

# Coimbra Region: A Million Food Stories

*Candidate for European  
Region of Gastronomy  
Award - 2021*



**COIMBRA REGION**  
EUROPEAN REGION OF GASTRONOMY  
CANDIDATE 2021







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## **MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE OF TOURISM**

Gastronomy and wine are strategically very important for Portugal. Those who visit us look for authentic experiences and try to meet our traditions. Our gastronomy is a clear example of that: centuries of influences from worldwide cultures that symbolize the world that we helped to build. Our flavours have references from Asia, America, Africa. Our cuisine reflects our multiculturalism and our opening to the world. It connects the East to the West without losing its uniqueness.

We have been able to preserve our traditional flavours but we have also been able to innovate, bringing them to the present days without leaving the origins. Proof of this is that we have the world's best chef José Avillez in Portugal and we have almost doubled the number of Michelin stars in the last two years, which demonstrates the quality and excellence of our products and our chefs.

Ferran Adrià himself considers Portuguese fish and seafood the best in the world. And they really are!

We have dedicated all our efforts and resources to the promotion of this rich heritage. In 2016, for example, the first degree in Gastronomy appeared in our country, precisely at the Hotel and Tourism School of Coimbra. Since that year, we have celebrated the National Day of Gastronomy and the initiative Taste Portugal is taking place, through which we are developing the Portuguese Restaurants in the World Network, to value our gastronomy and products.

This effort has paid off, and Portuguese gastronomy and wine are becoming more and more constant references in the international media, and more and more people are motivated to come to Portugal.

For all this, European Region of Gastronomy 2021 award is decisive and will contribute even more to design our flavours and our wine.

The gastronomy is undoubtedly one of the great attractions of the region of Coimbra, such as Chanfana (Goat's meat stew), Lampantana (Sheep's meat stew), Cabrito (Goat's Kid), Leitão (Roast suckling pig), Lampreia (lamprey), Fish of Art Xávega, Sardine from Figueira da Foz, Rice from the Mondego River fields, PDO Cheeses - Rabaçal and Serra da Estrela, conventual sweets, honey, smoked sausages, among many others.

This entire heritage will be exposed internationally and will attract even more visitors to the Region of Coimbra.

I am certain that this application will be irresistible, just like Portugal.

#CantSkipPortugal #CantSkipCoimbra2021



**Ana Mendes Godinho**

Secretary of State of Tourism

## TOWARDS A GASTRONOMIC REGION

*"In a Portuguese house you will always find  
Bread and wine on the table  
And if someone humbly knocks at the door,  
He will sit at the table with us (...)"*  
Uma casa portuguesa – Reinaldo Ferreira

Food and all its cycle, from creation, to cultivation, to the production, to preparation, until reaching the table, conveys diverse reflections about cultural experiences and food heritage of a town and its territory.

The Region of Coimbra is characterized by its natural diversity and landscape, as a result of the multiple physical, biological, historical and cultural influences that have interacted with each other and still do, defining the territory identity in its most diverse aspects.

The immense richness of the local endogenous resources of the Coimbra Region gives us the right ingredients to cook an excellent tourist recipe, connecting the territory to the excellence of its flavours and recipes, being this one of the best incentives to discover the culture and the identity of the region guided by gastronomic routes, focused on indigenous products such as: Chanfana, Lampantana, Cabrito, Leitão, Lampreia, Fish of Art Xávega, Sardinha da Figueira da Foz, Rice of Baixo Mondego, the DOP Cheeses - Rabaçal and Serra da Estrela, Conventual Pastry, Honey, Sausages, and many others.

However, the human being evolves and with him the techniques and know-how. This is an undeniable reality. If on the one hand, we should not lose the thread that binds us to our roots, on the other hand, we should not create resistance to innovation and creativity, so stimulated these days. To survive we need to evolve and this applies to gastronomy, to the patrimony and to the institutions and organizations that, without losing their identity, should not and cannot ignore new challenges.

One of the main objectives of the Intermunicipal Community of Coimbra Region is to optimize the sustainable development of tourism and economic activities linked to this sector, enhancing and including existing resources and structures, in a more organized and integrated way, encouraging

and acting towards integrated planning, creating and promoting intermunicipal projects that unify the supply and the image of the Region as a destination of quality to live in or to visit. Gastronomy is one of the most prominent products and, aware of this reality, we consider it is the right time to present the application of the Coimbra Region to "European Region of Gastronomy 2021" award.

The initiative has the support of a program for the development and valorisation of regional gastronomic products and their food value, promoting a new approach to the supply of endogenous and regional agri-food, involving public and private institutions and academic associations, in a common effort of improvement. We want this to be a way of identifying the territory, creating important and solid links between the main agents.

In addition to the need to qualify the region food heritage, this initiative will contribute to boost innovation, strengthen feelings of belonging and to provide greater openness and contact between local communities, visitors and tourists, encouraging experience sharing.

At a time when we have begun to rethink the ways of working the fields, in which we have already begun to return to nature and to understand and respect its cycles and to interconnect everything that surrounds us and the way we feed ourselves, in a quest for ancestral wisdom, it's time to sit down at this table that we call Coimbra Region and work together on this huge challenge of CIMRC and of all of you! (Let's do it!)



**João Ataíde**

President, Intermunicipal Community of the Coimbra Region - CIP

## AMBASSADOR

Due to its territorial singularities, Coimbra (and the places that are close to it) invited to the fixation of Man who, with his skills and art, began to cultivate the land and to get his sustenance from it. Around here lived and roamed Romans, Arabs, Jews, among many other peoples who left their ways of living well-marked and whose material and immaterial heritage, then experienced, is a living testimony. It is to savour yesterday's immaterial footprints made for today's man to feed himself not only with food, but also with knowledge, that we propose to present the European Gastronomy Region.

The course of the Mondego River traces the master line of the Coimbra table. A table that begins by being laid in the cold lands of the mountain range, when the river bed is already visible, and extends itself, along the course, welcoming from the lands that it bathes the best they have to offer. It passes through Coimbra, where it receives baths of knowledge which goes from tradition to innovation. It continues towards the sea, where it finishes receiving the freshness of its livings. A biodiversity-friendly, environmentally friendly table that will be ecologically friendly, sustainable and a strong appeal to youth as a way to ensure continuity for future generations. It is a table whose impacts respect the Man.

This table that we propose to the world is filled with the best cheeses, smoked sausages and hams; it is a space where copious desserts are spread, where there are sumptuous goat's kid delicacies, drizzled with the beautiful olive oil and watered by the wines created on the sunny slopes of the highlands.

Towards the plain we have Chanfana (Goat's meat stew), Leitao (roast suckling pig), Lampreia (lamprey), Eels, Rojões (pork chunks), but also honey and nuts, as well as the wine waiting for us. Arriving in Coimbra, and after venerated by the multicultural University, the conventual pastry, very rich in eggs and sugar, is claimed by those who sit around them on common days and on special occasions, sometimes accompanied by tuned voices of the Song. Because it is so well-known, some pastry has become a true symbol, for example the Pastel de Tentúgal (Tentúgal Pastry), taken by many visitors to their homes.



From the the sea, sardines, petingas (baby sardines), horse mackerels, mackerels, sea breams, gilthead sea breams, sea bass, grouper, squids, cuttlefish, octopus, prawns jump to the table where they are preferably savoured with rice harvested from the river banks or potatoes uprooted from the moist soil. The table receives the beans, the chickpea, the fava beans, the peas, the cabbage, the aubergines, the peppers, the tomatoes, the lettuce, the cucumbers, and also the corn bread and the bread, in a constant desire of identity affirmation, but above all with ambitions of renewal, were not the land the source of novelty! The well-being is not complete until the table is perfumed with the exhaled scents of parsley, coriander, bay leaf, thyme, mint, and is complemented by the richness of the apples, pears, oranges, lemons, tangerines, grapes, pomegranates.



**José Luís Lavrador**

Chef, Hotel and Tourism School of Coimbra



*The Region of Intermunicipal Community of the Coimbra Region Map*

CANDIDATE

EUROPEAN REGION OF

GASTRONOMY 2021

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**COIMBRA REGION:**

**A MILLION FOOD STORIES**



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## 1. COIMBRA, IN THE CENTRE OF PORTUGAL

Considered the "cradle of the most beloved traditions of Portugal", the Region of Coimbra is located in the centre of the country, with different landscapes. The inland is mountainous whereas over to the coast we find plains bordering the extensive beaches.

The importance in the History of this region is revealed by the testimonies that are found throughout the territory. For example, we speak of the ruins of Conimbriga that mark the Roman presence, and whose roots can trace back a gastronomic heritage which influence prevails until today. In dialogue with the older Greek culture, we inherited a Mediterranean matrix, not only visible in the primordial roles of some foods (bread, olive oil and wine) as in methods of cooking and conviviality. In addition to this food triad of the Greek and Roman cultures of the Ancient Mediterranean, we can refer to the appreciation



of the consumption of fresh fish considered one of the most valuable delicacies since ancient times. In fact, the presence of aquariums in restaurants of the region with fish to be prepared at the moment, can be understood as an update (even if unconscious) of the habit of Roman elites to furnish their country houses (the villae) with tanks to keep the fish fresh (the so-called piscinae).

Of the Middle Ages the region also has a landscape built of great patrimonial wealth. We highlight, as an illustration, only two architectural complexes and centres radiating culture at the time: monasteries and universities.

