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# Gastronomic Identity of the Coastal Profile of Santa Elena

## Identidad Gastronómica del Perfil Costero de Santa Elena

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Received: December 03, 2023

Approved: February 11, 2024

Sigcho (2024) Identidad Gastronómica del Perfil Costero de Santa Elena. *Espiraless Revista Multidisciplinaria de investigación científica*, 8 (49), 18-33

### Abstract

A result of the research project Gastronomic Identity of the Coastal Profile of Santa Elena, corresponding to the Gastronomy career of the Instituto Superior Tecnológico Espíritu Santo, is presented. It responds to the problem related to the lack of exhaustive documentation and understanding of the gastronomic identity of the coastal profile of Santa Elena, which leads to the loss of traditional cooking techniques, recipes, and local food products, and limits the potential for the development of gastronomic tourism. The research is of a theoretical, historical and documentary type guided by theoretical methods related to analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction and logical history, which allowed a characterization of the area with a view to identifying its identity and assessing how gastronomy can help to rescue the culinary values linked to the national identity.

**Keywords:** Gastronomic identity, coastal profile, St. Helena

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## Resumen

Se presenta un resultado del proyecto de investigación Identidad Gastronómica del Perfil Costero de Santa Elena, correspondiente a la carrera de Gastronomía del Instituto Superior Tecnológico Espíritu Santo. El mismo responde al problema relacionado con la falta de documentación exhaustiva y comprensión de la identidad gastronómica de perfil costero de Santa Elena, conduce a la pérdida de técnicas de cocina tradicionales, recetas y productos alimenticios locales, y limita el potencial de desarrollo del turismo gastronómico. La investigación es de tipo teórica, histórica y documental guiada por métodos teóricos relacionados con el análisis y síntesis, inducción y deducción y el histórico lógico que permitieron realizar una caracterización de la zona con vista a identificar su identidad y valorar cómo desde la gastronomía se puede ayudar a rescatar los valores culinarios vinculados a la identidad nacional.

**Palabras clave:** Identidad gastronómica, perfil costero, Santa Elena

## Introduction

Gastronomy as a discipline involves the study of the relationships between people and the way they eat. Its history dates back to antiquity, when the first recipe books appeared in Rome; however, gastronomy as a pedagogical discipline has its origins in Greece in the fourth century BC. (Becerril, 2019)

It is essential to point out that gastronomy allows the approach to the different cultures that develop in the towns, focusing on the food, its preparation techniques, emphasizing the management of flavors and aromas that highlight the dish that is prepared, which, being the national gastronomy of a country, is linked to the people with their regional culinary identity, by letting them know elements of historical tradition.

In the specific case of traditional Ecuadorian cuisine, a strong influence can be detected from those who originally inhabited the country, such as the Incas, who dominated the country from the year 1463, reigning until almost three quarters of a century later, and later from those who came to conquer the country, that is, the Spaniards from 1533, but without discounting that over time it has been influenced by foreign trends, which has led to changes in the preparation of typical dishes, or that these dishes have come to be replaced by others of modern cuisine (Luján, 2019). (Luján, 2019). In addition, Ecuadorian food is distinguished by a wide variety of dishes, derived from its own conditions and the characteristics of each region.

Likewise, there has been a change in the use of products from the provinces, and in the use of particular utensils that were commonly used in their preparation. All this of course has led to the undermining of the Ecuadorian ancestral cuisine, wreaking havoc on the culinary identity of the different provinces of the country. (Herrera, 2017).

The Road of the Gods is an important archaeological site located in the province of Santa Elena, Ecuador, its historical and cultural richness, the link with pre-Columbian civilizations, giving a meeting point of diverse cultures, and influencing the gastronomic identity that is in danger of disappearing. In spite of the above, due to the progress of society, the change of customs and the loss of the national historical content, much of the culinary content has been lost, leading to the risk of extinction, which is fed by the lack of preservation of culinary traditions, which threatens the diversity and authenticity of local gastronomy. Based on the above, it is pertinent to indicate that the main objective of this historical, documentary and exploratory research is to "Propose strategies and concrete actions to rescue and preserve the gastronomic identity of the Road of the Gods in the province of Santa Elena, Ecuador" for which it is necessary to: a) Investigate the recipes and traditional culinary techniques associated with the Road of the Gods; b) Analyze the influence of external factors such as globalization and the entry of fast food lines on local gastronomy; in order to, c) Design an action plan that includes the promotion of local gastronomy, culinary education and the creation of spaces for the transmission of knowledge, in order to thereby encourage the participation of the community and promote the preservation of its gastronomic identity.

