

Curriculum Vitae

Name: Astra Spalvēna

Researcher Identification: Scopus Author ID: 57205366401

EDUCATION

2009 – 2015

Doctor of Arts (Dr. art.) - Culture Studies and Art History

Latvian Academy of Culture, Riga, Latvia

Doctoral dissertation: "Cultural-Contextual Analysis of Food Adaptation in Sign Systems"

Supervisor: Prof., Dr. philol. Daina Tetters

2023 – 2025

Master of Arts in Creative Writing

RTU Liepāja (Riga Technical University, Liepāja Faculty), Latvia

Erasmus internship at Aarhus University, Denmark

Thesis: "Gastropoetic Essay: Food as a Narrative of Experience, Memory, and Identity"

WORK EXPERIENCE

September 2025 – present

Head of Research Department

Pauls Stradiņš Museum of the History of Medicine, Riga, Latvia

2022 – 2025

Researcher

National History Museum of Latvia, Riga, Latvia

2020 – 2023

Lead Researcher / Principal Investigator

Faculty of Humanities, University of Latvia, Riga, Latvia

2016 – 2020

Lecturer / Docent

RISEBA University of Business, Arts and Technology, Riga, Latvia

2014 – 2016

Researcher

Latvian Academy of Culture, Riga, Latvia

2008 – 2016

Guest Lecturer

RISEBA University of Business, Arts and Technology, Riga, Latvia

June 2019 – June 2021

Marketing Director

Latvian National Centre for Culture, Riga, Latvia

2018

International Media Communications Manager

Latvian Institute, Riga, Latvia

Prior to 2018: over 20 years of professional experience in journalism, advertising, public relations, and cultural institution management (National Film Centre, Museum of Literature and Music, State Museum Authority).

SCIENTIFIC PROJECTS

2020 – 2023

"National Self-Identity: The Gastropoetic Aspect. Historical, Transnational and Interdisciplinary Context"

University of Latvia, Faculty of Humanities

Role: Principal Investigator. State-funded research grant. The project examined how food culture shapes national identity in Latvia, combining historical, semiotic, and anthropological approaches. Resulted in peer-reviewed publications and public outreach activities.

2014 – 2016

"Sustainability of Traditions in an Innovative Environment. Habitus"

Latvian Academy of Culture

Role: Researcher. State Research Programme examining the dynamics of cultural tradition and innovation.

SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS

Selected publications (5 most relevant); total publication list available upon request.

1. Spalvēna, A. & Kušnere, S. (2022). Soviet hospitality traditions and the festive feast. *Akadēmiskā dzīve*, 58, pp. 7–15.
2. Spalvēna, A. (2021). New Cookbooks for The New Country: Latvian National Cuisine in the Making. *Culture Crossroads*, vol. 19, pp. 218–229.
3. Bardone, E. & Spalvēna, A. (2019). European Union food quality schemes and the transformation of traditional foods into European products in Latvia and Estonia. *Appetite*, Vol. 135, pp. 43–53. [Scopus / Web of Science indexed; IF 4.6]
4. Spalvēna, A. (2019). Artichoke broth and sprats in the French manner: foreign recipes in Latvian cookbooks. In: *Francijas garša. Gastronomija un kultūra*. Rīga: Zinātne, pp. 81–102.
5. Spalvēna, A. (2017). Gastronomical Exchange in Soviet Cuisine: On the Example of Latvia. In: *Proceedings of the 21st International Ethnological Food Research Conference*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

OTHER INFORMATION

Peer Review Activity

Peer reviewer for the following international scientific journals:

- Journal of Ethnography and Folkloristics (Estonian Literary Museum)
- Culture Crossroads (Latvian Academy of Culture)

Supervision and Teaching

Lectured in undergraduate and graduate programmes at RISEBA University (2008–2020), covering a range of communication, semiotics, and academic writing courses. Supervised student research projects and theses at bachelor's level.

International Scientific and Academic Experience

Erasmus internship at Aarhus University, Denmark (2025),. International collaboration with Estonian partners (University of Tartu).

Science Communication and Public Engagement

Active science communicator with extensive experience translating academic research into accessible public formats. Contributions include:

- Authored entries on gastronomy and food culture for the National Encyclopaedia of Latvia (2021–present).
- Three-episode podcast series "Klausītava" (National Library of Latvia, 2021) on food and literature.
- Six-lecture series "200 Years of Latvian Gastronomy" (LU Open Minded platform, 2021).
- Audio guide content and project management for National History Museum of Latvia exhibitions.
- Lectures and seminars on culinary heritage, food culture, and culinary tourism at museums, libraries, and cultural institutions across Latvia.
- Popular science articles in culture media: Satori, Domuzīme, and Punctum.
- Gastronomic content for the National Library of Latvia exhibition "Freedom Begins with a Book" (2025).

Professional Memberships

Member of the International Committee for Museums and Collections of Ethnography (ICME) of the International Council of Museums (ICOM).