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## **Italy**

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# **Geographic Indications Italy's Food Trademark System**

### **Report Categories:**

Agricultural Situation

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### **Report Highlights:**

Italy uses the European Union's trademark system of Geographical Indications (GIs) to protect its traditional food products. While consumers commonly understand these labels to mean quality, GIs simply refer to a defined production process or location. Italy's GI production was worth €5.3 billion in 2008 with the bulk of value in cheese and processed meats. Italian GIs cover a range of products, from the well-known Parmigiano-Reggiano to little-known varieties of olive oil. While GIs constitute a third of processed food production, they make up only 10% of processed food exports.

**General Information:**

Geographical indications (GIs) are indications that identify a good as originating from a certain place, where a given attribute, reputation, or other characteristic of that good is essentially attributable to its geographical origin. Examples of GIs include Florida oranges, New Zealand lamb, and Parma ham. Although frequently applied to foods items, GIs may be associated with any product (e.g. Swiss watches).

GIs act like trademarks. Once established they confer certain exclusive rights to the owner. Producers use GIs to create market recognition, hopefully at a premium price. Although GIs may benefit from a certain reputation or characteristic, their quality – that is, their wholesomeness, healthiness, safety – is not guaranteed above the minimal level guaranteed for all similar food items. The perceived “quality” of GIs is thus a matter of taste and marketing. For example, Grano Padano producers claim that blind taste tests show there is no statistical taste/preference difference between their product and Parmigiano Reggiano, even though the latter costs several euros more per kilo. Not all GIs win international taste competitions.

The United States and the European Union (EU) protect GIs in different ways. The United States protects GIs as part of its patent and trademark laws. However, in 1992, the EU developed a new system to provide protection throughout the EU for the geographical indications and designations of origin of certain agricultural products and foodstuffs. In 1999, the United States challenged the EU’s GI regulation in the WTO on two grounds: discrimination against U.S. GIs and failure to protect U.S. trademarks. In March 2005, the WTO panel ruled that certain aspects of the EU GI regulation were inconsistent with WTO rules and set a deadline for the EU to modify its regulations. For more information, see the USEU fact sheet on GIs:  
<http://www.fas.usda.gov/posthome/useu/GI.html>.

Controversies occur when GIs protected in one area are considered to be generic in another. For example, cheddar is considered to be generic (mainly

because the world consumes far more cheddar cheese than could be produced in Cheddar), while Italy argues vehemently that ‘parmesan’ (as well as Parmigiano Reggiano) are GIs. Controversy also occurs because many “GI” products were made well before they were registered under the EU scheme (which began only in 1992) by people who long ago moved from a particular geographical area to settle elsewhere, taking their traditional knowhow with them.

## **Italy and GIs**

An important strategy of Italy’s agricultural and food processing sectors is that the country will profit most by manufacturing high-quality goods that reflect the standards implicit in the “Made in Italy” label. Industry representatives cite aesthetics, quality, variety, and culture as the key images that Italian products command in international food markets. Central to the Italian strategy are GIs – protected labels, including Protected Designation of Origin (DOP), Protected Geographical Indication (IGP), and Traditional Specialty Guaranteed (STG) – that tie a product to its territory of origin, signaling its authenticity to consumers.

Under GI labeling rules, a product can receive a DOP if it is entirely manufactured in a given area, including preparation, processing, and production. An IGP refers to a product that is partially manufactured in a given area, including preparation, processing, *or* production. An STG refers to a product that is traditional to a given location, but it does not need to be produced in that area.

EU labeling laws grant special status to food products traditionally produced in a given place, preventing producers not in that region from calling their products by names that consumers associate with other goods. While consumers commonly understand these labels to mean quality, GIs simply refer to a defined production process or location. Given the preponderance of small to medium sized producers in Italy, such producers can gain more market presence by forming associations based on GIs and strict production processes to produce a homogenous product. The Mozzarella di Bufala and Brunello are two such associations. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Italy has

about 5,000 such locally registered producers associations. GI producers are also eligible for EU funding to promote their products. [1]

Of all Italian GI products, cheese and processed meats are the most valuable. Table 1 shows the production value for all groups of existing DOPs, IGPs, and STGs. GIs account for about one-third of total processed food production, excluding wine which is covered under other labeling agreements.

