



BARAGGIA BIELLESE AND VERCELLESE RICE

The first and only Italian PDO rice, Baraggia Biellese and Vercellese rice PDO is a product with truly unique qualitative and nutritional characteristics which express the indissoluble bond with its land of origin.

PRODUCTION AREA: PDO

The land of Baraggia Biellese and Vercellese is located in the foothills along the north-eastern border of Piedmont, in the Vercelli and Biella provinces, from the Prealps of Monte Rosa sloping down to sea level along a series of terraces. To the west it is delimited by the morainic relief Serra d'Ivrea, of glacial origin, and to the east by the Sesia river. Its lands are generally rich in clay, compact, asphyxial and poor in humus, Crops are irrigated by channeling streams and rivers which descend from the Alps and Prealps: the Sesia river which descends from the Monte Rosa glaciers, the minor rivers Cervo and Elvo, along with other streams which flow from the Prealps and three dams on the Ostola, Ravasanella and Ingagna streams. These waters, channeled by hydraulic engineering, carry elements which nourish and characterize the varieties of Baraggia rice, unique in terms of quality and organoleptic properties.

The climate is aerated and fresh due to the nearby hills and mountains. In Baraggia, average temperatures from April to July, the period during which rice ripens, are lower than in the plains of Vercelli, Novara and Pavia. Temperature inversions are also frequent, favored by winds which descend from the mountains. These climatic conditions mean that grains of rice form faster during ripening, resulting in a smaller size and lower yield, but also in the greater compactness of cell tissues and therefore excellent consistency, palpable in the quality of the rice.

The land is also rich in architectonic settlements of historic importance: suffice to say that each municipality has its own castle; Buronzo and Candelo are the most significant examples.

The uniqueness of Baraggia has also been recognized by the Piedmont Region, which in the last few decades has established numerous protected areas and Sites of Community



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Importance (Sic): the Lama del Sesia natural park, the special nature reserves of Isolone di Oldenico, the nesting colonies of Garzaia di Villarboit and Garzaia di Carisio, the Bessa di Candelo Nature Reserve, the morainic relief Serra d'Ivrea, and the Baragge di Candelo nature reserve, also referred to as "Italy's last savanna", with a surface area of 4,500 hectares, a unique habitat for the conservation of numerous animal species.

The particular environmental conditions of Baraggia, a perfect combination of local nature and human intervention, lies at the heart of the added value of PDO, which in this "terroir" has found the ideal conditions for excellence in rice farming.

HISTORY

Rice farming in Baraggia dates back to 1500; in 1606 the Notary Carlo di Catulo reported from Salussola on the importance of rice farms; in the name of the Noblemen of Vigliano and Valdegno, in 1609 Giulio Avogrado presented the Duke of Savoy with a request to grow rice in the Balocco Municipality. In 1730 a Ducal decree prohibited the extension of rice fields in the Lower Biella area to prevent any further reduction in pasture areas which abounded due to the natural conformation of the land. The term "Baraggia" has been used since ancient times to denote those lands, between the Biella and Vercelli provinces, which distinguished themselves from the moorland due to the specific characteristics of their geological structure. This term has always been used in reference to lands with poor soil, dotted more or less thickly with oaks, birches, hornbeams and heather undergrowth.

The land is characterized by its morphological position: plateaus where surface water is almost non-existent due to unfertile clay-rich, fine and clogged soils. These particular characteristics made it difficult to convert the area into arable land and on 16th July **1922** the Italian Ministry for the National Economy defined the Baraggia district a "reclamation area", to be subjected to economic and social transformation of public interest. On 9th December **1950**, with decree no. 3862 signed by the president of the Italian Republic Luigi Einaudi, **the Consorzio di Bonifica della Baraggia Biellese e Vercellese** was established, a public economic body tasked with



operating on this disadvantaged area by means of reclamation works and land improvement operations.

