



I  AM  LA CUCINA ITALIANA



**ITALIAN CUISINE CANDIDATE
FOR UNESCO HERITAGE**



**MINISTERO DELL'AGRICOLTURA
DELLA SOVRANITÀ ALIMENTARE
E DELLE FORESTE**



INDEX

ITALIAN CUISINE, A LIVING HERITAGE THAT TELLS WHO WE ARE	P.4
WHAT IS UNESCO INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE	P.6
THE 'ITALIAN CUISINE' DOSSIER	P.6
VALUES AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CANDIDATURE	P.6
PROMOTING COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERS	P.7
OFFICIAL LOGO	P.7
OFFICIAL ANTHEM	P.7
EVENTS IN SUPPORT OF THE CANDIDATURE	P.8
UNESCO PROCESS AND EVALUATIONS	P.8
ROADMAP	P.10
ITALIAN CUISINE IN NUMBERS	P.12
ITALIAN CUISINE, A LIVING HERITAGE THAT UNITES	P.15



ITALIAN CUISINE, A LIVING HERITAGE THAT TELLS WHO WE ARE



Italian cuisine is much more than a set of recipes: it is a daily ritual that has always accompanied us and which, every day, tells us who we are. It is a tradition in continuous movement, which transforms, adapts, and enriches itself thanks to the infinite local influences that traverse it.

It is precisely this vitality, this ability to evolve without losing its soul, that pushed us to nominate Italian cuisine as a UNESCO Heritage.

A candidature carried out together with the Ministry of Culture, to which goes my thanks for the constant collaboration in this path of valorisation of our beautiful Italy. We are not proposing any dishes or recipe books for nomination, we are not museumising what by its nature lives, changes, and renews itself. We are nominating a mosaic of diversity, a heritage made up of gestures, knowledge, ingredients, dialects, family and territorial stories.

Italian cuisine is like a puzzle: each of us holds a piece of it, a unique way of interpreting cooking, their own recipe, their own dish. It is the combination of these pieces — none the same as the others — that forms the authentic image of our gastronomic identity. Unlike what is often said, Italian cuisine is not a monolithic block. It is, rather, a tradition in constant evolution, the result of centuries of cultural interweaving and local microstories.



Every city, every town has its own gastronomic memory; and within every city, families live side-by-side, interpreting the same recipes in distinct ways.

Sometimes even within the same family, cooking changes from one hand to another, from one generation to another. It is in this plurality that its strength lies. In Italy, cooking is a daily gesture, a way to express oneself to others, just as happens with a work of art, a painting or a sculpture.

Cuisine is a deep part of our culture. It is a call to conviviality, to sharing, to the ability to unite people around a table, transforming every meal into an experience of community, memory, and pleasure. In short, Italian cuisine preserves our identity: passion, care, tradition, and joy of living.

Recognizing Italian cuisine as a World Heritage not only means supporting the growth of our businesses, but above all promoting a path that can guarantee, even in the future, that well-being that our Nation has been able to give to humanity on many occasions.

When we talk about Italian cuisine, therefore, we talk about this extraordinary richness of variety and identity, the set of millions of daily gestures that make up the great puzzle of our culture.

This is the heritage that we want to protect: not a fixed model, but a living, shared, continuously reinvented legacy, capable of telling — and for a long time to come — who we are.

Francesco Lollobrigida

Minister of Agriculture,
Food Sovereignty and Forests



WHAT IS UNESCO INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

It is the set of practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, and skills that communities recognize as part of their cultural heritage. It is not about objects, but about living traditions that are passed down from generation to generation.

THE 'ITALIAN CUISINE' DOSSIER

On March 23, 2023, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forests and the Ministry of Culture launched the candidature of Italian Cuisine as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The candidature does not concern a single dish or a recipe, but a shared cultural model, made up of community experiences, conscious choice of raw materials, conviviality of the meal, transmission of knowledge to new generations, and respect for the seasons and territories.

VALUES AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CANDIDATURE

Italian cuisine is the 'cuisine of affections': it transmits memory, care, relationships, and identity, telling stories of families and communities through food. It reflects the bond between natural landscapes and communities, embodying memory, daily life, and culture of the territories.



PROMOTING COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERS

Accademia Italiana della Cucina (1953), Fondazione Casa Artusi (2007) , La Cucina Italiana magazine (1929).

OFFICIAL LOGO

The official logo of the Italian Cuisine candidature as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity was presented on August 4, 2023, in Pompeii.

