

Protected food, drink or agricultural product name

Product specification for SAL DE MARAS

A protected geographical indication (PGI)

Responsible country: Peru

GB number: [for official use only]

This document sets out the elements of the product specification for information purposes.

Competent authority

The National Institute for the Defense of Competition and the Protection of Intellectual Property (INDECOPI) is the Peruvian authority in charge of running the scheme of the appellations of origin and geographical indications.

Name: National Institute for the Defense of Competition and the Protection of Intellectual Property (INDECOPI)

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Applicant group

Name: Sal de Maras y Pichingoto Sociedad Anónima (MARASAL S.A.)

Address: Salineras de Maras S/N Urubamba

Telephone: +51 966258303 / +51 995565637

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Composition: The applicant is a social enterprise comprised of 633 families from the rural communities of Maras Ayllu and Pichingoto. According to its records, the applicant's purpose is the production, extraction, treatment, packaging, marketing and export of salt and/or its derivatives, as well as carrying out activities that allow the optimization of the company's purposes, recognized as ancestral heirs of the original techniques of the ancestral Andean culture of the Maras district.

It must be noted that even though the Sal de Maras's application was submitted by Sal de Maras y Pichingoto Sociedad Anónima (MARASAL S.A.), according to the Peruvian legislation, the Peruvian State is the exclusive owner of the Peruvian appellations of origin and geographical indications.

Type of product (as in Annex XI Implementing Regulation 668/2014)

Salt [Class 2.6]

1. Product name(s)

Sal de Maras

Translation: Maras Salt

2. Description

The PGI Sal de Maras identifies salt for human consumption.

There are two product categories:

1. Salt for direct human consumption (pure salt only includes the addition of additives required by health regulations).
2. Salt for the food industry (pure salt without any additives) that can be reprocessed for direct human consumption or enter the recipe of other food products.

The PGI SAL DE MARAS boasts a unique reputation and characteristics linked to its geographical origin. Among the geographical and climatic factors are the altitude of the Maras salt mines (3200 meters above sea level), the topography of the area (the Qori Puqyo ravine where the salt ponds are terraced), the salt spring, the clay used in the construction and maintenance of the ponds, the climate with alternating dry and rainy seasons, the daytime and nighttime temperatures, and the wind that blows from north to south through the ravine in the afternoon.

On the other hand, there is the influence of historical and human factors through the adaptation of a terraced production system and traditional artisanal methods, irrigation techniques similar to those used in pre-Hispanic agricultural terraces, and a production system managed by two local communities (Maras Ayllu and Pichingoto) and passed down from parents to children, as evidenced by elderly community members who have worked their salt ponds since childhood, just as their parents, grandparents, and ancestors did. The

production of the PGI SAL DE MARAS dates back to pre-Hispanic times and was more intense during the Inca, colonial, republican, and contemporary periods.

In this regard, the PGI SAL DE MARAS stands out for being a high mountain spring salt, whose water is distributed by gravity in crystallizing ponds built on terraces with clay bottoms, from where it is extracted by hand after a natural process of solar evaporation, according to ancient techniques still practiced by local peasant communities.

It also stands out for having the following physicochemical and organoleptic characteristics:

Physicochemical characteristics

Characteristics	SAL DE MARAS
Humidity level	Less than or equal to 0.5%
Purity	Natural absence of microplastics
Natural mineral content	Presence of at least 5 different minerals
Foreign substances	Free from visible foreign substances

Organoleptic characteristics

Characteristics	SAL DE MARAS
Texture	Crystalline, granular, firm and homogeneous product
Color	From white to pink
Aspect	Matte and slightly transparent
Tasting	Characteristic salty flavor, fresh, lively and constant

3. Geographical area

The geographical area designated for extraction, bulk storage, processing, and initial packaging of the PGI SAL DE MARAS comprises the territorial area of the Maras district, in the Urubamba province of the Cusco region. This geographical area consists of two (2) concentric zones:

The production zone, or Zone 1, is located in the Qori Puqyo ravine (Maras Salt Mines). It includes the following elements:

- Presence of salt springs
- Distribution of salt water from natural springs to the ponds
- Salt extraction
- Initial storage of unprocessed salt (raw material)

The processing zone, or zone 2 (including zone 1), comprises the administrative territory of the Maras district. The following activities take place here:

- Presence of the pond construction material (stones and clays)
- Primary processing: drying, sorting, grinding
- Primary storage
- Initial packaging of the processed product in closed containers of up to 50 kg, with appropriate traceability systems.

Outside the defined geographical production area, the product may be reprocessed and/or repackaged.

4. Proof of origin

The guarantee that the product originates from the defined geographical production area is obtained by implementing a system that will consider:

- Registration documents and physical identification that allow the identification and tracking the product through all phases.
- The regulatory council or certification body that is responsible for verifying that the documents exist and are kept up to date by the various operators.
- Due to the time that can elapse between the harvesting and consumption of SAL DE MARAS, traceability documents must be kept for 10 years.

