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OSLO

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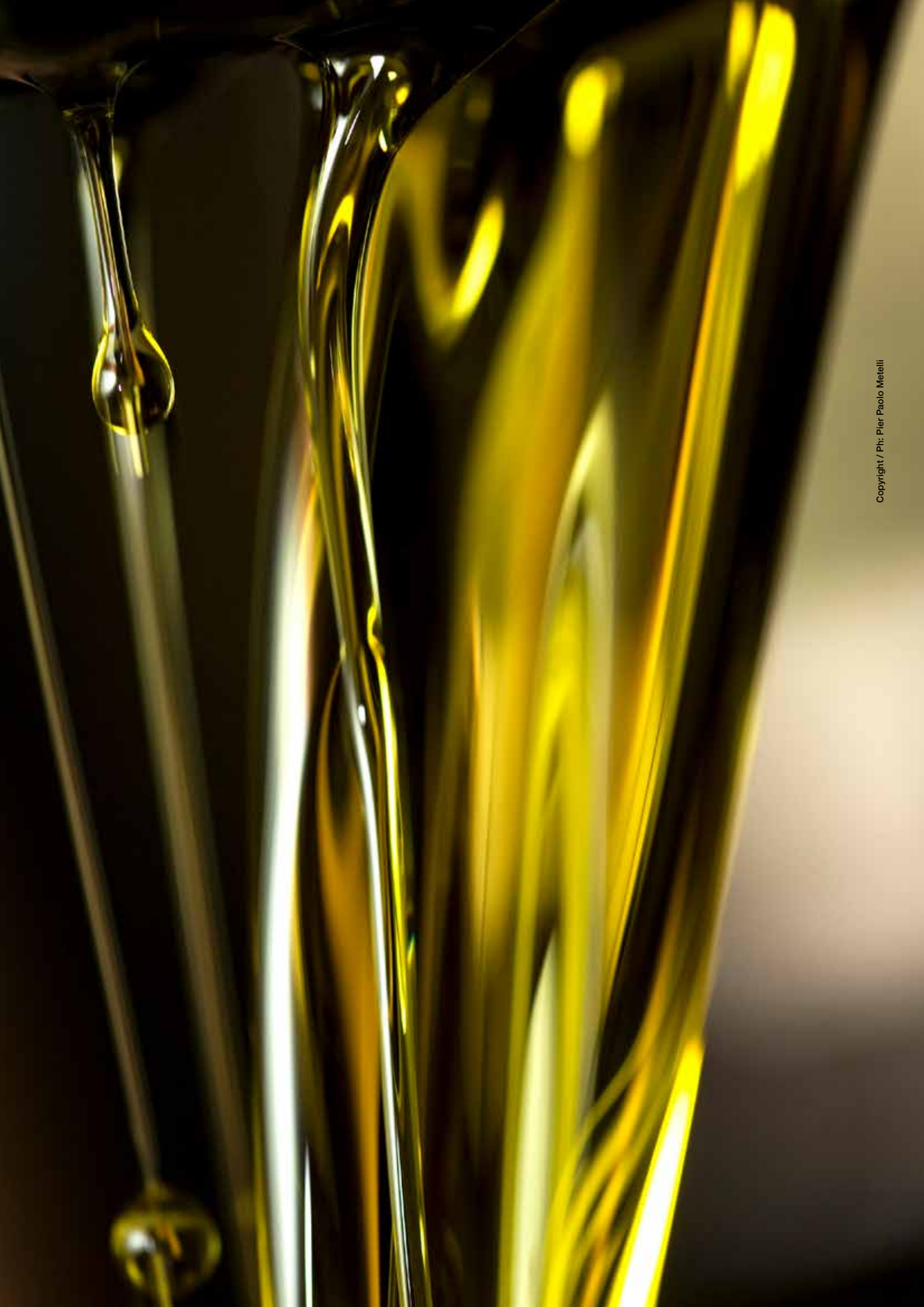
The products of Umbrian Cuisine
and Extra Virgin Olive Oil.

VIII Edition of the

Week of the Italian Cuisine in the World

At the table with Italian cuisine: well-being with taste





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Welcome at the table with the Umbrian cuisine!



It is a pleasure to celebrate the Week of Italian Cuisine in the World, the yearly week for the promotion of Italian excellence in the culinary and agri-food sectors promoted by the entire Italian diplomatic network, again this year.

