



# Anthropology of Food

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## 1. ANTHROPOLOGY OF FOOD

Food production, preparation, and consumption are all cultural acts. Through these actions, food becomes an essential element in the definition of individual and collective identity and one of the most effective tools for communicating and transmitting it.

Man's ability to transform nature has its consecration in the discovery of fire. Used to warm up, defend oneself, illuminate, send out signals, etc., fire has marked a decisive and enormous cultural development in human history, especially in the field of food. Claude Lévi-Strauss, founder of structuralism, whose work had a profound impact on the previous century's thinking, defined the cooking of food with fire as "the invention that made humans human". The discovery of agriculture and animal husbandry practices has also changed the destiny of mankind and is closely connected to food and nutrition.

Food is inseparably connected to life and to the ordinary and extraordinary activities of people and communities, since it is now unquestionable that it is not only used as nourishment but also as signifier. This ambivalence of food, as nourishment and sign, helps to identify, recognize and classify the gender of

people, their job, their social class, their age, but also forms of power, public and private roles, festive dimensions, and the anthropology of food: therefore, it assumes a decisive role in the investigation on food production and consumption practices, on the link between certain foods and contexts, as well as in the analysis of the articulated socio-cultural universe related to food. Besides, this nourishment-sign bond becomes relevant in the study of the mediation process that gastronomy has today more than ever in the complex relationship between different cultures: a meal, its structure, its preparation and the ways in which it is consumed constitute the expression of the social relations of the culture which expresses them and these acts can communicate, classify and even discriminate. The act of eating also makes explicit the boundary between familiarity and unfamiliarity, intimacy and distance. For example, drinks are shared with strangers, acquaintances, colleagues, and family. Meals are shared instead with family members, close friends and important guests.

Therefore, food is communication: both convey information. Food is a sign, because it summarizes, communicates and transmits a situation. Like language, cooking also consists of terms (products, ingredients), grammar rules (recipes), syntactic rules (menus), rhetoric (convivial behaviours). Language and cuisine also express symbolic values because they represent a specific culture and its individual and collective identities; thus, they are a privileged tool of self-representation and intercultural communication, in their present construction and in their progression from the past. Besides, the anthropology of food maintains that social sciences research in the field of food should not be limited to the structural analysis and therefore to the only synchronous dimension of cultural/alimentary facts, but that the use of a dynamic approach which investigates the transformations of culinary practices and hence also the diachronic level, is indispensable. As a matter of fact, food and eating are modified in relation to major societal changes, such as industrialization, migration, globalization, or innovation in the fields of transports, conservation techniques, mechanization, the media, etc., essential elements in the modification of the contemporary *homo edens'* eating habits.

Foods are experienced, catalogued and possibly accepted within a food system, and they acquire an identity and a relational code of their own. Moreover, eating is a ritual and the life of individuals is interwoven with **rituals** based on food. Countless foods have been laden with symbolic meaning and are at the centre of myths and ritual practices, prescriptions and proscriptions. Nowadays in particular, as in the past, food and gastronomy are at the centre of individual and collective representations of people. Besides, in recent years the ability to cook has had a considerable diffusion, with the proposal of culinary events, especially on television, where educational and entertainment programs follow one another, but also in newspapers, books, and magazines. Cooking and gastronomy schools

and universities have been created, and food is more or less pervasive in people's lives. In this landscape, old foods come to the attention of individuals in a new fashion and vice versa, invested with new categorizations and new values, sometimes positive, sometimes negative. Foods that were once considered healthy become dangerous now, which gives rise to food alarmism; and at the same time, in the light of new scientific discoveries, foods once considered harmful become salutary.

Food stands out in its wide anthropological dimension because it is the reflection of people, communities, societies and because it satisfies two important appetites, the physiological and the symbolic ones.

