

Geographies of Taste: Italy and Africa between Culture and Sharing

Cultural Dialogue between Italy and Africa on Food and Gastronomy

Date: 11 February 2026

Time: 9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Venue: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana Treccani

Food and gastronomy represent a universal language, capable of weaving together memory, identity, and the future. This initiative arises from the desire to highlight the role of food as a cultural bridge between Italy and the diverse contexts and realities of the African continent. The aim is to promote the intangible heritage linked to food, emphasizing its cultural, economic, and sustainable potential.

This event marks the inaugural moment of a broader pathway that will unfold throughout the year through seminars, meetings, and thematic initiatives, with the participation of experts, researchers, and key figures identified for each of the three sessions of the program outlined below. These events, along with those to follow, will offer opportunities for in-depth discussion and exchange among different forms of knowledge, bringing together academic, entrepreneurial, and cultural expertise from both sides of the Mediterranean.

9:30 a.m. – Opening Remarks

- **Marta Leonori**, Secretary General, Fondazione Treccani Cultura ETS
- **Ambassador Vincenza Lomonaco**, President, IDIAF Scientific Committee
- Ambassador **Massimo Riccardo**, Special Envoy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation for the Mattei Plan
- Minister Plenipotentiary **Stefano De Leo**, Director General for Sub-Saharan African Countries
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9:40 – 10:30 a.m.

SESSION I – Food as a Shared Heritage

(Identity, Memory, Intercultural Dialogue, Food Anthropology)

This session will focus on food as a cultural and symbolic heritage. It will explore the histories, memories, and cross-cultural influences that have intertwined destinies across the Mediterranean. Food thus becomes a language that tells stories of identity, conviviality, and belonging, bearing witness to its value as an intangible asset and a bridge between cultures.

Speakers:

- **Andrea Lenzi**, President, National Research Council (CNR)
- **Antonio Umberto Mosetti**, Anthropologist
- **Tracey Eboigbodin**, Chef and winner of *MasterChef Italia 2022*, special guest at the Italian Embassy in Nigeria for the Week of Italian Cuisine in the World
- **Chef Omar Ngom**, Chef and educator, Founder of Sama Chef École de Cuisine, Dakar, Senegal

10:40 – 11:40 a.m.

SESSION II – Food as a Tool for Global Sustainability

(Nutrition, Climate, Shared Future)

This session will address food as a shared responsibility and a common future. Discussions will focus on sustainable practices, environmental protection, and food justice, through a perspective that brings together Italian and African traditional knowledge. The goal is to reflect on how food culture can guide international cooperation and the construction of a fair and shared future.

Speakers:

- **Ambassador Nosipho Nausica-Jean-Jezile**, Ambassador of South Africa to Italy and President of the Southern African Development Community
- **Ambassador Josefa Leonel Corria Sacko**, Ambassador of Angola to Italy, former Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development and Sustainable Environment at the African Union Commission
- **Dr. Hamid El Bilali**, Representative, CIHEAM Bari (TBD)
- **Prof. Lorenzo D'Angelo**, Associate Professor, Sapienza University of Rome, Laboratory of Anthropology of Social Change in Tanzania
- **Dario Fociani**, Co-Founder and General Manager, Faro Srl, Aliena Srl

Coffee Break: 11:40 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

SESSION III – Food as Economic Sustainability

(Business, Supply Chains, Diaspora, Development Opportunities)

The third session will focus on food as a shared cultural and economic resource. It will highlight experiences of cooperation between Italy and Africa, showing how relationships built around food can become vehicles for knowledge exchange, dialogue, and equitable development.

Speakers:

- **Alessandra Pastorelli**, Counsellor, Head of Office I, Directorate General for Growth and Export Promotion, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI)
- **Chef Omar Ngom**, Chef and educator, Founder of Sama Chef École de Cuisine, Dakar, Senegal
- **Salvatore Maina**, Owner of one of the most popular supermarkets in Addis Ababa and a key reference point in the Ethiopian food distribution market
- **Abdulrahman Aboubaker**, Representative of Abulkhase P.L.C., a leading supplier of high-quality materials and equipment for various industrial sectors in Ethiopia
- **Representative or Associate of UCIMA** (Italian Packaging Machinery Manufacturers' Association) (TBD)
- **Fabio Leonardi**, Representative, AssoLatte (Italian Dairy Association) (TBC)
- **Tegitu Casiraghi**, Ethiopian coffee expert and Afro-food & drinks ambassador, Milan / Ethiopia

Moderator: **Marco Trovato**, Journalist and Editor-in-Chief, Africa Rivista