



THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL CUISINE IN A TOURIST CITY WITH CULTURAL HERITAGE. THE CASE OF THE HISTORIC CENTRE OF QUITO

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The aim of this study is to investigate the role of traditional food in the configuration of the tourist offer of a heritage city.

Theoretical framework: The theoretical framework on which this article is based is the paradigm of the heritage of traditional cuisines, through their appropriation as focal objects of cultural tourism, aspects that provide a solid basis for understanding the context of the research.

Methodology: The methodology adopted for this research is a descriptive case study with an exploratory scope, complementing quantitative and qualitative methods for a comprehensive approach to an emerging object of study.

Results and Discussion: The results obtained show that there is a gap between the cultural tourism destination and the local culinary heritage, an aspect that implies the underutilisation of one of the cultural resources with the greatest capacity to project territorial singularities and contribute to the positioning of the Historic Centre of Quito.

Implications of the research: There is a need for a strategic organisation for the valorisation of culinary heritage, in which local actors have a deep knowledge of their food and can communicate its value to visitors.

Originality/value: This study contributes to the knowledge of the synergy between tourism and traditional cuisine in cultural destinations such as historic centres, thus providing elements for the management of traditional cuisine and its tourist scenarios as a living heritage.

Keywords: Territorial Identity, Cultural Tourism, Heritage Enhancement, Food Cultures, Historical Centres

O PAPEL DA CULINÁRIA TRADICIONAL EM UMA CIDADE TURÍSTICA COM PATRIMÔNIO CULTURAL. O CASO DO CENTRO HISTÓRICO DE QUITO

RESUMO

Objetivo: Investigar o papel da comida tradicional na configuração da oferta turística de uma cidade histórica.

Estrutura teórica: O marco teórico no qual este artigo se baseia é o paradigma do patrimônio das cozinhas tradicionais, por meio de sua apropriação como objetos focais do turismo cultural. Esses aspectos fornecem uma base sólida para a compreensão do contexto da pesquisa.

Metodologia: Estudo de caso descritivo com escopo exploratório, complementando métodos quantitativos e qualitativos para uma abordagem abrangente de um objeto de estudo emergente.

Resultados e discussão: Os resultados obtidos mostram que existe uma lacuna entre o destino turístico cultural e o patrimônio culinário local, o que implica a subutilização de um dos recursos culturais com maior capacidade de projetar singularidades territoriais e contribuir para o posicionamento do Centro Histórico de Quito.

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Implicações da pesquisa: É necessária uma organização estratégica para a valorização do patrimônio culinário, na qual os atores locais tenham um conhecimento profundo de seus alimentos e possam comunicar seu valor aos visitantes.

Originalidade/valor: Este estudo contribui para o conhecimento da sinergia entre turismo e culinária tradicional em destinos culturais, como centros históricos, fornecendo elementos para a gestão da culinária tradicional e seus cenários turísticos como um patrimônio vivo.

Palavras-chave: Identidade territorial, turismo cultural, valorização do patrimônio, culturas alimentares, centros históricos.

EL ROL DE LA COCINA TRADICIONAL EN UNA CIUDAD TURÍSTICA PATRIMONIAL. EL CASO DEL CENTRO HISTÓRICO DE QUITO.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: El objetivo de este estudio es investigar identificar el papel que juega la comida tradicional en la configuración de la oferta turística de una ciudad patrimonial.

Marco Teórico: El marco teórico sobre el que se sustenta este artículo es el paradigma de la patrimonialización de las cocinas tradicionales, a través de su apropiación como objetos focales del turismo cultural, aspectos que proporcionan una base sólida para comprender el contexto de la investigación.

Método: La metodología adoptada para esta investigación comprende un estudio de caso de naturaleza descriptiva y con alcance exploratorio el cual complementa métodos cuantitativos y cualitativos para el abordaje integral de un objeto de estudio emergente.

Resultados y Discusión: Los resultados obtenidos revelaron que existe una brecha entre el destino turístico cultural y el patrimonio culinario local, aspecto que implica la subutilización de uno de los recursos culturales con mayor capacidad para proyectar singularidades territoriales y contribuir al posicionamiento del Centro Histórico de Quito.