## **2. EVERYDAY FOOD, FESTIVE FOOD**

The interest of the social sciences in food and eating-related practices develops especially when we begin to look at ritual practices in an articulate way and therefore at the distinction between everyday foods and special foods. According to Michail Bakhtin, the difference between festive food and everyday food is that the first is for everyone, for the community, it is the food of squandering, of abundance; festive food instead represents daily life, loneliness. Whether to participate or not in a banquet is the first sign of inclusion and belonging to a group, also because at the table we define roles and relationships between the diners. If the daily food is meant essentially to nourish, the festive food serves to create social relationships, to renew identity and belonging. While daily meals are eaten at home by family members or in staff canteens, festive food represents an opportunity for meeting and communication, it is at the centre of sharing and social solidarity. A feast celebration, affirmation of a special moment, turns everyday life and ordinariness upside down through food. Besides, everyday food follows space and time rules that are not as complex as the ones implied in festive food. The ordinary meal usually comprises one single course. On the other hand, the festive meal is structured according to a different time-space dimension which is articulated, extended, complex and which implies the consumption of several, often sophisticated, courses. In poor societies, the feast and its food interrupt daily food deprivation. Especially in traditional cultures, the demarcation between daily food and festive food was evident, since the preparation and consumption of certain foods were connected to specific holy days.

Altars laid in honour of the saints, tables full of food in suffrage of the dead, food offered and food received, highlight the extraordinary nature of food on holidays, highlighting the "ritual richness". Each festival has its own food, its own eating models, its own peculiar ceremonial systems that regulate the production and consumption of specific dishes. If on the one hand food is an instrument of the feast, on the other, the feast celebrates food and its abundance. Thus, we can say that festive foods foster new alliances, propitiate future well-be-

ing, dissolve the debt with the saint or the Madonna for a grace received. Those specific foods, prepared and consumed on that particular occasion ritual, become an essential sign of that feast, they are a constitutive and functional element of the feast. Those foods are that feast.

As mentioned above, the consumption of food as a nutritional act prevails in the weekday dimension, while in the festive one the communicative connotation becomes manifest. Two functions: eating and meaning. Food therefore responds to primary and elementary needs, and has economic and symbolic value. Special foods are still packaged today in suffrage of the dead, which emphasizes the original function of food offerings to the souls of missing relatives. The story of the human and vegetable creation, dissolution, and regeneration was expressed in the funeral ceremonies of the past through the contiguity of laughter and weeping, lamentations and feasts. The latter were often ritually consumed on the graves of dead relatives: from Ecuadorian *las guagas de pan*, an anthropomorphic wheat bread with jam, chocolate, milk, etc., to the Sicilian *pupi di zucchero*, coloured sugar statues representing paladins or male or female figures from cartoons, from the *soul cake* (spiced biscuits) prepared in honour of the souls of the dead in Ireland and the United Kingdom, to the Guatemalan *fiambre*, a savoury spicy dish that can be composed of more than 50 ingredients including different types of meat, sausages, cold cuts, vegetables and spices.

Christmas and New Year are holidays that revolve around food abundance and excesses, especially today. For example, in Italy, dishes, cakes, special breads, including tortellini, lasagne, soups, capons, pandoro, panettone, etc. are prepared and consumed to denote the festive convivial moment. English Christmas, on the other hand, is intimately linked to the *Christmas Pudding*, a dessert that goes well with brandy or rum, while French Christmas is characterized by the consumption of *buche de Noel* and *galette de rois*.

Carnival is another time of excess. In relation to specific chronotopes established by tradition, the carnival is lived as a time of subversion of rules, of gender, status, skills, and role reversals; it is the time of food excesses, misbehaviour, sexual licentiousness, etc. Carnival is the time of pork, cured meats, sausages, cheese, omelettes and sweets, including *castagnole*, *frittole*, *zeppole*, *chiacchiere*, more or less abundant depending on economic availability; all these are offered to masked people and to those who renew the community's carnival rites.

Easter and the ceremonies of the Holy Week are the best example of the dialectic between myth and rite. The death and rebirth of Christ clearly subsume the death and rebirth of nature. The Easter breads and cakes emphasize well the ancient roots of the festivity and its meanings. But Easter also includes eggs, meats, cheese, vegetables, wine, spirits and drinks that, for example, the confraternities eat and drink during the sacred representations.



