



# Press release

November 2022

Artisanal know-how and culture of  
**baguette bread**

registered at  
**UNESCO !**



Confédération Nationale  
de la Boulangerie  
et Boulangerie-Pâtisserie  
Française

[www.boulangerie.org](http://www.boulangerie.org)



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## Why this candidacy ?

In **2017**, the National Confederation of the French Bakery and Confectionery Industry (CNBPF), chaired by Dominique Anract, launched **the process to register the artisanal skills and culture of the baguette on UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**.

Convinced that the **values of conviviality and sharing, as well as the popular character and the social link conveyed by the baguette** made its know-how and its culture worthy of being recognized by Unesco, the artisan bakers also wished to **raise awareness of the richness of the skills linked to the preparation of the baguette and the importance of passing them on to future generations**.

This is particularly important regarding the threats to these traditional skills: industrialization, decline in the number of bakeries, especially in rural areas. In 1970, there were 55,000 artisanal bakeries (one bakery for every 790 inhabitants) compared to 35,000 today (one for every 2,000 inhabitants), an average of 400 bakeries loss per year since 1970. The number of bakeries and pastry shops has fallen sharply, especially in rural communities.



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***Dominique Anract, President of the National Confederation of French Bakery and Pastry***

*"It is a recognition for the community of artisan bakers and for the National Confederation of French Bakeries and Confectionery Industry (CNBPF). The baguette is flour, water, salt, yeast and the know-how of the craftsman."*

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***The National Confederation of French Bakery and Pastry is the profesional organization that represents and defends the general, material and moral interests of the 33,000 artisan bakers in France. The CNBPF federates 94 departmental professional groups and 13 bakery regions throughout France.***



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# How was the application prepared ?

To prepare the candidacy, the CNBPF was able to count on the mobilization of several actors:

## A steering committee

Bringing together representatives of the different actors in the wheat-flour-bread chain (millers, cereal producers, yeast producers, equipment manufacturers, bakers, employees of the artisanal bakery, baker apprentices, teachers, trainers, etc.) and chaired by Dominique Anract, president of the CNBPF.),

## A scientific committee

Bringing together specialists with complementary expertise (historian, sociologist, anthropologist, training specialist, etc.) and chaired by Bruno Laurioux, president of the European Institute of Food History and Cultures,

## A support committee

Bringing together several hundred people throughout the world, including many French parliamentarians, and chaired by Catherine Dumas, Senator of Paris.



***Bruno Laurioux, President of the European Institute of Food History and Cultures and President of the Scientific Committee***

*"The IEHCA, which had initiated the process of inscription of the Gastronomic Meal of the French, put its expertise and experience in the field of intangible cultural heritage of food at the service of the candidacy. We were happy to take part in this great adventure and to see this collective effort crowned with success."*





# What is the content of the application ?

The baguette is emblematic of French artisanal and food heritage. Every day, **12 million French people push the door of a bakery**, and more than **6 billion baguettes are produced each year**. Going to the bakery is a **real social practice that rhythms the life of French** people all over the country: the oppositions between social classes, regions and cities-rural areas are transcended.

A 2018 poll conducted by CSA revealed that **9 out of 10 French people support this candidacy!** The President of the French Republic Emmanuel Macron gave his "full and complete" support and called the wand "250 grams of magic and perfection."



**Catherine DUMAS, Senator of Paris, Councillor of Paris President of the Support Committee for the UNESCO candidature**

*« This UNESCO listing reflects a daily social practice that sets the pace for French life and transcends social categories, age groups and geographical boundaries. It enhances the value of the artisanal bakery and, beyond that, the entire industry (farmers, millers, yeast and salt producers). Finally, it protects our baguette, a national marker of French identity, well anchored in our territories. Congratulations to the 33,000 bakers in France ! »*





In France, the baguette is taken for granted and it is not always easy to put words on social practices that we have known since childhood. In order to finely characterize these practices, the bakers were able to count on the **expertise of the European Institute of Food History and Cultures (IEHCA) and the University of Tours**, whose Food Unit brings together many scientific fields around the transversal theme of food. Master's students from the University of Tours questioned and observed bakers and baguette lovers as part of an **anthropological survey** conducted to enrich the application conducted in 2019-2020.



