



Serrano español



CONSORCIO DEL JAMÓN SERRANO ESPAÑOL

TECHNICAL HANDLING GUIDE



*Serrano Ham with the Consorcio seal
the only one with a quality guarantee*



Spanish Serrano ham

Production: approximately 38 million air-dried cured legs and shoulders per year. Spain is the world's leading producer of air-dried cured ham. **Consumption:** The average annual consumption of ham in Spain is almost 5 kilos per capita, double the consumption in Italy. Spain is also the world's leading consumer of cured ham. **Geography:** Air-dried cured ham is produced almost everywhere in Spain, thus Serrano ham does not necessarily come from a specific geographical region. However, there are certain geographical areas with a greater production tradition than others. The regions of Catalonia, Castile and Leon, Castile La Mancha and Andalusia have a long-standing tradition of air-dried cured ham production. There are slight differences or nuances in production depending on each region and manufacturer. **History:** Ham has traditionally been air-dried in mountain regions, essentially rural areas, with mild climates of cold winters and dry summers. In Spanish, the word "sierra", as in English, means "mountain range", hence the origin of the word "Serrano" ham.



The different types of Spanish air-dried cured hams

In Spain there are two very distinct types of ham, depending on the breed of the pig: from the Iberico pig, and from the White pig.

					
WHITE PIG	90%	NORMALLY DUROC, PIETRAIN, LANDRACE OR LARGE WHITE.	FEED MADE MAINLY FROM CEREALS	MINIMUM OF 7 MONTHS WHICH CAN BE EXTENDED UP TO 2 YEARS.	THERE ARE VARIOUS MAIN TYPES OR CATEGORIES: -CURED HAM -SERRANO HAM -CONSORCIO SERRANO HAM
CURED HAM	PRODUCTION	PIG BREED	PIG FEED	AIR-DRYING	DENOMINATION
	10%	THE IBERICO PIG. ITS BREEDING AND FARMING ARE RESTRICTED NOWADAYS TO WESTERN AND SOUTH-WESTERN SPAIN AND SOUTH-EASTERN PORTUGAL.	FEED MADE MAINLY FROM CEREALS. THIS DIET IS COMBINED IN SOME CASES WITH NATURAL GRAZING IN THE COUNTRY, WHERE THEY EAT ACORNS, GRASS AND GENERAL PASTURELAND.	FROM 14 TO 36 MONTHS APPROXIMATELY	IBERICO HAM. (COMMONLY KNOWN AS "PATA NEGRA").

