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Emmanuelle Richard, Beatrice Gleize, Christian Ginies, Carine Le Bourvellec, Claire Dufour. Thermal processing of either fruits or vegetables differently influences polyphenol stability. XXXIst International Conference on Polyphenols, Jul 2023, Nantes (Cité des Congrès), France. hal-04158102

**HAL Id: hal-04158102**

**<https://hal.inrae.fr/hal-04158102>**

Submitted on 10 Jul 2023

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# THERMAL PROCESSING OF EITHER FRUITS OR VEGETABLES DIFFERENTLY INFLUENCES POLYPHENOL STABILITY

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Polyphenols are the major microconstituents in fruit and vegetables (F&V) and contribute to their organoleptic and nutritional properties. Epidemiological studies demonstrated that the consumption of fruit and vegetables is inversely associated with the development of cardiovascular diseases [1]. On the other hand, cardioprotection has been correlated to polyphenol consumption [2]. As fruit and vegetables are mainly consumed processed, preservation of polyphenols and vitamins is sought during thermal processing. To this end, a better understanding of their stability during thermal processing is essential to improve the nutritional quality of processed F&V products. The aim of our study is to evaluate the stability of common F&V polyphenols and ascorbic acid during conventional thermal processing. Mechanisms occurring behind the reactivity will also be discussed.

We designed two aqueous model systems containing soluble pectins, an apple polyphenol extract [3], cyanidin-3-glucoside, rutin and ascorbic acid either at pH 4 or pH 6 to study polyphenol stability for fruit or vegetable, respectively, in both hot break (95 °C) and cold break (65 °C) processings. Concentrations in polyphenols and ascorbic acid were as in fruit and vegetables. Kinetics for polyphenols were followed by HPLC-DAD-MS. Degree of polymerization and composition of proanthocyanidins were assessed after acidic depolymerization in the presence of menthofuran.

In the vegetable model at pH 6 and 95 °C, the polyphenol stability over 8 h was: rutin > 5-caffeoylquinic acid > catechin ~ epicatechin > cyanidin-3-glucoside > ascorbic acid. In the fruit model at pH 4 and 95 °C, polyphenols proved to be largely more stable although with a similar order: rutin ~ 5-caffeoylquinic acid > epicatechin ~ catechin > cyanidin-3-glucoside > ascorbic acid. At 65 °C, all compounds were mainly stable at both pH except cyanidin-3-glucoside and ascorbic acid.

This study highlighted a larger evolution of 5-caffeoylquinic acid at pH 6 than at pH 4 for both temperatures tested. Indeed, 5-caffeoylquinic acid led to an equilibrium with 3-caffeoylquinic and 4-caffeoylquinic acids through intramolecular trans acylation without any further degradation. At 65 °C, this equilibrium was slower and not achieved after 8 h. Additionally, (+)-catechin concentration peaked after 3 h at 95 °C and pH 6 with a two-fold higher content whereas (-)-epicatechin decreased by a larger amount at the same time suggesting both epimerization and degradation of monomeric flavanols.

These results suggest a greater stability for polyphenols in fruit processing than in vegetable processing for both temperatures. In the vegetable model, the major reactions are regioisomerization of caffeoyl- and coumaroylquinic acids, epimerization of monomeric flavan-3-ols and depolymerization of proanthocyanidins.

[1] Aune D. et al., *Int. J. Epidemiol.*, 46, 1029-1056, 2017

[2] Medina-Remon A. et al., *Br. J. Clin. Pharmacol.*, 83, 114–128, 2017

[3] Le Bourvellec C. et al., *Nutrients*, 11, 664, 2019