

# PRODUCT SPECIFICATION

REGULATION (EU) No 1151/2012 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs

“London Cure Smoked Salmon”

PDO ( )      PGI ( x )

## 1 RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT IN THE MEMBER STATE

1A Nobel House  
Smith Square  
London  
SW1P 3JR  
United Kingdom

**Email:** [protectedfoodnames@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:protectedfoodnames@defra.gsi.gov.uk)

## 2 GROUP

Name:                    H. Forman & Son  
Address:                Stour Road, Fish Island, London, E3 2NT  
Tel.:                     0208 5252 399  
Fax:                      0208 5252 398  
e-mail:                  claire@formans.co.uk  
Composition:        Producers/processors ( x )      Other ( )

The applicant is the only company producing ‘London Cure Smoked Salmon’ in the defined area. However, the applicant recognises that any producer in the defined area has the right to produce the product in accordance with the specifications and the obligations imposed by the regulatory framework.

## 3 TYPE OF PRODUCT

Class                    1.7 Fresh fish, molluscs & crustaceans and products derived therefrom.

## 4 SPECIFICATION

(Summary of requirements under Article 7(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012)

#### **4.1 Name:**

“London Cure Smoked Salmon”

#### **4.2 Description:**

London Cure Smoked Salmon is the name given to salmon cured and smoked using only a combination of rock salt and oak smoke. Both superior grade farmed and wild salmon can be London Cured. In terms of farmed salmon, London Cure traditionally uses only superior grade salmon from Scotland – not ordinary or production grade. Superior grade salmon is a first class product without substantial faults or defects. The product must have an undamaged skin with sheen and no significant loss of scales. There must be no open sores or bruising/damage to the belly or musculature. There must be no melanin spots in the musculature. The belly membrane must be firm and intact. The fish must be a natural streamlined shape. The salmon is a consistently orangey/pink colour and has a lustrous and smooth texture. When smoked, the aroma balances the scents of smoke and salmon in equal parts – neither overpowers the other. With regard to wild salmon, again traditionally sourced from Scotland, the fish must be stiff alive (i.e. it must be very firm indicating that it is freshly caught), have red gills, bright eyes and shiny scales. Wild salmon varies in colour from dusky to rose pink and has a creamy texture which is denser and heavier than farmed salmon. When smoked, it has an aroma of smoke and fish in equal parts.

The name London Cure can apply to whole, untrimmed sides, trimmed sides and slices cut lengthways down the fish (banquet sliced) or cut through the fish (D-cut). There are no minimum or maximum sizes of fish. The flavour of London Cure Smoked Salmon is mild and delicate. The aim of the London Cure is to subtly enhance the flavour of the finest quality salmon using only rock salt and a light smoke ensuring that the predominant taste is of salmon.

#### **4.3 Geographical area:**

The London Boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Hackney & Newham.

#### **4.4 Proof of origin:**

The origin of London Cure Smoked Salmon is fully definable. Details of all raw materials are maintained to ensure traceability during all stages of the production process.

With respect to farmed salmon delivery notes and feed sheets come from salmon farms detailing where the salmon is purchased from, what the salmon has been fed and when the salmon was harvested. For wild salmon a delivery note is kept showing where the salmon was purchased from and the catch date. Both wild and farmed salmon will ideally arrive for processing within 48 hours of catch (to a maximum of five days). Wild salmon may be frozen on arrival for use at a later date.

A raw materials inspection sheet is completed for both farmed and wild salmon - the temperature of the salmon is recorded upon arrival at the factory (minimum of 1°C, maximum of 5°C), a visual inspection of the product is carried out to ensure that all salmon are free of faults and defects (as outlined above) and the condition of the delivery vehicle is checked to ensure it is clean.

As the salmon moves through the stages of production, it is tracked at every stage for traceability:

#### 1. Material receipt of salmon

The raw material inspection sheet provides traceability of supplied goods – all pallets are assigned batch numbers. The batch number follows the product through the factory.

#### 2. Wet Salmon Preparation

All salmon are identified as boxes of fresh fish are given batch numbers.

#### 3. The Kiln

Products go into the kiln in their batches for smoking.

#### 4. Packaging

Once smoked the packed product is identified with a use by date (J Code).

#### 5. Dispatch

Invoices are raised for all products dispatched. Invoices detail the quantity of products supplied and the destination.

