

## **SALÓN GOURMETS 2026 UNVEILS ITS MOST DYNAMIC PROGRAM YET, FEATURING NEW COMPETITIONS AND INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES**

The world's leading trade fair for quality food and beverages will hold its 39th edition from April 13 to 16 at IFEMA Madrid; the program of activities for Salón Gourmets (SG) will combine its most iconic competitions with new contests that feature more participatory, visually striking, and spectacular formats, reinforcing its role as one of the fair's major attractions

Norway—as the Guest of Honor—along with Saudi Arabia, Canada, the region of Sicily, and the Mexican city of Chihuahua, will showcase their culinary cultures through cooking demonstrations, tastings, and experiences that highlight the origin, sustainability, and quality of their products

From competitions focused on trending foods like avocados and gourmet burgers to challenges that celebrate tradition, technique, and inclusion, Salón Gourmets once again establishes itself as a unique venue where gastronomy, innovation, and entertainment go hand in hand



**Madrid, April 2026.**— The 39th edition of the world's leading Quality Food and Beverage Fair is packed with activities designed to delight the thousands of professionals who will visit IFEMA Madrid from April 13 to 16. As is now tradition, Salón Gourmets (SG) will hold its iconic competitions, which have established themselves as one of the main attractions for visitors, alongside new initiatives being introduced for the first time with the aim of showcasing the sector's most dynamic, participatory, and fun side. Salón Gourmets will feature Estrella Galicia as the Official Beer and Cabreiroá as the Official Water; furthermore, Galicia will be the Guest Region and Norway, the Country of Honor.

SG will put Madrid in the spotlight and showcase the latest trends in the agri-food market through exhibitors from all corners of Spain and other countries. For example, Norway will highlight its culinary culture, characterized by a deep connection to nature, the use of local ingredients, and a culinary philosophy that prioritizes sustainability and product authenticity. On Wednesday, April 15, the Auditorio Gourmets stage (Hall 5-E50) will host the cooking demonstration

“Seafood from Norway: The Power of the Sea in Seafood” under the Seafood from Norway banner. Chef Íñigo Urrechu will demonstrate to the public the benefits of these local products, such as scallops, Norway lobster, king crab, crab, and snow crab, which stand out for their unique flavor, impeccable texture, and quality directly linked to their Norwegian origin. Meanwhile, children will also be able to enjoy Norwegian salmon at the Children’s Workshops aimed at schoolchildren aged 8 to 12 in the Community of Madrid; in the “Salmon Workshop,” organized by Seafood from Norway, children will learn how to make sushi with this high-quality product.

Another international highlight comes from Canada. Through Deliciously Canadian, attendees will be able to enjoy an authentic culinary experience from New Brunswick and discover the flavors that make this Maritime province a true paradise. Renowned chef Andrej Urosevic, along with Victor Comin, chef at the Canadian Embassy, will be in charge of showcasing world-renowned products through cooking demonstrations and tastings, such as New Brunswick lobster, pure maple syrup, cranberries, haskap berries, wild blueberries, scallops, Norway lobster, red king crab, snow crab, and snow crab.

### **NEW CHAMPIONSHIPS SET TO SURPRISE**

Avocado, one of the trendiest ingredients in recent years, will take center stage at Tacomanía – Mexican Taco Championship by IGP Aguacate de Canarias; the goal is to recognize the best Mexican taco recipe in which Canary Islands Avocado with Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) serves as the main ingredient and star of the dish. In addition to avocado, contestants may use other ingredients of their choice, provided they respect the essence of the Mexican taco.

One of the most popular and frequently recreated recipes in Italian cuisine is carbonara, which is making its debut in Singapore with its own contest. The Carbonara Challenge by Rummo celebrates its first edition centered on one of the great icons of Italian cuisine—pasta—in collaboration with the Rummo brand. This competition will put the talent of specialized chefs to the test as they prepare pasta carbonara, in this case using Mezzi Rigatoni as the main ingredient. Six contestants will prepare their carbonara dishes before a professional jury that will evaluate technique, texture, and flavor.

In a world where gastronomy is culture, passion, and spectacle, the fair will also pay tribute to technical mastery and pure flavor at the 1st IRUKI Grill Challenge by Ambassadors, a competition that goes beyond traditional grilling to become a true culinary spectacle. This championship will bring together the best grill masters in a dynamic, visually stunning, and flavor-packed format, where selection, precision, and absolute control over the cooking process will take center stage.

