

The first tableau next to the entrance shows the portrait of *Márk Pick*, the founder of the factory, his son *Jenő Pick*, and their biographies. Márk Pick, the product trader of Moravian Jewish origin, was a great traveller. Once he went to Italy, the homeland of salami, and when he tasted the local specialty he thought how well the *mangalica* pigs in the Szeged region could be used for these purposes. The Hungarian production, which started in small quantities in 1869, used methods that differed from the traditional Italian methods. Instead of maturing in the open air, Hungarians used cold smoking and the spices were also adjusted to the local Szegedian taste. Jen Pick took part in the production for fifty years.

The following tableaus demonstrate the development of the Szegedian meat industry and salami production in the second half of the 19th century. At that time, the meat industry was hugely versatile. Pork cutting established a variety of independent professions. Thus, the profession of stabbing master and intestine cleaner came to be separate professions, and salami production became independent as a result of this process too. Contemporary pictures, awards won by Pick salami at national exhibitions and documents presenting the factory's expansion can be seen here. We can have a look at the parts of the **drag balance** used in meat shops, the **picker** and the **pole-axe** used for stabbing the cattle and the **blade of the swinging knives** used for cutting the raw material for salami.

The **breamer** evokes the atmosphere of old pig feasts. In the cylinder, billets were burnt and with the help of the hand-driven wheel, the flame and hot air was blown.

Only the meat and bacon of old pigs is used for the production of winter salami. The Pick company had the pigs fed by the farmers in the Szeged region. The pigs were driven to the Szeged abattoir and then, following the stabbing, they were thrown into a scalding-tub. The hair was torn off the scalded pig and then thoroughly scrubbed until it became as white as snow. Following the gutting, the bacon was cut off. The chin bacon and the bacon under the pigs belly were used for salami production. The split pig was put into the refrigerator so that it would stiffen before being delivered into the salami factory. On cold winter mornings, the half pigs were delivered on horse-driven carriages through the town to the salami factory where they were hung on **hooked carriages** and pushed into a separate room with a wood piece to rest. In this room, as many as three-thousand half

pigs could be waiting to be boned at the same time, while the excess water dried off them.

Since winter salami production was a seasonal work until as late as the mid 20th century, the local farmers and workers were employed in this work for a long time. The workers built the factory in the summer.

In the boning room, the thick **tables** were laid on timber frameworks and smaller or larger **chests** or **baskets** were placed around the tables. The cleaned bones were put here, as well as the bloody meat, the soft lard and the thews. The boning was performed with the help of a sharp **knife**. Every pig cutting group had five members: the first cutter, the leg cutter, the blade cutter, the kidney and neck cutter, the meat cutter. The cutting group used to take the large meat off the bones. The meaty bones were scrubbed by the portioners, and the rest of the meat was examined in a **special chest**, so as to prevent any bone fragments. In the boning room, two people took care of the chopping of the bacon. The meat cutter cut the boned meat into palm-sized pieces and pulled these into a **track-carriage**. This was carried to the basement which served as a large refrigerator where it was laid on a mattress. The meat pieces were frozen for three days at minus five to six degrees and then rotated with an oak rod and carved flat on one side, so that they would freeze perfectly.

Previously, they used to exclusively stuff the salami into horse intestines. The horse intestine was prepared by the intestine specialists. It was washed in the **intestine washing tub**, then it was cut to proper sizes on the **intestine cutting table** and tied together at one end. Since the 1960s, winter salami has not been stuffed into horse intestines but instead into **cellulose cases** produced by the Nalo company, which is made of fibres and can be smoked.

Following the rotation of the well-frozen meat pieces, they were pulled into the **bobsled chest** with a wooden rake. Following this, a precise quantity of meat and bacon was measured by a person who pulled the chest beside the blocks. The preparation of salami paste started at this stage.

At the beginning, two people used to chop the raw material with the help of the manual **swinging knives** (that can be seen opposite the entrance) to the size of rice by walking in circles and at the same time performing rolling motion with the knives on the

Pick Salami Museum



blocks. Later on, the use of the **cutter** ensured an easier and faster way of cutting.

The manually driven wheel rotated the cup and the knives inside it by levers. In the middle of the cutting process, the secret mixture of spices were thrown into the semi-finished paste.

Afterwards, the salami paste was taken to the room with the pan and put into the wooden pan. It was compressed, so that no air would remain between the layers. Over several days, it ripened under a snow-white sheet in the pan and it gained a consistent fragrance and taste.

After this, 8 to 10 kilogram pieces were cut out of the paste (these were called *palóc*) with the help of the rectangular **palóc-cutter spade**, and the **palóc-carrier carriage** pulled these beside the filler machine. The *palóc* pieces were put into the vertical tube of the **cannon filler**, then two people drove the machine manually.

The end of the uneven salami rod was stuffed into the intestine and temporarily tied together; thus, it was placed inside the ligature room.

The string for tying the salami was soaked on a **spool** in warm water to make tying easier.