The food consumed together, donated, redistributed, displayed, essentially represents the indispensable core around which the ceremonial actions develop. In this perspective, food begging and ritual accumulation reaffirm the mechanism of the social production of abundance, the accumulation of wealth to be consumed together. Food excess and wealth are intimately linked to life and rebirth, to the continuity of the group, to community solidarity, to collective sharing, which are the basis of the food gifts exchange practiced during festivals.

### 3. RELIGIOUS PRESCRIPTIONS AND RELIGIOUS PROSCRIPTIONS

The cultural dimension of food is expressed, in each society, with a set of rules that help to define on the one hand permitted and prohibited foods, and on the other hand, the food diversity of the *homo edens*. These aspects are the result of historical, political, economic, environmental, and religious forms of conditioning that have affected the different populations. In particular, the religious sphere has influenced in a more or less decisive way the eating habits of many cultures, through the establishment of rules which have regulated the eating habits of the faithful, that is, the prohibition to eat certain foods and in several cases also the preparation of the same foods and their ritual use. The contrast between permitted and prohibited foods is also reflected on the time of consumption, i.e. foods permitted at a given time may become prohibited at another time. In this direction, regulated food has a positive influence on community cohesion and solidarity, contributing to the definition of individual and collective identities and to the renewal of collective memory.

Anthropologists have been dealing with prohibited and allowed foods in the religious sphere for some time. The Symbolist school of Mary Douglas, for example, has investigated the symbolic meaning of culinary prohibitions; Marvin Harris and the materialists, on the other hand, have focused on the environmental characteristics of the areas where such prohibitions apply, tracing their origin in a well-pondered evaluation of costs and benefits.

If the meat of cattle and pigs is used in several ways in the cuisine of many cultures, for the Hindus cows are sacred because they embody the gods and consequently slaughter and consumption are prohibited both by religious practice and by the Indian regulatory system; at the same time, pigs are considered impure by the Muslim faithful who therefore abstain from eating pork. With regard to these bans, materialists argue that the reasons must be sought in the socio-economic conditions that affected the cultures in question in the past. Only later did religion orient and define the food practice. In the case of Hinduism, at a certain point, the need to protect cattle must have been generated by the fact that it was at the centre of ritual sacrifices and collective feasts of the Veda populations, and so cows were in danger of extinction. The Hindus, however,

limit the consumption of meat so as not to harm the animals, preferring a vegetarian or vegan eating style. In the case of the Muslim ban on pork consumption, such a ban would have been necessary to ensure the protection of natural habitats and cultural heritage in the Middle East and only later this became a sacred rule corroborated by religious belief.

More generally, the Muslim food culture of the faithful is regulated by the Koran. These rules define the permitted foods, *halal*, and the forbidden ones, *haram*. In addition to pork, it is forbidden to eat meat for which the name of God has not been invoked, animals with canine teeth, reptiles, amphibians, birds of prey, insects. The consumption of alcoholic beverages is also prohibited. On the other hand, the consumption of fruit and seeds, of aquatic species with scales fished still alive, animals with a cloven hoof, such as cattle, sheep and goats, camelids, of wild species such as gazelles and deer, feathered fowls without claws such as chicken and turkey is allowed.

The Jewish religion also divides food into two categories, permitted and prohibited – *kashèr* or *kosher* vs *ṭaref*. Eating customs provide for the consumption of ruminants and animals with cloven hoof (with the exception of pigs, prohibited in the Leviticus), fowls (except birds of prey and nocturnal birds), aquatic species with fins and scales. All animals, except fish, must be slaughtered according to the *shechitàh*, that is in a quick, respectful and compassionate way and with the aim of draining blood quickly. It is not allowed to consume meat and dairy products in the same meal, while alcoholic beverages are allowed even if, for example, as in the case of wine, the stages of production must take place according to the Jewish norm, from the pressing of the grapes to the final consumption.

In Christianity there are no food prohibitions; there is no regulation that prohibits the consumption of food or drinks. Instead, periods of abstinence and fasting are indicated, that is the requirement to avoid eating meat at certain times of the year, such as Good Friday, or during Lent.

