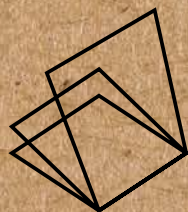


RESEARCH, GASTRONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA

MEMORIES OF THE *COCINA TU FUTURO* FORUM

Publication as part of the
master's thesis.

English version



PARAL•LEL

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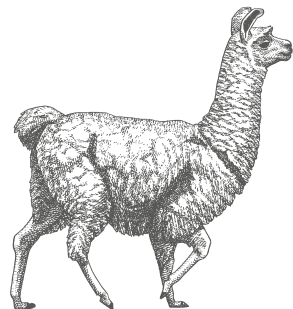
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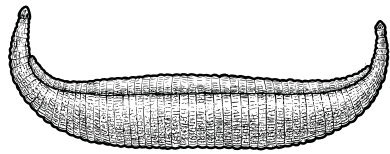
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PROLOGUE

by Luciana Bianchi

Gastronomic events are becoming more popular every year. However, only a few of them can be considered original and well-executed in every aspect, from the initial concept to the goals they aim to achieve.

In the past five years, the classic gastronomic congress and chef forum formats have lost their appeal among industry professionals. They have turned into superficial reality shows to showcase celebrity chefs, leaving behind innovative content. These events now attract more foodies and amateur cooks, while leaving gastronomy professionals in search of new alternatives that promote knowledge exchange, exciting ideas, engaging projects, new techniques, and inspiring topics that help the industry explore innovations for the development of new concepts, perspectives, and products.

After 20 years of attending gastronomic events around the world, it is now clear to me that we urgently need new formats and ideas for their execution. In order to bring together food professionals, students, researchers, and food lovers, all under one roof, these activities must be more than just a place to build a network of connections or watch highly-produced videos. The new type of action must have at least these three elements: original content, great speakers, and exciting activities.

Carles Tarrasó and Camilo Ruiz were model students at the Basque Culinary Center, where they stood out for their progressive ideas, proactive thinking, and a strong willingness to always give more of themselves. This attitude, combined with their excellent organizational skills and social abilities, demonstrated to their teachers and institutions that they had a brilliant future ahead.

It is worth noting that every student should seek an original idea to present as their final project, and by choosing to organize a gastronomic forum, they were taking a very high risk. Despite all the limitations and difficulties of carrying out such a project in Quito, Ecuador, they never backed down from the challenge!

The "Cocina Tu Futuro" Forum, held at UIDE in Quito, was a blend of gastronomic culture, human recognition, and reflections on business practices. It was an event that featured impactful workshops, influential panel discussions, influential presenters, and topics that were relevant for both food professionals and chefs. The organization was impeccable, and all the materials presented were meticulously thought out.

Tarrasó and Ruiz are only at the beginning of their gastronomic journey, but they are ready for their next adventure! I am certain that this project will not only open many doors for their future but also contribute to the understanding of what a Gastronomic Forum should encompass. Without even realizing it, these two young and talented students have created the most revolutionary and effective Latin American Gastronomic Event seen in years, a format tailor-made for the contemporary gastronomic reality of Latin America. It truly was a successful and authentic activity!

Luciana Bianchi
San Cristóbal, Galápagos, 2019

PROLOGUE
by Maria Fernanda Di Giacobbe

To Camilo and Carles,

I TEPOZTLÁN

Under orange-colored tents, the scent of blue corn tortillas permeates the air, and their steam brings warmth to the January cold.

On top of the tortillas, still puffed up, there are strips of cactus paddles, strands of cheese, and grasshoppers. With your feet connected to the roots of ancestral flavors, you are grounded, unchanging in customs and seasoning. In this "magical" atmosphere, for there is no other way to describe the market, the elderly women sell small, native avocados, pouches of herbs and spices, pumpkin seeds and blossoms, incense, and Palo Santo; they exchange them for other foods, for money, for words. Their clothes are a landscape and a testament to the talent of those who weave and embroider, and then everything makes sense.

II MOCHIMA

From the Heights of Santa Fe, the Mochima bay reveals islands of blue, emerald, and transparent waters that fill the spirit with freedom. Schools of mullets approach the mainland. An invisible thread train awaits them, and the sound of oars against the edges of the boats announces to the neighbors that the sea is bountiful, and everyone will eat. They will eat their flesh, their skin, their gills, eyes, and delicious roe. "Only what is needed is caught, dear tourist. Those who take everything without restraint stay behind, and those who save for tomorrow eat poorly." Up above, the women of the countryside undress the tender corn cobs and husk them to grind. They stoke the fire with firewood and a hot griddle, spread a dazzling green plantain leaf; on it, a ladle spills a circle of dough. They wait, laughing and gossiping, for little holes to appear on the surface of the cachapa; they flip it, cut a hand cheese cake in half to place on top, fold the food, wrap it in the same hot leaf, and offer it to us. There is no time or history. Sweet, green, milky, salty, textures—it is mountain facing the sea.

III TACACÁ

Belém de Pará. Shrimp in that intense cassava broth that holds a crystalline slime at its bottom and swims on its surface with dark leaves and the effervescent tingling of jambu. Bold Brazilians, I will never forget the surprise of a soup for a snack that enchants and numbs the mouth and frightens the intellect. I like to imagine Heston Blumenthal tasting it and surrendering to such creativity, just as we were amazed in his mushroom gardens for Alice and on his sandy coast, camiguanas, and seafood from Los Roques at Fat Duck many Tacacá is served on every street, kiosk, small restaurant, or tacacazeira; everyone knows its recipe, there is no author or secret there. Latin American cuisine is oral, feminine, it is shared ritual, abundance, and transcendence.

IV AMAZONÍA

He descended to the Amazonas in a bongo boat over 12 meters long. He left behind the Sapoara Sancocho (without head) from Ciudad Bolívar, the iguana stew from the beaches of Caroní, and ventured into the bewildering jungle. They sailed all night and set up camp in Baré indigenous land at daybreak. The mother brought a mapire of washed bitter cassava, grated it with sweet cassava, and mixed it inside a wooden trough. She covered it with banana leaves, fermented it for a day, introduced the mixture with her hands into the sebucan (thick woven snake), and pressed it with a huge wooden instrument to extract the yare (poisonous liquid from the bitter cassava). She placed the yare over the fire in a pot, added chili peppers and culón ants (large ants). After 24 hours, it will become Katara or Kumache, an exquisite and famous spicy dish between Canaima and Puerto Ayacucho. With the dried product, they will make flour for casabe, a round bread that symbolizes the moon, womanhood, and the continuity of life in harmony with nature and the universe.

COCINA TU FUTURO

Thanks to Camilo, Carles, the University, and valuable allies. Together, they planned and achieved talks, presentations, proposals with guests from different places, as well as workshops and entrepreneurship sessions for young people, students, and those interested in gastronomy. Impeccable logistics and fantastic energy accompanied the sessions. It is certain that this activity inspired all of us who attended, motivated many to bring their ideas to life, and provided essential foundations for a society aware of the moment we live in and the responsibility we have towards the planet that shelters us and the generations that will follow. We are part of a delirious balance; we don't possess a pantry for an endless feast. We are beings who are or should be connected to our roots, to what surrounds us, and to what is to come.

My love and admiration for the creation of this event, for those who shared their knowledge and perspectives.

We eagerly and gratefully look forward to the next edition.

*María Fernanda Di Giacobbe
Caracas 2019*

INTRODUCTION

STRENGTHENING A CONSCIOUS CUISINE IN LATIN AMERICA

Difference is a quality that we find difficult to assimilate. It repels us while we are inevitably drawn towards it, in a wavering that is capable of generating powerful syncretisms and artistic manifestations, as well as building walls and closing ports, denying what makes us most genuinely human: our empathy.

"All human beings face the same problems, but each culture solves them in its own way," says Jose Antonio Marina, reminiscent of the beginning of the famous novel: "All happy families are alike, but each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." Therein lies the germ of cultural diversity. In the face of the enormous challenge of survival, the hardships that different societies have faced, human beings have added other needs, created to pursue their desires or their ideal of happiness, and have sought to solve them through creativity.

One of the greatest concerns has been, of course, food. Throughout history, we have devoted enormous cognitive effort to deciding what we put in our mouths: what is within our reach, what brings us pleasure, what we reject... In Latin America, home to some of the most biodiverse regions on the planet, this process translates into a tremendous complexity of gastronomic knowledge, developed in connection with the land, and which also holds a strong identity component for their respective societies. Globalization and the lack of interest from public and private powers seriously jeopardize the preservation of this knowledge, which also provides communities with healthy food and sustainable agri-food systems.

In a global climate of revolution in the culinary world, it is necessary to raise awareness in Latin America and the world about the importance of preserving this knowledge.

The boundaries of the gastronomic discipline are being redefined. They are moving towards interdisciplinary and inclusive models of study and teaching that strengthen the transition towards new professional profiles prepared to work in collaboration, both with exact sciences and humanities. Their responsibility is to participate in the codification of local gastronomic knowledge, generating through their creativity new products and services that create wealth at the local level and are capable of addressing the challenges facing global food.

In this context, Paral·lel decided to organize the "Cocina tu Futuro" Forum in October 2018 in Quito, with the aim of reflecting on gastronomic projects committed to the territory in Latin America, and calling for the unity of gastronomy throughout the region, which is now more necessary than ever. This work is an analysis of the outcomes of the Forum.



Carles Tarrasó Oliver

COHERENCE: WORDS AND THOUGHTS VS ACTIONS

Humanity has reached a point where we are aware of the damage that has been done to our planet and how it has negatively impacted our environment. We have lost consciousness and a sense of belonging, and we have come to value a global culture more than our own cultural identity. This is what our grandparents and parents have taught us in many Latin American homes.

People live in a reality, portrayed in the media, through advertising, and even on social media, that is so different from the reality in the countryside and on our streets that it confuses us and even veers us off course.

Today, words like recycling, sustainability, ecology, and circular economy are already part of our daily vocabulary. They are in every newspaper, magazine, and social media platform.

Influencers constantly encourage us to take steps such as stop using plastic straws or similar things, which of course are important, but achieving sustainability goes far beyond such recommendations.

In Latin America, this trend has even become a contemporary way of political campaigning. Now, logos and political parties with more popularity are green.

But are we truly consistent with our actions? I believe that the work of human beings should be directed towards being as consistent as possible. We must practice what we preach. How many times do we hear new chefs talk about sustainable practices, only to discover the reality behind their speeches and see them lose all their magic?

The work we have been doing with Paral·lel is about showcasing projects that are coherent, sincere, and aligned with our philosophy and thoughts. We truly want Latin American cuisine to empower itself, just as women are empowering themselves in this new era of change. The problem has already been identified, we have examples to follow, now we simply need to act correctly.

We focused on Ecuador, one of the most megadiverse countries in the world, small but with vast resources and a unique wealth of cultures, languages, knowledge, and traditions. The inconsistency of its internal policies and actions has caused the spotlight to be placed on neighboring countries, undervaluing what is truly within. That is changing, and it is the duty of all Ecuadorians to value and preserve these resources without depleting them. Let us be known for the great projects we have, the grand vision of some, and let the wonderful ideas of people hungry for change be heard.



Camilo Ruiz Fernández



GASTRONOMY IN THE LATIN AMERICAN SOCIETY



THE LATIN AMERICAN GASTRONOMY NETWORK



Few places in the world possess as much cultural and biological diversity as the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. Each region is unique, while being connected by strong cultural ties, sharing a language, a history, and a religion. At first glance, we can see the common thread that connects the continent, but if we look closer, we find highly diverse worlds that have evolved in harmony with the nature of their respective territories, shaped by biodiversity and multiculturalism: the history of hundreds of ancestral peoples. Gastronomy is a fundamental part of these worlds: its deep roots intertwine with rituals and agricultural techniques that reflect an extraordinary knowledge of nature, which has successfully domesticated some of the products that are now the foundation of global cuisine.



It is in many of these earth's products where the nexus of this union is found: maize, cocoa, tubers like potatoes, sweet potatoes, cassava, and the diversity of fruits, blended with the syncretism created by the influence of colonial cuisine and other cultures that arrived by sea. From north to south, they define the character of Latin America.

The artistic project "The Network of Latin American Gastronomy" created for this work aims to represent and value the generosity of these peoples when they sit at the table, a table that spans a territory of over 9,000 km and where everyone fits. It symbolizes the roots and, at the same time, the interconnection, communication, networking, and sharing of knowledge and identity, embracing the diversity of cultures that are threatened by homogenization and impoverishment. It is time to break free from the old paradigms that have imposed classical, Europeanized practices in haute cuisine, which are detached from the culinary reality of Latin America.

The objective of the project is to promote the rescue of ancestral knowledge and traditions and integrate them into modern society. It seeks to find in these local knowledge the solution to global problems (1), and above all, to vindicate the new trend in Latin American cuisine whose characteristics are discussed in this work. It is a gastronomy committed to the environment and society.



An artistic installation, a photographic report, and a video were created, which can be found on the website www.carlestarrasso.com.



¹ Edgar Morin cited in Unesco (2005), p. 165

A CURRENT IN FULL EFFERVESCENCE

Latin America is going through a period of gastronomic effervescence, especially in Mexico and the Andean region, where countries like Peru and Chile have had several restaurants featured in prestigious international guides for years. An example is the annual list compiled by the magazine "50 Best Restaurants," which puts restaurants from around the world in the international spotlight and in which 8 Latin American restaurants were represented in 2018 (1). Furthermore, the same magazine created a specific category in 2013 for restaurants in the region: Latin America's 50 Best Restaurants. Another significant achievement has been the recognition of two Latin American projects in the first two editions of the Basque Culinary World Prize (2), a prestigious award for gastronomic initiatives with a social purpose granted by the Basque Culinary Center.

Regarding whether these factors are capable of generating wealth for society or if they only benefit a few, it is worth noting the case of Peru, which has strongly focused on promoting its gastronomy through institutional support, attracting investment, fostering entrepreneurship, and promoting tourism, thus playing an important role in dissemination. As a result, the country has experienced a notable improvement in its economy, social conditions, international image, and tourism, while simultaneously contributing to the preservation of its biodiversity and traditions.

However, not everyone has boarded that train: if we talk about Ecuador, also in the region, the image and prestige of its gastronomy do not resemble those of its neighbors, despite belonging to a very similar culinary culture.



THE CASE OF PERU:

Public institutions and private initiatives have succeeded in transforming their gastronomy into a national and international phenomenon, which has highlighted their culture and had an impact on education, tourism, primary and industrial sectors, and the country's image abroad (3).

- From 2012 to 2018, for 7 consecutive years, it was chosen as the best culinary destination in the world at the World Travel Awards (4).
- In 2016, the World Forum on Gastronomic Tourism of the UNWTO was held in Lima (5).
- Since the year 2000, the increase in international demand for this cuisine is reflected in the internationalization of 14 Peruvian cuisine restaurant brands (6).

¹ The World's 50 Best Restaurants (2019) ² Basque Culinary World Prize (2019) ³ Rivas, R., 2013; Rivas, R. (2012) ⁴ World Travel Awards (2019) ⁵ 2nd World Gastronomy Tourism Forum of the UNWTO (2019) ⁶ Rivas et al (2010)

GASTRONOMY AND KNOWLEDGE SOCIETIES IN LATIN AMERICA

How can we understand and replicate the success of projects that generate development through gastronomy? In what ways can gastronomy benefit our societies?