We speak of the Lorvão Monastery, important cultural and religious centre from the time before the foundation of the kingdom and the University. This one, founded in 1290, was functioning itinerantly between the capital of the kingdom at this time and the city of Lisbon, and which was permanently installed in the Royal Palace of Coimbra in 1537. The city witnessed the birth of a few Kings in the Palace (nowadays known as the Paço das Escolas) that presents a perimeter and exterior walls that date back to the Muslim occupation, and which houses the relics of the first two Portuguese Kings (D. Afonso Henriques and D. Sancho I) and Queen Santa Isabel. Coimbra is still the cradle of stories and legends which nourish not only the intangible heritage of the region, but also of the country, such as the loves of D. Pedro and D. Inês de Castro, crowned queen after death.

As a testimony of the Portuguese presence in the world, the city has a theme and pedagogic park for children: Portugal dos Pequenitos.

Come and meet each of the nineteen municipalities in the Region of Coimbra, which are full of secrets waiting to be revealed. Visit the Dinosaur Park, from the Jurassic period, in Figueira da Foz. Visit the Palace Hotel of Bussaco, a fairytale castle in the middle of the enchanted forest, built in 1888-1917 in a Neomanueline style. Get to know the beaches of Mira or Tocha and the *Xávega* Art. Walk along the *Serra da Lousã, Açor, Boa Viagem, Pampilhosa or Bussaco* and observe the fauna, herds and flora. Walk through Taipal and Madriz's Paul. Get to know the Xisto Villages, the Water Mills, the Fraga da Pena, the Piódão Village, the Curia Park. Climb to the Castle of Lousã, Penela or Montemor-o-Velho and enjoy the view as far as the eye can reach. Visit the Aguieira or Gralheira Dams, go down the Mondego River by canoe or enjoy the river beaches. Rest in the

Thermal Spas of Curia, Vale da Mó or Luso, where tranquility and technology are associated with the physiological action of water and the prevention and treatment of chronic diseases.

Visit us, but come with time! Come and visit the Region of Coimbra with its villages, its people, its valleys and its mountains, rivers and streams, churches or small chapels here and there, waiting for you. In this region you can find urban centres at few kilometers from villages lost in time or of beaches full of stories.

The tradition and the preservation of our identity are common to the entire region, which is reflected in the diversity of our gastronomy. The mountain contrasts with the coastal plains and allows you to bring to the table the knowledge and the taste both from previous generations and of the people who have developed a sustainable cuisine.

Portugal has registered a sustained growth in tourism demand, as a result of international recognition and the qualities and potential of the country as a tourist destination. Regionally, the situation is quite similar. The city of Coimbra, which in 2013 saw part of its built heritage recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site, aims to attract tourists, increasing their average length of stay, taking advantage of its recognition as a key driver and generator of new tourist flows for the entire region. We believe that the "European Region of Gastronomy award" will allow us a higher national and international promotion contributing to the increase on the number of visitors, and, consequently, tourism revenues.

We believe we have the conditions to welcome and dignify the European Region of Gastronomy brand. We also believe that this brand can contribute to the achievement of a set of objectives that will allow us to achieve greater affirmation and sustainability, both in terms of gastronomy and in economic, environmental and social terms. Upstream, it will allow us to guide and invest in the qualification and empowerment of the supply, based on a concerted and integrative line of communication, which intends to show a more harmonized territory without, however, compromising its authenticity and diversity. Downstream, it will allow us to work closely and benchmark with other European regions of gastronomy, inspiring new processes and organizational models, as well as introducing

improvements that can be integrated and consolidated in the territory, generating the development of new products.

## Coimbra Region in Numbers

**Size:** 4,336 km<sup>2</sup> | 19 municipalities

**Population:** 460,000 | mostly between 14 and 65 years old and living predominantly in urban areas

**Agricultural Area:** over 45000 hectares and 16,692 farms | decreased from the 42,082 farms existing in 1989

In 2016, the Coimbra region had more than 60000 students, 25% of which in secondary education and 24% in basic education. Regarding higher education, the Coimbra region notes over 35000 registered students, this is mostly due to the existence of two major higher education institutions: the University of Coimbra and the Polytechnic Institute.

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## 2. THE GASTRONOMY OF THE REGION OF COIMBRA

The gastronomy of the region of Coimbra is vast, including fish dishes of river and sea, meats and conventual sweets, which promise to please all palates!

Based on the richness of the products of the land, we mix all the ingredients offered in an excellent tourist recipe, linking the territory with the excellence of its flavors and recipes, being this one of the best incentives to start discovering the culture and the identity of this Region, autonomously or guided by Gastronomic Routes:

### Chanfana (Goat's meat stew)



Allow the goat's meat to be immersed in good red wine, garnished with garlic and rubbed with olive oil, and prepared in a wooden oven. The delicacy of the delicacies goes to the table in a clay pot, accompanied with potatoes and turnip greens, mainly on special occasions.



Having already surpassed its eminently recursive character, this delicacy began to be used to identify a territory and the people that live there. Chanfana synthesizes the best of the endogenous nature and culture in a unique product of regional fruition, which attracts lovers and curious.

### Lampantana (Sheep's meat stew)



When goats are scarce in the mountains, or human tastes summon for other experiences, adult sheep are called to the gastronomic arena. Equally abundant in the region of the chanfana, gentle and calm, living well between hillsides and valleys, sometimes mingling with goats and billy-goats in the same fold, such creatures are brought to the table in the same way as the chanfana and in the same situations in the life of the people, creating identity and preserving the knowledge and flavours that pass from generation to generation.

### Goat's Kid



To the higher territories of the region climb the goat's kids, looking for food from the very first fresh and cold grass. In a soil where agricultural labour becomes difficult, the natives soon began to graze. In addition to a great way to look for food, it has also been an extraordinary way to keep the mountains clean, in an ecological conscience that, although empirical, has become essential in the prevention and defense of the forest, on behalf of an increasingly required sustainability. There they are chosen, from among the animals of the herd, those that are better for the slaughter, that is, the tenderest and fat pieces. If in most places, these newborns are skinned, in other places the estona technique is used, an ancestral process

that, among specific rituals, makes it a singular gastronomic proposal, for those who live there and for those who visit this wonderful place. It is a roast in the oven, as the scriptures tell us, in which the fragile animal's belly is cut, and filled with a rich stuffing: lard, smoked ham, garlic, parsley and bay leaves. Accompanied with carefully chosen potatoes, it is taken to the oven until golden brown, crispness now only tried on very special occasions.

### **Bairrada Roast Suckling Pig**



Bairradino icon that has become a geo-symbol, whose flavour has crossed borders, is now appreciated in many parts of the country and beyond. One of the best things about this dish is that it is prepared with the Bísaro pig breed, a breed composed of milk animals, elegant, slender, long and low in fat. After properly slaughtered and eviscerated, the stomach and the esophageal cavity of

the animal are opened and filled with a paste made with lard, black pepper and garlic. The well-heated oven with dried vines roast the tender meat that, between turns and "colds", go out to the table cut into hot pieces, eaten accompanied with cooked potatoes, oranges and fresh lettuce.

### **Lamprey**



Beneath the sweet and clear waters of the Mondego river grow and live shoals of lampreys, until at the end of winter and early spring the time comes for skillful fishermen to fish and make them available to capable human hands, ready to turn them into succulent delicacies. After being properly bled and eviscerated, the fish is marinated in good red wine, its own blood, olive oil, garlic and onion for at least twelve hours, being then transferred to a large casserole, and allowed to simmer for 15 to 20 minutes.

Then reserve the lamprey, while the carolino rice from the Mondego fields is cooked. When the delicacy is ready, an earthenware dish is carefully chosen to bring the complete preparation to the table, where the diners await to taste it.

### **Fish of the Arte Xávega**



In the past powerful oxen guided by adults and children, plucked from the depths of the Gandarez sea, nets filled with shoals of mackerel, sardines, baby sardines, horse mackerels, sometimes rays, sea bass. This time is gone, technological devices have appeared and with them innovative capturing and fishing gear. What was then brought by animal (and human) traction came to reach the sand by force of the machine. The way of fishing is different, but the quality of the product is the same, at a table accustomed to living with the

excellence that comes from the cold waters of the Atlantic sea.

### **Sardine from Figueira da Foz**



From the deep sea of Figueira da Foz ships come shore daily loaded with sardine. Its fresh, elegant, firm appearance, its odor of seaweed seduce the eyes of those who desire it. From the canastra (fish basket) that carries it from the boat to the fish markets, sardines are looked at as a 'queen'. And it continues to be so while roasting over the burning coal, and then eaten with corn bread, potatoes and peppers salad. In public or private picnics, at dinners and intimate or extended family lunches, in more or less gourmet stages, the sardine, through the collective denomination – sardinhada (grilled sardines) - evokes conviviality, companionship and serves as a

reference for fraternity and the establishment of bonds.

### Rice From Baixo Mondego River



In fields flooded by the plentiful and nutritious waters of the Mondego river, seed is selected in the right season (spring). Hard work of weeding sustains its integrity while it grows on the muddy soil, from the time it germinates until it is harvested (Autumn). Although other varieties are cultivated, Ariete and Eurosis are the most important, as the production / food quality benefits are more visible. The low temperatures and insolation during the maturation period of the crop are the specific agro-ecological factors that contribute to slow ripening and consequently to the uniqueness of the grain. Carolino grain and PGI

(Protected Geographical Indication) that in the kitchen behaves in an unusual way, because it resists the heat without soaking and it appears beautifully on the dish.

### PDO Cheese – Rabaçal and Serra da Estrela



If in the Sicó Lands, the Rabaçal Cheese is the result of the mixture of goat and sheep milk, animals raised in the open air and fed by the pastures of the mountain range, in the Highlands, the Serra da Estrela Cheese comes from the milk of sheep, from bordaleira or churra mondegueira sheep breed, single herds fed from the cold pastures that grow on the slopes of that mountain. We are invited to appreciate two foods of excellence, although of different textures and flavours, which provide necessarily different gastronomic experiences.



