



ARTS & CULTURE

French Baguette Gets UNESCO Recognition

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UNESCO, the cultural organization of the United Nations, voted this week to recognize the importance of the French baguette.

The international experts gathered in Morocco to discuss the French bread and other subjects, including a traditional Japanese dance and the drink called rum from Cuba.

The baguette is a long, narrow tube-shaped bread. It is made of simple **ingredients**: water, flour, yeast and salt. It dates back a few hundred years in its early form. But, the baguette grew wildly popular during the 1920s and became a **staple** in French kitchens.

However, France's cultural agency has warned that the country's bread making tradition is failing. About 400 bakeries have closed every year since 1972, the agency reported.

At the start of 2022, French bakers and farmers criticized Leclerc, a large food store group, for making low-cost, low quality bread.

They said the store's bread, which cost just 30 cents, was not as good as the bread from traditional bakeries where it costs about a dollar.

Marine Fourchier lives in Paris. She said it is easy now to get a bad baguette in the city.

"It's the traditional baguette from the traditional bakery that's in danger. It's about quality not quantity," she said.

Audrey Azoulay leads UNESCO and formerly served as France's culture minister. She said buying and eating baguettes is a "daily **ritual**" in France. Ten billion are sold in the country each year.

“It is important that such craft knowledge and social **practices** can continue to exist in the future,” she continued.

The French government will start a yearly baguette event, called “Open Bakehouse Day” to expand public understanding of the bread making tradition.

Asma Farhat is a baker at Julien’s Bakery near the Champs-Elysee in Paris. She said “you can’t have a **proper** meal” without a baguette.

In addition to the rum, the Japanese dance and the bread, UNESCO honored many more traditions in places including Hungary, Greece, Guatemala and South Korea.

I’m Dan Friedell.

Dan Friedell adapted this story for VOA Learning English based on a report by the Associated Press.

Words in This Story

ingredient – *n.* one of the things used to make a food product

staple – *n.* an important food eaten often

ritual – *n.* an activity that happens daily or regularly

practice – *n.* something done often, or a usual custom

proper – *adj.* correct or following traditional standards

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