



Bella Vita

MEDITERRANEAN TASTE

Sweet Red Onion of Tropea

(Allium cepa)



The Famous Sweet Red Onion of Tropea, Italy

This most famous onion in Italy was born along the stretch of coastline of the Tyrrhenian Sea between Capo Vaticano and Vibo Valentia. In the middle of these two (areas or towns) is the beautiful little town of Tropea. The area of production is in the territory of 3 provinces: Catanzaro, Vibo and Cosenza. This area is the only place by Italian law that the famous Sweet Red Onions of Tropea can be grown.

Origin: The onion was brought to Italy by the Phoenicians who had discovered it from the Assyrians and the Babylonians.

The onion has many unique features. It has a slightly elongated shape and a deep red, wine color. The onion itself is not only famous in Italy, but is known all over Europe for its unusually sweet and mild flavor. During the harvesting season this is the most sought after onion in all of Europe.

What makes the Tropea Red Onion so Sweet – The sweetness can be summed up in 5 words: Location, Soil, Climate, Variety, and Cultural Techniques.

Location: the onions are grown only along the coast of the Tyrrhenian Sea in southern Italy near the 39th parallel (similar to Vidalia, Georgia). It is a commonly held belief among the inhabitants of this area that the gentle breezes blowing in from the Tyrrhenian Sea help produce the unique flavor and sweetness of the onion.

Soil: The Sweet Red onion of Tropea is grown only on silt rich, soft sandy soil similar to what one would expect on the shore line of the ocean. As the French believe that the soil or terrain creates a great Bordeaux or Burgundy wine, the Italians also believe that the soil is the key element in producing the great flavor of their fruits and vegetables. It is this sandy soil, rich in nutrients, which provides excellent drainage and aids in the creation of the unique flavor of this onion.



Sweet Red Onion of Tropea - Availability

	May	June	July	August	September
Sweet Red Onion of Tropea	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	

Disclaimer: The details provided represent typical product information. Average counts, weights and dimensions of products may vary throughout the harvesting season and production areas.

Porto Pavino LLC. P.O. Box 504, Harrison, NY 10528 USA. Tel + 1 914 967 6868 Fax + 1 973 629 1255. info@bellavitafoods.com

Sweet Red Onion of Tropea

(Allium cepa)



Climate: The temperatures are moderate with transplanting taking place in December when the average high temperature is 60° and the average low 45°. As March begins the temperatures gradually increase. By Mid-May the highs are in the mid 80's but the nights because of the Tyrrhenian Sea are cool. These cool nights, particularly during the bulbing stage of the onion, assist the respiratory system of the onion to throw off pyruvic acids (the acids that make the onion malodorous and brings tears to our eyes). The warm days stimulate growth. It is this unique combination of warm days and cool nights that are very important in the making of sweet onions. Low humidity is also an asset in this area as it creates a more stable onion which keeps and stores more successfully. Also, this area is blessed with an abundance of sunshine which helps to produce high sugars and stimulate top growth, an important factor in the production of a sweet onion.

Variety: This onion has been part of the Italian culture for as long as anyone can remember. Rumor has it that it dates back to the Roman era.

Cultural Practices: Tropeans take their Sweet Red onion growing very seriously. All planting and tending operations are still preformed in the old traditional method by hand using local people. The cultural practices have been done also in the same ways and methods as their forefathers with these practices having been passed down from generation to generation. There are two components that make for a sweet onion: Sugar content and pyruvic acid. Sugars must be high with a BRIX of 8.0 or higher and the pyruvics of 3.5 or lower. This unusual high ratio is only part of the unique flavor and sweetness of the onion; the other elements are those mentioned above.

Various countries have tried unsuccessfully to grow the Tropea Red. They have taken the seed and planted it in other areas or even countries. No one has been able to capture Tropea's unique flavor. The reason is that the sweetness depends not only on the variety but on the above mentioned factors. Could a grape cutting from a famous Bordeaux Chateau like Lafite-Rothschild and planted in another area, taste as good as the original? The answer is obviously no! In Burgundy, all grape varieties must be either Pinot Noir (red Burgundy) or Chardonnay (white Burgundy); there are no exceptions. What makes the difference? They all use the same variety. It is the many other factors such as the ones mentioned above: soil, climate (sunshine), cultural practices, etc..

Uses: In Italy these onions are often eaten raw because of their great flavor. They are used in Salads, sandwiches, or as an appetizer with perhaps Mozzarella or Tomatoes. They are so tasty that they are often served alone, raw or with balsamic vinegar.

Disclaimer: The details provided represent typical product information. Average counts, weights and dimensions of products may vary throughout the harvesting season and production areas.

Porto Pavino LLC. P.O. Box 504, Harrison, NY 10528 USA. Tel + 1 914 967 6868 Fax + 1 973 629 1255. info@bellavitafoods.com

Sweet Red Onion of Tropea

(Allium cepa)



Recipes and serving tips

Used as an ingredient in many dishes of the Mediterranean cuisine. The red sweet variety, raw, is excellent as an ingredient of summer salads with fresh tomatoes, olives and oregano or for making an onion pie, a characteristic dish in the Tropea area.

It is an essential ingredient of many of the well known culinary dishes: it is even part of the recipe for the «pissaladie're», well known also as the pizza all'Andrea or Sardenara, the flat-bread widely diffused between Imperia and Nice. But the red onion, eaten on its own or accompanied by pecorino cheese, can in itself be a magnificent breakfast. It is used to complete, especially the baby onion version, a dish of hors d'oeuvres and is also just as good preserved in oil or in a sweet-and-sour mixture. It is worth noting that one can find on sale an onion paté or jam which can be spread on toasted slices of bread, the first, excellent accompaniments for fresh meat, cheese and others.

Pasta with onions sauce

Ingredients: 12 oz. of pasta "maltagliati", 11 oz. sweet red onion, basil, (4 servings) oil, black pepper, salt.

Preparation: peel, slice, and cook onions in water with salt, crushing with a fork to have a cream. Use the sauce to flavor the pasta
"al dente" = not cooked too much. Add pepper.

Chicken the "Don Giacinto" way

Ingredients: 1 soft chicken, 2-3 onions, 2 laurel leaves, 7 oz. potatoes, (4 servings) toasted bread slices, oil, paprika, salt.

Preparation: clean and prepare chicken pieces. Put it in a pot with oil, laurel, the peeled and sliced onions, peppers, salt, and little water. Cook on a moderate flame and add potatoes in slices. Pour all the bread slices in a tureen.

Sword-fish the Calabrian way

Ingredients: 14 oz. sword-fish in slices, 2 onions, flour, Sicilian lemon juice, (4 servings) white dry wine, oil, Italian garlic, parsley, black pepper, salt.

Preparation: Wash, wipe, flour, and put in a top the slices of sword-fish. Sprinkle with onion and garlic grated, salt, and pepper. Bath with wine and lemon juice, flavor with oil. Cover the top and bake for 30 minutes. While serving, put on fish grated parsley.

Salad of Onions

Ingredients: 3 sweet red onions of Tropea, organum, balsamic vinegar of (4 servings) Modena, Italian extra virgin olive oil, salt.

Preparation: Peel, slice and keep onions in cold water for 10 minutes. Flavor with balsamic vinegar of Modena, salt, organum, and extra virgin olive oil.

→ For more recipes, call us.

Disclaimer: The details provided represent typical product information. Average counts, weights and dimensions of products may vary throughout the harvesting season and production areas.

Porto Pavino LLC. P.O. Box 504, Harrison, NY 10528 USA. Tel + 1 914 967 6868 Fax + 1 973 629 1255. info@bellavitafoods.com