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Slovenia

Social entrepreneurship in a circular economy in Slovenia



Food Care

Introduction

We buy, we use, we throw away. And create pollution. This is nowadays a typical behavior, what millions of humans do every day, damaging the sustainability of the planet.

What other options exist, that would be more “circular”, meaning that it doesn’t create trash but rather re-use without creating wastes?

What is it ?

Social entrepreneurship in the circular economy is about innovating for people and planet simultaneously – tackling waste and overconsumption while making sure the benefits reach communities.

The circular economy is a system that transforms waste into valuable resources for new products and production. In this model, everything has a purpose, and consumption is minimized.

*Watch a documentary **“Wasted! The Story of Food Waste”**, about food waste problems and creative solutions to learn more about this topic!*

Click [here](#) to watch a trailer. Full film available on Amazon Prime, Apple TV.

In Slovenia, the concept of a circular economy is being actively implemented to promote sustainability and reduce waste. Hotels and restaurants collect organic waste, which is then transported to regional waste management facilities such as [RCERO Ljubljana](#), the largest environmental project in Slovenia . At these facilities, the organic waste is transformed into high-quality compost. Local farmers utilize this compost to fertilize their crops, ensuring the production of healthy, sustainable food. The produce from these farms is then reintroduced into the food supply chain, completing the circular economy cycle and promoting environmental responsibility.

Why is it important?

Social entrepreneurship in a circular economy is where doing good for people and doing good for the planet meet. As a country with a growing tourism sector and rich natural resources, Slovenia faces challenges in balancing visitor demand with environmental protection. Every practice that reduces waste, preserves ecosystems, and promotes resource reuse is valuable. It helps minimize tourism's impact, support year-round local jobs, and make the economy more resilient by diversifying beyond seasonal tourism. That's why starting new eco-friendly businesses is so important today – to keep both communities and the environment healthy for the future.

What are the benefits?

1. Sustainable Solutions

Social enterprises in Slovenia are pioneering innovative approaches to promote the reuse, recycling, and repurposing of resources. For instance, [Reuse Centre Ltd.](#), established in 2012, collaborates with municipalities and public waste management companies to develop new green jobs and promote resource savings through the reuse of furniture and other items.

2. Community Impact

Organizations like [KNOF](#) focus on solving social issues such as poverty and inequality by creating job opportunities and supporting local communities. Through waste-related and environmental activities, they include people at risk of social exclusion, fostering a fairer and more sustainable society.

3. Environmental Protection

Slovenia has implemented various initiatives to prioritize resource efficiency and minimize waste. The national strategy includes measures to support the transition to a low-carbon circular economy, aiming to reduce environmental impact, conserve natural resources, and mitigate climate change.

4. Economic Growth

Social enterprises in Slovenia stimulate local economies by fostering new industries and business models within a circular economy framework. For example, the [Circular Economy Hotspot Slovenia 2025](#) event aims to showcase good business practices and innovative solutions, contributing to economic growth and resilience.

5. Education and Awareness

Organizations like [Permamed](#) play a crucial role in educating the public about sustainable practices. Through workshops and initiatives, they encourage the widespread adoption of circular economy principles, fostering a more sustainable mindset among citizens.

What can I do?

1. Buy from sustainable local businesses

You can find a list of eco-friendly Slovenian businesses on Slovenia Green or similar sustainable tourism websites.

2. Participate in eco-events

Join events like Green Week Slovenia or local sustainability fairs to raise awareness and learn about circular practices.

3. Invest in social enterprises

Support projects such as Center ponovne uporabe (Reuse Centre) Ljubljana, which create jobs, promote reuse, and foster community development.

4. Adopt circular habits yourself

Learn from initiatives like Re-use Centre Ljubljana, composting projects, or Slovenia Circular programs to integrate zero-waste practices into daily life.

5. Educate yourself and analyze social entrepreneurship potential

Read reports and theses on circular economy and social entrepreneurship in Slovenia, such as those available through EPALE Slovenia

What have I learnt?

I've learned that sustainability is a holistic concept connecting people, communities, and the environment, and that my everyday choices—from what I eat to what I buy—have a direct impact on the world around me. Social entrepreneurship and circular economy practices show that supporting local jobs, reducing waste, protecting nature, and promoting fairness and equity are not just abstract ideas—they are practical, actionable ways to create meaningful change. Sustainability is a lifestyle I can integrate into daily life, enabling me to question the status quo, make informed and responsible decisions, and actively contribute to positive social, environmental, and economic outcomes. By practicing these principles, I can help build resilient communities, foster innovation, and promote a more just and balanced relationship between people and the planet.

