



European Ministers of Agriculture Informal Meeting

Pollenzo, September 29th 2014



Slow Food Foundation
for Biodiversity

Terra
madre





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Maurizio Martina

Europe has a big responsibility: leading the debate on world food security, one of the most important issues concerning the future of our planet. This is why, in view of the forthcoming event, Expo Milano 2015, we are dedicating the Informal Meeting of Agriculture Ministers just to this subject.

We feel the importance of our role and the need to concretely and strongly deal with the fight against hunger worldwide. It is now time to consider development policies and agricultural systems that are able to combine innovation and sustainability to meet pressing needs. Reducing food poverty is possible only if the European Union will take as a priority the implementation of target actions within a strategic framework that we have to define. Against this background, Italy aims to stimulate a useful debate and review the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations. We are indeed facing an historical challenge but we want to be ready today to manage a scenario where, in 2050, there will be 9 billion inhabitants on this planet. This is why we decided to dedicate a step of the informal meeting to an example of success in our country: the University of Gastronomic Sciences of Pollenzo. This international institution offers its students a new kind of didactic that is interactive and interdisciplinary, and has trained and still trains young students from all over the world, focusing on food culture, respect and knowledge; three necessary pillars in the choice of geopolitical initiatives to be taken. The University of Pollenzo, funded by Slow Food, reminds us how biodiversity, uniqueness and the protection of an agricultural system that unites tradition and know-how, are issues to be studied (also in an academic course) and then translated into practice, so that they do not stay as abstract concepts or become possibly forgotten. All this is to be inserted in a framework rich in history, in an important agricultural region, Piedmont, where the winegrowing landscapes Langhe-Roero and Monferrato were recently added to the UNESCO World Heritage List. This was a crucial recognition of the cultural value of Italian agriculture because, for the first time, UNESCO identified an Italian winegrowing area as world heritage due to its exceptional rural and cultural features, thus strengthening the tight link between these two aspects. It also highlighted the essential role played by agriculture and farmers who monitor the preservation of the landscape and its biodiversity.

We have decided to give attention not only to the students, but also to small farmers, who will also be the main actors in this day. Thanks to farmers, production techniques – having an historical value and representing the future of Italian and European agriculture - have been updated and handed through the times.

Maurizio Martina
Minister of agriculture food and forestry policies



Carlo Petrini



The meeting of European Union Agriculture Ministers at Pollenzo is an extraordinary honor for this land, for the Slow Food association and for the University of Gastronomic Sciences

This is why, as well as a very warm welcome we wanted to give you all a memento of what our dearly held approach to the land and to food actually means. Through meetings with the students and a dialog with the producers that are here today, we are happy that on this occasion governments can come into direct contact with some of the protagonists of the fight to protect biodiversity.

Despite much hard work over the past few years and the increased awareness among national and international political decision-makers, we are continuing to see an impoverishment of the extraordinary wealth bequeathed to us by nature and the agricultural history of humanity, under pressure from economic choices that do not take into adequate consideration food that is produced locally with respect for the environment. This is why we do not think it is acceptable to see food as a commodity or to indiscriminately build over the soil, as people continue to do, just as we believe it is necessary to align ourselves with small-scale producers and family farmers who produce food for people to eat while protecting the land, season after season.

Since this university was founded, 1,500 students from 70 countries have graduated from the undergraduate or Master programs. They have since returned home, enriched by what they have learned, both from their studies but also from getting to know a different way of seeing food and the humans who eat it. And so they return every two years for Terra Madre, because they have put down some of their roots here.

Roots that tie them to the food producers, who are more effective than academics and activists in communicating the value of safeguarding biodiversity, agro-ecology and a production and consumption system based on good, clean and fair food. This is why we wanted products, producers and young people to be the central focus of this day.

In this publication, we have gathered together more than just a few product descriptions that Slow Food promotes through the Ark of Taste project. Rather, it represents a small testament to an immense heritage. A heritage that still belongs to Europe, to its lands and to the work of those who protect them on a daily basis. A heritage that testifies to the importance of new paradigms, to be built around the centrality and value of food. Slow Food and Terra Madre have been supporting and bearing witness to this heritage for decades.

The European Union carries with it a huge baggage, made up of opportunities and hope, but also legitimate expectations from the rest of the planet, which looks to our market and its rules as a way of interpreting, and sometimes constructing, its own future. Guaranteeing that everyone, particularly the most vulnerable, has access to healthy, sustainably produced food that nourishes with culture and not just calories, is an achievable objective. Slow Food and the European Union can and are morally obliged to move towards this objective, first and foremost by supporting small-scale, traditional food production destined for the local market.

The presence of 28 ministers will be a memorable day in our history. May your attention towards Terra Madre, our Mother Earth, be your commendable legacy towards Europe and the world.

Carlo Petrini
Slow Food President





Slow Food®

Slow Food is a global, grassroots organization, founded in 1989 to prevent disappearance of local food cultures and traditions, counteract the rise of fast life and combat people's dwindling interest in the food they eat, where it comes from and how our food choices affect the world around us.

Slow Food envisions a world in which all people can access and enjoy food that is good for them, good for those who grow it and good for the planet. Our approach is based on a concept of food that is defined by three interconnected principles: good, clean and fair.

GOOD: quality, flavorful and healthy food

CLEAN: production that does not harm the environment

FAIR: accessible prices for consumers and fair conditions and pay for producers

Slow Food believes food is tied to many other aspects of life, including culture, politics, agriculture and the environment, and is actively involved in agricultural and ecological issues around the world. Through our food choices we can collectively influence how food is cultivated, produced and distributed, and as a result bring about great change.

Slow Food is committed to protecting traditional and sustainable quality foods, conserving cultivation and processing methods, and defending the biodiversity of cultivated and wild varieties. The only type of agriculture that can offer development prospects, especially for the poorest regions of the world, is one based on the wisdom of local communities in harmony with the ecosystems that surround them.

The last Slow Food International Congress set the three major strategic objectives towards which Slow Food will work in the coming years:

10,000 products in the Ark of Taste, in other words biodiversity protection, because it is not possible to talk about access to good, clean and fair food for everyone if in the meantime humanity is losing its heritage of plant varieties, native livestock breeds and traditional food products.

10,000 food gardens in Africa, in other words the construction of a Slow Food network in Africa, guided by African leaders, because it is not possible to talk about access to good, clean and fair food for everyone without dealing with the continent where the paradoxical limits of the current food system are most evident.

10,000 food communities and convivia, groups that organize activities at the local level, in other words the strengthening of the Slow Food and Terra Madre network, because it is not possible to talk about access to good, clean and fair food for everyone without the engagement and mobilization of the association and the entire Terra Madre network at every level.

Since its beginnings, Slow Food has grown into a global movement involving millions of people, in over 150 countries.

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Terra Madre is a project conceived by Slow Food as a result of its development and its conviction that “eating is an agricultural act and producing is a gastronomic act. Found in 150 countries, Terra Madre is an international network uniting food producers, fishers, breeders, chefs, academics, young people, NGOs and representatives of local communities—all working to establish a system of good, clean and fair food from the grassroots level.

With their vision and knowledge, they work to promote a new approach to gastronomy, based on the defense of biodiversity, environmental protection and respect for local cultures and traditions. Though adapted to local contexts and different regions, the network tackles similar problems all over the globe, coming up with surprisingly analogous solutions.

Across the world, local communities are being oppressed by the global market and unchecked development. Across the world, subsistence farming and small-scale farmers are undervalued, often seen as unproductive or something from the past. Across the world, the ongoing depletion of natural resources due unsustainable usage and extraction (often a result of industrial agriculture) is a growing concern.

The Terra Madre network offers effective solutions that start from the specific nature of local places, from the preservation of plant varieties and animal breeds, to local culinary cultures that have developed over time to allow natural resources to be preserved. Through their daily work, Terra Madre communities offer a concrete example of the Slow Food philosophy: access to good, clean and fair food for everyone. Good refers to the quality and flavor of foods, clean to environmentally friendly production methods, and fair to dignity and fair pay for producers and accessible prices for consumers.

First to join the network were the food communities, followed by chefs, academics and young people... The Terra Madre network was launched in 2004 during its inaugural meeting in Turin. Almost immediately, it took Slow Food to places it had never been before, including many African, Latin American and Asian countries. In fact, much of the active work that Slow Food carries out today would not have been possible without the network. Driven by personal knowledge and experiences, it brings inspiration, ideas, issues and a personal touch.