The first is cured with a semi-hard, uniform, white or slightly yellow paste, the second is also cured, may be semi-soft, buttery, yellowish-white or even semi-hard to extra-hard, of brownish orange colour. Each one with its characteristics, the two together in one design – being Portuguese.

### **Conventual Pastry and sweets, among many others**

As if the mastery of the hands of so many housewives was not enough to create and recreate sweet recipes, the friars and the nuns, who inhabited the many existing monasteries, were mainly responsible for the best baked goods that the region has on its menu. We are not able to name them all, we will simply refer to the most well-known: Pastéis de S. Clara, Sopa dourada do convento de Sta Clara, Charcada de Coimbra, Arrufadas de Coimbra, Arroz doce, Manjar branco, Barriga de freira, Pudim de ovos, Lampreia de ovos, Queijadas de Pereira, Pastéis de Tentúgal, Pastéis de Lorrvão, Nevadas, caramujos, Tigelada, Cavacas, Filhoses, Amores da Curia, Folaes de Páscoa. All these specialties are prepared with eggs and sugar, with a strong aroma of cinnamon.





## Honey

The polysemic value of this food is lost in the dust of time. If, on the one hand, it was claimed for sustenance, on the other hand it often figured in mythology and religious rituals. Often quoted as an offering to the gods, or as food of the gods, to the Ancient Hebrews it was metaphor of the "promised land," the food of God's gratuitousness. Firstly seen as food nature, it later became cultivated sweetness. It was in this way that it has come to be used almost all over the world. The region of Coimbra followed beekeeping (apiculture) as a gastronomic design. Thus, with a unique flora of endogenous characteristics and its own climate, associated with human mastery, the honey that is extracted from this territory has unique specificities and is appreciated everywhere: strong aroma, intense taste, pronounced colour and balanced viscosity.

### Enchidos (Smoked Sausages)



In a territory where pork has been the food base of the people who live here, the smoked sausages (chorizos, blood sausages, smoked sausages, “farinheiras”) are part of this important food concept in the region of Coimbra. These gastronomic specialties are mostly prepared with the less noble pieces of pork meat and blood. These, after being well seasoned, are carefully used as stuffing with which the tripes of the animal are generously filled. They are then suspended inside the chimneys and allowed to be slowly smoked by action of tenuous fire. Although widely prepared throughout the region, due to their low temperatures, those that that are smoked

in the chimneys of the mountain houses are the most appreciated.

### Wine



The culture of a people is engraved on their table, in what they do best, in what results from their work and translates into specific flavours, which pass from generation to generation. We are facing a region whose culture dates back to ancient times, an ancient land ruled by nature, with a tradition in farming and livestock, and where wine cultivation is documented in the Roman and Middle Ages. A land of strong and rooted home customs, dictated by country life and the fate of its wine.

In Portugal, namely in the Region of Coimbra, it is not possible to dissociate gastronomy and wine. Whether in the

landscape or at the table, we find the perfect harmony of colours, textures and flavours that emphasize the work of those who produce and those who transform and bring it to the table in the form of experience and story that is told, generating memories that remain.

From this harmonization, in increasing expansion from the point of view of the tourist product, emerges the affirmation of wine restaurants and wine bars a little throughout the region, emphasizing the need to highlight professions like the sommelier and the bartender who, along with the chef, guarantee experiences that harmonize the local flavours and surprise the tourist. At the table, and through it, stories are built and memories are created. Traditional food is a link between place and people.

In this territory we find the mark of two wine regions: *Beira Atlântico*, where we find wines, sparkling wines, sparkling white wine, liqueur wines and grape brandy; and *Terras do Dão*, where we find wines and sparkling wines.

In *Beira Atlântico*, which is part of the *Bairrada* protected designation of origin, the wine's reputation goes back to the birth of Portugal. The culture of the

vineyard and of the wine was influenced by the Romans and Christian convents, being those of *Santa Cruz de Coimbra*, *Lorvão* and *Vacariça* the most important. Since 1890 this region has been recognized for the production of sparkling wines, and in that year Portugal produced sparkling wine with commercial expression for the first time. This aptitude lies in the natural characteristics of the territory (soil, climate and grapes) allied to human knowledge. The success of its sparkling wines was the reason for the enormous profusion of cellars and cellars producing. With its northern and southern extremes in the coastal region of the continent of Portugal and with altitudes that generally do not exceed 250 meters in relation to sea level, this wine region advances slightly toward the interior where, the altitudes of arable land in vineyards do not exceed 450 meters. It can be said that the *Beira Atlântico* region develops in plain or plateau, but always without losing sight of the Atlantic and its influence on the climate of its vineyards.

The certification "*Dão*" is one of the oldest in Portugal, dating back to 1908. This region is surrounded by mountains, which not only contributes to the

preservation of its identity, but also allies the nature and the variations in terrain, determining well-defined microclimatic variations, of great importance for the quality of the wines. The sinuous and deep valleys are a fundamental feature of the landscape, where the two main rivers of the region flow: *Dão* and *Mondego*. This is a region surrounded by hills that protect it from external influences, constituting a barrier to the humid air masses of the coast and the continental wild winds. The dense hydrographic network and the temperate climate, cold and rainy in the winter, hot and dry in the summer, contribute to the specific characteristics of the region's wines, giving the white wines freshness and minerality and delicate and velvety structure to the red wines.

### **Craft Beer (Brewery)**



The history of beer in Coimbra dates back to the 19th century, despite the uncertainty regarding the effective founding of its manufacture in this period. From 1855 we can find evidence of a small brewery, where a quality article was produced, according to the newspaper *O Conimbricense*, and after a period of several decades without new references, from 1891 comes the allusion to another brewery and gas factory, founded in Coimbra.

After four decades (1924), the transition from artisanal beer production to industrial production took place, with the foundation of the factory *Cerveja de Coimbra*, an enterprise of local entrepreneurs. Due to the quality of the ingredients and the brewed beer, the region has surrendered to the consumption of this drink since the very beginning. In the words of a journalist from the *Gazeta de Coimbra* (1924), "the city of Coimbra ceased to be that sleepy village to become a centre where the life of a people emerges ever more beautiful, ever more deeply progressive."

In 1934 a new turning point was witnessed, with the constitution of the *Sociedade Central de Cervejas* (Central Society of Beers), which merged several



national companies, among which the *Conimbricense* one, which maintained a certain autonomy, distinguished by the quality of its beer and the emblematic brands which were created - among them *TOPAZIO* and *ONIX*.

The quality of the beer benefitted from the quality of the ingredients, including the water of Coimbra, considered as a product of excellence, due to its origin in the *Serra da Estrela* (source of the Mondego River) and the high control measures done by the laboratories.

In 1959 the factory changed its facilities, transforming itself into a modern factory. However, despite being a reference unit, it stopped producing beer in the 1990s, ending definitively in 2002.

Facing the gap left by the disappearance of the *Fábrica de Cerveja de Coimbra*, in 2002, *PRAXIS Cervejas de Coimbra*, with beer production, was founded on a trial basis. In 2007, Praxis Restaurant opened.

In addition to ending the problem of lack of a brewery in Coimbra, *PRAXIS* is part of a worldwide movement (with great

expression in Belgium, Germany and the United States of America), which consists in the creation of a large number of microbrewery, whether in the so-called "urban crafts" or "creative" and producing special and high quality beers.

Nowadays, museology is added, which promotes research, preservation and dissemination of gastronomic, cultural / industrial heritage of beer in Coimbra. Therefore, various types of sources have been researched and explored, revealing the heritage of an activity that was important in Coimbra, in its Region and in the Country and that has been able to reinvent itself, acquiring a new life. Pioneer in the movement of Artisanal Beer in Portugal, *PRAXIS* occupies a prominent place in the World Route of Craft Breweries.





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### **3. GASTRONOMY AS AN AGGREGATOR OF LOCAL DYNAMICS**

In the region of Coimbra, we see gastronomy not only as a culinary art, but also as knowledge, involving producers, consumers, professionals, students, amateurs and ... tourists!

Gastronomy is a key element.

The territories are a whole that encompasses landscape, history, culture, geography. In the way people choose to feed themselves we find a little of the many parts that integrate the whole, that is, the gastronomy connects to the territory and is itself a mirror of the territorial singularities.

In fact, gastronomy takes us to the heart of a people's soul, traditions and economic strength. With this assumption in mind, the Brotherhoods appear as institutions that, aware of the importance of local food, take their daily space and time for the inventorying, preservation and dissemination of gastronomic products. An assertive and consistent promotion of the territory bases itself on its knowledge, the identification of its singularities and the assumption of the serious and responsible role to play in promoting sustainable local development.

The qualification of traditional products, their inventory, the registration of all the associated intangible cultural heritage, the affirmation of a healthy diet, the search of the history and culture of the feeding of the territories and the promotion as a factor of tourist attraction, represent goals either for all Portuguese Brotherhoods associated with the Portuguese Federation of Gastronomic Brotherhoods (86 throughout the national territory), and for the agents with responsibility for tourism and sustainability of the regions.

The national identity is also projected in the gastronomy, and the gastronomic Brotherhoods, with their performance and work, represent a strong contribution in the affirmation of Portugal.

The assignment of an insignia always represents a commitment to the community and to the country. Therefore, the *confrere*, in his/her spirit of volunteerism, finds in his/her mission how to contribute positively to the affirmation of the community which he/she belongs to. In his/her spare time, he/she strives to know and make known what is best done in the territory and in Portugal.

The Portuguese table is rich, and the *confrere* must use all this patrimony to flavour the evolution of the territories.

In the Municipality of Coimbra, made up of 19 Municipalities, there are 18

Brotherhoods, representing some of the most significant gastronomic products of this territory.