Implicaciones de la investigación: Es necesaria una organización estratégica para valorizar al patrimonio culinario, donde los actores locales tengan un conocimiento profundo de sus alimentos, siendo capaces de transmitir su valor a los visitantes.

Originalidad/Valor: Este estudio contribuye al conocimiento de la sinergia entre turismo y cocina tradicional en destinos culturales como los centros históricos, con lo cual aporta elementos para la gestión de la cocina tradicional y sus escenarios turísticos como un patrimonio vivo.

Palabras clave: Centro Histórico de Quito, Valorización Patrimonial, Cultura Alimentaria, Turismo Cultural.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The motivations of culinary tourists are cultural in nature and take place in the context of leisure practices characteristic of post-industrial consumer societies. In this sense, tourism has become an essential tool for the valorisation of food heritage, especially in settings with cultural resources, identity and tourist vocation, such as historic centres. The process of heritage valorisation is a consequence of the fact that food is part of the integral tourist offer of cultural



destinations, acting both as an attraction and as a means of satisfying needs. Therefore, the culinary offer of a destination is a relevant aspect in terms of travel decisions and an element of destination differentiation (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016).

In the case of the Historic Centre of Quito, the food heritage is a social construction linked to the mixing of indigenous and European cultures, aspects that give it a *sui generis* character that makes it identifiable within a comprehensive tourist offer. In fact, the motivations of visitors to the historic centre of Quito are closely linked to cultural aspects, which in practice translate into specific synergies to satisfy the interests of tourist demand. It is possible to refer to the articulations between colonial architecture, sacred art and traditional cuisine, which can complement each other to co-produce a travel experience. According to Kim et al. (2009), local food satisfies the basic needs of tourists with an important capacity to induce the experience of local culture. Local cuisine can be an opportunity to construct meaningful experiences (Kim & Eves, 2012).

Avieli (2013) describes the performative and adaptive processes that local food in Hoi An, must undergo in order to become a tourist attraction oriented towards international markets; the old town of this city is also a material cultural heritage of humanity. On the other hand, Dimiskrovski and Crespi Vallbona (2016) analyse the factors that determine the consumption of local food in the La Boquería market in Barcelona. López Guzmán and Sánchez Cañizares (2012) study culinary tourism in the city of Córdoba, where the historic centre is a cultural heritage of humanity and food is part of a whole cultural framework that this city offers. Nientied (2021) carried out research in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, and found that the authenticity of everyday life has unique characteristics to offer in the new urban tourism, and food is a central element of the proposal. This research aims to determine the role of traditional cuisine in the historic centre of Quito as an essential component of tourism experience.

2 METHODOLOGY

Between January 2019 and July 2024, a case study (Stake, 2000) was carried out, conceived as a methodological approach that allows the integration of different research tools to address new objects of study of culinary tourism. This is justified by the fact that it is the Historic Centre of Quito, a cultural tourism destination whose culinary heritage has not yet been studied as a component of the comprehensive tourist offer. It is essential that this city was declared a "Cultural Heritage of Humanity" by UNESCO in 1978 (Ministerio de Cultura y



Patrimonio, 2013), an important aspect to illustrate a case of heritage tourism management, which includes the presence of a remarkable culinary richness (Sosa, 2017).

To integrate the objectives of the research, it was divided into two phases. The first was a cabinet study on tourism in historic centres, specifically in the case of Quito. The second is an extensive phase of fieldwork divided three different periods. Given the complexity of analysing perceptions of traditional cuisine as part of the cultural tourism offer, it was necessary to incorporate quantitative and qualitative aspects,

To approximate tourists' perceptions of food in the context of their tourist practices, a survey of 800 questionnaires was carried out, of which 400 were sent to foreign tourists and 400 to national tourists. The differentiation between foreigners and nationals was justified by the interest in assessing the differences that might exist in terms of cultural proximity or distance to food, whether this distance could act as a stimulus or an obstacle to the articulation between tourism and traditional food. The number of questionnaires administered to both national and foreign tourists made it possible to enrich the information inherent in the relationship between travellers and local food, including aspects such as origin, history, interests and length of contact with the area. The aspects collected through the questionnaires were related to i) knowledge of the local culinary heritage, ii) interest in traditional cuisine, iii) availability of information on local culinary resources, iv) availability of culinary tourism offers, and v) diversity of eating practices developed in the context of tourism.

