



ACADEMIA
EXTREMEÑA DE
GASTRONOMÍA

GASTRONOMY ACADEMY
OF EXTREMADURA

el **ATRIL**

THE AEXG MAGAZINE

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SIGNED BY

Fernando Valbuena

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Food
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and Industry

Thanks to the work promoted by Spain
within the framework of Ibero-America...



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Almendralejo, Badajoz

A tasting recently took place on the
occasion of the centenary of the



CHAIRS
OF THE
ACADEMY

Each new month
you will meet
the personalities
that give name to
our Chairs





THE ACADEMY NEWS

by Francisco Saúco



The Academy, on low heat

Summer is a time when everything goes at a different pace.

These are the days of holidays, of half-empty cities, of companies that slow down (or even close); although it is also the time when the peak of the tourist sector... and therefore of the gastronomic business...

We find ourselves in different destinations from our own, discovering other ways of life, other cultures, other cuisines, from which we feed ourselves in a leisurely way, with the fortunate absence of stress and the usual rhythms. Even the weather forces us to slow down our automated habits during the year, it gives us a break from the frenetic pace of everyday life; and this relaxation helps us to enjoy ourselves, but also to reflect, to analyse the 2023-2024 season we have experienced and to embark on the next one with great enthusiasm, new challenges on the table and a renewed spirit.

At the **Academy** we find ourselves in that stand-by, that chup-chup of the sofrito that is about to come up; in fact, we are about to start the chicha.

Next September, we will start a new season with our **Permanent Gastronomy Seminar**, our new **Academy tastings**, we will continue with our **gastronomic-tourist visits** and we will be present at all the **gastronomic events** that require our presence and support. We will give you a good account of all this.

In the meantime, we leave you with the summer experiences of our collaborators as an appetizer of the promising 2024-25 that is almost upon us.

Happy holidays to all of you.

Francisco Saúco

President of the Academia Extremeña de Gastronomía



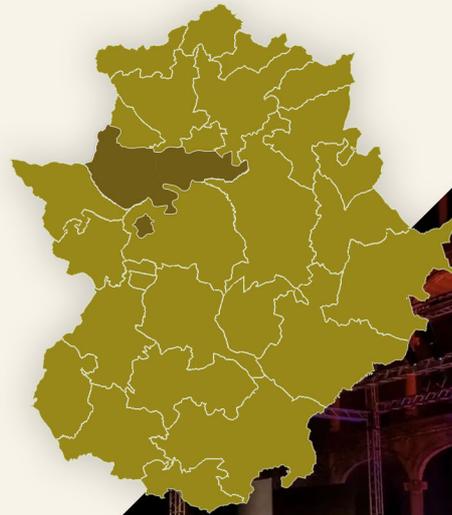


The tench region

I have the honour of having been one of the founders of the **Fiesta de la Tenca (Tench Festival)**, the popular gastronomic festival that gives value to the **bordering region of the Alcántara area**.

It all started in this village during its famous theatre festival, when four of us noticed that a town of less than 1,500 inhabitants doubled its population every night that there was theatre. I suggested, over a beer, that something had to be invented so that tourists from Extremadura and outside the region would stay until the end of the month. That's why it was decided to do an activity on the **last Saturday of August**. And it had to be done with something that identified the region. That is how it came about that **this fish**, which **breeds in the local ponds**, became a **gastronomic hallmark**, at the same time as the Regional Government of Extremadura declared it the First Gastronomic Tourist Festival.

The Tench Festival **was inaugurated in 1989** in **Navas del Madroño**, with the **Golden Tench** being presented to the then President of the Regional Government, **Juan Carlos Rodríguez Ibarra**. And this year, **2024**, the **36th edition**, will be held again in Navas.



