



A flavour source spice

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PRESS FILE

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PIMENT D'ESPELETTE

the only French spice with an AOP (Protected Designation of Origin)

In December 1999, the INAO (French national institute for origin and quality) national committee officially recognised the "Piment d'Espelette" or "Piment d'Espelette-Ezpeletako Biperra" AOC or Controlled Designation of Origin.

Since June 2000, the publication date of the Official Journal of the Decree pertaining to Controlled Designation of Origin « **Piment d'Espelette** » ou « **Piment d'Espelette - Ezpeletako Biperra** », the designation has been protected for the whole fresh chilli, or the chilli in its ground form or dried on a string, thereby combining **respect for consumers and recognition of the men and women who produce it**.

As a result of regulation 22 Ao.t 2002, the AOC was recognised as a "Protected Designation of Origin", or AOP, protecting it throughout all the countries of the European Union.

This official recognition of quality is the result of a sustained collective effort. The historical and cultural characteristics and the typical features of the Piment d'Espelette which are closely bound to the area in which it is cultivated perfectly reflected the fundamental concepts of the AOP label, but it had to be proved.

A sustained collective effort

As early as 1983, Piment d'Espelette producers joined forces as a cooperative to submit a request for AOC recognition, but the project was not accepted.

In November 1993, the Syndicate officially asked the INAO to support them in their application for AOC recognition. The application for the granting of the Designation was compiled and had to include evidence of use of the name and the reputation of the product, as well as its links to the area in which was cultivated.

In April 1997, the INAO officially recognised "Piment d'Espelette" or "Piment d'Espelette - Ezpeletako Biperra" AOC.

It was from this date onwards that the area specifically used for the cultivation of Piment d'Espelette, its production specifications, its processing and the organisation around the Designation were defined: control methods, approval procedures and product traceability systems. Thereafter, a sensory analysis study resulted in the introduction of Piment d'Espelette tastings, the "final step" in the approval procedure that makes it possible to confirm or otherwise the typicality of products.

The granting of the AOC is the result of many years of sustained collective effort and achieved through the motivation and drive of producers, the commitment of key players in the world of gastronomy, a solid partnership with the INAO and the support of local institutions and bodies.

If the Piment d'Espelette is undeniably the symbol of the region today, it is also recognised as an exceptional spice both in France and abroad.



HOW TO RECOGNIZE THE PIMENT D'ESPELETTE AOP :

The stamp is the distinct collective branding of our high-quality sector !

Each product, whether it be a string of chillies or ground chilli, is required to feature a tamper-evident system provided by the Syndicate which bears the collective branding as well as the AOP community logo.



DON'T MAKE A MISTAKE:
Only chillies stamped with these logos
is Piment d'Espelette AOP !



IDENTITY CARD

ORIGIN	Mexico
FAMILY	Solanacées
GENUS	Annum L.
SPECIES	Local species of Capsicum annum
VARIETY	Annum L.
PLANT	listed in the official catalogue of varieties under the designation "GORRIA"
SIZE	7 to 14 cm
CLIMATIC CONDITIONS	Tropical atmosphere (gentle, humid heat)

SCOVILLE SCALE RATING
(FROM 1 TO 10) 4

THE 3 TYPES OF PIMENT D'ESPELETTE



WHOLE FRESH PIMENT D'ESPELETTE

A whole fresh Piment d'Espelette is the unprocessed fruit and presents no green colouration, it is even and conical in shape, its skin is smooth and it is between 7 and 14 cm long, excluding its stalk. It is cultivated for professionals (producers, processors) for processing into its ground form and by-products.



STRING OF PIMENT D'ESPELETTE

Consists of a minimum of 20 chillies and up to a maximum of 100 chillies that are red in colour, of similar size, ranging between 7cm and 14 cm excluding the stalk. Fresh chillies are manually strung on the farm by threading food-purpose string through the stalk.



GROUND PIMENT D'ESPELETTE

Ground «Piment d'Espelette» is orangey to reddish-brown in colour and is characterised by an olfactory intensity dominated by fruity, grilled and/or hay aromas, combined with a strong, but non--burning pungency, which lingers in the mouth and unfurls progressively across the palate and/or a sensation of heat. In the mouth, ground «Piment d'Espelette» may have a sweet taste and/or a slight bitterness.

It is sufficiently finely ground to ensure that particles do not exceed 5 mm. The addition of any colouring, additive or preservative is forbidden. Ground Piment d'Espelette is only produced using chillies grown on the same farm.