The objective of this section is to define a theoretical framework to reflect on the place that gastronomic knowledge has in new societies and how it can be integrated into current social paradigms.

According to UNESCO, a new social paradigm has emerged: knowledge societies¹. We are experiencing a moment of democratization and expansion of the public sphere of knowledge, which began with the progress of democracy and printing, and is now being multiplied thanks to information technologies².

In knowledge societies, knowledge ceases to be an end in itself and becomes a means to achieve full rights for human beings. The most advanced societies will be those that generate, accumulate, and leverage a greater number of knowledge to generate innovations¹.

In these new societies, a new economy also emerges: the knowledge economy, in which knowledge itself represents a value due to its capacity to generate innovations that improve people's lives³. This highlights the value of research: it is the origin, the starting point where knowledge is codified, allowing it to become an asset within the economy and giving rise to innovations.



The soul of gastronomic knowledge

As Thomas Sowell once said (4), "Culture exists to satisfy human desires," and humanity has employed great effort and creativity to achieve that. The cultural heritage that humans possess today is the result of enormous cognitive efforts throughout history, and gastronomic knowledge is no exception. It has developed within each society based on its possibilities, needs, and desires, earning the qualification of local or indigenous knowledge, which, according to UNESCO, refers to:

- They have developed in interaction with nature.
- They have a strong identity component.
- They are often transmitted orally.

The challenges of this knowledge in knowledge societies arise from its original and unique nature, "which makes the systematic measurement of the body of knowledge produced by a specific community very difficult; a measurement that is possible for technical and scientific knowledge"(5). This also leads public authorities to often consider the codification of these knowledge systems as a cumbersome process.

A complex gastronomic thinking for development

Gastronomic knowledge can have a significant positive impact on society precisely because of its singularity: *its transdisciplinary nature - encompassing disciplines such as food technology, nutrition, and anthropology - and its status as traditional knowledge give it the capacity to generate innovation, tourism, entrepreneurship, and more sustainable forms of agriculture and food industry in developing countries. They also promote community integration, health, well-being, human security, and a sense of belonging* (5).

In summary, this knowledge can provide answers to the problems facing our societies, both present and future, and are closely linked to sustainable development models. Furthermore, their use within knowledge societies would signify the achievement of the "complex thinking" ideal advocated by philosopher Edgar Morin, which involves a more aware and compassionate humanity harnessing local knowledge to address global issues (6).

⁴ Citado en Marina J. A. (2018), p.25 ⁵ Unesco (2005), p. 164 ⁶ Unesco (2005), p. 165



PRESENTATION OF THE "Cocina tu Futuro" FORUM

Introduction:

Can gastronomy become an economic driving force in Ecuador? This was the starting point for the design of the "Cook Your Future" Forum, which focused on innovation and entrepreneurship in gastronomy in its first edition. The aim was to reclaim the role of chefs as agents of social change. Different cases and examples were presented, both national and international, showcasing the interaction between cuisine and various fields such as business, communication, science and research, tourism, and the food industry, always with a focus on sustainability and the defense of cultural identity.

The congress took place on October 1st and 2nd, 2018, at the campus of the International University of Ecuador in the city of Quito, Ecuador. The two days were structured with morning presentations and practical workshops in the afternoons, where attendees had the opportunity to discuss real cases with the invited speakers and workshop facilitators. The sessions were designed to stimulate, inspire, and raise awareness about the potential of gastronomy to improve society.



Thematic Blocks:

Research and Innovation in Gastronomy

What does a specific flavor suggest? How does our environment influence the things we like? Is it important to have in-depth knowledge about what we eat? In this section, we will begin by showcasing the interaction between science and cuisine. Research helps us decipher the physicochemical principles behind food and understand how our bodies and minds interact with it.

Tradition, Identity, and Social Commitment

Can we improve our society through gastronomy? All human beings have a cultural reference from the social environment in which we have been raised. Gastronomy plays an important role in recognizing ourselves as part of that scenario and also shapes that space. In this section, we want to demonstrate the power of building an identity through what we eat, reaffirming our sense of belonging and facilitating interaction with other members of our community. We are convinced that gastronomic activity, linked to tourism, hospitality, and local production in each area, also leads to job creation and wealth generation.

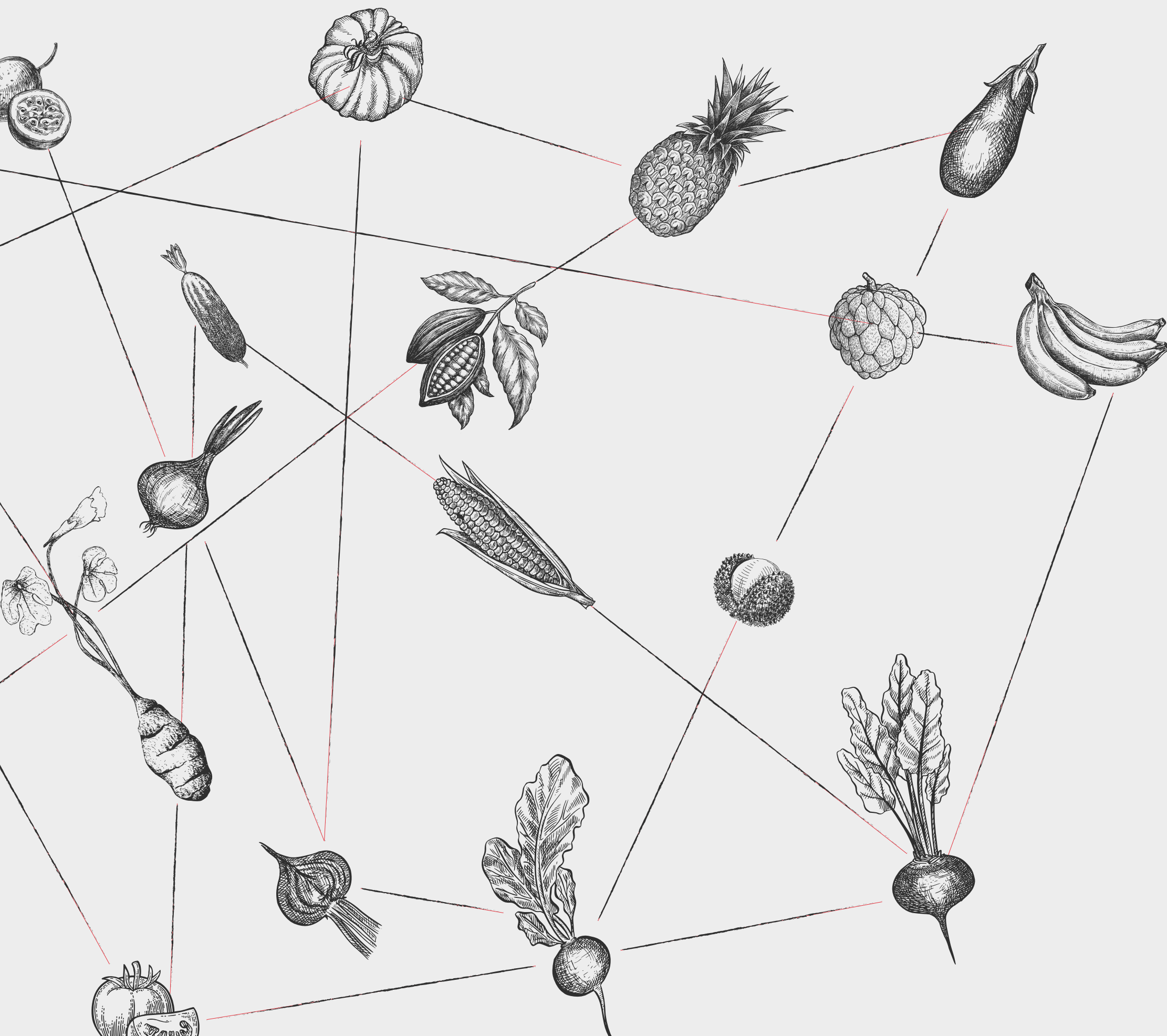
Trends and Innovative Business Models

Like all human activities, renewal in gastronomy is also essential. None of our actions can be disconnected from contemporary trends, cultural environments, and external influences that enrich and complement the possibilities of gastronomic businesses. It is essential to renew, create, propose, and undertake.

Steps to Entrepreneurship in Ecuador

Once we have reviewed the cultural foundations and the gastronomic environment, reaffirmed our values and our country's brand, and discussed the beneficial influences of innovation and global trends that can impact the changes we aspire to, we will now explore some processes. The experiences of other countries, but especially our own, will serve as a source of inspiration for creative capacities and reveal some key factors for establishing solid and enduring entrepreneurial foundations over time.

CONCLUSIONS OF
THE COCINA TU
FUTURO FORUM



CONCLUSIONS OF THE COCINA TU FUTURO FORUM

AFTER ANALYZING THE PRESENTATIONS, THE CONCLUSIONS HAVE BEEN DIVIDED INTO THREE SECTIONS:

POTENTIAL AND OPPORTUNITIES OF ECUADORIAN GASTRONOMY

What mechanisms exist in Ecuador to transform local knowledge into a driving force for development?

SIGNS OF A NEW LATIN AMERICAN CUISINE

What ideas are gaining ground among Latin American chefs? What trends influence them, what causes do they defend, what inspires them?

The new league of chefs



"The league I want to play in is one where chefs are agents of change and we have the power to contribute to the social, environmental, and cultural development of a country" - Rodrigo Pacheco.

"Holistic gastronomy is about observing the environment; it's the principles of sustainability applied to gastronomy while also considering cultural, social, and economic aspects" - Luciana Bianchi.

Working in networks and cooperation



"The collaboration between scientists, economists, chefs, and other stakeholders aims to create knowledge and an economy based on it. The chef is the link that connects all these elements" - Pere Castells.

New forms of inspiration committed to the territory

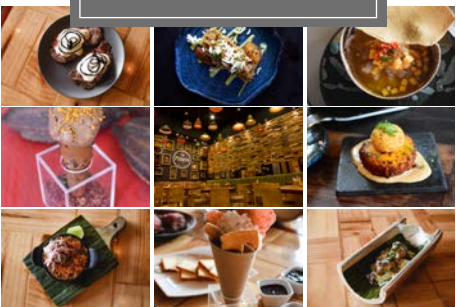


Professional ethics



"We have dedicated ourselves to developing innovative techniques with native, rescued products that may no longer be found in our local markets, and that are competing with unhealthy, low-nutrition junk food" - Marsia Taha.

Gastronomy and the information society



"If Ecuador is not on prestigious lists like other countries in our surroundings, it is because we have not yet started to work on communication" - Mauricio Acuña.

Gastronomy and the learning society



"We did not know that a diploma could change a country. These women did not attend school, they did not go to university when they were young, and today they are teaching at the university" - Maria Fernanda Di Giacobbe.

PRESENT AND FUTURE OF RESEARCH IN GASTRONOMY

What is the role of research and innovation in gastronomy? What methodologies and projects exist today?

Referencias de las fotos:

^a Rodrigo Pacheco, cocinando en el campo. Foto: Cortesía Hotel Las Tanusas ^b Equipo del restaurante Muyu. Foto: Paulo Rivas Peña. Cortesía de Galapagos Foundation ^c Marsia con un grupo de niños en la Amazonía boliviana. Foto: Christian Gutiérrez. Cortesía del Restaurante Gustu ^d Fotografías para Instagram de La Pizarra. Cortesía Restaurante La Pizarra. ^e Juan Carlos Arboleya impartiendo taller en el Foro Cocina tu Futuro.



POTENTIAL AND OPPORTUNITIES OF ECUADORIAN GASTRONOMY

Based on the presentations by Acuña M., Bianchi L., Cabanilla E., Carrillo R., Di Giacobbe M.F., Doutre-Roussel C., Lasio V., Pacheco R., Taha M.

It is common for public authorities to consider mechanisms for preserving and transmitting local knowledge as expensive and politically inconvenient (1). However, this knowledge is key to respecting food sovereignty, offering environmental and cultural advantages, improving community health, and actively integrating into society.

According to the United Nations (cited by Enrique Cabanilla), food sovereignty is a system that exists to guarantee human survival. It is based on respecting both cultural and biological diversity that exists in a specific territory as a result of the products produced and consumed there. In Ecuador, it is a recognized right in Article 13 of the constitution (2). "I believe that (Peruvian chef) Virgilio Martínez has helped us understand that the diversity of flavors and the foundation of the final product are not in the kitchen but in the field. A new gastronomy concerned with defending the land and rural areas because we will lose variety" - Enrique Cabanilla, Dean of the Faculty of Tourism at UCE.

The role of chefs in defending food sovereignty

In Latin America, the loss of food sovereignty - of traditions and gastronomic identity - is a widespread process. According to Marsia Taha, chef at the Gustu restaurant (Bolivia), traditional Bolivian food is not what people consume on a daily basis; it has been displaced and is becoming less accessible as people consume junk food. This loss of traditions has a double negative consequence: it worsens both health and culture. Chefs can play a role in preserving local gastronomic diversity by fighting against the homogenization of culture caused by large restaurant chains.



Chef Marsia Taha in the Bolivian Amazon.
Photo: Christian Gutierrez. Courtesy of Gustu Restaurant.

From the Melting Pot Bolivia foundation, founded by Danish entrepreneur Klaus Meyer, a project was launched to promote healthy eating habits based on traditional Bolivian food. A culinary school was established for people from vulnerable sectors, providing them with the tools to make native foods accessible and delicious.

Subsequently, partnerships were sought to finance the project: thanks to the investment of the IFU corporation, more schools were opened throughout Bolivia for 4,000 students, following a self-sustainable model where they learn by doing and sell what they cook. Finally, the model was expanded to other countries: two schools have already been opened in Bogota and Cali, Colombia.

Marsia Taha

Regarding author's cuisine, chef Rodrigo Pacheco states that in Ecuador there is a tendency to seek inspiration from abroad, valuing foreign and imported products above traditional ones, and he advocates for exploring the gastronomic potential of one of the world's most mega-biodiverse countries like Ecuador.

"In 2012, there were practically no restaurants in Ecuador that offered Ecuadorian author's cuisine. They were all Peruvian, American, Italian, fast food, and other international cuisines." It can be thought that at that time, Ecuadorians had lost their gastronomic identity because it is likely that for many, none of the three daily meals were Ecuadorian - Mauricio Acuña, chef of El Salnés.

The importance of preserving gastronomic knowledge in rural areas

There is a significant rural exodus taking place in Ecuador, resulting in urban overcrowding. The situation is concerning because in the last 15 years, the average age in rural areas has increased by 10 years, from an average of 37 to 47. Meanwhile, Quito has multiplied its population by 10 in 50 years. According to Enrique Cabanilla, young people are rejecting the countryside, and that is a mistake: the land is the foundation of culture and human survival. It is the safeguard we have for the gastronomic historical memory. It offers us a biodiversity that has been preserved for generations through people who have taken care of the seeds.



"One day, while going to harvest potatoes, with each strike of the hoe, 5 or 6 different varieties of tubers would emerge. Peru knew how to value that culture, to showcase something different to tourists. There must be innovation beyond the urban world. Let's de-urbanize ourselves, there is an entire Ecuador out there to be discovered."

