



## GOLDEN TAVOLA 2026 COMPETITION RULES

### Art. 1 – Description and purpose

On the occasion of Tavola 2026 a competition is organized between exhibitors to reward the most remarkable new product at the trade fair under the name **“Golden Tavola 2026”**. **Within this competition we distinguish five categories: ‘Taste & Craftmanship’, ‘Convenience, ‘Premium & Pleasure’, ‘Health & Balance’ en ‘Sustainability’**. In the first three categories a Golden Tavola trophy will be awarded and the nominated products announced (2nd and 3rd place). In the categories Health & Balance and Sustainable & Ethical a single Award winner will be designated in each case.

### 5 CATEGORIES:

- **Golden Tavola ‘Taste & Craftmanship’ 2026:** Awards the innovative fine food product that translates sustainability into a delicious product, from ingredient to packaging, while preserving taste and authenticity.
- **Golden Tavola ‘Convenience’ 2026:** Awards the fine food product that combines **innovation, quality, and refinement with time-saving, simplicity, or an enhanced user experience** for consumers, chefs, or professionals.  
"Convenience without compromising on taste or enjoyment.
- **“Golden Tavola ‘Premium & Pleasure’ 2026:** Awards innovative fine food products that **elevate the enjoyment of eating and drinking into a sensory experience**.  
Not necessarily the most expensive products, but those that **combine innovation, emotion, elegance, and exceptional taste** and quality to create a moment of pure indulgence.
- **Award ‘Health & Balance’:** Awards the innovative fine food product that enables mindful enjoyment: **nutritious, balanced, and attentive to the consumer’s well-being**.  
The focus is on a thoughtful balance between taste, nutritional value, and natural composition.
- **Award ‘Sustainability’:** Awards the innovative fine food product that **translates sustainability into a delicious product, from ingredient to packaging**, while preserving taste and authenticity.

The 3 Golden Tavola and 2 Awards are awarded per category to the best new product (Belgian or foreign) and is chosen from one of the following product groups:

potato products; fruit and vegetables; prepared dishes and catering products; delicacies and specialties; frozen products; drinks (alcoholic and non-alcoholic), coffee and tea; dry products; herbs, oils, sauces and dressings; vegan products; vegetarian products; fish and seafood; meat, meat products, game and poultry; confectionery; bread and pastries; and dairy products.

In addition, your product may also feature the following characteristics:

allergen- and gluten-free foods, organic foods, sustainable products, ethnic foods, Halal/Kosher, novel foods, private brands, seasonal products and regional/local food.

From the entries, three nominations are proposed in the categories **“Taste & Craftmanship”**, **“Convenience”**, and **“Premium & Pleasure”**, with the best product receiving the **Golden Tavola**. The second and third places are designated as the 1st and 2nd nominations, respectively.

In the **“Health & Balance”** and **“Sustainability”** categories, a single winner is selected to receive the **2026 Award**.

Tavola wishes to confirm its forward-looking character through this competition and to significantly strengthen the search for or creation of new products at the trade fair with the “Golden Tavola” competition. Through innovation Tavola aims to secure an important asset to attract a large number of visitors. For visitors, the Golden Tavola and the nominated products provide an important guide for their purchases.

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## **Art. 2 – Participation**

The competition is exclusively reserved for companies exhibiting at the Tavola 2026 trade fair, and only for products falling under one of the categories mentioned in Art. 1.

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## **Art. 3 – Jury and judging**

Judging takes place under the supervision of a court bailiff, who controls both the procedure and the results.

Judging takes place in two phases: pre-judging (1<sup>st</sup> round) and final judging (2<sup>nd</sup> round).

In the pre-judging the ‘novelty’ of the product is checked and assessed on the basis of the submitted product argumentation — no tasting occurs in this phase. This is carried out per product sector by three different buyers from the category in which the product was entered: Taste & Craftmanship / Convenience / Premium & Pleasure / Health & Balance / Sustainability

The final judging is carried out on the basis of three criteria-categories:

1. **Innovative character:** assessment of the argumentation regarding novelty, degree of originality/innovation, market launch date, and commercial success prospects of the innovation.
2. **The product itself / tasting:** appearance of the product (shape, color, smell, attractiveness), taste (initial taste, aftertaste, mouthfeel), shelf life, sustainability.
3. **Presentation:** commercial aspect of the packaging and the label (commercial attractiveness, information, sale ability, convenience) and — where applicable — practical aspects for the retailer (weight, volume, content, stack ability, environmental aspects).
4. Specific characteristics within the chosen category.

**1. Taste & Craftmanship:** craftsmanship & production technique, • quality & origin of ingredients, authenticity & honest character.

**2. Convenience:** ease of preparation, • ready-to-use quality & flexibility, packaging & handling, consumer-oriented intuition

**3. Premium & Pleasure:** emotional experience, story & narrative experience, aesthetics &

premium presentation, exclusivity & distinctive character

**4. Health & Balance:** quality & natural composition, flavour balance within a healthy concept, innovation in healthy formulation or function, relevance for modern lifestyles

**5. Sustainability:** sustainability of ingredients & origin, production process & environmental impact, packaging & material choice, authentic and credible communication, overall added value & inspirational character

The final jury is composed of highly regarded professionals from the following sectors: gastronomy, purchasing (large retail / caterer / catering organizations — different from those in the pre-judging), market research, product design, trade journals.