In addition, 18 semi-structured interviews were conducted with informants related to food in the historic centre of Quito. One type of interview was conducted with owners and representatives of the food establishments studied (N=16), and another with public officials (N=2) involved in the tourist management of the destination. The aspects addressed in the interviews included: i) the role of the culinary heritage in the tourist offer of the historic centre of Quito, ii) challenges and opportunities for the tourist management of the culinary heritage, and iii) strategies for the tourist valorisation of the culinary resources.

The food establishments studied were selected based on the catalogue of emblematic culinary establishments in the historic centre of Quito (see Figure 1.), developed by the National Institute of Cultural Heritage (INPC). The sample was determined using the non-probabilistic snowball method, which establishes that the first individuals are linked to others (Espinoza Tames et al., 2018). The validation of the sample was carried out according to the saturation criterion, which is based on continuing the investigation until no new evidence is found for each aspect developed (Esper, 2011).

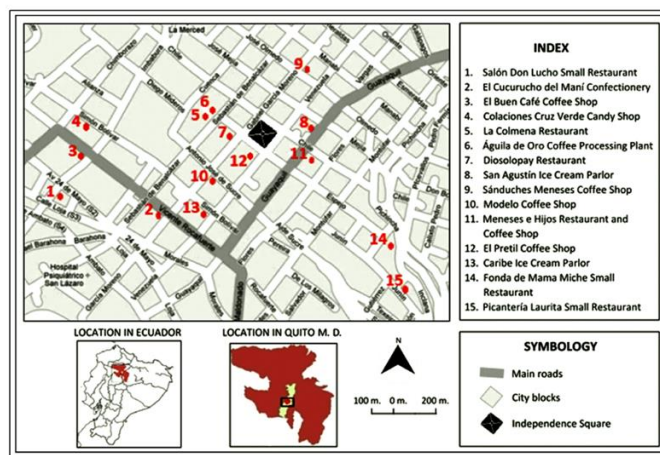


2.1 STUDY ZONE

The most representative tourist activity of the Historic Centre of Quito is "food and drink", with 79.55%, (MINTUR, 2020a). The primary data show that an essential part of the economic fabric of this tourist and cultural space is linked to the production and marketing of food. Quito has an international airport, with which the arrival of foreign tourists has increased, as it is a critical connection point for tourists arriving in Ecuador with the final destination of the Galapagos Islands, so that Quito has become a transit city, with an average hotel stay of 1.57 nights (Quito Turismo, 2020). In terms of national tourism, the historic centre of Quito is the leading destination of urban Quito for non-resident visitors (Quito Turismo, 2020), as well as for local tourism.

Figure 1

Traditional restaurants in the historic centre of Quito



Source: Sosa-Sosa and Thomé-Ortiz, 2021

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 QUITO'S HISTORIC CENTRE AND TRADITIONAL CUISINE

The traditional cuisine of the historic centre of Quito is vast and represents a remarkable cultural heritage. However, it has not yet positioned itself in the national or international tourist market through its emblematic dishes. According to the survey of national tourists, the emblematic dish that represents the city of Quito is the fritada [1], with the most representative value (12.8%), followed by the seco de chivo [2] (6%), the hornado [3] (5.2%), followed by



the yaguarlocro [4] (4.8%), the papas con cuero [5] (4.6%), the locro de papas [6] (4.1%), the seco de pollo [7] (3.8%), the canelazo [8] (3.5%) and the ponche [9] (2.5%).