Description: The hand of a chef "tosses" elements of Italian cuisine along with Italian monuments, symbols of the territory, and cultural personalities, creating a dynamic path similar to the tail of a comet.

Below the writing:

I ❤️ AM ❤️ LA CUCINA ITALIANA CANDIDATA A PATRIMONIO UNESCO.

The logo was created by the School of the Art of the Medal of the Italian State Mint and Polygraphic Institute of Rome, founded in 1907 and specialized in artistic modelling, metalworking, goldsmithing, silversmithing, glyptic art, and art graphics.

OFFICIAL ANTHEM

The official anthem of Italian Cuisine as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity is "Vai Italia" written by Mogol, one of the greatest Italian lyricists and record producers, also the author of Lucio Battisti's musical texts, and sung by Al Bano, one of the most popular Italian singers, with over 25 million records sold worldwide and winner of 26 gold and 24 platinum records.



The song, with music by Oscar Prudente, was recorded together with the Piccolo Coro dell'Antoniano, a famous choir created in 1963 by Mariele Ventre at the Antoniano Institute in Bologna to accompany the young interpreters of the songs at the Zecchino d'Oro, Unicef ambassador of musical culture for children in the world and included by UNESCO among the heritage of humanity for a culture of peace, and the Piccolo Coro di Caivano, promoted by the MiC with Antoniano-Opere Francescane and the participation of the Ministry for Family, Natality, and Equal Opportunities.

EVENTS IN SUPPORT OF THE CANDIDATURE

The Pranzo della Domenica (Sunday Lunch) on September 21, 2025, involved over 80 Italian municipalities, with a live broadcast on RAI and participation of cultural and entertainment personalities.

UNESCO PROCESS AND EVALUATIONS

24 member countries of the UNESCO Committee will have to express their opinion on Italian Cuisine as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in December 2025 in New Delhi.

- Group I: France, Germany, Spain
- Group II: Slovakia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan
- Group III: Barbados, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Paraguay
- Group IV: Bangladesh, China, India, Malaysia, Vietnam
- Group V(a): Angola, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Uganda, Zambia
- Group V(b): Algeria, Mauritania, United Arab Emirates



Role of the Advisory Body - Composed of 12 members (6 experts and 6 NGOs), it was crucial in the technical evaluation of the candidatures in the first half of 2025.

The positive judgment of the Advisory Body virtually guarantees success. On November 10, the UNESCO body of technical experts recommended the inscription of Italian cuisine in the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This is the first fundamental opinion that will be submitted to the final, political decision, which will be taken by the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee meeting in New Delhi, India, from December 8 to 13. The published technical evaluation states that the dossier is well-done and consistent with UNESCO's objectives.

In the evaluation report, the technical body highlights that the dossier brings out the contribution of Italian cuisine to sustainable development, particularly by promoting gender equality and social cohesion.

The practice of Italian cuisine is considered intrinsically inclusive, characterized by interchangeable roles that allow anyone to participate, overcoming cultural and generational barriers. Furthermore, adherence to principles such as combating food waste and reducing resource consumption makes it a model of environmental sustainability.



ROADMAP

→ **March 23, 2023** – Official announcement of the candidature by the Government (MASAF and MiC) with a press conference at the Collegio Romano.

→ **July 1, 2023** – Launch of the candidature on the Amerigo Vespucci ship, on the occasion of the start of the Vespucci World Tour and Villaggio Italia (2023-2025), with traveling events around the world to promote Italian cuisine.

→ **August 4, 2023** – Official presentation of the candidature logo at the Archaeological Park of Pompeii, designed by the Italian State Mint and Polygraphic Institute.

→ **December 14, 2023** – Conference “Italian Space Food” at the Italian Embassy in Washington: presentation of the project that brings pasta into space with the Axiom 3 mission (Barilla and Rana), as a symbol of innovation and tradition.

→ **January 10, 2024** – Launch of the Axiom 3 space mission with Italian pasta aboard the ISS, an international media event linked to the candidature.

→ **2024 – 2025 – Promotion of the candidature in important international contexts** — such as the G7 Agriculture in Ortigia, the “Agricoltura È” initiative in Rome, and the main agro-food fairs in Europe and around the world — through communication campaigns and promotional activities.



→ **2024 – 2025: Promotion of the candidacy** in important sports contexts such as the Piazza di Siena International Horse Show, the Ryder Cup, the Giro d'Italia, the Rugby World Cup, and many others.

→ **June 10, 2025** – Grand finale of the Vespucci Tour in Genoa with a drone show and celebration of Italian cuisine as cultural heritage.

