

Grana Padano

*The
Cheese Italians
Enjoy Most!*

With a nutty, intense flavor nurtured by millennia-old methods, Grana Padano is wonderful melted in risotto, shaved over carpaccio or sliced and served with flavorful bread. Enjoyed by people around the Mediterranean for more than a thousand years, Grana Padano is being used by inventive chefs in everything from fusion to basic American dishes.

When the monks of the Chiaravalle Abbey decided to settle in the Po River Valley around 1000 A.D., the area was a swampy marshland alternating with woods—not an ideal place for cows to graze. The monks cleared the woods and started to raise cattle and soon found themselves with more milk than they could drink. The solution? Transform the excess milk into a cheese that could mature for months—even years—only improving over time, so took it on board ships when



Consorzio Tutela Grana Padano
www.granapadano.com



GRANA PADANO

THE CHOICE FOR INTERNATIONAL KITCHENS

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they traveled. That cheese, Grana Padano, became one of Italy's most prized culinary offerings. Today's Grana Padano is made by the very same meticulous methods, and with the same delicious result.

The unique flavor and deep aroma are largely the result of the cows' strictly regulated diet of fresh hay and fodder, which includes alfalfa and maize. It takes 16 quarts of milk to make one kilogram (2.2 pounds) of Grana Padano; that explains the intense flavor and rich mouth feel.

Milk obtained from cows that are milked no more than twice a day is partially skimmed, allowed to rest for ten hours, and heated in huge copper tanks. First a whey starter is added, then calf's rennet is stirred in to help coagulate the milk. The curds are broken into small pieces and the liquid separated from the solids. The curds are lifted out of the whey with huge cloths, cut in half, wrapped, and left to drain. A soak in salt water follows, and finally the cheese is ready to age on wooden shelves for anywhere from 12 to 24 months. The longer Grana Padano ages, the saltier, drier, and more pungent it becomes. During the aging period, the cheese is turned and brushed, and the temperature and humidity in the aging rooms are carefully monitored to ensure that each wheel of Grana Padano emerges in perfect condition. After aging, the wheels average an imposing 75 pounds.

Over the centuries, production spread to outlying areas. Today, Grana Padano is made in 27 provinces of Italy in the regions of Lombardia, Piedmont, Veneto, Emilia-Romagna, and Trentino. Amazingly, the production method remains very much the same as that used by the monks a thousand years ago.

To protect their cheese, the producers formed a consortium in 1954. A year later, Grana Padano was granted DO (Denomination of Origin) status. In 1996, Grana Padano was awarded the prestigious DOP status (Denomination of Protected Origin) by the European Union. The consortium now boasts about 200 producers, ripeners, and merchants of Grana Padano joined by a common goal—to preserve the rich heritage and true identity of this ancient cheese and to monitor every aspect of its production.

**THE BEST-SELLING HARD CHEESE IN ITALY IS
GRANA PADANO.**

The consortium employs 30 craftsmen who check each wheel of this classic cheese before it's sent to market — not a spot check of representative wheels but every single wheel. Wielding a small metal hammer and a needle, they begin by tapping the entire surface of each wheel with the hammer to detect any hollow spots, which would automatically disqualify the cheese. Next they use the needle to pierce the wheel, examining the aroma, taste, and perfume of the bits of cheese that cling to the needle. If the wheel of cheese passes these two rigorous tests, it's official. The wheel's golden-yellow rind is stamped with the diamond-shaped Grana Padano symbol, an assurance to consumers that the cheese they are buying is the genuine product.

These symbols are your guarantee that the cheese you're bringing to your table is the same as the product that won the hearts of generations of Italian chefs. Three stamps are awarded to the wheels. First, there is a four-leaf clover symbol with the

letters DOP. Second, diamond shapes marked "Grana" and "Padano" are stamped into the rind. And finally, a large quality seal, also marked "Grana Padano," is stamped into the rind.

Grana Padano is a standout nutritionally as well. Even though it is lower in sodium and fats, Grana Padano offers more flavor—not less—than many other varieties of cheese. That makes it perfect not just for Italian dishes, but for a medley of international recipes—chiles rellenos stuffed with butternut squash and Grana, rotolini of roasted salmon coated with Grana Padano and pistachios—and more basic fare. Grana Padano makes ordinary individual macaroni and cheese casseroles extraordinary, and it's positively inspired when paired with a fire-grilled American burger.

Grana Padano connects your everyday meals with a thousand years of culinary excellence. Taste, health, and tradition have made it the favorite hard cheese of Italy, and it will become your favorite, too.

Grana Padano reflects the heritage, quality and flavor developed during ten centuries of cheese making.

