



**PARMIGIANO  
REGGIANO**

## **PARMIGIANO REGGIANO**

### RETAILERS GUIDELINES

Second edition - October 2025

*[parmigianoreggiano.us](http://parmigianoreggiano.us)*



# GUIDELINES FOR POINT OF SALE STAFF <sup>1</sup> PARMIGIANO REGGIANO CHEESE

These guidelines, drawn up by the Consorzio del Formaggio Parmigiano-Reggiano, have the purpose of giving some brief and useful information about Parmigiano Reggiano cheese, its characteristics and procedures at the point of sale.

The point of sale staff shall therefore be able to give consumers correct answers and suitable product information.

For additional information, please refer to the website: [parmigianoreggiano.us](http://parmigianoreggiano.us)

<sup>1</sup>The present guidelines should not be deemed to constitute a legally binding interpretation of the relevant legislation. Indeed, such an interpretation falls solely within the power/competence of the Courts. The responsibility of the compliance with the relevant legislation is of any operator. These guidelines may be amended.

Parmigiano Reggiano is a hard cheese, obtained from cooked and slowly matured paste, made from raw cow's milk, partially skimmed, produced by cows whose feed consists mainly of forage from the area of origin.

**AREA OF ORIGIN:** the milk and the cheese are produced in Italy in the defined geographical area which comprises the territory of the Provinces **of Parma, Reggio Emilia, Modena, Mantua (on the right bank of the Po river) and Bologna (on the left bank of the Reno river)**, in compliance with strict standards.

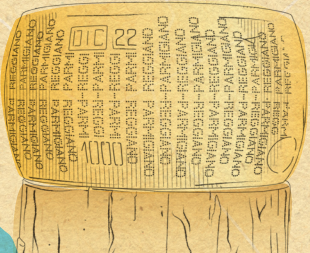
Since 1996 the name Parmigiano Reggiano has been recognized in the European Union as a PDO (Protected Designation of Origin):



EU PDO symbol

# PARMIGIANO REGGIANO

Area of origin



**Parmigiano Reggiano is made in compliance with a strict specification that provides for, among others, the following standards:**

**1**

*Dairy cows fed mainly with forage from the area of origin (Silage is forbidden).*

**2**

*Milk, cheese making process, and minimum aging (12 months) in the area of origin.*

**3**

*Always only 3 ingredients: milk, salt and calf rennet.*

**4**

*100% of the wheels checked by the Consorzio.*

## PARMIGIANO REGGIANO IN FIGURES:

Less than **3,000** milk producers

About **300** dairies

More than **4,000,000** wheels produced/year

**520** liters (137.6 gal) of milk to make one wheel

**40.5** kg (89.28 lb.) average weight of a wheel.



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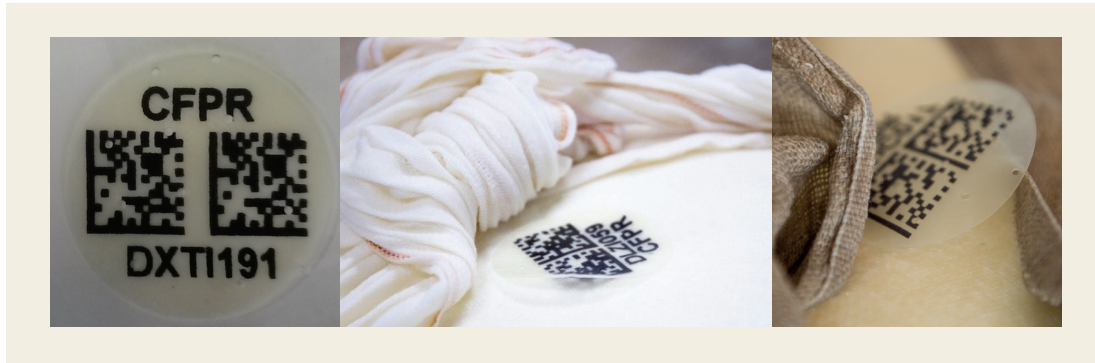


# WHEEL OF PARMIGIANO REGGIANO CHEESE

*How can we recognize it?*

On every wheel of Parmigiano Reggiano the following identification elements are present:

**CASEIN PLATE** that shows: alphanumeric code for full product traceability that identifies every single wheel; it is usually placed on the flat face of the wheel from birth.



Do you want to know who and when the wheel was made?

Insert the alphanumeric code in the field “Search by casein plate number”

( <https://www.parmigianoreggiano.com/en-US/dairies-find-dairy> ) and find out which dairy produced that specific wheel and the birthday.

