## Background and objectives:

As a next step in advancing environmental, social, and economic sustainability, the 8th UNWTO World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism will focus on the linkages between tourism, gastronomy and producers in fostering rural development, promoting sustainability and resilience, preserving cultural and natural heritage, and embracing innovation to enhance the tourism experience.

Gastronomy and gastronomy tourism are connected to various aspects like agriculture, culture, biodiversity, landscape, health, science, technology, and education. This connection allows tourism to encompass a wider and more fulfilling range of experiences.

Tourism provides an opportunity to expand the income sources of producers and simultaneously promote the preservation and revitalization of local products and gastronomy as a cultural heritage. It also facilitates the inclusion of women, youth, and underprivileged populations in the value chain.

By serving as a platform for knowledge sharing, networking and collaboration, the Forum aims to gain a deeper understanding of the multifaceted benefits that arise from synergizing tourism experiences, gastronomy, producers, and digital technologies, by addressing:

- The need for preservation of the territory and the promotion of sustainable practices which contribute to biodiversity conservation, food waste reduction, circularity, and the overall well-being of ecosystems.
- The reduction of the carbon footprint, and the promotion of regeneration and seasonal local produce, to ensure long-term environmental and economic sustainability.
- The protection of culinary traditions as a bridge between generations, preserving cultural identity, and attracting tourists seeking authentic experiences.
- Gastronomy tourism’s contribution to the overall sustainability and resilience of rural areas, enabling producers to thrive in an increasingly interconnected and technology-driven world.
- The need for skills development and training to reduce knowledge gaps to effectively utilize digital platforms, tools and solutions to enhance competitiveness.
- The celebration of the 10th anniversary of the recognition of the Mediterranean Diet as Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO.

Extending over three days with technical sessions, panel debates and keynote and thematic presentations, the Forum will also enable participants to engage in a series of masterclasses, as well as in fieldtrips and tastings of regional specialties, providing an immersive gastronomic experience.

Digitalization also opens new opportunities in gastronomy tourism. The Forum will serve as a platform to the finalists of the 4th UNWTO Global Gastronomy Tourism Startup Competition to pitch their innovative and solution-driven ideas to propose new future scenarios that can have a positive and transversal impact in the full gastronomy tourism value chain.
Wednesday, 4 October 2023

(time tbc) 4th Global Gastronomy Tourism Startup Competition Workshop
(closed meeting)

Venue: Tabakalera
15:00 – 19:00 Registration

Thursday, 5 October 2023

Venue: Tabakalera
08:30 Registration
10:00 – 11:00 Opening Ceremony
11:15 – 11:30 Designation of Chef Fatmata Binta as UNWTO Ambassador for Responsible Tourism

11:30 – 12:45 High level panel: Enhancing linkages between tourism and agriculture
Celebrating the 10th anniversary of the inscription of the Mediterranean Diet on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO, this session will focus on the necessary policy framework for the development and promotion of gastronomy tourism from both the tourism and agriculture perspectives in an intertwined alliance that can only bring benefits to destinations and local communities.

12:45 – 13:00 Setting the scene: Understanding the new traveller
Travellers have quickly adapted to the new post-covid reality and changed their behaviour shaping the future of travel. This session will explore on how Gastronomy Tourism fits into these new perspectives.

13:30 – 14:00 Keynote: The Power of Communication and Digital Tools
This keynote aims to explore the potential of effective communication strategies, along with the utilization of digital tools and platforms, to connect diverse palates, inspire memorable culinary journeys, and enhance gastronomy tourism experiences

14.00 – 15.30 Lunch
15:30 – 16:45 Session I - Circular Solutions for Reducing Food Waste
This session will explore cost-effective and environmentally responsible strategies for tourism stakeholders to reduce food waste through prevention, redistribution and the integration of revalorization processes to transform waste into valuable resources, fostering economic growth, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and contributing to a more sustainable food system.

16:45 – 17:30 Session II - Geographical Indications, Gastronomic Routes, and Intellectual Property
This session aims to provide tools and guidance to empower food producers by harnessing the value of geographical indications, gastronomic routes, and intellectual property for tourism development and promotion, enabling them to gain recognition, add value to their products, and contribute to local economic development.

Venue: Basque Culinary Center
20:00 Welcome reception, hosted by the Basque Culinary Center (for all international participants)

Friday, 6 October 2023

Venue: Tabakalera
08:30 Registration
09:30 – 10:00 Sharing is caring
10:00 – 11:30 Session III - Empowering producers to grow: Challenges and opportunities
This session will focus on the importance of creating synergies between producers and restaurants through the effective utilization of digital tools, while also emphasizing the importance of skills development, commercialization, and building community partnerships for producers. Additionally, the session will delve into overcoming legal obstacles faced by producers when diversifying their incomes through offerings such as accommodation or food services.

