UNWTO World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism Returns to Donostia – San Sebastián

Madrid, Spain, 12 September 2023 – The World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism will return to Donostia-San Sebastian in Spain (5-7 October) to focus on how tourism can foster rural development, build economic resilience, and preserve cultural heritage.

Held under the theme ‘Gastronomy Tourism: Back to the roots’, the Forum will put the spotlight on the connections between product, gastronomy and tourism. Over three days, industry professionals, leading experts, and institutional representatives will engage in live debates, keynote speeches, hands-on workshops and live cooking demonstrations with local and international chefs and producers.

Top forum for sector leaders

The event will welcome many of the leading figures of global gastronomy and tourism, such as Qu Dongyu, General Director of FAO; Paolo Di Croce, Director General of Slow Food (Italy); Célia Tunc, Secretary General of Collège Culinaire de France; Fatmata Binta, winner of the BCWP 2022 and who will be appointed on the occasion UNWTO Ambassador for Responsible Tourism; and confirmed speakers from Brazil, Croatia, Ecuador, France, Ghana, Italy, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Spain and Switzerland.

Furthermore, forum attendees will have the opportunity to choose from five different excursions to experience and savor the local gastronomy: “Rioja Alavesa, excellence in wine tourism”, “Rural flavours of the Basque Country and the Idiazabal territory”, “Urola Kosta: fishing villages, landscapes and dream flavours”, “A sea of mountains, Gorbeialdea and Arratia Valley” and “Bizkaia – Urdaibai coast”.

Underscoring the significance of preserving culinary traditions, this edition will also commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Mediterranean Diet’s inclusion on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list. Additionally, the side-event “Culinary Plaza” organized by Basque Culinary Center will spotlight culinary specialties from destinations including Azerbaijan, Botswana, Porto (Portugal), Saudi Arabia and Zimbabwe. Residents around Donostia-San Sebastián will be able to access the Forum’s venue at Tabakalera.

In addition, within the framework of the Forum, a UNWTO Gastronomy Pitch Challenge will also be held alongside Culinary Action! (the entrepreneurship area of Basque Culinary Center), where selected finalists from UNWTO Startup Competitions will pitch their technology-driven innovative proposals and solutions for gastronomy tourism.
order to welcome and connect participants from around the world, the Forum will be held in a hybrid format.

**Advancing sustainability**

Building on the Global Roadmap on Food Waste Reduction in Tourism, launched during the previous edition of the Forum, this year’s conversations will advance discussions on reducing food waste, promoting circularity, and combating climate change within gastronomy tourism. Sustainable practices, encompassing the reduction of carbon footprint, the promotion of seasonal and local produce, and the shift to circular economy models, will be showcased.

The Forum has been co-organized by UNWTO and the Basque Culinary Center since 2015 with the aim of promoting the exchange of experiences between experts in tourism and gastronomy, identify good practices and promote gastronomy tourism as a driver of sustainable development.

Professionals interested in attending the 8th UNWTO World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism can register online now.

The Forum’s has been presented by Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary General of the UNWTO; Joxe Mari Aizega, General Director of Basque Culinary Center; Félix De Paz García, Deputy Director General for Tourism Cooperation and Competitiveness of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism; Javier Hurtado, Minister of Tourism, Trade and Consumer Affairs of the Basque Government; and Azahara Domínguez, Deputy of Mobility, Tourism and Territorial Planning, Provincial Council of Guipuzkoa.

This year's Forum is organized by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the Basque Culinary Center (BCC), with the support of the Basque Government, the Provincial Council of Guipuzkoa, the City Council of San Sebastián, and the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism of Spain.

**About Basque Culinary Center**

Basque Culinary Center represents a unique ecosystem where training, innovation, research and entrepreneurship coexist with the aim of developing and propelling gastronomy, which is understood as reasoned knowledge about what and how we eat.

Our mission is rooted in values such as passion, innovation, excellence and social commitment. Located in San Sebastian since September 2011, Basque Culinary Center is a pioneer institution conformed by the Faculty of Gastronomic Sciences, and the Centre for Research and Innovation in the field of gastronomy; BCC Innovation researches and innovates in product design, offers various services to companies, new entrepreneurs and young people with significant projects.

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8th UNWTO World Tourism Forum on Gastronomy Tourism