A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY

Mexican origins

8000 years BC, Native Americans were already harvesting wild chillies. The spicy *Capsicum Annuum* fruit started to be cultivated around 6000 BC and it is in Mexico that we find the oldest strains of Piment d'Espelette. Mexico was the birthplace of the *Capsicum Annuum* «species of chilli», of which the Piment d'Espelette is an example. It was the first great explorers who made it possible for the cultivation of chillies to spread across the globe in just a few short years. But how did the chilli arrive in vegetable patches in the Labourd district? Nobody really knows, but from 1650 onwards there is evidence of the presence of chillies around Espelette.

A story about women

It was women first started to cultivate it, because they recognised that it would be an effective substitute for pepper, which was too expensive at that time. Chilli was used as a spice for flavouring as well as preserving meat and hams. Each year, the women selected chilli seeds from which to grow their plants the following year. In this way they created the GORRIA variety, a unique hand-selected seed from which Piment d'Espelette is grown.

Ancestral skill and know-how

In the autumn, to dry the chillies, the women threaded the chillies onto a string to hang them against the wall of the farmhouse. Once dry, the strings of chillies were put into the bread oven, which was still warm from the previous baking session the day before. The dry, crispy chillies were taken out of the oven and ground into a powder. This skill and expertise was handed down from generation to generation. Originally, the chilli was cultivated predominantly for domestic purposes. It was in the 19th century that women started to sell chillies in the market, especially the market in Espelette, which was a regional hub for trade and commerce, thereby earning themselves an independent, personal income.

Making the transformation process more professional

It was only in 1983, with the creation of a cooperative, that a real desire to make the processing of the chillies more professional became manifest. But various problems resulted in the closing down of the cooperative. The cultivation of Piment d'Espelette experienced a real decline and almost disappeared.

AOC recognition, followed by AOP

However; the exceptional Piment d'Espelette was to have the last word. And thanks to the determination of farmers who created a syndicate in 1993, the piment d'Espelette obtained official AOC recognition in 2000 and AOP recognition in 2002. An essential element of gastronomy and Basque culture, the piment d'Espelette is today the most famous and only officially recognised spice in France.



AOC and AOP logos

A TAILOR-MADE AREA FOR THE CULTIVATION OF PIMENT D'ESPELETTE

The Piment d'Espelette thrives in the heart of an exceptional natural environment.

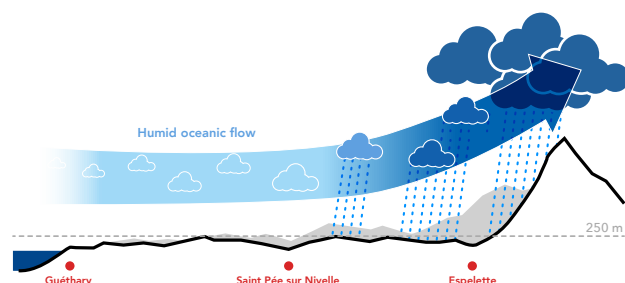
At the centre of a vast theatre of hills and crests and close to the Atlantic Ocean, the Piment d'Espelette appellation zone is characterised by a microclimate with mild temperatures in summer, significant rainfall and the well-known "Haize Hegoa" southerly wind. Similar to a subtropical atmosphere, this bio-climate encourages the harmonious growth and development of the Piment d'Espelette.

A continuum of traditions and know-how and a warm and humid climate, the Piment d'Espelette cultivation area is restricted to a clearly defined zone, which incorporates 10 communes located in the western part of the Pays Basque - a French département in the Pyrénées Atlantiques region:

- Souraïde and Larressore (approved in full)
- Ainhoa, Ustaritz, Itxassou, Halsou, Jatxou, Cambo-les-Bains, Espelette, Saint-Pée sur Nivelle (partially approved).

This clearly-defined area gives our chillies their unique character and outstanding qualities....