According to Rodrigo Salas (Ministry of Tourism official), locro de papas and canelazo represent the province of Pichincha, while ceviche, fanesca[10], cocoa liquor and colada morada[11] are dishes or drinks that symbolise the flavours of all of Ecuador³. These results were obtained from a gastronomic map of the country, which took into account aspects such as history, local ingredients, current tradition and what is offered at the destination. The lack of projection of traditional cuisine in the tourist offer is an aspect related to the lack of identification of the city's inhabitants with their food heritage, since it is difficult to distinguish these dishes as part of their daily life and traditions, as Rodrigo Salas affirms:

“These are processes that take years because you do not have to put it into the head of the tourist. You must get it into the head of the local first.”

The tourist positioning of the local cuisine of the historic centre of Quito is a process of local patrimonialisation, based on the correct evaluation of dishes and establishments, which are appropriated on the basis of social dynamics and through the creation and maintenance of emotional ties. Although it has been possible to identify different forms of socialisation around the emblematic foods of the historic centre of Quito, it has not been possible to identify a representative dish of this space. According to the survey of national and local tourists, the highest value corresponds to the fact that there is no representative dish of the destination (16.5%), followed by the drink canelazo (5%), the fritada (4.5%), sandwiches (4.3%), traditional sweets and punch each with 4%, and seco de chivo and seco de pollo each with 3.3%. The primary data allow us to affirm that the culinary offer of the historic centre of Quito is not positioned in the mind of the tourist demand, an aspect that is related to the ignorance of the culinary wealth of the historic centre.

³ [1] Potatoes and pork cooked in their fat, accompanied by corn

[2] Lamb in onion, garlic, tomato and kidney sauce, served with rice and avocado

[3] Roast pork with potatoes and corn

[4] Potato soup with sheep's blood

[5] Potatoes with pork skin

[6] Potato soup with milk and cheese

[7] Chicken in onion, garlic, tomato and kidney sauce, served with rice

[8] Hot water with cinnamon and naranjilla, brandy optional

[9] Hot drink of eggs, milk and cinnamon

[10] Cereal soup with corn

[11] Hot drink made from purple maize flour and fruit.



According to a study conducted by the National Institute of Cultural Heritage (INPC, 2017), the food heritage of the historic centre of Quito, located in different establishments (Figure 1), contains 56.9% of the food heritage of the entire canton of Quito.

On the other hand, in the historic centre of Quito there has been an inverse phenomenon of separation from the city, because the policies developed to manage this space deny the existence of the city and try to turn the historic centre into an enclave or bubble, independent of the city (Carrión, 2010). However, this space has actors and a context that are part of urban life. In recent years, the administrative functions have become less and less present, the population has been expelled due to the high costs of this location, and the streets have been made exclusive for the luxury tourism that builds a city (Carrión, 2010), without giving a substantial present value to the subjects that are part of this heritage. For the tourist, however, the selection of the most authentic and traditional elements represents a treasure to be discovered.

Historic urban landscapes have emerged out of concern for the economic, social and cultural pressures on historic towns and cities, particularly those on the World Heritage List. In this regard, it is essential to consider that the management of historic urban landscapes must comprehensively include the environmental, topographical, economic and socio-cultural aspects of the different societies that coexist in said spaces (González Biffi, 2018).

3.2 CULTURAL DETERMINANTS OF TOURISTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS LOCAL FOOD

Food plays an important role in cultural tourism, and it is an essential element in the competitiveness of destinations. The survey of tourists in the historic centre of Quito showed that foreign tourists are more interested in traditional food establishments (61.25%) than national tourists (40%). These establishments are part of the daily life of Ecuadorians and do not represent a specific attraction for them, as well as contextual aspects such as the possibility of eating at the home of relatives (8.25%). This option is insignificant for foreign tourists (3.75%). In this sense, 24.25% of national tourists and 10.5% of foreign tourists do not plan to eat in the historic centre of Quito.

It is important to bear in mind that many tourists who do not eat in the historic centre are unfamiliar with traditional cuisine and what is on offer in restaurants and must be able to distinguish between the quality and authenticity of a dish. 6.5% of foreign tourists and 0.5% of nationals said they would visit nearby restaurants, i.e. those they found on their way.



