



A “tasteful” voyage through the quality and genuineness of Speck Alto Adige PGI

Speck Alto Adige PGI is a lightly smoked ham cured in the pure open air, a treatment that gives it an unmistakable appearance and taste. It owes its special character to its strong ties with its land of origin, South Tyrol, the Italian region where northern culture blends with the Mediterranean culture. The especially favourable climate of the Alpine valleys, featuring plenty of sun and fresh air, plays a key role in the production of speck. Ancient tradition and the best ingredients paired with product genuineness and quality control make Speck Alto Adige PGI a typical, unique and inimitable specialty.

The origins of taste

Speck Alto Adige PGI owes its special character to its strong ties with its land of origin, South Tyrol, where the especially favourable climate of the Alpine valleys, featuring plenty of sun and fresh air, plays a key role in its production. Speck originates from the merging of two different meat conservation methods: curing, typical of the raw ham of the Mediterranean area, and smoking, typical of Northern Europe. In this way, South Tyrol (Alto Adige in Italian), the crossways between these two cultures, has created a local, unmistakable product with unique taste and unique production method based on the ancient rule of "a little salt, a little smoke and a lot of fresh air".

Speck goes far back in time. The very first documents, mentioning the existence of speck as a product derived from the need to preserve throughout the year the meat of the pigs butchered at Yuletide, date back to 1200. In South Tyrolean history, speck was a farmer's fare and a source of energy during their long hours of work in the fields.

Over time it became one of the main courses for feasts and banquets and today it is still the main ingredient of the South Tyrolean snack served together with bread and wine.

The long road towards becoming a specialty

A top quality typical product such as Speck Alto Adige PGI can be derived only from the best ingredients, from the special care taken in producing it and from the artisan's know-how.

The first key factor in the production of top quality speck is the raw material: only lean, firm pork thighs coming from renowned and controlled farms of a State member of the European Union are used to make Speck Alto Adige PGI.

The hind quarters are trimmed following traditional methods, resulting in the typical whole portions. They are then salted and aromatized with a special mixture of spices, salt, pepper, laurel, juniper and rosemary, whereby each producer's mixture is a family secret – this allows each producer to give its speck a personal touch.

Then the hams are alternately lightly smoked over slightly resinous wood and exposed to the clean, fresh mountain air. During the ageing period that usually lasts about 22 weeks, the hams are left to hang in rooms pervaded by the clean, fresh air of the South Tyrolean mountain valleys. During this time a natural layer of aromatic mould forms on the hams that, in addition to preventing them from becoming excessively dry, enriches them with that unmistakable note of Porcini mushrooms and walnuts.



The quality seal

Of the speck produced in South Tyrol, only the products that have passed the severe inspections carried out by the Consorzio Tutela Speck Alto Adige quality consortium and by the specialized independent quality control institute INEQ - Istituto Nord Est Qualità, approved by the Italian Ministry, can bear the name "Speck Alto Adige PGI".

The inspections are conducted to verify the quality of the meat, the salting of the hams, their light smoking over lightly resinous wood, the curing for at least 22 weeks, the fat to lean ratios, the salt content, their aroma and their balanced and unique taste.

Only once it has passed all of these tests can the speck be fire-branded and packaged with the quality seal "Speck Alto Adige PGI" featuring the typical green label.

Speck in the kitchen brings together tradition and modern nutrition criteria

Speck Alto Adige PGI is a precious ingredient that can boast many qualities: it has a lot of proteins, it has excellent longevity and can be enjoyed either alone or in combination with other ingredients just as well in South Tyrolean dishes as in modern cuisine recipes.

Speck is at its best when eaten in the traditional way, i.e. cut into small pieces or thinly sliced and accompanied by a glass of good South Tyrol wine and a piece of Schüttelbrot (typical South Tyrolean rye bread).

You will find some tasty recipes featuring speck at: www.speck.it/en/speck-alto-adige-recipes.html

Ambassador of taste par excellence

As an internationally renowned South Tyrol specialty, Speck Alto Adige PGI is celebrated with an ad hoc festival held each year in Val di Funes, an event attended by thousands of Italian and foreigner gourmets.

In 2010, the "Speckfest Alto Adige" will be held from October 1st to the 3rd in Santa Maddalena, at the feet of the Odle mountain range, one of South Tyrol's most attractive and charming resorts. One of the most popular moments of the Speckfest is the "Specküberraschung", namely the traditional surprise, consisting in the presentation of the creations made using speck by Hans Mantinger "Gletscherhons", a master in the art of slicing and cutting speck.

The aim of the "Speckfest Alto Adige" festival is to promote awareness of a typical quality product and the local customs and traditions. In addition to culinary specialties, the festival proposes lots of live music, a farmers' market and the fragrant bread baked especially for the occasion.

Find more information and anecdotes at: www.speckfest.it