**International Commission for Research into European Food History**

**Call for papers**

**FOOD AND MEMORY IN EUROPEAN HISTORY OF THE 19-21ST CENTURIES**

**5-8 September 2023, Ekaterinburg, Russia**

**Deadline for applications: 11 September 2022**

Memory and history are regularly contrasted. However, due to its objective materiality and subjectivity of tastes and individual habits, food turns out to be an intersection point of history and memory. The taste, scent, and texture of food serve as a means of transmission not only personal experience but also numerous symbolic meanings, including a sense of a past. Reflecting on and reimagining the past is one of the drivers of historical change, and this is true of food history. The role of food in forming and maintaining memories is illustrated by the famous ‘Proust effect’ but not limited to it. Since 2006 when J. Holtzman, in his article of the same name, outlined the boundaries of research of food and memory and raised questions, many of which are still relevant nowadays, the range of issues discussed has been expanding. On the other hand, food functions not only as a form of memory but also as an object of remembering. Memories of food and tastes can be woven into the impressions of various events or provide a way to unite the community (remembering the common taste experiences or knowledge of definite recipes as a base of community integration).

The area of food and memory studies is rather complex and can be considered twofold. Firstly, memory can be examined as an ongoing process of transmitting tastes, recipes, and technologies. How are they saved and transformed over time? What are the ways and agents of this transmission? Secondly, we can consider memory an invented phenomenon in compliance with Hobsbawm’s idea of the invention of tradition. In this way, the relationship between food and memory can be treated as a set of narratives, representations, samples that construct the image of the past through the food and knowledge of food of the past. Finally, the process of how the transmission of memory transforms into its construction is also worth analysing.

We propose to consider methodological issues concerning food and memory. What sources can be relevant for research? Do different research approaches elaborated in memory studies provide an opportunity to expand our understanding of food history or reinterpret already known facts? For example, can we treat famous restaurants as a kind of memory space (Pierre Nora) or nostalgia for national food among refugee children as a postmemory (Marianne Hirsch)?

The historical enquiry of this topic can be divided into several aspects. First of all, personal memory related to private and public events is under consideration. Memories of previous food experiences determine food habits, thereby catalysing or slowing down changes in foodways. Family traditions define the history of food to the same extent as achievements and inventions of professional gastronomy. In addition to family memories, food is a part of remembering many significant social and personal events. In particular, these are memories of travelling that are gradually becoming ‘managed memories’ due to the development of the tourism industry. Food souvenirs are an essential part of the travel experience, and it will be productive to research their evolution. Furthermore, memory can be a development tool: neglected and almost extinct products can be ‘reborn’ driven by tourist demand and create an attractive territory.

The relationship between food and collective memory primarily deals with forming national, ethnic, and regional identities. This theme is elaborated rather well but remains to be largely studied. Interesting is not only the moment of creation of the national cuisine but also the ways of its subsequent transmission and maybe transformation (from cookbooks to food festivals). Particular forms of collective memory, both ongoing and constructed, are also found in food production. For instance, it is physical memory associated with specific culinary techniques or institutionalised memory transmitted through the production standards. Variability of this memory can be described in terms of traditions and innovations. Another issue that can be considered from this point of view is the food quality policy. Do PDOs, PGIs and TSGs and their national analogues keep the memory about tastes and traditions or reinvent it?

Repetitive and unique memories of different periods create the special dimension of food history. Memory itself is changeable, and each generation has its own memories of both common gustatory experiences and extraordinary food practices. It can be a traumatic memory of food shortages during the war or memories of transforming tastes of familiar foods.

It is essential to take into account food, or gustatory, nostalgia, which can be considered in all of the above aspects. These are, for example, ‘childhood taste’, or memories of ‘the taste of motherland’ among emigrants, or imaginary nostalgia for food not experienced but familiar due to memories of previous generations. The ways food and nostalgia affect each other are worth exploring. How did the events of the XIX-XX centuries stimulate the development of food nostalgia? What tastes, food products, dishes, dining rituals evoked nostalgic feelings? How does nostalgia affect the consumption and commercial success of certain products?

Furthermore, institutional memory formation is of great interest. In this case, particular attention is paid to culinary heritage as a part of cultural heritage. We can analyse constructing ethnic or national past through including some food into the list of UNESCO cultural heritage. Is it preserving the past or its reinterpretation?

Also noteworthy is the opposite process – forgetting and the ways to overcome it in food history. On this point, we are talking about a loss of technologies and rituals concerned with food, exclusion of some food products from the diet and the list of ingredients. Contrariwise, reconstruction of lost recipes and tastes (by professionals, historians, amateurs; in restaurants, cookbooks, TV shows, and the media) can be considered a form of memory recovery, transformation, and distortion.

The relationship between food and memory is numerous, multidimensional (social, cultural, and economical), and can be examined in various fields and contexts from the viewpoints of different disciplines. The following research areas, to which other proposals may be added, will be covered:

**Memory studies’ methodology in historical food research**

* Historical sources for studying food and memory (cookbooks, literary works, art objects, travelogues etc.)
* Memory agents in food history
* Forms of remembering and forgetting tastes, recipes, technologies, dining rituals etc.: bodily memory of food producers, sensual memory of consumers, oral and written prescriptions…
* Historical transformations of food memory: constant and mutable memories of various generations

**Memory in food production**

* Traditions and innovations in domestic and industrial food production: transmitting personal and collective memories
* Food brands and memory of technologies, tastes, traditions
* Food quality policy: preserving and/or constructing memory

**Food and gustatory** **nostalgia**

* Food in exile and taste of motherland
* National and ethnic cuisine and its transformations in collective memory
* Nostalgia and food consumption, commodification of food memories

**Actualising food memory**

* Food and cultural heritage of UNESCO
* Food and tourism industry: evolution of tourist food souvenirs, promoting tourist destinations and revival/reinvention of traditional products and dishes
* Monuments to the food
* Food in commemorative events

Please submit your abstract (up to 300 words), together with a short CV (max 250 words) to the ICREFH Committee ([icrefh@gmail.com](mailto:icrefh@gmail.com)) at the latest by 11 September 2022. Conference language is English. A selection of papers at the conference will be published by ICREFH.

Registration fee is 200 euros (including hotels and lunches/meals).

For PhD/postdoctoral without paid positions and not older than 30 by 8 September 2023 registration fee is 150 euros.

The ICREFH (https://icrefh.hypotheses.org) has a tradition of short presentations (20 minutes) and a long discussion. Participants are requested to stay for the full three days of the conference.

**Application Form for ICREFH Symposium**

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**Last name:**

**First name:**

**Title:**

**Institution:**

**Country:**

**Phone:**

**E-mail:**

**Provisional title of paper:**

**Abstract (max 300 words):**

**CV (max 250 words):**