

Publication of an application pursuant to Article 50(2)(a) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs

(2014/C 412/05)

This publication confers the right to oppose the application pursuant to Article 51 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽¹⁾.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006

on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs ⁽²⁾

‘KRČKI PRŠUT’

EC No: HR-PGI-0005-01204-3.3.2014

PGI (X) PDO ()

1. Name

‘Krčki pršut’

2. Member State or Third Country

Croatia

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff

3.1. Product type

Class 1.2 Meat products (cooked, salted, smoked, etc.)

3.2. Description of the product to which the name in (1) applies

‘Krčki pršut’ is a preserved dry-cured meat product made from pork ham, excluding pelvic bones, dry-salted with sea salt and spices, air-dried without smoking and then dried and matured for a minimum of one year.

When placed on the market, ‘Krčki pršut’ must meet the following organoleptic requirements:

- (a) external appearance: spherical in shape, with a properly rounded edge, without the distal part (foot) and with no hanging parts or cracks on the open medial side or other flaws that might compromise the appearance of the product, with limited visible muscle tissue below the femur heads no more than 12 cm in length. Cracks occurring in the course of maturation may be coated with a mixture made up of pork fat, wheat or rice flour, sea salt and ground pepper.
- (b) taste and aroma: sweet and moderately salty flavour, mild characteristic aroma of mature dried pigmeat;
- (c) cross section: meat of a uniform pink to red colour, mottled with pieces of white fat;
- (d) consistency: soft consistency, which makes it easier to slice the meat correctly, and with no hard, unyielding, dark outside edge;
- (e) mass: more than 6,5 kg;
- (f) chemical parameters:
 - water: 40 %-60 %;
 - sodium chloride: 4 %-8 %;
 - water activity (a_w) below 0,93.

3.3. Raw materials (for processed products only)

‘Krčki pršut’ may be produced only from fresh hams, obtained from pigs from commercial meat breeds, cross-breeds or breeding lines, or cross-breeds of any combination thereof.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 93, 31.3.2006, p. 12. Replaced by Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012.

Appearance of the ham: the ham must be cut from a pig half-carcase between the last lumbar (v. lumbales) and the first sacral (v. sacrales) vertebrae. The ham must be free of the pelvic bones, i.e. the ilium (os ilium), the ischium (os ischii), the pubis (os pubis) and the sacrum (os sacrum), and of the tail vertebrae (v. caudales). The ham must be separated from the hip at the hip joint (articulatio coxae) where the femur head (caput femoris) connects with the acetabulum on the pelvic bone. Only the cartilaginous part of the ischium (tuber ischii) must be left in the ham. The muscles of the ham must be nicely rounded in a semi-circle so that the proximal edge of a trimmed ham is some 10-15 cm from the femur head (caput femoris). The trotter, together with the proximal tarsals, is removed from the ham at the tarsal joint (articulatio tarsi). Only the point of the hock (tuber calcanei), above which the ham is tied and hung to dry, may remain attached to the tibia and the fibula. On the medial and lateral sides, the ham is covered with rind and subcutaneous fat. There must be no loosely hanging parts of muscle on the open medial side, while the distal part of the rind, with the subcutaneous fat, must be rounded.

Meat quality: a fresh ham must display no discernible signs of trauma whatsoever. The meat must be reddish-pink, firm in texture and free of surface wateriness (RFN). At the time of its delivery to the production site, the pH of a ham, as measured in the area of the semimembranosus muscle, should be between 5,5 and 6,0.

Fat cover: the thickness of the fat on the outer part of a fresh trimmed ham, measured vertically below the femur head, should be approximately 25 mm. In any case, the layer of fat, including the skin, must not be less than 15 mm thick.

With the exception of cooling, the hams must not undergo any other preservation process. The time between pig slaughter and salting of the hams must be between 24 and 120 hours.

The minimum weight of a trimmed ham to be used for 'Krčki pršut' is 12 kg.