Alcántara
Theatre Festival



Plaza de la Constitución
(Constitution Square)
in Navas del Madroño

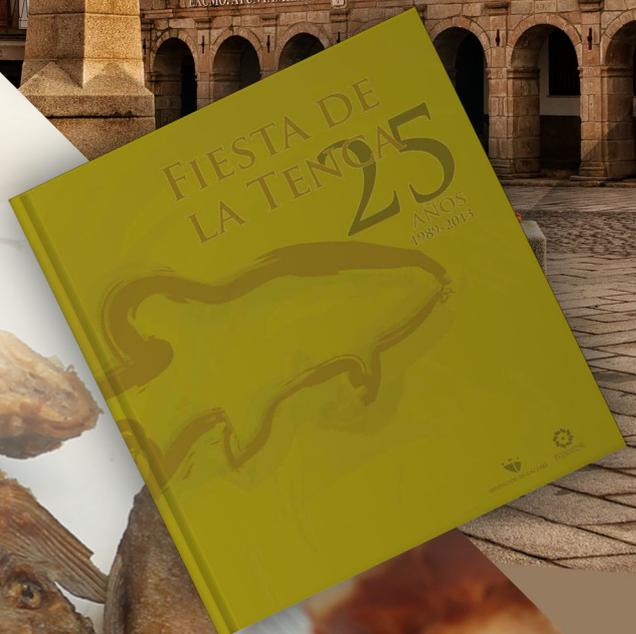


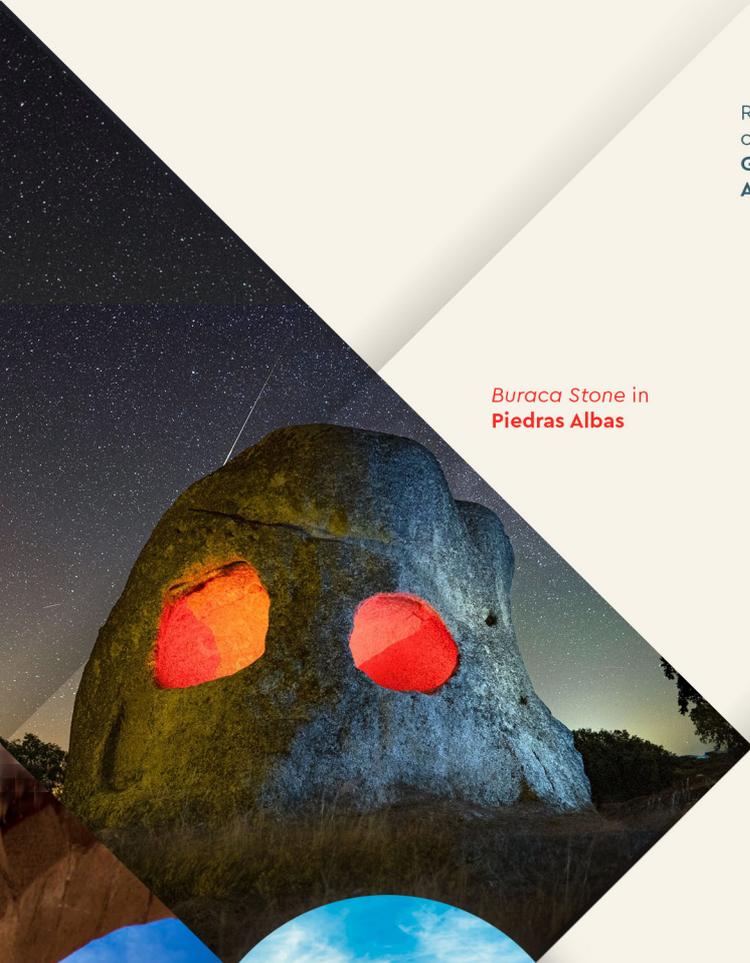
2024 NAVAS DEL MADROÑO
LA TENCA

Fiesta declarada de Interés Turístico Gastronómico de Extremadura
Festa declarada de Interesse Turístico Gastronómico de Extremadura

31 de agosto

Book 25th Anniversary of the Tench Festival.
Francisco Rivero





Buraca Stone in Piedras Albas

Renaissance organ in Garrovillas de Alconétar



Roman Bridge in Alcántara



Castle of Monroy, interior



Festival of San Blas in Villa del Rey

The second was in **Brozas**, where the Golden Tench was awarded to the popular television journalist **Isabel Gemio**; and so, year after year, they were held in each and every one of the villages in the region, and a small **book of tench recipes** was also published, based on the dishes presented by professionals from restaurants in the area and also by housewives.

Over time, therefore, these unique gastronomic and popular festivals have developed, with the Golden Tench being awarded to all kinds of personalities. I gave an account of this in a **book** on the occasion of the **25th anniversary**, the year it was held in **Malpartida de Cáceres**.

And if a traveller wants to see the extensive area from a tourist point of view, they should not miss the **Alcántara Bridge**, the Tartessian treasure of **Aliseda**, the paintings of Luis de Morales in **Arroyo de la Luz**; the best parish church in Cáceres, in **Brozas**, which they call the cathedral; tasting the **Torta del Casar**, listening to the oldest Renaissance organ in Europe in **Garrovillas de Alconétar**; appreciating the Muslim marabout of San Berto in **Hinojal**; see the **Vostell Museum** in **Malpartida de Cáceres**; appreciate the mythical holm oak tree, some of them more than 500 years old, in **Mata de Alcántara**; visit the interesting castle of **Monroy**; see the permanent exhibition of the **Travelling Schools** promoted in **Navas** by **María Zambrano** from Malaga; be present next to the enigmatic **Buraca stone** of **Piedras Albas**; visit the prehistoric settlement of 'El Castillejo' in **Santiago del Campo**, make a mysterious visit to the hermitage of 'Los Ángeles Malos' (The Evil Angels) in **Talaván** or discover the festival of San Blas in **Villa del Rey**.