In 2012, the Terra Madre network became stronger. The number of local projects multiplied and the fifth international gathering was held in October, with closer and more visible integration with Salone del Gusto. This closer collaboration was also one of the cornerstones of the sixth International Congress. Here, the delegates no longer reflected the official structure of the Slow Food association, but instead represented the extensive presence of the Slow Food and Terra Madre network around the world.

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Slow Food Foundation
for Biodiversity

The protection of biodiversity is the most important insurance policy we can take out to guarantee our future. Biodiversity is what allows plants and animals to react to unforeseen events, to adapt to a changing climate and to resist the attacks of parasites and diseases. A biologically varied system has the antibodies necessary to react to harmful organisms and to maintain its equilibrium. A system based on a limited number of varieties, on the other hand, is very fragile.

Slow Food began officially working on agrobiodiversity in 1997, and the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity was established in 2003. Food was the starting point and has remained the guiding thread and end point for all successive actions, allowing us to group together issues – agricultural, social, cultural and economic – that are generally studied and managed by specific, separate sectors.

To save biodiversity, we first have to discover it. This is why the Ark of Taste was started, to collect and catalog plant varieties and animal breeds as well as food products like cheeses, cured meats, breads and sweets. We realized that after the research phase, it is necessary to do something concrete to help the small-scale food producers, and so the Ark was joined by the Presidia (450 in 60 countries), practical projects for safeguarding a traditional food (an Ark product) but also a traditional technique (fishing, farming, processing), a rural landscape or an ecosystem. The Slow Food gardens and the Earth Markets are also useful tools for protecting and promoting biodiversity.

The Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity works in over 100 countries and involves over 20,000 small producers, promoting environmentally and culturally sustainable agriculture. Its most important commitment is to the countries of the Global South, where biodiversity means not just improving quality of life but guaranteeing the very communities.

The Ark of Taste



The Ark of Taste travels the world collecting small-scale quality productions that belong to the cultures, history and traditions of the entire planet: an extraordinary heritage of fruits, vegetables, animal breeds, cheeses, breads, sweets and cured meats...

The Ark was created to point out the existence of these products, draw attention to the risk of their extinction within a few generations, invite everyone to take action to help protect them. In some cases this might be by buying and consuming them, in some by telling their story and supporting their producers, and in others, such as the case of endangered wild species, this might mean eating less or none of them in order to preserve them and favor their reproduction.

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University of Gastronomic Sciences

The University of Gastronomic Sciences of Pollenzo (UNISG), founded in 2004 by the Slow Food association in collaboration with the Piedmont and Emilia-Romagna regional authorities, is a private university legally recognized by the Italian state.

The University offers:

A three-year undergraduate degree in Gastronomic Sciences (in English and Italian)

A two-year graduate degree in Management and Promotion of the Gastronomic and Tourist Heritage (in Italian)

Three post-graduate Masters in Food Culture and Communications (in English)

- Human Ecology and Sustainability
- High-Quality Products
- Representation, Place, and Identity

A post-graduate **Master in Cultura del Vino Italiano** (in Italian)

Five Advanced Apprenticeship programs (in Italian)

- bakers and pizza makers
- master brewers
- pork butchers
- cheese affineurs
- restaurant-based gastronomes

One **Master in The Slow Art of Italian Cuisine** in English and one **Master in Cucina Popolare Italiana di Qualità** in Italian.

The University Gastronomic Sciences trains the gastronome, a new professional with a holistic vision of the food world, to work in the fields of quality agricultural and food production, distribution, promotion and communication.

Graduates in Gastronomic Sciences are qualified to work in food and wine communication and in protection consortia, food companies and tourist bodies and on the marketing and promotion of premium products, in the sourcing and selection of food products, in food training and education and, finally, to set up micro-enterprises and artisan, retail and catering businesses.

Our programs combine the humanities and science with sensory training, direct experience (through study trips) of industrial and artisan processes to provide students with a set of skills and a multi-faceted approach to the complexity of the world of gastronomy.





UNISG study trips

UNISG organizes yearly more than **100 study trips** in Italy and round the world.

There are two kind of trips:

- thematic ones, dedicated to specific agrifood sectors, such as: coffee production, non-conventional agriculture, beverages, fishing, olive oil, etc.
- regional ones, exploring the distinctive gastronomic and cultural features of specific local areas, such as the Italian regions, some European countries and the rest of the world (the Americas, Asia, Africa, ect.)

These in-the-field experiences allow future “gastronomes” to learn by using their five senses, follow the production chain and discover biodiversity by tasting food, meeting the people who grow, produce and process it and attending lessons held by experts and producers.

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Beginning in 1835, at the behest of Carlo Alberto, a royal estate of the House of Savoy was created in the area of the Roman city of Pollentia. At the end of the 1990s, a Slow Food initiative brought life to a project to restore the grand complex of the Agenzia, where today the University of Gastronomic Sciences, the Banca del Vino and the Agenzia Hotel and Restaurant are found. This complex of Carlo Alberto’s in Pollenzo belongs to the UNESCO World Heritage “Savoy Residences” site.

www.agenziadipollenzo.com



Austria

Viennese Snails



The Viennese people have a long tradition of preparing and consuming snails (*Helix pomatia*), dating back to the Middle Ages. In fact, they were a much-loved delicacy of the inhabitants of Carnuntum, the capital of the Roman Province of Pannonien, 40 km east of Vienna. A special snail market operated until the 19th century, where the snails were also called "Viennese oysters".



During the 17th and 18th centuries snail farming was very common in and around Vienna as there was an enormous demand for meat alternatives, particularly during Lent. The widespread consumption of snails during this time of the year began with the monks, who didn't consider them to be meat and raised snails at the monasteries. Until the early 20th century, the majority of the snails were wild harvested and sold by street vendors at the market. However, with the end of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the tradition of gathering and consuming snails was also lost.

Today, *Helix pomatia* is a protected species and their collection has been forbidden since the 1980s, although breeding the snails is allowed. There are many traditional regional recipes, mostly originating from the 19th century, the golden age for this gastronomic tradition, among them the historic Viennese specialty – snails sweetened with caramelized sugar.

Bringing this ancient Viennese tradition back to life, a producer has transformed a historic 400-year-old farmhouse south of Vienna, into a snail farm. The snails are bred in the open air without the use of chemicals. The diet is supplemented every two days with a mix of organic flours. The producer's goal is to bring back the Viennese snail to the city's best restaurants and revive its former glory.

Producer: Andreas Gugumuck

SLOW FOOD AND UNISG IN AUSTRIA ARE...

- 5 Presidia, 32 Ark of Taste products
- 16 Convivia and more than 20 food communities
- 16 Austrian UNISG students and 8 study trips in Wien and Styria

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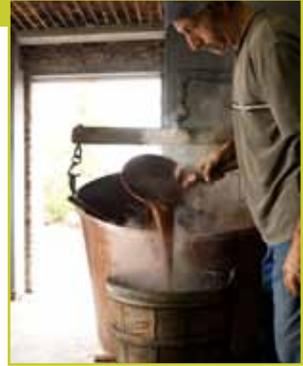
Belgium

Hesbaye and Land of Herve Artisanal Syrup



In Belgium's northern regions of Land of Herve and Hesbaye, the wide valleys that have long been home to many orchards, mainly of apples and pears, have supported the production of artisanal syrup for three centuries.

Originally, the syrup was produced with local varieties of pears and apples on farms that had a cuve (tank) and a press. Other farmers would bring their fruit to these syrup producers to be processed; a tradition of sharing fruit and labor called *fabrication à façon* that is still practiced today. However, over time, many farms became specialized and stopped producing syrup. The industrial producers that have taken their place have changed the quality of what is known today as Liège syrup. Production of traditional syrup from the Land of Herve and Hesbaye regions calls for the exclusive use of old apple and pear varieties, in varying ratios according to the recipe. No sweeteners are added, whereas modern versions call for the addition of sugar or dates.



The syrup ranges from dark brown to black in color, is shiny, has an aroma of caramelized fruit and is often viscous. The fruit is cooked for around 12 hours, before being pressed to extract a liquid that is then cooked again for 2-4 hours in large copper one-ton cauldrons. To test when the syrup is ready, the maker observes the syrup's consistency by letting it drip off a *mahète*, a metal blade attached to a long wooden handle. Some producers are able to recognize this point by a change in the sound of the boiling liquid.

