

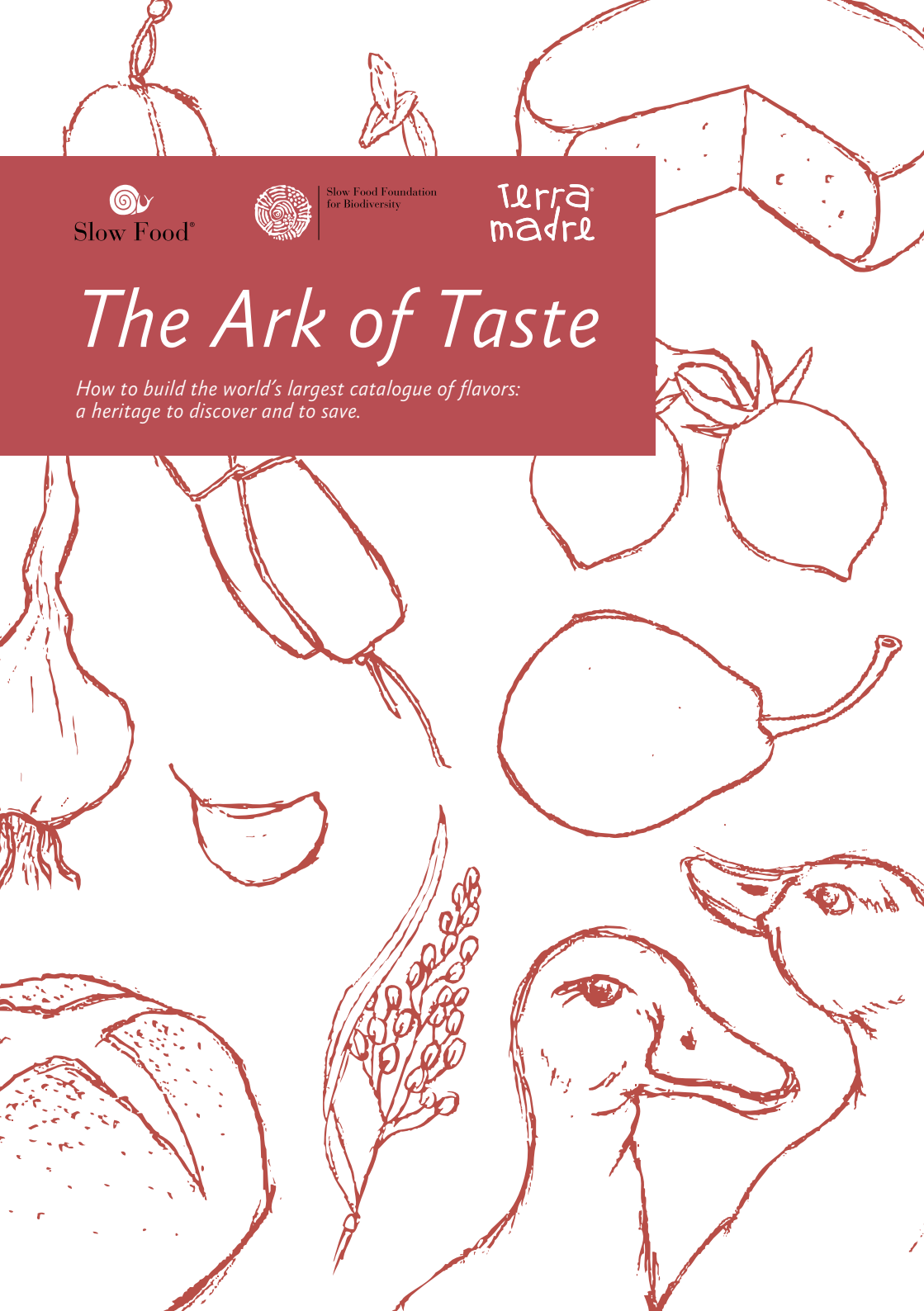


Slow Food Foundation
for Biodiversity

Terra
madre

The Ark of Taste

*How to build the world's largest catalogue of flavors:
a heritage to discover and to save.*





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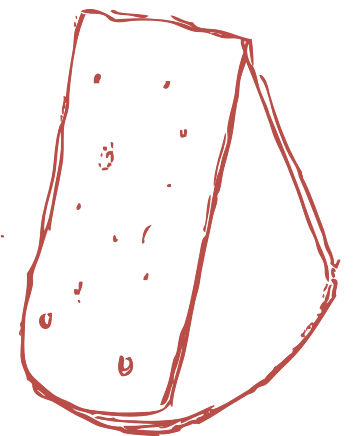
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What is the Ark of Taste?

