

Italy Showcases UNESCO-Recognised Cuisine as Global Demand Accelerates at Gulfood 2026

Italy's largest-ever presence at Gulfood responds to demand for premium Italian food, as brands deepen trade ties with the Middle East's import markets

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, January 30, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ --

Italy is delivering a strategic national showcase at [Gulfood 2026](#), the largest food & beverage sourcing event in the world, held annually in Dubai. The largest participation to date, presented the scale, depth and global leadership

of Made in Italy food and beverage excellence on one of the world's most influential sourcing platforms. The Italian pavilion, organized by Organizzazione Vittorio Caselli, unites exhibitors across two mega-venues, Dubai World Trade Centre and Dubai Exhibition Centre (DEC) at Expo City. This expansion at Gulfood 2026, positions Italian cuisine not only as cultural heritage, but as a future-facing food ecosystem grounded in quality, sustainability and innovation.



Valerio Soldani, Italian Trade Commissioner to the UAE and Oman, said: "With the Italian Trade Agency in Dubai, we are organising the Italian Food Lab this year to share Italy's culinary excellence with the global audience visiting Gulfood. This year, 320 Italian companies are exhibiting, making Italy the first national exhibitor from the EU and the third largest overall at the trade show. Through this participation, we are also highlighting a major achievement from last year, the recognition of Italian cuisine by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage. This remarkable milestone is being celebrated together with our exhibitors and through the chef-led masterclasses, where Italian products will be showcased and used on site."

Italian brands driving global food excellence

Gelato and Italian cheese are both emblematic of Italy's global food leadership, blending craftsmanship with export performance. Gelato continues to play a defining role within Italy's presence, symbolising craftsmanship, ingredient integrity and technical mastery, with the global

gelato market projected to reach \$23.92 billion by 2031. At the same time, Italian cheeses are enjoying record-breaking export momentum, with total Italian cheese exports exceeding 657,000 tonnes, growing at a CAGR of 4.95% from 2026 - 2034, led by PDO favourites such as Grana Padano and Parmigiano Reggiano, reflecting surging global demand for Italian dairy excellence.

Representation was strong across well-known brands, innovative startups and first-time exhibitors including Casa Del Gelato S.p.A, Pernigotti Maestri Gelatieri Italiani, MEC3, PreGel S.p.A. and Prodotti Rubicone are presenting advanced formulations and applications.

Jakob Zuegg, Export Manager, Casa Del Gelato S.p.A, Italy, said: "We are participating in Gulfood for the first time this year, showcasing our authentic Italian gelato varieties to visitors from all around the globe. We are truly impressed by the event's exceptional organisation and its impact in opening up access to new international markets. Within the UAE in particular, gelato remains a premium niche product, so this show is ideal for raising awareness about its unique culinary heritage. We look forward to returning next year with an even bigger booth."

A holistic celebration of Italian food culture

The pavilion reflected a broad strategic narrative of Italian food leadership across premium, value-added categories including PDO cheeses such as pecorino romano, artisanal dairy from Brazzale S.p.A. and Caseificio Ghidetti, IGP-certified olive oils from Costa d'Oro and Monini S.p.A., and premium Italian coffee from Barbera 1870, Caffè Mokarico and Caffè Moreno. Together, these brands reflect Italy's ability to preserve authenticity while responding to evolving global consumer and trade dynamics.

Alberto Piscioneri, General Manager of Tonitto 1939, said: "Our participation at Gulfood 2026 marks our fifth consecutive year at the show. We are here to strengthen relationships with existing customers and expand our reach across the region and beyond. We are also highlighting our commitment to UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030, including no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, affordable clean energy, and responsible consumption, with a focus on recyclable packaging."

Francesco Granata, Sales, Granata Olives, said: "This is our fourth time at Gulfood, and this year, with the expanded venue at the Dubai Exhibition Centre, we see even greater opportunities to grow our business. We hope this edition will help us build new connections and further strengthen our network."

By presenting a unified national portfolio that integrates iconic brands, innovation and professional expertise, the Italy Pavilion at Gulfood 2026 reinforces Italy's position as a global reference point for quality, authenticity and culinary leadership, strengthening commercial ties across the Gulf and international markets.

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Sources:

[\(1\) global gelato market](#)

[\(2\) Italy Cheese Market Size, Share, Growth & Forecast 2034](#)

About Gulfood

Gulfood 2026, taking place from 26–30 January, marks the 31st edition of the world's largest and most influential F&B sourcing and innovation event. With 8,500+ exhibitors, 125 countries, 280,000+ sqm across Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC) and Dubai Exhibition Centre (DEC) at Expo City Dubai, and five first-time sectors, Gulfood 2026 reinforces Dubai's position as the global headquarters of food trade and food intelligence. For a seamless experience at Gulfood 2026, access the comprehensive visitor guide, detailing everything from transportation and parking to sector locations, registration points and more.

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