
FOOD CULTURE: STUDY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF ANCESTRAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE GUAMOTE CANTON, PROVINCE OF CHIMBORAZO

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SUMMARY

Unemployment, poverty and job instability are driving people in rural areas to migrate to cities or abroad, abandoning their ancestral knowledge, cultural practices and traditional foods. Preserving these customs is vital to maintaining cultural identity and generational knowledge systems. In Chimborazo, despite the efforts to preserve culinary traditions, the lack of identification of this knowledge has led to the creation of innovative recipes based on a few products, omitting the authentic ancestral flavors. This puts the sustainability and gastronomic identity of the province at risk. Specifically in Guamote, Chimborazo, its rich cultural and gastronomic heritage contrasts with agricultural labor exploitation and low incomes, which force migration and result in a progressive loss of cultural identity. This study seeks to identify the key factors to preserve and transmit the ancestral practices, knowledge and flavors of the region to future generations.

Keywords: Food culture, ancestral knowledge, gastronomy, cultural identity, cultural and gastronomic heritage

INTRODUCTION

According to the Ministry of Tourism (MINTUR) (2022), tourism is an economic and social activity of enormous importance, generating employment opportunities and improving the quality of life of the population of tourist territories due to its wonderful natural and cultural attractions. The cultural legacy is the result of a symbiosis of acculturation, giving rise to several expressions at the national level, making Ecuador a multiethnic and multicultural country, being a destination of interest for tourists, being attracted by the ancestral heritages embodied in the diversity of cultures. The diet in Ecuador is very diverse. From geography, habitats, ethnicities, languages and cultures, the marked economic and social stratification that exists in the country constitute the pieces of a true mosaic of knowledge and food practices. The mixture of indigenous, Afro and Hispanic descendant cultures and miscegenation, which began centuries ago and continues to this day, explain the processes of syncretism, overlapping and cultural juxtaposition that are expressed in all areas of human coexistence, including food (Moya, 2013). The Guamote canton is located in the central part of the inter-Andean alley, located in the center of the province of Chimborazo, the cantonal capital is located 50 km from the city of Riobamba, recognized nationally and internationally for its cultural and natural riches, the architecture of the canton and its indigenous communities maintain and highlight characteristics that unite the past with the present.

The Guamote canton forms the center of origin of various species that constitute the food base of the region, including potatoes, geese, beans, quinoa, melloco, barley, carrots, corn, among others.

Despite this culinary richness, the lack of cultural and heritage diffusion and ignorance of the management of culinary techniques of the communities, as well as a devaluation of the cultural identity represented by the preparation and processing of the different typical dishes of the locality, adding to the lack of interest of the promoters and the Decentralized Autonomous Government (GAD) to seek alternatives for cultural and gastronomic dissemination of the canton has directly influenced the traditional gastronomy is lost, adopting new culinary trends which causes the loss of culture, economy and agri-food.

The present study has a qualitative-quantitative approach, not experimental, it will also be a field research where surveys and interviews will be applied for the collection of information, the results obtained will be systematized and analyzed.

The intention of this research is to explore the food culture of the canton and its importance in strengthening the cultural identity of the inhabitants.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To analyze and document the food culture in the cantonal capital of Guamote, Province of Chimborazo

HYPOTHESIS

The food culture is manifested in a distinctive and symbolic way in the cantonal capital of Guamote, as a result of the interaction between the indigenous communities and the mestizo people of the canton, they maintain ancestral practices of cultivation, collection and preparation of food, reflecting a relationship of respect and harmony with the Pachamama, in addition to the richness of raw materials such as grains, Tubers and meats provides a solid foundation for a diverse and ancestral cuisine, enriched by local biodiversity and traditional culinary techniques.

The festivities, beliefs and culinary representations of the canton play a fundamental role in the promotion and preservation of local gastronomy. Each celebration is important to share knowledge, exchange food and strengthen ties

establishing a construction of the cultural identity and sense of belonging of the inhabitants of Guamote.

The food culture in the cantonal capital is characterized by its diversity and relationship with the traditions and representations of the population of Guamote and its ability to transmit and preserve symbolic meanings and cultural values through food. This hypothesis suggests that Guamote gastronomy is not only an aspect of daily life, but also a key element in the definition and affirmation of the cultural identity of the inhabitants.

