

Summary

In a country that ranks high in the European Michelin star league table, it is inevitable that gastronomy becomes a key component and a very powerful tool in events.

Taste of success

As Spain hosts 214 restaurants with Michelin stars, including 11 with 3 stars, it follows that gastronomy is a vital component of the country's incentives. Food can make up the entire occasion, it can be the crux of a product presentation, a key component of social activities in a congress or the perfect excuse for networking at a trade show. Let's take a look at a few events in which gastronomy was the highlight.



The aesthetic revolution of the 90s meant that names like Arzak or Ferran Adrià stole the show from sports or pop stars; a revolution in which some catering companies took part, introducing crazy innovations into events. The dishes became works of art, with a requirement that the catering, together with other elements of the event, should be part of the message.

This was the case in the launch of the IQOS3 (Philip Morris) electronic cigarette, organised by [Metacción](#) at Palacio Cibeles, where the catering was one of a number of components aimed at communicating how temperature control and avoiding flames maintain the flavour of tobacco without the problems attached to lighting it. [Ramón Freixa \(Life Gourmet Catering\)](#) translated this into a healthy and exquisite gastronomic experience. It was based on bites cooked at a low temperature at molecular cooking stations, with molecular cocktails served by bionic arms, as well as a

cooking demonstration by Freixa, who has two Michelin stars. He cooked a variety of healthy salads without fire, thanks to liquid nitrogen, created fruits that turned into tasty steam in guests' mouths and instant ice creams with delicious combinations of flavours and colours. According to client Philip Morris, "never before have we managed to be so specific than when relating the benefits of non-combustion to catering".



Another trend is the return to local products, with all the flavour and charm that regional food provides. Catering company [21 de Marzo](#) organised a village festival for 800 guests of DMC Factor3 in the Plaza de [Pueblo Español](#) in Barcelona, decorated with lengths of coloured garlands and lanterns, including stalls with local sausages, rice, tortillas, churros with chocolate, and more, creating a relaxed, lively and festive occasion.



Part of going back to a region's culinary roots is rounding off the experience by displaying the ingredients and having the final preparation of the dish on site to complete the picture. Cooking becomes part of the show; the kitchen is transferred to the event and the food, fresh and raw, is displayed with the same care as the final dishes, being a key part of the visual appeal, as we see in this event in Bilbao.



Sensitivity to sustainability has also grown, leading to use of local products, waste avoidance and cooking with ingredients that are usually thrown away. Basf wanted the presentation of its Creator Space Tour in Barcelona to be based on responsible consumption, with three principles: promoting a healthy and sustainable diet, increasing water resources for the agricultural sector and reducing food waste/optimising waste management, and all this, in an exquisite gala dinner. [Unit Elements](#) designed an event in which prestigious chef and activist in responsible consumption Ada Parellada (Semproniana), with catering company [Vilaplana](#), designed a dinner based on products which are normally wasted, leading to potato skin chips, snacks of anchovy spines and escarole green leaf omelette, food we would normally not consider eating or that lacks appeal (Im-perfect). Staging followed the theme, including a rain tree to raise awareness of efficient use of water and an exhibition of clouds from which pipettes filled with soup hung, as though they were raindrops.



Finally, the trend that is sweeping the latest events: technology applied to gastronomy. Video mapping is projected from the walls and ceiling to the tables and allows a sensory journey which completes the foodie experience. In an incentive for Cisco, [Spaintacular](#) created magical gastronomy at the Platanera (banana plantation) Finca Punta del Lomo, in Tenerife, with a huge 150m table that was the centre of an eclectic evening. The combination of all these elements – local, tactile, nature, technology – achieved a Wow! effect. Immersive mapping embraced five concepts: corporate, water, cosmos, volcano and colour, all related to the characteristics of the island, and was combined with music and artistic performances.