The monotheistic religions mentioned above, specifically Islam, Judaism and Christianity, are united by the consumption of lamb meat. The most important religious feasts, the Jewish Pesah, the Christian Easter and the feast of the Islamic mutton (Id al-Adha), in fact, provide for the consumption of sheep meat and the lamb is the symbol of these feasts.

Buddhism does not provide for prohibitions but has food recommendations. The consumption of meat is not prohibited, but abstention from its consumption is considered a value because it implies the salvation of animals from slaughter. Buddhists who opt for a different diet from that of vegetarians, and therefore occasionally put meat on their menu, should not participate in the sacrifice of animals.

On the basis of what we have just said, one should think of the importance that the consumption of certain foods assumes in the current historical period characterized by migration phenomena, and therefore the consumption of a certain dish con-

nected to a specific country, and how it actively participates in the process of affirming the individual and collective identity of a given culture.

#### 4. TASTE AND AVERSION

Taste is relative. Good and bad are not absolute categories, universal, and are not given in nature. Taste and aversion are the result of a long process of additions, cuts, unions and separations of historical, social, cultural, economic, and religious nature. And they are the result of space and time variables. Therefore, taste is not a rigorously fixed reference, but it represents a relative behaviour that is transformed. It is possible to identify two spheres of taste: the first is as *taste tout court*, that is, a subjective perception and experience of the palate without historical and cultural references; the second is *taste as knowledge*. In this case, food is evaluated and classified. Eating becomes a thought and not mere taste. In this perspective, taste becomes a collective communicating dimension, a cultural experience elaborated over time and mediated by many variables.

The aversion for certain foods and smells, therefore, is not a natural fact but a cultural categorization. Taste belongs to the order of culture that orients us towards what is good, what we like, and dissuades us from what is disgusting and repulsive. For the Chinese, dog is a delicacy, while in Europe it has become man's best friend. In Italy and France, mushrooms are appreciated and used in various ways in national cuisines, while for northern European societies they were until recently pet food. Mediterranean cuisine is closely linked to the great monotheistic religions and, as we have seen, if for many individuals pork is impure and strictly prohibited, for others pork and its by-products are absolutely essential. Another recurrent example is horse meat: for the English, the consumption of horsemeat is an abomination, just as the Scandinavian peoples considered murderers those who killed a horse. For many Italians, and not only, instead, a horse steak marinated with garlic and parsley is a sought-after specialty.

What you like and consume in a given historical period, can vary in another era, but especially what you consider a delicacy in one place, can be classified as disgusting in another. And, just think of the cheese with worms of Sardinia, *su casu marzu* (a cheese that is obtained as a result of the laying of eggs by the cheese fly, from which are born the larvae that feed on the cheese itself proliferating inside), sought after and particularly appreciated on the island, or Roman style tripe, which will hardly find the consent of those who have never tasted it. Thai bat soup will not arouse the enthusiasm of many Europeans, as well as fried scorpions prepared in China, considered a delicacy, or mice cooked in some areas of Asia. Striving to swallow a course of guinea-pig or monkey is quite a complicated undertaking for those accustomed to eating pasta and beef or lamb meat. Grasshoppers, earthworms, spiders, etc.,

variously prepared depending on who prepares them, are the basis of the menus of many populations, but will hardly arouse the enthusiasm of the palates accustomed to the French *foie gras* or the German *thüringer rostbratwurst*. In any case, there are also those who are constantly looking for “extreme foods”. Anthropologist Marino Niola has argued that “with the crocodile skewer and zebu tartar cuisine moves to the zoo. This pushed exoticism seems to be the last frontier of globish catering, always looking for new sensorial experiences. Often thrilling, and not necessarily pleasurable. So the *fassone* gives way to the python, the free-range chicken to the lion rampant, the sauté rabbit to fried batter kangaroo. The menus of the trendiest restaurants on the planet now resemble a fantastic zoology manual worthy of Jorge Luis Borges’ surrealist imagination”.

