C/2026/3711

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Publication of an application for registration of a geographical indication pursuant to Article 15(4) of Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 of the European Parliament and of the Council

(C/2026/3711)

Within three 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 [1] an opposition with the Commission.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

Designations of origin and geographical indications of agricultural products

'Mazzit / Mazzita'

EU No: PGI-MT-03301 – 26.7.2024

1. **Name(s)**

'Mazzit / Mazzita'

2. **Geographical indication type**

PDO ☐ PGI ☑

3. **Country to which the defined geographical area belongs**

Malta

4. **Description of the agricultural product**

4.1. *Classification of the agricultural product in accordance with the Combined Nomenclature heading and code, as referred to in Article 6(1) of Regulation (EU) 2024/1143*

16 — PREPARATIONS OF MEAT, OF FISH, OF CRUSTACEANS, MOLLUSCS OR OTHER AQUATIC INVERTEBRATES, OR OF INSECTS

1601 — Sausages and similar products, of meat, meat offal, blood or insects; food preparations based on these products

4.2. *Description of the agricultural product to which the registered name applies*

'Mazzit' (singular 'Mazzita') is a Maltese traditional sweet and savoury-tasting meat product, having as a basis, either swine or male bovine blood. This blood is added to a mixture of local sweet white onions (*basal ta' Malta*), raisins (*żbib*), cocoa powder or liquid chocolate, and sugar, and encased in swine or bovine intestines. Besides these staple ingredients, producers also add small quantities of natural sweet flavourings/spices according to familial custom. Nuts, usually hazelnuts (though other nuts are frequently used) may be added, though irrespective of their presence the resulting product is still recognised as 'Mazzit / Mazzita'.

[1] Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 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).

The product is cylindrical in shape (sausage-like), weighing up to approximately 0,8 kg (circa one *ratal*) with a margin of tolerance of circa 0,2 kg (*kwart ta' ratal*). Weighting was traditionally calculated roughly by experience (*fuq l-għajnejn*). The 'Mazzit' typically has a diameter of 5–10 cm and is circa 15-30 cm in length. When consumed, it is often sliced about 2,5cm thick tossed in flour and pan fried from both sides.

'Mazzit / Mazzita' typically has a dark brownish colour, due to the presence of blood, caramelized onion and chocolate with a semi-translucent intestine casing. When sliced, the raisins, the onions, and the zest are visible with a brownish hue.

The aroma of 'Mazzit / Mazzita' is complex and rich. It has the savoury notes of swine/male bovine blood along with the sweetness of chocolate, sugar, and the caramelized Maltese variety white onions. Raisins add a fruity sweetness, while sweet almonds contribute a nutty aroma.

When cold and cut it has a unique moist, slightly grainy solid-crumbly texture. The mixture of blood, onions, chocolate, raisins, and nuts (and if used almonds) creates a harmonious blend with varying textures. The sausage casing adds a slightly chewy outer layer.

The taste of 'Mazzit / Mazzita' is a balance of savoury, sweet, and slightly bitter flavours. The dominant flavours are the rich umami of the blood, the carmelised onions together with the sweetness of chocolate, raisins, and sugar, and the subtle sharpness of the Maltese variety white onions. The nuts add a crunchy texture and a hint of earthiness. The sweetness is the 'Mazzit / Mazzita' most notable feature, making it the only blood sausage which is known for its sweetness than its savouriness.

After consuming 'Mazzit / Mazzita', the aftertaste experienced is that of a lingering sweetness from the chocolate and sugar, along with a subtle savoury note from the swine or bovine blood. The aftertaste is pleasant with its unique combination of flavours and textures.

Chemical parameters for 100 grammes of 'Mazzit / Mazzita' is typically as given in the ranges below:

Fat: 0,36 - 3,55 g

of which saturates: 0,25 – 0,78g

Carbohydrates: 15,97 - 42,55g

of which sugars: 14,57 - 38,89

Protein: 9,05 - 14,36g

Salt: 0,04 - 2,12g

While the 'Mazzit / Mazzita' is boiled for around a minute during the production process, the end product itself is considered raw and would need to be cooked fully, not only heated, by the end consumer before consumption.

