

Press Folder



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Consorzio Tutela Grana Padano

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HISTORY

Origins

History tells us that the famous cheese from the Po Valley was created in 1135 at the Chiaravalle Abbey, a few kilometers south of Milan. It was made so as to preserve the surplus milk produced each day, using special cauldrons, within monasteries, which can as such be considered the first dairies. The monks called it *caseus vetus*, or 'old cheese'.

The people, who had no familiarity with Latin, gave it another name, derived from the cheese's compact, but granular appearance. They called it '*formaggio di grana*', meaning 'grainy cheese'; or, simply, '*grana*'. The most well-known of the cheeses were the *lodesano*, or Lodi, considered by many to be the oldest, the *Milanese* (from Milan), the *Parmigiano* (Parma), the *Piacentino* (Piacenza), and the *Mantovano* (Mantua).

The Turning Point

The turning point in production of this family of cheeses happened in 1951. In Stresa, in June of that year, dairy owners and experts signed up to a European dairy "**Convention**," which laid down precise rules regarding the naming of these cheeses, with guidance on their characteristics. This occasion saw "Grana Lodigiano," which we know now ~~know~~ as "**Grana Padano**," and "Parmigiano-Reggiano" cheese become formally recognised.

It was not, however, until April 10, 1954, that Italy established some rules on the "Protection of Designations of origins of cheeses".

On 18 June 1954, on the initiative of Federlatte (Cooperative Dairy Federation) and Assolatte (Association of Dairy Industries), the Consorzio per la tutela del Formaggio Grana Padano (Grana Padano Protection Consortium) was founded to bring together all producers, ripeners and traders of this cheese.

The Decree of the President of the Italian Republic

On October 30, 1955, the Decree of the President of the Italian Republic, no. 1269: "**Recognition of designations** covering production methods, product characteristics and production areas of cheeses", including **Grana Padano**, was issued.

PDO RECOGNITION

In 1996, GRANA PADANO obtained **Protected Designation of Origin** recognition by the European Union. Following the changes brought about by this recognition, the control functions - which consist of verifying whether the conditions laid down in the Production Regulations that give the product the right to use the diamond-shaped Protected Designation of Origin Grana Padano logo - are now being applied by CSQA S.r.l., based in Thiene (VI), who have been appointed by the Consortium and approved by the Italian Ministry of Agriculture.



ABOUT US

On 18 June 1954, on the initiative of Federlatte (the Federation of Cooperative Dairies) and Assolatte (Association of Dairy Industries), the Consortium for the Protection of Grana Padano cheese was created in order to bring together all the producers, affineurs and traders of this cheese.

The Decree of the President of the Italian Republic

In **October 30, 1955** the Decree of the President of the Italian Republic, no.1269: "**Recognition of designations** regarding production methods, product characteristics and production areas of cheeses", including **Grana Padano**, was issued. It was not until the Ministerial Decrees of 1957 that the Consortium for the Protection of Grana Padano took on the role of overseeing production and marketing of the cheese.

ACTIVITIES AND AIMS OF THE CONSORTIUM

The Consortium for the Protection of Grana Padano cheese (CTFGP) comprises 127 dairy producers, 137 dairies and 148 seasoners. The Consortium has also authorised 200 companies to package Grana Padano cheese in portions and to sell it in grated form. 19 companies are authorised to use the PDO for processed products.

The Consortium's headquarters is in San Martino della Battaglia, a town in the Desenzano del Garda area, in the province of Brescia. It is therefore in the very heart of the Grana Padano production, which extends along the Po Valley and includes 34 provinces, from Piedmont to Veneto, from Trento to Piacenza; today, production is concentrated in **13** provinces.