In addition to the brotherhoods and confreres, and their undeniable role in the valorisation of endogenous products and traditions, we can also mention the existence of a multiplicity of associations, cooperatives and other organizations that combine efforts towards a responsible appreciation of the diversity and authenticity of each place and of each community.

This gastronomic perspective is clearly emphasized by a national vision, which is why, two years ago, the Assembly of the Republic created the National Gastronomy Day, which is celebrated annually on the last Sunday of May.

The institution of the National Day of Portuguese Gastronomy and the approval of the Draft Resolution 1453 / XII, unanimously, in the Assembly of the Republic was an objective to be fulfilled by the recognition of its importance as an economic, cultural and social element. Transversal to the life of individuals and more important than it is usually considered, gastronomy integrates a multiplicity of realities that contribute decisively to both the economic development of Portugal and the affirmation of its identity.

Thus, according to what was established in the Assembly of the Republic, the last Sunday in May every year will be an opportunity to remember gastronomy as a key driver for the economic and social development of the whole territory and, as a factor of aggregation and affirmation of the national identity.

Taking into account the transversality of the gastronomy and the way it interacts with various activities and areas of social life, the Portuguese Federation of Gastronomic Brotherhoods has sought to gather a set of partners that allows the accomplishment of diversified activities that meet the needs of people from different backgrounds and age groups. In addition, it is a concern to plan activities that highlight the day of gastronomy beyond the day set for it. It is important that the activities are not limited to the day dedicated to the celebrations, but that they extend themselves, thus allowing to prolong the interaction with

the society, in a constant connection and interaction between the activities taking place in each year and those that will take place in the following year. Only then will it be possible to truly capitalise on the institution of a day, formalizing a strategy that makes gastronomy a national cause and a factor of internal and external economic cohesion. More than remembering gastronomy as a cultural, historical and social factor, it is necessary to design a strategy that makes gastronomy a reason for sustainable development and an element of affirmation of Portugal in the world.

Thus, we have gradually been transforming the day of gastronomy into a *365-day movement* with the involvement of several public and private institutions. In its third edition, we will be in Gaia, in the North of Portugal, in a great party celebrating the Portuguese table with diverse activities that involve several audiences.







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## 4. COIMBRA REGION: A MILLION FOOD STORIES

**Coimbra Region: A Million Food Stories** reflects the desire to value the identity, diversity and authenticity of territories and local communities, through narratives about gastronomy.

We intend to contribute to the economic and social cohesion of the Region of Coimbra, through the continuous qualification of the destination, regenerating, and rehabilitating the territories with tourism potential through their cultural and natural, material and immaterial heritage.

The creation and activation of a structured and integrating brand intends to make this region the European Region of Gastronomy 2021, qualifying the supply, generating notoriety and attracting people and investment.

Through the involvement of entities from different quarters and regional stakeholders, we intend to listen, understand and integrate complementary contributions, based on the know-how and specific skills of each one. To empower and qualify the tourist and gastronomic supply of the region of Coimbra, valuing the identity and authenticity of the territories and communities emerges as a key factor, which should guide the strategy.

Observing the dynamics of the Coimbra Region, it is easy to recognize the existence of a vast set of tourist and gastronomically relevant events, both local and regional.

Culturally rooted, these events accompany the agricultural calendar, recalling, recovering and reinventing the celebration of the end of harvests and the agricultural year. Often associated with religious celebrations, they connect the sacred and the profane, captivating young and older people and putting them in common.

In spite of its systematicity, as well as the articulation of complementary products - gastronomy, wine, handicrafts, ethnography, arts and show business - this offer presents a high margin of qualitative progression, especially with regard to the creation of a guiding line, promoter of a reading and facilitated interpretation of the territory. It is important to care for and invest in an organizational model that can favour the recognition of the Coimbra Region brand, which is complemented through wealth enhanced by diversity. It is important to highlight a communication line that values endogenous products, producers, conservation and transformation techniques, communities and the most genuine histories, culture and traditions of each place. Identity, people and places, united by a strong and aggregating brand. United through the ability to bring together diverse players committed to creating synergies.

By imagining the pieces of a coloured puzzle, in which any element will have an equally important place, it is crucial to know how to look and to know (re)construct. It is important to create a global vision, capable of recognizing the value of each piece, combining it with the whole and giving it meaning.

With the European Region of Gastronomy's argument, involving stakeholders from the four sectors and allocating resources, we intend to structure the events and harmonize their schedule, valuing the supply from the point of view of products and producers. This measure will allow a better reading and understanding of the whole, combining the different moments, capitalizing resources and contributing to the common good. In general terms, it is intended to effect a win-win relationship.



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## 5. ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS - SOME HIGHLIGHTS

The region of Coimbra has a wide calendar of events, organized mainly by local associations and public and private institutions, aiming to promote products, territory and traditions. Distributed throughout the 19 municipalities of the region and occurring throughout the year, these events are associated with the productive cycles of endogenous resources, the celebration of religious dates and the perpetuation of cultural traditions and habits.

There is, therefore, a greater concentration in spring and summer, months with the best weather conditions and coinciding with the highest seasonality in the reception of visitors, national and international, as well as Portuguese emigrants around the world.

From the recent work carried out by the CIM Region of Coimbra, which went through the exhaustive survey of the events of each municipality and its organization in a single agenda, we can observe a high concentration of events of cultural and gastronomic expression. On the other hand, and representing an opportunity for improvement, there is a need to harmonize the respective dates and organize the territory.

Among the typology of events, we can mention: food weeks, fairs, shows and gastronomic festivals, dedicated to the specific products of each municipality (rice and lamprey, eels, honey, nuts, lupines, soups; bread, corn bread, cakes and *folares*, sardines, roast suckling pig, *chanfana* (Goat's meat stew), broad beans, goat's kid and

lamb, *míscaros* (*type of wild mushroom*), wines, sausages, conventual sweets and craft beer, among others).

In addition to these markedly gastronomic events, it is important to mention several other programs, already implemented in the region, that help us to sustain the strategy, and there is, naturally, room for improvement.

### **Program Selection of Gastronomy and Wines**

Affirming Gastronomy and Wine as a strategic tourism product, this program is intended for catering units wishing to display this seal of quality. The process begins with the submission of an application, followed by two auditing phases – one focused on food hygiene and safety, and another on the requirements of operation, service and gastronomy (and the first phase is eliminatory). In addition to the distinction and integration in the restaurant chain “Selection Gastronomy and Wines”, the members, benefit from reports and suggestions for improvement. The second phase of the audit points out a clear alignment with the principles of European Region of Gastronomy, with the gastronomic requirements variables such as raw material selection options (fresh products rather than frozen ones; season products, with better quality and contributing to biodiversity; integration of at least two traditional dishes of the region; provision of the dish of the day, fully integrating the season products; higher predominance of wines of the region compared to others; provision of products adapted for people with special dietary needs; integration of narrative and / or explanatory synopsis of regional products and dishes, among others.

In 2018 and constituting an added value for the implementation of the principles that guide the European Region of Gastronomy, the Region of Coimbra will implement the program which is already in full disclosure phase.





#### **4 Maravilhas da Mesa da Mealhada (4 Wonders of the Mealhada Region Table)**

Considering the four gastronomic reference products of the municipality of Mealhada - water, bread, wine and roast suckling pig - this brand seeks to guarantee to the consumer the quality and authenticity of these products, respecting their traditions. With applications that occur every two years, the program has as main target the commercial units of the county, respecting safeguard criteria of the tradition and authenticity. At the same time, and in the sense of the integration of innovation, competitions are organized to develop new products.

#### **Pedagogical Suitcases - Castles and Town Walls of Mondego Network**

This project of cultural promotion of the regional patrimony, of the responsibility of the Agency for the Development of the Castles and Town Walls of Mondego Network, consists of 32 suitcases on 8 endogenous products, including honey, olive oil, salt, rice and cheese, as well as handicraft products such as weaving, basketwork and pottery. These Suitcases can be requested in the scope of training activities, allowing, through board games, to know each product, its origin and characteristics.

#### **Meetings of Superior Studies in Gastronomy**

In 2016 a Degree in Gastronomy was created in Coimbra. Pioneer in Portugal, this course integrates three higher education schools, from the Polytechnic Institute of Coimbra, Agrarian High School of Coimbra and School of Health Technologies of

Coimbra) and one by a vocational school (Hotel and Tourism School of Coimbra), combining knowledge and amplifying the degree of specialization of the contents. Within the course, and in partnership with two other higher education courses of the University of Coimbra (master's degree in "Food: Sources, Culture and Society"); PhD in "Food Heritage: Cultures and Identities"), Meetings of Superior Studies in Gastronomy are organized annually. The event also counts on the intervention of other schools of the country with higher education in the gastronomy field, gastronomists and gastronomic critics; journalists and bloggers, stimulating debate and creating a common communication platform.

### **Sports events associated with Routes and local products**

Associated with the Gastronomic Routes and endogenous products of the Region of Coimbra, there is a wide range of sports events, such as cycling, mountain biking, running, trail and orienteering. These events, adapted to different publics, stimulate respect for nature and healthy habits, attracting visitors and giving prominence to regional products and delicacies.







### **Appreciation of bee colonies and encouragement of beekeeping**

Recognizing honey as a strategic product and bees as key elements for the biodynamic balance of ecosystems, the Lousamel Cooperative is an important training centre, receiving annually about 300 beekeepers from all over the country. In addition, this entity conveys the message of beekeeping to young people, going to schools and stimulating curiosity about bees and honey. Supporting sport events is another important strategy, highlighting the importance of honey as a strategic product of the region.

### **Entrepreneurship**

Assuming entrepreneurship as a tool for development and growth, the CIM Region of Coimbra encourages and supports the organization and promotion of inter-municipal events and competitions in this field since 2013, stimulating an entrepreneurial culture, a spirit of initiative, cooperation and creativity, helping entrepreneurs to transform ideas into actions, increasing employability and economic development of the region.