« The chillies must be cultivated, processed and packaged within the defined geographic area » (extract from the official specifications for the AOP Piment d'Espelette or Piment d'Espelette-Ezpeletako Biperra)

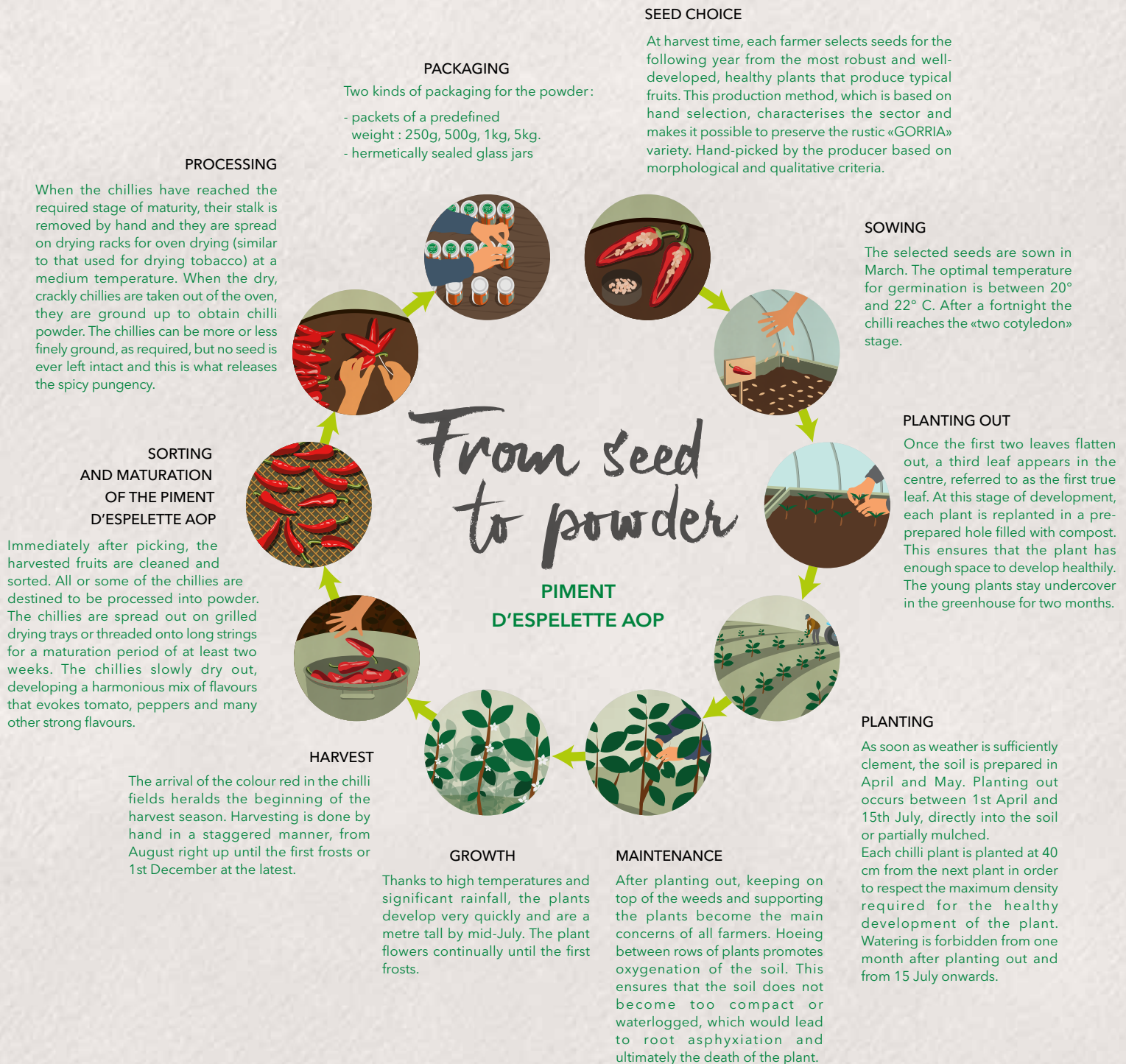


Below:
The area in which Piment d'Espelette AOP is cultivated (indicated here in red) gives our chillies their unique character and outstanding qualities.



THE PIMENT D'ESPELETTE PRODUCTION CYCLE

The Piment d'Espelette production cycle has remained unchanged for generations, from the selection of seeds at harvest time to processing, tasks which are spread throughout the year.





OUR GUARANTEES : THE SPECIFICATIONS

The AOP rules are defined in a series of strict specifications which guarantees quality and typicality, particularly in terms of origin, link to the production area and production methods that are respectful of the product. Operator compliance with these specifications is subject to rigorous controls by an external inspection body, by the syndicate internally and by state-based representatives. The label is not systematically granted to products: All batches of powder are subject to blind jury controls before sale.