The main theme chosen for this 8th edition, “At the table with Italian cuisine: well-being with taste”, reminds us that Italian cuisine is synonymous with the Mediterranean diet, a balanced lifestyle model that combines the pleasure of taste and a healthy and sustainable diet inextricably linked with the territory. This is why in Oslo we have chosen to celebrate the 2023 Week of the Italian Cuisine in the World with a focus on the Umbrian Extra Virgin Olive Oil, a key ingredient of the Mediterranean diet, and on the quality and sustainability of other delicacies from the Umbria region.

The celebrations in Oslo will take place over three days and the program includes various events of different nature - culinary, educational and commercial events - organized in collaboration with the Italian Trade Agency, the Institute of Italian Culture in Oslo, the University for Foreigners of Perugia, Brand Culturale and the Ambasciatori del Gusto association.

The culinary events are dedicated to enhancing the culinary traditions of the Umbria Region, the uniqueness, authenticity and versatility of its products, the beauty of its territory and the sustainability of the Umbrian producers, through dinners, tastings, cooking shows, sensory experiences, stories of passion for the products and presentations of new models of tourist offer. The events in the schools have the dual purpose of promoting the Mediterranean diet through the knowledge of the use and the production of the Extra Virgin Olive Oil, and of presenting and internationalizing the educational offer of the Italian universities. The commercial meetings have the aim of promoting and improving the positioning of the high-quality Umbrian products on the Norwegian market.

Once again, our regional cuisine – so different in the various areas of the “Bel Paese” - is a distinctive trait of our multifaced culture and it is not possible to separate the food from the territory from which it originates. This booklet passionately shows and tells, through images, the history of the Umbrian territory – commonly known as the green heart of Italy - and its food and wine traditions (which look to the future by innovating), which I am sure you will fall in love with.

Stefano Nicoletti

Ambassador of Italy to Norway and Iceland

Umbria, on the paths of olive trees.



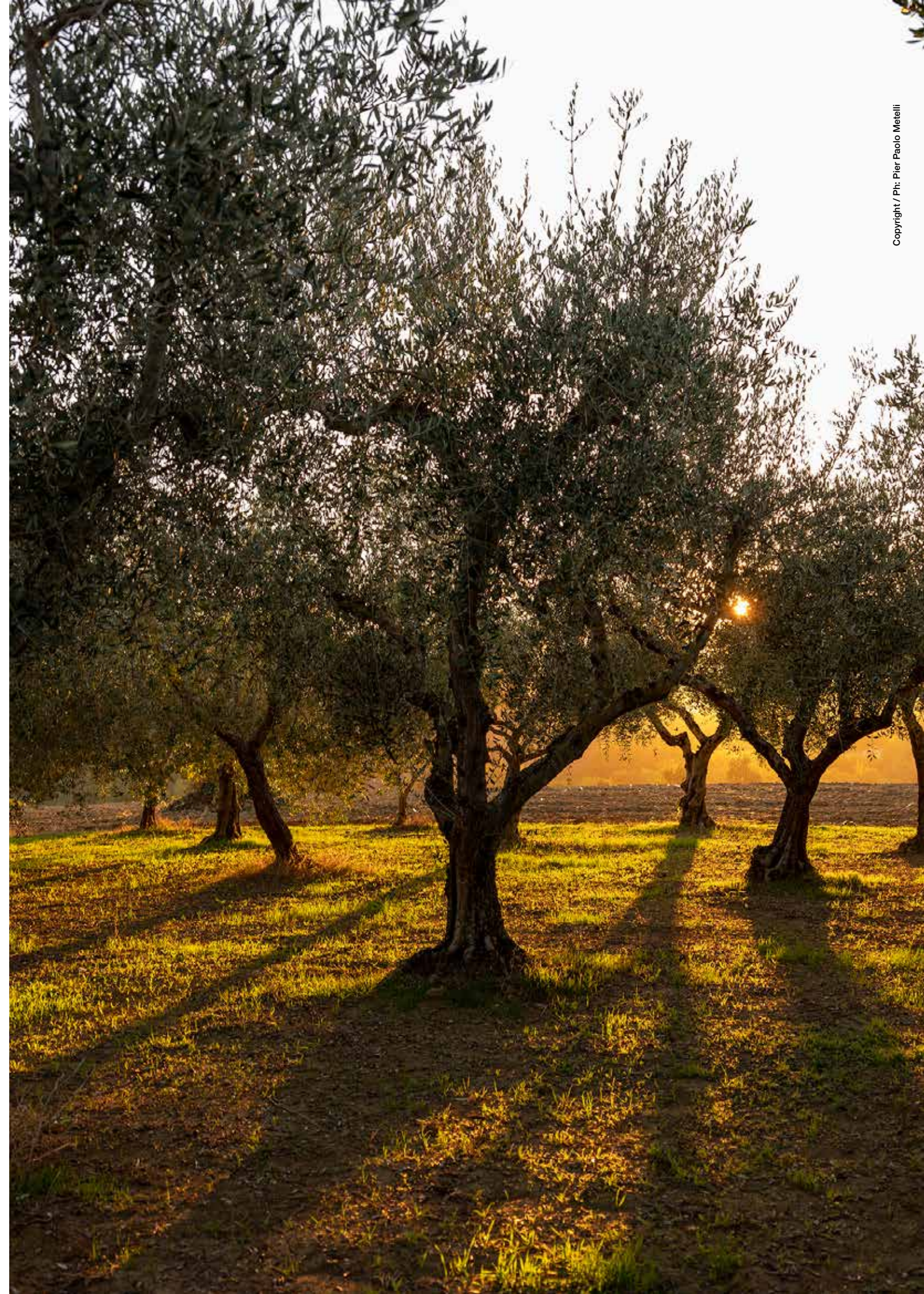
This evocative image sums up the program curated by the Italian Cultural Institute for the 8th edition of the Week of Italian Cuisine in the World, whose goal is to promote both the Umbrian territory and its food traditions, and the local cultural heritage.

