

ABSTRACT**RECOVERY OF MINOR COMPONENTS AND REFINING OF VEGETABLE OILS AND FATS**

This invention relates to a process for the recovery of carotenes from oils and fats by first removing the polar components by extraction using a lower alkyl alcohol or lower alkyl alcohol-water mixtures wherein lower alkyl alcohol groups having 1 to 5 carbon atoms, under conditions without destroying those components. The carotene-containing oils or fats are converted into fatty acid alkyl ester with a lower alkyl alcohol wherein lower alkyl alcohol groups having 1 to 5 carbon atoms by based catalyzed transesterification directly without further treatment. Glycerol layer is separated from the carotene-containing fatty acid alkyl ester layer. Carotenes are recovered by distilling off the fatty acid alkyl esters under vacuum. The removal of polar components prior to transesterification obviates pre-esterification of free fatty acid and avoided interferences of polar components with transesterification process.

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