Four families continue to produce traditional syrup using artisanal methods in the regions of Land or Herve and Hesbaye. United in the Presidium they purchase local varieties of apples and pears from nearby growers and transform them into syrup, according to their own recipe.

Producer: Sarah Thomsin

SLOW FOOD AND UNISG IN BELGIUM ARE...

1 Presidium, 3 Ark of Taste products
9 Convivia and 7 food communities
7 Belgian UNISG student and 1 study trip

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Bulgaria

Meurche



Meurche is a cured meat made from the best pork cuts – lard, leg and shoulder – roughly cut with a knife into cubes of around one centimeter and seasoned with salt, pepper and a variety of spices including cumin, coriander and dried dill seeds and leaves. The mix is encased in bladders to produce a product that weighs around two kilograms. The production process is laborious and requires patience. Meurche is known locally as *Rafpavok*, a term that includes all the cured meat products made from minced meat and stuffed into natural casings (stomach, bladder or intestines).



The climatic conditions of the area, with its harsh and windy winters, allow Meurche to be matured without being smoked: they are hung in the attics of traditional wooden houses, which allow for a steady air flow that is fundamental to its correct conservation.

Traditionally Meurche was produced during the winter, from December to January, and was ready in June-July, after a minimum of four months maturation. At this time, farmers would eat it during their breaks from working hard in the fields, in particular during the wheat harvest. To preserve it until the following December, Meurche was kept in ash in wooden containers.

Historically, Meurche was produced in villages in the region of Razloga, an area of plains surrounded by the Rila, Pirin and Rhodopi Mountains, in Bulgaria's northwest. Today, this tradition is preserved by around 20 families from Gorno Draglishte, a small town situated in the valley that separates the Pirin mountains, Bulgaria's highest peaks, from the Rila Mountains.

Up until 2011, just one producer was producing Meurche on a regular basis. The Slow Food Presidium was created to re-launch this artisanal product, and has involved one pork breeder and seven more producers.

Producer: Deshka Kroteva

SLOW FOOD AND UNISG IN BULGARIA ARE...

- 4 Presidia, 21 Ark of Taste products
- 11 Convivia and more than 10 food communities
- 1 Bulgarian UNISG student

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Croatia

Traditional Black Slavonian Pig Kulen

Kulen is a traditional cured meat from Slavonia, a region of forests and wide cultivated plains in eastern Croatia. The first mentions of this product date back to 1768, when it was named in a poem by Vid Došen, but the importance of Kulen is also clear from its appearance in popular folk tales like those in "Batalija and Other Stories."

The traditional production technique has remained more or less unchanged to the present day and involves grinding the least-prized cuts of pork with the belly fat, seasoning it with salt, spices, paprika and garlic, then packing it into the cezum. Once tied, the sausages are hung in a smoking room, where they remain for several weeks, to be smoked at fairly low temperatures over hornbeam, ash and beech wood.

In the past, Kulen was a very valuable sausage and rarely destined for everyday consumption. As only one Kulen could be made per pig, and the number of pigs slaughtered by every family was small, it was only eaten on special occasions. The ideal pork for making Kulen comes from the Black Slavonian pig, a large native breed with a black coat and dark, pigmented trotters. Their flavorful pork has a good balance between fat and lean meat. This breed used to be widespread, found in Hungary and Vojvodina as well as Croatia.

These days, due to the introduction of new, more productive crossbreeds, suitable for industrial farming, their numbers have fallen dramatically, and only 200 animals remain. The traditional method of farming them in oak forests has also become difficult. Most of the remaining pigs are raised in the area between Slavonski Brod and Dakovo, in Slavonia. To safeguard this endangered breed, the Black Slavonian Pig Farmers' Association has been started in the Vukovar-Sirmium region, currently uniting 28 producers.

Producer: Adam Zvonarević

SLOW FOOD AND UNISG IN CROATIA ARE...

- 1 Presidium and 8 Ark of Taste products
- 5 Convivia and more than 10 food communities
- 3 Croatian UNISG students and 5 study trips in Zagabria and Barec

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Cyprus

Halloumi



Halloumi is a Cypriot traditional cheese that has been made on the island for hundreds of years from raw sheep's milk, or a mix of sheep's and goat's milk. The name **halloumi** may come from the Arab word *helime*, meaning cheese, but could also refer to the ancient Greek word for salt.

The cheese is thought to have been introduced to Cyprus by Arab mercenaries from Syria and Palestine, who settled on the island during the Frankish period (1192-1489).



Halloumi is one of the few cheeses that is consumed on Cyprus today, but the original product is being substituted by industrial versions and is disappearing. For example very few remaining producers still use raw milk, and the traditional grazing of cattle, goats and sheep has largely been replaced by raising livestock in stables. This shift in farming has meant also the loss of local populations and breeds of goat (Machareas and Ntopia breeds) and sheep (especially the Chios breed).

The traditional production process starts with raw milk, which is coagulated with animal rennet. The curd is cut into small cubes by hand and placed into small pierced molds. The curds are left to drain for around an hour, without applying any pressure. The small forms are then cooked in the whey for around 30 minutes. Halloumi is then dry-salted, sprinkled with dry mint leaves (*Mentha viridis*), folded in half and left to cool for few hours. The small cheeses are then covered with salted whey. Fresh Halloumi is consumed within a day of production, while the more mature cheese can be kept for up to 40 days.

The whey collected during the production of Halloumi is reheated to produce a type of ricotta called Anari, which can be consumed fresh and un-salted two days after production, or salted in a whey-brine and dried and kept for more than a year.

Producer: Menelaos Pittas

SLOW FOOD AND UNISG IN CYPRUS ARE...

1 Presidium and 3 Ark of Taste products
2 Convivia and 3 food communities

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Czech Republic

Strážnice Sorb Service Fruit



Oskeruše, the service tree or sorb tree, native to central and southern Europe, produces small red and yellow fruits which are harvested in September and October, and become edible only after bletting, a process of over-ripening, during which they soften and turn brown or dark red.

There are at least 12 different varieties, and some produce larger fruits, as big as a small apple or pear. In the White Carpathians, along the border between the Czech Republic and Slovakia, some unusual varieties with different types of fruit are propagated by seed by the local farmers, whose ancient knowledge is now at risk of being lost.



One characteristic of this area is the presence of hundreds of centuries-old service trees with huge vaults of foliage. The service tree is one of Europe's oldest trees and runs the risk of being lost in many countries, due to its difficult propagation and the disappearance of the rural habitats where it grows. The tree is very productive: A 300-year-old tree can still produce over a ton of fruit.

The fruit is collected in the Moravian village of Strážnice and in the nearby villages in the district of Hodonín, in what is known as "Moravian Slovakia," in the southeast of the Czech Republic, close to the border with Slovakia. In this area along they are eaten in various ways. Traditionally the fruits are dried and made into tea, or cooked fresh to make jam. A spirit can also be made from them. They have digestive, diuretic, laxative and anti-rheumatic properties and are rich in iron and vitamins.

Unfortunately, the big trees are dying, and few are being replanted. Self-reproduction from seed is tricky, because the trees require a specific time for the stratification of seeds. The memory and the practical knowledge of how to replant them and how to use the fruits is being lost.

Producer: Vit Hrdousek

SLOW FOOD AND UNISG IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC ARE...

6 Convivia and 10 food communities
3 UNISG study trips in Moravia and Bohemia

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Denmark

Bakskuld



Bakskuld is a salted, dried and smoked fish preparation produced on the west coast of Denmark. There are two theories on the origin of the product's name. One is that it comes from *bakschuld*, from Friesland (northern Germany and the Netherlands) where the word for flatfish is *Scholle* (German) or *bakschol* (Dutch). Another theory comes from the Danish word *bakke* (referring to a tray on which fishing lines were kept) and *skulder*, the dialect name for a species of flounder.



Bony and flat fish such as plaice and related flounder species are used for this preparation, which has been documented since the 18th century. On the island of Fanø, it has been a common food for centuries and part of the daily diet. In the 19th century, production shifted to Esbjerg, on the western coast of Jylland (Denmark's main peninsula). Currently in Esbjerg and nearby areas of Jylland there are fewer than ten active producers selling bakskuld through fishmongers and specialty shops.

Bakskuld is usually prepared without the head and intestines, but with the fins and tail. The smoking process gives a slightly greasy surface to the outside of the fish. The smoky taste is mild and the fish has an overall complex, savory flavor. The flesh is firm, particularly compared to similar preparations of other fish species. It can be served as the main feature of a dish, or as an ingredient in a more complicated recipe. It is often fried, or wrapped in paper and cooked over an open fire.