For the annual celebrations, the Italian Cultural Institute has curated some educational events, organizing meetings with local schools with the aim of offering the students the opportunity to learn about and taste Umbrian olive oil and to meet a group of Professors from the University for Foreigners of Perugia: a double appointment dedicated to a young audience, that promotes our best products and, also, the academic offer of the renowned Umbrian University. In this way, we hope to nurture the interest of young people in the Italian language and traditions, strengthening the cooperation between the academic systems of our two Countries.

In addition to the educational program, the Italian Cultural Institute has designed an immersive experience open to the Norwegian public: an evening framed by the shots of the Umbrian olive groves of the photographic exhibition set up at the IIC, listening to the story of the traditions related to olive growing, guided by Umbrian producers and one of the very few Norwegian olive oil sommelier. Together, in a multiple-voice narrative, they will lead an olive oil tasting experience: a unique opportunity to savour the “green gold”, which we hope will inspire future visitors to the region at the heart of Italy.

Raffaella Giampaola

Director Italian Cultural Institute in Oslo





The University for Foreigners of Perugia:

Ambassador of Italy in the World through the Promotion of Italian Culture and Language



The University for Foreigners of Perugia is an ambassador of Italy in the world, as it has been committed for a hundred years to promoting Italian language and culture.

The celebrations in Oslo for Italian Cuisine Week see us involved as a university that has been innovatively promoting Italian culture for several years, by highlighting the excellence of the regions alongside the transmission of classical, artistic, literary, historical, and musical culture to the new generations. In this sense, the culture of food has become part of our educational offering with a three-year bachelor's program in "Made in Italy, Food and Hospitality" - the first of its kind in Italy, combining the two classes L-GASTR (Gastronomic Sciences) and L-15 (Tourism Sciences). Additionally, we have a new master's program, inaugurated this year in collaboration with the University of Perugia, on "Management and Italian Food Culture."

Food needs to be told more and more. A dish should be explained. A typical product should be known in its history. Storytelling is not something accessory but is the way to present an Italian excellence, such as cuisine, to the world. It is necessary to focus on a true food culture, which has at least two fundamental dimensions: the first is sustainability, the ability to combine production and environmental respect, as well as quality and accessibility to products, even for the less affluent segments of the population. The second is knowledge: creating awareness around excellent productions, valuing the work of those in the food and wine sector, and strengthening the international promotion of Italian products. In this latter aspect, the ability to enter different cultures is also important, starting with language knowledge since it is considered essential in many cultures.

In the rich variety of Italian cuisine, with our courses at the University for Foreigners, we are particularly linked to the Umbria region, where we have established numerous collaborations with local companies where our students can undertake internships and professional development. We believe that in this way, we contribute to the consolidation of the food culture as a non-secondary aspect of Italy's projection into the world. "At the table with Italian cuisine," therefore, to ensure well-being with taste.

