

About Arteserena S.L. producers of the world winning cheese Cremositos del Zújar

1. Beginnings of the activity.

[Arteserena, SL](#) began producing the prestigious "Cremsitos del Zújar" in an artisan factory located in Campanario (Badajoz, Extremadura, Spain) in 1994, as a result of the union of 13 partners, mostly farmers, motivated by the drought that Extremadura was experiencing in those years. They had to turn to milking to compensate for the devaluation of the price of lamb and wool. In this way, ARTESERENA guaranteed a fair price for the raw material from its farmers and embarked on its adventure, transforming the milk from Merino sheep into an emerging local product, the Torta de La Serena. Merino sheep, graze freely on over 15,000 hectares of extensive land, have been crucial, along with our Quality and R&D department, in obtaining the highest quality milk, transmitting all the nuances of the magnificent Extremadura countryside to our products.

2. Evolution and development.

Arteserena started by producing a 1.2-kilogram cheese called "Crema del Zújar," producing about 200,000 liters per year. However, the size gradually decreased, and they became pioneers in making a smaller cheese, reducing it to 750 grams. This is when the name "Cremsitos del Zújar" emerged. Currently, they also produce a 400-gram cheese, reflecting the market demand as households are becoming smaller. In their pursuit of developing new products while maintaining the traditional recipe, in collaboration with their R&D department, they created the "Cremsitos del Zújar" with BLACK TRUFFLE in 2014, which was a great success. In 2018, they introduced the LACTOSE-FREE Cremsitos del Zújar, as well as the Cremsitos del Zújar with SMOKED PAPRIKA FLAKES and IBÉRICO ACORN-FED HAM SHAVINGS, marking a milestone in the innovation of soft cheese products. In 2019, they developed a new "Premium" format in collaboration with their design and packaging department. This format, which contains half a cheese (200 grams) vacuum-sealed and ready to be consumed by releasing the vacuum, has gained great acceptance.

3. Business philosophy.

ARTESERENA, whose constant pursuit of excellence, is dedicated to the artisanal production of Merino sheep cheeses. They take care and control the quality of the product in all stages of the process, paying attention to every detail, from the feeding and well-being of their own livestock to the final finishing, in order to obtain a homogeneous and excellent quality product throughout the year. For them, ensuring that their products are highly accepted by their customers is what ensures the future of their company and

the pride in their work. They offer high-quality products under the highest levels of food safety, transmitting the value of craftsmanship and traditional recipes with the sole aim of fully satisfying their customers by meeting their expectations with each service.

4. Products and their characteristics. Tasting notes.

The flagship product produced by Arteserena is the "Cremitos del Zújar," a raw Merino sheep milk cheese, 100% natural and artisanal. It is made using only three ingredients: Merino sheep milk, vegetable rennet (*Cynara Cardunculus*), and salt, 100% NATURAL, without any additives or preservatives.

ARTESERENA also produces EXTREME10, under the protection of the PDO Queso de la Serena. The coagulation process is carried out between 28 and 32°C. Coagulation is carried out between 28 and 32°C. The curd is cut with a cheese knife (*lyre*) until the desired grain size is achieved. Subsequently, the curd is placed into molds and, after a slight draining, it undergoes manual salting.

Slow maturation takes place at a very low temperature and high humidity for a minimum of 70 days. The cheese is supported on the periphery with a cotton bandage to shape it and prevent it from becoming too flat or squashed.

Every day, the cheese is turned over ("flipped") to prevent one side from drying more than the other and to allow the flora to evenly develop on the rind, thus acquiring the desired characteristics.

TASTING NOTES: Appearance: Externally, it stands out with a fine, naturally golden crust that takes on a slightly pinkish hue as it reaches room temperature due to the flora developed during maturation. Internally, it is very creamy, with a full-bodied texture, highlighting the shine of the cream with an impressive ivory white color.

Aroma: Clean, intense, milky, and characteristic of field flowers, with slight notes of stone fruits.

Flavor: Soft and pleasant, with initial notes of cream, while the subtle bitterness transforms into an impressive and persistent hint of dried fruits and cereals.

The key to the success of Cremitos del Zújar is that it conveys the essence and nuances of the nature and tradition of Extremadura, craftsmanship, freshness, an authentic sensory explosion, a unique cheese.

Cremitos del Zújar is available in three sizes: 1.2 kg, 700 g, and 400 g. In the 400 g size, there are five varieties: Natural, Lactose-Free, with Black Truffle, with Smoked Paprika Flakes, and with Ibérico Bellota Ham Shavings.

