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East meets West: With TUTTOFOOD and HOSTMILANO the date triumphs in the kitchen between creativity and technology



- In collaboration Emirates Culinary Guild, TUTTOFOOD and HostMilano are organizing Dates Connection, a competition that awards the most innovative recipes with dates
- The event involves chefs from five countries-Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Italy-and the national semifinals will be held between September and October, each in a prestigious restaurant
- The national winners will compete in 2023 in Italy, in a final hosted at a still top-secret venue to be unveiled in the coming months
- The world date market is worth \$12.8 billion, rising to more than \$18 billion in 2028. The largest exporter is Saudi Arabia with a 20% share, while the UAE is third with 12%.



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In many countries it has always been the star of the holiday table. But today, thanks to new uses enabled by innovative technologies, dates are increasingly an ingredient across the menu, from pasta dishes to desserts to balsamic vinegars.

Celebrating the new role of this food rich in nutritional properties were HostMilano and TUTTOFOOD, the two leading events in **Fiera Milano's** portfolio in the hospitality and agrifood sectors, with Dates Connection: a journey to discover new culinary experiences from Riyadh to Dubai, from Doha to Amman and all the way to Milan involving some of the most creative international chefs and pastry chefs, both established and emerging, in an exciting competition that will reward the most original interpretations.

A digital and international challenge

Organized by **Fiera Milano** in collaboration with the Emirates Culinary Guild and the support of Saudi Arabian Chefs' Association, Qatar Culinary Professional, Jordan Restaurant Association, Dates Connection started in early July with invitations to chefs from the five countries involved: **Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Italy**. Participants are making a video in which they prepare their innovative recipe, which will be voted on online by the public and a qualified panel of judges, choosing two semifinalists from each country. The audience, international and food experts, engaged through The Emirates Association of Chefs, by Host and other associations will be able to cast their vote through a like on their favorite video on a dedicated channel on the platform.

The national semifinals will be held between September 2022 and February 2023, in which the two chosen will duel live in front of a panel of peers in a restaurant featured in the best guides; only one national finalist will emerge from the duel, chosen by a weighted evaluation between online public votes and jury votes of fellow chefs. Finally, the five finalists will compete in a **grand final event** to be held in attendance in **Italy in 2023**, at a still top-secret venue to be revealed in the coming months.

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The global date market, a growing business

The event is part of the path toward the 2023 editions of TUTTOFOOD and HostMilano, which will be held at [fieramilano](#) from May 8 to 11 and October 13 to 17, 2023, respectively. In line with the mission of the two events, in addition to **enhancing the creativity of chefs** by bridging different gastronomic cultures, Dates Connection will also be an opportunity for networking between supply and demand with the different players in the supply chains, from manufacturers to importers, from producers of enabling technologies to industry media.

Suffice it to say that, according to data from **Research & Markets**, the world **date market was worth \$12.8 billion in 2021**, rising to more than \$18 billion in 2028. The leading exporter is **Saudi Arabia**, with one-fifth of the total (2%) while the **UAE** is third with 12%. The largest importer is Europe with a demand of more than 160 thousand tons annually, worth about \$500 million. In addition, dates have an excellent nutritional profile and are rich in vitamins, minerals and antioxidants, particularly carotenoids and phenols. Thus, demand is also growing on the back of health trends, for the production of "healthy" snacks and desserts, but also as a base for non-alcoholic balsamic vinegars.

TUTTOFOOD will be held at [fieramilano](#) from May 8 to 11, 2023. HostMilano will be held at [fieramilano](#) from October 13 to 17, 2023.

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