METHODOLOGY

The use of the inductive and deductive method was used since induction consists of going from particular cases to generalization, it began with the observation of particular phenomena with the purpose of reaching general conclusions and premises. In the same way, deduction is based on going from the general to the particular, thus beginning with the observation of general phenomena with the purpose of pointing out particular truths. (Hernández Sampieri, Fernández-Callado, & Baptista, 2022)

The qualitative approach used data collection and analysis to refine the research questions or reveal new questions in the interpretation process, the study seeks to follow a predictable and structured pattern (the process). In quantitative research, an attempt is made to generalize the results found in a group or segment (sample) to a larger collectivity (universe or population). (Creswell, 2014)

systematize information obtained through the application of data collection instruments (surveys). With qualitative research, qualitative data was analyzed through the use of techniques such as interviews, observation, in addition to the establishment of a solid theoretical framework that guided the collection and subsequent interpretation of data. In the same way, with the application of quantitative instruments (such as surveys) it was possible to measure and quantify the variable of Food Culture identified during the qualitative phase. (Flick, 2018)

SAMPLE SIZE

According to the PDOT of the Guamote canton (GADMCG, 2016), the record of national and international tourists visiting the canton is approximately 3060 tourists per year.

Once the target population was known, the sample was identified, making use of the random stratified random sample design and using the statistical formula of finite populations, which is detailed below with the following formula:

$$n = \frac{z^2 \cdot p \cdot q \cdot N}{N \cdot E^2 + z^2 \cdot p \cdot q} \quad (1)$$

Where:

N= Population (3060)

E= permissible margin of error (5%).

n= Sample size

Z= Desired Confidence Level 95%

p = proportion of the population 50%

q= 50%

$$n = \frac{1.96^2(0,50)(0,50)3060}{3060 \cdot 0,05^2 + 1,96^2(0,50)(0,50)} \quad (2)$$

n = 341 encuestas

RESULTS

Analysis of the results obtained from the Food Culture variable, for which a structured survey was used as a data collection instrument, which was subjected to validation and reliability by means of a Cronbach's Alpha with a coefficient of 0.824, which classifies the instrument as good.

Table 1 Results obtained on food culture

n°	Items	Interpretation Overview
a)	Gender	Among the tourists who entered the Guamote canton, there is a marked predominance of female visitors, thus representing 63.34% of the total, while male tourists constitute 36.66%. In conclusion, a clearly significantly higher proportion of women compared to male visitors is reflected, which will provide a better understanding of the geographical composition of visitors to the United States. Canton
b)	Age	It is noteworthy that the most significant age group is 18 to 25 years old, representing 48.09%, in the same way the 26 to 35 year old group that constitutes 29.03% followed by the 36 to 45 age range with 21.41%. The group of tourists over 46 years of age represents 1.47%, being the lowest percentage compared to the other age ranges. In conclusion, this demographic analysis suggests the importance of targeting specific strategies and services to meet the preferences and expectations of the predominant young population that visits the Guamote canton.
c)	Level of education	The category of "Higher University" stands out significantly, representing 65.98%, then the level of "non-university superior" constitutes 19.35%, showing a considerable presence. Lower levels of education, such as primary (2.35 per cent) and secondary (12.32 per cent), provide a relatively low number of tourists with basic education. In conclusion, a majority presence of visitors with university education and a minority with basic education is shown, these results are essential since the level of education can influence their food preferences and associated cultural behaviors.
Specific Information		
Dimension: Representations		70.09% of respondents indicated that they strongly agree, suggesting strong support for the idea, likewise, 21.70% of respondents agree, which reinforces the positive perception. The

