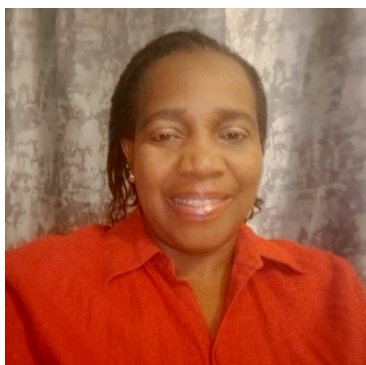




IGCAT Newsletter First Quarter 2026

IGCAT VOICE



In the heart of rural kitchens, under the shade of mango trees or beside open fires, women stir more than just pots. They stir memory, resilience, identity and the soul of a community.

Across Africa and beyond, women have long been the custodians of culinary heritage, weaving together ingredients, stories, and healing traditions. Yet despite their central role in shaping gastronomy, their voices remain underrepresented in the policies that govern food systems, tourism, and cultural development.

As a hospitality leader in Zambia, I have witnessed first-hand how women's leadership transforms communities. In the tourism sector, women are often the first to welcome guests, the last to leave the kitchen, and the quiet force behind the scenes. They curate experiences that connect travellers to places, not just through taste, but through care, storytelling, and cultural immersion.

Yet despite their visible presence in hospitality, their influence rarely reaches the policy level, but leadership must go beyond the plate. Women deserve seats at the tables where decisions are made, about food security, sustainability, and creative tourism. Their lived experience is a form of expertise. Their knowledge of indigenous ingredients, seasonal rhythms, and community needs is vital to shaping inclusive and resilient food systems.

Creative tourism offers a powerful platform to elevate women's voices. Culinary festivals, food trails, and cultural exchanges can showcase women-led enterprises, celebrate traditional knowledge, and foster mentorship across generations. In Zambia, I've seen how women educators, chefs, and wellness advocates are redefining what it means to nourish—not just bodies, but futures.

To move from plate to policy, we must:

- Recognize women's contributions as strategic, not just supportive;
- Invest in training, funding, and visibility for women in gastronomy and tourism;

- Integrate indigenous knowledge into formal education and policy frameworks;
- Create platforms for intergenerational mentorship and storytelling.

When women lead in gastronomy, they don't just feed, they heal, they teach, and they transform. Their leadership is not a trend, it is a tradition. ***To every young woman chef: remember, you are not just cooking, you are healing, teaching, and transforming.***

Beauty Nyongani

IGCAT Expert, Zambia

Duty Manager, Reservations & Community Liaison – Mfuwe Lodge, South Luangwa NP

News from IGCAT and the World Regions of Gastronomy



31st Platform Meeting of the World Regions of Gastronomy successfully hosted in Kvarner

23 March 2026 - Strategic policy and programmes to develop a region's culinary identity and strengthen collaboration between tourism, agriculture and education was the subject of the 31st World Regions of Gastronomy... [Read more](#)



Discover Your Next Culinary Adventure: IGCAT's Top 10 Foodie Websites for 2026!

19 March 2026 – Looking for your next unforgettable foodie experience? Discover the Top 10 Foodie Websites 2026, curated by IGCAT to guide you through extraordinary culinary adventures. Unveiled at a gala event... [Read more](#)



North-East England Joins European Region of Gastronomy Platform as Candidate for 2029 Award

18 March 2026 - In a proud milestone for the United Kingdom, **North-East England** has officially joined the European Region of Gastronomy Platform as a candidate for the 2029 Award. This marks the first UK regi... [Read more](#)



South Aegean Shines at the 2026 “Chrysoi Skoufoi” Awards

11 March 2026 - The South Aegean region continues to affirm its position as a gastronomic hub of Greece. This year, 20 restaurants across the Cyclades and Dodecanese islands were recognized among the best in the country at the prestigious “**Chrysoi Skoufoi**” ... [Read more](#)



Romanian Regions Strengthen Collaboration Through Strategic Partnership

4 March 2026 - In Bucharest, Romania’s three European Regions of Gastronomy, **Harghita** (awarded 2027), **Banat** (candidate 2028), and **Dobrogea** (candidate 2029), have joined forces in a new formal collaboration. The Int ... [Read more](#)



Armenia Becomes the First Caucasus Candidate World Region of Gastronomy 2028

18 February 2026 - Armenia’s commitment to placing gastronomy at the heart of cultural preservation, sustainable territorial development, and community-led economic resilience has led to the country officially joining the **World Region of Gastronomy Platform** as a ca... [Read more](#)



Jeddah-Taif approved for the title of World Region of Gastronomy 2027

6 February 2026 - An international Jury composed of five international experts considered the application of **Jeddah-Taif** for the title **World Region of Gastronomy 2027**. After reviewing the bid book titled *Jeddah-Taif: Everlasting and Abundant* submitted on 4 December... [Read more](#)



