

Sensory properties of akara (fried cowpea paste) prepared from paste stored at low storage temperatures

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Abstract

Akara (fried cowpea paste) a popular West African cowpea (*Visna unguiculata*) product was prepared from cowpea paste stored under refrigeration (4-6°C) and freezer (-18°C) temperatures for 10 and 24 days respectively. Blanched and unblanched paste were stored. Akara from freshly prepared paste was used as control. The sensory properties investigated were colour, taste, texture and aroma. Akara from various paste samples; refrigerator stored paste (RSP) freezer stored paste (FSP) and fresh paste (FP) were rated for the various attributes and the degree of difference from the control by a trained panel. Sensory attributes of RSP akara were majorly rated between good and fair in the first 3 days. Attributes were rated between fair and bad by the 6th and 10th days of storage and were significantly different from FP akara. Sensory attributes of FSP akara were rated between good and fair until the 17th day of storage. Blanching proved beneficial as a pre-storage treatment for the preservation of akara texture in the first 3 days for RSP and for 24 days for FSP. The results showed that the properties of cowpea paste which influence texture and overall sensory quality of akara, were better preserved in frozen storage. The implications of the results on the feasibility of bulk production and storage of cowpea paste for retail as a frozen ingredient are discussed.