Enrique Cabanilla

Ecuadorian indigenous person in the páramo. Courtesy of Enrique Cabanilla.

Meanwhile, large plantations for the food industry have taken over rural territories worldwide. According to Mauricio Acuña, this industry manipulates the population by selling other products, such as genetically modified soybeans, palm oil, or quinoa, as good or better than traditional foods. These products have caused the destruction of tropical forests in Esmeraldas, Santo Domingo, and El Oro in Ecuador. The same has happened with shrimp: thousands of hectares of mangroves have been destroyed to breed an introduced shrimp species. Ecosystems and the population's identity have been lost, and their health has worsened.

"It is necessary to guarantee the conservation of natural resources, ensuring that biodiversity elements are not lost due to overexploitation or poor management, and that their use by communities is secured over time," says Roberto Carrillo, director of the Schools of Tourism and Environmental Management and Hospitality at UIDE.

How can we generate development from local knowledge in rural communities?

To generate wealth from gastronomic knowledge, it is essential, as pointed out by chef, researcher, and writer Luciana Bianchi, to never lose sight of business vision. The role of the entrepreneur is crucial as they are responsible for valorizing the knowledge produced through invention and transforming it into economic innovations. This can be achieved by creating a demand for new goods or products (3). Entrepreneurship is fundamental in this process.

• Tourism

The value of gastronomy in tourism is almost intuitive. According to the UNWTO, it is a key resource in the value proposition and differentiation of destinations (4), as each community is usually associated with certain products or preparations and conveys that connection to tourists, helping to create a more evocative and emotional narrative (4).

"The more we appeal to the emotional aspect, which is inherent in gastronomy, the more unique we can be in our value proposition," says Virginia Lasio, professor of organizational behavior at ESPOL.



Plaza grande of Quito

Well-managed tourism benefits destinations in multiple ways:

- **In terms of communication**, it serves as a platform to showcase gastronomic knowledge.
- **Economically**, it stimulates collaborative work across the entire value chain. In addition to chefs, the work of producers, traders, and artisans becomes increasingly attractive to tourists.
- **Socially, culturally, and biologically**, it contributes to the conservation of biodiversity and landscapes. It supports the population continuity of rural areas, maintains traditions, customs, and functions that preserve the tangible and intangible heritage of the territory, and revives culinary memory. Furthermore, it reinforces the sense of belonging among locals and enhances the authenticity of the destination (4).

A joint effort among public institutions, the private sector, producers, and chefs is necessary to find a balance that guarantees both the economic sustainability of the tourist destination and the preservation of its authenticity. It involves channeling the economic flow received to all stakeholders in the local food chain, stimulating overall gastronomic growth (2).

At Hotel Las Tanusas, located in the Manabí region, where tourism to the Machalilla National Park alone was not sufficient to sustain a hotel project, gastronomy played a crucial role. A culinary concept strongly linked to the environment quickly turned the place into a prominent destination in Ecuador. Their commitment to society includes:



Hotel Las Tanusas in Puerto Cayo, Ecuador
Courtesy of Hotel Las Tanusas

- Encouraging agricultural production by working with local products and producers.
- Promoting manufacturing or industrial production by purchasing crafts and products made in the area.
- Creating job opportunities for local people.
- Attracting customers to drive investment.
- Promoting the local culture through media coverage.
- Raising awareness about environmental care and respect.

"We have to learn that to create a cuisine with a signature (a signature of Ecuador), it is necessary to establish a logical system that includes the well-being of the community, as well as the preservation of the cultural and environmental aspects. This will also help us attract customers."

Rodrigo Pacheco

Regarding rural tourism in Ecuador, also known as community tourism, Enrique Cabanilla states that a large percentage of indigenous communities involved in these projects aim to connect them with gastronomy, with 63% proposing the creation of restaurants and hotels.

When considering what to serve tourists in community tourism projects, there are two schools of thought: those who believe tourists need international cuisine and those who believe tourists want to try new things. "Chef Anthony Bourdain, during a trip to Quito, said that the dish that impressed him the most was eaten on Calle la Ronda, in one of the last places that still serves it: it was the ville, a very traditional roasted unborn calf" - Enrique Cabanilla.

• **Gastronomic Entrepreneurship and Economies of Scale**

According to Virginia Lasio, professor of organizational behavior at ESPOL (Guayaquil), high levels of competition can be observed in the food business markets in Latin America and the Caribbean. In terms of innovation, the indices are low, and businesses are not diversified, making them easily imitable and thus increasing competition.

"All these weaknesses, in my opinion, actually create opportunities" - Virginia Lasio.

In a more local context, Luciana Bianchi warns that when we make the effort to understand our own products and gastronomic culture, we identify existing needs, and where there are needs, there are great business opportunities.

"The Ecuadorian entrepreneur is starting to see cuisine as a business tool focused on the reality of Ecuador, not based on the realities of other countries" - Mauricio Acuña.



Denise Mamallacta, Angel Licuy, and Fernando Cabrera, students of the #Único project, prepare appetizers with Ecuadorian products. Photo: Julio Estrella. Courtesy of El Comercio newspaper - Ecuador.

The #Único project, led by Chef Mauricio Acuña, aims to instill a growth mindset in agricultural communities in Ecuador, encouraging them to work with patience and perseverance to develop and confront an industry that often takes advantage of their ignorance by paying farmers meager margins for their products.

It is a scholarship program for young farmers between the ages of 18 and 30, aiming to transform them into leaders in the field. The objective is to eliminate intermediaries: they are taught how to transform and process their own raw materials at the source using sustainable methods, establish their own ventures, and promote their products, so that the benefits obtained or the subsidies sometimes provided by NGOs are not seen as gifts but as investments that enable the creation of infrastructure and growth potential for their projects.

One of the projects is based on processing Sacha Inchi, a seed from which a delicious oil is obtained, as well as mucilage, which used to be discarded but is now used to make vegan cheese.

Mauricio Acuña

The transmission of knowledge is fundamental to promote the emancipation and autonomy of local communities. The projects carried out by chocolatier Maria Fernanda Di Giacobbe and chocolate expert Chloe Doutre-Roussel, who train in cocoa production and chocolate making in Venezuela, also providing training to rural communities, aim to achieve these objectives: providing freedom, economic independence, and a culture of work to communities through the shared utilization of knowledge.



Cocoa fruits

"The chocolate entrepreneurs don't kneel in front of a food box every time the government remembers to send them, but they work every day facing obstacles because cocoa is their opportunity to move the country forward, to say, 'Don't give me a gift, don't give me a house or the education of my children: I work to have what I want.' People return to their grandparents' farms to generate wealth once again because they already know how to work with cocoa and chocolate."

Maria Fernanda Di Giacobbe

¹ Unesco (2005), p. 165.
² Asamblea constituyente (2008)
³ Unesco (2005), p. 62
⁴ OMT (2017)



SIGNALS OF A NEW LATIN AMERICAN CUISINE

The New League of Chefs

Based on the presentations by: Bianchi, L., Morán, J.J., Pacheco R., Taha, M.

For years, we have witnessed the consolidation of culinary authors: a certain type of chefs who set trends, create new currents within cuisine, have followers and detractors, and inspire and influence a large group of chefs, fulfilling the same role as authors in other cultural or artistic expressions such as film or music. They go beyond cooking delicious food; they seek to express themselves by creating through a gastronomic concept, thus becoming authors.

"The concept is not the aesthetics, the concept is not the techniques: it is the coherence among all the ideas that make up the gastronomic proposal. It is the story that structures and gives meaning to the entire proposition." - Luciana Bianchi

It is within this large group that a new league of chefs is emerging, advocating for a more assertive cuisine, more connected to reality.



To be an author chef, a significant amount of authenticity and originality is required. It is no longer enough to pretend by replicating or copying the aesthetics of others - that is plagiarism. Instead, it is necessary to create differential and coherent gastronomic concepts that align with oneself, one's attitude, and one's values.

Luciana Bianchi

The chefs in this new league are authors who use the gastronomic concept to advocate for causes they believe in.

"Eating, incorporating food into our bodies, is such an intimate act that we cannot miss the opportunity to convey a message through it." - Rodrigo Pacheco.

This idea of the communicative power of gastronomy follows the trail of the "sixth sense" (1) defined by Ferran Adrià: a good dish arises from the combination of an excellent product, good technique, and a story to tell, one that reaches diners through emotion. However, it introduces a new component: the message to be conveyed must contain a social purpose. The new generations of customers increasingly appreciate the authenticity of concepts reflected in these unique proposals, and the same goes for the new generations of chefs who are starting to trust less in superstar chefs who often hide hypocritical discourses.

The new media profile of chefs contributes to the dissemination of these messages. Chefs outside the kitchen generate controversy but at the same time connect professionals with the local and global issues of society, promote interdisciplinarity, and give wings to innovation and the search for new sources of inspiration.

"It's not about being locked in the kitchen for 17 hours. Chefs have had their wings clipped for decades, and it's time for us to go out, explore nature, touch things, discover, and generate new ways of nourishing ourselves." - Rodrigo Pacheco.



Tuyu-tuyu worms from the Bolivian jungle.
Photo: Christian Gutiérrez. Courtesy of Gustu restaurant.

The Gustu restaurant (La Paz, Bolivia) was created with the aim of connecting gastronomy with these realities: "Cooking is not limited to four walls. It is a manifestation of a living culture that begins in productive fields" (Marsia Taha). The objectives of Gustu are:

- Develop innovative techniques based on native products, rescuing them from oblivion as they become increasingly difficult to find in markets.
- Fight against unhealthy and nutritionally poor "junk" food that invades many homes and the gastronomy of Latin America.

Marsia Taha

Before, no one cared about a chef's opinion, but now the chef has to be aware of their role as a communicator, attending events, writing, engaging in activism... but that power comes with great responsibility: one must be consistent with what is proclaimed, as Andoni Luis Adúriz already says (2): *"For a chef, it is truly challenging nowadays not to succumb to the bonfire of vanities."*

New forms of inspiration committed to the territory

Based on the presentations by Bianchi, L., Pacheco, R.

The new league of chefs proposes to step out of their comfort zone and seek new, more sustainable, coherent, and original ways of cooking. They challenge themselves to create unique concepts by breaking away from what is comfortable and ordinary.

Una cocina que busca inspiración en el exterior, trayendo de lejos la mayoría A cuisine that seeks inspiration from afar, relying on ingredients brought from distant places, is increasingly seen as unconscious, insensitive, and blind. It is the type of cuisine that "only aims to put pretty food on the plate with a bit of truffle oil, which makes no sense in one of the most mega-biodiverse countries in the world: Ecuador" - Rodrigo Pacheco.

Reclamation of culture: There are increasingly more examples of concepts that draw inspiration from the deepest roots of gastronomic cultural heritage, some even striving to revive traditions lost centuries ago.



Rodrigo Pacheco cooking in the jungle. Courtesy of Hotel Las Tanusas.

"We want to value the culture of pre-Hispanic peoples. Our greatest inspiration is the Valdivia culture, the first potters of the American continent, who changed the way we eat today. We are fascinated by the sophistication of their tools, their harmonious relationship with nature, and the sensitivity of their way of nourishing themselves."

Rodrigo Pacheco

A new interpretation of luxury: The aim is to bring diners closer to good cuisine, which is definitely not economically unattainable, using expensive imported products that have no cultural relevance to Latin American identity. It is understood that a product is exclusive - in other words, a luxury - because it is only found in a specific region, subject to seasonality, scarcity, or the complexity of obtaining it.

This vision draws inspiration from ideas expressed by Ferran Adrià: "A good sardine is better than a bad lobster," and by Andoni Luis Aduriz: *"Branded objects, expensive wines, jewelry, and furs are items that can be easily acquired at any airport [...] true wealth should not be represented by opulence, but rather by its opposite: essence, reduction, and simplification."* (2)

Commitment to sustainability: A new culinary worldview is being promoted in which the chef seeks to engage with the environment without causing harm.

Holistic gastronomy is about paying attention to the surroundings and applying the principles of sustainability to gastronomy, while also considering the cultural, social, and economic aspects of the local area - Luciana Bianchi.

More initiatives are emerging that aim for self-sufficiency in sourcing ingredients through foraging - gathering plants from the surrounding area - and cultivating a restaurant garden.

Las Tanusas Restaurant sources over 300 products from the natural environment or their own garden. They also catch all the fish with their own hands, making them 80% self-sustainable - Rodrigo Pacheco.



The Muyu restaurant (San Cristóbal, Galapagos, Ecuador) is a pilot project of the Galapagos Foundation for the Golden Bay Hotel. Its objective is to implement ecological and humane practices in hospitality and gastronomy. Among its activities, they prioritize continuous training for their staff and constant research, all governed by a rigorous ethical code strongly marked by values of respect for the environment, with a focus on the conservation of native fauna as demanded by the strict legislation of Galapagos. "There is a need to conduct impact studies before using any product. The environment comes first, and then humans. It is an exercise in humility as we eat what animals do not want to eat: There are 12 varieties of edible algae that iguanas feed on, but only those that they do not consume regularly can be harvested and consumed. We eat what iguanas reject."

Muyu restaurant team with vegetables grown in Galapagos.
Photo: Paulo Rivas Peña. Courtesy of Galapagos Foundation.

Luciana Bianchi

Collaboration and Networking

Based on the presentations by Acuña, M., M.F., Castells, Di Giacobbe, P., Pacheco, R.

The increasingly cooperative work of chefs represents the "willingness to cooperate and the spirit of solidarity"(3) inherent in knowledge societies. This collaboration extends not only among chefs but also with many other actors within and outside the food chain.

Within the food chain, chefs serve as a link between producers, distributors, and consumers. They have the power to generate business for producers and to highlight the value of their work, providing visibility.

"The collaboration between scientists, chefs, economists, and other actors aims at the creation of knowledge and an economy based on gastronomic knowledge. The chef is the link that connects this entire chain." - Pere Castells.

"The role of the gastronomic entrepreneur is to connect this chain (the food chain) so that the farmer, who is the actor without whom we cannot cook Ecuadorian cuisine, can empower themselves and have the importance they deserve, earning a fair salary." - Mauricio Acuña.

Outside the food chain, multidisciplinary collaboration allows chefs to innovate in new products and services. One of the most frequent collaborations in Latin America today is with ethnobotany, which helps identify new foods to showcase in restaurants, reinforces the concept, and helps chefs and diners connect with the origins of the product.



The culinary uses of plants are part of gastronomic knowledge; however, their study belongs to the field of ethnobotany. An important step towards promoting transdisciplinary and networking work is the willingness of chefs to participate in the study of knowledge related to gastronomy. "Our first goal is to value the extensive catalog of products we have in Ecuador, and by stepping outside the restaurant and collaborating with researchers, ethnobotanists, it helps us achieve this objective."

Rodrigo Pacheco

Rodrigo Pacheco foraging for his restaurant.
Courtesy of Hotel Las Tanusas.

Working with designers is also becoming a common practice: communicating a developed concept, reflecting the corporate image in all brand elements, or enhancing customers' perception of a gastronomic proposal requires a more careful design that aligns with the concept, whether it's in the restaurant's dining room or the packaging of a food product.



In the Cacao de Origen school-workshop (Caracas, Venezuela), chocolatiers Maria Fernanda Di Giacobbe and Chloe Doutre have collaborated with an artist from Brazil to design the new packaging for "Río Cacao" chocolates, using images from an English illustrator who lived in the area in the 19th century.

