

Chilli of Soweto spices up international Ark of Taste

Hot off the press is the chilli of Soweto, the latest uniquely South African product to make it onto the international "Ark of Taste" catalogue.



Carlo Petrini, Phila Cele and Geoff Green. Pic by Malcolm Drummond

This collection of indigenous products and recipes includes mokopana, the oval-shaped, African horned cucumber; the Zulu amadumbe, a robust herb with large "elephant ear" leaves and corms that are harvested like potatoes; karri, a honey wine brewed by the Khoisan and believed to be one of the oldest alcoholic drinks in the world; and the mottled black and white Venda chicken from Limpopo.

With the addition of the chilli of Soweto, the list of South African Ark of Taste products has reached 45, and joins food items and dishes from more than 170 countries where the Slow Food Movement is active.

Started 30 years ago by activist, writer and UN environmental award winner Carlo Petrini, the global movement aims to draw attention to the politics of food based on the principles of "good, clean and fair".

The Ark was created to point out the existence of small-scale quality products - heritage food items that are unique and possibly at risk of extinction. The aim of the Ark is to "rediscover" these products and promote them internationally. More than 2500 products have been listed.

Melissa de Billot, co-ordinator of the South African Ark of Taste programme, says Slow Food South Africa aims to have 100 products on the list by the end of the year.

"Some of these products are so rare that we are struggling to find even elders who have proper information," she says,

citing Zulu tea as an example.

Source: The Times

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