INFORMATION

BOOK A VISIT

LATTERIA SOCIALE LA MODERNA

FRAZ. FRESCAROLO, 3 Bussato, PR

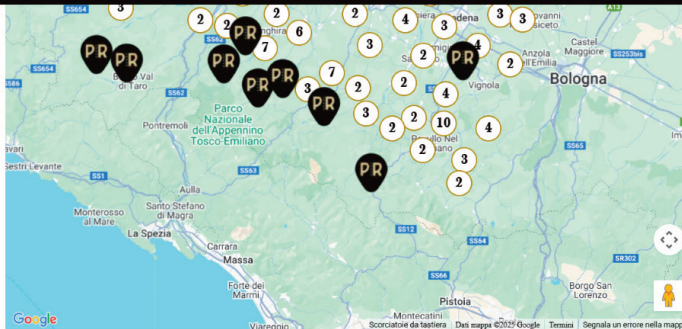
INFORMATION

FERRARI GIOVANNI IND.CASEARIA

LOC. BORIO, 1 Bedonia, PR

INFORMATION

LATTERIA SALSESE



Search by casein plate number i

Insert code

SEARCH



## ALL THE FOLLOWING MARKS:

The certification mark pin dot wording Parmigiano Reggiano placed on the side rind of each wheel.



The approval number of the establishment is provided for by EU legislation laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin.

**Remember: starting from January 2016 each wheel features production month and year, as well as dairy numeric code 3 times.**

The numeric code identifying the dairy: find out about the dairy that produced the wheel on:

<https://www.parmigianoreggiano.com/en-US/dairies-find-dairy>



Oval certification mark “Consorzio Tutela Parmigiano Reggiano” and the production year: all the wheels are carefully examined by Consorzio experts each year and only those that pass a detailed inspection with the traditional cheese “hammer” at 12 months, are given this symbol.

Month (in Italian language)/year of production proving how old the cheese is!



If a wheel is marked with parallel grooves around the side rind, it means that this wheel has been classified as “**Mezzano**” **Parmigiano Reggiano**, i.e. a Parmigiano Reggiano second category/“medium grade” cheese that should be eaten young.

On the wheels classified as third category, consisting of the wheels characterized by the presence of a number of serious defects the marks of origin around the side rind are removed: **these wheels can't be named Parmigiano Reggiano.**



## Voluntary selection marks

### What does the “Export” mark mean?

If the oval certification mark “Parmigiano Reggiano Export” is affixed on the cheese, it means that this wheel has been quality checked by the Consorzio experts at 18 months of aging and it is classified as “first grade”, namely without defects.



### What does the “Premium” mark mean?

If the mark “Parmigiano Reggiano Premium” is affixed on the cheese, it means that this wheel has been quality checked by the Consorzio experts at 24 months of aging, it is classified as “first grade”, namely without defects, and has been deemed suitable according to a sensory analysis score.

**What does the “Prodotto di montagna” mark mean?**

If this fire brand is on the cheese, it means that this wheel was produced in a mountain area within the production area, that it has been quality checked by the Consorzio experts at 20 months of aging and that it has undergone a sensory analysis.



# PORTIONED OR GRATED PARMIGIANO REGGIANO CHEESE

## Pre-packaged in Italy

On the labelling of Parmigiano Reggiano cheese that has been grated, portioned and pre-packaged under official controls within the defined geographical area of origin in Italy, the use of the “Parmigiano Reggiano Wedge and Wheel” certification mark is mandatory as well as the indication of the minimum aging on the portioned wedge.

“Parmigiano Reggiano Wedge and Wheel” certification mark can be any of the following four, as appropriate.



# PORTIONED OR GRATED PARMIGIANO REGGIANO CHEESE

## Pre-packaged in Italy

Starting from April 24, 2025, the certification mark, illustrated in the previous page, has been replaced with a new version, which will be progressively applied to the new labelling of Parmigiano Reggiano pre-packaged cheese.



The Mezzano, Export and Premium marks are going to be featured on the labeling as follow:



# Example of a labelling of pre-packaged Parmigiano Reggiano cheese



## Operations allowed in the US retail store

You can cut or grate Parmigiano Reggiano cheese at the retail outlet.

**Remember:** the pin dot wording Parmigiano Reggiano on the rind is distinctive and every portion that is cut and wrapped in store should feature a piece of rind bearing at least a part of the pin dot wording “Parmigiano Reggiano” that acts as a guarantee of authenticity for consumers.

### Wrong way



### Correct way

*(pin dot wording on each piece)*



Would you like to learn about the best way to open and cut a wheel of Parmigiano Reggiano cheese?

Look at our tutorial <https://www.parmigianoreggiano.com/en-US/product-guide-cutting-and-storage> or read the QR code.

## How can Parmigiano Reggiano cheese be labelled at the store?



**BE CAREFUL!**

**This certification mark cannot be placed on the labelling of the Parmigiano Reggiano cheese cut or grated or shaved or shredded in the store! As above highlighted, this mark shall be used only on the labelling of the pre-packaged Parmigiano Reggiano cheese cut and grated by operator with plants located in the area of origin, subject to the PDO Parmigiano Reggiano control system.**

The name to be used is **PARMIGIANO REGGIANO**.

