CLAIMS

1. A method of manufacture of a crumb comprising the steps of:

extruding a dough composition comprising flour, a gelling agent, optional further ingredients and water to form an extruded composition, wherein the gelling agent is uniformly distributed throughout the composition;

drying the extruded composition in a rotary dryer to form a dried composition, wherein the water content of the dried composition is from about 0.1% to about 1.5% by weight; and

milling the dried composition to form a crumb with a water content of about 0.1% to about 1.5% by weight.

2. A method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising the step of dividing the composition into pellets or beads before drying.

3. A method as claimed in claim 2, wherein the pellets or beads have a maximum dimension of 1 cm to 2 cm.

4. A method as claimed in claim 3, wherein the pellets or beads have a maximum dimension of 0.5 cm to 1.0 cm.

5. A method as claimed in any of claims 2-4, wherein the pellets or beads are rounded.

6. A method as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the rotary dryer comprises an inlet; an outlet; a passageway for the extruded composition, the passageway extending between the inlet and outlet; one or more drying units comprising a perforated cylindrical tube extending between the inlet and outlet and a screw extending axially of the tube, wherein one of the tube and the screw are rotatable to move extruded composition from the inlet to the outlet; and means for circulating drying air through the passageway.

7. A method as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the crumb has a water content from about 0.3% to about 1.0% by weight.

8. A method as claimed in claim 7 wherein the crumb has a water content from about 0.5% to about 1.0% by weight.

9. A method as claimed in claim 8 wherein the crumb has a water content from about 0.5% to about 0.6% by weight.

10. A method as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the crumb has a maximum dimension from about 0.1 mm to about 5 mm.

11. A method as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the gelling agent is a hydrocolloid.

12. A method as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the crumb contains from about 0.06% to about 0.4% by weight of the gelling agent.

13. A method as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the crumb contains from about 0.08% to about 3% by weight of the gelling agent.

14. A method as claimed in claim 13 wherein the crumb contains from about 0.1% to about 3% by weight of the gelling agent.

15. A method as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the gelling agent is selected from the group consisting of: natural gums, modified gums, gelatin, pectin, alginate, arabinogalactan, agar, carrageenan, furcellaran, modified starch and combinations thereof.

16. A method as claimed in claim 15 wherein the hydrocolloid is selected from the group consisting of natural gums and combinations thereof.

17. A method as claimed in claim 16 wherein the natural gum is selected from the group consisting of: guar gum, locust bean gum, gum Arabic, tragacanth, gum karaya, gum ghatti, xanthan gum and combinations thereof.

18. A method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the extruded pellets are dried in the rotary dryer by employing a counter current stream of hot air having a temperature in the range of 120°C-160°C.

19. A crumb comprising milled farinaceous particles of an extruded composition comprising flour, a gelling agent uniformly distributed throughout the crumb and optional further ingredients, wherein the total water content of the crumb is from about 0.1% to about 1.5% by weight.

CLAIMS

1. A method of manufacture of a crumb comprising the steps of:

extruding a dough composition comprising flour, a gelling agent, optional further ingredients and water to form an extruded composition, wherein the gelling agent is uniformly distributed throughout the composition;

drying the extruded composition in a rotary dryer to form a dried composition, wherein the water content of the dried composition is from 0.1% to 1.5% by weight; and

milling the dried composition to form a crumb with a water content of 0.1% to 1.5% by weight.

2. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the rotary dryer comprises an inlet; an outlet; a passageway for the extruded composition, the passageway extending between the inlet and outlet; one or more drying units comprising a perforated cylindrical tube extending between the inlet and outlet and a screw extending axially of the tube, wherein one of the tube and the screw are rotatable to move extruded composition from the inlet to the outlet; and means for circulating drying air through the passageway.

3. A method as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein the crumb has a water content from 0.3% to 1.0% by weight.

4. A method as claimed in claim 4 wherein the crumb has a water content from 0.5% to 1.0% by weight.

5. A method as claimed in claim 5 wherein the crumb has a water content from 0.5% to 0.6% by weight.

6. A method as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the crumb has a maximum dimension from 0.1 mm to 5 mm.

7. A method as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the gelling agent is a hydrocolloid.

8. A method as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the crumb contains from 0.06% to 0.4% by weight of the gelling agent.

9. A method as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the crumb contains from 0.08% to 3% by weight of the gelling agent.

10. A method as claimed in claim 9 wherein the crumb contains from 0.1% to 3% by weight of the gelling agent.

11. A method as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the gelling agent is selected from the group consisting of: natural gums, modified gums, gelatin, pectin, alginate, arabinogalactan, agar, carrageenan, furcellaran, modified starch and combinations thereof.

12. A method as claimed in claim 11 wherein the hydrocolloid is selected from the group consisting of natural gums and combinations thereof.

13. A method as claimed in claim 12 wherein the natural gum is selected from the group consisting of: guar gum, locust bean gum, gum Arabic, tragacanth, gum karaya, gum ghatti, xanthan gum and combinations thereof.

14. A method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the extruded pellets are dried in the rotary dryer by employing a counter current stream of hot air having a temperature in the range of 120°C-160°C.

15. A crumb comprising milled farinaceous particles of an extruded composition comprising flour, a gelling agent uniformly distributed throughout the crumb and optional further ingredients, wherein the total water content of the crumb is from 0.1% to 1.5% by weight.