

Polska



EU-protected beans in Poland

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Beans are healthy and nutritious plants. There are many varieties, each with different amounts of minerals and energy values. What they all have in common, though, is high vegetable protein content. Freshly shelled beans contain vitamins A and C and have half the calories of dried beans. Beans are rich in potassium, calcium and phosphorus. Unlike peas, they do not contain sodium. Some bean varieties contain iron, folic acid, selenium as well as zinc, which is especially beneficial to men. Beans also contain easily digestible starch and substances that hinder the growth of cancerous tissue (protease inhibitors) as well as soluble fiber that helps remove excess cholesterol from the body.

One of the bean varieties which are grown in Poland is fasola korczyńska (beans from Korczyn). This has been given protected geographical indication (PGI) status.

Beans marketed as fasola korczyńska may only be produced in five districts: Nowy Korczyn, Wiślica, Opatowiec, Solec Zdrój and Pacanów. These are located in the southern section of the Nida Basin (Niecka Nidziańska) macro-region and in the Vistula Lowland along the Nida River in Świętokrzyskie province, central-southern Poland. These beans were probably grown here as early as the 16th century.

Bean growing in the Nowy Korczyn area took off after the Nida River broke its banks at the end of the 1950s. The floods ruined most crops and after the water subsided the vacant fields were planted with beans. The most popular variety was Piękny Jaś. Since the natural conditions in the area favored that particular variety and helped the beans grow larger than elsewhere, with time beans from the area started being referred to as fasola korczyńska.

These beans are large or very large (each 100 grams contains 60 to 90 individual beans). The flavor is very delicate, mild and contains no hint of bitterness. The beans also have a higher protein content and low water content. Korczyn beans are highly popular with buyers in the West who value their high protein and B-group vitamin content.

Fasola wrzawska (beans from Wrzawy) have protected designation of origin (PDO) status. Fasola wrzawska beans are produced in Tarnobrzeg and Stalowa Wola counties in the southern Podkarpacie province. This variety is characterized by large-sized beans and delicate structure and consistency. The beans have a special sweet flavor that makes them a highly valued culinary product which reflects the local climate and soil and farmers' skills.

The region where fasola wrzawska beans are grown has high-quality alluvial soils and a unique microclimate, the result of the proximity of two large rivers: the Vistula and the San. This area is in the northern part of the Sandomierz Valley. The San River cuts across the region, flowing into the Vistula near Wrzawy. The area in question is warmer than neighboring regions and enjoys a long frost-free period that extends the growing season. The lowland nature of the region, protected as it is by surrounding uplands, means winds here are less strong, resulting in a high-quality crop since beans are sensitive to wind.

The seeds are flat, kidney-shaped, with a glossy seed coat uniformly white in color. Fasola wrzawska has large seeds (40 to 90 percent bigger than other kinds of multi-flowered beans), absorbs a lot of water, has a sweet flavor, a natural individual aroma, and is comparatively quick to cook.

The third Polish bean variety with EU protection is Piękny Jaś from the Dunajec River Valley which has protected designation of origin (PDO) status. The right to grow these beans may only be granted to farmers from 11 districts in the Dunajec River valley: Gródek nad Dunajcem (Nowy Sącz county), Zakliczyn, Wojnicz, Wierzchosławice, Radłów, Wietrzychowice, Tarnów, Pleśna, Żabno (Tarnów county), Czchów (Brzesko county) and Gręboszów (Dąbrowa county) in the southern Małopolska province.

The Dunajec River valley has good conditions for growing beans. The plantations are located quite low, which helps protect them from the wind to which the plant is sensitive. The soil (alluvial) is important because it has a high magnesium content, as is the amount of precipitation. Other important factors include the skills of bean

growers from the Dunajec River valley, which are backed by the know-how and experience of many generations. Piękny Jaś beans from the Dunajec River valley, whose seeds are kidney-shaped, slightly flattened and glossy, taste sweetish while the consistency is unusually delicate. The seed coat is thin, so the beans need a shorter cooking time than many other varieties.

Source: The Warsaw Voice



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