

SPECIFICATION

COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 510/2006 on protected geographical indications and protected designations of origin

“Waterford Blaa” / “Blaa”

EC No:

PDO () PGI (X)

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

1 RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT IN THE MEMBER STATE

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2 GROUP

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Composition: Producers/processors (X) Other ()

3 TYPE OF PRODUCT

Class 2.4. Bread, pastry, cakes, confectionery, biscuits and other baker's wares

4 SPECIFICATION

4.1 Name:

“Waterford Blaa” / “Blaa”

4.2 Description:

“Waterford Blaa” / “Blaa” is a soft doughy white bread roll clearly identified by the white floury top on the product. Unlike other products in this category Waterford Blaa contains no enrichment and is made from preservative free strong bakers flour, table salt, compressed yeast, dough conditioner and water only.

The bread has the following characteristics:

- Shape:

“Waterford Blaa” / “Blaa” can be round or square. They are made both crusty and soft are pined out round and trayed up round but the batch together as they expand during baking, when they are pulled apart they are square shaped but their domed top gives them a round appearance.

- Size:

“Waterford Blaa” / “Blaa” is 3-4.5cm high with a diameter of 8-12cm and weighs 40-65g.

- Presentation:

“Waterford Blaa” / “Blaa” may be presented in two different ways:

- Crusty:
Rustic square, or round shape of bread with a dome shaped, crusty top dusted with flour. Crunchy at first bite, then chewy with a subtle malt taste and a pleasing bitter aftertaste from the well cooked, dark crust.
- Soft:
Soft, well-defined square, oval or round shape of bread, pale in colour and heavily dusted with flour. Slightly sweet, malt flavour, light but firm in texture and melts in the mouth.

4.3 Geographical area:

The geographical area that applies to this application is described as Waterford city and county and an area of south Co. Kilkenny as outlined in the map.

The geographical area is restricted to the geographical area known as all of County Waterford and that part of South County Kilkenny, which directly adjoins County Waterford made up of the Ullid and Dunkitt electoral divisions which is part of the southern Piltown electoral area. The river Blackwater runs through the area and includes the town-lands of Dangan, Narabawn, Moolum, Newtown, Skeard, Greenvilleand and Ullid.



4.4 Proof of origin:

General Requirements:

- The product shall be prepared in registered food premises.
- The product shall be produced and distributed in a manner that prevents contamination.
- The dough shall be made using traditional baking methods by trained staff.
- The product shall be visually assessed at all stages of the production process by the bakers to ensure that it has the features characteristic of the Waterford Blaa.
- Training records shall be maintained to demonstrate that bakers are adequately trained for the production of “Waterford Blaa”/ “Blaa” and working in a food business.

Traceability of product:

- The “Waterford Blaa” / “Blaa” producer shall retain records of:
- Daily quantity of “Waterford Blaa” / “Blaa” manufactured
- Daily quantity of “Waterford Blaa” / “Blaa” supplied to each retailer/foodservice operator
- Quantity of ingredients used in manufacturing on a daily or weekly basis
- Suppliers of the ingredients used on a daily or weekly basis.

4.5 Method of production:

Stage 1 Mixing

All the ingredients are mixed and divided into heads (large pieces of dough) that weigh between 4.5 to 5.0lbs.

Stage 2 Resting

Following formation and weighing of the dough the heads are allowed to rest for 10 to 20 minutes.

Stage 3 Pinning

Pinning of the dough takes place, this process shall result in dough having the characteristic round shape of the final product prior to baking.

Stage 4 Sub-dividing and Resting (including flour addition)

The heads are then sub divided into smaller (30 approx) round pieces which will eventually form the “Waterford Blaa” / “Blaa” and allowed to rest for a second time. Flour is added.

Stage 5 Flattening and Rolling (including flour addition)

When flattened the pieces of dough are placed on trays measuring 30 inches x 18inches (75 x 45cms) in the specific pattern of 5 across and 8 down.

These trays are then placed on racks of 10/12 trays each and rolled into provers at a temperature of 42 - 44° C degrees for approximately one hour. Flour is added.

The baker visually assesses the dough to ensure that it is ready for the next stage.

Stage 6 Proving (including flour addition)

The Baker adds well sifted flour to each tray of “Waterford Blaa” / “Blaa” dough in one or two movements of the hand so that flour is spread evenly over each of the 40 units on the tray and rested.

Stage 7 Baking

The product is then baked in batches in either brick or conventional baking ovens until the dough is cooked at a temperature of C 220 °- C 230 ° C for between 25 and 35 minutes.

Stage 8 Assessment

The baker assesses the product during and after baking to ensure the product has achieved the characteristics associated with the Waterford Blaa.

Stage 9 Cooling

The product is cooled at ambient temperature for approximately one hour prior to packing.

Stages 1 to 9 must take place within the geographical area.

Stage 10 Packing

The product is packed into open boxes or trays

or

The product blast frozen and packed in boxes of 80-100 where they are reheated in ovens for consumption.

The dough requires a lot of handling using the traditional technique. The dough must be hand floured at least three times during the various stages of production.

4.6 Link:

The tradition of baking “Waterford Blaa” dates back to the arrival of the Huguenots. At the time and throughout the medieval period Waterford was a powerful trading city, leather, wheat, flour, butter and other agricultural produce from the area around Waterford were shipped to and from England and the Continent mostly to Spain, France and Italy.

