

INSTITUTO CULINARIO
DE CARACAS
CHEF CAMPUS
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LAGA
LA MARIANO MORENO
LA CASSEROLE
DU CHEF
HOTEL ESCUELA
DE LOS ANDES
VENEZOLANOS
CEGA
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ROOTED
WISDOM

AREPAS FOR THE FUTURE
WITH THE FLAVOR OF HOME

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CHUCHO ROJAS
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AREPAS FOR THE FUTURE

ROOTED WISDOM WITH THE FLAVOR OF HOME

By
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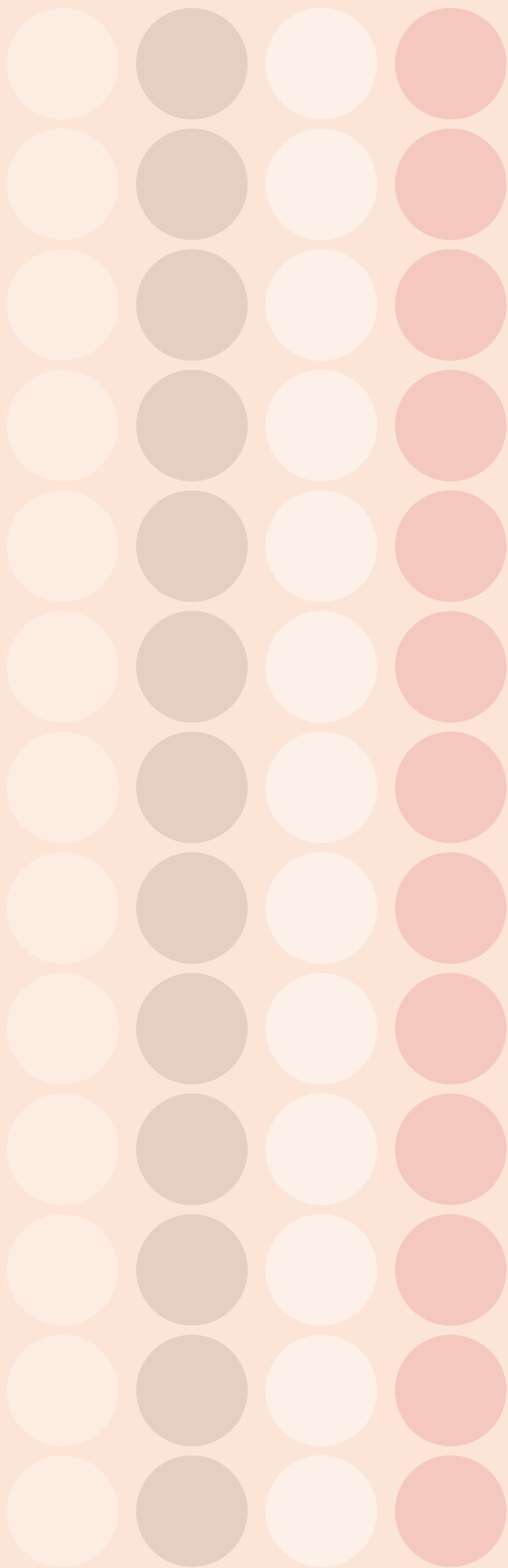
English proofreading:
Guadalupe Rodríguez Montilla

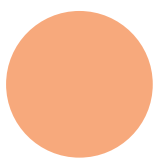
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ISBN: 979-8-9915211-3-0

**Arepas for the Future:
Rooted Wisdom with the Flavor of Home**

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Preface

Ivanova Decán Gambús

I BELIEVE HUMAN BEINGS ARE, FUNDAMENTALLY, MEMORY AND LANGUAGE.
IF WE DID NOT HAVE A MEMORY, WE WOULD NOT KNOW WHO WE ARE...
WE MUST HAVE NOT ONLY AN INDIVIDUAL MEMORY, BUT A COLLECTIVE ONE AS WELL.

EMILIO LLEDÓ

In the last years, Ximena Montilla Arreaza has been profiling an editorial and collective project structured on the idea of the arepa as a cultural system. *Juega con Soy la Arepa* (2021) inspired by the children's book *Arepa* (2020), *Arepas for Peace* (2022) and *An Arepa around the World* (2023), were the first three titles published under the umbrella of the project *History of the Arepa*, which received the 2023 Armando Scannone Award granted by the Venezuelan Gastronomy Academy. In each one of these books, particularly the last two, our corn bread is the starting point to propose plural and multidisciplinary views on the arepa as an expression of Venezuelanness and the ideal vehicle to promote the dialogue and cultural exchange outside our borders.

In this opportunity, and keeping the arepa as the central axis, Montilla focuses on the ways adopted by teaching and learning cooking in our country and the importance of identifying, developing and consolidating the culinary corpus that identifies us culturally. In short, it is about highlighting the role of knowledge and education which, paraphrasing Lledó, should be drafted as language and performed as dialogue.

An arepa for the future: knowledge with a taste of deep-rooted traditions focuses on Venezuela, the initiatives, processes, programs, and people that have exalted the importance of knowing to understand, and the need to cultivate knowledge as a tool to understand and interpret the multiple realities that contrive around the ways we eat. A total of twenty professionals from different areas in over twelve coking schools were invited to participate in this book, which compiles accounts, histories, proposals, experiences and reflections, that open paths and add contributions to the undelayable task of relating what we are on the dish.

It is worth remembering that – although it seems unconceivable today – barely a few decades ago, more than one person wondered if there existed a Venezuelan cooking... A lot has happened since then; however, in order to keep moving forward and assume the future as we should, it is essential to cultivate and develop our individual and collective memory. Food is the language that over and over remits to many realities. If we do not know it, nor preserve it, nor record it, the language to express it will not appear and it will be forgotten; thus, making it impossible for such food to become part of our intangible cultural heritage.

The roots linked to food – particularly the arepa, the presentation and enjoyment of which equally entails modes and memories – are usually born in the home kitchen. The role of women as guardians of the culinary tradition go beyond the edges of the stove by performing, unintentionally, some sort of empirical teaching when they prepare the food to feed the family; thus, rising as models to be imitated or on the stars of memories kept in the gustative memory of childhood. In *Roots with a taste of home*, the title of the first chapter, there are shared accounts that take us by the path of emotions; those ones that we Venezuelans feel when we are surrounded by the aromas coming from a freshly made arepa before it accepts the fillings chose for it. From that starting point, Montilla and her editorial team, with the compiled texts, knead a multiflavored and diverse story.

From the pages of the second chapter, we discover valuable and practically unknown contents on the field of national gastronomic research. The presentation of study about public policies regarding food shows how the network of popular dining halls was set in motion (and also school ones) by the State towards the end of the first half of the XX century; and the study includes – as appendixes – what we would call today “better practices” in the handling of food and kitchen hygiene, among other topics. The reading of this text allows us to set criteria on the first governmental policies aimed at improving the quality of the diet in the country, taking into account the nutritional aspects and the known possibilities of the Venezuelan pantry.

Particularly reveling are chapters three and four that refer to us the history of the public entities dedicated to culinary teaching in the country: the first recipe book of creole cooking printed in Venezuela, the first institutions devoted to teaching cooking and the contributions of the Industrial Technical School, particularly

those from Luis Caballero Mejias which go beyond the precooked corn flour. The commented catalog of a dozen teaching institutes that have been working between 1988 and 2024, offers a panorama of the practices in formation and development of our cooks in these educational centers where vocations are channeled and the expectations for the growth of specialized professionals are strengthened in order to satisfy the demands of the gastronomic sector and hotel services.

It is impossible not to mention, in the same context of learning dynamics, that both the Venezuelan kitchen and the pantry are now claiming its inclusion in the pensum of study of most of such educational institutions. Some have done so from the very beginning, and other are in the process of doing so; however, it is necessary to insist on the fundamental importance of these academic subjects as a pending and unavoidable task.

The encounters with contemporaneity, the impact of social networks in communication and diffusion of gastronomic contents, and the advantages of incorporating applied neuroscience to gastronomy as a study subject, are added to the new ways of understanding the perception of the food fact. Our food, particularly the arepa, is revealed bearing identity symbols and meanings, singular and collective, that connect us with the value and knowledge of corn, the icon of our original pantry which, in its bareness holds infinite and unknown possibilities, even when creole corns have been the backbone of food on these American lands since ancient times. We could affirm that science, technology, and cultural identity together with gastronomy form are a thread that guide us in the texts put together in chapters five and six.

A beautiful chapter dedicated to teachers and muses has the double function of paying homage and telling the story of the affective and professional connections between such teachers and their muses. It is very moving the shades that mold these relationships among people that have played a defining role in the history of Venezuelan gastronomy, that which sooner than later will become written word.

It is unthinkable to edit a book on the History of the Arepa project without including a recipe book. This time, twelve students, from the cooking schools located in different regions of the county, share their proposals around the arepa for the future. Their recipes are added to the ones that five professional chefs offer to their teachers and muses.

A book can also be an object of art that allows other looks and other enjoyments. The graphic work used to illustrate *An arepa for the future*: knowledge with a taste of deep-rooted traditions uses typography as an aesthetic element, creating a sort of visual game with letters and words that reveal a sensibility under which lies the artistic will. I end these lines with this reflection that entails a request to honor and delve into the experience of reading these pages.

Caracas, September 2024.



Ivanova Decán Gambús

 @ivanovadecan

With a degree in Arts from Universidad Central de Venezuela, she has an extensive professional career in the field of cultural management. Among the institutions she has managed, there are the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Francisco Narváez, Espacios Culturales de la CANTV and the Museo de Arte Moderno Jesús Soto. Cultural manager, university teacher, lecturer, communicator, consultant in art and gastronomy projects, she has published several works on gastronomic culture. Co-director and co-author of *Nuestra Cocina a la manera de Caracas*. Tribute to Armando Scannone's red book (Balsam/Alto, 2013) and co-author of

Italia en Venezuela: Inmigración y Gastronomía (Fundavag, 2017). Currently, she is a member of the Superior Council of the Museum of Contemporary Art Francisco Narváez. Since 2010 she is an incorporated member of the Venezuelan Gastronomy Academy, institution she currently presides.



ARRAIGO WITH A TASTE OF HOME

AND THE AREPA ALL INFLATED,
ROUND AND PROUD, WHEN
IT COMES OUT OF **THE BUDARE**

A
WELL-
DONE DOUGH
THAT DOES NOT
CRACK, DOES NOT
LOSE ITS SHAPE,
AND DOES
NOT OFFER
RESISTANCE
WHEN SHAPING
IT AS THE
MOON

AND THE AREPA ALL INFLATED,
ROUND AND PROUD, WHEN IT
COMES OUT OF THE BUDARE

We knead to remember, to share, and to not forget

Ximena Montilla Arreaza

My hands knead as others did thousands of years ago. They move with dexterity as if, their whole life, they would have molded those round suns that reach the basket as dawn approaches.

It all begins with water and the grains of salt, that white gold that, in other times, was a king's treasure and that now dissolves in the water, along with hundreds of stories I ignore, just like snow that does not settle. My eyes watch attentively, just like the first time I saw snow on Bolivar's Peak, with that hidden expectation of seeing how, little by little, that white mantle becomes more defined. I enjoy the swaying of my hands, the lack of hurry, their happy rhythm, and the easiness with which the desired dough promptly appears.

I remember my grandmother's voice and my hands stop at once: "Now, let it rest, don't move it." As I wash my hands, I do numbers in my head. She passed 22 years ago, but her hands have never stopped kneading with me, I am sure that this feeling of belonging I get when kneading is related to what other women felt in the past. It is as if the present, the past, and even the future were interwoven. I return to kneading, with the energy of Mamá Gos, of grandma Rita, nonna, and great-grandmother Elías, my mom, my aunts, Gorda Ligia, Negra Luisa, Doña Simona...we all knead together this morning's meal.

My children, in turns, steal bits of the dough. Yes, it is allowed to have a tiny piece of this deliciousness raw. It is a sign that it is well made. An exchange of mischievous glances and a stern call for attention sounds in my ears: "Stop stealing the dough, damn it!". Today, it is not me the mischievous one savoring that salty little piece of dough that melts in the mouth stirring up the appetite.

Finding a paper bag, those used for bread, was not easy. In here, there are no bakeries like the ones in my hometown; so, I enjoy the tearing of the bag while I am being taken back again to San Rafael house in Colinas de Bello Monte, my childhood home. Then, I spread corn oil on my *budare* and verify how well this piece of paper does its work: it leaves no traces, it is just the black and shiny *budare* smoking and thus signaling that I must continue with my labor.

I do not know how I learned to give the ball of dough that spinning-top-like shape; but I do remember watching the hands of la Negra Luisa molding the arepas at home; her perfectly round arepas. Her brown, terse, bright skin contrasted with those clear, pink, skilled palms that rotated that magnificent spinning top.

Now, they are the hands of my Andean grandmother the ones that flatten the spinning top and form small, thin *arepitas*. Hers were not perfectly round but were equally beautiful. My aunt Cissi teaches me that I must wet my hands to achieve that perfect sphere. Mother takes a spatula and flattens it with a sharp hit, “That is dancing the arepa – she tells me lovingly. – that will make them inflate”, and they must immediately go into the oven.

I repeat and enjoy the process with each arepa that my hands caress. As my dear friend Chucho says, those caresses are destined to each one of the diners that will have the honor to taste our precious ancestral bread.

My hands move fast and light. I do not use spatulas to turn over my arepas, nor to get them out of the oven, my youngest son looks at me with amazement and asks how I do not scald my hands. I answer that that is the work of the arepas and that, one day, he will be able to perform such magic for his beloved ones.

I tap on my arepas and San Juan drums sound back...

The smell of the arepas wakes me up, and once again I am back to my childhood, to the heat of that house with a large kitchen, where I am uncovering pans to discover the fired black beans, the *perico* or the delicious *mojito andino* that will dress my plate.

I choose a beautiful tablecloth to set the table as I learned at home with my paternal grandmother, each piece of cutlery set in its place, the napkin perfectly folded, plate and glass in its place, each tray well presented, the

flowers cannot be left out. *Papelón* with lemon or freshly made juice, freshly brewed coffee, and butter or cream. One ritual ends, and another begins. I tell my family that breakfast is ready. And I get ready to receive and share this offer to the gods – toasted and crispy – that patiently awaits in its basket, wrapped in a tiny cozy, one of those in a cross shape, that came from Caracas when I first moved, and then traveled through Hamburg, Barcelona, Aranjuez and Madrid, and which now covers our Venezuelan arepas in Atlanta.

We knead to remember, to share and to not forget, to give life to the suns and moons that will see us pass by the table. We knead to taste stories and harbor that feeling of home that crunches, warms, nourishes and feeds the soul.



Ximena Montilla Arreaza



@ximenamontillaarreaza

Is CEO of editorial Arraigo Group and Arraigo Foundation, and Director of Arepa History project. This Venezuelan Educational Psychologist and Neurogastronomist is the autor of over 4 books around the arepa. She has been a presenter at TEDx talks, the International Gastronomy Symposium and the Congreso de Mujeres Líderes Latinoamericanas en Harvard (Harvard Congress of Latin American Leading Women), and she is part of the WEF (Women Economic Forum). She has won 7 Gourmand Awards, 5 ILBA awards (International Latino books Awards), 1 Mom's Choice

Award (gold category), and Armando Scannone Award granted by the Venezuelan Academy of Gastronomy. Her work, as she says it herself, is to take our arepa, filled with Venezuelan talent, around the world.



The Kneading of Arepa Dough

Chef María Antonieta Pérez Mendoza

Writing about this topic gave me a never-before-experienced writer's block. Kneading is as natural to me as breathing; however, I could not find one single word to start describing it. It is not easy, even if it seems otherwise.

Kneading is as personal as tastes. Speaking with professor and chef, Norita Muñoz, principal of Adelis Sisirucá Gastronomy School in Barquisimeto, Lara state – and who also won a Tenedor de Oro Mention from the Gastronomy National Academy of Venezuela – we reflected on the topic regarding how every person begins to make their arepa dough, something I had not given too much importance or thought.

Starting by “What is your preference: water first or corn flour first?” And yes, even though the result is the same, each person kneads it better – smooth and without lumps – using one way over the other because their system works. There is a third group who adds the flour to the water and leave it there, not touching it, for ten minutes. They assure that when kneading the dough, it comes out perfect.

I am of the first system: flour first, water second. One time, a scientist explained it to me in a way that was both cold and funny at the same time: the dough, in the beginning, is a “solution”: “solute” (flour and salt) and “solvent” (water). He says that to get the desired concentration and volume, that is to say, a plastic, shapeable, soft, and smooth dough, the solvent (water) is added to the solute (flour and salt).

Kneading is working the ingredients with your hands to create another element; it is to transform via the movement, tact and pressure from the hands, the flour and water in a dough.

In the case of peeled corn (corn boiled in water with ashes and lime to peel it well and then grind it), or crushed corn (peeled and ground by crushing it in a *pilón*), the dough becomes plastic and shapeable; ten minutes in which we add water little by little with one hand while feeling the changes in the dough until no more liquid is needed and all that is left is to work on it.

In the case of pre-cooked corn flour, I sure do begin to “beat” with my fingers. There are some who “use a *fuete*¹” in this first part of the process to prevent the formation of lumps. Many, barely mix everything together and pay no attention to kneading well. That is why when they make a arepa, it cracks, and it turns out ugly; besides, such arepas do not inflate while cooking. With the kneading, we help to hydrate and properly mix the flour with the water to get a dough that reminds us of soft modeling clay.

I feel how everything changes the dough as I work on it, I like to close my eyes, it allows me to understand it better. Those are ten minutes in which the touch becomes the bridge between my hands and the final result: a dough so well made that it does not crack, does not deform, and does not resist when we give the arepa its moon shape, which inflates, all chubby, when coming out of the *budare*.

I do not look for shortcuts. The arepa deserves its time which, honestly, is not that much either, isn't it?



Chef María Antonieta Pérez Mendoza

   @mariantocook

Professional cook, born and bred in Caracas. Her first cooking course was at the age of ten. She graduated from the CEGA (Caracas Gastronomy Studies Center) Class IV and where she was under the direction and guidance of Professor José Rafael Lover, chefs Victor Moreno and Miguel Alfonso, and Mrs. Alicia Allas. She was taught Venezuelan Cooking at CEGA. For the last 23 years, she has been living in Tuscany, Italy, and has continued learning about our cooking and Tuscan cooking, always applying French and Italian cooking techniques, cooking for private diners, and teaching how to cook on social networks, always showing her passion, knowledge and total respect for the ingredients she uses.

¹ Usar el fuete: A traditional mixing technique to make arepas. It uses a whisker to mix the corn flour. This technique allows for the dough to be smooth and with no lumps, thus producing arepas that are softer and more uniform.

Grandmothers: Gastronomy Guardians

Ocarina Castillo D'Imperio

...IF THE SOUL IS SOME SORT OF STOMACH,
¿WHAT IS THE SPIRITUAL COMMUNION
BUT THE ACT OF EATING ALL TOGETHER?

THOMAS CARLYLE

I

In anthropological literature, it is stated that “culture begins when raw food is cooked¹”. Hence that women, unlike everything we held as true until this day, in addition to raising children and collect fruits and vegetables, have had an important main role in the history of those ancient times which, as of the last research, has currently been revised and re-dimensioned.

Nowadays it is not possible to exclude women from small game hunting, nor her performance in the building of stone tools aimed at cutting, peeling y shredding the possible food products, nor their knowledge in relation to the water edges, its sources, availability and use in the different villages; a necessary resource for the growth, reproduction and harvest of the plants along with the domestication of animals.

(...) if the men were the shamans and chiefs of clans, the women were the healers and the memory depositories. As such, through the story-songs sang as lullabies to their children when putting them to sleep, or to help them imitate the courage of the chiefs, la magic of the shamans, the wisdom of the mothers, remembering the healing power of water in which we are all born. They led the large peregrination towards the margins of the currents that were going to become, as of that moment, the main source of subsistence.²

Women learned to select, differentiate, and gather food, and transform it by the magical power of fire and cooking, to surround themselves with bowls, plates, jars, pots, *totumas*, budares... To feed and gather the family, to give them warmth and shelter. To listen, to keep quiet, to enunciate.

1 Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *Historia de la comida*, 2002, p.23

2 Roberta Goldman, *Locas por la cocina*, 1997, p.39

Also, in our original cultures, myths tell about the role of the woman linked to fire and agriculture, as can be appreciated in Ye'kuana mythology, which tells about the birth of the rivers Orinoco, Padamo, Cunucunuma, the mountains, and the origin of foodstuff:

Water sought its paths on the Earth. Then, new roads were born, the rivers (...) They called them New Water; running like snakes over all the Earth.

The soil turned soft, to be planted. Now, women are picking up stakes, saplings, buds, seeds. In the rain, they harvested, they planted (...) Happy, the people were happy, all together in the conuco (plot of land dedicated to the cultivation of corn and cassava). The cassava grew fast; it was ready immediately. Now, men rested. So was told to them by Semenía. – Now women worked, and we still do so. We do not forget the signal: today's men knock down the conuco as, in the beginning, they knocked down Marahuaca. Women plant, harvest, prepare (...). That is fine – said Semenía. Then she said: "Let's dance, let's sing, eat, drink, remember.". It was the first Food Party.³

II

...IN THE MEANTIME, THEY WAITED IN THE KITCHEN,
THE PLACE WHERE WONDERS HAPPENED.

ELENA GARRO

Hesiod, in his poem 'Theogony', said that in Greek mythology there were nine muses daughters on Memory (Mnemosyne), who came from the home of Greek gods in Mount Olympus and who spoke to human ears, inspiring them in the several arts, history, geometry, dance, astronomy, and astrology. Later in time, in the XVIII century, Brillat-Savarin in 'Meditation XXX' declares Gastarea as the:

3 Marc De Civrieux, Watunna, 1992, pp188-189

(...) tenth muse, who presides over the pleasures of taste. It could aspire to the Empire of the Universe, since the Universe is nothing without life, and everything that lives, receives nourishment.⁴

The tenth muse is paid tribute every day of the year, because her benefits are daily and several times along the day.

She presides the tables, where ambrosia and drinks are served, among diners whose "...conversation, relaxed and substantial, is about the wonders of creation and the power of arts, they eat slowly and taste with energy; the movement of their jaws is soft and delicate. It could be said that eat bite has its unique accent and, if by any chance they lick their lips, the creator of the delicacies eaten achieves immortal glory."⁵

The truth in the story of civilizations is that the kitchen is the place for women to cook and eat, to transmit the homely flavors and experience the skills and dexterity around the enjoyment of taste, a space in which sacred food is worshipped, to the exceptionally festive and to those which serve as material in rituals, initiations, and magic. It is the center to experience the knowledge of vegetable and animal species provided by the environment, to identify their goodness and risks, as well as flavorings and seasonings: leaves, mushrooms, barks, flowers, seeds, which were classified, dried, and preserved to properly accompany the ingredients.

A permanent space for trial and error in the discovery of restorative food, comforting food, food the heal the sick, the old and the children, food for pregnant women and birthing mothers, as well as aromatic and medicinal herbs. It is the place to marry cultures, where the heat of aromas, flavors, and contrasts, Indian hands, black or creole ones depending on their origin, and more recently, from very different historical-geographical origins, that kneaded the diversity of tastes and preferences, obtaining multiflavored innovations and repetitions. The kitchen as a social area, inside or outside the house, on ground floor or on a vertical structure, traditional or hypermodern, is a place of work in which, to the warmth of the flames or electrical burners, conversations and conspiracies are cooked, where dreams and projects are

4 Brillat Savarin, *Physiology of Taste*, 1966, p.167

5 Ibid.,, p. 169

imagined. It is where memory and homeland feelings are made. As Laura Esquivel says:

I spent the first years of my life by the fire in my mother's and grandmother's kitchen, watching how these wise women, when entering the holy place of the kitchen became priestesses, great alchemists who played with water, air, fire, and earth, the four elements that make up the reason to be of the universe. The most amazing thing is that they did it in the most humble way, as if they were not doing anything, as if they were not transforming the world through the purifying power of fire, as if they did not know that the food they prepared and we ate remained inside of our bodies for many hours, chemically altering our organism, nourishing our soul, our spirit, giving us an identity, a language, a homeland. It was there, in front of the fire, where I received from my mother the first lessons of what life was (...) It was there, in the most common place to receive visitors, where I learned of what was happening in the world. It was there where my mother had long conversations with my grandmother, with my aunts and, from time to time, with some relative already dead. It was there, then, where trapped by the hypnotic power of the flames, that I heard all kind of stories, especially stories about women.⁶

However, being this such a especial place in which, historically, women have locked their lives away tied to a place of work, a stove, pots and pans, and an endless day, for the official story they have been anonymous figures, made invisible for what was considered "their natural place". These women's maternal "giving and generous" condition that we know today, transcended through the greasy and wrinkled manuscripts that some of them left to their daughters and granddaughters as a testimony of their skills and preparations.

But, at some point, behind the professional and high-profile chefs, researchers, those awarded with several stars, and gastronomy writers, the memories of their childhood arise, bringing back the drinks and food, the soups and broths of family gatherings with a table full of smiling faces seduced by the symphony of colors and textures served on the finest China

6 Laura Esquivel, *Intimas succulencias*, 2012, p.17

of the house. These memories take us on an unforgettable tour of life. It is then when it is magnified the grateful and nostalgic acknowledgement to grandmothers, mothers, aunts, nanas, that fed our happiness and gustatory memory. People that for tens of generations educated our palate, calmed our sorrows and ailments, stimulated our whims, refined our senses, and taught us to respect recipes, habits, table manners, and traditions. So, lately, with its complexities and contradictions in the practice of diversity, citizenship, and gender, we have learned to acknowledge the kitchen as a “commonly feminine space”, to speak *in and from the kitchen*, making of it a place of enunciation, strategy of legitimation, and the practice of the power of what is feminine.

III

I was born and raised in a family of powerful women: women of fortitude, generous, passionate for the word and given to affection. Aracelis, Lulu and Elvira were also hearty eaters and good cooks. From their hands – grandmother, mother, and nana – we received our first food, the dishes inherited from the old family traditions. We tasted the innovations brought by the 50s – 60s and we learned some basic knowledge to “defend” ourselves in the kitchen when we decided to become independent in adulthood.

The tables in my childhood and youth were a party of flavors, colors, ingredients, contrasts, combinations..., dishes that today are my gustatory memory, that I constantly treasure, feed, evoke, and miss. Unlike Mafalda, I have a predilection for soups, which coming from those loving hands, were an extension of their ever-incomparable hug. I also thank them for the complicity of the kitchen, the liking of popular markets, the fascination for traditional dishes, and the passion for the study of these language as intimate as universal, so much a part of the senses as of the soul.

It is time to celebrate the “guardians of gastronomy”, all those women from different social, regional or experiential condition who, in an endless intergenerational movement, have protected ingredients and preparations, practices and rituals, senses and meanings. To those who have left us cooking notes, notebooks with recipes, stories, but, above all, memories. To those who have filled our gustatory memory so that each family, town or place, has

its own flavors and is able to communicate and share them. To those women who have inspired our best chefs and those of us who devote ourselves to understand the foodstuff of our history.

Caracas, July 2024



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**FLAVORS OF
A COUNTRY
STORIES OF FOOD
EDUCATION POLICIES**



Interior of the Kitchen of the Municipal Dinning Hall in Barquisimeto. (After 1944).

The Founding Deed of Venezuelan School Canteens: A Comprehensive Look from the Gastronomic Point of View

Juan Alonso Molina

Introduction

There was a time when Venezuela had a consistent State policy to improve the nutrition of its citizens, particularly its poorest sectors. Tracing its origin, identifying the fundamental milestones, verifying the extent of its scope and prolongation over time, as well as assessing the effectiveness in achieving its objectives, is a relevant task in the context of the complex humanitarian emergency with its dramatic consequences in the deterioration of the food regime of large sectors of the population and in the impoverishment of its gastronomy. A situation the country has been experiencing since the end of the second decade of the XXI century.

It was at the end of the 19th century when the first studies on the quality of the Venezuelan people's diet - and its relationship with the health of its inhabitants - were carried out. In fact, it was only by the middle of that same century that a Creole diet had been consolidated and was relatively common to the whole of the national territory¹, except in the most isolated areas with an almost exclusively indigenous population.

The first Venezuelan recipe books² are also of nineteenth-century origin and, on the other hand, the development of the written press during that

1 José Rafael Lovera. *Historia de la Alimentación en Venezuela*. Caracas, Monte Ávila Publ., 1988, Caps. II y III.

2 The first Venezuelan recipe book is by José Antonio Díaz, which appears under the name "Cocina campestre" (Country Cooking) as part of his work *El agricultor venezolano* (The Venezuelan Farmer), printed in Caracas in 1861. Later, at the end of the 19th century, Tulio Febres Cordero published in Mérida *Cocina criolla o guía del ama de casa para disponer la comida diaria con prontitud y acierto*.

period made possible a greater circulation of ideas and knowledge about local food customs³. In addition, the advances in European medicine and the training of some Venezuelan doctors in prestigious universities of the Old World produced, upon their return to the country, a more professional attention to the problems of public health at a time when the influence of positivism⁴ permeated the universities of the country, particularly the Universidad Central de Venezuela, in Caracas⁵.

Hence, in a country still predominantly rural and not yet recovered from the stormy cycle of civil wars, lack of governance and corruption that had marked most of its young republican history⁶, there were established in the

- 3 In 1884, for example, in the Caracas newspaper La Nación, the young Luis Razetti, while finishing his medical studies at the Universidad Central de Venezuela, published in three installments a work called “«La cocina doméstica en Venezuela», in which he made a critical examination of the general conditions in which cooking was practiced in urban homes of what today we would call the middle class, paying special attention to hygiene, household economy, disinterest in cooking that led to a poor and monotonous diet, and the consequent need for housewives and mothers to learn to cook and become aware of the importance of good nutrition for the health of their families. Luis Razetti, «La cocina doméstica en Venezuela». In: La Nación Newspaper, Caracas, 12-07, 31-07 and 18-10-1884. Cited
- 4 The influence of positivist thought in Venezuela is clearly associated with the work of the naturalist and pedagogue Adolph Ernst (Primkenau, Prussia, 1832 - Caracas, 1899), since his arrival in the country in 1861, and, in particular, since his early connection, in 1863, to the Universidad Central de Venezuela, first as an *ad-honorem* professor of the German language, and, from 1874 until shortly before his death, as a founder-holder of the Chair of Natural History, in which he introduced the evolutionist precepts and where he had such outstanding disciples as Rafael Villavicencio, Luis Razetti, José Gil Fortoul and Lisandro Alvarado. The new positivist paradigm also implied a growing need to introduce methods, criteria of analysis and scientific verifications in various areas of human endeavor, among which medicine and health did not escape. See: VV. AA. Diccionario de Historia de Venezuela, Caracas, Polar, 2010, Volume II, pp. 230-231 (Adolfo Ernst); and Volume III pp. 722-725 (Positivism). Also: Alfredo Jahn, Homage to Ernst. Speech read by Dr. Alfredo Jahn [...]. Caracas, Lit. y Tip. Del Comercio, 1932, pp. 6-16.
- 5 Until 1891 there were only two public universities in Venezuela, the Universidad Central de Venezuela in Caracas and the Universidad de Los Andes in Mérida. In that year the Universidad del Zulia was created in Maracaibo. However, they coexisted with the so-called 1st Category Federal Colleges, established in some state capitals, empowered to confer university degrees in some disciplines such as Medical Sciences, Political Sciences, Philosophical Sciences, Ecclesiastical Sciences and Civil Engineering. See: Reinaldo Rojas, “Historia de la Universidad en Venezuela”. At: Revista Historia de la Educación Latinoamericana (Rhela), Tunja, Colombia, Vol. 7, year 2005, pp. 73-98.
- 6 Of the 2,323,527 inhabitants registered by the 1891 National Census, it is estimated that less than 10% lived in urban areas (in population centers with more than 10,000 inhabitants), so that almost 90% were peasants. See: Rafael Cartay, “La ocupación del territorio venezolano entre 1787 y 1936”. Boletín de la Academia Nacional de la Historia, Caracas, Volume LXXIV, April-June 1991, No. 294, pp. 141-154.

capital, before the end of that century, the first public agencies dedicated to determine - with the help of science - the quality of food sold to the public⁷, very often subject to numerous adulterations and frauds, some dangerous to health, as was widely recorded by the press of the time. This was the beginning in Venezuela of the then incipient discipline of Bromatology⁸, as a branch of the medical sciences, laying the foundations for understanding the relationship between food, nutrition, health and sanitation.

However, beyond the provision of some laboratories, the creation of the National Health Office⁹, the development of certain academic initiatives and the institutionalization of very specific programs to improve the quality of products such as bread, pasta or fresh cow's milk -the main vector

- 7 On December 10, 1890, the Governor of the Federal District, General Neptalí Urdaneta, decreed the creation of the Municipal Laboratory of Caracas, assigning for it the Agricultural Chemistry Laboratory of the Central University, with the purpose of rendering "(...) notable services to the public health of the District, preventing it against the repeated and criminal abuses caused by the adulteration of drinks and food offered for consumption by a great number of industrialists". It began to operate on 01-01-1891 under the direction of the chemist Vicente Marcano, and on 07-14-1893 it had passed to the charge of the National Executive, being renamed National Laboratory, at the service of the Ministries of Finance and Development, as well as of the Municipality of the Federal District. In the latter year, official publications also mentioned the existence of a "Sanitary Police" dedicated to examining "(...) foodstuffs, beverages and medicines offered for consumption (...) preventing the sale of those that were harmful (...)". As of 12-18-1900, the National Laboratory began to accept requests for analysis of its products from companies and individuals, with the previous authorization of the Ministry of Development. See: Edgar Abreu Olivo, *Pioneros del primer siglo 1864-1929. La industria de alimentos en Venezuela*, Caracas, Polar Foundation, 2005, pp. 30-31, 41, 50 and 54.
- 8 The first book dedicated to this discipline in the country was the *Tratado de la alimentación*, by Dr. Manuel Antonio Díez, published by Tipografía El Cojo, in Caracas, in 1895. Currently, Bromatology is understood as an applied and interdisciplinary science that responds to a coherent body of systematized knowledge about the nature of food, its chemical composition and its behavior under various conditions, focusing on its study from all possible points of view, taking into account all the factors involved, both in the production of raw materials and in their handling, processing, preservation, distribution and consumption; therefore closely related to the food industry and food legislation. See: José Bello Gutiérrez, *Bromatological Science. Principios generales de los alimentos*, Madrid, Publishers Diaz de Santos, 2000, p. 4.
- 9 This organism, that counts with an Institute of Hygiene and Chemistry, Bacteriology and Parasitology Laboratories, was created on November 13, 1911, having Dr. Samuel Darío Maldonado as its first director. It succeeded the Public Hygiene Commission, established on 03-17-1909, considered as the beginning of the sanitary organization in Venezuela. See: L. G. Chacín Itriago, "Organización de la Higiene Pública en Venezuela". *Bulletin of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau (OSP)*. Year 6, N° 1, January 1927, pp. 29-48. Also: M. Lares Gabaldón. "Trayectoria de la Sanidad en Venezuela". See: *Boletín de la Oficina Sanitaria Panamericana (OSP)*. Year 20, No. 12, December 1941, pp. 1260-1263.

transmitting bovine tuberculosis to humans¹⁰, it was not until the death of the dictator Juan Vicente Gómez that a broader and more comprehensive policy was developed, including quality food services at subsidized prices for the popular strata - special attention to people with deficiency diseases, and training and applied research in the field of nutrition.

10 «In the first decades of the twentieth century, as the sanitary organization was just in its infancy and there was practically no control over cattle and their production, most of the milk consumed came from tubercular and mastitic cows; hence the wide spread of 'phthisis', a disease that, along with malaria and venereal diseases, was one of the scourges that sowed death in Venezuela at that time». Edgar Abreu, *Entre campos y puertos. Un siglo de transformación agroalimentaria en Venezuela*, Caracas, Polar Foundation, 2001, p. 455. The following pages of this same publication detail the main milestones in the struggle to eradicate the consumption of poorly processed milk from animals without sanitary control.



Angela Rodriguez Cuello's ID Card as an employee of the Nacional Board of School Canteens.



Front cover of ID cards held by the employees of the National Board of School Canteens.

The National Board of School Canteens

In fact, it was under the government of his successor, General Eleazar López Contreras, starting in 1936, that food became one of the most important aspects of public health with the creation of the Ministry of Health and Social Assistance¹¹, the installation of the National Food Commission and the organization of the 1st Venezuelan Social Sanitary Crusade -responsible for the Popular Soup Services initiative, which later became the first soup kitchens¹².

In addition, while food chemistry studies and food surveys were being carried out in several regions of the country, in 1941, under the government of General Isaías Medina Angarita, the Nutrition Section was created, attached to the Directorate of Public Health, which at the same time deepened and broadened the studies on the country's food problems.