Article. 4 of the Statute sets forth that the Consortium:

- **is a non-profit organization.**
- has the goal of **protecting and promoting Grana Padano cheese and its PDO status** both in Italy and abroad, to be achieved "**through the completion of each activity and the adoption of any initiative necessary for this purpose**", including:
 - exercises **constant supervision of the production and sale of GRANA PADANO**, including via the **affixing of markings on the wheels and/or packaging**;
 - collaborates with institutions, offices and other entities - public or private, national, EC, transnational or international – as regards to the application of the existing rules on the protection of designations of origin for cheeses;
 - creates suitable marks, brands and patents;
 - carries out promotional and advertising activities;
 - conducts technical and market research aimed at promoting the advancement of methods and means of production and marketing for GRANA PADANO cheese;
 - performs actions, including legal actions, to defend the denomination, the distinctive marks and the sole rights of the Consortium in general, and to prevent or penalize infringements and/or acts of Consortium members and/or third parties who violate the interests of the Consortium and/or its members.



PROCESSING STAGES

Only Italian milk from the production area

Grana Padano is made exclusively from raw Italian milk from the production area, which is partially skimmed by natural surface skimming. The milk is produced by cows milked only twice daily and fed according to specific rules. The milk is processed in cone-shaped copper-lined cauldrons large enough to produce two wheels of cheese (called "twin wheels").

Once the milk has curdled after a natural whey starter and calf rennet have been added and heated to 31°C-35°C, the curd is chopped with a giant whisk ("*Spino*"). It is then heated and stirred continuously to a temperature of 53-56°C and left in the vat to rest for up to 70 minutes until it grows firm. Using a sort of wooden shovel ("*pala*") and a linen cloth (*schivino*), the cheese makers raise it within the cauldron and divide it into two equal parts, known as "twin wheels", each of which is wrapped in a linen or jute cloth and extracted from the cauldron and placed on long tables.

Branding

At this point, each new wheel is enclosed in a cylindrical mold known as a "fascera", once made of wood and today of a suitable plastic material. This is tightly sealed and pressed by a heavy disk of the same material. After about 12 hours of "shaping", another plastic band is placed between the mold and the side of the wheel, which is embossed with the marks of origin: **the four-leaf clover stamped with the serial number of the dairy, the abbreviation for the province and the month and year of production**, and small diamond-shaped lozenges that show, dotted inside them, alternately the words "GRANA" and "PADANO".

Maturing lasts from 9 to over 20 months

After about 24 hours, the mold is replaced with a steel one, studded with small holes and slightly rounded, which, in about a day, gives the cheese its characteristic shape of convex and flat plates. At that point, it is ready to be salted, immersed in a solution of water and salt, for a period ranging from 14 to 30 days. After drying in special heating rooms, maturing begins for a minimum of 9 months, to over 20 months, in well-insulated rooms, with modern control systems that maintain temperature, humidity and ventilation.

During the long ageing period, Grana Padano cheese undergoes a series of physical-chemical and microbiological processes that are reflected in its organoleptic characteristics.

During this period, the wheels are kept clean, and turned approximately every 15 days. These operations were once done manually but are now handled by brushing machines and robotic turners.



FIRE-BRANDING

Controls and inspections

On the ninth month of ageing, all **Grana Padano wheels are examined** with the traditional inspection tools - a **hammer, a needle, and a probe**.

If the wheels pass all the tests, they will be fire-branded, which guarantees the "safe, fair and merchantable quality" required for Grana Padano PDO. The fire-branding of the wheels is performed by each dairy's own staff, under the watchful eyes of Consortium officials, and under the control of the official certifier (CSQA).

The reproduction of the brand mark, the distinctive yellow logo, must feature on all packages of grated and portioned cheese, thus guaranteeing the consumer that the product in hand can legitimately be called 'Grana Padano' PDO.

Without this branding, the cheese cannot be named or marketed as Grana Padano PDO.

The wheels that bear the marks of "Grana Padano" origin, but which on final inspection do not meet the necessary standards, are subject to the cancellation of the trademarks by "screening"—obliterating the rhomboid and four-leaf clover symbols that identify as Grana Padano a cheese that does not meet the right standards.