THE SPECIFICATIONS

Here are the main specified requirements :

PIMENT D'ESPELETTE AOP PRODUCTION

- Production area limited to 10 communes,
- NAO-approved plots of land,
- A single, hand-selected variety of chilli,
- Open-field farming, with a density of between 10,000 and 30,000 plants / ha,
- Chillies are harvested by hand only when they are ripe ; harvesting is staggered from August to the first frosts,
- Systematic phytosanitary treatments are forbidden and watering is subject to strict regulation;
- Within 48 hours after harvesting, the chillies are sorted, cleaned and either strung or are in the process of being dried before being ground into powder.

PROCESSING THE CHILLI INTO POWDER

- Natural drying in the fresh air for a minimum of 15 days is essential for the development of flavour and aroma ;
- This maturation phase is followed by oven drying for a few hours,
- The chilli powder is made using chillies from the same farm only,
- The chilli powder is made of ground piment d'Espelette only: the addition of colourings, additives or preservatives is forbidden,
- The powder is compulsorily packaged in packets of a predefined weight or hermetically sealed little glass jars.

PROCESSING THE CHILLIES FOR THREADING ON A STRING

- Fresh chillies are manually strung on the farm by threading food-purpose string through the stalk.

Reference text

Decree n°2008-988 of 18th September 2008 relating to the Designation of Controlled Origin (AOC) "Piment d'Espelette" or "Piment d'Espelette-Ezpeletako Biperra" which replaces the founding decree of 29th May 2000.

Regulation n°1495/2002 pertaining to the granting of the AOP label to the "Piment d'Espelette" or "Piment d'Espelette-Ezpeletako Biperra" AOC. (Official Journal of the European Union of 22nd August 2002)



OUR GUARANTEES : CONTROLS AND APPROVAL

The Designation of Protected Origin (AOP) characterises a sector that is totally committed to quality in all areas of production.

Since 2008, the AOP Piment d'Espelette sector has been operating on the basis of a new regulatory framework resulting from the official quality marks reform. This national reform, the aim of which is to make the world of quality marks more transparent for the consumer, resulted in changes in INAO, ODG (Protection and Management agencies), and inspection authority missions.



The Piment d'Espelette sector is characterised by :

- Production condition controls and product controls prior to sale
- Internal and external controls :
- The external control, carried out by an independent CERTISUD body, ensures that producers have complied with required specifications and validates end product AOP compliance with a tasting session,
- The internal control, carried out by the Syndicat du Piment d'Espelette, focuses on production conditions and tools and on producer commitment.



Responsible for the protection of the AOP label, the INAO evaluates all the plots of land on which officially-recognised Piment d'Espelette will be produced. It can deliver sanctions in the event of non-compliance with specifications on the part of producers.

The INAO also provides the Syndicate with the necessary back-up to protect our AOP in the event of misappropriation of reputation.

OUR GUARANTEES : TASTING SESSIONS

PRODUCT CONTROL BY ORGANOLEPTIC EXAMS

The sector upholds and protects the strictest of systems for the awarding of the quality label for Piment d'Espelette powders.

The whole fresh Piment d'Espelette and the string of Piment

are rigorously inspected, by periodic organoleptic exams.

The juries inspect the shape and the peel of the fruit.

The string must be harmonious to obtain the label

«Piment d'Espelette AOP»

The powder :

100% of batches of chilli powder are rigorously inspected by eye, by nose and by mouth by tasting juries made up of producers, food and catering industry representatives and piment d'Espelette connoisseurs.

CHARACTERISTIC ORGANOLEPTIC QUALITIES

TO LOOK AT

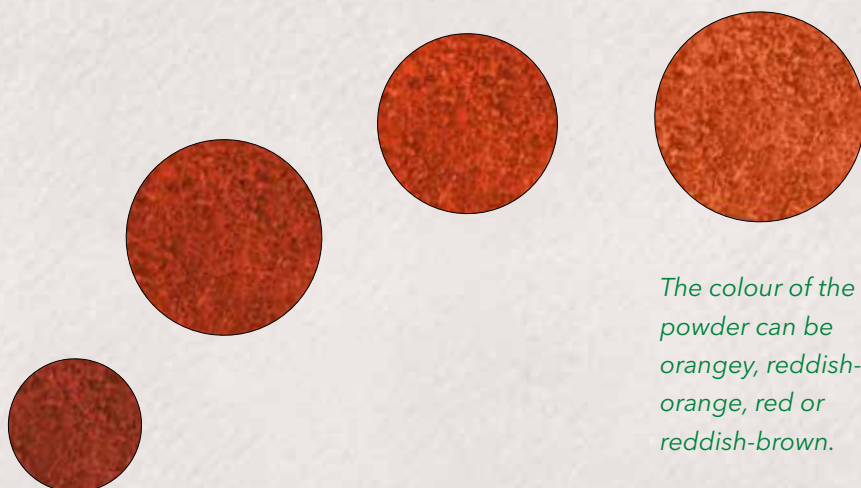
Ground to less than 5mm From orangey to reddish brown.

