



Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma

The Ducal Crown

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NEWS BEAT



A WELL-LIKED HAM THAT DESERVES TO BE BETTER KNOWN

Although Prosciutto di Parma is perfectly familiar to chefs, gourmet cooks and other foodies, mainstream American consumers are just getting to know this remarkable ham. Only a quarter of the participants in a recent survey had heard of Prosciutto di Parma and a surprisingly low 10 percent had tasted it. However, virtually everyone who has tried Prosciutto di Parma likes it a lot. Nine out of 10 consider it “excellent” or “very good in quality.”

According to the online survey, conducted on behalf of the Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma, the attribute that impresses consumers the most is the fact that Prosciutto di Parma is an all-natural product with no ingredients besides sea salt. Respondents have found many uses for the ham from Parma: as an appetizer (69%) or antipasto (59%), with cheese (59%), on a sandwich (58%), as a recipe ingredient (57%), with fruit (50%).

The survey reflects the growth in popularity of pre-sliced prosciutto, which is packaged in Parma and has been available in the U.S. only for the past few years. Over one third of the Prosciutto di Parma buyers in the survey had purchased the packaged pre-sliced ham.

How do consumers know they're purchasing genuine Prosciutto di Parma? More than half are tipped off by the name on the label or ask for the ham by name. Only 11 percent were aware of the Parma crown logo that certifies the authenticity of the product; it is fire branded on each ham and is depicted in a black triangle in the left-hand corner of each package of Parma ham.



IN MORIMOTO'S HANDS, ITALIAN FOODS GO GLOBAL

As one of four reigning Iron Chefs on the popular Food Network Show, Chef Masaharu Morimoto is accustomed to fierce culinary battles. But the challenge laid down by Italian producers of two traditional foods may be the toughest of his career: creating a tasting menu at New York City's Morimoto restaurant that incorporated Prosciutto di Parma and Parmigiano Reggiano into every course.

The first course proved that prosciutto with melon, however classic, is a dish that should never be taken for granted. The juicy wedges on diners' plates came from prized Japanese heirloom melons that cost \$80 each, explained Chef Morimoto. Of course, the ham had to be of equal quality, and silky slices of Prosciutto di Parma passed with flying colors.

With its intricate patterns, a square-cut Shikai Maki roll looked as though it came straight from the hands of a master sushi chef—and, in fact, it did. Both Morimoto and his executive chef, Makoto Okuwa, have earned that status. The surprise elements were a translucent layer of panko-breaded Prosciutto di Parma holding the roll together and a Parmigiano Reggiano foam so light it almost floated off the plate.

Other innovative dishes from Chef Morimoto's kitchen:

- Bluefin tuna flower with Prosciutto di Parma and Parmigiano Reggiano over baby arugula, with Japanese white asparagus and balsamic-pepper dressing
- Veal piccata wrapped in Prosciutto di Parma and crusted with Pamigiano Reggiano, served with triangles of asparagus and Prosciutto di Parma gelée.
- Chocolate pasta with Parmigiano Reggiano cream, garnished with sweet-and-salty grissini wrapped in Prosciutto di Parma and dipped in chocolate.

Asked whether Prosciutto di Parma and Parmigiano Reggiano would join his repertoire of ingredients, Chef Morimoto said, "Yes, definitely! These are experimental dishes—I'd never made some of them until today--but the flavors of these products are so wonderful that I plan to use them in the future."

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A PASTA PARTNER TO REMEMBER

Prosciutto di Parma, peas and cream are a trio that shows up over and over in pasta sauces—and no wonder, because the combination tastes sublime. Dominic, a Manhattan restaurant, serves a version made with strozzapreti, short twisted strands of pasta whose name (“priest stranglers”) is a kind of black-humor compliment; supposedly, the pasta tasted so good that clerics risked eating too fast and choking on it. Made with Prosciutto di Parma, this pasta dish lives up to its reputation of being dangerously delicious.

Prosciutto is often used sparingly in pasta dishes because just a little packs a lot of savory flavor. And it’s usually added at the last minute as a garnish, like grated cheese or chopped parsley. For instance, a variation on linguine con le vongole calls for strips of Prosciutto di Parma, which provide a delicious counterpoint to the clams; make the dish with an olive oil sauce fragrant with lemon zest and garlic. Add prosciutto strips to pasta primavera or toss with penne and roasted vegetables. For an ultra-easy pasta dinner, top ricotta-filled ravioli with your favorite marinara sauce and a sprinkling of julienned Prosciutto di Parma.

On Top of Spaghetti, by Johanne Killeen and George Germon, features a recipe for spaghetti alla carbonara that substitutes finely chopped prosciutto for the usual pancetta and tosses baby arugula into the mix. Author Erica de Mane describes an interesting technique in her orecchiette and broccoli rabe recipe (Flavors of Southern Italy). She trims and chops the fat from Prosciutto di Parma slices, then sautés it with garlic to create a base for the sauce; the lean prosciutto, cut into strips, garnishes the completed dish.

Thick-sliced Prosciutto di Parma is simmered with plum tomatoes, heavy cream to make what Biba Caggiano calls “the traditional sauce of Bologna” in her new cookbook, Biba’s Italy. “It never goes out of style,” she promises. Caggiano should know because she is a native of Emilia-Romagna, where Bologna is located and Prosciutto di Parma is made.

[Click here](#) for home style pasta recipes and chef style pasta recipes you can make at home, including Strozzapreti with Prosciutto di Parma.



CHEF TALK



CHEF TALK: GABRIELE PAGANELLI, ON HIS NATIVE CUISINE

Gabriele Paganelli is the chef of Famoso, a white tablecloth restaurant specializing in the cuisine of Emilia-Romagna, and M Café and Bar, a casual restaurant with a European-style menu; both are located in Chevy Chase, Maryland.

Q: Where do you draw inspiration for your dishes?

A: I grew up in Ravenna, on the coast, but in Emilia-Romagna we also have the influence of the mountains and of river valleys. For me, the bible of cooking is *La Scienza in Cucina e L'Arte di Mangiar Bene*, by Pellegrino Artusi, which was published more than a hundred years ago. I try to present traditional ideas in a simple but modern way.

Q: For Example?

A: In the old days, they made pasta from chestnut flour because they couldn't grow grain in the mountains between Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna. Now we make tagliatelle from chestnut flour because it tastes good, not

because it's the only kind available to us.

Q: How much Prosciutto di Parma do you go through in a week?

A: At least two hams. In the café we serve it with seasonal fruit, on pizzas and with piadine, a traditional flat bread. One of our specialties at Famoso is thinly sliced Parma ham over a Parmigiano Reggiano basket filled with a mesclun mix, along with a selection of cheeses, fruits and other cured meats.

Q: Any other dishes you're especially proud of?

A: Risotto with a pheasant and black truffle ragout. It's called risotto mantecato—meaning “creamed”—because it is served at the table from a Parmigiano Reggiano wheel. The creaminess comes from the cheese as it melts into the risotto.

Q: Is there a tradition in Emilia-Romagna of combining prosciutto with fish or other seafood?

A: Yes, it's a way of boosting the flavor of a sweet or mild fish. I find salmon a little bit boring, so we serve grilled fillets with a crisp julienne of Prosciutto di Parma and a salad of mixed greens and fresh citrus fruits.

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