A FOOD WITH HIGH NUTRITIONAL VALUE

Everyone knows about the nutritional importance of milk in human nutrition. However, not everyone knows that Grana Padano is a concentration of milk nutrients. In fact, it takes 15 litres of milk from the PDO territory, in the Po Valley, to produce a kilo of this precious cheese. Most of the macro-and micronutrients in milk, excluding lactose and whey proteins, are present in Grana Padano, which can be eaten as part of a lactose-intolerant diet.

Fats

The milk to make Grana Padano PDO is semi-skimmed by natural surface skimming during processing and then the fat is reduced to an average of 29 to 100 g of cheese. Of these, saturated fats are approximately 68% and 32% are unsaturated, including 28% monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats which, together with the 4% to 11% of saturated short-chain fatty acids are also known as "good fats."

Proteins

100 g of Grana Padano PDO contains, on average, 33 g of protein, which makes Grana Padano cheese naturally high in protein. Grana Padano proteins are milk proteins, giving them a high biological value because they contain the eight essential amino acids, of which 18% are branched-chains, so-defined because our body cannot produce them and must take them from food. Proteins are essential for all stages of life; not only are they fundamental for the normal growth and development of bone in children, but also for the growth and maintenance of muscle mass for all ages.

Minerals

Grana Padano PDO, as a concentrated form of milk, is also a concentration of minerals. It is rich in zinc, calcium, copper and phosphorus. It is also a natural source of selenium, iodine, and magnesium. According to the INRAN (Italian National Institute of Research on Food and Nutrition) tables of food composition, 100 g of Grana Padano PDO contains 1165 mg of calcium, which is important for development of bone in children, as well as for the maintenance of normal muscle function, teeth and bones in all segments of the population. The high zinc and copper content, and the presence of selenium contribute to the protection of cells from oxidative stress, while the phosphorus and magnesium contribute to the maintenance of normal teeth and the iodine contributes to normal thyroid.

Vitamins

The vitamins contained in milk, and concentrated in Grana Padano PDO, are very important for a balanced diet. Vitamin A and group B vitamins are found in the highest quantities. In particular, Grana Padano contains vitamin A and vitamin B2, which contributes to the normal function of the immune system, and is rich in vitamin B12, which contributes to normal nervous system, and to the reduction of tiredness and fatigue.

Grana Padano is a great choice for a balanced diet.

For a balanced diet, it is necessary to consider the relationship between calories and nutrition, avoiding sources of 'empty' calories, such as alcohol. A 50g portion of Grana Padano PDO, eaten instead of, for example, a portion of meat or 2 eggs, provides 196 calories, but also contains several important nutrients that are not easily found in other foods with the same calories. For all these reasons, Grana Padano PDO is considered an excellent food to include in a varied, correct and balanced daily diet.



NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION		
Average nutritional values	Per 100 g	% RI (*) per 100 g
Energy	1597 kJ / 384 kcal	19%
Fat	29 g	40%
- of which saturates	18 g	90%
Carbohydrate	0 g	0%
- of which sugars	0 g	0%
Fibre	0 g	
Protein	33 g	66%
Salt	1,8 g	29%
Vitamin A	224 µg (28% NRV**)	
Riboflavin	0,36 mg (26% NRV**)	
Vitamin B12	3 µg (120% NRV**)	
Calcium	1165 mg (146% NRV**)	
Phosphorus	692 mg (99% NRV**)	
Magnesium	63 mg (17% NRV**)	
Zinc	11 mg (110% NRV**)	
Copper	0,5 mg (50% NRV**)	
Selenium	12 µg (22% NRV**)	
Iodine	35,5 µg (24% NRV**)	

(*) Reference intake of an average adult (8 400 kJ/ 2 000 kcal)

(**) Nutrient Reference Value

THE IMPORTANCE OF TIME



Grana Padano PDO aged 9 – 12 months, over 12 months and over 14 months

It is the ultimate cheese for any meal with an overall mild, sweet, delicate taste, reminiscent of milk and with a compact, light straw-coloured texture that does not yet have the typical "grainy" structure. It is found in the youngest Grana Padano aged from 9 to 12 months, with just the yellow logo on the packaging, and in those over 12 months and over 14 months, with the relative stamp.