The salami rod was gently massaged by the person performing the ligature and then stabbed by the **stuffer** so as the paste would lose the air that had been inside. The temporary string was cut down from one end of the rod, the string was held together with the other end with the help of **special pincers**, then the paste was condensed to its tied end by stiffening motions. After having reached the appropriate stiffness, the string was driven through the free end of the rod; this became the belly string, which was fixed to the middle of the rod by the stuffer. Afterwards, the other end of the rod was tied in, then the stuffer was taken out, the rod was turned out and the back string was stretched off the spool in the hand, and this way, pulled the rod straight. Three loops were thrown onto it; the middle loop was fixed to the back string. The hanging string required for the hanging was prepared, and then the intestine reaching outside the ends of the string and the rod was cut off. The **number of the paste**, the **control number** and the so-called **aluminium number** following the introduction of the norm system, as well as a **seal with the letter P** was written on the back side of the rod. The rods were tied into pairs with the help of the

hanging string and hung onto the **finger carriage**. These reached the rails of the smoker in the building of the salami ripening tower so that one half of each pair hung above the other because they were not to touch each other.

The chopped oak-wood was smouldering on three or four **smoker carriages** in the smoking rooms. This kind of smoke is the best for smoking salami. The carriage should be pulled back and forth so as the rods would be smoked evenly. Usually, one week later, the rods were relocated. The person performing this carried five-five pairs of rods on his shoulders with the help of the **smoking sticks**, to the ripening loft.

The pairs were hung there also, so as the rods would not touch each other. Several windows served to air the room in the ripening loft. From autumn until spring, these were opened and closed depending on the weather, this way regulating the optimal temperature needed for drying. Following several weeks of drying, the replacement took place. The rods near the window were replaced by those inside the room so as they mould evenly. Sooner or later a thick layer of mould was created on the rods and so as this would not prevent ripening, the excessive parts were scrubbed off with a **hair brush**.

The rods ripened for about eighty days. The salami master decided when the time was right for cutting. Then, the salami rods were placed into the packer.

The portion measured by the measurer was packed by packing pairs. One of them used to stick the **label** with national colours onto the rod and the other one placed the rods into the **wooden chest** lined by wood-chip.

In the case of delivery overseas, the rods used to be packed in paper or cellophane, then grease-proof paper and finally put into **metal chests** lined by wood-chops, so as to protect the salami from wet sea air. These chests were also brazed and put into wooden chests.

The tops of the wooden chests were nailed down and a thin steel band was flexed on it with a **bracing machine**.

The chests were carried to the railway station on horse carriages.

The graphs on the tableaus on the exhibition, as well as the diagrams show the quantitative growth of winter salami and its expansion throughout various continents of the world. The pictures help us gain an insight to the recent past and present of Pick Szeged Zrt.

Szeged Paprika Museum



The seasoning paprika (*Capsicum annuum L. var. Longum DC.*) comes from an annual plant, belonging to the family of Solanaceae. Its closest relatives are the sweet paprika and the chilli paprika, both of which stem from a common ancestor, the wild paprika native in Central and South America.

The first paprika plant was brought to the old world by Columbus. In the second half of the 16th century, it spread as an exotic plant in the baroque Europe, later it was produced and used as a medicinal herb.

The seasoning paprika accelerates blood circulation, is an appetizer, reduces inflammations, is anaesthetic and reduces cholesterol levels. It is rich in capsaicin which provides its sharp taste, and also in carotenoid colour and vitamin C.

Albert Szent-Györgyi succeeded to gain large quantities of vitamin C out of the Szeged paprika and in 1937 he won the Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine *'for his discoveries in connection with the biological combustion processes, with special reference to vitamin C and the catalysis of fumaric acid'*.

The paprika conquered our country as a seasoning plant during the 18th century, arriving from the Balkans. The fields of black sand in the neighbourhood, experience gained in tobacco production, the proximity of the river Tisza and the favourable climate facilitated the naturalization of paprika in Szeged.

The paprika seeds intended for sowing were gained from the nicest, selected crops. Its preparation took place in the second half of March. The cleaned and dried seed was soaked in water, wrapped in a wet cloth and kept in a warm place. After the seed had sprouted, it was sown into the properly prepared, manured, hacked, raked and softly stamped seed-bed, then watered into the soil and covered by manure. In the seed-bed prepared this way, the seed evolved into a seedling in eight weeks. Meanwhile, it was being hoed and watered.

Planting paprika was the most outstanding moment of producing paprika. Usually, it took place in the second half of May. The seedling-bed was watered, so as to be able to pull the seedling out of the soil easier. The seedlings were put into a chest with a low edge and handgrips, a so-called *'kole'** and brought to the thoroughly prepared plough-land by horse-carriages. (* *The tools indicated by underlining can be found on the pedestal in the central part of the room.*)

Planting began by defining. With the **defining rake**, stripes were drawn on the soil far and wide, the lot was practically divided into squares indicating the position of the plantable seedling by points of intersection, which (if necessary), was watered by **sprinklers**. The person planting the seedling, bored a 10 to 12 cm deep, cone-shaped hole into the point of intersection with the help of a **drill**, put the seedling inside and pressed the soil aside with the edge of the drill. With the help of the **drill stick**, this work was performed by two people.