All these foods are delicious to some, disgusting to others. The exhibition at the Disgusting Food Museum in Malmö, Sweden, is based on this axiom. It is a museum in which 80 of the world’s most disgusting foods are “exhibited”. The museum offers visitors a sensory experience, as they can choose to smell and enjoy some of these foods. For example, Swedish *surströmming*, herring fermented in jars that generate a strong smell and taste between putrid and rancid, or Icelandic *hakarl*, a preparation that includes the burying of shark meat for several months until it rots; it has a strong smell of ammonia and its consumption is accompanied by *brennevin*, a local brandy, or even the above mentioned Sardinian *casu marzu*.

Even the vegetarian dimension is unrelated to nutritional issues and is imbued instead with cultural choices and constructions. The refusal to eat meat is a complex reason for those who are born omnivorous. It is the freedom to choose what to eat, refraining from the consumption of living beings, that guides the diets of vegetarians and vegans. And it is an ancient complex, varied cultural vision, because meat is either associated with a bloody act, the suffering of the animal, or to its harmfulness to human metabolism. McDonald’s adjusted their menus to these ideas and in 2012, in India, they opened the first vegetarian fast food.

Each culture, therefore, categorizes according to its own parameters the beautiful and the ugly, just and unjust, good and bad. Each culture has a food code that has defined and admitted as good certain foods, while categorizing others as undesirable. Food is precisely a cultural trait, and the propensity for some foods and the refusal for others, even though they are edible, has a cultural origin.

## 5. FOOD AND FOOD PRACTICES BETWEEN LOCAL AND GLOBAL

The contemporary era is characterized by the spontaneous or induced mobility of individuals and, therefore, by multicultural contexts in continuous change. In this scenario, food plays a fundamental role in the construction of individual and collective identities, since it holds ethical, cultural, sym-



bolic, religious, etc. values. Food choices are linked to social self-identification practices, and so every food must be recognized, accepted and included through a process of authentication that will make it autochthonous.

The relationship between "local" and "global" is one of the most important issues in the contemporary social sciences debate. In the field of food and eating, in order to be perceived as local, a dish or an ingredient must become part of exchange networks that allow to enter a confrontation with the other, the different, thus acquiring its own identity built in the confrontation. Moreover, the historical processes of mutation that inevitably influence the general food sphere must be considered for every food or culinary tradition.

We often tend to believe that certain food practices and certain foods are ancient, and therefore have a great tradition, underestimating the role that technology plays with changes in the preparation of pasta, cheese, wine, etc. which improve their quality. Every cultural trait, even as concerns food and eating, is the result of transformations: there are foods that have been preserved, reshaped and handed down over time, such as bread, while others have definitively come out of specific diets, for example the Roman *garum*; still others are overshadowed, just think of honey, often replaced by sugar. Finally, the foods which have been introduced more recently are readapted and absorbed by the local cuisine. Think of cocoa, originally from Central and South American countries: for about 500 years it has been variously used in all food systems in the world; or corn, which arrived in Europe after the discovery of the Americas and from which we now obtain soups, flours, breads, etc. The same foods symbols of "Italianity", pasta with tomato sauce and pizza, have a young history, just over two centuries; more generally, without the "American" tomatoes, the renowned Mediterranean cuisine would be quite different.

Fernand Braudel argued that "cultivated plants do not stop travelling and revolutionizing the lives of men". The Mediterranean, for example, is a crossroads where ancient, native foods (wheat, vine, olive) are mixed with "foreign" foods, which have become an effective and constitutive part of the food scene in this area. For these reasons, talking about local food is rather relative. Food travels, arrives from some places and leaves for others, often as a result of epoch-making historical events similar to today's globalization. Think of the impact of the Arab culture on the Western Mediterranean countries food systems. We are talking about a decisive agricultural and eating innovation: sugar, rice, citrus fruits, aubergines and especially dried pasta are foods that have revolutionized the local food systems.

The Mediterranean and, more generally, Europe, therefore, represent places where local and global have coexisted for a long time; spaces in which cultures, beliefs, lifestyles, even in the kitchen, hybridize. Today's gastronomy is the result of mixtures and loans, of contaminations and migrations. In addition to cocoa, corn and tomatoes, America is the original

home to prickly pears, potatoes, peppers, chili peppers, some varieties of pumpkins and beans, avocado and pineapple. Many of these foods were not immediately accepted: potatoes, for example, were considered animal feed stuffs. Only in the 18th century did these foods become essential in the various **regional cuisines**. Just consider the preparations that are still made in northern Italy based on polenta and cornmeal, or the multitude of dishes that involve the use of potatoes in most European countries.

