

# TASTE THE FUTURE OF FOOD



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# Biodiversity for Resilience



Throughout the history of agriculture, farmers have generated a seemingly endless diversity within crops and livestock, discovering ingenious solutions to local challenges. This diversity allows farmers to feed the world.

It is the foundation of agriculture, enabling it to evolve and adapt to meet the never-ending challenge of sustainably producing sufficient and nutritious food for an increasing population. Solutions to the challenges threatening our food system can be found through utilizing the amazing wealth of diversity of our foods.

But this diversity is not in fact endless. It is disappearing, and once lost, it's lost forever.

For example, by some measures, the United States has lost 90% of fruit and vegetable varieties since the 1900s; Mexico 80% of its maize varieties since the 1930s; China 90% of its wheat varieties since the 1950s and an estimated 17% of livestock breeds are at risk of extinction.

Out of perhaps 30,000 edible plants species left, only about 150 crops, and relatively few varieties of each of these, are cultivated on a large scale around the world, and we get most of our calories from just a handful. –

All this puts our agricultural systems at risk.

We need crop and livestock diversity both in farmer's fields and stored in genebanks – available to all through an efficient global system to ensure that nutritious food will be available at stable and affordable prices without expanding agriculture's footprint.

The good news is that the global community has recognized the value of these conservation efforts in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In fact, SDG Target 2.5 specifically calls on us all to safeguard what's left of our crop and livestock diversity and put it to good use by 2020.

If we are going to contribute towards meeting this ambitious goal, we need to excite and inspire consumers around the immense potential of food diversity.

The Food Forever Experience is an international series of events, which aims to do just that. By working with innovative chefs and other partners to cook up delicious dishes using lesser-known ingredients, we aim to "plant the seed" for a more diverse, nutritious and sustainable future.





# Food Forever Experience Rome

## A Celebration of Biodiversity and the Mediterranean Diet

For centuries Italian cuisine has played a powerful role in shaping our eating habits, not only in Europe but around the world. From *Apicius* in the 4th century, to the seemingly ever-present Italian cuisine of the 20th century, the impact of *Lo Stivale* on the culinary habits of the planet is difficult to overstate. With such an influential tradition, it is only fitting that the Food Forever Experience series comes to Italy.

Today, the Food Forever Initiative is excited to welcome you to a celebration of the biodiversity of our foods on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the coming into force of the FAO's Plant Treaty.

Featuring unique ingredients important to Italian cuisine, from the Orto Artichoke and Cacio Fiore cheese, to crops of major global importance, such as durum wheat and chickpea, tonight's joint reception will celebrate the critical importance of the diversity of our foods and the actions we can collectively take to safeguard it.

We hope you enjoy the food, maybe learn a little, and leave inspired, as we showcase the collective power we have when we come together around the same table.



**Rome**

# THE MENU

Vallepietra giant beans with anise and nepi white onion

Stewed red chicory with hazelnut

Cacio fiore with acacia honey and extra virgin olive oil

"Al cocchetto" arsolì beans with garlic, sage and tomato sauce

Turnip tops with wheat and pecorino romano

Atina beans, lake turano pea beans and purgatory beans with nepi white onion, truffle and extra virgin olive oil

Durum wheat pie with artichokes, pecorino romano and eggs

Ricotta romana mousse with sardinian pecorino and truffles

Puntarelle with arsolì beans and capers

Puff pastry with ricotta romana, rum and caramelized beans

Sponge cake with bébé apple puree, cinnamon and honey

**BUON APPETITO!**



# Ingredient Highlights



## VALLEPIETRA GIANT BEAN

A tasty, versatile bean with a rich local history, which has been cultivated by farmers in Vallepietra, a small village some 90 km from Rome since the 16th century. The giant beans, known locally as the “ciavattone”, are traditionally eaten plain, tossed with onions and hefty portions of extra-virgin olive oil or as key ingredients in local soups and salads. The Vallepietra Giant Bean reflects an agricultural tradition in rural Italy that has survived thanks to a handful of local family farms.

## ANISE

One of the oldest herbs, Anise spread around the Mediterranean in ancient times. To this day, it is an indispensable spice in many kitchens for soups, stews, and some desserts but is perhaps best known as an ingredient in famous spirits such as raki, mastika and ouzo.





