



**UNIVERSITÀ  
DI PARMA**



**EMBRACING CULTURAL IDENTITIES THROUGH FOOD**

**ERASMUS+ Blended Intensive Programme call for applications**

**Bip Ref. 2023-1-IT02-KA131-HED-000138353-6**



**Co-funded by the  
European Union**

The **University of Parma** (Italy), jointly with the **University of Évora** (Portugal), the **University of Gävle** (Sweden) offer the opportunity to participate in an **ERASMUS+ Blended Intensive Program** (BIPs). The Blended Intensive Program is officially approved by the EU in the framework of the ERASMUS+ 2021/2027.

BIPs are one of the new and innovative formats of student mobility introduced by the new Erasmus+ 2021/2027 Program. These programs, jointly developed by multiple higher education institutions, feature advanced and innovative pedagogical approaches that combine short-term face-to-face (physical) mobilities with portions of virtual learning.

BIPs are inherently transnational and transdisciplinary, as curricula are developed and taught together by partner institutions in different countries. The combination of in-person and virtual learning spaces allows students and instructors to experience and exchange highly collaborative, challenge-based, and research-stepped methods of teaching and learning.

During the mandatory virtual component of the program, participants will have the chance to enhance and refine their expertise concerning Business development, managing, sustainability in sciences and ice breaking skills development, aligning with the European Commission's commitment to leverage digital technologies for education and foster sustainability methodologies above all.

### General information about the course

**Cost:** free of charge

**Study period and scope:**

VIRTUAL attendance - 9 to 29 /06/2025 (16 hr) and 16/07/2025 (4hr)

IN-PERSON attendance in University of Parma, Italy - 07/07 to 11/07/2025 (22 hr)

**Language of instruction:** English – B1

**ECTS for participation in the programme:** 6 ECTS

**Number of places:** 30 (25 from abroad/ 5 from Parma)

**Deadline for application:** April 27<sup>th</sup>

## The call for applicants

### Description of the program

Food is a powerful expression of cultural identity and diversity, fostering social bonds while also preserving cultural distinctions. In 2010, food was first recognized on UNESCO's World Heritage lists, underscoring its role in cultural heritage and the rise of identity claims associated with it. While this may seem like a recent phenomenon, food has historically played a pivotal role in shaping identities and fostering cross-cultural exchanges. Eating habits are closely tied to cultural identity, shaped by a range of factors including religious traditions, social groups, income, dietary restrictions, and cultural prohibitions. Social transformations over time have introduced new food practices, leading to new identities that became part of daily life and reflected emerging needs arising from economic, social, and technological changes. Moreover, the accelerated population growth poses challenges to the ability to produce enough food to feed an increasingly larger number of people. In this process, there may be losses related to the knowledge of previous food practices.

The BIP aims to examine food as a vehicle for cultural identity formation, exploring how food heritage is negotiated between past and present identities and how it supports the integration of social groups into the global economy. This is important because it highlights food as a dynamic and multifaceted element of cultural identity that bridges history, tradition, and modernity. By exploring how food heritage is negotiated between past and present identities, the BIP sheds light on the ways communities maintain their cultural distinctiveness while adapting to contemporary challenges. Furthermore, understanding how food supports the integration of social groups into the global economy underscores its role in fostering economic inclusion and global interconnectedness, making it a key factor in addressing issues of cultural preservation, social cohesion, and economic development in an increasingly globalized world.

The goal of the BIP is to encourage students to engage actively in safeguarding cultural heritage. Students will be aware that cultural heritage is not something static, but an evolving construct shaped by the narrative of shared experiences between cultures.

History education offers an analytical framework that enhances understanding of identity development by situating the history of food within the broader context of Europe's formation. Through an innovative approach that fosters a productive dialogue between historical narratives and contemporary experiences, students are expected to acquire tools for a deeper understanding of

ongoing interactions and exchanges within Europe, as well as between Europe and other cultures around the world.