Maria Fernanda Di Giacobbe
y Chloe Doutre-Roussel

Packaging of Río Cacao chocolates.
Photo: Julio Osorio. Courtesy of Cacao de Origen.

The professional ethics

Based on the presentations by Bianchi, L., Doutre-Roussel, C., Di Giacobbe, M.F., Morán, J.J., Pacheco, R.

There is a growing awareness of the working conditions of culinary professionals. The demands of high-end establishments often lead to undignified working conditions and a lack of humane treatment for employees. Furthermore, the prominence of the star chef figure in the culinary experience can result in neglecting the diner, perceiving them as a passive subject whose only role is to pay the bill.

"We are seeing gastronomic personalities who have abandoned their principles, creating a character that sells well but is not truly themselves. Being an actor is much easier than investing in being a person who works according to their principles... We should never underestimate the intelligence of customers; they are our fellow travelers (of the chefs). It is not ethical to deceive customers with falsely portraying sustainability or social commitment in the products being sold." - Luciana Bianchi.

Just like in any business, in the kitchen, it is important to ensure that the team is happy, to reinforce the human side, and to take care of people. The success of a team-based business is achieved by creating a circle of happiness:

"The quality of life in the kitchen depends on having good leaders who strive to make their team comfortable, who make them live a dream." A happy team + a happy (sustainably grown) product + a happy customer = a happy company - Rodrigo Pacheco.

There is also a focus on generating benefits for the community by creating job opportunities for local people, making an effort to train them as professionals, and motivating them, especially if they have not received prior hospitality training or exposure. Above all, it is about empathizing with them and creating a dynamic of mutual learning.

Most of the employees at Muyu restaurant (Galápagos) are locals who had no idea what a tasting menu was or what the experience in a fine restaurant was like. They were invited to a dinner at Muyu to go through the experience, not only to help them understand but also to involve and motivate them - Luciana Bianchi.

Regarding the role of women, there is a willingness to combat gender inequality not only within the restaurant but also by empowering women in society through gastronomy. According to UNESCO, there is a knowledge gap for women in developing countries, mainly due to "poverty, gender-based discrimination, illiteracy, language barriers, lack of infrastructure, and a deficit in computer skills"(4).



At Cacao de Origen School, they organize training trips, especially aimed at educating women. The Kakao Bombones Venezolanos project trained women in vulnerable situations in harnessing cocoa resources and making chocolates that showcased the unique flavors of Venezuela. It started with 30 women and one man, and in six years, it had trained 8,500 people. The San Benito project, on the other hand, trained 700 women to become chocolate entrepreneurs. "Working with cocoa and chocolate means transforming the plantation, the garden, the backyard into resources, money, and freedom."

*Maria Fernanda Di Giacobbe
y Chloe Doutre-Roussel*

Maria Fernanda Di Giacobbe and Chloe Doutre conducting a chocolate workshop at Cacao de Origen.
Photo: Julio Osorio. Courtesy of Cacao de Origen.



The "Mujeres Artesanas" project at the Muyu restaurant aims to empower women and promote their independence. "I have cases of women who are abused by their husbands, and I said to myself: I will empower this woman so that she doesn't allow this to happen [...]. Since there is no craftsmanship on the island, we train them to start making cheeses, others make baskets, and our restaurant purchases them."

Luciana Bianchi

Craftswoman making baskets for the Muyu restaurant. Photo: Paulo Rivas Peña. Courtesy of Galapagos Foundation.

The gastronomy in the information society

Based on the presentations by Acuña, M., Bianchi, L., Di Giacobbe, M.F., Doutre-Roussel, C., Morán, J.J., Taha, M.

The information society has opened up new opportunities for communication and greatly facilitates the exchange of knowledge. However, UNESCO (5) warns about the emergence of a "society of entertainment" that does not use information to disseminate knowledge but rather for purely recreational purposes, especially among younger internet users. Considering that currently the majority of cooking content is consumed online and that many popular channels promote recipes for unhealthy junk food that may look appealing but are not nutritious, not to mention the abundance of misinformation about healthy eating circulating on social media, it is paradoxical that, quoting UNESCO (6), "instruments designed to optimize the preservation and transmission of knowledge can result in a impoverishment of the diversity of cognitive cultures." But how do information society tools benefit gastronomy?

Por un lado ofrecen a los negocios gastronómicos nuevas vías para interaccionar con sus clientes y para On the one hand, they offer gastronomic businesses new ways to interact with their customers and gain greater exposure. They can also foster new forms of cooperation, even among competitors -such as the "coopetition" that has greatly benefited the new Basque cuisine(7)-, to achieve mutual benefits in terms of media coverage.



Fotografías de platos para Instagram en La Pizarra
Cortesía de La Pizarra


In the restaurant La Pizarra (Guayaquil, Ecuador), owned by chef Juan José Morán, a significant effort was made from the beginning to focus on social media (Facebook, Instagram, and TripAdvisor) to attract customers. "Appearing in a magazine can cost several hundred or even thousands of dollars, and many of its readers may not be potential customers for your restaurant. On the other hand, by spending \$30 on Instagram, you can reach around 20,000 people, while also selecting the desired target customer profile." Additionally, they decided to adopt a collaborative social media strategy by dining at other popular restaurants in the area and sharing photos on their social media platforms (through Instagram Stories, thus avoiding cluttering their feed with unrelated information). "In this way, the visited restaurant would share the post on their social media, and many of their followers would start following my restaurant."

Juan José Morán

They also allow for greater visibility for other actors in the food chain who traditionally lack it, such as producers. The role of communicators for the chef and the gastronomic entrepreneur is highlighted here, leveraging the media impact of the former and the economic resources of the latter.

"If Ecuador is not on prestigious restaurant lists like other countries in our region (Peru, Colombia, etc.), it's because we haven't started working on communication," says Mauricio Acuña.


Communication is understood as a new responsibility for chefs outside the kitchen, also aimed at promoting the codification, dissemination, and valorization of local gastronomic knowledge.



"Cacao de Origen" promotes the work and products of Venezuelan cocoa producers through the organization of fairs, festivals, and gatherings, as well as participating in international events. They also raise funds to promote Venezuelan chocolate in countries such as Italy, France, the United States, Japan, and Brazil (Maria Fernanda Di Giacobbe and Chloe Doutre). Photography: Folder examples: Work at Cacao de Origen. Title: Work at Cacao de Origen.

Maria Fernanda Di Giacobbe y Chloe Doutre-Roussel

Work at Cacao de Origen. Photo: Julio Osorio. Courtesy of Cacao de Origen.



The chefs of Gustu restaurant, as representatives of Bolivia's most influential restaurant, have traveled to over 30 countries to draw attention to Bolivian cuisine, always bringing products with them to showcase.

Marsia Taba

Gustu's kitchen team. Photo: Patricio Crooker. Courtesy of Gustu restaurant.

As journalist M. Dolores Masana states in her article "The Social Disrepute of the Press" (El País, May 3, 2012), "today, voices from journalist associations and schools are multiplying, denouncing a series of ills that threaten to sink the journalistic profession into a complete lack of credibility and a deplorable social disrepute." In this context, the role of gastronomic journalism, especially in Latin America, is being reconsidered:

"It should be understood from a constructive perspective, as a tool through which to cooperate and empower young chefs from around the world so that they can continue their work. Gastronomic journalists who travel the world discovering new talents should leverage their expertise and experience to guide and advise emerging concepts, and their influence to highlight the authors of cuisine and regional gastronomies: a mix of cooperation, training, and valorization." - Luciana Bianchi.

Gastronomy in the Learning Society

Based on the presentations by Acuña, M., Bianchi, L., Di Giacobbe, M.F., Doutre-Roussel, C.

The dynamism and rapid changes occurring in the field of gastronomy today are breaking conventional patterns of education and knowledge codification. Learning is not limited to obtaining a degree or a specific time and space; it will continue throughout life because in today's innovation-driven societies (8), there is a constant demand for new skills. To propose a new model of gastronomic learning, it is essential, on the one hand, to cultivate a critical mindset (9) in professionals and students that helps them differentiate between knowledge and mere information - which is readily available through networks or the internet. On the other hand, it is necessary to redefine the internship model, as it can be an excellent way to expand knowledge, but too often it becomes a disguised form of precarious work that does not guarantee learning.

"An internship in a fine restaurant where you might spend three months doing mise en place or peeling potatoes is not learning: it is a lie because you can do that at home. A resume with a list of titles or prestigious restaurants does not automatically make you a great chef." - Luciana Bianchi.

It is crucial for education and research in food to be aware of local culture, teaching communities to value the knowledge they hold while also sharing technical knowledge that enables them to generate value from that knowledge. This can include creating new products or services, such as tourism services or innovative food products, optimizing cultivation methods, or assisting in the codification and transmission of ancestral knowledge.

"When teaching gastronomy, it is essential to first teach the value of local gastronomic knowledge, rather than strictly adhering to the methods of the academy (based on French culinary tradition). This promotes the defense of local products associated with healthy eating habits, environmental conservation, and a sense of belonging to one's own land." - Mauricio Acuña.

Furthermore, combining this local knowledge with scientific and technical advancements leads to the emergence of new disciplines in gastronomy.

It is important for those who possess knowledge to share it altruistically, seeking mutual growth. The support of experts and networking are fundamental in educational projects, as they promote shared values and working methods, provide access to multiple sources of information, and offer opportunities to generate collaborative entrepreneurship or innovation projects, thereby stimulating professional vocation and the desire to learn.



The chocolate laboratory of Cacao de Origen. Photo: Julio Osorio. Courtesy of Cacao de Origen.

The Cacao de Origen center serves as a meeting point for experts and students of cocoa and chocolate. They travel throughout Venezuela to meet many traditional chocolate producers who possess ancestral knowledge of cocoa cultivation and chocolate making passed down from generation to generation. With the expertise of chocolate expert Chloe Doutre-Roussel, they teach the implementation of improvements in chocolate production methods, such as fermentation boxes and drying patios, and incorporate quality criteria such as the cut test, organoleptic tests, and seed selection by size, to enhance the quality and diversity of the product.

Since then, they have embraced the philosophy of the Bean to Bar movement, which originated in the United States around 2005. This movement aims to rediscover what cocoa can offer by revealing its identity instead of hiding it through industrial processes of over-roasting and added vanilla. They periodically invite scientists and chocolatiers who also follow the same philosophy. Thanks to the tremendous impact of their Kakao Bombones Venezolanos project, four Venezuelan universities - Universidad Simón Bolívar, Universidad Central de Venezuela, Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, and Universidad de los Andes - have created diploma programs on Cocoa and Chocolate Management. "We didn't know that a diploma could change a country. Those women who were trained in the Kakao program didn't go to school, they didn't go to university when they were young, and today they are teaching at the university."

Maria Fernanda Di Giacobbe y Chloe Doutre-Roussel

The gastronomic entrepreneur has the opportunity and responsibility to create a knowledge community in places where access to it is difficult. They can transmit to the local people who haven't had the opportunity to attend culinary school the values of a good hospitality professional, promoting their personal growth as well. This effort will benefit both the team and the entrepreneur.

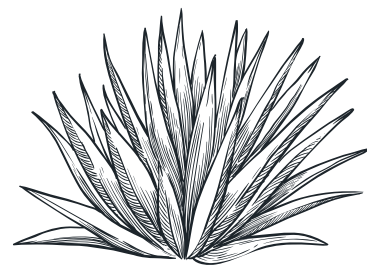


The team of Muyu restaurant receiving training. Photo: Paulo Rivas Peña. Courtesy of Galapagos Foundation

The process of educating skilled professionals in the Galapagos Islands - where the local population faces serious difficulties in adapting to norms and work schedules - involved never adopting an attitude of superiority. It was a reciprocal process that began with empathizing with them. Dignified schedules were established, and voluntary training activities were offered, such as workshops with international professionals who visit the Galapagos Foundation, including chefs, service professionals, scientists, and bartenders. Additionally, efforts were made to promote reading by creating the first library on the island within the restaurant, requesting foreign tourists (who make up the majority of customers) to donate a book in English or Spanish.

Luciana Bianchi

¹ Norton, M. et al (2009), Tortosa. C (2012) ² Aduriz, A. (2004), p. 1 ³ Unesco (2005), p. 175 ⁴ Unesco (2005), p. 184 ⁵ Unesco (2005), p. 60 ⁶ Unesco (2005), p. 57 ⁷ Aguirre, M. (2005), p. 11 ⁸ Unesco (2005), p. 64 ⁹ Unesco (2005), p. 64



PRESENT AND FUTURE OF GASTRONOMY RESEARCH IN LATIN AMERICA

Based on the presentations by Arboleya J.C., Bianchi L., Castells P., De La Torre L., Lasio V., Planagumà P., Taha M., Sánchez G., Pacheco R.

WHAT CAN CULINARY RESEARCH CONTRIBUTE?

What is the usefulness of research and innovation in gastronomy?

The codification of gastronomic knowledge through research is essential. It represents the necessary step for this knowledge to become an asset within the knowledge economy (1) and a valuable asset at that. As these knowledge are essentially local - generated within a specific culture and in constant contact with nature - they can help devise new solutions to the global challenges faced by societies.

"Gastronomy is such a vibrant discipline, such an essential part of us, that when scientists become involved in it, we see a utility: the possibility of changing the way people consume food to make a better world. Gastronomy is enjoyment, it is health, it is nutrition, and the passion transmitted to us by chefs infuses warmth into the coldness of science and drives us to generate applied innovation to improve people's lives." - Juan Carlos Arboleya, food scientist and professor at the Basque Culinary Center.

From a philosophical standpoint, this use of local knowledge to solve global problems would be a symptom of the emergence of the complex thinking desired by philosopher Edgar Morin, who emphasizes the "need to promote a knowledge capable of capturing global and fundamental problems in order to incorporate partial and local knowledge into them. (2)" It would indicate progress towards a more aware and compassionate humanity.

On the other hand, the diversity of gastronomic knowledge, combined with the creativity and ability of chefs to work in multidisciplinary networks with science, art, or other disciplines, is an excellent starting point for innovation in products and services. Facilitating the generation of gastronomic innovations would have a very positive effect on entrepreneurship in Latin America, where gastronomic businesses, as mentioned by Virginia Lasio (3), show a great lack of innovation.

"They are not diversified, easily imitable, and therefore have many competitors. A culture of innovation makes businesses interesting again and allows them to constantly differentiate themselves from their competitors to be more successful, which is something that happens in countries with an efficiency economy but not in Ecuador." - Virginia Lasio.

Research methodologies in gastronomy:

Gastronomy shows great versatility in working with both exact and human sciences. At a time when chefs seek to explore new fields of knowledge that directly relate to gastronomy (neuroscience, anthropology, business management, sensory analysis), networking becomes more necessary than ever to create new hybrid research methodologies. These methodologies facilitate the generation of easily codifiable knowledge, validated by experience through these collaborations. This fact allows us to speculate that the normalization of a research methodology in gastronomy has the potential to hybridize human and exact sciences, remedying the current divide between them. This would be a significant achievement within knowledge societies (5).

