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0 Km Food in Calabria

Didactic Material nr. 9



Introduction

0 km food refers to consuming ingredients that are produced locally, minimizing transportation and emphasizing seasonal products. It is part of a broader movement for sustainable and environmentally friendly eating. For a general overview, you can check this website: <https://www.moevegloal.com/en/planet-energy/environment/from-farm-to-table-the-path-of-zero-kilometer-food>

In Calabria, Italy, the 0 km philosophy is deeply rooted in tradition. Local specialties such as 'nduja, Tropea onions, and fresh citrus fruits are produced and consumed within the region, preserving cultural heritage and supporting local farmers.

What is 0 km Food?

0 km food, which originated in Italy as part of the Slow Food movement in the 1980s, is not only about eating local products—it's about living well. Fresh, seasonal ingredients support farmers, preserve traditions, and bring better health. It also reflects a slow life approach, where meals are shared, time is valued, and food is part of a balanced lifestyle.

As shown in Stories of Food & Love from Acri, Calabria, Nonna Rosetta demonstrates how what we eat and how we live go hand in hand, proving that 0 km food is also a recipe for happiness.

<https://gratsi.com/blogs/all/nonna-wisdom-stories-of-food-and-love-from-italy>

Why is it important?

In Calabria, the 0 km philosophy is deeply embedded in daily life. Small farms and local markets provide high-quality products like 'Nduja sausage and Tropea onions, supporting farmers, producers, and local businesses. By prioritizing local food, Calabrians preserve traditional recipes and cultural heritage, while also fostering economic growth in the region. This approach promotes a healthier lifestyle, a slower pace of life, and a strong sense of community, showing how food can sustain both people and place.

What are the benefits?

1. Healthier and Fresher Food

Locally grown, seasonal products are fresher and more nutritious because they travel shorter distances and are harvested at peak ripeness.

2. Supports Local Economy and Workers

Buying local helps farmers, small producers, and local markets thrive, sustaining jobs and regional economies.

3. Preserves Cultural Heritage

0 km food encourages traditional farming methods and recipes, maintaining regional identity and culinary heritage.

4. Environmental Impact

Shorter transportation reduces carbon emissions, packaging waste, and energy use.

5. Promotes Slow Life and Community

Encourages mindful eating, communal meals, and stronger connections between people and their surroundings.

6. Specific Benefits for Calabria

In Calabria, supporting local products like 'Nduja sausage and Tropea onions helps preserve centuries-old culinary traditions, sustain small farms, and maintain a lifestyle that values quality, culture, and community over speed or mass production. Weekly markets and cooperatives in towns like Cosenza, Catanzaro, and Amantea allow consumers to meet producers directly, ask questions, and make informed choices, fostering trust and a resilient food system.

What can I do?

- 1. Visit Local Markets** – Mercato del Contadino in Catanzaro, the organic market in Reggio Calabria, and weekly markets in Cosenza or Amantea offer seasonal fruits, vegetables, cheeses, and preserves, letting you support farmers directly. Check this [video](#) about the Market from Amantea.
- 2. Agritourism Farms (Agriturismi)** – Many agriturismi provide farm-to-table experiences and sell fresh products onsite, giving a taste of traditional Calabrian ingredients. You can explore the different options available in the region through platforms like [Agriturismo.it](#), where various stays and experiences are listed.
- 3. Check Labels** – Look for local products like Caciocavallo Silano, Bergamot from Reggio Calabria, Rossano licorice, and Diamante chili peppers, even in supermarkets.
- 4. Use Apps** – Apps like Too Good To Go help locate 0 km products, farmers' markets, and stores prioritizing local ingredients.
- 5. Follow Local Influencers and Food Bloggers** – Explore Calabrian cuisine through these accounts:
 - [@cq_pasta](#) – Christina Quarisa shares Calabrian cooking with her grandmother, Nonna Connie, showing traditional recipes and culinary stories.
 - [@calabriafood.official](#) – Showcases local eateries, seasonal products, and authentic Calabrian recipes.
- 6. Cook and Share** – Use local ingredients to recreate traditional recipes, enjoy mindful meals, and strengthen community connections through shared food experiences.

What have I learnt?

- 0 km food in Calabria is more than just a way of eating; it helps protect nature while supporting farmers, workers, and local traditions. By choosing local products, we contribute to preserving Calabria's unique landscapes, from its mountains and forests to its coasts and agricultural lands.
- It encourages responsible consumption and fosters fairer, more resilient food systems. Supporting local farmers means promoting ethical practices, reducing food waste, and creating a more balanced relationship between producers and consumers.
- 0 km food connects us to the land and the people who cultivate it with care. Visiting markets, talking to producers, and buying directly from farms allows us to understand the effort behind each product and appreciate the cultural stories embedded in every ingredient.
- It plays a key role in building sustainable local economies. By investing in local agriculture and small businesses, 0 km food helps fight depopulation in rural areas, sustain family farms, and create employment opportunities, all while maintaining Calabria's culinary heritage.
- Beyond economics and environment, 0 km food strengthens social bonds and community life. Shared meals, farm-to-table experiences, and local cooking traditions encourage slow living, mindfulness, and a deeper appreciation for the rhythm of the seasons.
- Overall, learning about 0 km food in Calabria has shown me that the choices we make about what we eat are deeply connected to culture, nature, and quality of life. Eating locally isn't just healthier—it's a way to celebrate heritage, support people, and live more consciously.

All is summarized in the [European approach of Microcredentials](#).

Micro-credential 1

Embodying sustainability value:

- 1.1 Value sustainability by reflecting on personal values while critically evaluating how they align with sustainability values.
- 1.2 Supporting fairness to support equity and justice for current and future generations and learn from previous generations for sustainability.
- 1.3 Promoting nature to acknowledge that humans are part of nature; and to respect the needs and rights of other species and of nature itself in order to restore and regenerate healthy and resilient ecosystems.

Micro-credential 2

“Embracing complexity in sustainability”

- 2.1 (Systems thinking), to approach a sustainability problem from all sides; to consider times, space and context in order to understand how elements interact within and between systems.
- 2.2 (Critical thinking) To assess information and arguments, identify assumptions, challenge the status quo, and reflect on how personal, social and cultural backgrounds influence thinking and conclusions.
- 2.3 (Problem framing) To formulate current or potential challenges as a sustainability problem in terms of difficulty, people involved, time and geographical scope, in order to identify suitable approaches to anticipating and preventing problems, and to mitigating and adapting to already existing problems.

Micro-credential 4

“Acting for sustainability”

- 4.2 (Collective action) to act for change in collaboration with others.
- 4.3 (Individual initiative) to identify own potential for sustainability and to actively contribute to improving prospects for the community and the planet.