Combining scientific approaches from socio-historical research (such as the production of oral sources, archival and bibliographic research, questionnaires, and statistical analyses) with the use of social media, students will be able to convey to a wide audience the importance of food culture as a means of social cohesion.

Beyond individual academic development, the program emphasizes knowledge transfer and community involvement. Students produce educational materials to raise awareness of food heritage and sustainability, ensuring their research reaches a wider audience through cultural institutions, communities, and online platforms.

These outcomes prepare students for careers in education, policymaking, research, media, and the food industry, equipping them with research proficiency, cross-cultural communication, and interdisciplinary problem-solving skills. By the end of the program, they will have strengthened their theoretical foundation and practical expertise, emerged as competent professionals and engaged global citizens.

Four phases define this BIP:

- i) **online classes** on the basic theoretical concepts.
- ii) **in-person experiences** involving different methods of inquiry.
- iii) **autonomous inter/transdisciplinary project**, done individually or in a group (with online tutorial support), creating a medial product (podcast, video, fanzine, website, contents for social network, etc.), followed by discussion and assessment.
- iv) **transfer of knowledge**, the development of projects that involve local communities, through materials produced within the scope of the BIP, and that raise awareness of the need to preserve food as cultural heritage, emphasizing the necessity of safeguarding it.

### Teaching methodologies

Pre-recorded lectures, on-field class, case-studies presentations, self-learning, and online group meetings for data analysis and discussion.

Autonomous learning is a crucial aspect of the program, encouraging students to combine individual study with group discussions. Reading selected materials and conducting personal research provide the necessary tools to better understand topics related to food identity and globalization. During virtual and in-person meetings, students share ideas, analyze data, and collaborate on final projects, refining their interpretation and argumentation skills. This approach promotes independence, facilitates continuous interaction, and strengthens research and analytical competencies.

Overall, the Blended Intensive Program stands out for its integration of diverse teaching methodologies, creating a dynamic, interactive, and immersive learning experience. By combining theoretical lessons, field experiences, case study analysis, independent study, interdisciplinary projects, and community involvement, the program offers a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach. This model enables students to develop a critical understanding of the subject, apply theory to practical contexts, and acquire interdisciplinary skills in history, economics, food sciences, and cultural studies. Through a collaborative and interactive environment, the BIP ensures not only the acquisition of theoretical knowledge but also the development of professional skills applicable to fields related to sustainability, culture, and global business.

### Program content, detailing physical and virtual components

#### **Virtual modules: 16hr**

Session 1 (4hr): Presentation of the BIP programme, ice breaking. In the first part of the virtual meeting, students will be asked to introduce to each other. During this session, the instructors will present the course and the final objectives to be achieved. How to build a solid body of soft skills such as, for instance, presenting data to experts will be discussed. In the second part of the 1st session, students will be divided in teams and will start working at the final project with the help of the instructors.

Session 2 (4hr): **Food as Cultural Heritage**: Analysing food supply and its environmental impact from a historical perspective; exploring food traditions and cross-cultural blending within migrant and diasporic communities. During this session, the following topics will be analyzed: the culture of food in the early modern period, food and religion, the construction of identity in diasporic communities from the early modern period to the present day, and migrant entrepreneurship and Italian

entrepreneurs in the global context. The fields of study covered in this first session are modern and contemporary history, food history, global history, social and economic history. Speakers will be recruited by University of Parma and Evora.

Session 3: (8hr): **Food as a Glocal Identity**: Examining the effects of globalization and media on the shaping of cultural identity through the spreading of food habits and traditional products. During this session, the following topics will be analyzed: production, distribution, and consumption of typical products, designations of origin and the birth of "Made in Italy," tradition and innovation in traditional products, globalization, and multiethnic food consumption. The fields of study covered in this second session are: economic history, food history, rural history, global history, and the history of international trade, modern retail, history of marketing, history of consumption. Speakers will be recruited by University of Parma.