Francisco Rivero

Academician of the **AEXG**
PhD in Tourism
Chronicler of Las Brozas and Hinojal



MIXED, NOT STIRRED

by Alfonso Ramos

*1/2 In Spanish, the idiom "¡Fresco/a como una lechuga" (fresh as a lettuce) means the same as "Fresh as a daisy" in English. Similarly, "¡Dar calabazas!" (Give someone pumpkins) means "Say no" to a relationship or "Get ditched".

And yet you still gave me pumpkins

You see me always fresh as a lettuce



Gastronomic expressions and eponyms (part III)

Gastronomic colloquial expressions

As we commented in the first part of this article (ATRIL 33), cuisine is full of commonly used meanings that designate food, dishes or culinary techniques with names of people or places: these are the **eponyms**, of which we have already spoken at length; in conclusion, we could say that they are the connection of cuisine with the human being and the environment that surrounds him or her. And to close the circle, let us now move on to analyse the countless **culinary expressions** that we use on a daily basis; popular sayings involving food, which are nothing more than a faithful reflection of our deep connection with gastronomy and the love we feel for it.

So without further ado, **'let's dive into the flour'** ('let's get down to the nitty-gritty'):

- > **With you, bread and onions:** With you to the end of the world. It means I don't care if you don't have a penny, I'll stay with you until the end of my days... my sweetie.
- > **To make a chicken:** don't make a scene. When they make a fuss over you out of the blue.
- > **One boil to go:** when someone is a bit of a wimp, lacking in initiative and preparation. In addition to ignoring something, it doesn't quite sink in. It is also used to talk about someone you don't quite see as sane.
- > **To have a mental pie:** a mental blockage, to be absent-minded, confused, confused, with one's ideas a bit messed up.
- > **To be involved in garlic:** to be part of or involved in something, whether good or bad.
- > **Go fry some asparagus:** Go to hell, leave me alone. Tell him. You're fed up with him. 'Go fry some asparagus, man'.
- > **To care about a pepper, cumin, cucumber or radish:** = I don't give a damn about anything. But what have these poor foods done to deserve this?
- > **To look like a cheese:** handsome, attractive, tasty.
- > **To be to dip bread in:** attractive; for those who don't like cheese (it's their loss).
- > **To be as good as bread:** Cheese 1 - Bread 2 (attractive too).





> **To give yourself a 'pisto' (ratatouille):** attributing too much credit to oneself. You're a bit of a fantasist, you invent and embellish reality and you can see your duster. Little phantom.

> **Longer than a day without bread:** either in altitude or in time, because sometimes everything takes forever.

> **It's eaten bread:** it's a piece of cake, it's easy and doesn't cost any effort.

> **Walking on eggs:** walking slowly, very very slowly.

> **With a pair (of eggs):** dare to be brave, you can do it. Also 'echarle un parle'.

> **Oysters! (Jeez!):** you've blown my mind (for better or for worse). By the way, they're delicious..

> **Don't even do the egg:** don't lift a finger. What is clearly said, don't do nothing at all.

> **To give you morcillas -blood sausages- (Go jump in a lake!):** nothing to do with that tasty bar ration, quite the opposite: they are despising you.

> **I shit in milk (I'll be damned):** a mild way of saying jod..., but less finicky than 'caracoles' or 'repámpanos'.

> **Eating the coconut (eating your brains out):** that you're overthinking things. Relax and let yourself go. Be water my friend.

> **Garlic and water:** just suck it up and put up with it. That's all.

> **Carry a good torrija or a good hake with you:** that you've got drunk, just like that. You'll see how happy you'll be tomorrow.

> **Be like a banana:** to be out of shape, generally because of the extreme heat (in Extremadura you don't get out of shape until the end of September). You don't feel like doing anything.

> **Estar empanao (To be breaded):** to be stunned, stupefied or, quite simply, a booby. That you don't know anything. Also 'ir a por uvas'.

> **Go for grapes:** first cousin of 'empanao'.

> **To be vinegary:** to be sour, bitter, to be eternally negative. No one can stand you. Keep your distance from individuals of this nature.

> **Eating a brown:** when you have to deal with an uncomfortable situation, to put it mildly.

> **No bread for so much sausage:** that there is not enough money for so many mugs. And we're not looking at anyone, but chorizo leaves a smell..

