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Gastropreneurs

Empowering Youth Entrepreneurship on Gastronomy

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LEARNING UNIT 3

Learning Unit
FOOD SAFETY, HYGIENE & QUALITY STANDARDS

Theoretical Core of the learning unit
Theoretical Core This section will clarify the general theoretical framework relevant to the different units, without going into the details of the gastronomy-related topics. (minimum 2 pages)

Food safety is the cornerstone of any gastronomic activity. Beyond being a legal obligation, it represents a fundamental ethical commitment to consumers and to society as a whole. This theoretical core starts from the premise that safe food is not the result of chance, but of systematic prevention, scientific knowledge and professional responsibility applied at every stage of the food chain.

1. Foundations of food safety and public health

At a conceptual level, food safety is closely linked to public health. Theoretical frameworks developed by the World Health Organization and the European Food Safety Authority emphasise that most foodborne illnesses are preventable when basic hygiene rules and risk management systems are properly applied. Learners will understand how biological, chemical and physical hazards affect food and why modern gastronomy must be built on the logic of risk prevention rather than reaction.

This section introduces the idea of food safety as a shared responsibility: from producers and suppliers to chefs, service staff and entrepreneurs. Each link in the chain plays a role in guaranteeing that food reaches the consumer in optimal conditions.

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2. Hygiene as a preventive culture

Hygiene is not simply a set of rules; it is a professional culture. This unit explores the theoretical principles of personal hygiene, environmental hygiene and operational hygiene, explaining how microorganisms spread and how contamination occurs in professional kitchens.

Key theoretical concepts include:

- The difference between cleaning and disinfection and their complementary roles.
- The dynamics of cross-contamination between raw and cooked foods.
- The importance of personal responsibility, including hand hygiene, work clothing, and health status of food handlers.

Students will understand hygiene as a continuous preventive process, embedded in daily routines rather than an occasional task.

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3. HACCP as the core safety system

The Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) system represents the scientific backbone of modern food safety management. This theoretical core explains the origins of HACCP and its evolution into an international reference model.

Learners are introduced to:

- The logic of hazard identification (biological, chemical, physical).
- The concept of Critical Control Points (CCPs) and why controlling a few key moments in the process is more effective than inspecting the final product.
- The meaning of critical limits, monitoring procedures and corrective actions.

The aim is not to train auditors, but to help future entrepreneurs internalise HACCP as a thinking framework that supports safe decision-making in daily operations.

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4. Regulatory frameworks and international standards

Food safety is strongly shaped by regulation. This section provides a theoretical overview of the European regulatory context, including general principles of food law, traceability requirements and official controls.

In parallel, it introduces international standards such as ISO 22000, explaining their role in harmonising practices across countries and in building trust among partners, suppliers and consumers. Learners will understand how standards translate into operational routines and documentation systems, especially in small and medium-sized gastronomic businesses.



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5. Quality as a complement to safety

Safety and quality are distinct but interconnected concepts. While safety protects health, quality shapes the consumer experience and business reputation. This core develops theoretical notions of:

- Sensory evaluation and consumer perception.
- Internal audits and continuous improvement.
- Documentation and record-keeping as tools for accountability.

Special attention is given to allergen management and labelling requirements, highlighting their importance not only for legal compliance but also for social responsibility and inclusion.



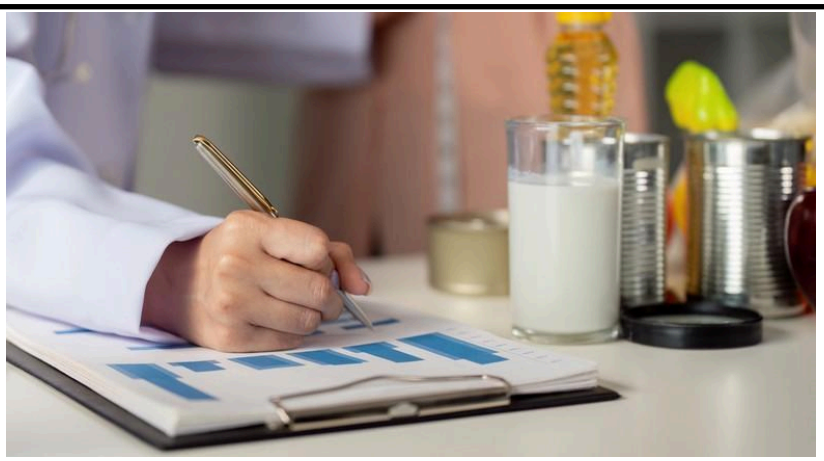
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6. Towards a culture of responsibility

The unit concludes by framing food safety and quality as part of a broader professional identity. For young entrepreneurs, especially in small towns and rural contexts, adopting strong safety standards becomes a way to build credibility, trust and long-term sustainability.

This theoretical core equips learners with a solid conceptual foundation that allows them to move from rules to reasoned practice, empowering them to apply safety principles confidently in diverse gastronomic contexts.

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