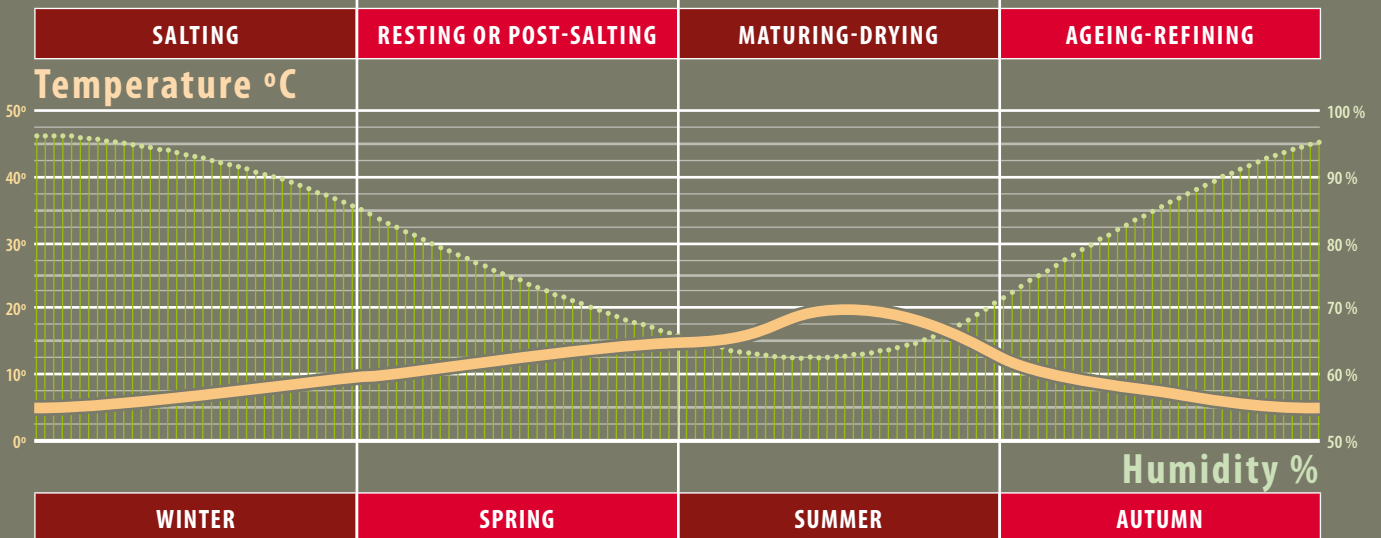
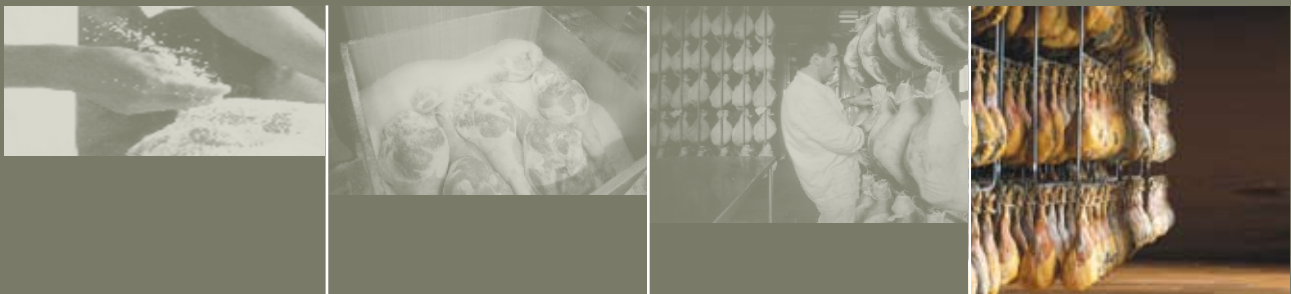
How is ham air-dried cured in Spain?

Salt regular salt of marine origin,

Air with its own unique characteristics of temperature and humidity, and

Time being understood as an “absence of hurry”.

Behind a slogan that makes it seem very easy to produce air-dried cured ham hides a technical challenge and a relatively complex process. Today, hams are made in modern salting and drying facilities equipped with the **latest technology**. **Hygiene, quality, excellent raw materials and consistency** are the keys to **the Spanish ham producing process, which is unique in the world**. The process starts with low temperatures and high humidity which are progressively raised and reduced respectively to reach a climatic balance, at which the product stabilizes and the meat is transformed into Serrano ham, a truly exceptional foodstuff. The drying rooms replicate the environmental conditions found in the mountains throughout the seasons of the year.



Serrano Ham

The name "Serrano ham" has been protected as a Traditional Speciality Guaranteed product (T.S.G.) by a European Union regulation since 2000.

This protects the production method for this product, though it does not refer to a specific production area or to the origin of the raw material.

How, then, can you distinguish a "Serrano ham" from any other ham?

Simply by examining the commercial label. This label, which features each producer's or distributor's own brand and product specifications, will show the name "Serrano ham".

Each ham also has a control code which is issued by the certification organizations that audit and authorize the production of Serrano ham.

As another option, producers can also include the European Union star logo and the "T.S.G." acronym (Traditional Speciality Guaranteed) on their labels.

Hams cured by European companies which are not duly certified may not use the name "Serrano ham" to market their hams within the EU.



Serrano ham with the Consorcio seal of Quality

Hams endorsed by the Consorcio fulfil two standards:

- The European T.S.G. standard.
- The Consorcio's own individual standard, which is even more demanding in certain aspects than the T.S.G.