In this area, we highlight the incentive programs for the development of tourism projects, combining gastronomy, tourism and the use of endogenous products, which have been taking place in the region of Coimbra. For example: Tourism Train Experience, Tourism Creative Factory, Open Kitchen Labs and Push 4 Tourism (promoted by Tourism of Portugal). To support emerging projects, it is also planned to install an incubator in the gastronomy field.

In addition, and highlighting the importance of entrepreneurship and support to startups in our region, we can refer to the recent conquest of the 5th position in the world ranking of one of Coimbra's business incubators.

### **Health Programs**

Understanding health as a critical issue and looking at the programs developed in the region, namely those promoted by the health sector, it is important to highlight:

**Be Healthy: From Vegetable Garden to Soup and Move Yourself** – aimed at pre-school and primary school, this project intervenes in overweight, obesity and exercise. "From Vegetable Garden to Soup" intends to return to traditional eating habits, emphasizing the

importance of soup as a food base. "Move Yourself" aims to increase school sports and provides clinical and nutritional follow-up.

**Healthy Eating in Schools** - this program includes health screenings, workshops, seminars, healthy eating shows and animations, promoting healthy eating habits.

**School Fruit Scheme** – At a European-level, it consists of the distribution of a piece of fruit or vegetables twice a week to students in primary school, and in the performance of school activities aimed at the development of healthy eating skills and knowledge of the origin of agricultural products.

**Pão.come** - a community intervention program aimed at the entire population, this program aims at reducing specific mortality due to brain and cardiovascular diseases, promoting a reduction in the content and consumption of salt in bread. Due to its breadth and transversality, it is a relevant intervention in public health, involving several professional groups that, with the support of the baking industry, contribute to the promotion of health.

**Eco-Schools** - this international project is for schools and aims to recognize and stimulate those that improve environmental performance, school management and environmental awareness and social community - in 2016/17, in the Region of Coimbra 131 schools joined to the project, of which 117 were awarded for their work.





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## 6. OBJECTIVES AND AREAS OF PRACTICE

The brand "Coimbra Region, European Region of Gastronomy 2021" aims to enhance regional gastronomic heritage; to involve local communities and strengthen the regional gastronomic identity; to contribute to the recognition of gastronomy as a differentiating factor and potential of the local dynamics, valuing the professions (in particular those linked to rurality, and for which the younger ones are important); and promote the transfer of knowledge among the various agents, taking innovation as a factor of valorisation.

To achieve these objectives, and after meeting with founders and stakeholders, a set of actions was identified, which we intend to organize around five axis, supported by a set of actions and projects that are part of a strategy aimed at creating conditions to make the Region of Coimbra the European Region of Gastronomy 2021.

- ✓ Axis 1 | Valorisation of Regional and Local Gastronomic Heritage
- ✓ Axis 2 | Promotion of Knowledge and Innovation
- ✓ Axis 3 | Training of agents and qualification of the supply
- ✓ Axis 4 | Promotion of sustainable development
- ✓ Axis 5 | Communication and marketing

Through the measures to be developed during the almost three years that precede the year of the European Region of Gastronomy Award, it is intended to structure, qualify and enable the supply giving it robustness and regional, national and international renown. At the same time and considering the recent changes in the landscape and human context of the territory (the result of last summer's fires), the project is oriented towards the creation of new forms of valorisation of the region, assuming the diversity, authenticity and complementarity of products as attractiveness.

Overvaluation of the destination is generally common. In the Region of Coimbra and considering the importance of the creation of added value, potentiating the endogenous resources and acting directly with the local agents, we believe that the trip represents a greater good.

On the other hand, the phase after 2021, which represents the consolidation and strength of maintenance and growth of the project, intends to incorporate the inputs of all involved and the generation of a mind set oriented towards continuous improvement and investment in tools promoting the sharing of knowledge.

Cross-selling and the rapprochement between the academy/academia, producers and agents of tourism appear as opportunities to enhance the territory and increase demand. Of the proposals, the common communication structure and the concertation of the offer stand out, promoting the intervention of the visitors and attracting the greater permanence in the region (one of the detected weaknesses).

This common brand allows structuring a vision, giving meaning to the proposed actions, and the guiding strategy of the project is anchored in the valorization of the territory and the communities, boosting the economy and finding new solutions for environmental, economic and social sustainability. From this vision and common objective - to value the region of Coimbra through the "European Region of Gastronomy" award - the project aims to integrate, to structure and qualify the supply, making local communities the destination.

The transversal axis - communication and marketing - is critical, framing initiatives that contribute to analyze and homogenize the actions that are already being done in the region. For Coimbra to be assumed as European Region of Gastronomy, it is not fundamental to create new initiatives or events, but rather to structure them, giving it a coherent and value-added promotional language. We will create a brand and its graphic elements to support physical and digital communication, which will contribute to the recognition and dissemination of activities and events.

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## 7. FOCUS AREAS

### CULTURAL AND FOOD DIVERSITY

The Region of Coimbra comprises a geographic area characterized by landscape, climatic and cultural diversity (from the coast to the interior, from the urban to the rural), which has contributed to a gastronomic tradition rich in products, forms of conservation and food processing. Secrets span generations, developing unique identities.

Through diversity, we intend to develop actions that allow the valorization of endogenous products and cultural manifestations (handicrafts, ethnography and folklore, among others), as well as reinforce the distinctive elements, the authenticity of the region and its knowledge. We intend to mobilize young people, involving them in the processes of strengthening cultural and gastronomic diversity and investing in their training, leading them to the appropriation of an integrative identity of the region's elements and motivating them to implement cooperation networks -and co-creation of value.

Recognizing the richness of the region's biodiversity, we want to stimulate the consumption of season products, respecting the production cycle, shortening the supply chain and boosting the local economy, also contributing to a healthier diet close to the Mediterranean diet and offering experiences and memories.









## ACTIONS TO BE DEVELOPED

**Creation of a Storytellers Exchange** - for the sharing of specific memories and narratives of the territory. From the storytellers, it is intended the respective training, dynamization and involvement in the tourist activity, sharing the regional identity heritage. This action, to be implemented by 2021, will allow greater proximity and involvement of the tourist in the local context and dynamics, generating authentic experiences. The involvement and appreciation of the local people will allow a greater identification and commitment to the dynamization of the territory, contributing to the local economy.

**Recovery of traditional recipes** – resorting to a research work, based in material and immaterial sources, it is intended to recover the more specific prescription of each place and to create a written and photographic collection. This action, to be implemented by 2021, allows us to value and document the food heritage, preserving knowledge and traditions. To boost results, the action should involve elders and millenials (reinforcing intergenerational links), working together and learning from each other.

**Cycle of Activities: Small Explorer** - aimed at the younger, and looking for the interaction between rural and urban, this cycle will have a set of actions to increase knowledge of the territory and local products, such as: visits to farms and markets; small farmer's



workshop; workshops of production, transformation or preparation of local products; walks to discover biodiversity (making species identification and creating herbarium); today I am ... shepherd, beekeeper, cheese master ... - these are some examples to be implemented in 2019, involving schools, leisure centres and tourist agents.

**Valorisation of Local Products workshops-** oriented towards a better knowledge of local products and their potentialities and benefits, these workshops should take place from 2019 on and preferably on production sites. Intended for curious, the dynamization of the workshops should be complemented by information about the product and the region. The use of complementary cultural events, such as crafts, will promote a greater wealth of experience, benefiting cross-selling. In this area, and for its importance as a strategic product of the Region, honey should be worked on in a health, sport and gastronomic perspective, amplifying its value.

**European Young Chefs Award** – implementation of the contest, in accordance with the specific guidelines defined by IGCAT and the European Region of Gastronomy platform.

**Acquisition and revitalization of Street Food Caravan** – in the concept of mobile showcase, this equipment should go through the regional events, restructured within the European Region of Gastronomy, as well as national and international events, disseminating knowledge and appreciation of cultural and gastronomic diversity. Associated to this action, it is intended to create a Store of the Region of Coimbra, offering products and services of the territory. The implementation of the action will take place in the second half of 2019.

**Creation and / or dynamization of Gastronomic and Cultural Routes**– to be implemented in 2018, integrating local actors, namely those who defend the principles of valorisation of endogenous products and economic, social and environmental sustainability, these routes should be dynamized in the perspective of the mobilization of people to the territory, generating wealth and tourist attraction.

**Short Circuits** - To shorten the supply chain and boost consumption of fresh products, this action involves promoting and reorganizing markets, fairs and local points of sale, bringing supply and demand closer together. The creation of collaborative production measures (with risk-sharing or systematic acquisition) should be understood as an alternative, namely by implementing the "basket of the week" concept (integrating fresh products according to the calendar and production cycle). This action which should be implemented from the beginning of 2019, involves LAGs - Local Action Groups and producers, as well as local economic agents and municipalities.

## SUSTAINABILITY & HEALTH

We recognize the importance of sustainable practices in the perpetuation of resources, and we intend to improve the planning and prevention mechanisms, protecting endogenous products and local gastronomy. A sustainable production system, from an environmental, economic and social point of view, contributes to the valorisation of products and consumer awareness of good production practices, processing and consumption of food, including studies of the evaluation of the impact of new products on satiety, regulation of appetite and reduction of obesity, as well as food safety. It is intended to instill in the young people the taste for the products of the region, showing them who generates them and how they do it; how to ingest, preserve or transform them; how to





integrate them into a broader value chain and how to protect them, perpetuating the cultural heritage.

