

MOLD GUIDE

A LOOK INSIDE OUR MOLDY, DELICIOUS WORLD



WHAT IS THIS POWDERY STUFF?

That is mold. But not "that" kind of mold. The mold we use, *penicillium nalgiovense*, is integral to our salami. Like the mold on a fine cheese, *p. nalgiovense* gives our salami a special character. We intentionally put mold on the outside of our salami as part of our curing and fermentation process. We call it our "House Flora". It's unique to our process and is nothing you should be afraid of. It's something we love and that sets us apart. Unlike some salami makers, we keep our molds, rather than brushing them off and dusting the products with milk or rice powder.

WHAT'S THE POINT OF THE MOLD?

"House Flora" serves many purposes in our process. The first reason we use mold is to protect the salami from any competing mold or bacteria growth during the drying process. Spraying the mold on the salami inoculates it with good mold and drives off any potential bad mold that might exist in the environment. Our mold army vanquishes any potential undesirables through sheer numbers! Another key function of our mold is to regulate the drying of the salami. The mold keeps the surface of the salami from drying out too quickly or slowly, making for a creamy, supple finished product. Finally, the mold on the exterior of our salami contributes to the overall flavor by mellowing out the acidity produced during fermentation. We could cure our salami differently and not use mold, but it would drastically change our product.

IT LOOKS DIFFERENT THAN LAST TIME

Milk and rice powders are always consistent and white, but they aren't natural or wild like our "House Flora." Although we use the same species every time we inoculate our salami, we can't say that it is going to act the same way each time - and that's part of the nature of dealing with a natural product. Each year, we watch it change with temperature, humidity and the evolving nature of the mold. We control it as closely as we can, but we still find that there is natural variation. Which is why there is such a range in color and appearance, from white to green to shades of dark grey and black. The black mold especially can seem off-putting, but it isn't unsafe to consume, and again, that's part of the wonder of dealing with a natural product.

HOW DO I TAKE CARE OF THIS STUFF?

Although we're talking about mold specifically here, the mold and salami are one beast. What's good for the mold is good for the salami. The important thing to remember about salami is that an exchange of oxygen is vital, the molds need air to keep growing. When they no longer are getting oxygen they die off. At home, I loosely wrap my salami in its paper, then fold it in an unsealed Ziplock bag. Stored in the crisper drawer of my home refrigerator it's cool, but not too cold, and not cut off from airflow. In this manner your salami can last for days or even weeks. The molds are delicious, meant to add flavor and totally safe to eat. I always say that it is up to individual taste, but in no way would consuming it be harmful, and if desired, it can easily be peeled with the casing.