Thus, in 1946, after the so-called October Revolution¹³, which had overthrown President Medina the previous year, the Revolutionary Government Junta created the National Institute for Popular Food (INPAP)¹⁴, which, among other functions, assumed, as its main mission, the creation of a network of soup kitchens with those already existing in some parts of the country, thus proping to increase their reach to cover most of the national territory, under its coordination, administration and supervision. However, the institute also assumed very important responsibilities in food education, research and training in nutrition, as well as acting as liaison with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

11 In August 1930, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture and Breeding were created, but it was six years later when the public management dedicated to health became independent, establishing the Ministry of Health and Social Assistance in Official Gazette No. 9.947, dated February 25, 1936.

12 The first Popular Lunchroom was created in 1938, in Plaza España, in Caracas. Shortly after, one was added in La Guaira, and others in La Pastora, Palo Grande, Puente Sucre and Prado de María, in the capital, although the following year most of them were eliminated, with only those in Plaza España and La Guaira remaining. See: INPAP. "La alimentación y los programas de trabajo en el campo de la nutrición en Venezuela". Report prepared by the Instituto Nacional Pro-Alimentación Popular for the Pan American Sanitary Bureau. Boletín de la Oficina Sanitaria Panamericana, December 1949.

13 Thus known in Venezuelan history as the coup d'état carried out by a civic-military conspiracy of leaders of the Acción Democrática party and young officers of the Armed Forces against the government of President Gen. Isaías Medina Angarita, on 10-18-1945. See: Rafael Arráiz Lucca. El "trienio" adeco (1945-1948) y las conquistas de la ciudadanía, Caracas, Publisher Alfa, 2011.

14 Created by Decree No. 420 of the Revolutionary Government Junta, dated 10-24-1946.

In September 1949 there were already 23 soup kitchens in operation, which served 2 meals a day (lunch and dinner), at prices between Bs.1 and Bs.1.5 each, depending on the location, when similar lunches ranged between Bs.3 and Bs.6 in the cities where they were established. Such prices included a state subsidy of between 26 and 30% of their total value. The capacity per shift of each dining room was between 300 and 500 diners, serving between 300 and 1,200 meals per day.

For the canteens, the institute had designed 60 different menus consisting of: a bowl of soup; a portion of meat or fish; a portion of grains, rice or pasta; a portion of potatoes, plantains or legumes; a piece of fruit; bread and coffee. In addition, they dispensed milk in $\frac{1}{2}$ liter rations. Each menu was designed to provide approximately 1,400 calories at each meal, i.e. 2,800 calories, which added to the homemade breakfast for each person attending the dining room, could easily allow them to consume at least 3,200 calories a day, sufficient for an adequate energy intake.

On the other hand, the mineral salts and vitamins in each of the aforementioned menus were calculated to cover more than 50% of the daily requirements of the average Venezuelan, so that the consumption of the two meals offered in the soup kitchens fully satisfied the nutritional requirements of their beneficiaries. To weigh the magnitude of the undertaking, it is worth remembering that by the end of that same year, a total of 4 million meals were expected to be served in the network of soup kitchens¹⁵.

Naturally, such magnitude and challenges from the technical, scientific and administrative point of view, required the establishment of a Technical Section within the structure of INPAP, whose main functions were the «advice and control of the food served in the soup kitchens, developing appropriate menus according to the characteristics of the same» and the «conduct of nutritional studies and research in order to know the food problems affecting the Venezuelan population».

In addition, by that time, the INPAP had developed a Food Biochemistry Laboratory, another Food Preservation Laboratory with the capacity to produce products for its own soup kitchens and a training program abroad for some of its own technical personnel. It had also promoted the creation of a National Nutrition Commission or Council according to FAO guidelines, had

15 INPAP, ob. cit.

planned the training of public health system nurses in basic clinical nutrition and had created the first specialized public Nutrition and Dietetics services in the country.

But also, as if that were not enough, the INPAP had also created the Inter-American Council for Food Education (CIDEA) to develop educational and dissemination programs for the population in both urban and rural areas, among which was the creation of School Nutrition Clubs in some schools and high schools, as well as the production of a weekly radio program with “lectures and dramatizations on nutrition issues”, which at the time reached an audience of more than 51,000 listeners per program¹⁶.

The recipe book for school canteens

To give an idea of the type and variety of recipes used for the preparation of the menus for the school canteens, we can outline here those included in a publication of the patronage, corresponding to 1956¹⁷:

• *Soups*

Bean soup (with tomatoes, among other common ingredients); Juliana Soup (with macaroni, turnips, chickpeas and meat beef shank, among other common ingredients); Noodle soup (with meat); Peas soup (with tomatoes, among other common ingredients); Cornstarch soup (with milk, butter and white cheese); Lentil soup; Stewed beans; Mashed beans; Black beans (with tomatoes); Ocumo (Tania root) cream soup (with milk, butter and unspecified bone broth); Stew Creole (with brisket meat); ‘Topocho’ (plantain variety) soup (with bone broth); Celery cream soup (with milk, butter and unspecified bone broth); Legume soup (with fresh turnips and peas, among other more familiar vegetables, and unspecified bone broth); Green plantain soup (with unspecified bone broth); Onion cream soup (with milk, butter and unspecified bone broth); Pea Cream soup (with butter and unspecified bone broth); Chopped stewed (with tomatoes and brisket meat); Potato cream soup

16 Ibídem

17 PATRONATO NACIONAL DE COMEDORES ESCOLARES, Cuaderno de Recetas y Fórmulas Culinarias para Comedores Escolares. Caracas, Tipografía La Nación, 1956.

(with milk, butter and unspecified bone broth); Noodle soup (with tomatoes, butter, white cheese and meat); Soda cracker soup (with tomatoes, eggs, milk and unspecified bone broth); White beans soup; Corn little buns soup (with eggs, milk, white cheese and meat beef shank); Rice soup (with chickpeas and meat beef shank); Another rice soup (without chickpeas, but with potatoes, tomatoes and meat beef shank); Pigeon pea soup (with tomatoes); Bread soup (with eggs, milk and tomatoes); White beans minestrone (with tomatoes and meat beef shank); Stewed small white beans (with ripe plantains, tomatoes and chicharron); Stewed small white beans (with ripe plantains and tomatoes); Yam soup (with tomatoes and beef broth); Spinach cream soup (with milk, butter and unspecified bone broth); Tomato cream soup (with milk, butter and unspecified bone broth); Oatmeal Cream soup (with butter, white cheese and unspecified bone broth); Leek Cream soup (with milk, butter and unspecified bone broth); Green soup (with watercress, leek, lettuce, parsley, fresh peas and unspecified bone broth); Toasted cornmeal soup (with milk and bacon); Consommé (with parmesan cheese, tomatoes, meat beef shank); Stewed beans (with tomatoes, sugar and salt to taste and unspecified fish); Corn cream soup (with milk, butter and wheat flour); bean soup (with fine noodles, green peas and tomatoes); 'Chipichipi' mollusc broth (with tomatoes).

• ***Salads and vegetables***

Beet salad; Creole salad (with potatoes, onions, tomatoes, avocados, cabbage and eggs); Cabbage salad; Bean salad; Cabbage and onion salad (with sugar); Cucumber salad; Avocado salad with chayote (with onions); Tomato salad (with sugar); Green beans in sauce (with tomatoes and onions); Tomato and lettuce salad (with sugar and lemon, without salt); Mixed salad (with potatoes, onions, tomatoes, eggs, avocados and carrots); Another mixed salad (with beets, carrots and potatoes); Cabbage au gratin (with eggs, milk, butter, wheat flour and Parmesan cheese); Shredded carrots (with sugar and lemon, no salt); Spinach cake (with eggs, [wheat] flour and sugar); Semi-Russian salad (with potatoes, carrots, turnips and green beans); Sugared tomatoes (with lemon); Cucumber and tomato salad; Creamed spinach (with milk, butter and wheat flour); Avocado salad with potatoes (with on-

ions); Sugared beets (with lemon); Chayote salad with potatoes; Sweated eggplants (with garlic); Radish salad with lettuce (with sugar); Lettuce salad (with sugar and lemon); Sweated carrots (with butter and sugar); Baked beets (with butter, yellow cheese and sugar); Bean salad with onions (with sugar); Spinach pudding (with milk, eggs, white cheese, [wheat] flour and bread crumbs); Watercress salad (with sugar and lemon, without basic vinaigrette); another Salad of watercress (with sugar and basic vinaigrette, without lemon); Creole salad with mayonnaise [prepared on site] (with potatoes, onions, tomatoes, carrots, cabbage, pickled with mustard, eggs, lemon and sugar); Special salad (with potatoes, carrots, cabbage, apples, pineapple, pickled in mustard, lemon and sugar); Stuffed chayotes (with milk, butter, white cheese and yellow cheese); Eggplants with tomatoes (with oil and butter); Mashed potatoes (with milk and butter); Potatoes au gratin (with milk, butter, Parmesan cheese and wheat flour); Potatoes (with onions, tomatoes, white cheese, bread and butter); Baked potatoes (with butter and white cheese); Sweated potatoes (with onions, tomatoes and lard); Potato cake (with butter, white cheese, wheat flour and lard); Yucca in mojo (with green paprika, chard, parsley, garlic, spicy [undetermined] and sugar).

• **Pasta**

Spaghetti in milk (with butter and white cheese); Spaghetti in sauce (with tomatoes or Pampero® tomato puree, onions, Parmesan cheese and butter); Macaroni in sauce (with tomatoes, tomato puree, onions, Parmesan cheese and butter); Spaghetti cake (with milk, white cheese and eggs).

Rice

White rice (with onions and butter); Rice au gratin (with milk, butter, Parmesan cheese and wheat flour); Stewed rice (with onions, paprika, potatoes, carrots and butter).

MINISTERIO DE SANIDAD Y ASISTENCIA SOCIAL
PATRONATO NACIONAL DE COMEDORES ESCOLARES



Cuaderno de Recetas y Fórmulas Culinarias
para
Comedores Escolares

TIPOGRAFIA LA NACION - CARACAS - 1954

MINISTERIO DE SANIDAD Y ASISTENCIA SOCIAL
PATRONATO NACIONAL DE COMEDORES ESCOLARES



SESENTA MENUS
PARA
COMEDORES ESCOLARES

TIPOGRAFIA LA NACION - CARACAS - 1954

• **Animal protein**

● - *Fish*

Sardine meatballs (with toasted bread and eggs); Baked fish (with lemon and green paprika); Stewed dried fish (with tomatoes); Fried fish (with lemon and onions); Scrambled cod (with eggs and tomatoes); Snapper with pineapple (with butter and wheat flour); Roasted manta ray (with lemon); Fried 'coporo' (with lemon).

● - *Pork*

Stewed pork (with tomatoes or Pampero® mashed potatoes).

● - *Beef*

Beef with potatoes (with tomato puree); Beef in sauce (with tomatoes or tomato sauce, natural, of course); Beef stew (with beans and tomatoes or tomato puree); other Beef stew (with sweet potatoes, green plantains and tomatoes); other Beef stew (with tomatoes, vinegar and oregano); another Beef stew (with tomatoes and potatoes); beefsteak with onions (with vinegar); Baked wrapped beef (with wheat flour); Roast beef (only with garlic and salt); Shredded beef (with vinegar and bacon); Beef in vegetable sauce (with cabbage and lettuce, among other more common ingredients); Beef pudding (with eggs, milk, biscuit and capers); Beef roast (with tomato puree); Meatballs in vegetable sauce (with lettuce, eggs, milk, wheat flour and breadcrumbs); Beef fricassee (with cabbage and vinegar); another Beef fricassee (with chard and tomatoes); Beef stew (with tomatoes and breadcrumbs); Beefsteaks (with toasted breadcrumbs and vinegar); Ground beef (with tomatoes and onions); Meat salad (with carrots, beans and lettuce); Loin roast with coconut (with onions, tomatoes and vinegar); Meat pie with potatoes (with milk, butter, onions and tomatoes).

● *Guts or offals*

Tripe stew (with tomatoes, potatoes, capers, bread crumbs and Parmesan cheese); Tripe stew (with beef liver, heart, kidney, spleen

and lung, potatoes, ripe plantains, vinegar, grated paprika, malagueta and cloves); Tongue [stuffed] in sauce (with pork, tomatoes, capers, olives and nitro salt).

• **Other animal species**

Rabbit stewed with coconut (with tomatoes and vinegar); Turtle stewed (with tomatoes, capers and raisins).

●

● - *Eggs*

Ground beef with egg (with tomato puree and capers); Meat omelet; Scrambled eggs (with onions, tomatoes and chayotas); Fried eggs; Spinach with eggs (with Parmesan cheese, butter, milk and wheat flour); Egg omelet (with onions); Onion omelet [identical to above, probable transcription error]; Baked eggs (with milk, butter and wheat flour).

● - *Hallacas, buns and arepas*

Andean Hallacas (with beef, pork, bacon and bacon, tomatoes, chickpeas, sweet wine, vinegar and corn pilado); Hallacas 'Marabinas' [from Maracaibo] (with beef, pork, bacon and bacon, garlic, tomatoes, chickpeas, white wine, vinegar, fine oil [sic], sweet guava, cumin, pepper, cinnamon and husked corn); Hallacas Larenses [from Lara] (with beef, pork and bacon, garlic, potatoes, celery, tomatoes, chives, wine [undetermined], oil [undetermined], cumin and husked corn); 'Bollos Pelones' [buns] (with beef and cabbage leaves); Arepas (with yellow corn (not husked) .

- Desserts

Pumpkin cake (with milk, butter, eggs, raisins and vanilla); Bread cake (with milk, butter, eggs, raisins and vanilla); Bananas in caramel (with papelón [raw sugar], butter and cloves); other plantains with caramel (with papelón and cloves, without butter); other plantains in caramel (with sugar, cinnamon and butter); banana cake (with butter, eggs, white cheese, bread crumbs, raisins and vanilla); sweet potatoes in caramel

(with papelón and butter); Banana cake (with milk, butter, eggs, corn-starch, bread crumbs, lemon and vanilla); Carrot cake (with milk, butter, white cheese, raisins and vanilla); Baked banana cake (with milk, butter, white cheese, raisins and vanilla); Baked bananas (with butter); banana flan (with ripe plantains, milk, eggs and vanilla); Buñuelos [yucca fritters] (with eggs, cheese [not determined], sugar and butter); Ripe plantain cake (with eggs, white cheese, wheat flour, cinnamon and butter).

● - *Sauces*

Light béchamel white sauce (with milk, butter and wheat flour); Medium light white sauce (with milk, butter and wheat flour [in different proportions than the previous recipe]); Thick white sauce (with milk, butter and wheat flour, in different proportions than the previous two recipes); Tomato sauce (with onions, tomato puree or juice, butter, wheat flour and sugar, without oil or butter); Mayonnaise sauce (with mustard, vinegar and lemon); French sauce (with vinegar, oil, lemon, sugar and mustard powder).

Focus on the Recipes

As you can see, a total of 159 recipes for the preparation of 60 school menus, each one of them with the amounts of nutrients specified to supply, as a whole, most of the requirements of a healthy child, according to the standards of the time. However, from a strictly culinary point of view, the following aspects are noteworthy:

1. The salt amounts are almost never specified, but are indicated as “salt to taste”.
2. The fat indicated for the preparation of fried foods, stir-fries, stews and sauces, is lard, without specifying whether vegetable or pork, although it was most likely vegetable, due to the greater accessibility and safety of this product, already industrialized and available in the commercial circuits of the time.
3. Beef is almost always indicated, in a generic way, without specifying the type of cut.

4. The animal protein most indicated for use in the recipe book is beef with 35.44% of the total, including the many soups that require bone broth. In second place, butter, with 23.41%. In third place, eggs with 17.08%. In fourth place, cheeses of various types with 13.29%. And, in fifth place, fish with 5.6%.
5. Curiously, pork is indicated in only one recipe, probably because of the difficulties at the time in obtaining meat from animals treated in slaughterhouses, that is to say, innocuous.
6. The preparation of soups, stews, stir-fries and sauces or fillings for animal proteins almost always involves the use of “green seasonings”, without specifying which ones or indicating the quantity, only “to taste”.
7. The use of vegetable oil, without specifying the raw material used to obtain it, is almost exclusively limited to salads, i.e. raw, without any cooking.
8. The mayonnaise, later omnipresent in the Venezuelan popular table, only appears as an ingredient in one recipe.
9. The general dressing for almost all salads is composed of oil, vinegar and salt, but in a few recipes this dressing is omitted and substituted by sugar and lemon.
10. The corn indicated is whole or husked, which was available on the domestic market¹⁸.
11. In sweet preparations, the most indicated sweetener is sugar - in more than 70% of them - rather than papelón.

18 The first patent for the industrial production of “corn dough flour” or “dehydrated corn dough” was registered on June 4, 1954 under No. 5,176 in the name of Ing° Mecánico Luis Caballero Mejías (1903-1959), for a company he owned, identified as “La Arepera C. A.”. However, for various reasons, not yet studied in depth, he did not manage to develop a commercial production that would allow him to popularize his product. Later, Polar companies, taking advantage of the development of corn flakes produced to reduce the costs of the exclusive use of barley in the production of beer in its Cagua plant since 1954, began to produce its own precooked flour and created the brand P.A.N., with which they managed to turn it into a staple product in Venezuelan homes in a few years as from December 1960. Rafael Cartay, “El consumo del maíz en Venezuela”. In: Humberto Fontana Nieves and Carlos González Narváez (Comp.). *El maíz en Venezuela*, Caracas, Fundación Polar, 2000, pp. 439-465. Regarding Mr. Caballero Mejías, consult the blog opened by his only surviving daughter, Clementina Caballero Pereira, in which she denies the alleged sale of the patent made by her parents to Lorenzo Mendoza Fleury, as it has been spread through social networks. Available at: <https://luiscaballeromejias.com> (Accessed on 24-06-2024).

On the other hand, it should be noted that the recipes were calculated in quantities estimated for the preparation of 100 children's rations each, without forgetting that the bursars responsible for each dining room had to adjust them according to the number of children to be served in each service, since the capacity of the dining rooms for each shift was no less than 300 trays. Hence, the quantities of ingredients, their weight, the cookware and other equipment necessary for their preparation were necessarily of a considerable magnitude, which could only be handled efficiently through teamwork with well-trained personnel.

In addition, according to information provided by Mrs. Belén López, retired bursar of the National Board of School Canteens in Barquisimeto¹⁹, children were periodically received with specific indications about the diets to be provided to them, because they suffered from deficiency diseases diagnosed in the medical examinations to which they were subjected in their schools. So, they also had to produce special rations for these cases.

For this purpose, according to the same testimony, the aspiring bursars -for decades only women were admitted- had to take an intensive course, five days a week, at the Cooking School belonging to the National Board of School Canteens, in Caracas, at the facilities of the National Institute of Nutrition, for a period of approximately 6 continuous months, where they were trained in theory and practice in the fundamentals of administration, cost control, selection, purchase and storage of food, general principles of nutrition, hygiene and food handling, health education, occupational safety, cooking, food preservation and service. After passing the course, they received the certificate that allowed them to start working as responsible or auxiliary bursars in school canteens, soup kitchens or even in health institutions, such as hospitals, sanatoriums and outpatient clinics, all under the Ministry of Health and Social Assistance. They were also periodically offered training courses.

19 Belén López and her mother, Mrs. Ángela Rodríguez de López, were both retired after a long career by the National Institute of Nutrition, which had absorbed the bodies dependent on the National Board of School Canteens, and they were in charge of several school canteens and hospital institutions in Barquisimeto. Mrs. Rodríguez was the bursar of the Municipal School Canteen of Barquisimeto from 1944. The testimony of Mrs. López was collected by the author of this article in 2016.

The Bi-weekly Publication *Ser* and Food Education

In the absence of documentary evidence about the curriculum and pedagogical guidelines of the culinary education received by aspiring bursars and school canteen assistants, we can allow ourselves to conscientiously analyze the information contained in some copies of the bi-weekly *Ser*, informative organ of the Health Education Division of MSAS since 1946²⁰-preserved by the aforementioned Mrs. Lopez-, in relation to the aspects developed therein on food, nutrition, hygiene, preparation and service of food. It goes without saying that since they belong to the same ministry and period, such aspects must reflect, to a great extent, the principles, values, concepts, precepts and technical fundamentals taught in the cooking courses of the National Board of School Canteens.

In this sense, it is remarkable the validity of many of the concepts expressed there about the value of a varied, balanced and adequate diet according to age and the requirements of certain occupations of human beings. It can be stated, without a doubt, that the predominant vision of food was comprehensive, based on the conviction of the close relationship between food and health, education and nutrition, hygiene and food quality, the material conditions of life and the enjoyment of food, all framed in a deep knowledge and appreciation of the national reality prevailing at the time, with clear objectives of improvement and improvement (see Appendices 1, 2 and 3).

There we can also observe the eagerness to teach good eating habits from an early age, the safe practice of kitchen work, the promotion of the consumption of products from the local pantry, particularly tropical fruits, the importance of order and hygiene in the preparation of food, as well as the maximum use of them. And, of course, there is no lack of well-founded warnings about the consequences of deficiencies or excesses in the consumption of certain foods.

20 This publication began “(...) to be printed in July 1946, with a print run of 20,000 copies, tabloid size, four pages, in one color. In 1951, its circulation was increased to 45,000 copies, with eight pages, two of which were printed in four colors. In 1955, the print run was increased to 60,000 copies, being reduced to 45,000 in 1957, to be increased again to 60,000 as of July 1958”, *Ser*, Informative body of the Ministry of Health and Social Assistance. Edited by the Health Education Division, Caracas, Year 14, Nos. 336-337, July 15 and 31, 1960, p. 3. Still in the 1970s it continued to be published and distributed throughout the country.

Looking back, it is inevitable to highlight the efforts made to promote the consumption of yellow corn instead of white corn, given the scientifically proven higher nutritional capacity of yellow corn, particularly if white corn is not nixtamalized²¹.

Of course, these were the times before the popularization of precooked corn flour, and Venezuelan families depended on growing their own corn or acquiring corn in kernels, whole or husked. The dough ready to make arepas or arepas already made, roasted or ready to roast, could be yellow or white corn, although each one was preferred for certain uses, as it is still today: yellow corn for cachapas or sweet hallaquitas, and white corn for arepas, for example (See Appendix 4).

Likewise, the strategy of promoting the consumption of local fruits can be better understood if we take into account that the consumption of natural juices packaged by agribusiness had not yet become widespread, but in the then booming food retail chains, a large number of imported fruits such as apples, pears, peaches, and plums were offered for sale, competing advantageously with the well-known fruits for their novelty and exoticism²².

In addition, we have found exhortations to consumers at the public table, that is, restaurant customers, aimed at stimulating a critical spirit with respect to the order, cleanliness and hygiene of the premises and their operation, as well as the quality of the food served (See Appendix 5).

In any case, it is reasonable to assume that in the canteens administered by the National Board of School Canteens such recommendations were

21 Basically, the favorable difference in the consumption of yellow corn is due to its high Vitamin A content (300 IU), as opposed to white corn, which does not contain it, unless it is subjected to the process known as nixtamalization, as used in Venezuela to produce the so-called “piladas” arepas, based on soaking in water with ash or hydrated lime. See: “Fruits. Nutritional values per 100 grs. of the edible part”. In: Ser, Biweekly publication of the Department of Sanitary Education of the Ministry of Health and Social Assistance, Caracas, Year XXVIII, Nos. 615-618, November-December 1973, pp. 8-9.

22 In the 1950s, authors such as Ramón David León, Mario Briceño Iragorri, Aníbal Lisandro Alvarado and Conny Méndez, among others, drew attention in the national press to the displacement of the cultivation, trade and consumption of numerous vernacular products and preparations by imported ones. These had begun to flood the shelves and counters of grocery stores and supermarkets, as well as the mass media, as a result of the sustained increase in oil income and the use of such resources to finance imports. See: Mario Briceño-Iragorri. *Alegría de la tierra. Pequeña apología de nuestra agricultura antigua*. Caracas, Publ. Ávila, 1952, 164 pp. Also Ramón David León. *Geografía Gastronómica de Venezuela*. Caracas, Tipografía Garrido, 1954. 186 p. And, Aníbal Lisandro Alvarado, *Menú-Vernaculismos*, Madrid, Publ. Edime, 1953, 172 p.

rather decisive guidelines for action in the implementation of policies for the acquisition of supplies and preparation of food for their beneficiaries.

Preliminary conclusions

Obviously, the present text does not intend to -nor could it- exhaust the wealth that the study of the training of bursars and school canteen assistants during the approximately four decades that the National Board of School Canteens was in force in the country could mean for the research of the history of culinary education in Venezuela. Much more documentary information would need to be examined, contrasted and analyzed to understand the value, significance and transcendence of such a long-lasting food assistance program, much of it developed in the midst of episodes of considerable political turbulence.

The natural perspicacity of the historical researcher raises questions whose lack of answers in the current circumstances does not invalidate his interest. It would be necessary, for example, to know the curriculum and the programs that governed each subject, the didactic foundations and evaluation systems, the selection of participants, the location and equipment of the classrooms where the practical culinary teaching took place, the policies for the acquisition of supplies, the composition of the staff of cooking instructors or the total number of graduates; and how all this evolved over the years, as the number of school canteens and other food services to which its graduates were assigned grew, until the decline, extinction or integration into other types of programs in which their initial purposes and working methods were blurred.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that we are in the presence of a little-known aspect of culinary education in Venezuela -beyond the very specialized field of public health and nutrition-, which deserves the attention of gastronomy scholars, since it includes notions, advances, strategies, policies, methods and actions that were fundamental to improve the general quality of food, contribute to overcome nutritional deficiencies, improve the use of the Venezuelan pantry, professionalize culinary practice and update knowledge in food, nutrition and culinary matters, sustaining them on scientific bases.

Unfortunately, the lack of more comprehensive and exhaustive studies prevents at this time to quantify the magnitude of such contributions; but the extension of the canteens to all the states of the country, and not only to its capitals, during the four decades that lasted their heyday, allows us to establish the positive impact they had in the hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans who were their direct and indirect beneficiaries. and whose eating habits and full development of their potentialities were possible due to healthier life conditions, thanks to the management of the National Board of School Canteens and the generations of bursars and canteen assistants trained during the existence of the program and destined to work throughout the country.

Barquisimeto, July 2024

APPENDIX 1

20 hygiene rules for food buyers²³

1. Purchase food in businesses that meet good hygienic conditions.
2. Purchase food in businesses where food handlers wear uniforms in a good state of cleanliness.
3. Purchase food in businesses where the premises, utensils, machines and other food processing and dispensing equipment are kept clean.
4. Shop in establishments that keep garbage and waste in proper bins.
5. Shop in businesses that keep food protected from flies.
6. Shop and show your satisfaction by purchasing food where handlers wear short, clean fingernails.
7. Shop where good quality food is sold.
8. Purchase food where the utensils and machinery used in its manipulation are periodically washed.

²³ Ser, Biweekly publication of the Health Education Division of the Ministry of Health and Social Assistance, Caracas, Year XXIV, Nos. 535-538, July-August 1970, p. 6.

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9. Shop in businesses that keep running water in abundance, hot and cold.
 10. Shop in businesses where utensils are washed with detergent and are left to dry and they are not cloth dried.
 11. Shop in businesses where food is stored in closed, refrigerated shelves that are separated by waterproof, stainless steel separators.
 12. Purchase food only on those businesses where decomposing food and organic residues are properly discarded in trash containers.
 13. Shop in businesses where you notice that handlers clean their hands with clean water, soap and a brush.
 14. Shop in businesses where there are no flies, mice, cockroaches and other disease-carrying vermin.
 15. Shop in businesses where the owners protect the food, keep it on proper shelves and separated from the floor.
 16. Before buying canned food, look at the label on the container to make sure of what you are buying and, at the same time, be able to appreciate the conditions of conservation of the container.
 17. Do not shop in businesses where any of the food handlers have signs of a cold, skin lesions, cough or show any signs of illness.
 18. Discard purchasing food in businesses where employees have their heads uncovered, comb their hair while working, scratch their heads, pick their noses, etc.
 19. Do not shop where handlers smoke while preparing or serving food or lick their fingers to pick up paper napkins.
 20. Shop only in stores where there is a separate place to hang outfits, toiletries and cleaning utensils.

APPENDIX 2²⁴

20 personal hygiene rules for food handlers

1. Do not prepare or serve food if you have a cold, dysentery, or a skin disease.
2. Do not forget to wash your hands with soap and water before starting work or after using the toilet.
3. Do not wash your hands in the dishwasher or where food is prepared.
4. Do not have dirty bandages, or bandages of any kind, on your hands or fingers.
5. Always keep your fingernails short and clean.
6. Uniforms or work clothes should always be very clean.
7. Always work with your head covered.
8. Do not scratch your head, nose or rub your eyes while working.
9. Do not straighten or comb your hair while working.
10. Do not put the pencil in your hair or behind your ear
11. Do not use towels, dish towels or kitchen towels to dry your hands.
12. Do not cough or sneeze without covering your mouth and nose with a handkerchief.
13. After coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose, wash your hands.
14. Do not spit on the floor.
15. Do not smoke while preparing or serving food.
16. Do not lick your fingers to pick up paper napkins.
17. Do not change your suit, or hang it, near food.
18. Do not wear ornaments or jewelry that may fall into the food during preparation or service.

24 Ser, Biweekly publication of the Health Education Division of the Ministry of Health and Social Assistance, Caracas, Year XV, Nos. 348-349-350-351, January 15 and 31, February 15 and 28, 1961, p. 13.

19. Do not serve in a glass or dish that has not been properly washed after having been used by someone else.
20. As soon as you have a cut or wound, go to the first aid kit and apply the appropriate treatment.

APPENDIX 3

Dietetic service²⁵

1. Always treat pots and cooking equipment as if they were extremely hot: handle them with tongs, suitable instruments or some appropriate piece of cloth [i.e., cloth or rag]. Have some free space to put the pots and pans when removing them from the fire. Ask for help when moving very heavy and hot containers.
2. Trolleys with hot food should be moved slowly by runners. Use the handles to protect your hands.
3. Food carts should always be parked against the wall and away from crosswalks.
4. When carrying a coffee pot: a) walk so as not to trip; pick it up or put it down comfortably, without stretching your arm; b) when filling a coffee pot, use a container that can be handled comfortably.
5. Check all plates and glasses before using them, separating those that are cracked or chipped, placing them in the places assigned for that purpose.
6. Wash dishes and glasses separately. Never put all the glasses inside the sink. Wash the pieces separately. If a glass breaks inside the sink, empty the sink and remove the pieces so that you can work in a safe place. It is also dangerous to stack dishes and glasses too high.
7. Exhaust] hoods over stoves should be periodically cleaned of dirt and grease.

25 Ser, Biweekly publication of the Health Education Division of the Ministry of Health and Social Assistance, Caracas, Year XXIII, Nos. 499-500, January 1969, p. 4.

8. Pans should be positioned so that the handles do not protrude over the edge of the stove.
9. Anything spilled should be cleaned up immediately, to prevent others from getting dirty.
10. Keep all knives, saws and blades sharp and properly protected. Do not leave them on tables.
11. Knife guards for meat, bread, vegetables, etc., are for your safety. Always keep them in place.
12. Keep your hands away from the containers of meat mincing machines, mixing machines, etc. Use the wooden spoons provided for that use.
13. Do not store plates, glasses or other items on tables or shelves where food is prepared.
14. Open all cans with a can opener, preferably of the twist type. Avoid using an opener with a dull blade, which can leave a dented edge on the can.
15. Make sure that the canned product is labeled to guarantee its origin, contents, quality, and product approval.
16. Make sure the can does not contain gases produced by the decomposition of the product manifested by the bulging of the can.
17. Make sure the can does not show signs of oxidation that indicate that the product has been stored under bad conditions and for a long time.
18. Make sure the can does not present welding points that may be suspicious of product adulteration.
19. Do not buy an uncovered product. First make sure it has been properly prepared and preserved and, in any case, that it is uncovered in your presence.
20. All canned products should be washed before storing them in the refrigerator to avoid contaminating the food in the lower shelves if they drip.
21. Wash all canned food before opening the can. Dirt accumulates on

the edges and it mixes with the contents inside at the moment of opening the can.

22. Once a canned has been opened, its contents should be transferred to a container, whether glass, porcelain, etc., and then placed in the refrigerator for preservation.

APPENDIX 4

Nutritional advantages of yellow corn²⁶

From a nutritional point of view, there are marked differences in the different varieties of corn. Yellow corn, for example, is richer in vitamins than white corn. The color of yellow corn varieties is precisely what is transformed into vitamin A once it is consumed. So, when you eat it, you are making a good supply of strength for your body.

Vitamin A is necessary for growth, and therefore of special importance for children and adolescents.

Vitamin A protects the body against infections and increases resistance against tuberculosis. For this reason, yellow corn should be preferred to white corn in the Venezuelan diet, especially in the diets of children and adolescents.

Venezuelan:

For better nutrition of your children; to acquire greater resistance to disease and, in general, to balance the daily diet, consume YELLOW CORN.

26 Ser, Informative organ of the Ministry of Health and Social Assistance. Published by the Health Education Division, Caracas, Year 14, Nos. 328-329, March 15 and 31, 1960, p. 11.

APPENDIX 5

Demand cleanliness in restaurants²⁷

Food can be a vehicle for numerous diseases, when they, whether in their elaboration, extraction, conservation, manipulation, etc., do not fulfill the conditions demanded by hygiene. In these circumstances, far from playing the fundamental role of holders of life, they can become the destroyers of it.

In establishments known as restaurants, where food is prepared and sold to the public, the rules concerning the preparation, preservation and handling of such food must be observed more carefully since the volume of services and the speed with which they must be rendered, may lead the persons in charge of handling the food to not ensure that the utensils for preparing them - as well as the places for seasoning the food and raw products used - are completely clean. This means, among other things, to prevent flies and other harmful insects from settling on utensils and places, because the large number of microbes and bacteria they carry in their legs and trunks could, as vehicles of disease, cause contamination of the food, thus posing a consequent risk to the consumer.

On the other hand, it is necessary to observe and examine very carefully the elements to be used for the preparation of the “menu”: food spoiled for lack of adequate refrigeration, or that has been exposed to insects, or that has been in free contact with environmental dust, in short, poorly preserved, can also make those who eat it sick.

In addition, it is important to insist on the aesthetic aspect, as a factor in disease prevention: if the people in charge of preparing or serving the food to be sold to the public, that is, those who handle it, have not taken the necessary precautions to dress cleanly, keep their hands clean with soap and water, and ensure that their fingernails are free of dirt, they can become a risk factor for those people who go to the restaurants.

The public that, by necessity or by pleasure, goes to restaurants, has a perfect right to demand, before whom it corresponds, not only that they are

27 Ser, Biweekly publication of the Health Education Division of the Ministry of Health and Social Assistance, Caracas, Year XV, Nos. 348-349-350-351, January 15 and 31, February 15 and 28, 1961, p. 27.

served the food they are looking for, but also that the presentation is pleasant, and that those who serve them observe the guidelines that hygiene imposes without qualms. Moreover, and this given the high concept that is held today of public health, the public is obliged to go to the owner or representative of the business and, if they do not get their complaint heard, to take the matter to the corresponding health authority. The day we all proceed in this way, we will be rendering an invaluable service to health in general, the most valuable of interests.

It is also necessary to emphasize the responsibility that restaurant owners have in admitting among their employees those who present wounds, ulcers, burns, rashes, which may, on the one hand, make these persons suspect of suffering from contagious diseases, and on the other hand, cause displeasure or disgust in the public's mood.

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AREPAS FOR THE FUTURE: ROOTED WISDOM WITH THE FLAVOR OF HOME



Cover of the bi-weekly publication Ser.

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He was born in Barquisimeto, Venezuela, in 1960. Historian specialized in the research of Venezuelan regional gastronomy, Gastronomy chronicler of Lara state, cultural promoter, cooking instructor and restaurant consultant. His Works have been published in books, newspapers, and specialized magazines. He has written essays, history pieces, chronicles, and cooking books. He received an Honor Mention at the Gold Fork Awards 2014 and the Gold Fork Award 2022 to the best Gastronomy Publication for his anthology of gastronomy texts *Un bocado por el mundo*, both awards granted by the Venezuelan Academy of Gastronomy.

**THE PLEASURE
OF LEARNING:
THE VENEZUELAN
COOKING SCHOOL**

Luis Caballero Mejías and the Industrial Technical School

Marianella Abadi Abilahoud

Much more than corn flour, ingenious inventor, tireless teacher, pillar of the Industrial Technical Schools of Venezuela. Although most people associate the name of Luis Caballero Mejías with the invention of corn flour or dehydrated corn dough, an indisputable contribution to the daily life of all Venezuelans, this illustrious Caracas native, born on December 12, 1903, stood out as a teacher dedicated to the research and teaching in the technical field, a creator and promoter of industrial education in Venezuela, in addition to following his scientific spirit which allowed him to develop several inventions.

