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(54) Title: ENZYMATIC PROCESS FOR INCREASING THE SOS TRIGLYCERIDE CONTENT OF A VEGETABLE OIL

(57) Abstract: The present invention relates to a process for increasing the SOS triglyceride content of a vegetable oil, wherein S represents stearic acid (C18:0) and palmitic acid (C16:0) residues and O represents oleic acid (C18:1) residues, said process comprising: a) providing a reaction environment comprising: i) an sn-1,3-specific lipase immobilised on a support, ii) a vegetable oil, wherein the vegetable oil comprises at least 45% oleic acid fatty acid residues, based on total C6-C24 fatty acid residues, and wherein the vegetable oil has an oleic acid content in the sn-2 position of at least 75% by weight of the total sn-2 fatty acid residues of the vegetable oil, iii) an aliphatic alcohol ester of stearic acid, palmitic acid, or mixtures thereof, optionally mixed with stearic acid and/or palmitic acid, and iv) water; wherein the weight ratio of the aliphatic alcohol ester and optional stearic acid and/or palmitic acid (iii) to the vegetable oil (ii) is at least 4:1; and wherein the water activity of the reaction environment is in the range 0.1 to 0.6; b) heating the reaction environment to a temperature of 30-60°C to perform transesterification, thus obtaining a mixture comprising a triglyceride phase, fatty acid esters, and optionally free fatty acids; and c) separating the fatty acid esters and free fatty acids from the mixture obtained in step (b) to obtain a triglyceride composition. The triglyceride phase may be used as a cocoa butter equivalent of a component thereof in chocolate or chocolate-like products.

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