

SINGLE DOCUMENT

Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs*

'IDIAZABAL'

EC No: ES-PDO-0217-01160 – 20.09.2013

PGI () PDO (X)

1. NAME

'Idiazabal'

2. MEMBER STATE OR THIRD COUNTRY

Spain

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT OR FOODSTUFF

3.1. Type of product

Class 1.3. Cheeses

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

'Idiazabal' cheese is made exclusively from raw sheep's milk from the Latxa and Carranzana breeds. It is pressed, uncooked and matures for a minimum of 60 days. It has a minimum weight of 1 kg (with a leeway of 10 % up or down), a height of between 8 and 12 cm (with a leeway of 0.5 cm), and a diameter of between 10 and 30 cm. The cheese may be smoked.

The cheese has a cylindrical shape, a hard rind, is smooth and has a pale yellow colour, or a dark brown colour in the case of smoked cheese. The cut (colour and holes) of the cheese is homogeneous, running from an ivory colour to a straw-yellow colour, with small holes of varying shapes that are few in number. The texture of the cheese is rather springy, firm and has a certain amount of graininess. As far as its smell and taste are concerned, it typically has a strong smell that brings to mind sheep's milk and rennet, and a taste which is balanced and intense on the palate, with delicate spicy, acid and, where relevant, smoky notes. Its strong smell remains for a long time after it has been swallowed.

Its fat content must not be less than 45% of a dry extract; total protein must be at least 25% of a dry extract and the dry extract itself must be a minimum of 55%. The pH of the product must be between 4.9 and 5.5.

3.3. Raw materials (for processed products only)

Raw sheep's milk from Latxa and Carranzana breeds in the defined geographical area.

No substances may be added to the milk other than dairy ferments, lysozyme, rennet and salt.

* Replaced by Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 November 2012 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs.

3.4. Feed (for products of animal origin only)

The Latxa and Carranzana breeds of sheep are normally put out to graze for almost the whole year. The flocks are moved periodically to and from the valley floors to the upper slopes of the mountains, according to the season. Since they live practically the whole year in a natural environment, the sheep basically feed on spontaneous vegetation in the woods lower down the slopes in winter, and in the high grasslands in summer. They are fed in the fold, when conditions in the grasslands are difficult or when this is recommended for a number of physiological reasons (lactation).

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

Both the production of the milk and the production and maturing of the cheese must take place in the defined geographical area, meaning that all the stages of production are carried out in the defined area.

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

'Idiazabal' cheese may be put up for sale whole or in slices (pieces).

Packaging of 'Idiazabal' cheese or its slices, as applicable, must always be carried out following the cheese's minimum maturing period of 60 days.

The slicing of the cheese, except when the product is sold retail, and when it is packed, as appropriate, must be carried out in the defined geographical area. There are two reasons for this:

Firstly, when the cheese is sliced, at least two sides of the wedges lose the protective rind. Thus, to ensure that the organoleptic characteristics of 'Idiazabal' cheese are maintained, when the product is cut, the resulting slices must be packaged very quickly after the slicing.

Secondly, a consequence of the slicing may be that the identifiers of the authenticity and origin of the product may disappear or no longer be visible. In order not to compromise the authenticity of the cut product, therefore, it is necessary to cut and package it at origin.

3.7. Specific rules concerning labelling

'Idiazabal' cheese must carry the following three identifiers:

- A casein label with a unique serial number must be affixed to each cheese in the moulding or pressing stage. The label shall be supplied by the managing body.
- The labels used to market the cheese must include the name and logo of the Protected Designation of Origin.
- The labels used for the cheese, whether marketed whole or in slices, must be affixed in the dairy where the cheese has been produced and has matured, in accordance with Spanish law.
- The cheese must carry a secondary label, each with its own serial number, codified according to the size and format of the cheese that it is certifying. The secondary label must contain the name 'Idiazabal' and the logo of the Protected Designation of Origin. The secondary labels shall be supplied and checked by the managing body and shall be made available, in a non-discriminatory way, to all operators requesting them which meet the terms of the specification.

4. CONCISE DEFINITION OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

The geographical area includes the natural environments of the Latxa and Carranzana breeds of sheep in Álava, Vizcaya, Guipúzcoa and Navarre, except the municipalities of the Valle del Roncal. The production area lies in the north of the Iberian Peninsula, between 43° 27' and 41° 54' North, and 1° 5' and 3° 37' West, based on the Greenwich Meridian.

5. LINK WITH THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

5.1. Specificity of the geographical area

There is evidence in this area of sheep farming with the Latxa and Carranzana breeds since around 2200 BC. The specific characteristics of the area are essential to the correct development and management of these breeds as they have become used to this area after so many years. The area of production is a highly indented and complex mountainous region which makes communication difficult. This has contributed to the continued existence of sheep farming in many of the valleys and uplands. The soils are rich in basic and other nutrients, with the eroding effects attenuated by the natural features of the rock and on occasions by the presence of carbonate rock in the soil profile which makes for excellent pasture land. The topographical features of the area produce a varied climate which ranges from an Atlantic to a Mediterranean climate, with transitional zones caused by the barrier effect of the mountain ranges. The network of water courses is extensive and rich, given that there are many hills and mountains and a lot of precipitation. There are two catchment basins: The Cantabrian, into which flows water from Vizcaya, Guipúzcoa and the northern valleys of Álava and Navarre; and the Mediterranean, which takes in Álava, Navarra Media and La Ribera. As regards flora, there are many natural meadows and grasslands. The favourable climatic and soil conditions have encouraged the growth of hygrophilous and sub-hygrophilous plants which derive from the oceanic character of the Basque Country and the north of Navarre.

5.2. Specificity of the product

'Idiazabal' cheese has its own sensory characteristics that set it apart from other cheeses. These can be experienced in the product's wealth of nuances of smell and taste; it also has a very little to medium springiness and graininess, and medium to high levels of firmness. The cheese has an intense taste which stays long on the palate, with a perfect balance between the milky aromas, rennet and 'roasted' smell that are its fundamental sensory characteristics, and which are complemented by a vast number of nuances of taste and smell that give the cheese real personality.

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 specific characteristics of the production of the milk used to make 'Idiazabal' cheese are essentially due to the breeds that are authorised to provide it (Laxa and Carranzana). The adaptation of these sheep to the defined geographical area and the historical relationship between the environment, the sheep and the shepherds, creates a permanent bond that goes a long way to explaining the specific characteristics of 'Idiazabal' cheese. Laxa and Carranzana are breeds of sheep which are very well suited to providing milk, are hardy and adapted to the mountains, and are at one with the Basque sheep-farming culture, the topography and the 'green' environmental features of their home turf.

The reason, too, why all these characteristics that come from the natural environment, that changes with the seasons, types of pasture, climate, and so on, find their expression in 'Idiazabal' cheese is thanks to its use of raw, unheated milk, since heating would cancel out or diminish the sensory nuances that make the product tasty to eat and are part of the longstanding traditions of the area.

Reference to publication of the specification

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

http://www.magrama.gob.es/es/alimentacion/temas/calidad-agroalimentaria/PLIEGO_incluidas_modif_Idi_v6-5-14_tcm7-326642.pdf

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