***Claire Verriele, then a student in a Master's degree in sociology  
"Research in the social sciences" at the University of Tours***

*" This experience allowed me to know the French in their bakeries. I realized the importance of these places in our country. We don't necessarily realize it, but in every neighborhood, this shop is present and represents, for some isolated people, their only human contact of the day. The daily act of buying a baguette allows a privileged relationship with the members of the bakery."*

**The candidacy is structured in two parts: artisanal know-how and the culture of the baguette.** Thus, this candidacy emanates from the community of bakers but also from baguette lovers in France and throughout the world!







## The candidacy is...

**Enhancing the value of the entire industry :** To achieve this candidacy, bakers relied on all the professionals in the wheat-flour-bread industry (millers, cereal producers, yeast producers, equipment manufacturers, bakery farmers, employees of artisanal bakeries, bakery apprentices, teachers, trainers, etc.). With a surface area of 5 million hectares, soft wheat covers more than a quarter of French arable land.

**Popular and inclusive :** the application bears witness to a daily social practice that sets the pace for French life, which is popular and inclusive and transcends social categories, age groups and geographical boundaries.

**Apprenticeship-oriented :** the application focuses on the transmission of know-how through apprenticeship, which concerns more than 29,000 people in the bakery-pastry industry throughout France. The aim is to raise awareness of the wealth of skills involved in preparing a baguette and the importance of passing them on to future generations.

**Rooted in the regions :** 3 out of 4 bakeries in France have fewer than 6 employees and are spread throughout the country. They make a significant contribution to the preservation of town centers and the dynamism of the regions. In remote rural areas, the bakery is often the only store open.

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### **Christiane Lambert, President of the National Federation of Farmers' Unions**



*"This high distinction granted to the "artisanal know-how and culture of the baguette" -- a symbol of France in itself! -- is the recognition of the know-how of soft wheat cultivation in France, a first in Europe. One hectare of wheat can produce 25,000 250g baguettes, grown in a sustainable and responsible manner by farmers whose activity creates and maintains jobs for dynamic territories. They are the ones who maintain the social link thanks to quality, traceable and healthy products. Farmers are proud to be the first link in a long and beautiful tradition, which contributes to the identity of France and deserves to be noticed and protected."*



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**Jean-François Loiseau, President of the French Milling Association, President of Intercéréales**

*"The inclusion of the craft skills and culture of the baguette in the Intangible Heritage of Humanity is a real source of pride for the actors of the French cereal industry. A symbol of the French art of living, the baguette relies on the know-how of cereal farmers, storage facilities and millers. UNESCO thus recognizes the talent of the professionals and the quality of the raw materials (soft wheat, flour) necessary to the elaboration of our baguette".*



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**Stéphane Lacroix, President of the French Yeast Trade Union Chamber**

*"What distinguishes the French baguette from sourdough breads is the yeast fermentation and its lightness. Sourdough fermentation is undeniably slower than yeast fermentation. The yeast allowed the fermentation of the bread directly, facilitating the elongation of the bread and therefore the predominance of the crust whose fineness and golden coloring differentiates it from thick crust breads of gray color. The crumb is more honeycombed and therefore lighter. Over the years, our French baguette has become the emblem of French excellence and is appreciated throughout the world thanks to the mastery of direct yeast fermentation and the know-how of our French bakers."*





# **A candidacy to safeguard our heritage**

The purpose of the 2003 UNESCO Convention is the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, especially in the face of globalization and the standardization of lifestyles. The challenge of nominations to the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage is to ensure that the practices being defended continue. Each nomination contains safeguarding measures to protect the element (especially in light of the greater visibility associated with the inscription, which could damage and distort the element), to ensure that it endures, that it is promoted in a reasoned manner, and that it continues to be transmitted from generation to generation. The safeguard measures component is therefore crucial. These are concrete actions to be implemented if the application is accepted.

**In order to face the risks which weigh on the artisanal know-how and the culture of the baguette, the artisanal bakers propose to set up safeguard measures as regards transmission, documentation and research, and promotion:**

## **Transmission**

- **Create a Certificate of Professional Competence mainly focused on the baguette.** This short training course for people who are far from employment would lead to a diploma, which would facilitate the setting up of integration projects.
- **Formalize the role of the baguette in the existing diplomas.**
- **Add a cultural module to the training of bakers and bakery salesmen to address bakery know-how as an element of heritage.**

## **Documentation and research**

- **To grant an annual doctoral scholarship Industrial Training Conventions through Research in humanities and social sciences.**
- **To carry out international actions** (colloquiums/seminars) with other elements linked to food know-how inscribed in UNESCO.
- **Create a website that will include:** a virtual library of the baguette, its know-how and culture; an inventory of experts working in connection with the element; links to existing training courses; and information on past and future promotion activities.



