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The Next Big Pig - Mangalitsa/Mangalica



Mangalitsa Piglets

Canada's [Globe and Mail](#) is reporting about the arrival, in 2009, of Mangalitsa jamon from Jamones Segovia S.A., explaining that Mangalitsa is "the next big pig."

As they introduce their new premium food product, I expect Wooly Pigs (the ultimate source of all Mangalitsa produced in the Western Hemisphere) will benefit from their PR.

From the article:

Michael Tkaczuk, president and CEO of Toronto's Serrano Imports, came across mangalica ham by chance at a Barcelona food fair in March of this year. **On tasting it and hearing the story of the salvation of the unique mangalica breed, he knew that his company, which also brought serrano and Iberico ham to Canada, had to import it. "This product is just unbelievable," he says.**

Indeed, the cured ham, estimated to sell at \$150 per kilogram, is a worthy addition to foodie "must try" lists. With its maroon colour, rich aroma, smooth texture and robust, slightly salty flavour, it's a close cousin to the high-end *jamon Iberico* that arrived in Canadian stores last April.

Derek Bendig, chef de cuisine at Toronto's Pangaea restaurant, is one of the few Canadians who have tasted the ham, and is eagerly anticipating its arrival. "The ham is spectacular," he says. "The story behind it is a great selling feature," he adds.

Our customers, who've been enjoying fresh Mangalitsa meat know that it [is incredible](#).

Their remark "close cousin to the high-end *jamon Iberico*" makes it sound like Mangalitsa isn't as good as Iberico - but any differences in quality would be due to method of raising the pigs, not their genetics. Blog readers know that Mangalitsa is unsurpassed in its fattiness and meat quality, making most Iberico strains seem [lean in comparison](#).

If you've been following this blog, a few things in the article will seem odd:

The mangalica pigs, whose meat is used for the Spanish-cured mangalica ham, continue to be raised in a traditional manner by Hungarian farmers. The pigs are free-range and feed largely on barley, wheat and corn, as well as grasses and other plants they forage.

For the most part, the Hungarians [don't raise Mangalitsa free range](#), just as the Spanish [don't raise Iberico that way](#) - unless you count a small fraction of [mostly crossbred hogs](#) receiving a 3-month outdoor finish "free range".

From the article, you'd think their pigs would taste as good as [Red Mountain Farm's](#) Mangalitsa, which just isn't the case. Red Mountain Farm's Mangalitsa is some of the best raw material in the world, because the hogs are purebred and finished on acorns. It won't surprise me if American Mangalitsa producers, due to their focus on serving the high end, produce better pork than the Hungarians for quite a while, in the same way that Austrians, serving a very small and quality-sensitive market, [generally finish their Mangalitsa](#) with more care.

There's more on [how the Spanish](#) produce their cured meat products [here](#).

POSTED BY HEATH PUTNAM AT 7:23 AM 1 COMMENTS
