



WORLD REGIONS OF GASTRONOMY PLATFORM MEETING

21-26 April 2024 | Abha, Aseer

PROGRAMME

SUNDAY 21 APRIL

Arrival in Abha – Symposium speakers

We recommend that IGCAT delegates arrive in Abha on 21 April. Transfers will be arranged to take you from the airport to the Abha Palace Hotel where we will meet in the café bar for informal introductions.

MONDAY 22 APRIL

10.15h Pick up at Abha Palace Hotel and transfer to King Khalid University

IGCAT EXPERTS SYMPOSIUM

Venue: King Khalid University

IGCAT Experts and representatives from awarded and candidate regions will share their knowledge, experiences and best practices in order to build stronger connections and encourage collaboration between Aseer and the rest of the member regions. The symposium will be open to stakeholders from Aseer also.

11:00h **Opening IGCAT's Expert Symposium: setting the context**

Chair: **Dr. Edith Szivas**, IGCAT Vice-President

Welcome and Keynote on Challenges for the 1st World Region of Gastronomy

Mayada Badr, Executive Director, Culinary Arts Commission

PANEL ONE: BUILDING SUPPORT THROUGHOUT THE PUBLIC SECTOR

11:30h **Aseer's Development Plans**

Asim Asiri, Aseer Development Authority

Putting National Plans into Action and Cross-Sector Collaboration

Ramon Sentmartí - Catalonia, World Region of Gastronomy 2025

Building a Legacy - Evaluation of 2023

François Dhalluin - Hauts-de-France, European Region of Gastronomy 2023

Research and Evaluation of Food Tourism

Roberta Garibaldi - East Lombardy, European Region of Gastronomy 2017

12:30h Open discussion

13:00h Lunch

14:00h **PANEL TWO: ACTIVATING CITIZENS AND VALUING TRADITIONAL FOOD**

Chair: **Omar Valdez**, IGCAT Board

The Culinary Codification Project and Results in Aseer

Majed Almuhanha, Culinary Arts Commission - Aseer, World Region of Gastronomy 2024

Latitud Iche Food Route

Orazio Bellettini Cedeño - Manabí, candidate World Region of Gastronomy 2026

A Food Commitment: what did it mean for our region

May Britt Hansen - Trondheim-Trøndelag, European Region of Gastronomy 2022

15:00h Open discussion

15:20h Health break

15:30h **PANEL THREE: EDUCATION AND LIFE-LONG LEARNING**

Chair: **Jaume Gomila** – Menorca, European Region of Gastronomy 2022

Bunyan's Role in Training Services for Tourism, Hospitality and the Entertainment Industries

Nabil Tukar, CEO of Bunyan - Aseer, World Region of Gastronomy 2024

Education – a commitment to sustainability

Jose Luis Marques, Coimbra, European Region of Gastronomy 2021

16:15h Open Discussion

16:30h **Aseer, World Region of Gastronomy 2024 Programme**

Dr. Mohammed Hamoud, Coordinator of Aseer, World Region of Gastronomy 2024

16:45h Health Break

CONCLUDING SESSION

17:00h **Conclusions from the symposium and future actions for IGCAT**

Diane Dodd PhD, IGCAT President

17:15h **Closing remarks**

Mayada Badr, Culinary Arts Commission

17:30h Transfer to welcome dinner.

19:00h **Aseer World Region of Gastronomy 2024 Welcome Dinner**

Venue: / Al-abo SARRAH PALACES- 6CCH+63P, Al Azizah, Abha 62517

The Abu Alssarah palace is one of the most important heritage palaces in Aseer region, it dates to more than 200 years old, and was built in 1836. This palace stands tall at the top of al-Soudah mountains.

TUESDAY 23 APRIL

7:30h Pick up and transfer to Ibrahim bashasha for a special Saudi breakfast (7 minutes to arrive)

8:00h **Saudi Breakfast**

A well-known local chef will cook a typical Saudi breakfast.

9:00h Transfer to King Khalid University. (25 minutes to arrive).