The Ark of Taste is an online catalogue of foods at risk of disappearing that are a part of the cultures and traditions of the entire world.

Plant and animal species board the Ark, but also processed products, because, together with plant and animal biodiversity, cheeses, cured meats, breads and sweets are also disappearing: expressions of farmers' and artisans' knowledge that exists not in written recipes, but as complex and rich skills and practices passed down through generations.

In October of 2012 in Turin, the Slow Food International Congress reaffirmed the centrality of biodiversity, relaunching the Ark of Taste project as a fundamental tool for the future of the association that will involve convivia, producers and local communities. The International Executive Committee asked the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity (Slow Food's technical arm) to develop and coordinate the Ark of Taste project, using the International Technical Committee together with the National/Regional Commissions and with the collaboration of the University of Gastronomic Sciences.

What is its purpose?

The Ark was created to point out the existence of these products, draw attention to the risk of their extinction and invite everyone to take action to help protect them: by seeking them out, buying and consuming them; telling their story; supporting their producers; and, in some cases (such as the case of endangered wild species at risk of extinction) promoting their conservation and reproduction.

The overall objective is not to create a seed bank, a collection of genetic material or museum to exhibit traditional knowledge, but to rediscover and give value to these resources in order to support local economies.

In 1999, Slow Food used the Ark of Taste to launch the first Slow Food Presidia, and even today, nominating a product for the Ark is often the first step to it becoming a Slow Food Presidium.



How to identify a product for the ark

Where to start?

Each of us has our own channels, experiences and networks. We need to first of all reflect and recall if we have come across a particular product in our professional or personal lives that is no longer present on the market or is so only in small quantities.

Don't reinvent the wheel

It is important to understand if any research has already been done in the region, or if texts, catalogues of varieties and breeds, or recipe books that describe the raw ingredients already exist. It is also useful to visit botanical gardens; seed banks and varietal collections at agrarian schools, universities or research centres. These can provide many interesting starting points. But it is not enough.

Talk to chefs, journalists, gastronomes, experts and producers

It is not sufficient to have found a product in a catalogue, on the internet, in a museum, in a seed bank or a botanical garden to nominate it for the Ark of Taste. The questions we must answer are: "Does this product still exist? Is it currently on the market? And if not, is it still produced in homes?"

It is not necessary to visit producers

The Ark selects a product and not producers. So it is not necessary to know the producers or to have visited their farms. We can discover Ark products by talking to the elderly, cooks, journalists, experts (e.g. local veterinarians, agronomists, food technologists and anthropologists), market vendors, etc. Of course, if we can talk directly with the producer, we can obtain more detailed information, but it is not essential.

Visit farmers' markets

It is important to visit local markets, concentrating on the less common products and asking vendors questions. Note down product names (in all the languages and dialects), buy samples of the most interesting products, take them home, taste them and show them to local chefs, agronomists and elderly people, asking them if they recognize them, if they have maintained the same characteristics over time or if they have changed.

Ask lots of questions; never stop at the first answer

The job of identifying and describing Ark products is enjoyable and fascinating but also complex. It is similar to the work of an investigative journalist, a sort of "taste investigator". Describing a product requires patience. We need to ask many questions and often the same question to a number of people, comparing the responses. Never stop at the first answer. Those who produce, cook or consume a product might omit certain details they take for granted. So we need to dig deeper. Often the particularity of a product rests in those small details: a particular spice used, type of fermentation or smoking method, for example. At times, to discover an interesting product, direct questioning doesn't work (e.g. "Is anything particular produced in your area?" "Is there a product that is or was eaten during festivals?" etc.).

For edible plants, describe the shape, weight, color, flavor, etc. Don't stop at the species (it's not enough to note that it's a tomato or a cherry): we must note if it is a specific variety, what distinguishes it from the others, if it is linked to a particular area and in what way, if it is propagated with local or commercial seeds, if it is an ingredient in particular recipes, etc.

For an animal breed, describe the animal's characteristics – size, shape of horns, color of its hide/fur, etc. – and describe the purpose of its breeding, noting what products are made from it (meat, cured meats, cheeses, etc.).

For a processed product, describe how it is made, including the various steps, and indicate if the ingredients are produced locally. Is it linked to a specific variety (for example, if it is a type of bread, is it made with a particular wheat or rye variety?) or a native breed (if it is a cheese or cured meat, is it made with the milk or meat of a native breed?).

If it is a cheese, check and note if it is made from raw milk or pasteurized milk.



