

TRADITIONAL GASTRONOMY AND ITS PRESERVATION

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Abstract: Cultural heritage in its various aspects is a peculiar expression of the territory and its history, the preservation of which is necessary for the understanding, permanence, and formation of the national identity, as well as for the democratisation of culture. On the other hand, cultural heritage values the territory and represents an important economic resource, being a factor of competitiveness that needs to be strengthened as an element of differentiation and attractiveness. Among the intangible cultural heritage, gastronomy is of great importance to preserve the cultural identity and traditions of the country, as well as a tool to promote tourism.

Keywords: intangible heritage, gastronomy, culture, digitisation, Portugal

The General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation Culture, hereinafter referred to as "UNESCO", meeting in Paris on 29 June September to 7 October 2003 at its 32nd session, considering the importance of intangible cultural heritage, a melting pot of sustainable development, as highlighted in the UNESCO for the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore, 1989, in UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, 2001 and the Istanbul Declaration of 2002 adopted by the Third Round Table of Ministers of Culture, recognising that communities, in particular indigenous communities, and, in certain cases, individuals, play an important role in the production, safeguarding, maintenance and recreation of intangible cultural heritage, as contributing to the enrichment of cultural diversity and human creativity, considering the need

to raise awareness, in particular of the importance of intangible cultural heritage and its safeguard.

In this convention, the concept of intangible cultural heritage is defined as "(...) the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills - as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated with them - that communities, groups and, as the case may be, individuals recognize it as being an integral part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, passed on from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups according to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, instilling a sense of identity and continuity, thus contributing, to promote respect for cultural diversity and human creativity".

The "intangible cultural heritage" as defined, in the following areas:

- (a) Oral traditions and expressions, including language as the vector of intangible cultural heritage;
- (b) Performing arts;
- (c) Social practices, rituals and festive acts;
- (d) Knowledge and uses related to nature and the universe;
- e) Traditional craft techniques.

Each State Party shall endeavour by all appropriate means to ensure the recognition, respect and enhancement of the endeavour cultural heritage in society, in particular through:

- (i) Education, awareness and information the public, in particular young people;
- (ii) Specific education and training programs within the communities and groups involved;
- (iii) Training activities in the area of intangible cultural heritage and, in particular, management and scientific; and (iv) Non-formal means of transmitting knowledge;

Intangible cultural heritage plays also a vital role in enriching tourism experiences, fostering cultural exchange, stimulating economic development and preserving heritage. By

recognizing and valorising intangible cultural heritage such as gastronomy, tourism can contribute to the safeguarding and promotion of cultural diversity and heritage conservation worldwide.

Gastronomy is widely acknowledged as a catalyst for local economic growth and has emerged as a key strategy for promoting tourism (Mendes et al., 2021). However, there remains ongoing debate regarding the imperative to conserve local gastronomy and the most effective approaches to achieve this goal. Altering the norms governing food production and consumption could potentially jeopardize the indigenous roots of gastronomic culture in various regions worldwide (Fernandes & Richards, 2021). Traditional cuisine is progressively being recognized as a precious facet of intangible cultural heritage. Consequently, efforts to preserve ancient traditions have spurred the resurgence and safeguarding of local, regional, and national products (Araújo, 2021). As tourists increasingly prioritize authenticity, gastronomy emerges as a pivotal symbol of cultural identity. Thus, discussions surrounding gastronomy inherently encompass themes of territory, culture, heritage, memory, and identity (Araújo, 2021). Recognizing the significance of local cuisine for tourists and mapping its impact on their perceptions of destinations is paramount. This understanding is crucial not only for effectively marketing destination tourism products but also for conserving this heritage (Guan & Jones, 2015).

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