THE QUALITY OF DENDÊ OIL USED FOR FRYING AT THE PRINCIPAL TOURISTS SITES IN SALVADOR (BRAZIL)


Salvador is one of Brazil’s principal tourist destinations and is known around the world for a variety of attractions, including food and cookery of African origin. The delicacy with which the city is most identified is acarajé, a crispy ball made of black-eyed peas deep-fried in dendê oil. It is widely consumed not only by tourists but also by the local population. For this reason an evaluation of the alterations to the oil and the compounds formed during frying is a question of public food safety. The aim of this study was to analyze the level of acidity and peroxides in the dendê oil used to fry acarajés, and the manner of its use by “acarajé ladies” at the principal tourist sites in Salvador. 10 samples of dendê oil were collected and a structured questionnaire with 13 questions was applied in an investigation of 10 different tourist sites. The analytical tests were duplicated. All of the “acarajé ladies” interviewed were female and their ages ranged from 20 to 63 years. They were unanimous in the exclusive use of dendê oil for frying acarajés, although only 40% of the interviewees stated that they changed the whole quantity of oil at least once per shift. 90% of the samples presented elevated levels of acidity, and 60% presented elevated levels of peroxides, meaning that the majority of the oil tested was inadequate for use. More frequent inspections and training in the use of dendê oil and the maintenance of its quality are therefore recommended.