### **4.5 Method of production:**

#### Raw Salmon

All salmon will ideally reach the geographical area within 48 hours of catch (to a maximum of five days) to ensure freshness which is essential to the delicate cure and light smoke. For this reason traditionally only Scottish salmon has been used. In times of need obtaining salmon from other sources is acceptable as long as the quality and freshness of the fish is comparable to Scottish salmon. All salmon will ideally reach the geographical area within 48 hours of catch (to a maximum of five days) to ensure freshness which is essential to the delicate cure and light smoke. For this reason only Scottish salmon is used. In times of need obtaining salmon from other sources is acceptable as long as the quality and freshness of the fish is comparable to Scottish salmon.

#### Hand Filleting of the raw salmon fillet prior to smoking

The whole salmon is split into two fillets before the curing process takes place. The salmon is hand split to yield a far better quality fillet of salmon which is unbroken. Traditionally penny shaped holes (between 1-3 inches) are cut by hand in the skin as it is thought to aid the penetration of salt and smoke in the next steps of the process. When smoking London Cure salmon it is essential to leave the rib cage and pin-bones in. Like meat being cooked, the product is better smoked on the bone.

#### The Dry Curing Process

Before salmon is smoked it has to be salted – this begins the curing process. The fresh salmon fillets are placed on salting racks and sprinkled with rock salt for up to 24 hours depending on their size. During this time they lose some of their weight. This process yields a product with a salt level of just 3-4% which allows you to taste the salmon.

#### The Smoking & Drying Process

Once fillets have been cured they are rinsed and placed in the kiln where they can be either hung up or laid on racks. The fish is smoked and air-dried for a maximum of thirteen hours in oak smoke. The cured fillets lose further weight during this process. A hard crust is formed by the warm air flow. This is known as the pellicle.

### The Slicing Process (where applicable)

Before slicing the pin bones and pellicle are removed by hand. All London Cure Smoked Salmon is hand-sliced to produce a consistently high quality product. The fish is checked by the slicer to ensure no defects are present. The salmon is then carved to the customer's specification. Being hand carved, the slices are slightly uneven: hand-carving results in a greater surface area on the product so more flavour emanates compared to a product which is machine-sliced and too smooth.

### Packaging

The salmon is packed into food grade boxes/containers to protect the product during handling, storage and transit. The finished product can be presented to the customer as a whole untrimmed side, a trimmed side or in smaller retail packs of either d-cut or banquet sliced. When sliced the salmon is interleaved with food grade perforated cellophane that allows the salmon to breathe. The salmon can be packed in a range of weights dependent on the requirements of the customer. The product is stored and distributed to the consumer in line with strict hygiene standards, including temperature control between 0-5°C.

### **4.6 Link:**

The characteristics of London Cure Smoked Salmon are linked to the geographical area on the basis of tradition, reputation, the smoking process (largely unchanged since 1905) and the skills of those involved in that process. These skills have been passed down from generation to generation.

Salmon smoking in London started in the late 1800s when Eastern European immigrants who settled in London's East End used it as a way of preserving fish at a time when refrigeration was basic. The Jewish population of the UK increased from 46,000 in 1880 to about 250,000 by 1919. They lived primarily in the large industrial cities, especially London, Manchester and Leeds. In London, Jews lived principally in the Spitalfields and Whitechapel areas, close to the docks, and the East End became known as a Jewish neighbourhood. When the Jews arrived from Eastern Europe they brought their own cuisine and the need to supply them with traditional food products saw the introduction of the first smokehouses in the East End.

Anecdotal and photographic evidence exists showing salmon smoking in the East End of London. In his book 'Thank You For Your Business' Derek Taylor mentions the rise of the East End Salmon Smokers: "There were many Jewish smoked salmon curers at the time using oak indoor bonfires with the salmon hanging above." In her book 'The Book of Jewish Food' Claudia Roden discusses the importance of preserved fish, including smoked salmon in the Jewish diet and mentions the East End salmon smokers: "Smoked salmon was eaten by Jews in the East End of London long before the English middle classes discovered it." Today the London Cure Smoked Salmon still produced in this area is one of the last links to that original community and the Old World.