In addition to the leveling and flattening of arable lands, the Consortium also implemented infrastructural works, from roads to the electrification of villages. From the Sixties it worked tirelessly to complete three large-scale public works: the **reservoirs** on the **Ostola** river in Masserano, on the **Ravasanello** river in Roasio and on the **Ingagna** in Mongrando. These three large artificial lakes satisfy the irrigation demands of farms in the area; during the summer season and in times of drought, consortium members in the Baraggia district are guaranteed sufficient water for PDO rice production.

The morphological characteristics of the land coupled with its special and sophisticated irrigation system based on directly channeling water which flows from the Alps and Prealps, were the added values that roused the European Community's interest in Baraggia and its rice, produced in the northernmost latitude suitable for rice farming. Official recognition came with EC Regulation no. 982/2007, with which the European Commission approved **Protected Designation of Origin status for Baraggia Biellese and Vercellese rice**. In the same year a specific decree of the Italian Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies recognized the **Consorzio di Tutela della DOP "Riso di Baraggia Biellese e Vercellese"**, the Consortium tasked with protecting, promoting and enhancing the first and only Italian PDO rice.

CHARACTERISTICS

In terms of culinary properties, Baraggia rice distinguishes itself due to its greater cooking resistance and for its remarkable ability to absorb flavors and condiments. The history of rice farming in Baraggia is centuries-old and the diversity of rices selected from the end of the nineteenth century was described for decades in the *Giornale di Riscoltura*. The particular soil and climate conditions which constitute the **terroir of Baraggia confer** unique and excellent qualities upon rice. Stringent and concrete product specifications guarantee the product and its ties with the land.



Baraggia Biellese and Vercellese rice PDO is based on the following values:

THE TERROIR OF BARAGGIA: the pureness of the water, the fresh and aerated climate and particular conditions of the land result in lower yields per hectare but confer **greater compactness** along with a particular **and enduring al dente consistency** upon this rice, while also exalting its **absorption capacity** with the right balance and use of condiments.

THE PROTECTED ENVIRONMENT: nestled between **nature reserves** declared protected areas by the Piedmont Region, the land where Baraggia rice grows is irrigated by water channeled from **rivers and streams which flow directly from the Alps and Prealps**.

GUARANTEE OF TRACEABILITY AND TIES WITH THE LAND: PDO Baraggia rice is a guarantee of rice traceability, from farming to harvesting and packaging. All phases of the **production supply chain must** exclusively take place in the land of Baraggia, from field to table.

TYPICALITY: PDO rice production occurs **in accordance with traditional methods** linked to the **geographic environment**. Not only does this include **natural factors** of the place of origin, but **human factors too**, namely local knowledge, farming and processing methods.

GUARANTEE OF CULTIVAR AUTHENTICITY: PDO Baraggia specifications guarantee the **purity of farmed rice varieties**, which must be the same as those declared on the label; in a packet of PDO rice you will never find similar varieties and anything other than **authentic** ones.

RICE QUALITY: The rice farms of the Protection Consortium must abide by regulations that are even more stringent than statutory ones, for the selection and processing of rice, guaranteeing a homogeneous packaged product and therefore specific **qualities when cooked**.

PROFESSIONALISM: all the aforementioned phases are guaranteed by **Italian and European legislation**, production specifications approved by the **Italian Ministry of Agricultural, Food and**



Forestry Policies and a Conformity Control Plan implemented by **Ente Nazionale Risi**, recognized by the aforementioned Ministry.

PDO RICE VARIETIES

PDO risotto rices:

CARNAROLI: with its large and pearled grain, Carnaroli is considered the prince of risottos, even by great chefs. Thanks to its high amylase content, the grain maintains its consistency and firmness when cooked, for an al dente texture. The central pearl, the slightly opalescent part inside the grain, effectively absorbs flavors and condiments during cooking, an important characteristic for the preparation of risottos, requiring the preparation of rice directly with other ingredients.

ARBORIO: one of the world's most renowned rice varieties originated in Baraggia in 1946, selected by Domenico Marchetti in the fields of Arborio, the eponymous town. Compared to other Italian varieties it has a larger grain and is slightly square-shaped, with a generous central pearl. The added value of Baraggia Arborio PDO rice lies in the authenticity of this variety: around 95% of rice farmed and packages as Arborio in Italy is actually Volano, a similar variety dating back to the 70s. Authentic and historic Arborio rice is farmed thanks to Baraggia PDO specifications, a niche which has roused the interest of cuisine and culture enthusiasts.

