

Extremadura: our traditional flavours



The fruit grown in the region of Extremadura is of high quality and has exceptional flavour and aroma. It is grown using environmentally friendly methods. The region's many hours of sunlight make for high sugar content and intense colour in its fruit produce. Extremadura fruit is building up its reputation year by year.

Last year, Extremadura produced the record figure of 250,000 tonnes of fruit. The region has about 20,000 hectares of fruit orchard, with stone fruit species being predominant. A marked shift in fruit varieties has taken place in recent years among both the main crops and other products, like apricot. Stone fruits are grown chiefly in the plains on the banks of the river Guadiana and north of Cáceres. This area has around 7,000 hectares of cherry orchard. The other major fruits of the region are nectarines, plums, peaches, pears and apricots.

Extremadura is a strong exporter of stone fruit.

Another of the special features of Extremadura fruit growing is that cooperatives, like the Valle del Jerte partnership, have become firmly established. The processed fresh fruit and vegetable sub-sector is still at an early stage, and is now starting to create wealth, add value to products, create jobs and attract investment into the region's pioneering new





processing plants. Extremadura is one of the 'youngest' regions in this sub-sector, but it has a clear strategy to compete on quality.

Integrated Production: Extremadura was the first region to introduce integrated production regulations through to the distribution phase. Extremadura's cultivated area certified for integrated production now stands at 82% for stone fruit (and 60% for pear).

The vegetables of the region include tomatoes for use in the food industry. In 2005, Extremadura produced 2.2 million tonnes of tomatoes for industry. Extremadura is thus the country's leading tomato producer, with 29,000 hectares under cultivation. Extremadura can be said to be the only region in the world where tomato growing has increased over the past six years.

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Other major products of the region include melon and peppers for pimentón (paprika) powder and dried ñoras - used as a typical ingredient in Spanish and Mediterranean cuisine. In the Vera district, peppers already have their own protected designation of origin.

The quality of Extremaduran products is the outcome of combining traditional methods perfected over the centuries with the advantages of the latest technologies. Hence the best of the past and of the present is applied to the excellent raw materials brought forth by the region's privileged environment. To preserve these aspects of living heritage, the Junta of Extremadura (regional government) uses protected designations of origin as internationally recognised guarantees that ensure that the products are prepared using the best raw materials and the region's traditional methods. Extremadura's products



are recognised and appreciated by the experts and have won favour among consumers.

The spirit and the reality of Extremadura is difficult to convey and must be experienced for oneself - the diversity and beauty of its landscapes, its people, its natural resources and products, and, of course, its food and cuisine. Extremadura, besides being a very large region, offers quality and something distinctive for those wishing to escape from 'more of the same'. It is a very gratifying experience to learn to enjoy its PDO and PGI products, like Cereza del Jerte cherries and Pimentón de la Vera smoked paprika powder.

Extremadura offers the visitor a generous selection of everything you need to enjoy a visit abroad.

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They all want to be picota cherries. Reject imitations

The protected designation of origin Cereza del Jerte exclusively covers fresh table cherries of exceptional quality. Jerte cherries are highly prized for their distinctive flavour, juiciness and firm pulp.

The growing area is in the north of Cáceres province, in the local districts of Valles de Jerte, La Vera, and Ambroz. This is a peerless landscape with a variety of microclimates, many hours of sunlight, plentiful, crystal-clear water and soil enriched by the work of many generations.

Environmental factors like humidity - high even in the hot summer - valley breezes, orientation, average annual sunlight hours, altitude, the microclimatic profile and healthy soil acidity have made this area a unique and privileged place to grow cherries.

The varieties under the PDO mostly belong to the group generically known as Picota del Jerte. The stalks

come off naturally in the picking process. Picota del Jerte accounts for more than three quarters of the local harvest, and is divided into the sub-varieties Ambrunés, Pico Negro, Pico Lemón Negro and Pico Colorado. The area also grows a stalked variety with special features called Navalinda.

All these cherries are sweet and delicately acidic. Their colour is of varying intensities of red, while the pulp is very firm, crisp and red. The juice is red to colourless, depending on the sub-variety.

The cherries are carefully picked using traditional methods - by hand, fruit by fruit, to avoid any damage.

