

SPECIFICATION FOR THE P.G.I. «QUESO DE VALDEÓN»

(VALDEÓN CHEESE P.G.I.)

Revision	Date	Reason	Publication Favourable Decision EEMM	Date of dispatch (COM) File eAmbrosia	In force (OJEU)
0	-	Entry in the Community register of the «QUESO DE VALDEÓN» PGI.	-	31/01/2003 PGI-ES-0267	28/01/2004
1	02/11/2017	<p>Request for a non-minor amendment to the specifications in the following sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Product description.</i> The weight range for whole cheese (0,2 and 3 kg) and the net content of packages for whipped cheese (up to 6 kg) are extended. The minimum weight of 250 g for portions is eliminated. - <i>Proof of origin.</i> Updating of the control structure and adaptation to regulations. - <i>Method of production.</i> The minimum maturing period for cheeses made from pasteurised milk is increased from one and a half months to one month. - <i>Labelling.</i> All references to the possibility of marketing the cheese whole, beaten or in portions (packaged) are transferred to this section, references to the control carried out by the Regulatory Council are removed, and compulsory indications and the inclusion of the logo are specified. - <i>Control structure:</i> Update. 	30/05/2018	05/07/2018 PGI-ES-0267-AM01	18/03/2020

**SPECIFICATION FOR THE PROTECTED
GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION
«QUESO DE VALDEÓN» (VALDEÓN CHEESE)**

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.

A) NAME OF THE PRODUCT

PROTECTED GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION (P.G.I.) «QUESO DE VALDEÓN».

B) PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

The cheeses covered by the Protected Geographical Indication «Queso de Valdeón» are blue, fatty, made from cow's milk or a mixture of cow's milk with sheep's and/or goat's milk, raw or pasteurised, by lactic acid and enzymatic coagulation, matured for a minimum period of two months for cheeses made from raw milk and one month for cheeses made from pasteurised milk and are presented whole or whipped.

1. Characteristics of whole cheese:

- Morphological characteristics:
 - Cylindrical in shape, with slightly concave upper and lower sides.
 - Maximum height 15 cm and maximum diameter 25 cm.
 - Weights from 0,2 to 3 kg.
 - The cheese may also be presented for marketing in portions.

- Physico-chemical characteristics:
 - Fat content of 45% or more of the dry matter
 - Minimum moisture content of 30%.
 - Salt content of less than 3.5%.

- Organoleptic characteristics:
 - Natural bark, thin, soft, yellowish in colour with greyish tones.
 - The texture of the rind is smooth, with a large number of evenly distributed, irregular and variable-sized hollows, with a blue-greenish appearance.
 - The paste is ivory-white in colour, evolving towards a cream colour, with a shiny intensity and the presence of a faint halo depending on the degree of maturity.
 - Paste with low elasticity and friability, weak firmness and medium deformability, melts on the palate, good solubility and reduced adherence.
 - Slightly acidic or lactic odour when the cheeses are semi-ripened, with a very specific smell of mould.

- As the ripening process progresses, the lactic smell disappears, the smell becomes more persistent and intense, and spicy, fruity and even aromatic smells and aromas appear, although the smell of mould remains.
- The flavour is intense, salty and spicy, slightly fiery, more pronounced with longer maturing times, and also increases with the presence of goat's or sheep's milk.
- Good persistence of flavours, especially in the more matured cheeses.

2. Characteristics of whipped cheese:

- Morphological characteristics:
 - Se presenta en envases con contenido neto entre 20 gramos y 6 kg.
 - Los envases con contenido neto superior a 1,5 kg y hasta los 6 kg solo se destinarán a establecimientos de restauración, cadenas de distribución e industrias.
 - El batido es perfectamente homogéneo con ausencia total de corteza.
- Physico-chemical characteristics:
 - Percentage of fat equal to or greater than 45% of the dry matter.
 - Minimum moisture content of 30%.
 - Salt content of less than 3,5 %.
- Organoleptic characteristics:
 - The cream is ivory-white with greenish-blue tones and not very shiny.
 - Creamy cream, which becomes creamier as the temperature of the product rises, of medium consistency, approaching buttery.
 - Slightly acidic or lactic smell, musty, persistent and intense.
 - Cream that melts well on the palate, with good solubility and medium adhesion.
 - Intense and spicy flavour that increases with the presence of goat's or sheep's milk.
 - Intense salty taste, slightly burning sensation.
 - Good persistence of flavours.

