



# FOOD ECO-CULTURE EDU

Connecting Disciplines in European Higher Academia



## CURRICULUM DESIGN



Co-funded by  
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# 01

## INTRODUCTION



# CONNECTING DISCIPLINES

## IN EUROPEAN

## HIGHER ACADEMIA



**Food Eco-Culture Education (FECE)** is a European Erasmus+ Higher Education project that responds to major challenges currently affecting the food and hospitality sector, including:

- **skills shortages,**
- **high staff turnover, and**
- **increasing pressure to address environmental and social sustainability issues.**

The project recognises the pivotal role played by food in our **society, culture, and hospitality and tourism sector** (e.g. culinary tourism, food experiences, food as culture and identity, food storytelling, pro-sustainability choices) and focuses on strengthening the link between education and real-world practice by applying interdisciplinary thinking to food-related themes, together with their opportunities and challenges.

**This Curriculum Design** is informed by interdisciplinary research and participatory validation workshops conducted with students and local stakeholders across six partner institutions. These activities provided critical insights into current skills gaps, educational needs, and future-oriented competencies required in the food, hospitality, tourism, and related sectors.

This curriculum design translates the project's research findings – e.g., food as culture and identity, health and wellbeing, and sustainability choices - and workshop outcomes into a structured, modular learning framework for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). It is designed to be adaptable across disciplines, study programmes, and national contexts, while maintaining a strong focus on sustainability, cultural awareness, social inclusion, and practical learning.

# 02

## WHY IS THIS CURRICULUM IMPORTANT?



## 02 – Why is this curriculum important?

The Food Eco-Culture Education curriculum responds to growing challenges in European food, hospitality, tourism, and related sectors, including skills shortages, sustainability pressures, and the need for more socially and culturally aware professionals

Food today sits at the intersection of environmental responsibility, cultural identity, health, digital innovation, and place-based development, yet these dimensions are often addressed in fragmented ways within higher education.

This curriculum offers an **integrated and interdisciplinary approach** that reflects real-world complexity and prepares students to navigate current and future transformations in food systems.

By grounding learning in research, student input, and practical examples, **the curriculum strengthens the connection between academic knowledge, societal needs, and professional practice** across diverse European contexts.



# 03

## CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES



## 03 – Curriculum Objectives

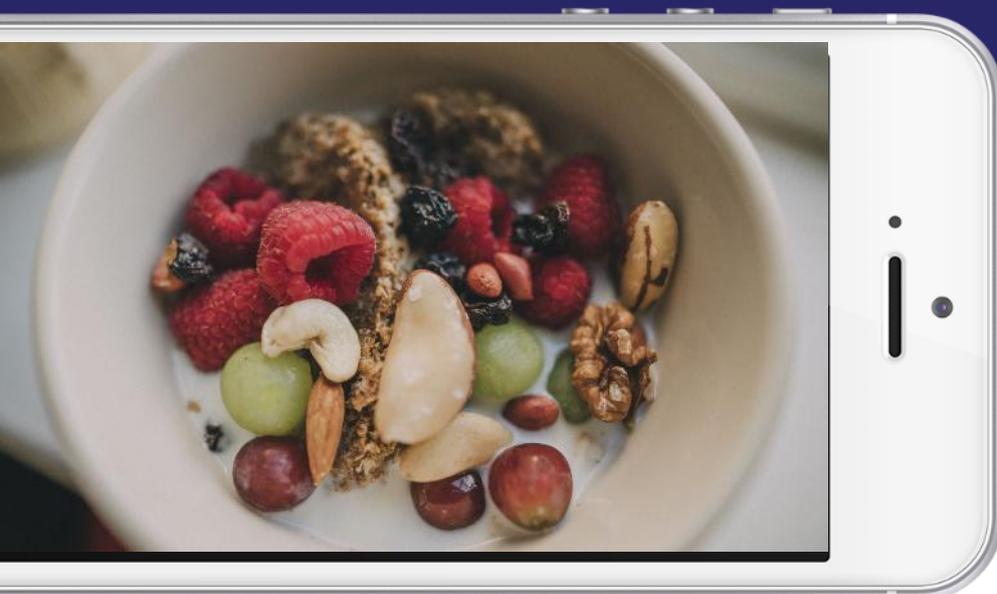
The primary objective of the Food Eco-Culture Education curriculum is to equip students with a **holistic understanding** of food as a cultural, social, environmental, and economic phenomenon.

The curriculum aims to foster critical thinking, practical skills, and ethical awareness related to sustainable food choices, food literacy and wellbeing, food tourism and place-based experiences, digital innovation, and communication and collaboration.

