

CANARIAN BLACK PIG



BREED

The Canarian black pig is descended from the animals that arrived in the Canary Islands from northwest Africa with the first settlers of the archipelago. Later these animals were genetically influenced by pigs from the Iberian Peninsula and Europe broadly. The result of this mixture has given rise to a breed unlike any other, one adapted to the environmental conditions of the islands.



ORIGIN

The Canarian black pig is a descendant of the animals brought to the Canary Islands by the first settlers from north Africa who arrived on the islands in several waves around 2,500 years ago. This has been confirmed by studying pig remains found in archaeological sites in the archipelago. Therefore, Canarian black pig could trace its origins to now-extinct pig breeds in north Africa, which reinforces their unique genetic profile. Likewise, chroniclers of the Spanish conquest of the archipelago recorded the presence of pigs already on the islands when the Spaniards arrived in the fourteenth century.

After the discovery of America, the Canary Islands became a mandatory place for Spanish ships to put in when travelling to the Indies. The Archipelago was a resupply point for ships, where food and live animals were brought on board to take to the new continent. Domestic animals of breeds that existed at the time in the Canary Islands were brought to the New World, and were forerunners of some of the current American Creole breeds.

The Canarian black pig went through a critical stage when pig farming was modernised in the mid-20th century. The

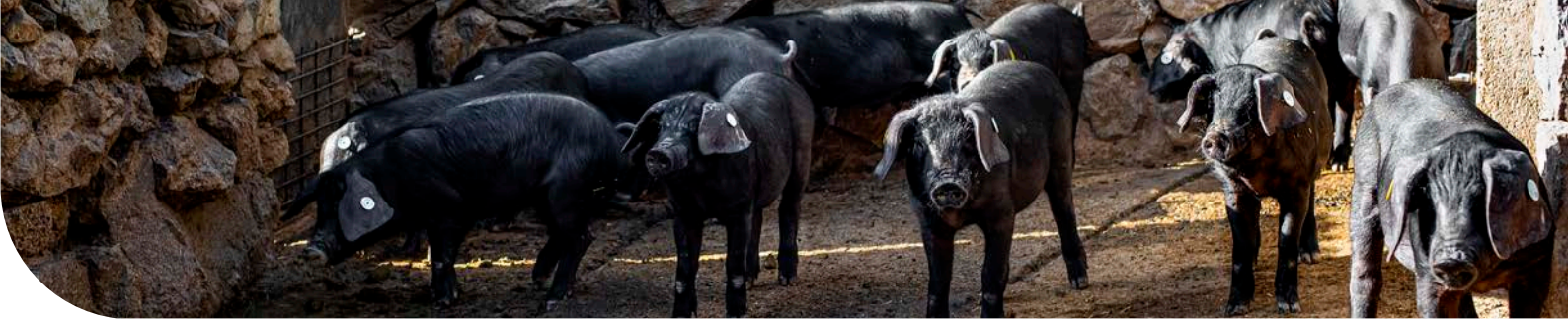
changes involved the introduction of commercial hybrid breeds with a white coat, animals being selected for high prolificacy, with a preference for fast growth and leaner meat. This meant that the native pigs almost disappeared from the islands. They were only preserved in the stocks of a handful of local livestock farmers, who continued to breed some of these animals, generally in more remote mountain areas of the island. The Canary black pig was included in the Official Catalogue of Livestock Breeds of Spain in 1997 with special protection status due to its low numbers.

The Island Council of Tenerife (the Cabildo) acquired some of the remaining animals on the islands and set up a breeding centre at the Finca El Helecho in Arico. The Cabildo worked with farmers who wanted to ensure the breed's survival to promote conservation of the Canarian black pig. More recently, the work of the Association of Breeders of Canarian Black Pig has been critical, as this organisation manages the breed's Stud Book.

The Cabildo's efforts to recover and promote this breed include a directed breeding programme to avoid an increase in consanguinity among the animals. Through this programme, breeding animals are provided to the island's farmers to promote reproduction. At the same time, different actions are carried out to publicise the Canarian black pig products -such as organising advertising campaigns, cooking days and tasting samples- aimed at both food and agriculture professionals and the general public. Thanks to institutional support, the Canarian black pig currently represents 17% of the pig breeding stock on the island of Tenerife. The current breeding stock census on the island includes approximately 400 animals.