TO SMELL

Dried hay aroma, fruity, grilled.
Aromatic balance Medium to intense aromatic intensity.

TO TASTE

Sweet, slight bitterness.
Medium to intensely spicy, progressively spicy, heat sensation, lingers in the mouth.



The colour of the powder can be orangey, reddish-orange, red or reddish-brown.





THE PIMENT D'ESPELETTE AOP SYNDICATE

The Syndicate includes all Piment d'Espelette producers, processors and packagers.

Created in 1993 by passionate producers, the role of the syndicate in upholding its regulatory missions for the protection and management of Piment d'Espelette was confirmed :

- **In 2000 with the recognition of the Piment d'Espelette AOC,**
- **In 2002 with the granting of the AOP label to the Piment d'Espelette AOC,**
- **In 2007, by the INAO's recognition of it as the only body working for the Protection and Management of the Piment d'Espelette AOP.**

In addition to its vital promotion, quality assurance and AOP protection and management missions, the Syndicate acts as spokesperson and vital link between producers and corporate and economic partners. Its board of directors, which is made up of producers, selects development projects that will be implemented by working groups and employees. The Piment d'Espelette sector is a further enriched through an active network of 80 volunteers who are involved in the AOP tasting juries and in the day-to-day operations of the sector.

SYNDICATE RESOURCES

- 85% of income comes from the membership of operators who play a role in production
- 15% comes from grants awarded by Local and Regional Bodies and Europe.

Our partners :



THE SYNDICATE'S AREAS OF ACTION

- Constituent regulatory aspects of the AOP and controls;
- Legal protection of the AOP, in partnership with the INAO and the DGCCRF,
- Collective communication and nurturing and promoting the product's reputation
- Product quality by means of the provision of technical support for producers and raising awareness of the essential good practices required to ensure the sanitary quality of the product.
- Political representation of the AOP;

INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS OF THE AOP

- L'INAO : long-standing partner of the Syndicate, the role of the INAO expanded with the SIQO reforms. Its current missions include supervising controls, protecting designated areas and Appellations both in France and overseas.
- CERTISUD : External controls authority selected by the Syndicate in 2008
- DGCCRF : Partner acting in collaboration with the INAO in the fight against cases of fraud perpetuated against our AOP.

OUR ACTIONS

SUPPORTING PRODUCERS

The Piment d'Espelette sector is a community of committed men and women. By overseeing production practices on a daily basis and through our actions to promote solidarity and local and international cooperation, we are investing in the development of a form of agriculture that is respectful of our local landscape and the environment.



Partnership with the B.L.E. Association (Civam Bio Pays Basque) to promote and encourage more environmentally-friendly cultural practices



Supporting operators in waste management through the collection of used agricultural plastic films.



Organisation of training on Hygiene procedures to guarantee optimal health and safety.



All of our producers are Eco emballage members.

COMMUNICATION

The Syndicate organises numerous promotional activities through different events, activities and partnerships.

EVENTS



Salon International de l'Agriculture Paris (SIA)

Agricultural trade fair
Nouvelle Aquitaine

Lurrama

COMPETITION



General Agricultural Competition at the Paris

"Piment d'Espelette - Ezpeletako biperra" competition

- Local flavours competition

PIMENT D'ESPELETTE FESTIVAL



Piment d'Espelette Festival

The last weekend in October, 20,000 to 30,000 people come together to celebrate the Piment d'Espelette, an opportunity to meet producers.

