

Protected food, drink or agricultural product name: **Extra Virgin olive Oil**

Product specification for Extra Virgin Olive Oil

A protected designation of origin (PDO)

This document sets out the elements of the product specification for information purposes.

Competent authority

Name: Malta Competition and Consumers Affairs Authority

Address: Mizzi house, National Road, Blata I-Bajda

Telephone: 2395 2000

Email: info@mccaa.org.mt

Applicant group

Name: Koperattiva Produtturi taz-Zebbug Limited

Address: 10, Bonsai, Triq San Martin, Zebbug, Malta

Telephone: 79493556

Fax: not applicable

Email: president@kpz.com.mt

Composition: Producers

Type of product (as in Annex XI Implementing Regulation 668/2014)

— Class 1.5. Oils and fats (butter, margarine, oil, etc.)

1. Product name(s)

BIDNI Extra Virgin Olive Oil

2. Description

Extra virgin olive oil (EVOO) is responsible for a large part of many health benefits associated to Mediterranean diet as it is a fundamental ingredient of this diet. The peculiarities of this golden, highly valued product are in part due to the requirements that must be met to achieve this title, namely, it has to be obtained using exclusively mechanical procedures, its free acidity cannot be greater than 0.8%, it must not show sensory defects, and it has to possess a fruity taste.

The organoleptic characteristics of extra virgin olive oil must be characterized by three main organoleptic attributes: the Fruity, the Bitter, and the Spicy. First of all, therefore, a quality extra virgin olive oil must absolutely refer to the fruit from which it comes: the olive.

The chemical properties of extra virgin olive oil are a high content of MUFA (65–83%), especially oleic acid, and some polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFA) such as linoleic acid, which is considered a potent fatty acid on the reduction of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol.

The physical properties of olive oil are: Oleic acid is present in the highest concentration, the values were ranged between 64.8% and 72.8%. It is followed by palmitic acid (11.34%-17.33%), linoleic acid (6.08% – 11.68%), stearic acid (1.04%-2.06%), palmitoleic acid (1-1.64%), linolenic acid (0.16-0.96%) and arachidic acid (0.28%-0.92%).

3. Geographical area

The National National Agricultural Policy for the Maltese Islands 2018 – 2028 had identified a total area of about 128.5 hectares of olive cultivation in the Maltese Islands. The top ten localities for olive cultivation in Malta and Gozo are the following: SIGGIEWI, RABAT (Malta), MELLIEHA, SAN PAWL IL-BAHAR, MGARR, ZEBBUG (Malta), XAGHRA, DINGLI, LUQA, QALA

4. Proof of origin

Malta, whose civilizations' origins date back to the Stone Age, is a fertile ground for olive groves. Olive growing was introduced to the Maltese Islands in ancient times: some olive trees found here date back to more than 1,000 years ago. The subtropical Mediterranean climate and the alkaline soil are both ideal for olive cultivation, which once flourished on these islands under the Phoenicians and the Romans, as many of the local place names still witness.

In January 2006, the Project for the Revival of the Indigenous Maltese Olive (PRIMO), was launched. Apart from reviving indigenous cultivars, such as the Bidni, one of the aims of this project was to substantially increase production levels in a bid to obtain the much coveted PDO status. As a direct result of PRIMO, some 30,000 Bidni olive trees were grafted and planted, thereby setting the necessary groundwork for the creation of a niche industry. The methodology behind this process consisted of several steps. After olive pips were collected from the ancient Bidni olive grove of Bidnija, these were then sowed at the Government of Malta's Experimental Farm in Għammieri and left to germinate for use as rootstock. Once the rootstocks were viable, cuttings were then taken from the millennia-old Bidni olive trees and carefully grafted to the rootstocks. Efforts to plant more Bidni olive trees are ongoing.

The PDO provides for the adoption of a mandatory traceability system which links the olives with the end product. Olives must derive from the holdings adhering to the value chain agreement and to the control system.

The olive grower must adopt a traceability system in order to guarantee the information traceability and their compliance with the present specification.

The traceability system shall allow for keeping track of at least the following set of information:

- The olive grower delivering the olives;
- The production capacity;
- The amount of olives delivered and processed;
- The amount of end product produced identified by the PQNS.

5. Method of production

To qualify for the quality mark under this scheme, olive oil produced under the conditions set in the preceding section and intended for the production of olive oil has to be freshly harvested olives. Fresh olives to:

- be delivered from the holding to an officially approved olive miller within twenty-four hours (including Sundays and Public Holidays) of harvesting;
- be free of any visible health issues and shall be delivered in clean containers;
- have a printed shelf life on the packaging of not more than one year after the day of olive oil production.

To qualify and obtain the PDO quality mark, extra virgin olive oil must be made from the indigenous olive trees of Malti and Bidni, and the historically renowned Leucocarpa (with white fruits), Bajda.

Olive Oil shall satisfy the same requirements laid down by the relevant national regulations for high-quality olive oil, and shall be low in fatty acids, defect-free, fresh when pressed and extracted without high heat or chemicals.

Olive Oil must be bottled in accordance with the current EU legislation.

6. Link with the geographical area

Olive cultivation has a long historical significance for Malta and Gozo. There is evidence of historical importance that Malta had olive groves during its long history. For some reason the olive groves were eradicated and olive cultivation began popular with farmers around 40 years ago when a local land owner introduced the olive tree Bidni in Malta. This development attracted attention by other farmers and olive cultivation began to increase at a steady pace. It is estimated that in 2020, Malta had around 130 hectares of olive cultivation, spread in various holdings in the main localities described above, but also in other localities in smaller areas. The local soil has been found to be fertile for olive cultivation and most olive groves have to irrigate the groves since the quantity of rain is not enough to maintain a healthy environment within the groves. Due to the size of the olive groves, there is very little use of heavy agricultural machinery, and most olive harvesting is carried out by mechanical shakers, rakes or by hand. The harvested olives are delivered to the millers in plastic crates and then each individual grower collects the olive oil from the miller for bottling; in some instances the miller may also purchase the olive oil for direct sale by the miller himself.

7. Inspection body

Name: Malta Competition and Consumers Affairs Authority

Address: Mizzi house, Blata l-Bajda, Malta

Telephone: 2395 2000

Email: info@mccaa.org.mt

The inspection body conforms to the principles of ISO 17065 standard. The product compliance with the present specification is verified by independent control bodies approved according to the current legislation and included in the list of official control

bodies for the Scheme issued by the Government of Malta. Controls are conducted on the basis of the control plans established by the Control Bodies and approved by the Government of Malta.

8. Labelling

The product compliant with the present specification shall bear the logo identified under the PQNS regulations and shall include the authorisation code issued by the Government of Malta on the label/packaging in addition to any other required information set forth by the current regulations.

The label will have the indication “PDO” certified by the Government of Malta”, as well as the digital traceability label that can certify the origin of the olives.

ENDS

PDO Product specification template

Protected food, drink or agricultural product name: **Extra Virgin olive Oil**

Product specification for Extra Virgin Olive Oil

A protected geographical indication (PGI)

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ENDS

