

## Chorizo Picante



In 15<sup>th</sup> Century Spain livestock was raised outside the cities and the animals killed in abattoirs, the meat then sold to the butchers. But with the pigs it was different, the pig was still being raised in the villages, it was killed in the streets and the sausage was made by the family. This custom is something that still persists in some towns of Spain, *el matadero* (the slaughter of the pig).

It is likely that chorizo was the first cured product that due to its age and extension gained the attention of the Spanish Royal Academy of Language whom defined in the Dictionary of Authorities in 1726 as "short piece of tripe, full of meat, regularly of pork, minced and marinated, which is normally cured by smoke ". In such time the paprika was not yet common spice to the Spanish pork-butchery.

The Spanish chorizo is red due to the paprika with the ingredient arriving in Spain in the 16th Century, from the Americas. Before the paprika arrived on the Iberian Peninsula sausages were whitish or black if they were made with blood and sausage recipes can be found in 'women's manuals' dating back to the 16th Century.

The *chorizo picante* (spicy chorizo) is made with lean and fat pork, smoked and cured, traditionally made in the winter months taking advantage of the cold and frost these conditions giving it the characteristic dark red colour and aroma. There are three types of chorizo *sartar, cular and vela*.

Tasting themes: sliced thin for sandwiches or tapas, fried with olive oil, cooked in stews with grains (lentils, chickpeas, white beans) plus a host of gastronomic combinations very typical of Castillian lands.