11:30 – 12:00 Coffee break
12:00 – 12:15 The Future is Now
12:15 – 13.15  Session IV - Scaling up for the SDGs: Pitching round and Launch of the 4th UNWTO Global Gastronomy Tourism Startup Competition

Following a brief presentation by UNWTO providing insight on how the entrepreneurial ecosystem and its key stakeholders can collaborate to achieve the SDGs while ensuring revenue, scale and sustainability in tourism and food industries, selected finalists from UNWTO Startup Competitions will pitch their ideas to the audience, showcasing their gastronomy and tourism-based solutions in policy, in practice, in communities – but moreover, in sustainable action. A jury will deliberate and select the winner of the challenge to be announced at the end of the session.

13:15 – 13:45  Live demonstration

14:00 – 15.30  Lunch

15:30 - 17.00  Session V - Get inspired!

This session will consist of inspiring presentations showing examples of successful initiatives in gastronomy tourism, providing an ideal space for the exchange of expertise and for the development of projects that foster sustainable practices in gastronomy tourism.

17:00 – 17:15  Wrap up – Key Takeaways

17:15 – 18:00  Closing Ceremony

Saturday, 7 October 2023

Technical Visits: Learning Excursions

1. **Rioja Alavesa, excellence in wine tourism:** Between infinite vineyards, impressive design wineries and wonderful medieval villages, Rioja Alavesa is presented as one of the most complete rural destinations in the Basque Country. La Rioja Alavesa presents a spectacular natural panorama that fits perfectly with immense undulating vineyards and some monumental villages that resemble an authentic tale. We invite you to visit two unique wineries in the region and end up enjoying the wonderful traditional cuisine of Rioja Alavesa.

   Starting time: 8.00 a.m. (from Tabakalera)
   Duration: 7-8 h.
   Capacity: 25 pax.

2. **Rural flavors of the Basque Country and the Idiazabal territory:** Tolosaldea represents the authentic rural flavors of the interior of Euskadi. It stands for beans, chillies, ribeye grills, Idiazabal cheese, cider, local markets and sweets traditions. A destination where you will enjoy all these ingredients that attract foodies from all over the world, discovering some of its gastronomic secrets. Goierri represents gastronomy tourism from its product’s origin: the traditional market, the Idiazábal cheese, the black pudding, the small producer and the shepherd. On this route, the focus will be placed into the quality of the local products that
enrich the culture and give identity to the territory and participants will visit a cheese factory to learn about its ways of doing and the lifestyle of current Basque shepherds.

Starting time: 9.00 a.m. (from Tabakalera)
Duration: 4-5 h.
Capacity: 25 pax.

3. **Urola Kosta: Fishing villages, landscapes and dream flavors:** Urola Kosta is a region within the historical territory and province of Gipuzkoa, in the Basque Country. It has two areas, one coastal, located between the mouths of the Oria and Urola rivers, and another in the middle and lower watershed of the Urola river. This region is on the way to the *Camino de Santiago* and its towns have a wide tourism offer deeply rooted in maritime sports and traditional gastronomy. An exciting visit to the best landscapes of the Basque Country and a great opportunity to get to know its gastronomy where the hot coal becomes the main protagonist.

Starting time: 9.00 a.m. (from Tabakalera)
Duration: 4-5 h.
Capacity: 25 pax.

4. **A sea of mountains, Gorbeialdea and Arratia Valley:** The Valley of Arratia is one of the greatest attractions of the Arratia-Nervión region undoubtedly because of its ecological and landscape wealth. *El Gorbea* has been the scene, like many mountains of Bizkaia, of legends of lamias and gentiles who held their covens in remote caves like: Itxulegor, Mairulegorreta, Supelegor. Arratia offers endless tourism resources to the visitors. The same occurs with the Gorbea Natural Park located between Bizkaia and Alava, possibly the most popular and most frequented peak in the Basque Country. Surrounded by a sea of mountains, impressive forests and immense meadows, it is an unprecedented tourist destination where you can enjoy its gastronomy, cheeses Idiazabal, its characteristic honey, and many more.

Starting time: 9.00 a.m. (from Tabakalera)
Duration: 5 h.
Capacity: 25 pax.

5. **Bizkaia – Urdaibai coast:** Urdaibai is an extraordinarily beautiful and varied natural area, declared a Reserve of the Biosphere by UNESCO in 1984. Its heart is the Oka River that rises on Mount Oiz and transforms into an estuary when it reaches Mundaka, creating spectacular marshes full of life. Urdaibai offers you some of the most beautiful and appreciated beaches in the Basque Country, as well as beautiful fishing villages such as Bermeo, Elantxobe and Mundaka. In Urdaibai, the rural and the marine coexist, an exceptional fact that is successfully reflected in the variety of its gastronomy. The raw material makes the difference, with the local and seasonal products. The great standard-bearers par excellence are the Cantabrian anchovy and the bonito from the north, two exquisite canning specialties. Tradition and economic activity united.

Starting time: 9.00 a.m. (from Tabakalera)
Duration: 5 h.
Capacity: 25 pax.