All is summarized in the [European approach of Microcredentials](#).

Micro-credential 1

Embodying sustainability value:

- 1.1 Value sustainability by reflecting on personal values while critically evaluating how they align with sustainability values.
- 1.2 Supporting fairness to support equity and justice for current and future generations and learn from previous generations for sustainability.
- 1.3 Promoting nature to acknowledge that humans are part of nature; and to respect the needs and rights of other species and of nature itself in order to restore and regenerate healthy and resilient ecosystems.

Micro-credential 2

“Embracing complexity in sustainability”

- 2.1 (Systems thinking), to approach a sustainability problem from all sides; to consider times, space and context in order to understand how elements interact within and between systems.
- 2.2 (Critical thinking) To assess information and arguments, identify assumptions, challenge the status quo, and reflect on how personal, social and cultural backgrounds influence thinking and conclusions.
- 2.3 (Problem framing) To formulate current or potential challenges as a sustainability problem in terms of difficulty, people involved, time and geographical scope, in order to identify suitable approaches to anticipating and preventing problems, and to mitigating and adapting to already existing problems.

Micro-credential 4

“Acting for sustainability”

- 4.2 (Collective action) to act for change in collaboration with others.
- 4.3 (Individual initiative) to identify own potential for sustainability and to actively contribute to improving prospects for the community and the planet.



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Seasonal food in Slovenia



Food Care

Introduction

Slovenia is known for its rich agricultural heritage and diverse landscapes, making it an ideal country for growing a variety of seasonal products. Understanding the importance of consuming food that is naturally available during specific times of the year is essential for supporting local communities and maintaining the balance between nature and agriculture.

What is Seasonal Food in Slovenia?

Seasonal food refers to products harvested at their natural peak throughout the year. In Slovenia, this cycle shapes the country's culinary identity, bringing freshness to traditional recipes. Slovenian cuisine closely follows the seasons: apples, pumpkins, and mushrooms in autumn; berries, herbs, and fresh vegetables in summer; and root vegetables and cabbage in winter. This natural availability guides what appears on the table while respecting agricultural rhythms. Choosing seasonal food means enjoying authentic flavors, supporting local farmers, and celebrating Slovenia's rich biodiversity with a lower environmental impact.

Seasonal Food in Slovenia

Season	Fruits	Vegetables	Wild/Foraged & Other
Spring (March–May)	Strawberries, cherries (late spring), rhubarb	Asparagus, lettuce, spinach, spring onions, radishes, peas, broad beans, nettles	Wild garlic (čemaž), dandelion leaves, mushrooms (morels)
Summer (June–August)	Apricots, peaches, plums, nectarines, blueberries, raspberries, currants, melons, figs, grapes (late summer)	Tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, courgettes, green beans, eggplant, corn, potatoes	Forest berries, chanterelles, porcini
Autumn (September–November)	Apples, pears, grapes, quinces, medlars, walnuts, chestnuts, persimmons	Pumpkins, cabbages, kale, broccoli, cauliflower, leeks, carrots, beetroot, turnips, celery root	Mushrooms (porcini, parasol, saffron milk caps), truffles
Winter (December–February)	Apples (stored), pears (stored), dried fruit (plums, figs, raisins), citrus (imported but common)	Sauerkraut, turnip mash (repa), potatoes, onions, garlic, winter cabbage, kale, Jerusalem artichokes	Dried beans, lentils, nuts, homemade preserves

Here you can read more about [seasonal food in Slovenia](#).

Why is it important?

Each time we buy seasonal food, we are making a choice that benefits our health (as you can see in [this article](#)), our local community, and the environment. Seasonal food is not only healthier and tastier, but it also helps preserve local culinary traditions and reduce food waste.

What are the benefits?

