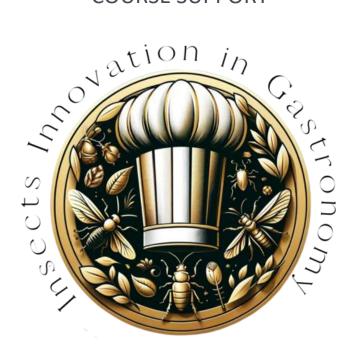






### Insects Innovation in Gastronomy

### **COURSE SUPPORT**



#### Module 1 Unit 5:

**What Do People Think About Eating Insects** 

#### Disclaimer:

This project is co-funded with the support of the European Union.

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Module 1: Introduction to Edible Insects in Gastronomy Unit 5: What Do People Think About Eating Insects?

In this unit, we explore the reactions of professors and students as they try dishes prepared with insect-based ingredients. We will analyze their opinions on **taste**, **texture**, **and overall experience**, as well as their **expectations before trying them and their impressions afterward**.

Exploring the Potential of Insect-Based Ingredients: Chefs and Students Reactions in a Tasting

One of the first questions asked was: What do you think about cooking with insect-based ingredients?

Antonio, one of the participants, expressed his surprise at the **versatility** of these ingredients and how easily they can be incorporated into existing diets and menus. He highlighted their **potential** as a complementary ingredient that **adds innovation** to various dishes.

Other participants agreed, noting that insect-based ingredients:

- Enhance traditional recipes by adding a unique touch.
- Provide an **innovative alternative** to common ingredients.
- Offer a **new flavor profile**, especially in gluten-free adaptations like insectbased breadcrumbs, which introduce a slightly **spicy and umami-rich taste**.

#### **Previous Experience with Edible Insects**

When asked about their prior experience with insect-based foods, most participants said it was **their first time** trying or cooking with these ingredients. Only a few had experimented with insects before, but their exposure was **limited to a small variety**.

#### **Taste and Flavor Perception**

Participants shared their thoughts on the **flavors** they noticed while tasting the dishes:

- Most described the taste as pleasant and familiar.
- Some noted a mild spiciness and a subtle umami flavor.
- A few highlighted **earthy and nutty undertones**, making it a **versatile ingredient** for different preparations.
- Many particularly enjoyed the **cricket-based dishes**, finding them flavorful and well-balanced.





#### **Would You Recommend These Ingredients?**

Participants were asked whether they would recommend **insect-based ingredients** to **other chefs or people in their circle**. Most responses were **positive**, with chefs seeing **great potential** for innovation in gastronomy.

Key points mentioned included:

- The **positive experience** of working with these ingredients.
- The unique characteristics that differentiate them from other proteins.
- The **potential for future growth** if further developed and refined.

Some participants suggested that **chefs should be introduced to insect-based ingredients first**, while consumer acceptance might take longer. A few mentioned that while they would recommend these ingredients to professionals, they might not yet suggest them to family and friends.

Ultimately, the **health and nutritional benefits** were cited as **strong reasons** to encourage their use in everyday cooking.

#### The Importance of Culinary Training in Insect-Based Cuisine

Participants were also asked whether chefs should receive **training on how to use insect-based ingredients**. The response was overwhelmingly **positive**, with many agreeing that:

- Since this is **an emerging field**, chefs should be **equipped with the right knowledge** to incorporate these ingredients effectively.
- Insects are likely to play a growing role in future gastronomy, making it essential for professionals to understand their potential.

#### **Comparing Practical Reactions with Insect Innovation in Gastronomy European Research**

The insights from this tasting session align with findings from the **European project "Insects Innovation in Gastronomy"**, which explores **consumer and professional attitudes** toward insect-based foods.

The project's **survey results**, available on its website, <a href="https://gastroinnovation.eu/results/">https://gastroinnovation.eu/results/</a> reveal key trends in consumer behavior:

- A significant number of respondents across **different European countries** expressed **hesitation** about including insects in their diets, mainly due to **lack of knowledge**.
- Italy and Spain showed slightly higher awareness, but consumer education remains limited.
- There is greater acceptance of insect-based flours or powders, particularly in snacks (41%) and protein supplements (35%).
- Whole insects remain less appealing, with only 10% of respondents open to consuming them in their original form.





• The highest interest in using insect-based ingredients was observed in **Cyprus, followed by Italy, Greece, and Spain**, while **Romania and Turkey** showed the least enthusiasm.

**Attitudes in the HORECA (Hotel, Restaurant, and Catering) Sector** The study also surveyed **hospitality professionals**, including chefs.

- Chefs in Spain and Italy expressed greater initial interest in incorporating insect-based ingredients into their menus, particularly in powdered or flour form.
- However, they raised concerns about **customer acceptance** and the need for **better training** to confidently use these ingredients in professional kitchens.
- Many acknowledged that **limited culinary knowledge and experience** with insect-based foods hinder their adoption in mainstream gastronomy.

#### **Educational Initiatives: The Key to Consumer Acceptance**

The study highlighted that **education and awareness campaigns** are **essential** for increasing consumer acceptance of insect-based foods. These efforts should focus on:

- Nutritional benefits, such as high protein content and sustainability.
- Environmental advantages, like reduced land, water, and feed consumption.
- Inspiring culinary applications, demonstrating how insects can be used in innovative ways.

#### Conclusion

This unit provides an opportunity to analyze **first-hand reactions** to insect-based cuisine and compare them with **scientific findings** from the "Insects Innovation in Gastronomy" project.

To explore these insights further, we invite you to visit **gastroinnovation.eu**: <a href="https://gastroinnovation.eu/">https://gastroinnovation.eu/</a> and discover more about the **survey results** from various European countries.

Understanding the **perceptions and motivations** of both consumers and professionals is essential to advancing the adoption of **insect-based ingredients** in modern gastronomy