• Gastronomy and exact sciences:

La integración de la cocina en la ciencia, y viceversa es un tema de actualidad: cocineros y científicos han The integration of cooking and science, and vice versa, is a current topic of discussion. Chefs and scientists have become aware of the significant contributions that each can make to the other's work. However, this collaborative effort should not be limited to applying scientific studies to gastronomic concepts, where scientific knowledge merely serves as inspiration for the chef, as often seen in culinary conferences. It is necessary for the chef to actively participate in the process and be capable of constructing new knowledge.

"The mind of the chef demands a series of 'gastronomic' requirements: flavor, aroma, texture, while the scientist requires others such as formulation, shelf-life testing, stability, microstructure..." - Pere Castells, scientist and co-founder of Gastrocultura Mediterránea company.



According to UNESCO (1), the standardization of a research method involves:

1. Techniques and materials should be standardized to the maximum extent possible in order to compare and reproduce results accurately.
2. Research work should be complementary. Division of labor to avoid duplication of tasks.
3. Technology should be utilized to achieve efficiency.
4. Striking a balance between data dissemination, validation, and review, as well as reaching agreements for determining and protecting intellectual property.

Here are two methods of collaboration between cooking and science:

From the kitchen to the industry: creating an industrial product based on culinary curiosity:

"The creation of an industrial product based on culinary curiosity is a complex process. From the moment my culinary mindset envisioned this sauce, I had a clear idea of where I wanted to go, how I wanted this sauce to be: clean, without bubbles... Then, I start experimenting in my kitchen. In the kitchen, the chef and their team constantly think about dishes, flavors, influenced by their own background and region, in this case, the interior of Catalonia [...] It starts with trial and error, but then it requires the support of the scientist to continue the process, to understand what is happening in their experiments from a microstructural, rheological, and microbiological perspective."

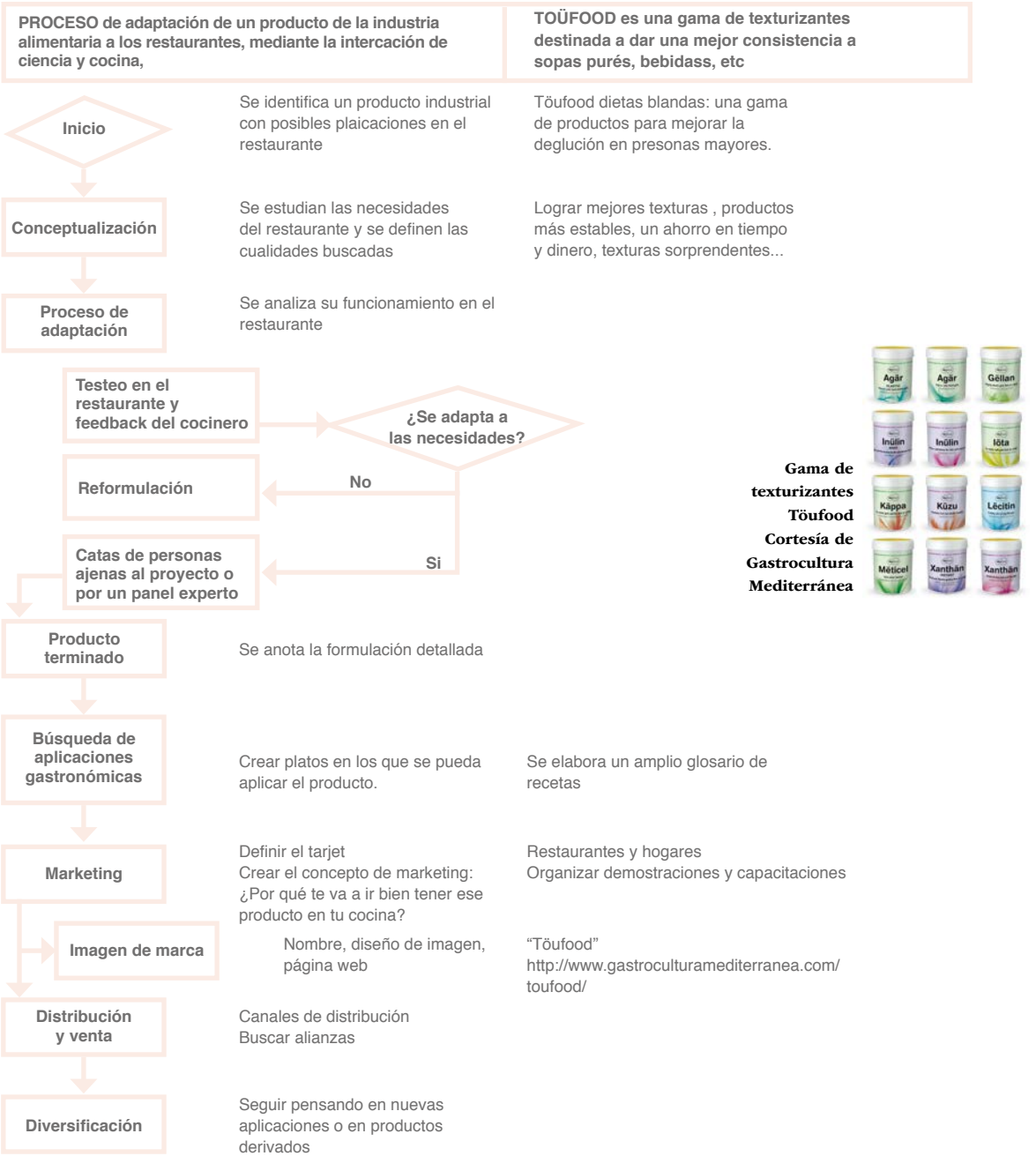
Pere Planagumà, chef and cofounder of the company Gastrocultura Mediterrànea



From the industry to the kitchen: seeking applications in the restaurant for an industrial product:

The range of texturizers "Toufood," created to improve the texture of food for people with swallowing difficulties, has entered the restaurant market. Their differentiation strategy has been to promote the democratization of these products, demonstrating through training to restaurant owners that they can be applied not only in avant-garde gastronomy but also as a great advantage for any type of restaurant, improving processes, achieving better textures, more stable products, and saving time and money. To achieve this, the brand organizes training sessions and has prepared an extensive recipe glossary.

Pere Castells



• Gastronomy and humanities

While new methodologies are being developed to integrate local knowledge and scientific knowledge, it is necessary to study and preserve the former, which in many cases are in danger of disappearing. In this regard, UNESCO provides a theoretical and normative framework through the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage held in 2003: the notion of Intangible Cultural Heritage (6). The traditional Mexican cuisine was the first to be protected under this designation in 2010 (7).

Marsia Taha asserts that "gastronomy is an intangible cultural heritage of Bolivia that must be preserved and consumed always to maintain identity and culture." To achieve this, the restaurant "Gustu" has developed a research methodology that combines ethnographic study with an adaptation of these ancestral techniques to modern cuisine: exploration trips.



Approach: By studying the context of Bolivian gastronomy, it is observed that different regions present significant differences in terms of their geography, which is one of the greatest sources of biodiversity and therefore gastronomic wealth. These regions are home to diverse communities, indigenous peoples, histories, languages, and traditions.

Objective: To achieve conservation through knowledge, respect, and the transmission of knowledge, raising awareness among the local population, as "one does not respect what one does not know."

Methodology:

- Identify the product.
- Identify ancestral cooking techniques by exchanging knowledge with the local population and producers.
- Create preparations using these products and their associated techniques, incorporating them into the concept of modern Bolivian cuisine at Gustu restaurant.

Marisia Taha

Marisia Taha on an exploratory trip to a Bolivian indigenous community. Photo: Christian Gutiérrez. Courtesy of Gustu restaurant.

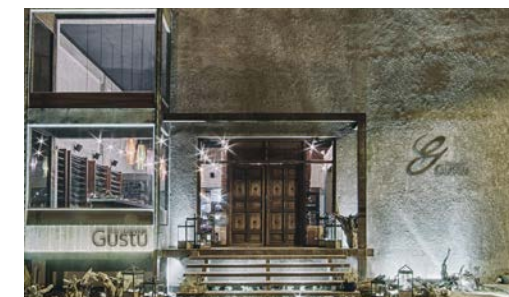
It is worth noting the increasingly frequent collaboration between cuisine and ethnobotany, which generates a strong exchange of knowledge.

Ethnobotany allows the chef to understand the complex anthropological and social dynamics that lie behind "Why do I eat what I eat?", helping to relativize the strict technical training inherited from classical cuisine, open the mind to new influences, and stimulate curiosity - Galo Sánchez, gastronomy professor at UIDE.

On the other hand, the chef's expertise is valuable in interpreting the knowledge studied by ethnobotanists and establishing comparisons with current uses. It also allows for innovation in a field that is not known for its industrial production.

The culinary laboratory

The culinary laboratory is also an area that still needs to be standardized, as well as the profile of the researcher, who in many restaurant-based R&D departments is a chef without prior scientific experience. However, as evidenced by publications from various Labs (8), significant progress has been made in the objective measurement of physicochemical parameters in experiments. Many culinary laboratories receive guidance and support from other research institutions.



Facade of Gustu restaurant in La Paz, Bolivia. Photo: Christian Gutiérrez. Courtesy of Gustu restaurant.

The culinary laboratory at Gustu restaurant receives support for research and development from the Basque Culinary Center (through BculinaryLab). Their research focuses on seeking foreign techniques to apply them to Bolivian products. 90% of their preparations involve natural fermentations, such as chuño cider (using the champenoise method), miso made from different Andean grains, and vinegars made from Amazonian fruits.

Marisia Taha



Muyu restaurant team experimenting in mixology. Photo: Paulo Rivas Peña. Courtesy of Galapagos Foundation.

The laboratory is the starting point for the Muyu restaurant. Its goal is to create the first cuisine of the Galapagos Islands that remains true to the concept of "Galapagos local cuisine," as the islands lack the use of native products or culinary traditions. It is necessary to create this cuisine based on the available products and techniques. The researchers are the restaurant's employees supported by national and international scientists, and there are internship agreements with three international universities: BCC (Spain), UNISIG (Italy), and the University of Houston (USA). The research directions are determined by the restaurant's management and supply needs. For example, they study the use of various preservation techniques and self-sufficiency, through foraging and their own two gardens, to ensure a constant food supply since the island's supply chain is deficient, and the infrastructure does not allow for extensive cold storage. Other projects are related to creating a line of barista products based on local botanicals and a fermentation project.

Luciana Bianchi

What is the future of gastronomy research?

According to Juan Carlos Arboleya, the future challenges of food production that will be addressed with the help of gastronomy arise from the need to adapt to:



Hornado seller at the Iñaquito market. (Quito)

The Space: The need for new forms of food production and distribution that adapt to a larger and more concentrated population in urban centers. There will also be less space for cultivation and industrial food production. Ongoing research includes:

- More efficient and high-yielding urban gardens.
- Utilization of traditional techniques like fermentation to create new preparations.

Climate Change: Climate variations will lead to changes in crops by geographic region. Cities will consume more energy, have less access to water, and fewer non-renewable resources. There will be a need to reduce meat consumption due to the pollution generated by animal farming and increasing ethical and moral concerns among the population. Ongoing research includes:

- Exploring alternative protein sources such as cultured meat.
- Expanding the biodiversity of the food we consume by introducing new edible organisms like insects, artemia, zooplankton, or phytoplankton.

Exploring the Hedonic Dimension of Gastronomy: New forms of enjoyment. Research that focuses on how we experience gastronomy, the so-called "gastronomic experience," is currently redefining the boundaries of this concept. It delves into the multimodal perception of food, the multisensoriality discussed by Spence (9), the dimension of health and well-being, and the aspect that "feeds the soul" by connecting us with a story or culture, what Ferràn Adrià calls the "sixth sense"(10). Some of these research lines also have practical applications to generate innovations that help address food challenges. Ongoing research includes:

- Mindfulness techniques applied primarily to children to improve their awareness of food and encourage more home cooking.
- Further studying multisensoriality.

Juan Carlos Arboleya

A new educational model

The fundamental role of higher education institutions in the generation and transmission of knowledge is undeniable. However, in a transdisciplinary gastronomic reality where constant updating of knowledge is essential, a change in the educational model is necessary.



According to Juan Carlos Arboleya, the learning of the gastronomist of the future should take into account these aspects:

- Providing students with the ability to interrelate knowledge and avoiding rigid transmission of knowledge as seen in traditional lectures (11). Instead, promoting flexibility and curiosity: "Faced with overwhelming amounts of data, we should invest in having more criteria to handle and work with them."
- Scientists should not approach the scientific method as an act of faith. It is necessary to be open to other cultural, artistic, and social factors, seeking to understand the human being from a more humanistic perspective. "As they said in the Renaissance: any art, including gastronomy, should become a science, and any science should become an art."

Juan Carlos Arboleya

Beetroot bubbles¹², a modernist cuisine technique

¹ Unesco (2005), P. 109 ² Unesco (2005), P. 165 ³ Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2018) ⁴ Unesco (2005), p. 90 ⁵ Unesco (2005), p. 120 ⁶ Unesco (2005), p. 168 ⁷ Oficina de la Unesco en México (2019) ⁸ BculinaryLab (2019), Nordic Food Lab (2019) ⁹ Auvray, M., & Spence, C. (2008) ¹⁰ Norton, M. et al (2009), Tortosa J.C. (2012) ¹¹ Unesco (2005), p. 66 ¹² Técnica desarrollada por el restaurante Mugaritz, Errentería, España

SUMMARIES OF THE
PRESENTATIONS



THEMATIC BLOCK 1

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN GASTRONOMY

INNOVATION, CUISINE, AND SCIENCE. NEW PRODUCT: ESCATA



Pere Castells (Spanish)

Pere Castells is a graduate in Chemical Sciences, specializing in Organic Chemistry. He has been a collaborator of the research team El Bullitaller at Ferràn Adrià's restaurant "El Bulli" in Roses, Spain. From 2004 to 2012, he was responsible for the Department of Gastronomic and Scientific Research at the Alicia Foundation. He has been a scientific-gastronomic collaborator in the course "Science and Cooking" at Harvard University (2010-2017). Pere Castells is also a co-author of the book "Léxico científico-gastronómico" alongside Ferràn and Albert Adrià, and he is a prominent speaker and writer.



Pere Planagumà (Spanish)

Pere Planagumà graduated from the Girona Hospitality School and then gained experience as a stagier in restaurants in Spain and France, including El Bulli, La Tour d'Argent, and La Rotisserie du Beaujolais. He has worked in some of Catalonia's finest restaurants, such as Mas Pau, Les Cols, and El Celler de Can Roca, where he served as head chef. Pere Planagumà has also been a scientific-gastronomic collaborator in the course "Science and Cooking" at Harvard University. He is a founding partner of Gastrocultura Mediterrànea and Gastronomi Solutions companies. Currently, he is a professor in the Gastronomic Sciences degree program at the University of Barcelona and the chef at the ROM restaurant.

The thematic focus of the first presentation at the Forum was on the importance of the collaboration between science and cuisine. This interaction combines the needs of a chef with the methodology of a scientist. The case study presented the result of a three-year research project. The convergence of these two disciplines allows for the development of sustainable, environmentally friendly, and circular economy results, exemplified by the presentation of their product, Escata.

In this particular case, the issue arose when Pere Planagumà visited an anchovy factory. He became curious about the destination of the wastewater generated during the production process. Upon learning that it was all being discarded, causing significant environmental damage and imposing a high cost on society, he decided to find a way to make use of the waste. The discarded products could be repurposed and transformed into new "by-products," in this case, Escata.