## Promotion

- **To set up a day of the artisanal baguette.** This event, which could be held during the Heritage Days, would take the form of an "Open Bakehouse Day". It would allow to present to the public the specificities of these artisanal skills and to allow them to appreciate and distinguish the artisanal baguettes, all unique, from other standardized products. This device, through a local mediation, would make each baker the ambassador of his trade and would underline the specificity of buying baguettes from local bakers. It would be complemented by a digital campaign adapted to the different regions (video clips highlighting bakers from all regions), with a particular focus on rural areas, which are losing the most bakeries.
- **Promote the national competition for the Best Traditional French Baguette** by creating a network of contact points (one per region) and ensuring better distribution of information. This network will aim to encourage trainers and apprenticeship masters to prepare young people for the competition and to help them
- **Develop the National Competition for the Best Traditional French Baguette by :**
  - 1) adding tests for other types of baguettes;
  - 2) expanding participation to young people. A "baguette" mark would be taken into account for the Best Young Bakers of France competition, for the "One of the Best Apprentices of France" competition and for the CAP exams. This score would serve as a preselection and the "youth final " would take place during the Bread Festival.
- **Create a Baguette Conservatory** to showcase and transmit the know-how and culture of the baguette, through a reference and interactive exhibition ranging from the production of cereals to the consumption of the baguette, sensory workshops on how to taste and choose a baguette, training courses and master classes for all, and public debates.





## A collective success

Well surrounded, the bakers worked hard and obtained a first victory with **the inscription, in 2018, of their candidacy to the National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage** by the experts of the Committee of Ethnological and Intangible Heritage (CPEI). This step was an essential prerequisite to be able to present themselves to UNESCO.

**In March 2021, the candidacy was chosen to be the file that will represent France at UNESCO.** As France can only present one candidature every two years, the bakers were honored that their candidature was chosen in March 2021 by France to carry our colors to UNESCO.

Since March 2021, the application is being examined by the UNESCO.

The UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, meeting in Rabat, Morocco, from Monday, **November 28 to Saturday, December 3, 2022**, for its seventeenth session, announced its decision : **artisanal know-how and culture of baguette bread are registered on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO.**

Dominique Anract, President of the CNBPF, was in Rabat to defend this candidacy and to convince the member states. He was able to count on the support of Her Excellency Mrs. Véronique Roger-Lacan, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of France to UNESCO.

**2017**

*The candidacy is launched by the CNBPF*



**2018**

*Inscription of candidacy to the National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage*

**2021**

*The candidacy was chosen to be the file that will represent France at UNESCO*

**2022**

*Decision of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO*







**Jean-Pierre Lafon, Ambassador of France, Co-chairman of the support committee for the nomination**

*"Inscribing the French baguette in the list of intangible heritage UNESCO pays tribute to one of the elements of our daily life and beyond the know-how of our artisan bakers whose influence has largely exceeded our borders. It is a tribute and an encouragement to the thirty two thousand bakers who every day bring out the baguette and animate a lively network in our villages and neighborhoods which is part of our deep identity."*

**Véronique Roger-Lacan, Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of France to UNESCO**

*"Through the traditional know-how that characterizes it, the baguette is a symbol of UNESCO's founding universalism: the right to food, to training and to a profession as well as to one's culture. The baguette and the bakers are therefore Ambassadors of the UN's universalism and of the French excellence abroad. Thanks to this inscription on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the know-how of bakers, often ancestral, will be better preserved and more widely recognized throughout the world."*



**Guillaume Gomez, personal representative of the President to promote French gastronomy in France**

*"This listing is a reminder, if one were needed, that food practices or cultures are fully constitutive of intangible cultural heritage. No to the standardization of food! It is our duty to preserve the diversity of food cultures and artisanal know-how throughout the world, because we are what we eat. My congratulations and gratitude to the artisan bakers and all the professionals who allow us to have access to the baguette every day!"*

**Proud of the work accomplished for the preparation of this candidacy, the artisanal bakers would like to express their gratitude to all the people and structures that participated in this beautiful collective adventure.**

**To find out more, watch the film of the application at the following link :**

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=5rL77Pc0yMk&t=2s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5rL77Pc0yMk&t=2s)



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