

Publication of an application for registration of a name 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

(2021/C 311/08)

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⁾ within three months from the date of this publication.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

'ALHO DA GRACIOSA'

EU No: PGI-PT-02605 – 11 May 2020

PDO () PGI (X)

1. Name(s) [of PDO or PGI]

'Alho da Graciosa'

2. Member State or Third Country

Portugal

3. Description of the agricultural product or foodstuff

3.1. Type of product

Class 1.6. Fruit, vegetables and cereals, fresh or processed

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

'Alho da Graciosa' – garlic of the species *Allium sativum* L. – is presented in the form of dried bulbs, either individually or in braids, each with a diameter of at least 3 cm, measured across the peeled bulb.

The bulbs, which are ovoid in shape and wrapped in various layers of white outer skins that are easy to remove, consist of cloves with a firm, smooth texture encased in reddish pink skins.

In terms of smell, 'Alho da Graciosa' cloves are distinguished by their medium-low intensity aroma, even uncrushed.

In terms of taste, 'Alho da Graciosa' has an intense, very pleasant flavour with little aftertaste.

Important aspects of its chemical composition include its high levels of zinc (over 7 mg/kg), iron (over 8 mg/kg), magnesium (over 170 mg/kg) and allicin (over 3 500 mg/kg), which gives 'Alho da Graciosa' food-preserving properties.

3.3. Feed (for products of animal origin only) and raw materials (for processed products only)

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

All the steps in production (selection of the best garlic cloves for planting, cultivation and harvesting).

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

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(1) OJ L 343, 14.12.2012, p. 1.

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

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

The island of Graciosa in the Azores archipelago.

5. **Link with the geographical area**

The link is based on the specific characteristics and qualities of 'Alho da Graciosa'.

As regards its reputation, it should be noted that 'Alho da Graciosa' has been grown successfully on the island of Graciosa since the arrival of the first settlers in the early 15th century, thanks to the favourable soil and climatic conditions.

Over the generations, Graciosa's garlic has been improved, as producers select the best specimens for propagation, i.e. those that preserve its main characteristics, such as colour and size.

When the island was first settled, the rainfall pattern and fertile soil were found to be good for fruit and vegetable growing. The garlic that was grown by the islanders, who were mostly subsistence farmers, stood out from the other crops.

Graciosa has always been known as the Terra do Alho (garlic country) and garlic is pictured on the coat of arms of one of the most iconic parishes on the island, the parish of São Mateus.

It is from the above circumstances that 'Alho da Graciosa' derives its specific qualities, characterised by its medium-low intensity aroma, even uncrushed, and its intense, very pleasant flavour with little aftertaste, which are due not only to the island's soil and climatic conditions but also to the care taken by the producers over the years, with no cultivars brought in from other regions.

Although the climate of the island of Graciosa, like that of the other islands in the archipelago, has temperate oceanic characteristics, Graciosa has the lowest rainfall in the Azores, the driest months being May and August. This is due to its topography, which is characterised by low-altitude plains that are sheltered from strong winds and get plenty of sunshine.

Graciosa's soils are thin, standard andic brown soils and regolic soils derived from basalt rock or from pyroclastic material lying on shallow basalt rock.

These volcanic soils, with a slightly acidic or neutral pH, are rich in micronutrients, such as zinc and iron, which are essential for the development of the young plants and for chlorophyll formation and photosynthesis. Such soil is good for garlic growing and encourages the formation of allicin, thus promoting the garlic's development and giving it the characteristics listed in point 3.2.

Allicin content varies considerably as a result of certain environmental factors, and high soil pH, high levels of sunshine and low rainfall increase its concentration in garlic (Eagling and Sterling, 2000).

The average allicin content of garlic varies between 1 800 mg/kg and 3 600 mg/kg, while analysis of 'Alho da Graciosa' using high-performance liquid chromatography has revealed an average allicin content of above 3 500 mg/kg.

As regards the growing conditions, the average soil pH on the island of Graciosa is 6.2, which, together with the low rainfall and sunny aspect of the land, favours the formation of allicin, which is the principal antimicrobial constituent of 'Alho da Graciosa'.

