

Mapping Taste: Food Across Cultures

University of Mannheim, Germany

On-site: June 15-19, 2026 | **Virtual preparation:** May 19 & June 10, 2026

ERASMUS+ Blended Intensive Program (BIP)

Program Overview

Mapping Taste: Food Across Cultures is an interdisciplinary summer course offered by the University of Mannheim (School of Humanities – International Cultural Studies). It explores food not only as a physical necessity, but as a central cultural symbol, a medium of identity formation, and a field of sustainable and social transformation.

The course brings together students from different countries and academic backgrounds and combines theoretical perspectives with hands-on, project-oriented learning. It is designed as a **Blended Intensive Programme (BIP)** consisting of two digital preparatory sessions and a five-day in-person phase in Mannheim, Germany.

Academic Focus & Target Group

The program aims to deepen students' understanding of the **social, cultural, historical, and political dimensions of food**. At the same time, participants develop practical research skills through collaborative and interdisciplinary project work.

The course is designed for **undergraduate and master's students** from cultural studies, history, languages, media and communication studies, sociology, anthropology, political science, philosophy, design, and related disciplines who are interested in food from social, cultural, and political perspectives.

Program Structure (*Program Subject to Change*)

The course is divided into two phases: two digital preparatory dates and a hands-on, project-oriented in-person phase in Mannheim (five days).

Virtual Phase (via Zoom)

May 19, 2026 | 16:00–18:00 (CET)

Introduction to the program and student projects, formation of international project groups

June 10, 2026 | 16:00–17:30 (CET)

Introductory Keynote: *Gastronativism*

Dr. Fabio Parasecoli (New York University)

On-Site Phase in Mannheim

Arrival: June 14, 2026

Program: June 15 - 19, 2026

Departure: June 19, early afternoon

The Mannheim phase is highly interactive and practice-oriented, combining lectures, excursions, tastings, and group project work.

Academic & Practical Highlights

Lectures

- **Food & Memory / Food & Belonging**
Dr. Ana-Sofia Uhl (University of Mannheim)
- **The Politics of Taste: Food, Nation-Building, and Identity in Europe**
Aistė Žemaitytė (Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas)
- **From Table to Field: Food as a Methodological Resource in Applied Ethnology**
Danijela Birt Katić (University of Zadar)
- **German Food Culture**
Eva Breitbach (University of Mannheim)

Fieldwork & Activities

- Exploration of Mannheim's migrant history and food cultures
- Visit to a local food market and meetings with migrant communities
- Excursion to the Palatinate region (e.g. winery, asparagus farm)
- Educational lunches and food tastings
- Interactive group cooking session

Project Work & Credits

Students work in international teams on a collaborative group project throughout the course.

- **3 ECTS** – Group project
- **6 ECTS** – Group project + individual assessment

All participants receive a **University of Mannheim certificate**.

Why Mannheim?

Mannheim is one of Germany's most diverse cities, home to people from over 170 nationalities. Its vibrant food culture reflects histories of migration, belonging, and everyday cultural exchange. Located near the fertile Palatinate region, Mannheim also offers direct insight into agricultural traditions and local food production. Together, city and region form a living laboratory for studying food across cultures.

Host & Partners

Coordinating University:

University of Mannheim
School of Humanities – International Cultural Studies

Partner Universities:

- Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań (Poland)
- Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas (Lithuania)
- University of Zadar, Zadar (Croatia)

Contact at University of Mannheim:

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