The main ingredient from which Escata is derived is canned anchovies, which have a millennial tradition in the Catalonia region dating back to Roman times. Therefore, by reutilizing a waste product, they are simultaneously revaluing and reinventing a traditional product.

On one hand, as a chef, Planagumà had specific demands and ideas about the desired final result. He wanted a clean product that could be used as a flavor enhancer, accompanying any meal. On the other hand, Castells needed a methodology to ensure that the product not only met the requirements of a gastronome and appealed to consumers but also complied with food safety standards, being safe for human consumption and extending the product's shelf life.

After three years of trial and error, they achieved a different, innovative, and sustainable result. With Escata in hand, the focus now shifts to how it will be marketed, how consumers will become aware of its applications and uses. This is where the business aspect comes into play, creating a comprehensive sales strategy, from building expectations to the moment the product is consumed.

One of the tasks the speakers aimed to accomplish was to inspire the audience and viewers to analyze and think about similar products. They encouraged the integration of various disciplines, models, and products within the Ecuadorian context to apply important concepts such as circular economy, interdisciplinary synergy, sustainability, and tradition, combining innovation and staying at the forefront. And of course, knowing how to sell these products, establishing them in the market, making them desirable and sought after by consumers.

Escata is just one example that Pere Castells and Pere Planagumà can showcase of this collaboration and joint work. They are currently involved in creating a brand of gastronomic additives, which requires significant research and ongoing updates.

Innovation lies in creating a non-existent product, as there was no such reference before. Therefore, to succeed in the market, a comprehensive marketing and sales campaign had to be designed. For example, they created a website showcasing its striking image and explaining its applications and uses.

THEMATIC BLOCK 1

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN GASTRONOMY

THE FOUNDATIONS OF A CONSCIOUS AND ADAPTABLE CUISINE TO TODAY'S WORLD



Rodrigo Pacheco (Ecuadorian)

Boca Valdivia is the evocative name of the restaurant located in Hotel Las Tanusas in Puerto Cayo, Manabí province, Ecuador, and it belongs to Rodrigo Pacheco. Three pillars form the basis of the concept: fresh produce, sustainability, and ethnobotany. He secured third place in the Trophée Passion World Cuisine Championship in Paris. Pacheco represented Ecuador at the prestigious gastronomic event Madrid Fusión in 2017.

Revaluing culture, self-sustainable gastronomy, connecting consumers with nature, and placing the chef as an agent of social change were some of the most important topics highlighted by Rodrigo Pacheco in his presentation. This Ecuadorian chef is determined to change the way chefs have worked in recent decades. "It's no longer about spending 17 hours a day in the kitchen," he tells us.

This agent of change can become the precursor of healthy eating habits, revaluing an entire community, generating employment opportunities, and thus creating wealth, all with a philosophy and coherence behind it.

In his project "Boca Valdivia," Rodrigo works day by day to develop a hotel business in an area with insufficient tourist influx to sustain it over time. However, by making gastronomy the driving force, he has managed to make the place shine on its own. Together with an entire community, he has made this place unique in the country. The hotel-restaurant is located 15 minutes away from the Machalilla Natural Reserve (Manabí Province) on the Pacific coast.

Rodrigo talks a lot about rescuing and revaluing traditions from ancestral cultures, such as the Valdivia culture on the Ecuadorian coast. He incorporates some of their age-old techniques both in the kitchen and in the service. When an entire community realizes that everything it needs to be "rich" is around them, that's when they truly value what they have harvested. This is the example of many residents in the area where this ambitious and different restaurant is located. In this way, for Rodrigo and his team, gastronomy doesn't become something ephemeral that disappears once the plate is empty; gastronomy becomes wealth that can be transmitted and preserved over time, passing it on to future generations.

Another well-achieved goal of the restaurant and hotel is to self-supply 80% of its products. They utilize all the resources around them, including mangroves, forests, shores, and the creation of a garden and a small farm. Indigenous products or those highly valued and used for other purposes outside the country are given prominence and a gastronomic application in the restaurant.

There is no similar business model in Ecuador, one that works in collaboration with a community, revaluing their products, culture, and customs while generating employment opportunities. Boca Valdivia is undoubtedly an example of how gastronomy can transform and create wealth. When we talk about wealth, we're not only referring to economic wealth but also to the knowledge gained through work and the respect for ancient traditions, disseminated through cuisine.

THEMATIC BLOCK 1

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN GASTRONOMY

FINE-TUNING GASTRONOMIC CONCEPTS FOR SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS MODELS.



Luciana Bianchi (Italo-Brazilian)

Chef, researcher, and writer with an academic background in Molecular Science. She is a member of the Guild of Food Writers in the United Kingdom and a collaborator for the website The World's 50 Best Restaurants. She also contributes to the Italian guide Identità Golose. She has published articles in magazines and newspapers from 12 countries. She is an associate professor at the Basque Culinary Center in San Sebastián, Basque Country, Spain, and at the University of Gastronomic Sciences in Pollenzo, Italy. She is the director of the Galapagos Foundation.

The clear objective of this talk was to delve into the idea of general concepts that can either succeed or fail in the restaurant industry. "Fusion concepts that become confusion..."

Often, the failure of a restaurant is not due to poor management or financial issues. Most of the time, it lacks a clear concept. The concept, she says, is the clear refinement of ideas that define a business model. The idea may seem logical in our heads and familiar, but the work lies in being able to transmit it and have the message reach our customers.

The concepts we propose should be understandable not only by gastronomy experts. Even if our audience is knowledgeable in the field, the proposal must be effectively communicated.

Luciana mentions how many times we come across restaurants that sell a culture different from the territory where the business operates. Often, poor communication leads to a missed opportunity to effectively transmit a culture. In these establishments, the cuisine and service become clichés. The most important aspect when incorporating these types of concepts is to respect the culture.

Another issue raised in this presentation was the copying of concepts. The habit of reproducing exactly what our neighbors do because the restaurant next door is successful can be seen as a lack of motivation when creating a concept. It is common to see "creation" of authorial concepts when in reality they are copied ideas and speeches. It tends to be a common practice in Latin America, she says.

It is much more interesting when one finds places that separate a technique from a concept. Techniques are meant to be used.

Our distribution channel for ideas or concepts is often the people who work in the establishments. Involving the staff in the creation process is important. It is better when one forms a brigade of people who walk with you in the process of creating a concept. The importance of constantly training the team is discussed, as well as providing people with decent working conditions.

The concept not only has to be clear, but in the end, a restaurant is a business and needs to be profitable. The concepts that make a chef happy have to be sustainable over time. Where there is demand for certain types of restaurants, there are great opportunities, she tells us.

This is the case in Ecuador, according to the speaker.

Lastly, she emphasizes the importance of first knowing one's own culture, products, and people, starting with something small and then growing gradually.

THEMATIC BLOCK 1

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN GASTRONOMY

ANCIENT AND CONTEMPORARY USES OF BLUE PENCO IN THE ANDES OF ECUADOR



Lucía de la Torre (Ecuadorian)

Ethnobotanist trained in Ecuador, Mexico, and Denmark. She completed her master's degree in the Department of Systematic Botany at the Institute of Biological Sciences, Aarhus University, Denmark. She holds a Master's degree in Management and Conservation of Tropical Natural Resources. Currently, she is the general director of the Ethnobotanical Garden of Hacienda Verde (Pichincha, Ecuador), where she works on the rescue of Andean fruit trees and conducts research on the ethnobotany of Andean agaves.



Galo Sánchez: (Ecuadorian)

Food and Beverage professional with 15 years of experience in hotels and clubs. He holds an undergraduate degree from UTE (2008) and additional studies from the Argentine Institute of Gastronomy (2012). For 9 years, he has worked as a teacher at educational centers such as UTE, ITI, and UTN. Currently, he is a coordinator at UIDE in the gastronomy program and a professor of nutrition. He recently obtained a master's degree in Business Management from UTPL (2018).

On this occasion, the work of an ethnobotanist and the interrelation between gastronomy and the culinary application of many plants were discussed, some of which have disappeared and been replaced by foreign species.

Lucía presented an interesting case, specifically the blue agave. Originating from Mexico, it has been in Ecuador for over a thousand years. In fact, pre-Columbian cultures used it for a variety of purposes. Certain plants, such as the agave, have the power to bring benefits to the environment, the land, and a more diverse ecosystem. In the case of the agave, it can also thrive in arid areas or nutrient-poor soils.

Despite not being a native plant to this land, it has been in Ecuador for thousands of years, and our communities have known how to use it as their own. Writings from the early Spanish conquistadors have been found, describing the variety of uses that indigenous peoples had for the agave.

The relationship between a single plant and humans, and the multitude of uses acquired throughout history, is fascinating. It has been used for fishing nets, gathering, ornamental accessories, and daily items such as baskets, as well as countless culinary and medicinal applications, even for personal hygiene. The fiber is also used in the construction of musical instruments, among many other things.

The purpose of understanding the meticulous work of Lucía was to see how, with just one plant, we obtain various riches. Why do some people lack food when the land is capable of providing us with everything we need? It is possible to achieve sustainability because, in a way, these crops contribute to a healthy and balanced ecosystem. Maintaining these plantations helps preserve traditions and culture for years to come, preventing their loss. The richness of just one plant can be a driver of the local economy.

Galo Sánchez, a chef and gastronomy teacher, highlights the magnificent work that Lucía does in her project Hacienda Verde (Guayllabamba, Pichincha Province), a space where they strive to recover plants that have been lost over time due to replacement by those that yield higher profits. However, few people realize the immense loss this represents in the long run, considering the loss of a great ancient culture and tradition. Therefore, the work of a gastronome should also involve, as is the case with Galo, giving culinary applications to products that have been lost. Through these small initiatives, the recovery of this great legacy is envisioned.

Galo, for example, spoke about how to incorporate various citrus fruits (limón bufón, limón bolita, limón sidra, etc.), which are not well-known in the market, into mixology along with agave liquor. When a tradition is recovered, it can also be seen as innovation and entrepreneurship. Therefore, these initiatives can become a significant economic driver for countries like Ecuador.

The example of the agave given by Lucía, and the application in a cocktail given by Galo, is just one of the thousands of initiatives on which these two professionals are working. They are part of the many projects that will undoubtedly continue to develop in the near future.

THEMATIC BLOCK 2

TRADITION, IDENTITY, AND SOCIAL COMMITMENT

TRANSFORMING CACAO INTO CHOCOLATE FROM OUR IDENTITY



María Fernanda Di Giacobbe (Venezuelan)

Founder of KaKao, Venezuelan chocolates, Cacao de Origen, and Río Cacao. She supports cocoa communities through the art of chocolatiering. Cacao de Origen is a center for the study, research, and preservation of Venezuelan cocoa. In 2015, she was awarded the Grand Gold Tenedor by the Venezuelan Academy of Gastronomy. In 2016, she won the Basque Culinary World Prize for her transformative power in Venezuelan society through her chocolatier craft.



Chloe Doutre-Roussel (French)

Consultant, educator, and recognized cocoa expert with over 35 years of experience. Author of "The Chocolate Connoisseur". She has worked with "El Ceibo", a cocoa cooperative in Bolivia. She serves as a judge at the Academy of Chocolate Awards (AOC) and the Northwest Chocolate Festival. She is a member of the Advisory Board of the Fine Chocolate Industry Association and the president of the Chocolate Committee for the Good Food Awards.

These two remarkable women have turned cocoa into a source of inspiration for many socially excluded individuals, despite the challenges of the current situation in Venezuela. They work to reclaim and revitalize a product that unites an entire continent, Latin America.

María Fernanda and Chloe's project encompasses cocoa in all its expressions, from the growth of the plant, its treatment, harvesting, and fermentation to its transformation into chocolate and finally into bonbons. They realized that they could create more wealth by infusing their bonbons with Venezuelan flavors. Their work involves teaching and providing opportunities to socially excluded individuals from different sectors of society, allowing them to utilize their resources and traditional knowledge. The project reaches out to people who may not have had the opportunity to attend school, and through this wonderful initiative, they have been able to obtain university degrees. They have had direct contact with prestigious universities, exchanging knowledge, and it is also a great opportunity for these individuals to engage with academics in the field, explore, and continue researching, benefiting both parties.

One aspect of their teaching is the revival of traditions and the utilization of the entire cocoa product, including derivatives beyond just chocolate, such as honey and sweets, among others. These women's task was also to capture the flavors of Venezuela in their bonbons. Traditionally, famous chocolate shops in their countries were all foreign-owned, but today their bonbons showcase the colors and flavors of Venezuelan tradition, using products from their own country.

One of the greatest benefits has been the creation of job opportunities, with entire families now dedicated to cocoa, from farming, working the land, and harvesting to manufacturing chocolate. Most importantly, these individuals have become the ambassadors of this tradition. The true fruits of their labor will be seen in the future when this heritage is passed down from generation to generation.

They established the Cacao de Origen center, an educational space that incorporates tradition, innovation, and both old and new technologies for cocoa production. They also focus on improving the quality of presentation and packaging, making these chocolates and bonbons competitive in the international market. They have also managed to recover or prevent the loss of unique Venezuelan cocoa genetics, reclaiming fields and lands where cocoa was no longer cultivated, having been replaced over time by other crops believed to be "more profitable." They have restored the original occupation of these cocoa producers who had transitioned to other jobs. The school they established amidst the plantations emphasizes the importance of working the land and highlights its significance among farmers.

"Venezuela is cocoa, Latin America is cocoa..." these speakers often repeat. They also discuss the importance of regional integration to valorize the native products of this vast area. They emphasize the significance of working together with scientists, researchers, and experts to exchange knowledge, treating cocoa as a cultural asset.

"Cocoa predates politicians, conquests, pirates... cocoa unites us," says María Fernanda.

THEMATIC BLOCK 2

TRADITION, IDENTITY, AND SOCIAL COMMITMENT

#ÚNICO: OUR AGRICULTURAL SCHOLARSHIP PROJECT BY EL SALNÉS



Mauricio Acuña (Ecuadorian)

He has been cooking since the age of 16, starting in his mother's kitchen. He gained his experience in several top restaurants in Europe. In Ecuador, he manages the small family restaurant El Salnés, together with his mother, offering select dishes of traditional Ecuadorian cuisine and innovative creations using endemic Ecuadorian ingredients.

He owns his own company, Espai - epicur, dedicated to research and development. He initiates projects in Ecuador, such as the Latitud Cero and Pambamesa congresses, and the #Único scholarship.

On this occasion, Mauricio Acuña, one of the country's experienced chefs, highlights the society's mistake of disconnecting cuisine from the countryside. He explains the problem that arises from undervaluing the work of farmers, leading to a complete disconnection from roots and true identity.

Mauricio's proposal is to demonstrate how valuing the land can make a business economically profitable. This objective is also achieved through innovation and development, which is what his company currently focuses on.

Acuña shares that he chose to gain a lot of experience before taking the reins of his family business, and this gave him the necessary tools to continue with a prosperous venture. When he traveled abroad to acquire experience, he realized the serious mistake that Ecuadorians made in prioritizing foreign culture.

Upon his return to the country in 2012, he found approximately 1,200 restaurants in the city of Quito, of which very few worked with native products, and even fewer had their own recipes. He encountered Italian, Japanese, American, and other types of restaurants. Ecuadorians had lost their gastronomic identity.