The province of Santa Elena has a large area dedicated to anthropic use, characterized by a marked influence of shrimp farms, salt mines, industrial complexes, recreational complexes and housing along the coastal area, which are fundamental pillars of the economy of the peninsula and the country. Within the anthropic use, the predominant coverage in the canton are the shrimp farms, which are located on the coastal strip, mainly in the Engunga sector. Unproductive lands, located mostly in the eastern part of the canton, occupy a considerable area and are represented by rocky outcrops, sandbanks, beaches, saline areas, bare soil, and areas in the process of erosion. (Municipal Autonomous Government of Santa Elena (GAD), 2014-2019).

In the southeast of the Chongón-Colonche mountain range, there is a system of roads to the coast, whose main access is the old Guayaquil-Salinas highway. Along this axis of communication and transit of products are located pre-Hispanic monoliths in Chongón, Juntas del Pacífico, La Barranca (Julio Moreno), Sube y Baja and Sacachún, communities in which these archaeological remains are preserved as part of their historical memory. The route of the Guancavilca Gods traces a map of millenary thought in which coexist the conceptions about life and the forms of social organization preserved by the current communities as a legacy of their ancestors. The preservation of this archaeological heritage contributes to cementing the knowledge that new generations acquire of pre-Hispanic cultures in order to revitalize their historical memory and strengthen their identity. (Freire A. M., 2013).

According to oral memory, the monoliths came from Las Negras hill and were a group of human stone sculptures, both male and female. They were probably part of a representational system whose meaning is linked to strategies of social reproduction, ecological regulation, interethnic communication, gender relations and the maintenance of leadership. (Freire A. M., 2013).

Ecuadorian gastronomy has a variety of exquisite traditional dishes thanks to the influence of different peoples such as the Incas, Spanish, French and English who conquered and migrated to Ecuadorian territory.

Although Ecuador is a small country, it is known as "the country of the four worlds" because it has four regions (coast, highlands, Amazon and Galapagos) with different customs and climates that offer an abundant gastronomy.

These four regions have a variety of exquisite traditional dishes ranging from the famous encebollado of the coast, roasted guinea pig or fanesca of the highlands, to the chontacuro of the Amazon and seafood in the Galapagos. (Serratac6, 2022)

The autochthonous gastronomy of each geographical area brings with it part of the cultural history of the people, indirectly revealing the customs and ways of life in a given space, since it presents a vision of the way in which local resources have been used in the course of time, showing the trace of culinary evolution, which allows observing the union of different customs that in the case of Ecuadorian ancestral cuisine, come from the Inca, Spanish and African cultures.

This reflection leads to explore various concepts related to the theme of the project, starting with culinary anthropology, which, according to the explanation provided by Pazos in 2010, refers to the process of transmitting the art of cooking from one generation to another through the use of the five senses: sight, smell, taste, touch and hearing. The definition of this teaching in the context of oral tradition is similar to narrating how it is carried out. Sensory tradition represents the way we perceive that culinary techniques and practices have been passed down over time Principle of the form

(Pazos-Barrera, 2010). It is worth noting a theoretical precedent linked to gastronomic identity, among which stands out the "Food Identity Theory", which argues that food and culinary practices are fundamental elements in the construction of individual and collective identity, this being a perspective that argues that what a person or community chooses to consume can influence their sense of belonging and how they perceive themselves (Sosa, 2022). (Sosa, 2022).

In this sense, authors such as Mary Douglas and Michael Herzfeld, have contributed to the understanding of how food can be intrinsically linked to identity, from here emerge theories linked to Claude Levi-Strauss already mentioned above, such as "The theory of gastronomy as cultural identity" (Valencia, 2020). (Valencia, 2020) which stresses the importance of food as a distinctive element of culture and how cultural identity is reflected through gastronomic practices, examining that food habits can reveal deep aspects of a society and how this cultural identity is expressed through the food consumed. (Ot6lvalo, 2022)

Specifically, these aspects and the focus of the research have been directed to the coastal province of Santa Elena where there is a route called the "HUANCAVILCAS" ROAD OF THE GODS, which includes the communes of Limoncito, Julio Moreno, Las Juntas del Pac6fico, Sube y Baja, Sacach6n and Buenos Aires: Limoncito, Julio Moreno,

Las Juntas del Pacífico, Sube y Baja, Sacachún and Buenos Aires, communes dating from 800 AD to 1532 AD.

