



Identification of the predominant gastronomic culture in Isla Trinitaria - South of Guayaquil

Identificación de la Cultura Gastronómica predominante en la Isla Trinitaria - Sur de Guayaquil

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Received: February 23, 2024

Approved: May 02, 2024

López, A., Miranda, X. (2024)
Análisis jurídico de la valoración de
la prueba en base a las reglas de la
sana crítica. *Espirales Revista
Multidisciplinaria de investigación
científica*, 8 (50), 26-34

Abstract

Guayas, generally one of the most populated provinces on the Ecuadorian coast, has a diverse gastronomy influenced by customs and traditions rooted throughout generations. Guayaquil is the capital of the province, an epicentre that highlights an amalgam of customs, traditions, culture, tourism and gastronomy distinctive of its main canton. The city is divided into four main sectors: North, South, East and West. In the southern sector of Guayaquil is the Trinitaria Island, where the gastronomic fair "La Sazón de Mis Ancestros" is held annually. This event emphasizes the rich gastronomy of Esmeraldas, with a group of ladies willing to undertake in the preparation of different dishes of the province of Esmeraldas, that is to say, to introduce these typical dishes in the Trinitaria Island, such as encocado of fish and seafood, the casserole of fish and seafood, shrimp salad, among others. This representation gives us access to appreciate the gastronomic culture prevailing in this specific area.

Keywords: Customs, Traditions, Culture, Tourism, Gastronomy.

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Resumen

Guayas, generalmente es una de las provincias con mayores habitantes en la Costa ecuatoriana, cuenta con una gastronomía diversa influenciada por las costumbres y tradiciones arraigadas a lo largo de las generaciones. Guayaquil es la capital de la provincia, es un epicentro que resalta una amalgama de costumbres, tradiciones, cultura, turismo y gastronomía distintivas de su principal cantón. La ciudad está dividida en cuatro sectores principales: Norte, Sur, Este y Oeste. En el sector sur de Guayaquil se encuentra la Isla Trinitaria, donde anualmente se celebra la feria gastronómica "La Sazón de Mis Ancestros". Este evento recalca la rica gastronomía esmeraldeña, con un conjunto de señoras dispuestas a emprender en la preparación de distintos platos de la provincia de esmeraldas, es decir, introducir estos platos típicos en la Isla Trinitaria, tales como encocado de pescado y mariscos, la cazuela de pescado y mariscos, ensalada de camarón, entre otros. Esta representación nos accede a apreciar la cultura gastronómica preponderante en esta área específica.

Palabras clave: Costumbres, Tradiciones, Cultura, Turismo, Gastronomía.

Introduction

The gastronomic culture is the representation of this fusion between the typical and traditional with culinary pleasure, because the elaborations of the different dishes are a contemporary cultural aspect. The deep-rooted traditions of the people offer an excellent option to provide tourists with an authentic gastronomic experience. Cultural identity encompasses the values, pride, traditions, symbols, beliefs and behaviours that characterise a social group. These aspects allow individuals who are part of the group to strengthen their sense of belonging and contribute to cultural diversity in society, (Sanchez, 2023).

These elements are fundamental to forge a sense of group belonging. Regarding gastronomic tourism, it focuses on the exploration and enjoyment of traditional, typical dishes and other culinary delights. Currently, this form of tourism is on the rise, as travellers are interested in learning more about the culinary culture of different destinations (Gutiérrez, 2022).

Within the tourism categories, gastronomic tourism is considered part of recreational tourism, since, when visiting a destination with the objective of enjoying its food, there is also the agreement to investigate and enjoy the various tourist attractions offered by that place. The term "culinary conservation" is not registered in the dictionary of the Real Academia de la Lengua. It is actually made up of two words: "conservation", which implies preserving or protecting goods, and "cuisine", which comprises the processes, methods and techniques used in the preparation of food, (Sánchez, 2023).

