

TRADITIONAL FOOD PRODUCTS FROM SPAIN. CCASTILLA & LEÓN.

Dr. Teresa M. López Díaz, Food Technology and food hygiene Department, Veterinary Faculty, University of León, Spain.

Spain is quite a big country, in fact, one of the largest of Europe, the population is around 46 million. It's geography, orography and climate is very diverse. There are also great differences between the North and the South. The North use to be cold and rainy, while the South is hot and dry, being differences in temperature between regions quite remarkable.

Also, the history has influenced the development of the different regions, the traditions, costumes and, at the end, the culture. This has given place to a rich gastronomy and a great variety of traditional foods. In the last decades, an important effort has been made to promote and protect these products. The reason is that we think that they are an important part of our culture and they have to be protected and kept alive. Part of this policy has been the enhancement of their inherent quality. For this reason, several quality schemes were created in the different countries, an among them, in Spain: Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and the P.

Geographical Indication (PGI), for instance. As you know, these schemes are since 1992 under a European Rule that has been updated in 2012 (1151/2012) so there is an harmonisation in our continent. Wines have their own regulation. Spain has around 200 food products, including wines, protected by one of these schemes, or the equivalent for wines, what is quite remarkable. These include 43 fruits and vegetables, 31 meat and meat products, 28 oils, 27 cheeses, mainly, and around 30 wines.

Today Spain is divided in 17 regions, councils, each with its own government, what we call, Comunidades Autonomas, and each region is divided in provinces.

Due to the differences indicated, each region has each own gastronomy and its own list of traditional food products and for this reason, and the limited length of this talk, I will consider just one the regions, Castilla y Leon, where I was born and where I live in.

Castilla y Leon is the largest region of Spain and one of the largest of Europe. Despite this, its population is low, just 2,5 million. It is divided in nine provinces. It is a land of monasteries, cathedrals and other monuments, but it has also beautiful landscapes, with mountains, large plains of cereal crops, rivers, forests... Part of the region is a plain that we call "meseta" that is 800-900 m high, which have cold and quite dry winters, which favour the curing/ripening of fermented meat products.

This region is the first producer in Spain of wheat and corn, of bovine and ovine cattle and the third on porcine. It is also the first producer of bovine and ovine meat, and ewe's milk, and the second in cow's milk. This gives place to an important food industry, with around 2,600 industries, most small-middle size, dedicated mainly to meat and meat products, dairy products, fruits and vegetables and wines.

Around 50 products produced in Castilla & Leon are under a PDO or a PGI, or under specific quality schemes created in the region, called "Marcas de garantía", which join the producers of a traditional food that has peculiar characteristics linked to the geographical area or to the production process. One of these quality marks is called Tierra de sabor, which identify the products that are made in a region with an attractive label.

I will talk now about the most typical ones made in Leon, the province located more in the North-West of the region.

CECINA DE LEON: it is a meat product made just with beef (5 years old at least) and salt. Meat is salted for 2-3 d, washed, air dried for 30-45 d, smoked for 2 weeks and dried at 10-12°C/75-80% HR/>7 months. Ingredients: beef >5 years old (rounds) and salt. It is under a PGI.

MORCILLA DE LEON: Product made with a mixture of blood (pork), onion, salt introduced in a gut. It is eaten after frying. There is one Morcilla made

in Burgos, which includes rice and has no onion.

CHORIZO DE LEON: "chorizo" is the name used in Spain to identify a fermented dry sausage made with pork meat and fat, mixed with garlic, red paprika and oreganum, plus salt and nitrates. It is introduced in a gut, natural or artificial, dried for some days and left in a ripening chamber at controlled conditions (12-15 C, 80% RH) for 3-4 weeks.

BOTILLO DEL BIERZO: it is made in the BIERZO valley, located at the East of the province, where temperatures and humidity are higher. A mixture of different parts of pork (ribs, tail, tongue, etc.), garlic, paprika and salt, introduced in a gut, smoked and dried. It is eaten after cooking, along with boiled potatoes and vegetables. Total, 5-9 d. PGI.

VALDEON's CHEESE: Blue cheese (cow's and ewe's milk), made in Valdeón valley (Picos de Europa) (0,5-3 kg). PDO. Formerly, it was hand-made and the cheese, after moulding, were carried to natural caves located in the mountains for ripening.

WINES: There are two:

- Vino Tierra de León, made with "prieto picudo" grape variety mainly. More than 30 wineries, under a PDO and
- Vino del Bierzo, made with "mencía" variety, mainly. More than 50 wineries under a PDO.

To sum up, to achieve the recognition of the traditional products made in a region, it is necessary the collaboration of the local producers, the academia, to identify/characterise the products from a scientific point of view, and the authorities, which have to promote the products by applying for the quality schemes already running, like the PDO and PGI, or creating new ones, like Tierra de sabor. The Presentation can be found in www.prezi.com, searching for Local foods, it is public.