- 1. Environmental Impact:** Eating seasonal food reduces the need for energy-intensive farming practices such as heated greenhouses or storage facilities. This results in a smaller carbon footprint, less resource use, and a more sustainable food system.
- 2. Support for Local Economies:** Seasonal food is typically grown by small, local farmers. By purchasing their products, you are keeping money within the local community and contributing to the economic growth of rural areas. [Here](#) you can look at some local restaurants in Slovenia.
- 3. Freshness and Quality:** Seasonal produce is harvested at its peak, meaning it has higher nutritional value and better taste compared to products that are stored for long periods or transported from far away.
- 4. Biodiversity:** Growing seasonal products promotes the cultivation of a variety of crops, maintaining agricultural diversity and reducing reliance on monocultures, which can be harmful to the soil and ecosystem..
- 5. Transparency and Trust:** Buying from local markets allows consumers to know where their food comes from, building trust in the quality and production methods of the items they purchase.
- 6. Cultural Preservation:** Seasonal food helps maintain traditional recipes and culinary customs tied to specific times of the year. This not only keeps cultural traditions alive but also strengthens the connection between the local community and its heritage.

What can I do?

- **Buy fresh veggies and seasonal products in the local markets.** In Slovenia, local markets have become a symbol of sustainable and seasonal food consumption. With weekly markets spread across the country—from Ljubljana to the coastal towns of Piran and Koper—residents and visitors alike have easy access to fresh, seasonal produce. Whether you're buying apples in Maribor or wild mushrooms in the countryside near Kočevje, these markets offer a glimpse into the true essence of Slovenian cuisine. For more information on where to find these markets, visit: [Weekly Markets in Slovenia](#).
- **Learn About Local Produce:** Discover fruits and vegetables in season, like cherries in early summer, pumpkins in autumn, and other local products such as Prekmurje oil, Kranjska sausage, and mountain honey.
- **Support Local Restaurants:** Dine at restaurants that use seasonal ingredients and highlight Slovenian cuisine, like [Hiša Franko](#) in Kobarid.
- **Attend Food Festivals:** Celebrate local flavors, such as the [Chestnut Festival](#) in Vitovlje or local harvest fairs and winter markets across the country.
- **Grow Your Own:** Plant herbs or vegetables suited to the Slovenian climate to connect with seasonal rhythms. You can follow [@BalconyGardenIdeas](#) for tutorials.
- **Follow Local Chefs and Influencers:** Get inspired by Slovenian culinary experts on social media for seasonal recipes, like [@sloveniafoodexperience](#).
- **Use Seasonal Food Apps:** Apps like [Kuri](#) help track what's in season and promote eating local, fresh ingredients.

What have I learnt?

- Seasonal food supports local economies and helps small-scale farmers.
- It reduces environmental impact and lowers our carbon footprint.
- Choosing seasonal products means enjoying fresher, tastier, and healthier food.
- Seasonal eating preserves biodiversity and strengthens local culinary traditions.
- It fosters a deeper connection between communities, food, and cultural heritage.

All is summerized in the [European approach of Microcredentials](#).

Micro-credential 1

Understanding Nutrition

- 1.1 value sustainability by reflecting on personal values while critically evaluating how they align with sustainability values.
- 1.2 Supporting fairness to support equity and justice for current and future generations and learn from previous generations for sustainability.
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Micro-credential 2

Adopting Healthy Eating Habits

- 2.1 (Systems thinking), to approach a sustainability problem from all sides; to consider times, space and context in order to understand how elements interact within and between systems.
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Micro-credential 4

Promoting a Balanced Diet

- 3.1 (Futures literacy) to envision alternative sustainable futures by imagining and developing alternative scenarios and identifying the steps needed to achieve a preferred sustainable future.
- 3.2 (Adaptability) to manage transitions and challenges in complex sustainability situations and make decisions related to the future in the face of uncertainty, ambiguity and risk.
- 3.3 (Explorator thinking) to adopt a relational way of thinking by exploring and linking different disciplines, using creativity and experimentation with novel ideas or methods.



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0 Km Food in Slovenia



Food Care

Introduction

0 km food refers to consuming ingredients that are produced locally, minimizing transportation and emphasizing seasonal products. It is part of a broader movement for sustainable and environmentally friendly eating. For a general overview, you can check this website: <https://www.moeveglobal.com/en/planet-energy/environment/from-farm-to-table-the-path-of-zero-kilometer-food>

In Slovenia, 0 km means eating fresh, local, and seasonal food. Traditional dishes like Kranjska klobasa and potica are made with ingredients from nearby farms. Regional specialties such as Vipava cherries, Goriška peaches, and local wines show the country's rich variety. By choosing local products, Slovenians support farmers, protect tradition, and enjoy healthier meals.

What is 0 km Food?