Based on those premises:

- The saltmines are identified using farm identification forms completed by each producer and kept by both the producer and MARASAL producers' organization. These forms include the producer's name, address, the name and location of the saltmines, the number of ponds operated, and are supplemented with a cadastral map.

- MARASAL producers' organization must collect and keep a record of these identification forms in a producers' file, which will be updated every year.
- Each salt delivery is weighed at the time of delivery. The weight and storage location of the salt are recorded on an extraction receipt. This document includes the producer's name, the date, the product's destination (storage location), and the weight of the salt.
- The producer or MARASAL producers' organization keeps these receipts or extraction receipt declarations, which serve to constitute the annual extraction receipt file.
- The salt stored as of December 31st of each year is subject to collective storage declarations submitted to the Regulatory Council. These declarations list the quantities of SAL DE MARAS harvested during the year and stored by the storage facility. The storage declarations also include the remaining stock from previous years.
- MARASAL storage organization annually creates and maintains a map of identified stocks, which helps to locate SAL DE MARAS stocks. This document shows where the products are stored. It allows for the identification of production years and, if applicable, the different qualities.
- When salt is moved from one storage location to another for preservation, processing, or packaging, a movement note is prepared. This note includes the date, the type of product (coarse salt, semi-coarse salt, fine salt, etc.), its volume, origin (location and batch), and destination.
- The processing and packaging registry records the quantities of salt processed or packaged by type of container, as well as the original batch of the products. It is prepared and maintained by the processor/packer.
- Products are identified by a batch number to ensure upstream and downstream traceability. Thanks to these batch numbers, customers and consumers can benefit from traceability all the way back to the storage batches.
- Each year, the processor-packer prepares a production summary. This summary combines the data for each product in the processing and packaging registry, ensuring consistency between the volume of salt entering the warehouse and the volume packaged.
- When products are sold, the sellers write up the sales documents (receipt, invoice).
- Each year, the marketing organization prepares a sales summary. It comprises the total volume sold and the remaining stocks of SAL DE MARAS.

5. Method of production

The production of the PGI SAL DE MARAS is based on traditional methods of artisanal exploitation of the natural saltwater springs that emerge from the Qori Puqyo ravine.

Description of the production circuit

a) Construction and maintenance of canals, terraces and ponds

- Brine supply
 - Distribution of spring water through supply channels managed by "irrigators".
 - Deposits (currently 16) of salt water (puñuq)
 - An average of 5000 crystallization ponds in production
- Construction of crystallization ponds
 - Foundations and walls made with several layers of local stone without cement
 - Backgrounds made with local clay aggregate
 - Surface layer of clay mixture
 - Tools used: pickaxe, shovel, traditional compactor (p'anrina)
- Maintenance work
 - Collective maintenance (under the minka communal work system) of roads, canals and water reservoirs (puñuq)
 - Construction/rehabilitation and maintenance of puñuq (saltwater reservoirs)
 - Maintenance of the main channels by cleaning the crystallized salt that may be obstructing the bottom and reducing the cross-sections.
 - Maintenance of crystallization ponds (under the mutual aid system ayni)
 - Routine maintenance (every year at the start of the dry season: May/June)
 - ❖ Repair of secondary sections of the terrace irrigation system.
 - ❖ Consolidation of the low walls of the terraces using stones from the surrounding area.
 - ❖ Drying of the pond.
 - ❖ Cleaning the pond.
 - ❖ Tamping with p'anrina to ensure the watertightness of the ponds.
 - ❖ Water inlet.
 - Exceptional maintenance (approximately every 10 years and in case of cracking or a decrease in salt production due to water leaks).
 - ❖ Drying of ponds.

- ❖ Destruction and renewal of the bottom with pick and shovel.
- ❖ Aggregate of local clay with water.
- ❖ Tamping the clay until it is about 10 centimeters thick, well compacted and homogeneous.
- ❖ Local clay aggregate.
- ❖ Leveling the ground and compacting with a tamping hammer (p'anrina).
- ❖ Water inlet.

b) Extraction

During the raw material extraction process, it is essential to ensure that the sodium chloride is extracted in a way that prevents contamination with other substances. To guarantee the quality of the crystallized salt, the use of materials recognized as suitable for food contact is mandatory: untreated wood, stainless steel, or food-grade plastic. The use of traditional tools and methods is recommended.

At this stage it is observed that:

- Salt is extracted approximately once a month during the dry season, usually from May to October.
- The traditional production process is communal, managed by the two communities of Pichingoto and Maras Ayllu.
- The ponds are filled with salt water from the springs, guided by gravity through a system of channels.
- The crystallization ponds are supplied with brine directly from the canals or through the water reservoirs (puñuq).
- The crystallization ponds receive brine up to an average height of 5 centimeters every 3 days approximately during the dry season.
- The extraction process is carried out using the "salt on salt" method, which consists of letting each layer of surface crystallization fall to the bottom of the pond, and then breaking up the layers of salt with the force of the feet.
- It is harvested by scraping each layer using boards, a scraper (t'ullkina) or a small stainless steel pick.
- The salt is transported to a platform located at the edge of the crystallization pond, called "era" or pre-drying area, using a stainless steel shovel or a hand-woven p'ispita basket.
- The salt remains in the "era" for approximately 7 days, where it accumulates in 2 separate piles (one for non-food red salt and one for food salt).

c) Initial storage (provided by MARASAL in their warehouses)

- Transporting the salt to the warehouse door using 50 kilo sacks.