Bakskuld risks being lost due to the small number of producers who still know how to prepare this local specialty. It is mainly eaten by older generations, but recently younger generations are starting to appreciate this traditional product. However, unless this "re-discovery" of Bakskuld translates into younger producers, this product's future is uncertain.

Producer: Hardy Jensen

SLOW FOOD AND UNISG IN DENMARK ARE...

3 Ark of Taste products

5 Convivia and 5 food communities

8 Danish UNISG students and 3 study trips in Copenhagen, Christiania, Limfjorden, Hirtshals, Skagen, Nordsøen

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Estonia

Salted and Dried Flounder



Fish is one of the most important resources in Estonia, as well as one of the staple foods, particularly when dried or smoked. One of the typical species used for preserving is the European flounder (*Platichthys flesus*), known as lest in Estonian, which lives in the coldest northern seas, from the North Atlantic Ocean to the North Sea and the Baltic. The fish is caught from the middle of June to September along the entire Estonian coast, and is also found off the islands of Hiiumaa, Saaremaa and Muhumaa.

The flounder is caught when it is at least as big as the palm of the hand, to ensure there is enough meat once dried, so the summer period is ideal. The fish are caught using nets in the waters close to the coast.



The production technique involves gutting the flounders and removing the heads, then salting them for four hours. They are then washed and hung up by the tail in a dry place, protected from direct sunlight. Depending on the weather, the fish will dry in 2 to 6 days. The flounder is eaten as it is, or boiled with potatoes, served with dark bread, butter and artisanal beer.

Traditionally salted and dried flounder is not produced in large quantities and so is not sold in shops, but must be bought directly from the producers. For years the production of artisanally dried fish has been declining, because many processes have been mechanized. Huge quantities of fish can be dried and salted in industrial factories, but this means a loss of authenticity and identity. New lifestyles are leading to traditional houses being abandoned, making it hard to find a place with the right characteristics for drying the fish, so fewer people are making this typical product.

Producer: Tiina Mai

SLOW FOOD AND UNISG IN ESTONIA ARE...

2 Convivia and 3 food communities

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Finland

Kalakukko



The production of Kalakukko, an un-leavened bread stuffed with freshwater fish and meat, dates back to the Middle Ages. It is traditionally from the lake-filled regions of Savonia and Carelia in eastern Finland, which offer an abundance of freshwater fish. Kuopio, at the heart of Eastern Finland's Savo region, is the city best known for its production.



The name of this product comes from *kala*, meaning fish in Finnish, and *kuchen*, the word for cake in Hanseatic German, which became *kukko* in Finnish over the centuries. Kalakukko was typically eaten by farmers and woodcutters who consumed it together with fresh or fermented milk to provide a wholesome meal after a long days work. It was prepared in homes, but was also available for purchase from street vendors or markets.

The bread casing is made from rye flour, sometimes mixed with other flours such as barley or oat. Butter is added to the dough, and then it is filled with fish and bacon before being cooked for more than 20 hours. The fish pieces used in the filling were often from the smallest, boniest and least valuable species, but became very tender with the long cooking time. The fish was mixed or wrapped with strips of bacon and in Medieval times, when salt was very expensive and primarily used to preserve meat, baking the Kalakukko was an efficient way to benefit from all the salt used in making bacon, as it seeped into the fish and flavored the loaf.

Artisanal Kalakukko is still produced today by many families and by some shops. Usually lake whitefish or perch is used, and today other ingredients are often added, such as vegetables or mutton meat.

After being baked and cooled, Kalakukko can be kept for up to two weeks. It is excellent served warm with butter and boiled potatoes.

Producer: Markku Ylihärsilä

SLOW FOOD AND UNISG IN FINLAND ARE...

- 6 Ark of Taste products
- 14 Convivia and 6 food communities
- 5 Finnish UNISG students and 1 study trip in Helsinki

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France

Natural Breton Oysters



Already known to the ancient Chinese, Greek and Roman civilizations, in France the first systems for capturing and farming *naissain* (young oysters) were developed in the 19th century, in the Bay of Saint-Brieuc, Brittany.

Oysters are the architects of the reefs, bays and marine ecosystems that host and protect them during the various phases of their development. In Brittany, numerous oyster farmers have stopped catching the oysters naturally, and instead use spawn selected in incubators and raised in nurseries. Due to the inexhaustible supply of incubator-produced spawn, many of the farmers working in the sea have intensified production, to increase their output and reduce the amount of work. As if this was not enough, researchers have also genetically altered oysters, adding a chromosome to turn natural oysters (diploids) into sterile triploids, so they can be sold year-round.



Slow Food has created a Presidium to promote the production of natural oysters. The project has been set up with oyster farmers who have chosen to continue with tradition, respecting the natural life cycle of the mollusks. The Presidium producers guarantee sea-born oysters and environmentally friendly farming techniques, thanks to a production protocol signed by all the producers. Among other conditions, the protocol states that no more than 4,000 oysters can be raised per hectare and that all the spawn must be caught at sea.

The Presidium currently has three producers, all joined in the "Groupement des producteurs d'huîtres bretonnes nées en mer - Réseau Cohérence."

Producer: Laurent William Thomas

SLOW FOOD AND UNISG IN FRANCE ARE...

23 Presidia, 41 Ark of Taste products

31 Convivia and 50 food communities

22 French UNISG students and study trips in: Rhône valley, Champagne, Brittany, Haute Provence, Bouches du Rhône, Aubrac, Burgundy, Auvergne, Châteauneuf du Pape, Paris, Camargue

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Germany

Northern Hesse Ahle Wurscht



Ahle Wurscht is the name for a family of cured meats (ahle means “aged”) of different sizes, traditional to northern Hesse. The climate of this central German region is characterized by humidity and the ideal temperatures for curing meat, making it the perfect environment for the art of pork butchery. In centuries past, young apprentices used to arrive in large numbers from all over Germany and other German-speaking countries to learn the art in the workshops of Kassel. A document from 1784 issued by one of the many corporations that regulated the trade cited the city as one of the best places for an apprenticeship.



Ahle Wurscht is made from pork and pig fat. All cuts are used, apart from the head, trotters and offal. The ground meat is mixed with salt, pepper, mustard or cumin seeds and garlic previously soaked in cognac or rum, depending on the recipe, which varies from producer to producer. The mixture is then packed into casings of different sizes, which require different aging times. The final cured sausage has a hard texture and is eaten sliced, accompanied by dark rye bread.

Though the domestic production of cured meats has effectively been lost since the 1960s, with few still raising their own pigs, a handful of butchers have preserved and passed down their traditional knowledge, and still today the best German cured meats come from northern Hesse. About ten producers from the Waldeck-Frankenberg, Schwalm-Eder, Kassel and Werra-Meißner areas have joined together in the Association of Ahle Wurscht Friends, with the aim of protecting and promoting the traditional production method, differentiating artisanal cured meats from ordinary, standardized, industrial salami and also improving the quality of their products in collaboration with the local Slow Food convivium.

Producer: Rohde family

SLOW FOOD AND UNISG IN GERMANY ARE...

5 Presidia and 31 Ark of Taste products

more than 80 Convivia and more than 30 food communities

86 German UNISG students and 13 study trips in Berlin, Hamburg, Lübeck, Kiel, island of Sylt, Mosel, Franconia, Münster, Bavaria, Brandenburg and Treviri

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Greece

Traditional feta cheese in barrel



For centuries, the Greek cheese feta has been made from pure sheep's milk, or sheep's milk mixed with a maximum of 30% goat's milk. The name comes from the Greek *fetas*, meaning "thinly sliced piece," and refers to the cutting of the cheese during production. It also used to be known as *tsantila* cheese, from the name of the cloth used to drain the whey from the curds.

Made in Thessaly, Epirus, Thrace, Macedonia, the Peloponnese, in the central part of Greece and on the island of Lesbos, it is universally considered the Greek cheese most representative of the country's age-old dairy traditions, and in 1994 it obtained a PDO.



After the milk has been curdled, the traditional production technique involves placing the curds inside molds without pression to drain the whey. Once the curds have been dried, they are dry-salted. The cheese is then cut into pieces weighing 1 to 2 kilos and placed in brine-filled wooden barrels with a capacity of 20 to 50 kilos. The cheese then ages for three months.