It seeks to support students in developing competencies relevant across disciplines and transferable across different professional pathways, while encouraging responsible decision-

making, cultural sensitivity, and engagement with communities and industry.

The curriculum is designed to be flexible and adaptable, enabling Higher Education Institutions to integrate the modules into existing programmes or use them as standalone learning units.



# 04

## SUMMARY

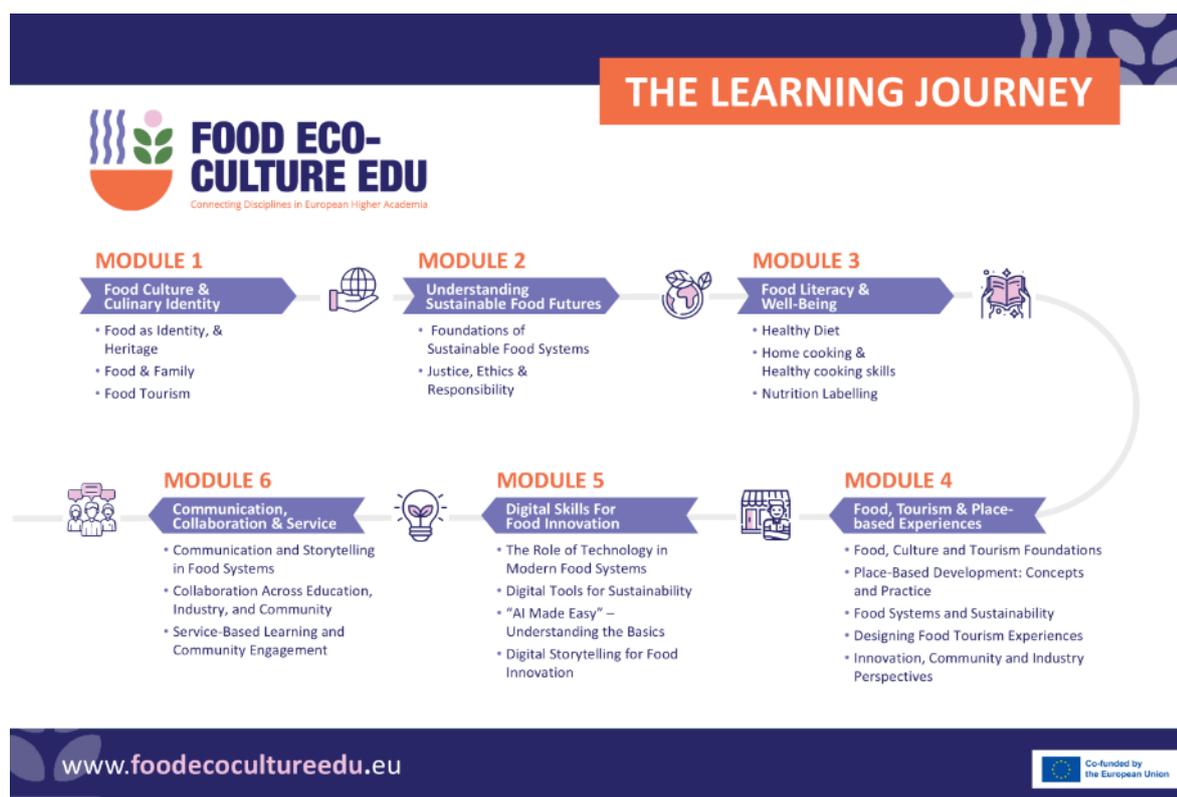


# 04 – Summary

The Food Eco-Culture Education curriculum consists of **six thematic modules** designed to equip students with interdisciplinary knowledge, skills, and competencies related to food and cultural identity, sustainable food choices, health and well-being, food tourism and place-based experiences, digital innovation, and communication. The curriculum reflects key themes, needs, insights, trends, and educational gaps emerging from the project research and the regional workshops and is articulated in the form of the following six modules:

- **Module 1 - Cultural Traditions and Identity**
- **Module 2 - Understanding Sustainable Food Choices**
- **Module 3 - Food Literacy & Wellbeing**
- **Module 4 - Food, Tourism, and Place-based Experiences**
- **Module 5 - Digital Skills for Food Innovation**
- **Module 6 - Communication, Collaboration, and Service**

Each module follows a common structure, including a description, learning objectives, suggested topics, case studies, learner exercises, and sources, ensuring coherence and transferability across HEI contexts.