Today, through his #Único scholarship, Mauricio strives to work with people in agriculture. The main objective is to empower farmers to take ownership of their products instead of relying on third parties. This is how a change can be generated, he says. Many of these farmers haven't even completed the third year of primary school, so the first stage is to provide them with basic technical tools that a university graduate could offer since people in rural areas don't have the opportunity to learn.

Impressive results have been achieved in this initial stage. For example, they have raised awareness about the seasonality of products, even though Ecuador is located on the equator and doesn't experience the four seasons. Forcing plants to grow out of season places excessive demands on them and may not result in a product of the best quality.

The project is working on products such as Sacha Inchi, an Amazonian nut with a high content of essential oils similar to olive oil. They also focus on a river fish called Cachama, which had disappeared due to the invasion of a fish that was more "profitable" at the time. Achira, a bulb with an impressive starch source, and the recovery of a pig species called black pig, which was replaced by a more profitable alternative at one point, are also part of their efforts.

By introducing these products and understanding that it is better for an economy on a larger scale, the identity in flavors, traditions, and culture was lost. A recipe, clearly, wouldn't taste the same if we replaced one ingredient with another.

Mauricio refers to this as the force of action, a consciousness of "returning to what is ours." It is about a more complete economy on a larger scale that involves not only economic profitability but also the revaluation of products and small producers, and therefore, the traditions and culture of an entire region like Latin America.

THEMATIC BLOCK 2

TRADITION, IDENTITY, AND SOCIAL COMMITMENT

TOWARDS AN INVESTIGATIVE, RESPECTFUL, AND SUSTAINABLE GASTRONOMY AS A TOOL FOR SOCIAL CHANGE



Marsia Taha (Bolivian)

She studied culinary arts at the School of Hotel and Tourism in Bolivia and at the Center for Hotel Studies in the Canary Islands, Spain. She participated in the Azteca Culinary Contest and made it to the eliminations for the Bocuse d'Or. In 2013, she joined the team at Gustu, starting as a kitchen assistant and eventually working her way up to the position of sous chef. Since 2017, together with Mauricio López, she has been the Head Chef at Gustu.

Marsia works in one of the gastronomic initiatives of Claus Meyer, a gastronome, entrepreneur, and visionary who co-founded one of the best restaurants in the world for many years, according to the 50 Best Restaurants magazine. His philosophy is to change the world through cooking, so he creates a foundation in Denmark to provide tools for a prison in that country through flavors, food, and cuisine, thus establishing the Melting Pot foundation.

It is then that he brings the idea to Bolivia, where he creates a culinary school for people from low-income backgrounds in 2012, and a year later, the restaurant Gustu is opened. Gustu is a high-end Bolivian cuisine restaurant that creates dishes showcasing the country's diversity of products and techniques.

The restaurant exclusively works with Bolivian products, as Marsia says, "gastronomy is a manifestation of living culture." The first important step is to establish contact with the productive areas where the ingredients for Gustu's dishes will come from. They encourage the cultivation of products that are in danger of disappearing, facing the challenge that Bolivia, like other countries, confronts with junk food, which is unhealthy and replaces traditional Bolivian gastronomy.

Marsia emphasizes that their products are an intangible cultural heritage that should always be preserved and consumed to maintain the country's identity and culture. They have determined that the best way to understand and work with the ingredients is by bringing the restaurant closer to the source, hence they occasionally embark on exploration trips. This approach has led them to discover unknown products and culinary techniques they had never seen before. Therefore, the restaurant not only incorporates the products but also employs techniques that allow them to better express their culinary creations. As Marsia puts it, "...you cannot respect what you do not know."

Their latest project involves the creation of a laboratory for Bolivian foods. Currently, most of the experiments conducted there involve fermentations. Marsia gives an example of their current work, which is chuño cider. Chuño is a traditional pre-Inca technique used in many places in Latin America, consisting of freeze-dried potatoes. It was originally used as a preservation method and to facilitate transportation, considering that those cultures were nomadic in the past. The cider is made using a traditional French method for making champagnes (the champenoise method), which involves a first fermentation of the chuño followed by a second fermentation in the bottle. The result is a cider made from an ancestral ingredient that offers fruity notes and is highly enjoyable to consume.

The Melting Pot project has become a model of corporate social responsibility that contributes to and supports the development of the gastronomic world. This successful model, which currently involves over 4,000 gastronomy professionals in Bolivia, is aimed at expanding to other countries in the region.

THEMATIC BLOCK 2

TRADITION, IDENTITY, AND SOCIAL COMMITMENT

HOW CAN A GASTRONOMIC PROJECT BE AN AGENT OF ECOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL CHANGE?



Luciana Bianchi (Italian-Brazilian)

Chef, researcher, and writer with academic background in Molecular Science. She is a member of the Guild of Food Writers in the United Kingdom and collaborates with the website The World's 50 Best Restaurants. She also contributes to the Italian guide Identità Golose. She has published articles in magazines and newspapers from 12 countries. She is an associate professor at the Basque Culinary Center in San Sebastián, Basque Country, Spain, and at the University of Gastronomic Sciences in Pollenzo, Italy. She is the director of Galapagos Foundation..

This time, Luciana tells us how a gastronomic project can be an agent of ecological and social change. One example of this is her own venture with the Galapagos Foundation.

The Galapagos Islands are an interesting archipelago to develop a gastronomic culture because there is no native population. It is only recently that a fourth generation of settlers has emerged, and among its 13 major islands, 6 minor islands, and several islets, the population does not exceed 30,000 inhabitants.

Tourism has been and continues to be the main source of income for the island. The biggest challenge was opening a hotel-restaurant within a national park where everything is protected and supervised. Additionally, there is a shortage of hospitality and tourism professionals.

The foundation's task is to collect and record endemic species that can be used in the cuisine, thus creating an indigenous gastronomy of the island. This is a laborious effort involving chefs and researchers from many parts of the world.

The first settlers on the islands came from different parts of continental Ecuador, posing another challenge: creating a unified culture that arises from the combination of various traditions. All of this is achieved through tremendous work on sustainability and environmental awareness.

The project behind the foundation is Muyu, a restaurant that serves as a pilot for the development of Galapagos gastronomy. They faced a significant problem of product scarcity in their daily operations, which led them to develop their own garden. They also established direct contact with fishermen who were not accustomed to the formal and demanding work of a restaurant, where fresh products are needed daily. Thus, they had to establish a culture of rigorous work in the hospitality industry. This not only applies to fishing but also to farmers and orchards that provide them with vegetables and fruits.

One of the most remarkable aspects, according to Luciana, is creating a community where everyone works together. This is achieved by training the project's staff in different areas such as cooking, baking, serving, hotel management, cleaning, and even creating Galapagos crafts. When training these individuals, the focus is not only on their professional skills but also on fostering a sense of belonging and perseverance. An interesting approach is to make employees also customers, helping them better understand the experience the restaurant aims to transmit. Being part of a small island (San Cristobal), there are not many references to this type of experience, so they are cultivating a culture of demanding and somewhat critical consumption. This is a good way to make employees feel more committed to their work.

Another challenge that Luciana mentions is the reduction of orders for raw materials from the mainland. In their first year, they imported 500 kilograms of raw materials, but now they import only about 100 kilograms per year. This is part of a business that truly focuses on sustainability, being aware that everything they do will have an impact on the environment. The goal is to have a lesser negative impact, especially on other species, by adopting a holistic approach to gastronomy and considering future generations.

Empowering women in the kitchen is another topic that the foundation works on. After experiencing some personal accidents throughout her career as a chef, Luciana also aims to provide a dignified life for the kitchen staff working there, respecting their working hours and wages. She firmly believes in the gastronome as an agent of social change, considering the science of gastronomy as a holistic subject that takes care of the environment and acknowledges the impact our actions can have.

THEMATIC BLOCK 3

NEW TRENDS AND INNOVATIVE BUSINESS MODELS

COOKING FOR VIRTUAL CLIENTS



Juan José Morán (Ecuadorian)

He began his studies at the age of 18 at the Higher Institute of Culinary Arts in Guayaquil, Ecuador.

He started as a chef at the Pedro Vicente Maldonado station in Antarctica. He is the owner of the restaurant La Pizarra, which opened in July 2014 in Los Ceibos (Guayaquil) and, since August 2015, in Plaza Lagos (Samborondón, Guayas province), together with his partner Jaime Blum.

He is the head chef and the creator of the restaurant's specialty: Ecuadorian tapas.

This young chef from Guayaquil addresses a fundamental aspect of running a business that caters to the demands of modern customers: social media. From his position as chef and owner of La Pizarra restaurant, he talks about how he has been attracting customers through Instagram and Facebook, primarily. He has successfully maintained constant interaction and customer loyalty through these tools, as he points out that today's customers are influenced by various trends and fashions, especially in the culinary field.

Juan José became attentive to his virtual ally when he introduced a completely unknown concept to his target audience: tapas, a popular Spanish tradition of small portioned dishes. Incorporating a new concept requires careful and meticulous management of social media to ensure that customers understand what to expect when they enter the restaurant. Juan José successfully achieved this through the use of the hashtag #vamosdetapeo.

After capturing the attention and understanding of his customers, the next challenge was building loyalty, which is particularly difficult nowadays. His efforts extended beyond providing excellent service at the restaurant; he also established a close connection through social media. Nowadays, social media can reach a wide audience at a low cost, allowing him to reach approximately 20,000 people for just 30 dollars. This marks a significant difference compared to traditional advertising rates in magazines or other media outlets.

Creating campaigns was another strategy he employed. For example, every Wednesday they launch a new suggestion, recipe, or different dish. Over time, this idea has evolved, enabling customers to choose and make suggestions, creating a bond that fosters loyalty and consistency. This modern tool has also served as a thermometer for measuring the popularity of dishes, determining whether they should be introduced to the menu.

The extensive reach of social media has transformed La Pizarra, a restaurant located in an exclusive area of Guayaquil, into an accessible option for customers of all income levels, demystifying the notion that dining there is expensive. It has attracted diverse diners and expanded the customer base. Furthermore, its fame has led to collaborations with prominent national and international brands, generating campaigns and increasing its contacts and potential customers. This has prompted considerations for brand expansion, diversification, and the opening of new locations.

When discussing customer loyalty, La Pizarra has used social media to build trust, allowing customers to witness the daily work that takes place in the kitchen. This has strengthened their brand and fostered a sense of belonging among customers and staff. Juan José Morán is the chef who leads a great team named La Pizarra.

He concludes by saying, *"...social media is one of the most important tools for gaining local and international recognition, and we must know how to use it."*

THEMATIC BLOCK 3

NEW TRENDS AND INNOVATIVE BUSINESS MODELS

ANALYZING THE FUTURE OF GASTRONOMY



Juan Carlos Arbolea (Spanish)

Juan Carlos Arbolea is a Spanish professional with a degree in Chemistry from the University of Oviedo, Spain. He is an expert in molecular gastronomy and has worked for eleven years at the Food Research Unit of AZTI-Tecnalia in Vizcaya, Basque Country, Spain, specializing in marine and food research. He is a professor at the Basque Culinary Center, where he coordinates the Master's Degree in Gastronomic Sciences, and he serves as the Editor-in-Chief of the "International Journal of Gastronomy and Food Science." In 2005, he collaborated with renowned chef Adoni Luis Aduriz of the restaurant Mugaritz in San Sebastián, Basque Country.

Juan Carlos Arbolea is a Spanish professional with a degree in Chemistry from the University of Oviedo, Spain. He is an expert in molecular gastronomy and has worked for eleven years at the Food Research Unit of AZTI-Tecnalia in Vizcaya, Basque Country, Spain, specializing in marine and food research. He is a professor at the Basque Culinary Center, where he coordinates the Master's Degree in Gastronomic Sciences, and he serves as the Editor-in-Chief of the "International Journal of Gastronomy and Food Science." In 2005, he collaborated with renowned chef Adoni Luis Aduriz of the restaurant Mugaritz in San Sebastián, Basque Country.

Juan Carlos Arbolea, a scientist with a passion for cooking, presented an analysis of the future of gastronomy in his lecture. He entered the world of gastronomy after spending four years of his doctoral thesis studying the science behind whipped cream. He studied its microstructure to understand the physical and chemical processes that occur in cream. It was during this time that he encountered the world of Mugaritz, a renowned restaurant, and began to explore the intersection of cooking and science.

While it is impossible to predict the future with certainty, there are analyses and conclusions that can provide a fairly accurate panorama of what the world will be like in 2050, and gastronomy will undoubtedly be affected as well. To design future food trends, it is necessary to create a scenario of what the environment will be like at that time. There will be many more people, and cities will be larger. Perhaps one outcome is that cooking will be seen as something related to convenience. The world will be transformed by climate change, politics, and social crises.

Today, diverse ingredients and products from all over the world can be found in any location. For example, tropical fruits can be found in northern Spain. However, the choice to consume such exotic fruits comes with underlying issues such as energy consumption and pollution. Therefore, consumption will need to be more sustainable. We will need to think of ways to make the future less pessimistic, such as urban farming and alternative protein sources, as there will be a significant shortage. Studies are currently being conducted on the cultivation of plant-based proteins and the creation of lab-grown animal proteins derived from stem cells. The crisis may require people to be more open to new forms of consumption, which will involve overcoming ethical and moral challenges.

There will also be positive aspects, as life expectancy will increase, and diseases will be cured. In the field of gastronomy, there will be a greater focus on how we eat, with more awareness of nutrition and health. Juan Carlos believes that the interaction between science and cooking can contribute significantly to the future by developing foods that incorporate methodology and creativity into gastronomy.

An interesting project is to improve children's perception of less appealing foods. This can be achieved through interaction between the senses, science, and cooking once again. This collaborative approach can lead to increased utilization of wild plants and the development of new culinary techniques that can adapt to this changing world. Traditional techniques such as fermentation can also be effectively used to create new products.

At the end of his presentation, Juan Carlos emphasizes the importance of maintaining a connection to our roots and having a grounded perspective, despite the artificial world we are approaching. Understanding our origins and returning to our roots is crucial for humanity.

THEMATIC BLOCK 3

NEW TRENDS AND INNOVATIVE BUSINESS MODELS

THE ADDED VALUE IN THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN AND THE REVOLUTION OF LATIN AMERICAN FLAVORS IN CHOCOLATE



Santiago Peralta (Ecuadorian)

In 2002, along with his wife Carla Barbotó, he founded what started as a family business that soon became a company that revolutionized the industry in the country and in Latin America. PACARI chocolate, a producer of Premium Organic Chocolate, has gained international recognition. They work together with cooperatives from different provinces of Ecuador, with trained farmers and experts in cocoa production, to produce their chocolate.

Behind this successful business model around chocolate, Santiago, the founder of Pacari, tells us how the idea of turning Ecuadorian products into a benchmark for the world began. When we talk about a successful business model, we refer to a chocolate that has won numerous recognitions and awards worldwide.

Peralta tells us that his motivation was to be part of a small country, relatively unknown abroad. From a young age, he saw the potential for development and the opportunities that Ecuador could offer him. His objective then became to stop the country from exporting all its cocoa and instead produce chocolate, thus gaining a place in the global market.