**Italy: Table 1. Value of Production for DOPs, IGPs, and STGs in 2008**

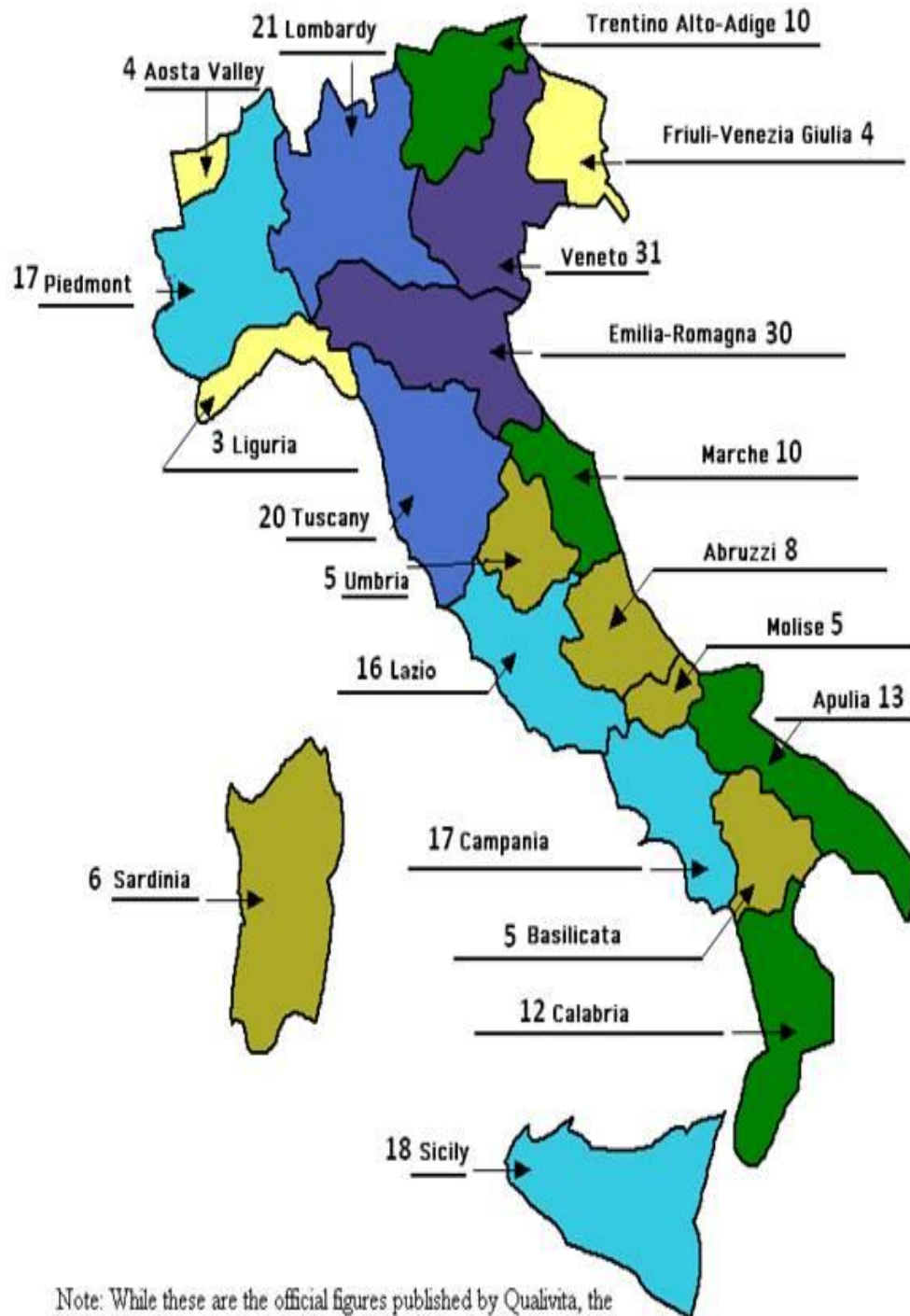
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<b>Value of Production (in € Million)</b>	
Cheese	€ 2,959.43
Processed Meats	€ 1,820.69
Fruits, Vegetables, and Cereals	€ 372.66
Oils and Fats	€ 74.79
Other*	€ 49.76
<b>Total</b>	<b>€ 5,277.33</b>

\* Other includes fresh meats, other products of animal origin, fish and seafood, other refined products such as spices, breads, pastries, confectionery, bakery items, and essential oils.