He graduated as a Mechanical Technician from the School of Arts and Crafts in Chile and later as a Mechanical Engineer in the United States. In 1930, he was appointed head of workshops at the National Shipyard located in Puerto Cabello, where he remained until 1935 when he was appointed director of the School of Arts and Crafts for men in Caracas - which later changed its name to Industrial Technical School in 1936. Caballero Mejías was at the head of the school for more than 20 years.

During his tenure as head of workshops of the National Shipyard, Luis Caballero Mejías managed to organize, improve and obtain machinery for the institution. His work was always recognized, appreciated and publicly mentioned by Tomás Pacanins, General Director of Workshops, in the annual reports delivered to the Ministry of War and Navy at the time, fragments of which are published in the press (<https://www.luiscaballeromejias.com>).

Although the Technical School had already been created during the government of Guzmán Blanco as part of the free education decree, its excellence and national and international prestige was reached under the leadership of Caballero Mejías who, from the beginning, was determined to offer a good level of education and training to the people who could not attend higher education. Thus, obtaining a government's approval to reform the pensum that elevated the level of the credentials of those who graduated from it.

The Industrial Technical School quickly achieved international renown for the quality of its graduates, for incorporating new technologies and teaching methods, for the cooperation agreements reached with several U.S. schools for curriculum exchanges, teaching practices and internships for students, thus enhancing the educational level of the institution.

The school offered the following morning and evening courses: physics, chemistry, line and technical drawing, geometry, English, Spanish, algebra, physical education, arithmetic, geography, graphic arts, foundry and blacksmithing, carpentry and model making, linotype, motoring, petroleum and practical mechanics.

During the government of Isaías Medina Angarita, it was decided the creation of the Ciudad Universitaria, entrusting its conception, direction and design to the architect Carlos Raúl Villanueva. The project contemplated a new campus for the Industrial Technical School as a third level educational institution linked to the engineering branch that would train professionals in technical careers shorter than the university ones. Thus, on June 3, 1949, the School moved from downtown Caracas to its new headquarters, occupying an area of 11.5 hectares, and with a capacity for 1,200 young people. The new headquarters had classrooms and administrative offices, workshops, dormitory areas for foreign students and professors, dining room, kitchen and food storage, medical service area, auditorium, library, recreation and sports areas. (<https://www.luiscaballeromejias.com>)

The ample spaces of the Industrial Technical School were granted to the famous American sculptor Alexander Calder for the realization of his works, among them Calder's iconic clouds that adorn the Aula Magna of the Universidad Central de Venezuela, Cultural Patrimony of Humanity.

In 1954, the Industrial Technical School was named after Luis Caballero Mejías, honoring the professional who always considered that technical education has the same relevance and complexity to achieve preparation or training as university careers, with the advantage that it inserts professionals into the working world sooner.

Engineer Igor Salomón Mendible, a graduate of the Industrial Technical School, said in a telephone conversation on May 27, 2024, that the training received at that institution was of the highest quality. He comments that the infrastructure, the workshops and laboratories, the curriculum and the professors were first class:

(...) in fact, the laboratories of the Technical School were better equipped than those of the Central University; after graduating in chemistry at the Technical School, I graduated as an engineer at the Central University.

He explains that the School had a basic cycle with a duration of two years, students graduated as experts and could enter the labor market, or continue for two more years to graduate as technicians.

He insists that the training provided was specially designed so that the graduates could immediately and easily enter the job market, since they were taught disciplines such as labor law and civics. He goes on to say that it was precisely at the School that a large number of those who were directors of State-owned companies until approximately 20 years ago were trained. Likewise, he comments that the important projects of the Nation were discussed before being presented to the competent authorities, such is the case of the project for the exploitation of the Orinoco oil belt.

The workshops even printed and edited books: «Magníficas ediciones de libros venezolanos han salido de la Escuela Técnica Industrial» (Magnificent editions of Venezuelan books have come out of the Industrial Technical School), is the title of an article in the newspaper *El Tiempo*, *Diario de la Tarde*, in its edition of Tuesday, September 1, 1942, which comments on the advantages of the initiative of the Ministry of Education and the efficiency of the School's graphic workshops. The text cites several of the printed works, among them: *Examen de la Geografía de Venezuela* by Agustín Codazzi and *Viaje a las Regiones Equinocciales de Nuestro Continente* by Alejandro de Humboldt.

Maestro Chelique Sarabia, famous composer of 'Ansiedad', studied Petroleum at the Escuela Técnica Industrial de Caracas since 1954, as he wrote in his book *Mi Propio yo... en este país*, published a year after his death in 2023. His widow, María Jesús Cifuentes de Sarabia, daughter of the remembered Ana Teresa Cifuentes, «La Perfecta Ama de Casa», (The Perfect Housewife) who with her books and television programs was one of those who contributed to forge the culinary history of Venezuela, commented in a telephone conversation on May 29, 2024, that her husband left the manuscript ready and then it was up to her to publish it. In the book, Maestro Chelique tells how he arrived at the Technical School at the age of 14, that due to a particular situation he was homeless and sleeping in the gardens of the school. He was discovered and taken to the Headmaster:

(...) Luis Caballero Mejías listened patiently to my story and far from expelling me (he was the the Headmaster), he got me a scholarship. From Monday to Friday at the boarding school, Saturdays and Sundays he took me to his house, gave me Technical Drawing and Mathematics classes, and in the evenings, at dinner, he would tell Mrs. Patria, his wife, about the progress he was making with Dr. Salomón De Lima and the boys of the School, in the experiments to make a pre-cooked corn flour enriched with vitamins A and D, which did not exist at that time.

The maestro goes on with his memories of the close relationship he had with Caballero Mejías.

One day I dared to tell Dr. Caballero that I was also a musician and that I made songs (I already had a few).... The following week I was founding the Estudiantina of the Technical School to which I soon composed a waltz, which my classmates called the Hymn.

As for the famous son "Ansiedad", which has more than 800 versios – being Nat King Cole's 1959 version the most iconic, Chelique Sarabia said that, on the day he turned 15 years old, he was alone at the Plaza Bolivar:

(...) the Principal cinema, in its marquee, advertised "Ansiedad", a Mexican movie with Libertad Lamarque and Pedro Infante... I do not remember exactly how many times I saw the movie, making time to go back to the boarding school. Only today I can say that its plot has nothing to do with the lyrics of the song I wrote early that night, on the

balcony of the single room of the Industrial Technical School, which had been assigned to me because I had important activities in the social and cultural life of the School, apart from my academic responsibilities.

Cifuentes de Sarabia comments that her husband told her that Dr. Caballero Mejías had always believed in his talent for music and supported him; besides, Dr. Caballero Mejías was a father figure to him.

The resources of the oil industry allowed the creation of other branches of the School in different states of the country, diversifying the specialties according to the productive priorities of each region. At the end of the Marcos Pérez Jiménez's dictatorship, engineer Luis Caballero Mejías was removed from his position as director of the Technical School for advocating for students who were not involved in political protests. In 1973, the government of Rafael Caldera closed the Technical School definitively and donated its facilities to the Faculty of Sciences of the Central University of Venezuela.

Luis Caballero Mejías, a distinguished teacher, worked tirelessly for education, occupying various positions as professor and dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the «Universidad Central de Venezuela» (Central University of Venezuela), as well as Director of the Directorate of Artisan, Industrial and Commercial Education of the Ministry of Education. He also received several decorations, among them, the medal of Public Instruction and the Andrés Bello order.

After the delight of knowing a little more in depth the admirable work of Luis Caballero Mejías in the field of industrial education, we reviewed one of his most brilliant inventions.

Aware of the tedious work that had to be done to make the arepa, he had the concern to shorten it. Knowing the traditional procedure, he began to make tests, and gave the samples to his mother-in-law, who was an excellent cook. Finally, he found the formula he patented, which consists of a dehydrated, fortified flour, very malleable and easy to prepare.

On June 4, 1954, the Ministry of Development granted the only patent known to exist for the invention «Harina de Masa de Maíz o Masa de Maíz Deshidratada» (Flour of Corn Dough or Dehydrated Corn Dough) under No. 5176, as it appears in the Boletín de la Propiedad Industrial y Comercial de Venezuela (Industrial and Commercial Property Bulletin of Venezuela) No. 271, year XXIII, on page 239.

Subsequently, on June 25, 1956, it created the company La Arepera C.A., which was registered in 1957 under No. 1-2064-156. The company was described as a mercantile and industrial establishment, engaged in the production, packaging, purchase and sale of all kinds of food. In 1958 it created a trademark to commercialize La Arepera flour, which was registered under No. 33508. The product was marketed through the company La Arepera C. A. under the name of La Arepera. Since this did not obtain the expected success, his partners, Eduardo Antonini Moya and Omar Quintero Uzcátegui, agreed to liquidate the company in mid 1959, says Clementina Caballero Pereira, daughter of engineer Luis Caballero Mejías, in a face-to-face conversation on May 24, 2024. Likewise, Caballero Pereira affirms that her family never sold the aforementioned patent, and therefore never received any money for it. On that same date, there was a reform in the Venezuelan law in force, which eliminated the possibility of registering patents in the food and beverage sectors. At the end of that year, on October 12, 1959, engineer Caballero Mejías died. The following year, in 1960, Empresas Polar launched Harina Pan, the product became very popular due to its excellent quality and time saving in the preparation of arepas.



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Cooking Schools in Venezuela

Basis for their Study and Understanding

Miro Popić

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AREPAS FOR THE FUTURE: ROOTED WISDOM WITH THE FLAVOR OF HOME

Culinary education had an early beginning in Venezuela. It was initiated in 1858 by an agronomist engineer named José Antonio Díaz when he created the first chair of agriculture at the Santo Tomás School in Caracas. The study texts were published in an 1861 edition in the National Printing House under the title *El agricultor venezolano* (The Venezuelan Farmer) in which, together with the agricultural instructions of his work, he included a section on country cooking «Cocina Campestre», considered the first compendium of Venezuelan recipes - duly explained and processed - using products of the local orchards available in the daily market within everyone's reach.

Country Cooking includes more than thirty dishes that constitute the culinary foundation of what identifies us at the table, where we find what we ate and how we did it, where many of them are still present in our daily life. A historical event that marks the passage from orality to writing, the moment when cooking ceases to be a food fact and becomes culture, generating a sense of belonging and cohesion in the social and political spheres.

Díaz's motivation to deal with food in Venezuela in the mid-nineteenth century stems from a reality: «Our farmers generally eat poorly, because they do not know the means to improve their food with the same resources of the field and its products»

He did not intend to train cooks as a trade, but to teach the peasants to take advantage in a pleasant and attractive way of what they cultivated with their own hands: «With domestic fowl, legumes, succulent roots, the fat of pigs and the small vegetable garden of garlic, onions and tomatoes, one can have not a coarse table, but a fine and abundant one, without having to

buy anything other than salt and some inexpensive gadgets, comfortably acquired with the exchange in the market».

The country cooking section in José Antonio Díaz's work occupies twenty pages. There are basically 36 recipes of our foundational cuisine, which include from pre-Hispanic preparations to some truffled pieces. Recipes that should be studied and seen in depth to get to the original essence of our cuisine.

Something similar was attempted in 1884 by the young doctor Luis Razzetti, who was alarmed because in Caracas: «in private homes people usually eat badly, because here good cooks are very scarce, and cooks are very scarce because here there are no housewives who know how to or want to teach them, as in Europe». The fault, he says, lies with the mothers themselves who «do not make their daughters learn how to cook because, they say, their daughters were not born or raised to be cooks».

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AREPAS FOR THE FUTURE: ROOTED WISDOM WITH THE FLAVOR OF HOME



Hotel Industry and Services

Empiricism continued to dominate our cuisine for more than a century, and it was not until the middle of the twentieth century that a certain interest in professional training was born for young people who at that time already felt inclined towards cooking as a profession and future. Two names dominate the scene: INCE and CEGA.

The vertiginous transformation after the oil exploitation, where we went from an eminently rural country to an 80% urban population, generated changes in our habits and customs. Along with the domestic kitchen, the public kitchen emerged as a necessity to feed the enormous work force that generated the new wealth transformed into development. Hotels and restaurants became commonplace in the new urban landscape, generating a need for trained personnel, at the same time eager for academic training to get started in the profession of feeding others and making a living from it.

In 1959, the National Institute for Educational Cooperation (INCE) was created on the initiative of teacher Luis Beltrán Prieto Figueroa, during the Government Junta that was formed after the overthrow of Marcos Pérez Jiménez. After the fall of the dictatorship, with two million illiterate adults and thousands of children out of the educational system, education was a priority in the nascent democracy. The country required trained personnel to meet the needs generated by the new reality. Along with basic education, apprenticeship and training, training centers were created in the most immediate Arts and Crafts, where the Kitchen and Service finally found a space.

The first INCE cooking teachers were the very people interested in having them: the chefs -most of them foreign- who managed the large hotel chains and the industrial canteens of the nascent factories and public offices. They trained young people in need of a quick apprenticeship to generate income for their families. In every kitchen, someone has to peel chicken, chop onions, stir broth and wash dishes. Not only did they train them, but they also hired them, especially the fittest.

The theory was put into practice with the maintenance of restaurants that served as a showcase to demonstrate the knowledge acquired. I remember having recurrently eaten in one of them -located in the industrial zone of Los Ruices, in Caracas-, when I worked in a nearby advertising agency. The next step for the most obstinate ones was to apply for a place in the kitchen of the big restaurants of the city, generally directed by a French chef. Do you know how to debone a chicken? was the first question. If the answer was negative, they received this advice: «go first to INCE and then come here». The other thing was to start washing utensils and peeling potatoes and onions, without schedules, listening to repeated scoldings.

The need for professional cooks opened a niche in academic training and cooking schools emerged. The first one was in 1988 with the creation of the Hotel School in the city of Merida, under the sponsorship of Corpoturismo. Then, in 1991, in Caracas, two hotel chefs, Cristina Michalczuck Jeremías and David Garrido Daza, created the High Training Educational Institute (HTEI) and in 1996, in a house in Maripérez, La Casserole du Chef was born. All of them offered to train French cooking chefs. None of them included Creole cuisine concepts in the curriculum, with the sole exception of self-taught chef Helena Ibarra and her Taller Cooked by hand, which she opened in San Bernardino in 1999.

The CEGA

The eighties of the last century marked a milestone in terms of Venezuelan cuisine. For the first time, people began to talk seriously about our cuisine, its origins and future; the media, especially the print media, began to deal with it and a group of Venezuelans from different disciplines raised their voices, highlighting the importance of dealing with what we eat as a factor of identity. The first books dedicated to our cuisine appeared and, in 1988, the Center for Gastronomic Studies, CEGA, was founded on the initiative of historian José Rafael Lovera.

Lovera said: «We think it is worth trying to create a National School of Cuisine, whose objective is the study and promotion of our food cultural heritage with a view to its improvement and dissemination, and the publication of good recipe books that can be available to all».

He insisted that it was necessary to return to the humble products of our kitchens, analyzing them and improving their elaboration formulas, improving their presentation: «It is not in vain that, for centuries, they built our body fiber and constituted one of the fundamental cultural supports to identify us as Venezuelans»

What was born as a study and discussion center in an apartment in Bello Monte in Caracas, became the first cooking school focused on Venezuelan cuisine, which operated in a villa near Plaza Morelos. For the first time in the classroom, the term «compuesto» (compound) was used instead of «bouquet garni», «sofrito» instead of «mirepoix», «hervido» (boiled) instead

of «bouillon», «picar en cuadritos» (diced) instead of «brunoise». It was, from the beginning, a school of cooks, but of Venezuelan cooks proud of a cuisine that stopped pretending and began to be.



Miro Popic

 @miropopiceditor

“There are four things that identify a people: territory, language, religion and cuisine. What we eat is what identifies us wherever we are”.

Of Croatian origin, he was born in Chile and has lived in Venezuela for more than 40 years. Gastronomic journalist, food history researcher, writer and editor of books related to the plurality and identity of the cuisines in this continent,

such as his trilogy *Comer en Venezuela: del cazavi a la espuma de yuca* (Eating in Venezuela: from cazavi to yucca foam). (2013) winner of the 2013 Golden Fork for Gastronomic Publication, an award granted by the Venezuelan Academy of Gastronomy (AVG). *El pastel que somos. Identidad y cocina en Venezuela*. (2015), *El señor de los aliños: en busca del sabor perdido*. (2017). And his book *Venezuela on the rocks!* (2018) winner of the 2018 Golden Fork for Gastronomic Publication by the AVG.



CEGA was a model school

Ileana Matos

Founded in 1988 by historian José Rafael Lovera, the Center for Gastronomic Studies taught its students Venezuelan cuisine and mysticism at work.

Cooking the José Rafael Lovera way is still unique and unrepeatable, as was the teaching experiment that gave rise to the Center for Gastronomic Studies, founded by the historian, researcher and teacher in 1988, with the aim of training chefs capable of undertaking and innovating from traditional cuisine and exploring new culinary techniques, through proposals with traditional Venezuelan dishes.

«In two words, enlightened cooks», says Victor Moreno, a renowned Venezuelan chef who was part of the first graduating class of the Center for Gastronomic Studies, which he entered as a student in August 1999 and graduated in December 2000, a little more than 10 years after its founding.

«Lovera's plan began with the creation of a gastronomic club that gave rise to the first educational institution in the country dedicated to the conservation and dissemination of local culinary heritage», explains Moreno, who highlights Lovera's interest in offering local cooks with experience at the public table, a didactic, but not practical, training on the trade, with the incorporation of disciplines such as art, history or science, and the certainty that these would allow them to approach the kitchen as a cultural expression.

The first three people called by Lovera to join the gastronomic group, which also included teachers, researchers and personalities related to gastronomy, were the pastry chef Florencia Rondón and the cooks Edgar Leal and Franz Conde. «Lovera managed to form a group with common interests», says Moreno, before mentioning that the word began to spread faster than expected about the meetings that were held on Sundays at the Quinta San José on Caurimare Avenue, in Colinas de Bello Monte.

The aforementioned people were joined by «Francisco Abenante, Aitor Garbizú, Tomás Fernández, José Luis Morales, Néstor Acuña, Sumito Estévez, Alonso Núñez and Gustavo Gómez», says the chef, before adding that the historian's plan included taking them to eat in Caracas restaurants of different trends, every other Sunday, when they would cook at Quinta San José.

Later, Moreno continues, the cooking exercises moved to the historian's residence, under the direction of Alicia Allas -his family's cook, a native of Irapa-, whom Lovera had taught to prepare the dishes he liked. Some more? The organization and participation in the Young Chefs' Meetings held in Merida, Lara and Guayana, where, in addition to talks and conferences, dinners were also offered.

«This group allowed Lovera to formalize a pilot project, from his home, in which Allas participated as a cooking teacher, and to start what would later become the CEGA as a formal cooking school, which remained open until 2015 and from whose classrooms emerged 15 generations of cooks».

Successful experience

In 1999 he opened the CEGA's dining room to the public, in Quinta Herminia, located between Avenida Este 2 and Plaza Morelos, in Los Caobos. It offered lunches from Monday to Friday, with a daily menu composed of Venezuelan dishes prepared by its students, under the direction of Lovera and the curatorship of Allas.

The chef instructors - recalls Moreno, who was part of the first group of students - were Alonso Núñez and Gustavo Gómez. «Classes began at 7:00 am with the formation of work teams to prepare the *mise en place* of the dishes of the day's menu, proposed by Lovera, who invited the students to think of each of the preparations based on the blank plate and the ideal dinner».

Meanwhile, the chef adds, they received practical classes during which they went through the Venezuelan recipe book, its coloring and influences from cuisines from other parts of the world. At 4:00 pm - and until 7:00 pm - after cleaning the kitchen, the theoretical classes began. Subjects? Nutrition, Food Chemistry, Oenology, Cost Control and French, among others, in

addition to the History of Venezuelan Cuisine class, «the great moment of the week», taught by Lovera, on Fridays.

«This subject had its reference text, the book *Historia de la Alimentación en Venezuela* (Food History in Venezuela), written by the professor and published in 1988», recalls Moreno, who so far, he says, knows of no other cooking school in the world that can boast its own text.

The chef also mentions the book *Geografía Gastronómica Venezolana* (Venezuelan Gastronomic Geography) by Ramón David León, published in 1954, which also accompanied the academic plan of CEGA, as well as the visits of international personalities linked to gastronomy, invited by Lovera to enrich the academic preparation of the students, among them the French chef Joël Robuchon.



Photograph of Professor Juan Lovera
Photographer: Patrick Dolante

Chef Instructor

Upon completing his studies, Moreno entered the job market and two years later accepted Lovera's invitation to become an instructor at CEGA. His performance earned him a scholarship that took him to Spain to join the brigades of El Celler de Can Roca, in Catalonia, under the direction of Santi Santamaría, and Balzac, in Madrid, with Andrés Madrugal.

Back in Caracas, two years later, he resumed his position as instructor. The chef recalls the experience with gratitude for having been part of a model school that democratized Venezuelan cuisine as a value, under the slogan «Become a Venezuelan cook», where, in addition to cooking, mysticism at work was taught, "the most important academic contribution of Lovera who, with his passion for teaching, became the «Quixote of Venezuelan Cuisine»



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In Search of the Lost Trail

Helena Ibarra

THE PLEASURE OF THE TABLE BELONGS TO ALL AGES,
TO ALL CONDITIONS, TO ALL COUNTRIES,
AND TO ALL AREAS; IT MINGLES WITH ALL OTHER PLEASURES
AND REMAINS AT LAST TO CONSOLE US FOR THEIR DEPARTURE

Brillat-Savarin

The power of gastronomy as a reflection of a culture is measured in the biodiversity, but, above all, it the concept of quality.

A bite that awakens the senses and lights up the imagination. A market that offers a colorful palette of options to match. Venezuela is still a geographic area where agriculture is slowly developing. Products are yet to be discovered, and the recipes are lost in regional cookbooks. In the last decades, however, new proposals have appeared and very shyly, in May, *the Lairén* starts to show... *The Copoazú* opens the imagination of the new chefs. This profession becomes new in the spectrum of options to choose from, as Ferran Adria would say, barely twenty years as an optional study.

The technique embraces traditional cooking and, little by little, a local style with a local flavor takes shape, thus rescuing our history. The young men and women who migrated are getting Michelin stars, as Ricardo Chaneon in MONO, who points at this local talent marked by the vertiginous ascent of the arepa with no borders...

Little by little, the factors that trace a gastronomic geography get linked together; different flavors that, once again, conquer Europe and the world. A country of casava and corn – a very important recipe book – not to mention the superfood that is offered from the Amazon, places the concept of Food and Health in a privileged position.

The elements are there. The design of a restaurant that is coherent with the decoration, but which plate lacks content, is proliferating. Offers of an empty culinary proposal reflecting an empty memory are multiplying. Fads appear and disappear, but there is an important segment missing regarding services, menu choices and, finally, concepts that make sense.

An arepa of casava, and you get a display of colorful and varied flours – sweet potatoe, topocho, casava; not to mention the appearance of fruits such as Copoazú or Manaca. The ideas paint a thriving image, in which restaurants like Cordero have the privilege of their own plantations, the dream of many Chefs with stars. Taking care directly of the quality, transform and produce new uses to make the most of these markets, is an ideal purpose. This country offers without reservations, giving way to countless aromas and flavors with their own accent. There is a lack of policies and intentions to work this land that is willing to give its best, and that still presents itself with shyness to a market in which it could offer a larger variety and different quality products.

In order to speak of “haute cuisine”, we must first investigate the products present in the different regions of the country, as well as the possibility to recognize a constant and careful marketing of what it has to offer – which is the reflection of the country’s regions with their biodiversity. That is right, a balanced concept that gives non-industrial or man-intervened solutions, but that presents this market in full measure.

A bunch of coriander un bloom, “wise coriander” as it is called, that seals the commitment of gastronomy with a purpose. We are heading in the right direction with schools that have a serious academic pensum and reliable professors. Entrepreneurships multiply along with the need for an income; and as some design good and appropriate offers, others copy and go bankrupt. The use of branding without results is multiplying; thus, allowing us to see the proposal of something unstable in which the concept must be indicated, and the global vision of kitchen management must be deemed as important.

It is there, with the talent of these new generations that learned the trade from scratch, that we could build up the structure of a Venezuelan cuisine that knows its boundaries. Encompass the alphabet and pleasantly associate the elements to achieve results in this harsh mathematics of flavor.

We are discovering our roots, understanding our origin. They are appearing in a new memory, in which our memories are rekindled, or references are born. A generation willing to recover everything, conscious of its history, while communing with nature. It is a huge responsibility to design this palate eager of surprises, but also marked by a vague memory. A return to the past, to doors that open to a market with better quality and larger offerings. A difficult challenge, a wonderful encounter with our land that, mischievously, sets the way from the A of Ají...

Flavors that are piecing together this puzzle, aji with mango smell, aji with passion fruit smell, a whole series on its way to the geographical denomination.

Organizing, designing, motivating the main actors of this large table offering so as to be able to indicate the best, encourage the production and, why not, export it – as so many products are already being “silently” eaten in Florida and other places.

From Caracas, the schools and academies mark these spots where exceptional qualities are blooming. The countryside moves looking for recipe books and contributing to this matrix of products that will support a true gastronomic offer of haute cuisine. A country with the potential of unsuspected qualities. A path to go through to present our personality, and to structure a business identified with the land and its past.



Yes, there is a Venezuela in the concert of gastronomy. This potential goes step by step, this new market is shyly showing its face to the world. We will have a place that will no longer be a secret or a possibility, but a reality that will allow a country, that was evidently an oil country, to see its fields bloom and to discover new flavors that are just asleep, waiting for a transformation that permits these products to give us their tuned notes on G Major and perfume *sostenuto*.



Helena Ibarra



@helenaibarra1

Chef of Venezuelan quality products and of a French education. She has over 40 years of culinary experience. 2007 Armando Scannone Award. 2012 Gold Fork Award and special mention in 2012 gastronomic publication. Maracay Laureus Award, first place. Author of the book *Extra-Ordinary Cooking*. Winner of the 2011 Gourmand Award – *Best Woman Cookbook Chef in the World*, and the book *Extra-Ordinary Cooking 2. The Amazons, the Unexplored Pantry*, with which she won the 2023 award as Best in the World in the Latin

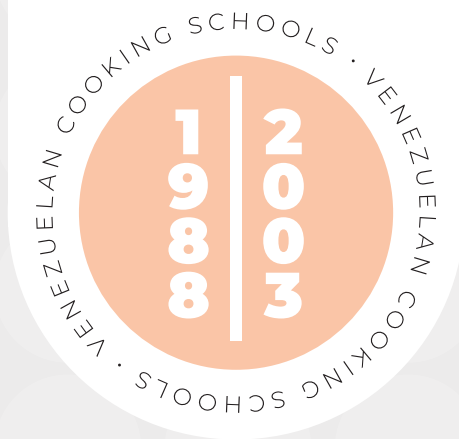
American Category. She was awarded as Pioneer and Ambassador of Venezuelan Gastronomy at international level in 2012 by the Venezuelan-French Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (CCVF). She has written several columns on gastronomy for national newspapers and other publications linked to the world of Venezuelan cooking.





SCHOOLS OF THE FUTURE: FLAVORS WITH TRADITION

**STORIES FROM
12 SCHOOLS IN
ARAGUA
CARABOBO
CARACAS
LARA
MÉRIDA
ZULIA**



The teachers in their academic planning contemplate events, lectures, forums, congresses, among others, aimed at enhancing Venezuelan cuisine as a reflection of the cultural mix that characterizes us.



On November 20, 2016, Decree 2567 is published in Official Gazette No. 41,038, creating the National University of Tourism (UNATUR), of which the School Hotel of the Andes is now a part of.

The curriculum of the Hotel and Hospitality Services program includes curricular units related to national and international gastronomy, such as Cuisine I and Cuisine II, where students acquire skills and abilities to perform any type of food production operation, from those that use fresh food to establishments that produce industrial quantities of processed food.

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In the National Tourism Training Program (PNFT), specifically in Track II of the TSU, students take the curricular unit of Food and Beverages; while in Track III of the Bachelor's Degree, in the mention of Gastronomy, they take the following courses: History and Evolution of the National Gastronomic Heritage, and Development of the National Gastronomic Collection: History and Evolution of the National Gastronomic Heritage, and Development of the National Gastronomic Heritage. In track IV of the Bachelor's Degree, students study Gastronomy in the New Social Model and Development of International Gastronomy. Currently, an educational program is being developed under the name of the Center for Hospitality Studies (CEH), aimed at service providers and the general public, who wish to be trained in refresher courses and diploma courses in areas of their interest such as: Food and Beverage, Marketing, Languages, Management, and others.

And this year, the postgraduate programs were approved by the MPPEU through the National Council of Universities, by official gazette No. 42,830, dated March 1, 2024. These programs are specifically for three specializations in Tourism and Hospitality: Tourism Heritage; Sustainable Tourism and Hospitality; and Tourism Business Management.

Teachers, together with their students, are aware of the importance of enhancing our gastronomic identity by using local ingredients in classes and events, taking into consideration that they are fresher and better quality products, in addition to promoting and encouraging culinary traditions and helping to avoid the homogenization of gastronomy, such is the case of: turmeric, chia, ginger, cilantro, potato, wheat, corn, sugar cane, chayota, coffee, cocoa, chickpeas, peas, beans, among others.

The students of both the Hotel and Hospitality Services and the PNFT do cooking internships in the University's laboratories. The skills and competencies acquired during their training are put into practice during their internships in different hospitality companies (hotels, inns, restaurants, etc.) throughout the country.

Through the development of events at the University, we invite representatives of renowned restaurants and chefs, establishing cooperative ties to work together to highlight national, regional and local gastronomy.



FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT: 16 Classrooms / Didactic Kitchen / Production Kitchen with two cold rooms / Sommelier Classroom / Restaurant / Gastronomy Library / Computer Lab / Office of the National Center for Tourism Research (CENINTUR) / Auditorium with capacity for 220 people / Meeting Room / Event Room / Medical Office / Dental Office.



Arelys Toledo, Nelsy Vargas, Yelson Velásquez, Alexandra Rivas, Chef Carlos Orozco, Chef Elia Nora Rodríguez and Chef Crisbel Sánchez



This project started one day when I was writing some of my recipes and talking to my father about the need to create cooking schools in our country –there were not many at that time. I told him that I wanted to create a gastronomy school that would train professional cooks. He agreed and, with his support, I decided to mobilize everything to create my longed-for school, Le Gourmets. We have been training true chefs for 30 years now; we were the second school in Venezuela and the first in the state of Carabobo.

Le Gourmets is characterized by training cooks qualified to work professionally in any area of gastronomy, since our curriculum includes Basic Cuisine, International Cuisine, Bakery-Pastry, Venezuelan Cuisine and Molecular Cuisine.

In International Cuisine we are based on French principles and techniques, the program offers the five continents and the most representative gastronomies worldwide such as those of France, Italy, Spain, Japan, China, Peru, Mexico, Argentina, United States, Australia, and cuisines such as those of Germany and Russia, which have iconic and significant dishes within the gastronomic field.

[illegible]

In the area of Venezuelan Cuisine, we reinforce the regional cuisine of our country, teaching students the importance of “what is ours”. A complete semester is developed covering the 23 states of the country, emphasizing the most representative dishes of each region, their flavors and aromas, and the links they have with traditions and history. Dishes such as: the capybara, in the case of Holy Week; and the ‘Olleta de Gallo’ with representative characters of our history, such as Francisco de Miranda. Through the internship program with restaurants and hotels –Hotel Hesperia, Casa Tarbes, Capricho, Chef Margaro–, the training process is carried out, sending students who are about to finish their studies, to begin their internships for 360 hours, thus acquiring the skills and knowledge they will develop in the workplace.

Since 2003, Le Gourmets has organized an event called *Trilogía en Fusión*, a national and international food and wine event, in which companies and entrepreneurs participate to showcase their products, with the collaboration of organizations such as the Pan-American Forum of Culinary Associations, the Venezuelan Chef’s Association, the Wine Club and the World Chef Association, thus bringing the best certified international judges.

In *Trilogía en Fusión*, for 11 consecutive years, international cooking competitions have been held as part of the event, attracting almost all the schools in Venezuela. These competitions have been a platform to teach students culinary techniques, time management in the kitchen and the use of local products. The winners of these competitions have had the opportunity to compete in other countries under the same guidelines, and with a high international level. Throughout these years, Le Gourmets has obtained an outstanding medal list: 3 gold medals, 4 silver medals and 2 bronze medals.

In addition, through the Chefs Association, the School has made it possible for all its students to take the World Chef Academy course, a mandatory requirement before graduation. This course, the *Pre-commis* Chef, is directed by Director Elia Nora Rodriguez, who acts as Advisor for World Chef, and clarifies that «participating as *pre-commis* in international competitions is a prestigious experience that can help open doors in your future culinary career».



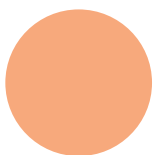
Pre-commis chefs are generally assistant chefs in training, who have not yet reached the full professional chef level. These roles are designed for young culinary talents who are in the process of learning and perfecting their skills under the tutelage of more experienced chefs.

For example, at the Bocuse D'Or, one of the world's most prestigious culinary competitions, *pre-commis* chefs are young cooks selected to work alongside their national teams, learning from the best and gaining invaluable experience in a high-pressure, competitive environment.

Nowadays, we are planning to set up a Bocuse D'Or Club, where we will train new talents for the most important competition in the world, which will take place in 2026. This year we are participating with Alan, Gilbert and Yull as our commis, our logistics chef Alexandra Leon and Yiya Ramos as participant Chef, all of them alumni of Le Gourmets. Our goal is to get schools from different regions of our country to participate as well.



Chef Valentina Landaeta, Director Felix Trujillo Febres, Sandy González, Chef Jesús Alejandro Sosa



CARACAS

LA CASSEROLE DU CHEF

26 years ago, Mrs. Lisetta Auristela Torrealba de García wanted to start a business cooking the exquisite dishes that her mother-in-law Cristina Rivolta de García had taught her; however, her husband and founding partner, Mr. Mauricio García Rivolta, suggested that with all that she had learned – from her mother-in-law, who was also her cooking teacher– she should create a school where she could teach others. The school would have a curriculum that would incorporate, to this knowledge she had, the proper techniques to be a professional cook. In this way, Lisetta and Mauricio founded La Casserole du Chef in the Cristina de Mariperez farm, now moved to Prados del Este, and directed by Félix Trujillo Febres.

Throughout the ten-month program, French cooking techniques are reinforced in Venezuelan cuisine, in this way we want to provide knowledge and tools to access the different topics of the culinary field in general, in a simple way, under the parameters of a style conscious of the real needs of the global gastronomic market.

We make sure to use local ingredients in our practices: sprouts and edible flowers, plus four types of proteins: meat, fish, chicken and lamb, from our commercial partner El Remanzo; the products from our commercial partner the Iberia Enterprise, among many other products from our suppliers.

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In order to certify our students, we test the development of the techniques learned by the future cooks in four International Cuisine table services, and one Venezuelan Cuisine. It comprises three levels of cooking: Basic, Intermediate, and International, thus being a 90% practical and 10% theoretical training.

An additional aspect that the school considers relevant in its training offer, apart from providing individual kitchens, is that all courses or workshops range from the most basic to the most advanced, adding classes such as Oenology, Etiquette and Protocol, Service to the diner, and the most important, the Gastronomic Entrepreneurship Workshop, taught by IESA.

Our teaching and administrative staff is made up of Professor Deyanira Quijada, nutritionist; Chef Instructor Jesús Sosa, public accountant; Chef Instructor Jhosman Paredes, professional cook; Chef Instructor Osmel Landaeta, professional cook; Professor Alberto Burbano, oenologist; Morella Febres, librarian; Sandy González, administrator; and Valentina Landaeta, chef and publicist.

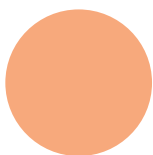
Through the alliances established with Atekao Fábrica de Chocolate; the restaurant El Bosque Bistró, of Chef Iván García; JW Marriott Hotel, in Caracas; the Napolitano restaurant, in the San Ignacio Shopping Center, internship opportunities are managed for the students –at a national level– of our Professional Internship Program in renowned Restaurants and Hotels.

In this way, we have been training Casseroles for 26 years!



One of our main differentiating attributes is the provision of individual kitchens for our participants, making learning completely individual.





CARACAS

ICC - THE CULINARY INSTITUTE
OF CARACAS

The Culinary Institute of Caracas, founded in 2003 by Sumito Esteves and Héctor Romero, was based on research, development, practice and documentation of the flavors of Venezuelan gastronomy. It was one of the first technical-scientific training centers that valued the trade with ecological and social responsibility, starting from the regional with universal projection: The study of regional cuisines has been one of the main cornerstones of our educational proposal to deepen and establish criteria that allow us to recognize ourselves in customs and knowledge that define Venezuelan gastronomy, being this the main subject of study in the Cooks Training Program.