## Materials and methods

The research is theoretical, historical and exploratory, guided by theoretical methods related to analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction and logical history, which allowed a characterization of the area, a historical tour with a view to identifying its identity and assessing how gastronomy can help to rescue the culinary values linked to the national identity.

Environment: Students and teachers of the Higher University Technology course in Hybrid and Online Marketing and Commercial Management of the Instituto Superior Tecnológico Universitario Espíritu Santo participate.

As a background to the research, a review of previous historical, anthropological, tourism, recipe books and gastronomic studies will be carried out in order to provide a characterization of the area.

There are several authors who have worked on the history of the area, among the most recognized authors for their contributions are:

The book *El perfil costanero de Santa Elena: historia y cultura* (2010) by Juan Villavicencio, offers an overview of the history and culture of the coastal profile of Santa Elena, including the evolution of its culinary traditions. (Villavicencio, 2010)

*La cocina del Ecuador: recetas y lecturas* (2005) by Sonia Mera, which presents a historical tour of Ecuadorian gastronomy, including the cultural influences that have shaped the country's cuisine. (Pazos Barrera, 2005)

*Cocina tradicional del Ecuador* (2001) by Juana Samandre, which talks about the traditional way of preparing recipes, includes the meeting of cultures and recipes from the coast, highlands, amazon and galapagos. (Samandre, 2001)

Archaeologically, the Guancavilcas are part of a larger cultural context called Manteño-Guancavilca (650 to 1531 AD), which extends along the coastal strip between the mouth of the Chone River in the province of Manabí, and the provinces of Santa Elena and Guayas to Puná Island, with the Chongón-Colonche mountain range as its eastern boundary (Freire A. M., 2013). (Freire A. M., 2013).

When the Spaniards arrived, there was talk of the existence of four large ethnic groups: Chonos, Guancavilcas, Manteños and Punáes. The Guancavilcas or Huancavilcas settled in this area. They and the Manteños of the north (Manabí) were the ones who received the initial impact of the Spanish conquest led by Pizarro with his first landing in 1531, on the coast of San Mateo in Esmeraldas, and his advance along the coastline to Puná. (Freire A. M., 2013).

For Mendoza (2017), cultural tourism over the years is having great acceptance, highlighting that in this activity museums are a potential actor for its development, where the opportunity to experience the culture and traditions of a place other than the origin of tourists-visitors transform it into an element of preservation and cultural growth, since in addition to receiving more visitors, these are modernizing in the process of planning, design, organization and implementation of presentations and exhibitions of content in cultural spaces. Therefore, museums contribute to the development of cultural tourism by becoming a means that affects lifestyles and characterization of social ties, leading to the understanding and educational use of heritage to tourists-visitors (National Library of Spain, 2023). (Eduardo, 2024)

## Results

In this sense, reference is made to the research of Mariana Loor (2005) *Cocina tradicional de Santa Elena*, which deals with a recipe book that compiles traditional recipes of the region, transmitted from generation to generation. (Loor, 2005). In addition, it contemplates the contributions Santiago Granda (2017) in his book "From the Pacific to the Andes: Ecuadorian Cookbook" presents a variety of recipes of Ecuadorian cuisine, including various typical dishes of the coastal profile of Santa Elena. (Granda, 2017)

Gastronomy as a discipline involves the study of the existing relationships between people and the way they eat, together with the cultural environment in which the cuisine is developed. Its history dates back to antiquity, when the first recipe books appeared in Rome; however, gastronomy as a pedagogical discipline has its origins in Greece in the fourth century BC. (Becerril, 2019)

In the specific case of traditional Ecuadorian cuisine, a strong influence can be detected from those who originally inhabited the country, such as the Incas, who dominated the country from the year 1463, reigning until almost three quarters of a century later, and later from those who came to conquer the country, that is, the Spaniards from 1533, but without discounting that over time it has been influenced by foreign trends, which has led to changes in the preparation of typical dishes, or that these dishes have come to be replaced by others of modern cuisine. (Luján, 2019). In addition, Ecuadorian food is also distinguished by a wide variety of dishes, derived from its own conditions and the characteristics of each region.

