



Culinary Village | Kigali Food Festival 2026

1–4 September 2026 | Kigali, Rwanda

Africa Food Systems Forum

Investing in Africa's Agri-Food Systems: Nourishing Nations, Growing Jobs, Building Resilience

Food brings people together and it can also tell the story of how Africa's food systems are changing.

As part of the Africa Food Systems Forum, the **Culinary Village at the Kigali Food Festival** will bring the continent's food story to life through cooking, conversation, culture and collaboration. Across three days, chefs, farmers, food entrepreneurs, scientists, young leaders and food systems champions will come together to celebrate Africa's rich culinary heritage while showcasing the innovations and solutions that can shape a healthier, more resilient and prosperous food future.

The Culinary Village will connect **what is grown in Africa with what is cooked, eaten and celebrated**, creating an accessible space where audiences can discover how agriculture and food systems translate into the food on our plates.

From heritage to the future

The programme will explore three themes:

Food Foundations — Celebrating where we come from

The opening day will celebrate Rwanda's and Africa's culinary heritage, shining a light on the crops, ingredients, knowledge and traditions that

have sustained communities for generations. Through traditional dishes, indigenous crops and stories from farmers and food leaders, the day will also reflect on 20 years of progress in African agriculture through the lens of food.

Food for Today — Showcasing solutions that work now

The second day will spotlight practical solutions already helping to transform food systems across Africa. From beans and climate-friendly crops to school meals, biodiversity and urban food systems, chefs and food systems leaders will demonstrate how innovation can improve nutrition, livelihoods and resilience, today.

Food for the Future — Imagining what comes next

The final day will look towards the future, exploring resilient crops, biofortification, new food technologies and innovations that could help nourish Africa's growing population. The programme will bring together innovators, chefs and food systems leaders to imagine what Africa's food system could look like in 2040, and what needs to happen today to get there.

A celebration of Africa's food innovators

At the heart of the Culinary Village will be a dynamic programme of **live cooking demonstrations, tastings, conversations and innovation showcases**.

Featuring leading African and international chefs, the programme will demonstrate how indigenous and climate-resilient crops can be transformed into delicious, nutritious and culturally relevant meals. Audiences will have the opportunity to taste dishes inspired by Rwanda and countries across the continent, while hearing directly from the people working to transform the systems behind those ingredients.

The programme will also spotlight the next generation of food systems leaders, including **young chefs, farmers, entrepreneurs and innovators**, recognising their role in carrying Africa's food heritage forward while creating new solutions for the future.

Food as a platform for change

The Culinary Village will explore the connections between **agriculture, nutrition, climate, livelihoods, culture and innovation**.

Through stories and experiences that begin with the farmer and end at the table, the programme will highlight how investing in Africa's agri-food systems can:

- Strengthen food and nutrition security
- Create jobs and opportunities for young people
- Support farmers and food entrepreneurs
- Promote climate-resilient and indigenous crops
- Protect biodiversity and culinary heritage
- Improve access to nutritious food
- Build more resilient and inclusive food systems

Meet the chefs

The Culinary Village will feature an exciting line-up of chefs bringing their creativity, experience and passion for African food to the Kigali Food Festival:

Chef Arabella Parkinson · Chef Bola Adeyanju · Chef Claude Bigayimpunzi · Chef Eniola Okeola · Chef Fiston · Chef Lihle Mahambehla · Chef Odi Gowa · Chef Seyitan Aruna

Together, they will showcase the diversity of Africa's ingredients and culinary traditions while demonstrating how the food on our plates can be part of a bigger story about transformation.

Join us at the Culinary Village

Whether you are a farmer, chef, policymaker, entrepreneur, young food systems leader or simply someone who loves good food, the Culinary Village offers an opportunity to **taste, learn, connect and imagine what is possible**.

Come and discover the people, ingredients and ideas shaping Africa's food future - one plate at a time.

CULINARY VILLAGE, KIGALI FOOD FESTIVAL 2026

Day 1 – Food Foundations

Tuesday September 1

13:00 - 16:00

Food Foundations: celebrating Rwanda's and Africa's culinary heritage - the crops, techniques and traditions that have sustained communities for generations. Marking 20 years of AGRA and the AFS Forum through the lens of food.

Traditional Foods of Rwanda	
13:00	Opening remarks <i>MC: Paul Newnham welcomes guests and opens the programme with an introduction to the Culinary Village, the Chefs' Manifesto, and the 2026 AFSF and AGRA themes.</i>
13:05	Intro - Opening Performance <i>Guest: Local Rwandan dance and drumming troupe opens the programme</i>
13:15	Partner Spotlight - IKEA FOUNDATION <i>Guest Speaker: Nico Janssen</i>

13:25	Scene setting Rwanda's Food Heritage <i>Guest Speaker: Chef Fiston</i>
13:30	Cooking Demonstration One Traditional Foods of Rwanda Live cooking demonstration of iconic Rwandan dishes featuring indigenous crops — sorghum, cowpeas, native yams, and sweet potatoes. <i>Presenters: Chef Claude Bigayimpunzi and Chef Seyitan Aruna</i> <i>Guest speaker: Chef Fiston</i>
13:50	Tasting samples for the audience
ODE to AGRA: 20 Years Through Food	
14:00	Ode to AGRA - Opening remarks <i>MC: Paul Newnham introduces 20 years of AGRA and the AFS Forum through food.</i>
14:05	Scene setting 20 Years of Agri-Food Systems <i>Guest Speaker: Jean Paul Ndagijimana</i> <i>Tracing two decades of progress in African agriculture — what crops, farmers and food systems have changed since 2006.</i>
14:15	Cooking Demonstration Two Science Meets the Plate <i>Guest Presenters: Chef Arabella Parkinson and Chef Odi Gowa</i> .
14:30	Tasting samples for the audience