Italy has more geographic indications than any other EU country. In 2009 it had 122 DOPs, 71 IGPs, and one STG, totaling 194 GIs. [2] Italy accounts for 21% of all GIs in the EU, followed by France with 167, and Spain with 129. Italy shows no sign of slowing down in its registration of GIs; in 2009, Italy registered 19 new products, more than three times as many as France or Spain. Northern Italy leads the country for most GIs. The northern provinces account for roughly half of GIs, while the remainder is split roughly evenly between central and southern Italy. The below graph shows the regional distribution of GIs, according to Qualivita.

Italy: Graph 1. The Regional Distribution of GIs



Note: While these are the official figures published by Qualivita, the total is 255, significantly higher than the 194 officially registered GIs. Qualivita most likely included other products that are protected under Italian labeling standards but not yet included in the EU system.

Given the abundance of Italian GIs, some are obviously more recognizable than others. Table 2 shows the Top 10 GIs in 2009, ranked based on a combination of production, consumption, export, percentage of production destined for export, and production channels. Other GIs are more marginal and less recognizable to consumers. For example, 37 types of Italian olive oil have been granted DOP status with a combined production value of just € 41 million.

**Italy: Table 2. Top 10 GIs in 2009**

	<b>Total Production in 2008 (in € Million)</b>	<b>Total Exports in 2008 (in € Million)</b>
1. Speck dell'Alto Adige IGP	€ 112.25	€ 67.71
2. Olio Extravergine di Oliva Toscano IGP	€ 33.32	€ 24.53
3. Parmigiano-Reggiano DOP	€ 840.00	€ 354.20
Prosciutto di Parma DOP	€ 800.00	€ 357.00
4. Gorgonzola DOP	€ 224.00	€ 124.20
5. Pecorino Romano DOP	€ 141.41	€ 136.89
6. Prosciutto di San Daniele DOP	€ 330.00	€ 103.50
7. Salamini Italiani alla Cacciatora DOP	€ 34.00	€ 7.50
8. Grana Padano DOP	€ 1,098.90	€ 528.29
9. Mortadella Bologna IGP	€ 261.00	€ 24.56

*Ranking according to Qualivita,  
with input from the Italian Ministry of Agriculture*

## **Trade**

Italy consumes the vast majority of its GI production, exporting less than 15% of all GIs. GIs make up a significant portion of Italy's top exports, accounting for 40% of Italy's combined cheese, processed meats, fruits and vegetables, and oils and fats exports. As a share of total processed food exports (excluding wine which is covered under other labeling agreements), however, GIs take only 10%. About two-thirds of Italy's GI exports go to other EU countries. Table 3 shows the export value for all groups of Italian DOPs, IGP,

and STGs.

**Italy: Table 3. Value of Exports for DOPs, IGP, and STGs in 2008**

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<b>Value of Exports (in € Million)</b>	
Cheese	€ 1,269.79
Processed Meats	€ 606.74
Fruits, Vegetables, and Cereals	€ 233.29
Oils and Fats	€ 40.79
Other*	€ 9.51
<b>Total</b>	<b>€ 2,160.11</b>

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\* Other includes fresh meats, other products of animal origin, fish and seafood, other refined products such as spices, breads, pastries, confectionery, bakery items, and essential oils.

The most important GI processed meat exports in 2008 were Prosciutto di Parma DOP and Prosciutto di San Daniele DOP, valued at €357 million and €104 million respectively and totaling over 75% of GI processed meat exports. The most important GI cheese exports in 2008 were Grana Padano DOP and Parmigiano Reggiano DOP, valued at €528 million and €354 million respectively and totaling over 70% of such exports. Extra-virgin olive oil from Tuscany was valued at € 24.5 million in 2008 and accounted for 60% of GI olive oil exports. Two types of apple exports – Mela Alto Adige and Mela Val di Non – were valued at €99.4 million and €89.9 million respectively and totaled over 80% of GI fruit and vegetable exports.