Gastronomic protection involves applying techniques such as fermentation and pickling to protect food and ensure that it remains fit for human consumption. It is essential to understand that numerous studies have been carried out over time to develop preservation methods that ensure the integrity of foods and that they remain preserved to this day, (Gutiérrez, 2022).

The province of Guayas is currently an important tourist destination due to a variety of factors that have been consolidated in the region. Among these elements are the heritage of its flora and fauna, the diversity of ethnic groups, popular festivities, picturesque landscapes and the numerous options for the practice of different types of tourism, such as cultural, gastronomic, rural, adventure, business and religious. This combination of attractions has positioned the province as a highly valued destination both nationally and internationally (Sánchez, 2023).

The typical cuisine of the province of Guayas enjoys recognition thanks to the diversity of its dishes and their exquisite flavour, the result of procedures handed down from generation to generation and which preserve the culinary secrets bequeathed by the ancestors. This variety of flavours has awakened the interest of inhabitants and tourists, who seek to delight themselves with the delicacies offered by this appreciated region (Gutiérrez, 2022).

Among the culinary specialities of Guayaquil, the most common are *seco de pollo* (dried chicken), *caldo de salchicha* (sausage broth), a variety of *ceviche*, as well as *arroz con menestra* (rice and vegetable stew) accompanied by a variety of proteins such as meat, chicken, chops, among other options. A wide range of typical or traditional dishes to satisfy gastronomic preferences is available in markets and other places located in the city centre, (Alvarado, 2020).

Guayaquil is divided into five rural parishes and sixteen parishes in the urban sector that make up the city of Guayaquil. Isla Trinitaria, located in the southern sector of Guayaquil, is a recognised area in the southern sector of Guayaquil. This sector is known for its rich gastronomic culture, providing a wide culinary knowledge in the local community, (Álvarez, 2023).

The beauty of La Trinitaria, highlighted by its impressive sunset, its topography and its climate, make it a place worth appreciating. However, to talk about its natural attractiveness contrasted by problems such as poverty, insecurity and social inequality is a separate issue. Surrounded by the salt marsh which is a natural jewel. Unfortunately, the history of Isla Trinitaria is marked by exploitation by land traffickers and populist politicians, who invaded it voraciously, stripping it of its resources, but not of its essence, (Alvarado, 2020).

It is generally recognised that the gastronomy of Trinitario Island is diverse and is mainly inspired by the cuisine of Esmeraldas. Therefore, it is necessary to mention the presence of representative dishes from Esmeraldas, such as *encocados*, fish or seafood casserole, seafood rice, etc. Among the preparations are dishes characteristic of Guayas. It should be noted that the two provinces are located on the Ecuadorian coast, which implies

some similarities in coastal gastronomy, especially in dishes that include fish and seafood (Álvarez, 2023).

Tourism

Tourism represents an enriching experience that a human being experiences, as it provides the opportunity to explore new destinations, immerse oneself in different cultures and engage with diverse people during one's free time. As time has passed, tourism has experienced remarkable progress driven by technological advances, improvements in communications and the expansion of basic infrastructures such as roads, airports and ports. Today, tourism has become a significant social phenomenon, providing travellers with the security to move around in various locations, motivated to discover environments other than their everyday lives, (Alvarado, 2020).

Tourism is increasingly defined as an experience that gives travellers the possibility to enrich themselves both personally and culturally. In addition to this, tourism is important in the preservation and protection of the natural and cultural environment, as well as in the revitalisation of old traditions. It is actively involved in supporting and sustaining cultural events, while fostering intercultural communication and nurturing aspirations for global peace, (Alvarez, 2023).

The tourism industry is a sector in constant transformation and adaptation. As it evolves, it faces significant changes, adopting new approaches to tourism management and exploring innovative forms of business. Today, tourism is tending towards greater specialisation to meet the emerging demands of travellers. This has led to the emergence of more diversified tourism products, addressing different market segments and promoting diversification in this industry, (Alvarado, 2020).