4.3. *Derogations on sourcing of feed (for products of animal origin designated by a Protected Designation of Origin only) and restrictions on sourcing of raw materials (for processed products designated by a Protected Geographical Indication only)*

The raw materials used in the production of 'Mazzit / Mazzita' are:

— Blood – Fresh blood of either fattener swine (irrespective of gender) or of male bovines is sourced from approved slaughterhouses, within the geographical area and extracted from livestock reared within the same territories. The blood is not chemically treated, having fibrin removed through stirring, and kept at room temperature, though on warmer days if the blood is transported to a production facility outside the approved slaughterhouse, this is done within a refrigerated truck whilst maintaining the two-hour limit.

— Casings – The large intestine of swine or small intestines of bovines.

— Onions (basal ta' Malta) – sweet white onions, is harvested in the said geographical area. All onions bought are traceable from farmer to 'Mazzit / Mazzita' producer through short food supply chains.

— Salty water – Potable water mixed at production stage with salt harvested from saltpans in Malta and traced from salt-producer to 'Mazzit / Mazzita' producer.

— Raisins.

— Cocoa powder or liquid chocolate.

— Sugar.

— Sweet flavourings/spices – These may be one or more of the following: citrus zests, figs, nutmeg, coriander, vanilla/vanilla extract, sweet almonds, and cloves. Other sweet flavourings/spices are occasionally used, and together the mix of flavourings and spices constitute no more than 10 % of the total mixture by weight to strengthen the sweetness of the product.

4.4. *Specific steps in production that must take place in the identified geographical area*

All steps of production are carried out within the geographical area. The production process includes distinct phases as follows:

(1) Preparation of the mixture to be added to the blood.

(2) Extraction of blood.

(3) Mixing blood with pre-prepared mixture.

(4) Stuffing.

(5) Cooking.

(6) Submerging in salty water.

(7) Refrigerating.

'Mazzit / Mazzita' tends to differ marginally from one producer to another. Each producer tends to have a well-guarded recipe, handed down within the same family across generations. Such variations are restricted to the added sweet flavourings/sweet spices such as citrus zests, figs, nutmeg, coriander, vanilla/vanilla extract, cloves, and sweet almonds, which constitute a small proportion (up to 10 %) of the total mix.

4.5. *Specific rules concerning packaging, slicing, grating etc. of the agricultural product the registered name refers to*

The 'Mazzit / Mazzita' is placed on the market either in its sausage like form or it may be sliced into round portions (roti-roti) of around one-inch (pulzier) (circa 2,5 cm ± 0,5cm). The 'Mazzit / Mazzita' is sold either over the counter at butcher shops, or pre-packed at any establishment, which is authorised to sell meat products and/or meat preparations.

Production including packaging can only take place in the delimited geographical area due to hygiene and food safety requirements, due to the region's isolation from mainland Europe, and the high average temperatures throughout the year.

4.6. *Specific rules concerning labelling of the agricultural product the registered name refers to*

The product is to be labelled 'Mazzit / Mazzita' without any further descriptors.

Labelling shall follow existing regulations applicable to any food product containing meat as one of its ingredients with the addition of the term 'Mazzita / Mazzit'. Specifically, whether it is sold chilled over the counter or pre-packed, the producer shall notify the customer which ingredients are being used, including whether the blood and intestines used are of swine or bovine origin The source of the blood and the intestines, including country of origin of the livestock, and approval numbers of the production plant shall also be specified.

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

The islands of Malta and Gozo – NUTS 3 level MT 001 and MT 002.

