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## ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

# Mineralized agar-based nanocomposite films: Potential food packaging materials with antimicrobial properties

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Highlights

- Agar was impregnated with Zn-minerals to produce nanocomposite films
- Nanocomposites exhibited different morphologies, properties and functionality
- Reinforcing with minerals improved mechanical, optical and thermal properties
- Nanocomposite films release Zn(II) inducing antimicrobial effect

#### Abstract

New mineralized, agar-based nanocomposite films (Zn-carbonate and Zn-phosphate/agar) were produced by a combination of *in situ* precipitation and a casting method. The presence of minerals significantly influenced the morphology, properties and functionality of the obtained nanocomposites. Reinforcement with the Zn-mineral phase improved the mechanical properties of the carbonate-mineralized films, but had a negligible effect on the phosphate-mineralized samples. Both nanocomposites showed improved optical and thermal properties, better Zn(II) release potential in a slightly acidic environment and exhibited antimicrobial activity against *S. aureus*. These results suggest that Zn-mineralized agar nanocomposite films could be potentially used as affordable, eco-friendly and active food packaging materials.

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