
FOOD HERITAGE IN THE CANTONAL SEAT OF PENIPE, PROVINCE OF CHIMBORAZO: TRADITION, IDENTITY AND PERSPECTIVES FOR ITS SAFEGUARDING

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ABSTRACT

The research addressed the problem of the decrease in interest and the devaluation of Food Heritage in the canton. Penipe is one of the primary cantons of the province of Chimborazo, distinguished by its culinary diversity, which is intricately tied to a culinary tradition that has been meticulously preserved and handed down through successive generations. However, the acculturation of its inhabitants and the adoption of modern culinary practices and techniques have threatened to eliminate the ancestral knowledge of its inhabitants. The primary objective of the research was to delineate the characteristics of the food heritage and its impact on the tourism development of the canton, with the aim of proposing strategies that contribute to the preservation and promotion of Penipe. The research employs a mixed and descriptive approach, characterized by a non-experimental and cross-sectional field design. The design is non-experimental and cross-sectional in nature because the survey was administered over a brief period to the proprietors of restaurants and bus stops in the Penipe canton. The reliability of the instruments was verified by means of Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which resulted in a value of 0.818. This value was subsequently rated as "very good" by the researcher.

Keywords: Food heritage, cultural identity, cultural tradition, province of Chimborazo.

RESUMEN

La investigación abordó el problema de la disminución del interés y la devaluación del patrimonio alimentario en el cantón. Penipe es uno de los cantones principales de la provincia de Chimborazo, que se distingue por su diversidad culinaria, íntimamente ligada a una tradición culinaria que se ha conservado meticulosamente y se ha transmitido de generación en generación. Sin embargo, la aculturación de sus habitantes y la adopción de prácticas y técnicas culinarias modernas han amenazado con eliminar los conocimientos ancestrales de sus habitantes. El objetivo principal de la investigación fue delinear las características del patrimonio alimentario y su impacto en el desarrollo turístico del cantón, con el fin de proponer estrategias que contribuyan a la preservación y promoción de Penipe. La investigación emplea un enfoque mixto y descriptivo, caracterizado por un diseño de campo no experimental y transversal. El diseño es de naturaleza no experimental y transversal, ya que la encuesta se administró durante un breve período a los propietarios de restaurantes y paradas de autobús en el cantón de Penipe. La confiabilidad de los instrumentos se verificó mediante el coeficiente alfa de Cronbach, que arrojó un valor de 0,818. Este valor fue posteriormente calificado como «muy bueno» por el investigador.

Palabras clave: Patrimonio alimentario, identidad cultural, tradición cultural, provincia de Chimborazo

I. INTRODUCTION

This canton plays a pivotal role in the province of Chimborazo's tourism sector, which is characterized by a plethora of lesser-known material and intangible attractions. Despite its modest size and economic constraints, the town's residents have demonstrated a remarkable commitment to preserving their cultural identity and culinary heritage. The concept of food heritage encompasses the cultural traditions, culinary practices, and ancestral customs that are transmitted across generations, thereby fostering a sense of belonging among individuals and communities. This concept is closely intertwined with the natural food heritage of a particular region, which refers to the diverse natural ingredients utilized in the preparation of local dishes and traditional beverages. The methodology employed in the research is a mixed approach, incorporating elements of descriptive, field, and non-experimental design. Therefore, the collection and interpretation of data employed a range of techniques and instruments. The survey technique was utilized, and the instruments employed included the questionnaire and observation sheets (Espeitx, 2004; Guevara & Aguagallo, 2021; Cortez, 2018).

A salient concern that has seen a marked deterioration over time pertains to the diminishing significance attributed to the community's ancestral knowledge. This phenomenon can be attributed to the acculturation experienced by many inhabitants of the Penipe canton. The new generations have adopted novel culinary practices, diverging from the traditional methods of preparing recipes that have been passed down through generations. This shift can be attributed to a perceived lack of appreciation for the cultural heritage of their ancestors among the younger generations. Moreover, the absence of a comprehensive manual delineating health and hygiene standards, with particular emphasis on the appropriate handling of food, constitutes a significant contributing factor.

Consequently, this deficiency has a deleterious effect on the gastronomy of the canton, which in turn has the potential to adversely impact tourist sentiment and behavior. In summary, the devaluation of the cultural identity of the canton has resulted in a diminution of sense of belonging among the new generations. This phenomenon can be attributed to the lack of interest exhibited by both the local population and tourists, who demonstrate a preference for more contemporary and innovative practices that align with the demands of the current era, as demonstrated in the works of Marcos (2014), Mareira (2020), Alvarado & Cedeño (2022), and Meléndez & Cañez De La Fuente (2019).