	Youth & The Next Generation
14:40	Youth and the Next Generation - Opening remarks <i>MC: Paul Newnham introduces a youth spotlight segment: who will carry Africa's food heritage forward?</i>
14:45	Partner Spotlight - Mastercard Foundation <i>Guest Speaker: TBC</i>
14:55	Cooking Demonstration Three Youth Spotlight Passing the Baton <i>Guest presenters: Chef Eniola Okeola and Chef Lihli Mahambehlala</i> Tasting samples for the audience
15:15	Panel Youth as Food Systems Changemakers <i>Guest speakers: Farmer Daphne Nakiranda, Mamlo Foods, Chef Seyitan Aruna</i>
15:40	Chef Djibril Sall Lamentin - Presentation
15:55	Wrap the day! <i>MC: Paul Newnham</i>
16:00	<i>Programme Close</i>

End of Day 1

Day 2 – Food for Today
Wednesday, September 2
13:00 - 16:30

Food for Today: showcasing today's food systems solutions — how chefs, farmers and innovators are turning climate-resilient crops, school meals and pan-African culinary culture into real change.

Biodiversity and the Plate	
13:00	Opening remarks <i>MC: Paul Newnham welcomes guests to today's theme: Food for Today. Celebrating Solutions from across Africa.</i>
13:05	Partner Spotlight - ProVeg International <i>Guest Speaker: Chef Bola Abeyanju</i>
13:15	Solution One Beans <i>Guest Speaker: Jean-Claude Rubyogo, PABRA</i>
13:25	Cooking Demonstration One Beans Across Africa <i>Guest Presenters: Chef Arabella Parkinson and Chef Claude Bigayimpunzi</i> <i>Guest Speaker: JC Rubyogo</i>
13:45	Tasting samples for the audience
Celebrating Africa's Table: Solutions Continued	
13:55	Solution two Climate-Friendly Crops

	Discussion <i>Guest Speakers: Bram Govaerts, Professor Mohammad Ishiyaku, TBC Gates Foundation speaker</i>
14:25	Partner Spotlight Gates Ag One <i>Guest Speaker: Kira Everhart-Valentin</i>
14:35	Celebrating Africa's Indigenous Table - Climate-Friendly Crops <i>Guest Presenters: Chef Odi Gowa and Chef Seyitan Aruna</i>
14:55	Tasting samples for the audience
School Meals for Today	
15:05	Solution three School Meals <i>Guest Speaker: TBC Food 4 Education</i>
15:05	<i>Chefs prep for cooking demo.</i>
15:10	Cooking Demonstration Two School Meals: Combining Indigenous and Fortified Crops <i>Guest Presenter: Chef Bola Adeyanju</i>
15:35	Tasting samples for the audience
FAO Urban Food Agenda + Young Chefs Programme	

15:45	Solution four FAO Urban Food Agenda + Young Chefs Programme <i>Guest Speaker: Celeste Macilwaine</i>
15:55	Cooking demonstration Three Community Cooking <i>Guest Presenters: Chef Eniola Okeola and Chef Lihli Mahambehla</i> <i>Guest Speaker: Celeste Macilwaine</i>
16:25	Day 2 wrap!
16:30	Close

End of Day 2

Day 3 – Food for the Future

Thursday, September 3

13:00 - 16:00

Food for the Future: how do we build food systems that are climate-resilient, equitable and nourishing for the generations to come? From the fields and fisheries of West Africa to the kitchens of the future.

Resilient Crops for the Future	
13:00	Opening Remarks <i>MC: Paul Newnham introduces the theme - Food for the Future</i>
13:05	Partner Spotlight - Tailored Foods <i>Guest Speaker: Tailored Foods</i>
13:15	Cooking Demonstration One Future Crops Culinary Masterclass <i>Guest Presenters: Chef Eniola Okeola and Chef Seyitan Aruina</i> <i>Guest Speaker: Taylor Quinne</i>
13:35	Tasting samples for the audience
Fortifying the Future	
13:45	Opening remarks <i>MC: Paul Newnham</i>
13:50	Scene setting Imagining the Future Table Partner Spotlight

	<i>Guest Speaker: TBC DSM-Fermech</i>
13:55	Cooking Demonstration Two Fortifying the Future: Biofortification, Fortified Foods and the Road to 2030 <i>Guest Presenters: Chef Claude Bigayimpunzi Chef Lihli Mahambehala</i>
14:25	Tasting samples for the audience
Innovations that Will Feed Our Future	
14:35	Opening remarks <i>MC: Paul Newnham</i>
14:40	Innovation Showcase Feeding the Future <i>Guest Speakers: Georgina, Tailored Foods; Monti Mall; Aminata Outtara, Dan-Agro</i>
15:00	Cooking Demonstration Three Innovation Cooking Demonstration <i>Guest Presenters: Chef Odi Gowa and Chef Arabella Parkinson</i>
15:20	Tasting samples for the audience
15:30	Collaborative Future-Imagining What Does Africa's Food Future Look Like? A facilitated group discussion: participants will visualise Africa's food systems in 2040 — what's on the table, who produced it, and what changed to get there. <i>Guest Speakers: Pascal Murasira, African Food Fellowship; AGRA, Veronica Nduva, Gates Foundation; Chef</i>

15:55 5 min	Final Culinary Village Wrap & Thanks!
16:00	Close

End of Day