# 05

## MODULES



# Module Overview



MODULE 1	Food Culture and Culinary Identity
<b>Overview</b>	This module explores food as a cultural, social, and identity-forming practice within multicultural societies. Students analyse the historical, cultural, and symbolic meanings of food, with particular attention to food as identity and heritage and its connection with the idea of home and with tourism.
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are able to analyze how food and culinary traditions shape and reflect cultural identities, using examples from diverse communities and historical contexts.</li> <li>• Students are able to identify the role that the production, sharing, and consumption of food plays in the (re-) production of culture, and the building of inclusive and diverse communities.</li> </ul>
<b>Topics Covered</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Food as Identity and Heritage</li> <li>• Food &amp; Family</li> <li>• Food Tourism</li> <li>• Conclusion</li> </ul>
<b>Case Study</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNESCO Intangible Heritage</li> <li>• Cemetery Recipes: trying recipes inscribed on tombstones</li> <li>• ‘Samen Sterk’ (‘Together we are stronger’)</li> <li>• Township Tourism in South Africa</li> </ul>
<b>Suggested Exercises</b>	Self-reflection on a meaningful family recipe and discussion with a peer
<b>Suggested Videos / Podcasts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Podcast: The Full English: the show that sees the world through food</li> <li>• Podcast: The Columbian Exchange (BCC)</li> <li>• Podcast: Comfort Eating with Grace Dent (The Guardian)</li> <li>• Podcast: Lunchbox Envy</li> <li>• Podcast: The One about Dutch Kitchen</li> <li>• Video: TEDx “There is something about food” - Vivian Elebiyo-Okojie</li> <li>• Video: TEDx “Food is not only culture, its diplomacy” - Leah Selim</li> </ul>

# Module Overview



MODULE 2	Understanding Sustainable Food Choices
<b>Overview</b>	This module explores the basics of sustainable food systems and choices, including how food is produced, transported, and consumed, and how these processes affect climate, nature, and society. Key concepts as circular economy, local and seasonal food, food waste, and ethical supply chains will be introduced.
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students can explain the core principles of sustainable food systems and describe how food production and consumption impact climate, nature, human and animal communities and their ethical dimensions.</li> <li>• Students can identify practical ways to make more sustainable food choices, such as reducing food waste, choosing ethically sourced products, or selecting seasonal/local ingredients, and justify why these choices matter for society and the planet.</li> </ul>
<b>Topics Covered</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Foundation of Sustainable Food Systems</li> <li>• Justice, Ethics, &amp; Responsibility</li> <li>• Conclusion</li> </ul>
<b>Case Study</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Dutch Cuisine Movement</li> <li>• Fork Ranger App</li> </ul>
<b>Suggested Exercises</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-reflection on Food and Climate Change</li> <li>• Self-reflection on Food Waste: My Fridge, My Impact</li> <li>• Discussion with peers about two statements on sustainable food affordability and food waste</li> <li>• Self-reflection on what's on your grocery list</li> </ul>
<b>Suggested Videos / Podcasts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Video: TEDx “Re-thinking Food: Transforming Food Systems” - Frank Eyhorn</li> <li>• Video: Environmental Impact - Noah Zerbe</li> <li>• Video: TEDx “How to make sustainable choices at the Supermarket - Frank Holleman</li> <li>• Video: TEDx “A diet that sustains the Planet” - Walter Willet</li> <li>• Video: Food Waste Challenge in Europe</li> <li>• Video: Transforming Food Systems for Justice, Climate, and Nutrition - UN Secretary António Guterres</li> <li>• Video: Understanding Food Supply Chain - Farm Traveler Podcast</li> <li>• Podcast: The Sustainable Food Trust</li> <li>• Podcast: Good Food</li> <li>• Podcast: Hot Farm</li> <li>• Podcast: The Food Chain (BCC)</li> </ul>