Their foundation was always organic. He says he prefers agriculture in this way because otherwise, he would be poisoning people. This is a fundamental part of the values of his company. He and his wife, as the initiators of the company, are just the visible face of more than 20,000 people who, in one way or another, directly or indirectly, are involved in the activity or make a living from it. They work with him or around the entire production process of the business.

Pacari didn't have a special or specific recipe for making chocolate, but they did have enthusiasm and a clear goal. They wanted to be a good representative in the world for a traditional product and, why not, for a whole region.

THEMATIC BLOCK 3

NEW TRENDS AND INNOVATIVE BUSINESS MODELS

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY, COMMUNITY TOURISM, AND THE OPPORTUNITY FOR AN INNOVATIVE BUSINESS IN RURAL AREAS.



Enrique Cabanilla (Ecuadorian)

He has worked in Nicaragua, Argentina, and Bolivia in processes related to academia, consultancy, and research. He holds a Master's degree in Tourism Development Management and a Ph.D. in Geography from the University of Santa UNS (Peru). He has published books and articles related to tourism in Ecuador, research on trends in sustainable tourism enterprises and destinations, and manuals for the development of SMEs. He teaches courses on community tourism in Latin American countries and carries out consultancy work related to local development.

"The land is the foundation of food and human survival; the land is the safeguard of our gastronomic historical memory..." Enrique reached these conclusions after living in rural areas. He realized their richness and the importance of working with them. For that reason, he dedicated his time to work on food sovereignty and community tourism. Enrique is convinced that by supporting rural businesses, we provide economic support to the environment and, in a way, defend cultural identity.

Firstly, he explains food sovereignty. What does it imply? Taking care of our environment, the ecosystem, which ultimately provides us with food. It is crucial to rely on what is available in our surroundings, as this practice guarantees a specific culture. What is grown in the vicinity is influenced by certain geographical conditions, distinguishing one territory from another. Article 13 of the Ecuadorian Constitution guarantees Ecuadorians safe and permanent access to healthy, sufficient, and nutritious food that responds to diverse cultural identities and traditions.

The concept of sovereignty involves thinking about what is produced locally and, therefore, knowing what can be utilized. Food sovereignty requires a state that guarantees and defends this right, promotes and incorporates new technologies, while respecting ancestral techniques.

Another part of Cabanilla's work is community tourism, which is closely linked to food sovereignty. The chef saw in this field the opportunity to "preserve who we are and who we were." He has worked with communities that wanted to revalue their products and gastronomy. With these communities, he developed projects in the restaurant and hotel industry. Creating awareness that offering, making, and producing within the same region is valuable and "rich" is part of their daily work, as long as there is conscious agriculture and consumption. For example, the consumption of monkey meat in the Ecuadorian Amazon, strange as it may sound, is an ancestral tradition. As long as it is not done massively, it is a good way to teach tourists and visitors about their traditions and customs.

Cabanilla says that we must consider a new trend in tourism where people want to try new things and are willing to experience local products and food. Previously, restaurants and hotels were expected to have international cuisine to be well-regarded. The idea now is to empower and help these communities work with the resources at hand. In this regard, he encountered many agroecological tourism initiatives. Some of these initiatives have successfully continued, teaching tourists about the specific crops in each area while also supplying these products to restaurants and hotels in the vicinity. In the case of initiatives in the Andes of Ecuador, products such as quinoa, mashua, different types of potatoes, among others, are highlighted.

Enrique believes that defending culture is entirely innovative within a gastronomic and tourism company. There is so much more to discover in rural areas, far from the big cities. He says that it is in the countryside where the cultural diversity of territories resides.

THEMATIC BLOCK 4

STEPS TO UNDERTAKE IN THE GASTRONOMY INDUSTRY IN ECUADOR

ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN LATIN AMERICA



Michelangelo Cestari (Venezuelan)

For 10 years, he worked in the kitchens of Mugaritz, Le Manoir aux Quat'saisons, Au-Crocodile, Geranium, and Relæ, restaurants awarded with Michelin stars. In 2012, together with gastronomic entrepreneur Claus Meyer, he co-founded Melting Pot-Bolivia. He founded Gustu SA, the umbrella company for Restaurant Gustu and Q'atu Bakeries, where he assumed the position of CEO. He developed and managed Manq'a Schools and Community-Eateries, MIGA Association, Tambo Gastronomic Festival, and Suma-Phayata Street Food.

Michelangelo talks about the tools he has used throughout his career that have been useful in achieving success. He first differentiates between an entrepreneur and a businessman. Throughout his career, he has been a co-developer of projects in Latin America, always linked to the social and gastronomic field. The business models have adapted to the reality of the environment and its needs. In the beginning, in La Paz, Bolivia, he saw a niche to develop culinary projects. In his presentation, he emphasized the importance of focusing on where one wants to go with their ideas before starting any project. When there is a clear goal, it becomes difficult for environmental adversities to steer it off course. It's about adapting the available tools to the environment. This led him to develop artisan bakeries, gastronomic events, restaurants, and culinary schools. His focus was always on social development, in this case, in Bolivia.

Currently, he leads his own company, this time in Bogota, Colombia. Based on his extensive experience working in high-end restaurants, the easiest path would be to open a "fine dining" establishment. However, he sees it as more efficient to focus on the local environment and tailor his entrepreneurship to the target market. Therefore, he established a small investment fund that develops small gastronomic businesses adapted to the current market in Bogota, Colombia.

His strategy was to focus on a competitive advantage, being unique within the market. This is not easy since ideas are sometimes copied by others. Therefore, constant motivation to reinvent the business and make it unique is necessary. Identifying the market and later defining how to be unique within that environment allows for having fewer competitors. Through Porter's Five Forces (developed by a business professor at Harvard University), one can assess the profitability of their business based on the number of competitors in the environment. "Why compete with the rest when you can identify a gap, a different market niche...". According to Michelangelo, chefs need to be pragmatic with their ideas. It's good to be a dreamer, but the business must also be sustainable over time.

Marketing: It is important to implement tools provided by marketing. In this case, Cestari mentions the well-known "marketing mix," which includes the 9 Ps. He explains that it involves identifying the needs of the environment, the product to be offered, the price at which the product will be offered, the promotional strategy, and defining the place where the product will be consumed. It's essential to consider not only the consumers but also partners, allies, and suppliers when referring to the environment. The processes, the operations to be implemented within a company for the final delivery, should also be taken into account. Lastly, the "physical evidence" refers to the tangible aspects that make the product tangible.

After analyzing all the presentations that focus on sustainability, the recovery of ancestral products, and working with identity and culture, it is crucial to make these projects economically sustainable and profitable to survive. The speaker talks about finding a balance between values, desires, and ideas and promoting a long-lasting, profitable company. He emphasizes the need to be pragmatic with the ideas and dreams that chefs often have. To achieve this, it is necessary to implement a strategy that can be fulfilled over time. Clear, simple, and short-term objectives should be established. Setting a limited time frame will help ensure that the strategies are accomplished.

THEMATIC BLOCK 4

STEPS TO UNDERTAKE IN THE GASTRONOMY INDUSTRY IN ECUADOR

GASTRONOMIC ENTREPRENEURSHIP: OPPORTUNITIES IN THE ORANGE ECONOMY



Virginia Lasio (Ecuadorian)

Professor of Organizational Behavior at Espae Graduate School of Management at Espol and a professor at the Business School of ESAN University in Lima. Former dean of Espae (2002-2018). She led the Entrepreneurship Development Program, including the creation of the Espol Entrepreneurship Center. She directs the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor for Ecuador. She is a member of the Aacsb International Latin American & Caribbean Advisory Council and the Advisory Council of the publication Biz ED. She holds a doctorate from Tulane University (USA), a Master's degree in Business Administration from Espae, and a Mechanical Engineering degree from Espol.

Virginia presented her analysis of the "Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Ecuador" study, in which she participated in its development. Since 2008, an annual study has been conducted to analyze entrepreneurial activity in different countries. This study has revealed some weaknesses in the entrepreneurship ecosystem in Ecuador, emphasizes the speaker.

In recent years, Ecuador has positioned itself ahead of other countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region in terms of entrepreneurial activity. In this analysis, entrepreneurship was divided into new ventures and nascent ventures. The former refers to businesses that have lasted for three years in the market, indicating more consolidated businesses. The latter refers to ideas that have started by acquiring a location or the necessary equipment to launch the business, many of which may not necessarily materialize.

Ecuador has a high level of entrepreneurial activity, surpassing countries with resource-efficient economies (economies that use their own resources to meet their needs). The intention to start a business is also high. Another analysis focuses on the fear of failure, which is lower in the country. Fear of failure is not considered a hindrance to starting a business.

Most Ecuadorians undertake small businesses or retail businesses. These businesses tend to be unsustainable over time because they are easily imitable, leading to a high number of competitors. Despite being entrepreneurial, these businesses do not generate significant employment opportunities, so they are not a solution to the country's unemployment problem. Therefore, the rates of entrepreneurship are not in line with the country's economic development. This is because many of the ventures that are created are focused on the domestic market and are aimed at providing an immediate solution to family economic problems. They are not companies that contribute to exports, and the products offered are not innovative. Consequently, they are easily imitable products, resulting in short-lived businesses. They satisfy immediate economic needs but do not foster long-term sustainability.

When starting a business, people perceive that they face little competition in the market. However, this can be attributed to individuals who have not sufficiently observed or studied their environment before starting their ventures. They are often people who start businesses out of necessity or as a means to generate additional income alongside their daily activities. They also perceive it as a temporary opportunity until their own economic situation improves. As a result, the high rates of entrepreneurship in Ecuador do not have a significant impact on the overall economy of the country. They are born to meet personal or family needs but do not contribute to the development of Ecuador's economy.

Virginia discusses the concept of the "orange economy," which refers to the industry surrounding culture and creativity. She states that gastronomy falls within this trend. Many of the examples presented at the forum not only satisfy the need for sustenance but also provide an experience. According to Virginia, gastronomy is situated at the intersection of art, science, and the economy. This industry must constantly innovate to survive in the market, but financial management cannot be dissociated from the creative aspects of a gastronomic business.

According to Virginia, the opportunity to undertake ventures in gastronomy is immense, especially when these ventures can be linked to sustainability and innovation. A successful business, then, is one that can endure over time, create employment, and truly contribute to the country's economic development, benefiting not only the owners but also society as a whole.

THEMATIC BLOCK 4

STEPS TO UNDERTAKE IN THE GASTRONOMY INDUSTRY IN ECUADOR

APPLICATION OF AGROBIODIVERSITY AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECUADORIAN GASTRONOMY



Roberto Carrillo (Ecuadorian)

Is the Director of the Schools of Tourism Management & Environment and Hotel Business Administration at the Universidad Internacional del Ecuador. He holds a Master's degree in Conservation Biology from the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador (PUCE), a diploma in University Teaching from the same university, and a Bachelor's degree in Tourism with a specialization in Ecotourism from the same institution.

Carrillo is a university professor and a private consultant in the fields of tourism, conservation, and sustainable development.

Ecuador is one of the most biodiverse countries in the world, "it's not a myth," he says. It is said to have 11 different species per 1000 square kilometers, and there is also talk of the variability within each existing species.

The worst mistake one can make is not knowing about a species and all that it can offer. A chef should have knowledge of the nutritional value of products, for example, not just the techniques that can be used with food. This lack of knowledge about what we have in our surroundings has led to the loss and extinction of many species, both animals and plants, over time. What has also happened is the replacement of many elements with species thought to be more profitable and higher yielding, as discussed in some previous presentations.

Once we have knowledge of what can be done with a species, we must also be aware that this resource can be depleted through inappropriate exploitation.

He gives the example of "zoos criaderos," conscientious breeding centers for animals suitable for human consumption. This way, communities in the Ecuadorian Amazon would have a way to preserve their customs and traditions without ceasing to consume animals, as they have done for thousands of years.

When the Spanish conquistadors arrived in what is now known as Ecuador, the early accounts described a product as unpleasant, pasty, and tasteless. They were referring to Quinoa. Peru knew how to value it, utilizing one of the quintessential Andean foods and turning it into a product found worldwide and highly esteemed. They diversified it with thousands of applications; nowadays, even astronauts consume quinoa in space due to its easy transportability and the nutrients it provides.

With support from institutions and investment in food product research centers, countless things can be achieved.

A product can be revalued, discovering and providing it with various and ample uses that adapt to different markets. It can be positioned in the international market, generating an economy around it.

Today, he tells us, we can talk about a green economy. An economy that aligns with sustainability and respects the environment. When the green economy, sustainable economy, and orange economy (creative and artistic) come together, marvelous things can be achieved.

It is important to consider producing and consuming foods that are enduring over time. This is where sustainable economy comes into play: exploiting resources consciously and utilizing biodiversity as a resource to attract and draw the attention of people from outside. But we must bear in mind that biodiversity can be depleted if we do not use it intelligently.

THEMATIC BLOCK 4

STEPS TO UNDERTAKE IN THE GASTRONOMY INDUSTRY IN ECUADOR

EXPERIENCES AND GASTRONOMIC PROJECTS IN ECUADOR



Quique Sempere (Ecuadorian)

He studied at the Universidad Tecnológica Equinoccial, UTE, and in Spain, specifically in the Basque Country, at Karlos Arguiñano's cooking school. He started his career in hotels: Hilton Colón, Sheraton, and Swissotel. He worked in Spain at Karlos Arguiñano's hotel and at the Arzak restaurant. He served as Executive Chef at the Royal Palm hotel in the Galapagos Islands and cooked for several world celebrities. He was the Executive Chef at Patria, a high-end Ecuadorian cuisine restaurant, and for the past five years, he has been working on the RUNA project, a creative native cuisine, conducting research on Ecuadorian culture, cuisine, and ingredients. He is the owner of Pacha restaurant - Tapas with Identity.

To conclude the second day of presentations and conclude the first edition of the "Cocina tu Futuro" Forum: Gastronomic Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Quique shared that food is the business of his establishment. Together with his team, he aims to make gastronomy a complete experience, and that is what sets his restaurant, Pacha, apart from the rest.

They strive to utilize resources that evoke memories of childhood or remind people of a summer at the beach. The unique aspect of their food is the story behind each dish. Sempere primarily employs local recipes and products. He combines ancestral techniques with modern ones and "deconstructs" dishes to allow customers to "let their imagination soar."

The foundation of his cuisine, aside from the experience at his restaurant, is the direct connection with producers. It is easy for one of the options to transport you to the Ecuadorian Amazon, for example. Quique works directly with producers, giving value to many products that are usually overlooked or neglected by urban dwellers. This may be due to a lack of knowledge or simply because they do not appreciate them.

The way he creates his dishes is by traveling and constantly connecting with different communities throughout the country. This is where the "Runa" project (meaning "man" in Quechua) was born. Its goal is to provide tools to rural sector producers so they can produce with more knowledge and suitable technological means. It is a collaboration between his restaurant and producers from each locality.

Through his project, he wants to emphasize the biodiversity found in the country's four regions, showcasing their diversity in terms of products, recipes, and techniques. Many of these techniques are ancestral, originating from indigenous peoples who have gradually united and incorporated new techniques.

His strategy for sharing everything he has learned during his travels is to provide the complete experience in a restaurant located in the heart of Quito.

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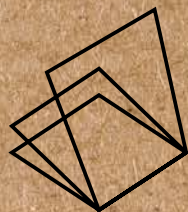
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