TREASURES OF THE PAYS BASQUE



Treasures of the Pays Basque

Communication of the 4 AOPs and AOCs in the Pays Basque, Porc Basque Kintoa (AOC) Fromages Ossau Iraty AOP Vin d'Irouleguy Piment d'Espelette AOP



INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION WITH OTHER QUALITY AGRICULTURAL SECTORS

Piment d'Espelette enjoys a global reputation: its success in maintaining the fabric of local agriculture, and in the creation of a complete economy around this flagship product act as an example to groups of producers in both the northern and southern hemispheres. It is in this context in particular that the syndicate

has developed partnerships with Kampot pepper producers in Cambodia for the introduction of Indication Géographique labelling on certain key products. This type of partnership, which is supported by the Aquitaine region local government within the framework of International Cooperation, can lead to

exchange and expertise missions. Above and beyond local farming solidarity, supporting overseas development actions plays a role in strengthening the protection of our AOP and of products granted an official mark of quality on an international level.



ETXEA

The Piment d'Espelette AOP Discovery Centre

As part of its Piment d'Espelette AOP promotional activities, the Piment d'Espelette syndicate of producers has created a discovery centre dedicated to raising awareness of the Piment d'Espelette AOP.

This dedicated 100m space aims to promote the Piment d'Espelette through the work of the men and women involved in its production, its history, its reputation, the land in which it is grown, the specifications of its label, its organoleptic characteristics and its use.

**Free entrance
for access for
people with
reduced mobility.**

Low season:

March to June, October, November

From Monday to Friday

From 10 am to 1 pm and from 2 pm
to 5 pm

Closed at the weekends and on
public holidays

High season:

July to the end of September

From Monday to Friday:

Non-stop from 10 am to 6.30 pm

Saturday: From 10 am to 1 pm
and from 2 pm to 5 pm

Public holidays: From 10 am to 1 pm

Closed on Sundays

Annual closure:

From December to the end of February

**Tasting sessions
showcase the Piment
d'Espelette and local
products.
Workshops are
organised for children.**

The AOP Syndicate

25, Merkatu Plaza - 64250 Espelette

Contact us:

etxea@pimentdespelette.com

Tel : 05.59.93.88.86



① On entering, you will find information that explores the Piment d'Espelette from an historical perspective.

② Here, the three types of Piment d'Espelette are exhibited (ground, on a string, fresh) and a small exhibition looks at the stamp that provides consumers with a guarantee of the authenticity of the Piment d'Espelette AOP.

③ The local and strictly defined areas of cultivation are covered extensively in the exhibition space.

A model/sculpture of the local area highlights the geographic and climatic environment in which the Piment d'Espelette grows, supported by explanatory texts on the ideal conditions provided by the landscapes within the communes that make up the AOP.

④ An audiovisual space presents the history, production and use of the Piment d'Espelette through a documentary.

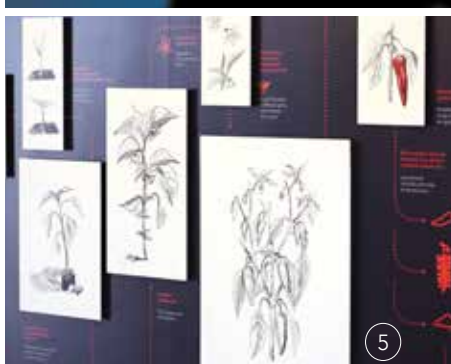
Comfortably installed, the general public can gain a better understanding of the origins, production stages and requirements of the AOP charter.

⑤ The botanical area provides detail on the development of the plant by means of large displays outlining the life-cycle of the Piment d'Espelette from seed to harvest.

⑥ The tasting and organoleptic experience space is perfect for awakening visitors' senses. It highlights the sensory qualities required in the production of our spice.

It also outlines the numerous virtues of the chilli, its culinary benefits and its other uses. Using portraits, the Scoville scale promotes our chilli and its spicy pungency in a playful way.

⑦ A dedicated children's area is available, and every week in the summer fun activities are organised.



