

TUNISIAN HARISSA

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF HUMANITY

Tunisian harissa was officially registered on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage List in December 2022. This registration is the international recognition of a purely Tunisian culinary tradition and heritage linked to the production of harissa.



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Indeed, harissa is not just a condiment strongly rooted in the terroir and national culinary traditions, it is also an identity and an element of social cohesion. With this international listing, Tunisia has committed to taking measures to safeguard protected cultural and culinary practices and thus ensure their continued transmission from generation to generation.

Inscription on UNESCO's list represents an important asset for Tunisia's cultural diplomacy, as it is recognized by the 181 member countries. Today, nearly 700 practices and traditions that represent the world's intangible heritage have been registered with UNESCO.

In addition to the know-how around harissa, Tunisia has also already registered the traditions related to Sejnane pottery and charfiya fishing on the Kerkennah Islands.

This international recognition around the national flagship product will certainly help open new paths of valuing Tunisian know-how and will further strengthen the reputation of harissa abroad.

A GENUINE PUBLIC-PRIVATE INTERINSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVE

The application for listing the know-how of Tunisian harissa is the result of inter-institutional work resulting from various efforts over the past ten years to establish the Tunisian origin of this flagship product.

To position harissa as a typically Tunisian product, in 2014 the Ministry of Industry in close collaboration with the Canned Food Industries Group (GICA) and the private sector launched an international program to promote "Tunisian Harissa", supported by the PAMPAT project implemented by UNIDO with Swiss funding. Thanks to this first collective initiative, a public-private collaboration was developed for the promotion of the authentic Tunisian recipe abroad.



A few years later, Tunisian institutions saw the need to explore other ways to promote traditions around harissa.

To protect the identity, cultural and culinary practices related to this flagship product, the Ministry of Cultural Affairs and the Ministry of Industry launched an inter-ministerial initiative in 2018 to list Tunisian harissa know-how on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List.

The National Heritage Institute (INP) was in charge of the preparation of the nomination file. Indeed, with support from GICA and PAMPAT, the INP developed in 2019 a coordination process with all the relevant in-country stakeholders, including operators, farming communities, and representatives of Tunisian civil society, especially the Association for the Protection of the Town of Nabeul, who together possess the know-how for harissa.

Thus, the application file officially submitted to UNESCO in 2020 and approved in 2022 is indeed the result of a genuine national inter-institutional effort based on a public-private partnership to promote a Tunisian flagship product.



Recipes by *Chef Rajiv Thattai*

Ingredients

- 800g shrimps
- 250g rice
- 2 tablespoons harissa
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 1 lemon
- 1 teaspoon powdered ginger
- salt and pepper

1h

Prep. Time

30 min

Cook. Time

04

Servings

Preparation

- Peel the shrimps, removing the head but keeping the tail on.
- Marinate in a mixture of Harissa, lemon juice, salt, pepper and ginger powder.
- Leave at least one hour in the fridge to let the flavours infuse.
- In parallel, heat the salted water, bring to a boil and cook the rice for 20 minutes.
- Drain the rice and fry it in a pan with olive oil, salt, pepper and turmeric.
- Heat the oil in a pan and grill the shrimps until opaque, basting frequently with reserved marinade.
- Serve the spicy shrimps with rice.

Marinated Shrimps With Rice



Harissa Pesto (Harrilouza)

Ingredients

- 5 garlic cloves
- 4 tablespoons harissa
- 2 teaspoons caraway powder
- 2 teaspoons coriander powder
- 12 small slices of crunchy white bread
- olive oil
- 50g chopped almonds
- ¼ bunch of parsley
- salt

10 min

Prep. Time

0 min

Cook. Time

04

Servings

Preparation

- Peel the garlic cloves and cut them in half.
- Mix the Harissa with garlic, spices, chopped parsley and salt in a blender adding the olive oil until obtaining a smooth paste.
- Add the crushed and chopped almonds.
- Store the pesto in the fridge in a jar under a layer of olive oil.
- Spread this mixture on the toasted bread slices.