In the province of Santa Elena there is a route that is called the "GUANCAVILCAS" ROAD OF THE GODS, which includes the communes of: Limoncito, Julio Moreno, Las Juntas del Pacífico, Sube y Baja, Sacachún and Buenos Aires, communes dating from 800 AD to 1532 AD.

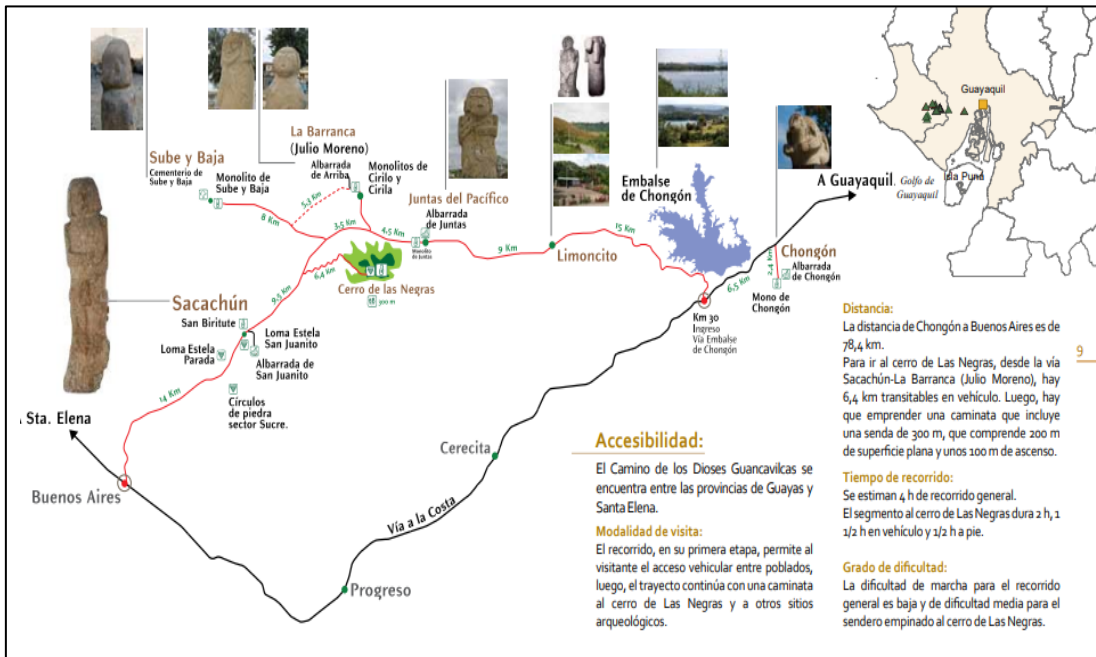


Image 1. Characterization of the route, Photo: (Freire A. M., 2013)

**Comuna de Limoncito: History:** The Comuna de Limoncito dates back to colonial times, the first inhabitants of the area were the Chachi Indians, who were displaced by Spanish settlers in the sixteenth century. In the 19th century, the area was populated by mestizo and Afro-descendant settlers, in 1822, Ecuador gained its independence from Spain, the Limoncito Commune became part of the new republic, in 1940, the commune was officially recognized by the Ecuadorian government and received a title to its lands and was granted some autonomy, in 1980, the commune began to develop its tourism potential, by 2007, the commune became part of the province of Santa Elena. (Freire A. M., 2013).

**Size of the territory and extension:** The Limoncito Commune is a rural community located in the province of Santa Elena, Ecuador. It is located about 10 kilometers south of the city of Salinas, on the Pacific coast, with an area of 120 square kilometers, is located in the Cordillera Chongón-Colonche, a mountain range that extends along the Pacific coast of Ecuador. The commune is surrounded by tropical forests and waterfalls.

**Population:** According to data from Ecuador's National Institute of Statistics and Census (INEC), the commune has a population of approximately 800 people. Most of the inhabitants of the commune are engaged in agriculture, fishing and tourism. (Ampuero, 2016)

**Economy:** The economy is based on agriculture, fishing and tourism. The main agricultural products of the commune are corn, rice, bananas and coffee. Fishing is also an important activity in the commune. The inhabitants of the commune fish for their own consumption and for sale. Tourism is a growing activity in the commune. The commune has beautiful beaches, tropical forests and waterfalls.

