

# SEARCHING FOR GERMAN QUESTIONS IN THE ETHONBIOLOGY OF FOODSCOUTING

**Dauro M. Zocchi, Giulia Mattalia, Muhammad Abdul Aziz, Raivo Kalle, Michele F. Fontefrancesco, Renata Sõukand, Andrea Pieroni**

## FRAMEWORK OF THE PROJECT

The project aims at developing gastronomic sciences-centred methods and techniques underpinning food scouting, namely all the activities aimed at mapping, inventorying, and documenting food and food-related resources. Specifically, it provides possible methodological toolkits to define, locate traditional foods, and elicit data from local actors regarding their views on cultural, social, ecological, and economic values of food-related resources.

## FOODSCOUTING: Definition and Aims

**Ethnography-based documentation** of folk/traditional perceptions, uses, and management of **threatened or neglected** plant, animal, and microbial **food** ingredients used within a given **cultural setting/community** as well as the folk customs attached to them that developed within a certain area as the result of a long **socio-ecological coevolution**” (Pieroni et al., 2016).



Foodscouting research investigate **three** main kinds of **food categories** (ingredients, products, and dishes) within **two dimensions** (tangible and intangible). In so doing, they aims at achieving two objectives:

- The **general characterization of the foodscape** in terms of diversity and relevance of specific food commodities
- The **socio-cultural, economic and culinary analysis** of food-related resources within specific geographical areas.



## SCENARIOS OF APPLICATION

**Market Surveys as an Entry Point into the Local Food System** (Fontefrancesco & Zocchi, 2020)

### Research objectives

Analysis of rural and urban marketplaces:

- Inventory traditional food crops and associated trade, purchasing and consumption practices
- Explore the factors that favour or constrain their diffusion and commercialisation

### Research design & Methods

|                | Preliminary mapping   | Market survey   |
|----------------|---|---|
| <b>Aims</b>    | Identification of traditional food produced, exchanged and consumed in the study area; selection of the markets | General inventory of the food offering; Documentation of traditional foods exchanged in the marketplaces; Exploration the drivers behind their trade and consumption. |
| <b>Methods</b> | Literature review (gray and scientific literature); Convenience and purposive sampling                          | Personal observations, informal conversations, and semi-structured interviews with market vendors.  |

**Scouting and Documenting Artisanal Food Products: The Ark of Taste project** (Zocchi et al., 2022; Zocchi & Fontefrancesco 2021)

### Research Objectives

Foodscouting investigations in Latin America, East Africa, and Eastern Europe to:

- Document artisanal food productions and their associated heritage
- Assess the main trends connected to their maintenance, evolution, and revitalization

### Research design & Methods

|                | Food mapping   | Analysis of ecogastronomic units of concern  |
|----------------|--|--|
| <b>Aims</b>    | Collection of information on the food and culinary resources, places, networks and patterns of usage in a given area.                | In-depth documentation of tangible and intangible elements linked to local food biocultural heritage resources threatened or endangered. |
| <b>Methods</b> | Desk (grey and scientific literature reviews, online scouting) and field research (personal observations and informal conversations) | Open and semi-structured interviews, life-history recollections, focus groups and direct observations.                                   |

## RELEVANCE OF FOOD SCOUTING

- To understand how food intersects with the identity, culture, and livelihoods of different stakeholders, at different (and often related) scales of the food system.
- To open up to in-depth explorations of social, economic and political dynamics and issues related to the production, distribution, representation, and consumption of food.
- To offer scholars and practitioners instruments to preserve and promote foodstuffs and associated heritage in more culturally-adapted and context-based ways.

## REFERENCES

Fontefrancesco, M. F., & Zocchi, D. M. (2020). Indigenous crops and cultural dynamics in the markets of Nakuru County, Kenya. *International Journal of Gastronomy and Food Science*, 22, 100269. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijgfs.2020.100269>.

Pieroni, A., Pawera, L., & Shah, G. (2016). Gastronomic Ethnobiology. In U. P. Albuquerque & R. R. Nóbrega Alves (Eds.), *Introduction to Ethnobiology* (pp. 53–62). Cham: Springer

Zocchi, D. M., & Fontefrancesco, M. F. (2021). *The Ark of Taste in Tanzania: Food, Knowledge, and Stories of Gastronomic Heritage*. Pollenzo: Università di Scienze Gastronomiche di Pollenzo.

Zocchi D. M., Motuzenko O., Stryamets N., Fontefrancesco M.F., Sõukand R., & Pieroni A. (2022). *The Ark of Taste in Ukraine: Food, Knowledge, and Stories of Gastronomic Heritage*. Pollenzo: Università di Scienze Gastronomiche di Pollenzo.

**Dauro M. Zocchi, PhD, [d.zocchi@unisg.it](mailto:d.zocchi@unisg.it)**