Because of its qualities, visitors to the island often seek out culinary specialities that are seasoned or prepared with 'Alho da Graciosa', such as the famous molhanga sauce served with fresh fish, the fish dish molho à pescador, the typical Graciosa sausage (linguiça da Graciosa) or grilled limpets (lapas grelhadas), which makes 'Alho da Graciosa' a highly valued product that is used by renowned chefs not only for its distinctive flavour and aroma but also because it is recognised to have food preserving qualities on account of its high allicin content.

'Alho da Graciosa' was tested as an inhibitor of *Listeria monocytogenes* – a pathogenic micro-organism capable of surviving and growing on food at chilled temperatures, which makes it difficult to control – and was found to have a greater inhibitory capacity than other pink garlies on the market (Voz do Campo, issue 224, and Pimentel, Paulo (2008) University of the Azores).

Tests carried out on minced meat also showed that 'Alho da Graciosa' clearly slowed the growth of *L. monocytogenes* up to the third day of refrigeration (Voz do Campo, issue 224, and Pimentel, Paulo (2008) University of the Azores).

As regards the reputation and renown of 'Alho da Graciosa', it is worth mentioning the initiative taken by the Angra do Heroísmo Chamber of Commerce and the Graciosa Business Centre in 2019 in organising the first 'Alho da Graciosa' festival, with talks, cookery demonstrations, workshops, school activities, special restaurant menus featuring dishes (from starters to desserts) made with garlic, guided tours and the sale of regional products, with the aim of publicising, marketing and promoting 'Alho da Graciosa'.

On that occasion, numerous articles published in major regional and national newspapers, namely Público and Açoriano Oriental, and specialist magazines, such as Vida Rural, Voz do Campo, Agrotec and Agronegócios, among other media, not only gave great prominence to the festival itself but above all focused attention on the qualities of 'Alho da Graciosa', which were showcased during the event.

The articles included 'E viva o alho! o da Graciosa que é diferente e único' [Long live garlic! The distinctive and unique garlic of Graciosa], published in the newspaper Público, 'O Alho da Graciosa ainda vai dar que falar' ['Alho da Graciosa' is still giving people something to talk about], published in the magazine Vida Rural, and 'O Alho da Graciosa, um composto natural com propriedades conservantes' ['Alho da Graciosa', a natural compound with preservative properties], published in the magazine Negócios do Campo.

The aforementioned article entitled 'E viva o alho! o da Graciosa que é diferente e único', published in the newspaper Público, contained the following paragraph: 'Since time immemorial, Graciosa has been known as the island of garlic, and from the 1950s garlic growing gained in importance, taking on considerable significance for the local family economy (along with lupin, beans and grains). The garlic was distributed among the other islands of the central group, known as the ilhas de baixo, by the Fernão Magalhães, the vessel which, in those days, provided a link between them. However, everything changed after the earthquake of 1 January 1980, which caused destruction and led to a large part of the population leaving the island. The fields and produce were abandoned and garlic growing almost ceased.'

'Alho da Graciosa' was recently chosen to represent Azorean produce on the commemorative stamp issued by the Portuguese post office, CTT – Correios de Portugal S.A., to mark the fourth edition of National Gastronomy Day. The stamp was launched during the National Gastronomy Day celebrations organised by the Confraria Gastrónomos dos Açores [Azores Fine Food Society], as a member of the Federação Portuguesa das Confrarias Gastronómicas [Portuguese Federation of Fine Food Societies].

Given the characteristics of 'Alho da Graciosa', which distinguish it as a much-valued and highly esteemed product, demand is not restricted to the regional market. On the contrary, it can also be found elsewhere in Portugal, where it is used by some of the country's top chefs, who thus make the most of its culinary qualities without risk of excessive smell or aroma.

Reference to publication of the specification

(the second subparagraph of Article 6(1) of this Regulation)

https://tradicional.dgadr.gov.pt/images/prod_imagens/horticolos/docs/CE_Alho_Graciosa_IGP.pdf
