

Baguette makes it to UNESCO list

December 2, 2022

In news— Baguette, the staple French bread was inscribed into the UN's list of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) on November 30.

What is a Baguette?

- **The baguette is a long and thin loaf made of flour, water, salt and yeast**, and is consumed as a staple in France.
- Some believe that it was invented by August Zang, a baker and an entrepreneur from Vienna in 1839, who introduced the world to the taste of crusty bread with softer insides, using a steam oven.
- It gained its official name in 1920.
- The history of the bread is uncertain, some also believe that Napoleon Bonaparte, the French military leader, ordered thin sticks of bread for consumption by his soldiers as they could be carried from one place to another more conveniently.

What are India's intangible cultural symbols on the UNESCO list?

- In 2022 India nominated Garba, a traditional dance form that originated in the state of Gujarat, for inscription on UNESCO's ICH list.
- The elements which have been on the representative list of intangible cultural heritage from India in the past decade include Kolkata's Durga Puja (2021), Kumbh Mela (2017), Navroz (2016), Yoga (2016), traditional brass and copper craft of utensil-making among coppersmiths of Punjab (2014), Sankirtana, a ritual musical performance of Manipur (2013), and the Buddhist chanting of Ladakh

(2012).

- Before 2011, the list included Chhau dance, Kalbelia folk songs and dance of Rajasthan, and Mudi yettu, a dance drama from Kerala (2010), Ramman, a religious festival and theatre performance of Garhwal in the Himalayas (2009), and Kutiyattam or Sanskrit theatre, and Vedic chanting (2008).
- Ramlila, a traditional performance of Ramayana, was also included in 2008.

Who manages nominations to the UNESCO list in India?

- Several autonomous bodies within the Ministry of Culture actively function towards promoting and preserving intangible cultural heritage within the country.
- **Sangeet Natak Akademi is the nodal organisation which looks after this function,** and files nominations of intangible cultural entities from India, for evaluation by the international body.

What is the intangible cultural heritage of UNESCO?

- UNESCO defines “intangible” as “expressions that have been passed from one generation to another, have evolved in response to their environments and contribute to giving us a sense of identity and continuity...”
- Intangible cultural heritage includes “oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts.”
- The adoption of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the ICH by the General Conference of UNESCO in 2003 was a crucial step towards preserving intangible heritage from across the globe.
- **UNESCO’s list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity was established in the year 2008.**

What are the criteria for the selection?

There are three criteria for an intangible cultural heritage to be inscribed in the United Nations list.

1. The entity must be recognized by communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals as part of their cultural heritage.
2. It must be transmitted from generation to generation and be constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history and
3. Provide them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.