Valerio De Cesaris

Rettore dell'Università per Stranieri di Perugia

Culinary Traditions and Social Rituals in Umbria

This historical period is characterized by the birth of bread. Bread has ancient origins, and in ancient times it could be preserved and used to feed the people during times of famine by soaking it in water, milk, or wine. For the Umbrians, or rather the Etruscans, food was fundamental, as remains of banquets were found in their tombs. The Etruscans invented lasagna, although the exact original recipe cannot be traced back to this day. The Etruscan people enjoyed a quince puree that they would accompany with fish or game. 2000/1000 BC.



2000/1000 a.C.



The Middle Ages brought about numerous social, civil, and religious changes, as well as periods of abundance and famine. Even in Umbria, the church dictated its laws, such as abstaining from eating meat during fasting periods, when only fish was allowed. The diet could be divided into three sectors: meat for warriors and knights, fish for clerics, and legumes and herbs for peasants. The forests and wildlife became feudal reserves. The lower classes were left with only pork. Hunting was a source of sustenance, with hares, rabbits, birds, and wild boars being hunted. In Umbria, fish from lakes and rivers were commonly consumed.

MIDDLE AGES



Umbrian cuisine, up to this day, allows us to rediscover lost flavors, introducing us to the preparation of simple or elaborate dishes that are both a heritage of Umbrian memory and identity. This tradition has been passed down from one generation to the next, but the modern lifestyle has almost irreversibly interrupted this sequence, erasing ancient knowledge and rampart homogenization of flavors, ingredients, and tastes.

2000

PREHISTORY

The diet of the first humans in Umbria was not limited to the meat of animals, but also included vegetables. The only meat that the early humans were able to obtain came from small animals. The hunters were all men, while the gathering of herbs was done by women. With the subsequent development of various weapons and fishing tools, the diet also expanded to include fish. In Umbria, there was a particular use of game, river fishing, legumes, fruit, and vegetables typical of the Mediterranean scrubland.



ROMAN ERA

During this era, vegetables were eaten in large quantities. The Umbrian territory offered mushrooms, truffles, and eggplants. Garlic and onion were common dishes for soldiers and the poor, while cabbage was used as a remedy for those with a shaken nervous system. Salt was of considerable importance for food preservation and was offered to guests as a sign of friendship.



1900

Several customs were born during this historical period. Among the most significant ones, we find that in the month of November, to celebrate the dead, sweet macaroni and chestnuts were eaten, to which fava beans, pumpkins, and sweet potatoes were added. The biggest celebration was Christmas, where only one meal was consumed: cappelletti in broth, followed by preserved fruits and sweets. On the first day of the new year, pork and chicken meat were eaten along with grapes (considered good luck for money). During Carnival, many sweets were eaten, such as strufoli, frappe, and honey.



The Umbrians, inhabitants of certain areas of ancient Etruria, can still recognize intriguing parallels with their traditional cuisine today.

In Etruscan society, a significant distinction existed between banquets and daily meals.

The aristocracy, depicted in convivial postures within elegantly and sumptuously arranged settings, considered the symposium and banquet as genuine rituals, composed of repeated and codified gestures that concealed precise symbolism. This ritual served to acknowledge and accept an individual on a social level, creating a sense of belonging among the members of a close-knit circle that held economic and political power within the cities.

As for their diet, the Etruscans proved to be skilled hunters of cattle, pigs, sheep, and game. Archaeological finds such as bronze cauldrons, grills, and spits bear witness to the fact that meats were cooked or roasted directly over an open flame. Etruscan land was rich in resources, including charred grains and large dolia for storing cereals. Stone pestles and mills, as well as pottery jars and vessels, provide evidence of cereal processing within households, with servants tending to the hearth and meal preparation. From historical sources, it appears that farro soup was the Etruscans' favorite dish, making this grain, along with soft wheat for bread, widely known and appreciated.

Another highly coveted food item that graced Etruscan tables was cheese and dairy products in general. Shepherds worked with the milk of sheep, cows, and goats, and their production was so specialized that renowned shops sprung up in some cities. A wide array of products corresponded to a vast range of ceramics used for meal preparation and consumption.