Given the tourist vocation of this destination, it is possible to deduce the existence of a demand for products and services related to traditional local cuisine, which is essential in the case of foreign tourists. According to interviews conducted with representatives of emblematic establishments in the historic centre of Quito, 100% of these establishments receive national tourists, while only 87.5% receive foreign tourists.

The possession of certain cultural capitals constitutes a specific baggage to identify the location, quality and authenticity of the culinary offer in the labyrinthine historic centre of Quito. In the artisan confectionery "Kucurucho del Maní" they mention:

"Foreign tourists come more to learn, to ask, they do not know."

Many foreign tourists do not eat traditional food because they know nothing about it. In the same context of their trip, they begin to explore it, an aspect that can be complex in an environment where there is also a desire to identify historical and cultural aspects. This information is therefore a fundamental aspect of promoting an approach to food. According to Carrión (2000), in the historic centre of Quito, different cultural resources can be bought, sold or bartered, constituting an important source of income, as in the case of restoration, which in the context of tourism can become a source of economic revitalisation.

The approach to heritage management that has been given to the historic centre of Quito has focused on architecture as a central element, ignoring some popular elements such as traditional cuisine.

For Sosa (2017), the investments in hotels and restaurants in the historic centre of Quito, organised through the government's strategy to beautify public spaces, have sought to increase the number of visitors without prioritising the improvement of the living conditions of the local actors. The policies of patrimonialisation do not focus on the living community of this area, which is the cornerstone of the culture of the historic centre of Quito, involving its people in the gastronomy, festivals, customs and traditions that are fundamental aspects of the identity of this space. González Biffi (2018) stresses the importance of taking into account the living heritage, the result of the society that inhabits it, when conceptualising historic centres; in this way, he highlights the urgency of addressing some essential components such as cultural heritage (material and immaterial), the concept of public space, the multifunctionality of space, identity and citizen participation.

In addition to preserving Quito's culinary tradition, heritage food establishments allow for the preservation of material aspects, such as the traditional architecture in which they are located, and immaterial aspects, such as the intergenerational sociability built around food.



Food is an intrinsic component of culture, because it involves the historical evolution of a specific space, the daily habits, customs and ways of relating to the social actors that inhabit it, based on the narratives and correlations that underlie each of its emblematic dishes. Hall & Michel (2000) argue that food in tourism is a multisensory resource that alludes to a language capable of evoking memories and emotions. In this sense, the inclusion of traditional cuisine as an element of historical-cultural recognition of the historic centre of Quito is a powerful marker of identity that allows the display of knowledge, emotions and sensations that will remain in the memory associated with the trip.

3.3 CHARACTERISATION OF THE TOURIST AND HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH FOOD

The most representative countries of origin of foreign tourists arriving in the historic centre of Quito are Colombia (16.5%) and the United States (15.3%), information that contrasts with data from MINTUR (2020b), which states that tourists arriving in Ecuador in the first quarter of 2020 will come mainly from the United States, with 28.13%, followed by Colombia with 19.61%. Other countries of origin of foreign tourists are from the American continent, where they account for 77.89%, and Spain is the most important country from another continent, with 8%.

Considering US tourism as the most representative, the World Tourism Organization (2012 cited in Moira, Mylonopoulos and Kontoudaki, 2015) mentions that for Americans, eating in restaurants is the second most important cultural activity and the first most important cultural leisure activity when they visit other places. The interest in "authentic" food can be considered a trend in cultural consumption with a global reach (Hazır & Warde, 2015). In this regard, some sociological research has shown that the consumption of exotic foods is associated with strategies of social distinction (Prieur & Savage, 2013).

Sociodemographic factors provide elements to examine how cultural and economic variables directly influence the configuration of tourism consumption (Mak et al., 2012). In this case, it is observed that the level of education plays a relevant role in the interest in the culinary culture of the destination. This focus on food tourism is based on an aspirational cosmopolitanism that associates a high cultural level with the knowledge of foreign foods, where exoticism is an essential criterion of social differentiation.