Even regional cuisines have nothing archaic about them. They are the product of encounters between local and global elements, between popular cuisines and the fashions of the moment, and became established between the Seventeenth and Nineteenth centuries. Certainly, they propose traditional preparations, many of which date back to the Middle Ages, such as savoury pies or chickpea gruel, as well as much older foods, such as oil, wine, bread and meat, which are daily used. Even exotic foods and spices, in the past, were a global product because they arrived on the tables of wealthy people, homologating food tastes in different areas of the world. Many of the products that today are invested with **typicality** and identity, some recognizable by the PDO, PGI, TSG, etc. labels, which express the *terroir* of a specific area, are imported, have undergone a sometimes conflicting process of recognition and acceptance. Today's consumers, especially a certain group of consumers, look for local food at the expense of global preparations. The first is a symbol of food excellence, a limited product, therefore precious and expensive. The others are homologous mass-produced goods and with more accessible prices for all. In the first case, craftsmanship, traditionality, etc. are certified, guaranteed and become the categories by which the product is identified; in the second case, they are undifferentiated industrial products.

The products covered by the PDO, PGI, TSG, etc. labels are standardized and, therefore, institutionalized. They are formalized identity and commercial goods that, through a specific recognized and accepted regulation, subsume a whole set of characteristics that places them in opposite and contrasting areas. These are local productions which are codified by supra-local rules, identifying the product by elevating its typicality and at the same time homologating it. It is a good that must be transformed in order to be preserved, a different and therefore precious product but whose preservation reduces diversity, a product that is the result of local know-how harnessed without "official" global knowledge, a product that is geographically identifiable but integrated into the world market rules. When you want to affirm the typical over the global, the first is masked by the dynamics of the second. Even the local is global.

It is in particular the eating styles that change rapidly and that are influenced by the encounter/confrontation between local and global. Among the globalized food symbols, we certainly find McDonald's with restaurants scattered all over the

world: thanks to their flexibility they have managed to impose a food model. In India, for example, the fast food philosophy has adapted to religious prescriptions that forbid the consumption of beef and beef products; in France, their menus offer *salade niçoise*, and in Greece salad with feta. In Israel, Big Mac is eaten without cheese, in compliance with *kosher* rules that require the separation of meat and dairy products. The McDonald model is opposed by the *Slow Food* movement, which places slowness and therefore taste and food digestibility at the basis of its eating style; the brand is in fact represented by a snail. Between McDonald's globalized diet and local eating styles, we find "**glocal**", or hybrid, models of food consumption.

The Italian cuisine is probably the one that best highlights the ambivalence of the contemporary eating system. Industrialisation and technology have certainly helped and embellished traditional culinary practices and knowledge. Besides, while in the last sixty years the food taste of Italians has in many cases been uniform (think of certain dishes like pasta or certain desserts like panettone and pandoro), in recent decades particular attention has been paid to the proposal of local culinary traditions.

Basically, local and global cuisine coexist, interface and complement each other. With globalization, diversities do not disappear, but, as Massimo Montanari states, if anything, they are accentuated, investing food identities with new senses and functions. These identities, in turn, take specific forms that dialogue with each other. Montanari also argues that there is no contradiction between eating at McDonalds and then having homemade tagliatelle. Two different meals in two different places and moments, only apparently in opposition, expressing two of the various identities that define us.

## FOCUS 1

### Mediterranean Diet

The expression "Mediterranean diet" appeared for the first time in 1975 in the book *How to Eat Well and Stay Well. The Mediterranean Way* by Ancel Keys and Margaret Haney. The two American scientists arrived in Italy in the fifties to study the difference between the high percentage of US patients suffering with cardiovascular diseases and the low percentage of individuals affected by the same diseases in Naples. The discrepant element between Americans and Neapolitans was the cholesterol rate, the result of a different eating style: in Italy the diet was based on "Mediterranean eating". In 1957, aided by a whole team of doctors, the Keys started a 35-year-long study led in the United States, Italy, Greece, Japan, Finland, Yugoslavia, Holland, aimed at analyzing the relationship between health and lifestyle. At the same time, since the early sixties, the couple began

to assiduously visit the Cilento and got convinced that the lifestyle of local inhabitants concealed the food and eating system they had been long looking for. The name "Mediterranean diet" was born to define this lifestyle, that is a diet based on the use of seasonal products used in several ways, in opposition to the American eating model.