During this time, the cheese is kept for a month at a temperature of around 12°C, which is then lowered for the remaining period to around 2-6°C.

The feta is kept immersed in brine until ready to be consumed. The paste is compact, with no rind or holes, and is easily crumbled by hand. The flavor is slightly acidic and the fragrance is rich with aromas from the pasture grasses and herbs. Feta can be eaten in salads or other traditional dishes, like *spanakopita* (a savory phyllo pie filled with vegetables, feta, onions and egg), or on its own.

Producer: Dimitris Kissas

SLOW FOOD AND UNISG IN GREECE ARE...

7 Ark of Taste products

8 Convivia and 15 food communities

2 Greek UNISG students and 11 study trips in Crete, Thessaloniki and Thrace

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Hungary

Mangalica Sausage



The Mangalica pig breed, also known as Mangaliza or Mangalitsa, was once common across the Pannonian plains, particularly in Hungary. The pig is distinguished by its unmistakable thick and curly coat, generally blond, black and white or, more rarely, pink.



This very fat pig grows slowly and cannot be kept indoors, characteristics that make it completely unsuitable for industrial farming. After risking extinction, it was rediscovered at the end of the 1990s, and began to be appreciated for its excellent meat, which has a high fat content but is low in cholesterol. Following traditional techniques, the farmers produce their own smoked hams and sausages. These are the most interesting of the products, and come in various forms. After being stuffed into their casings by hand, the sausages are cold-smoked over acacia or oak wood, then aged for some time, ideally between two and three months.

Slow Food has created a Presidium to promote this high-quality heritage breed, but also the traditional sausage of the Hungarian Puszta grassland. The starting point for the project was a small but well-organized business: 17 farmers and butchers united in an organically certified cooperative. These very small-scale producers are based in Kiskunság, a region south of Budapest and home to one of the country's most important national parks, where they farm the Mangalica pigs, process the meat and even make their own paprika.

Since it was launched in 2002, the Mangalica Sausage Presidium has participated in many national and international events, always attracting great interest. Among the most important are the Salone del Gusto and Terra Madre, held every two years in Turin.

Producer: Rendek Laszlo

SLOW FOOD AND UNISG IN HUNGARY ARE...

- 1 Presidium and 1 Ark of Taste product
- 4 Convivia and 10 food communities
- 3 Hungarian UNISG students and 2 study trips in Budapest, Bács-Kiskun, Békés, Szatmár and Tokaj-Hegyalja

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Ireland

Irish Raw Milk Cheeses



Texts naming and describing the cheeses once made in Ireland's lush green pastures date back to the 8th century, but the descriptions and names are extremely vague. However, we know that Irish cheesemakers once produced a wide variety of cheeses.

In the 1970s an association of artisan producers reintroduced cheesemaking on a small scale in rural Ireland and this soon grew to thirty small dairies. Using the same raw materials that served the ancient cheesemakers of Ireland so well, they began to make a diverse range of new cheeses. Irish specialist cheeses have won international acclaim, but only a handful of the "new traditionalists" still use raw milk in the production of their unique cheeses. The Slow Food Presidium celebrates the distinctive merits of these cheeses and, by working to protect them for future enjoyment, continue the revival of this island's cheesemaking traditions.



Unlike many Presidia that concentrate on one particular product with distinctive properties from a specific geographical area, this project covers many different types of cheeses from across Ireland. The Presidium is made up of ten artisan dairies that work with their own distinctive style and techniques, but share a common commitment to producing a safe, high-quality product using raw milk from their own cows or nearby herds.

The Presidium is represented by a number of cheeses that are considered 'ambassadors' for Irish raw cow's milk cheese; selected on the basis of their taste qualities. Only one cheese from each producer can be a representative at any one time. The purpose of this project is to encourage and support raw cow's milk cheese producers throughout Ireland and to increase appreciation for this product.

Producer: Jennifer Gill

SLOW FOOD AND UNISG IN IRELAND ARE...

- 1 Presidium and 7 Ark of Taste products
- 15 Convivia and 17 food communities
- 5 Irish students and 7 study trips in Dublin and Kerry

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Italy

Nebrodi Black Pig



Small, with a slim build, Nebrodi black pigs are raised in semi-wild or wild conditions throughout much of the Nebrodi Mountains Nature Park. The park protects a large part of the Nebrodi massif, which is covered by 86,000 hectares of beech and oak forest in northeast Sicily. This splendid landscape, unexpected at these latitudes, protects some of the richest biodiversity of all of Sicily, and indeed Italy.



Frugal and hardy, the Nebrodi black pig breed was once found all over Sicily, but in the 1970s its numbers fell significantly as it was replaced by northern breeds, selected to live indoors and grow quickly. In Italy alone, at least 20 local breeds have been lost since the 1950s. Thanks to the passion of a handful of small-scale farmers who have kept a few pigs for their own consumption, however, this breed was saved, and currently there are estimated to be around 2,000 Nebrodi black pigs.

These pigs, which are much closer to wild boars than domestic pigs, in both appearance and behavior, graze outdoors and feed on acorns, beech (*frazza* in dialect), roots, tubers, grasses, berries and, in the coldest months, cereals and whey. The farmers who have revived the breed have built little huts, known as *zimme* in dialect, where the pigs can shelter or find relief from the heat. They have an incredible resistance to disease, which is common in all rustic breeds.

The meat of the Nebrodi black pig is extraordinary, highly aromatic and perfectly suited to long aging when cured. The farmers have very small farms, and in the majority of cases also process their meat. As only a small number of pigs are being farmed, their cured meats are produced only in small quantities, and are mostly distributed locally. A Slow Food Presidium has been helping to promote their excellent-quality products.

Producer: Antonino Borrello

SLOW FOOD AND UNISG IN ITALY ARE...

more than 200 Presidia, 583 Ark of Taste products
276 Convivia and 234 food communities
925 Italian UNISG students and 500 study trips in all Italian regions

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Latvia

Janu Sier



In Latvia, tradition dictates the celebration of the summer solstice on the nights of the 23 and 24 of June, perhaps the most important celebration of the year for Latvians. Farms are bedecked with garlands of oak and birch branches and meadow flowers. Nearly everyone in Latvia leaves the city for the open air so that the shortest night of the year can be spent with friends and relatives in the country. Bonfires are lit, and the whole night is spent singing traditional songs, drinking beer and dancing in the forests.



During the day of the 24th of June, a special celebration for everyone named "John" takes place, in which a special cheese (sier) named John (Janu) is prepared and consumed. This is an ancient and popular tradition, and many songs about Janu sier are part of the popular folklore. The cheese itself is very unusual, a type of half-cooked half-curdled cheese prepared by adding crumbled pieces of fresh cheese to the warmed (but not boiled) cow's milk. At this point, everything is mixed and heated to 60-70°C, and the whey begins to separate. The whey is removed, and a beaten egg, butter or cream, and salt are added. Caraway seeds (of *Carum carvi*, an aromatic plant very similar to cumin) are also added. If placed under a press overnight, the Janu sier will be denser and dryer. On the other hand, less heating time will lead to a softer cheese.

It is made in the kitchen of every farmhouse and there are numerous variations on the basic recipe. Generally, it is round (the diameter varies between 20 and 40 cm) with a rounded edge and a canary yellow skin that becomes slowly more intense with age. It can be eaten very fresh, still warm, accompanied by honey and rye bread, or older and harder, after a few weeks of aging. In the aged version, you can detect a clear taste of caraway and the sweet, rich flavors of milk and egg.

Producer: Martins Ritins

SLOW FOOD AND UNISG IN LATVIA ARE...

- 1 Ark of Taste product
- 1 Convivim and 9 food communities
- 1 Latvian UNISG student

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Lithuania

Traditional Lithuanian Cheeses



Hundreds of years ago, the women of Lithuania would make fresh cow's milk cheeses. Once dried in the sun, these could be kept for eating during the winter, when the cows were no longer producing milk.

The production process was very simple, requiring neither rennet nor aging. The milk was simply fermented and the curds pressed. The resulting cheeses could then be salted and dried, smoked or cooked. The first evidence of this type of production dates back to the Middle Ages.



Almost always, the milk was heated on top of the warm oven used to cook food, left in a jug for several hours. This ancient cheesemaking tradition still survives in the south-eastern Lithuanian district of Varėna. Two types of cheese are made, both for consumption when fresh.

