Honeys of Ethiopia:
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- Mek’elè
  - Tigray White Honey
- Addis
  - Ababa
- Wolisso
  - Ghetce
  - Horde
  - Shallala
  - Dawro Konta
- Badogo
- Wondo
- Wassara
- Awasa
The Honeys of Ethiopia network was created to promote one of the country’s most representative food products. Two Slow Food Presidia, Tigray white honey and Wenchi volcano honey, formed the network’s starting point, and in 2009 it was expanded to include the Terra Madre beekeeping communities. The project is the result of a collaboration between Slow Food and several Italian partners: Modena per gli Altri (MOxA), Parma per gli Altri (PPA) and CONAPI, the consortium of Italian organic beekeepers and farmers.

Established to safeguard a sector that more than any other reflects the biodiversity and wealth of the local environment, the network offers a kind of map of Ethiopia’s best artisanal honeys. As well as providing technical assistance to the producers, it also promotes honey by-products, like wax and propolis. The medium-to-long-term objective is to organize a good commercial network that will allow the beekeepers to access the national market, even those living in very remote areas. This will allow them to obtain a fair price that reflects the efforts they have made to improve the quality of their honey.

The Communities
To date, the Honeys of Ethiopia network includes the two Presidia (for Wenchi volcano honey and Tigray white honey) and the food communities in Gassa Chare (Dawro Konta), Wolisso, Shalala, Horde, Getche, Badogo, Wondo and Wassarà.

Each honey has different characteristics, reflecting the unique environment, climate and flora of their places of origin.

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In collaboration with
MOxA, Parma per gli Altri, CONAPI, Slow Food, Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity
Slow Food

Slow Food is an international association active in over 150 countries around the world, with 100,000 members, 2,000 Terra Madre food communities and millions of activists. Through projects, local activities and national and international events, it works around the world to promote agriculture based on local knowledge and respect for the environment, biodiversity and local cultures.

www.slowfood.com
www.slowfoodfoundation.com

Modena per gli Altri

Modena per gli Altri works on projects in Modena and Ethiopia, providing economic support to small businesses in the agricultural and artisanal sector.

www.modenaperglialtri.org

Parma per gli Altri

Parma per gli Altri is an NGO active in Africa, particularly Ethiopia and Eritrea, where it works in collaboration with local communities to implement local health, education and economic development projects, with a particular focus on women.

www.parmaperglialtri.it

CONAPI

CONAPI is a national cooperative of beekeepers who follow organic principles and maintain a close link to their local areas. The cooperative researches innovative ways of promoting honey and other beekeeping products, while its members work every day to preserve biodiversity and protect the environment. CONAPI has a technical role within the Honeys network, exchanging knowledge with the Ethiopian beekeepers.

www.conapi.it
Wukro is in the heart of the Tigray region, in the far north of Ethiopia. One of the country’s most prized honeys is made here, on a 2,000-metre-high plateau, where, according to the local people, “the mountains gather for meetings.” During the dry season the vegetation, mostly low shrubs, acacias and grasses, dies back, leaving a semi-desertic landscape. The subsequent rains then struggle to turn the area green again. Despite the aridity, the annual production of honey is high, as beekeeping is a very common activity in the region. The honey is collected twice a year: The primary harvest is at the end of the rainy season (from September to December), while the second is only possible in rainier years and takes place from May to June. Three main types of honey are produced: red, yellow and white. The bright white honey makes up 90% of production. Coarse-grained, with an uneven texture, it has a delicate scent, not too sweet a flavor and a lingering aftertaste. This honey is made from specific flowers, mostly from the Lamiaceae family, and to a lesser extent, prickly pear and euphorbia.

The Selam association of beekeepers has 16 members who collect honey from modern hives located in communal apiaries.

Production area: Wukro, eastern Tigray region
2 Wenchi Volcano Honey
Slow Food Presidium

The Wenchi volcano’s magnificent crater, two hours’ drive from Addis Ababa, is ringed by steep green slopes surrounding a deep, bright-blue lake. Thanks to its thermal waters, in recent years the area has become a renowned tourist destination. An association works in Wenchi to manage the eco-tourism activities and protect and promote the natural resources of the area around the volcano. In 2010, a group of 40 beekeepers also created the Wenchi Beekeepers’ Association. The honey made on the volcano’s slopes, collected at the end of the rainy season between October and December, is yellow-amber in color and has a very fine, smooth grain. The scent is intense, with hints of flowers and slightly toasted caramel. Creamy on the palate, it has a medium acidity level and is soft and refreshing, thanks to the balsamic notes. The main flowers that have been identified so far are Hagenia abyssinica (kosso) and Erica arborea (hasta). The honey is made partly in traditional hives (large woven cylinders of bamboo, covered in false banana leaves, closed at one end with straw and at the other with a circular piece of wood) and partly in modern hives.

Production area: Wenchi volcano, southwestern Oromia region

3 Dawro Konta Honey
Food community

Thanks to the variety of plants in its forests, Dawro, a mountainous province southwest of Addis Ababa, is an ideal area for producing quality honey. Beekeeping is an important source of income for the Kullu Konta, who belong to the larger Welayta ethnic group. The traditional hives (kafó), made from woven bamboo, are dried over a fire of aromatic shrubs, acquiring an intense aroma that attracts the bees. The hives are covered with false banana bark placed in the trees. When the honey is ready, the hives are closed and taken to the beekeepers’ houses. The first harvest, in November and December, is the most abundant and is obtained from a range of flowers, including wanza (Cordia africana) and coffee (Coffea arabica). The second harvest, in April and May, is mostly from eucalyptus and fruit trees, such as docoma (wild plum).

