



europeana
food and drink

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Europeana Food and Drink

Editorial Guidelines for Content



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1. The Guidelines

3.1 Know Thy Audiences (and their needs)

As suggested above, audience identification and analysis come first. By having undergone the task of mapping your audiences against your content, you are one step closer in being ready to meet commercial demand.

Document interactions on your social media, use metrics to find out what people search in your collection, analyse comments and requests for information. Have brainstorming sessions with a crossover team from your staff (curators, picture librarians, gallery assistants, and marketing) to do these mappings. Your content, commercially, is as good as the demand of it is in the market, regardless of its artistic or educational value.

The “content is king” approach that many GLAMS blindly follow, works well to a certain degree but has not proven to support commercial re-use. Paraphrasing Nancy Proctor, Deputy Director for Digital Experience at Baltimore Museum of Art, moving “[From the Acropolis to the Agora](#)”. Referring mainly to the museum as a distributed network of relationships and meaning, it urges museums to develop collaborative environments in the museum and use participative design methodologies to develop their offering. This model could also be applied when selecting and curating content for commercial and creative re-use: be amongst the people, the Agora, finding out what they need from you, how they are already using your assets and what else can be done to increase their engagement, rather than being high on the Acropolis, remote from public discussions, unaware of their wants and needs, not listening to demand.

Tip:

Front-of-house staff usually are a source of information about your core audiences. Ask them.

A good example from the National Gallery in London is the painting the [Execution of Lady Jane Grey](#). Thought by curators and experts of the Gallery as a lesser painting, it was not selected as a “highlight painting” and thus not reproduced in products in the Gallery Shop. Public demand though instigated that it was included in the selection and this was knowledge that Front of House staff painstakingly passed on to the management, insisting that customers were asking for reproductions of the painting and souvenirs with it.

3.3 Know Thy Strengths

Half of the Europeana Food and Drink content providers indicated that they already know there is commercial interest or demand for their selection of content. In most cases, it is content with rich storytelling potential that can be curated into tightly packed collections, such as recipes from a certain era that would appeal to food historians, food writers and chefs and restaurants who offer heritage menus.

Tip:

Facilitate re-use. Involve your audience into the making-of. Curate it, expose it and make it really easy for people to access your content.

If, for example, you have a great book of heritage recipes in Latin, such as the ICCU example of the image below, “De re coquinaria”, the foremost collection of Roman recipes, think of finding ways to make this accessible. One idea is to use crowd-sourced methodology for transcribing the recipes, similarly to projects such as the [Ancient Lives](#). This project demonstrated that crowdsourcing could be a really effective way to engage with interested communities and rally them around a heritage preservation cause.

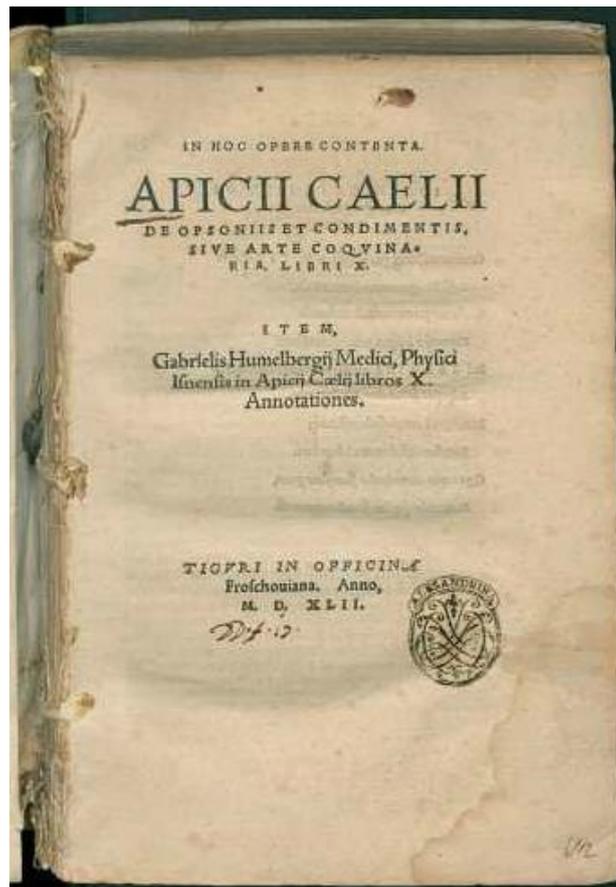


Figure 2: “De re coquinaria”, the outmost collection of Roman recipes from the ICCU selection

