



FONTINA PDO

*Fontina PDO is the food product which symbolizes the **Aosta Valley**.*

The protected designation of origin cheese Fontina PDO is characterized by its milky aroma, unmistakably sweet flavor and a soft, melt-in-the-mouth texture.

PRODUCTION AREA

The production area of Fontina PDO is located within the autonomous region of the Aosta Valley.

HISTORY

The name Fontina appears to originate from a mountain pasture farms called Fontin, although it has also been linked to the village of Fontinaz. The name may also derive from the ancient French word "fontis" or "fondis", indicating the cheese's particular capacity to melt when heated.

It appears that Fontina was first mentioned in 1477, in the Summa Lacticinorum of Pantaleone di Confienza, a doctor from Vercelli; its earliest classification dates back to 1887, with "Le Fontine di Val d'Aosta", in the annual report of the Experimental Station of the Lodi dairy factory. It was classified a second time in the 30s and 40s by the Italian Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, by the Alpine Experimental Station of Salice d'Ulzio and the Zootechnical-Dairy Institute of Turin, before the 1955 Presidential Decree granting it Controlled Denomination of Origin status. It wasn't until 1957 that Giulio Angelo Negri first grouped together research carried out until then.

In the 60s, Italian agriculture, the animal husbandry and dairy industries experienced a veritable revolution. New processing and commercialization methods emerged in the dairy industry; local breeds were eliminated. However, not only was local production saved, it went from strength to strength thanks to dedicated research into quality and brands recognizing typical products.



In 1995 the European Union Commission granted Fontina Protected Designation of Origin, along with 6 other Italian cheeses.

PRODUCTION METHOD

Unpasteurized whole milk is used within a few hours from milking. Milk is never heated to beyond 36°C and is coagulated with veal rennet. The curd is broken up into pieces the size of corn grains before being heated for around half an hour up to 48°, to favor coagulum drainage. After this phase, which is called coagulation, the cheese is left to rest for 10 minutes before being placed into special molds containing a casein plate with the product's progressive number. It is then pressed for around 12 hours, during which time the mold is continuously turned. Before being turned one last time, the identification mold of Consorzio Tutela Fontina (DTF) is applied, which also contains a producer identification code, printed onto the flat side of the cheese. It is then salted and left to mature in natural, humid and cold caves for at least three months.

APPEARANCE AND FLAVOR

Fontina PDO has a compact and thin crust that is more or less intense brown in color, according to age. The semi-cooked cheese is soft and elastic with characteristic holes dispersed throughout; it melts in the mouth. Its color ranges from ivory to more or less intense straw yellow. Its flavor is sweet and delicate.

STORAGE AND USE

Fontina PDO stores well in humid environments at 10-12°C, best placed on a wooden board. In the fridge it should be stored in food grade bags in the least cool compartment, with the sliced part covered in tin foil. It should be removed around an hour before being served. It can be used as a table cheese or for preparing recipes. Without a doubt the most well-known dish containing Fontina PDO is "fondue alla valdostana". It is also used often as an ingredient for



crostini, starters and first courses (polenta, gnocchi, crespelle, etc.), or served alone as a simple snack. It is sublime served with both white and red wines, as well as light rosés.

FONTINA PDO IN NUMBERS

- Approximately 80 winter producers.
- Approximately 200 summer pastures.
- Summer pastures are located at altitudes of up to 2,500 meters.
- 3 breeds native to the Aosta Valley.
Cows are milked twice a day.
- Cheese making takes place at a temperature of 48 degrees.
- 80 days is the minimum aging period.
- 5 – 12 degrees is the temperature of caves where it matures.
- 90% is the degree of humidity inside caves where it matures.
- Fontina weighs 7.5 – 12 kg.
1200 earliest mention of the "de Funtina" family.
- 1955 year in which Controlled Denomination of Origin DOC status was awarded
- 1995 year in which Protected Designation of Origin PDO status was awarded
- 30% the percentage of fatty unsaturated acids contained in Fontina.
- 58 % the percentage of fatty saturated acids contained in Fontina.
- 100 liters of milk are used to make 1 Fontina.
- 17,000 valdostana breed cows.
- 400,000 Fontina cheeses produced per year.

THE CONSORTIUM

Established in 1957, the Consorzio Produttori e Tutela della DOP monitors the production and trade of Fontina and ensures marking in compliance with product specifications. During its



first year the Consortium branded 75,000 cheeses; a decade later this figure had risen to 150,000, doubling in the late 80s. In 1995 the European Union Commission granted Fontina Protected Designation of Origin, along with 6 other Italian cheeses.

Consorzio Produttori e Tutela della DOP Fontina

The Consortium was established in 1957, initially as the Consortium of Fontina Producers and then as the Consortium of Producers and for the Protection of Fontina PDO. It monitors the production and trade of Fontina and ensures marking in compliance with Fontina product specifications.

PDO: PROTECTED DESIGNATION OF ORIGIN

On 14th July 1993, the Consortium of Fontina producers submitted an application to the European Union Commission for recognition of PDO status for this cheese native to the Aosta Valley, already DOC (controlled denomination of origin) at the time.

In a draft prepared in December 1995 the European Union Commission granted Fontina Protected Designation of Origin status, along with 6 other Italian cheeses.

CONTACT DETAILS

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