



Seasonings:

Deciding on the Finest to Enhance your Food

Seasoning is a spices blend and widely used in almost every food we eat. Seasoning is intended to enhance the taste and flavour. It is obtained by grinding clean and drying wholesome spices and condiments. It may contain spices, condiments, herbs and edible common salt.

A Consumer Voice Report

Seasonings intensify the natural flavour of the food without changing it. Seasonings are usually added near the end of the cooking period. The most common seasonings are salt, pepper, and acids. Cook the dish as you normally do. Sprinkle seasoning on the dish 2-3 minutes before taking it off the flame. Stir well and serve hot to enjoy the delicious taste.

We tested 5 brands of seasoning on a range of quality, safety and acceptability parameters.

These included sensory panel tests for acceptance, safety tests like Salmonella, Aflatoxin, Saffrole, Melamine and Lead. Quality tests includes moisture, acid insoluble ash apart from nutrients like iron, iodine and sodium. The sensory tests covered the aspects of flavour and taste. We followed the standard test methods at an NABL-accredited laboratory.

The test programme was mainly based on Food Safety Regulations and label claims.



Brands Tested

The following five brands of Seasonings were undertaken for comparative testing:

Rank	Overall score out of 100	Brand	Product Name	Net Quantity, gm	MRP in Rs.	MRP per pouch in Rs./ Quantity in gm	Best before, Months	Manufactured/ Marketed By
1.	88	Maggi	Masala ए Magic	120 (6g×20)	100	5/6	9	Nestle India Limited
2.	87	Nilon's	Magical Masala	72 (6g×12)	84	7/6	9	Nilon's Enterprises Pvt. Ltd.
3.	83	Jalani	Too Good Masala	60 (6g×10)	40	4/6	12	Jalani Enterprises
4.	83	Dabur	Homemade Tasty Masala	6 gm	5 (buy 2 get 1 free)	5/6	9	Dabur India Limited
5.	81	Sloopy	Masala Master	336 (7g×48)	240	5/7	9	Ayoni Food Enterprises Pvt. Ltd.

Rating: >90 – Very Good *****, 71-90- Good ****, 51-70- Average ***, 31-50- Poor **, up to 30 – Very Poor *

CV recommendations

Top Performer

Maggi Masala ₹ Magic

Value For Money Brand

Jalani Too Good Masala

Key Findings

- ❖ In overall score, Maggi's Masala ₹ Magic performed on top followed by Nilon's Magical Masala and Jalani's Too Good Masala.
- ❖ The Value for Money brand is Jalani's Too Good Masala.
- ❖ In sensory panel tests, Nilon's Magical Masala scored highest followed by Jalani's Too Good Masala and Maggi's Masala ₹ Magic.
- ❖ Iron was found the highest in Maggi Masala ₹ Magic and lowest in Jalani's Too Good Masala.
- ❖ Sodium was found lowest in Nilon's Magical Masala.
- ❖ Salmonella was absent in all the brands.
- ❖ Heavy metals lead, aflatoxin, melamine and saffrole were found below detection limit.
- ❖ All the brands performed well and passed all the tests.

Comparative Performance Score

Brands Parameter	Weightage, %	Maggi Masala ₹ Magic	Nilon's Magical Masala	Jalani Too Good Masala	Dabur Homemade Tasty Masala	Sloopy Masala Magic
Sensory Panel Test – Taste & Flavour	30	22.80	26.85	23.25	21.45	21.90
Moisture	6	5.58	3.66	5.58	5.46	4.62
Acid insoluble ash	7	6.79	7.00	6.58	6.58	4.27
Aflatoxin	5	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Lead	5	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Melamine	6	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
Saffrole	5	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Iron	6	6.00	4.67	3.30	3.88	3.67
Vitamin A	5	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Iodine	7	6.88	4.57	5.13	6.86	6.97
Sodium	6	4.47	5.82	4.65	3.69	4.11
Salmonella	5	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00

Test Parameters and Results

Sensory panel tests

Subjective panel tests were conducted in the laboratory. Consumers are very critical on selection of product that makes brand most acceptable/least acceptable. During this test, we determine sensory quality of the product. We conducted sensory tests for flavour and taste. These tests were conducted in the lab involving panel members under the supervision of trained experts. Seasonings should be fresh and pleasant, free from dirt and insect.

Flavour and taste were found acceptable for all brands. Nilon's Magical Masala scored highest followed by Jalani's Too Good Masala and Maggi Masala ₹ Magic.

Moisture

The presence of moisture is inherent in food and to some extent is good for maintaining its taste and odour but excess / inappropriate amounts is damaging to the useful life of food. Moisture should be within the specified limit of 10% maximum as per FSSAI regulation.