The use of tools such as the pestle, the *sebucán*, the *budare*, the mortar, the cauldron and the wood stove, as well as the support of culturists, popular cooks and professionals from different regions of the country, has been present in the regular practices. Undoubtedly, Venezuelan kitchens have been our great space for study and growth. From the different landscapes of Venezuela's geography, the study of the Original Pantry has been another of our cores.

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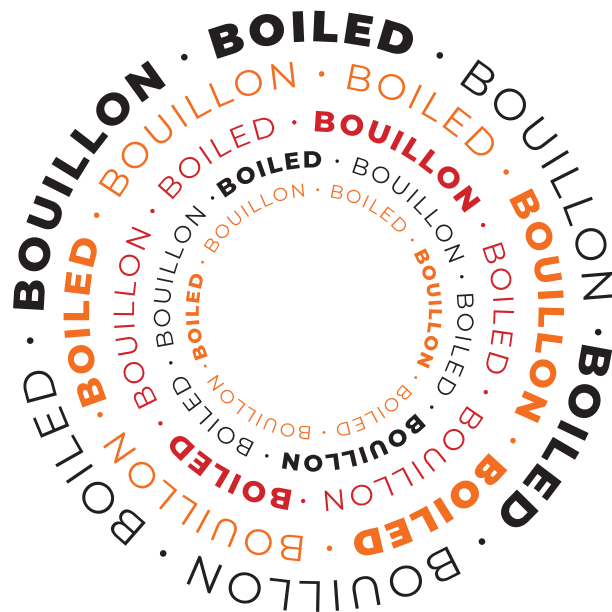
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In the practices, we review the different culinary techniques, as well as the ingredients belonging to the “original pantry” and to the non-original pantry in equal measure, since they are the basis of our cuisines. Products such as cassava, corn, peppers, pumpkin, cocoa, coconut, banana, tubers, tropical fruits, different marine species, meat products, salted meats, sausages and any other ingredient or product of diverse origin that are present in our kitchens.

From the historical point of view, and using traditional, ancestral and modern techniques, we approach Creole cuisine without leaving aside other resources assimilated through time. We firmly believe in cooking as a craft in which it is essential to acquire refined techniques to have the right tools to defend gastronomy as a creative process.

Historically, the ICC served as headquarters for projects such as *El Comedor*, a restaurant that would operate for a period of 15 years in its spaces, as would happen with *Romero Atelier Culinario*, and now with *El Maíz es Nuestro*, with Daniel Torrealba at the helm. In addition, it has been the headquarters of Venezuela Gastronómica since its foundation. And it has been present at events such as the International Gastronomy Salon and the International Gourmet Festival, among others.

The purpose of our management has been the kitchen as a transforming, creative activity and as a business; it has also been the formation of new generations of COOKS technically trained with ethical, managerial and professional foundations.





Restaurante El Comedor, at ICC



A CYCLE CLOSES...

After twenty-one years of uninterrupted educational management, the Culinary Institute of Caracas ceases its activities, both on-site and practical, as an educational center dedicated to the training of gastronomy professionals.

For various reasons, we have decided to dedicate our efforts –from other platforms and tools– to research, documentation, publication and dissemination of contents related to our gastronomy and culture.

In different formats and with different purposes or functions, the idea is to create a virtual space that safeguards the contents compiled during this period of time –research, graduate work–, which is one of the greatest assets we have, since it is the result of many years of work, dedication and conviction.

The interest in highlighting and understanding the aspects that have shaped our culture and society through time is one of the main cornerstones of this new stage of the ICC, which closes one cycle to open another. In addition to being grateful to all the people –students,



professors, administrative staff, allies and collaborators– who have been a part of this particular project, we feel a deep pride for the scope and achievements we have obtained in these twenty-one years, while we learned by teaching, shared by spreading and got it right by making mistakes.

Looking around us and appreciating with enthusiasm the thousands of people who passed through the classrooms of this center, many of them turned into local and international culinary professionals, is everything we expected as a reward and, fortunately, we received it.

Understanding ourselves as a national reference in many aspects, especially when we managed to model a way of teaching and doing Gastronomy, which is already manifested in, and through, other institutions and people, commits us and gives us a great responsibility, since we prepare the soil and cultivate it with faith in a country and its people.

There are no right, adequate or precise words to close this project. I can simply say: “Thank you to my country, to my fellow adventurers, to my friends, to my family and above all, to the great ICC family that is scattered all over the world.

Till next time...”

HÉCTOR ROMERO



Back, from left to right: Chef José Canga, Chef Pablo Blanco, Chef Carolina Monduc, Chef María Herrera, Chef Andri Lentini.
Adelante: Chef Eder Buitriago, Chef Adriana Díaz.

ARAGUA

CHEF MILENIUM SCHOOL OF
GASTRONOMY ARTS INSTITUTE

The passion for gastronomy and the dedication of Carolina Alejandra Monduc Contreras have been the driving force behind this ambitious project: the Chef Milenium School of Gastronomic Arts Institute, founded on December 22, 2004. Since its inception, Carolina Monduc was completely dedicated to learning about the culinary arts, and meticulously designed a curriculum whose effectiveness would be reflected in the academic achievements of the School. These have been recognized with distinctions such as the gold medal in the Culinary Cup of the Americas and multiple nominations for the *Tiuna de Oro Award*, during the years 2011-2015, among others.

This curriculum covers certifications to become: a Chef in International Cuisine, thus allowing the institute to train a professional with the ability to design, organize and manage activities in the gastronomic area in a productive and efficient way; a Professional Pastry Chef, responsible for coordinating, supervising and controlling the functions and activities of the bakery and pastry area, as well as the preparation and production of the items in his section, ensuring the highest level of quality. It also offers a Professional Bakery training to become an expert in bread making, with content based on the history of bakery, types of flours, sourdoughs and their inclusion in the bakery formulation, fermentation control, bread making techniques, among others.

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The objective of the Venezuelan Cuisine course, in each of the training programs, is to disseminate and strengthen knowledge about traditional gastronomy through a tour by regions, to introduce students to the techniques, ingredients, spices and other elements that make up the emblematic dishes of the different regions: central, capital, insular, northeastern, Guayana, the plains, Andean, Zulia, central-western and central-western.

In the professional training of the Chef Milenium School of Culinary Arts Institute, local ingredients and products from the state of Aragua are used to enhance the gastronomy and the efforts of the farmers of the region. Among these ingredients are corn, plantains, bananas, bonefish, lionfish from Ocumare de la Costa, and various fruits from Colonia Tovar. Whether in their natural state or transformed into preserves, jams, chutneys, and other products, each element reflects the authenticity and richness of the culinary heritage of the region.

In addition, by using local products, the institute directly supports farmers and promotes sustainability, fostering a supply chain that benefits the community and preserves the state's culinary traditions. This approach not only educates students in advanced culinary techniques, but also teaches them about the importance of local gastronomy and sustainable economy.

The student body, in conjunction with Chef Milenium school, always carries out social activities for different audiences and foundations, helping to

enhance the gastronomic and social culture in our state, thus promoting ethics, values and the desire to help others without expecting to receive anything in return.

Chef Milenium is always present in most of the gastronomic events in the state of Aragua, besides being the brand image of some commercial partners. The school is constantly on local channels to, through the screens, teach and show recipes of the cuisine of Aragua and Venezuela.

Over the years, the Institute has forged an outstanding reputation in the central region of the country and has become a true symbol of pride in the Aragua state. The institution has graduated twenty-nine (29) classes of Chef in International Cuisine and nineteen (19) classes of Pastry Chef, in addition to training numerous cohorts in Professional Bakery and Basic Cooking, along with a diverse range of specialized courses in gastronomy.

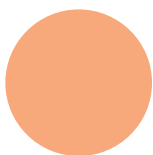
The Chef Milenium School of Gastronomic Arts Institute has not only educated generations of talented chefs but has set a standard of excellence that elevates Aragua's cuisine and gastronomy legacy into a bright future.



The school is constantly updating its curriculum and modern equipment to ensure that students are always at the forefront of culinary trends and techniques. This focus on updating and modernization reflects the institution's commitment to academic and professional excellence.



María Andreina Militello, Gabriela Fajardo, Marisol Carmona, Joaquín Gasca, Taina García, Miguel Fernández, María Fabiola Domínguez, Henry Montes, Aguamiel Mendoza, María Alejandra Ávila, José Eduardo Militello



CARACAS CHEF CAMPUS CULINARY INSTITUTE

Chef Campus Culinary Institute was born in Caracas, however, we immediately opened up to the world, and because we have presence in other countries with administrative offices and Spanish-speaking students, is why we consider ourselves the first culinary institute with Venezuelan roots and international status.

Our institution was founded to be a bridge and hinge of the encounter between the culinary cultures of Latin America, and to open the possibility for Venezuelan students and professionals to expand their knowledge by looking towards Spain and Europe, allowing them to learn about the gastronomy of those countries, and to receive a certification or endorsement with university credits from Venezuelan and Spanish institutions.

Long before the pandemic forced the multiplication of online training courses, we were already teaching classes through our E-learning platform, with which we have been able to reach different countries and train professionals abroad with our teaching methodology.

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We have agreements with the University Extension Office of the *Universidad Central de Venezuela* and with the Antonio Nebrija University of Madrid, in Spain, which endorse our academic courses; so does the Seville Superior School of Hotel Management, with which we share a technical degree specializing in Cooking and Gastronomy, Confectionery and Bakery, and Catering and Sommelier of 28 months of duration, which is studied between Venezuela and Spain.

Our curriculum has two modalities: classroom and distance learning. In the classroom mode, our students must also certify a number of hours in our E-learning platform.

We offer the diploma and the career of Haute Cuisine; and of Professional Bakery and Pastry, which can be studied together with a specialization. These programs, the basis of our curriculum, are divided into three modules: Initiation to International Cuisine Techniques, Head Chef and Advanced Techniques, and Executive Chef in Modern Gastronomy and Restaurant Management.

In addition, and with excellent Latin American and Spanish professionals, Chef Campus has developed an academic portfolio to offer training courses, diplomas and master's degrees in culinary nutrition, Plant-Based, Food Chemistry, Sustainable Gastronomy, Cocoa Management and Handling, Menu Management and Engineering, Marketing, Communication and Business, aimed at the Restaurant and Hospitality sector. That is why we say that «we are an Institute of 360° Studies», because we cover with our programs a whole universe of gastronomy studies.

Our Haute Cuisine curriculum is based on the techniques and recipes of French cuisine, the basis of universal cuisine. As for International Cuisine, our students study the culinary history and then develop the main recipes of Spanish and Mediterranean, Italian, Asian, Peruvian, Mexican, and Middle Eastern cuisine, among others.

A separate chapter is dedicated to the research and development of the Venezuelan Regional Cuisines, in the third module of studies of the Haute Cuisine career.

Venezuelan cuisine is integrated transversally in the Haute Cuisine program, from basic techniques to the latest trends. Food Technology classes focus on research and development of native products, driving innovation



Avant-garde kitchens: Three fully equipped kitchens with the main utensils for training in haute cuisine, bakery and professional pastry making.



Five classrooms with capacity for more than 300 students in different shifts during the week. Modern and comfortable spaces for theoretical and practical learning.

with local ingredients. And the Catering exams require students to master the elaboration of traditional dishes and develop creative recipes inspired by regional cuisines.

To motivate our students to deepen their knowledge of our gastronomy, we created the Creative cooking Contest, which we have been hosting for more than two years.

And for those seeking a deeper understanding, we have created a Diploma in Venezuelan Gastronomy that explores the history, techniques and ingredients that make our cuisine one of the most diverse and vibrant on the continent.

The training of chefs in our school is not only based on the mastery of culinary techniques, but also on the passion for culture and identity. Venezuelan cuisine is an essential element in this training process, providing our students with the necessary tools to become professionals of integrity and ambassadors of the national gastronomy.



Sra. Gladys Marín, Norah Muóz Peralta, Mileidys Vargas, Sheryl Palencia.



Since the foundation of the School, the students have maintained an active participation with the surroundings,

[illegible]

“we understand that with the profession of cook you can do a lot of social work, hence for 5 years we have been cooking for a group of sisters of the Catholic Church who are in charge of the elderly and low-income children”. This is a practice that the “Adelists” strive to pass on to their students.

The School trains professional cooks with comprehensive knowledge in all areas of gastronomy, focusing on traditional Venezuelan cuisine with special emphasis on the Lara cuisine.

In this module of Lara cooking, we teach the recipes that were served by Don Adelis, and that are part of our identity. In the Venezuelan Cuisine practices, the products used correspond to each one of the regions, an example is the Amazonian Cuisine class, where we bring the instructor from Puerto Ayacucho, and also bring the products grown and harvested by the different ethnic groups that live there.

At Adelis Sisirucá, we not only teach our students the techniques and methods of Venezuelan and Lara cuisine, but through each preparation we seek to contribute to the research and systematization of knowledge about the national and regional culinary heritage.

In International Cuisine, the modules are: Latin American Cuisine, French Cuisine, Italian Cuisine and Spanish Cuisine. These modules allow our cooks to have the competence to use traditional and modern techniques in the execution of the cooking preparations of each of these countries.

The curriculum includes complementary subjects such as Deboning, Meat Portioning, Dining Room Service, Grill Techniques and use of Grill, which provide a broader vision of the world of cooking.

The study methodology is based on 20% of theoretical classes where the subjects covered are Professional Ethics, Food Safety, Nutrition and Dietetics, Recipe Standardization; and 80% of practical classes.

One of the requirements for graduating is a three-month internship. Students have the option of doing it in the country or abroad. And the School is in charge of maintaining communications with the people in charge of where the future interns can complete their internships. The School has the support of several restaurants in Venezuela for these internships: Cristal restaurant, located in Yaritagua; in Caracas, in El Bosque Bistró, Alto restaurant, and in the cocoa Hacienda La Trinidad where *Cacao de Origen*

operates. Abroad, the restaurants that give us the opportunity to receive interns are Chef Quique Dacosta in Valencia, Spain; Chef Enrique Limardo in Washington D.C. and in Medellin, Colombia, the restaurant El Cielo.

One of the goals of the Adelis Sisirucá School is to develop an educational platform, specialized in professional gastronomic pedagogy, capable of stimulating interest in food traditions, to provide them with a level of execution of the highest demand, in order to contribute significantly to the enrichment and constant updating of the national culinary heritage.



Currently, the school, whose curriculum includes subjects such as Advanced Professional Techniques: Vacuum and Low Temperature Cooking, is updated with the necessary equipment for our students to be in contact with equipment such as sous vide, convection-steam ovens, blast chillers, slow cookers and vacuum machines. In addition to having a Bean to Bar chocolate laboratory at their disposal.



Professor Maritza and Alvaro Bravo.

ZULIA

ALEJANDRO MAGNO
GASTRONOMIC EDUCATION
CENTER (CEGAMA)

Cegama is an educational center that started 14 years ago, aware of a flaw in the gastronomic market, since its founder thought that in Maracaibo, Zulia state, people thought that by studying gastronomy they graduated as a “Chef”. With much talent, she demonstrated to the people of Maracaibo and Venezuela that this is a culinary education, because if every home has a gastronomy, imagine the breadth of a whole country! Because studying gastronomy is to study the geography, history and beliefs of each region. Our motto is to graduate cooks, not chefs, since our humble cooks left the ferments, the kneading, the kitchen of use, where they managed to learn and implement each of the cuisines that came to Venezuela. It has been 14 years of gastronomic experience, and we are looking forward to many more. Cegama was founded in 2010, in a get-together, where the teacher Maritza Vargas, her daughter Cirmory Vargas and three other students –Franco Balmes, Greinys Monroy and Nalis Blanco–, engaged in conversation and give way to their dreams. From there arose the proposal that Professor Maritza should leave a legacy to Venezuela, because for her students, her love of cooking and her dedication, went beyond teaching how to cut, seal and make recipes. And among other issues, it was agreed that this great training

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Cirmarys Vargas



Edgardo Barrera

was not to train “Chefs”, but it was to form and train “Cooks”, because cooking is a responsibility, a cook is an artist, a psychologist, a philosopher, a creator of textures and flavors.

Those students are no longer at the school, as they have taken different paths. Professor Maritza Vargas, her daughter Cirmarys Vargas and Danielle Bracho –a Cegama graduate– continue to be linked to the School with her enterprise @danielleeventos. Three enterprising women and lovers of the culinary art, each one of them with a different and very important commitment to our center.

Cirmarys Vargas brings creativity and objectivity with an emotional intelligence that she implements in management and in her classes. Being a student of neuro-gastronomy, her motto is “Believe to Create”. And Danielle Bracho, with her wit in the Pastry Shop, and her blessed hands, makes it clear to us the importance of imagination and magic when creating and decorating cakes.

Maritza Vargas, known as @la profeMaritza, is a born researcher who, since childhood, has been aware of the importance of studying the subject of cooking –reader of historians such as Rafael Cartay, Armando Scanonne and many more–, so that she can deliver in each class, as she says: “The little I know, but I know nothing”. Never ceasing to prepare herself to be a better cook, today, she is the “*Generala de la Cocina*”, the Kitchen General; with her discipline and determination, she earned that name, setting as her goal to train the best cooks in Venezuela, and instilling gastronomy as a discipline and philosophy of life, hand in hand with a qualified human capital, which promotes the skills and qualities of the students towards the professionalism they truly deserve.

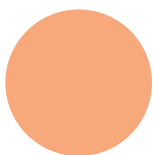
To speak of Venezuelan cuisine is to thank each cook who implemented the different cultures and philosophies of those great cuisines that arrived in Venezuela with the emigration, as happened in the time of Guzmán Blanco, when they were in charge of bringing great French cooks; and as Elroy, an American journalist of the time, said: “Caracas is like a one-story Paris”. For Cegama. it is essential to make known the origins of our training, to know where we come from and where we are going. Gastronomy is history, philosophy and geography adapted to local products, because it is to adapt each technique and each method of the most emblematic cuisines of the world to our products, making it clear that Venezuela has the methods and techniques of these world cuisines.

A distinctive element of the School is that we not only prepare the students to be inside a kitchen, we also prepare them to be outside; they are trained with a series of subjects that prepare them as Food and Beverage Managers, taking the area of gastronomy at all levels of the market, including Marketing, which is the most used tool on a daily basis. Part of this training is linked to the organization of events, project closings, gastronomic moments where students are prepared for the culinary world with various tools inside and outside the kitchen area.

Our motto says “learn” because learning gives us knowledge and power; “surprise” because we surprise in every delivery we offer to every human being, and “undertake” because every gastronomic project that is started leaves and carries gastronomic memories.



Chef Juan Timaure, Chef María Zulima Giménez, Maestro Chef Víctor Santander, Maestro Chef Víctor Hugo Santander



LARA MI SAZÓN SCHOOL

The history of this school begins in an unconventional way, in October 2004, when Chef Victor Santander began to teach cooking classes, with specific objectives, for friends who wanted to change a little the menu of their homes. Interested people joined along the way, and the courses took shape and were lengthened according to the pupils' needs.

Later, and based on the experience of Chef Santander –founder and director of the Mi Sazón School–, these curricula were designed to cover all the requirements for cooks to discover their seasoning and successfully handle themselves in any kitchen, whether in their own business or in a commercial enterprise.

In December 2013, Mi Sazón School began operations as a Restaurant-School in the facilities of the Italian-Venezuelan Club; later in 2015, it would get the endorsement of the *Universidad Politécnica Territorial Andrés Bello Blanco* (UPTAEB).

At the end of 2019, in search of a location that would allow us to expand the School –in terms of classrooms for each specialty–, we moved to the current location in the Nueva Segovia neighborhood, where we have a bakery area, a pastry and confectionery area, a cooking room, a library, a conference room, and a recording studio for online classes and other projects. In October 2023, we signed an inter-institutional cooperation agreement with the National University of Yacambú (UNY).

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Under the principles of excellence, creativity, autonomy and social responsibility, we want to provide knowledge in terms of techniques, cooking methods, food chemistry -referred to the processes and effects produced in them-, good seasoning and cooking logic, essential points to practice Creative Cooking, mastering Fusion Cooking.

Seeking to strengthen our school, we obtained the Inter Institutional Co-operation Framework Agreement with UPTAEB seven years ago, and with the UNY one year ago, for the endorsement of our Certificates and Diplomas.

We are currently preparing an online workshop on Venezuelan, Panamanian and Costa Rican cuisine, where the Venezuelan cuisine will be taught by historian Juan Alonso Molina, and Chef Victor Santander, who is also the founder of the Gastronomic Association of the Lara State (ASOGALA).

For internships, we have alliances with the Tiffany Hotel, Lidotel, the bakeries Panadería del Este, La Victoriana del C.C. Sambil, and the hotel La Estancia. For workshops and diploma courses, we have international alliances with the *Centro Superior Cultural & Turismo*, endorsed by the Universidad de los *Llanos del Pacífico* of Panama and the Culinary Trainer School of Costa Rica, certified by the World Association of Chefs Societies (WACS) and endorsed by the Ibero-American Forum of Professional Gastronomic Organization. We have an agreement with the Lara Wine Academy for the Diploma in Enogastronomy; and another agreement with the *Unidad de Alimentación Saludable y Tu Médico C.A.*, for the Diploma in Healthy Gastronomy and Healthy Eating.

Mi Sazón School does not cease advising and accompanying students or alumni who wish to start their own business. We endorse the courses taught by some of them in their schools, such as Easy Cooking, Baked Sweets, Chocolate and Honey, in Barquisimeto. We also endorse and advise the courses of the Institute of Gastronomic Arts and Techniques of Venezuela of FUNDAFSI in Nirgua, Yaracuy state.

We have participated as a gastronomic school in various local activities such as the World's Largest Hallaca Festival (108m), the 120m Pepito Festival –Guinness Record in Barquisimeto–, in two editions of the Lara in Chocolate Festival, and in three editions of the Lara Magic Gastronomy Festival. We have also given the lectures: The Art of Gastronomy and presentations of Live Cooking: Fusion-Vanguard Cuisine, on the International Day of the Cook.

We are a Gastronomic Institution with a very clear objective: To train excellent professionals in Gastronomy, not only in knowledge and execution of cooking techniques through recipes, but also in values. Ethics and Morals are fundamental pillars of our teaching. We instill teamwork, discipline and integrity in our students.



Our headquarters are located in Nueva Segovia Urb. 2nd street with 19, house no. 1-91, Barquisimeto in the state of Lara; and consists of three floors distributed as follows: on the first floor is the entrance hall, the bakery and pastry room, on the second floor we have the kitchen room and the library, where we also dictate the theoretical classes. In the basement we have the conference and presentation room; and the studio for recordings and online classes.



Norma Bustamante



Wilmer Zambrano



Kitchen Area



For the School, Venezuelan Cuisine is the most important subject, in fact it is the one with the highest number of academic hours. Being Venezuelan, we think that the main thing is to learn our gastronomic culture, that the students know the food regions of the country and their original and local pantries, to go in line to create creative dishes with a modern local pantry, giving

[illegible]

openness to what is ours and encouraging the local economy. In order to complete the training, the course also includes Venezuelan Creole Sweets in Confectionery.

The Cooking curriculum also includes fermented and distilled beverages, where rum, beer, coffee and cocuy, which are emblematic drinks in our country, are taught, and is complemented with wines covering the Oenology program. We also see Aragua Cuisine, where we show our local pantry by municipalities, and at the end, we see avant-garde techniques, where we see the transformation of traditional Venezuelan cuisine into avant-garde dishes worthy of a five-star restaurant. And in both cooking and pastry, we teach basic techniques for the handling of cocoa and its transformation into chocolate.

For internships, we have collaborations with restaurants in Aragua where they usually request interns, as well as with the Association of Bakers of the state, where they require pastry chefs, bakers and confectioners.

In today's Venezuela, internships outside the country are difficult, due to the expenses and the economic situation we are facing, however, ACAEG has agreements with cooking schools in Mexico, Bolivia, Colombia and Panama where the doors are open to apply for internships. In addition, our academic director, Wilmer Zambrano, is the national director of Associated Chefs of Latin America and the Caribbean, in Venezuela, which allows us to send interns from the academy to complete their practical hours in all the countries where the Association operates.

At the national level, we are always being requested for interns in different areas. We have good synergy with renowned Venezuelan chefs, such as Nelson Pocho Suarez in Bakery, Emerson Freites in Pastry, Camilo Herrera, Rómulo Hidalgo, Nelson Méndez, Jesús Méndez and Christian Corrales in Cooking, and Orlando Morantes in the cocktail area.

ACAEG keeps good relations with the community. Diagonal to us is the Regional School for Hearing Impaired Children, on several occasions we have held workshops for the children of this school in the area of Cooking and Baking. We have also organized meals to take to a shelter for abandoned girls, which is also nearby. In this way, we try to contribute our grain of salt and also involve students and teachers in these community support activities.



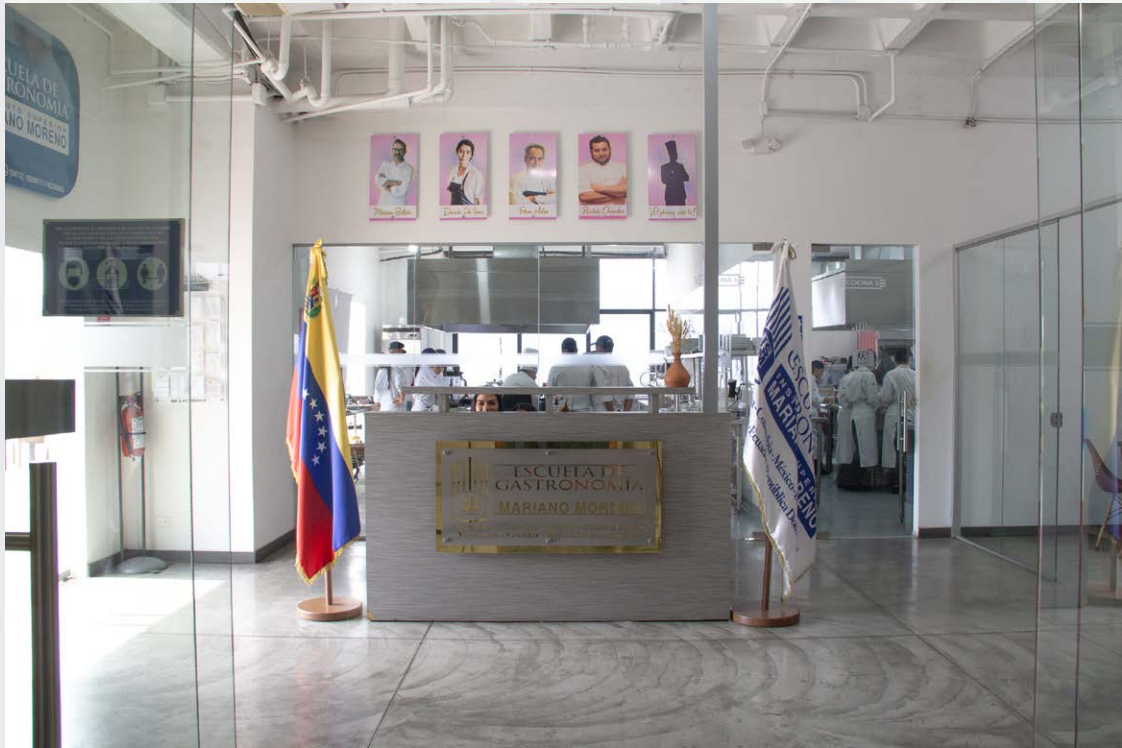
Theory Room and Bartender, barista and table service area.

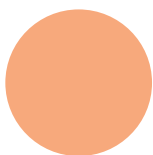


Pastry room and theory area.

Every year, we carry out several social actions together with the Aragua Gastronomic Civil Association, of which our director is the vice-president. These actions are such as Caldito para el Alma, in which soups are made for the El Limón home for the elderly and for the White Cross; arepazos in solidarity with street people; and the arepazo for World Arepa Day. In December, we always do activities for the El Limón Home for the Elderly and for the girls of SAPAMA, where we collect clothes, gifts and Christmas food for them to enjoy.

Simultaneously, the school organizes events, fairs and activities that highlight the richness of Venezuelan cuisine. ACAEG has alliances with the sweet makers of Palo Negro, with the Venezuelan Society of Rabbit Farming and the Faculty of Agronomy of the UCV, where there is always some activity in favor of our gastronomy.





CARACAS
INSTITUTO SUPERIOR
MARIANO MORENO

Extending its international legacy, the Mariano Moreno gastronomic school is established in 2020 in Venezuela. Founded in 1963 in Buenos Aires by Roberto Sade, it is today a benchmark in education throughout Latin America.

The Mariano-Moreno philosophy, –as Sade explains–, considers that «cooking is the teaching of a trade», which is why the curriculum does not last four to five years like a university degree, and avoids lengthening the study with complementary subjects, because «cooks have a specific skill and knowledge that they will develop in practice».

Thus, the long courses at Mariano Moreno have a duration of two years for the Cooking Course, i.e. four semesters; and the Professional Bakery-Pastry making course has a duration of one year, i.e. two semesters.

The curriculum of the Cooking Program includes specific programs on classical French cooking techniques, and other modules on different culinary cultures designed to immerse students in the history, techniques, ingredients and characteristic dishes of each one of them, where they will learn about Argentine, Chinese, American, Japanese, Spanish, Peruvian, Italian and Mexican cuisine, providing students with a deep and broad understanding of international gastronomy.

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In the Venezuelan Cuisine course, we will learn about different culinary regions such as the Zulia, Andean, Central Western, Coastal, Afro-Venezuelan, Central, Plains, Amazonian and Guiana, and we will deepen our knowledge of their traditional techniques and ingrained food habits, through visits to these gastronomic regions that we make with the students to have direct contact with the traditional chefs and cooks in their place of origin.

In addition, we encourage the connection with outstanding Venezuelan chefs who defend and promote the richness of Venezuelan cuisine, including chefs such as Juan Alonso Molina, Marco Sforza, Egidio Rodríguez, Mehmet Uzuñöz, Roberto Costagliola, Jorge Muñoz, and Miro Popic, who have shared their experience and knowledge with our students.

We value the authenticity and history behind each dish and believe in the power of cuisine to unite communities and preserve cultural identity. For this reason, the school organizes a variety of events, fairs and activities that not only highlight the richness of Venezuelan cuisine, but also foster pride and appreciation of the national gastronomic heritage.

We recently organized the presentation of *Fuego pemón*, a book awarded by the Gourmand Awards. And together with our students we held an extraordinary celebration –under the guidance of chef and author Lucy Quero– that allowed us to celebrate the culinary diversity of Venezuela.

We manage internship opportunities for our students nationally and internationally through an approach focused on intermediate contact. We, as an institution, serve as a bridge between our students and internship opportunities both inside and outside the country, and we work with our alumni and partners in the gastronomic industry who know the training quality of our graduates.

We are committed to training our students not only as talented chefs, but also as guardians of our culinary traditions, thus promoting the Venezuelan culinary legacy for future generations.



Our extensive infrastructure includes a total area of 1600 m² where four industrial kitchens operate, each with an area of 50 m², fully equipped with ovens, stoves, grills, fryers and other equipment necessary for large-scale food preparation. In addition, we have classrooms equipped with audiovisual equipment, such as projectors and blackboards, which facilitate the teaching of culinary theory and cooking techniques.

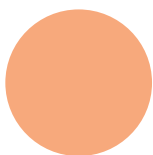


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Enrique Lima, Primly Zambrano, Mónica Sahmkov



William Tse, Elba Sangronis, Pablo Hernández



CARACAS
LAGA GASTRONOMY
ACADEMY
UCAB - PLAZA`S

We are very fortunate to be on the campus of the Andrés Bello Catholic University, a very active environment full of young people. This has motivated us to do more and more activities focused on this student body, so that they can get to know us and learn about gastronomy.

Inaugurated in November 2022, the School arose thanks to Program of the Academies established by Father José Virtuoso and Academic Vice Rector Gustavo García, who, thanks to their extensive experience in the educational field, realized the need to create new options other than traditional training. More dynamic options linked to today's world, this is how LAGA Gastronomy Academy was created, as a result of an alliance between UCAB and Plaza's supermarkets.

We are a school in constant evolution that not only wants to train cooks and pastry chefs, but Venezuelans who see gastronomy as a tool for change and evolution; and we are working daily to expand our offerings to achieve that goal. We offer certifications in both cooking and pastry, practical and theoretical diplomas, short programs, courses and consulting.

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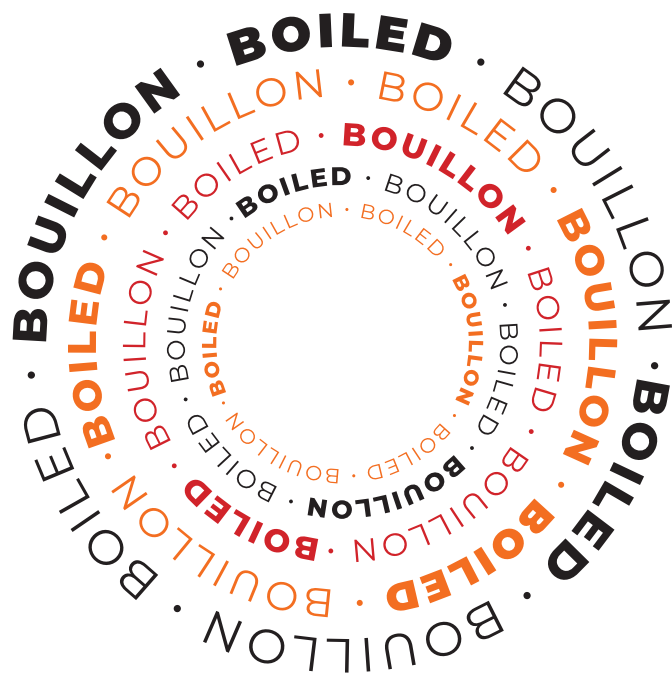
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Venezuelan cuisine has, within our certifications (1099 academic hours), 260 hours dedicated to Venezuelan regional cuisines, where the different regions of the country are studied, highlighting their ingredients, characteristics, typical preparations, climate and location.

Our semester dedicated to regional cuisines and chefs not only includes master classes by José Antonio Casanova -a professor who has dedicated a large part of his career to exploring these cuisines- but also the presence of three or four chefs from the regions, who, with their special visit to the School, bring the ingredients of the area to transmit their flavors and customs to the students.

The 192 hours per semester that we teach in Practical Cooking allow our students to learn about the basics of Classical Cooking, as well as about our cuisine; not counting the 248 hours of Bakery and 248 hours of Pastry. In addition to that, we are thinking about those students who wish to become entrepreneurs in the Venezuelan gastronomic field and, in the case of the Pastry certification, we will include a module on Entrepreneurship, due to the profile of the program.

We want to train chefs who are experts in technique, with an understanding of business management and research methodology under the transversal value of sustainability.

LAGA has two locations, one at UCAB and the other at Los Chaguaramos.



At the Los Chaguaramos site we have a cooking room for practical classes and then a space where lectures or tastings can be given.

At the UCAB site we have three rooms for practical classes: a pastry room, a bakery room and a kitchen room. We also have the benefit of being able to use the different laboratories that exist on the university campus, rooms for online classes, hybrid classes, traditional classrooms, among others.



Undoubtedly, being in one of the best university campuses in the country is a great differentiating element, since students are allowed to use spaces such as the Architecture experimental room, the library, and the auditoriums, among others.

The Arepa University

by Sumito Estévez

I

For the purpose of having the arepa - made the Venezuelan way - recognized worldwide as a cultural concept, it will need to wear a cap and gown. It may sound like an exaggeration, but do not forget that pizza has its *corsi avanzati della Asoziacione Verace Pizza Napoletana*¹ - and people pay the trip to Italy to take them -; the hamburger has its 12,000 m2 university or that if we type in Google: "online course on Mexican taco", we find hundreds of them. If these workshops exist, it is because the three fast food concepts I have just mentioned have ended up having academic status and generate undertakings.

In times when the ubiquity of information makes us live in the mirage of believing that an academic act is no longer necessary because "all the information is there", this article intends to stand as a defense of cooking schools. For many years, I have witnessed not only their importance, but also their infinite capacity to change lives.

II

"Massification" depends on the collective development of skills and that is exactly what a school achieves. It is often said that "cooking is learned by doing" (almost always in demagogic speeches), and that is a half-truth because cooking is learned by learning. I mean, with maestros, teachers and instructors. It will never be the same, neither in numbers nor in long-term consequences, a son learning to make arepas with his mother than 1000 people doing it in a school. So, that is one of the most important reasons for any school: to develop skills so as to be able to massify.