The WTO's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) sets minimum standards of intellectual property protection for all WTO member countries, including the United States and Italy. In the area of GIs, it mandates that "members must establish the legal means to prevent GIs from being used by nonoriginal producers in a way that would mislead the public as to the geographical origin of a good or would constitute an act of unfair competition." While the United States does not enforce the EU's GI system, it has other strong intellectual property and trademark laws through the U.S. Patent and Trade Office, under which Italian producers are free to register their products. For example, Parma Ham, San Daniele Ham, Parmigiano

Reggiano, Grana Padano, and Pecorino Romano are all protected by the U.S. trademark system and have U.S. certification marks. According to representatives of the consortium that produces Parmigiano Reggiano, “the U.S. trademark system had provided sound protection for the Parmigiano trademark.”

GIs are at the center of Italy’s defense against what it calls “counterfeit” Italian food. Some critics claim that sales of Italian-sounding foods hurt Italian exporters, damage the image of Italian foods, and violate intellectual property rights. Regarding producer protection, the United States is the second largest importer of Italian cheeses. In 2008 the United States imported over \$317 million worth of Italian cheese, over 80% of which were GI cheeses – particularly Grana Padano, Parmigiano Reggiano, Fiore Sardo, and various types of Pecorino. From 2000 to 2008 Italian cheese exports to the United States nearly doubled. This trend does not seem compatible with claims of “counterfeit” products taking market share from Italian producers.

### **The Reality Versus the Image of GIs**

Italy’s focus on GIs is a sign that the country believes its agricultural future lies in high-quality niche markets rather than production agriculture. In reality, GIs are only 10% of processed food exports and 30% of food production in Italy. Italy’s agricultural profitability is far less tied to particular geographic specialties than the “Made in Italy” campaign implies. For example, there are no GIs for one of Italy’s largest food exports, pasta.

GIs are mostly a question of food processing and Italian culinary traditions, but their expansion is hindered by systemic problems in Italian production agriculture. Italy’s food processing industry is heavily dependent on imports of meat, milk, food and feed grains, animal feed, and vegetable oil (including olive oil). The country has a limited ability to expand its production of prosciutto from pigs raised in Italy or bread or pasta from wheat grown in Italy. The majority of processed foods that Italy exports as Italian products are made from raw materials imported from the United States, neighboring EU countries, and others.

GIs are marketed as a way to ensure that genuine producers receive a fair price



for their goods. Unfortunately, the labeling scheme is ripe for fraud, and consumers often end up paying more for a product that has been guaranteed to be something it isn't. There were three fraud scandals in 2009 alone involving Mozzarella di Bufala Campana DOP in which producers violated the agreed production process. In addition, GIs are tied to specific geographic areas, and production capacity in a given region is usually limited. When demand for a given GI exceeds the ability of the region to produce that food, other manufacturers may be attracted by the higher price and produce fraudulent goods to meet that demand.

GIs are tied to specific geographic areas and production processes rather than quality standards, leading not only to fraud but the misperception that GIs indicate superior taste or health. Six of Italy's 11 top-ranked cheeses are, in fact, not GIs. Italy has the second most top-ranked cheeses among the world's 50 best, second to the United States. [3] Without doubt, Italian foods are among the finest in the world, but that is more a question of culinary methods than geographically-tied agricultural production.

## **Appendix 1. Full List of Italian GIs as of December 31, 2009.**

### **Fresh Meat (3)**

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Abbacchio Romano IGP

Agnello di Sardegna IGP

Vitellone Bianco dell'Appennino Centrale IGP

### **Processed Meat (31)**

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Bresaola della Valtellina IGP