<p>1 <i>The preservation of culinary practices is a key factor for the gastronomic development of the Guamote canton</i></p>	<p>proportion of impartial people is relatively low, accounting for 3.23%, while those who disagree constitute 4.99%. In conclusion, a strong support from tourists is indicated for the preservation of Guamote's culinary practices as a key element for gastronomic development.</p>
<p>2 <i>It is important to transmit gastronomic knowledge through the culinary manifestations of the Guamote canton.</i></p>	<p>62.64% of the respondents expressed "Strongly agree", indicating a strong support for the idea of transmitting knowledge, in addition 32.26% of the respondents are "Agree", the proportion of "Impartial" people is low, representing 0.88% while those who disagree constitute 4.40%. In conclusion, most tourists see the transmission of gastronomic knowledge through culinary manifestations as important, but there is a minority that does not fully share this perspective.</p>
<p>3 <i>It is important to preserve the ancestral culinary practices of the Guamote canton.</i></p>	<p>A solid 68.82% of respondents expressed "Strongly Agree", in addition, 24.93% of respondents "Agree", providing additional support while those who "Disagree" make up 6.46%. In conclusion, although there is a minority that does not completely agree with the importance of preserving ancestral culinary practices, most tourists seem to highlight the relevance of the culinary tradition in the Guamote canton.</p>
<p>4 <i>It is essential to implement food safety standards in the gastronomy of the Guamote canton.</i></p>	<p>69.79% of tourists mentioned "Strongly agree", in addition, 18.77% of respondents "agree", the proportion of "Impartial" visitors is low, representing only 2.35%, while those who "Disagree" constitute 9.09%. In conclusion, although there is a minority that does not completely agree with the implementation of food safety regulations, the majority of tourists seem to recognize the importance of these measures in the context of food culture in the Guamote canton.</p>
<p>Dimension: Cultural Identity</p>	
<p>5 <i>The cultural manifestations of the Guamote canton must be promoted through gastronomic tourism fairs</i></p>	<p>It is evident that 73.02% of tourists show a support of 92.37% indicating that they totally agree, likewise, 19.35% of those surveyed "Agree". "Impartial" people are low at only 3.52%, while those who "disagree" make up 4.11%. In conclusion, tourists view the integration of gastronomic fairs as a conduit to highlight and celebrate the unique cultural manifestations of the Guamote canton.</p>
<p>6 <i>It is important to know and preserve the sense of belonging of the indigenous groups of the Guamote canton.</i></p>	<p>A solid 73.31% of visitors expressed "Strongly Agree", indicating strong support, in addition, 17.60% of respondents "Agree", likewise 4.11% stated that they have an "impartial" opinion, while those who "Disagree" constitute 4.99%. In conclusion, although there is a minority that does not completely agree with the importance of knowing and preserving the sense of belonging of the indigenous groups of the Guamote canton, the majority of tourists seem to recognize and value this dimension of food culture.</p>
<p>7 <i>Knowing the beliefs and traditions of indigenous peoples is an important factor for the</i></p>	<p>68.62% of respondents expressed "Strongly Agree", in addition, 24.34% "Agree" providing strong support, the proportion of "Impartial" people is low representing 1.76% of visitors. Finally, "Disagree" represents 5.28%. In conclusion, these results suggest that the majority of tourists perceive the importance of knowing the beliefs and traditions of indigenous peoples for the tourism sector of the Guamote canton,</p>

tourism sector of the Guamote canton despite the fact that there is a minority that does not completely agree.

8 *The mastery of a foreign language is a socio-cultural factor for the tourism sector of the Guamote canton.* A high percentage constituting 82.11% of respondents mentioned that they "Strongly Agree", indicating strong support. In addition, 14.66% of respondents "Agree," providing an additional endorsement. The proportion of "impartial" people is relatively low, constituting only 3.23%.
 In conclusion, most tourists perceive the mastery of a foreign language as a relevant socio-cultural factor for the tourism sector of the Guamote canton, thus highlighting the importance of intercultural communication.

Dimension: Culinary Techniques

9 *It is important to know the distribution channel of the local products to be processed in the A and B establishments of the Guamote canton* 63.05% of respondents expressed "Strongly agree", indicating significant support, in the same way 22.58% of respondents "Agree", which reinforces this perspective, although with a lower intensity than the "Strongly agree" group. The proportion of "Impartial" people is considerable, accounting for 11.14%, while those who "Moderately agree" constitute 3.23%.
 These results suggest that, although the majority of respondents recognize the importance of this knowledge, a significant part shows a neutral or slightly positive opinion.

10 *It is important to carry out quality control of raw materials as an axis of development of food and beverage establishments.* A high percentage constituting 78.89% of respondents mentioned that they "Strongly agree", indicating strong support for the idea of performing a quality control of raw materials. In addition, 7.33% of respondents "Agree," providing additional support. The proportion of "impartial" people is lower, constituting only 8.80%. Finally, as a lower proportion, 4.99% expressed "Moderately agree".
 In conclusion, most tourists perceive the idea of carrying out a quality control of raw materials in the establishments of the Guamote canton, as an axis of cultural and gastronomic development.

11 *It is essential to have cooking processes and customer service in the development of gastronomic tourism* 73.02% of respondents expressed "Strongly Agree" towards the idea of having cooking processes and customer service, in addition, 15.54% "Agree" providing strong support, the proportion of people "Impartial" and "Disagree" is low representing 3.81% of visitors.
 In conclusion, these results suggest that most tourists perceive the importance of having cooking and customer service processes for the development of the gastronomic sector of the Guamote canton, although there is a minority that does not completely agree.

A solid 60.12% of visitors expressed "Strongly Agree", indicating strong support, in addition, 29.91% of respondents "Agree", while those who "Disagree" make up 9.97%.
 In conclusion, although there is a minority that does not completely agree with the importance of having nutritious

- 12** *It is important to have nutritious products to promote the traditional gastronomy of the Guamote canton, the majority of tourists seem to recognize and value this dimension of food culture.*

According to MAGAP data in 2020, the largest production volumes of agricultural products at the Guamote canton level have potatoes followed by quinoa (1,337.19ha) and in third place is the production of (1,120.82ha) and finally barley (1,114.08ha) being the most important economically speaking, as well as representing the most important foods within the food culture of the canton.

