

Title Development of a cactus-mucilage edible coating (*Opuntia ficus indica*) and its application to extend strawberry (*Fragaria ananassa*) shelf-life

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Abstract

Increased consumer demand for higher quality food in combination with the environmental need to reduce disposable packaging waste have led to increased interest in research into edible films and coatings. In this work, the use of prickly pear cactus mucilage (*Opuntia ficus indica*) was investigated as an edible coating to extend the shelf-life of strawberries. Different methods for mucilage extraction were tested in order to obtain the best coating. Edible films were tested to determine their effects on colour, texture and sensory quality of the fruit. From the results, it was concluded that the use of mucilage coatings leads to increased strawberry shelf-life.