# Module Overview



MODULE 3	Food Literacy & Wellbeing
<b>Overview</b>	This module introduces the basics of food literacy and wellbeing, focusing on how everyday food choices and cooking practices influence personal health, as well as social and environmental outcomes. Key topics include healthy and balanced diets (with a focus on the Mediterranean Diet), self-cooking and practical healthy cooking skills, and understanding nutrition information, food labels, and ingredients.
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students can demonstrate an informed understanding of the principles of a healthy diet and their relevance to wellbeing, including the role of self-cooking, basic healthy cooking skills, and the interpretation of nutrition labelling and food ingredients.</li> <li>• Students can apply practical food-literacy knowledge to everyday food choices, using nutrition labels, ingredient lists, and healthy cooking principles to support personal wellbeing and more conscious food consumption.</li> </ul>
<b>Topics Covered</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Healthy Diet</li> <li>• Self-cooking and healthy cooking skills</li> <li>• Nutritional Labelling</li> <li>• Conclusion</li> </ul>
<b>Case Study</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Mediterranean Diet</li> <li>• Home Cooking Importance in Modern Life</li> </ul>
<b>Suggested Exercises</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Familiar Recipe Adaptation in alignment with the Mediterranean Diet</li> <li>• Learner practical exercise to practice knife skills, cooking healthier, and planning a meal</li> <li>• Improving your reading of nutrition labelling and analyse and explain nutritional and health claims</li> </ul>
<b>Suggested Videos / Podcasts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Video: TEDx “Food Literacy - it’s about more than just read the label” - Eric Schofield</li> <li>• Video: “Basic Knife Skills 101” - Alexis deBoschnek</li> <li>• Video: “How to (Actually) Follow a Recipe” - Techniquely with Lan Lam</li> <li>• Video: “Portuguese Kale Soup Recipe” - Fed by Sab.</li> <li>• Video: “Spanish Beans with Fish: Traditional Bean &amp; Seafood Stew Recipe” - Spain on a Fork</li> <li>• Video: “Eggplants pasta: Pasta alla Norma” - Recipe Tin Eats</li> <li>• Video “Understanding Food Labels with NHS Fife”</li> <li>• Video: “Reading Food Labels” - Dietitian Margaret Brum</li> <li>• Video: “Health Risks of ultra-processed foods” - Deena Adimoolam</li> </ul>

# Module Overview



MODULE 4	Food, Tourism, and Place-based Experiences
<b>Overview</b>	<p>This module explores the relationship between food, tourism, and place-based development, focusing on how local food practices shape cultural identity and visitor experiences. Key topics include gastronomy as cultural heritage, food-based storytelling, and the role of local markets, producers, and events in creating meaningful and sustainable tourism experiences for communities and destinations.</p>
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will be able to understand the connection between food, culture, and tourism, design and evaluate engaging food tourism experiences, gain practical skills through field visits, sensory explanation, and destination analysis.</li> <li>• Students will be able to apply principles of sustainable and place-based food tourism development, collaborate with community and industry stakeholders to explore innovation in food tourism, analyse and map food destinations and local culinary resources.</li> </ul>
<b>Topics Covered</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Food, Culture, and Tourism Foundations</li> <li>• Place-based Development: Concepts and Practice</li> <li>• Food Systems and Sustainability</li> <li>• Designing Food Tourism Experiences</li> <li>• Innovation, Community, and Industry Perspectives</li> <li>• Experiential Component</li> <li>• Conclusion</li> </ul>
<b>Case Study</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Burren Food Trail (IE)</li> <li>• Midlands Flavours (IE)</li> <li>• Sustainability for Food &amp; Drinks Businesses West Cork (IE)</li> <li>• Blas na hEireann (Taste of Ireland)</li> <li>• The Food Hub (IE)</li> <li>• The Kilkenny Food and Craft Experience Trail</li> </ul>
<b>Suggested Exercises</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-reflection exercise: food, memory, and place</li> <li>• Self-reflection exercise: mapping the taste of a place</li> <li>• Self-reflection exercise: tracing the journey of a meal</li> <li>• Self-reflection exercise: design a food-related festival</li> <li>• Self-reflection exercise: who wins? who decide?</li> <li>• Self-reflection exercise: heritage and food mapping in Kilkenny</li> </ul>
<b>Suggested Videos / Podcasts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Video – Ireland's first National Centre of Excellence Athenry, Co. Galway.</li> <li>• Video – taste the Island - a celebration of Ireland's food and drink</li> <li>• Video – Discover Good Food Ireland® Experiences</li> </ul>