Education: is provided by an elementary school and a high school. The elementary school has an enrollment of approximately 100 students. The secondary school has an enrollment of approximately 50 students.

Social aspect: The inhabitants of the commune know each other and work together for the common good. The commune has a Junta de Vigilancia that looks after the community's interests.

Culture: It is a mixture of indigenous, Spanish and Afro-descendant cultures. The commune has a rich oral tradition, music and dance.

Tourism: The commune has tropical forests and waterfalls. Visitors can enjoy activities such as hiking and fishing.

Infrastructure: The Limoncito commune has basic infrastructure, but it needs to be improved to provide better services to its inhabitants. (Villao Viteri, 2015)

Julio Moreno Commune:

History: The commune Julio Moreno is one of the 12 communes that make up the canton of Santa Elena, in the province of the same name, on the coast of Ecuador. It is located 15 kilometers north of the city of Santa Elena, the commune Julio Moreno dates back to pre-Hispanic times, when the Manteño-Huancavilca cultures inhabited the region. At present, some archaeological remains of these cultures are preserved, such as the totem poles of Guasango and the stone stelae of Sacachún, in colonial times, the commune Julio Moreno was a place of forced passage for travelers heading to the city of Guayaquil, at this time, the economy of the commune was based on agriculture and livestock, In the twentieth century, the commune Julio Moreno experienced significant economic growth, due to the construction of the road that connects it with the city of Santa Elena. At this time, the economy of the commune diversified, including fishing, tourism and oil extraction. In 1995, the Julio Moreno commune became an autonomous commune, with its own administration and government. This decision was made by the inhabitants of the commune to protect their land and natural resources from contamination and exploitation. Today, the Julio Moreno commune is a thriving and dynamic community. The inhabitants of the commune are mainly engaged in agriculture, livestock, fishing and tourism. The commune also has an important handicraft activity, with products such as ceramics, basketry, and wood carving.

Size of the territory and extension: The commune of Julio Moreno has an area of approximately 60 square kilometers.

Population: The population of this commune is approximately 5,000 inhabitants. (INEC, 2010)

Economy: The economy of this commune is based mainly on agriculture, livestock and artisanal fishing, the main crops are corn, rice, cassava and bananas. Cattle, pigs and poultry are also raised. Artisanal fishing is an important activity, but it is declining due to sea pollution ( Ministry of Culture and Heritage, 2013)



Education: In this commune there are schools and colleges that provide education to children and young people, primary education is compulsory and free. Secondary education is optional and can be attended in public or private schools. ( Ministry of Culture and Heritage, 2013)

Social aspect: The society of this commune is predominantly rural and conservative, the family is the basis of society, most people are Catholic and practice their religious beliefs, the main social problems facing this commune are poverty, unemployment and lack of opportunity (Villao Viteri, 2015).

Culture: The culture of this commune is strongly influenced by the traditions and customs of the Guancavilcas. The inhabitants of this commune preserve their own dialects, clothing, music and dances. (Villao Viteri, 2015).

Tourism: The municipality of Julio Moreno has several tourist attractions, such as the beaches of Puerto Lopez, Isla de la Plata and Machalilla National Park (Villao Viteri, 2015). (Villao Viteri, 2015).

Infrastructure: The commune of Julio Moreno has a basic infrastructure, but it needs to be improved to provide better services to its inhabitants. (Villao Viteri, 2015).

Commune of Las Juntas del Pacífico:

History: The Juntas del Pacífico Commune was founded in 1952 by a group of families who settled in the area. Its name comes from the union of two rivers that meet in the community: the Seco River and the Grande River. The community has experienced significant growth in recent decades, growing from a small village to a vibrant community with a diverse population.

Size of territory and extension: The Juntas del Pacífico Commune has an area of 23.5 km<sup>2</sup>. It is located in the Julio Moreno parish, Santa Elena canton, Santa Elena province. The community is bordered to the north by the San Pedro commune, to the south by the Sube y Baja commune, to the east by the Chongón-Colonche mountain range, and to the west by the Pacific Ocean.

Population: The Juntas del Pacífico Commune has a population of approximately 2,500 inhabitants. The majority of the population is mestizo, with a minority of Afro-descendants and indigenous people. The population is mainly engaged in agriculture, cattle ranching, fishing, and tourism.