Tasting

Tasting is an essential instrument to evaluate a product. It is very important, however, to consider its subjective nature. Each tasting is conditioned by the personal preferences and cultural background of the taster.

For example, with a sausage, only a comparative tasting would allow one to understand that fennel, say, used by one producer is a personal variation, and is not one of the traditional ingredients characteristic of that particular sausage.

The sensory qualities of a food are defined by:

- appearance
- color
- consistency (liquid, solid, crunchy, succulent, tender, smooth)
- taste (sweet, salty, bitter, acidic)
- aroma

There are at least three elements needed to establish sensory qualities (also called organoleptic qualities):

- balance (the harmony between the aromatic and flavor components of a product)
- terrior (the ability of a product to express organoleptic characteristics connected with the territory of origin)
- complexity (how the organoleptic qualities evolve over the course of tasting)

A simple product finishes on the nose and palate with the same organoleptic characteristics that it began with. A complex product, on the other hand, will change during tasting; the perceptions will evolve and last longer.

Tasting is more effective when it is comparative, done not with just a single sample of a product, but by trying to taste the product from multiple different producers.

A comparative tasting allows us to understand the basic characteristics, the qualities that give a product a distinct identity.

What are the criteria for selecting a product?

1. Products should be of interesting quality and can be: domestic species (plant varieties, native animal breeds); wild species (only if related to techniques for collecting, processing or traditional uses); processed products.

What are domestic species?

Besides wild plants and animals, there are the plants and animal breeds selected by mankind. With domestication, nature becomes something familiar, controlled by man (domus = home). Domestication does not refer only to planting seeds or taming an animal, but means selecting and, therefore, progressively changing seeds and animals until they are best adapted to the environment and guarantee better production.

What is a cultivated variety (or cultivar)

A variety (or cultivar) is a set of cultivated plants, clearly distinguishable by their morphological, physiological, chemical and qualitative characteristics. A variety is stable, maintaining its distinctive characteristics even when it reproduces (through seeds or tissue, such as with grafting). Native or local varieties are well identifiable and usually have a local name. These often arise from selection by individual farmers or communities and are characterized by good adaptation to the environmental conditions of an area. They are consequently more hardy, resistant to stress and have less need for external inputs such as water, fertilizers, etc. They are closely linked to the culture of a community (for example in customs, recipes, knowledge, and dialects).

SOME EXAMPLES...

Carla apple (Italy), brown beans from Öland Island (Sweden), Lorient cabbage (France) and the Akkajidaikon radish (Japan) are native varieties.



What is a plant population (or ecotype)?

An ecotype is a population within a species (usually reproduced with seeds) that is genetically adapted to a specific territory, usually of a limited size. This definition resembles that of a native variety (or cultivar). The difference is that ecotypes do not have a precise genetic identity, stable and defined, and they are not part of official classifications or registers. However they are very important for the protection of cultivated biodiversity. It can happen that, if they are adequately studied and well selected, they can enter into the classification of a cultivar.

AN EXAMPLE...

The various populations of pink apples from the Sibillini mountains, grown in Marche (Italy).



What is a breed?

It is possible to define a breed as a group of domestic animals with defined and identifiable exterior traits (passed on to descendants through heredity) and visible characteristics (such as size; color of coat or plumage; shape of the head, limbs, horns, tail, etc.) used to distinguish them from other animals of the same species. For a breed to be officially defined as such, it must be registered. The registration of a breed occurs only following a request by a group of farmers.

A native breed is linked to a specific area of varying size where it has developed or naturally adapted over time. They are more rustic and, even in extreme environments, generally require less attention and less food. For the Ark of Taste, it is important to connect a breed to a product like a meat, milk, cheese, or cured meat product.

SOME EXAMPLES...

Mirandaise cattle, a beef breed originally from Gers in the Midi-Pyrénées region of France; the Saluzzo white hen from Piedmont, Italy; and the Villsau sheep from Norway's northwest coast, one of the oldest sheep breeds still surviving in Northern Europe.



Breeds originate in specific places, but in some cases—and this usually happens because some of their characteristics are particularly useful—they can spread to other parts of the world. A breed might be at risk of extinction in its native area but common in other parts of the world, like the Toggenburg goat, originally from the Swiss canton of St. Gallen but now found in many other Alpine regions.

What is an animal population?

A population is a group of individuals of the same species with related characteristics. Like in the case of breeds, the role of farmers is crucial in recognizing a population based on visible characteristics (feathers or plumage, size, shape of the horns or tails, etc.) and behaviour (productivity, fertility, etc.) A population is to a breed what an ecotype is to a cultivar, that is, it is less established and not officially part of a genetic breed registry.