BALDO: slightly smaller in size compared to Carnaroli, Baldo rice has a special characteristic: it is the only Italian crystalline risotto rice as it lacks the central pearl. The size and good consistency of the grain make it suitable for preparing delicious traditional risottos, whereas its low amylase content helps to create a creamy texture without the addition of fats.

S. ANDREA: the feather in the cap of Baraggia, S. Andrea rice is named after the historic Vercelli Abbey, where it is used to prepare the typical local dish, panissa. A longer-grained rice compared to other traditional risotto varieties, it provides excellent consistency, resulting in an



al dente texture. It is a favorite among chefs due to its shorter cooking time compared to other risotto rices and because it releases a lot of starch during cooking, creating a creamy texture that is fundamental for serving wave-style risottos. These characteristics mean that S. Andrea rice is also widely used to prepare arancini and supplì croquets, which require a rice with a crunchy center and al dente texture while maintaining 'stickability'. Baraggia S. Andrea rice was shortlisted by Bocuse D'Or, the most prestigious international cuisine competition, as an ingredient for the 2018 European finals held in Turin, due to its particular and unique characteristics.

Other Baraggia rices

LOTO: a Long A rice that falls under the Ribe denomination, with a rather large, oval-shaped grain. Although it is not a risotto rice, it retains its bite, making it suitable for preparing traditional Italian recipes like sartù, timballi, arancini and supplì, therefore recipes requiring two cooking phases, including frying or oven baking. Loto is also suitable for parboiling, a precooking process for obtaining a rice which retains its bite, a desirable quality for the catering industry and canteens.

BALILLA: is one of the most historic Italian rices: its name evokes the age in which it was selected, in 1924. Its round and pearled grain, small in size, becomes very soft when cooked. This characteristic, along with the natural 'stickiness' of grains and its thickening properties make it particularly suitable for soups, as well as puddings and spoon desserts.

GLADIO: classified as a B long rice, it is often referred to as 'Indian' due to its similarities with rices from Southeast Asia, due to its thin and needle-like grain. This rice has never been particularly popular in Italy although the promotion of Basmati rice from India and Pakistan over the past few years has meant that consumers are increasingly using it as a side dish for meat, fish or vegetable-based second courses. Its high amylase content and therefore low glutinosity means that grains remain separate, an important quality for the preparation of rice salads.

THE CONSORZIO DI TUTELA DELLA DOP RISO DI BARAGGIA BIELLESE E VERCELLESE

The Consortium for the protection of Baraggia Biellese and Vercellese Rice PDO was recognized by the Italian Ministry of Farming and Forestry Policies on 15th November 2007. It



is tasked with protecting, promoting and enhancing the PDO status of Baraggia rice. The PDO rice supply chain consists of farms, rice farms and packagers who operate in the Baraggia area, Piedmont, located in the foothills of Monte Rosa, an area spanning 44 thousand hectares between the Biella and Vercelli provinces. Approximately half of this area is dedicated to rice farming, on 22 thousand hectares of rice fields. The area where Baraggia PDO rice is grown, harvested and transformed includes 28 municipalities: Albano Verellese, Arborio, Balocco, Brusnengo, Buronzo, Carisio, Casanova Elvo, Castelletto Cervo, Cavaglià, Collobiano, Dorzano, Formigliana, Gattinara, Ghislarengo, Giffenga, Greggio, Lenta, Massazza, Masserano, Mottalciata, Oldenico, Rovasenda, Roasio, Salussola, San Giacomo Verellese, Santhià, Villanova Biellese, Villarboit. Each step of the production process must be controlled by respective competent bodies. The control and certification body for Baraggia Biellese and Verellese rice PDO, designated by the Italian Ministry of Food Farming and Forestry, is the Ente Nazionale Risi, tasked with verifying that the origin and production methods comply with product specifications.

CONTACT DETAILS

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