In the early days, the East London smokers imported salmon from the Baltic, not realising that wild salmon was available from Scotland each summer. Having discovered the Scottish fish at Billingsgate market, they realised it would be easier to use the native fish and the taste of the

finished product was considered superior. The light smoke applied to the London Cure allowed chefs to use it on their menus and it became extremely popular across the western world. Historically Scottish Wild Salmon was sent to Billingsgate Market from at least the 19<sup>th</sup> Century onwards. Scottish salmon has a worldwide reputation for excellence and the London Cure relies on exceptional raw materials to produce a superior smoked salmon.

What makes London Cure Smoked Salmon special is not just the salmon used, but also the light smoking process. The London Cure is special because it smokes the salmon to preserve it without leaving a heavily smoked flavour. From its origins, the beauty of London Cure Smoked Salmon was that it enabled fish to be preserved whilst showcasing its quality and freshness. Today, this quality and freshness sets the London Cure apart from other smoked salmon which is usually mass produced. Mass produced salmon processed by machine does not always use the freshest salmon, nor does it always use best quality salmon. It can also have ingredients such as sugar, disproportionate amounts of salt or liquid smoke added and it frequently has an excessively smoky taste – often to disguise poor quality raw materials. As a London Curer we purchase only the finest quality salmon which arrives at the smokehouse within 48 hours of harvest. As soon as it arrives the fish is cleaned, split and trimmed entirely by hand whereas most smokehouses use machines which damage the flesh, give lower yields and cannot handle the firm flesh of very fresh fish. The fillets of salmon are then salted by hand with bones left in to enhance flavour. Years of experience ensure that a carefully controlled amount of smoke is added – a perfect blend of air-drying and dehumidification with precise quantities of smoke produced by friction burning oak logs. As it is processed by hand, care can be taken to ensure that London Cure salmon always has the chewy pellicle removed (except when sold untrimmed) and when sliced, perforated cellophane is used to interleave the salmon allowing it to breathe and to make it easy to remove from the packaging without tearing the delicate slices. At all steps of the process London Cure Smoked Salmon is appraised and reappraised by skilled employees ensuring that only the finest quality smoked salmon is delivered to customers. The attention to detail in the artisan process means that the finished product is fresh without an overly smoky taste.

The skill of salmon smoking and slicing has long been established in the East End, and these artisanal skills have been handed down through four generations. The salmon is always split and filleted by hand. Once split the fillets must be inspected and any fillets that are discovered to have blood spots or cancerous indicators and any that are not judged to be up to the standard required are rejected at source. Each fillet is then cured by hand – the person applying the salt cure must ensure just the right amount of salt is added to each fish, and that the length of time for which the salmon is cured is appropriate for the size of each fillet. Once smoked for the required length of time, the smoked side of salmon is trimmed by hand, making sure that the pellicle is completely removed as it is hard, chewy and not pleasant to eat. The 32 pin bones are then deftly removed by hand using fish bone tweezers. To do this successfully, the pin bone must be pulled along its own axis (not straight up) in order to avoid damaging the delicate flesh of the salmon. The salmon is then hand carved which enhances the taste – it produces an uneven surface which releases more flavour. Carving is done either long ways from head to tail (banquet sliced) or across the body of the fish (D-cut). Quality control in the form of visual inspection means that every slice of smoked salmon is examined before leaving the factory. Basic training on the principles of salmon carving and slicing takes time, and true artisan skills are honed over years.

As late as the mid 1970s there remained about a dozen salmon smokers in London's East End. As the last remaining London Cure smoker we adhere to the traditional approach to create London Cure Smoked Salmon, retaining all the traditional skills associated with salmon smoking, and believe in maintaining artisan skills before they are lost for good.

This application seeks to preserve traditional salmon smoking methods, the reputation of the London Cure, the skills of those who produce the salmon and the London Cure recipe itself.

#### **4.7 Inspection body:**

Name: Tower Hamlets Trading Standards  
Address: Trading Standards,  
London Borough of Tower Hamlets,  
Mulberry Place (AH),  
PO Box 55739,  
5 Clove Crescent,  
London, E14 1BY  
Tel.: 020 7364 5008  
Fax: 020 7364 6901  
e-mail: tradingstandards@towerhamlets.gov.uk

**The inspection body conforms to the principles of EN 45011 standard.**

#### **4.8 Labelling:**

N/A