AN EXAMPLE...

Animal populations of Mushunu Molo chickens (in Kenya) and the goats of Roccaverano (in Italy).



Why can a wild species be nominated?

The Ark recognizes products connected with the knowledge and culture of a community. In fact, Slow Food considers biodiversity not only genetic material, and above all, as culture (territory, know-how and traditional techniques). So, why catalogue wild products as well? Because often they are connected to traditional harvesting, fishing, or processing techniques and indigenous cultures. Safeguarding wild products means protecting the knowledge that is handed down within communities to preserve the ecosystems in which these products grow (like forests, mountains, and lakes). In the animal kingdom, fish represent the largest group of wild animals. Therefore, it is also possible to nominate a variety of fish connected to a traditional fishing technique or method of conservation (like salting, drying or smoking).

SOME EXAMPLES...

Some wild products are linked to complex techniques, such as Manoomin rice (USA), which is harvested by canoe and then dried and smoked, or wild coffee from Harena (Ethiopia), which is sun dried then toasted. Others are linked to simpler techniques, such as radic di mont (Italy), collected in the mountains and preserved in extra-virgin olive oil. Wild products often have cosmetic and medicinal uses as well as culinary.



What are processed products?

Processed products refer to cheeses, cured meats, breads, desserts, beverages, preserves and so on, which have evolved in order to conserve food (milk, meat, fish, cereals, fruit). These numerous products are fruit of knowledge handed down over generations in every corner of the world, the result of creativity and skill. The smallest variations can result in very different foods - think of the thousands of types of cheeses that have come out of the same three ingredients (milk, rennet, salt), or cured meats, where at times the only difference is the cut of meat, a spice or the type of wood used for smoking. Artisanal processing practices allow the creation of particular products that are able to, more so than the raw materials alone, narrate a local culture and protect producers from fluctuations in the seasons and market. Often, it is possible to safeguard varieties of plants and local breeds by promoting the processed products connected with them (a cheese or cured meat can save an animal breed, a bread can save a type of wheat, etc.)

For Slow Food, processed products are also biodiversity, together with the breeds or seeds of wild and domesticated species.

2. Products must be of particular sensory quality, as defined by local traditions and uses.

Chemical or physical analyses are not sufficient to judge the quality of a product, but nor is tasting.

The origin of the product must be understood (In which area did it originate: in the mountains or plains? In an urban or isolated zone? In a humid or arid climate? In a well-defined or vast area?). The communities must be consulted (Is the product known by everyone or by a small number of people? Is it considered a high-value product, destined for festivals and ceremonies, or a poor-man's food?). Processing techniques must be understood (Is it a raw or pasteurized milk cheese? Is the curd cooked, uncooked stretched? Is the cheese fresh or aged?), as well as conservation methods (Is it smoked, wrapped in straw, etc?).

Then of course, we taste to evaluate organoleptic aspects. A product is interesting if it is complex, meaning if it evolves in the mouth, offering perceptions that change and last. Tasting can identify potential defects (notes of rancidity, excessive acidity, etc.), identify the main organoleptic characteristics (aroma, taste, consistency), understand if there is equilibrium and harmony between the various taste and smell components, and if the product expresses its territory and typology well. At times an element that seems a defect is actually typical for that area, for the local tastes or for the typology. For example, bitterness in goat's cheese is a defect, but it is a typical characteristic of some alpine cow's cheeses.

Ultimately, it is fundamental to consider the palate of the community from which a product originates. A European product could be difficult to understand and appreciate for an African taster, just as an Asian product could be difficult to decipher and appreciate for a European.

3. Products must be connected to a territory and to the memory, identity and traditional local knowledge of a community.

Territory is a key element for biodiversity. It is not sufficient for a product to be just local. The adjective "local" tells us very little about the history and traditions of an area. It is possible to locally produce recently introduced improved varieties, hybrids or products unrelated to the local culture. The products that interest us, on the



other hand, are strongly linked to their territory, not just as in terms of climate and environment, but also in a cultural and historical and physical context.

Territory is soil, air, water and climate, but also language, dialects, religion, craftsmanship, architecture and landscape. Far from its territory of origin, a seed, vegetable, fruit tree or animal breed becomes simply genetic material.