3.4. Feed (for products of animal origin only)

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3.5. Specific steps in production that must take place in the defined geographical area

All production stages of 'Krčki pršut' must take place in the geographical area referred to in point 4. The production process covers the following stages: salting, pressing, drying and maturing.

3.6. Specific rules concerning slicing, grating, packaging, etc.

'Krčki pršut' may be placed on the market in one piece (the whole ham) or in packages that may contain the whole ham without the bone, larger or smaller pieces of pršut or sliced pršut. These forms of pršut must be packed in a vacuum or modified atmosphere.

3.7. Specific rules concerning labelling

After the end of the maturing stage, the hams that have been shown, through the requisite checks, to possess all the physico-chemical and organoleptic properties prescribed by the specification are hot-branded with the collective mark of 'Krčki pršut'.

When the product is placed on the market, either as a whole ham or packaged in any way, the product name must contain the collective mark and the inscription 'Krčki pršut'. The collective mark is shown below.



The inscription 'Krčki pršut' must be clearly legible and indelible, and must be sufficiently large and highlighted through type and colour to stand out more clearly than any other indication, including the collective mark, the production batch (series) number as well as any logo, images and inscriptions of the producer.

4. Concise definition of the geographical area

Production of 'Krčki pršut' is restricted exclusively to the area of the island of Krk. Krk is divided into six local self-government units: the town of Krk and the municipalities Baška, Malinska-Dubašnica, Omišalj, Punat and Vrbnik. In addition to parts of the island of Krk, the administrative boundaries of some of the local government units also take in other nearby small islands (Košljun, Prvić, Plavnik), on which the manufacture of 'Krčki pršut' is not authorised.

5. Link with the geographical area

5.1. Specificity of the geographical area

The island of Krk has a moderately warm humid climate with hot summers, and as a result of the warm sea its mean annual temperature is over 4 °C higher than it should be for its size. The most important climatic factor with an impact on drying meat is the wind. On average, the strongest and most common wind on the island is the bora, most often originating from the east-northeast and northeast. It is a dry, cold wind occurring most strongly and most often in winter and less strongly and less often in summer. Although annual and seasonal wind roses are not identical at all points of the island, in the winter period cold, dry winds from the northern quadrant prevail almost everywhere on average between 44 % and 70 % of the time.

Krk's favourable natural drying conditions have been exploited by the island's inhabitants who, over generations, have adjusted and perfected the process of making pršut. There are many extant written traces recording the age-old practice on the island of raising pigs and drying the meat.

Describing life on the island, in 1874 Cubich wrote about the tradition of salting pigmeat, stating that the islanders 'eat fresh, salted or smoked pigmeat', and '... add soup containing pieces of pršut to macaroni' (Giambattista Cubich, *Notizie naturali e storiche sull'Isola di Veglia* ('Natural and Historical Information on the Island of Krk'), Trieste, 1874, pp. 101 and 143).

In an account of the life and customs of the people of Vrbnik (on the island of Krk) in 1901, Žic describes the manner in which pigs are slaughtered and the pršut salted (I. Žic, *Vrbnik (na otoku Krku), Narodni život i običaji, Hrana i posuđe* ('Vrbnik (on the island of Krk), Life and Customs, Food and Dishes'), in *Zbornik za narodni život i običaje Južnih Slavena*, Zagreb, 1901, Vol. VI Part 1, pp. 3-6).

In *Krčki zbornik* (Vol. 16, 1986, Krk, p. 426), it states that on the island of Krk pigmeat is salted, particularly bacon and pršut.

An old recipe for processing pig hams has been found in one of the recipe notebooks in the Franciscan monastery on Košljun.

The mild climate of the island of Krk and the extensive development of tourism which has directly influenced pršut production have served to enhance and spread the reputation of the product. As tourism grew, the number of farms raising pigs declined and raw materials for the production of pršut started to be purchased on the mainland.

5.2. Specificity of the product

The specificity of 'Krčki pršut' derives from its longstanding reputation and from the skills and knowhow of producers who use traditional recipes to make it.