The Burgos-based company Arcecarne and Salón Gourmets are taking the hamburger to the next level at the Burger Masters—National Gourmet Hamburger Championship by Arcecarne. From traditional burgers to Angus and specialty flavors, these burgers will take center stage at this competition, where contestants must create the best recipe using this product. In this championship, six professional chefs must prepare four identical burgers in 20 minutes, using meat selected from Arcecarne’s extensive catalog, demonstrating their skill in achieving the perfect doneness, juiciness, and flavor.

The excellence of Navarre’s produce is also celebrated in SG with the “La Mejor Menestra Navarra: Reto Reyno Gourmet” Championship. Navarre’s produce represents one of Spain’s most valuable culinary heritages: Tudela artichokes, Navarre asparagus, piquillo peppers, borage, and cardoon, among many others, are natural ambassadors of Navarre’s identity. Using these ingredients, six contestants must prove they are the best by preparing this iconic dish of Navarran cuisine; they are required to use at least two seasonal Navarran vegetables—specifically Navarran Asparagus PGI and Tudela Artichokes PGI—as well as Navarran Olive Oil PDO.

Five new competitions that will bring the Salon Gourmets to life, joining other championships that have already become a tradition. One example is the Spanish Oyster Shucking Championship, which is coming of age by demonstrating how blind people can perform the craft of oyster shucking with precision and confidence, led by the La Rioja-based association Cocinar a Ciegas; an initiative that will highlight the genuine integration of diverse profiles into highly specialized culinary professions, making them an accessible and open space for diversity.

Another classic is the 7th National Art of Carving Championship, El Encinar de Humienta / Grupo Gourmets, a competition that tests contestants' skill in carving a beef tenderloin and their creativity in preparing steak tartare. In this edition, the competition will also take it a step further with a surprising presentation featuring a "Spectacular Carving" by Mas Mas Meat, with an aesthetic inspired by Mad Max, where technique and spectacle go hand in hand.

One of the must-see events of the year is the 16th GourmetQuesos, the 2026 Championship of Spain's Best Cheeses. With over 800 entries, 64 judges, two qualifying rounds, 20 categories, 60 finalists, and 1 winner, this is the most prestigious cheese competition in Spain. Once again this year, GourmetQuesos will select the best national cheeses, evaluating aspects such as the rind, color, texture, aroma, flavor, aftertaste, and persistence of each sample.

Wine, one of the cornerstones of Spanish culinary culture, plays a vital role in the agri-food sector. In this context, vertical tastings have established themselves as one of the most appealing offerings at Salón Gourmets, providing an opportunity to discover how a single wine evolves across different vintages. José Moro, founder and president of Cepa 21, will lead a vertical tasting to demonstrate how his wines are revolutionizing the Ribera del Duero region. Three 100% Tempranillo single-varietal wines will be tasted: Cepa 21 2022, the winery's flagship wine, intense and balanced; Malabrigo 2022, elegant, enveloping, and sophisticated; and Horcajo 2020, the most premium, deep, and powerful red. Cepa 21, José Moro's most personal project, has become a national benchmark for its ability to combine tradition and innovation.

Meanwhile, José Ramón Urtasun and Jesús Mendoza will lead the vertical tasting of Trasnoco, one of Bodegas Remírez de Ganuza's most unique and exclusive wines, as it has a very limited production—around 7,000 bottles annually. During this event, seven vintages of this wine will be analyzed: 2001, 2005, 2010, 2012, 2016, 2019, and 2021. This is a unique occasion, as it will be the first time this vertical tasting is held, and it is unlikely to be repeated given the scarcity of older bottles.

#### **A KEY YEAR FOR THE MAJOR GOURMET SHOWCASE**

The 39th edition of Salón Gourmets is also taking place at a particularly significant time for the Gourmets Group, which is celebrating the 50th anniversary of its founding in 2026; a context that reinforces the fair's role as an essential event for the global agri-food sector. With the product taking center stage, the fair will feature an extensive program of competitions, activities, and themed zones designed to showcase market trends. The projections for this edition reflect the scale of the event: more than 55,000 products on display, of which more than 1,500 will be new releases, along with the attendance of more than 110,000 professionals and the presence of more than 15,000 international buyers.

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