



Media Contact: Nicole Fischer
Nicole.Fischer@padillacrt.com
(212) 421-8321

Prosciutto di Parma Celebrates 25 Years in the U.S.

NEW YORK., November 20, 2014 – This fall represents a significant milestone for the Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma, which is celebrating 25 years of Prosciutto di Parma exports to the United States.

Today, consumers are no longer constrained to Italian restaurants or delis to find this king of hams. Despite cheaper domestic competition, the popularity of Prosciutto di Parma has swelled over the last 25 years. The product is now widely available in wine bars and pizzerias, supermarkets and convenience stores. Even 25 years ago, though, the food industry may well have anticipated this success.

In 1989, Prosciutto di Parma was released, or rather reintroduced, to Americans. The prized cured ham from Italy, was awarded the USDA stamp of approval to be imported, and the first shipments began to arrive in the fall of 1989. Chefs and foodies no longer had to smuggle legs of pork in their suitcases, and Italian delis everywhere rejoiced.

“The reintroduction of Prosciutto di Parma was a game changer for the U.S. market and its diverse culinary scenes across the country,” says Lou DiPalo, author of *DiPalo’s Guide to the Essential Foods of Italy*, and owner of Di Palo’s of Little Italy, New York City. “This famed and beloved product brought with it a renewed appreciation for exceptional standards and traditional methods in the kitchen and at home.”

The story of Prosciutto di Parma dates back thousands of years to Roman times, when, in 100 BC, Cato the “Censor” first mentioned the extraordinary taste of the air-cured ham made around the town of Parma, Italy. From there, this geographically protected food became world renowned for its delicate, sweet flavor.

That treasured taste, absent from restaurant menus and deli counters for many years, returned to the U.S. market with much fanfare. “Prosciutto di Parma’s homecoming to the U.S. signaled the end of an age void of any prosciutto equivalent to the quality of this fine Italian product,” says Julian Niccolini, co-owner of The Four Seasons Restaurant in New York City. “The mood in the kitchen was incredible. Chefs relished in the tremendous opportunity Prosciutto di Parma signified for their menus.”

In just 25 years, the Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma experienced a surge in demand, increasing sales from 49,000 legs in 1990 to more than 500,000 just last year. This growth propelled the U.S. into the number one export market for Prosciutto di Parma behind Italy itself.

Today, there are many places and ways that ham is cured, but few are recognized by the European Union’s PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) system. This distinct classification is designed to protect names and traditions of high-quality European foods made according to time-honored methods in a defined geographic region. From the pigs’ diet and development through the curing process, each step is strictly monitored by the Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma. This ensures the high standards required to receive the prestigious Parma Crown are met.



About the Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma

The Consorzio was established in 1963 by 23 producers producing 53,000 branded hams who wanted to protect and promote their product throughout the world. Since then, the Consorzio has grown into a family of 156 Prosciutto di Parma producers supplying 10 million hams annually to markets all over the world.

Today's producers carry on a tradition that has been passed down through generations. The production of every Prosciutto di Parma is regulated by strict laws that define the quality and characteristics, represented by the Parma Crown branded on Prosciutto di Parma. Learn more, discover recipes and find out where to buy Prosciutto di Parma at www.parmacrown.com.