



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 & Craft’, ‘Convenience & Ready to Eat’, ‘Luxury & Indulgence’, ‘Health & Balance’ and ‘Sustainable & Ethical’**. 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 winner will be designated in each case.

5 CATEGORIES:

- **Golden Tavola ‘Taste & Craft’ 2026:** Rewards the innovative fine food product that excels in flavor, texture, craftsmanship and authenticity. Emphasis lies on the quality of the mouth experience and the artisanal or culinary mastery with which the product was made.
- **Golden Tavola ‘Convenience & Ready to Eat’ 2026:** Rewards the fine food product that combines quality and refinement with time saving, simplicity or smart use for the consumer, chef or professional. “Convenience without compromise on taste, experience or Sustainable.”
- **Golden Tavola ‘Luxury & Indulgence’ 2026:** This category rewards products that elevate the enjoyment of eating and drinking into a sensory experience. Not necessarily the most expensive products, but those combining emotion, craftsmanship, elegance and exceptional taste into a moment of pure indulgence.
- **Award 2026 ‘Health & Balance’:** Rewards the fine food product that enables conscious enjoyment: nutritious, balanced and mindful of consumer wellbeing. Emphasis lies on the sensible balance between taste, nutritional value and natural composition.
- **Award 2026 ‘Sustainable & Ethical’:** Rewards the fine food product that translates sustainability concretely at every stage of its lifecycle — from ingredient to packaging — while preserving taste, authenticity and aesthetics. These are products that are good for people, planet and senses.

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. Your product may also belong to the following subgroups: 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 & CRAFT – CONVENIENCE & READY TO EAT – LUXURY & INDULGENCE, of which the best receives the Golden Tavola. The 2nd and 3rd places are respectively designated as 1st nomination and 2nd nomination. In the categories HEALTH & BALANCE – SUSTAINABLE & ETHICAL one winner is chosen in each case who receives the Golden Tavola.

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.

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.

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 (1st round) and final judging (2nd 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 & Craft / Convenience & Ready to Eat / Luxury & Indulgence / Health & Balance / Sustainable & Ethical. The submitted product must achieve a minimum score of 75% to proceed to the final judging.

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:** 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).

Within the chosen category points are also awarded based on the properties of the category:

- Convenience & Ready to Eat: 25% of the total score
- Taste & Craft: 25% of the total score
- Luxury & Indulgence: 25% of the total score

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.

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.

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.

Art. 6 – Submission of products

The participating products must be delivered to the entrance building Xpo South of 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, 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.

Art. 7 – Prizes

From the entries one winner and a maximum of two nominations are chosen per category. These are: Golden Tavola TASTE & CRAFT – Golden Tavola ‘CONVENIENCE & READY TO EAT’ – Golden Tavola ‘LUXURY & INDULGENCE’. The Golden Tavola may be awarded to either a Belgian or a foreign product. If the required score for a specific category of the competition is not attained, the jury may withhold the prize for the 2026 edition. The Golden Tavola consists of a statuette depicting the Tavola logo, i.e. the lobster claw.

The other two nominated products are designated 1st nomination Golden Tavola and 2nd nomination Golden Tavola for the relevant category.

In the categories **HEALTH & BALANCE – SUSTAINABLE & ETHICAL** one winner is designated in each case and will receive a specific trophy.

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

On the trade floor Tavola visitors choose their best innovation from the 11 winners and nominated products as the public prize: the ‘Visitor’s choice award’.

Art. 8 – Presentation

All products that progress to the final judging will be listed in the trade fair guide and presented to visitors at Tavola 2026 in the Rambla. At the fair a dedicated stand will be built where the winner and nominated products will be exhibited. A demonstration area will also be set up at the stand where a chef will present tastings of the nominated products and the Golden Tavola 2026 winners. Winners must supply (sufficient) products for this purpose.

The organizers will provide photographic material of the winning products — the organizers hold the right to use this material within the framework of the Tavola fair. Exhibitors also obtain the right to use the photographic material of their product.

Art. 9 – Promotion

To promote the nominated products and the Golden Tavola 2026 winners a full promotional campaign will be launched prior to the trade fair, comprising: articles in trade journals, digital newsletters to the visitor target group, extensive announcement on the fair’s website, inclusion in the trade fair guide. The winners and nominees of the Golden Tavola 2025 receive a logo that may be used on packaging / in communications / etc. of the winning product.

Furthermore, winners and nominees receive broad attention from the (trade) press before, during and after Tavola.

Tavola 2026 information:

Xpo Group, Kortrijk Xpo, Doorniksesteenweg 216, 8500 Kortrijk, Belgium
T: +32(0)56 24 11 11 – tavola@xpogroup.com

Golden Tavola Project Team

Isabelle Fruy & Eilleen Knockaert – goldentavola@kortrijkxpo.com