Edible plant varieties and animal breeds are best able to fulfill their potential in the territory in which they have acclimatized over centuries thanks to humans' activities. For this reason they are more resistant and require fewer external inputs (fertilizers and herbicides in the case of plants; veterinary care, water and food in the case of animals). They are therefore more sustainable, both from an environmental and economic point of view. When you hear that a product is the same everywhere, that there are no differences between one region and another, between mountain and plains and so on (which happens a lot), don't give up, continue to ask questions. You will find the differences: it will be thanks to a particular terrain, the use of a herb or spice that is found only in a particular valley, and so on. The challenge is to try to link a product and a vast territory with a precise identity: an island, a mountain, the path of a river, or a group of hills. If you cannot find a difference, not even in the smallest details, it means that this is not such an interesting product.



How long before a product becomes traditional?

Some organizations have specified a minimum number of year after which a product can be defined as traditional: this may be 50, 30, or even 25 years. Slow Food considers that in fact a simple number of years is not enough to guarantee that a product is traditional. Golden Delicious apples, for example, are grown around the world (from Chile to Europe and Australia) and account for 80% of world apple production. But this is not a traditional product because the link to a local community and area is much less important than the genetic component (i.e. the variety, which is the same everywhere and particularly stable, expressing the same characteristics regardless of the territory). Yet this variety is a hundred years old and was identified at the beginning of the 20th century.

The same situation applies to a vast number of commercial varieties of peaches, grapes, plums etc. that are at least fifty or sixty years old.

Slow Food answers this question by considering the collective memory of a community. To decide whether a product can be considered traditional you need to answer the following questions: "Does the product belong to local culture? Is the knowledge required to cultivate, process and consume it passed down through the generations?" You can find this out by approaching the oldest producers in the community and asking them whether the product was already cultivated or processed by their parents and grandparents. One response is not enough. It is necessary to check whether it is a shared memory.

Some pointers that may be helpful: Has the product left traces in the work of local artisans? Are there any artisanal tools (wood, copper, stone, reeds) used to work or preserve a particular cheese, or collect and dry a particular fruit? Are there mortars and baskets to hold a certain cereal? Is it present in the language, dialect or folk songs? Has the product been present at fairs and markets for some time? Has it influenced local architecture - are there old mills or dairies?". In addition to the elderly people of the community, ask women, chefs, food journalists, experts (agronomists, veterinarians, food technologists, etc.). It is also important to search the available literature: Are there cookbooks? Books on festivals and local traditions? Catalogues of products? It is essential to cross check by using as many sources of information as possible.

Is it possible to nominate the same product in several countries?

Yes, after having identified the differences, even if small.

Artisanal products are never the same because they are influenced by many factors: altitude, soil composition, climate, local knowledge, personal creativity and so on. When a product is found in many countries with the same name we need to investigate further. Ricotta, for example, is produced across Sicily, but if we dig deeper, we discover that they can be made from cow, sheep or goat milk or mixed; fresh or aged; baked; smoked; coagulated with fig branches, and so on. Couscous is produced across the Mediterranean, but looking deeper, we discover a universe of variations made of different cereals (wheat, millet, rice, corn) and of other raw materials (there is even a couscous made of water-lily seeds). And just wheat couscous, for example, can be made with different local wheat varieties, different sized grains, or flavored with dried herbs, leaves or roots, etc.)

When there are no apparent distinctions, it is because the differences have not been studied and described, not because they do not exist. In Italy in the 1960s, wine was red or white. Today a universe of different wines exists, which change according to the vine variety, the territory, winemaking techniques and ability of individual producers. Promoting diversity is fundamental to saving small-scale producers. Uniformity, flattening and superficiality (those who say "this product is the same everywhere") favor producers of large quantities at the expense of quality. The fact that a product could be widespread over very large areas, often with the same name, does not mean that it is not at risk in each of the territories where it is traditionally prepared.

SOME EXAMPLES...

We can board on the Ark the plum slatko from Bosnia and Herzegovina and wild fig slatko from Macedonia. We can nominate Jabal 'Amel freekeh from Lebanon, freekeh from Jenin in Palestine, or that from Idleb in Syria. It is possible to nominate feta cheese (in its original version) in various areas of Greece, Turkey and Macedonia. Naturally, we would not nominate Danish feta, the largest producer of feta in the world operates in Denmark.



4. Products must be produced in limited quantities.

On the meaning of “limited quantity” or “small scale”, the debate is open and agreed definitions are few. It is, in fact, a relative concept that depends on context (the case of a Mediterranean island is very different from the Amazon) and the type of production (growing onions is not like producing saffron or an aged Alpine cheese), and it is very difficult to give a certain number or precise formula.

In the case of the Ark of Taste (but also in other projects like the Presidia and Earth Markets) we are interested in selecting products that could not be mass produced or industrial. In practice, “we are not able to calculate what is right, but we know very well how to recognize what is wrong” (Schumacher, 1973).