1.1 OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of the present study is to analyze the culinary heritage of Penipe, the capital of the province of Chimborazo. This analysis entailed the identification of the characteristics, cultural meanings, and traditional gastronomic practices that are unique to Penipe. The study was undertaken with the aim of contributing to the safeguarding and valorization of the local culinary traditions within the broader context of gastronomic tourism and sustainable development. Consequently, the research offers substantial information and data, which will undoubtedly contribute to the advancement of future academic work in the domain of food heritage. This contribution is of particular significance due to its content and cultural value. It plays a crucial role in the preservation of the recipes for traditional foods from the area, as well as in maintaining the continuity of traditional consumption practices.

1.2 HYPOTHESIS

The culinary traditions of the cantonal capital of Penipe play a pivotal role in shaping the local cultural identity. Through the appropriate valorization and promotion of these traditions within the context of gastronomic tourism, the region can achieve sustainable development, thereby fortifying the local economy and fostering the conservation of ancestral culinary expertise and flavors.

II. CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

As stated in the research "Food Heritage and Tourism: A Unique Relationship," food heritage is a significant component of various contemporary tourism models, including agrotourism, rural tourism, ecotourism, and cultural tourism. The culinary offerings are intricately tied to the region's diverse approaches, reflecting a rich tapestry of influences. These elements are to be regarded as integral components of the local culture, as manifestations of historical practices, and as a synthesis and concretization of the prevailing climate and topography. The models under consideration are characterized by a triad of interconnected axes: nature,

culture, and gastronomy, as well as sport. The culinary tradition under scrutiny appears to be founded upon the tenets of "land" productions and local culinary customs, at least in the prevailing discourses, though this is not always reflected in reality (Espeitx, 2004).

This assertion is supported by research "Food systems and food heritage. Transculturation in the Ecuadorian Context" is defined as the perpetual exchange of culinary traditions. The integration of these elements into the local culture is influenced by the pace of ecological and cultural adaptation. The assimilation of these elements into the local practices may be facilitated by their complementary nature or by their alignment with existing local traditions. In any event, upon incorporation, these novel elements are able to become firmly established, assuming a place of their own and achieving a state of familiarity. It is noteworthy that these transculturation processes have occurred in a similar manner within the region, a phenomenon attributable to the congruence of historical processes of territorial formation and political organization, as well as the ecological affinity of the region's distinct zones. The configuration of cultural food systems is responsive to the prevailing conditions of each historical period, catering to the diverse interests of a heterogeneous group of actors. In the following section, we will briefly discuss some historical milestones that have contributed to our understanding of the emergence of Ecuador's food heritage. These milestones are indicative of a complex process of adaptation and reinvention, which serves as a testament to the adaptability and creative capacity of the individuals involved (Unigarro, 2015).

In the research study entitled "Memory and Food Heritage: The Importance of Empirical Knowledge," the author makes the following salient point: As a component of the socialization process, food functions as a medium for conveying a wide array of elements pertaining to the environment and local culture. The act of consuming food is an integral component of the acquisition of ethical and moral values. It is also a medium through which personal and collective identities are imparted and assimilated. Furthermore, it serves as a conduit for the cultivation of relationships with others and the intrinsic connection to a specific territory. In essence, one's perception of the world is shaped, at least in part, by one's dietary choices (Mareira, 2020).

In this sense, a more profound understanding of the forms of transmission and construction of knowledge inherent to food cultures can serve as a valuable analytical framework for examining the place and its specificities and contingencies in a globalized world, as well as the intrinsic relationship between human presence and the environment. In the contemporary global food industry, characterized by intricate and interconnected production, distribution, and marketing processes, the global dimension is of paramount importance.

The advent of modern transportation and trade networks has led to an unprecedented exchange of food products and culinary traditions, facilitating access to a vast array of global cuisines at any time of the year and at a relatively low cost. Nonetheless, the corpus of knowledge pertaining to culinary arts, in conjunction with all other knowledge that is structured around food, constitutes a component of cultural constructions that are structured in reference to a particular relationship with the environment. This component thus constitutes a fundamental dimension of the constitution of the puzzle of local identity.

2.1 STATE OF THE ART

Food heritage, as a consumer good, is consumed in the strictest sense of the term; that is, it is ingested. Therefore, an analysis from the perspective of eating behaviors, the representations and values that modulate them, is necessary (Rivera, 2020).

Food heritage is defined as the aggregate of food practices, artifacts, and spaces associated with food, as well as representations and knowledge about food and cuisine. It signifies a profound connection with the geographical environment, on the one hand, and with the diverse societal sectors that are intricately linked with food, on the other hand (Sarmiento, 2023).

