

Publication of an application pursuant to Article 50(2)(a) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs

(2013/C 132/13)

This publication confers the right to oppose the application, pursuant to Article 51 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽¹⁾.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006

on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs ⁽²⁾

'SAL DE TAVIRA'/FLOR DE SAL DE TAVIRA'

EC No: PT-PDO-0005-0913-07.12.2011

PGI () PDO (X)

1. Name

'Sal de Tavira'/Flor de Sal de Tavira'

2. Member State or third country

Portugal

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff

3.1. Type of product

Class 1.8 — Other products of Annex I to the Treaty (spices, etc.)

3.2. Description of the product to which the name in point 1 applies

'Sal de Tavira'/Flor de Sal de Tavira' is hand-harvested sea salt, obtained in the defined geographical area by the natural precipitation of water from the Atlantic Ocean, which circulates through a series of pools until it finally crystallises in the salt pans. Its physical and chemical properties are described below. It is unrefined, unwashed and additive-free sea salt.

3.2.1. 'Sal de Tavira'

'Sal de Tavira' is sea salt consisting of crystals which form at the bottom (natural clay) of the salt pans. The salt is extracted by hand with a special tool called a *rodo*. The crystals, which are flake- or cube-shaped, can up to a certain point simply be crushed between the fingers and are clearly distinguishable from common sodium chloride.

3.2.2. 'Flor de Sal de Tavira'

'Flor de Sal de Tavira' has a different mineral salt content and is much more fragile when rubbed between the fingers than 'Sal de Tavira'. It consists of very fine flakes which with minimal rubbing between the fingers are crushed into very small, light crystals. It has its own characteristic proportions of chemical elements and looks different to the naked eye. It dissolves easily in the mouth, so it can be used directly at table. 'Flor de Sal de Tavira' is hand-harvested by removing the top layer of salt which forms in the pans, with a special tool, a *coador*, before the rest of the salt sinks to the bottom.

'Sal de Tavira/Flor de Sal de Tavira' have specific physical and chemical properties which differ from those of common salt and derive from the specificity of the defined geographical area, the conditions under which they form and the harvesting method. See details below.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 93, 31.3.2006, p. 12. Replaced by Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012.

Table 1

Physical properties of 'Sal de Tavira'/'Flor de Sal de Tavira'

Properties	'Sal de Tavira'	'Flor de Sal de Tavira'
Crystal shape	Flake- or cube-shaped	Varies
Crystal size	Small	Extremely small
Rigidity (how easily the crystals can be crushed between the fingers)	Very easily	Extremely easily
Solubility in water	Very soluble	Very very soluble
Colour	Depends on atmospheric conditions (*)	White

(*) As the product is additive-free and has not undergone any processing, if it rains it is yellow and if it does not rain it is white.

Table 2

Chemical properties of 'Sal de Tavira'/'Flor de Sal de Tavira'

Chemical properties		'Sal de Tavira'	'Flor de Sal de Tavira'
Elements/Substances	Arsenic, As (mg/kg)	0,01	< 0,005
	Copper, Cu (mg/kg)	< 0,015	< 0,015
	Lead, Pb (mg/kg)	0,559	0,048
	Cadmium, Cd (mg/kg)	< 0,002	< 0,002
	Mercury, Hg (mg/kg)	< 0,005	< 0,005
	NaCl %	97,10 %	97,70 %
	Zinc (mg/kg)	< 1,00	1,00
	Iron (mg/kg)	21	4
	Manganese (mg/kg)	2,2	< 2,0
	Sodium %	35,83 %	31,16 %
	Potassium %	0,15 %	0,22 %
	Magnesium %	0,50 %	0,69 %
	Calcium %	0,10 %	0,14 %
	Sulphates %	0,92 %	1,25 %
	Insoluble in water %	< 0,01 %	< 0,01 %
	Natural iodine ppm	Approx. 630 ppm	Approx. 630 ppm

3.3. Raw materials (for processed products only)

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3.4. Feed (for products of animal origin only)

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3.5. *Specific steps in production that must take place in the defined geographical area*

'Sal de Tavira'/Flor de Sal de Tavira' is harvested in the defined geographical area and all the other production operations must be carried out in that area.

3.6. *Specific rules concerning slicing, grating, packaging, etc.*

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3.7. *Specific rules concerning labelling*

The following must appear on the label of all types of 'Sal de Tavira' and 'Flor de Sal de Tavira' packaging:

- 'Sal de Tavira' or 'Flor de Sal de Tavira' — 'DOP' and/or 'Denominação de Origem Protegida',
- the EU logo and the words 'Denominação de Origem Protegida' — from the date of the Community decision.