On the island of Krk, pigs have been reared and pigmeat salted in order to preserve it since medieval times. Techniques of salting and maturing were passed down from generation to generation in such a way that, even up to the mid-twentieth century, every well-off family raised its own pigs and salted the meat. Although the origins of 'Krčki pršut' production lie in the distant past, its reputation was greatly enhanced just in the middle of the twentieth century at the time when tourism was being developed. Indeed, 'Krčki pršut' was one of the few local products able to satisfy the requirements of the tourism market in terms of quality and quantity. Tourists recognised the quality and special characteristics of 'Krčki pršut' and its link to the local area (Inozemni novinari o otoku Krku ('Writings of foreign journalists concerning the island of Krk'), *Krčki zbornik* 15, 1986, Krk, p. 199; *Jela otoka Krka* ('Dishes of the island of Krk'), 1989, pp. 22 and 87), and demand for these products is increasing from year to year. In the mid-1990s, restaurants increasingly listed the dish as 'Krčki pršut' rather than 'local pršut' (bills of lading from Žužić butchers market, menus from Konoba Porat, Hotel Pinia, Restoran Bimal, Restoran Rivica).

The long-standing tradition of 'Krčki pršut' production has resulted in certain specificities in the production process and a final product that differs from pršut produced in neighbouring regions (e.g. Istria and Dalmatia).

'Krčki pršut' comes complete with the skin and subcutaneous fat, while the visible muscle tissue is not coated with grease except on the areas of cracks. During the salting stage, spices (pepper, rosemary and bayleaf) are used in addition to salt, while during the drying phase smoking of the pršut is not permitted. This characteristic production process imparts special characteristics to the muscle and fat after a long maturation period of at least 12 months (from the start of salting up to the finished product).

The muscle tissue of the finished product has soft consistency, which makes it easier to slice properly. The slices are pinkish-red in colour, mottled with fat and do not have a hard, unyielding, dark outside edge.

A pršut that is produced correctly has a mild flavour characteristic of dried pigmeat matured slowly over a long period, which can be savoured to the full since it is not masked by the aroma of smoke.

5.3. *Causal link between the geographical area and the quality or characteristics of the product (for PDO) or a specific quality, the reputation or other characteristic of the product (for PGI)*

The climatic conditions of the island of Krk and, in particular, the frequency and timing during the winter of cold dry winds that are very favourable for drying meat and thus for making pršut, the first stage of which (salting) traditionally begins during the cold season of the year (November to March). At that time, the air is naturally so cold and dry that it prevents spoiling of the meat, enabling it to be dried properly even without the use of smoke and, later, enabling the meat to be matured gradually. The proximity of the sea and the accessibility of salt also satisfy one of the preconditions for production of a dried-meat product to develop. For a long time already the inhabitants of Krk have made the most of these natural advantages and the skill of drying pigmeat has become part of the cultural and traditional heritage passed down from generation to generation. The knowhow was perfected and modified over time until a production process was developed on the island of Krk that — probably because of the poor communications and links with the Croatian mainland — differed in several stages of production from that on the adjacent mainland areas.

Although 'Krčki pršut' gained its reputation slowly over a long period far back in history, over the last fifty years the development of tourism on the island of Krk also helped to raise its profile dramatically. 'Krčki pršut' was one of the few domestic products that immediately started to be offered to tourists and that satisfied their requirements with its quality and quantity.

Being offered continuously as a restaurant standard and the rise in the number of tourists helped to boost not only the reputation of 'Krčki pršut' but also demand for it, facilitating the development of commercial pršut production.

Over time 'Krčki pršut' has developed into one of the crowning glories of local gastronomy and is nowadays an indispensable dish on the menus of restaurants on Krk that serve local delicacies.

Reference to publication of the specification

(Article 5(7) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 ⁽³⁾)

<http://www.mps.hr/UserDocsImages/HRANA/Krčki%20pršut/Izmjenjena%20Specifikacija%20proizvoda.pdf>

⁽³⁾ See footnote 2.