



C/2024/4419

10.7.2024

**Publication of an application for amendment pursuant to Article 26(2) of Regulation (EU) 2019/787 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the definition, description, presentation and labelling of spirit drinks, the use of the names of spirit drinks in the presentation and labelling of other foodstuffs, the protection of geographical indications for spirit drinks, the use of ethyl alcohol and distillates of agricultural origin in alcoholic beverages, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 110/2008**

(C/2024/4419)

Within 3 months from the date of this publication, the authorities of a Member State or of a third country, or a natural or legal person having a legitimate interest and established or resident in a third country, may lodge, in accordance with Article 17 of Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 of the European Parliament and of the Council<sup>(1)</sup>, an opposition with the Commission.

APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF A UNION AMENDMENT

**‘Hierbas Ibicencas’**

**EU No: PGI-ES-01973-AM01**

**Date of application: 21.11.2023**

**1. Applicant and legitimate interest**

Group of producers of Hierbas Ibicencas [Agrupación de elaboradores de Hierbas Ibicencas]

**2. Heading in the product specification affected by the amendment(s)**

- Name of product
- Category or legal name of the spirit drink
- Link
- Marketing restriction

**3. Description of and reasons for the amendment**

**3.1. Explanation that the amendment(s) fall under the definition of the Union amendment as provided for in Article 31 of Regulation (EU) 2019/787**

The application places a restriction on the marketing of the geographical indication ‘Hierbas Ibicencas’, requiring the product transported in bulk to be accompanied by a document validated in advance by the control authority, and requiring an alphanumeric control code to be included on the label.

**3.2. Description of and reasons for the approved amendment(s)**

Marketing restrictions

Description

Requirement for ‘Hierbas Ibicencas’ transported in bulk to be accompanied by a document validated in advance by the control authority.

Inclusion of an alphanumeric control code on the label of the protected product.

The amendment concerns points 9.a (introducing a new paragraph f) and 10 of the product specification and point 9 of the single document.

<sup>(1)</sup> Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11.4.2024 on geographical indications for wine, spirit drinks and agricultural products, as well as traditional specialities guaranteed and optional quality terms for agricultural products, amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013, (EU) 2019/787 and (EU) 2019/1753 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 (OJ L, 2024/1143, 23.4.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1143/oj>).

## Reasons

'Hierbas Ibicencas' may be bottled in places other than its place of production.

'Hierbas Ibicencas' has begun to be transported in bulk outside the island of Ibiza in recent years. In order to guarantee the origin of the protected product, maintain consumer confidence in the quality of the product and avoid unfair competition between operators, it is deemed necessary for the control authority to monitor the traceability of the various consignments produced more closely by requiring them to be accompanied by a document validated by that authority prior to transportation, and by assigning an alphanumeric code to each bottle. Experience with other PGIs that use numbered units has shown that giving a unique code to each bottle allows for more effective controls.

## SINGLE DOCUMENT

### 1. Name(s) of the geographical indication

'Hierbas Ibicencas'

### 2. Member State to which the geographical area belongs

Spain

### 3. Geographical Indication type

Geographical Indication

### 4. Category or categories of the spirit drink

25. Aniseed-flavoured spirit drink

### 5. Description of the characteristics of the spirit drink

Aniseed-flavoured spirit drink with an alcohol content of between 24 % and 38 % by volume, flavoured with plants and sweetened with sucrose.

#### *Chemical characteristics*

- Actual alcohol strength: Minimum: 24 % vol. Maximum: 38 % vol.
- Sugar content:  $\leq 250$  g/l.
- Maximum methanol content: 20 g/hl of alcohol at 100 % vol.
- Density at 20 °C:  $<1,18$  g/ml.

#### *Organoleptic characteristics*

Clear appearance Pale yellow to amber yellow Intense and complex aniseed aroma determined by the aromatic plants used in the production process. Sweet flavour. Rich, dense, and sticky texture. Intense aftertaste of aromatic plants.