Ideal to accompany an aperitif, flaked in a fresh salad or to complete a carpaccio. It is suitable for making sauces and creams.

This ageing of Grana Padano pairs perfectly with young, fresh and fruity white wines.



Grana Padano PDO aged over 16 months and over 18 months

With a slightly more intense straw-yellow colour, Grana Padano aged over 16 months and over 18 months already has the typical grainy structure, the beginning of the formation of tyrosine "crystals" and the flaky fracture. It has a savoury and distinctive taste, though never overpowering. It is a versatile cheese, particularly suitable for grating in a variety of dishes or simply eaten on its own. It is recognisable by the foreseen stamps.

Excellent for hot preparations such as flans, soufflés and quiches; for creamy pastas, risottos and soups.

It pairs very well with red wines of moderate intensity and body, still young and fresh.



Grana Padano PDO "Riserva" aged over 20 months and over 24 months

Aged for over 20 months or 24 months, Grana Padano Riserva has a particularly grainy structure and an even, white-straw colour. Grana Padano Riserva, thanks to the long ageing, has an increasingly rich flavour, although never aggressive. A highlight on any table, either used as special ingredient in a variety of dishes or as part of a luxurious cheeseboard, served with nuts, fruit and chutneys.

This type of ageing can be combined with soft but tannic red wines with a good alcohol content. The pairing is also perfect with sweet dessert wines and the one with wines produced with the classic method is interesting.



THE GRANA PADANO CONSORTIUM IN NUMBERS

The production and the subjects involved

2024 Production (January - March)	1,587,747 wheels (+ 3.72% vs 2023)
2023 Production (January – December)	5,456,349 wheels (+ 4.69% vs 2022), equivalent to 211,830.742 tons (+4.84% vs 2022)
Average weight of the wheels 2023	38.82 kg
Average weight of the wheels 2022	38.77 kg
Exports 2023 (January – December)	2,482,891 wheels (+6.55% vs 2022), equivalent to 94.846,4362 tons and 48,2% of brand production
Riserva 2023 (January - December)	694,486 wheels (+3.51% VS 2022)
Riserva 2022 (January - December)	426,798 wheels
Companies:	127
Dairies:	137
Agers	148
Packers	200
No. farms providing milk	3,835
No. of workers across the sector	50,000
Milk processed into Grana Padano PDO 2023	2,858,093.638 tons (+3.85% vs 2022)
Annual production breakdown	65.77% cooperatives – 34.23% industries
POS consumption 2023 (value)	3,700,000,000 euros (3,158,464,300 GBP)
POS Italy	1,750,000,000 euros (1,493,868,250 GBP)
Foreign POS	1,950,000,000 euros (1,664,596,050 GBP)

WHAT THE CONSORTIUM IS NOT

- The Consortium is not a producer and therefore cannot be considered an industry.
- It does not promote one particular make/brand but a national a PDO product (EU Regulation 1151/2012).

Common prejudices

Grana Padano PDO is an Italian agricultural product with a brand used for the sole purpose of protecting Italian agriculture (about 70% of the milk produced in the Po River Valley to the north of the Po River becomes Grana Padano cheese) and the consumer. The entire Grana Padano production process employs approximately 40,000 people and brings together more than 4,500 farms, dairies and maturing facilities. Just as we are used to hearing Chianti, Barolo, San Daniele, Stilton, Champagne etc., Grana Padano can be cited without advertising a specific brand, which would benefit that industry, because it speaks of a PDO with a thousand-year history.

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