

Publication of the amended single document following the approval of a minor amendment pursuant to the second subparagraph of Article 53(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012

(2022/C 286/13)

The European Commission has approved this minor amendment in accordance with the third subparagraph of Article 6(2) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 664/2014 ⁽¹⁾.

The application for approval of this minor amendment can be consulted in the Commission's eAmbrosia database.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

'IDIAZABAL'

EU No.: PDO-ES-0082-AM02-16.2.2021

PDO (X) PGI

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 the product to which the name in (1) applies

'Idiazabal' cheese is a pressed, uncooked cheese made exclusively from raw sheep's milk from the Latxa and Carranzana breeds and matured for at least 60 days. The cheese has the following characteristics: weight between a minimum of 1 kg and a maximum of 3,5 kg, height between a minimum of 8 cm and a maximum of 12 cm and diameter between a minimum of 10 cm and a maximum of 30 cm. A tolerance of ± 10 % shall be allowed for each of these characteristics. The cheese may also be smoked.

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

The cheese is cylindrical in shape, with a smooth, hard rind that is pale yellow in colour, or dark brown in the case of smoked cheese. The surface (colour and holes of the paste) is homogeneous, ranging from ivory to straw-yellow in colour, with a few small, irregularly-shaped holes. The texture of the cheese is rather elastic and firm, with a certain graininess. As far as aroma and taste are concerned, it typically has a strong aroma of 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 aroma remains for a long time after the cheese has been swallowed.

Its fat content must not be less than 45 % in dry matter; total protein must be at least 25 % in dry matter and the dry matter itself must be a minimum of 55 %. The pH of the product must be between 4,9 and 5,5.

3.3. Feed (for products of animal origin only) and raw materials (for processed products only)

Feed: the Latxa and Carranzana breeds of sheep are normally put out to graze almost all year round. The flocks are moved periodically between the valley floors and the upper slopes of the mountains, depending on 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).

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 179, 19.6.2014, p. 17.

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

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

3.4. *Specific steps in production that must take place in the identified geographical area*

The milk production, cheese-making and maturing stages must take place in the defined geographical area, i.e. all of the steps in production must take place within its boundaries.

3.5. *Specific rules concerning slicing, grating, packaging, etc. of the product the registered name refers to*

'Idiazabal' cheese may be presented for sale whole or in wedges (portions).

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

The cheese may only be cut into portions and, where applicable, packaged in the defined geographical area. There are two reasons for this.

Firstly, when the cheese is cut, at least two sides of the wedges lose the protective rind. Thus, in order to maintain the organoleptic characteristics, when 'Idiazabal' cheese is made available in portion form, the wedges must be packaged very shortly after being cut.

Secondly, a consequence of cutting into portions may be that the identifiers of the authenticity and origin of the product disappear or are no longer visible. It must therefore be cut into portions and packaged at source to ensure that the authenticity of the product in portion form is not compromised.

By way of derogation from the above, 'Idiazabal' cheese may be cut into portions in retail outlets provided that this is done in front of the consumer at the time of sale.

3.6. *Specific rules concerning labelling of the product the registered name refers to*

'Idiazabal' cheese must carry the following 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.

For cheeses made exclusively with milk from the same holding, the words '*baserrikoa — de caserío*' [from the farmstead] may be added to the 'Idiazabal' PDO logo.

— The labels used for the cheese, whether left whole or cut into wedges, must be affixed at dairies entered on the PDO Registers, 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 being certified. 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 on a non-discriminatory basis to all requesting operators that 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, excluding the municipalities of the Roncal valley. The production area lies in the north of the Iberian Peninsula, between 43° 27' and 41° 54' North, and 1° 05' and 3° 37' West, based on the Greenwich Meridian.

5. Link with the geographical area

Specific features 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 adapted to this area after so many years. The production area is a complex mountainous region of rough and uneven terrain, 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 lead to a varied climate ranging from Atlantic to Mediterranean, 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 abundant rainfall. 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 typical of the maritime climate in the Basque Country and northern Navarre.

Specificity of the product:

'Idiazabal' cheese has distinctive sensory characteristics that set it apart from other cheeses. These can be experienced in the product's wealth of nuances of aroma and taste; it also has a very low to medium elasticity 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.

Causal link between the geographical area and the specific character of the product:

The specific characteristics of the milk used to make 'Idiazabal' cheese are essentially due to the authorised breeds from which it is obtained (Latxa and Carranzana). The adaptation of these sheep to the defined geographical area and the historical link 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. Latxa and Carranzana are breeds of sheep that 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 eco-friendly nature of their habitat.

Moreover, the reason why all of these characteristics linked to the natural environment, which change with the seasons, types of pasture, climate, etc., find their expression in 'Idiazabal' cheese is because it is made with raw milk that is not heat-treated. Heating the milk would cancel out or diminish the sensory nuances that make the product so distinctive and link it to the longstanding traditions in the area.

Reference to publication of the specification

<https://www.mapa.gob.es/es/alimentacion/temas/calidad-diferenciada/dop-igp/htm/DOP-Idiazabal-modificacion-menor.aspx>