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#### **Art. 4 – Registration**

Registration takes place exclusively online via the exhibitor portal — final registration date: Friday 9 January 2026. Registration is confirmed immediately after completion by email to the address provided during registration. Participation is limited to **5 products per company** and may be spread across multiple categories. The participant pays an entry fee of **EUR 300.00 (excl. VAT)** per product. This will be invoiced together with the other services.

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#### **Art. 5 – General eligibility**

- a. The registrant for the competition is an exhibitor at Tavola 2026.
- b. The registered products belong to one of the categories mentioned under Art. 1.
- c. The product was placed on the market after 1 March 2025 and not later than 15 March 2026.
- d. The product must comply with all applicable legislation (including labelling requirements).

Products that infringe intellectual and/or commercial property rights will not under any circumstances be exhibited or admitted to the fair. Therefore each exhibitor must inform Xpo Group of any ongoing litigation or legal proceedings relating to the product in question.

The same applies to legal disputes. If third parties bring a claim against Xpo Group because their rights were infringed by the exhibitor, the exhibitor must indemnify Xpo Group against all claims. The exhibitor is fully liable if the aforementioned conditions/rights are not respected — especially if a third party is involved — and will accordingly bear any compensation payable to Xpo Group.

The organizer is not liable for incorrect or defective information.

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#### **Art. 6 – Submission of products**

The participating products must be delivered at Kortrijk Xpo on Monday 12 or Tuesday 13 January 2026 between 08:30 and 12:00 at the following address: Kortrijk Xpo — South Entrance (Entrance Xpo 'Zuid'), Kennedylaan 100 (gps address), 8500 Kortrijk — Belgium (access via Xpo South at parking P3A).

The 1st phase of judging is concluded on Tuesday 27 January 2026. For products progressing to the next judging round new product samples will be requested for tasting.

Companies whose product(s) progress to the next round will be notified of this on 30 January 2026. The new samples for tasting and final judging must be delivered no later than Friday 6 February 2026.

On site refrigeration and freezing cabinets are available for storing refrigerated or frozen products. During the final judging a fully equipped kitchen is available to serve the products to the jury as described on the packaging.

The organizers will take all reasonable care to ensure a high quality level of tasting. Nevertheless, they cannot be held liable for any damage to products caused by, inter alia, spoilage and others. Participants are therefore advised to deliver the products in the most ideal conditions. Products are non-returnable and become the property of the Tavola organization.

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## **Art. 7 – Prizes**

For each category, one winner and a maximum of two nominations are selected. The categories are: Golden Tavola “Taste & Craftmanship”, Golden Tavola “Convenience”, and Golden Tavola “Premium & Pleasure”.

The Golden Tavola can be awarded to either a Belgian or an international product. If no entry meets the required score for a given category, the jury may withhold the award for the 2026 edition. The Golden Tavola consists of a statuette representing the Tavola logo, featuring the lobster claw.

The remaining two nominated products are designated as the 1st Nomination Golden Tavola and 2nd Nomination Golden Tavola within their respective category.

In the “Health & Balance” and “Sustainability” categories, a single winner is selected to receive a specific award.

On Friday, 20 February 2026, nominees and winners will be notified. The official award ceremony will take place on 3 March 2026. From that date, winners will also receive the Golden Tavola logo to use in their communications.

On the exhibition floor, TAVOLA visitors will select their favourite innovation from the 11 winning and nominated products for the ‘Visitors choice’ Award.

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## **Art. 8 – Presentation**

All products advancing to the final judging will be listed on the website and presented to visitors at Tavola 2026 on the Rambla. A dedicated stand will be set up at the exhibition to showcase the winners and nominated products. The stand will also feature a demonstration area, where a chef will allow visitors to taste the nominated products and the Golden Tavola 2026 winners. Winners are required to provide a sufficient quantity of products for this purpose.

The organizers will provide photographic material of the winning products. The organization retains the right to use these images in the context of the Tavola exhibition. Exhibitors are also granted the right to use the photographic material of their own products.

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## **Art. 9 – Promotion**

To promote the nominated products and the **Golden Tavola 2026 winners**, a comprehensive promotional campaign will be launched prior to the trade fair, including: articles in trade publications, digital newsletters targeting the visitor audience, and extensive announcements on the exhibition website.

Winners and nominees of the **Golden Tavola 2026** will receive a logo that can be used on packaging, in communications, and other promotional materials for the winning product.

In addition, winners and nominees will receive significant media coverage in the trade press **before, during, and after Tavola**.

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**Tavola 2026 information:**

Xpo Group, Kortrijk Xpo, Doorniksesteenweg 216, 8500 Kortrijk, Belgium

T: +32(0)56 24 11 11 – [tavola@xpogroup.com](mailto:tavola@xpogroup.com)

**Golden Tavola Project Team**

Isabelle Fruy & Eilleen Knockaert – [goldentavola@kortrijkxpo.com](mailto:goldentavola@kortrijkxpo.com)