# CALL FOR APPLICATIONS
# Italian Cooking Competition
# 24 November 2026

The Embassy of Italy in Pristina is pleased to announce the opening of applications for its official **Italian Cooking Competition**, organized as part of the celebrations of the Week of Italian Cuisine in the World.
The overall winner will receive a scholarship for the prestigious *Like an Italian* residential training programme at **ALMA – The International School of Italian Cuisine**, in Colorno, Parma, Italy.

## Article 1 - Competition Stages

The selection process will take place in two stages:

**Stage 1 – Application Screening -** The Selection Committee will review the applicants' profiles and motivation letters and select up to 8 finalists, who will qualify for the practical cooking challenge.

**Stage 2 – Live Cooking Competition -** The finalists will compete in a live cooking challenge before an outstanding jury chaired by Chef Stefano Ciotti (Nostrano Restaurant, one Michelin star). The competition will take place on **24 November 2026**, as part of the Week of Italian Cuisine in the World. The exact time and venue of the final will be communicated directly to the selected finalists.

## Article 2 – The Practical Challenge

To ensure a fair and equal competition, all finalists will prepare the same recipe during the live final. The recipe will be selected by Chef Stefano Ciotti in cooperation with ALMA.
All ingredients required for the challenge will be provided by the organizers on the day of the competition.

## Article 3 – The Prize

The first-place finalist will receive the **Like an Italian scholarship**, which includes:

- full coverage of the tuition fee for the two-week training programme at ALMA, worth €4.300, funded by the Embassy of Italy in Pristina;
- accommodation in a fully equipped apartment, in a shared room, for the duration of the programme;
- lunch on class days at the school's cafeteria (breakfast and dinner are not included).

The winner will be responsible for covering the costs of return travel, local transfers, medical insurance and, where applicable, visa expenses.

## Article 4 - Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must meet the following requirements by the application deadline:

- hold Kosovo citizenship;
- be between 18 and 35 years of age;
- hold a diploma from, or be currently enrolled in, a culinary school or a comparable training institution. Alternatively, applicants may provide certified evidence of up to five years of professional experience in the food service industry;

- have a good command of English, with a minimum level of B2;
- be available to travel to Italy on the dates set by ALMA and attend the training programme, which will take place from **9 to 23 June 2027**.

**Article 5 - How to Apply and Selection of Finalists**

To apply for the competition, candidates must submit all the required documents by the deadline specified in Article 7, by email to: pristina.commerciale@esteri.it
Please use the following subject line: **Cooking Competition Application / First Name and Surname**.
The following documents must be attached in PDF format:

- a copy of a valid identity card or passport;
- a CV in English, highlighting the applicant's educational background and/or culinary experience;
- a motivation letter in English (maximum 500 words), explaining the applicant's interest in Italian cuisine and in the training programme at ALMA;
- proof of enrolment at a culinary school or comparable training institution and/or documents certifying the professional experience declared in the food service industry;
- the completed and signed Application and Participation Declaration Form.

**Article 6 – Live Final: Evaluation Criteria**

During the final, candidates will be required to prepare the assigned recipe within a time limit of **60 minutes**.
The jury will assess each candidate's performance based on the following criteria:

- technical skills, attention to texture and precision in cooking techniques;
- faithfulness to the Chef's original recipe and balance of flavors;
- visual presentation and plating.

**Article 7 – Competition Schedule**

- **6 November 2026**: Opening of applications;
- **18 November 2026, 12:00 am (local time)**: Application deadline;
- **20 November 2026**: Announcement of the 8 selected finalists;
- **24 November 2026**: Live Cooking Competition Final;
- **25 November 2026**: Official award ceremony and announcement of the winner.

**Article 8 – Withdrawal, Forfeiture and Reassignment of the Scholarship**

The selected winner must formally confirm acceptance of the scholarship within five (5) working days of receiving the official notification.
If the winner is unable to accept the scholarship or attend the training programme, they must notify the Embassy of Italy in Pristina in writing and without undue delay.
If the winner withdraws without prior notice or fails to attend the training programme without a valid reason duly communicated to the Embassy, the Embassy reserves the right to withdraw the scholarship.
In such cases, the Embassy reserves the right to offer the scholarship to the next eligible candidate in the ranking, in accordance with the selection criteria and subject to the candidate's availability and acceptance.