> **For lack of bread, a piece of cake:** dedicated to those who are able to accept with dignity less than they expected. His cousin, when there is no loin, everything like...

> **Turning around the omelette:** turning the tables; when life takes a 180° turn. Welcome if it's for the better, damned if it's for the worse.

> **It's not the oven for buns:** Would you ask your parents for a motorbike after a whole semester? That's just the way it is. Better to wait until things come down.

> **Turn like a tomato:** red with embarrassment, from laughing or from having spent hours in the sun. Redder than a tomato.

> **You don't have blood, you have horchata** (spanish drink made with tiger nuts): rushing doesn't suit you. Long live calm and quietness...

> **Le's call the bread, bread an the wine, wine:** let's call a spade a spade. Prose for novels.

> **Getting into a aubergine field:** when you've got yourself into a real mess. A situation that is difficult to get out of, like thorny aubergine plants.

> **They look like an egg and a chestnut:** In other words, I don't know where you find the resemblance between them.

> **Cheating you with cheese:** they get in your way, they score a goal or they get in your face.

> **Cutting the cod:** he is the master, the boss, the lord and master. He decides and the rest obey.

> **He is not clean wheat:** be careful, he is not as good as he seems. Just a façade.

> **To bring something to the boil:** to criticise, it's as simple as that. And it must be that we're into the subject, judging by the number of variants: 'to fall off a donkey', 'green', 'back and forth', 'like a rag'...

> **To be the milk:** the best thing they can say to us. The best of the best, a compliment. Although, if your mother shouts it at you with a bad face, get ready.

> **To be like a noodle:** beyond thinness. Skinny, very skinny.

> **With your hands in the cookie jar:** you've been caught in the middle of something. And not necessarily cooking.

> **You've been caught with the ice cream cart:** more of the same. Caught red-handed.

> **Eating your toast:** they're cheating on you.

> **Fresh as a lettuce:** when you're shameless, you're either rested. Fresh as a daisy.

> **White and in bottle:** plain and simple, as clear as daylight, as a matter of course. Should we now say white and in brick?

> **Getting like a soup:** you go out on a radiant day and suddenly a cloud picks you out. Get soaked to the skin.

> **He who itches, eats garlic:** If you're angry at what others say, it's probably because there's some truth in it, isn't there?

> **Things clear and the chocolate thick:** leave no room for doubt, speak clearly.

> **Not understanding a potato:** not understanding anything. But not a word.

> **Giving pumpkins:** it's better to give it than to receive it. Unrequited love.

> **Don't you want broth? So have two cups:** if you don't like something you don't like it, you'll get it twice as much. The height of bad luck. appears in... what a nightmare!

> **Pulling the chestnuts out of the fire:** helping someone else to undo a mess, knowing that you could be harmed by it. Only the brave and altruistic.





> **To live off the poor soup:** this applies to the typical parasite who lives off the backs of others. Stay away from him, if possible.

> **To be even in the soup:** to be everywhere, omnipresent. Corner you turn, corner he appears in... what a nightmare!

> **To ask for pears from the elm tree:** the impossible. Don't ask for it, because it won't happen.

> **You're going to miss the rice:** what mothers and grandmothers tell their daughters as they near the end of their childbearing years. You're going to grow out of it. No comments.

> **Don't eat a donut or tailpiece:** you don't get laid.

> **When you are a father, you'll eat two eggs:** from when families barely had enough to eat, but had a hen whose eggs were reserved for the head of the family.

> **Not all the bush is oregano:** that not everything in life is simple; although oregano grows in the mountains with astonishing ease.

> **Losing your mojo:** you lost your magic, baby.

> **Half an orange (your):** the love of your life, even if you don't show it every day. Better half.

> **Lentils, if you want them, eat them and if you don't, leave them:** that's what you get, you'll see.

> **Be a flour of another sack:** is a different matter; then we are talking about something else.

> **Being stronger than vinegar:** you're going to blow your shirt off!

> **To be a hake or a bream:** you're a fool, straight away.

> **Trembling like a pudding:** when you're facing such an important moment, your body tells you so. Otherwise, it wouldn't be so important.

> **Like water for chocolate:** Mexican expression meaning to be at boiling point; your blood is boiling.

> **If you want to grow old, keep oil in your skin:** if you want to live a long life, be moderate in everything.

> **To put the icing on the cake:** To finish something off really well.

If you want rice, Catalina: hybrid or Arabism?

'If you want rice, Catalina': in other words, that they ignore us!

This could be a special case: a **hybrid** which, as well as being a colloquial expression, has its own eponym. However, it is still not clear, as there are many theories...