Capocollo di Calabria DOP

Ciauscolo IGP

Coppa Piacentina DOP

Cotechino Modena IGP

Crudo di Cuneo DOP

Culatello di Zibello DOP  
Lardo di Colonnata IGP  
Mortadella Bologna IGP  
Pancetta di Calabria DOP  
Pancetta Piacentina DOP  
Prosciutto di Carpegna DOP  
Prosciutto di Modena DOP  
Prosciutto di Norcia IGP  
Prosciutto di Parma DOP  
Prosciutto di San Daniele DOP  
Prosciutto Toscano DOP  
Prosciutto Veneto Berico-Euganeo DOP  
Salame Brianza DOP  
Salame Cremona IGP  
Salame di Varzi DOP  
Salame d'Oca di Mortara IGP  
Salame Piacentino DOP  
Salame S. Angelo IGP  
Salamini Italiani alla Cacciatora DOP  
Salsiccia di Calabria DOP  
Soppresata di Calabria DOP  
Sopressa Vicentina DOP  
Speck dell'Alto Adige IGP  
Vallee d'Aoste Jambon de Bosses DOP  
Valle d'Aosta Lard d'Arnad DOP  
Zampone Modena IGP

### **Cheese (39)**

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Asiago DOP  
Bitto DOP  
Bra DOP  
Caciocavallo Silano DOP  
Canestrato Pugliese DOP

Casatella Trevigiana DOP  
Casciotta d'Urbino DOP  
Castelmagno DOP  
Fiore Sardo DOP  
Fontina DOP  
Formaggio di Fossa di Sogliano DOP  
Formai de Mut dell'Alta Valle Brembana DOP  
Gorgonzola DOP  
Grana Padano DOP  
Montasio DOP  
Monte Veronese DOP  
Mozzarella STG  
Mozzarella di Bufala Campana DOP  
Murazzano DOP  
Parmigiano-Reggiano DOP  
Pecorino di Filiano DOP  
Pecorino Romano DOP  
Pecorino Sardo DOP  
Pecorino Siciliano DOP  
Pecorino Toscano DOP  
Provolone Valpadana DOP  
Quartirolo Lombardo DOP  
Ragusano DOP  
Raschera DOP  
Ricotta Romana DOP  
Robiola di Roccaverano DOP  
Spessa delle Giudicarie DOP  
Stelvio DOP  
Taleggio DOP  
Toma Piemontese DOP  
Valle d'Aosta Fromadzo DOP  
Valtellina Casera DOP

## **Other Products of Animal Origin (1)**

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Miele della Lunigiana DOP

## **Oils and Fats (38)**

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Olio extravergine di Oliva Alto Crotonese DOP

Olio extravergine di Oliva Aprutino Pescarese DOP

Olio extravergine di Oliva Brisighella DOP

Olio extravergine di Oliva Bruzio DOP

Olio extravergine di Oliva Canino DOP

Olio extravergine di Oliva Cartoceto DOP

Olio extravergine di Oliva Chianti Classico DOP

Olio extravergine di Oliva Cliente DOP

Olio extravergine di Oliva Collina di Brindisi DOP

Olio extravergine di Oliva Colline di Romagna DOP

Olio extravergine di Oliva Colline Salernitane DOP

Olio extravergine di Oliva Colline Teatine DOP

Olio extravergine di Oliva Dauno DOP

Olio extravergine di Oliva Garda DOP

Olio extravergine di Oliva Laghi Lombardi DOP

Olio extravergine di Oliva Lametia DOP

Olio extravergine di Oliva Lucca DOP

Olio extravergine di Oliva Molise DOP

Olio extravergine di Oliva Monte Etna DOP

Olio extravergine di Oliva Monti Iblei DOP

Olio extravergine di Oliva Penisola Sorrentina DOP

Olio extravergine di Oliva Pretuziano delle Colline Teramane DOP

Olio extravergine di Oliva Riviera Ligure DOP

Olio extravergine di Oliva Sabina DOP

Olio extravergine di Oliva Sardegna DOP

Olio extravergine di Oliva Tergeste DOP

Olio extravergine di Oliva Terra di Bari DOP  
Olio extravergine di Oliva Terra d'Otranto DOP  
Olio extravergine di Oliva Terre di Siena DOP  
Olio extravergine di Oliva Terre Tarentine DOP  
Olio extravergine di Oliva Toscano IGP  
Olio extravergine di Oliva Tuscia DOP  
Olio extravergine di Oliva Umbria DOP  
Olio extravergine di Oliva Val di Mazara DOP  
Olio extravergine di Oliva Valdemone DOP  
Olio extravergine di Oliva Valle del Belice DOP  
Olio extravergine di Oliva Valli Trapanesi DOP  
Olio extravergine di Oliva Veneto DOP