### **NEPI WHITE ONION**

This flattened onion hails from Nepi, a village about 50 km north of Rome, where sulphurous water rich in mineral salts contributes to a noticeably sweet and fragrant taste. Though once central to the livelihoods of the cipollari of Nepi, the onion has almost disappeared from the region. The few remaining Nepi onion farmers pass their seeds from generation to generation, committed to preserving the unique local variety and preventing hybridization with other varieties grown in the area.



### **RADICCHIO**

An Italian variety of chicory, radicchio adds a crunchy texture and a bold, bitter flavor to any salad or pasta sauce. It is often paired with sweet or acidic flavors to balance dishes. Beyond its unique flavor and visual appeal, radicchio is remarkably nutritious. Its wine-red leaves are packed with important vitamins and minerals, and with fiber.

## CACIO FIORE

Cacio Fiore is a cheese made from the milk of Sarda sheep, which are indigenous to the island of Sardinia. Cacio Fiore reflects a rich pastoral culture perfectly adapted to the diverse environment of the island, which ranges from rocky mountains to sandy coasts. Cacio Fiore is produced by mixing the raw milk with rennet produced from Artichoke flowers. The resulting soft, creamy cheese has a strong, slightly bitter taste profile that balances with the scent of artichokes and field vegetables.



## ARSOLI BEAN

Arsoli beans have been cultivated since at least the sixteenth century in Arsoli, a small village in the mountains, 60 km outside of Rome. Originally arriving in Italy as a gift from King Carlo V of Spain to Pope Julius III, Arsoli beans soon took on cultural significance, featuring in regional proverbs and traditional songs. A climbing bean variety, the plant can reach a height of 3.5 meters. They are easily recognizable, and much prized, because of their soft, buttery texture, but today they are rarely found beyond the area around Arsoli.





### **ATINA BEAN**

Every September since the mid 19th century, these beans have been harvested by hand in the community of Atina, in the southern reaches of Lazio. Atina beans are prized locally because of their particularly sweet flavor and extreme tenderness, their skin so thin there is no need to soak them before cooking. Though production of this rare bean has declined since the 1950s, local farmers and seed savers are slowly leading its rediscovery in Italy.



### **LAKE TURANO PEA BEAN**

These tiny beans are cultivated at about 1000 meters above sea level on the mountain slopes surrounding Lake Turano, northeast of Rome. They are sold almost exclusively in local markets around the lake. Largely unavailable beyond the immediate area of their cultivation, Lake Turano pea beans add a distinct and delicate flavor to the average soup, stew, or salad.





### **PURGATORY BEAN**

Since the 17th century, these beans have been served at the “Pranzo del Purgatorio” (Purgatory Lunch) on Ash Wednesday in northern Lazio. Production is traditionally concentrated in three towns near the Lago di Bolsena: Gradoli, Acquapendente and Onano. Delicate and small in size, this bean has struggled to keep up with commercial varieties but continues to circulate among local growers.



### **PECORINO ROMANO PDO**

Highly aromatic and slightly piquant, Pecorino Romano is one of the most important sheep cheeses among EU Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) products. Hard, salty, and one of Italy’s oldest cheeses, Pecorino Romano was a staple in Roman legionaries’ portable lunches. Though originating in the region around ancient Rome, in the 19th century production largely shifted to Sardinia, a major agricultural exporter, where, despite the name, 97% of production occurs today.



### **ORTE ARTICHOKE**

In the mid-twentieth century, the Orte artichoke thrived in the Tiber River valley and was a critical component of central Italian cuisine. The Orte artichoke is slightly larger than typical artichokes, with subtle purple tones, and takes slightly longer to ripen and harvest.



### **DURUM WHEAT**

Historically one of the Mediterranean's most significant crops, durum wheat is a hard, nutritious wheat that produces a coarse flour known as semolina. It is a significant source of various B vitamins, iron, protein, and fiber. Durum wheat is one of the two main species wheat production relies on, though it accounts for only 5% of the world's wheat production, with the other 95% made up of common wheat.

## **PUNTARELLE**

An Italian chicory variety, puntarelle is a hearty, bitter winter green prized in Italian kitchens. While common in the areas surrounding Rome, puntarelle is difficult to find further afield.

Characterized by its leaves shaped like those of dandelions, and light green stems, it can be eaten raw or cooked and is often included in a Roman salad that goes by the same name.



## **BEBÈ APPLES**

Native to North America but grown in the Sabina area in central Italy, bebè apples are certainly not your average variety. Yellow-white with a bright red blush, they are crunchy, juicy, and extremely sweet with a long shelf life. Only a handful of trees remain in an area where growers must compete for land with olive oil production.