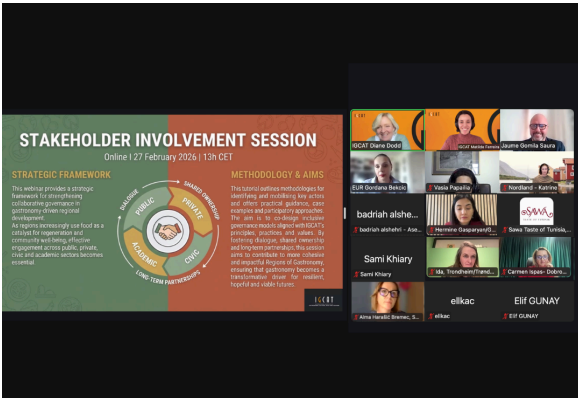
Open Call for World and European Regions of Gastronomy 2030

Join IGCAT's growing Platform and work with us to protect and promote your cultural and food diversity!

Deadline for joining the Platform: **30 Jan. 2027**

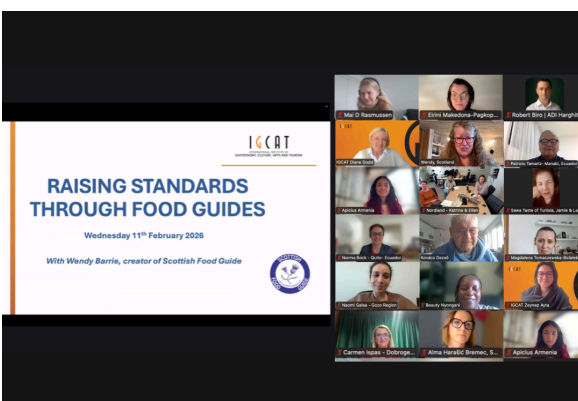
Deadline for applications: **31 May 2027**

For more information: [Open Call for World Regions of Gastronomy 2030](#)



Webinar: Turning Food into Regenerative Action

27 February 2026 - Food is more than nourishment, it is memory, landscape, identity and the possibility to regenerate a region. During a dynamic tutorial on Stakeholder Involvement for members of the World Region of Gastronomy Platform, **Jaume Gomila**, IGCAT Vic... [Read more](#)



Celebrating Regional Food Excellence: Insights from Webinar in Raising Standards Through Food Guides

12 February 2026 - Drawing on her experience establishing the award-winning **Scottish Food Guide** in 2002, **Wendy Barrie**, cook, food writer, and IGCAT Expert, shared practical insights on creating a credible and enduring foo... [Read more](#)



Sicily European Region of Gastronomy 2025 is at the beginning of a longer legacy

20 January 2026 - Sicily's year as European Region of Gastronomy 2025 has marked a defining chapter in the island's cultural and gastronomic history, demonstrating how food heritage, sustainability, and young ta... [Read more](#)

Current news from around the globe



Galicia's "living seed library" is putting lost crops back on the land

By In Spain News

25 January 2026 - Galicia's "living seed library," managed by the **Misión Biológica de Galicia (MBG)**, is helping restore agricultural biodiversity by conserving and reintroducing more than 3,000 local varieties of cereals and legume... [Read more](#)



Balance, Access & Investment: The Path to a Regenerative Shift

By European Union

17 February 2026 - At European Tourism Day, a clear message emerged: the future of European travel depends on better balance, smarter investment, and a decisive shift towa... [Read more](#)



Golden Bee Award 2026: Innovation and Excellence in Pollinator Protection

By **Republic of Slovenia**

4 March 2026 - Organized by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food of Slovenia, the International Institute of Gastronomy, Culture, Arts and Tourism (IGCAT) proudly supports and promotes the [Golden Bee Award 20...](#) [Read more](#)



Cultivating Hope: Support the Slow Food Network in Africa

By **Slow Food**

10 March 2026 - The International Institute of Gastronomy, Arts, Culture and Tourism (IGCAT) believes that sustainable food systems start from the ground up. That's why we are proud to spotlight Slow Food in Africa, an incr... [Read more](#)



UN Tourism Opens Call for Best Tourism Villages 2026

By **UN Tourism**

23 March 2026 - The **UN Tourism** has opened applications for the **Best Tourism Villages 2026** initiative, recognizing outstanding rural destinations worldwide, which the International Institute of Gastronomy, Culture, Ar... [Read more](#)

IGCAT carries out research, collects knowledge and develops projects to support creative solutions in regional and local development. This newsletter is just a small selection of news from the past three months. IGCAT compiles trends and facts from around the world.

www.igcat.org

info@igcat.org



© 2026 IGCAT, All rights reserved

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Manage your subscription](#)

We handle your data responsibly according to GDPR (EU) 2016/679.

Find out more about our [Privacy Policy](#).