Economy: The economy of Comuna Juntas del Pacífico is based primarily on agriculture, livestock, fishing and tourism. The main agricultural products are corn, peanuts, cassava, and plantains. Livestock is mainly dedicated to the production of meat and milk. Fishing is an important activity for the community, which benefits from the marine wealth of the Pacific Ocean.

Education: The Juntas del Pacifico Commune has one elementary school and one secondary school. The literacy rate in the community is 90%. Most of the community's youth attend university in Santa Elena or Guayaquil.

**Social:** The Juntas del Pacífico Commune has a strong social organization. The community has a communal government, a parish council, and several community organizations. The community is characterized by solidarity and cooperation among its members.

**Culture:** The Juntas del Pacífico community has a rich culture that is reflected in its traditions, music, dance, and gastronomy. The community celebrates several patron saint festivals throughout the year. Traditional music and dance are important expressions of the community's culture. The community's cuisine is based on fresh produce from the sea and the land.

**Tourism:** Comuna Juntas del Pacífico is a growing tourist destination. The community offers lodging, restaurants, and tourist activities such as hiking and bird watching. The community has great potential for sustainable tourism development.

**Infrastructure:** Comuna Juntas del Pacífico has basic infrastructure that includes potable water, electricity, sewerage, and telecommunications. The community has access to a main road that connects it to Santa Elena and Guayaquil. The community has a health center and a pharmacy.

**Comuna Sube y Baja: History:** Comuna Sube y Baja was founded in the 19th century by a group of families who settled in the area. Its name is due to the rugged topography of the region, which has steep ups and downs. The community has experienced significant growth in recent decades from a small village to a vibrant community with a diverse population.

**Size of territory and extension:** The Sube y Baja Commune has an area of 15.8 km<sup>2</sup>. It is located in the Atahualpa parish, Santa Elena canton, Santa Elena province. The community is bordered to the north by the Julio Moreno commune, to the south by the San Pedro commune, to the east by the Chongón-Colonche mountain range, and to the west by the Pacific Ocean.

**Population:** Comuna Sube y Baja has a population of approximately 2,000 inhabitants. The majority of the population is mestizo, with a minority of Afro-descendants and indigenous people. The population is primarily engaged in agriculture and cattle ranching.

**Economy:** The economy of Comuna Sube y Baja is based mainly on agriculture, livestock, fishing and tourism. The main agricultural products are corn, peanuts, cassava, and plantains. Livestock is mainly dedicated to the production of meat and milk.

**Education:** Comuna Sube y Baja has one elementary school. The literacy rate in the community is 85%. Most of the community's youth attend high school in the Julio Moreno commune or in Santa Elena.

**Social:** Comuna Sube y Baja has a strong social organization. The community has a communal government, a parish council and several community organizations. The community is characterized by solidarity and cooperation among its members.

**Culture:** Comuna Sube y Baja has a rich culture that is reflected in its traditions, music, dance and gastronomy. The community celebrates several patron saint festivals throughout the year. Traditional music and dance are important expressions of the community's culture.

**Tourism:** The community has great potential for the development of sustainable tourism, unfortunately local governments are not present in this aspect.

**Infrastructure:** Comuna Sube y Baja has basic infrastructure including potable water, electricity, sewerage, and telecommunications. The community has access to a main road that connects it to Santa Elena and Guayaquil. The community has a health center and a pharmacy.

**Sacachún Commune: History:** Sacachún is one of the oldest communes in the province of Santa Elena, with a rich history dating back to pre-Columbian times. Archaeological remains have been found dating back to the Valdivia, Guangala and Manteña cultures, demonstrating the importance of the area as a center of cultural development. The commune was officially founded in 1861 by a group of families who settled in the area. Throughout its history, Sacachún has been an important agricultural and livestock center, and has also experienced significant development in the tourism sector.

**Size of territory and extension:** The Sacachún Commune has an area of 24.5 km<sup>2</sup>. It is located in the parish of Anconcito, canton Santa Elena, province of Santa Elena. The community is bordered to the north by the San Pedro commune, to the south by the Julio Moreno commune, to the east by the Chongón-Colonche mountain range, and to the west by the Pacific Ocean.

**Population:** The Sacachún Commune has a population of approximately 3,000 inhabitants. The majority of the population is mestizo, with a minority of Afro-descendants and indigenous people.

**Economy:** Sacachún's economy is based primarily on agriculture, livestock, fishing and tourism. The main agricultural products are corn, peanuts, yucca and plantains. Livestock is mainly dedicated to the production of meat and milk.