Table 2 Agricultural products of Guamote

Cultivation	Has	%
Grass	8.255,68	47,56
Pope	2.916,04	16,80
Often	853,70	4,92
Barley	1.114,08	6,42
Quinoa	1.337,19	7,71
Pig	1.120,82	6,46
Haba	728,07	4,19
Wheat	26,31	0,15
Alfalfa	801,73	4,62
Pea	132,75	0,76
Blackberry	3,16	0,02
Vegetables	1,32	0,01
Red onion	26,31	0,15
Total	17.356,63	100

Source: MAGAP-CHIMBORAZO, 2014

Note: Prepared by PDOT-GADMCG technical team

In the same way, the livestock products of the canton have been analyzed, being the most important and most used in the gastronomic preparations of the canton are the cutes, sheep, cattle and pigs, of which their meat and derivatives are used.

Table 3 Livestock products in Guamote

Livestock		Total Chimborazo	Total Guamote
Bovine	Heads	246.787	30.501
Porcine	Number	142.788	16.224
Ovine	Number	328.036	84.893
Asnal	Number	43.503	83.23
Horse	Number	17.695	19.12
Hinnies	Number	1634	71
Goats	Number	11.774	478
Alpacas	Number	346	52
Call	Number	2402	1339
Rabbits	Number	102.017	6952
Guinea pigs	Number	812.943	153.250

Source: MAGAP-CHIMBORAZO, 2014

Note: Prepared by PDOT-GADMCG technical team

Finally, the gastronomy of the canton must be analyzed, which is very varied, with typical foods and dishes of the locality, in addition, its main products are characteristic of the Ecuadorian highlands, which gives the dishes an identity and authenticity of the place. The most representative dishes are: Grain soups (beans, corn, peas); locros of potatoes, geese, mellocos and barley, especially tender broad beans, potatoes with achiote, machica with lard, accompanied by horchata which is barley rice, guava jam or oat chicha. On important dates, you can taste the baked with potatoes and mote, locro de cuy, caldo de gallina, fritada, roasted guinea pig accompanied with potatoes, caldo de mondongo, yaguar locro and chicha de jora, therefore, it is mainly part of the rich gastronomy of Guamote. (Instituto Nacional de Patrimonio Cultural (INPC), 2019) (Pérez & Jara, 2020)

For which it is important to have a record of the tourism and gastronomic providers of the canton who feed and sustain the food heritage of the sector.

Table 4 Tourism and gastronomic providers of the Guamote canton

N°	ESTABLISHMENT	ACTIVITY	GUY	ADDRESS
1	Long Chuza	Accommodation	Hotel/Restaurant	García Moreno and Manabí
2	Inti Sisa Guesthouse	Accommodation/Food & Beverages/Transportation	Hotel/Restaurant	Vargas Torres
3	Giralda	Accommodation	Hotel/Restaurant	Av. Macas and Panamericana Sur
4	The Poguio	Accommodation	Hotel/Restaurant	Of. Simón Bolívar
5	Totorillas Agrotourism Farm	Accommodation	Cabins	Panamericana Sur - Via Palmira
6	Hotel Ramada	Accommodation	Hotel/Restaurant	Carlos Vela and Riobamba
7	Saskines Adamary	Food and beverages	Restaurant	Vía Riobamba – Macas, kilometer 68, Guamote.
8	Adamary	Food and beverages	Restaurant	City Center.
9	Hostal Flor de los Ángeles	Accommodation	Hostel	Barrio 24 de Mayo, in front of Plaza San Vicente Av. Circunvalación 2 Manabi
10	Traditional food restaurant	Food & Beverage	Restaurant	

Source: MINTUR Tourism Cadastre (2022) & Own research

Winemaking: Own

CONCLUSIONS

- The food culture does manifest itself in a distinctive and symbolic way in the cantonal capital of Guamote. Festivities and cultural performances in Guamote play a crucial role in promoting and preserving local gastronomy, as well as strengthening community ties around food. Most visitors perceive the importance of knowing and respecting beliefs, traditions and customs, as well as cultural diversity in general. These events are meaningful opportunities to share knowledge, exchange recipes, and celebrate the canton's unique cultural identity.
- The abundance of raw materials in the Guamote canton provides a solid foundation for a diverse and creative cuisine, enriched by local biodiversity and culinary practices rooted in tradition.
- On the other hand, there is evidence of strong support from tourists for the preservation of ancestral culinary practices, the transmission of gastronomic knowledge, culinary manifestations and the sense of belonging of the indigenous people of the canton. Therefore, a widespread recognition of the importance of food culture in the tourist and gastronomic experience in the Guamote canton is suggested.

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