### **Physical module: 22hr**

During the summer school, students will have the opportunity to directly experience the topics covered in the online lessons. The theme of food as cultural heritage will be explored during the visit to the *Association for the Integration of Women* and the restaurant *Roots*. This association, based in Modena, focuses on integrating migrant women into the workforce, with particular attention to employment in the restaurant industry.

Engaging in dialogue with members of the association and the women participating in the training program will allow students to explore a business model based on cultural exchange, aimed at promoting cultural integration and the definition of personal identity within a cross-cultural exchange context.

The theme of food as glocal identity will be addressed through visits to local producer consortia of Emilia's renowned specialties, such as Prosciutto di Parma and Traditional Balsamic Vinegar of Modena. These products have successfully redefined their identity within the context of globalization, continuously balancing tradition and innovation.

During the summer school, a space will be dedicated to exploring historical research methodology through the presentation of unpublished archival sources. Using documentation from the modern and contemporary ages, students will have the opportunity to deepen their understanding of reading and utilizing archival sources to explore aspects of economic and social history related to

food. Examining historical cases related to the evolution of food traditions and studying sustainability initiatives help to understand the connections between food, economy, and society. Through group discussions, students identify key points from the cases analyzed and develop a critical approach.

The in-person phase of the program includes field lessons, which enable students to directly apply theory to real-world contexts. Through visits to local producer consortia, such as those for Prosciutto di Parma and Traditional Balsamic Vinegar of Modena, students can understand how traditional products maintain their identity in a globalized context. Interaction with migrant communities at *Roots* Restaurant and the *Association for the Integration of Women* also offers an opportunity to analyze food as a tool for cultural and workforce inclusion. This direct experience fosters effective and immersive learning, enhancing intercultural exchange and sensory engagement through observation, tasting, and hands-on practice.

Another key component of the program is project-based learning, which enables students to apply acquired knowledge by creating multimedia content. Producing podcasts, videos, digital fanzines, or social media campaigns gives them the opportunity to disseminate and raise awareness about the significance of food as a cultural heritage element. Through online tutorials and constant feedback from instructors, students are guided through the development of their projects, which will later be presented and evaluated in an academic setting. This approach not only fosters creativity and innovation but also makes learning more concrete and applicable to both academic and social contexts.

A distinctive feature of the BIP is its strong emphasis on social impact through knowledge transfer and community engagement. Students develop educational materials aimed at raising public awareness about the importance of preserving food traditions. These materials are then disseminated locally and digitally, involving communities, cultural organizations, and online platforms. In this way, the program extends beyond academic training, aiming to build connections between students and local stakeholders, contributing to lasting educational impact, and promoting knowledge dissemination beyond the university environment.

## Conditions for Admission

This BIP has been designed for bachelor's and master's degree students, as well as for doctoral students.

Applicants may come from a diversity of backgrounds, (History, Economics, Political science, Food science etc.) countries and cultures.

The selection for this programme will be based on the evaluation of submitted CVs and statements of personal motivation - Why have you applied for this BIP? What are your expectations?

## How to apply

- Students should complete the [APPLICATION FORM](#)

## Selection procedure

An appointed Committee of the organizer and co-organizer institution will carry out the selection procedure.

Students should expect to hear back about the result of their application by 15th May 2025.

Selected students must communicate their acceptance or withdrawal within 5 days from the publication of the selection results by contacting their university program coordinator. Selected students will be contacted with further instructions upon completion of the selection procedures.

## Financial support

The attendance of the Blended Intensive Programme may be covered by an ERASMUS+ SMS Short Mobility Grant for all mobile students (excluding students from the hosting University).

This financial support may only be guaranteed by the selected student's home University. The University of origin of each selected student is fully for the management of the financial aspects of the mobilities in accordance with the provisions of the competent ERASMUS+ National Agency.

No financial support is foreseen for host institution students as they will not be traveling for the purposes of participation in this program (non-mobile participants).

Please refer to your local coordinator or Erasmus/International Relations Office for any further information related to the financial support made available.



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