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San Daniele dei Friuli (Udine), June 22, 2007

CHINA GIVES THUMBS-UP TO SAN DANIELE

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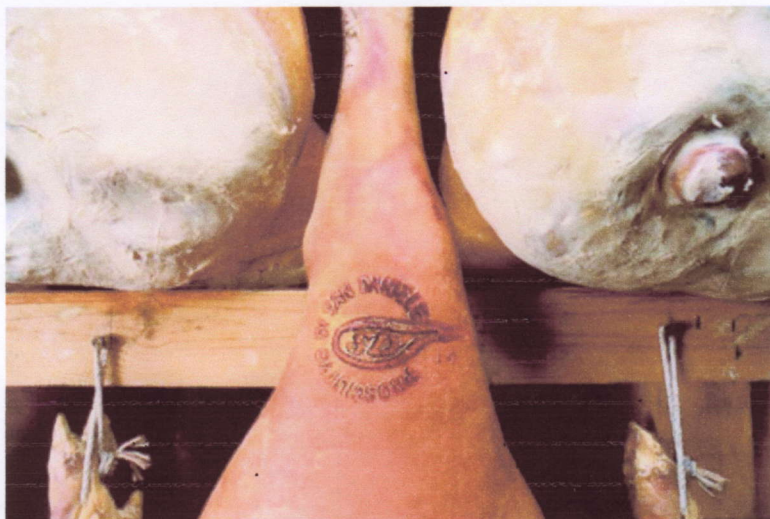


During the opening ceremony of 2006's 9th Festival of the Prosciutto di Parma held annually during the last two weeks of September at the Prosciutto Museum in the town of Langhirano, Stefano Tedeschi, President of the Consortium and one of Italy's most famous soccer referees, presented the first prosciutto di Parma to go to Seoul to Mr. Cho Young-Jai, South Korea's commercial attaché in Rome. "Our next big challenge," said Tedeschi, "will be China where the red tape is almost finalized before aiming at Oceania's markets."

As I reported in my article, "Prosciutto with a Capital P" (*Epicurean-Traveler.com*, October 3, 2006), Tedeschi then went on to give the following answers to many FAQs about prosciutto. Within Italy 15% of the prosciutti for a total of c. 2,000,000 come from San Daniele; 39.1% percent from Parma; and the remaining 45.9 % are lower-cost brands from elsewhere. More salt is used to cure Prosciutto di San Daniele. The other differences between prosciutti di San Daniele and prosciutti di Parma is the pig's age and weight before curing: ten months old and weighing at least 150 kilos, so that the uncured thighs weigh between 10 and 14 kilos in Parma vs. nine months old, weighing at least 160 kilos, so that the uncured thigh weigh around 11 kilos; shape: a San Daniele prosciutto which includes the hoof for a more rustic-looking ham is guitar shaped vs. Parma's "chicken drumstick"; and the length of ageing time: 9-10 months in Parma vs. at least 12 months and sometimes up to two years for San Daniele; the weight of the final product: variable for Daniele and 9-10 kilos for Parma.

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A hot-off-the-press release from the Region of Friuli/Venezia proudly declares that San Daniele may have beaten Parma in the competition for the Chinese market. The Aria di Festival, held in San Daniele since 1985 over the third weekend in June draws crowds of around 500,000 people.

This year's voluptuous dumb-blond TV starlet, Valeria Marini, former wife of Italy's most important movie producer and distributor Vittorio Cecchi Gori, cut the first slice of San Daniele in front of a Chinese delegation, this year's "guest stars." In fact this year's festival "of flavors, land, and culture" (June 22-25) was a celebration of the arrival of the historical Friuli prosciutto on the Chinese market.

This recent decision by the Beijing authorities formed part of a program called *Piaceri italiani in Cina* ("Italian Pleasures in China"), which will see four flagship stores open in four different Chinese locations in a bid to promote Italian food and tourist attractions in China. Every year the Festival's program includes concerts, a classic "Friulian barnyard" so city children can learn about farm animals, tastings of local foods and wines, cookery classes, and tours of San Daniele prosciutto producers to learn the production steps, recipes, plus the best way to cut and preserve the product.