Until the beginning of August the paprika soil was hoed three times by a **manual hoe** or a **shuffle hoe** and it was watered depending on the weather.

Pepper harvest started at the beginning of September. The harvesters pulled the ripe red husks off the stock by hand and then put these into sacks. Three or four harvests followed each other in every 10 to 14 days.

When the paprika was already dry and its core was wilt, the sewing **began**. The husks were sewn together through their cores, placed in the shape of a star on a needle, and then on strings. The strings were put on stands and then, when they dried out sufficiently, hung under the drips. The pediment of the characteristic **sun-ray house** is to be found above the staircase. This post-aging could even double the production of the colouring substances of the paprika.

For a long time, the purpose of paprika processing has been to reduce sharpness. At the beginning, the strings were dried in furnaces in the winter, then directly put into the seat of the large wooden mortar operating with the help of a lifting structure, the so-called *'küülü'*. The lifter of the *'küülü'* was pressed down by feet, then lifted upwards and then the breaker fell into the seat. After about three-hundred movements of this kind, the paprika was **ridled through** and the remaining part was put back into the seat. As a result of this method, a rather sharp broken paprika was produced since the skin, the seed and the core were being broken together.

From the mid 19th century, *'chipping'* became commonly used. The husks dried until they rattle, then they were broken and degraded off the core. The chipped off paprika was then broken again in a *'clubber' chest* and then it was put into the *'küülü'*.

However, the reduction of sharpness could not be completely achieved by this procedure either.

At the end of the 19th century, the method of paprika cleaving became to be used and this became to be regarded as the beginning of the institution of paprika preparation. The paprika preparer used ripping tools either prepared by himself or bought from others. The cleaving took place by cutting the core off the paprika husk at first and then cleaving the husk vertically and turning it out. The seed and the nervation was picked out from its inside, the paprika skin was pulled on a needle and sewed on a string and then the string was hanged on a **frame**. The picked out seed was soaked in water for several days, then washed through and dried together with the paprika skin with the help of the oak-wood firing utility **stove** of the drier, in a **pan**.

The dried skin was granulated by a **club**, mixed with the seed in the appropriate proportion and put into the *'küülü'* or the mill.

Following the spread of non-sharp paprika in the 1930s, paprika preparation has gradually lost its importance.

The history of Szeged seasoning paprika began with the *paprika broken* in a *'küülü'*. *Ground paprika* is the product of dry mills driven by yoke-powered wind-mills, the water-mills of the river Tisza and later on, that of steam-mills. The paprika millers of Szeged developed the grinding of paprika to an unsurpassable perfection. Even in relation to world standards, they are masters in putting forward the possibilities hidden in the material, such as tastes, fragrances and colours.

The green-painted **mill chair** (the predecessor of which was produced by the *Pálffy brothers* of Szeged in 1859) was still functioning before it arrived to the museum. Two nicked pairs of cones were rotating inside of it. Due to the direction of the nicks and due to the relative position of the cones, it pre-granulated the paprikas before the stone grinding.

Experience has shown that in order to produce the ground seasoning paprika of the best quality no other technique can replace stone grinding. There are air channels on the scrub surface of the two **mill-stones**, which are put one above the other. The grinding surfaces must permanently remain coarse.

Since these quickly become smooth in the course of grinding, coarseness must be renewed on the mill-stone every four or five days and it must be carved by a **stone-carving hacker**.

Around the turn of the 19th and 20th century, the demand for ground paprika increased. The Szeged soil and the production methods of those times could not satisfy the needs any more. Thus, paprika began to flow from the more under-developed areas of Hungary towards Szeged and at the same time, the paprika traders got familiar with the significantly cheaper Spanish paprika.

Certain less exigent preparers obtained paprika at prices much lower than those of the markets of Szeged and in the course of the procession, by adding some Szeged paprika; they were selling their paprika as *'real'* Szeged paprika. Therefore, the issue of the protection of Szeged paprika was inevitable to arise and in 1920, the chemical examination station enhancing qualification was established in Szeged.

Napoleon's continental closure and the two world wars (by the exclusion of the Far-Eastern black pepper and Spanish paprika) meant a boost for the Szeged paprika.

The Szeged paprika already conquered the country in the mid-19th century thanks to the paprika preparers selling their products at the markets. At the beginning of the 20th century, the Szeged Valéria Square (today: Bartók Square) gave place to the **paprika market**. At that time, traders from other towns used to come to Szeged to buy paprika.

Outside our country, at first, the paprika conquered the Habsburg monarchy and Vienna in particular. *János Kotányi* of Szeged operated a paprika mill at the beginning of the previous century in Vienna where the paprika prepared in Szeged was ground by millers arriving from Szeged. These were the first steps to establish what is today the well-known Kotányi seasoning trade company. Outside the monarchy, the USA was the first country to be interested in the Szeged paprika but we had a prosperous export to the Balkans as well.

The traditional activity of the Szeged Paprika Zrt includes both the production and the sale of the ground seasoning paprika. Nowadays, milling is performed in a stone-mill with one of the longest histories but at the same time, with the help of the most state-of-the-art technologies (due to developments and investments).