During the civil war records were destroyed, oral history dictates that in 1685, a large section of French Protestants were exiled to whatever countries gave them shelter, including England and Ireland. Waterford became a point of attraction to French refugees due to its ease of access; it placed them within convenient distance of their own shores, should circumstances make their return desirable; and it afforded a port of trade capable of developing the mercantile abilities of the most enterprising.

According to the oral tradition of the period, the Huguenots introduced a bread product made from left over pieces of dough in the late seventeenth century. Waterford bakers believe when the Huguenots introduced the “Waterford Blaa” / “Blaa” it was called “blaad or Blanc”, and was originally made from leftover pieces of dough before baking. The “blaad or Blanc” was later corrupted to “Blaa” a name which exists to the present day.

During the early 19th century, the “Waterford Blaa” / “Blaa” gained popularity, chiefly among the poor, when the founder of the Christian Brothers, Brother Edmund Ignatius Rice (1762-1844) began baking the “Waterford Blaa” / “Blaa” at his own bakery in Mount Sion in Waterford City, in 1802. The simplicity of the “Waterford Blaa” / “Blaa” basic ingredients made them cheap and popular with the local population.

Based on traditional methods and the unique skills of the bakers, today they are supplied by local family bakers operating since the late 1800’s. The same traditional recipe has been handed down from generation to generation as in the oral tradition.

Unlike other products in this category “Waterford Blaa” / “Blaa” contains no enrichment and is made from preservative free strong bakers’ flour, table salt, compressed yeast, dough conditioner and water only.

The addition of flour gives the product the white finish on top which results in the rough cracked appearance of the “Waterford Blaa” / “Blaa” which is a characteristic of the product. As “Waterford Blaa” / “Blaa” are not baked with steam the heavy dusting of flour is both for protection from oven heat and to enhance the appearance. Throughout the production process of the Waterford Blaa / Blaa there is excessive use of flour, at pinning, resting etc. there is also flour on the base of the Blaa.

“Waterford Blaa”/ “Blaa” are characteristically not uniform in shape and size.

“Waterford Blaa” / “Blaa” is a popular breakfast product usually baked during the night and sold as a bread product normally eaten with butter or as a mid-day snack to make sandwiches with a variety of fillings, including fried potatoes, dilsk, Irish fillet steak and relish. However, it is a popular belief that “Waterford Blaa” / “Blaa” is best when torn apart by hand and eaten fresh, straight from the bakery.

The link between “Waterford Blaa” / “Blaa” and the area is based on the specific characteristics of the product and the reputation of the product and the traditional production methods.

The traditional production methods passed from baker to baker since its introduction by the Huguenots ensure that it cannot be produced solely by machine. The dough requires a lot of handling using the traditional technique. The dough must also be hand floured at least three times during the various stages of production. The product contains no preservatives or enrichments. These processes and the skill of the bakers ensure that the each “Waterford Blaa” / “Blaa” is produced in accordance with the tradition.

The reputation of the “Waterford Blaa” / “Blaa” draw on its early historical roots; the manufacture of the “Waterford Blaa” / “Blaa” began with the arrival of the French Huguenots in the 17th century who taught the local population how to bake “Waterford Blaa” / “Blaa”. In the book “The Huguenots, their settlements, churches, & industries in England and Ireland By Samuel Smiles” (1869) it states that “there were also numerous refugees of a humbler class settled in the place, many of the minor tradesmen were French -- bakers, butchers, masons, smiths”.

Such is the reputation of “Waterford Blaa” / “Blaa” that it has featured in contemporary publications such as Eddie Wymberly’s “Well!: Recollections of Waterford in the 1940s and 1950s”. Which includes a poem written by Eddie Wymberly about the “Waterford Blaa” / “Blaa”:

“A Blaa with two a’s is made with fresh dough
About the size of a saucer, that’s the right size you know:
But where did they come from, did they happen by chance
No, the Huguenots brought them from France”.

At Taste Festivals Ireland/Euro-toques Food Awards 2008, the “Waterford Blaa” / “Blaa” bakers received an award for the preservation of a traditional regional product, the “Waterford Blaa” / “Blaa”. The “Waterford Blaa” / “Blaa” is one of the distinguished regional foods of Ireland and dates back beyond the 1700s. The “Waterford Blaa” / “Blaa” is so versatile and such an integral part of daily life in Waterford - Its traditional recipe has survived generations.

Many articles have been written on the product in local, Regional, National and some International papers. All of which describe the product, its characteristics and its history.

The name is synonymous with the area, it is often used as a symbol of Waterford; the local radio station, WLR Fm’s morning programme is called “The Big Blaa Breakfast Show”, within the area the “Waterford Blaa” / “Blaa” is also used to promote local events, the “Fleadh Blaa Hooley!” a traditional music event was a fund-raiser for this year’s Waterford Festival of Food, Dungarvan and Fleadh Cheoil na Mumhan (Munster Fleadh).

They are supplied by local family bakers operating since the late 1800’s using the same traditional recipe handed down from generation to generation as in the oral tradition.

4.7 Inspection body:

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4.8 Labelling:

Must comply with legislation.