The survey results for foreign tourists showed a higher level of education, with 51.25% saying they had higher education and 30% having secondary education. For national tourists, the majority (53%) said they had secondary education, while only 31.25% said they had higher



education. Only 5.25% of foreigners and 0.25% of nationals had a doctorate, while 7.25% of foreigners and 4.5% of nationals had a master's degree. In general, tourists who visit the historic centre of Quito have a high level of education. This aspect is logical, as it is a predominantly cultural destination. However, the lack of articulation is still noticeable, with the local culinary offer, the lack of a consistent offer, the lack of information available and the ignorance of the tourist in this matter.

Some studies on the relationship between tourism and cultural heritage have come to similar conclusions. A study conducted by López-Guzmán & Sánchez Cañizáres (2012) in Córdoba, Spain, shows that the tourists most interested in gastronomy are those with high salaries and university degrees, such that 66.9% of respondents reported having a university degree. For Mak et al. (2012), tourists with a high level of education are more interested in understanding and experiencing foreign cultures through the consumption of local food.

The notion of cultural capital used in this paper alludes to the theoretical construct developed by Bourdieu (1984), which refers to the accumulation of knowledge and experience during the lifetime of agents in a social field. In the specific case of food consumption, it is important to bear in mind that the accumulation of capital is a differentiated, asymmetric process, strongly linked to the contextual aspects of each life story.

Some studies have shown that people with high purchasing power have changed their differentiation strategies based on the consumption of traditional foods in exotic and inaccessible destinations for a large part of the mass tourism market (Lin et al., 2019). In this type of strategy, there are economic and cultural barriers that prevent mass displacement. However, the search for authenticity and simplicity has the logic of a hedonistic ethic, accompanied by an 'adventurous spirit', hyper-connected and post-modern. Today, more and more tourists are looking for experiences of local consumption, finding a unique character in the popular and authentic (Nientied, 2021), where everyday food is part of this encounter with a different and genuine experience.

The predominant age group of tourists is between 21 and 30 years old, which represents 44.5% in the case of foreigners and 39.75% in the case of nationals. The second most important age group is between 31 and 40 years old, with 24.75% of foreign tourists and 20.40% of national tourists. This shows that young tourists, aged between 21 and 40, are the main market for the historic centre, with 69.25% in the case of foreign tourists and 60.15% for nationals. From the above, it can be concluded that young tourists are the ones who show a greater openness to exploring unconventional destinations and are more willing to try different foods from a neophilia position.



Regarding the occupations of foreign tourists in the historic centre of Quito, 22.9% are self-employed and 19.6% are students; given that there is an important relationship between age and tourist occupation, it is crucial to consider that age is a determining factor in visiting cultural destinations.

3.4 ADAPTATION AND ACCEPTANCE OF TRADITIONAL CUISINE IN THE TOURIST OFFER

For Cohen and Avieli (2004), local food must be adapted to be consumed by foreign tourists through a process of reinterpretation that makes it possible to adapt the aesthetic, organoleptic and sensory registers, avoiding a frontal cultural clash between the culinary offer and the tourist. Today, speaking of foreign foods is a relative aspect, since with the advance of globalisation, essential processes of intercultural food have been presented. Expressions such as "authentic Japanese cuisine" help us to understand how a culinary pattern that has been commodified (through the globalisation of sushi, for example) presents levels of originality that depend on the application of culinary techniques, the nature of the ingredients used, and the socio-cultural aspects embedded in food culture.

The truth is that an irreplaceable element of supposed authenticity is the spatial dimension of production-consumption; that is, the only way to experience it would be through displacement, which often has a touristic connotation. However, far from any cultural essentialism, the authentic culinary experience usually represents a frontal cultural shock, swinging on the pendulum of neophilias and neophobicas, before which it is necessary to generate adaptations, translations, normalisations and watered-down versions of the culinary heritage. For Cohen (1972), in the case of foreign tourists, food can represent the need to experience new aspects of the culture. However, they will always seek a degree of familiarity to enjoy their experience in an environment of physical and psychological security. Traditional dishes around the world have been modified to be consumed, which requires original and innovative recipes. It is optional to have a single recipe. You can have several recipes for the same dish with the same characteristics or their brand or secret.

