الاتحاد الدولي ماستر شيف العرب
International Union of Arab Master Chefs

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When Does a Recipe Become a Heritage Document?

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How food editors can document a recipe’s name, oral testimony, place and variants while making clear what each source supports.

Ingredients preserve part of the story

An old page can record a cup of flour and leave the cup size or the signs of ready dough unexplained. Testimony from someone who practises the craft can supply missing knowledge.

Each account has a place and date

If two families describe a dish differently, preserving both accounts with the narrator, place and recording date makes the archive stronger. A recording date does not establish the recipe’s origin. A menu or photograph can document a particular use, while an origin claim needs further evidence.

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Who appears in the record?

An account gains value when it names who transmitted the practice, how they learned it and what changed. Interviews and personal photographs should be accompanied by permission and agreed attribution before publication.

What can a single word carry?

A recipe may use a local word or a verb such as “rub” without defining the motion. A translation alone can lose some of the meaning. Keeping the original term alongside a description of the gesture or tool preserves more information. If usage differs across places, each meaning can remain attached to its speaker and context.

What does the editor add?

Imagine one narrator recalls judging bread by the colour underneath, while another family recalls tapping it and listening. Both accounts can appear side by side. The editor can distinguish the speaker’s words from editorial explanation and any contemporary reconstruction. Readers then know which details come from testimony and which were added later.

The photograph’s date and the date of what it shows

An editor may receive a photograph with a handwritten date. It may mark the exposure, printing or a later annotation. If the meaning cannot be established, the date can be recorded as written on the copy. An account identifying the place or tool can be attributed to the person who supplied it. This keeps both the available evidence and its limits visible and leaves room for new material to be added later.

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