In fact, although there were already **different opinions** as to whether this **Catalina** was the wife of a converted Jew living in **León**, or perhaps Catalina de **Médici** herself, the lexicographer, Arabist and **member of the RAE**, **Federico Corriente Córdoba**, added a new hypothesis to the previous ones.

In his **acceptance speech as a full member of the RAE**, Don Federico mentioned some **Arabic expressions** which passed into the middle register of Castilian in the form of sayings,



Juan II de Castilla



*1who means the same as 'after a while, crocodile!'



proverbs and locutions (despite being today unintelligible or absurd from the semantic point of view) due to their phonetic, morphological, syntactic or simply lexical structure.

Corriente's hypothesis is that the phrase in question is a transcription into Spanish of the Moorish expression "tirid 'ala rrús, aqtá' lína", which literally means "do you love the groom? Make it clear to us!", a ritual question asked of women during the celebration of their second marriage in al-Andalus. It is also said that this was a set phrase used by the Andalusians to allude to something that was not easy to answer.

As for the stories about the possible existence of Catherine, this is the one we have found the most sympathetic:

The phrase seems to have its origin in a lady called Catalina who lived in the times of John II of Castile, around the 15th century, the wife of a converted Jew living in León who was very fond of rice foods, a cereal she spoke wonders about in terms of its salutary and prophylactic properties (according to her, there was no ailment or illness for which rice did not have some substantial therapeutic advantage). Years went by until Catalina became seriously ill. Family and friends, aware of her faith in rice, came to her bedside to offer her the remedy that she herself had praised for so long...

The relatives kept saying to her, 'Do you want rice, Catalina?' but the good woman, in the depths of death, no longer had the strength to respond to the offer.

Perhaps thinking that her illness had affected her hearing, they shouted in chorus: 'Do you want rice, Catalina!'

The dying woman kept silent until it was time for her to breathe her last breath, so that the threatening question became part of the popular lore as a symbol or synonym for someone who obstinately ignores that for which his or her agreement is required.

And to conclude this third part, closing our vast article on eponyms and gastronomic expressions, what better way than to make use of one of them:

And with this and a sponge cake, see you tomorrow at eight o'clock!*

Alfonso Ramos Retamar

Friend of the Academia Extremeña de Gastronomía



Eu sou uma (I'm a) 
COXINHA!

'Coxinha' mais linda

Blessed **holidays**, longed-for disconnection and a much-needed reset of the mind.

And it is at this time of year, in an unknown land, with time and a host of plans on the table, when your body asks you to get going for whatever comes your way. And after a morning's expedition to indulge the senses, that first glass of beer or wine... oh, it gives me so much!

When I travel to **Portugal**, mostly to the central coastal area, one of the things that constantly comes to mind is the food: delicious, plentiful and very traditional.

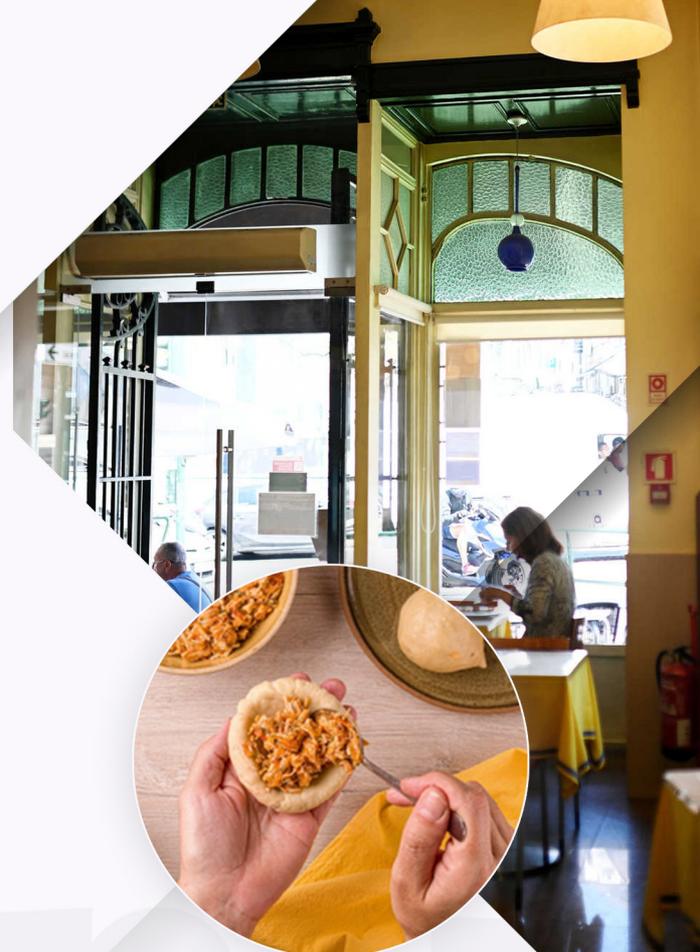
In our beloved sister country, there is a unique synergy between the contemporaneity of its British influence and its love for the essence, for its **signs of patriotic identity**, for defending its customs... and for those **sweet and savoury** snacks that are so 'super', as a great Lusitanian friend of mine says.