1 True Neapolitan Pizza Association Advanced Courses (free translation from Gloria Rodriguez).

But since we have brought up the example of home learning, there is another fundamental value that emerges from the classrooms and practice kitchens, “variety”. When one learns at home, one learns to cook a type of arepa (the one liked at home), with a type of dough and with the fillings that are to the taste of that home. In schools, students are confronted with the many possibilities and then decide, either for economic or cultural reasons, which of those possibilities they will choose. I, for example, learned at home to make the arepa “the Caracas way”, the one in the shape of a flying saucer that sounds muffled when you hit it right out of the oven. No one taught me how to make it with cheese or showed me peeled corn dough with ashes. In our hypothetical University of the Arepa, the students would study it all: types of dough, variations, regional differences, changes according to the corn used. Everything, literally, “everything”.

The previous paragraph brings us to another very important point of any school, which is «the focus». It is true that everything they can tell you in a school, be it Quantum Physics or Arepas, can be found on the Internet and with free access. It is so. Nonetheless, we need a guide person who knows how to separate the wheat from the chaff, who indicates the priority in the search for information, who scrutinizes our strengths and leads us on a specific training path because that is the one in which we will flourish the most... A mentor who challenges us, provokes us and allows us to live an “experience”.

And so we fall into the experience based on something key such as “repetition”. One can study diving techniques watching videos on the internet for weeks, and it will be useless if we do not do multiple dives. Why cooking should be different? In cooking, there is a sacred truth: In the long run, it is not the talented who survive, but those who have repeated and practiced to exhaustion. This is a very important point because we are in an era in which “innovation” is the mantra; and this mantra is confused with changing paths all the time, without taking the time to perfect anything.

This obsessive repetition results in the possibility of standardization and replication, a key factor in achieving both a profitable business and a concept with global cultural influence! The phrase “my secret ingredient is love” is nice, but for a dish to be sustained over time, “love” must be translated into love for the profession, and this involves respecting rules.

“Replicating” depends in turn on a factor that every school teaches, such as learning to “document” with a common language among peers. Orality does not generate relay, although it may sound unpleasant to say so. Just as we would not be listening to Bach today if his written music had not been catalogued in scores, recipes become diluted over time until disappearing if they are not documented. The grandmother’s recipe reaches the daughter who heard it; but it will only pass on to the generation of grandchildren and great-grandchildren if someone finds the notebook where it was written. Learning to write and read is the work of schools.

Once we understand the importance of the “procedures manual”, the ensemble of processes emerges naturally. I am referring to the Hygiene Measures and Critical Control Points (CCP); to the ideal equipment to be more efficient, and to the set of “non-negotiables”, which is nothing more than those practices that under no circumstances can be left undone - either for legal reasons or for good practices learned at school.

Talking about “equipment” or “hygiene” is also to talk about the area of expertise of other professions such as, in this case, Industrial Design or Medicine. We arrive at one of the most beautiful values that schools teach: Wanting to dialogue and associate with other disciplines. You do not feel as part of a bubble, but of a collective that thinks differently and understands life from different points of view. A collective that unites for the common good. We have reached an almost poetic moment in every profession. Thus begin the desire to establish interdisciplinary laboratories for development and research, alliances for festivals and contests, and the days for celebration. Graphic designers, cultural promoters, nutritionists, biologists, arepera owners scattered around the world, talking to each other. Humans holding hands, speaking a common language. Speaking in “arepa language”.

So, what have the cooking schools been, and will continue to be, useful for? They are useful to build. To build guilds, build knowledge, build economic welfare, build a country.

I welcome you to this, *The Arepa University*.



Sumito Estévez

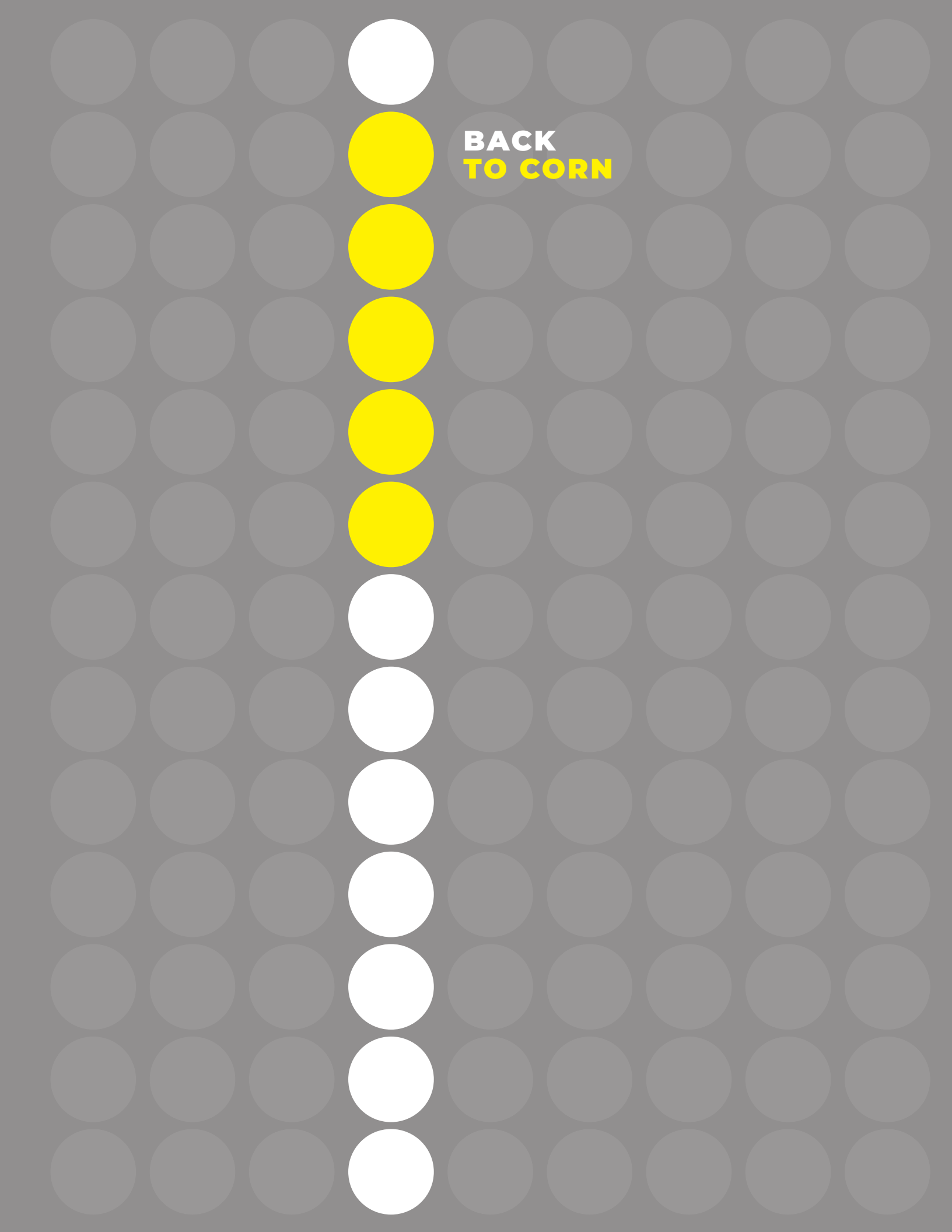
 @sumitoestevez

Venezuelan chef, he is one of the most important and recognized chefs in Latin America. Multifaceted, he has been able to balance his public roles as a teacher, businessman, television personality and writer. He constantly participates in social entrepreneurship projects because he considers gastronomy a fundamental vehicle in the construction of self-esteem, prosperity and integration.

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AREPAS FOR THE FUTURE: ROOTED WISDOM WITH THE FLAVOR OF HOME



The image features a background of a grid of circles. A central column of circles is highlighted, consisting of a white circle at the top, five yellow circles, and seven white circles at the bottom. The text "BACK TO CORN" is positioned to the right of the yellow circles.

**BACK
TO CORN**



Creole Corn in Venezuela

María Elena Morros

Creole seeds:
«The best way to preserve them is by using them»

When I was invited to write about creole corn in Venezuela, I thought of doing it with the structure of a scientific article; however, my intuition told me that I should handle a different strategy. This topic should be approached in a narrative way, placing feeling before technical jargon, because that is what “creole seeds” are... cultural treasures protected by the peasants.

Many years working with rural communities allowed me to make sense of the complexity of the systemic approach and to recognize the integral thinking of the farmer when making decisions. It is not only about observing and categorizing, but also about learning to listen and understanding the logic of their actions.

For the peasant family, creole seeds are part of their cultural heritage, represent their food safety and are present in their culinary traditions. Creole corn are corn varieties that have been cultivated and selected by peasants and small farmers for generations. They have adaptation characteristics to grow in different agroecological contexts and which are a fundamental part of biodiversity. For the farmers, having native varieties represents the security of being able to use the seed during the next planting cycle. These seeds do not require the use of external agricultural inputs because they are adapted to their conditions, and that means lower production costs. They will probably yield less quantity than the improved cultivars, but they are more efficient.

These Venezuelan peasant family farming systems are characterized by diversified designs, with creole corn being planted in association with other crops such as beans, yucca, pigeon pea, yam, pumpkin, among others,

representing the guarantee of food for the family and the supply of items for rural and urban markets. In our task as researchers, we were surprised by the great diversity of items and types of seeds that are in the hands of the peasant communities, and the role they have played in their conservation over the years, thus deserving the title of Guardians of Seeds. The diversity of crops, the diverse strategies for conservation and management of seeds, and the knowledge about culinary uses and their benefits, are amazing. It is knowledge that has been passed down from parents to children, and that is still maintained and appreciated today.

I highlight the importance of peasant women in the conservation of seeds, which is related to the expression “the best way to conserve creole seeds is to use them”, (in) arepas, soups, breads, cakes, mojos, chichas, sweets, among other delicacies. It is important to emphasize that peasant knowledge about the use of creole seeds is also part of the biodiversity, hence the importance of their rescue, registration and conservation.

History of creole corn in Venezuela

The work by Segovia and Alfaro, entitled: ***El maíz: un rubro estratégico para la soberanía agroalimentaria de los venezolanos*** –Corn: a strategic item for Venezuelan food sovereignty–, details the history of corn in our country. It highlights the fact that corn was domesticated approximately 8,000 years ago between Mexico and Guatemala, the region where there is the greatest variability of corn, considered its center of origin. In their work, the authors cite McClintock et al. (1981) who point out that Venezuelan corn originates from ancient introductions that have a connection with the Mexican and Central American races Nal-Tel, Zapalote Chico, Tepecintle and Salvadoran.

Likewise, the authors review the work of Grant et al. (1965) where it is emphasized that, during the colonial period until mid-1940s, the following types of corn were planted: tuxpeño, pira, canilla, guaribero, puya, cariacó, chandelle, chirimito, cubano amarillo, negrito, puya grande, aragüito and tusón, being these, at the time, an important part of the production and diet of Venezuelans. It was during 1939 when the official genetic improvement program began in Venezuela. The germplasm base for the development

of new varieties and hybrids came from these local cultivars and from the exchange of genetic material with Colombia, Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean.

The promotion of the use of improved cultivars, both national and imported, is currently the basis of the business production system in the country; however, in some regions, in peasant systems, Cariaco type corn continues to be planted, with which various artisanal products are made, such as baked bread, shortbread, and fororo; other creole varieties of yellow corn are used to prepare arepas, cachapas, atoles and chicha; and various other types of white and purple corn are also planted and used.

According to Engineer Nayiri Camacaro, personal communication, March 28, 2024, head of the Plant Genetic Resources Unit of the National Agricultural Research Institute (INIA), 61 entries of creole corn from 8 Venezuelan entities are registered in the Germplasm Bank database.

White and yellow Cariaco corn, chuco corn, güajirero cuarentón red corn, black corn, four-color corn, black corn, purple corn, Yucatán corn, chiquito corn, indigenous purple corn, Tocatorón corn, cotufa-type corn, striped corn, among others, are the various Creole names that the villagers use to identify their creole corn.

In this sense, it is of enormous importance for the food safety of the country, to deepen the study of creole corn by region, including the collection, characterization, detailed management and conservation of them, as well as their culinary use in each region. This research could be carried out by a team of professionals from different disciplines.

Use diversity

Among the uses highlighted in the records of INIA's germplasm bank are the preparation of chichas, husked arepas, fororo (traditional beverage made from Cariaco corn), majarete, carato, atoles and cachapas.

According to Engineer A. Berti, personal communication, March 26, 2024, in the highlands of Trujillo state there are three types of Cariaco corn: white, yellow and purple. The production cycle of these maize varieties lasts 8 months. The white and yellow varieties are small in size, up to 1.20m, and

the purple varieties are tall. The purple corn is used to make arepas and chicha, and the white corn is used to bake bread, **polvorosas** and the famous **mantecadas de Niquitao**, a type of cake made by the Moreno family more than 100 years ago.

In these moorlands of Trujillo, arepas are made with raw Cariaco corn. The corn is not peeled but soaked, ground and passed through the stone, and then roasted in the **budare**. They are very thin arepas, they look like cassava. Other types of creole corn present in the region are chucos corn, both yellow and white, chiquito corn, and white Yucatan corn.

In the recipe book **Niquitao un pueblo con sabor** the following recipes are recorded: corn **tungos**, typical of the Holy Week season, to accompany the sweet called «curruchete» (sweet curd or Creole cheese, milk and raw cane sugar); corn mazamorra, special food for children and the elderly; local gofios, mantecadas and cheese arepas baked with Cariaco corn.

Traditional Venezuelan sweets include some recipes based on Cariaco corn, such as the **pan de horno** (salted biscotti type of bread) from the plains, filled with sweet cambur and baked in firewood; **pan de horno**, carato, majarete, from the Aragua region, delicacies prepared by the Asociación Civil Dulceras de Palo Negro, and gofio from the coast of Barlovento.

Finally, I would like to refer to the reflections of @cocinandinave when he says: "...we have always lived with our backs turned to the original commensalities that define Venezuela as a diverse and tasty territory... Understanding the territory and its crops, is to dialogue with our native peoples from their pots, this is essential to strengthen our identity and safeguard the diversity and cultural richness of our regions..."

Recipe of the Mantecadas from Niquitao

A beautiful tradition of the town of Niquitao in the state of Trujillo, are the well-known mantecadas. They proudly tell you... “that recipe was my grandmother’s, I learned to make them when I was a child and I have been making them for over forty years”. The same shape and unforgettable flavor; it is recommended to have them with cold milk or coffee with milk, and not to talk while eating mantecadas because you can choke on the floury texture of the Cariaco corn. Here you have the recipe taken from the recipe book of Mrs. Laura García de Zambrano, native of Boconó, Trujillo state, original authorship of Mrs. Modesta Briceño, year 1991.

Ingredients

- 1 kg of corn powder (Cariaco corn flour)
- 3 sticks of butter or 380 grams
- 1/2 kg of sugar
- 8 eggs
- 2 tablespoons of lard (optional)

Preparation

Mix well the butter and shortening with the sugar until it has a creamy consistency; gradually add the eggs one by one and continue beating. Once these first ingredients are mixed, add the flour to form a cream. Place the cream in the previously buttered molds and bake in the oven at 200°C for approximately half an hour or until a knife comes out clean when inserted.

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Our Arepa: A Recurring Symbol

Andrés Fernando Rodríguez

IN THIS COSMIC AND ALMOST RELIGIOUS BOND BETWEEN MAN
AND THE FRUITS OF THE EARTH, THE PEASANTS OF YARACUY STILL CALL
THE MORNING STELLA OF THE LITANIES «ESTRELLA AREPERA» [...].

Mariano Picón Salas

In the beginning it was the *theocintle* and the *theocintle* was God and the corn was with God. And the corn was God and the verb was bread... And erepa was corn and the corn was arepa: Bread of the soil. Bread of men. Bread of the Gods. Edible God. Sun of Bread.

A good example of hybridization that does not deny its indigenous origin, because the Taino voice maize will be followed by the Cumanagota voice "erepa", referring to the same grain, which will move towards the bread made with it, to crown it as the august emblem of these lands, processed with smooth grinding stones, with metate or nixtamalized, then joining the African pestle, the domestic pestle, the industrial pestle, even to facilitate its processing and then the techniques and fillers generated in the process of interculturalization with Europe. Solar disk of corn. "Bread in disc shape". Symbol of Bread. Corn bread: Arepa.

To say that a symbol is recurrent is perhaps a truism or, at least, a reiteration, since recurrence is inherent and immanent to the symbol. Thus, to say that the arepa is a symbol, it is surely to affirm something we all know (or, at least, intuit).

The sonorous voice of its lineage designates, unfailingly, our circular corn bread, even when with it we name other varieties of such singular food, from other elements, but that will need to be adjectivized to note that we are not referring to its original signifier. Therefore we say: plantain arepa, coconut arepa, wheat arepa, cheese arepa, coroba arepa (typical of Caicara del Orinóco), Andean or wheat arepa; among many other denominations, including those that, being made of corn, incorporate additional flavoring,

coloring or nutrient elements: beet arepa or purple arepa, carrot arepa or orange arepa; watercress arepa, spinach arepa or green arepa, pumpkin arepa or yellow arepa (with pumpkin seed mojo, toasted and pulverized, with the addition of salt, garlic and cumin), chicharrón arepa; or the differentiation between them, from the identification of the processing and cooking method: husked corn arepa, peeled corn arepa, roasted, parboiled, baked or fried arepa.

Arepa as a metaphor

How many times have you eaten the world?

In Venezuela this would be a rhetorical question that, surely, would make us reflect before answering: Symbolically or concretely? And then affirm: All of them! A lot! Every day!

One eats the world when one eats an arepa. In it resides a universe of memories, of sensations, of waking dreams, like that of our bard of Catuche¹, of experiences and transcendences.

In the arepa, in any of the many that the country exhibits in each of its regions, there is no room but to be in it, of it, by it and with it. The word «arepa» has been resistant to change and persistent as a notion of that certainty of being. It is worth saying that the word includes or excludes, but, in the arepa, only the former is given, from the first signifiers and in any era.

The linguistic sign, in this case, is immutable. It inherits and constructs unfinished dialogues that weave in time other dialogues that repeat themselves as in a holistic spiral. But, the meaning of the sign multiplies without ceasing to be one.

Our daily bread is a strong identity element in which the absence becomes noticeable when its stellar figure does not accompany any of the spaces that crown the taste, the food and the immeasurable value of the kitchens that inhabit us.

1 The nightingale of Catuche, Aquiles Nazoa, in his *Nocturno del poeta y la arepa* (The Poet and the Arepa Nocturnal), dreams about it, when he says: “that the sky is a budare, / the moon is an arepa / and a big plate of grate cheese, / the stars [...]”.

In the Venezuelan arepa resides one of our best identity cards, imbued with affection and that kind joy that we feel at home, with our mother, since our early childhood.

Venezuela –the entire homeland– is arepas territory. For its historical conformation, for its cultural configuration, for the interaction of humans with its landscape, for the cosmogonic vision that configures its mythical universe; for the sense of belonging that this cultural asset of patrimonial value possesses, per se, for the multiple cooking methods, techniques and forms of presentation.

If we know it is ours, if we feel it is ours, if that corn transformed into arepa fills our soul to the point of nostalgia for the aroma of the water that accompanied its boiling, for that discreet sweetness and that particular texture, irreplaceable and without falsehoods, then that will be our greatest pride and bastion of defense of our own selfhood.

Our arepa: Tradition and creativity

Beyond being a bread that defines the polychromatic terrain that make up the Venezuelan nation, the arepa is a cultural symbol of deep meanings that establishes a bridge between time and memory. Between that today and yesterday that originated it. Between the being and its cosmogony, beyond its manufacture, domestic or industrial, in the town home kitchens or in the urban kitchens, both at the family and the public table.

It has been inveterately said that industrially manufactured precooked corn flour has helped the arepa in an inexorable process of disappearance from the daily scene, in front of the consumption of wheat bread, which, in light of the current times, may be a half-truth or even fake news, depending on how you look at it.

Certainly and without restrictions, the dynamics imposed by modernity saw –and still sees!– with good eyes the simplification of long and very laborious manufacturing processes provided by the precooked corn flour, since –even without reading the instructions printed on the package– in a very short time, by trial and error, the glorious corn sun that populates us

can be made. However (truth be told, in spite of many), it is fair to point out that, some 14 years after the appearance of the packages on the shelves, the arepa of the people enjoys good health, above any novelty or vicissitude.

Picón Salas (1953)², well in advance, left a glimpse of it:

[...] Hot gift of the wide colonial kitchens, of the legendary pilón and of the clay budare -ancient as the most ancient cultures of Terra Firma-, inaugural sustenance of the morning accompanying the chocolate mug, the mellow guarapo and, from the XIX century on, the exciting coffee, the arepa evolved and accepted multiple metamorphoses and seasonings throughout the historical process (p.297. *Pequeña historia de la arepa*).

Tradition, as part of the complex cultural framework in which it is expressed, is dynamic, adaptable and changing, without blurring the root that sustains it. It transforms, reinvents itself and seeks its own channels, without ceasing to question the knowledge of its genealogy. Tradition constantly re-signifies and re-dimensions itself in a recurrent and incessant inter, intra, with and even counter-cultural dialogue, with time and with the self.

All of this without considering the damage inflicted by the industry on the numerous types of corn seeds that, for a long time, coexisted in our landscapes and memories. The large and small producers of our grain, the fundamental base of everyone's arepa, bring to the processors only one type of white or yellow corn, which is the one required to buy it. This, without conscientious analysis, has condemned the disappearance and substitution of important varieties for different uses and preparations.

This has been the case with black corn, orange corn, small and plump cobs and even Cariaco corn (white, wide-grain), depriving palates of unique organoleptic characteristics.

It is fair to say that, in the aforementioned industrial process of corn flour, known as "dry milling", which goes through the stages of degermination, lamination and milling of the endosperm (reducing, separating, breaking,

2 Picón Salas, Mariano (1962), *Pequeña Historia de la Arepa*. En: *Obras selectas*, Caracas-Madrid, Edime, 2.º edición, pp. 295-300. Publicado por primera vez en la revista *El Farol*, Caracas, abril de 1953, N° 145, pp. 2-5.

sifting and classifying), nutrients are lost, which must be compensated by incorporating fortifying elements that provide nutritional benefits.

Thus, in a world market where the corn market business is dominated by five consortiums (Archer Daniels Midland, Bunge, Cargill, Gruma and Tate & Lyle) and the corn flour market (including genetically modified corn) is dominated by holding companies where the following groups are notorious: Gruma (Grupo Maseca); Goya (Goya Foods, Inc.); with a current sustained expansion of the Polar group –which has presence in the Netherlands Antilles, Colombia, the United States and Europe–, the arepa has had, in recent times, ambassadors who, as a consequence of the forced diaspora, have been expanding it around the world, while hybridizing it with new flavors and, with great pride, combining it with dissimilar preparations.

Specifically, in Spain, the market is dominated by Goya (Goya Foods, Inc), which previously marketed Alimentos Polar's flagship brand and, after its separation, controls the flour market in that country with Masarepa flour, while Colombian companies enter the Spanish market through other companies such as Mercontrol (Coslada-Madrid), which markets the Colombian Doñarepa. Meanwhile, the network of supermarkets -physical and online- Mercadona and Open Food Facts, position in their sales space Hacendado flour (Moagem Ceres S.A, of Portuguese origin) in Spain and Portugal. We must not forget to mention the flour mills La Meta (Lleida), Talaverana (Talavera de la Reina-Toledo), Santa Rita (Loranca de Tajuña-Guadalajara), and the holding of flour mills Grupo Harinalia (Santa Cruz de Tenerife).

El Salvador exports corn flour to Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and the United States of America. In Colombia, the most important brands are Promasa (Alimentos Polar), Súper Arepa (Organización Solarte), Doñarepa (Harinera del Valle) Arepa Repa (Soberana S.A.S), Harina Diana (Grupo Diana), Campesina (3 Castillos), La Sorpresa (Grupo Sorpresa SAS), and Mi Masa (Procesos Agroindustriales El Gustazo C.A). In the giant of the South, Brazil, we have the Candor brand, Mao (Indumezmao S.A), and in Mexico, apart from the products led by Gruma, the traditional mills of Mexico City, Morelos, Puebla, Tlaxcala and Hidalgo cannot go unmentioned. In Venezuela, the historical journey has gone through several stages to reach the current configuration, even in that state of latency with which we are sheltered by the poetic words of Said. From the failed mill to

make arepas proposed by the Polish engineer, Alberto Lutowski, in 1856, we went to the Carabobo bread flour of the company Branger & Iribarren, in 1943 (although this flour was not conceived to make our arepas, but to make corn bread in bakeries). Then –in 1954– came the pre-cooked corn flour La Arepera, product of the ingenuity of the engineer, researcher and teacher from Caracas, Luis Caballero Mejías Paz. Finally, this precooked flour will be subjected to new processes by the company Remavenca (which later became Alimentos Polar) and, finally, in 1960, this flour will be marketed under the brand name P.A.N (Producto Alimenticio Nacional³), positioned since then until today as the leading brand in the domestic market, followed, for many years, by harina Juana (Molinos Nacionales C.A. Monaca), which later incorporated capital stock of the Gruma group, to be ended by a judicial expropriation process carried out by the Venezuelan State.

The acute crisis of the Venezuelan economy brought with it the appearance of other brands on the Venezuelan shelves that have been looking for their spaces from the price offer: Lucharepa (Alimentos La Lucha), Harina Arepa, DeliArepa, Arepas Candor, Gran Arepa, CASA, Venezuela Socialista, Venezolano, Paez, Corpoalca, El Valle, Mazorca, Ricamasa, Demasa, Oriental, Yaracuy (Alimentos Yaracuy), La Apureña (Planta de Harina La Apureña C.A- Achaguas), El Silbón, Sabana, Mi Reyna, La Reina, Alimentos Carmar, Del Campo, Doña Arminda, Doña Belén, Doña Celina, Doña Emilia, Doña Goya, Doña Lola, Doña Rosa (Industria Venezolana Maicera Pronutricos, C. A. - Grupo Wineca⁴), Doña Tita, Rica Masa (Pronutricos, C. A.), La Catira (Productores de Harina La Apureña C. A. - Grupo Wineca), Don Simón, Don José, El Dorado, El Maizal, Kaly (Miceven, C.A), Fina Ideal (Grupo Empresarial Aliven S.A-Alivensa), El Maizal (Alimentos El Maizal C.A), MANÁ, Maizkel (Industrias Kel-Trujillo), Maizarepa (Cereales La Pradera), Maizabrosa, Iberia, Santa Lucía, Las Tres Vírgenes, San Jorge, Don Quijote, La Nieve, Micaela, not to mention a fictitious product, announced some 20 years ago in the soap opera *Por estas calles*, written by Ibsen Martínez, of the now disappeared RCTV, as *Don Chepe* corn flour.

3 Details on this information can be found in: LiPo, Dimitri (May 14, 2013). *El Retrofuturo de la Arepa*. Li Po Group. <https://grupolipo.blogspot.com/2013/05/retrofuturo-mucho-antes-de-que-se.html>

4 Transferred, through judicial process, to Alimentos El Maizal C.A., in 2021.

This long enumeration –which could well set off alarms about our bread of the earth– only confirms what Picón Salas himself (ob cit.) pointed out more than seven decades ago, when he affirms that “the arepa evolved and accepted multiple metamorphoses and seasonings throughout the historical process” (p. 297) and that the “cosmic and almost religious bond between man and the fruits of the earth” is still alive in a time where past and present coexist in the heart of the symbol that inhabits us.



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Strategies to preserve Creole Seeds

María Elena Morros

Native seed sustainability

Creole seeds face many situations that put their sustainability at risk. Particularly with “corn”, the market demands types of corn with certain characteristics of size, uniformity, type of grain, color –among others–, all of them related to commercial varieties or hybrids. To cope with this situation, farmers and small producers plant mostly commercial varieties of corn to sell in the market, and at the same time maintain diversified lots of native corn for food and exchange.

Another aspect is related to official credit programs, most of which require the use of certified corn seeds, as well as the use of commercial pesticides and fertilizers. Ideally, programs oriented to the planting of native corn under agroecological management and, very importantly, support for its use, should also be promoted.

A further situation is the loss of interest –among young people– in creole corn, which jeopardizes its conservation.

The effect of climate change on native seeds is very important, as evidenced by the difficulty in predicting planting times, the occurrence of floods or droughts, and the presence of new pests, which can cause crop losses at any time.

Facing this scenario, the farming communities require strategies that allow them to plant and conserve their native corn and to have the seed for the next planting season.

Community Seed Banks (CSB)

The process of multiplying and conserving native seeds has always been in the hands of the farmers and small producers themselves; however, as mentioned above, there are many factors that jeopardize their sustainability.

The articulated and committed effort of technical institutions and rural communities has allowed: the collection of creole seeds that are in the hands of farmers; the sowing of lots for their multiplication, and the conservation of seeds by the communities themselves. This effort has involved farmers, housewives, young people and children, the elderly, educators, agricultural technicians, and gastronomic experts, together forming strategic alliances for the rescue and strengthening of the knowledge about creole seeds and their uses, production and marketing. In this sense, Community Seed Banks are initiatives promoted by rural communities with the purpose of managing –collectively– a reserve of native seeds, necessary for sowing and exchange among the producers of the communities where they are established.

Among the functions of the CSBs are: the collection and conservation of their creole seeds to allow their reestablishment in the event of the loss of some seed due to climatic or pest reasons; support for the multiplication of local seeds in order to guarantee the availability of seeds for the following sowing cycles, which is achieved through expert farmers who traditionally produce seed in the region, called «seed farmers»; the exchange of seeds among farmers; support for training activities on topics related to the organization and administration of seed banks, agroecological management of seed lots, conservation and maintenance of the inventory of native seeds, and support for community activities related to seeds, such as the Peasant Seed Day, which has been held in Monte Carmelo de Sanare, Lara state, since 2005, and which has served as a motivation for other rural communities in the states of Merida, Trujillo, Tachira and Aragua, due to its proven usefulness for the collection and exchange of native seeds.

CSB development

Community seed banks, also called «local seed banks», have been promoted and developed in various Latin American countries, almost always supported by international organizations such as the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Bank and international research centers such as CIAT for beans, and in the case of maize, CIMMYT, among others, given their importance for seed conservation at the community level and food safety in the countries.

The narrative of this article emphasizes the experiences developed with peasant organizations in the highlands of Lara state in our country, hence the recommendations or guidelines outlined below.

The process of developing a community seed bank should include a stage to motivate peasants and farmers to contribute seeds of their traditional crops and to initiate their multiplication. The role of technicians is very important to accompany the organization and administration of the seed bank, and to strengthen the capacity of farmers and smallholders in the management of seeds, both in the field and in the place where they are stored. The organization and administration of the CSBs are vital aspects to consider; decisions on how to organize and manage the Bank should be left in the hands of the community. The establishment of rules and agreements should be made in a clear, transparent manner, where equity, justice, shared decision-making, solidarity, commitment, among other principles, prevail. It should always be kept in mind that the purpose of this effort is that peasants and farmers –linked to the CSB– can have access to native seeds when they need them and not to have to depend on certified seeds. At the beginning, a process of this nature requires institutional support for the organization, training, equipment, physical conditioning of the infrastructure and multiplication of the first batches of seeds. Experience tells us that, from this initial phase, a community counterpart should be established: labor, some equipment or inputs, physical spaces, among others, avoiding «paternalism» at all costs. The Community Seed Bank must manage strategies that will allow it to establish, and move through, a self-managed process in

order to guarantee the generation of jobs, the reinvestment of resources and the support to the different actors linked to the Bank. In my experience, the sustainability of these innovative processes is related to organizational, technological and entrepreneurial strengthening.

Ways to organize and manage CSB

The type of organization of the community seed bank will depend on the community that administers it; and it is very important to avoid imposing any pre-established form. As for its administration –there are several typologies–, in some cases the banks deliver an agreed amount of seeds to their members and these commit themselves at harvest time to deliver the amount borrowed plus an additional amount of seeds, previously agreed upon. A part of these seeds will be stored and conserved for safekeeping, and the rest will be used for the exchange process with other farmers.

In other cases, the CSBs decide to collect native seeds and keep a certain amount for safekeeping; and with the support of the seed farmers, they proceed to multiply them, under their supervision and endorsement. In this way, the availability of seeds for farmers in the region is assured. In other cases, the Bank can expand its work by providing support to seed farmers in the form of training, credits, supply of bio-inputs, conditioning services, storage, etc., generating resources that can be reinvested in the process. In some Latin American countries, these initiatives have become seed companies, multiplying, conditioning, storing and selling seeds in the regions.

Recommendations for the organization stage of a CSB

- Hold a community assembly to discuss the need for and importance of establishing a CSB.
- Designate in assembly, the Administrative Committee responsible for the CSB.
- Train those responsible for the CSB in the organization, management and administration of the Bank, agroecological management of seed lots, seed conditioning and storage.
- Select the physical location where the bank will be built, thinking that it should be a safe place, with spaces away from direct sunlight where the seeds will be stored, and which should have cool temperatures and low humidity.
- Equip the CSB with containers, scales, sieves, sacks, shelves, among others, the minimum equipment necessary to condition and store seeds
- Keep records and control of incoming and outgoing seeds. Inventory tracking.

National Experiences

It is important to highlight the work being carried out by FAO in Venezuela. This organization is currently working on a project called: Promotion of food security through a multi-stakeholder approach for the development of the cereal and legume seed value chain. The project, which was started with producers in the state of Monagas, seeks to multiply the improved yellow corn seed INIA Variety S7. Among the benefits of this variety, according to the beneficiaries, is its gastronomic versatility in traditional preparations such as carato (corn chicha), majarete, cachapa and **arepa de maíz pelao** (peeled corn arepa). The project contemplates the development of Local Seed Banks (LSB) in the Cedeño municipality of the state of Monagas; and

intends to project it to other states in the country to guarantee access to and availability of quality seeds **for** rural productive communities¹.

Based on my experience with participatory genetic improvement processes, artisanal seed production and the creation of community seed banks, I emphasize the importance of the “organizational effort” as one of the key elements to ensure the sustainability of the process. Issues related to the type of organization, principles, norms, responsibilities, reporting, among other aspects, should be discussed openly in assemblies and favor democratic decision-making. In this sense, training efforts should be directed towards participation, teamwork, collective leadership, conflict management, strategic focus, among others.

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AREPAS FOR THE FUTURE: ROOTED WISDOM WITH THE FLAVOR OF HOME



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1 Food and Agriculture Organization. 2023. FAO promotes and encourages the multiplication of certified yellow corn seeds in the state of Monagas. <https://www.fao.org>

**AN AREPA
IN THE
VENEZUELAN
CUISINE TRAINING**

MEMORY

MEMORY

M E M O R Y

M E M O R Y

MEMORY

MEMORY

M E M O R Y

M E M O R Y

MEMORY

MEMORY

MEMORY

M E M O R Y

MEMORY

P R E S E N T . . .

P R E S E N T . . .

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» FUTURE

» FUTURE

Applied Neurogastronomy: A Cornerstone in the Training of the Cook of the Future

Merlín Gessen

In a world where gastronomy has become an art form and a constantly evolving science, it is vital that future chefs not only master traditional culinary techniques, but also understand the emotional and sensory processes that influence the dining experience. This is where Applied Neurogastronomy presents itself as an essential component in the training of tomorrow's culinary professionals.

Insight into Applied Neurogastronomy

Neurogastronomy is an interdisciplinary field that explores how the human brain processes culinary experiences, from the first aroma we perceive to the last bite. It is not just about taste; it is a sensory journey that includes texture, color, sound and even the personal story that each diner brings to the table. In the context of a Cooking School, teaching Applied Neurogastronomy involves equipping students with a set of tools that allows them to create gastronomic experiences deeply connected to human emotions.

As an example, exploring how flavors influence a diner's emotions is critical. By understanding that sweetness can activate reward centers in the brain, a chef can design desserts that not only delight the palate, but also evoke feelings of happiness and satisfaction. By way of illustration, certain traditional dishes can provoke nostalgia, creating an emotional connection that goes beyond the simple act of eating.

As pioneers in this field, at the Neuroscience Institute of the Americas, we have spent the last decade training neurogastronomists, who now bring this knowledge to kitchens, restaurants and culinary businesses around the world. Neurogastronomy has not only proven to be a valuable resource for professional success, but also a powerful tool in the creation of business models that understand the importance of the customer experience as a whole.

Beyond technique: Neuroscience at the service of gastronomy

Technique has always been a cornerstone in the world of gastronomy. However, Applied Neurogastronomy invites us to go beyond the mere execution of recipes to delve into the complex interaction between food and the human mind. It is at this intersection where generated gastronomic experiences truly resonate with diners, touching not only their palates, but also their deepest emotions

A clear example of this is how a simple bowl of soup can evoke childhood memories, of moments shared as a family. This phenomenon does not occur only because of the technical skill of the chef, but because of the emotional connection that is established through sensory stimuli and how these are processed by the brain. Applied Neurogastronomy allows us to understand and control these processes in a conscious way, to design experiences that not only nourish the body, but the soul as well.