### **Fruits, Vegetables, and Cereals (67)**

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Aglio Bianco Polesano DOP  
Amarene Brusche di Modena IGP  
Arancia del Gargano IGP  
Arancia Rossa di Sicilia IGP  
Asparago Bianco di Bassano DOP  
Asparago Bianco di Cimadolmo IGP  
Asparago Verde di Altedo IGP  
Basilico Genovese DOP  
Cappero di Pantelleria DOP  
Carciofo di Paestum IGP  
Carciofo Romanesco del Lazio IGP  
Carota dell'Altopiano del Fucino IGP  
Castagna Cuneo IGP  
Castagna del Monte Amiata IGP  
Castagna di Montella IGP  
Castagna di Vallerano DOP  
Ciliegia di Marostica IGP  
Cipolla Rossa di Tropea Calabria IGP  
Cipolloto Nocerino DOP

Clementine del Golfo di Taranto IGP  
Clementine di Calabria IGP  
Fagiolo di Lamon della Vallata Bellunese IGP  
Fagiolo di Sarconi IGP  
Farina di Neccio della Garfagnana DOP  
Farro della Garfagnana IGP  
Fico Bianco del Cilento DOP  
Ficodindia dell'Etna DOP  
Fungo di Borgotaro IGP  
Kiwi Latina IGP  
Insalata di Lusia IGP  
La Bella della Daunia DOP  
Lenticchia di Castelluccio di Norcia IGP  
Limone Costa d'Amalfi IGP  
Limone di Sorrento IGP  
Limone Femminello del Gargano IGP  
Limone Interdonato Messina IGP  
Marrone del Monfenera IGP  
Marrone del Mugello IGP  
Marrone di Caprese Michelangelo DOP  
Marrone di Castel del Rio  
Marrone di Combai IGP  
Marrone di Roccadaspide IGP  
Marrone di San Zeno DOP  
Mela Alto Adige IGP  
Mela Val di Non DOP  
Melannurca Campana IGP  
Nocciola del Piemonte IGP  
Nocciola di Giffoni IGP  
Nocciola Romana DOP  
Nocellara del Belice DOP  
Oliva Ascolana del Piceno DOP  
Peperone di Senise IGP  
Pera dell'Emilia Romagna IGP  
Pera Mantovana IGP

Pesca e Nettarina di Romagna IGP  
Pomodorino del Piennolo del Vesuvio DOP  
Pomodoro di Pachino IGP  
Pomodoro S. Marzano dell'Agro  
Sarnese-Nocerino DOP  
Radicchio di Chioggia IGP  
Radicchio di Verona IGP  
Radicchio Rosso di Treviso IGP  
Radicchio Variegato di Castelfranco IGP  
Riso del Delta del Po IGP  
Riso di Baraggia, Biellese e Vercellese DOP  
Riso Nano Vialone Veronese IGP  
Scalogno di Romagna IGP  
Uva da tavola di Canicatti IGP  
Uva da tavola di Mazzarrone IGP

### **Fish, Molluscs, Fresh Crustaceans, and Derived Products (2)**

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Acciughe Sotto Sale del Mar Ligure IGP  
Tinca Gobba Dorata del Pianalto di Poirino DOP

### **Other Refined Products (spices, etc.) (6)**

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Aceto Balsamico di Modena IGP  
Aceto Balsamico Tradizionale di Modena DOP  
Aceto Balsamico Tradizionale di Reggio Emilia DOP  
Zafferano dell'Aquila DOP  
Zafferano di San Gimignano DOP  
Zafferano di Sardegna DOP

### **Bread, Pastries, Confectionery, or Bakery Products (5)**

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Coppia Ferrarese IGP  
Pagnotta del Dittaino DOP  
Pane Casareccio di Genzano IGP

Pane di Altamura DOP

Pane di Matera IGP

## **Essential Oils (1)**

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Bergamotto di Reggio Calabria DOP

<sup>[1]</sup> For more information, see: [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/prom/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/prom/index_en.htm).

<sup>[2]</sup> Appendix 1 includes a full list of Italian GIs as of December 31, 2009.

<sup>[3]</sup> [http://www.thefiftybest.com/food/best\\_cheese/](http://www.thefiftybest.com/food/best_cheese/)