



TECHNICAL DATA SHEET

100% DRIED SAFFRON IN STIGMAS

COLOR: Intense red

PERFUME: Very persistent

PROPERTIES: PROPERTIES: The saffron plant originates from a bulb, *crocus sativus*, and is characterized by having a sterile flower, which does not turn into fruit, from which the spice is obtained. In the month of September saffron bulbs are planted in the field, according to a manual procedure. For about two months the bulbs in the ground start their vegetative phase until the month of November, when small herbaceous filaments begin to grow from the ground and then small purple flowers. For about fifteen/twenty days, every day the field is covered with these flowers which are picked by skilled workers at dawn. After the daily harvesting of flowers, they are directly brought to the laboratory and, for each flower, three small filaments are manually extracted: saffron. The filaments, called stigmas, are then subjected to a long drying process at a controlled temperature of 45° C (45° F) and packaged in jars in order to preserve their aroma. After the harvesting of the flowers, the bulbs remain underground in the field in order to allow the start of the duplication phase of the bulb, during which only herbaceous filaments emerge from the ground. During the month of June, bulbs are manually explanted in order to allow the separation of the new ones from the old ones, waiting for a new replanting, based on a triennial rotation, in the month of September.

SOME CURIOSITIES: Saffron is the most valuable and expensive spice on the market. For this reason and because of its limited production, for years it was managed as a state monopoly. Today, however, things have changed, and its cultivation is absolutely free. The ideal climate for its breeding, both in terms of temperature and in terms of humidity, is the one found in very draining and not very clayey territories around 40°, it is not by chance that among the main producers there are Spain, Iran and Italy.

In the world:

The history of this spice is very ancient, and its use has not always been the culinary or therapeutic one. Originating from Asia Minor, *za'hafaran*, as Arabs call it, was used by Phoenicians to dye fabrics yellow, according to Pliny's writings. It was the Arabs who, during their expansion, contributed to its spreading, giving prestige to this spice beyond the borders: in Spain, for example, it is used in the preparation of paella, and in Indonesia it has become the base for the production of curry.

In Italy:

already in Roman times saffron was a very renowned spice used as an aphrodisiac. With the passing of time, saffron kept its preciousness and the Republics of the boot established commercial exchanges, called *Banchi dello zafferano* (Banks of saffron), for the quotation of the lots destined to the great noble courts of Florence, Venice, Milan and Genoa. In the Middle Ages, saffron was used for the creation of yellow paint to be used in figurative arts.

It is said that during the construction of the Cathedral of Milan, on the stained-glass window of Saint Helena worked a glazier who was very good at making colors golden by using saffron and he was nicknamed Valerio of Flanders. One day Valerio's daughter got married and this one did not have the money to make her a present, so he went to the wedding banquet with two trays full of golden risotto, giving life to one of the most extraordinary Italian recipes "risotto alla Milanese".

From mythology:

From mythology: Ovid tells us that once lived a nymph called Smillace who fell in love with a young warrior, *Krocus*. Gods did not approve this relationship because of the mortal nature of *Krocus*, which was opposed to the immortal nature of the nymph, and they did everything possible to interrupt the relationship making the two lovers obsessive, quarrelsome and very unhappy. The love inevitably ended in tragedy, *Krocus* committed suicide out of frustration and Smillace went mad. At this point the Gods took pity on them and transformed them into plants, she became the *Smillax Aspera*, a shrub with heart-shaped leaves and thorny branches to symbolize a tenacious but exasperated love. He, on the other hand, became a *Crocus sativus*, a purple flower, symbolizing the pride of having been in love with an immortal, with a heart the color of the sun.