6. **Link with the geographical area**

The 'Mazzit / Mazzita' is linked with the geographical area in terms of its:

Inherent qualities — relating to sensory traits characterized by three main attributes: a sweet-savoury balance, subtle earthiness, and crumbly texture. These qualities stem from specific ingredients and their interactions. Most ingredients contribute to the product's sweetness, primarily onions, raisins, sugar, chocolate, and herbs, while nuts and almonds enhance the earthy notes. Maltese white onions grown in *Xerorendzinas* soils provide a mild sweetness due to their relatively higher sugar content. Meanwhile, salt from local marine saltpans contributes a smooth, less sharp saltiness and earthy undertones as the interaction with calcium carbonate creates a non-sugary sweetness perception.

The traditional blood defibrination method (through mechanical stirring) avoids the sourness associated with acidic anti-coagulants, thus allowing the blood's own slightly metallic and mildly sweet notes to emerge.

The crumbly texture is achieved through a combination of protein denaturation during cooking, high proportion of dry ingredients, and coarsely ground components like nuts, almonds, onions, and raisins. The product's freshness is maintained by processing within a 2-hour limit and avoiding additives, resulting in a natural flavour profile.

Specific characteristics — these include traditional production methods at:

(i) blood harvesting and handling though manual or mechanical stirring to prevent coagulation through a viscosity level passed down inter-generationally via mentor-apprentice relationships, typically within families; and

(ii) blood processing within two-hours of collection, while still warm, to maintain freshness and the desired organoleptic properties.

The ingredient selection reflects historical practicality, utilizing readily available resources like semi-wild onions, sea-salt, blood (a meat industry by-product), and raisins. Pig blood was historically chosen for ease of availability and sweeter profile. The Maltese white onions used are traditionally grown on non-irrigated land due to water parsimony and selected for their hardiness and longer shelf life. Traditional measurement systems persist despite modernization, with quantities typically determined 'by sight' (*fuq l-għajnejn*) through generational knowledge transfer. The product follows historical Maltese weights: one Mazzita equals one ratal (approximately 0,8 kg), with proportions of ingredients measured in traditional units like kwart ta' ratal. The traditional serving size is one *pulzier* (Maltese inch) thick slice.

Reputational attributes which may be summed up in terms of:

(1) Consumer recognition and market reputation

(2) Historical origins

(3) Mediatic and other references

(4) Cultural and symbolic significance.

Consumer Recognition and Market Reputation

The term 'Mazzita' / 'Mazzit', refers to a specific blood sausage traditionally produced in Malta and which follows the specifications as outlined in this document. Often, in writing, the words 'blood sausage' in English are used in conjunction to the word 'Mazzita' / 'Mazzit' by way of explanation as to what the term refers to, and thereby explain it to readers who are not proficient in the Maltese language. Complementarily, in menus and recipes which are articulated in English, and where therefore the ingredient is referred to as blood sausage, the writer generally adds the term 'Mazzita' / 'Mazzit' to spell out that not any blood sausage will be used, but the traditional Maltese variety. It goes without saying that if any blood sausage could be used there would be no need to make a definite descriptor in addition to the generic English term. Market research shows that 95 % of Maltese people recognize 'Mazzita' / 'Mazzit' as a traditional sweet-tasting blood sausage made from pig or young-bull's blood. About 90 % identify raisins as a key ingredient, while two-thirds recognize Maltese white onions as essential. The product is widely acknowledged as traditionally Maltese (81 %), with three-quarters of the population having grown up familiar with it. Despite limited market availability in the early twenty-first century affecting awareness among younger generations, 40 % of those under 30 still consider it part of their cultural heritage. Over 75 % of Maltese people have tasted 'Mazzit / Mazzita', with more than half reporting regular consumption. Notably, 70,2 % indicate weekly consumption, reflecting the enduring tradition of eating Mazzit / Mazzita on Sunday mornings.

Historical and Cultural Origins

'Mazzit / Mazzita' historically served as a primary protein source for the Maltese population, particularly consumed on weekends and festivities, and to celebrate the end of Lenten fasting for hundreds of years after the introduction of Christianity.