It is essential that professionals, cooks in training, and educators understand that Neurogastronomy is not a magic formula. It is not about following a secret recipe that guarantees success, but a powerful tool that must be used responsibly and ethically. Every decision made in the kitchen, from the selection of ingredients to the final presentation of the dish, has a direct impact on the diner's experience. For example, the choice of colors in a dish can alter the perception of flavor, or the arrangement of elements on the table can influence the sensation of satiety and satisfaction.

Integrating Neurogastronomy in culinary training

In an educational setting, this knowledge is not simply an add-on; it is a fundamental approach that transforms the way chefs view their craft. Students who train under this approach develop a deep understanding of human behavior and the psychology of taste, enabling them to design dishes that are not only technically flawless, but also resonate emotionally with those who enjoy them.

For example, by understanding the science of flavor, future chefs can learn how different tastes, aromas and textures interact with the human sensory system to create memorable experiences. It is not enough for a dish to be tasty; it must be a symphony of sensations that tells a story and evokes emotions.

Neurogastronomy also enables chefs to design personalized dining experiences, using principles from social psychology and behavioral economics to understand consumer preferences, motivations and behaviors. In this way, they can create menus that are tailored to individual diners' expectations and desires, making of each meal a unique experience.

In addition, the ability to communicate effectively and to use storytelling becomes crucial. Chefs who understand Neurogastronomy can connect on a deeper level with their diners, not only through taste, but also through the narrative that surrounds each dish, creating an emotional context that enriches the dining experience.

Towards a conscious and innovative cuisine

Over the years, we know that knowing the relationship between the mind, emotions and well-being also plays a key role in promoting conscious and sustainable eating. By understanding the factors that influence food choices, chefs can encourage healthier and more responsible habits, without sacrificing sensory pleasure.

On the other hand, exploring how the brain perceives new combinations of flavors and textures allows them to push the limits of creativity, developing avant-garde techniques and dishes that not only delight, but also surprise.

Incorporating Applied Neurogastronomy into the curricula of culinary schools is not just a trend, it is essential to train the chefs of the future. Those who master this knowledge will not only be better prepared to face the challenges of an ever-changing industry but will also be in a unique position to redefine what it means to offer a true gastronomic experience.

This innovating approach to culinary education will not only enrich the careers of future chefs but will also contribute to the preservation and evolution of Venezuela's rich culinary heritage, allowing these professionals to be more aware and capable ambassadors of our gastronomy around the world.

A call to action: Neurogastronomy in Cooking Schools and the crucial role of teachers

In the training of future talents, Applied Neurogastronomy is not just an optional complement, but an essential requirement that shapes the way these professionals will approach culinary creation in the future. As we mentioned earlier, the work of teachers in this field is crucial. Their role is not limited to teaching techniques but extends to the comprehensive training of individuals capable of understanding and applying concepts of neuroscience and psychology in their gastronomic creations.

It is essential that educators have a thorough grasp of the principles of Neurogastronomy. This includes a solid understanding of how the brain processes flavors, aromas and textures, and how these interrelate with our emotions and memories. For example, a knowledgeable teacher could explain how certain flavors trigger specific emotional responses, such as the nostalgia we feel when tasting a dish that reminds us of our childhood. This understanding not only enriches the culinary experience, but also enables chefs to design dishes that connect on a deeper level with their diners.

In our experience, we have seen that traditional teaching approaches often fall short when it comes to conveying the complexity and richness of Neurogastronomy. Therefore, we can recommend that teachers adopt more dynamic and interactive methodologies. Instead of being limited to lectures and master classes, we suggest incorporating hands-on workshops where students can experience firsthand how variations in the presentation of a dish can alter the perception of flavor. Restaurant scenario simulations or case studies are also powerful tools that allow students to apply theoretical concepts in real-world contexts, better preparing them for the challenges they will face in the professional world.

One thing we are clear about is that to be successful, both research and innovation must be encouraged. Applied Neurogastronomy is a constantly evolving field, and it is essential that both teachers and students stay on the cutting edge of the latest research. Fostering an environment where curiosity and creativity are encouraged is key to developing innovative chefs. For example, students could be encouraged to develop research projects that explore new flavor combinations or culinary techniques that could become future trends. This approach not only provides them with a deeper understanding, but also gives them the opportunity to actively contribute to the advancement of the field.

None of this will be possible if teachers do not assume their leading role. They not only teach by words, but also by example. Their passion for knowledge, dedication to excellence and commitment to innovation are qualities that inspire students to aspire to that same level. In our educational work, we have observed that students feel more motivated and engaged when they see their teachers practicing what they preach, applying the principles of Neurogastronomy in their own culinary creations.

We can affirm that the development and advances in this area of knowledge have been achieved thanks to the awareness of being a multidisciplinary discipline that benefits greatly from collaboration. We recommend that teachers foster a work environment, in teams, with this philosophy, where ideas are shared and forces are joined with other professionals, such as neurogastronomists, scientists and psychologists. This approach not only enriches the learning process, but also reflects the reality of the culinary world, where collaboration is often the key to success.

Imagine, for example, a collaborative project where culinary students work together with a neurogastronomist to design a menu that is not only delicious, but also optimized to evoke positive emotions and pleasant memories in diners. This type of hands-on, collaborative experience prepares students to be chefs who not only cook, but also create complete experiences.

It is important to remember that Applied Neurogastronomy is not a passing fad, but a responsibility that culinary professionals must assume ethically. Teachers must emphasize the importance of using this tool not only to surprise or delight, but also to promote the health and well-being of diners. This implies constant updating on the latest research and a commitment to continuing education, both for themselves and for their students.

Conclusion

We are at a pivotal moment in transforming chef training and the hospitality industry as a whole. Applied Neurogastronomy is a revolution that can redefine how we understand and experience food. The role of teachers in this transformation is essential; by empowering them with innovative knowledge and tools, we can open the door to culinary experiences that not only surprise, but also enrich and benefit diners.

Understanding that the real magic lies in the ability to unite science and art, this tool, like all tools, is powerful and its use requires great responsibility. It is not only about impressing with techniques, but also about using scientific knowledge to improve people's lives through food, creating a positive impact that transcends the table and is reflected in their overall well-being.

We invite all those passionate about cooking, science and wellness to join us on this exciting journey. Exploring the endless possibilities we have shared with you is a step towards creating unique, memorable and sustainable moments that generate happiness, while promoting healthy eating habits. Together, we can contribute to a more delicious, healthy and sustainable future.



Merlín Gessen

 @Neurogastronomo

@MerlinGessen

A pioneer in Applied Neurogastronomy, he has an outstanding track record in research, consulting and teaching focused on innovation and Customer Experience, especially in the HORECA sector. He has integrated science and gastronomy to revolutionize the culinary experience and customer service in the Hospitality industry.

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AREPAS FOR THE FUTURE: ROOTED WISDOM WITH THE FLAVOR OF HOME



The Value of Social Networks in spreading Culinary Traditions

Ligia Velásquez

In Venezuela we like to eat, we make plans with friends and family in which food is always present, and we love to recommend places over and over again. Thanks to social networks, we have discovered a universe of people, places and products that we want to visit and try.

Undoubtedly, social media is the platform with the greatest impact to boost and arouse general curiosity around the gastronomic field. Thanks to the work of digital agencies, the same restaurants and entrepreneurs who have put their personal touch to the discourse on networks, content generators and the media that has taken advantage of these spaces to give a fresher and more “digestible” view of this information, we have the opportunity to learn more about what is happening in the country.

Everyone contributes in their own way. Some do it better than others, but it all adds up. The chefs, together with their team, have been in charge of showing each of their proposals and, in many cases, telling the stories behind each dish, presenting their suppliers as to make diners value more and more every day the importance and even the cost of their offer.

Chefs such as Francisco Abenante, Mónica Sahmkow, Issam Koteich, Víctor Moreno, José Antonio Casanova, just to name a few, proudly show the recipes they prepare for their diners. Many rescue recipes, others reinterpret them, and others create them based on a national pantry. In the case of Iván García, his movement ***Kilómetro Venezuela***, gastronomic project for the identification and research of Venezuelan products», has awakened national and international interest by reflecting the initiatives that arise, and it becomes an invitation to come over and, through flavors, get to know and understand us.

Sumito Estévez, from abroad, constantly shares the flavors that speak of his country no matter where he is. Enrique Limardo, Federico Tischler, Héctor Romero in their projects abroad, have an elegant discourse in each dish where they speak of a country that is not forgotten and can be fused with other cultures.

Journalists and critics in gastronomy have understood the value of their pen, beyond writing for a media outlet, and through their accounts, they leave a daily record of what is happening in the national scene in terms of products, proposals, bibliographies and events. This is the case of Miro Popic @miropopiceditor, who is not satisfied with just writing texts; he also creates a lot of contents in his networks –which he authorizes the reader to copy and paste in his own– that help to clarify doubts about the origin of our dishes and ingredients, as is also the case of his latest book *Leer para comer*.

Ruben Rojas @elfogon, who also collaborates for the cooking magazine *Bienmesabe* (digital media that keeps track of all the important initiatives in terms of gastronomy in the country and trends abroad) is an expert in Venezuelan dishes and in telling their stories.

Then there are the foodies and content generators, who travel around cities to share their experiences and perceptions about the places and dishes they have tried. Here something interesting arises: the figure of the influencer, or “character that generates influence among their followers, capable of generating such an impact on people, that motivates them to buy or try a service, thanks to their recommendation”, makes that the opinion about their experience in restaurants or the dishes and products they try, generates a debate as many question the honesty of their statements. The number of followers, the aesthetics of their grid and the opinion they give, may or may not affect an account, since, in some cases, the number of followers is not consistent with the expertise of their opinion.

The Venezuelan Academy of Gastronomy itself has understood the value of the social networks and, in its own way, reaches a community eager for culture to be told what is happening, and before which a record is left of all the important actors of the moment that preserve the gastronomic value of the country.

The schools themselves have understood the importance of the impact generated by the social networks to attract new students, with the possibility of showing the benefits of being in these spaces.

Today more than ever, Venezuela has several actors related in one way or another to Venezuelan gastronomy and depending on the social network they use, they are generating debate and record of our flavors which, apparently, will have a long life. Farewell to oblivion.



Ligia Margarita Velásquez Gaspard

 @ligisvelasquez

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Journalist, taster and gastronomic consultant: faithful believer that successful businesses are made around good food. Through her personal brand she works as a foodie, food hunter, judge in cooking tests and contests, as well as menu curator and fine-tuning of gastronomic experiences in restaurants and ventures, because #ParaOpinarHayQueProbar (to give an opinion you have to taste).

Foto: Bettina Arriaga

In the Manner of My Home

Chucho Rojas

A GASTRONOMIC JOURNEY IN TRIBUTE TO THE HOMES
THAT HAVE BEEN A MILESTONE IN FORMING
THE CULINARY TRADITIONS, THE FIRST SCHOOL

I remember clearly when, being away from home, I would call my mom to ask for her recipe of *asado negro* or the exact way to prepare an arepa. Her voice, guiding me step by step, from a distance, was a reminder of home, a bridge connecting me to my roots. These anecdotes –which many Venezuelans abroad share– are testimony to the importance of our first school: the house, the home. At the center of our homes beats that place where memories, flavors and traditions intertwine.

In every corner of the world, Venezuelans –no matter where they are today–have taken this essence with them, turning their new homes into small embassies of our gastronomy. However, the nostalgia for that first classroom, without an established curriculum, sometimes relying only on memory, with no clear notes and sometimes without a recipe book, becomes the fundamental pillar of those who later dedicate themselves to the stove professionally.

The teaching techniques in cooking schools are undeniably the result of a tireless search to capture and transmit what was said and done in that first school. The expression “In the manner of my home” accompanies those who recognize that school as the first one, which is religiously respected, which is reinterpreted, but in essence untouchable. That first school that we want and must transmit, is a necessity, increasingly palpable, especially when we face the reality of an exodus of more than six million Venezuelans.

Venezuelan homes are authentic sanctuaries of culinary tradition. In them, mothers, grandmothers and aunts have transmitted, from generation to generation, the secrets of our recipes. It is not only the technique that is taught, but also the value of each ingredient, the history behind each dish and the love that is put into each preparation.

This family culinary knowledge transfer is fundamental to preserve our identity and the rootedness for what is our own. In every *arepa*, in every *hallaca*, in every *sofrito*, we carry with us a piece of Venezuela. However, with the passage of time and the integration of new cultures, there is a risk that our culinary traditions may be diluted or merged. Although this integration can generate new and exciting interpretations, it is essential that we keep our roots alive and present in those who come after us.

It is important to honor those who have kept these traditions alive. They, the first masters, have created an incalculable legacy for future generations. Every mother who taught her children to knead the flour to make arepas, every grandmother who shared the secret of a good *sancocho*, have contributed to keep our culture intact and vibrant. This act of teaching and cooking at home, of transmitting knowledge, is a form of cultural resistance, an affirmation of our identity.

In an increasingly globalized world, it is vital to remember and teach the roots of our gastronomy. Our grandmothers' recipes are not only a matter of taste, but of identity. They taught us that cooking is a universal language, a way of communicating and staying connected to our origins, regardless of where we are.



The Venezuelan diaspora, scattered around the world, has been a tireless promoter of our gastronomy. However, we must be aware of the challenge this implies. The preservation of our culinary traditions depends on our ability to transmit this knowledge to new generations. Each recipe learned and shared is a bond that unites us to our land, to our family, to our essence.

It is our responsibility to teach and practice our traditional cuisine, not only as an act of nostalgia, but as an affirmation of our identity. In every home, in every kitchen, we must foster pride in our own, in those flavors that define and unite us, no matter how far away we are.

The preservation of our culinary roots depends on our dedication to keep alive the first gastronomic school, the one that shapes the palate and provides the foundations so that, in the Venezuela of the future, no matter where you are, you can continue to say with pride: «this dish is still made my home way».



Chucho Rojas



@chuchorojas

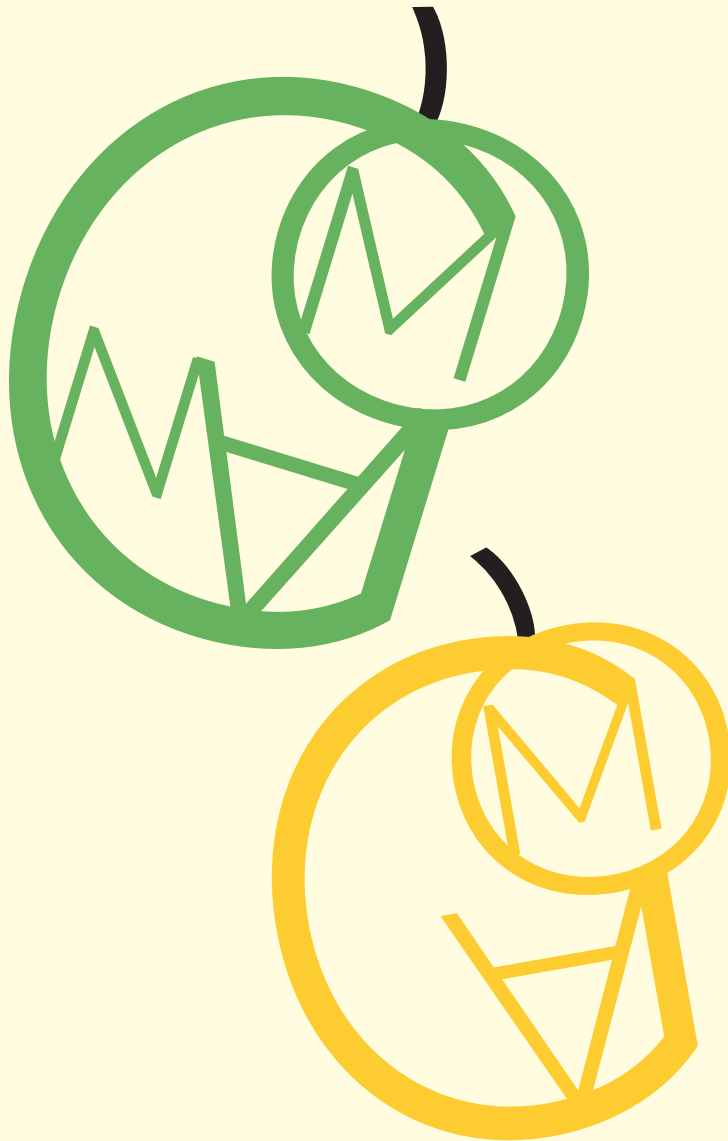
Chucho Rojas is the executive chef of Meat And Bone Group, a leader in the distribution of Wagyu meats in the United States.

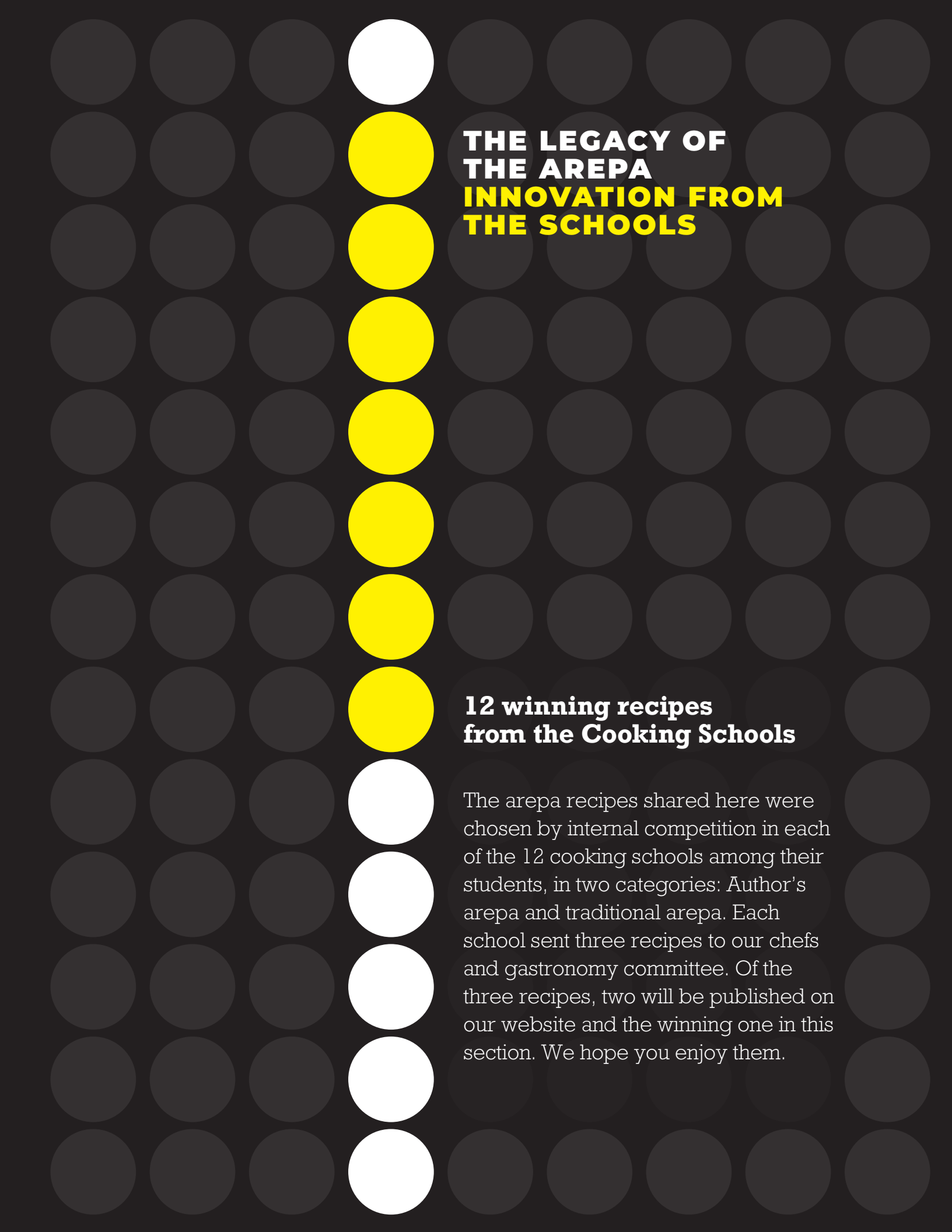
With nearly 30 years of experience, he has managed Michelin-starred restaurants and has been a researcher for the French Academy of Sciences.

He has participated in television programs such as MasterChef Latino and Top Chef VIP, and is currently developing an innovative concept of gastronomic consulting, focused on a humanistic vision of entrepreneurship.

Born in Tucupita, Venezuela, Chucho is dedicated to sharing his experience through teaching.

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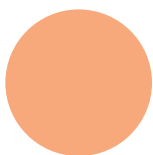


THE LEGACY OF THE AREPA INNOVATION FROM THE SCHOOLS

12 winning recipes from the Cooking Schools

The arepa recipes shared here were chosen by internal competition in each of the 12 cooking schools among their students, in two categories: Author's arepa and traditional arepa. Each school sent three recipes to our chefs and gastronomy committee. Of the three recipes, two will be published on our website and the winning one in this section. We hope you enjoy them.





CEGAMA

Teacher Maritza Vargas, reading the book *El pan nuestro de cada día* by Rafael Cartay, learned that in each region of the country there was one type of arepa, just like in any gastronomy, there is a type of bread - which in the case of Europeans is made of wheat because it is the product they have at hand, while what we have is corn and, thus, we make arepas.

One of the things we admire about the Alvarez Brothers, originally from the Andean region, is that they dedicated themselves to the arepa, and invented the *Reina Pepiada*, the *Domino*, the *Prohibitiva*, the *Bomba H*, the *Viuda*, inspired by personalities that came to their establishment, as well as historical moments of the country.

I cannot fail to mention that at the School we have a subject called *El Arepazo* because we make a feast of stuffed arepas.



Chivata

Neudyn Urdaneta

I named it “Chivata”, inspired by a typical dish from Zulia, *Chivo en coco*, and I took it to be an arepa filling, being the arepa normally made with precooked corn flour, and there was the difference. I was looking for the popular flavor of a good goat with cheese and green plantain; so, why not make an arepa of green plantain? Researching how to make it, I learned about a technique from a long time ago, when the people who worked in the farms collected those plantains, roasted or baked them in stoves, then hydrated and ground them, until they turned the green plantain into the proper dough to form the outstanding plantain arepa.

Ingredients:

For the dough

700 g green plantains

Enough water to hydrate the baked plantains

For the filling

1 k of goat leg, chopped

5 dried coconuts

300 g of onions cut in mirepoix

150 g sweet pepper cut in mirepoix

200 grams of leek cut in mirepoix

75 grams of palmita cheese

20gr ground onoto

5gr ground black pepper

20gr salt

Preparation:

For the dough

Preheat the oven to 180° C. Peel the plantains and bake them in a non-stick pan for 25 minutes. Once baked, take them out and put them in a bowl or large container with water covering them for 12 hours to hydrate them. Then remove, drain and mash them well with a potato masher, or fork, before kneading, using some of the hydration water if necessary, until you obtain a soft dough that is as smooth as possible.

For the filling

Split each coconut, extract its pulp by removing the shell and grate it all. Bring 1 liter of water to boil in a pot or pan over high heat. When it comes to a boil, add the grated coconut pulp, stir it and turn off the stove. Let it rest for 15 minutes and then extract the first milk by passing it through a strainer without squeezing the pulp. Transfer the strained pulp to a blender and add the same amount of water as in the pot. Blend at maximum speed for a couple of minutes and then pour the contents into the pot. Place the pot over

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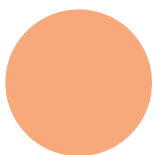
medium heat and when it comes to a boil, add the goat pieces, the sweet peppers, the leek and the onions. Season with salt, pepper and onoto. Cook until it thickens and add the first milk extracted. Continue cooking until the goat meat softens. Then remove the pieces, carefully discard them, separate the meat into strands and return it to the pot, without bones or cartilage. Stir everything well and let it reduce over the fire until it thickens. Remove from the heat and use to fill the arepas.

S O F R I T O



Hello, I am Neudyn Urdaneta, I am 44 years old, I am a student of Gastronomy at the Cegama school, and I am a father of three children. I am passionate about cooking, my vision is to be recognized in the field of gastronomy for my efforts, talent, methods and technique. I know it is a difficult field to master, but not an impossible one. Many people will say that Gastronomy is just cooking, but, actually, there is so much more to it: gastronomy forms you, disciplines you as a better person, and makes you a great cook.





In the first class of Venezuelan Cuisine in our school, we talk about its origin, the traditions of the arepa, its characteristics, the industrialization of the corn process to obtain the pre-cooked flour. We teach how to make “arepas de maíz pilado” and “arepas peladas”, using the process of alkalization of the dough, the “nixtamalization”. And in Special Dietary Regimes, we learn how to make alternative arepas with farinaceous products other than corn.

Sweet Arepa with Cacao, Filled with Guava jelly and Llanero Cheese

Joshua Castillo

I was inspired by Venezuelan Creole confectionery and the contrasts of flavors that I learned to manage in Avant-Garde Cuisine; and I wanted to apply what I had learned, searching for that contrast. Guava and cheese are an excellent combination, and contrasts with chocolate, so I decided to intervene the arepa dough with cocoa, leaving out that special touch of the sweet little arepas. And through that surprise filling, to generate emotions with that chocolate flavor in the dough and the guava jelly combined with the *llanero* cheese. In any case, the diner will be reminded of Venezuela with the flavors found in each bite.

Ingredients:

For the Melado

¾ cup of water
250 g of grated papelon (panela, piloncillo or chancaca)
1 cinnamon stick
10 cloves
3 guayabita (allspice) peppercorns
5 g sweet aniseed

For the Arepa

1 cup of precooked corn flour
15g cocoa powder
1 cup papelon melado
¼ cup hot water
1 pinch of salt

For the filling

1 guava jelly cut in 1 cm thick slices
15 g of llanero cheese (hard white cheese, for grating) cut into 1 cm thick slices

For frying

½ liter of vegetable oil (depending on the size of the cauldron or pot to be used, as the arepas must be fried by immersion, that is, they must be completely covered by the oil until they float in it).

Preparation:

For the papelón Melado

Pour the water in a small saucepan. Add the cinnamon, cloves, guayabita pepper and sweet anise. Place on the stove over medium heat and add the papelon. Cook until the papelon dissolves in the water and the liquid is reduced to about 1 cup. Reduce heat, remove spices and let cool to room temperature.

For the Arepas

Pour the hot water into a small bowl, add the cocoa powder and dissolve well with a fork or wire whisk. Set aside.

In a large bowl or directly on the clean table, form a volcano with the flour and the pinch of salt mixed together. Combine the papelon syrup with the cocoa dissolved in water and pour them in the center of the volcano to start integrating everything with both hands. Knead until a smooth and elastic texture is obtained, but not sticky. Once this is achieved, let it rest for a few minutes.

Once the dough has rested, form balls of approximately 60 g each, make a hole in one side of each ball, insert a piece of bocadillo and a piece of cheese, close the dough and manipulate it to give it the characteristic circular shape of an arepa.

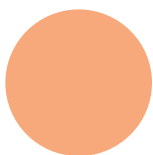
Frying

Heat the oil in a pot over high heat. Add the arepas, one by one, and fry them until golden brown, carefully pouring hot oil over their surface with a spoon, if necessary, so that they bulge. To finish, remove them with a skimmer or perforated spoon, draining them a little before letting them rest on absorbent paper.



I'm Joshua Castillo. I'm 25 years old, although I was born in Medellin; Maracay welcomed me as if it were my home, and for 15 years I've been living here. Although in Colombia there are arepas, there is nothing like Venezuelan arepas. Since I was a child, I have liked cooking, and perhaps for my family, my vocation was something unexpected, since my mother expected me to follow in her footsteps in the family business of making uniforms. While studying, one of the cuisines that inspired me the most was the Venezuelan cuisine, because knowing its regions I learned about the gastronomic diversity that we enjoy in Venezuela.





INSTITUTO CULINARIO DE CARACAS

In the Level II cooking workshop, we dedicate a week to “corn” as a representative ingredient of the “original pantry” and as a cultural meaning. There we see the different grains or types of corn, different traditional culinary techniques and different preparations, including different types of arepas. “Arepas” we understand as one of the Venezuelan breads.

The arepa is in a moment in which it is beginning to develop empathy with other audiences, which requires making concessions, in the right measure, so that it does not lose its identity. Not all of these concessions will be the most fair, correct, coherent or logical, but it will remain an “arepa”, despite the debate and how irritating that culinary-cultural transgression could be.

The arepa seems to be, at present, the vehicle of diffusion of our culture – or of part of it –, which grants it a sort of autonomy or license, in relation to how it is going to manifest itself, depending on where and how it happens. The arepa represents –both in Venezuela and in other parts of the world– a space to meet with Venezuelanness, in a plural, diverse, legitimate and natural way.

Pounded Corn arepa with oregano, filled with celse coriano with tomato salad and pickled bicuyes

Alicia Daniela Ortiz Barreto

Since the beginning of my studies in Cooking, I have had a great interest in our gastronomy, since I believe it is forgotten and underrated. Is Venezuelan gastronomy not good enough? Is it varied or interesting enough? At the ICC, I have learned that if our food is worked correctly it can be a world reference, that is why I chose a little known recipe such as the *Celse Coriano*, with an ingredient that to the eyes of those who are not from the west of the country, seems exotic: the *bicuye* –the Cocuy flower– possessing such a great richness that it would be a waste to overlook it without giving it the prominence it deserves.

Recipe for 5 servings

Ingredients:

For the celse coriano

1 liter of mineral water
50 g of onions cut in medium julienne strips
30 grams of scallions cut in medium pieces
3 grams of red bell pepper cut in medium julienne strips
50gr sweet ají cut in medium julienne strips
1 g bay leaves
2 g fresh mint leaves
6 gr coriander
1 g fresh thyme
500 g pork skin or pork jowl, cleaned and cut into 4-cm pieces
6 whole black peppercorns
12 whole cloves
4 whole guayabita (allspice) peppercorns
2 whole anise stars
1 head of peeled garlic (whole cloves)
15 g sweet white wine
250 g white wine vinegar
2 tablespoons of white sugar
4 tablespoons of coarse salt

For the corn dough with oregano

1 kilo of pounded corn dough
1 tsp. powdered oregano
Salt to taste

For the tomato and pickled cherry tomato salad

300 g of cherry tomatoes cut in quarters
150 g whole pickled bicuyes (pickled bicuyes)
5 g coriander leaves
1 tsp olive oil
Pepper to taste
Salt to taste

Preparation:

For the celse coriano

Pour the water in a pot and heat it on a stove over medium heat with the onion, chives, pepper, sweet ají, mint leaves, thyme, coriander leaves and bay leaves.

Wash the pork well under cold running water. Add it to the pot with the black pepper, cloves, guayabita pepper, aniseed, garlic and salt. Cook for 1 hour or until the liquid is reduced by half.

Add the wine, vinegar, sugar and cook until the meat is very tender. Remove from heat and let stand for about 10 minutes.

Place everything but the herbs into a sterilized glass jar with the liquid still hot, which should reach the rim of the jar. Cover and let it mature for two days before using it.

For the dough

In a bowl, knead the corn dough with the oregano and salt until you obtain a smooth and homogeneous dough. Form arepas of approximately 200 g each and cook them as usual in a hot, lightly greased baking pan. Once cooked on both sides, set aside covered with a cloth to prevent them from drying out.

For the salad

At the moment of serving, carefully mix in a bowl the tomato, the bicuyos and the cilantro with the olive oil, seasoning with salt and pepper.

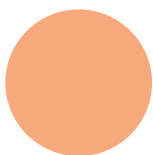
Assembling

Cut the arepas without opening them completely, fill them with the celse and place the salad on top.



My name is **Alicia Ortiz**, I am 23 years old, I am a native of Maturin, Monagas state, proudly Oriental, and passionate about the regional cuisines of my country. I began my studies in 2021 at the Cardini Gastronomic School and, after completing my internships, I continued them at the Culinary Institute of Caracas, where I have resumed my passion for cooking and the love we owe to the gastronomy of our country. One of my goals is to rediscover and exalt the forgotten recipes of our cuisine, especially that of Monagas. This inspires me every day to investigate, learn, taste and, of course, cook.





The arepa is our daily bread, as well as the *empanadas*; and we prepare them not only with corn flour, but also in combination with yucca and plantain, for example. We prepare them in different ways to accompany main dishes, grilled on a metal plate, baked or grilled. And in Venezuelan Cuisine, we highlight the *Reina Pepiada* as the best known arepa in our country.

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Arepas with wild tomato *perico* and goat cheese

Miguel Pinto

Wild tomatoes, although quite common throughout South America, are an unusual ingredient in everyday commerce. They stand out for their perfect spherical shape. When bitten, their skin yields to pressure, releasing a burst of flavor that enriches any dish with their presence. I used to prepare different salads with these fruits, therefore, satisfied with their flavor and qualities, I decided to incorporate wild tomatoes to a classic of Venezuelan gastronomy: Arepas.

Ingredients:

For the carrot puree

1 carrot peeled and cut into cubes
Enough water to cook it
Salt to taste

For the arepas

110 g pre-cooked corn flour
60 g of carrot puree
70 ml of carrot cooking water
50 g grated goat cheese
3 g sugar
2 g salt
A little bit of oil to grease the *budare* or griddle

For the *perico*

1 tablespoon of butter
Approximately 50 g of diced onion
Approximately 130 g of whole wild tomatoes
3 eggs
20 ml milk cream
40 g goat cheese cut into cubes
Basil to taste, chopped in chiffonade
Coriander to taste, chopped in chiffonade
2 g salt

Preparation:

For the carrot puree.

Pour water into a small saucepan or pot and heat over medium heat. When it comes to a boil, add the carrot cubes, making sure the water doubles the volume of the carrot cubes. Let cook for 20 minutes, until the carrots soften. Remove them with a skimmer or strainer and, once drained, mash with a potato masher or food processor and season with a little salt to taste. Set aside.

For the arepas

In a bowl, mix the carrot cooking water with the salt and sugar. Add the corn flour little by little, integrating it well with your hands. Incorporate the carrot puree and grated goat cheese and knead until a smooth and homogeneous dough is obtained. Form the arepas and cook them over low heat in a previously greased and very hot baking pan or griddle.

For the perico

In a skillet over medium heat, heat the butter and sauté the onion until translucent. Add 70 g of wild tomatoes and reserve the rest, sauté briefly. Add the eggs and season with salt. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly. Stir in the heavy cream and goat cheese and remove from heat. Add the rest of the tomatoes and some fresh basil and cilantro.

Presentation

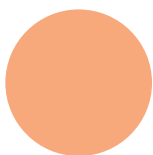
Serve the arepas warm, opened in half and filled with the creamy perico. Optionally you can add a little butter to the arepas before filling them with the perico. Garnish with a few leaves of cilantro to add freshness and color.



My name is **Miguel Alfredo de Jesús Pinto Santafe**, I am 24 years old, and I was born in Barquisimeto, Lara state. I am about to graduate from the academy Mi Sazón, as a Chef Specialist in Haute Cuisine Techniques. I started in the culinary world when I was 18 years old, when they were looking for interns for a university canteen; once there, I participated in various undergraduate events and in the JUVINEU 2017 where I learned the importance of organization to prepare large quantities of food.

My culinary drive is born from a deep thirst for knowledge, a drive to understand even the smallest detail; each ingredient and technique is a world of possibilities in flavors and textures. I find my inspiration at the intersection of art and science. The kitchen for me is more than a workspace; it is a blank canvas for creativity and a laboratory for experimentation.





In our school, there is a class dedicated to extolling the iconic dish of the country's gastronomy, where the doughs are traditional or intervened, with a great variety of fillings according to each region.

For Le Gourmets, the arepa is a symbol of tradition, culture, and representation of regional and national gastronomy.

Little Chicharron arepas stuffed with pork and Valencian cheese

Natasha Palacio

This chicharron arepa recalls the Marciano family's *arepera* on Comercio street in Valencia, from the end of the 1940's until the beginning of the 1950's, where they prepared a chicharron arepa filled with pork leg. It was the only *arepera* that served the Valencian cheese. It is a traditional recipe, and it has a kind of seasoned curd that was used to spread on the arepas.

Ingredients:

For the arepas

250 g of ground chicharron
300 ml water
1 egg
500 g pre-cooked corn flour
300 ml oil (for frying)

For the pork loin

1 kilo of pork loin
100 ml lard
60 g salt

For the Valencian cheese

200 g grated semi-hard cheese
100 ml of whey
4 red sweet peppers cut in *brunoise*
4 green sweet peppers cut in *brunoise*
1 red onion cut in *brunoise*
30 g coriander, chopped in *haché*

To decorate

1 chopped lettuce leaf for each arepa
2 tomato rounds for each arepa

Preparation:

For the dough

In a bowl place the ground chicharron, the water and the egg. Mix well and add the flour, kneading with both hands until a smooth and homogeneous dough is obtained. Form arepas of approximately 60 to 70 g each. Heat a lightly oiled *budare* over medium heat and grill them without cooking them completely. Remove them from the heat and set them aside for frying later. In a pot over high heat, place the oil. Once hot, immerse the arepas and fry them until golden brown. Remove them and let them rest on absorbent paper to remove excess oil. Set aside.