# Sign the Declaration of Interdependence – A vision for the world's agrobiodiversity

We've created a vision for the world's agrobiodiversity to help raise awareness on the amazing benefits utilizing the world's food diversity brings to humankind. All of us depend on food, no matter where we live or what we do. The time to act is now, and you can take action. By signing this Declaration, you join a collective movement of individuals resolved to act boldly and urgently to safeguard the diversity that underpins our food, forever. Visit [www.food4ever.org](http://www.food4ever.org) to join the movement.

## A DECLARATION OF INTERDEPENDENCE

All of us depend on food, no matter where we live, or what we do. What we eat, in what quantity, and how that food is produced, can be the difference between life and death. It can maintain our health or ruin it. It can create high-value added employment opportunities or force farmers into subsistence. It can help protect our environment or contribute to its degradation. Food: our memories are made of it; we share it with both our loved ones and total strangers; and of course, we all have a favorite.

We have the world's farmers to thank for the rich variety of food tastes and experiences. Over many millennia, they have developed, grown and guarded the diversity of domesticated plants and animals. Every crop we eat consists of hundreds, if not thousands, of different varieties, each with unique characteristics.

While these crops and livestock originated in specific places, many have spread throughout the world. We are all interdependent beneficiaries in this continuing story of the movement of people, plants, and animals – always changing, evolving, mixing and matching in new ways.

The astonishing range of species and varieties cultivated by the farmers of the past and the present underpins the resilience of our food supply: our nutrition, food security, wellbeing and health depend on it.

Yet our common global heritage of food biodiversity is now at risk. Changing agricultural practices and increasing uniformity of our global food system is leading to rapid erosion of diversity from field to plate.

When we lose this diversity, we lose options for the future. The disappearance of one of the world's most valuable natural resources leaves our food systems vulnerable to the challenges that lie ahead, be they the production of sufficient food for an increasing population, climate change, new pests and diseases, or, indeed, all of the above.

Do we really want to lose the vast array of tastes, smells, colors and textures of food? The continued availability, affordability, and nutritional quality of these foods will be determined by the wise use of humankind's diverse agricultural biodiversity.

*Food Forever*



**As citizens of the world, we hold these  
truths to be self-evident:**

1

That no one should suffer from hunger,  
food insecurity or malnutrition

2

That the productivity, nutritional quality and  
affordability of food is determined by sustainable  
utilization of crop and livestock diversity

3

That diversity in foods enriches the  
experience of degustation

4

That we must safeguard this diversity  
for future generations

5

That sharing of the benefits of this diversity  
and its associated knowledge is key

**THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW! IT IS TIME TO RAISE PUBLIC AWARENESS  
OF THE AMAZING BENEFITS THAT UTILIZING THE WORLD'S BIODIVERSITY  
BRINGS TO HUMANKIND.**

Ambitious concrete steps across the globe are required to safeguard and equitably share our food diversity, if our current pathway is to be modified. Mutually dependent on the world's precious resources, we resolve to act boldly and urgently to save the diversity that underpins our food, forever.

# Partners

## About the International Treaty for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture is an international legal instrument, adopted by the FAO Conference in November 2001. It connects 145 countries and the European Union to work together for the conservation and sustainable use of all food crops present in our plates and used in agriculture.

To date, the International Treaty has facilitated 5.4 million exchanges of plant material from its global gene pool for the benefit of farmers, plant breeders, scientists and consumers around the world. The International Treaty respects and specifically recognizes the enormous contribution of smallholder farmers to the diversity of crops that feed the world.

The International Treaty has supported the conservation and sustainable use efforts of over one million people in 67 developing countries through 80 projects, involving almost 500 national and international partner institutions.

The Eighth Session of the Governing Body (GB-8) taking place at FAO headquarters in Rome this week also provides an occasion to celebrate the 15th Anniversary of the International Treaty's entry-into-force and the achievements made so far.

Follow us at

**@PlantTreaty | #GB8 | [www.fao.org/plant-treaty/en/](http://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/en/)**



# About the Food Forever Initiative



**Food Forever** is an awareness raising campaign to support Target 2.5 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Our aim is to make sure the message about the importance of conserving crop and livestock diversity reaches as many people possible, so that the prospect of ending hunger isn't just a goal – but a reality.

Food Forever is rallying support from stakeholders – be they politicians, farmers, chefs, businesses, or individuals - to drive the campaign.

Follow us at

**@FoodForever2020 | #LetsPlantTheSeed | #FFXRome**