10:00h **King Khalid University**

Venue: King Khalid University- 6HX6+33Q, Abha 62529, Saudi Arabia

Conversation with **Dr. Ibrahim Alseeny** and **Dr. Riham Masshat** about food to fork philosophy as part of the curriculum and to consider the sustainability of the food chain.

The King Khalid University is a public institution that was established in 1998 in the city of Abha. The university offers many degrees in various scientific and humanitarian disciplines; paying particular attention to scientific research that can contribute to the development of the region. It provides a digital portal for distance education as well as fourteen complexes in the various governorates of the Aseer region, which allows students to obtain an education without having to travel to Abha, where the university's headquarters are located.

10:30 Transfer to Preservation of Grace Association (7 minutes to arrive).

11:00h **Preservation of Grace Association**

Venue: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/Kqx8tTt4Tp2KUq5U9>

Tour and presentation by **Edres Abdullah**, Association Manager

11:30h Transfer to Aljanub Women's Association, (9 minutes to arrive).

12:00h **Aljanub Women's Association**

Venue: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/fdb8NR88nf74TsVa8>

Tour and presentation by **Jawaher Alzahrani**, CEO of Aljanoub Women's Association.

13:15h Light lunch and free time

14:00h Transfer to tourist grape farm (18 minutes to arrive).

15:00h **Saudi Tourism Authority (STA)/ TOURIST GRAPE FARM**

Venue: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/E2ikcM86GuDmY2Aj6/>

Tour and presentation by the owner Mohammed Bin Abood.

The farm hosts a variety of local fruit plants such as fig, grapes, pomegranates and peaches.

19:00h **Street food, an initiative undertaken by the Culinary Arts Commission**
A presentation of authentic local foods and products, an initiative for locals and visitors to (re)discover the place and taste of authentic street food.

20:00h **Dinner**
The dinner will take place in the Street Food site. IGCAT Platform and Experts will have the opportunity to meet and talk with the local chefs.

WEDNESDAY 24 APRIL

9:00h Pick up at Abha Palace Hotel and transfer to Sadaf restaurant.

10:00h **Breakfast at Sadaf restaurant**
Sadaf is a local restaurant presenting the local culture in multiple forms. This visit will include conversations with the chef and the owner.

11:00h Transfer to Rijal Alma Honey Cottage, (1h to arrive).

12:00h **Rijal Alma Honey Cottage**
Conversation with **Mohammad Alalmal**, owner and entrepreneur. This visit was rated by IGCAT jury as a top food-related visitor experience because it successfully combines tradition, innovation, sustainability, education, and edutainment in a commercially viable manner.

14:00h **Lunch in Rijal Alma Historical village**
Conversation with **Eng. Abdulaziz Alghanim**, Heritage Commission. The Village has been listed in a tentative list of World Heritage Sites. Located in Rijal Alma province, it consists of 60 palaces built from natural stone, clay and woods. The village is unique with its tangible and intangible cultural element.

17:00h **Coffee Beans Farm**
A Slow Food traveller destination.

20.00h **Dinner**
Venue: / Ali Alassas Majlis (local Chef) - [ABUA29812981](#) ، وادي جراب ، Al-Mozvin8171 ، Abha 62582
The dinner will be prepared by the local chef **Ali Al-Assas**.

THURSDAY 25 APRIL

08:00h Pick up and transfer to World Food Gift Challenge competition venue (only jury members & IGCAT)

10:00h **World Food Gift Challenge 2024 competition (Parallel programme)**

Venue: King Khalid University

Only for jury members and IGCAT staff.

10:30h Pick up at Abha Palace Hotel and transfer to Eva Inn Hotel for everyone else

11:00h **Aseer Best Cases Session**

Chaired by **Majed Almuhan**, Culinary Arts Commission - Aseer, World Region of Gastronomy 2024

Local Food Packaging

Packaging our local food, is one of the projects that is being developed by Dr. **Saeed Aldosary** and his team.

Azka Farm

Azka Farm focuses on the documentation of the gastronomical features of wild plants, and **Ahmed Zaki**, CEO of Azka Farm will present this project.