Pastéis de nata, **bolos de arroz**, **bolinhas** and so many other delicacies liven up breakfast or a mid-afternoon coffee.

But there are also **petiscos**, the lesser-known Portuguese relatives of tapas. Whether they are small versions of larger dishes or actually a small bite, they are all spectacular.

So that's where we are, with a '**cerveja**' (beer) **in hand** and choosing the petisco. Because in Extremadura it is 'free', but in Portugal it is ordered and paid for separately (its price is derisory).

And then comes into play the delicious 'coxinha' that I love so much; **the perfect accompaniment** to a '**cerveja** or **um vinho**' (beer or glass of wine).





Coxinha de 'frango' (chicken in Portuguese) is a popular appetizer in **Brazil and Portugal**, reminiscent of Sicilian arancini. The term 'coxinha', which in Portuguese means 'little (chicken) thigh', gives us clues about the shape of this appetizer. Its history is really peculiar and tender: according to the writer **Nadir Cavasin** in her book '**Histórias e Receitas**', **Count D'Eu** and **Princess Isabel** had a **son with disabilities**, which forced the little boy to live in seclusion. However, the boy delighted in great delicacies and his favourite dish was chicken thighs. One day, **the chef could not find any chicken thighs** to prepare for the boy, so he boiled the chicken, shredded it and wrapped it in flour dough and shaped it into a chicken thigh. To preserve the shape, she breaded and fried it. The little boy, Princess Isabel and Empress Teresa Cristina **were delighted** with the new way of preparing chicken thighs, so the Empress asked the cook for the recipe, turning coxinhas into a dish for the nobility that has become one of Brazil's standard-bearers.

It's **simple**: margarine, flour, chicken, garlic, onion, parsley, spices and little else. It has the texture of a croquette and the appearance, as we have already mentioned, of a chicken thigh.

No matter where you look in Portugal, you will come across a coxinha. Whether in a bakery, bar, restaurant, street stall or small stand in a shopping centre. It will be waiting for you. To quote the great João Gilberto, '**Coisa mais bonita é você, assim, justinho você** (The most beautiful thing is you, just like that)'. Or rather, **Coxinha**. Because as the song says, there are things that don't have to be otherwise... because they are already perfect.

Gostosa Portugal!
Tasty Portugal!

AEXG Editor



WINE OF THE MONTH

by Marcelino Díaz

RED WINE

Gran Buche Tempranillo 2017

Orán Wineries

Almendralejo, Badajoz

The Centenary wine tasting

A tasting recently took place on the occasion of the centenary of the **Círculo Mercantil de Almendralejo** (Merchant Circle of Almendralejo) in which red wines from famous wine regions of the world shared a table with a wine from Extremadura.

