

8th UNWTO World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism

Gastronomy Tourism: Back to the roots

5 – 7 October 2023, San Sebastian, Spain

Concept Note

1. BACKGROUND

The 7th UNWTO World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism took place in Nara, Japan, on 12 – 15 December 2022 and was held under the theme *"Gastronomy Tourism for People and Planet: Innovate, Empower and Preserve"*. It highlighted the importance of gastronomy tourism as a lever to promote women empowerment, young talent, and environmental sustainability, while also being a channel for cultural exchange and the protection of the authenticity and identity of tourism destinations.

In the last edition, UNWTO also launched the [Global Roadmap for food waste reduction in tourism](#), a consistent framework to embrace the sustainable management of food so that it never becomes waste, which highlights best practices and practical guidance for the sector to scale up action.

As a next step in advancing efforts for long-term environmental, social, and economic sustainability, the 8th UNWTO World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism to be held on 5-7 October 2023, in San Sebastian, Spain, will put the spotlight on the intrinsic potential of the linkages between tourists and producers in fostering rural development, building resilience, preserving cultural heritage, promoting sustainability, and embracing innovation and digitalization to enhance the tourism experience. Through insightful discussions, engaging workshops, and networking opportunities, participants will gain a deeper understanding of the multifaceted benefits that arise from synergizing tourism experiences, gastronomy, producers, and digital technologies.

2. OBJECTIVES AND TOPICS

By serving as a platform for knowledge sharing, networking, and collaboration, the 8th UNWTO World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism aims to:

- Celebrate the deep-rooted connection between tourism, gastronomy, and local producers, highlighting the pivotal role they play in promoting wellbeing for local communities, fostering rural development, preserving cultural heritage and traditions, and promoting a long-term sustainability.
- Foster a deeper understanding of the intertwining relationship between gastronomy tourism, the diverse range of producers and the challenges and opportunities that arise from this synergy.

- Emphasize on the importance of tackling challenges such as the loss of connection between consumers and the food they eat caused by industrialization, the preservation of the territory and the promotion of sustainable practices which contribute to biodiversity conservation, reduction of food waste, and the overall well-being of ecosystems.
- Address the pressing need to reduce food waste, promote circularity, and combat climate change within the gastronomy tourism sector, showcasing sustainable practices for reducing carbon footprints and regeneration, promoting seasonal and local produce, and embracing circular economy models, to ensure long-term environmental and economic sustainability.
- Highlight the importance of preserving culinary traditions as a bridge between generations, preserving cultural identity, and attracting tourists seeking authentic experiences.
- Contribute to the overall sustainability and resilience of rural areas, enabling producers to thrive in an increasingly interconnected and technology-driven world, where tourism can offer an opportunity to their main source of income.
- Provide appropriate training to producers so they gain the necessary skills to effectively utilize digital platforms, e-commerce solutions, and social media to enhance their visibility, expand market reach, and improve operational efficiency.
- Overcome challenges producers face in adapting to these new tools due to limited access, knowledge gaps, and financial and technical constraints, enhance their competitiveness and tap into the vast opportunities offered by the digital landscape.

The Forum will also celebrate the 10th anniversary of the recognition of the Mediterranean Diet as Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO, highlighting the importance of collaboration among organizations such as the UNWTO, FAO, and UNESCO to create a virtuous cycle of cooperation, leveraging their expertise, knowledge, and resources to drive sustainable practices, promote cultural heritage, and contribute to the socio-economic development of territories.

3. FORMAT

The Forum extends over 3 days with technical sessions, panel debates and several keynote and thematic presentations.

The Forum will also enable participants to delve into the various aspects of the linkage between producers, tourism, and gastronomy by engaging in a series of simultaneous masterclasses led by tourism marketing and digital experts, sustainability and rural development specialists, among others.

They will also have the opportunity to engage in hands-on workshops with local chefs and producers, allowing them to learn about traditional recipes, local ingredients, and culinary techniques. Fieldtrips and tastings of regional specialties will also be organized, providing an immersive gastronomic experience.

4. PARTICIPANTS

The 8th World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism will bring together professionals in the areas of gastronomy and tourism from Spain and abroad, including:

- Ministries of Tourism and National Tourism Organizations from UNWTO Member States
- UNWTO Affiliate Members
- Regional and Local Destination Management Organizations
- International and Regional Organizations
- Top chefs and inspiring examples from the world of tourism and gastronomy
- Travel and gastronomy associations, travel agencies, accommodation/transportation companies, service providers
- Organizations/professionals related to gastronomy tourism, agritourism, ecotourism and **wine tourism**
- Academic institutions (universities, research facilities) in the areas of tourism and gastronomy
- Museums and research centres on tourism and gastronomy