The first version is made by heating raw milk to 25°C, just as in the past. The milk is then left to sit at room temperature for 12 hours before being heated again to 40°C. At this point the curds are collected into cloths to drain off the whey, then pressed for another 12 hours. The cheese must be eaten very quickly, and can be accompanied by dark rye bread (duona) and honey or jam.

The second type is identical except for the use of a whey starter after the first heating of the milk, and the addition of seasonings (garlic, mint, caraway, nuts, fruit, etc.). This cheese is eaten after 7 to 10 days.

Today, these cheese are made industrially, but only using pasteurized milk, while tradition demands raw milk. The only way to taste authentically traditional cheeses is to seek them out directly from the small-scale rural producers. They make very small quantities, mostly for home consumption.

Producer: Aleksandras and Asta Jermakovicius

SLOW FOOD AND UNISG IN LITHUANIA ARE...

- 1 Convivium and 4 food communities
- 1 Lithuanian UNISG Student



Luxembourg

Ardennes Bread



The Ardennes comprise a region that goes from the southern part of Belgium to the eastern regions of France and Luxembourg (particularly in the Ösling area, which covers the most northern part of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg). Since the Ardennes soils are quite fertile for wheat, the main cultivation used to be spelt. This is the reason why the bread once produced in this area was made with wheat and spelt flour.



The traditional Ardennes bread is hand made, mixing wheat flour and spelt flour in equal parts, adding wheat germ and sea salt. All the ingredients are absolutely natural and no additives or enhancers are used.

It is slowly kneaded, so as not to heat the dough or cool down the crumb. Leavening – which happens in three phases, 90 minutes each – is natural and slow and is obtained with natural yeast added in small quantities (around 0,3 – 0,4%) at a constant temperature of 23 – 24° without slowing down the process. At the end of the leavening the bread is shaped into different forms, the most typical being the rectangular loaf, and is then baked in a stone oven, which was once wood fired. The crust is crunchy and the inside very soft. It can be kept for a long time and is highly digestible, thanks to its low gluten content, but its main feature is its very low glycemic index .

Producer: François Gratien

SLOW FOOD AND UNISG IN LUXEMBOURG ARE...

2 Convivia

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Malta

Wild Thyme Honey



The wild thyme honey produced on the island of Malta is known locally by the name Ghasel Tas-Saghtar. It is a native honey, produced from the wild thyme plants (*saghtar*, in Maltese) that are indigenous to the island, growing predominately on arid and rocky terrain like scrubland and the walls of many valleys.



Historically, wild thyme honey played an important role in traditional Maltese cooking. In addition to being consumed as a sweetener, in drinks and as a restorative it was used in the preparation of various local specialties. Beekeeping and honey production on Malta are rooted in an ancient tradition, and the name of the island itself is tied etymologically to this product: Malta was known by the Greeks and Romans as Melita, derivative of the Greek word meli, meaning honey, or melitos, for "land of honey".

Built from dry stone or carved into the rock, beehives (*mgiebah*, in Maltese) are found in many regions of Malta, but Mellieha is the island's most famous area for honey production. Other areas include Gozo, Comino Island and Fawwara, as well as the area below Dingli Cliffs in the west. Wild thyme, which produces a mass of small violet flowers with an intense perfume at the end of May, mainly grows in the north of Malta and on Comino Island.

Over time, the use of sugar has reduced the importance of honey as a sweetener and its production has decreased. In addition, urbanization threatens both the open fields where the bees collect nectar and the very presence of wild thyme, which is now a protected plant. It is essential that the authorities invest in this product, by studying its specific qualities and characteristics to certify its uniqueness. There is also a need to provide support to small-scale producers, assisting them to overcome threats of disease to the bee population and providing suitable training.

Producer: Nicolas Zammit

SLOW FOOD AND UNISG IN MALTA ARE...

1 Convivium
1 Maltese UNISG student and 1 study trip

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Netherlands

Aged Artisanal Gouda



Aged artisanal Gouda is one of the most exceptional European cheeses, not only for its quality and history and the knowledge preserved by generations of cheesemakers, but also for its size, with each cheese weighing 20 kilos or more. Ever since the Middle Ages, Gouda has been traditionally made only in the summer using raw milk from the cows grazing on the peat meadows of the polders in the “Green Heart,” the rural area between the cities of Leiden, Utrecht and Dordrech.



The cheese is named after the town of Gouda, home, in centuries past, to a central cheese market. At the end of the 19th century, most cheese production switched from individual cheesemakers to large dairy cooperatives, which began adopting industrial procedures to make the cheese, in great demand for export. Fortunately, a few small producers managed to hold out, preserving the traditions of real Gouda.

Though 250 cheesemakers are still making artisanal, raw-milk Gouda, most of them in the Gouda region, their output represents only around 1% of the total production of Dutch cheese. The survival of their businesses is under threat from expanding urban areas and the combination of a series of factors: increasing production costs, low cheese prices and competition from industrial imitations, made with pasteurized milk, sold for lower prices and increasingly common on the national and international market.

Slow Food has launched an Aged Artisanal Gouda Presidium, involving some producers who use milk from their own Holstein-Friesian cows. The project is trying to offer an alternative to the current marketing system, helping the Presidium producers to promote their cheese and working to highlight its quality and healthiness and the value of their traditional cheesemaking knowledge.

Producers: Marije Bakker and Magdalena Elisabeth Maria Van Rijn

SLOW FOOD AND UNISG IN NETHERLANDS ARE...

- 11 Presidia and 18 Ark of Taste products
- 14 Convivia and 5 food communities
- 15 Dutch UNISG students and 6 study trips in Amsterdam and Maastricht

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Poland

Polish Mead



Dark and aromatic, mead was the traditional beverage served at Polish celebrations, and all families would make it at home. Different recipes for mead exist, with varying proportions of honey and water. The most prized version, called *półtorak*, has an alcohol content of 17-18%. Mead is made by fermenting a solution of honey and water, with the result drier or sweeter depending on how diluted the honey is.



The quality of the honey is of great importance. The more honey used to make the mead, the longer it can be aged. The minimum aging time is four to five years, but bottles up to 10, 15 or even 20 years old still exist. Making the mead involves first cooking the honey in water with local herbs, then fermenting the mixture in large steel barrels before aging it.

These days, barely a handful of mead producers remain, and only one of them is still using the authentic artisanal recipe. Together with his family, he has been producing and selling an excellent mead since 1991, ever since private businesses became legal again in Poland. On his farm, he tends 30 hives, which produce a dark, aromatic honey (the best for mead is heather honey or fir honeydew). As well as honey, the producer also makes the earthenware bottles in which it is stored.

The authentic recipe has been handed down through the generations, and came to the producer from his mother. It was she who taught him the correct measurements and the exact nuances of flavors and fragrances. No surprise, given that according to Polish tradition it was the women who would prepare the mead, while the men took care of the beehives. In 2002 Slow Food launched a Presidium to protect the only remaining producer still making mead artisanally, with no additives, and to promote authentic Polish mead.

Producer: Marcin Jaros

SLOW FOOD AND UNISG IN POLAND ARE...

2 Presidia

13 Convivia and 8 food communities

3 Polish UNISG students and 2 study trips in Warsaw, Krakow, Bacowa, Czorsztyn, Gdansk, Pruszcz, Swolowo, Sopot, Malbork and Danzica

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Portugal

Évora Cheese



This cheese is traditionally made with raw sheep's milk in the Alentejo region – in the past, a rural and extremely poor area – in the eastern part of Portugal. In the past it was preserved in big earthenware jars called *talhas de barro*. The poorest workers were often paid with this cheese or other food products.



The milk comes from the merino sheep breed, from animals grazed on pastures, and is processed within an hour of milking. After being filtered through a cloth and warmed over a low heat, the cheesemaker adds salt and vegetable rennet made from the infusion of a local variety of cardoon (*Cynara cardunculus*). After 20-40 minutes, the curd is broken up and placed into the forms, taking care not to compress it too much.

The small cheeses are aged for around 30 days, for a semi-hard cheese, or 90 days, for a hard cheese. Initially they are turned twice a day and then just once a day. When they are ready, each cheese is washed and cleaned.

Évora cheese is cylindrical and the smallest forms have a diameter of 12-14 cm and height of 2-4 cm. The paste is light yellow and the rind is yellow, but becomes darker on contact with air. It has a particularly salty flavor, which is slightly piquant and sharp.