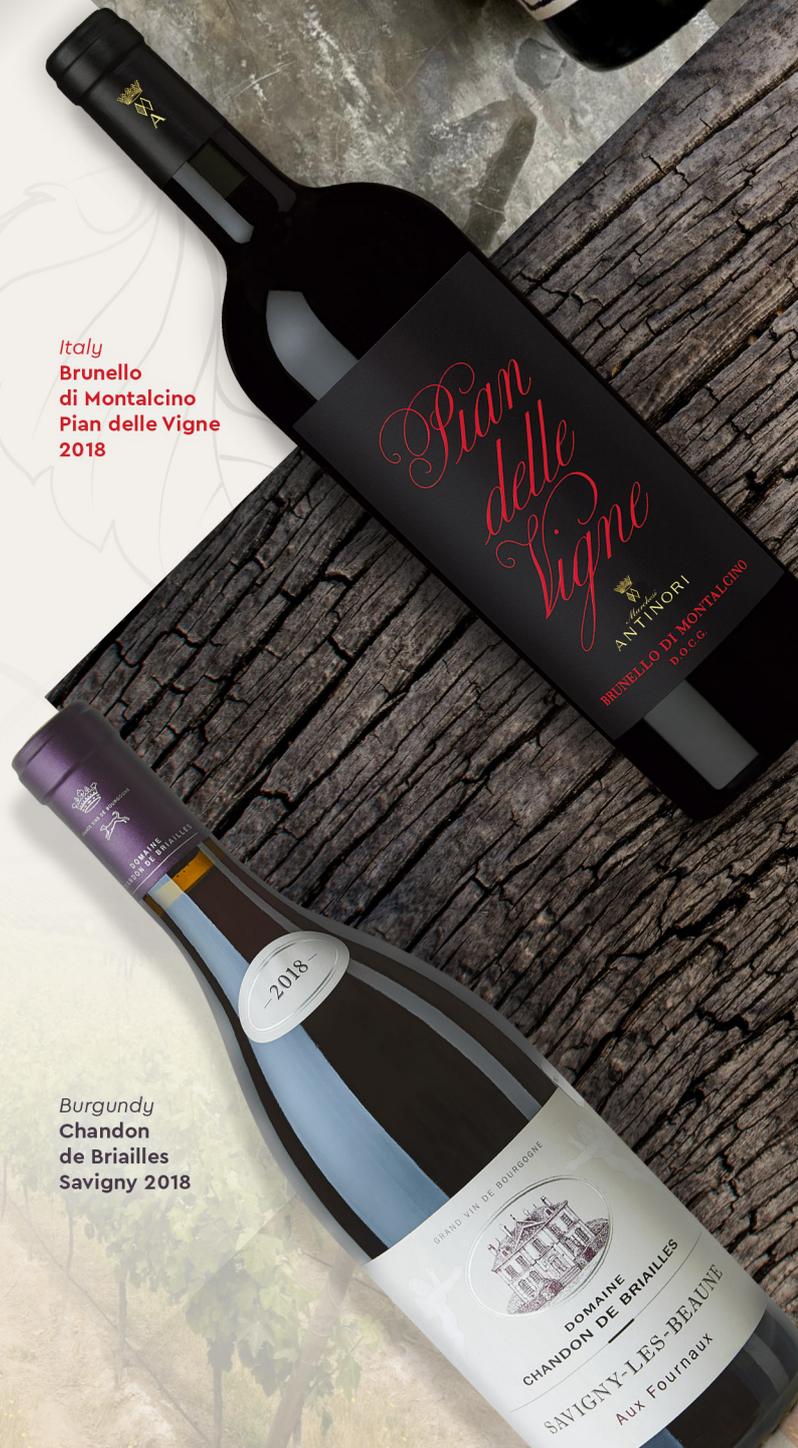
The first wine to be tasted was a **Luddite Shiraz 2019** from **South Africa**, €67 (\$73.9) a bottle. Well covered in colour, with an intense nose and a full, fleshy body.

It was followed by one of **Italy's** most famous wines, a **Brunello di Montalcino, Pian delle Vigne 2018**, €57 (\$62.9) a bottle. It is less structured than the previous one, but more lively in the mouth due to its adequate acidity, which gives it a slightly ample aftertaste.

Third was a **Burgundy, Chandon de Briailles Savigny 2018**, €95 (\$104.8) a bottle. Light in colour intensity and russet hue; complex and evolved nose, light bodied but intense in flavour due to its good acidity and ample aftertaste.



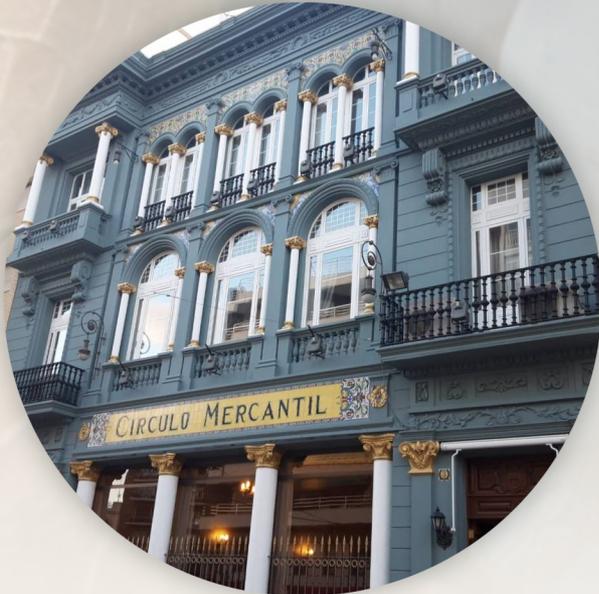
South Africa
Luddite
Shiraz 2019



Italy
Brunello
di Montalcino
Pian delle Vigne
2018



Burgundy
Chandon
de Briailles
Savigny 2018



The three wines were contrasted with an excellent red wine from Almendralejo by **Orán Wineries**, **Gran Buche 2017**, priced at €28 (\$30.9) a bottle.