The certification mark PARMIGIANO REGGIANO shall be accompanied by the relevant statement of identity, i.e. cheese grated/shaved/shredded.

As “Parmigiano Reggiano” is a certification mark, other uses such as “domestic Reggiano” “Parmesan reggiano”, “Parmigiano Regg”, “Parm. Reggiano”, “Parmigiano Grana Padano” ... are **NOT ALLOWED!**

The words “PARMIGIANO” or “REGGIANO” must not be used on cheese that is not PARMIGIANO REGGIANO cheese.

**Remember: the Consorzio owns many certification marks in the US consisting of or containing the name Parmigiano Reggiano, carries out monitoring activities on the market to control the use of such marks and picks up samples to be analyzed in order to check authenticity.**

**Ingredients: part-skimmed milk, salt, enzyme or part-skimmed milk, salt, rennet.**

The milk is from cows and Parmigiano Reggiano cheese is made from unpasteurized milk.

**No additives or preservatives are allowed.  
Do not add anticaking agents or cellulose to  
the Parmigiano Reggiano grated cheese:  
IT IS FORBIDDEN!**

## Further information

You can write the age of the cheese stenciled on the cheese rind (production month/year) on the label **NUTRITIONAL and other information.**

Parmigiano Reggiano cheese **is naturally lactose free** because of the natural cheese making process.

Parmigiano Reggiano cheese should be stored at refrigerated temperature (+4°C/8°C - 40°F/48°F).

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
Varied Servings Per Container	
<b>Serving size</b>	<b>1 oz (28g)</b>
<b>Amount per serving</b>	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>% Daily Value*</b>	
<b>Total Fat</b> 8g	<b>10%</b>
Saturated Fat 5g	<b>25%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 25mg	<b>8%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 180mg	<b>8%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 0g	<b>0%</b>
Dietary Fiber 0g	<b>0%</b>
Total Sugars 0g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	<b>0%</b>
<b>Protein</b> 9g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 320mg	25%
Iron 0mg	0%
Potassium 30mg	0%

\*The % Daily Value tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

## Incorrect labelling examples



**Incorrect name**

**Incorrect ingredient:  
pasteurized milk**

**Incorrect name**  
**Incorrect ingredients:  
presence of cellulose**

## What are these white spots?

Unlike what many people think, they are not grains of salt or calcium, they are crystals of tyrosine, that is an aminoacid present in the cheese, and it is an index of the degree of aging.



## Can the rind be eaten?

Yes, it can. After cleaning the rind to get rid of the foreign substances that may have accumulated and the casein plate (if present), you can then eat it because it is completely natural!

## HOW TO STORE NON VACUUM-PACKED PARMIGIANO REGGIANO CHEESE

After purchasing a piece of Parmigiano Reggiano freshly cut cheese or after opening the vacuum pack, the cheese must be stored at home in the refrigerator at a temperature between +4°C/8°C - 40°F/48°F.

Parmigiano Reggiano cheese should be kept in appropriate glass or plastic containers. Another very practical solution is wrapping it in food-grade plastic film. In this way, Parmigiano Reggiano cheese can be stored for a limited period of time, whilst checking its preservation conditions.

Freezing cheese is never recommended: however, it is possible to freeze grated Parmigiano Reggiano cheese.

## ORGANOLEPTIC CHARACTERISTICS

### **The sensory development of Parmigiano Reggiano during its various stages of aging.**

In tasting a piece of Parmigiano Reggiano we must remember that the complexity of flavours and aromas are there not only because of how the cows are fed and the high technology in using the milk, but also because of the very long aging of the cheese.

To indicate the aging, the stamps created by the Consortium for all ages (for each month of aging) may be requested. In addition, organoleptic descriptive adjectives have been defined for certain maturity classes, which may be used in combination with the aging. As regards these latter, the Consortium has created stamps for all ages (for each month of aging) too.



**12- 19 months** – Parmigiano Reggiano with 12-19 months of maturation has a harmonious and delicate flavour with scents of milk, yogurt and fresh fruit. It is particularly suitable for aperitifs paired with sparkling white wines, or to enrich salads and cold dishes.



**20-26 months** – Parmigiano Reggiano with 20-26 months of maturation is soluble, crumbly and grainy with the right balance between mildness and richness, with notes of fresh fruit, nuts and meat stock. Perfect with medium body wines and to add flavour to all the dishes of the Italian tradition.



**27-34 months** – Parmigiano Reggiano with 27-34 months of maturation is particularly crumbly and grainy. The flavour is pronounced with notes of spices, nuts and meat stock. It is an ideal ingredient for filled and baked pastas or to be tasted at the end of meals, paired with fruit and honey.



**35-45 months** – Parmigiano Reggiano with 35-45 months of maturation has passed the test of time and releases pleasant scents of spices. It is an exclusive gift and a pleasant accompaniment to be tasted with structured and meditation wines.



CONSORZIO FORMAGGIO PARMIGIANO-REGGIANO

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