Today this cheese is produced both for self-consumption and for sale, but the original version is at risk of disappearing, even if in the 1996 it has become a PDO. Évora is now often made from the milk of other sheep breeds, or even milk imported from Spain, and uses industrial rennet in place of the cardoon rennet. The future of Évora cheese is also threatened by disappearance of small family farms and the influence of hygiene laws that are highly restrictive and result in standardization.

Producer: Fernando Pereira

SLOW FOOD AND UNISG IN PORTUGAL ARE...

16 Ark of Taste products

7 Convivia and 8 food communities

1 Portuguese UNISG student and 14 study trips in Lisbon, Porto and Douro

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Romania

Bucegi Mountains Brânză de Burduf



Brânză de Burduf is a traditional cheese made from a mix of sheep's and cow's milk by herders in Transylvania, particularly around Bran. The cheese is wrapped in fir bark before being aged.



The tradition of transhumance, is still very alive on the slopes of the Bucegi mountains, one of the highest groups of the Carpathians. The two locally farmed sheep breeds are the Tigae and the Turcana. These hardy, thick-fleeced breeds are well suited to the Mountain pastures, most of which can only be reached by steep, narrow paths. In the spring, the herders climb up to the wooden stane (mountain huts) at altitudes as high as 2,000 meters above sea level. They spend the whole summer here with their animals, milking them by hand three times a day.

Brânză de Burduf, the most prized among Romanian cheeses, is made by processing another sheep's milk known as *caș*. After being pressed for several hours, the fresh *caș* is placed into wooden barrels to ferment before being cut into small pieces, kneaded and salted. The mass is then placed in a thin cylindrical case made from fir tree bark, or in a pig's bladder. Branza has balsamic aromas, notes of resin and a spicy kick that develops with aging. The cheese is only made from May to July, when the trees are growing and full of resin and the bark is soft enough so that it does not break when bent. It can be eaten after being aged for a minimum of 20 days and a maximum of 2 months.

Cheese production is one of the main activities in the Bucegi Mountains, and Slow Food has started a Presidium to defend traditional Brânză de Burduf cheese produced in this area, working towards the amelioration of the local dairies, defining the production phases and aging process, and addressing hygiene and sanitary issues.

Producer: Marian Popoiu

SLOW FOOD AND UNISG IN ROMANIA ARE...

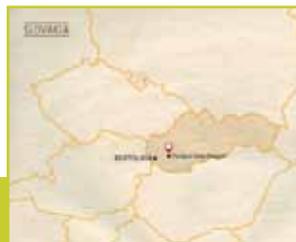
2 Presidia and 25 Ark of Taste products
13 Convivia and 16 food communities
1 Romanian UNISG student

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Slovakia

Parenica



Parenica is a typical steamed cheese from the Podpol'anie region in central Slovakia, a mountainous, hilly area known for its distinctive folklore and small villages surrounded by terraced fields. The mountains and hills offer the ideal environment for sheep farming, practiced here since the 14th century.

Parenica cheese (the name comes from the Slovak word for "steaming") is prepared using raw milk from the Valaska, Zos'achtená Valaska, Cigája and Čychofřízka Ovca breeds of sheep. It can also be made from a mix of raw fresh sheep's and cow's milk, as long as the sheep's milk makes up at least 50%.



The traditional technique involves heating the sheep's milk to 32°C, then adding rennet and lactic acid bacteria. The resulting curd is broken up using a lyre-shaped tool to obtain granules which are then worked by hand to form a cohesive mass (*hrudka*). This is left to drain in a cloth before being placed in a mold and left to ferment, at 20-23°C, for around 24 hours. The curds are then cut into pieces weighing about 500 grams each and placed in a wooden container filled with hot water (60-70°C). The curd is pulled and smoothed along the internal wall of the container using a wooden spatula until it forms a ribbon around 4 to 6 meters long and 6 centimeters wide. This is placed in a cold brine and then wrapped to form the cheese's characteristic spiral shape.

This operation requires an extraordinary level of skill from the herders (*bacovia* in Slovak), and the stretching technique is passed down from father to son. Once dried, the cheese is smoked for two hours. In 2005, it obtained a PGI. Generally it is eaten fresh, often accompanied by boiled potatoes, or used in dishes like *halusky*, with thick soft noodles.

Producer: Josef Zvara

SLOW FOOD AND UNISG IN SLOVAK REPUBLIC ARE...

- 1 Ark of Taste Product
- 3 Convivia and 6 food communities
- 2 UNISG study trips in Bratislava, Dúbrava, Strekov

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Slovenia

Tolminc



Tolminc is a Slovenian hard cow's milk cheese that takes its name from the city of Tolmin, situated in the high Isonzo Valley (Zgornje Posočje), in Slovenia's northwest near the Italian border. The cow's raised on these alpine pastures are predominately the Braunvieh breed.

Historically this cheese was produced in the mountain pastures of the Julian Alps that surround the valley. The first documented evidence of cheesemaking in the region dates back to the 13th century, when cheese was also used to pay taxes to land owners. A cheese with the name Tominisk sir first appears in 1756 in a price list from the city of Udine. At the end of the 19th century, a number of cheesemakers traveled to the region to help local farmers to resolve some production problems and in 1886, the decision was made to start producing hard cheese.



Production of this cheese starts with fermenting the milk for at least 12 hours. During this process the micro flora that develops gives the milk the right level of acidity. Rennet is then added to coagulate the milk. The curds are placed into molds and pressed for 6-12 hours, in heated premises. The cheeses are turned during the pressing, allowing for a more rapid purging of the whey. The forms are then salted in brine for 24-48 hours. Aging takes place for a minimum of 60 days in natural well-ventilated premises, but to acquire a good complexity of aroma and flavor the cheeses are aged for at least six to eight months. During the maturation period, Tolminc becomes covered in a light gray mold that is removed by brushing or with a damp cloth.

In 2001, Tolminc obtained PDO (protected designation of origin) status, but production in mountain dairies continues to decline: of the 68 that were still operating in the 1930s, less than 20 survive today and very few young people are choosing to take on pastoral activities.

Producer: Bojan Kavcic

SLOW FOOD AND UNISG IN SLOVENIA ARE...

- 1 Ark of Taste product
- 2 Convivia and 6 food communities
- 1 UNISG study trip in Ljubljana, Kobarid and Žalec

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Spain

Bay of Biscay Anchovy



The Cantabrian anchovy, or Bay of Biscay anchovy (*Engraulis encrasicolus*) are the best in the world: big, full of flavor and succulent, this fish tends to develop more fat thanks to the cold temperatures and high level of oxygen in the Cantabrian Sea.

Anchovies are pelagic fish that can be found even at great distances from the coast as the summer season approaches. In recent years, fishing of the species has been limited, and even banned in 2007 due to the dangerous reduction in stocks. While Basque fishing boats still use traditional artisan methods that respect the ecological balances of the species, other types of boat use drag net methods (where fish are caught in a device, usually a net, dragged by one or more vessels), which catch or destroy everything they encounter. Given the scarcity of this resource, many canning factories have decided to import lower quality anchovies from other countries and continents, flooding the Basque markets.



Traditionally, preservation has always been done by the fishermen's wives. They buy the anchovies between mid-April and mid-June and place them in 300-liter bins between layers of salt, where they are kept for about eight months under a weight. In January the anchovies are cleaned and can be canned in sunflower seed oil, marinated in vinegar or preserved in salt. Anchovies are one of the specialties of Basque cuisine and are enjoyed on their own or as an accompaniment to bread, cheese or olives.

The majority of fish caught is canned by big industries who process anchovies caught by large fleets (called *boquerones*), however one traditional artisan business remains in the city of Bermeo, in the province of Biscay, which buys anchovies from small groups of fishermen (between 10 and 14 people) who work sustainably using purse nets, which reach depths of 20 meters.

Producer: Royo family

SLOW FOOD AND UNISG IN SPAIN ARE...

10 Presidia and 121 Ark of Taste products

39 Convivia and more than 60 food communities

7 Spanish UNISG students and 22 study trips in Aragon, Valencia, Andalusia, Asturias, Salamanca, Barcelona, Granada, Madrid and Mallorca

contact: v.bassanese@slowfood.it

Sweden

Reindeer Suovas



Reindeer meat has always been the most important food for the Sámi people, an ethnic group native to Northern Europe. They live in the Sápmi region, an arc of land spreading across the north of Sweden, Norway, Finland and Russia. The Sámi have their own language and culture, profoundly influenced by the extreme conditions in which they live. Their winter lasts more than six months, and temperatures frequently fall to -30°C.