Gastronomy

Gastronomy has emerged as an essential factor for variety and a key tool for the identity and promotion of different regions, nations and cultural traditions. Thus, gastronomy can be understood as a boost for the tourism sector, as it contributes to diversifying offers, stimulates local economic growth, involves a variety of professionals (producers, chefs, traders, among others) and broadens the horizons of the primary industry by incorporating new approaches, (Espinoza, 2019).

In recent times, the tourism sector has begun to value the considerable capacity of culinary products to attract and captivate, turning them into valuable tourism assets. These elements function as authentic representations of people and places. It is relevant to note that travel plans, tourism packages and innovative proposals are articulated around culinary uniqueness, prioritising gastronomy and indigenous products as central elements. This change represents a significant shift in the tourism industry, highlighting the growing personal interest in exploring and discovering local and regional traditions, as well as new tourism experiences, including those related to gastronomy, (Espinoza, 2019).

In this way, gastronomy emerges as a prominent element in cultural tourism, serving to diversify the tourist offer and representing a valuable compendium of local knowledge and traditions. It can be considered both as a tourism product in itself and as a tourism resource, depending on its management and approach. Its transformation into a tourism product results from the re-evaluation or adaptation of its resources. Gastronomy is managing to grow as a determining factor in the competitiveness of a destination and in boosting its promotion, (Espinoza, 2019).

Gastronomic tourism

Gastronomic tourism encompasses activities involving food producers, culinary events, restaurants and specific destinations where the main motivation of the trip is to enjoy local gastronomy or explore aspects related to food production in a given area. It can be described as an experience that allows travellers to immerse themselves in regional and traditional cuisine, and has gained popularity globally in recent years, becoming one of the most prominent tourism benefits in terms of development. Importantly, local gastronomy undergoes a significant change in this context, (Mendieta, 2020).

Gastronomic tourists are interested in discovering and tasting indigenous and unique foods. An illustrative case is that derived from the flora and fauna of the villages, which generates a distinctive atmosphere and fulfils the aspiration of travellers to live memorable experiences through their journeys. These visitors establish links between local culture, the natural environment and gastronomy, creating an intimate connection between them. Nowadays, gastronomic tourism is becoming increasingly important on a global scale. In this form of tourism, food and culinary delights act as agents of cultural integration, while at the same time they stand as fundamental pillars in the geographical area, (Mendieta, 2020).

Gastronomic culture

Culture, together with religion and other socio-demographic aspects, plays a fundamental role in the acceptance of certain food products, as well as in the appreciation of their taste and flavour. Thus, culture not only shapes the culinary history of communities, but also defines it and manifests itself through it, making it tangible, sensual and pleasurable. This close relationship between culture and gastronomy turns typical dishes and local food into valuable tourist assets, thus encouraging travel, as people find in gastronomy a distraction to immerse themselves in Ecuadorian culture. In this way, cultural tourism facilitates the exchange of cultures and the acquisition of new routines related to different communities (Valencia, 2020).

Gastronomy, being a component of the cultural legacy of a community, acquires significant relevance as a tourism product linked to culture. The culture of any region encompasses the set of thoughts, creations, beliefs, consolidated traditions, transformations and experiences over time and in a given space. Since cultures are inherently dynamic, they are subject to change and continuous interactions, constantly adapting and coexisting with other cultures, (Valencia, 2020).

Materials and methods

After researching, the authors focused on strengthening their knowledge by identifying the culinary culture of Isla Trinitaria in the south of Guayaquil. This was achieved through a multidisciplinary research approach, followed by the implementation of a work plan through linking and the use of the research-experimentation technique.

After researching, the author focused on strengthening her knowledge by identifying the culinary culture of Isla Trinitaria in the south of Guayaquil. This was achieved through a multidisciplinary approach to research, followed by the implementation of a work plan through linkage and the use of the experimentation technique. The methodology employed refers to the procedures and approaches used in this research, which were appropriately selected to carry out the diagnosis.

