

THE HONEST FIRE — Essence & Differentiator

A Chef Among the World's Last Cooks of Truth

Essence (what makes this stand out)

This project contrasts **ancient, fire-based cooking** and the deep, scientific understanding those communities have preserved with a **modern world that has largely forgotten those roots**.

It is not about *what* is eaten, but *why* people cook that way — how they ferment, smoke, preserve seeds, and adapt across seasons.

The result is a **fusion of fine-art photography, field storytelling, and light-touch science** that chefs can use for pairing, preservation, and new flavour thinking.

Why this hasn't been done

Most projects either photograph people (anthropology) or celebrate dishes (cookbooks).

The Honest Fire merges three worlds that rarely meet:

- a chef who participates inside the circle,
- a scientist who decodes the methods, and
- an art book that presents dignity without pity.

It requires **culinary humility**, a **cinematic eye**, and **scientific rigour** — together.

What National Geographic Has Done — and What They Haven't

For a century, National Geographic has shown **tribes, rituals, and landscapes**.

They have rarely entered the *kitchen-fire intimacy*, and have **never portrayed the same family in two seasons** — scarcity and abundance — through the perspective of a **chef cooking alongside them**.

The Honest Fire fills that century-old gap: *not observation but participation; not spectacle but culinary humanism*.

Chef–Scientist Collaboration

Culinary Director: Chef László Szűcs

Scientific Advisor: Prof. Dr. Sándor Keszthelyi — Institute of Agronomy,
Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences (MATE)

Together they explore:

- Traditional fermentation, smoking, drying, salting, sun-curing
 - Seasonal nutrition shifts (hunger vs. harvest)
 - Sustainable proteins (insects, roots, grains)
 - Soil-to-plate relationships that connect agronomy and taste
-

Method & Outputs

Each chapter returns to the same community in two seasons.

Every fire becomes both **a story and a small field laboratory** where emotion and evidence coexist.

Planned outputs include:

- a **large-format fine-art book** (FriesenPress),
 - a **short-form documentary series** (*pilot budget* $\approx$ £7,000), and
 - a **cultural archive** preserving techniques before they disappear.
-

Compact Partner Blurb

The Honest Fire is a **chef-led, science-informed, fine-art chronicle** of how humanity still cooks with honesty when everything else is gone.

It stands where travelogues stop — **inside the fire**.

It documents not merely *what* is eaten, but *why* methods endure:

fermentation without refrigeration, smoke as preservation, seed-keeping as memory.

The same family is portrayed twice — during scarcity and during abundance — revealing adaptation as both culture and biology.

With **FriesenPress** publishing, **Canon Europe** interest, and **Prof. Dr. Sándor Keszthelyi** providing research integrity, this is **culinary humanism**: participation over observation, dignity over spectacle.

Copyright & Creative Ownership

© 2025 Chef László Szűcs. All Rights Reserved.

“The Honest Fire”, “Culinary Humanism”, and “A chef among the world’s last cooks of truth” are protected creative identifiers associated with this project.