The products on the Ark are tied to a specific territory and the knowledge of a community, and it is precisely these two elements that define their limits. It is not possible to increase the quantity produced over a certain limit without fundamentally changing the nature of production. If the volumes produced grow too much or too quickly (time is also an important variable), it increases the production area of the crops (which moves towards the model of monoculture), multiplies the number of animals being raised, intensifies the growing methods or leads to importing primary materials from outside of the production area (sometimes from very far away), and mechanizes many if not all of the steps of the production chain, giving up craftsmanship at the risk of not obtaining the same quality.

The Ark of Taste is a catalogue of products, not producers. Therefore, it is not necessary to have an exact figure of the quantity produced (data which is, however, essential to have a Presidium), but it is important to at least identify an order of magnitude, to establish if we are dealing with an artisan or an industrial product. To further understand this concept, you can read *Small is Beautiful*, published in 1973 by the economist and philosopher F. Schumacher.

5. Products must be at risk of extinction.

A traditional product’s risk of disappearing can be real, in other words imminent, when the knowledge and skills necessary to produce it belong to one or a few producers, mainly elderly. It is not enough to have a written recipe or simple oral explanation in order to produce a cheese, cured meat or traditional dessert. Traditional processing methods are the work of artisans and learning the practices means working with them for years. One must learn the skills, and acquire an indefinable but necessary sensitivity to be able to maintain constant the quality of a product even when the conditions in which the production takes place (the temperature, humidity of the places of work and aging, the time of year, the state of the animals’ health, etc.) change. Only production-line, industrial productions do not allow for the possibility of individual interpretation, but demand, on the contrary, encoded processes and the use of technology in most stages of production.

The risk of extinction is real also when a product is made for home consumption only. Or when the introduction of ultra-hygienic laws swiftly renders places of maturation or production, equipment, or materials that are important for the characterization of a product illegal. In case of a risk of extinction, the risk is real when the number of units still produced is small (a few hundred or thousand). It is difficult to reverse a process of genetic erosion when numbers are so low. It requires a commitment from institutions, experts and funds to support breeders and financing of reproductive projects.

The risk is potential – in other words medium- or long-term – when the social situation (of producers or consumers) and the environmental situation (of the ecosystem) are such that a reduction in the quantity or number of producers can be predicted for the coming years. The signs of risk are many and diverse: changing trends in consumption; a market that no longer appreciates the product and pays very little, gradually reducing the profitability; depopulation of the area and emigration in search of new livelihoods of people able to traditionally produce the product; loss of generational transmission; alteration or disappearance of rural ecosystems and landscapes; loss of support from national and international agricultural policies, and scarce attention by institutions. The looming threat of industrial products similar to the traditional ones,



which confuse consumers and orientate them towards homogenized and standardized versions, can quickly expel traditional products from the market, as they are more vulnerable, fragile and have less support from advertising and marketing.

Can a food produced only for home consumption be nominated?

Yes. A product that survives only in family traditions but is not present on the market, even if produced in abundance, represents an extremely fragile system that risks disappearing in the space of a generation.

In the Balkans and many other ex-Soviet Union countries for example, small privately owned companies previously did not exist, only large public cooperatives. In these countries artisanal products have survived only in families, and now, little by little, some of these are returning to the market.

Here two different situations exist. Either a product is made exclusively by families for home consumption and is not sold, or a product is also present on the market, but in a non-authentic version, with a standardized recipe or with different raw materials. In both cases it is important to nominate the product handed down in families before it is too late. It is not necessary to understand if the production in question has the necessary commercial or sanitation requirements. The product can board the Ark regardless.

The interpretation and application of these criteria must always take into consideration the different local situations, with respect to geographical, cultural, societal, economic and political differences of the communities in question.



General rules

Nomination of a product must also follow these general rules:

The name of the product included on the Ark must be usable by any producer, and not privately owned by any producer or collective entity: it cannot be a trademark.

The products that board the Ark of Taste belong to the community, to the territory they come from and where they were developed, to the generations that have handed them down, and to those who have preserved them. They are not the private property of a single company. Any new business or young person living in the area must have the option to cultivate, raise, or transform a product from the Ark. Therefore, the Ark of Taste does not contain any brand name products registered or patented by the private sector.

Some practical examples include: Nutella® is not on the Ark, but a traditional gianduja chocolate-hazelnut spread could be; Marlene® apples would not join the Ark, but instead any of the hundreds of varieties of apples that have continued to survive around the world could. Huguenot® (a cow's milk cheese invented by a South African producer that has given his product an invented name that can be copyrighted) would not board the Ark, but an Italian caciocavallo, a Polish oscypek, or an aged French pélardon, or other cheeses typical of their respective communities could.