Food heritage is defined as a set of practices and knowledge that integrate the kitchen as a food system and are considered expressions of a heritage universe. The latter is defined as the collective internalization of cultural, social, historical, and geographical values that contribute to the development of gastronomic heritage. As Guevara and Aguagallo (2021) have demonstrated.

III. METHODS

3.1 POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The study population of the research is 30 owners of bus stops and restaurants in the cantonal capital of Penipe.

Table 1 Whereabouts and restaurants of the Penipe canton

Nº	Trade name	Service
1	Karlita Grill	Restaurant
2	Mami Lauri's stay	Restaurant
3	Penipeño Stove	Restaurant
4	Taste of Stone	Restaurant
5	Mirador del Río	Restaurant
6	Penipeño Corner	Restaurant
7	Picantería Doña Anita	Restaurant
8	Christ the King	Whereabouts
9	The corner of flavor	Restaurant
10	Orchids	Whereabouts
11	La Playa Chacaguayco	Restaurant
12	The Fold	Restaurant
13	Picantería Carmita	Restaurant
14	Don Rey	Restaurant
15	Whereabouts Mami Miche	Restaurant
16	The Grandparents' Stove	Restaurant
17	Maiteño Flavor	Restaurant
18	Auto Grill El Rancho	Restaurant
19	Palitagua	Restaurant
20	Canaveral	Restaurant
21	Sport Stop	Restaurant
22	Fishing deportiva Alexander	Restaurant
23	The taste of my land	Restaurant
24	Tortillas Rosita Elvira	Restaurant
25	Mama Judithcita	Restaurant
26	Juanita Restaurant	Restaurant
27	Doña Cuty	Restaurant
28	Pueleño Flavor	Restaurant
29	Mama Sara's Tortillas	Restaurant
30	Alejopamba	Restaurant

The instrument applied to the 30 owners of food and beverage establishments had a reliability result of 0.818, which on the Cronbach alpha scale qualifies it as Very Good.

Table 2. Croncach's Alpha Food Heritage

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alfa	N of elements

,818

12

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 3. Items and interpretations.

N°	ITEMS	INTERPRETATION
A	Gender	<p>According to the surveys applied to the owners of the restaurants and whereabouts of the cantonal capital of Penipe Province of Chimborazo, it has been identified that:</p> <p>76.67% of the respondents are female 23.33% of the respondents are male.</p> <p>From these results, it can be concluded that the highest percentage of respondents are female.</p>
B	Age	<p>According to the surveys applied to the owners of restaurants and bus stops in the cantonal capital of Penipe, province of Chimborazo, it has been identified that:</p> <p>63.33% of respondents belong to the age range of 41 to 50 years 6.67% belong to the age range of 31 to 40 years 30% of those surveyed belong to the age range that exceeds 51 years old.</p> <p>From these results it can be concluded that most of the respondents concentrate on the age segment between 41 and 50 years old.</p>
C	Level of Education	<p>According to the surveys applied to the owners of the restaurants and whereabouts of the cantonal capital of Penipe Province of Chimborazo, it has been identified that:</p> <p>36.67% of the respondents have a primary education level. 60% of the respondents have a secondary education level. 3.33% of those surveyed have a third-level level of education.</p> <p>From these results, it was possible to conclude that most of the respondents have a secondary education level.</p>
D	Knowledge and technique	<p>According to the surveys applied to the owners of the restaurants and whereabouts of the cantonal capital of Penipe Province of Chimborazo, it has been identified that:</p> <p>76.67% of those surveyed consider that it is important to incorporate the knowledge and techniques of ancestral knowledge in the canton 23.33% of those surveyed do not consider it important to incorporate the knowledge and techniques of ancestral knowledge in the Penipe canton.</p> <p>From these results, it was concluded that the majority of respondents agree to incorporate the knowledge and techniques of ancestral knowledge in the cantonal capital of Penipe, Province of Chimborazo.</p>
E	Culinary art	<p>According to the surveys applied to the owners of the restaurants and whereabouts of the cantonal capital of Penipe Province of Chimborazo, it has been identified that:</p> <p>80% of respondents have knowledge about the culinary art. 20% of those surveyed have no knowledge about the culinary art in the cantonal capital of Penipe, Province of Chimborazo.</p>
F	Agriculture	<p>According to the surveys applied to the owners of the restaurants and whereabouts of the cantonal capital of Penipe Province of Chimborazo, it has been identified that:</p> <p>70% of those surveyed know how agriculture is managed in the canton. 30% of owners have no knowledge about management of agriculture in the cantonal capital of Penipe, Province of Chimborazo</p>
G	Ancestral Knowledge	<p>According to the surveys applied to the owners of the restaurants and whereabouts of the cantonal capital of Penipe Province of Chimborazo, it has been identified that</p>