Cherries are rich in vitamins K, A and C and provide high levels of calcium, iron, potassium, phosphorus and fibre. Eating cherries helps us stay young by fighting the agents that age our skin. Cherries are also an excellent natural remedy against swelling and arthritis, boost the immune system, prevent bone disease and improve the metabolism and the elimination of liquids.

Cherries are available in greengrocers from mid-June to early August, when they are ripest.

So now you know... the finest cherries are picotas and come from the Jerte valley!

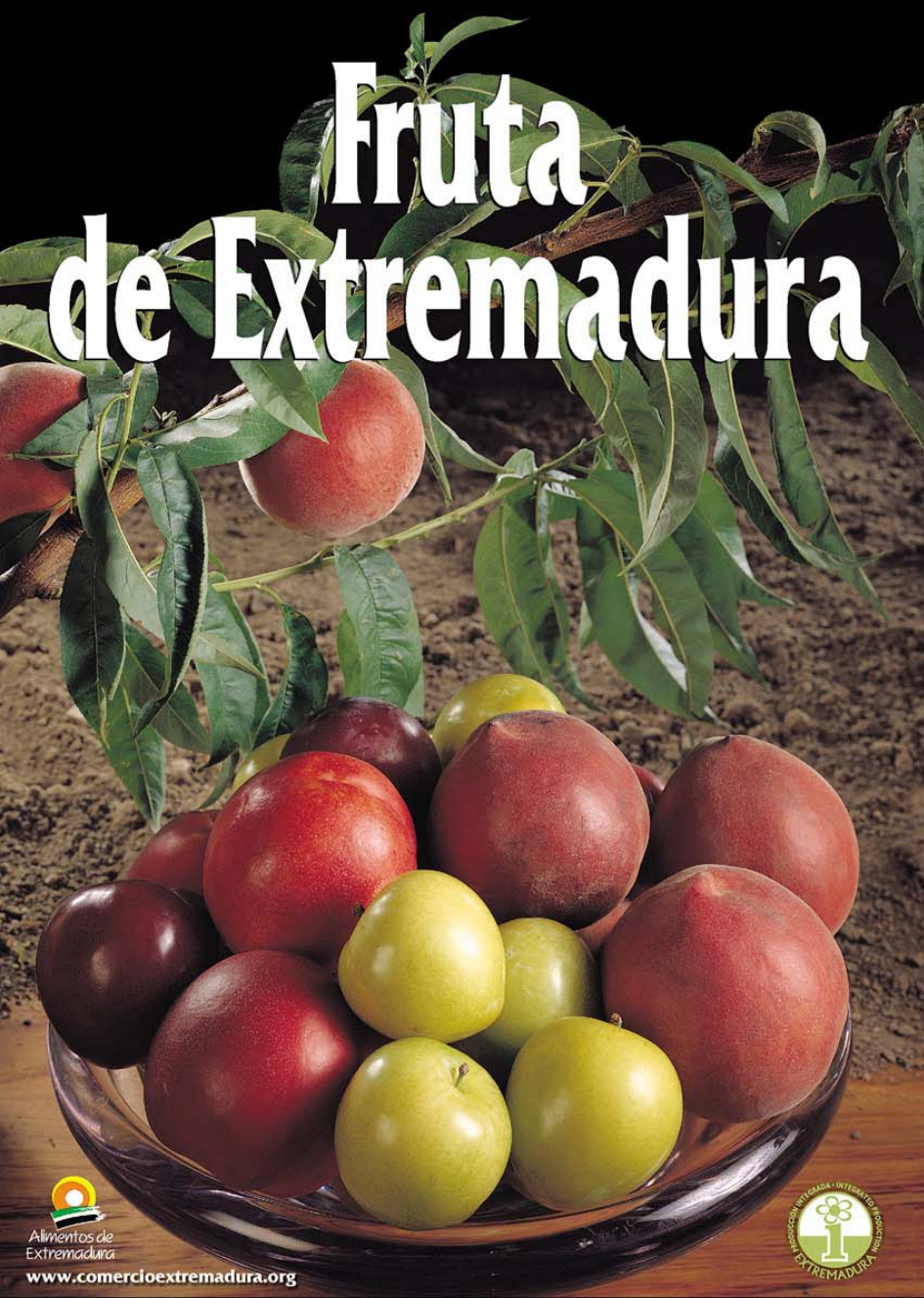


www.cerezadeljerte.org

CEREZA DEL JERTE, CRDO 219



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