Using the Slow Food logo, name and trademark (or any variations thereof) is forbidden on the labeling of Ark products. Correct use of the Slow Food trademark and the 'Ark of Taste' name is established by the guidelines in the document Code of Use for Slow Food Logos - an attachment to the Slow Food International Statute.

The Ark selects a product and not individual producers. The Ark does not require the knowledge of producers, their involvement or control over the production chain.

An Ark profile describes appearance, color, flavor, but it is not necessary to know the details of the entire production. To give a simple example: an apple variety selected for the Ark subsequently could be cultivated using organic or conventional methods. The Ark limits itself to drawing up a profile, highlighting that a particular product is disappearing. It is an alarm signal, an appeal to take action around the world.

As a result, the label of products on the Ark may not use the logos, neither those of

Slow Food (the snail) or other connected organizations or projects (like the Foundation for Biodiversity, Presidia, etc.). It is possible to discuss the Ark of Taste project through other tools: brochures, booklets, articles, websites, etc., but not with product labels.

In many countries, Slow Food has established important relationships with chefs who, in addition to participating and collaborating in Slow Food activities, use products from the Ark of Taste, Presidia, or products grown or made by small local producers in their cooking.



Slow Food encourages chefs to note on their menus the names of the producers to give transparency and to promote a specific project – the Alliance between Chefs and Presidia – to truly create a network of restaurants working to safeguard biodiversity (see www.slowfoodfoundation.com/alliance). Those who want to participate in this network and make use of Presidia products can note them on their menus with the Slow Food Presidia logo. The Alliance is a recent project, created to promote Presidia, but is gradually expanding to local good, clean, and fair producers in general.

In the case of chefs using products from the Ark of Taste, or other local products, it is not possible to use the Slow Food logo (or any related logos), because Slow Food does not have any type of control over individual producers. Nevertheless, it is possible to underline that some products listed on the menu are included on the Ark of Taste, using an asterisk next to the name of the product (or by publishing the list of Ark of Taste products on an additional page) and adding this sentence: “These products – or, the products indicated with (*) – are included on the Slow Food Ark of Taste.” In this instance, we advise also adding a sentence explaining the project itself: “The Ark of Taste is a catalogue of products to save that belong to the culture, history and gastronomic traditions of communities around the world.”

For more information: www.slowfoodfoundation.com/ark



How to nominate a product

Anyone can nominate a product without being an expert, having particular skills or being a Slow Food member. It is possible to nominate a product from one's own area, but also from other communities or another country. You can nominate a product by filling out the simple form available on the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity website.

The nomination form can be sent to the national/regional commission – in countries where they exist – or directly to the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity. The Foundation website lists the countries in which a commission exists and the relevant contact information to put you in touch with local workgroups.

These two bodies – the local commissions and the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity – will verify that the nomination fits the criteria established for the project. If the evaluation is positive, the nomination is sent to the International Technical Committee for the Ark of Taste. If more information is required, the local commission will request it from the nominator.

The International Technical Committee is composed of individuals from different countries whose technical skills allow them to give the final evaluation of the nominated product and to grant final approval it for inclusion in the Ark. This body can, in turn, request further information from the local commission on the nominated products.

If a local commission does not exist, it is the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity that, at the time it receives the form, will submit it to the Technical Committee for evaluation.

After approval, the next step is to include a brief description of the product on the online catalogue.

Nomination Form

Product name

Indicate the name of the product as it is known in its area of origin*.

If this name is in a local language or dialect, please also provide the translation in the national language.

Category*

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bread and oven-baked salted products | <input type="checkbox"/> Must and fermented beverages (cider, mead...) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Breeds | <input type="checkbox"/> Oils |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cacao | <input type="checkbox"/> Pasta |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cakes and biscuits | <input type="checkbox"/> Preserved fish (botargo, in oil and salted fish...) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cereals and flours | <input type="checkbox"/> Pulses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cheeses and dairy products | <input type="checkbox"/> Salt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coffee | <input type="checkbox"/> Spirits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cured meats and meat by products | <input type="checkbox"/> Tea |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fish | <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetable preserves (jams, sauces, juices...) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fresh and dried fruit | <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetables |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grape varieties | <input type="checkbox"/> Vinegar |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Herbs and spices | <input type="checkbox"/> Wine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Honeys and bee related products | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insects | |

Country*

Product description*

In the case of a **plant**, describe its shape, weight, color, taste, etc. and how and when it is harvested. In addition to the species (e.g. don't just say that it is a tomato), but mention if it is a specific variety, linked to the territory, propagated with local seeds, etc.