C) DELIMITATION OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

The area of production of the cheese protected by the Protected Geographical Indication is the municipality of Posada de Valdeón (León).

It is located in the Valdeón Valley, in the extreme north-east of the province of León, in the Picos de Europa Nature Reserve. It is bordered to the north and west by the Montaña de Covadonga National Park, in the Autonomous Community of Asturias; to the east by the Autonomous Community of Cantabria, and to the south by the Riaño National Reserve.

It covers an area of 166 square kilometres.

D) ELEMENTS PROVING THAT THE PRODUCT ORIGINATES FROM THE AREA

The elements that prove that the product originates from the area are the control and certification procedures.

Aspects to be taken into account:

- The cheeses must come exclusively from registered and controlled cheese dairies and maturing premises.
- Cheese dairies and maturing premises must undergo initial assessment for registration and periodic assessment for maintenance in the registers.
- The cheeses must be produced in accordance with the method described in section E) of this specification.
- Only cheeses that have passed all the process controls are dispatched to the market with a guarantee of origin guaranteed by the labelling identifying the designation.
- Regular checks and evaluations will be based on analysis of the milk as it enters the curdling vat, inspection of the method of production, review of documentation, stock control, sampling of the final product.
- All operators must be able to determine:
 - (a) The supplier, quantity and origin of all milk received.
 - (b) The consignee, quantity and destination of all labelled cheeses.
 - (c) The correlations between the milk received as referred to in point (a) and each batch of labelled cheese as referred to in point (b).

E) METHOD OF PRODUCTION OF THE PRODUCT

«Queso de Valdeón» is made from cow's milk or a mixture of cow's milk and sheep's and/or goat's milk, and has a balanced fat and protein composition, in accordance with the different seasonal production characteristics of the species of origin.

The method of production is based on the following steps and in the following order:

- The milk received at the cheese dairies is filtered and then placed in the reception tanks, where it is kept at 4°C until it is transferred to the curdling vat.
- The minimum analytical levels in the curdling vat, after mixing the milk of the different species, shall be as follows:
 - Fat content (%): 3,5
 - Protein (%): 3,1
 - Dry extract (%): 12,0
- The curd is acid-lactic and the precise dose of rennet is used so that coagulation takes between 60 and 120 minutes. In the curdling vat, the *Penicillium* fungus is inoculated. The temperature of the milk at the time of coagulation and during the coagulation process is between 28 and 32 °C.

- The curd must be cut in such a way as to obtain a curd of approximately one cubic centimetre and left to rest for 14 to 17 minutes. It is then stirred and drained.
- The moulding is done in cylindrical moulds, leaving the grain loose. After two or three hours, it is turned over and left to rest for 24 hours.
- The salting shall be done with dry salt, the first day on one side and the second day on the other side.
- The cheeses then undergo a pricking process to aerate them internally.
- Ripening: The temperature of the ripening rooms shall be between 5 and 10°C and the humidity shall be greater than 85%. Except where strictly necessary to maintain these environmental conditions, ripening must take place under natural conditions.
The ripening period shall be a minimum of two months for cheeses made from raw milk and one month for cheeses made from pasteurised milk.
During the ripening period, the cheese must be turned and cleaned in such a way that it acquires its particular characteristics.
- The cheese, when presented as whipped, must be obtained from cheese produced and matured using the process described above and must comply with the morphological, physical and organoleptic characteristics described in section B) of this specification. Only the following processes are used to produce the cheese:
 - Removal of the rind from the whole cheese
 - Cutting up the paste.
 - The cheese is beaten to the consistency of homogeneous paste.
 - Packaging.

The following shall be considered as prohibited practices in the production of « Queso de Valdeón »:

- a) The addition at any stage of product production of any kind of colouring agents, flavouring agents or seasonings
- b) Any handling which tends to modify the natural characteristics of the cheese, and in particular the coating with waxes, paraffin waxes, plastic substances or colouring agents.

