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Popayan

UNESCO City of Gastronomy

Fast facts

- Gastronomic tradition spanning several centuries: soups and dough mixing, salads and seasoning, omelets and corn pancakes and also drinks like the chicha (fermented corn drink). Traditional foods are still used on a daily basis (potatoes, corn, rice, beef, porc and chicken)
- This culture has been transmitted through oral tradition during many generations and it is only recently that books on this heritage have been published (e.g. "platos de las abuelas" grandmother's dishes).
- Traditional culinary practices are protected and encouraged in Popayan. Certain traditional cooking methods such as desamargados (fruits and zest marinade) have survived the industrialization of cooking processes.
- There is a strong respect for traditional cuisine in Popayan especially during Holy Week and Christmas when certain foods are prepared exclusively for these holidays (e.g. Sopas de ayuno, sopa de vigilia, plato de noche Buena).

Major assets in gastronomy

Popayan has a favorable climate for farming which led to the birth of its traditional cooking (vegetables, corn, potatoes, etc.). Some European influences have since been integrated in the recipes (mint, onions, broccolis, etc.)

Institutions for gastronomy

- Libraries, archives, associations, research centres
- Cooking school (SENA) dedicated to the education of cooking techniques and service industries
- The Gastronomic Corporation of Popayan responsible for the organization of the national gastronomy congress, it also offers training in events management and table services

Establishment of gastronomy in Popayan

- In 2003 took place the first national gastronomy congress in which chefs, gastronomy professionals, journalists, historians, anthropologists, biologists and ecologists have participated. This is an international event gathering delegations from neighboring countries (Peru, Venezuela, Mexico, Argentina) and it was the first academic event dedicated to gastronomy in Colombia
- High quality restaurants offering international cuisines
- Popular restaurants specialized in the making and selling of traditional dishes. The traditional preparation of those dishes has not been changed since the past century
- The Puerta Cerrada (closed door) consists in offering traditional food in family dining rooms in a context other than restaurants
- Traditional food markets: Popayan has four spaces for markets offering a variety of food. La Galeria del Barrio Bolivar, la Galeria de La Esmeralda, la Galeria de La Trece and La Galeria de Las Palmas

Conferences and networks

During the international gastronomic congress celebrated in the City of Puebla in 2003, was created the Red Latinoamericana de Ciudades Gastronomicas (the



gastronomic cities network of Latin-America) which integrated Puebla, Popayan and Lima. This international collaboration aims at expanding the participant's gastronomic culture and opens up new forms of cooperation in food and tourism industries in the Latin-American region.

Education and training centres

The University of Cauca, one of the oldest ones in America, partnered with the gastronomic corporation of Popayan by establishing an anthropological research course on gastronomic heritage from Popayan and Cauca vicinities. Popayan wants to sensitize anthropologists to the various aspects suggested by Cauca cuisine.

Economic impact

- Traditional food industry: as a university city, one of the most common sources of income for modest families in Popayan is food production. The domestic elaboration of traditional dishes for students studying in the city has been a family tradition since 150 years.
- Business development in the field of gastronomy (catering, furniture making, crafts, cookbook publishing)
- The gastronomic corporation of Popayan organizes workshops in order to train people from popular backgrounds in gastronomy-related fields and table service. These workshops are integral to local policies to reduce unemployment and enhance the skills of people working in local restaurants.
- The gastronomic cities network of Latin-America is interested in gastronomy's economic impact as it represents a source of employment and a privileged component of tourism development. The city thereby offers the required infrastructure for alternative travel experiences such as gastronomic tourism. Popayan has become the first gastronomic destination in south-west Colombia.