It is important to distinguish the coarser artifacts, used as tableware and pantry utensils not meant for the elite, from the exclusive, finely decorated products with elegant shapes. An aristocratic table was adorned with cups on high pedestals, called "kantharoi" and "kilikes," filled with spiced wine. There were also containers brimming with fruit, decorated dishes for serving skewered meats, but most notably, there were wine and water-mixing vessels known as "kyathoi," a type of ladle for scooping wine to pour into the cups, and splendid "oinochoai," ancient pitchers with a lobed rim, used for pouring water and considered a highlight of Etruscan production.

This is just a taste of the rich and captivating culinary tradition of the Etruscans, which has left a lasting imprint on today's Umbrian table. The products and food practices of the ancient Etruscans continue to inspire and enrich Umbrian cuisine, keeping the roots of this ancient civilization alive.



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The Ancient Roots of Winemaking in Umbria

The history of wine in Umbria also has ancient roots. The ancient Etruscan civilization, which thrived in the Umbria region between the 9th and 1st centuries BC, cultivated grapevines and produced high-quality wines. The Etruscans have left traces of vineyards and winemaking techniques, as evidenced by numerous archaeological finds.

After the Roman period, during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, Umbrian wine production continued to develop, thanks to the presence of monasteries and convents dedicated to vine cultivation. It was during this time that the first DOC (Denominazione di Origine Controllata) designations in the region were established.

Over the centuries that followed, Umbrian viticulture experienced ups and downs. However, starting in the 1970s, there was a renaissance in the Umbrian wine industry, with the introduction of new cultivation and winemaking techniques and the promotion of native grape varieties such as Sagrantino and Grechetto.

Today, Umbria is renowned for producing high-quality wines, with numerous wineries producing prestigious wines recognized internationally. The Umbrian winemaking tradition continues to be an integral part of the region's culture and economy.

Etruscans, the Pioneers of Olive Cultivation in Italy

The Umbria region also produces exceptionally high-quality extra virgin olive oil, and the history of Umbrian olive oil dates back to the time of the Etruscans. This ancient civilization extensively cultivated olive trees and produced high-quality olive oil. In fact, the Etruscans were among the first peoples in central Italy to develop intensive olive farming.

Thanks to the presence of the Etruscans, the cultivation of olive trees and the production of olive oil spread widely in Umbria, giving rise to a millennia-old tradition that has persisted through the centuries.

Umbrian olive groves benefit from a favorable climate and fertile soil, imparting a unique flavor and aroma to the olive oil. Even today, Umbrian olive oil is highly regarded for its quality and sensory characteristics.

Native olive varieties like Moraiolo and Frantoio give the oil an intense and fruity taste. Umbrian olive oil is a fundamental ingredient in traditional Umbrian cuisine, used to season typical dishes and enrich the region's gastronomic heritage.

The Olive Tree: a Universal Symbol of Peace and Spirituality

The olive tree is universally recognized as a symbol of peace and reconciliation. Its presence in iconography and religious culture is widespread, and Saint Francis of Assisi, the famous Umbrian saint, had a particular fondness for olive trees.

Pier Paolo Metelli's photographs depicting these olive trees provide an opportunity to remember the connection between the spirituality of Saint Francis of Assisi and nature. His preference for these trees may stem from the fact that the olive tree represents peace and serenity, fundamental values for the saint.

The exhibition of these photographs at the Institute of Culture is an opportunity to reflect on these profound meanings and to appreciate the beauty of the olive tree, as well as its significance in Umbrian culture.

Umbrian Cuisine: Authentic Simplicity

Umbrian cuisine is characterized by its authentic simplicity, relying on high-quality ingredients that have gained significant renown even beyond the region. One of the most prized products is the black truffle of Norcia and Spoleto, considered one of the best in the world.

This truffle has not only helped promote other types of Umbrian truffles, such as the white truffle of Eugubino-Gualdese, but has also elevated the entire local culinary tradition.

