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# Local food products The Basque Country



FUNDACIÓN  
**EROSKI**

contigo



SCHOOL OF  
NUTRITION



Energy to grow



Tix and Loy have taught us how important it is to eat a balanced diet as part of our everyday lives, eating all kinds of food in the recommended quantities.

But, do you think that food is the same all over the world?

The answer is no, because the things we eat vary a great deal depending on where we are.

The weather, geography and cultural and historical heritage of each region mean that each place on the map specialises in growing, making and eating specific types of food. These types of food are known as local food products. Have you heard of them? Tix and Loy are going to explain them a bit more.



## 1/ The advantages of local food products

Local food products are types of food which are produced, processed and distributed in a specific geographical region. They also have specific characteristics that set them apart.

Do you know the countless benefits of local food products? Here they are:

1. They are fresher, because the distances they have to be transported are shorter.
2. They keep their flavour and nutritional properties better.
3. Because they do not have to be transported very far, they mean we can cut costs and emit less CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere.
4. Because they are top-quality products, they always taste good.
5. They allow us to get to know and enjoy the specific flavours of our land.
6. They encourage food tourism (between regions).
7. They help maintain customs and traditions from the past.
8. They allow us to get to know and establish a relationship with the environment in which we live.
9. The production of local food products helps develop the local economy.
10. They help enrich our community.

*Did you know...?  
Thanks to the interest  
shown by farmers and  
consumers, flavours,  
traditions and part of  
the past of our food  
culture are now being  
recovered.*



Have you ever helped  
collect the local  
harvest?

Do you know anyone who works  
making local food products?



## 2/ Protected Designations of Origin (PDO)

The current internationalisation of the market has harmed a lot of local food products.

**Protected Designations of Origin (PDO) were created** to protect and highlight the production of food of this kind.

Not all local food products have a PDO, however, **only those that meet certain requirements.**

Do you know how to identify products with a Protected Designation of Origin?



A product with a Protected Designation of Origin has a label that tells us that...

- ... the product comes from a specific region.
- ... it has specific characteristics because it comes from that region.
- ... it is entirely produced in that region.



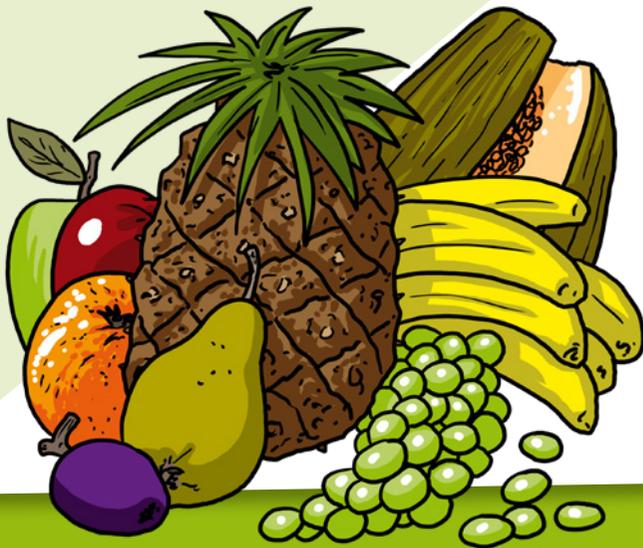
### 3/ Seasonal produce

This is food, mainly fruit and vegetables, which is eaten when it is at its optimum level of ripeness. The advantages of this kind of food over other kinds include:

1. More nutritional properties and better flavour because their properties remain intact.
2. Economic savings because larger quantities of the product are available.
3. They respect the environment because they defend the natural life cycles of products and help reduce the intensive farming of single products.

We can enjoy different kinds of seasonal fruit and vegetables over the year.

Like oranges for example. Although we eat them all year round, they are a winter product. In fact, the best months to eat oranges are from January to April.



Did you know...?  
There are  
different protected  
designations of  
origin for different  
types of product.



If I ask you to name some typical products  
from The Basque Country,

*could you name me any?*

I'm going to tell you the names of  
some of our local products. Let's see  
if you've heard of them:

- Idiazabal cheese
- Peppers from Gernika
- Txakoli wine
- Basque Country beef
- Bay of Biscay White Tuna



## Idiazabal cheese

This cheese is made from the milk of **Latxa and Carranza sheep which are born and raised in the Basque Country.**

The shepherds have fed them in the same way for thousands of years, taking them to high pastures in the spring, summer and autumn. When the cold winter arrives, they bring them down to the warmer valleys. These sheep are very special: they only produce milk from February to June, and only about 100 litres per animal.

They do not give much milk, but the milk they supply is of very good quality and is used raw to make Idiazabal cheese. Once made, **the cheese has to be matured for at least two months.** It is more yellow than cow's cheese because it contains more fat, the kind you need in order to grow. And it is very rich in calcium, which makes your bones big and strong.