		90% of those surveyed consider it important to revalue ancestral knowledge 10% of those surveyed consider that it is not important to revalue ancestral knowledge.
H	Food Preservation	According to the surveys applied to the owners of the restaurants and whereabouts of the cantonal capital of Penipe Province of Chimborazo, it has been identified that 86.67% of the owners consider it important to use ancestral recipes for the preparation of typical food 13.33% of the owners consider that it is not It is important to use ancestral recipes for the preparation of the typical food of the cantonal capital of Penipe.
I	Raw material	According to surveys applied to the owners of the restaurants and whereabouts of the cantonal capital of Penipe Province of Chimborazo, it has been identified that 90% of the owners consider it important to use an adequate raw material for the preparation of food in their whereabouts or restaurant. 10% of the owners consider that it is not important to use an adequate raw material for the preparation of food in their whereabouts or restaurant.
J	Culinary Techniques	According to the surveys applied to the owners of the restaurants and whereabouts of the cantonal capital of Penipe Province of Chimborazo, it has been identified that 86.67% of the owners consider it important to know about the culinary techniques that should be used for the preparation of typical food. 13.33% of the owners consider that it is not important to know about the culinary techniques that should be used for the preparation of typical food.
K	Gastronomic roots	According to the surveys applied to the owners of the restaurants and whereabouts of the cantonal capital of Penipe Province of Chimborazo, it has been identified that 93.33% of the owners consider it important to preserve the gastronomic roots of the canton. 6.67% of the owners consider that it is not important to preserve the gastronomic roots that are part of the recipe for the preparation of the typical food of the cantonal capital of Penipe, Province of Chimborazo.
L	Beliefs	According to the surveys applied to the owners of the restaurants and whereabouts of the cantonal capital of Penipe Province of Chimborazo, it has been identified that 83.33% of the owners consider it important to preserve the beliefs of the canton. 16.67% of the owners consider that it is not important to preserve the beliefs held by the cantonal capital of Penipe, Province of Chimborazo
M	Traditions	According to the surveys applied to the owners of the restaurants and whereabouts of the cantonal capital of Penipe Province of Chimborazo, it has been identified that 86.67% of the owners consider it important to know about the traditions that the canton has 13.33% of the owners consider that it is not important to know about the traditions of the Penipe canton, Province of Chimborazo
N	Values	According to the surveys applied to the owners of the restaurants and whereabouts of the cantonal capital of Penipe Province of Chimborazo, it has been identified that 96.67% of the owners consider it important to preserve the values within the cultural identity of the canton 3.33% of the owners consider that it is not important to preserve the values within the cultural identity of the cantonal capital of Penipe, Province of Chimborazo.
O	Feeling of Belonging	According to the surveys applied to the owners of the restaurants and whereabouts of the cantonal capital of Penipe

Province of Chimborazo, it has been identified that.
93.33% of the owners consider it important to protect and enhance the sense of belonging of the indigenous peoples and nationalities of the canton.
6.67% of the owners consider that it is not important to protect and value the feeling of belonging of the indigenous peoples and nationalities of the Penipe canton, Province of Chimborazo

According to the data collected, the food heritage of Penipe is essential to safeguard the local culture and traditions of the community, constituting an invaluable resource to promote sustainable tourism. Penipe stands out as an ideal attraction for those looking for authentic and environmentally friendly gastronomic experiences, thanks to the appreciation for ancestral knowledge, the use of local ingredients and the preservation of traditional culinary techniques. Both the cultural identity and the tourist development of this town depend closely on its culinary legacy; Integrating this heritage into the tourist offer will enrich the visit of tourists and strengthen the sense of belonging and pride within the community.

4.1 HYPOTHESIS TEST ACCORDING TO DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

A comprehensive review of the extant literature on the subject, as well as a thorough investigation of the pertinent data gathered from the proprietors of eateries and bus stops in the canton of Penipe, Province of Chimborazo, has led to the formulation of a general hypothesis that has subsequently been validated. This hypothesis posits that "The characteristics of the Food Heritage affect the development of tourist activity in the cantonal capital of Penipe, Province of Chimborazo." This hypothesis is predicated on the premise that the enhancement of the local community's and visitors' knowledge and appreciation of food heritage has the potential to significantly augment tourism in the region. The following question supports this hypothesis: The present study seeks to examine the influence of food heritage in the promotion of tourism in the cantonal capital of Penipe, Province of Chimborazo. This inquiry delves into the intricate relationship between food heritage and tourism development, a central tenet of the hypothesis.