This method made it possible to detail each of the strategies used in the preparation of the characteristic dishes of the areas studied, especially on Trinitaria Island in the south of Guayaquil. The descriptive approach was essential, as it provided a thorough understanding of the elements required for this study.

This method enabled research to be carried out and connections to be made with service providers, especially those offering food and drink typical of the region. The traditions and practices of the community in serving the dishes were taken into account.

With the help of the strategic plan, a detailed analysis of the gastronomy was carried out to find the most important typical dishes for tourists and service providers offering traditional food on the island of Trinidad.

The research served to confirm and strengthen the gastronomic route through the southern sector of Guayaquil. Project research, the creation of project applications, the creation of applications or prototypes to solve specific problems, is also considerable and is called feasibility projects.

Interviews were carried out especially with the owners of food and beverage establishments in order to analyse and understand the methods and techniques applied in the preparation of typical or traditional dishes in each region or province of Ecuador. Therefore, all this leads to strengthening the gastronomic culture of the Trinitaria Island located in the southern sector of the city of Guayaquil. In addition, it is worth mentioning that a questionnaire was carried out to obtain the desired results and different opinions of the food establishments.

Results

In order to strengthen the cultural and gastronomic identity of Trinitaria Island, several alternatives were proposed, such as preserving the food of typical and traditional dishes, rescuing dishes that were prepared years ago and have ceased to be prepared, and finally, disseminating the gastronomic identity of each dish through their cultures and histories. As a first alternative, an exhaustive analysis of the current situation of

typical and traditional gastronomy on the island of Trinitaria, south of Guayaquil, was carried out. During this process, a wide variety of culinary offerings was observed. However, it was identified that the entrepreneurs or owners of the food and beverage establishments lacked knowledge of the different techniques applied and methods of cooking food, which could affect the presentation of the dishes for tourists. In addition, the lack of proper attire on the part of the staff serving in these food outlets was noted to reflect carelessness.

This situation often results in the closure of eateries due to lack of promotion and advertising, as well as insufficient staff training. On the other hand, those establishments that continue to offer typical and traditional food and beverages have owners and employees who are constantly undergoing training.

Through the diagnosis, it is evident that the premises present deficiencies in customer service, such as the presence of shared bathrooms. In addition, they lack elements that contribute to the ambience of the place, such as an adequate selection of music and attractive decoration, which are essential aspects of the restaurant experience. The quality of the food, price and cleanliness are also fundamental aspects, as they influence the intelligence of customers and their willingness to return, thus ensuring a satisfactory dining experience.

However, ensuring the quality of food implies a complete process responsible for handling it must have the right discernment to provide optimal customer care during the preparation of the dishes.

After reviewing the diagnosis, seminars and courses were held with entrepreneurs or owners of formal and informal restaurants, as well as bars and sodas, addressing topics such as food quality, customer service, strategic management and legal aspects related to restaurant management, among others.

Conclusions

The main purpose of this research was to revitalise, conserve and disseminate the culinary identity of the Trinitaria Island, located in the southern sector of Guayaquil. It was observed that the local gastronomy was at risk of being lost due to the lack of knowledge on the part of the inhabitants of Guayaquil. It is important to highlight that, in order to avoid this loss, it is necessary to combine contemporary techniques and methodologies with traditional ones, in order to preserve not only the characteristic flavour and colour of the autochthonous cuisine.

The analysis made it possible to identify that the owners of establishments offering typical and traditional food need to continue their training in gastronomic aspects, management and, especially, in the methods and techniques of preparation of the dishes they offer.

The proposal of this study has contributed to the strengthening of the gastronomic cultural identity on the island of Trinidad, which guarantees the quality of both the food offered and the customer service in the typical and traditional food establishments.

The owners of the establishments are committed to initiating projects that facilitate collaboration between the school and the people. This aims to promote the development of the gastronomic sector of Guayaquil through tourism, by continuing

the culinary fairs that will be held annually. In addition, information will be provided on establishments where visitors can enjoy typical or traditional food from the area.

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