0 km food, embraced in Slovenia, is not only about eating local products—it's about living well. Fresh, seasonal ingredients support farmers, preserve traditions, and bring better health. It also reflects a slow life approach, where meals are shared, time is valued, and food is part of a balanced lifestyle. As seen in stories of Slovenian cuisine, from potica baked with local walnuts to Kranjska klobasa made by family butchers, food and life go hand in hand, showing that 0 km food is also a recipe for happiness.

Why is it important?

In Slovenia, the 0 km philosophy is deeply embedded in daily life. Local farms and markets provide high-quality products like Kranjska klobasa, potica, and seasonal fruits, supporting farmers, producers, and small businesses. By prioritizing local food, Slovenians preserve traditional recipes and cultural heritage, while also strengthening regional economies. This approach promotes a healthier lifestyle, a slower pace of life, and a strong sense of community, showing how food can sustain both people and place.

What are the benefits?

1. Healthier and Fresher Food

Locally grown, seasonal products are fresher and more nutritious because they travel shorter distances and are harvested at peak ripeness.

2. Supports Local Economy and Workers

Buying local helps farmers, small producers, and local markets thrive, sustaining jobs and regional economies.

3. Preserves Cultural Heritage

0 km food encourages traditional farming methods and recipes, maintaining regional identity and culinary heritage.

4. Environmental Impact

Shorter transportation reduces carbon emissions, packaging waste, and energy use.

5. Promotes Slow Life and Community

Encourages mindful eating, communal meals, and stronger connections between people and their surroundings.

6. Specific Benefits for Slovenia

In Slovenia, supporting local products like Kranjska klobasa, potica, pumpkin seed oil, and regional wines helps preserve centuries-old culinary traditions, sustain small farms, and maintain a lifestyle that values quality, culture, and community over speed or mass production. Weekly markets and farm cooperatives in towns like Ljubljana, Maribor, and Ptuj allow consumers to meet producers directly, ask questions, and make informed choices, fostering trust and a resilient food system.

What can I do?

1. Visit Local Markets – Central Market in Ljubljana, the Maribor City Market, and weekly markets in towns like Ptuj or Kranj offer seasonal fruits, vegetables, cheeses, honey, and other homemade products, giving you the chance to support farmers directly.

2. Agritourism Farms (Agriturismi) – Many agriturismi provide farm-to-table experiences and sell fresh products onsite, giving a taste of traditional Slovenian ingredients. You can explore the different options available in the region through platforms like I feel Slovenia, where various stays and experiences are listed.

3. Check Labels – Look for local products like Kranjska klobasa, Štajersko pumpkin seed oil, Tolminc cheese, Karst prosciutto, and wines from Goriška Brda, even in supermarkets.

4. Follow Local Influencers and Food Bloggers – Explore Slovenian cuisine through these accounts:

- @slovenianfoodexperience – Showcases local eateries, seasonal products, and authentic Slovenian dishes from across the country.
- @sloveniankitchenbymichelle – Michelle shares traditional Slovenian recipes with a modern twist, highlighting culinary stories and family traditions.

5. Cook and Share – Use local ingredients to recreate traditional recipes, enjoy mindful meals, and strengthen community connections through shared food experiences.

What have I learnt?

- 0 km food in Slovenia is more than just a way of eating; it helps protect nature while supporting farmers, artisans, and local traditions. By choosing Slovenian products, we contribute to preserving the country's diverse landscapes, from the Alps and forests to the plains, vineyards, and coastal regions.
- It encourages responsible consumption and fosters fairer, more resilient food systems. Supporting local farmers means promoting ethical practices, reducing food waste, and creating a more balanced relationship between producers and consumers.
- 0 km food connects us to the land and the people who cultivate it with care. Visiting markets, talking to producers, and buying directly from farms allows us to understand the effort behind each product and appreciate the cultural stories embedded in every ingredient.
- It plays a key role in building sustainable local economies. By investing in local agriculture and small businesses, 0 km food helps fight depopulation in rural areas, sustain family farms, and create employment opportunities, all while maintaining Slovenia's culinary heritage.
- Beyond economics and environment, 0 km food strengthens social bonds and community life. Shared meals, farm-to-table experiences, and local cooking traditions encourage slow living, mindfulness, and a deeper appreciation for the rhythm of the seasons.
- Overall, learning about 0 km food in Slovenia has shown me that the choices we make about what we eat are deeply connected to culture, nature, and quality of life. Eating locally isn't just healthier—it's a way to celebrate heritage, support people, and live more consciously.