The meat of the Canarian black pig, which was highly prized in the past, remains popular today thanks to its superb, unique qualities. It is rightfully included among gourmet products.





PRODUCTION



Breeding

Breeding happens on farms in a more traditional way, where the pigsties, called goros, usually have access to an outdoor patio, where the animal can dig and engage in typical behaviours more freely. Providing more space to walk and move outdoors also ensures higher-quality meat.



Feeding

Unlike hybrid breed white pig farms, where the animals are fed exclusively commercial feed, Canarian black pig farms normally use a combination of feed and agricultural by-products (plant scraps, fruits that have lost their commercial value, etc.) and cheese whey, which contributes to the excellent flavour of the meat.



Growth

The animals have a slower growth process. The slaughter age is about nine months, with a live weight of 80-90 kg. Breeding animals can reach an average weight of 150-170 kg.

FEATURES AND PROPERTIES

LONGEVITY

The average lifespan of these animals is 8-9 years.

MORPHOLOGY

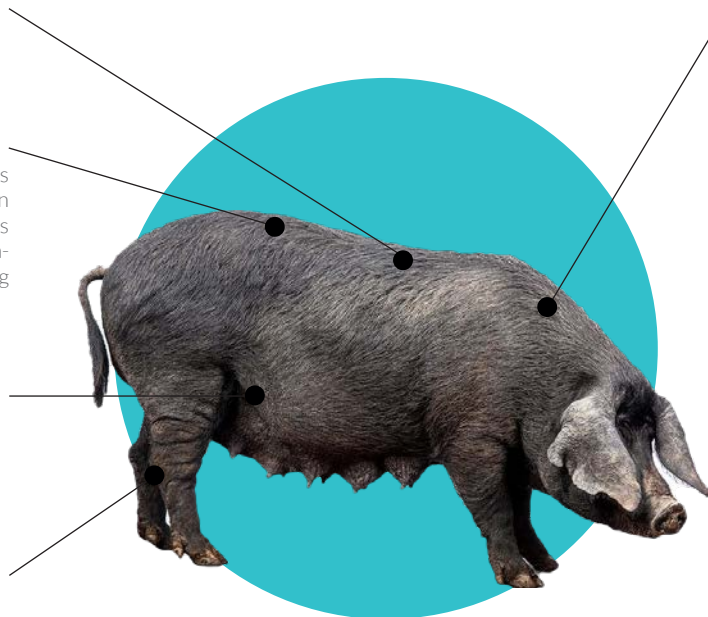
This animal is characterised by its black coat. It has wrinkles and folds in its skin, as well as numerous bristles (hairs). The profile of its head is ultra-concave and its ears are very long and pointed towards the snout.

MOVEMENT

Adult animals are mainly guided by smell, as the wrinkles in the skin next to the eyes make it extremely difficult for them to see.

GROWTH

They have a slower growth process than that of domesticated white-coated pigs. They can reach a live weight of 140-160 kg in a period of 18 months.



FATTENING

These are animals that tend to accumulate more fat than commercial pigs of hybrid white breeds, since they are pigs that have not undergone any selective breeding in response to market demands. Until the middle of the last century, their bacon was a highly sought-after commodity to preserve the meat itself, prepare meat products or for use in the kitchen to fry and sauté food.

- Among its qualities, we can highlight that in the Canary Islands it is considered a gourmet product. Canarian black pig meat has qualities that set it apart, and so the product is highly sought after and fetches considerable prices. Today demand outstrips production.
- Some fat is able to infiltrate the intramuscular level, and the result is a juicier and tastier product than meat from leaner pig breeds.

AUTHENTIC TASTE: *the history of the black pig of Tenerife*

Ancestors of the current Canarian black pig from northwest Africa have existed on our islands for 2,500 years. The subsequent genetic mixture with other animals brought from the Iberian Peninsula and Europe more broadly resulted in a pig of true Atlantic origin. The Canarian black pig is a native breed that was spared disappearance in the middle of the last century thanks to still being bred according to traditional methods in remote mountain areas of our islands.

This is an animal raised with more open space, and the pigs generally have access to outdoor patios. Their diet includes plant by-products and cheese whey, which affords their meat a widely appreciated flavour and high overall quality.