With an integrated strategy, we aim to value local products and develop more sustainable and healthy forms of consumption. At the same time, we want to give visibility to producers, valuing their role in the circular economy and boosting the territory. One of the central measures is based on the recognition and valorisation of professions linked to production, thus reinforcing the recognition of the entire chain.

The relationship between dietary habits and individual health has been widely studied and its role in human growth, development and precocious aging has been recognized, since this process (of aging) does not begin only when the age advances, it begins at the birth, or even before, with our genetic inheritance. But only about 25% of longevity diversity can be explained by genetic factors. The remaining 75% can result from several factors that result from our interaction with the environment around us, our lifestyle, namely healthy eating, exercise, sleep quality and health care.

Food consumption is one of the pillars for the promotion of the health of a population and the practice of a healthy diet implies the balance of food intake, combining the quality of the food ingested, the quantity, variety and preparation and when food is taken.

Eating habits are determined by a set of factors such as individual preferences and needs, the characteristics of the food or the environmental conditions in which meals are made.

The building up of eating habits occurs mainly in childhood, but several situations contribute to its maintenance or alteration, being the different places where the individuals spend more time in each phase of their life, predominant in their consolidation or change.

Especially in developed countries, such as Portugal, there have been changes in dietary patterns, which show a reduction in the prevalence of undernourishment and a generalized increase in the prevalence of overweight.

This change in food consumption patterns is characterized by reduced intake of complex carbohydrates, fiber, vitamins and minerals, increased intake of saturated fat and sugar and an imbalance between the energy supply and the energy expended. The consumption of food and nutrients related to healthy eating seems, however, to have increased modestly in the last decades, in socioeconomically more developed countries; the same is not happening in developing countries.

Often associated with an unbalanced diet, there is a sedentary lifestyle with reduced levels of physical activity, which contributes to the accumulation of fat in the body and the development of several chronic non transmissible diseases associated with it. The sedentary lifestyle has become increasingly prevalent in Western countries.

The association between eating habits and the obesity epidemic has been studied, with clear evidence that less healthy eating patterns associated with physical inactivity are related to a higher incidence of obesity as well as other chronic diseases with which it is closely related, namely cardiovascular diseases,

Mellitus diabetes type 2 and some types of cancer.

In fact, in addition to the generalized weight increase of individuals, the increase in chronic non transmissible diseases (NCDs) has reached alarming proportions in recent years. In 2001, NCDs accounted for 46% of diseases

globally and were associated with 60% of deaths worldwide. By 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) expects NCDs to account for 57% of diseases globally.

These pathologies appear at an earlier age, affecting the active population, and have an impact not only on the health and quality of life of the affected individuals and their families, but also on the socioeconomic structure of a country.

In Portugal, according to the Healthy Foods report in 2014, according to estimates made under the Global Burden of Disease initiative, inadequate dietary habits were the risk factor that

contributed the most to reducing the number of years of healthy life in the (19%), followed by hypertension (17%) and high body mass index (13%).

Since the population's eating habits have a strong impact on health loss and disease development, it is important to characterize the population's eating habits, aiming at an adequate early intervention. This collection of information on food consumption allows the identification of individuals at nutritional risk enabling a targeted intervention, but also, in case of public health risk, a capacity for more comprehensive analysis and action and the development of food policies aiming the prevention.

Despite the long work already done in promoting healthy eating habits, few effective changes have been achieved, and similar actions need to be encouraged. An example of this is the goals of the US government's Healthy People 2020 program, which advocates increasing consumption of fruit, vegetables and whole grains and reducing the contribution of added fats and sugars to the energy intake. A decrease in the intake of saturated fat and sodium and an increase in the intake of calcium and iron (especially in women) are also recommended by this program.

Promoting healthy living habits is a concern. Being an important health centre, benefiting from hospital structures of excellence, as well as schools, universities and research centres focused on health, we are a region that aggregates an increased responsibility in the development and implementation of programs promoting healthy habits (from prevention, treatment and follow-up).



We advocate the idea that "we are what we eat" and we integrate the objectives and guidelines of the National Program for Promotion of Healthy Eating of the Directorate-General for Health, namely:

- ✓ To increase the knowledge about the food consumption of the Portuguese population, its determinants and consequences.
- ✓ To change the availability of certain foods, especially in schools, work and public spaces.
- ✓ To inform and train purchasing habits, preparation and storage of healthy foods, especially in the social groups with more difficulties.
- ✓ To identify and promote transversal actions that encourage the consumption of foods of good nutritional quality in an articulated and integrated way with other sectors, namely agriculture, sport, environment, education, social security and local authorities.
- ✓ To improve the qualification and the way of acting of the different professionals whose activity can influence knowledge, attitudes and behaviours in the dietary area.

In the field of these focus areas we want to emphasize the benefits of consuming endogenous products and to reinforce the knowledge of their seasonality and benefits associated with their consumption; to stimulate the recognition of healthy food as a way to combat problems such as obesity and overweight, valuing the traditional prescription and making it healthier; to act in the school environment, through awareness-raising actions and programs of incentive and transversal training; sharing of scientific research from the region's research centres with different audiences (schools, seniors, sports academies and clubs, parents' associations and maternities, public and leisure spaces), through their players (the researchers) using innovative science communication formats; to involve the European Region of Gastronomy stakeholders in the promotion of eating habits and physical activity, combining the know-how of the areas of knowledge and promoting effective synergies.



### **Actions to be developed**

**Promotion of Fairs and Traditional Markets** - involving different players, namely economic agents, municipalities, chefs and young people in training, we aim to create a cycle of events that promote traditional fairs and markets, encouraging the consumption of endogenous products and reinforcing the habit of 'eating with the seasons'. These events, to be held in the first half of 2019, should introduce innovation, giving clues about the use of available products and exploring forms of consumption complementary to traditional consumption - *Chefs in the Market*.

**Physical Activity, Endogenous Products and Tradition** - involving associations, sports teams and municipalities, we intend to stimulate the performance of tournaments and sports and municipal and intermunicipal competitions, in the second semester of 2019, having as a link the connection to the endogenous products and traditions.

**Materials and Events Development** - using the know-how of the university and the health sector, and contributing to health, nutrition and wellness literacy - books, enlightenment sessions, science communications, Researchers' Night, among others (first half 2020).

**Mini Chefs (Small Chefs)** - development of workshops for the acquisition of basic skills in the preparation of gastronomic products, calling the attention to the diversity of products and the advantages of healthy food. Action to be taken from the beginning of 2019 on.

## SUPPORTING SMES

The companies of the region of Coimbra include those involved in the production and processing of food. We consider that the European Region of Gastronomy award represents an opportunity for these companies to take the centrality of local products, inspiring them for continuous innovation and creativity. Therefore, we consider that tourism can definitely showcase these gastronomic products, valuing not only local products, but also the traditions and the jobs related to the entire production and service chain.

In this focus area it is important to develop qualification and training programs for SMEs to promote regional gastronomy, focusing on creative and innovative solutions and creating value, from production to customer service; develop and stimulate co-working and networking processes, stimulating the reduction of the distribution chain and ensuring greater sustainability of the different processes; develop professional and training qualification programs (in areas such as service, quality of service and sustainability); support regional programs for dissemination and valuing the quality and authenticity of local products, stimulate tour operators to develop and disseminate tourist experiences related to gastronomy and wines, such as workshops, tastings and dissemination of existing routes and itineraries, as well as suggesting the creation of others, integrating the needs and expectations of foodies and other visitor and resident profiles.

### ACTIONS TO BE DEVELOPED

**Restructuring Gastronomic Events** – the aim is to highlight these events and make them attractive and notorious, namely through the development and design of support infrastructures, with modern and functional design, as well as a common communication line. In addition, it is intended to create a toolkit with the main guidelines for the organization of gastronomic events, integrating the principles of sustainability (action to be implemented in the second half of 2020).

**Organization of annual calendar** - adding information and making it available in physical and digital format, facilitating access to information and enhancing the

perception of a single, coherent and integrating region - action already started in physical format, it is predicted that the digital format may be available at the beginning of 2019.

**Training and Qualification Program of Local Agents** - involving training entities and economic agents, this action includes training and coaching in areas such as service and tourist information, languages, mastery of technological tools facilitating management and online communication, food styling and accessible tourism, among others. This action implies a survey on the effective training needs and the design of tailor-made training. In this area, the aim is also to stimulate co-working and networking, through a platform for sharing good practices. The program is to be started in 2018.

**Implementation of a Cabinet aiming the sustainable development of the territory** - understanding territory as a space for tourism experience and learning, the aim is to develop and streamline a set of products that allow contact with storytellers (visits to production sites, workshops and other tourist activities ) and the distribution of tourism - the first phase of the action, which involves structuring the supply and which depends on the creation of a stocktellers group, should be implemented in the first half of 2020.

**Infrastructures Empowerment** - namely in the area of universal accessibilities, welcoming spaces and the availability of a set of complementary products, stimulating cross-selling. This action should be implemented from 2020 on.

**Implementation of *the Christmas Market*** - inspired by the European models, it is intended to enhance the region's gastronomy and cultural events, giving a stage of promotion to local economic agents and creating a showcase of the territory. The full implementation of the action is expected to take place in December 2020.



## EDUCATION & INNOVATION

Education is a key factor for success and we want to give it special attention, also because of the influence and responsibility instilled by a university with more than 700 years. The University of Coimbra, along with other living forces of the Coimbra Intermunicipal Region, including other Entities of the Scientific and Technological System, continues to be a national reference in Higher Education, but also prioritizes the transfer of knowledge, through projects and specialized services for research and innovation, in favour of the society and its communities, ensuring the quality of the contents on academic and scientific grounds.

With a focus on quality, authenticity, diversity, identity, and, above all, people (residents and visitors), we are confronted with the challenge of articulating tradition and innovation, without changing what we are known for, and without ruining the expectations of those who visit us.