In the case of an **animal breed**, describe the animal's characteristics – size, shape of horns, color of hide/fur, etc., and for which purpose it is bred, indicating also what products are derived from it (meat, cured meats, cheese, etc.).

If it is a **processed product**, describe how it is produced, including the various production steps, and indicate if the ingredients used are produced locally. Is it linked to a specific variety (for example, if it is a type of bread, is it made with a particular wheat or rye variety) or a native breed (if it is a cheese or cured meat, is it made with the meat of milk from native breeds)?

If it is a **cheese**, please check and note if it is made from raw milk.

If known, name and describe any **traditional dishes** linked to the product.

Product history

If known, please detail any known history about the product (are there related festivals, proverbs, local customs, etc?)

Historical production area*

Indicate the geographical area in which the product is still produced (e.g. names of the towns, valleys, etc)

What is your estimate of the approximate quantity produced?

Is the product for sale on the market?

Or is it produced for home consumption only?

For what reason is this product or breed at risk of disappearing?

Name of person supplying the application*

Ph*: _____ E-mail _____

Please tell us why you have nominated this product

*the asterisked questions are very important for the evaluation of the product, and it is therefore compulsory to enter texts in these fields or the application will not be saved.

Please attach any additional documents on the product you are nominating: list and contacts of the producers and chefs using this product if known, texts, articles, images, links to websites, videos, etc.

This is the initial form used for adding a product to the Ark of Taste. Your nomination will be considered and evaluated for publication. To continue with the work and launch projects (such as Presidia), more information must be collected through visits to producers and specific questionnaires.

How to communicate the Ark of Taste

To accompany the growth of the project, various communication tools are available in multiple languages

www.slowfoodfoundation.org/ark

The website for the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity contains a complete and updated outline of the project, an online catalogue of approved products that can be searched by country, product type or product name, and a new, simple and easy-to-complete nomination form. The nominations received, in any language, are published



in the section “Nominations from around the world”, along with the names and comments of those contributing to the project. In this section, visitors can search incoming nominations. A page of Frequently Asked Questions is available for visitors to orientate their activities and contribute to the project’s growth.

On the Foundation website home page, news on the project (new countries involved, testimonies from nominators, interviews with cooks, etc.) will be published. It is therefore important to receive reports from the ground regarding events (such as a display of Ark products during a fair, meetings or conferences devoted to the project), interesting initiatives and testimonies, because they enrich the news section and can also inspire other associations to organize similar events.

facebook.com/arkoftaste

A Facebook page dedicated to the Ark is now active, updated daily with news, photos, testimonies and videos. The profile relies on contributions from the network, and it is very important therefore to publish and share posts as often as possible both within the association as well as sharing with friend and other contacts.

twitter.com/arkoftaste

A specific profile has also been created where daily updates are published and passed on through the network. In this case, it is very important to connect with others and gain followers, but also to spark interest that can multiply the reach of the project’s network.

[Slow Food and Terra Madre international newsletter](#)

The international newsletter, sent monthly in eight languages to 90,000 recipients across the world, contains a focus on the project, allowing the presentation of different content (updates on new countries, products, photo galleries, quizzes, etc.).

[Photo gallery and video testimonies](#)

Photos sent by nominators and those from the Slow Food archives are published on Facebook and the Multimedia section of www.slowfood.com. Videos are also important: those able to create films are invited to interview the custodians of biodiversity. Videos can be sent together with documentation for nominating a product and can also be attached to the form on the sight, or archived in the Granaries of Memory, a collection of videos containing testimonies from custodians of local traditions, cultures, and biodiversity collected from around the world by the University of Gastronomic Sciences.

What is the difference between the Ark of Taste and the presidia?

While the Ark of Taste is a catalogue of products, the fundamental characteristic of the Presidia is the relationship with the producers and the creation of an initiative to support them. Starting a Presidia means visiting them, understanding how they work and what their difficulties are and understanding their social and cultural context and their market, in order to succeed in putting a promotional initiative into action.

The Slow Food Presidia directly intervene to safeguard a traditional product at risk of extinction (a product from the Ark) and represent, therefore, the next phase after cataloguing on the Ark. Naturally, it is not possible to have as many Presidia as there are products on the Ark. The hope is that many other organizations and institutions will also mobilize to save these products.



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www.slowfoodfoundation.com
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