→ **June 29, 2023** – International event in New York, with a screening in Times Square and an event at Gotham Hall for the promotion of the candidature, with the presence of Italian institutions and ICE (The Italian Trade Agency).

→ **September 21, 2025** – National and international event “Il pranzo della domenica – Italiani a tavola” (Sunday lunch – Italians at the table), in hundreds of Italian squares and embassies around the world, to celebrate conviviality and the meal ritual.

→ **November 10, 2025** – First positive technical opinion from UNESCO on the dossier “Italian Cuisine, between sustainability and biocultural diversity”.

→ **December 10, 2025** – Final decision of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee in New Delhi.

(Photogallery available on www.masaf.gov.it)



ITALIAN CUISINE IN NUMBERS

Italian Cuisine in the World (Source Deloitte Foodservice Market Monitor 2025)

- In 2024, Italian cuisine reached a total value of 251 billion euros, with a growth of +4.5% year-on-year.
- It represents 19% of the global market for full-service restaurants, with particular relevance in the United States and China, which together cover over 65% of global consumption of Italian cuisine.
- It will help protect against the hateful phenomenon of Italian Sounding.

Italian Agro-food Supply Chain (Source XXIII Ismea-Qualivita Report)

- Added value of Italian agriculture, over 44 billion euros, with a 2% increase compared to 2023. According to ISTAT, it is one of the sectors that contributes to the growth of Italian GDP.
- In Italy, the agri-food production value reaches 20.7 billion euros in 2024 (+3.5% annually), with a growth of 25% since 2020 and a weight of 19% on the national agro-food sector.
- The food sector grows for the fourth consecutive year (+7.7%), exceeding 9.7 billion; bottled wine remains stable at 11 billion.



- DOP IGP exports exceed 12 billion for the first time (+8.2% over 2023), with record values: 5.15 billion for food (+12.7%) and over 7 billion for wine.
- Cheeses, fruit and vegetables, cereals, and olive oils are sharply increasing; wine grows by +5.2% and reaches 7.19 billion, equal to 88% of Italian wine exports.
- Exports grow by +5.9% in EU countries and +10.4% in non-EU countries; the United States remains the primary market, with 22% of the total.
- The results are made possible by the work of 328 Protection Consortia and 184,000 operators, employing over 864,000 people (+1.6% over 2023).
- According to ISTAT, DOP Economy companies are led by younger and better-trained entrepreneurs, with greater innovation and multifunctionality, and with superior economic results: the average standard production is over three times that of national agricultural companies.
- Spending in GDO (Large-Scale Retail) for GI (Geographical Indication) products grows by 1.1%, reaching 6.2 billion euros.

Wine and Food Tourism (Source Qualivita – Ismea)

- The Report on Italian Wine and Food Tourism – 2024 Edition Qualivita certifies a value of 40.1 billion euros, with a growth of +12% compared to 2023 and +49% compared to 2016.



UNESCO Perspectives (Fiepet Confesercenti based on data from Banca d'Italia, Unioncamere and Movimprese)

- If Italian cuisine were proclaimed UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, the impact on tourist arrivals would be immediate:
 1. Increases between +6% and +8% in the first few years.
 2. More moderate growth between +2% and +3% in the following five years.
- Estimates: approximately 18 million more tourist arrivals in two years.
- The recognition would act as a multiplier for tourism, the economy, and the country's image.

Tourism in Italy (Source Enit)

- According to Enit, tourism will generate a contribution to GDP equal to 237.4 billion euros by the end of 2025, with an estimated growth up to 282.6 billion euros within the next decade.
- In the first 7 months of 2025:
 1. Italy is second in Europe for international arrivals (151.8 million) and for total stays (268.4 million).
 2. Third for domestic inflow with 116.6 million overnight stays from January to July.



ITALIAN CUISINE, A LIVING HERITAGE THAT UNITES

Italian cuisine is a living heritage, capable of crossing generations and territories without losing its evocative power.

With this candidature, Italy does not claim any supremacy: rather, it offers the world a daily ritual that generates conviviality, happiness, and hope. Other countries have had individual gastronomic traditions recognized — from the French convivial ritual to Mexican celebratory meals, from Kimchi fermentation in Korea to Japanese Washoku — but none, so far, the entire scope of their cuisine.

The UNESCO recognition would make the Italian Cuisine the first in the world to be recognized as World Heritage in its entirety: an intangible heritage that continues to grow, innovate, and, above all, unite.





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