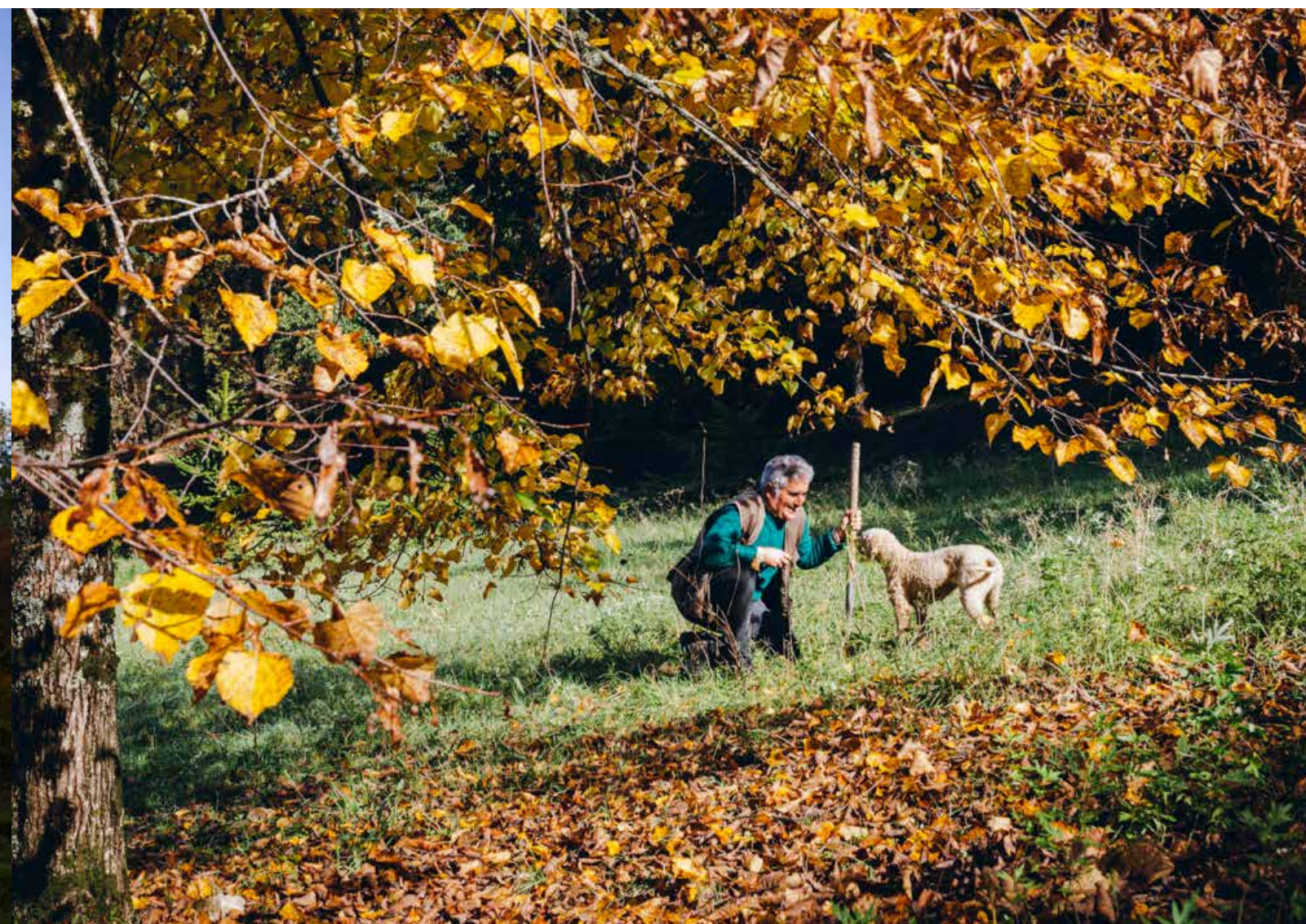
Other delectable products include Valnerina's farro, used in soups and flours, and the Castelluccio lentils, small, green, and delicate.

The Fagiolina del Trasimeno, black celery from Trevi, and red-skinned Colfiorito potatoes complete the list of typical ingredients.

To preserve the memory of the past, Perugia still prepares "torta al testo" on brick tiles, alongside "torcoletti," "schiacciate," and focaccias with pecorino and ham (Perugian pizza).



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Umbrian Waters: A Bounty of Delightful Fish and the Art of Norcineria

The waterways and Lake Trasimeno offer delectable fish: in Spoleto, the Nera trout with truffle is particularly beloved, and the “tegamaccio” from Trasimeno is a flavorful fish stew. Other popular fish dishes include lake carp stuffed with herbs, grilled eels, pike from the grill, and herb-seasoned perch fillet.