Only a limited number of hams are worthy of the Consorcio's seal.

How do you distinguish a ham endorsed by the Consorcio from one which is not?

Two elements will help you recognise a Serrano ham endorsed by the Consorcio:

- a brand on the skin in the unmistakable "S" shape of the **Consorcio del Jamón Serrano Español**.
- a numbered control label with the logo of the Consorcio and the T.S.G.

The "S" brand on the ham is the property of the **Consorcio del Jamón Serrano Español** and is the guarantee in which all reputable merchants and discerning consumers place their trust.



The Consorcio del Jamón Serrano Español

This Association has encompassed the main producers and exporters of cured ham in Spain since 1990. The main activities of the **Consorcio** are:

- **quality control**
- **promoting our hams in international markets**

The quality control of the Consorcio del Jamón Serrano Español

As far as the Association is concerned, **Quality** is its raison d'être, and all its efforts are geared towards maximising quality.

What does a ham need to earn the Consorcio del Jamón Serrano Español's seal of quality?

- It must be a "Serrano" ham (i.e. protected by the T.S.G.) and be produced by companies that have been certified as such.

And furthermore...

- The raw material must be Spanish (only from pigs born, raised and slaughtered in Spain)
- It must be made exclusively in Spain
- It must have been air-dried cured for a minimum of 9 months (average 12 months)
- It must be covered by at least 1 centimetre of fat (a fundamental factor in the ham's appearance and aroma)
- It must have reached 34% shrinkage from the fresh ham weight
- It must have passed an individual sensorial inspection (piece by piece)
- It must have been made by a company that has passed the quality audits which are constantly carried out by the **Consorcio**.

The **Consorcio** takes care of supervising that the conditions of hygiene, temperature and humidity laid down by the Standard are complied with throughout the different phases of the production process, and that the processes for de-boning, slicing and packaging the hams are adhered to.

These inspections involve, amongst many other controls, an **individual piece-by-piece inspection** of the hams. This requires an individual visual examination of each ham undertaken by experts who know how important it is to offer a product with the very highest guarantees.



The main differences between European Hams

ITALY	SPAIN	FRANCE
MAIN DESIGNATIONS		
PARMA, SAN DANIELE, SPECK	SERRANO, IBERICO	BAYONNE
PRODUCTION PROCESS		
PARMA AND SAN DANIELE: BETWEEN 12 AND 18 MONTHS UNSMOKED SPECK: BETWEEN 5.5 AND 8 MONTHS UNSMOKED	SERRANO: BETWEEN 7 AND 16 MONTHS UNSMOKED IBERICO: BETWEEN 14 AND 36 MONTHS UNSMOKED	BAYONNE: BETWEEN 7 AND 12 MONTHS UNSMOKED
USE OF SALT		
SUPERFICIALLY 20 - 30 DAYS	USED TO COMPLETELY COVER HAMS 6 - 15 DAYS	SUPERFICIALLY 20 - 30 DAYS
MOST COMMON PRESENTATION		
PARMA: WITH SKIN AND WITHOUT HOOF (ALSO DE-BONED) SAN DANIELE: WITH SKIN AND HOOF (ALSO DE-BONED) SPECK: ALWAYS DE-BONED	SERRANO AND IBERICO WITH HOOF AND WITH PART OF THE SKIN CUT IN A V-SHAPE (ALSO DE-BONED)	BAYONNE: WITH SKIN AND WITHOUT HOOF (ALSO DE-BONED)
TEXTURE, COLOUR AND FLAVOUR		
PARMA AND SAN DANIELE: HIGHER MOISTURE CONTENT. SOFTER TEXTURE, LITTLE FAT INFILTRATION, PINK COLOUR, MILD FLAVOUR SPECK: LOWER MOISTURE CONTENT, NO FAT INFILTRATION DEEP PURPLE COLOUR, SMOKY FLAVOUR	SERRANO AND IBERICO: LOWER MOISTURE CONTENT. MORE CONSISTENT TEXTURE SERRANO: CERTAIN FAT INFILTRATION, PURPLE COLOUR, INTENSE FLAVOUR IBERICO: SIGNIFICANT FAT INFILTRATION, DEEP PURPLE COLOUR, VERY UNIQUE, INTENSE FLAVOUR	BAYONNE: HIGHER MOISTURE CONTENT. SOFTER TEXTURE, LITTLE FAT INFILTRATION, PINK IN COLOUR, MILD FLAVOUR

