

Not just pizza: Italian cuisine makes UNESCO list

Italy proposed the much wider “cucina italiana” in 2023

● First time the entire scope of a nation's cuisine has made the cut

● Culinary rival France in 2010 won UNESCO recognition for “the gastronomic meal of the French”.

AFP | Rome, Italy

UNESCO recognised yesterday that Italian food is more than pizza, pasta and gelato, adding the range



The world's first pizzeria, called Antica Pizzeria Port'Alba, opened in Naples in 1830, and it's still operating today – serving pizzas from an oven lined with volcanic rocks from Mount Vesuvius.



An Italian “Pizzaiolo” (pizza maker) prepares a Pizza Margherita in the first stone oven where was cooked a Pizza Margherita at the Capodimonte museum in Naples.

and ritual of the famed cuisine to its list of intangible cultural heritage.

Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, whose hard-right government has championed “Made in Italy” products as part of her nationalist agenda, hailed the recognition that she said “honours who we are and our identity”.

“Because for us Italians, cuisine is not just food or a collection of recipes. It is much more:

it is culture, tradition, work, wealth,” she said in a statement.

Pizza-making in Naples already features on the UN cultural agency's list of intangible heritage, as does espresso coffee.

Meloni's government proposed the much wider “cucina italiana” in 2023.

The government said it was the first time the entire scope of a nation's cuisine has made the cut.

Culinary rival France in 2010 won UNESCO recognition for “the gastronomic meal of the French”. That more celebratory affair, which begins with an aperitif and ends with liqueurs, includes four courses.

In Rome's Trastevere neighbourhood on Tuesday, the co-owner of the small “Da Gildo” trattoria, Leonora Saltalippi, said Italy's cuisine had centuries of mothers and grandmothers

to thank.

“It is all a heritage born from the vision of women in the kitchen,” the 43-year-old restaurateur told AFP.

They “have cooked for centuries and found, in the small things from the land and the poverty of the ages, a flavour that starts with oil and ends up in everything they touch,” she said.

Pouring a delicate stream of olive oil over a plate of fettuccini with artichokes, she noted that across the country, every family had their own recipe, “with nothing written down”.

Customer Tiziana Acanfora, 51, added: “What certainly makes the difference is the care and love with which things in general are prepared, not just the kitchen.”

At a table nearby, US tourist Naomi King polished off an oxtail stew “that I would recommend a hundred times over”.

“Italian food is one of the better foods in terms of flavour in the world,” she told AFP, highlighting the huge variety she and her husband had eaten since arriving in Italy.

The focus on local fruits and vegetables also made the difference, she added: “They know how to take that and make it into something special.”

Amazon says will invest \$35bn in India by 2030

AFP | Mumbai, India

E-commerce giant Amazon said Wednesday it would nearly double its investment in India, seeking to expand exports, create jobs and invest in artificial intelligence in the world's most populous nation.

Several global corporations, including technology giant Microsoft, have announced large investments this year in the South Asian nation, the world's fifth-largest economy, and which is projected to have more than 900 million internet users by year's end.

“Amazon has announced plans to invest more than \$35 billion across all its businesses in India through 2030, building on nearly \$40 billion invested in the country so far,” the US online giant said in a statement.

“This investment will focus on business expansion as well as three strategic pillars: AI-driven digitisation, export growth, and job creation.”

The announcement comes a day after Microsoft said it will invest \$17.5 billion to help build India's artificial intelligence infrastructure, with CEO Satya Nadella calling it “our largest investment ever in Asia”.

Amazon said it had invested in both building physical and digital infrastructure, including transportation networks, data centres, digital payments infrastructure and technology development.

“The investment will create one million jobs, boost cumulative exports to \$80 billion, and deliver AI benefits to 15 million small businesses”, the e-commerce company statement added, in an announcement made in New Delhi.

Amazon said it will build on existing investments that have “digitised 12 million small businesses and enabled \$20 billion in exports”, it added.

“We're excited to continue being a catalyst for India's growth,” top Amazon official Amit Agarwal said.



As of 2024, Amazon's India operations have digitally enabled over 12 million small businesses, and supported roughly 2.8 million direct, indirect, induced or seasonal jobs across technology, logistics, packaging, and services

Indian festival of lights Diwali joins UNESCO heritage list

AFP | New Delhi, India

India's festival of lights, Diwali, was yesterday announced as an addition to UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage list, sparking celebrations.

The United Nations cultural agency, meeting in the Indian capital New Delhi from Tuesday to Thursday, is examining dozens of nominations from as many as 78 countries.

The new announcements will join UNESCO's list of cultural heritage, whose purpose is to “raise awareness of the diversity of these traditions” and protect them in future.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi welcomed the announcement, saying the festival was “very closely linked to our culture and ethos”.

“It is the soul of our civilisation. It personifies illumination and righteousness,” he said in a statement on social media, adding the move “will contribute to the festival's global popularity even further”.

The Delhi government is organising several events, including special illumination of buildings and decoration across major roads, along with a massive lamp-lighting ceremony.

As one of Hinduism's most significant festivals, millions of Indians celebrate Diwali, also



Local residents watch fireworks light up the sky as part of Diwali celebrations, the Hindu festival of lights, in Mumbai known as Deepavali, not just in India but globally.

Many people, including those from the Sikh and Jain religious

communities, observe it as a five-day festival which symbolises the triumph of good over evil.

Celebrations, which happen on the new moon day in either late October or November, usually see lighting of lamps and bursting of firecrackers.

In much of north India, Diwali marks the return of Hin-

du Lord Rama to Ayodhya after defeating the demon king Ravana.

The festival is also strongly associated with worship of Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity.

India's foreign ministry said Diwali's addition to the UNESCO list was a “joyous moment” for the country.

During Diwali, people in many parts of India use mustard oil lamps because mustard oil is believed to purify the air and drive away negative energy – a tradition that dates back thousands of years to early agrarian communities.