### 6. Definition of the geographical area

The area in which the geographical indication Hierbas Ibicencas is produced is limited to the islands of Ibiza and Formentera, Autonomous Community of the Balearic Islands, Spain.

### 7. Method of production of the spirit drink

#### *Ingredients*

1. Ethyl alcohol of agricultural origin with the characteristics set out in Article 5 of Regulation (EU) 2019/787.
2. Distilled, deionised and/or demineralised drinking water.
3. Sucrose.

4. Star anise or anise seeds (*Illicium verum*) and/or green anise or aniseed (*Pimpinella anisum*).
5. Aromatic plants produced in the production area: fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*), thyme (*Thymus capitatus*), rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*), lemon verbena (*Lippia triphylla*), lavender (*Lavandula dentata*), rue (*Ruta chalepensis*), eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus camaldensis*), chamomile (*Matricaria chamomilla*), juniper berries (*Juniperus oxycedrus*), oregano (*Origanum vulgare*), peppermint (*Mentha piperita*), spearmint (*Mentha spicata*), lemon leaves and peel (*Citrus limonum*), orange leaves and peel (*Citrus sinensis*) and sage (*Salvia officinalis*). The number and combination of plants must be determined by the producer.

#### *Production method*

Hierbas Ibicencas is obtained by extracting the aromas of the aromatic plants listed in the previous section by maceration, distillation and infusion using the following procedures:

- maceration: in a 70 ° alcoholic solution of ethyl alcohol of agricultural origin in water for 15 days;
- distillation: over a low heat in copper stills;
- infusion: in boiling water, then allowed to cool.

The methods are used at the producer's discretion with regard to which procedure to apply to which plants. Sucrose, ethyl alcohol of agricultural origin and water are added to the resulting product in order to obtain the characteristics described in section 3.

The product obtained using any of the processes may be filtered.

#### 8. **Specific packaging rules**

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#### 9. **Specific labelling rules**

##### *Mandatory particulars*

The product covered by the geographical indication must include on its labelling:

- the designation 'Hierbas Ibicencas' in letters at least 2 mm tall.
- An alphanumeric control number.

#### 10. **Description of the link between the spirit drink and its geographical origin**

The Geographical Indication 'Hierbas Ibicencas' is based on the drink's history, reputation and certified quality.

The inhabitants of the Pityusic Islands (the name given to the islands of Ibiza and Formentera) traditionally used to produce spirit drinks using local aromatic plants. During that period, most of the inhabitants of Formentera were engaged in fishing, farming and stockbreeding. During the 1850s, one native of Formentera called Joan Marí Mayans had bigger ideas and began to travel to Barcelona in his small boat with the aim of providing the island with products and goods it was lacking. This was how he discovered stills and found out how distillation could be used to produce the island's spirit drinks.

His entrepreneurial spirit prompted him to set up a small distillery in Formentera, which he moved to Ibiza in 1880. Sales boomed to the point that by the early 1930s, he was already routinely exporting to the Philippines and Cuba. It was during this period that other producers of 'Hierbas Ibicencas' began to appear in Ibiza.

Some of these establishments, still active today, are run by third generation family members who still use the same small-scale methods as their ancestors. This fact demonstrates that 'Hierbas Ibicencas' are well-established on the islands of Ibiza and Formentera.

The certified quality of 'Hierbas Ibicencas', particularly its aromatic complexity, is the result of the influence of the human factor on the selection of the aromatic plants and on the production process.

This blend of aromatic plants used did not come about by chance but is the result of experimentation by the producers, who selected the most appropriate plants in the right proportions to give the drink its pleasant, characteristic flavour. The agricultural and climatic conditions of the islands of Ibiza and Formentera encourage the growth of certain wild aromatic plants such as thyme with different qualities (high essential oil content) that give 'Hierbas Ibicencas' its own unique personality.