Their main source of food is the huge herds of reindeer that migrate across the polar circle every year. Out of the 35,000 Swedish Sámi, around 3,000 are reindeer herders, a vocation limited by law to ethnic Sámi. The semi-wild reindeer spend the winter grazing in the forests and move to higher altitudes during the spring and summer. The Sámi are no longer nomadic, however many Sámi still follow their herds during the annual migration from the forests to the mountains.

Much of their traditional food was designed to keep for long periods, so that it could be taken on the nomads' long journeys. One of the most important preparations is Suovas, a lean fillet of reindeer meat, salted and smoked for eight hours. During their journeys, the Sámi eat Suovas with a typical unleavened bread, heated on the stones around the campfire.

This Slow Food Presidium wants to safeguard the production of traditional Suovas, aged and made only from a tender cut from the inner loin (coarbealli). The reindeer who provide the meat are never given antibiotics or man-made feeds, and find all their food themselves in the Sápmi meadows. The reindeer meat is smoked directly over a fire made in a traditional peaked hut. Flavorful and aromatic, reindeer Suovas is eaten in thin slices, accompanied by pickled wild mushrooms and lingonberries. It can be eaten raw and aged, or grilled.

Producer: Sara Anneli Jonsson

SLOW FOOD AND UNISG IN SWEDEN ARE...

3 Presidia and 6 Ark of Taste products

21 Convivia and more than 40 food communities

3 Swedish UNISG students and 2 study trips in Stockholm, Sörmland, Helsingborg and Göteborg

contact: e.demichelis@slowfood.it



United Kingdom

Traditional Stilton (Stichelton)



Stilton is a hard cow's milk blue cheese, one of the best in Britain. Its history dates back to the 18th century, when Cooper Thornhill, an innkeeper in the town of Stilton in the Cambridgeshire county of Huntingdon, began offering it to his customers.

Making Stilton involves heating the milk and adding a specific culture of bacteria, including *Penicillium roqueforti*, which creates the cheese's typical blue veins. Once the curd has formed, after adding the rennet, it is left to dry overnight. It is then salted and placed into cylindrical molds where they rest for a week. At the end, the cheese is removed and the surface is scraped and smoothed with a blade, to stop air from getting inside. The cheese is left in an aging room until its characteristic rind develops. After around six weeks, holes are made with steel needles to allow air to enter and the blue veins to develop. The cheese is ready after around two months of aging.



In 1996, Stilton was granted a PDO (protected denomination of origin). The protocol stated that it must be made only within the counties of Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire, but also forced the producers to use pasteurized milk. The decision came from the fear that the cheese's blue veins could harbor pathogens, though nobody ever managed to demonstrate its actual risk. This meant that the practice of using raw milk—common to all traditional cheeses—had suddenly become illegal, wiping out the authentic flavor of Stilton.

Fifteen years later, after the very last raw-milk Stilton producer started to pasteurize their milk, a cheesemaker decided to revive traditional Stilton made with raw milk and they rebaptized the cheese with the ancient name for the Cambridgeshire town, Stichelton. In Britain, traditional Stichelton has become a rallying point for the campaign in defense of raw-milk cheeses: a battle for quality, health, biodiversity and the identity of traditional cheeses.

Producer: Joseph John Schneider

SLOW FOOD AND UNISG IN THE UK ARE...

2 Presidia and 79 Ark of Taste products
more than 40 Convivia

4 English UNISG students and 21 study trips in London, Gloucestershire, Somerset, Bristol, Kent, Sussex, Scotland (Highlands, Edinburgh, Aberdeen)

contact: www.slowfood.org.uk, c.bom@slowfood.org.uk

We would like to thank

THE RESTAURANT OF THE ALBERGO DELL'AGENZIA

For the organization of the Piedmontese Slow Food Presidia dinner

The Restaurant is part of the neo-Gothic complex of the Agenzia of Pollenzo, restored in the late-1990s as part of a Slow Food initiative, and today hosting the University of Gastronomic Sciences, the Banca del Vino and the Agenzia Hotel.

This complex, built under King Carlo Alberto, belongs to the UNESCO World Heritage "Savoy Residences" site.
www.albergoagenzia.it

BANCA DEL VINO

Modern Italian enology was born in 1938 in the cellars of the Pollenzo Estate. Over 150 years later, the historic cellars, today property of the Agenzia of Pollenzo, are home to the Banca del Vino, a project unique in its scope, with the objective of creating a historic collection of Italian wine by selecting, stocking and storing the best wines of the peninsula.

www.bancadelvino.it

BALADIN AND PAUSA CAFÉ

For the artisanal beer offered during the event

www.pausacafe.org

www.baladin.it

THE BAKERY OF MATTIA GOZZARINO

For the handmade breadsticks offered during the event

LA GRANDA

Piedmontese Cattle Presidium

CASCINA FIUME

Carmagnola Ox-Horn Pepper Presidium

The students and teachers at the "Gianfranco Donadio" Catering School in Dronero (Cuneo) for their service during the event



an event by

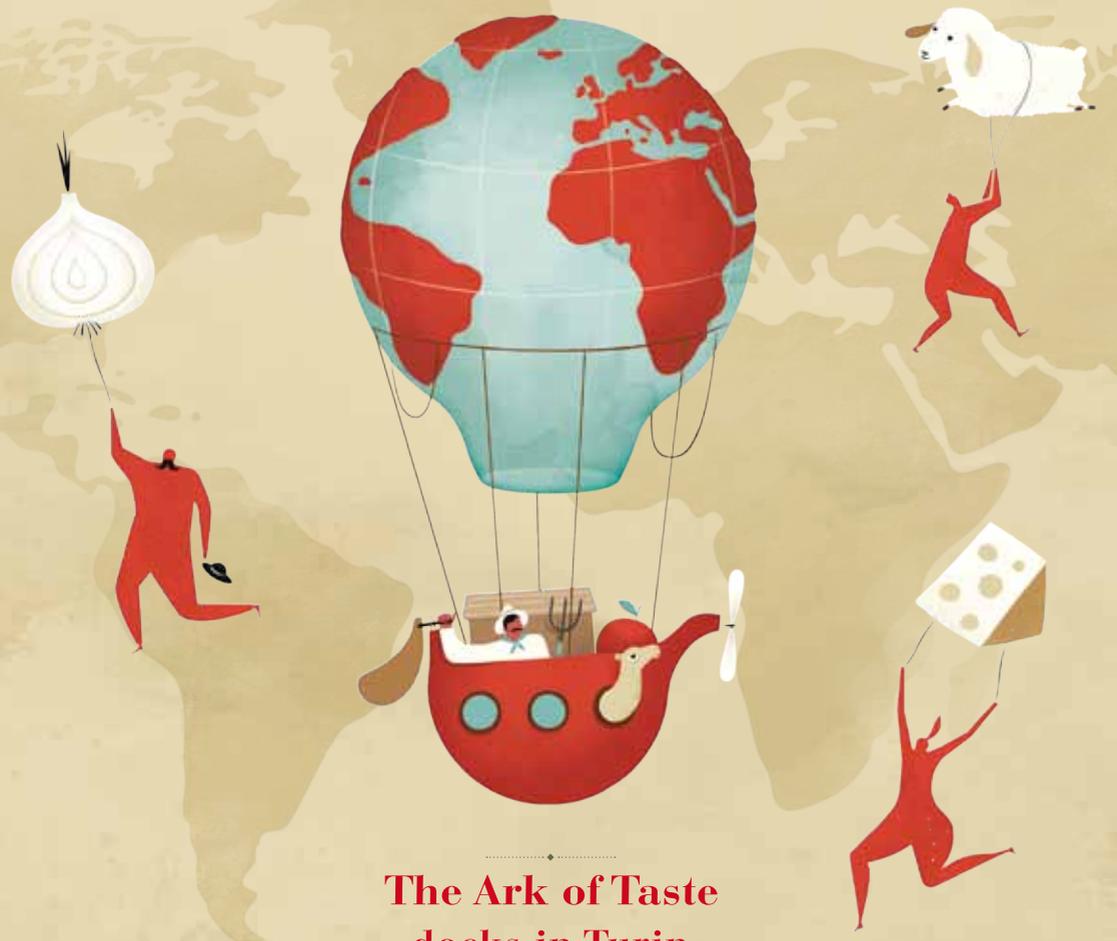


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