Heritage cooking is a growing trend, with archaeologists collaborating with chefs and ceramicists to re-create heritage culinary experiences. [Minoan Tastes](#) is a group which does this through a cross-sector collaboration that capitalises on the culinary and cultural heritage tourism trend in Crete. If you own assets that showcase heritage cuisine (recipes, ancient pottery and cooking vessels, old food processing artefacts and machines etc) curate them with this trend in mind and promote these collections to the relevant communities.

UNESCO is accepting nominations for intangible heritage elements that concerned communities and States Parties consider require urgent measures to keep them alive. The [Committee](#) meets annually to evaluate nominations proposed by [States Parties to the 2003 Convention](#) and decide whether or not to inscribe those cultural practices and expressions of intangible heritage on the Convention's Lists. Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.



Figure 3: Traditional Mexican cuisine - ancestral, ongoing community culture, the Michoacán paradigm

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National cuisines such as [Mexican](#), French and Japanese cuisines have been designated Heritage Status. Also regional cuisines, such as the [Mediterranean cuisine](#). One of the reasons for nomination was “R.3: Safeguarding measures focus on raising awareness, transmission, documentation, revitalization as well as legislative actions;

emphasis is placed on strengthening cooperation mechanisms between and among the communities and States concerned". Through good documentation and 'transmission', sharing, GLAMS comply with UNESCO's directives for the preservation of intangible heritage.

Even individual practices and food customs and traditions, such as the [Lavash](#), the Armenian bread whose preparation is closely linked to Armenian expression of culture, have also been awarded heritage status.

Tip:

Think about working towards nominating assets in your collection as expressions of cultures they represent and which are threatened with extinction. Is there a cultural practice represented amongst your collections that needs preserving and promoting as intangible heritage in need of preserving? Do you hold some of the last physical or digital remnants, a testimony of a dying social and cultural practice that relates to food and drink and our intangible heritage of togetherness, human and nature? If so, nominate it.

3.4 Know Thy Ambassadors

There are already people out there that are advocating passionately and engaging meaningfully with your content. Find them. Speak to them. Invite them for collaborations.

At the National Gallery, Food historian Gillian Riley was invited to the [National Gallery Podcast](#) to talk about one of the paintings she included in her 'A Feast for the Eyes', cookery book inspired by the Gallery's collection. At the end of the podcast, this recipe was offered as a PDF. Book sales were boosted as a result.

Tip:

Once you have mapped out your audiences, locate the thought leaders in each segment. Invite them to curate or re-interpret your collections.

The most successful partnerships are cross-sector collaborations. Europeana Food and Drink has a very diverse audience profile. Find experts in related or opposite fields and invite them to look at your collections through their expertise. You would be surprised what a chef can create inspired by your collections or what a chemist or nutrition specialist can say about the nutrient components in your recipe collections or what seed preservation activist groups can draw from creatively to illustrate their campaigns. There may be bloggers writing about you, twitter hashtags that refer to you and other discussions taking place where you are mentioned, but not aware of.

3.5 Know Thy Themes

The project has a strong thematic focus which was reflected in the content selection. The themes set out in the beginning and developed during the learning phase of the project were broadly reflected in the selected content:

- Cultural
- Social
- Cultural/social
- Industrial
- Industrial/craft
- Nostalgia
- Daily life
- Emigration
- Tradition

The selected content also had strong links to events, celebrations, agricultural seasonal circles that are reflected in Christian holidays, memory days and festivities.

Tip:

Use your semantic technologies. Invest in good documentation.

Work with your curators to encourage them to apply robust and rich thematic ontologies on your content. Use your CMS search and filter functions to find thematic content. Use search terms that may or may not be directly related to food and drink or a combination of words.

Do not dismiss antonym concepts, such as famine, alcoholism, fasting. Communities of re-use may have an interest in content that highlights social issues such as third world famine, the problems of overindulgence in food (obesity) or drink, and your content may be just the source material they need to illustrate their campaign or product.