This extraordinary diversity, the Mediterranean diet, was declared UNESCO World Heritage on 16 November 2010. The super-local body recognized a model that makes traditional, classic and contemporary cuisine dialogue; a container of practices, knowledge, values and specificities that also enhance social cohesion and conviviality.

The Mediterranean diet is based on the universal pyramid of the Mediterranean diet which contains the foods that it is preferable to consume and the behaviors that the consumer should observe. These foods are also recommended by the World Health Organization, namely: eat more fruit, vegetables, and cereals; eat fish and shellfish frequently, cheese and eggs a little less frequently, and consume sausages, meat and sweets more rarely. As several scientific studies currently maintain, the Mediterranean diet does not only consist of food, but also of virtuous behaviours, a dietary lifestyle that, as the anthropologist Elisabetta Moro has stated, condenses: 1) eating together, that is sharing food as a ritual moment and a moment of social cohesion; 2) cooking together, with a view to safeguarding food heritage; 3) teaching food and eating culture; 4) promoting physical activity; 5) making the tradition and therefore the gastronomic history of the Mediterranean known; 6) seasonality, that is the use of fresh products that respect the environment; 7) zero waste, that is no unnecessary food waste.

## FOCUS 2

### "Pasta, Pizza and Mandolin"

Pasta and pizza are the symbol of Italian food and Italian eating. In the world, Italians have long been called "macaroni" and "pasta, pizza and mandolins" is one of the most inflated stereotypes to immediately identify the *Belpaese*. Pasta and pizza have become global foods and symbols. As for the first, according to some it was invented by the Chinese, others attribute its origin to the Arabs of Sicily and Andalusia. In any case, the production and distribution of pasta in recent centuries is certainly Italian. Until the Seventeenth century, as a matter of fact, the history of pasta was closely related to the meetings of cultures and civilizations that have crossed the Mediterranean; since the Eighteenth century, when pasta manufacture was born, this food has been inextricably linked to Campania and Liguria. The definitive consecration of pasta



took place when it began to be served with tomato sauce and when, between the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries, Italian emigrants helped to spread it all over the world. Born among poorer social classes, pasta is now divided between street cooking and haute cuisine. A multitasking product that adapts to an infinite variety of seasonings and has been reinvented in all regions: *mezze penne al pomodoro*, *spaghetti cacio e pepe*, *anelletti al forno*, *timballi di pasta*, *spaghetti alla carbonara*, *linguine all'amatriciana*, *cappelletti in brodo*, *tortellini al ragù*, *penne strascicate*, *tagliolini al tartufo*; and more: *fusilli*, *gnocchetti*, *tortiglioni*, *vermicelli*, *conchigliette*, *midolline*, *risoni*, etc. Pasta has originated many cultures and many food traditions, has colonized world cuisines, has become one of the most important symbols of the Mediterranean diet.

Pizza is also a banner of gastronomic Italy that has become a planet food-symbol. Since the Eighteenth century, pizza, popular food par excellence, has embarked on a progressive internationalization that has brought it from the streets of Naples to bakeries around the world. According to food historians, today's pizza is an evolution of the *mense*, that is wheat flat breads attested in the classical period and used to rest food on them. Of course, pizza belongs to the family of *focaccia*, sister for example of the Hispanic *tortilla* and the Arab *pita*.

Like pasta, which is part of the Mediterranean diet and therefore recognized by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage of humanity, pizza, or rather the art, tradition, and culture of Neapolitan *pizzaiuoli* has also been made a patrimony by the United Nations Organization, sanctioning and institutionalizing the universality of the local-global food par excellence.