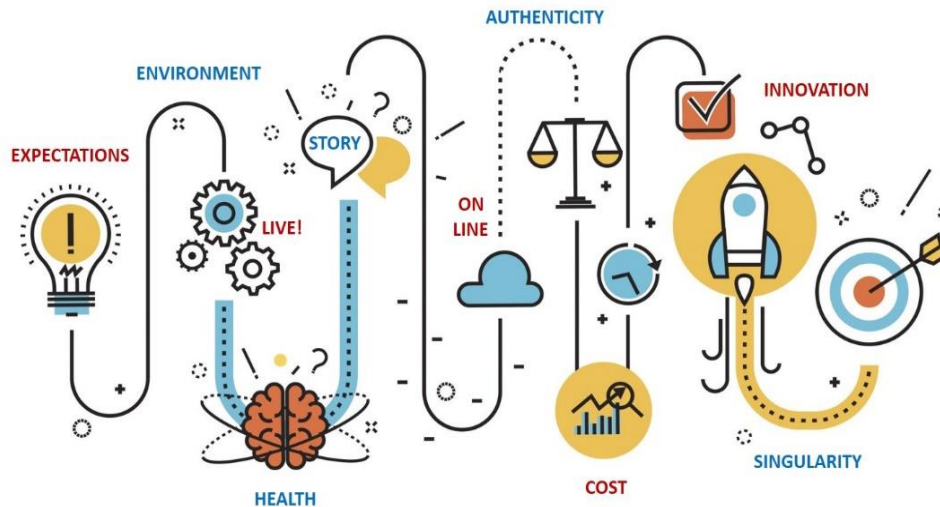
We know that for 40% of European tourists, the gastronomic experience is decisive in choosing the destination (after the price and type of destination) and we know that they want to know the origin of the products and experience the production. Foodies are looking for stories, and our storytellers are everywhere ... we just need to join them!



The gastronomic experience has gained importance in the last five years and the genuine gastronomy is an added value and a differentiating heritage. We also know that the consumer has new expectations, is technologically skilled and has an increasing interest in the field of gastronomy.

Taking the new patterns of consumption into account, we recognize a clear paradigm shift, having health, environmental sustainability, the search for real and authentic experiences and a return to origins as a main concern.

Looking at the value chain of consumption, and trying to see the whole:



*The Defining decision variables of the value chain of consumption*

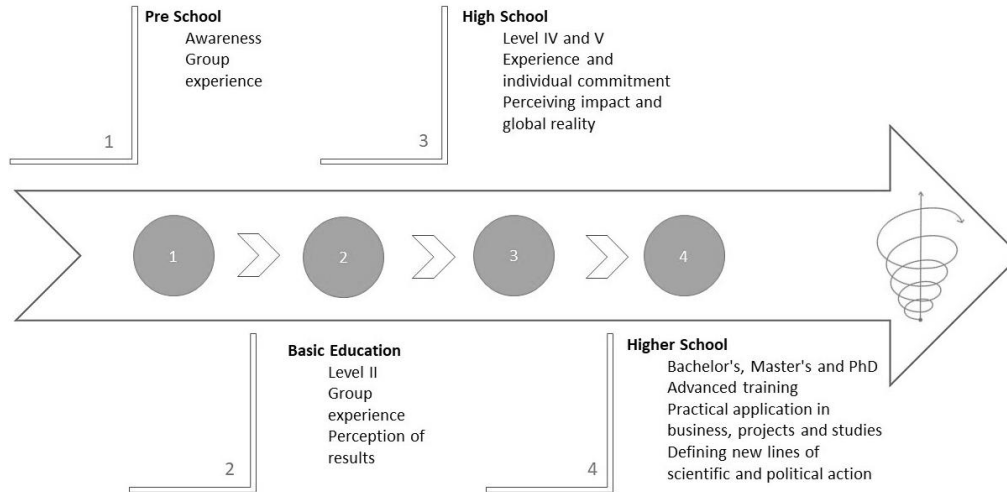
Gastronomic experiences should be accessible, informal, real and collaborative, giving importance to online presence and the ability to create surprising experiences.

In the region of Coimbra, we have a training offer, in terms of gastronomy, which stands out in the national panorama and that meets the needs and demand indicators

(nutritional, but also affective), in line with the annual tendencies for the sector. In fact, the Top 5 Global Food & Drink Trends 2018 (Full Disclosure, New Sensations, Preferential Treatment, Science Fare) emphasizes, among others, the importance, based on consumer demand for well-being, health and trust, such as the reduction of salt and sugar, the origin of the ingredients (transparency) and their functional and organoleptic claims, maintaining the affective connection (unique experiences, memory or escape from pressure and day-to-day stress) to rustic and traditional.

In fact, we believe that by offering training in gastronomy in the educational institutions of our region, from level II of vocational training to PhD level, we show how we value gastronomy and how we have a wide and agglutinative view of this area of knowledge.

Educational Value Chain, a contribution to awareness and training at various levels, on Gastronomy, healthy consumption habits and the preservation and innovation of local products, throughout the educational process:



*The Educational Value Chain*

But we want more. We want to make use of the knowledge we have to show the younger generation the production cycles of the endogenous products; introduce them to the local producers and put them in touch with this reality, sometimes difficult to have access to. Thus, we can contribute to "new ways of doing", creating conditions for innovation and creativity and valuing jobs and knowledge, which we risk forgetting, as a result of technological developments and emerging jobs.

The innovation in the instruments and mechanisms of Science Communication has been assuming a paramount role in the promotion and diffusion of the scientific knowledge to the society, through the enthusiastic involvement of its scientists in projects of education and science communication using strategies such as: i) diffusion by the media; ii) digital communication (websites and social networks); iii) science communication and education projects. The places of diffusion of scientific research and knowledge to society are diverse, from the most formal (laboratories, universities and schools), to more informal ones (museums, diverse institutions, science centres, bars, gardens, street, buses, Shopping centres).

Our focus on education starts with the ability to innovate, without distorting the traditional and approaching the new consumption patterns. The strategy is to develop projects with schools, promoting taste education, healthy eating and reducing obesity and overweight; stimulating gastronomic entrepreneurship through shared research projects; to create projects for the transfer of knowledge from the academic sphere to businesses and communities, disseminating knowledge; developing instruments and processes of co-working and networking, combining authenticity, tradition and modernity; creating a gastronomic observatory and create a program of "local chef ambassadors", which promotes endogenous products and the articulation of traditional recipes and innovation, respecting authenticity.



## **ACTIONS TO BE DEVELOPED**

**Creation of Chef Ambassadors of the Region** - through the identification of a group of recognized chefs, linked to the territory and / or from the region, who value endogenous products and regional gastronomy. This action, to be implemented in 2019, aims to give local chefs notoriety, attract young people to the gastronomic area and generate greater identification and recognition of the community. In addition to the identification of these ambassadors, the action implies their involvement in local events, generating greater visibility and notoriety (2020 - 2021).

**To assemble and Polarize the Entrepreneurship Contests** - involving the promoters of this area of activity, the aim is to organize the dispersed competitions that currently exist

in the Region, offering them an annual theme, promoter of gastronomy, starting at the beginning of 2019.

**Compilation of Pedagogical Material** - to be disseminated in schools, representing the cycle of local products, from production to the end of the chain (extending the concept of the *Pedagogical Suitcases of Castles and Town Walls of Mondego Network* and introducing the preparation of gastronomic products, considering the traditional recipes). Expected to take place in different phases, the action should begin in the second half of 2019.

**To stimulate the Development of Food Gifts** - portable and representative of the gastronomy of the region, namely through the introduction of this theme in competitions and entrepreneurship programs, starting in 2019 and involving promoters of programs or entrepreneurship competitions and the university.

**Developing Academic and Scientific Research Projects** - based on the effective needs of the various agents of the region, creating a close and cooperative link and benefiting all of those involved (some by having access to privileged sources of information and others by the applicability of scientific results, improving processes and developing new products). The implementation of the action should take place from October 2019 on.

**Reinforcement of Knowledge Transfer and Science Communication** - through the reinforcement and development of new instruments and science communication mechanisms, this action aims to demystify the existence of a gap between the university, society and companies. In addition, this more adapted and closer communication between the different spheres intends to contribute to the application of the scientific results, through their introduction in the business operation - in practical terms, and from the second half of 2019 on, the aim is to implement meeting and discussion forums, as well as workshops, involving different areas of knowledge and skills.



**Foundation of a Gastronomic Observatory** – by hosting and sharing crucial information to the strategic planning of companies, namely in the development of new products - to be implemented in 2019, involving the university and economic agents and emphasizing knowledge transfer.

**Development of Promotional Actions** - in partnership with the municipalities of the region of Coimbra, advertising the gastronomic heritage and sharing experiences in a European context, valuing and bringing about innovation - action to be implemented in 2021.

**Creation of an Anchor Event** – of international projection to be held in 2021, bringing together national and international chefs, gastronomes, bloggers (and other opinion makers), generating notoriety and valuing products such as gastronomy, wines, craft beers, handicrafts, folklore and ethnography, among others. This event should be based on the concept of Gastronomic Festival, integrating the dimension of cultural practice, art and show business, and attracting nationals and foreigners.



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## 8. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The application for the European Region of Gastronomy Award is the result of the involvement of regional and national agents from various sectors of activity, directly or indirectly linked to gastronomy (integrating public, private, academic and third sector entities) that together contribute to the enrichment of this project and to the perpetuation of earnings beyond 2021.

The criterion for selecting partners - founders and stakeholders - in addition to the question of the representativeness of the four sectors, was based on the potential synergies and on the complementarity of knowledge, skills and areas of intervention - agriculture; hotels, tourism and restaurants; innovation and entrepreneurship; culture; education and local development associations.