For the pork tenderloin

Preheat the oven to 180° C. Mix the lard with the salt. Rub the pork tenderloin well on all sides with the salted lard mixture. Transfer to a baking sheet and bake in the oven for approximately 30 to 40 minutes. You can make sure it is cooked by pricking it with a long stick or knife and observing that the liquid that comes out is crystalline, after which you can remove it. Let it rest and then shred the meat. Set aside.

For the Valencian cheese

Mix the grated cheese, whey, onion, sweet peppers and cilantro in a bowl until it forms a creamy cream, closer to a cheese paste than to a sauce.

Presentation

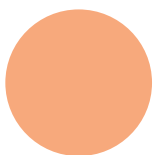
To serve, open the arepas in half, fill them with the Valencian cheese, the shredded pork loin, tomato slices and chopped lettuce.



My name is Miguel Alfredo de Jesús Pinto Santafe, I am 24 years old, and I was born in Barquisimeto, Lara state. I am about to graduate from the academy Mi Sazón, as a Chef Specialist in Haute Cuisine Techniques. I started in the culinary world when I was 18 years old, when they were looking for interns for a university canteen; once there, I participated in various undergraduate events and in the JUVINEU 2017 where I learned the importance of organization to prepare large quantities of food.

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LAGA
UCAB-PLAZA 'S

The arepa comes up several times in our Venezuelan Cooking classes, because depending on the region it has different preparations or processes, I do not consider it has a special place, but it is important as it is in our whole program of Venezuelan Regional Cuisines.

Arepa A trip to Choroní

Leonardo Hernandez

In designing the proposal for this arepa, I was inspired by a trip to Choroní, where I was able to appreciate some of the most emblematic products of the region. Tuna is the main protein in this proposal, although a wide variety of fresh seafood can be found in the town. The plantain is another element that stands out in Choroní; in many houses and wild areas you can see *conucos* plantain plantation. In addition, the *papelón* is distinguished by its quality in the area, as well as the *culantro*, an herb that grows in abundance. Finally, I included sofrito jam mayonnaise, since the traditional *sofrito* is considered the backbone of Venezuelan cuisine. Each of these elements was selected to highlight the essential characteristics of Choroní and the gastronomic potential that Venezuela possesses.

Ingredients:

For pounded corn and coconut arepas

400 g of white corn
2 liters of water (one to cook the corn and the other to soak it)
200 g shredded coconut
10 g salt
5 g oil (to spread on the *budare*)

For the crystallised sofrito

700 g oil
400 g of onions cut in brunoise
5 well crushed garlic
200 grams of garlic and leeks cut in brunoise
300 grams of pepper cut in brunoise
200 grams of sweet pepper cut in brunoise

For the sofrito oil-based mayonnaise:

1 egg
300 ml of sofrito oil
1 tablespoon of sofrito
20 g lemon juice (Choroni lime or French lemon)
10gr coriander cut in chiffonade
5 g dill, chopped in chiffonade

For the tuna en *papillote*

300 g of tuna fillet
50 ml olive oil
3 g garlic paste
Slices of French lemon in sufficient quantity to cover the whole fish
Pepper to taste
Salt to taste

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Preparation:

For the pounded corn and coconut arepa.

Put a liter of water and the corn in a pot on the stove over medium heat. Cook the corn until it reaches an al dente consistency. Strain the corn, discarding or reserving the cooking water for another use. Transfer the cooked corn to a large bowl or pot, pour the other liter of cold water over it until it is completely covered and let it sit overnight. The next day, strain it again, discarding the soaking water.

Combine the corn with the grated coconut and pass this mixture through a grinder three times in a row. Transfer this mixture to a bowl, add the salt and knead, hydrating it little by little with water, as necessary, until a firm and compact dough is obtained. Let it rest for 5 minutes before kneading again. Divide the dough into 4 equal parts and form 4 arepas.

Preheat a lightly oiled baking pan or griddle and the oven.

First grill the arepas on both sides in the budare, then place them on a baking sheet and put them in the oven for 10 minutes to finish cooking. Once cooked, take them out and set aside.

For the crystallized *sofrito*

Preheat a medium saucepan over medium heat. Pour in the oil and once hot, add the onions and let them cook over very low heat for 30 minutes, stirring continuously with a wooden paddle. Then add the garlic and the leek and continue cooking for another 20 minutes. At the end of this time, add the pepper and cook for another 20 minutes. Finally, add the sweet peppers and cook for 30 minutes. Remove from the heat, let it cool to room temperature and pass it through a fine strainer to separate the oil from the *sofrito*. Keep both.

For the mayonnaise

Place the egg in the bowl of a hand blender. Emulsify by pouring little by little, in a continuous stream, the oil strained from the *sofrito*. When the desired texture is reached, add the tablespoon of *sofrito* and the lemon juice and finish blending everything. Put the mayonnaise thus formed in a bowl and add the coriander and dill. Set aside.

For tuna au *papillote*

Preheat the oven to 150 ° C. Place the tuna fillet on a board and season with salt and pepper to taste. In a separate bowl, mix the garlic paste with the olive oil. Then add this mixture to the tuna fillet, covering it completely.

On a baking sheet, place a plantain leaf, spread it with a little oil and distribute slices of French lemon on top. Place the tuna steak on top of the plantain leaf and cover with more lemon slices. Place another banana leaf on top and secure it to the ends of the bottom sheet with some toothpicks. Bake for 20 minutes. At the end of the time, remove from the oven, carefully uncover the tuna, remove all the lemon slices and transfer the fish to a separate bowl to break it up and make chunks of it. Set aside.

Filling and presentation

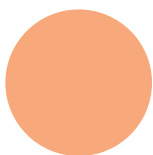
In a bowl, mix the tuna chunks with the mayonnaise. Open the corn and coconut arepa, fill it with the previous preparation and serve.



I am Leonardo Hernández and live in Caracas. I attended high school at Colegio San Agustín, and I just graduated with the first class of the LAGA gastronomy academy where I had the opportunity to train with excellent teachers who motivated me even more to continue in this exciting world... My goal is to constantly improve and exalt the flavors creating experiences.

A word cloud featuring the name 'MIREPOIX' repeated in various colors (yellow, red, green, orange) and orientations (horizontal, vertical, diagonal). At the bottom, the word 'SOFRITO' is written in large, bold, black capital letters.





Yes, the arepa has a special place in our school's curriculum. In the third semester, students have a course dedicated exclusively to Venezuelan Cuisine, where they explore the different varieties of arepas found in different regions of the country. Without question, the arepa is much more than a simple food in Venezuelan gastronomy; it is a symbol rooted in the national identity that unites Venezuelans around their culinary culture.

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Arepa Parrillera

María Elena Rivero

My dad is an “expert” griller, who inspired me to create this recipe: I remember him serving me a meat arepa with white cheese at school. I remember that all my friends loved it, and I was always happy to share it with them. That same happiness I felt at that moment is what I feel now sharing my creation.

La Parrillera is oriented towards Creole flavors, I wanted to achieve the authenticity of the ingredients using the emblematic black pudding from Carúpano, with that sweet-spicy touch that distinguishes the ones from the region. For the green mojito sauce, I wanted to achieve an intense green color that looks like *guasacaca*, but omitting the presence of avocado, and, finally, the *guayanes* cheese, a very soft and creamy cheese that, with a touch of the griddle, is elevated, thus also managing to complement all the flavors. Arepas are a symbol of home, it is a food that always embraces us at the beginning of the day or at the end of it, it is part of our lives and identifies us as Venezuelans, as well as a good barbecue with the family. Two concepts that together create the *Arepa Parrillera*.

Recipe for 3 arepas, preparation time 40 minutes.

Ingredients:

For the arepas

110 g of precooked corn flour
160 ml of water
150 g of Carupano black pudding, without skin
Oil to grease the *budare*

For the green mojito sauce

30 g onion cut into quarters
1 peeled garlic clove
50 g chopped green seedless sweet aji
50gr coriander leaves
15 ml vinegar
20gr olive oil
70gr vegetable oil
Pepper to taste
Salt to taste

For the stuffing

450 g large sirloin steaks
400 g of guayanes cheese cut with a ring of the approximate size of each arepa.
Oil (to brown the cheese slices)
Black pepper to taste
Coarse salt to taste

Preparation:

For the arepas

Place a skillet over medium heat and cook the black pudding until golden brown. Remove and process in a food processor until reduced to a puree or paste. Cool to room temperature and set aside.

In a bowl, add the water together with the flour and the processed black pudding. Knead until it comes off your fingers and then form the arepas.

Heat over medium heat the budare or griddle lightly greased with oil and then cook the arepas until golden brown on both sides.

For the sauce

In a blender or hand processor, add all the sauce ingredients and process for 2 to 3 minutes. Remove and set aside.

For the filling

Heat a nonstick skillet, lightly greased with oil, over a high flame. Season the steaks with coarse salt on both sides. Once the skillet is hot, place the steaks in the skillet and brown them on both sides, cooking to medium rare, preferably. Remove from the heat and let them rest for a while.

Clean the skillet, coat it again with a little oil and heat it over medium heat. Once hot, add the cheese rounds and brown them on both sides until a golden crust is achieved. Remove and set aside.

Assembling

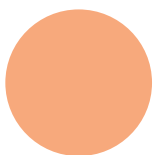
Cut the steaks into strips. Open each arepa in half and stuff it in the following order: grilled *guayanés* cheese, steak strips and the green mojito on top of the meat, or on the side of the arepa in a small bowl or sauce pan to enjoy with each bite.



My name is **María Elena Rivero Da Costa**, I was born in Caracas, Venezuela, on November 25, 1999. I am currently studying Gastronomy at the Instituto Superior Mariano Moreno. My journey through the gastronomic world began at a very young age; I always had a fascination for watching my parents and grandmothers cook, my childhood memories revolve around cooking and family. I can't forget to mention my dad, his forte is the grill, the pork leg, meats in general, and he always makes excellent food.

When I finished high school, upon graduating, I had to make a decision: I always knew I wanted to study Gastronomy, but I heard what others said and let them convince me to study Psychology – which I did for four years until I was honest to myself and quit. I spent a few months thinking about what to do until people close to me motivated me to pursue this dream. I know I am just at the beginning of a long road, but I am prepared for what is to come. I am happy to study what I am passionate about in my country, Venezuela.





ADELIS SISIRUCÁ SCHOOL

In the Venezuelan Cuisine level, the first practical classes are those of corn, where students learn to make fundamental preparations within our gastronomy, such as the pounded corn arepa and the peeled corn arepa, the *pampuras* (Coro arepa) and some classic fillings such as the *Reina Pepiada*.

The arepa is a heritage and symbol of national identity. For us as a school, the arepa is essential in training, since, as chef Norah Muñoz says: "Every good Venezuelan cook has to know how to make good arepas".

Watercourses and conucos

Adrián Andrés Pérez Asuaje

The idea is to show the world the culinary richness of the Venezuelan Amazon, highlighting the unique flavors and colors of this region. It is an opportunity to celebrate and value the cultural heritage of our country, especially that of the indigenous peoples who represent us here.

Ingredients:

For the arepas

170 g of purple *mapuey* (American yam or *Dioscorea trifida*) flour
80 g of precooked corn flour
250 ml of warm water
3 g salt

For the fish stew

250 g of boneless and shredded smoked fish
50 g sweet chili peppers cut in brunoise
25gr of onion cut in brunoise
20 grams of chives cut in brunoise
2 cloves of garlic
2 sprigs of coriander or cilantro, cut in chiffonade
50 ml of oil with annatto
5 g salt

For the Catara sauce

250 ml of Katara
50 g sugar
3 g salt

Preparation:

For the stuffing (*or pisillo*)

Heat the oil with annatto in a skillet over low heat. Once hot, sauté the vegetables and half of the cilantro for 2 minutes or until the vegetables soften a little. Add the smoked fish and stir-fry for 3 more minutes. Season with salt and finally add the rest of the cilantro before removing from the heat and setting aside.

For the sweet Katara sauce

In a small saucepan or kettle, add the *katara* and sugar. Bring it to the fire and cook until it has reduced by 30% or until it has a slightly thick texture. Add a pinch of salt and set aside to accompany the stuffed arepa.

For the arepas

In a bowl of adequate size add the warm water and salt, add the purple *mapuey* and corn flours, mixing everything very well. Knead until you get a smooth and homogeneous texture, and let it rest for about 5 minutes.

Once the time is over, divide the dough into four equal parts, make balls and flatten them with the palms of your hands until you obtain the characteristic circular shape of an arepa, with a thickness of approximately one finger each.

In a non-stick frying pan or *budare*, previously heated and lightly greased with oil, cook the arepas at a medium-high temperature (140° to 160° C) for about 3 minutes or until they are golden brown (or form a «shell» on the bottom), so that they can be easily flipped over. Once browned on both sides, place them in the oven at 180° C for 5 minutes.

Assembling

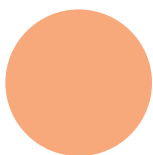
When removing them from the oven, let them rest for a few minutes, open them in half, fill them with the *pisillo* and serve them accompanied with the *katara* sauce, to be added to the taste of each diner.



My name is **Adrián Pérez**, I was born in Barquisimeto in 2001. I lived most of my life in Amazonas, and I always had that connection with the flavors and aromas of those lands. I studied cooking in Amazonas and then in Barquisimeto, at the Adelis Sisirucá School of Gastronomy, where I learned a lot about Venezuelan cuisine and modern cooking techniques. I currently work at Cristal restaurant, and I have a Venezuelan cuisine project called Macundal, where I seek to promote traditional recipes with modern techniques and innovative presentations.

What inspires me to cook? For me, cooking is more than a job, it is my form of expression and my way of connecting with others through food.





LA CASSEROLE DU CHEF

The arepa is part of the Venezuelan gastronomy, being the most demanded dish in the country. Within the curriculum, at the Intermediate level, we have the subject of Venezuelan Cuisine, and the History of Venezuelan gastronomy; and the most important space that the arepa has is in the last stage at the International level in the Services to the Venezuelan table.

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Dorada guayanesa

Francisco Zaragoza

In the Eastern part of our country we find a lot of gastronomy that frequently deals with our coasts and the taste for the sea, but Venezuela has a culinary jewel, rich in flavor, texture, tradition, that deserves to be put in value, as it is our *guayanes* cheese. Therefore, I present this recipe where the arepa dough is flavored with beef, pumpkin and roasted garlic, and is filled with *guayanes* cheese, chopped basil and tomato powder.

Ingredients

For the tomato powder

The skins of 12 tomatoes (usually discarded when preparing natural tomato sauce)

Black pepper to taste

Sugar to taste

Salt to taste

For the arepas

175 g pre-cooked corn flour

200 ml beef stock at room temperature

150 g of pumpkin

3 cloves garlic

15 g all-purpose wheat flour

300 ml canola oil (for frying)

Pepper to taste

Salt to taste

For the filling

150 g of *guayanes* cheese

8 ml olive oil

1 bunch of basil cut in chiffonade

Pepper to taste

Salt to taste

Preparation

For the tomato powder

Preheat the oven to 150° C. Place the tomato skins on the bottom of a baking sheet and sprinkle with sugar, black pepper and salt to taste. Bake for 40 minutes until dry and lightly toasted. Remove from the oven and let cool to room temperature. Take them between your hands and crush them as finely as possible. Reserve.

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For the arepas

Preheat the oven to 200° C. Put the pumpkin and garlic in a baking tray and take them to the oven to roast them. Once their surface is well browned, remove them and mix them with the beef stock. Season to taste with salt and pepper and transfer this mixture to a blender to process it evenly.

Pour the above mixture into a bowl, or large container, and add the corn flour gradually while starting to knead with both hands. Knead until you obtain a homogeneous, firm and smooth consistency. Rectify the salt and proceed to form the arepas in the usual way.

Heat the oil in a hotpot on a stove over medium-high heat. Once hot, fry the arepas until golden brown. Remove them and let them rest on paper towels to remove excess oil.

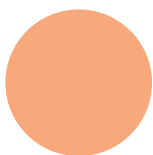
Presentation

Open the arepas in half and fill them with a good portion of *guayanes* cheese, basil and tomato powder. Drizzle with a few drops of olive oil and serve.



Francisco Javier Zaragoza Pereira is a sociologist, musician, photographer, but he brought it all to gastronomy. He arrived at the Casserole Du Chef after the insistence of friends and family as an opportunity to profile the talent of combining flavors, textures, colors and special aromas, where he would come to stand out among the best of his brigade. At forty years old, he is an example that it is never too late to achieve your dreams.





CHEF MILENIUM

The arepa is a tangible representation of Venezuela's rich culinary heritage, and its inclusion in the curriculum reflects the School's commitment to the preservation and promotion of local culinary traditions. The arepa is seen as a link between the past and the present, an element that connects students to their roots while preparing them to innovate and excel in the future.

Mandocerdo

Selenis Villegas

Today I present an arepa with ingredients characteristic of the gastronomy of my beautiful country. The "Mandocerdo": An arepa made with *mandioca* dough, its base is made of plantain, *papelón* and the characteristic corn flour of us Venezuelans. It is filled with pork meat marinated in beer and spices: salt, pepper, oregano and garlic. In addition, it is accompanied by a delicious cream cheese that is made with two of our most characteristic cheeses throughout the country, the *Guayanes* cheese and the *Telita* cheese.

Ingredients

For the arepas

250 g of harina pan
1 ripe plantain, well washed
1 liter of water to cook the plantain
250 g grated white cheese
40 g *papelón* syrup
40 g grated *papelón* on the fine side of the grater
Water for kneading (can be from the cooking of the plantain)
2 cups of oil
1 pinch of salt

For the cream cheese

½ cup milk cream
100 g finely chopped *telita* cheese
50 g *guayanes* cheese, finely chopped
Black pepper to taste
Salt to taste

For the pork

150 g chopped pork pulp
½ can of beer
1 tablespoon of oil
Black pepper to taste
Oregano to taste
Salt to taste
5 petals of coriander microgreens

Preparation

For the arepas

Cut the plantain with its skin into thick slices. Put them in a pot and cover them with water. Put them on the stove over high heat and cook them until they are soft. Remove them, drain them and proceed to remove their skin and inner seeds. Mash them to a puree and set aside.

In a bowl, add the flour, cheese, grated *papelón*, syrup and pinch of salt. Add the mashed plantain and begin to knead, using some of the plantain cooking water, if necessary, until you obtain a soft and manageable dough that does not stick to your fingers.

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Add the plantain cooking water until you obtain the desired consistency in the dough. To make the arepas, first form a ball and flatten it between your hands while rolling it until you obtain the desired thickness. Repeat the procedure until the dough runs out.

Heat the oil in a cauldron over a high heat. Its temperature should reach 170-180°C. Dip the arepas in the oil and fry until golden brown. Remove them, drain them and let them rest a little on paper towels to remove excess oil.

For the cheese cream

In a saucepan over medium heat, warm the cream. Add the cheeses and wait for them to melt. Remove from the heat. Season with salt and pepper to taste and set aside.

For the pork

Place the pork in a deep tray to marinate with the beer, oregano, black pepper and salt to taste for at least 1 hour in the refrigerator. After this time, remove from the liquid and dry very well with a cloth.

In a pot over medium heat, heat the oil. Cook the pork for about 20 minutes or until browned. Remove from heat and set aside.

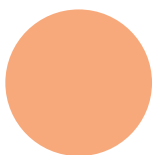
Presentation

Open the arepa in half, fill with the cream cheese and the browned pork pieces. Decorate with the coriander microgreen petals.



My name is **Selenis Villegas Valera**, I am 19 years old, and I am from Aragua, but with roots in the plains. Since I was a little girl, my love for gastronomy has been evident. I grew up in a home of women who every day created with their hands a new experience for my palate. My great-grandmother, my grandmother and my mother, have been responsible for me to inherit a pair of blessed and agile hands for the kitchen. I proudly carry my Venezuelan nationality, and the gastronomy of my country makes me remember my home, my roots, my family and the childhood I one day enjoyed so much. I am currently studying at Chef Milenium.





UNATUR SCHOOL HOTEL OF THE ANDES OF VENEZUELA

The arepa is a symbol of our national identity, that is, it is a gastronomic expression of Venezuela. The arepa is considered as one of the main topics in the curricular units of Cuisine I of the Hotel and Hospitality Services career as well as in the PNFT's Gastronomic Heritage.

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Sweet potato and creole cheese arepa with creamy shredded chicken and cheese coral

Narmary Lobo

Among all the ingredients I could have chosen for this recipe, I chose the sweet potato as the main ingredient, motivated by my passion for baking. Whenever I can, I try to involve the sweet with the salty, since, in my opinion, it gives a delicious result; and that is achieved in this recipe with ingredients native to the state and the country in general.

Ingredients for 5 servings.

For the dough

500 g sweet potatoes (sweet potatoes or yams)
200 grams of shredded creole or smoked cheese
Salt (optional)

For the stuffing

700 g chicken breast (bone-in and skinless)
150 g of tomatoes cut in brunoise
150 g tomatoes cut into quarters
150 grams of onions cut in brunoise
150 g quartered onions
3 garlic cloves
1 dehydrated chili
200 g milk cream
3 tablespoons of oil
1 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
½ tsp. ground oregano

For the coral

150 g ground or finely grated smoked cheese

Preparation

For the stuffing

Put the chicken breast in a pot with water to cover it and a teaspoon of salt. Cook it over a medium-high heat until it is completely done. Once ready, remove it, drain it, let it cool to room temperature and proceed to shred the meat into thin strands.

Blend the quartered tomatoes and onions with the dehydrated chili and garlic, adding a little water if necessary. Set aside.

In a large skillet, heat the oil over medium heat and sauté the onions and tomatoes cut in brunoise. Then add the blended vegetables and cook until you get a light sauce. Then add the shredded chicken breast and the cream.

Season with the oregano, black pepper and salt to taste, and cook over low heat for 5-10 minutes until the sauce reduces a little.

For the dough

Preheat the oven to 180° C. Remove the skins from the sweet potatoes and place them in a greased baking pan or on baking paper and bake for 1 hour or until they are soft enough to mash.

Another option for mashed sweet potatoes: put them in a pot with enough water to cover them and cook over medium-high heat until soft. A very important step: before mashing them, let them drain until as much water as possible is removed.

Once the sweet potatoes are mashed, add the grated cheese and knead until a homogeneous dough is obtained. If the dough is not firm enough, add a little precooked corn flour. Finally, season with salt to taste and set aside.

For the coral

Place a non-stick frying pan over a medium flame and add thin layers of the ground or grated cheese, leaving spaces to obtain a kind of flat coral. Wait 1 or 2 minutes until golden brown and easy to turn; brown on the remaining side and remove the coral thus formed from the heat with a paddle. Repeat the procedure eight times to obtain the same number of cheese corals.



Assembling

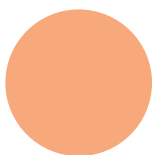
Make arepas of approximately 10 cm in diameter and 1 cm thick with the dough. Heat a lightly oiled griddle or *budare* over medium heat. Grill the arepas until golden brown on both sides. Remove them, open them in half, fill them with the chicken and the cheese coral, and serve them.



Narmary Jurletty Lobo Dugarte, 23 years old, was born in Merida, Venezuela, on May 12, 2001. She finished high school in 2017 at the Liceo Bolivariano Libertador; and the University Superior Technician in Hotel and Hospitality Services in 2022 at the UNATUR, in the School Hotel nucleus of the Venezuelan Andes. Currently, she is a first year student of the degree in Tourism, majoring in Gastronomy, at the same university. Passionate about cooking, she is the creator of With Love by Narmary Lobo, a pastry and creative stationery business. She is dedicated to her studies and to launching her business, with the intention of creating a chain of coffee shops.

A word cloud featuring the words 'BOUQUET GARNI' and 'COMPUESTO' repeated in various sizes and orientations. The words are set against a background of a stylized green plant with long, thin leaves and small white flowers. The overall design is clean and modern, with a focus on the text and the plant motif.





CHEF CAMPUS

The arepa, without a doubt, occupies a preponderant place in the diet of Venezuelan people. Its presence goes beyond a simple food, becoming a cultural element that defines our national identity. In the Venezuelan Regional Cuisine program, students not only learn the traditional techniques to prepare them, but also explore the different regions of the country, discovering the local variants in the preparation and consumption of this emblematic food. Its presence in the cooking curriculum is a reflection of the commitment we have with the training of professionals capable of preserving and disseminating this culinary treasure that defines us as a nation.

Pampatar Arepa

Maira José Ladrón de Guevara Soto

To immerse myself in the world of Venezuelan cuisine is to connect with my roots and discover what I am made of and where I belong to. And one of the most beloved jewels of our cuisine is the arepa, which unites us all around the table and is the heart of our cuisine. Throughout Venezuela, the aroma of corn dough is an aroma of home. It is much more than food, since our natives, the pounded corn dough, cooked on hot stones, has become a basic recipe of the Venezuelan diet.

I present an arepa of mosaics of sweet pepper from Margarita in all its colors, and calamari ink; filled with seafood *Salpicón* (octopus, squid and shrimp). An explosive sensory experience, full of flavors and textures.

The mosaic of the dough creates an intense and fleshy flavor, while the *Salpicón* adds a crunchy and juicy texture, complemented by the acidity of the lemon and the freshness of the herbs. A recipe for lovers of the sea and bold flavors.

Ingredients

For the seafood *salpicón*

350 g of octopus, well washed and drained
250 g squid, cleaned, without skin and guts
250 g of washed shrimps, but with their shells on
3 liters of water (2 liters to blanch the squid and 1 to blanch the shrimps)
2 liters of water to stop the cooking of the squid and shrimps
(1 liter for each one)
Ice cubes from 2 shells (half for the squid and half for the shrimps)
250 ml lemon juice
150 g of purple onions, cut into feathers
7 g sweet red and green margarita pepper, cut into julienne strips
7 g Peruvian yellow pepper, cut in julienne strips
1 branch of celery
2 cloves garlic
5 g cilantro cut in chiffonade
15 ml extra virgin olive oil
1 bay leaf
Pepper to taste
Salt to taste

For the arepas

360 g of precooked corn flour
360 ml mineral water
5 g salt
50 grams of yellow Margarita sweet pepper
50 grams of green Margarita sweet pepper
50 grams of red Margarita sweet pepper
2gr squid ink
A small amount of bacon grease to grease the *budare*



Preparation:

From the seafood ***salpicón***

Octopus

Heat a medium stainless steel saucepan over medium heat until it reaches a temperature of 90°C. Place the octopus in the pot and cover it. You will hear the sound of heat shock. Next, add the onion, bay leaf, celery and garlic. Cover again and lower the temperature to 80°C (176°F). The octopus is cooked with the vegetables in its own juice. No salt is added. Cooking time is 45 minutes per kilo of octopus, although the texture should be checked every 20 minutes. The octopus meat should be uniformly soft and with a juicy texture. Remove from the heat, remove the octopus, discarding the vegetables with which it was cooked, chop it and set aside.

Squid

In a large bowl or container pour 1 liter of water with plenty of ice cubes and set aside. Pour the water to blanch the squid in a pot. Heat it over a high heat. When it comes to a boil, introduce the squid and blanch them for 40 seconds. Remove them immediately with a skimmer or perforated spoon, drain briefly and place them in the bowl with the cold water and ice cubes for a few minutes. Remove, drain and dry on paper towels. Set aside.

Shrimps

Pour the water to blanch the shrimps in a saucepan and place it over medium heat. When it comes to a boil, introduce the shrimp and blanch them for one minute. Repeat the procedure followed to extract, drain and cool the squid. Remove them and once dried on absorbent paper, proceed to remove their shells. Set aside.

Salpicón

In a glass or steel bowl, mix the lime juice, red onion, peppers, cilantro and olive oil. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Add the cooked seafood and stir well to blend the ingredients. Marinate in the refrigerator for at least 5 minutes for the flavors to integrate.

For the arepas

Divide the flour into three equal parts and set aside. Dissolve the salt in the water and separate it in three equal parts, each one in a different bowl or container, in one of these add the red sweet pepper, in another one the yellow sweet pepper and in the remaining one the green sweet pepper. Also divide the squid ink in three equal parts and pour the corresponding amount in each bowl. Then proceed to blend the contents of these separately, returning them to each bowl, already blended.

To make an arepa, take a portion of each of the three doughs and form a ball in such a way that the colors of each can be seen separately. Flatten it while rolling it between the palms of your hands, until you obtain a disk of approximately 1.5 cm thick. Repeat the procedure until all the dough runs out.

Heat a lightly greased *budare* or griddle with a silicone brush coated in bacon grease, set over a medium heat. Once hot, grill the arepas for approximately 7 minutes on each side, or until crispy on the outside and cooked on the inside.

To serve, open the hot arepa in half and fill with the *salpicón*.



I am Maira Ladrón de Guevara. I live in Caracas, I am 53 years old, and I am trained in Haute Cuisine and Bakery and Pastry, at the Chef Campus Institute. I have worked as manager at El Manjar, as Guest Chef at La Guapa Caracas. My long-term goals in the culinary world are to constantly research to create innovative recipes, and to inspire others through teaching and creation. For me, the kitchen is a space where I am happy and that allows me to give love.



The image features a dark gray background with a grid of circles. A central column of circles is highlighted in white and yellow. The text "MUSES AND TEACHERS" is positioned to the right of this column.

**MUSES
AND
TEACHERS**



Magdalena Salavarría | Photographer: @rafaelguillen



Don Armando Scannone | Photographer: @rafaelguillen

Muses of Venezuelan Cuisine

Nideska Suarez

Two names, two flavors, two ways of conjuring magic in front of the stove that complement each other to brighten Venezuelan cuisine: Alicia Allas and Magdalena Salavarría. From Irapa, the first one; and from Güiria, the second one, they both had seasoning at their fingertips. They were not only fellow natives from the same state and neighboring municipalities, but sisters in the art of cooking.

Both took the road from Sucre state to the capital to end up becoming the muses of two great sybarites, lovers, above all, of the Creole seasoning: José Rafael Lovera and Armando Scannone. One a lawyer, an engineer the other, both gastronomes. With a passion that, very early on, was marked by the aromas of stews and preparations, as well as by the pleasure of the perfect bite that melts in the mouth and becomes food for the soul. Two demanding palates that could not help but fall in love with the seasoning of two innate cooks, who despite not being trained in the rigor of the academy, brought in their DNA the exact measure for each recipe.

Venezuela is fortunate to have these duos – made up by the masters and their muses - united by flavor and who represent, within Venezuelan gastronomy, the perfect balance between yin and yang. The yin is embodied by two extraordinary cooks who symbolize the active principle of the feminine in our kitchens, a principle that travels through generations wrapped in the aroma of cocoa, asado negro and cloves. The masculine principle is personified by two great masters and keepers of knowledge, responsible for preserving it for posterity.

Don Armando Scannone was an artist who gave us in a palette of colors those recipes that have been riding the needles of time, whose flavors identify us because they inevitably remind us of our grandmothers, mothers and aunts: first he gave us a crimson brushstroke with *Mi cocina: A la manera de Caracas*, the iconic Red Book (1982); then he traced a brushstroke of

sky with *Mi cocina II*, known as the Blue Book (1994); later he gave us a little piece of sunshine with *Menús de mi cocina* (2010), the Yellow Book, that same year he gave us a trace of hope with *Mi cocina ligera*, the Green Book; to finally deliver us *Mi lonchera* (2013), wrapped in the colors of the sunset: the Orange Book.

It is said that every artist has his muse and Scannone's was Magdalena Salavarría. A story that begins many years ago with the arrival of Magdalena to the Scannone family home to assume the stoves and, everyday, place on the table the dishes that made the delights of those who tasted them; thus achieving the perfect pairing with the demanding palate of Scannone who, since childhood, developed a fervent inclination for the Creole seasoning, because, after his mother's milk, the first thing he tasted was black beans broth.

Despite being the son of Italian immigrants, in his home he favored the native dishes of the land that welcomed him, especially those of the Caracas region; smells and flavors that, since childhood, seemed to decide his destiny.

When Magdalena was about to give birth to her last daughter, she left don Armando's house for a while, and he told her:

—All right, go have your baby girl and come back when you recover.

Naively thinking that her absence could be replaced by hiring another cook; and indeed, he did so, but poor of him, the dishes she cooked told him nothing, they did not sing like Magdalena's, which seemed to have a melody. These dishes that he now tasted in the absence of his cook did not even babble. Magdalena had gone off to bring a new life into the world while in her kitchen the liveliness of the preparations died out. It was thus that he learned the lesson that an artist must never let his muse escape because there is an exclusive one for each artist and it cannot be substituted.

Fortunately for don Armando, and for everyone, Magdalena returned with the baby in her arms and the seasoning in her hands more alive than ever.

However, there was another lesson that the sybarite had learned: it was not enough to have the best cook in his kitchen because, at this point, he had no doubt that he had a rare treasure at home; he also had to collect that knowledge so that it would not be lost. It was then and there when it came to life the gastronome that had been brewing inside him for some time.

The undertaking was monumental because Magdalena, blessed with the gift of flavor, did not know about measurements, but intuition. Her instinct guided her; her experience knew the precise cooking time and temperature, but her measurements were the pinch, the fistful, a little bit of... her wisdom came from within, from what she had seen and learned during her life. So, how to turn something innate into a cooking manual that anyone could follow?

That is what the engineer with his millimetric system was for. He weighed, measured, tasted and tasted again, until he found the exact taste he was looking for and, course, he wrote it down. That is how the “Bible” of Venezuelan gastronomy, the Red Book, was born. Among its covers you can find a great part of the essence of Magdalena’s cuisine, but of course there is always a secret ingredient impossible to transmit because, in the end, the seasoning is something very personal. As Mercedes Oropeza, one of her disciples, rightly points out:

“There would have to be a Black Book, which would be Magdalena’s book with all the secrets so that things turn out to be just as hers. Because Magdalena is a woman from Güiria, she comes from popular wisdom; she is a very humble woman who always had a secret under her sleeve”.

Nevertheless, the Red Book does its job and anyone who approaches it and is guided by what it took so long to compile, will be able to have something of Magdalena’s cuisine for themselves as they prepare and taste the recipes.

This task would not have been possible without the great synergy that existed between Don Armando’s engineering and Magdalena’s architecture, because while she built a wonderful world inside the pots and cauldrons, he had the mission to apprehend that world in its right measure so that it would never be extinguished.

A lifetime together (more than forty years) gave them enough confidence for her to call him a jerk and for him to dare to ask her to prepare him a *mondongo* on Sunday.

—No, Don Armando, you’re too much of a jerk. Today is my day off, how am I going to start making *mondongo*?

She would end up preparing it with all the love in the world and besides, it would be tastier than the previous ones.

Those who knew them and had the privilege of closely observing the dynamic between them, do not hesitate to affirm that there was magic between the master and his muse, the magic of two people who understood each other without too much talking.

“Magdalena knew how to read Don Armando, she knew what he liked and disliked, she also knew how and when to spoil him with the affection and respect they had for each other through food, and that was of great value to him throughout his life”, José Luis Álvarez relates.

As Magdalena sat smoking her tobacco in the backyard of the house, Mercedes Oropeza, who was doing the internship under Magdalena's tutelage, came over to tell her:

–Magdalena, it's already eleven o'clock and you haven't set up lunch, how can we help you?

The plural included José Luis Álvarez, who was also an intern at don Armando's house.

Magdalena's answer was:

–Oh, stay calm, stay calm.

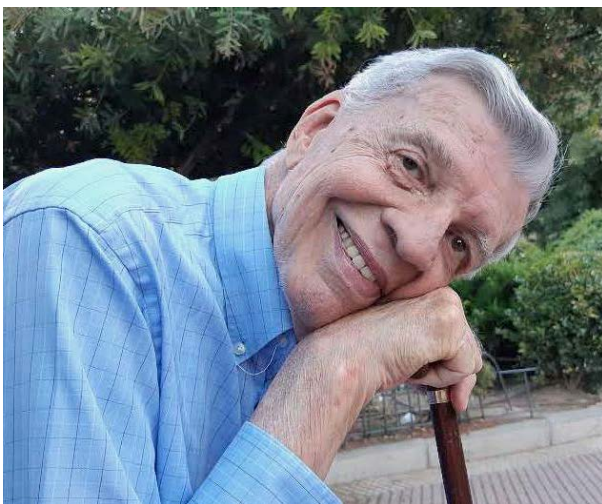
She answered without haste while the wisps of smoke gave her an air of mysticism. Maybe that is why when she got up from that stone and went into the kitchen, nobody knew how she did it, but don Armando was having lunch at half past twelve, not a minute more nor a minute less.