Moisture was found lowest in Maggi Masala ₹ Magic followed by Jalani and Dabur. It was highest in Nilon's Magical Masala.

Acid Insoluble Ash

Acid-insoluble ash indicates the presence of sand, dirt and dust. As per Food Safety Regulation, acid insoluble ash content should not be more than 2 % by mass.

Acid insoluble ash was found the lowest in Nilon's Magical Masala followed by Maggi Masala ₹ Magic and Dabur Tasty Masala. It was highest in Sloopy Masala Magic.



Aflatoxin

Aflatoxins are highly toxic compounds and can cause both acute and chronic toxicity in humans. It should be 30 µg/kg maximum. In all the brands aflatoxin was not detected (detection limit- 1.7 µg/kg) thus safe for consumption.

Lead

Lead is a toxicant that affects multiple body systems, including your liver and kidneys in particular. It is especially harmful to infant and pregnant women as it can cause damage to the central nervous system in children. It should be not more than 5 mg/kg.

Lead was not detected (detection limit- 0.5 mg/kg) in all the brands tested.

Melamine

Use of melamine either as an ingredient or as an additive is not permitted in any food under the food safety regulations. Melamine could be present in a food either on account of its incidental presence (as a contaminant) or deliberately. Melamine is illegally added to food and food ingredients in order to give the impression that the protein content of the food is higher than it really is.



limit- 5.0IU/100g) in all the brands tested.

Iodine

The daily requirement of iodine for an adult is 150 micrograms per day. Pregnant women and lactating mothers however, need more iodine (250 micrograms per day). The total iodine requirement for a person living up to 70 years of life would add up to less than a teaspoonful.

Iodine was found in all the brands. It was the highest in Sloopy followed by Maggi and Dabur.

It should be max. 2.5 mg/kg. Melamine was not detected (detection limit-1.0mg/kg) in all the brands tested.

Saffrole

Saffrole is found in a variety of spices, and it has been widely used as a natural or synthetic food additive and flavouring agent.

It should be max. 10.0 mg/kg. Saffrole was not detected (detection limit -5.0mg/kg) in all the brands tested.

Iron

Deficiency of iron results in anaemia. Anaemia and iron deficiency seriously affects health, survival and wellbeing of women, the physical and mental status of their new-borns, their cognitive development and overall work performance as they grow into adults. Iron was found the highest in Maggi Masala & Magic and lowest in Jalani's Too Good Masala.

Vitamin A

Vitamin A deficiency can increase the risk of serious, sometimes fatal, infections. Symptoms include night blindness, dry skin and frequent infections. Vitamin A was not detected (detection

Sodium

Sodium is a mineral commonly referred as salt. Sodium is a naturally occurring mineral found in many different foods. It is used for seasoning as well as food preservation. Salt also inhibits the growth of bacteria in food articles. Sodium helps to control the amount of water in the body. World Health Organization's (WHO) recommendation on sodium consumption for adults is 2g sodium/day (equivalent to 5g salt/day). Excess sodium intake is an important determinant of hypertension and cardio-vascular risk.

Sodium was found the lowest in Nilon's magical masala followed by Jalani and Maggi. It was highest in Dabur Homemade Tasty Masala.

Microbiological tests for Salmonella

Microbiological contamination is a very serious issue for food products. Microorganisms are responsible for many food borne disease. As per FSSAI regulations, we conducted test for Salmonella sp.

Salmonella may cause gastroenteritis and focal infections. Salmonella was absent in all the



brands, tested thus safe for consumption.

Packaging

Packing plays an important role in maintaining the consistent quality of the product, preventing its deterioration, and increasing its shelf life. The product should be packed in food grade packaging. All the brands were packed in pouches.

Marking

The product should have the following information marked on its packing:

- a. Name of the product
- b. Trade name, if any
- c. Name and address of manufacturer
- d. Batch or code number
- e. Net quantity in gram
- f. Month and year of manufacture
- g. The words 'Best before' (month and year to be indicated)
- h. FSSAI license number
- i. Logo indicating 'vegetarian' or 'non-vegetarian' status

- j. Storage information
- k. Maximum Retail Price (MRP)
- l. Customer-care details

All the brands fulfilled above marking requirements.

Net quantity

Net weight of a product should be as per declaration and shall not exceed the tolerance limit of legal metrology. The net weight of all brands was found to be above the declared quantity.

Conclusion

Seasonings have played a vital role in all cuisines all over the world. In India, seasoning is added to intensify the natural flavour of food. They increase the palatability and flavour of the food, and also gives it a distinct look. However, when choosing which seasonings to use in our home, we must keep an eye on its quality and look into the various parameters we discussed above.