



## **Directly from Tuscany... Please Welcome Prosciutto Toscano PDO**

natasha lardera (April 01, 2013)



It took Gruppo Parmacotto five years for to get the approval of the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to import Prosciutto Toscano PDO to the USA. This legendary cured meat hailing from Tuscany is not as sweet as Prosciutto di Parma but is very savory. It can be enjoyed alone or together with fresh fruit, such as melon and figs, or vegetables and seasonal salads.

“This is our latest and greatest import! A prosciutto from the hills of Tuscany, this type is slightly less fatty and much more flavorful. It's been seasoned with black pepper, juniper, and salt.” The menu at Salumeria Rosi thus introduces Prosciutto Toscano DOP on its menu... yes, indeed, there are so many types of prosciutto hailing from Italy, and this is the latest cured meat delicacy making it to the US.



Prosciutto Toscano PDO (Denominazione d'Origine Protetta, roughly, "protected designation of origin." The PDO label is given to food products that are produced, processed and prepared within a particular geographical area, and with features and characteristics that must be due to the geographical area. It guarantees the products' authenticity and high quality) has been introduced to the press and trade representatives by chef [Cesare Casella](#) [2] at [Eataly](#) [3]. This was possible through the hard work of [Gruppo Parmacotto](#) [4] (one of Italy's biggest producers of cured meats). It took five years to get the approval of the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to import this Tuscan delicacy that is new here but a legendary meat back in Tuscany.

The Consortium for Prosciutto Toscano PDO thus explains its production process:

"Rules about the slaughter of pigs and the preservation of their meat in Tuscany date back to the time of Charlemagne, but it was during the time of the Medici family that the production of Prosciutto Toscano started to follow strict rules. In this way the production process has remained unchanged until today.

The production area of Prosciutto Toscano PDO spreads to the whole region of Tuscany. The raw material comes from the regions Emilia Romagna, Lombardia, Marche, Umbria, Lazio and Tuscany. The animals must be at least 9 months old with a live weight between 144 and 176 kg.

After the selection and the trimming of the pig thighs, the traditional production process requires dry salting with the use of sea salt, pepper and other spices typical of the area of origin, such as garlic, rosemary, juniper and myrtle. Salting lasts from three to four weeks and it is followed by pre-aging, a phase during which there is a gradual maturation of the meat through a slow dehydration. After about six months from the beginning of the process, the phase of "sugnaturation" is carried out, by which the ham is smeared with a mixture of pork fat with the addition of flour of wheat or rice, salt and pepper. This is the beginning of the curing phase which lasts at least 10 months and takes place in special rooms with controlled micro-climate. Here the ham will develop all the typical aromas and flavors of the final Prosciutto.

Once cut, the color of the slice ranges from bright red to light red, with few white lines of fat. The product has a sharp and persistent flavor, the aroma is intense and those characteristics are due both to the use of herbs and aromatic essences during the salting process and to traditional processing and curing methods.

It is said that this prosciutto is so tasty that it is perfect when combined with the really bland bread typical of Tuscany."

The other prosciuttos that are well known already, Parma and San Daniele, are considered sweet, while Prosciutto Toscano is a savory ham that can be enjoyed alone or together with fresh fruit, such as melon and figs, or vegetables and seasonal salads.

The slogan "Un capolavoro sulla tua tavola" (A masterpiece on your table) used at Eataly could not be more correct... all this work results in a real masterpiece.

Marco Rosi, president of Gruppo Parmacotto, was proud to say, "I have created the group to bring authentic Italian products to the world and being able to import Prosciutto Toscano to the US is a real victory."

At the moment prosciutto lovers can find Prosciutto Toscano PDO at [Salumeria Rosi](#) [5], Eataly, Fairway, Wegman's and Balducci's. By the end of the year it will be available in more stores.

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