Quality control comparison of Jamón Serrano

TSG SERRANO HAM	CONSORCIO SERRANO HAM
ORIGIN OF THE DESIGNATION	
TRADITIONAL AND HISTORIC CHARACTER	TRADITIONAL AND HISTORIC CHARACTER, WITH A PRIVATE QUALITY LABEL
REGULATIONS OF REFERENCE	
COMMUNITY REGULATION 2082/92 (PUBLISHED AS REG. 2419/99 OF 12/11/99; 291/25 OF 13/11/00)	COMMUNITY REGULATION 2082/92 (PUBLISHED IN REG. 2419/99 OF 12/11/99; 291/25 OF 13/11/00.) OWN PRODUCT STANDARD (LATEST AMENDMENT 29/6/99)
QUALITY LABEL	
GENERIC COMMUNITY LABEL "T.S.G." (LABEL WHICH ACCOMPANIES THE PRODUCT)	GENERIC COMMUNITY LABEL "T.S.G." (LABEL WHICH ACCOMPANIES THE PRODUCT) SKIN BRAND ON END PRODUCT PLUS CONTROL LABEL
SOURCE OF THE RAW MATERIAL (FRESH/FROZEN HAM)	
UNSPECIFIED (PRESUMED AS VALID FOR ANY ORIGIN)	ONLY SPAIN
PRODUCTION LOCATION	
EU	SPAIN
MINIMUM CURING TIME	
30 WEEKS (210 DAYS)	36 WEEKS (252 DAYS)
MINIMUM SHRINKAGE (FROM FRESH WEIGHT)	
33%	34%
FAT CONTENT (FAT THICKNESS WHERE THE THICK FLANK AND TIP MEET)	
MINIMUM 0.8 CM	MINIMUM 1 CM
LEGISLATION ON PRESERVATIVES	
PERMITTED FOR ALL PRODUCTS COVERED BY EU DIRECTIVE 95/2 (TO THE RELEVANT LIMITS IN THE FINISHED PRODUCT)	ONLY E-250, E-252 AND E-300 ARE PERMITTED (WITHIN THE LIMITS SET BY EU DIRECTIVE 95/2)
CONTROL SYSTEM	
PRODUCT CERTIFIED BY ACCREDITED ORGANIZATION TO EN-45011 (APPLICATION IN PROCESS)	PRODUCT CERTIFIED BY ACCREDITED ORGANIZATION TO EN-45011 (APPLICATION IN PROCESS) FINAL PRODUCT INSPECTION

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The nutritional properties of Serrano ham

The **Consorcio-endorsed Serrano Ham** is an extremely healthy foodstuff, with the following nutritional properties per 100 g of product:

- 30-35 grams of protein, which provides essential 'building blocks' for the body
- 8-14 grams of fat, which the body needs for its reserves and as a precursor of other vital processes.
- 4-6 grams of common salt.
- Other elements to a lesser degree, including B-group vitamins and minerals such as iron, phosphorous, zinc and calcium.

Both its protein and fat content make Serrano ham a **highly digestible** product.

The fat on Serrano ham

Why do we promote a Serrano ham with fat?

A high quality product:

The fat has an important technological factor, as to produce a really high quality ham there has to be a uniform layer of fat. This balances the curing process, preventing sudden uncontrolled drying of the product and controlling the curing effect of the salt.

A delicious product:

It has a tremendous sensorial importance, since the fat in foods is where the flavour is stored and where most of the reactions that form the aromatic component originate. The unmistakable flavour of Serrano ham, its juiciness and tenderness, are a direct result of its fat content.

A healthy product:

It has great nutritional importance.