All is summarized in the [European approach of Microcredentials](#).

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Traditional food to support Cultural Heritage in Slovenia



Food Care

Introduction

Europe strongly supports traditional food for its cultural value, health benefits, and positive impact on rural economies. The EU protects and promotes traditional products to ensure their quality and authenticity.

The gastronomy of Slovenia is deeply rooted in its diverse landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and Central European-Mediterranean identity. Known for its hearty, seasonal dishes and regional variety, it draws on local ingredients such as buckwheat, pumpkin seed oil, Karst prosciutto, Tolminc cheese, and the celebrated honey from the Carniolan bee.

You can discover more about Slovenia's authentic dishes [here](#).

What food supports Slovenia's cultural heritage?

1. Potica

A traditional Slovenian festive dessert – a rolled pastry made from leavened dough, filled with various fillings, most commonly walnut, raisin, tarragon, or poppy seed.

2. Kranjska Klobasa (Carniolan Sausage)

A protected traditional sausage made from pork, bacon, salt, garlic, and pepper. Usually served boiled, with bread, mustard, and pickled side.

3. Jota

A hearty stew made with sauerkraut or pickled turnip, beans, potatoes, and smoked meat. Typical of the Primorska and Goriška regions.

4. Žganci

A simple traditional side dish made from buckwheat or wheat flour. Often served with milk, cracklings, or sour milk.

5. Štruklji

Rolled dumplings made from rolled or boiled dough, which can be sweet (filled with apples, cottage cheese, walnuts) or savory (filled with cheese or herbs). They can be boiled, baked, or fried.

6. Prekmurska Gibanica

A rich multi-layered dessert from the Prekmurje region, composed of several fillings: walnut, poppy seed, cottage cheese, and apple. One of Slovenia's most famous desserts.

Why is it important?

With each traditional recipe we preserve, we are safeguarding a piece of Slovenia's heritage. Traditional food embodies the country's unique culture, its deep connection to the land and sea, and the values of its people. Supporting traditional Slovenian food is essential for keeping the stories, flavors, and culinary customs of the region alive.

What are the benefits?

1) Empowerment of Cultural Identity

It helps maintain and celebrate Slovenia's diverse cultural identity and rich culinary traditions, ensuring that the country's heritage – shaped by Alpine, Mediterranean, and Pannonian influences – is preserved and continues to flourish.

2) Economic Boost

Traditional foods attract both local and international visitors, supporting small-scale producers, farms, winemakers, and restaurants. For example, you can visit [Hiša Franko in Kobarid](#), where tradition meets innovation, or explore local farmers' markets featuring artisanal cheeses, honey, and cured meats.

3) Community Connection

Preparing and sharing Slovenian dishes like potica, jota, or žlikrofi brings families and communities together, strengthening social ties and reinforcing a shared sense of identity and belonging.

4) Biodiversity

Supporting traditional Slovenian foods encourages the use of native crops and regional ingredients, such as buckwheat, Carniolan honey, and indigenous grape varieties – helping to protect Slovenia's natural biodiversity and promote sustainable agriculture.

5) Historical Continuity

Preserving culinary knowledge ensures that traditional recipes, cooking techniques, and food rituals are passed down through generations, keeping Slovenia's gastronomic heritage alive and relevant in modern times.

What can I do?

1) Cook Traditional Food

When hosting friends, prepare a Slovenian dish like jota, žganci, or potica. It's a great way to share local flavors and celebrate Slovenia's culinary heritage. Check out [Slovenian food blogs](#) for recipe ideas.

2) Buy from Local Producers

Skip the supermarket and shop at farmers' markets or local stores. Supporting Slovenian farmers helps keep traditional food culture alive and thriving.

3) Choose Restaurants with Local Cuisine

When eating out, pick places that serve traditional Slovenian dishes made with local ingredients. Use [TasteAtlas](#) or follow local food pages on social media for recommendations.

What have I learnt?

- Slovenian gastronomy connects us to the land through fresh, local ingredients like buckwheat, Karst prosciutto, Tolminc cheese, pumpkin seed oil, and forest honey.
- Traditional food preserves culture, strengthens communities, and supports local farmers, artisans, and small businesses.
- Eating locally protects biodiversity and promotes sustainable farming practices rooted in the country's diverse regions.
- Everyday choices—cooking, shopping, and dining locally—help keep Slovenia's culinary heritage alive while building a more sustainable and resilient food system.

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