The majority of respondents recognize the importance of food heritage in their community, suggesting an appreciation and respect for ancestral culinary knowledge and practices. This recognition is a positive indicator that Penipe's food heritage possesses the potential to serve as a significant tourist attraction, attracting visitors from around the globe. The willingness of restaurant and establishment owners, as well as the community at large, to value and promote their cuisine as a distinctive and attractive feature demonstrates the relationship between knowledge of food heritage and tourism development. Moreover, the research suggests that a significant proportion of respondents place considerable value on ancestral knowledge and acknowledge its pivotal role in fortifying the cultural and culinary identity of Penipe.

The specific hypothesis that "Ancestral knowledge affects the knowledge of the Food Heritage of the cantonal capital of Penipe, Province of Chimborazo" is approved and supported with the following question: To what extent does ancestral knowledge influence the understanding of the culinary heritage in the cantonal capital of Penipe, located in the Province of Chimborazo? This inquiry explores the manner in which traditional knowledge influences the comprehension and conservation of culinary heritage, thereby establishing a direct correlation between ancestral knowledge and heritage knowledge.

The continuous transmission of this knowledge between generations is instrumental in preserving the food heritage, thereby allowing its evolution and adaptation to the current context. The results of the study indicate that respondents are committed to preserving local culinary traditions, which they consider fundamental to the authenticity of the dining experience in Penipe.

The specific hypothesis that "Culinary practices influence the understanding of the food heritage of the cantonal capital of Penipe, Province of Chimborazo" is approved and supported by the following research question: "How do culinary practices influence the understanding of the food heritage in the cantonal capital of Penipe, Province of Chimborazo?" The focal point of this inquiry lies in the manner in which culinary techniques and methodologies influence the comprehension and conservation of culinary traditions, thereby underscoring the interplay between praxis and erudition.

The emphasis on preserving the preparation techniques, native ingredients, and recipes underscores the direct connection to and knowledge of the food legacy. This, in turn, serves to strengthen the community identity and the sense of belonging. This association not only enhances the tourist experience but also substantiates the specific hypothesis that "Cultural identity influences the awareness of the culinary heritage of the cantonal capital of Penipe, Province of Chimborazo." The following question supports this hypothesis: The present study seeks to examine the impact of cultural identity on the knowledge of the food heritage of the cantonal capital of Penipe, Province of Chimborazo. The present question explores the

relationship between cultural identity and knowledge of food heritage, investigating how cultural identity influences the perception and appreciation of food heritage.

The study indicates that the Penipe community exhibits a pronounced sense of cultural rootedness, particularly evident in its commitment to preserving its traditions, values, and beliefs through its culinary practices. Cultural identity exerts a substantial influence on the local culinary legacy, directly impacting how gastronomy is perceived and valued as a tourist attraction.

A substantial body of research has demonstrated that recognizing and promoting cultural identity is imperative to comprehending and safeguarding the culinary heritage of a given region. This cultural identity, in turn, exerts a significant influence on the development of tourism in a manner that is both pertinent and sustainable.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The culinary heritage of the cantonal capital of Penipe is of particular significance. The ancestral culinary knowledge possessed by the proprietors of the restaurants and establishments in the canton has been documented and identified. It is noteworthy that these characteristics influence tourism development. They not only represent the culture and identity of Penipe but also foster a sense of belonging among its inhabitants, thereby reinforcing, valuing, and preserving ancestral customs and traditions as a valuable cultural heritage transmitted through generations.

The knowledge of ancestral origin held by proprietors of restaurants, in conjunction with the geographical distribution of the Penipe canton, is of paramount importance. This knowledge plays a foundational role in the preservation and dissemination of local culinary traditions. It impacts the understanding of food heritage, encompassing the techniques, procedures, and utilization of traditional native ingredients from the region. These ingredients are of significant importance in maintaining and perpetuating culinary traditions, thereby reinforcing and valorizing local identities.

The culinary practices that influence the understanding of food heritage have been delineated. The amalgamation of conventional preparation techniques and the judicious utilization of local ingredients constitutes a foundational element in the provision of distinctive culinary experiences. These experiences reflect the identity and cultural richness of the canton and demonstrate to tourists that the necessary knowledge is in place to ensure the safety and health of the food served.

The influence of cultural identity on the knowledge of food heritage was explained. The traditions, values, beliefs, and feelings of belonging that the Penipe canton has are key cultural elements for its preservation. A strong connection between culture and gastronomy is maintained, creating a strong feeling of belonging and community. This ensures a unique and improved experience when enjoying its gastronomy.

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