The reputation of 'Hierbas Ibicencas' has gone from strength to strength since it was first produced. Many visitors to the islands throughout the 20th century have praised the qualities of this unusual drink. Some of those visitors were as high profile as the writer Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, who in his book 'Los Muertos Mandan' (1909) wrote of the ancient Ibizan custom of drinking an aromatic spirit drink produced using the island's plants.

The quality and reputation of 'Hierbas Ibicencas' was endorsed by the recognition of the geographical designation 'Hierbas Ibicencas' on 12 December 1996. This was one of the first geographical indications granted to spirit drinks in Spain.

In the 2006 edition of the Ramón Llull awards (acolades presented by the Government of the Balearic Islands to people or entities who excel in any field), the award went to a Hierbas Ibicencas producer for successfully upholding the tradition of a product that is so emblematic of the Pityusic Islands as well as promoting it abroad.

Since the 19th century, the inhabitants of Ibiza and Formentera have enjoyed traditional 'Hierbas Ibicencas' at all their celebrations, family reunions and social events. Hierbas Ibicencas is a drink that is indisputably associated with festive occasions and is offered on the drinks menus of restaurants, cafés, bars and of Ibiza's renowned nightclubs.

Recent studies support the product's popularity. According to the publication 'Diagnosis de la producción y comercialización de los productos con denominación de calidad 2012' [Report on the production and marketing of products with quality designations in 2012] produced by the Balearic Island Agrifood Quality Institute, sales have increased by 38 % since 2002, reaching a total sales volume of 312 461 litres in 2012. Furthermore, foreign sales account for approximately 20 % and the trend has been increasing since 2002, since the product's presence outside the local market has practically doubled, which confirms its appreciation by foreign consumers. In 2012, Hierbas Ibicencas was sold in Germany, Switzerland, Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

'Hierbas Ibicencas' is traditionally drunk with or without ice, before or after meals or with a dessert. For example, one of the most common combinations is a glass of Hierbas Ibicencas with flaó (a local Ibizan dessert). It also has numerous culinary uses dating back to bygone times, such as in the traditional recipe 'Langosta ibicenca guisada con calamares y Hierbas Ibicencas' [Ibizan lobster stewed with squid and Hierbas Ibicencas]. In addition to traditional forms of consumption, it has recently found fresh uses in new recipes, for example: 'Cazón con cebolla y Hierbas Ibicencas' [dogfish with onions and Hierbas Ibicencas] or 'Flaó con gominolas de Hierbas Ibicencas' [Flaó with Hierbas Ibicencas flavoured gumdrops].

Further evidence of the reputation of Hierbas Ibicencas is its recent debut in the world of cocktails. The Balearic Island catering school has created very special cocktails such as 'A sa fresca eivissenca' made out of 'Hierbas Ibicencas', lemon juice and mint or 'Textures eivissenques' based on 'Hierbas Ibicencas', fresh lemons, white sugar, fresh strawberries and warm lemon mousse.

The reputation of 'Hierbas Ibicencas' has been confirmed by awards of great prestige where the drink has been in direct competition with spirit drinks from around the world: International Gold Star for Quality 2000 (Madrid), Silver Medal at the International Wine and Spirits Competition 2000 and 2001 (London), Gold Medal at the International Wine and Spirits Competition 2002 (London) and Bronze Medal at the Hong Kong International Wine & Spirit Competition 2011.

Its reputation is also confirmed by references in various publications: 'Llibre de vins, licors i per necessari' (Ripoll, Ll., 1974), 'Herbes i Remeis Casolans' (Ripoll, Ll. 1985), 'Les Herbes Eivissenques' (Inaebnit E., 2001), 'Llibre de la Ratafia' (Fàbrega, J. 2001) and 'El libro de los licores de España' (Zurdo, D. et al, 2004).

**Reference to publication of the product specification**

[https://www.caib.es/sites/qualitatagroalimentaria/es/herbes\\_eivissenques-46246/](https://www.caib.es/sites/qualitatagroalimentaria/es/herbes_eivissenques-46246/)

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