It is essential to determine whether traditional foods need to be transformed to be consumed in the context of tourism, which will be constantly debated between innovation and tradition. One aspect to be considered is that culture is dynamic, and globalisation processes have greatly influenced the way contemporary society feeds itself. Quito's food has been transformed to adapt to the needs of today's consumers, while preserving its mestizo accent, in



which its Andean and Spanish origins merge. This case illustrates the dynamics and configuration of urban culture in Andean cities, which is usually extremely complex and colourful, the result of internal migration, international migration and the matrix inherited from the colony that defines the patrimonial subjects in their respective realities and interrelations (Carrión, 2000). In the Caribe Ice Cream Parlor and Cafeteria, they mention:

“We have 50 years of seco de chivo, but it was an ice-cream parlour, then a small sandwich shop and then a cafecito, because you give people what they want.”

The tourist looks for traditional dishes that are typical of a place and can be culturally assimilated. Mintz (1996) mentions that local cuisines have become more open to external influences and dishes that are easily assimilated by other cultures, which allows the tourist to be more receptive to local food. Patrimonial food represents a sphere of social conflict in which patrimonial subjects are defined in their interrelationships (Carrión, 2000).

Many communities are tempted to adapt their culinary traditions to the requirements of demand, the maximum turning point of which is the reinvention of authenticity (Avieli, 2013; Álvarez & Sammartino, 2009). These changes are the result of the globalisation of food and food establishments, which often try to adapt to the demands of tourists (tropicalisation). Patrimonialisation of food is threatened in the face of tourism, since it requires changes to position local cuisine, so that the relationship between tradition and innovation is likely to enter a phase of contradiction. In recent years, Cafeteria Modelo has begun to offer dishes such as lasagne and bbq wings, as they comment in an interview:

“Lasagne started because people were asking for different products. Other products we have are barbiquiu (sic) and wings, which is new. That is what they are asking for.”

This emblematic cafeteria has responded to the needs of national and foreign tourists, making these dishes more familiar to foreign tourists. However, they have moved away from offering traditional dishes, causing a loss of heritage that may be irreparable. It should also be mentioned that in recent years this establishment has also opened a branch in the El Bosque shopping centre, located in an urban area of Quito with high purchasing power.

Tourists have little time to risk that some food might harm them (Cohen & Avieli, 2004), which is why not everyone is interested in local food, coupled with the fact that what is new is not necessarily only in the food, since other instances would lead them to live this different experience. The Cafeteria Modelo is outlined within this type of establishment, which welcomes a type of tourist looking for these international dishes.

In the construction of the historic centre, two different visions can be observed: one of a traditional nature, which understands the historic centre from a reductionist, ideological



perspective and is largely charged with the past, and the other, which goes beyond the sense of monumental attributes and is directed towards the social relations that define the decisive quality of its existence (Carrión, 2008). Heritage is related to the construction of the sustainability of historic centres, that is, the transmission of the historic centre from a specific period and community to another time and society (Carrión, 2000); therefore, changes are part of the conformation of historic centres, often given by the demands of modernity, migrations and mobilities such as those generated by tourism. Social actors are involved in heritage management, given by the different ethnic or cultural groups that make up Latin American cities, and particularly Andean cities such as Quito (Carrión, 2000). Thus, in the cafeteria "El Buen Café", they state:

“When my parents went to the cafeteria, breakfast was simple because people were not used to the kind of breakfast we have today. In the cafeteria they only worked with butter, pan de agua, fresh cheese and milk. My parents did not sell punch, and I started selling punch to give to the different people who asked for it, just like chocolate.”

A few years ago, some of the traditional dishes on today's menus were new, but they were requested by visitors at the time. This influence of new dishes is currently taking place in tourist activities that affect economic and socio-cultural transformation processes. However, this does not mean that it is proposed to transform the traditional food of the historic centre of Quito to be consumed by tourists, but to try to preserve its patrimonial character and finally to protect it in the context of tourist activities

Historic centres are based on a cultural wealth that is rooted in the past, but under the logic of present activities that allow it to be experienced and given meaning. These spaces represent a complex social relationship in which the patrimonial subjects define the space that determines the conflict, the inheritance, the mechanism of intergenerational transfer and its sustainability (Carrión, 2000). Tourists related to local cuisine in the historic centre of Quito articulate their cultural action around three main axes: the moment of consumption (contra-daily time), the patrimonial dimension of food consumption (inherited, transmitted and received), and the sociability that frames culinary consumption. In this sense, the social actors involved in culinary tourism become heritage subjects, recipients, transmitters and guardians of culinary heritage.