Thus, the entities that until now have shown interest and willingness to actively engage in this application are.

### Founders

- ✓ Intermunicipal Community of the Coimbra Region Dh
- ✓ Coimbra University
- ✓ Polytechnic Institute of Coimbra
- ✓ Regional Tourism Centre of Portugal
- ✓ Coordination and Development Commission of the Centre Region
- ✓ Turismo de Portugal, IP – Hotel and Tourism School of Coimbra

### **Governmental Support**

- ✓ Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development
- ✓ Secretary of State of Tourism

### **Stakeholders**

- ✓ AD ELO –Bairrada and Mondego Local Development Association
- ✓ Coimbra More Future
- ✓ ADIBER – Gois and Beira Serra Development Association
- ✓ Pinhais do Zêzere – Association For the Development
- ✓ Dueceira - Ceira and Dueça Development Association
- ✓ Lousãmel - Lousã and Neighbouring Counties Agricultural Cooperative of Beekeepers
- ✓ ADIRAM - Integrated Development Association of Mountain Villages Network
- ✓ AHRESP – Portuguese Association of Hotels and Restaurants
- ✓ APTECE - Portuguese Culinary and Economic Tourism Association
- ✓ Iclio, S.A.
- ✓ Portuguese Federation of the Gastronomical Brotherhoods
- ✓ Bairrada Regional Wine Commission
- ✓ Dão Regional Wine Commission
- ✓ Praxis, Coimbra's Beer
- ✓ Bairrada Wine Route Association
- ✓ CEARTE - Vocational Training Centre for Crafts and Heritage
- ✓ Castles and Town Walls of Mondego Network
- ✓ Provere Inature
- ✓ Lugrade - Bacalhau de Coimbra, S.A.
- ✓ J. Carranca Redondo, Ida (Licor Beirão)
- ✓ Regional Health Administration of Centro, IP

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## 9. COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING PLAN

Our Communication and Marketing plan aims to implement the strategic guidelines presented in the bid book, increasing the visibility and attractiveness of the region, both nationally and internationally, valuing products, places and people, and giving importance and qualification to the events carried out.

Our target audience is diversified and geographically dispersed, so the commitment to communication is essential and transversal to the whole process. Thus, it is important to create a common language and a networking platform for stakeholders.

First, and to value the European Region of Gastronomy insignia, we implemented exploratory meetings to present the general lines of the project, followed by reflection and brainstorming, gathering comments and contributions. Then, we worked the different areas, using personalized interactions and considering the domains of stakeholder intervention. These were the first steps towards the bid book elaboration, guide and business card of the region.



### **Communication and marketing plan steps:**

- Create the communication plan, using the communication agency;
- Define Media Partners, nationwide, and create a communication office, responsible for organizing press conferences, sending press releases and newsletters and promoting social networks (Facebook; Instagram; Twitter) - this office should be a support for the regional events announcement;
- Create, develop and streamline an aggregator website, connected to the IGCAT website link and other platform members, in Portuguese and English - this website should incorporate structured information from the 19 municipalities of the region, namely the events calendar;
- Create video and audio contents, promoting gastronomy, people, places and distinctive products of the region;
- Carry out national Road Shows, promoting the region and the European Region of Gastronomy concepts;
- Create an image and a gastronomic signature, spreading the label "Coimbra Region - European Region of Gastronomy 2021";
- Create a Gastronomic Passport to encourage the events visits, and the purchase of endogenous products, aiming at the events organised under the label "Coimbra Region - European Region of Gastronomy 2021". This passport intends to attribute benefits to users, seeking their attention and loyalty;
- Display billboards and other publicity material;
- Participate in fairs and events at a European level, reinforcing the region's reputation and the European Region of Gastronomy brand.

We should note that there are actions, referred to within the scope of focus areas, that integrate this line of Communication and Marketing, it is the case of Street Caravans, Storytellers and Chefs Ambassadors.

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## 10. EUROPEAN CONTENT AND ACTIONS

The preparation of our application and the research that we have developed to make it possible have enabled us to be in touch with the reality of the various regions and realize that our concerns are shared by the other European Regions of Gastronomy.

Due to the diversity of agents involved in this application, and the work that each one of them has already produced in their areas, we believe that this group work will allow us to achieve greater European visibility.

Our gastronomic traditions derive from our history, but also from the legacy that the tourists leave in the region of Coimbra. This legacy is also influenced by thousands of international students that annually attend our University.

The municipalities of the Coimbra region have about 40 twinning with European cities which we would like to involve in this challenge, stimulating actions to publicise our gastronomic heritage and promote the "European Region of Gastronomy" award.

Also worthy of note is the integration of the Portuguese Tourism Schools in the European Association of Hotel and Tourism Schools, a network that certainly will help us to promote our gastronomic tradition.



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## 11. ECONOMIC PROVISION

The intent is that the European Region of Gastronomy Award 2021 creates national and international recognition, greater cohesion, more sustainability and wealth. In the face of all the work and effort already developed, we believe it's paramount to affect financial resources to facilitate a set of measures and actions.

For the implementation of the financial part of the project, we have engaged several sectors of the community i.e. public, private, NGOs and Academics. This is a fundamental step in the financial stability of this project, securing intervention in the definition and implementation stage as also conceiving financial support.

The CIM-Region of Coimbra, intermunicipal community that integrates the 19 municipalities in the region, will be the primarily responsible for the financial management of the European Region of Gastronomy Award. Alongside with the main project partners, the CIM – Region of Coimbra will play a key role concerning managing and affecting of public funding's and programmes.

In terms of funding, this will be achieved in all four sectors and we will seek to ensure the financing of the European Union funds, including those managed at local level.

Our estimated budget includes application, actions planned under the project and secretarial services including communication and marketing.

Project management	658 181,77€
International collaboration	967 400,00€
New ideas and programme of activities	491 500,00€
Development of tourism product content	231 460,00€
Marketing and communications	136 220,00€
<b>Estimated Budget</b>	<b>2 484 761,77€</b>

*The Estimated Budget*





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## 12. SUSTAINABILITY AND LEGACY

The application of the Region of Coimbra has as strategy to develop a set of actions and initiatives that prepare and enable the region to become European Region of Gastronomy in 2021. So, a great part of the proposed actions will take place in the period 2018-2020, creating in the region human, material and operational conditions to present the gastronomic heritage as a fundamental asset for the economic stimulus.

The aim is to promote the local endogenous products recognition, with consequences for the confidence and self-esteem of the local community, through a greater national and international recognition of the region and its gastronomy appreciation.

In addition, and considering the actions aimed at youth training, we intend to instil greater sensitivity to sustainability issues, as well as materialize in a more objective way the ideals associated with it, in matters of environment, economy and society.

In 2021, with the promotion of the event, which will be held annually, we intend to value the agents committed to the "European Region of Gastronomy" label and contribute to the dissemination of this legacy through initiatives such as the Gastronomic Passport or the Street Food Caravan.

The training and qualification of the region agents will allow a significant improvement of the gastronomic events, both in terms of infrastructures and in terms of organization. In the future we will have an inclusive vision of the region and more appropriate calendar of activities.

As a result of the communication plan, we expect that the region will have greater national and international recognition, as well as the internalization of a communication model able to attract visitors and residents.

In what concerns networking and co-working, strong links will be built between the different agents of the process, process facilitators and value-added generators for all the entire value chain.

**People and places appreciation will be the most important legacy - preserving stories, building memories.**

With the access to the platform, and the extensive interaction with other European Region of Gastronomy, we expect good practices sharing, the brand expansion and the notoriety of the distinguished regions, as well as the implementation of new collaborative projects such as the recent challenge launched at the meeting held in Minho - Portugal, which aims to create fiction films focused on the food and landscape of the European Regions of Gastronomy.

**Legacy**

- ✓ Gastronomy Observatory
- ✓ Greater territorial attraction
- ✓ Improved and coherent communication structure
- ✓ Greater satisfaction of local communities
- ✓ Structuring, qualification and training of supply
- ✓ Local communities as tourism destinations
- ✓ Sharing and management platform
- ✓ Training of public and private agents
- ✓ Knowledge – Companies – Communities
- ✓ Enhance authentic, health and environment appreciation
- ✓ Greater national and international recognition
- ✓ Networking – Co-Working
- ✓ Increase in demand
- ✓ Improved quality of existing events
- ✓ Infrastructures improvement and accessibility

## Candidate for European Region of Gastronomy 2021

The evolution and implementation of these actions, as well as all occurring within the European Region of Gastronomy Award, will be monitored and evaluated by the higher education institutions that accompany us on this application.

This way, we aim to ensure compliance and monitoring of the proposed goals and for what this award actively contributes. The recognition of the regional gastronomy as a way of cultural diversity, promoting a stimulus to local producers and to greater national and international notoriety in the region of Coimbra, among others.





## Governmental Support



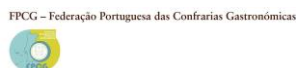
AGRICULTURA, FLORESTAS  
E DESENVOLVIMENTO RURAL



## Founders



## Stakeholders







**COIMBRA REGION**  
EUROPEAN REGION OF GASTRONOMY  
CANDIDATE 2021



@ Regional Tourism Centre of Portugal | Lousãmel - Lousã and Neighbouring Counties Agricultural Cooperative of Beekeepers | Dueceira - Ceira and Dueça Development Association | Bairrada Wine Route Association | Intermunicipal Community of the Coimbra Region Dh | Turismo de Portugal, IP – Hotel and Tourism School of Coimbra | Mira Municipality | Penacova Municipality | Montempr-o-Velho Municipality

# Coimbra Region: A Million Food Stories

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*Candidate for European  
Region of Gastronomy  
Award - 2021*