5. Production, Marketing, and Export Data: Currently, Arteserena produces "artisanally" 1,000,000 liters per year, which is approximately 170,000 kg, with a workforce of 14 people. In the last year, they have marketed 147,000 kg of cheese, generating a revenue of 2.1 million euros. They are present throughout the national territory, in major supermarkets such as Carrefour, Makro, and El Corte Inglés, regionally in all Mercadona and DIA stores. Their products can also be found in specialized stores, gourmet shops, and delicatessens across Spain and Europe.

Exports account for 8% of the annual revenue, with a presence in more than 10 countries worldwide, continuously expanding into major supermarkets and gourmet stores.

Due to the consistent reception of international awards, "Cremositos del Zújar" has become a benchmark in the international cheese industry, appearing in major gourmet magazines, television programs, books, and recipes by renowned international chefs. These accolades endorse its quality and attributes, leading to greater product exposure and constant growth in sales.

Arteserena began participating in international competitions in 2013, once they considered their product to be refined and ready to compete. Since then, they have received approximately 30 national and international awards across their different product references, with the majority of them going to their flagship product, "Cremositos del Zújar." The most significant awards include being named the 2nd Best Cheese in the World and Best Cheese in Spain at the World Cheese Awards 2016-17 held in San Sebastián. They also received the recent which named it the best aged sheep cheese and best cheese in Spain for 2019/20. These awards highlight the difficulty of competing with more common and less complex soft cheeses.

In February 2020, Cremositos del Zújar received the "Coups de Coeur" award at the Salon du Fromage in Paris, which recognizes it as one of the top 10 cheeses at the event. This is a highly significant international recognition, considering the Salon du Fromage is a renowned cheese event.

In December 2021, they were awarded the Gold Medal at the international Lyon Cheese Competition held on December 3, 2021, which featured more than 1,000 international cheeses.

Recognitions for "Cremositos del Zújar":

- 2013: Lactium Silver and special mention celebrated in Vic.
- 2013-2014: World Cheese Awards Bronze celebrated in Birmingham, UK.
- 2014: Rome Gold Award celebrated in Rome, Italy.
- 2014-2015: World Cheese Awards Gold celebrated in London, UK.
- 2016-2017: World Cheese Awards Super Gold celebrated in San Sebastián.

- Reached the finals among the top 16 cheeses in the world and achieved the second position as the best cheese in the world among 3,060 different types of cheeses presented in the competition.
 - Best cheese in Spain.
 - Best cheese cake in the world.
- 2017: Gourmet Gold Award celebrated in Madrid.
- 2017: Rome Silver Award celebrated in Rome, Italy.
- 2017-2018: World Cheese Awards Silver celebrated in London, UK.
- 2018: Rome Gold Award celebrated in Rome, Italy.
- 2018-2019: World Cheese Awards Super Gold celebrated in Norway.
- 2019: 1st Prize for Aged Cheese - Alimentos de España awarded by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Food.
- 2019: Special Award for Best Cheese - Alimentos de España awarded by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Food.
- 2020: Coups de Coeur Award for one of the top 10 cheeses at the Salon du Fromage granted by the Salon du Fromage in Paris.
- 2021: World Cheese Awards Gold celebrated in Oviedo, Spain.
- 2021: Gold Medal at the international Lyon Cheese Competition (FR).
- 2022: Gourmet Silver Award celebrated in Madrid (Gourmet Quesos).
- 2023: Special Gourmet Quesos Award for Best Cheese in Spain 2023 celebrated in Madrid (Gourmet Quesos).
- 2023: Gourmet Gold Award celebrated in Madrid (Gourmet Quesos).
- 2023: Gourmet Silver Award (for Mini Cremositos) celebrated in Madrid (Gourmet Quesos).

All these recognitions are a result of the exceptional quality of our products, achieved through the great work of authentic artisan cheesemakers throughout the Arteserena team. Their professionalism turns cheese-making into an art.

Future Perspectives.

ARTESERENA will continue to support the social, cultural, and environmental surroundings, contributing as an economic driver for the area. We will promote local gastronomy and the consumption of local products, fostering rural settlement and supporting animal welfare and sustainable traditional grazing practices in harmony with the environment.

ARTESERENA aims to consolidate the internationalization process by implementing our action plan to showcase and position our products in major supermarkets and gourmet stores.

ARTESERENA will also continue to innovate while preserving the essence of artisanal products, maintaining excellent quality control.

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