



# JOSELITO: SIMPLY THE BEST HAM

*Throughout the generations the Gómez family has shared one obsession: to create the world's best ham*

Founded in the 19th century by Eugenio Gómez Hernández, the secrets and the traditions of how to produce Joselito ham have been passed down four generations to the present owner, Eugenio's great-grandson, José Gómez Martín. Throughout the generations the Gómez family has shared one obsession: to create the world's best ham.

## REARING CONTENTED PIGS

For over 100 years, four values have underpinned Joselito: use of its own herd of Iberian pigs; the pigs roam free; the company's commitment to the number of hectares per pig; and the 100 per cent natural curing process. How the pigs are reared is crucial. Each pig roams free in at least three hectares of land, feeding on a diet of grass and acorn in the Iberian eco-system, dehesa, a mix of wood and grassland.

The pigs are constantly on the move when searching for acorns, grass and water, increasing the muscle's oxidative capacity. This enhances the meat's quality and antioxidant and monounsaturated fatty acid content, and gives the ham its distinctive, intense red colour.

The pigs are aged for at least two years at a slow growth rate, and weigh 170–190 kg at the end of their life, so a greater amount of fat infiltrates the muscular tissue.

## QUALITY VERSUS QUANTITY

Since the pigs are reared in such a natural way, and because Joselito insists on a certain number of hectares per pig, only a limited amount of ham can be produced: quantity will never supersede quality. By the same token, the operation is sustainable, with 70,000–80,000 oak trees planted annually.

While some of the methods used in producing Joselito's ham have become more modern since Eugenio's day, the 100 per cent natural curing process continues to be long and slow. It's no wonder then, that it's the ham of choice for the finest chefs, who describe the ham as 'a jewel in the gastronomy of Spain', and 'an icon which best represents the essence of gastronomic virtue. Tradition, culture, technique, art and pleasure lie behind every slice'.

## *the traditional way*

In the UK, Joselito ham graces some of the most prestigious delicatessens and restaurants, including Fortnum and Mason, Harrods, Harvey Nichols, Wholefoods, Scotts, The George, Annabel's and Vivat Bacchus, as well as Spanish specialists Brindisa.

## ENJOYING THE HAM

The real expert, José Gómez, says, 'the ham goes very well with champagne, wine and beer to savour the aroma and the taste, the best way to eat it is the traditional way – accompanied by little chunks of fresh bread.'

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

What does the future hold for the ham that is already considered the best in the world? 'Joselito is a unique product of exceptional quality,' states Gómez. 'It is a pleasure to the senses, a gastronomic luxury. It is and deserves to be in the best delicatessens in the world, the best restaurants in the world, and in the houses of the most discerning customers in the world.'

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