- Weighing with issuance of a weighing slip to the producer: the weight is reduced by 10% to account for residual moisture.
- Quality control.
- Store in appropriate locations.

d) Initial processing (at facilities managed by MARASAL)

- Drying: The salt is dried in a covered place on a layer of about 10 cm for several days in direct sunlight under a transparent roof.
- Sieving: the salt is classified according to the size of the grain, obtaining several categories of salt at the end of the sieving process: coarse, semi-coarse and natural fine.
- Selection: removal of foreign substances.
- Milling: manufacturing of ground salt.

e) Initial packaging (at facilities managed by MARASAL)

- Once the above operations have been carried out, the salts produced are initially packaged in sealed containers of up to 50 kg, identified with two traceability systems depending on whether it is "salt for direct human consumption" or "salt for the food industry".

f) Primary storage (at facilities managed by MARASAL)

- They are stored in a cool, dry, ventilated and clean place, at room temperature, away from moisture, direct sunlight and inclement weather.

6. Link with the geographical area

The particular characteristics that typify the PGI SAL DE MARAS and its reputation have their origin fundamentally in the geographical and climatic factors of the delimited geographical production area, as well as in the historical and human factors that are expressed in traditional knowledge and production techniques.

Among the geographical and climatic factors, the following stand out: the altitude at which the Maras Salt Mines are located (at 3200 meters above sea level), the topography of the place (Qori Puqyo ravine where the salt ponds are located in the form of terraces), the salt spring, the clay used in the construction and maintenance of the ponds, the climate with alternating dry and rainy seasons, the daytime and nighttime temperatures, as well as the wind that blows in the afternoon in the ravine from north to south.

Among the identified historical and human factors are the adaptation of a terraced production system and traditional artisanal farming methods, irrigation techniques similar to those used in pre-Hispanic agricultural terraces, and a production system managed by two local communities (Maras Ayllu and Pichingoto) and passed down from parents to children, as evidenced by elderly community members who have worked their salt ponds since childhood, just as their parents, grandparents, and ancestors did. The production of the PGI

SAL DE MARAS dates back to pre-Hispanic times and was more intensive during the Inca, colonial, republican, and contemporary periods.

In light of the factors mentioned, the PGI SAL DE MARAS stands out as a high mountain spring salt, whose water is distributed by gravity in crystallizing ponds built on terraces with clay bottoms, from where it is extracted by hand after a natural solar evaporation process, according to ancient techniques still practiced by local peasant communities.

Regarding the physicochemical characteristics of the PGI SAL DE MARAS, it is worth noting that the natural absence of microplastics and the presence of at least five different minerals are related to the extraction of naturally occurring saline water from mountain springs in the Peruvian Andes, specifically in the Qori Puqyo ravine, as well as the use of clay found in the same production area. Furthermore, it should be noted that the PGI SAL DE MARAS contains no added chemical additives (such as waterproofing agents, anti-caking agents, emulsifiers, etc.), except for those adjuvants required by current national health regulations.

Finally, regarding the organoleptic characteristics of the PGI SAL DE MARAS, it should be noted that the local clay also gives the salt its distinctive pink or pinkish-white color. During the dry season (May to October), salt accumulation is rapid, resulting in higher production and a higher quality of salt; that is, salt with the pinkish-white color that commercially characterizes this salt.

7. Inspection body

The PGI SAL DE MARAS will seek to be inspected by a certification body duly recognized and accredited by national regulations.

The control plan will be defined in more detail once the regulatory council or the contracted external control and certification body has been established.

The operators subject to control are:

1. Producers of SAL DE MARAS.
2. Initial storage, processing, and packaging: MARASAL.
3. Warehouses – processors – secondary packagers.

The general organization established to guarantee the certification of SAL DE MARAS is based on three types of control defined below:

1. Self-control: the responsibility of the operator for their own activity.
2. Internal control: in charge of the regulatory council which applies a control plan.
3. External control: carried out by a contracted certification body.

In this regard, it must be noted that pursuant to Resolution N° 9941-2026/DSD-INDECOPI dated 20 March 2026, Indecopi authorized the following association to operate as the Regulatory Council for the PGI Sal de Maras:

Name: Asociación de Productores Organizados de la Indicación Geográfica Sal de Maras - PROSALMARAS

Telephone: +51 995565637

Email: gerencia@saldemaras.pe

8. Labelling

In order to properly identify the products, the PGI SAL DE MARAS cannot be removed from the geographical production area without prior processing, packaging, and labeling. This must be done in sealed and labeled containers of no more than 50 kg, even if the packaging is temporary (with subsequent repackaging possible).