Soudah Development:conservation programme

The Soudah Development work on project that sustains the Juniper tree and this project will be presented by **Marwa Ali**, Projects Manager of Soudah Development.

12.30h Q&A

13.00h Lunch at *EVA Inn Hotel*

15h00 Transfer back to the Abha Palace Hotel, free time and get ready for the Gala.

17:00h Transfer to Gala venue.

18h00 **World Food Gift Challenge Gala**

Venue: King Khalid University.

FRIDAY 26 APRIL

Departure from Abha

Or extend your stay!

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

TRAVEL TO ASEER REGION:

The main airport and city in Aseer region is **Abha** (AHB). Please be aware that there is no direct international flight to Aseer region especially from European countries. Therefore, you can reach Abha either through King Khalid Airport in Riyadh, or King Abdelaziz Airport in Jeddah city. As for the airlines, **Saudi Airlines** is highly recommended, kindly see the link for more information: [Link](#)

E-VISA:

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has introduced e-visas for citizens of eligible countries who wish to visit the Kingdom. The e-visa system provides a simple and quick way to apply for e-visa, without the need to visit a Saudi Arabian embassy or consulate in person. Please check the link for more information. **Visit Saudi:** [Link](#)

MEDICAL INSURANCE:

The host region will provide a first-aid service for participants at the meeting venue and hotel. All other medical services will not be covered. Participants are expected to assume the costs of any medical treatment that they might receive while in Aseer. More information related to medical insurance, and other health related issues can be obtained at **Council of Health Insurance** webpage: [Link](#)

ACCOMMODATION:

Kindly be informed that participants are responsible for arranging their accommodation. For your convenience, the hosts have negotiated a discounted price for our group at **Abha Palace Hotel**.

Please make your own reservation by contacting **Mr. Mohammed Amer** at reservation@abhapalace.com.sa using the reference: **Culinary Arts Commission**.

Hotel Name	Price / Night	Address	Google maps link
Abha Palace Hotel	750 SAR (≈ 186 EUR)	Al Sad Dist,1100 Abha, Arabia Saud	Link

AIRPORT TRANSFERS AND LOCAL TRANSPORTATION:

All guests of IGCAT and the World Regions of Gastronomy Platform are entitled to free of charge local transportation.

Dedicated buses will circulate between the airport and the hotels, the symposium venue, as well as the field trips. Participants who prefer to rent their own vehicle should arrange it themselves with one of many international or local transportation companies available.

DRESS CODE:

Traditional Saudi clothing is worn out of love and pride by locals. Traditionally, women wear an abaya (a long robe or cloak that covers the whole body) over their everyday clothing, and men wear a thobe (a long-sleeved, gownlike garment); however, not all Saudis wear traditional clothing all the time. As a visitor, you are not expected to wear the same attire as locals, or cover to the same extent, but it's highly recommended that you dress modestly. For example, loose-fitting clothing that covers the elbows and ankles is recommended for both men and women in public. The sun is strong outdoors and therefore a scarf is useful. Indoors, air conditioning can be strong. Comfortable shoes for the field visits would be advisable. The Gala Evening will require glamorous/cocktail attire while maintaining one's modesty.

CURRENCY & EXCHANGE:

Currency exchange and transactions are easy in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia's national currency is the Saudi riyal (SAR), which is subdivided into 100 halala.

Banknotes are in denominations of five riyals, ten riyals, 50 riyals, 100 riyals and 500 riyals; and coins in one riyal, two riyals, 50 halala, 25 halala, 10 halala, 5 halala and 1 halala.

All banks in the Kingdom offer currency exchange services. Exchange bureaus are located at airports. Our guests are highly recommended to use currency exchange services in the main airports "Riyadh and Jeddah" before transiting to Abha airport. Credit cards, such as Visa, MasterCard and American Express are accepted throughout the Kingdom as well as Aseer region. ATMs are also widely available. For the currency rate you can check: [Link](#)

OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION:

Please be reminded that the sale, purchase, and consumption of alcohol and drugs is illegal in Saudi Arabia.