The community has set up an association of 26 beekeepers.

Production area: Gassa Chare, Dawro Konta, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People’s Region (SNNPR)
4 Wolisso Honey
Food community

In Wolisso, 120 kilometers southwest of Addis Ababa, at an altitude of 1,800 meters above sea level, honey was traditionally only used as an ingredient in a typical fermented drink called tej, or as a medicine. The beekeepers used only traditional techniques and hives formed of cylinders woven from bamboo and covered in leaves. The hive was cleared of bees using a large amount of smoke, often to the detriment of the honey's quality. To improve the purity of the honey and diversify production (making not just tej, but also honey, propolis and beeswax), an association of 17 beekeepers has gradually introduced modern apicultural methods and tools alongside their traditional techniques. Between June and November, the Wolisso community collects honey made from eucalyptus and other local species like wanza (Cordia africana).

Production area: Wolisso, southeastern Oromia region

5 Shalala Honey
Food community

The village of Shalala is located at an altitude of 2,277 meters above sea level in the heart of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People’s Region. Beekeeping has ancient roots here, and is widely practiced among the Hadiya, the local ethnic group. In December 2008, 22 beekeepers formed the Shalala Beekeepers’ Association. Their honey is reddish-yellow, thick and very sweet, and comes from range of local flowers and trees including sunflowers, legumes like Vicia sinensis, senafitch (Brassica nigra), and common fruit trees like papaya and mango. The honey is harvested in June and November, and the honeycombs are kept in woven bamboo covered with leaves. The Shalala community also produces beeswax and propolis.

Production area: Shalala, Hadiya zone, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People’s Region (SNNPR)
6 Horde Honey

*Food community*

Horde lies about 2,000 meters above sea level, in highlands covered in natural forest. In 2010, 20 beekeepers from the village formed an association. Each producer has a number of kafó (traditional hives) and the first modern hives have been introduced only recently. Honey is harvested from September to November and from March to June, and comes from a variety of local plants: wanza (Cordia africana), coffee (Coffea arabica), tikur inchet (Prunus africana) and a local variety of Olinia rochetiana. In the past the honey was used for blessings and to show honor and respect, as well as for therapeutic purposes. The red honey has a liquid consistency, with a very sweet scent and flavor. It is sold in the nearby towns of Osanna and Gombora to tej producers or traders, and in a shop in Shalala set up by the association Modena per Gli Altri.

Production area: Horde, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People’s Region (SNNPR)

7 Getche Honey

*Food community*

Getche honey is collected at altitudes between 2,000 and 2,500 meters, in an area populated by the Gurage, an ethnic-linguistic group who are mostly traders and beekeepers. Until recently only traditional collection methods were used, with hives made from logs, bark and clay, hung from trees to attract the bees. The first modern hives were introduced in 2008. The honey harvested in October is pale and produced from a number of different flowers. In the spring it is redder and comes from other flowers, from eucalyptus, nug (yellow daisy-like flowers), avocado and other forest trees. The honey is stored in terracotta containers and sold in local shops and markets. The association is made up of 10 beekeepers who work with 200 traditional beehives and around a dozen modern beehives.

Production area: Getche, Gurage zone, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People’s Region (SNNPR)
8 Badogo Honey
Food community

Badogo honey is typical of the southern Ethiopian region of Hadiya, between the Omo and Billate rivers. It is collected at an altitude of 1,800 meters above sea level. The 15 beekeepers who currently work here have recently joined the Honeys of Ethiopia network. The honey is collected from April to June and again from November to December. Badogo honey is amber, almost reddish in color, and shortly after harvest it crystallizes and solidifies. The honey is made from nectar from the tree Apodytes dimidiata, known as white pear, native to the area.

Production area: Southern Nations, Nationalities and People’s Region (SNNPR)

9 Wondo Honey
Food community

Wondo honey comes from southern Ethiopia and is collected at 2,000 meters above sea level in an area between the Omo and Billate rivers, inhabited by the Hadiya, about 11 kilometers from Shellala. Currently 34 beekeepers belong to this community. The reddish-amber honey is collected between April and June and between November and December. A viscous liquid when harvested, about a month after extraction it crystallizes and solidifies. The honey comes from the flowers of several different species: Syzygium guineense (a temperate forest plant from the myrtle family), red eucalyptus, Rhamnus prinoides (an African shrub from the Rhamnaceae family), Grevillea robusta (southern silky oak), Dovyalis caffra (a small evergreen tree) and Cordia africana, from the borage family.

Production area: Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples’ Region (SNNPR)

10 Wassarà Honey
Food community

The Wassarà community’s 13 beekeepers belong to the Kambaata ethnic group. They produce honey at an altitude of 2,400 meters above sea level. The harvest is in January and between May and June, when the honey is made from Eucayptus camaldulensis flowers. The honey is dark in color, almost brown, and liquid immediately after extraction. It later solidifies, crystallizing with a fine grain. It has a very dense texture and a woody scent.

Production area: Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples’ Region (SNNPR)
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