



AfriFOODlinks

*Empowering Tunis's Bakers for a Healthier Urban Food
Environment: The AfriFOODlinks Initiative*

Tunis , may 17,2025



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Overview

As part of the “Subsidized Bread Reformulation in the City of Tunis” initiative (AFL Project), the INNTA team, in partnership with the Association Patrimoine pour l'Économie Solidaire (APES) and its Ftartchi workshop, organized a series of training sessions for volunteer bakers. The program will engage around 50 bakers from across the city of Tunis.

Ftartchi, culinary Training with a Social Impact

Ftartchi is a social enterprise based in Tunis, dedicated to culinary training and creating positive social impact through food. The initiative includes a catering service (*Ftartchi Le Traiteur*) and a culinary training center (*Ftartchi L'Atelier*). Ftartchi provides free culinary education to young people, especially those from marginalized backgrounds, with the goal of helping them enter the job market. This marks the first bakery-focused training course offered in the city.

Hands-On Training

Hosted at the Ftartchi training workshop, the sessions introduced participants to a revised bread-making process using two types of flour: a traditional flour with a 78% extraction rate and a new variant with an 85% extraction rate. Both types are used with reduced salt content and without chemical improvers. The sessions were led by the head baker of Ftartchi's training workshop ensuring high-quality, artisanal instruction rooted in real-world experience. Notably, representatives from both the National and Regional Chambers of Bakers were also present at these training sessions, underscoring the initiative's importance within the sector.



Strategic Collaboration for the Tunisian Baguette

To tailor training to local particularities, the Ftartchi workshop's head baker conferred with the representative of Tunis's Regional Chamber of Bakers at the latter's Sidi Hassine Sijoumi bakery. This immersion enabled a valuable exchange of expertise regarding Tunisian craftsmanship.

The primary objective was to examine Tunisian baguette production methods and refine its recipe, particularly for subsidized bread, aiming for a product distinct from French techniques and potentially closer to the Italian baguette.

This collaboration culminated in an optimized Tunisian baguette recipe, accompanied by comprehensive documentation of essential know-how and panification techniques to ensure consistent quality and reproducibility.



A Partnership Built on Complementary Strengths

This collaboration between INNTA, both the National and Regional Chambers of Bakers were also present at these training sessions, underscoring the initiative's importance within the sector, the bakers of Tunis, and Ftartchi brings together complementary expertise to ensure the success of the project:

- **Integrated Expertise:** INNTA contributes its scientific knowledge in nutrition and food technology, defining the technical specifications for reformulation (flour types, sodium levels). APES, via "Ftartchi" provides its practical artisanal baking expertise and its capacity for professional engagement and training within the sector.
- **Contextualized Experiential Learning:** delivered by an experienced master baker within the APES workshops, the training prioritizes hands-on learning, enabling bakers to achieve concrete mastery of novel baking techniques. The utilization of specific flours provided by the millers of Tunis (78% and 85% extraction rates) and rigorous adherence to the sodium reduction protocol are central tenets of the program. A progressive reduction of the salt

content in bread, with a target decrease of 30%, achieved in steps of 10%. This is an interesting approach to allow consumers to gradually adapt to a less salty taste.

- **Valorization of Traditional Practices:** the integration of sourdough production and utilization promotes healthy and sustainable artisanal methodologies, offering an alternative to industrial improvers.
- **Knowledge Exchange and Network Facilitation:** the bread produced during each training session was enjoyed during a convivial lunch between the bakers, the APES association, and the AfriFOODlinks INNTA team.
- **Knowledge exchange and community building:** the convivial lunches and tasting sessions organized by APES foster the exchange of experiences and the establishment a professional network among trained bakers, thereby bolstering the initiative's sustainability.



This initiative highlights how local collaboration and hands-on training can improve urban food systems while preserving traditional practices and empowering communities. By equipping bakers with healthier techniques, AfriFOODlinks is helping reshape the bread landscape in Tunis—**one loaf at a time**.