AN EVOLVING SECTOR

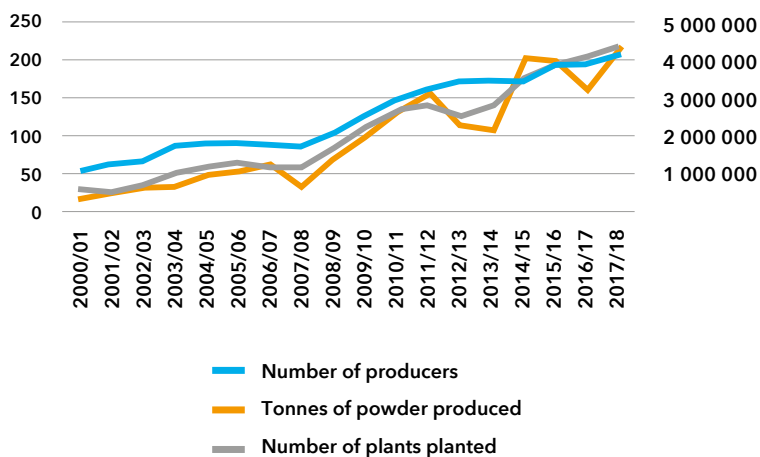
THE DYNAMISM OF A SECTOR THAT IS PREDOMINANTLY FARM BASED

From 30 producers in 1997 to more than 200 producers and processing and packaging businesses in 2018. The Piment d'Espelette sector is characterised by a remarkable dynamism in the agricultural world !

This dynamism is no doubt linked to the diversity of the Piment d'Espelette sector: Diversity that is first and foremost human with a real mix in terms of age, sex and origins ... But also diversity in production volumes on the farms, with a differential of 1 to 50 in terms of the number of plants planted.

Within the national context of an ageing farming population, the introduction of new producers, who are often young, guarantees the sustainability of the sector. The Piment d'Espelette, which plays an important role in maintaining family farms and in creating jobs, also has a significant and positive impact on the local area, particularly in terms of tourism. As such, the Piment d'Espelette has become one of the unmistakable symbols of the Basque country. It contributes to the vitality of the social fabric of the rural Pays Basque.

Evolution of the sector since 2000



PROMISING MARKETS FOR THE PIMENT D'ESPELETTE

Each operator in the sector is responsible for sales. Whilst all sales circuits are represented from direct sales to long distribution circuits, short distribution circuits, which create added value, remain the preferred sales

approach for the producers of Piment d'Espelette. Some producers are also members of other bodies who recognise quality: the Agriculture Biologique (organic farming) label and the IDOKI brand (managed by the Pays Basque Farm Producers Association).

Another driving force for the sector is the development of sales in France and abroad. From sales that were originally focused on the Pays Basque, the AOP now enjoys a national market in fine food emporiums, shops promoting local produce, restaurants and caterers, bulk suppliers and food industry artisans. As a result of its growing reputation, the Piment d'Espelette is experiencing simultaneous growth in export, coming from professionals in European countries, Canada, the USA, and also Asian countries, such as Japan.



EVERYDAY COOKING AND COOKING FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS

PIMENT D'ESPELETTE A PARTNER IN TASTE

Piment d'Espelette is a must-have spice in any recipe! A genuine flavour enhancer, it increases taste perception in food. Its light, progressive pungency, which lingers in the mouth, as well as these exceptional flavours give it its strength of character and its own totally delicious taste.

An exceptional spice used by top chefs for its unbeatable culinary properties.

ON A STRING, the fresh or dried chilli can be used as a condiment as it is, sliced thinly in a sauce or omelette, in little chunks in a soup, a stew or in stock... Or finely chopped and cooked in oil with a little garlic as the base for many dishes.

GROUND, ground Piment d'Espelette can be used daily in dishes to replace pepper.

Piment d'Espelette goes with all dishes and meals, but goes particularly well with meat and vegetables, fish and seafood. It lingers in the mouth, giving gastronomic cooking a particular character and goes very well with both dishes inspired by the local area as well as contemporary cuisine.

MORE ORIGINAL, the combination of Piment d'Espelette with fresh fruits, stewed fruits, in biscuits and cocoa... is a really delicious treat.

In order to store a string of Piment d'Espelette or ground Piment d'Espelette, we recommend :

TO STORE GROUND PIMENT D'ESPELETTE :

As with any natural spice, ground piment d'Espelette should be stored in a cool, dark and dry place. It contains no additives, preservatives or colourings, which is what gives it its exceptional qualities. Consume quickly after opening.

TO STORE A STRING OF PIMENT D'ESPELETTE:

To store your string of Piment d'Espelette, hang it in your kitchen or in a dry, well-ventilated place where it will continue to dry and will become a dark red colour.



“In my restaurant, I use the Piment d’Espelette in all my recipes. It’s about culture. It’s delicious with butter, on a slice of bread, an ice cream, or in a cep pie pastry.”

Elle Magazine, 10/06/2014

Syndicat du Piment d'Espelette AOP



EZPELETZKO BIPERRAREN SINDIKATUA

For any additional information, contact :
Le Syndicat du Piment d'Espelette AOP

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