**Education:** The Sacachún Commune has one elementary school and one secondary school. The literacy rate in the community is 95%. Most of the community's youth attend university in Santa Elena or Guayaquil.

**Social:** The Sacachún Commune has a strong social organization. The community has a communal government, a parish council and several community organizations. The community is characterized by solidarity and cooperation among its members.

**Culture:** The Sacachún Commune has a rich culture that is reflected in its traditions, music, dance and gastronomy. The community celebrates several patron saint festivals throughout the year. Traditional music and dance are important expressions of the community's culture. The community's cuisine is based on fresh produce from the sea and the land.

**Tourism:** The community has great potential for the development of sustainable tourism, unfortunately local governments are not present in this aspect.

**Infrastructure:** The Sacachún Commune has basic infrastructure that includes potable water, electricity, sewerage, and telecommunications. The community has access to a main road that connects it to Santa Elena and Guayaquil.

**Comuna de Buenos Aires History:** The Comuna Buenos Aires was founded in the 19th century by a group of families who settled in the area. Its name is due to the fertility of the soil and the pleasant climate of the region. The community has experienced significant growth in recent decades, from a small hamlet to a vibrant community with a diverse population.

**Size of territory and extension:** The Comuna Buenos Aires has an area of 32.8 km<sup>2</sup>. It is located in the parish Anconcito, canton Santa Elena, province of Santa Elena. The community is bordered to the north by the Sacachún commune, to the south by the San Pedro commune, to the east by the Chongón-Colonche mountain range, and to the west by the Pacific Ocean.

**Population:** Comuna Buenos Aires has a population of approximately 4,000 inhabitants. The majority of the population is mestizo, with a minority of Afro-descendants and indigenous people.

**Economy:** The economy of Comuna Buenos Aires is based mainly on agriculture, livestock, fishing and tourism. The main agricultural products are corn, peanuts, cassava and plantains. Livestock is mainly dedicated to the production of meat and milk. Tourism is a growing sector in the community, which offers lodging, restaurants, and tourist activities such as hiking, bird-watching, and other activities.

**Education:** Comuna Buenos Aires has one elementary school and one secondary school. The literacy rate in the community is 90%. Most of the community's youth attend university in Santa Elena or Guayaquil.

**Social:** Comuna Buenos Aires has a strong social organization. The community has a communal government, a parish council and several community organizations. The community is characterized by solidarity and cooperation among its members.

**Culture:** Comuna Buenos Aires has a rich culture that is reflected in its traditions, music, dance and gastronomy. The community celebrates several patron saint festivals throughout the year. Traditional music and dance are important expressions of the community's culture. The community's cuisine is based on fresh produce from the sea and the land.

**Tourism:** Comuna Buenos Aires is a growing tourist destination. The community offers lodging, restaurants and tourist activities such as hiking and bird watching.

**Infrastructure:** Comuna Buenos Aires has basic infrastructure including potable water, electricity, sewerage, and telecommunications. The community has access to a main road that connects it to Santa Elena and Guayaquil.

## Conclusions

The ancestral dishes presented by the colonists are: roasted fish, roasted yucca, roasted green, roasted deer, roasted guate, curd, buttermilk, milk cream, roasted goat, chica de jora, herbballuisa water, shaved plantain colada, roasted sweet potato and pipián. Information that will help to preserve the traditions of the region.

With the presence of the Spaniards, and the introduction of new species and ingredients as well as culinary techniques, they were mixed until what is known today as "traditional" dishes: seafood rice, fried fish and its variations, seco de chivo, seco de pato, seco de venado, seco de guante, steamed fish, duck rebosado, caldo de gallina criolla, cazuela and its variants, and according to data that were provided by the settlers of the sector, it is estimated that the presence of shrimp was in the 1950s, this information will help in the development of the recipe book final objective of this research project to help rescue the traditions of the route of the Road of the Gods of the Coastal Profile of Santa Elena .

A recipe book that highlights the main typical dishes of the coastal profile in the province of Santa Elena, is presented as a powerful instrument for the rescue of the gastronomic identity of the sector. Beyond being a simple compendium of recipes, it acts as a means for the conservation, transmission and promotion of local culinary traditions. This project not only contributes to the pride and connection of the community with its heritage, but also projects the cultural richness of Santa Elena at a national and international level.

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