## Peppers from Gernika

As you are sure to know, before harvesting fruit and vegetables in order to eat them, you have to wait for them to grow and ripen. But these Basque peppers are an exception to the rule.

Peppers from Gernika are green peppers which **are not allowed to ripen fully.** When harvested, the berries **measure between 6 and 9cm**, and are **perfect for eating**, so they are **packed the same day** in order not to lose any of their authenticity.

Their green flesh is smooth, fine and sweet. Peppers from Gernika are best served as a starter just with salt so as not to mask their unique flavour with anything else.



## Txakoli wine

This wine **made from green grapes** is deeply rooted in Basque culture. The name “txakoli” comes from the Basque word “etxakoa”, which means “homemade”.

**The grapes are not allowed to ripen fully** and are harvested when still green. This means that this wine is not as fruity as wines made from ripe grapes, but rather **sharp instead**.

Whilst other wines are fermented for at least a few months, **txakoli is fermented for just 12 days**.

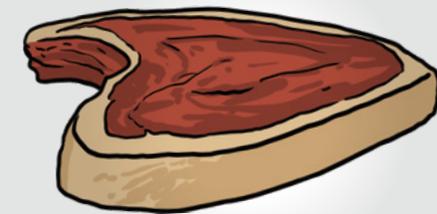
Distinctions are made between the different locations of the vineyards from which the grapes come. There are a number of important areas that produce txakoli in the Basque Country: Txakoli from **Álava**, Txakoli from **Guipúzcoa**, Txakoli from **Getaria** and Txakoli from **Vizcaya**.



## Basque Country beef

Meat from the Basque Country is considered amongst the finest in Europe. That is because Basque farmers take great care of their animals from the day they are born, looking after them throughout their lives. They mainly **eat local grass**, complemented with **special-quality feed**.

Although all beef may look the same to us, there are **three different types**: Txahala, which is the meat of a young animal up to two years old, Zaharra, which is the meat of an animal between 2 and 13 years old, and Idia, which is the meat of castrated males.



## Bay of Biscay White Tuna

Boats reach the harbours of Hondarribia, Getaria, Bermeo, Ondarroa, Pasaia, Donostia and Lekeitio full of this kind of tuna: **“Bonito del Norte”** or Bay of Biscay White Tuna.



So we can continue to enjoy the tasty meat of this White Tuna and be sure that the fish does not become extinct in the Bay of Biscay, **it is not caught using nets**, because then all the fish would get caught very quickly and not have time to reproduce.

**The Basque fishermen catch them one by one with rods** to guarantee the sustainability of the species and not squash the fish in nets.

## What have we learned today?

- Food products with Protected Designations of Origin are those which are produced, processed and distributed in our own community.
- We can recognise them in the supermarket thanks to their quality labels.
- The production and distribution of these products in our community contributes towards local economic growth.

# Activities

## Local food products - The Basque Country

### 1. Let's play with food names



As we have seen, calligrams (or shape poems) are a type of visual poem that form a drawing with the text. That drawing represents the theme of the poem. It can be a character, an animal, a landscape or any object you can imagine!

**Let's see some examples!**

The first is by Guillaume Apollinaire, a French writer who popularized this type of poem at the beginning of the 20th century.

Although it is written in French, what do you think the poem is about?

Cette reconnaissance-foi  
adorable herosonne c'est toi  
soms As grand  
A Ouf  
to bouché  
le val de  
lon  
vois  
en aufer  
l'imper  
fuite unage  
da ton buste o.  
dors ou remon  
à travers un image  
ou esquis  
un peu  
plus bas  
c'est ton  
-oeur  
que  
bati-

# Activities

## Local food products - The Basque Country

The following is from Guillermo de Torre, a Spanish writer, who made this in 1923. 95 years ago!

Una constelación pluricolor  
Un sol de repetición arroja  
El ventilador pirotécnico multi-  
Los cohetes bramán sironas sobre la  
Ciudad y el mar copulados  
plica sus aspas deshilachadas.  
y efimera topiza el cielo estuyi.  
10.000 proyectiles por minuto.

Here's another example:

CAER LEVANTARSE APRENDER  
SOCIALIZAR DISFRUTAR QUERER  
AMAR REIR LLORAR APLAUDIR  
AYUDAR AL QUE LO NECESITE  
VER COSAS NUEVAS NO RENDIRSE  
DECIR SOLUCIONES NO PROBLEMAS  
BAILAR COMO SI NADIE TE VIERA  
CANTAR COMO SI NADIE TE  
ESCUCHARA  
NO RENDIRSE NUNCA

Since we have been learning a lot about the products of our region, we are going to create a calligram with them!

Here are some examples of food calligrams:



# Activities

Local food products - The Basque Country

Now it's your turn!

a) First, choose a product from our region. It can be a seasonal food. Think of something that inspires you and write a poem about that food.

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b) Then it's time to make the calligram. Transform the poem into a drawing, that's shape reflects the theme of the poem; that is, the food that you have chosen.