The fatty acids found in Serrano ham are beneficial for the organism as a whole. Incorporating these fats into the circulatory system has no adverse effects on health because their regulatory action reduces the blood's LDL (the 'bad' cholesterol).



Useful information on the product

Little white dots (thyroxin)

Small "chalky" granules which become interspersed between the muscular fibres of the ham as the curing process advances.



Their appearance varies in terms of shape, size and location.

It is believed their appearance is due to the intrinsic differences in the raw material, the influence of certain production phases, or even the environmental conditions.

It is a biological component (amino acid) which is also found in other foods subjected to similar curing, conservation or ageing processes (e.g. cheese).

They are not harmful to eat and do not give the product any abnormal characteristics. The final quality of Serrano ham does not depend in any way on the presence or absence of this substance.

White veil

This can appear on the cut surface of ham.

It is mainly made up of thyroxin. Its appearance does not mean that the vacuum effect has been lost, or that the ham is past its use-by date because of contamination or deterioration. You simply need to remove the affected area by taking a thin slice off the surface.

Darkening of the cut surface

This happens when you cut or open up a piece and it has been exposed to the atmosphere for a certain amount of time without protection, resulting in oxidation. This can also happen to the fat, which tends to go more yellow. To prevent this, it is advisable to protect the cut surface with clingfilm and keep the ham at the right temperature, i.e. cool with a certain amount of humidity.

Iridescence

This is a chromatic phenomenon (contrast of colours) which occurs on the cut surface of the ham and in certain muscular areas. It can be seen when you shine a light on the surface. It does not signify any kind of nutritional or organoleptic change in the ham.

Saline deposits

These can appear on the cut surface. This is inorganic salt which forms deposits on the surface due to low external humidity. It does not represent any kind of problem and can be removed by taking a thin slice from the surface.

How to handle a ham correctly

The **Consorcio-Serrano ham** can be bought in three different formats: **on the bone, de-boned and sliced**.

Ham on the bone



This is the most common way of eating ham in Spain, and requires expert cutting and the right knife to get very thin, almost transparent, slices. We recommend using the special support for cutting hams which is known as a “jamonero” or “jamonera”. Cutting should be done with a very sharp knife with a long, narrow blade.

If you do not intend to eat the whole piece in one sitting, the parts exposed to the air should be covered with any leftover fat and a light cloth. The ham should be left in a dry but well-ventilated place at a stable room temperature, away from extreme heat or cold.

De-boned ham



This ham is produced in the same way as Serrano ham on the bone, though at the end of the maturing process and before packaging it is de-boned. If the ham has not yet been skinned and de-fatted, it is advisable to do this before using a meat-slicing machine.

Only cut and remove the slices that are to be eaten or sold immediately. Discard the first slice if the ham has been left a long time without cutting. Every time you finish cutting, the exposed surface of the ham should be covered with clingfilm. Always store the ham at between 2°C and 10°C.

Advice on consumption

Ham should always be eaten at room temperature (14°C - 22°C).

The slices should look shiny, never dull. The shine means that the fat inherent in the ham appears naturally. For this reason, if the slices have been kept in the fridge, they should be taken out and left at room temperature for a while before eating until they start ‘sweating’.

Tapas:

In Spain, Serrano ham is usually eaten as a snack or appetiser in small, thin slices, perhaps accompanied by bread and a glass of red wine or a beer.

‘Pan con tomate’ is a Catalan speciality that is very highly rated all over the world: a thick slice of country bread, toasted, with fresh tomato rubbed into it, a drizzle of olive oil and a slice of Serrano ham... delicious!

Sandwiches and baguettes:

This is the most common way of eating ham the world over. Try combining the ham with a little olive oil and other quality ingredients: fresh spinach, tomato, cream cheese, tapenade, Manchego cheese, etc.

Use in cooking:

Serrano ham can be used in cooking every day to imbue dishes with its incomparable flavour, from the simplest to the most sophisticated: pasta, rice, soups, stews, fish, vegetables, etc.

It’s worth remembering not to overcook it so it doesn’t lose its unique flavour!





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