



The logo for INCULTUM consists of the word "INCULTUM" in a white, uppercase, sans-serif font, centered within a horizontal brushstroke of reddish-brown paint.



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## **"The culture and food seminar/conference LECTIO MAGISTRALIS BY MASSIMO MONTANARI (FOOD HISTORIAN) ON 'FOOD IS CULTURE.'"**

On October 30, 2023, an interesting conference titled "Food is Culture" took place at the Museo delle Marionette in Palermo, near Piazza Marina. The keynote speaker for this congress was Massimo Montanari, who, until 2019, held the position of full professor of Medieval History at the School of Letters and Cultural Heritage at the University of Bologna, where he also taught Food History and directed the European Master's program in "History and Culture of Food." He also teaches at the University of Gastronomic Sciences in Pollenzo.

Internationally renowned, Massimo Montanari is considered one of the leading experts in the field of food history. He has primarily focused his scholarly attention on two closely interconnected research areas: agricultural history and food history, both of which serve as primary avenues for reconstructing medieval society in its entirety. This encompasses economic and social structures, such as labor relations, power dynamics, and ownership, as well as the tangible and material aspects of daily life, cultural values, and mentalities. Within these research domains, his studies on the history of food have gained special prominence. Food history is seen as a comprehensive field that intersects with economics, institutions, and culture.

Massimo Montanari also serves as the President of the scientific committee that supports the nomination of "The Italian Home Kitchen" as an intangible cultural heritage of UNESCO.

Dr. Montanari discussed the importance of food and eating in general, which, for one reason or another, will always be deeply rooted in our lives, whether as an act of conviviality, sharing, pleasure, or a simple act of survival.

He emphasized how food and culture are intricately connected and that any effort to convey culture to tourists cannot avoid delving into the typical dishes of one's culture as they represent the true cultural roots.

The event was structured in two parts: the first part was explicitly descriptive, where Dr. Montanari shared his viewpoints regarding food and, especially, the reasons why culture and food are so closely intertwined. The second part, on the other hand, was an open discussion where all participants were free to engage with him, ask questions at the microphone, and share their insights.

More than 80 people attended the event, with the majority being students from the master's degree programs in cultural heritage valorization and Eno gastronomic communication. Also in attendance were many professors and individuals personally interested in engaging with him.

This event was made possible thanks to the close collaboration being fostered between the GAL and the University of Palermo, with the valuable contribution of our communication and marketing expert, Professor Maurilio Caracci, who is a lecturer at the university since 1999.

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It's worth highlighting that we have begun to incorporate the aspect of food as a means to expand and enhance tourist flows through cultural itineraries. This approach is particularly significant in our Sicilian context because food largely represents the culture from which we originate. It's no secret that Sicily has historically been influenced by various cultures, being at the center of the Mediterranean, absorbing many different habits and cultural influences within the same culture, ultimately resulting in this fusion of inputs. For instance, when we think of dishes like couscous with fish in the province of Trapani or cassata, we immediately recognize traces of Arab culture.

As we consistently emphasize innovation and sustainable actions in the INCULTUM project, even for the future, it is inevitable to consider how to make culture and tourism more appealing, especially to young people. Enogastronomic communication is an aspect that currently interests many people, from young individuals to the older generation. Consequently, our pilot project has decided to collaborate with the new university degree program to delve into this aspect as a tool for increasing tourist flows and diversifying cultural communication.