

Certifying Heritage: Food, Tradition, and Nature in the Baltic States

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This presentation focuses on food as a site of mediation between nature and culture and reflects on its place in the regional environmental histories of East Europe. Focusing on the Baltic States, I will examine on the implementation of food protection certifications known Geographical Indications (GI) that were designed to protect local traditions, skills, knowledge, and natural landscapes against steamrolling globalization and commercialism. While South European countries have been able to take advantage of these certificates, Northern European countries, and especially the three Baltic States, seem to be lagging behind in the numbers of certified food practices. By considering the criteria and assumptions built into the definitions of "tradition" and "nature" in the GI's, this presentation explores the ways in which certifications intersect with local histories, cultural imaginaries, and environmental practices. This presentation concludes with a reflection on the Baltic States as a European frontier and its place in its historical imagination.