A fundamental aspect of Umbrian culinary culture is “norcineria,” where pork meat is processed and sold. Umbrian “norcineria” has its origins in Ancient Rome, during the Flavian dynasty. Emperor Vespasian, after his conquests in the land of Jerusalem, decided to bring back slaves to Italy for pig farming and processing.

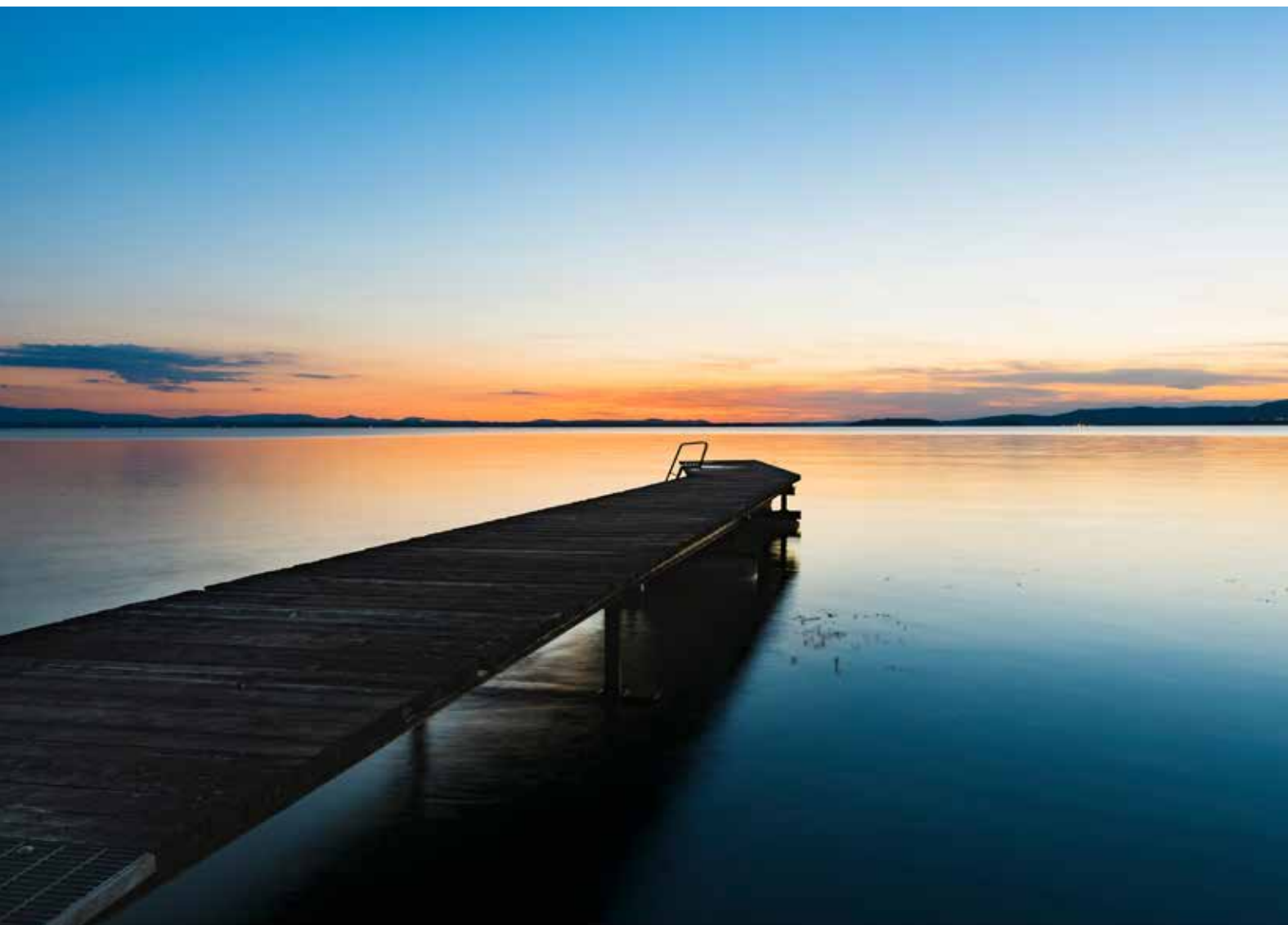
The most flourishing period for “norcini” was from the 12th to the 17th century. This tradition has deep roots primarily in the Umbrian Valnerina but also in other cities. The trade was seasonal, carried out during the winter. Even today, Norcia and Cascia are the cities that best preserve this ancient tradition.