The earliest historical and documented reference to 'Mazzit / Mazzita' dates back to the mid-eighteenth century. It is found in Gian Francesco Agius De Soldanis' dictionary: *Damma tal kliem kartaginis mscerred fel fom tal Maltin u Ghaucin* (1750) and also appears in another eighteenth-century dictionary: Vassalli's 1796's *Lexicon*.

The still-popular aphorism: *fl-aħħar tal-mazzita issib iż-żbiba* (literal translation: within the 'Mazzita', one finds the raisins; meaning: whilst eating a Mazzita one is bound to find a raisin). Implicitly, this reference confirms the traditional nature of the 'Mazzit / Mazzita', and its sweet taste (owing to the presence of the raisins).

Subsequent references appear in various sources, including mentions in dictionaries, recipe books, and cultural accounts, highlighting its socio-cultural and nutritional significance. A notable reference from 1903 by Antonio Emanuele Caruana *Vocabolario della lingua maltese* specifically mentioned swine blood as an ingredient, while a mid-20th century British administration report noted that nearly all abattoir blood was used for '*Mazzit / Mazzita*' production.

Traditionally, consumption was seasonal, limited to cooler months due to blood's perishability before modern refrigeration. This seasonal pattern persists today, despite the advent of mechanical chilling.

Mediatic and Other References

The delectability of 'Mazzit / Mazzita' was outlined in a December 2023 Michelin-guide article which focuses on the revival of 'Mazzit / Mazzita', whilst praising its taste and highlighting its cultural significance. The cultural aspects were previously elaborated upon by Elise Billiard in her 2009 Doctoral thesis *Searching for a National Cuisine* which explored the revival of traditional foods such as 'Mazzit/Mazzita' and their role in shaping a national and cultural identity. A testament to 'Mazzit's / Mazzita's' traditionality and cultural role was the recommendation in a 2016 issue of *Maltese Newsletter* - a publication by Maltese expats in Australia and New Zealand, which recommended 'Mazzit / Mazzita', among other Maltese food, as a must try for expats visiting Malta.

Furthermore, the product has gained prominence at various events, both locally and internationally, including in academic events, international exhibitions and symposia. It has been also referenced in blogs, menus and recipes on how to use the ready-made product.

Cultural and symbolic significance

'Mazzit / Mazzita' is generally consumed by all segments of the population and was (and still is) produced all over the Maltese islands, with a particular concentration of producers in southwest Malta – a sub-region, which was relatively close to most slaughterhouses, including the main slaughterhouse which has been operational in Marsa since 1897. The town of Ħal Luqa, uphill from Marsa maintains the nickname 'Tal-Mazzit' due to its historical concentration of producers. The area is also contiguous with Siġġiewi-Fawwara which was well known for Maltese white onion production, traditionally grown on non-irrigated land which depends solely on rain for crop irrigation. The 'more wild, local variety' onion was traditionally known for its ability to thrive even in dry soil, and indeed even on garigue and was cultivated for this reason. Furthermore, these onions had a longer shelf-life than other varieties.

'Mazzit / Mazzita' also symbolizes intergenerational continuity within families. 'Mazzit / Mazzita' recipes tend to differ marginally between producers. Each producer tends to have a family recipe, handed down inter-generationally within the same family. Such variations are restricted to the volumes of the main ingredients (with the aforesaid ranges) and added sweet flavourings/sweet spices. These slight variations serve to distinguish different producers and contribute to their reputation. Some brand names still reference historical producers through the prefix 'Ta" followed by a renowned producer's name, highlighting the product's familial legacy. Historically, ingredient choices, such as the type of intestines used, reflected social distinctions, with bovine intestines preferred for urban, higher-class consumers. While these geographic distinctions have diminished, producer choices still cater to varying consumer preferences.

Reference to the publication of the product specification of the geographical indication:

https://agriculture.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/pgi-mazzit-mazzita.pdf