

Spanish producer takes Great Taste 2026's top prize as EU food and drink shines

A cured beef ham from Spain is named Supreme Champion, while 124 products listed under EU member states earn the competition's highest three-star rating.

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Food and drink from across the European Union has enjoyed a standout year at Great Taste 2026, with Wagyu Beef Ham from Spain's Entrepeñas named Supreme Champion, the competition's highest honour.

Made by a third-generation family business in the mountains of León, the cured beef ham received three stars and won the Golden Fork from Spain before being selected as Supreme Champion in a final live tasting. Judges praised its tenderness and the depth of its beef flavour.

According to the Guild of Fine Food's 2026 results directory, 124 products listed under EU member states received three stars. That represents more than four in ten of the 306 three-star winners worldwide. The products spanned 16 EU member states, led by Ireland with 37, Italy with 24 and Spain with 22. PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) and PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) three-star winning products included:

- **Finocchiona PGI** from Italy – a traditional Tuscan salami made from pork and seasoned with fennel seeds or flowers, giving it a distinctive aromatic flavour.
- **Paški sir PDO** from Croatia – a hard sheep's milk cheese from the island of Pag, made from the milk of the island's native sheep. As it matures, it develops a rich, savoury flavour.
- **Aceto Balsamico di Modena PGI** from Italy – made from grape must and wine vinegar, this balsamic vinegar balances sweetness and acidity, making it ideal for dressings, marinades and finishing drizzles.

- Reblochon de Savoie PDO from France – a soft, washed-rind cheese from the French Alps, made with raw cow's milk and known for its creamy texture and delicate, nutty flavour.

EU products among the Golden Fork winners

Once judging is complete, the geographical Golden Forks recognise the highest-rated products from designated countries and regions. Winners are chosen from products that have already earned three stars, with separate awards for Ireland, Spain, Greece and Italy, among others, and a Rest of Europe category. Standout EU ingredients which received a geographical Golden Fork included:

Ireland: A 25% sour cream from Donegal won the Golden Fork from Ireland. A familiar dairy ingredient took one of the country's top honours, offering retailers and chefs a reminder that exceptional flavour can be found in everyday staples as well as speciality products.

Greece: Blossom Honey with Thyme and Oregano Honey from Paleros won the Greek Golden Fork. Its combination of blossom honey and aromatic herbs brings a distinctly regional character to an ingredient that can be used across sweet and savoury dishes.

Italy: Miele di Barena from Apicoltura Marangon, a honey producer in the Po Delta, won the Italian Golden Fork. It also took the People's Choice award, voted for by guests at the ceremony.

Finland: Stone Kiln Cold Smoked Rainbow Trout Fillet from Kuopion Perinnetuote won the Golden Fork from the Rest of Europe. The product shows how a familiar fish can gain a distinctive identity through its preparation and smoking.

Spain: Entrepeñas' Wagyu Beef Ham won the Spanish Golden Fork before taking the Supreme Champion title, giving a cured meat from León the competition's biggest prize.

Other EU recognition included the Nigel Barden Heritage Award for Organic Cashel Blue from Ireland and the Better Business award for Spanish anchovy producer Anchoas Hazas.

Great Taste provides another way for trade buyers and their consumers to choose food and drink recognised for its flavour. Products are assessed through blind tasting, independently of their branding and packaging. Guild-commissioned research found that 73% of UK adults who recognise the Great Taste logo consider it a trustworthy recommendation, while 54% use it to discover new products.

Patrick McGuigan, cheese advisor to the EU's 'More Than Only Food & Drink' campaign, said: "To see so many EU products earn three stars is a further testament to the quality of EU food and drink available to UK businesses. Great Taste is judged blind, so these products have earned recognition for what matters most: how they taste.

"For retailers and hospitality businesses, the winners offer a brilliant starting point for exploring producers and ingredients they may not yet know. A Great Taste award is also a signpost that many consumers recognise and trust, which can help give them the confidence to try something new.

"I'm particularly pleased to see everyday ingredients such as sour cream celebrated alongside honey, cured meat and smoked fish. The results show just how much variety there is to discover across the

EU- and how a distinctive product, with a story behind it, can bring something fresh to a shelf or menu."

More than 15,000 products were entered into Great Taste 2026. Just 306 received three stars, before the highest-rated products were considered for the 16 Golden Fork awards.

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For more information please visit our website or contact: morethanfood_UK@agripromotion.eu

Notes to editors:

In 2024, the European Union launched the 'More Than Only Food and Drink' campaign to promote the EU's incredible range of food & beverages across the UK market.

The campaign aims to promote European food & beverage products to food and drink professionals in the UK, highlighting the key characteristics of the products (safety, quality, authenticity, and sustainability), with a focus on EU quality schemes - Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) - as well as the EU organic label.