Umbrian Food Emporiums: Authentic Havens of Taste

The butchers’ shops, or “norcineria,” are like secular sanctuaries where the worship of cured meats and pork meat is passed down from generation to generation. Each of these shops boasts an extensive selection of cured meats, including ham, guanciale, pancetta, sausage, and many other pork-based products.

The meat processing is carried out using ancient traditional techniques, which involve salting, drying, and aging. Umbrian cured meats are renowned for their high quality and unique flavor. Umbrian ham, for instance, is known for its tender and flavorful meat, aged for a minimum of 12 months. On the other hand, guanciale is a seasoned pork jowl used to flavor many traditional Umbrian dishes, such as pasta all’amatriciana. Umbrian sausage is characterized by a blend of aromatic spices that impart an intense and savory taste.

The tradition of Umbrian “norcineria” is very much alive today, and the butchers’ shops are popular among locals and tourists seeking to savor the delicious cured meats and other pork-based products. This tradition has been passed down from generation to generation and remains a central element of Umbrian culinary culture.





Umbria, Villages, Rituals, and Ancient Traditions

During the period between 2000 and 1000 B.C., the art of bread-making was born. Bread could be stored and used to feed the people during times of famine, by soaking it in water, milk, or wine. The Etruscans, who inhabited Umbria, invented lasagna, although the original recipe is still a subject of debate. Another beloved dish among the Etruscans was a quince puree, often served with fish or game.

In the medieval period, Umbria underwent numerous social, civil, and religious changes, leading to periods of abundance and famine.

The Church dictated dietary laws, such as the prohibition of consuming meat during fasting periods, allowing only fish. The diet was divided into three sectors: meat for warriors and knights, fish for clerics, and legumes and herbs for peasants.

Forests and game became feudal reserves, while hunting provided sustenance with hares, rabbits, birds, and wild boars. Fish consumed in Umbria were typically from lakes and rivers.

In 1900, various culinary customs emerged. In November, to commemorate the dead, sweet macaroni and chestnuts were consumed, accompanied by fava beans, pumpkins, and sweet potatoes.

Sweets were carefully and abundantly prepared, including castagnaccio made with chestnut flour, pine nuts, and walnuts. During Christmas, a single meal of cappelletti in broth was followed by preserved fruits and desserts.

On the first day of the new year, pork and chicken were eaten, accompanied by grapes for financial luck. During Carnival, sweets like strufole, frappe, and honey were prevalent.

Today, Umbrian cuisine allows us to rediscover lost flavors and discover simple or elaborate dishes that represent a heritage of Umbrian memory and identity. These recipes have been passed down from generation to generation, although modern lifestyles have largely disrupted this tradition, leading to the homogenization of flavors, ingredients, and tastes.

Among the traditional Umbrian dishes are bruschetta, made with toasted bread and seasoned with extra virgin olive oil and garlic, farro soup, pasta alla Norcina with sausage and truffle, porchetta, stewed wild boar, fagiolata, torta al testo (a type of Umbrian flatbread), and torta al testo with cheese and arugula. Each Umbrian city and town has its culinary specialties, which often vary from one municipality to another. Umbrian cuisine is closely tied to the peasant tradition and uses simple yet genuine ingredients.

PARTNERS



SPECIAL THANKS



Lorenzo Cantoni
Chef



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Food Manager



Si Event
Catering



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Brand Culturale

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We dream of an Umbria that shares its beauty with the world while keeping the charm of its small towns and villages, which hold the true spirit of this land.

Throughout history, from the Umbri people to the Etruscans, who were pioneers in cultivating and selling products like oil, wine, and spelt in Europe, to the time of St. Francis of Assisi, who bravely met the Sultan during unexpected times, we've created a valuable story about the balance between privacy and welcoming the world. We imagine an Umbria that welcomes the world while preserving its intimate, sometimes shy nature.

Once discovered, it brings back the importance of simple things that shine brightly here.

We are like a guiding light, a place where connecting with our region is our main focus. We strongly believe that our history and words like tradition, emotion, family, and territory have a special power, revealing excellence to those who truly appreciate it.

We are the keepers of culinary secrets, ancient traditions, and stunning landscapes, which we share with those who know how to listen with their hearts.

Filippo Fettucciari
Brand Manager of Brand Culturale.