

Armenian Bread Declared Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The UNESCO cultural and scientific organization has decided to include Armenian flatbread on its intangible cultural heritage list, recognizing the importance of the foodstuff to the country's inhabitants.

Lavash, a staple of Armenian cuisine, is a type of soft and very thin flatbread that can be consumed as a wrap for cheese, meat or vegetables. It is also popular throughout the South Caucasus, and in Iran and Turkey.

According to a note on the UNESCO website, preparation of lavash "requires great effort, coordination, experience and special skills" and "strengthens family, community and social ties."

Lavash was accepted onto the list on Wednesday, with the UNESCO organization saying on its site that it acknowledged "the preparation, meaning and appearance of [the] traditional bread as an expression of culture in Armenia."

The Intangible Cultural Heritage Lists, a daring attempt to recognize and preserve immaterial culture, have been compiled since 2008, and entries from 103 countries are currently recognized by UNESCO.

Examples include Argentinian tango, Mongolian calligraphy, Middle Eastern falconry, Vanuatu sand paintings and even the Mediterranean diet.

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Other Armenian entries recognized by UNESCO include the reed wind instrument duduk, the performance of the medieval epic "David of Sassoon," and the art of stone cross making.

Russia has only two items on the list: The culture of the Semeiskiye Old Believer sect, and the Yakut heroic epic "Olonkho," which sees songs comprising up to 36,000 verses performed by singers over the course of several nights.

China is the runaway leader with 38 entries, followed by Japan (22) and Croatia (14). Neither the U.S. nor Britain have a single item of intangible heritage to contribute so far, according to UNESCO.

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