F) FACTORS THAT PROVE THE LINK WITH THE GEOGRAPHICAL ENVIRONMENT

HISTORICAL

Cheese production in the Valdeón valley dates back to pre-Roman times, when goat's milk was used as a raw material.

The first written references to cheese production in the Valdeón valley date back to the mid-19th century. Pascual Madoz, in his 'Diccionario' (1845-1859), refers to cheese production and the importance of goat farming in the villages of the Valdeón valley.

The first written references to cheese production in the Valdeón valley date back to the mid-19th century. Pascual Madoz, in his 'Diccionario' (1845-1859), refers to cheese production and the importance of goat farming in the villages of the Valdeón valley. In the second half of the 19th century, cheese production in the Valdeón valley was an important occupation. When the cattle grazed in the high altitude pastures during the summer, the milk was processed into cheese in the folds themselves or transported to the valley. The Count of Saint-Saud testifies to this in 1892: 'The strong women of Valdeón go up there morning and evening, with their sandals with their three-barrels at the base - the "madreñas" - carrying a goatskin bag in which they carry their food on the way up and on the way back they bring the wineskins with the milk milked in the fold'.

There are various testimonies which show that the production of blue cheese in the Valdeón Valley for sale on regional markets was an important activity from the beginning of the 20th century onwards. Of these, the testimony of Doña Marmeta Pérez Marcos is particularly relevant: *"My family is all from Caín and I was also born there in 1922; my parents inherited the formula from their ancestors and that is how I made it until very recently. We used to curdle between 50 and 60 litres of milk a day, making cheeses of little more than a kilo. We used to sell them with a donkey as far as Puentealmuey, which is more than 50 kilometres away. As soon as the war was over, he sold them for 36 pesetas a kilo. We started selling cheese in Arenas de Cabrales after the war, not before. The cheeses were made from goat's and sheep's milk and a little bit of cow's milk, and we added rennet. When it was curdled, you put it in the "arno", then you put them in a "duerna" and the whey was released there for a couple of days. We took them out and put them on boards in the huts of the sheepfolds to dry. After a fortnight they were ready. But to make them blue and good, we would take them to the caves. After a month the cheese was very good"*.

Today, in the Valdeón valley, production processes similar to those used several centuries ago coexist with others that have incorporated new technologies. However, they are still in full force and effect.

NATURAL

The delimited area is immersed between important natural barriers that make it a perfectly defined area, these barriers being the Panderruedas pass (1,450 metres), the Pontón pass (1,311 metres) and the Pandetrave pass (1,562 metres).

Between the high mountains lies a deep depression with an average altitude of 650 metres.

The climatology of the delimited area can be described as high mountain. Winters are cold and long, with frequent frosts (more than 100 days between November and April) and abundant precipitation, often in the form of snow.

Summers are short and cool (average minimum temperatures of 5-6°C and maximum temperatures of 18°C), with abundant rainfall, although this is shorter than the rest of the year; relative humidity in summer is still high due to mist and fog.

The average annual rainfall is 1100 mm in the valley and 1800 mm on the mountain peaks. This particular microclimate together with the processing practices are conducive to the development of the inoculated microbial flora that characterises these cheeses".

G) CONTROL STRUCTURE

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Verification of compliance with the conditions described in this specification for the Protected Geographical Indication «Queso de Valdeón» is the responsibility of the Agricultural Technological Institute of Castilla y León, through the Food Quality and Promotion Subdirectorate, as established in Article 139 of Law 1/2014, of 19 March, on Agriculture in Castilla y León.

H) LABELLING AND CONFORMITY MARKING

Whole «Queso de Valdeón» may be marketed whole, in portions or churned, provided that it is packaged and its origin can be traced.

The commercial labels used to sell the protected product on the market must include the name and logo of the Protected Geographical Indication.

Cheeses marketed whole and whipped must bear a back label, serialised and number. The back label must bear the name and logo of the Protected Geographical Indication.

Cheeses marketed in portions must be labelled with the name and logo of the Protected Geographical Indication, as well as references that allow its origin to be known.

Prior to dispatch to the market, the cheeses and packages of whipped cheese are labelled and relabelled.

The logo of the denomination is:

