

NARCHVI

NUMBER OF REGISTRATION: 991

DATE OF REGISTRATION: 29/10/2025

AO: "Narchvi"

NAME OF GOOD FOR WHICH REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED: cheese

NAME OF APPLICANT AND ADDRESS: Association "Svanuri Narchvi"

Vill. Pari, Mestia Region, Georgia

I. Name of Product – "Narchvi"

II. Product Description

"Narchvi" is a cheese made from raw, unskimmed cow milk, and it is ripened in wooden box.

Specific organoleptic characteristics:

Shape – the shape and size of cheese pieces vary. Pressed cheese takes the shape of box wherein it is placed.

Color – "Narchvi" is whitish, pale yellowish.

Texture/Consistency – the consistency of cheese depends on the period of production. Cheese made in May-September has loose/crumby consistency, while cheese made in October-November has a firmer, butter-like consistency.

Smell – "Narchvi" has intensive, appetizing, spicy aroma. "Narchvi" shall not have sour, pungent or unpleasant smell.

Taste – piquant and appetizing. Matured "Narchvi" has taste of hazelnuts or walnuts, and shall not have sour, pungent or unpleasant taste.

Chemical Characteristics – fat content calculated on dry mass shall be at least 29%. Salt content shall not exceed 4%.

III. Geographical Area

Milking, cheese-making, and ripening take place in Zemo Svaneti, encompassing the Southern slopes of Caucasus Mountains- and upper reaches of Enguri and Tskhenistskali rivers.

MAP OF MILKING AND CHEESE-MAKING AREA



IV. Description of Local Production Methods, Specific Stages of Production Used in Defined Geographical Area

Milking

Mountaineering and Feeding on Summer Pastures

The milk used to make "Narchvi" cheese is obtained from healthy cows that feed on pastures in milking zone required for production of "Narchvi".

In late spring, as soon as the weather permits, the farmers move their herds to fertile summer pastures of Svaneti for grazing, and in October or November, before the cold snap, they return them.

In some villages of Zemo Svaneti, cattle are kept on village pastures year-round.

Feeding

During grazing season, the cows in milking zone are fed only with pasture grass. Salt is allowed to be added periodically.

During winter, animals (cows) are fed with hay (mowed in Svaneti), and in very harsh winter conditions the feeding with mixture of milled barley and corn, and pumpkin and other vegetables is allowed, as well.

Milk Characteristics

Georgian mountain cow milk is used to make "Narchvi", that is made from unpasteurized raw milk freshly milked in the morning or evening.

Period of Production

Traditionally the production of "Narchvi" begins on August 29 (the day after the feast of Assumption of Maria) and ends at the end of November. However, it is permissible to start the production process in May, provided that the temperature regime in the cheese ripening room is maintained.

Making of Wooden Boxes

"Narchvi" cheese box is made from well-dried hardwood or coniferous wood grown in Svaneti forest. A box made of dried planks or seasoned log is used to store cheese. The box is

perforated (on the sides and bottom) or spaces are left between the planks so that the cheese can drain well.

The box is tied with a string made of tree branches. It is allowed to use nails made of stainless steel to make wooden box, and provided that the nail does not come into contact with the cheese.

Box lid shall be at least of 4-5 cm thickness and cut out in such a way that it fits into the box and evenly covers the cheese mass. The box size can range from 5 to 40 kg in capacity.

Cheese-making

Filtering of Milk and Obtaining Delamo (Serum)

Fresh unskimmed milk is filtered and poured into stainless steel container (cast iron pot is also allowed). To make Delamo the milk is added to previously prepared cut of beef, veal, or pork, at the temperature of 35-37°C, and mixed with smooth-surfaced hardwood stick or spoon with variously shaped ends. It is also possible to use other equipment made of materials approved for contact with food. It is permissible to heat the milk to achieve the required temperature. When the Delamo hardens, it is ready to be removed to obtain the grain. The use of lactobacillus starter is not permitted.

Obtaining of Grain

Cheese vessel is placed on the fire (oven). The Delamo is stirred manually or with wooden spoon until obtaining of granules of size of corn kernel and/or hazelnut kernel. Then, it is left in same container for 5-20 min until serum removal. Cheese mass is kneaded, and transferred to a strainer.

Squeezing from Serum and Cheese Ripening

The cheese is moved to wooden vessel (Zerdi) or stainless-steel container that allows the serum to drain. The cheese is left for ripening in the container or vessel for 2 to 24 h.

The length of this period depends on ambient temperature. The ripening of cheese is determined as follows: small piece of cheese is placed in hot pan over a fire; if the mass is stretched the cheese is ready for next stage. Otherwise, the mass is left until ripening.

Salting and Placing in Boxes

Ripened cheese is kneaded manually until obtaining of uniform dough-like mass. If the amount of ripened cheese is not sufficient, it is permissible to keep the cheese for several days at the temperature of 5-7°C. A tablespoon of salt is added to obtained mass, kneaded again, placed in previously prepared wooden box, covered with wooden lid, and placed several large stones or other loads thereon. Use of other pressing constructions is also allowed.

Before placing the cheese into wooden box, it is permissible to place it in fabric bag to drain. The cheese in the bag is loaded, and left for 2 days before being placed in wooden box. The cheese of 10-15 cm thickness is placed in the box, in time. New cheese mass can be added to fill the box after minimum 2 and maximum 5 days. Cheese mass shall be well pressed into the box before adding the next portion.

Ripening

Ripening period in wooden box continues at least 2 months in dry, cool place. The temperature shall not exceed +15°C.

V. Proof that Product Comes from Defined Geographical Area (Traceability System)

A. Registration of Business Operator

Each person whose activities are related to one or more stages of "Narchvi" production can join the Association "Svanuri Narchvi". The association shall maintain a register of persons who, based on the permission of the controlling body, have the right to use the Appellation of Origin "Narchvi".

B. Requirement on Traceability

All stages of milking, cheese-making, ripening, slicing, and packing are executed within designated area under control and monitoring conditions to ensure the uniqueness/specificity of product.

Product traceability shall be ensured at the stages of: milking, cheese-making, ripening, cutting, packing and distribution.

To ensure traceability the person whose activities are related to any stage of "Narchvi" production (milk producer, cheese-maker, cutter, packer, distributor), is obliged to have necessary information on the stages of production, processing and distribution of product, the raw ingredients used in it, and packing material to maintain relevant documentation and records submitted to the state control body upon request, on the basis of which, it will be able to assess the compliance of origin of milk and cheese, and the specification and production conditions with the established requirements.

These records shall include, at least, the following data:

- Number of milking cows at the beginning of milking period and any changes (increase or decrease) during the season;
- Approximate amount of milk used daily;
- Amount of cheese made daily;
- Number of wooden boxes used;
- Number of boxes moved during each transportation;
- Number of cheeses placed on the market.

Traceability system is coordinated by the Association of Entrepreneurs of Cheese with Protected Designation of Origin – PDO "Narchvi" – "Svanuri "Narchvi", the label defined by which shall accompany the product.

VI. Relationship between Product Quality, Characteristics and Geographical Environment

Natural Environment

Zemo Svaneti includes the Southern slopes of Caucasus Range, and upper reaches of Enguri and Tskhenistskali rivers. Zemo Svaneti has humid climate up to 2000 m above sea level with cold and long winters, and short, warm, and sometimes hot summers. Average annual temperature is 5.7°C (6.4°C in January and 16.4°C in July).

Human and Environmental Factors

For the purpose to keep cheese during long winters the local people Zemo Svaneti developed traditional method to storage cheese in a box, and the knowledge was passed from generation to generation for centuries.

Cow Breed

A breed of cow common in Svaneti with common name – cow, Latin name *Bos taurus* has breed name – Georgian Mountain Cow. There are distinguished sub-breeds: Pshav-Khevsuretian, Tushetian, Ossetian, Rachan, Svan, Abkhazain and Acharan. The breed is distinguished with its agile temperament and strong constitution. Thanks to unique proportionality of body structure, breed ability to orient itself, and the strength of its hooves easily masters steep mountain pastures with slopes of up to 30°.

Natural Factors

The cows whose milk is used to make "Narchvi" are fed on the pastures of Zemo Svaneti, which is reflected in the taste of milk.

Reputation

On August 13, 2020, by the Decree No. 02/59 of the Director of the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Protection of Georgia the tradition of making "Narchvi" was granted the status of intangible cultural heritage monument.

In famous American online publication "Saveur"[\[1\]](#) the publication "The Lost Cheeses of Georgia", published on March 27, 2019 dedicated to traditional cheese varieties produced in Georgia describes "Narchvi", as well". The author of publication David Farley describes his

impressions of being hosted in Svaneti: "The host called this cheese a gift from God, and that was no exaggeration, because it is truly extraordinary cheese". "Narchvi" is hard, deep and intensely flavored cheese made from cow milk, with buttery texture and initially sweet taste. It is stored in wooden box for up to an year. At this time, the cheese is given a nutty flavor. In 2022, the following documentary films were also dedicated to Narchvi: "Cheese the Narchvi. Oldest methods in Svaneti / Svanuri cheese "Narchvi"[\[2\]](#) and "Narchvi": Reviving the Old Tradition".[\[3\]](#)

VII. Rules of Packaging and Labeling

"Narchvi" can be delivered to the consumer in whole box or in sliced form. The cheese shall be sliced and packed either by the producers or packers under the control of the Association "Svanuri "Narchvi".

Each box or slice of cheese with the sign - PDO "Narchvi" placed on the market shall provide information to consumers by taking into account the requirements of Georgian Regulation "On the Provision of Food Information to Consumers". At that, each box or slice of cheese with the sign - the PDO "Narchvi" shall be sold with individual markings, the label of which will indicate:

- Food category – cheese.
- PDO "Narchvi" – font size whereof shall not be smaller than any other font size on the marking.
- Name "Narchvi" shall be followed by: "Protected Designation of Origin".
- Protected Designation of Origin Official State Logo shall be applied in the same field of vision where the name "Narchvi" is indicated.
- For the members of the Association "Svanuri "Narchvi" – the association created the Logo ("Protected Designation of Origin "Narchvi").

Information Specified by Traceability System

Products intended for export shall be signed with:

In Georgian – ნარჩვი

დაცული ადგილწარმოშობის დასახელება

In Latin – **NARCHVI**

Protected Designation of Origin and/or PDO

In Cyrillic – НАРЧВИ

Защищённое наименование места происхождения

VIII. Control Bodies

Control of compliance with the requirements of the Specification of Protected Designation of Origin "Narchvi" is provided in accordance with Georgian Legislation:

- **Self Control** – is provided by the producer of Protected Designation of Origin "Narchvi".

- **Inner Control** – is provided by the Association "Svanuri "Narchvi", that on-site assessments compliance of production process and organoleptic properties of "Narchvi" with the requirements set forth in the specifications, controls the process of slicing and packing of "Narchvi", furthermore, verifies traceability records, documentation, other relevant information, and assists business operator in order to facilitate the implementation of state control.

- **Outer same as State Control** – is provided by the competent authority – the National Food Agency (6 Marshal Gelovani St., Tbilisi 0159, Georgia) or controlling authority – the Legal Entity to which the competent authority has delegated the performance of a specific task related to state control.

[1] <https://www.saveur.com/cheese-of-northern-georgia/>

[2] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yMDopZOcbA0>

[3] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UkWF6-W9GU4&t=3s>