«It seemed to us that Magdalena was pure magic», says Mercedes, recalling those moments.

Sweet tooth and much loved, it was inevitable to spoil her by preparing the cakes she loved so much. It is easy to please someone who has given so much.

Alicia Allas, the other muse of our Creole gastronomy, also began working very young in the Scannone family's house, in fact she also contributed with her experience in the elaboration of the Red Book, but her destiny as a muse awaited her in another kitchen: that of the Lovera Zamora family.

She was also endowed with innate taste and intuition to delight palates; molded over the years by the hands of experience, she ended up being a great, wise and generous teacher.



Professor Jose Rafael Lovera
Photographer: Gabriela Lovera



Alicia Allas | Photographer: Carlos Medori

As a historian, for José Rafael Lovera it was inevitable to look back to the past to bring it to the present. We all have a thread that leads us to the past; some have color, others have texture, and others have flavor. The latter was the case of Professor Lovera, who could not resist the urge to cast his hook into the waters of gastronomy to bring us pearls such as *Historia de la alimentación en Venezuela* (1988), *El cacao en Venezuela: una historia* (2000), *Food Culture in South America* (2005), *Gastronáuticas*, *Gastronomía Caribeña* (2006), among others.

Founder of the Centro de Estudios Gastronómicos (CEGA), he knew the importance of having Alicia as his right hand and instructor of Venezuelan cuisine, then she would reveal herself as the teacher capable of giving unforgettable master classes that inspired so many. Not only was she an artist in the kitchen, she also had the ability to transmit knowledge because she spent her whole life learning, refining her innate gift through studying.

As María Antonieta Pérez (Mariantito) tells us:

“She is a master in brightness, in taste, in smells. Her food is very beautiful”

Alicia Allas found in other chefs' books her greatest allies, she read a lot, she was a bookworm of cookbooks, she devoured them to then prepare dishes that, in turn, others devoured with pleasure. She was fluent in French, Italian and international cuisine, and was capable of adapting dishes from other latitudes, giving them her personal stamp. It was her way of taking possession of the dish and transforming it and then sharing it as a delicacy.

"We are going to prepare this duck in orange. The chef says you can put this, but I have this ingredient that also gives it acidity, which will also soften it and I think it is more suitable for our climate and our flavors".

And it would turn out wonderfully.

Master and muse had embarked on a constant search. Alicia's search was for flavor, which also had an impact on other aspects such as the brightness that her dishes always had and that perfumed quality that was difficult to imitate. Professor Lovera's quest was that of the enlightened cook, which had to be made up of several cooks: the traveler cook, the curious cook, the polyglot cook, the writer cook. All of this in order to achieve coherence between what was studied, what was practiced and the lifestyle that was led.

Professor Lovera urged CEGA students to use "el cacumen" (intelligence) and not to present the dishes as *Maria Moñitos* would; Alicia's didactic method was to teach by doing:

"Put in the goat, everything must touch the bottom of the pot, all the pieces of meat. Cover it and don't move it so that the crust turns very beautiful and tasty".

She knew the reason why everything was done in the kitchen:

"You do this to make it shiny, to make it creamy".

She didn't believe in cooks who depended on gadgets to prepare dishes. "So if you don't have the gadget you're not a cook?" She was capable of preparing the most perfect mayonnaise with a wooden stick.

Both, master and muse, were united by pedagogy, from their love for flavors and their complementary searches, they built a relationship of more than forty years in which he liked to eat very well and she liked to cook even better, both respected and admired each other as professionals.

In every yin there is some yang, and vice versa, the history of Venezuelan gastronomy would not be the same if these four beings, lovers and culinary culturists, had not met, because today we are no longer talking about four people, but about countless of cooks who trained with them and keep their legacy alive. Just like the cooks whose testimonies helped to write this portrait to remember the masters and their muses, disciples who do not hesitate to express their gratitude in recognizing how fortunate they were to have had the opportunity to drink from the fountain of knowledge that both couples so generously offered them.

Chef Mercedes Oropeza, comments:

“I think there is a before and after of myself from the moment I went there (referring to Armando Scannone's house). I arrived there with knowledge of French cooking techniques, and when I started working with them, through the Red Book and the Yellow Book, I learned a lot. Thanks to the repetition of all the classic recipes of Venezuelan cuisine and working with the Red Book, I am what I am today (...) I learned values that perhaps I did not have to my credit. I learned the value of friendship, I have the best memories of both, and I enjoyed it very much. I really feel very privileged, because I learned a lot from both of them, and they will always have a special place in my heart”.

To which, chef José Luis Álvarez adds, to help us outline a broader picture:

“Magdalena was a woman completely devoted to her trade in body and soul, with a vocation for service, she was also special and detailed with don Armando, always trying to please him, along with her guests. It was more than forty years of unwavering resolve and dedication at the side of don Armando. She is undoubtedly a woman of good feelings, authentic, simple, and unconditional to those of us who, from love, knew about her joys and sorrows, and noble with those of us who love, value and respect her forever”.

Chef María Antonieta Pérez, known for her channel @mariantocook, the voice that has served us as a thread to draw the relationship between José Rafael Lovera and Alicia Allas, cannot help but express:

“Doing the internship at Professor Lovera's house was fabulous, for me it was a privilege. What didn't I learn? What didn't I experienced in that house? I don't know how to tell you. It was something unparalleled. It marked me, it marked me very much. Professor Lovera and Alicia. And when I talk about my teachers, I am also talking about Víctor Moreno, who was my chef. Chef Miguel Alfonso, who was my pastry chef. The first chef who was at CEGA, José Manuel Hernández. I don't know what else to say, only that I thank God because I have been very lucky, but very lucky with all the teachers who have passed through my life, starting with my mother”.

After listening to their stories, I have been able to reconstruct, to a certain extent, part of what was the collaboration and the relationship between these lovers of cooking, whose meeting seems to have been marked by the call of Venezuelan gastronomy; as if destiny had been forged inside a pot, over a slow fire, and in which an exquisite stew was being cooked. The aromas and

flavors of such stew remain with us today through books, history, knowledge and the perseverance of those who are committed to continue working to keep the stoves of Venezuelan cuisine burning; and to honor, through flavors and techniques, a legacy that is passed from one generation to another like a precious stone that must be guarded with love.

Nideska Suárez



@nideskasuarez



Venezuelan writer graduated from Universidad Central de Venezuela in Literature. Her literary work has received several national and international awards. Some of her short stories and poems have been published in several magazines and anthologies, being the most recognized: *Al filo del gozo (At the edge of pleasure)*, *Antología de poesía erótica escrita por mujeres (Erotic Poetry Anthology written by Women)* (Editorial Viento al Hombro, 2007), published in Mexico, and *Antología de poesía venezolana traducida al árabe (Venezuelan Poetry Anthology translated into Arabic)* (2016), translated by Syrian poet Abdul Zagbour. In

poetry, she has published the plaque *La línea de mi cuerpo (The contour of my body)* and the poem book *Desde mi útero (From my Uterus)*. Some of her literary work can be enjoyed on her website micajadeletras.com.

Helena Ibarra

by Federico Tischler



With parents out of the ordinary, it was obvious that she would be out of the ordinary, too.

Coming from a family with a historical and patriotic pedigree, raised among unconventional Caracas culinary traditions, she honed her palate to become one of the country's gastronomic references.

Helena, with “h” as in Hellenic, is undoubtedly the putative mother of all of us who aspire to cook Venezuelan food.

From a young age, after studying Ecology in France, she understood the art of working with products in the city of lights and fine cuisines. As a child, sitting in starry inns and dressed in pristine jackets, she learned to enjoy caviar, truffles, the best quality chickens and ethereal soufflés.

She always cooked

Through her culinary journey, in one way or another, she competed with her mother, Carmen Helena Parés, a lady who cooked like the gods and was part of the most serious caste in the Academy of History. His mother made it clear to her that she also had to study the “hows” and “whys” of recipe books and the ways of eating. Parés founded an extraordinary foundation to preserve the Karibe, Tupi and Guarani cultures, seeing herself as a complete and complex entity on the east coast of our continent.

There, Helena got to know and cook history; she meddled in writings that denoted sapience and much more flavor than what was intended to be shown as Venezuelan cuisine. And that remained latent in her...

On the other hand, his paternal family was of absolute refinement.

Her father, a cultured man with trained taste buds, invoked renowned chefs from France and Europe, who opened their kitchens and offered him tables without much guilt, but with certain misgivings. Monsieur Ibarra was one of the most important critics of his time, even influencing the nascent and modern Caracas. With this background, “La Ibarra” became one of the first gastronomic critics of the city, earning respect and confrontations for her knowledge, youth, beauty and self-confidence.

She continued cooking, although not on a commercial basis.

This has perhaps belittled the recognition she deserves. She was better known for her private dinners and lavish events in family homes or high-class salons. From a very young age, she embarked on the arduous task of teaching. First, with innovative recipes in magazines and newspapers, showing incredible associations and taking the risk of using unglamorous ingredients that were not found in the emerging refined culinary venues.

Fearlessly, she raised the cassava when no one dared to buy it on the highways. She displayed delicate black-bean butters festooned with tiny avocado pearls, closing the symbol of fairness and balance with a small piece of ciboulette. She used Amazonian finger paints to seal waterproof bows with onoto doughs. She refined bamboo skewers with seeds or dried corn husks. She entangled thin strands of yucca with wild prawns, coating them with spicy mangoes and chiles from the plains. Gourds waited patiently to

be presented at the table, concentrating fermented whey that was finished with cilantro flowers - much sought in popular markets.

As she continued to cook, she realized that everything she had learned had to be passed on professionally and in a serious project.

She had already been giving courses for some time where she taught the basics of cooking, with her starter sauces and derivations – which were as extensive as the imagination would allow. She felt that her name should be associated with training and, therefore, have its own space.

She undertook the arduous task of creating a space where people could cook, learn and, at the same time, attend and serve.

She created an extensive program designed to showcase the incipient gastronomy that, until then, had not been taught in the country. She strove to encourage critical thinking rather than simply memorizing recipes. It was there that we understood why it is essential to make a menu and what tools we need to create this guide of dishes within a concept and a proposal.

I could go on for hours about everything that Ibarra understood and intended to teach in her school, a true center of gastronomic studies and not just a simple cooking school. That is how *Cocido¹ a Mano* was born!

Cooked¹, from cooking, but also from sewing

Because we had to learn to use our hands, eyes, ears, mouth and touch. Being in that school was a symbol of power, in the best sense of the word: the power to create, believe and think. From the first day, we had to cook and make mistakes; however, we were not evaluated with grades, but with experiences. You had to write a lot but you had to read more. We listened to Pink Floyd in the kitchen, but also to *Sentimiento Muerto*, a rock band Helena was not only the manager and co-creator of some songs, but she was also wife of the singer and leader - with whom she had an extraordinary and sensitive daughter, Samantha.

In ***Cocido a Mano***, we made hallacas, but we also cooked basics from French, Italian and other cuisines we would like to learn.

We played with egg yolks to visually understand how chemistry achieved stability in worlds as dissimilar as water and fats by creating emulsions.

I could go on... because, in addition to being a student of that first and only graduating class, I went through the stations of that kitchen until I became Helena's right hand and was in charge of her Siamese proposal, in which the table had to be even more refined and professional. Once outside those protective walls, we went out into the arena with a restaurant of small capacity, which broke the mold of the Caracas standard, to make a Venezuelan cuisine of the highest and most overwhelming standards; an experience that had not been repeated until today.

Helena went on, fell down and got up, almost as the Bible says

She created more gastronomic projects, continued doing private events and training thinkers who know how to eat and cook. Over time, she has been recognized as a standard bearer of our national cuisine, and after several awards, the Venezuelan Academy of Gastronomy gave her the podium she so well deserves.

For me, it is not only an honor to be his student, his pupil, but also his friend.

That is the greatest reward for having followed in her footsteps to start cooking over 25 years ago.

1 Cocido: In Spanish, phonetically can be both “cooked” or “sewn”. With this spelling, it means “cooked”.

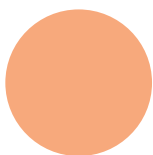
Thank you, Helena. May you continue to teach us how to eat better but, above all, that you may now devote yourself to be flattered and invited to partake at more tables where Venezuelan cuisine is cooked as you have taught us.

**AREPAS FOR MUSES
AND MAESTROS**

AND THE AREPA ALL INFLATED,
ROUND AND PROUD, WHEN
IT COMES OUT OF **THE BUDARE**

A
WELL-
DONE DOUGH
THAT DOES NOT
CRACK, DOES NOT
LOSE ITS SHAPE,
AND DOES
NOT OFFER
RESISTANCE
WHEN SHAPING
IT AS THE
MOON

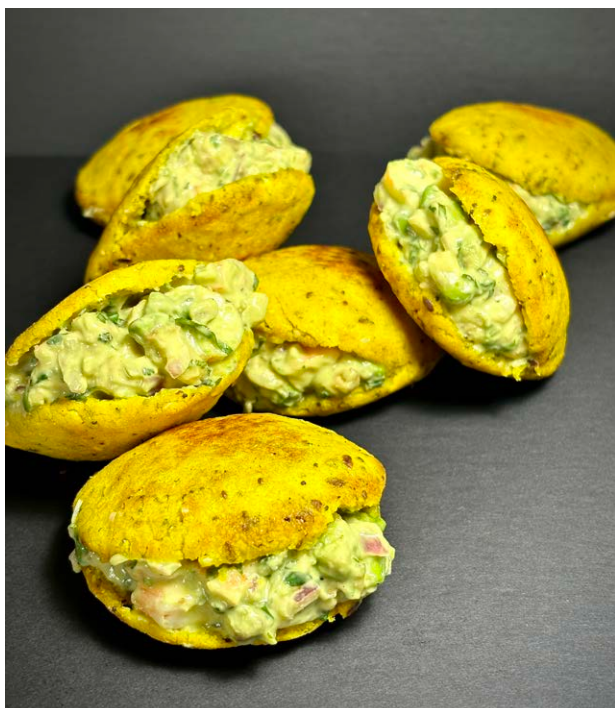
AND THE AREPA ALL INFLATED,
ROUND AND PROUD, WHEN IT
COMES OUT OF THE BUDARE



AREPA LA SALAVARRÍA

Magdalena Salavarría, an authentic, simple and loyal woman. With special gifts and talent for cooking, she is the one to whom I have the privilege of honoring and thanking infinitely for everything I have learned and experienced, throughout many years of perseverance and dedication to Venezuelan cuisine, together with Don Armando Scannone.

All my gratitude, forever.



Mini Arepas ***Multigrain*** with Shrimp and Avocados.

Dough ingredients:

Yield 12 arepas of 50g each

1 ½ cup rasa or 225g of *harina pan*
1 level teaspoon or 2g of turmeric
5 level tablespoons or 30g sesame, poppy, flaxseed, and chia seeds, mixed together
1 ½ level teaspoon or 8g salt
1 ½ cup or 345g water

Procedure

●Weigh in a bowl all the dry ingredients; the *harina pan*, turmeric, grains and salt, mix them very well. Add the water and knead immediately. Let rest for a few minutes.

●Weigh or divide 12 portions of dough of 50 g each and proceed to make the arepas by making flattened circles - 1 cm thick - with your hands. Set aside.

●Put a frying pan, griddle or *budare* over medium heat, grease with oil using a paper towel, and put the arepas to cook for 4 minutes on each side, or until you get a thin golden crust on both sides. Remove from the pan and take them to the oven previously heated to 450°F for 9 minutes, until they are puffed and crispy.

●Remove from the oven, and with a knife open in half, one by one, without separating their sides, fill and serve immediately

Filling ingredients

Yield 490g approx. - 40g for each arepa

16 units (350g raw - 210g cooked) of shrimp

3 cups or 690ml water

1 ½ teaspoon or 9g of salt

35g finely chopped red onion

10g finely chopped cilantro

25 g mayonnaise

15 g mustard

5 ml Worcestershire sauce

25 ml lime juice

1/2 tsp or 2 g Tabasco hot sauce

1/2 tsp or 3 g salt

1pc or 160g finely chopped avocado flesh

Procedure

●Put the water and salt in a pot over high heat, bring to a boil and add the shrimp, bring to a second boil and continue cooking for two minutes. Remove from heat, strain and cool the shrimp with iced water, finally chop them into small cubes and set aside.

●Weigh in a bowl the rest of the ingredients: onion and cilantro, finely chopped; mayonnaise, mustard, Worcestershire sauce, lime juice, Tabasco, salt and mix. Add the shrimp and the finely chopped avocado pulp.

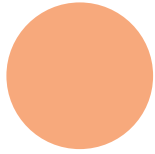
NOTE: level cups, tablespoons and teaspoons.



José Luis Álvarez C

 @joseAivarez

Born in Maracaibo, in Zulia state, he developed his culinary career in Caracas. He is a Chef by vocation who had the fortune to know and have, for many years, very great, dear and respected personalities such as Don Armando Scannone, José Rafael Lovera and Felix Otamendi, among others, and from whom he learned the value of the «Venezuelan cuisine».



LA SCANNONE



Photographer: Enrique Blanco

Chicharron mini arepas

Dough ingredients:

2 1/2 cups of drinking water
2 cups of pre-cooked corn flour of the brand of your choice.
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 cups of ground pork cracklings with crispy meat and skin.

Preparation:

Pour the water into a medium bowl or deep bowl, add the salt, gradually add the flour and mix stirring continuously.

Then knead gently and let it rest for 5 minutes, knead again adding the ground pork crackling, until a soft and moldable dough is obtained.

On a scale, weigh portions of dough of about 50g. Then take each portion and shape it with your hands, making a sphere, flatten it a little, until you get the shape of a small arepa.

Place them on a tray and cover them with a clean, very damp kitchen towel until the moment of frying.



At the moment of serving, they should be fried in a medium-sized pot with enough oil, preferably corn oil. The oil should be heated to 180°C (350°F).

- Add the *arepitas* five at a time and fry until golden brown. Remove them with a skimmer and place them in a bowl with absorbent paper before serving.

Another alternative: once they are done, you can fry them until they are light golden brown; place them on absorbent paper, and once they are cold, put them in a plastic bag and keep them in the freezer until the day you want to serve them, then take them out of the freezer and fry them until they are completely golden brown, and that's it.

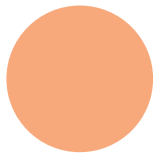


Mercedes Oropeza

 @unavainita

She is a cook committed to the flavors of Venezuela. During her professional career she has remained faithful to her family influences and the training received in the kitchens where she has worked. From Le gourmet at Hotel Tamanaco with Laurent Kehr and Le Petit Bistrot de Jacques with Marc Provost, through group work sessions at the home of Professor José Rafael Lovera and Professor Antonio Pasquali, to the kitchen of *La Casona* –in the second term of President Rafael Caldera–, and then her internship with Don Armando Scannone and Magdalena Salavarría.

To this day, the teachings received from her mentors guide the management of her kitchen. Mercedes Oropeza has always put haute cuisine techniques at the service of Venezuelan cuisine, seeking refinement and sophistication, that is her hallmark. She has been awarded the Golden Fork of the Venezuelan Academy of Gastronomy in 2005, and the Armando Scannone Award in 2009. Nowadays, she is grateful for the loyalty of her clientele, which she sees as the greatest recognition.



AREPA LA ALLAS

BY MARÍA ANTONIETA PÉREZ MÉNDOZA



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AREPAS FOR THE FUTURE: ROOTED WISDOM WITH THE FLAVOR OF HOME

Life has given me the fortune of having unforgettable and beloved cooking teachers, even though I have never seen them again. Cooking is an exercise of memories: flavors and smells are the key to travel in time, so I could say that I am an incurable traveler.

Mrs. Alicia Allas –from Irapa, Sucre State, Venezuela– is an outstanding figure in Creole cuisine. Together with Professor José Rafael Lovera and chef Víctor Moreno, she has trained many of the country's finest cooks.

I had the honor of having been by her side, for three months, at Professor Lovera's house, cooking and cooking till madness. Asking questions, watching her, being scolded, flattered, advised. We corrected and updated the recipe book-jewel of my magic school CEGA, remaking the recipes, living with all our senses the miracle of good cooking through her blessed gift and her wisdom. I drank directly from the source; I will never forget it.

The inspiration for this arepa was born from the brightness and elegance that characterizes her cooking, and which she taught me. It can be achieved if you do not skip steps, if you do not look for shortcuts, but instead follow the path and enjoy it.

Ingredients for 3 arepas

For the dough:

- 1 cup precooked corn flour
- 1 1/2 cups of warm water
- 1 teaspoon salt

Combine all the ingredients of the dough and knead well for 10 minutes. We make the arepas about one centimeter thick, round, flat, like Mexican chubby. Arrange them on a tray, on a clean cloth or plastic wrap. Cover them. Set aside.

For the stuffing:

- 3 thin corvina fillets of 50 grams each.
- 1 teaspoon of lemon zest,
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten and seasoned with salt and pepper
- 2 cups of precooked corn flour
- 3 slices of *manzano* tomatoes, finely chopped cilantro, salt, pepper,
- 2 tablespoons of good olive oil.

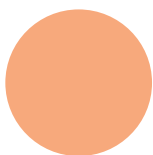
- Dry the sea bass fillets very well and rub them with the lemon juice, salt and pepper (a little cumin would not be superfluous). Dredge them in the eggs and flour them well, removing the excess flour. Set aside.
- Season the tomatoes with salt, pepper, olive oil and coriander. Set aside.
- We cook the arepas in the *budare*, griddle or in a frying pan, over medium high heat. When we put them on the griddle, we flatten them delicately so that the crust is formed on all their surface. After 6 minutes, turn them over. If they resist, do not touch them, it means that the crust has not formed yet.
- Turn on the heat of the hotpot or frying pan to fry the fish. As soon as a wooden stick is inserted and bubbles form around it, fry the fish, over medium-high heat, for one or two minutes on each side. No more. Push the meat a little bit and if the flakes open, it is ready.

- Let the arepas cook on the other side for 4 minutes. After that, turn up the heat a little more and flip them every 30 seconds, you will see how they puff up.
- Tap it with your fingertips, if they sound hollow, like a drum, they are ready.
- Immediately fill the arepas with a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil or butter, a corvina fillet and a tomato ring.
- And enjoy the little arepa inspired by my teacher, Mrs. Alicia Allas.

María Antonieta Pérez Mendoza

@mariantocook





AREPITAS CEGANAS LAS FAVORITAS DEL PROFESOR LOVERA



Ingredients

2 cups corn flour
1 cup milk
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup heavy cream
300 g fresh, grated, semi-hard white cheese

Procedure

- Mix the flour with the water, milk and cream, then add the cheese and butter.
- Knead the mixture for 5 minutes in an enveloping way.
- Portion according to the desired size, or with a measuring spoon.
- Seal them over the hot *budare* and then bake in the oven at 180° C, for 10 minutes



Víctor Moreno

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 @geopaladar90.3fm

@victormorenoc

He was born in Caracas in 1979. He studied at Centro de Estudios Gastronómicos (CEGA) in 1998. He was a disciple of Santi Santamaria and Andres Madrigal at El Raco de Can Fabes, a three Michelin stars restaurant in Caralonia, Spain, 2001-2002. He finished his education as a cook at El Señorío del Sulco, in Lima, Peru, during 2003. He returned to Venezuela and was a CEGA profesor for 6 years. He was chef at the TV Show "Portada`s" transmitted by Venevision, for almost 10 years. Together with his father, he is conducts the radio show *Geografía del Paladar*, which goes on air weekly on Actualidad 90.3 FM. Since 2005, he is chef editor of the magazine Bienmesabe. He received the Golden Fork from the Venezuelan Academy of Gastronomy in 2007. He was executive chef and partner at Moreno Restaurante in Caracas. He defines himself as a defender of his country's culinary tradition, and eternally in love of his flavours. He is an unconditional collaborator of the GNO Jose Andres World Central Kitchen in Venezuela; and as its ambassador, he organizes and convenes people and foundations that are in harmony with the objectives of this organization.

Helena is not only one of the first women to professionalize cooking in Venezuela, but she has also been, for almost 40 years, an undeniable reference for the rescue and dissemination of flavors and ingredients beyond the traditional techniques that appear in many recipe books.

Ibarra has not only created a research school on all the questions related to Venezuelan gastronomy; but, in her extensive trajectory, she has also known how to impose respect and admiration, even outside the country. Her hands have rescued ingredients little appreciated or unknown, especially by professional and commercial gastronomic proposals, making it clear that cooking goes far beyond the fashions and trends of the moment. Instead, it has much to do with the *terroir* and the real use of what we have at hand, and even more, the seasonal products.

For me, she has been more than just a professional mentor, Helena has instilled in me personal and human values, in addition to deepening my curiosity for research. Shortly after meeting her, I knew that I would dedicate myself to cooking professionally. And that I had to know, in one way or another, the ingredients I was going to use; that I had to read recipe books and question them with respect, but also with criteria. I have been fortunate to have her for so many years, first as a trainer and even more as a friend.

For me, it is more than an honor to pay her a small tribute, recreating one of the first encounters where I had the opportunity to get to know her way of cooking: A pork tenderloin cooked and glazed in passion fruit sauce, which was subtly placed on a pink sweet potato puree and that evoked more of the ethereal and almost unthinkable sensations. Delicate notes of rosemary and pink berries exploded in the mouth to leave me all day with a papillary coating that succumbed in my dreams (to the surprise of even Freud himself). On this occasion, the sweet potato is transformed into a crust in the shape of an arepa, which will serve as a carrier for a pickled pork rind which, with fresh leaves and crunchy vegetables, will dance with an emulsion of that tropical and Caracas passion fruit that made me drool so much.

Federico Tischler

AREPA LA IBARRA



**Mini sweet potato arepas, chicharron escabeche,
passion fruit mayonnaise**

As I was getting to know Helena and her cuisine, I tasted pork tenderloin in passion fruit sauce that she served over pink sweet potato puree. That night I dreamed of that meal, and I knew that I should not only dedicate myself professionally to cooking, but to learn -from and with her- how to harmonize flavors and make associations that at first glance did not seem fair or obvious. Here, I want to pay a small tribute, interpreting that first impression I had about cooking and how she changed my life in many ways...

Sweet potato mini arepa:

3 white sweet potatoes, peeled and cooked
50 g cold unsalted butter, cut into cubes
50 ml extra virgin olive oil
10 g kosher coarse salt
4 g freshly ground black pepper
0.5 g nutmeg, freshly grated

- Wash well and peel the sweet potatoes, cut into medium-sized cubes and cook in salted water until *al dente*. Once soft, remove from the heat, and drain well the cooking water.
- Strain and process until a smooth puree is obtained, add the remaining ingredients until a soft and smooth dough is obtained. Cover with plastic wrap to prevent it from drying and crusting. Set aside to cool.
- Once cold, weigh 40 gram balls and make flat and smooth arepas. Grill on a griddle over high heat until crusty on both sides and then bake for 5 minutes at 200°C or until puffed. Set aside.

For the chicharron:

1 kg fresh pork belly
100 g salt
100 g sugar
20 g ground black pepper
25 g ground bell pepper

- Remove the skin and the bones from the pork belly to use in another preparation.
- Cure with a mixture of salt, sugar, ground black pepper and ground bell pepper. Let the mixture penetrate well for at least 24 hours in the refrigerator, covering it with plastic wrap. Once this time has passed, wash and dry well.
- Bake in the oven at 200°C on a tray with a rack to brown well on all sides and obtain a crispy piece.
- Remove from the oven and salt immediately so that the salt penetrates. Let stand.

In the meanwhile, we make the base for the marinade:

5 g coriander stalks, finely chopped
5 g coriander leaves, chopped in chiffonade
5gr mint leaves, chopped in chiffonade
100gr red onion, cut into very fine juliennes
100gr red chili bell pepper, cut in very fine juliennes
25 g ginger, peeled and cut into very fine juliennes

Vinaigrette:

100 ml extra virgin olive oil
75 ml apple cider vinegar with natural base
25 g Dijon mustard
100 g finely shredded papelón
50 ml freshly squeezed lime juice
20gr kosher coarse salt

Wash, dry and finely peel the vegetables.

Mix all the other ingredients until a smooth and homogeneous vinaigrette is obtained.

Combine the vegetables and set aside.

Cut the pork rinds into thin slices and season with the marinade vinaigrette, set aside.

For the passion fruit emulsion:

3 fresh organic egg yolks
100 ml extra virgin olive oil
25 g Dijon mustard
100 g passion fruit pulp puree
10 g kosher coarse salt
2 g freshly ground black pepper
1 g merken or smoked ground chili pepper

- Separate the egg yolks and place them in the blender together with the mustard, salt, pepper and merken. Start whisking vigorously so that they aerate and allow to emulsify when incorporating the oil, which we will be adding in very thin streams, whisking constantly.

- Once we have a stable emulsion, we incorporate the fruit puree, and once the mixture has unified we rectify the seasoning. Set aside.

To serve, place a dot of the passion fruit emulsion on the grilled arepa, and on top of it place a couple of slices of the *chicharrón escabeche* with part of the salad dressing. Finish with sprouts or small leaves of sage or flowered coriander.



Federico Tischler | @fetischler, Venezuelan chef, with almost 25 years of professional career in some of the best restaurants in the world. As executive chef of the Alpasión winery, he has found a way to represent Mendoza's cuisine beyond the obviousness of fire and meat as protagonists; and has created a team dedicated to a mountain cuisine, honest and fresh, that adapts each season to local products, many of which are harvested by themselves, always achieving a perfect harmony with the wines of the entire range.

Likewise, Tischler is creating new concepts that range from food trucks, exalting street food to more delicate levels, where local products take more strength and prominence. In addition, he is developing a more personal project dedicated to wine, with several *tasting rooms* that will be accompanied by a more artisanal and rustic proposal, within an architectural jewel that will give much to talk about in the Uco Valley area. He also opens and advises gastronomic concepts in Miami, the city where he lives, which are an important reference for their innovation, but above all for the high degree of care he takes with raw materials, always offering the most honest and pure cuisine possible.

The Baptism of the Arepa

Laureano Márquez P.

Next to the baptismal *pilón*¹ (Venezuelan cooking mortar), a large family was gathered, united by the indelible bonds of Venezuelan gastronomic consanguinity. There was present the *budare* that knows very well how to earn the arepa, with that metallic roundness that was cured by the patience of the tender hands of the Grandma, she who «never learned what geometry is, but an arepa in her hands, round came out»², a *budare* that never forgets its legendary ancestor of baked clay, because clay was the first thing that was kneaded, in the hands of God, to shape the man who kneads dreams.

Precooked corn flour, emblem of modern haste, could not be absent from the act. It came replacing the traditional method of grain softened with heat, lime or ashes to then be shelled in that *pilón* that now baptizes and supports, with Benedictine tolerance, the blows of the *pilón* accompanied by the evocative *pilón* chants that give rhythm to the work:

The hands of this *pilón*
go up and down;
they are like two hearts
as they go apart
Hit that *pilón* hard,
so it breaks at last,
there is a lot of wood
up the mountain and
daddy knows how to make one

1 Pilón: A Venezuelan cooking mortar made of wood and used only to grind corn.

2 Mi abuela (My Grandma) by the oriental composer Perucho Aguirre, a song that became popular in the voice of Gualberto Ibarreto.

Close relatives were not missing: the *bollo*, proud of his baldness, knowing that it makes him appetizing; the *hallaquita*, with that tight suit with which she highlights, flirtatiously, her provocative waist; and the *cachapa*, always accompanied by her husband the *queso de mano*, who does not let her go anywhere alone.

Although he is not from the family, the coffee also wanted to be there, so he came with his girlfriend, a very chubby brunette *manga*. Finally, the full moon attended the ceremony, and how could she not if she knows that, when a Venezuelan looks at her, no matter the latitude he is at, he inevitably evokes an arepa.

The *pilón* spoke up:

Dear Venezuelan brothers and sisters, and global admirers of gastronomy, we are gathered here today in the name of the gramineae family (whose first historical reference we have dates back to November 5, 1492, in the northern part of the island of Cuba, when a couple of expeditionaries sent by Columbus came across *Doña Mazorca*, native, as it has been said, of Central America, and which then spread throughout the continent) to proceed to the baptism of this creature whose birth and origin is lost in the shuffle of centuries. She is already a little old, but it is never too late to be baptized. So, I ask you: What name shall we give to this little lady?

And everyone replied:

—Wow, the one of a lifetime: Arepa!

—And, What is it that you ask for the arepa?

—Baptism.

—Do you know that when you ask for the baptism of the arepa, you must commit yourselves to maintain its quality, flavor, and dignity; and also the quality of its kneading and its strict roundness?

—We know.

—Do you commit to ensure that the fillings are generous and of high quality or that, in the event that she only accompanies *sancochos* or other stews, she is properly cooked? And do you commit that, when you spank

her a little with your fingers while she is on the palm of your hand, her sound is hollow?

—We commit ourselves.

—Then, all that is left to do is baptize the arepa in the name of the gastronomic culture of the peoples, in the name of the most ancient traditions of our aborigines, who found in it what we continue to find today: food that unites us, that accompanies our lives from birth, because as the popular saying goes: «every child comes into the world with an arepa under the arm». May this food never be perverted, may it never be used to subdue, in the form of a muzzle, no child of this land. And may all of us, coming from the same arepa, unite in her in solidarity as the brothers and sisters that we are, so that an arepa shining, like a full moon, will never be absent from the table of Venezuelans.

—Amen.

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Laureano Márquez

 @laureanomar

Venezuelan, political scientist, actor and humorist. “I was born for the first time in 1963, then I was born again several times on the central regional highway. I came into the world in a village in the south of Tenerife called «La Medida», that’s why when I see advertisements announcing, «*furniture a la medida*» or «*suits a la medida*», it seems to me that they are destined to my hometown”. He has worked in very popular comedy programs on Venezuelan TV: “I started in *Radio Rochela* as a scriptwriter and actor. I have dedicated myself to humor in all its varied manifestations. Television, radio, theater, writing and monologues”. He currently develops the art of comedy in *Stand Up* and theater. His audience, now spread all over the world, does not stop cheering him. Bravo, Laureano.



The #WorldArepaDay has been celebrated for 13 years, every second Saturday of September, in hundreds of cities around the world. In recent years, the month of September became the “month of the arepa”, since a single day has not been enough to celebrate how special this food is for Venezuelans around the world.

Who invented the World Arepa Day?

It was an initiative of Rafael Mourad, Luisana La Cruz and Tony de Viveiros, founders of the ganization *Venezolanos en el Mundo* (VenMundo).

Why is World Arepa Day celebrated?

1. To unite our community of Venezuelans inside and outside the country.
2. Homage our arepa, ancestral tradition and our daily bread.
3. To value, preserve and promote our traditions and culture.
4. Support Venezuelan entrepreneurs linked to our gastronomy and other areas.
5. Promote civil responsibility by actively participating in solidary actions to support social projects inside and outside the country.

How can you celebrate World Arepa Day this year?

1. Making arepas at home and celebrating with family, friends or alone, the important thing is to celebrate.
2. Taking the role of coordinator and organizing an event in your city.
3. Finding out if there is a fair or event to celebrate this day in your city and attending.
4. Being informed and participating in workshops, in-person and/or virtual master classes, lectures, talks, webinars and live on the arepa, its history and recipes.
5. Organizing aid and donations to Venezuelan social projects.
6. Ordering arepas to take away, in areperas or restaurants, as a way to support our Venezuelan entrepreneurs: Ambassadors of the arepa.
7. If you have a restaurant, arepera or food store, during the month of September you can make promotions, offers, discounts and contests to celebrate this day.
8. Donating or collaborating with an NGO or refugee foundation.
9. Signing the Change.org petition for World Arepa Day to be recognized in the official UN Calendar of international days.
10. Share your celebration using the hashtag #LaArepaNosUne and participate in the digital challenge where Venezuelans from all continents will upload photos of their favorite arepas. Don't forget to tag @DiaMundialDeLaArepa and @historiadelaarepa.





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**Arepas for the Future:
Rooted Wisdom with
the Flavor of Home**

was presented and baptized on September 14, 2024 in the city of Caracas, because it was the day when the Venezuelan community in more than 64 countries celebrated the Arepa, and in solidarity with the Venezuelan cooking schools that research native flavors.

ANDRÉS
FERNANDO
RODRÍGUEZ
CHUCHO
ROJAS
FEDERICO
TISCHLER
HELENA
IBARRA
ILEANA
MATOS
IVANOVA
DECÁN
GAMBÚS
JUAN
ALONSO
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MÁRQUEZ
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MARÍA
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DU CHEF
HOTEL ESCUELA
DE LOS ANDES
VENEZOLANOS
CEGA
ESCUELA ADELIS
SISIRUCÁ
ESCUELA MI SAZÓN
CHEF MILENIUM
ACAEG VENEZUELA
LE GOURMETS
CEGAMA