Local food is not always the first option for the tourist (Mitchell & Hall, 2003), depending on the cultural distance that is brought into play from the tourist activity itself (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). Therefore, the food must be culturally acceptable and avoid risks for the



tourist, so it is not only a matter of promoting gastronomy, but also of intercultural negotiation (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). From the tourist's cultural point of view, food includes traditions, customs and history, aspects that are sometimes different from those of the destinations visited, which can make it difficult to enjoy local dishes. In the ice-cream parlour-restaurant San Agustín they mention:

“We offer lomo, which has been adapted to the tastes of our customers. We also have churrasco, chicken and seafood dishes that are not necessarily traditional.”

The lack of promotion of the culinary offer of the historic centre of Quito is an element that makes it difficult for tourists to approach the local cuisine; it is not a simple matter of promoting a few dishes, but rather the enormous challenge of disseminating the food culture of the destination. In certain establishments there is a high concentration of tourists, an aspect that is linked to independent efforts to manage the culinary heritage. In the Dulcería Colaciones Cruz Verde they mention:

“Look, there is no media that has not come here, television, press, even the Miami Herald has come here. I am not serious, I have got along well with the press, it is because of the press that I have put up with more, honestly. The foreign public comes, as well as the Americans; they come for the press programme "Miami Herald" and for the many videos of some cable networks to interview me. They also come from Germany. Foreign tourists come with guides, even with policemen; at least the strong agencies come, like Metropolitan, which is the one that comes here the most.”

Many foreign tourists come directly to these establishments to try specific foods, because the tourist agencies have previously promoted traditional foods. This aspect generates trust and curiosity to know the emblematic food of the area. There is little promotion of traditional foods from the historic centre of Quito, and the impact is minimal because it is targeted at specific groups of tourists, mainly those linked to travel agencies. This aspect shows the great potential between tourism and traditional food, which should be exploited more. In the restaurant Diosolopay, they state:

“The foreign tourist already comes with the idea, they ask directly for Locro, because the travel agencies already sell them this image; we have about two travel agencies that come directly for Locro, for example the agency Ecoleviajes, Kimbaya, local agencies of the historic centre PR travel, Access Ecuador, are some agencies that are managed, so they already sold this idea because they already chose the menu for us in time.”

For his part, the owner of the ice-cream parlour-restaurant "San Agustín" mentions:



“We have a lot of foreign tourists because the tourist guide for foreigners there is advertised as seco de chivo, so they come specifically to try the seco de chivo.”

The emblematic food products (seco de chivo, locro de papas and snacks) are positioned in the minds of foreign tourists travelling through travel agencies and the media, an aspect that reveals a very punctual private initiative that has not been replicated by government agencies as a comprehensive tourism promotion strategy.

4 CONCLUSION

According to the results of this research, we can conclude the importance of traditional food for both national and international tourists. However, the lack of knowledge about the quality and heritage value of local food is an obstacle to its promotion in tourism. In this sense, it is essential to develop a joint strategic action, anchored in a heritage management policy, that promotes the culinary offer of the historic centre of Quito beyond the dispersed efforts of private actors led by tourist agencies. The data collected and analysed show the need to develop a culinary tourism information system, anchored in a local cuisine promotion device, within the framework of a concerted strategy between public and private actors. These actors are the living heritage of local cuisine and science.

As this is a case study, it is impossible to generalise from the findings reported; however, it is an important contribution to the emerging field of culinary tourism in historic centres, while opening the debate on the articulation of traditional cuisine with emerging destinations in Latin America. Future research should include comparative analyses with other destinations to expand the scope of this line of research.

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