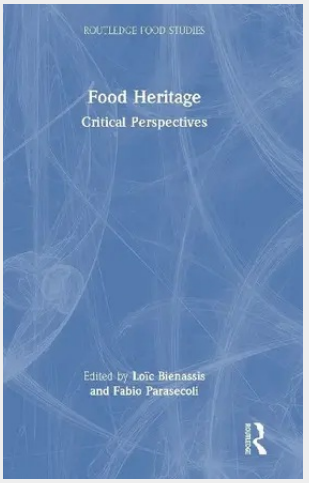
Bienassis / Parasecoli

Food Heritage

Critical Perspectives



This book presents a critical analysis of the concept of food heritage through a dialogue between its academic definitions and the vaguer, more common-sense meaning of the term. By addressing the notion of heritage through the question of food and eating practices, this book allows us to revisit the very meaning of this concept, now well established yet still interpreted through a wide variety of perspectives. In a mirror image, viewing the notion of heritage through the lens of food allows us to investigate an important dimension of our modern foodways. Beyond the conceptual discussion, the book analyses the concrete processes through which foods and food practices come to be defined, recognized, and mobilized as heritage, showing how these dynamics unfold in varied cultural and institutional contexts. Chapters draw on case studies from across the world—in Belgium, Catalonia, China, Brazil, Estonia, France, Japan, Korea, Morocco, Poland, Serbia, as well as across Africa and the Mediterranean region—and propose different temporalities while involving a range of actors. Among these actors, however, UNESCO occupies a particularly important place in this volume, due to the role it plays as a legitimizing body, supposed to officially consecrate certain elements as heritage. The practical cases reveal the complexity of the situations and provide detailed examples of specific issues and difficulties involved in thinking about the heritagization of food and assessing the practices related to it. This volume will be of great interest to students and scholars from across food studies, heritage studies, cultural studies, tourism studies, and anthropology.

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