

Regional sheep products

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Regional products are manufactured only in some regions of the European Union. They are bearing a protected trademark and the technology of their production is protected.

Bryndza podhalańska (Podhale sheep cheese) is the first product from Poland to receive EU protection and join the group of products with a protected designation of origin (PDO), as a result of which it can be marked with an original product label. Bryndza podhalańska is a traditional product of Carpathian shepherds. Its production begins after milking, when warm milk is mixed with rennet, a milk-curdling enzyme. Curdled cheese mass is crumbled using a wooden mixer and then manually collected to mould a lump. It can be hung in a linen cloth to drain resulting in bundz – a delicate, sweet-flavoured cheese that can be used to make bryndza cheese after 1-2 weeks of maturation. At first, bundz is crumbled, moulded by hand into a uniform lump with the addition of 2-3% salt, and then pressed in wooden dishes to obtain uniform plastic mass.

Oscypek cheese is the second Polish product registered as a regional product in the European Union. The initial stages of production are the same as for bryndza until obtaining the cheese lump, which is then repeatedly compressed and scalded in hot water. The cheese is formed when an internally carved ring is placed round the cheese, and the parts remaining outside are pressed by hand into conical shape, giving the whole a characteristic spindle-like appearance. It is then pierced with a skewer, soaked in brine for about 24 hours and after drying it is smoked on a chalet shelf over a fire. Smoked for 3-14 days, it acquires unique taste and shiny colour, ranging from yellow to light brown. Oscypek is a seasonal product. Milk used for its production comes exclusively from Polish Mountain Sheep. It is allowed to add cow's milk (40% at most) coming exclusively from Polish Red cows. The oscypek production season lasts from May to September because of the limited availability of sheep milk during the other months.