In addition, the label must bear the certification mark, which includes the following:

- name of inspection body,
- serial number,
- producer details (address, logo, batch year, awards received),
- 'Sal de Tavira' or 'Flor de Sal de Tavira' logo:



4. **Concise definition of the geographical area**

The salt pans where 'Sal de Tavira'/Flor de Sal de Tavira' are produced are located in the Ria Formosa National Park. Administratively, the defined geographical area comprises the parishes of Santa Luzia, Santiago and Santa Maria in the municipality of Tavira.

5. **Link with the geographical area**

5.1. *Specificity of the geographical area*

The specific characteristics of 'Sal de Tavira'/Flor de Sal de Tavira' result to a large extent from the climatic conditions in the defined geographical area and the fact that there are no environmentally damaging activities such as heavy industry or intensive farming in this part of the Ria Formosa, where the salt pans are located.

The Ria Formosa is a lagoon area, protected from the direct action of the ocean by a sandy barrier. The compact, clay soils, which are highly impermeable, are suitable for the construction of salt pans.

The climate is temperate Mediterranean, with low average annual rainfall; it rarely rains for long periods. The area receives long hours of sunshine and the winds are evenly distributed, from the north and the south-west, thus favouring salt production.

The specificity of the geographical area also derives from human factors and rules governing land use dating back to 1266, which describe the Tavira salt pans as the property of the Portuguese crown.

The soil and climatic variables in the defined geographical area, together with the production rules and the proximity to the Atlantic Ocean, mean that 'Sal de Tavira'/Flor de Sal de Tavira' are produced under unique conditions.

In addition, the specific techniques employed by the local salt workers are essential for optimising production, as regards preparation of the salt pans and extraction, storage and conservation of the product, so that the final product is free of impurities, clean and 'glitters like a pile of diamonds'.

The experience and knowledge of the local people are an extremely important factor in determining the characteristics of the product. They know how to prepare the salt pans, cleaning them and removing mud, thus ensuring that a quality product is obtained, free of undesirable foreign matter.

Control of the volume of water in each pan has a significant influence on the concentration of brine and the crystallisation process, which are decisive for the production of the top layer of salt. Knowing how to handle the *coadores* so as not to create waves that will cause the extremely fine flakes of salt floating on the surface of the pans to break, so that they cannot be harvested intact, is one of the techniques mastered through experience by the local salt workers, which is of crucial importance to the quality of the product.

5.2. *Specificity of the product*

'Sal de Tavira' and 'Flor de Sal de Tavira' are a hall-mark of the region, known to contain natural iodine in beneficial quantities and trace elements present in sea water, and to be free of mud and/or other insoluble substances. They are natural, unrefined, unwashed and additive-free salts.

'Flor de Sal de Tavira' is more fragile than 'Sal de Tavira' when rubbed between the fingers. The fact that it consists of extremely fine flakes that are crumbled easily into very small crystals means that it can be used directly at table, where it dissolves in contact with the moisture of food and enhances its natural taste.

5.3. *Causal link between the geographical area and the quality or characteristics of the product (for PDO) or a specific quality, the reputation or other characteristic of the product (for PGI)*

The variables that create the geographical area's microclimate, together with the rules of production and proximity to the Atlantic Ocean, give the region unique conditions for salt production, which has been going on for centuries, and enhance the quality of the final product. As a result of aerosolarisation, the salt naturally contains iodine and other important nutrients such as potassium, magnesium, calcium and iron.

The impermeable clay soils of the salt pans in the region allow traditional (manual) extraction of a white salt that is free of mud and other impurities.

In addition, the techniques employed by the local salt workers, who are known as *marmotos*, together with the rules of production, notably the preparation of the salt pans and cleaning of the pools, are essential for optimising production and ensuring that the final product is of high quality. The method of harvesting in the defined area, using three types of salt pan (cold water pools, hot water pools and crystallising pools), where the water circulates by gravity, helps to concentrate the brine and facilitates the harvesting of 'Sal de Tavira'/Flor de Sal de Tavira'.

Its physical and chemical characteristics therefore result from a combination of factors and they have been acknowledged by numerous prizes awarded at fairs and other events.

The unique qualities of Flor de Sal are recognised nationally and internationally by top chefs. When used in cooking it enhances the flavour of food and gives dishes a unique, refined taste. It is a hallmark of the region, known for its flavour and its widespread use in national and international cuisine.

Publication reference of the specification

(Article 5(7) of Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 ⁽³⁾)

http://www.gpp.pt/Valor/Caderno_Especificacoes_Sal_CE.pdf

⁽³⁾ See footnote 2.