
Third UN Tourism Regional Forum on Gastronomy Tourism for Africa

2-4 December 2026, Lungi, Republic of Sierra Leone

Provisional Programme

Gastronomy has become one of the key drivers for destination tourism development and is transforming the way travellers choose destinations. Experiences such as tasting local cuisine, visiting local markets, participating in food festivals, engaging in cooking classes and discovering how indigenous foods are grown, prepared, and used in traditional recipes, are increasingly central to the visitor experience.

In this regard, integrating local agrifood systems into the tourism value chain and bringing together producers, chefs, hospitality professionals and service providers can create tangible opportunities for inclusive and sustainable development.

While empowering communities and entrepreneurs, gastronomy tourism connects travellers to the identity of each destination. Africa's rich cultural mosaic and history are vividly reflected in its cuisines. Centuries of cross-cultural exchange, shaped by trade routes and ancestral traditions, have given rise to a unique and diverse culinary heritage, carefully passed down from generation to generation. Authentic and varied, African cuisines have achieved a remarkable balance between tradition and innovation. Sharing these stories with the world is essential to positioning Africa as a leading destination for gastronomy tourism, while safeguarding and promoting its unique cultural heritage.

Building on the success of the previous editions, held in Zimbabwe in 2024 and Tanzania in 2025, the Third UN Tourism Regional Forum on Gastronomy Tourism for Africa will further explore regional and national strategies, showcase inspiring experiences and the richness of African gastronomy, and identify concrete actions that strengthen Africa's competitiveness in the global tourism landscape.

Wednesday, 2 December 2026**Venue:** Julius Maada Bio International Conference Centre (JMBICC) (Lungi)

10:00 – 17:00

Registration

15:00 – 17:00

Workshop I - Linking Cultural Heritage and Creative Industries to Gastronomy Tourism Development.

This workshop will explore how cultural heritage and the creative industries—from crafts, design and music to storytelling, festivals and the performing arts—can enrich gastronomy tourism experiences, strengthen destinations identity and create new opportunities for local communities and creative entrepreneurs.

15:00 – 17:00

Workshop II - From Local Flavours to Global Destinations: How Intellectual Property Can Strengthen African Gastronomy Tourism.

This workshop will deep dive into how geographical indications, brands and other intellectual property tools can strengthen African destinations, empower producers and create authentic visitor experiences.

N.B.: *Coffee service will be provided throughout the sessions.*

The technical workshops are accessible **BY INVITATION ONLY** to local and international participants duly accredited and appointed by their respective Member States or the organizations/entities they represent.

The working language of the workshops is **ENGLISH**.

*time TBC***Welcome Cocktail** *(for international delegates)***Thursday, 3 December 2026****Venue:** Julius Maada Bio International Conference Centre (JMBICC) (Lungi)*Interpretation: English / French*

08:00 – 09:00

Registration

09:00 – 10:30

Opening Ceremony

10:30 – 11:00

Coffee Break

11:00 – 11:15 **Presentation of the UN Tourism Agenda for African Gastronomy Tourism**

11:15 – 12:30 **High-Level Panel – From Policy to Impact: Advancing Gastronomy Tourism in Africa**

This session will bring together policymakers and leaders to examine current policy frameworks and strategic approaches, and to discuss future action-oriented pathways that strengthen the impact of gastronomy tourism across Africa.

12:30 – 14:00 **LUNCH & Live Cooking Demonstrations**

14:00 – 14:15 **Workshop Takeaways: From Discussion to Action**

Brief reflections from the Workshops held on the previous day, highlighting key insights, opportunities and proposed actions.

14:15 – 15:00 **Panel Discussion: Empowering Women Through Gastronomy**

This panel will explore women's indispensable roles across the gastronomy tourism value chain – from food production and processing to preparation and service provision – highlighting their central contribution to economic and social sustainable development. Yet, despite this contribution, over 70 percent of women-led businesses in Africa have insufficient access to financial services, and many operate in the informal sector, where they lack legal protection as well as access to training and market information.

Coinciding with FAO's launch of the *International Year of the Woman Farmer 2026*, the discussion will combine inspiring stories with practical, actionable solutions to address systemic barriers facing women, including access to land, finance, technologies, education, and participation in decision-making.

15:00 – 15:30 **Creativity, the Heart of African Gastronomy**

This conversation will explore how culture, gastronomy and creativity shape destinations and position African cities as attractive, distinctive places to live, visit, and invest in. The discussion will highlight how gastronomy, cultural heritage, and local identity contribute to sustainable development and how these can be leveraged to brand tourism destinations, overcome persistent perceptual barriers and shift the narrative around the African continent.

15:30 – 16:30 **Panel Discussion: Agritourism, A Gateway to Tourism, Culture and Agrifood Systems**

This panel will explore how agritourism experiences are created, packaged, and marketed to create tangible benefits for rural communities. In response to growing demand for authentic and immersive travel experiences, the discussion will examine how agrifood activities, traditional knowledge, and cultural practices can be transformed into sustainable and engaging gastronomy tourism products.

Drawing on practical examples from across Africa and beyond, the panel will highlight how agritourism models support local producers, strengthen agrifood value chains, diversify rural economies, and generate income—while safeguarding cultural heritage and natural resources.

16:30 – 16:45	Conclusions
16:45 – 17:00	Closing Ceremony
19:30 – 21:30	Gala Dinner <i>(for international delegates)</i>

Friday, 4 December 2026

09:00 – 20:00	Technical Tours <i>(for international delegates)</i> Full-day programme (consecutive activities) - Historic, Leisure and Nature tours - Beach Entertainment - Street Food Tasting Festival
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