

Editorial

# Gastronomy: Fostering a New and Inclusive Scientific Field

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Despite eating being a universal human experience, the study of “what we eat” has only gained momentum in the past century; this is mainly because of the development of the agrifood industry, nutritional studies within the medical sciences, and, more recently, the Anglo-American tradition of food studies.

However, while the agrifood sciences focus largely on food as a commodity in the gastronomic arena, and the nutritional sciences focus mainly on what happens after consumption, what and how we eat within certain socioecological and historical coordinates is often left untapped at the forefront of research. This is because “what and how we eat” was not considered worth studying for centuries—at least until the development of the concept of gastronomy in France in the 19th century, mainly due to the contribution of Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin’s cooking treatise “Physiologie du gout” (1825). What one community ate did not fit in fact within the priorities of the scientific community and of others who we would now consider stakeholders in the food domain. On the other hand, American food studies, which developed in the last decades of the 20th century and focus on the critical examination of food and foodways (especially within history, society, politics, and art) often partly neglect the centrality of the technicalities of gastronomic phenomena (the preparation, perception, and consumption of food, i.e., ingredients, products, and dishes).

Gastronomy therefore represents a complex system that urgently needs interdisciplinary approaches that combine the biosciences (especially the culinary sciences) with the dense social sciences and humanities, which underpin gastronomy’s history and co-evolution.

This new journal *Gastronomy* (ISSN 2813-513X) [1] intends to fill this gap and advocate for the establishment of a new and inclusive research field; this has been requested in recent years by many crucial actors in the food system (producers; artisans; chefs; local, national, and international institutions; and food activists), and especially by “consumers” (i.e., citizens), including many students and young researchers who are already involved in newly conceived academic gastronomy departments and curricula.

One might ask: what are the main challenges in this new field in the coming decade? It might appear that interest in gastronomy research, practice, and public discourse has constantly and exponentially increased in the west in the past 20 years, driven also by the hyper-spectacularization of culinary practice in the media; however, recent years have also shown the fragility of the gastronomic industry and crucial new public awareness of the importance of “what and how we eat”, which has been further driven by the recent pandemic. Therefore, I argue that this complex arena requires further multidisciplinary knowledge, analysis, conceptualization, and reflection, which could help to bring the sector into this new era challenged by the ongoing ecological transition and the quest for social justice, cohesion, and inclusion; in short, it could help ensure the future holistic sustainability of gastronomy and of its socio-ecological context. The food arena has, in fact, garnered worldwide attention in recent years regarding ecological and social impacts, calling for urgent change in how local and global food systems work under the current global ecological crisis.

A quintessential pillar of new gastronomy is therefore represented by the resilience of sustainable micro-food webs, often designed and managed by local communities, and



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largely practiced by women, especially within the “peripheries” of the world. This journal will be particularly sensitive to these and to researchers working with them.

*Gastronomy* will therefore provide a new platform for scholars to publish their work via rigorous and rapid review processes, open access contributions that will enable access to research without delay, and an inclusive arena for dialogue among scientists, stakeholders, environmentalists, food activists, and civil societies. Our aim is to present high-quality contributions and provide inspiration on a broad range of topics. Interdisciplinary works on “what and how we eat” conducted at the interface between different disciplines are particularly encouraged.

The topics *Gastronomy* will cover include the following:

- Gastronomic engineering and technology;
- Gastro-chemistry and -physics;
- Gastronomic microbiology;
- Gastronomic safety and nutrition;
- New ingredients, products, and dish development;
- By-products and environmental science;
- Gastronomic and sensory experience;
- Psychological and cognitive sciences in gastronomy;
- Taste sciences and genetics;
- Culinary science and art;
- Molecular gastronomy;
- Culinary techniques and technologies;
- Culinary transformations and tools;
- Culinary concepts and innovation;
- Food styling and photography;
- Gastronomic design and aesthetics;
- Gastronomic languages, narratives, and semiotics;
- Food art and storytelling;
- Prehistory and history of gastronomy;
- Food anthropology;
- Food heritage and food geography;
- Gastronomic ethnobiology and foodscouting;
- Consumer studies;
- Food philosophy;
- Food sovereignty and food policies;
- Gastronomy in education;
- Sustainability sciences in gastronomy and agro-ecology;
- Food and quality of life;
- Gastronomic communication and languages;
- Food law and economics;
- Design and management of gastronomic hospitality;
- Gastronomic tourism and cultures.

We welcome submissions in various forms, including original research articles, review papers, viewpoint sets, and short communications, and hope that you will join us in ensuring this new journal’s success within the entire gastro-community.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The author declares no conflict of interest.

## Reference

1. *Gastronomy* Home Page. Available online: <https://www.mdpi.com/journal/gastronomy> (accessed on 3 February 2022).

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