# Module Overview



MODULE 5	Digital Skills for Food Innovation
<b>Overview</b>	<p>This module introduces how digital technologies are reshaping the food sector, with a focus on tools and applications that support sustainability, reduce food waste, and improve communication in food, tourism, and hospitality contexts. Key topics include the use of digital platforms, smart systems, and basic AI applications, as well as an overview of the future digital skills and competencies needed to address emerging workforce gaps in food-related SMEs across Europe.</p>
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will develop an understanding of how digital technologies and tools are transforming the food sector, including the use of apps, smart systems and basic AI applications that support sustainability, reduce food waste and improve communication within food, tourism and hospitality contexts.</li> <li>• Students will identify and build awareness of the future digital skills required in a modern food landscape, addressing current digital skills gaps in the workforce of food, food tourism and hospitality SMEs across Europe.</li> </ul>
<b>Topics Covered</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• The role of technology in modern food systems</li> <li>• Digital tools for sustainability</li> <li>• Food Systems and Sustainability</li> <li>• “AI Made Easy” - Understanding the basics</li> <li>• Digital Storytelling for Food Innovation</li> </ul>
<b>Case Study</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Lodge at Ashford Castle (Ireland)</li> <li>• PreciTaste: AI tool in the kitchen</li> </ul>
<b>Suggested Exercises</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-reflection exercise on the digital tools for sustainability</li> <li>• Self-reflection exercise on digital storytelling for food innovation</li> </ul>
<b>Suggested Videos / Podcasts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Video: Sustainability Mindsets &amp; Skills: Food Loss &amp; Waste - Conor Spacey</li> <li>• Book: ‘Delivering the Digital Restaurant’ - Meredith Sandland and Carl Osbourn</li> <li>• Book: ‘The Future of Food’ - Jorg Snoek and Stefan van Rompay</li> </ul>

# Module Overview



MODULE 6	Communication, Collaboration, and Service
<b>Overview</b>	<p>This module focuses on the role of communication, collaboration, and service in shaping contemporary food systems and food education. Learners explore how food is communicated through culture, narratives, and everyday practices, and how these messages influence values, behaviour, and decision-making. The module also examines collaborative approaches that bring together higher education, industry, and communities to address food-related challenges. Through service-based learning and real-world examples, learners consider how knowledge can be co-created and shared to support more inclusive, sustainable, and socially responsive food systems.</p>
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will be able to explain the role of communication and collaboration in creating inclusive, sustainable food systems.</li> <li>• Students will be able to analyse how service-based learning and community engagement strengthen food education outcomes.</li> <li>• Students will be able to apply collaborative approaches to real-world food, hospitality, and community challenges.</li> <li>• Students will be able to reflect on their own communication practices when working across disciplines, cultures, and sectors.</li> </ul>
<b>Topics Covered</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Communication and Storytelling in Food Systems</li> <li>• Collaboration across Education, Industry, and Community</li> <li>• Service-based Learning and Community Engagement</li> <li>• “AI Made Easy” - Understanding the basics</li> <li>• Conclusion</li> </ul>
<b>Case Study</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slow Food International</li> <li>• FoodSHIFT 2030</li> <li>• Too Good To Go</li> <li>• Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (IT)</li> </ul>
<b>Suggested Exercises</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-reflection exercise on working collaboratively on food systems</li> <li>• Self-reflection exercise on digital storytelling for food innovation</li> </ul>
<b>Suggested Videos / Podcasts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Podcast: Food for Europe</li> <li>• Video: Partnerships and Collaboration in Food Systems - FAO United Nations</li> <li>• Video: The Food Trails Project - Milan Urban Food Policy Pact</li> </ul>

# 06

## COMPETENCIES





## Competencies

The Food Eco-Culture Education curriculum supports the development of competencies that respond to the Erasmus+ Higher Education priorities of sustainability, digital transition, social inclusion, and employability. Through an interdisciplinary and practice-oriented approach, the curriculum equips students with knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are transferable across food, tourism, hospitality, education, and related sectors, while fostering responsible citizenship and lifelong learning.



## Upon Completion of the Curriculum, Students Will Have Developed the Ability to:

- ✓ Critically analyse food systems by integrating cultural, social, environmental, and economic perspectives, supporting informed and ethical decision-making.
- ✓ Apply sustainability and green transition principles to food-related practices, including responsible production, consumption, and waste reduction, in line with European environmental goals.
- ✓ Demonstrate food literacy and wellbeing competence, enabling healthier, more sustainable personal and professional food choices.
- ✓ Design and evaluate inclusive, place-based food and tourism experiences that create value for local communities and respect cultural diversity.
- ✓ Use and critically assess digital tools and basic AI applications relevant to food systems, communication, and innovation, contributing to the digital transition of food-related sectors.
- ✓ Communicate and collaborate effectively with diverse stakeholders, including communities, SMEs, educators, and visitors, across intercultural and interdisciplinary contexts.
- ✓ Adapt to evolving labour market needs by developing future-oriented skills such as creativity, problem-solving, reflection, and service-based learning.



# 07

## REFERENCES



## 07 – References

- FoodEcoCultureEdu Project Research Report.
- FoodEcoCultureEdu Student Validation Workshops (2025).
- European Commission (2021).
- Erasmus+ Programme Guide.



*Food is everything we are.  
It's an extension of nationalist  
feeling, ethnic feeling, your personal  
history, your province, your region,  
your tribe, your grandma.*

**Anthony Bourdain**





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Follow our Journey



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