The tasting made it very clear that beyond the fair fame acquired by the wines of certain wine regions of the world, in the end in a **blind tasting** of these characteristics, what is detected and appreciated are **differential nuances** that appeal to a greater or lesser extent depending on the taste and habits of consumers.

Tasting notes

Gran Buche Tempranillo 2017

-  **Appearance.** Intense colour and lively garnet hue.
-  **On the nose.** Intense and complex with hints of red fruit compote.
-  **In the mouth.** Full-bodied and well-structured with organoleptic characteristics more in line with the tastes of the 25 tasters present.

Marcelino Díaz
Academician of the AEXG



SIGNED BY
Fernando Valbuena

Festivities of
San Juan,
Badajoz



Summer diary

Summer seeks the seashore; there are other shores, but none like the **Cantabrian Sea**. Common sense recommends it (even more so at my age).

There was a time when summer was a thing of two: **Santander** and **San Sebastian**, the rest were trinkets. So, now that I still can, I pack my suitcase with the coloured fireworks of the night of **San Juan** and say goodbye to **Badajoz**, the Guadiana and the cicada. I flee early from the extreme heat... Behind me, with its breath on my neck, **the suffocation**.

I have breakfast in **La Roca**. I stop in **Guijuelo**. I'm fond of the local chorizo sandwich, I don't care if it's Guijuelo or **Mozárbez**. So, just between us, and if you don't tell anyone, although I prefer the marinades from Extremadura, tougher than those from Salamanca, not in terms of chorizo. I don't know for sure whether it's the marinade or the sausages, but there are no better **chorizos** than those from **Salamanca**. At least for me and for the memory that remains of what I have eaten. So I order a chorizo sausage. I finish and order another one... I don't know when I'll be back in Guijuelo.

Javier squares himself. I square myself. We say goodbye until we return, both in the spell of Spain, and I continue on my way north. **Salamanca**, warm in gold, **Valladolid**, brave lady, **Palencia**, already without blankets. And I go on. **Tierra de Campos**, wheat and doves. **Frómista** and its pigeons. **Alar del Rey** and its croquettes.



Playa del Silencio,
Castañera
(Asturias)



I stop in Alar, where the Canal de Castilla wanted to surrender to the mountains, where the plain dies. Croquettes, Valdavia beans and my first bonito with tomato of the season. It's as if the coastline of the bonito were overlooking the high peaks that look down on us and from there they overflow their catch (or so it seems to me as I spread the bread on the tomato).

Alar del Rey is a good place to meditate on this Spain of ours, less and less Spain, less and less ours. Alar del Rey is dying, it is enough to walk around its main square to know that its pulse is failing. Almost everything is on the run. Last year, when I passed through here, I spent some time chatting with a 'chamarilero' (a person who buys and sells second-hand goods and old junk).. Now I don't even know if the chamarilero is still in business, it's bad timing, there's no one to ask either. The streets, laid out square and square by the canal engineers, are deserted. Before me, the Canal de Castilla, a quixotic undertaking. Someone said that Spain wanted too much. Here too. The poplars of the pobeda present arms on the banks, the air flows, something tells me that I've already given the suffocation the slip. And I look up. Before me, fortified, the land of the Cantabrians... so unsociable, so theirs... And I feel sorry for what is dying... If it wasn't for the croquettes, what would become of Alar del Rey?

I go on, the sale of the road is behind me. Tunnels and viaducts in half... Aguilar de Campoo that smells of biscuits... Reinosa, which was and is no more... I go down to Los Corrales de Buelna; when I come out of a tunnel, as in the movies, it's already raining. Torrelavega. To the right, Solares. As if by magic, before me, the marshes of the Asón river assail me... And Laredo. The humidity of the sea (and of the house). The rough sound of the waves at night. I tuck myself in with the duvet...

Fernando Valbuena

Academician of the AEXG



HARMONIES

by Rafael Ansón



Food Production and Industry

Thanks to work promoted by Spain, and within the framework of Ibero-America, **gastronomy has evolved considerably**, leaving behind its status as an activity destined only for the pleasure of a privileged few, and becoming one of the most important manifestations of human beings in the 21st century. Because this New Gastronomy is the healthiest activity, it must be the most supportive and sustainable and, of course, it is still the most satisfying.

The **New Gastronomy** also encompasses the **four links in the food chain**. The first and most important is **production** (agriculture, fishing and livestock farming); then comes the **industry** that transforms the raw materials; followed by **distribution and trade**; and finally, the **hotel and catering industry**.

And what is happening in **Extremadura** is that it has always had an **extraordinary production** and, in recent years, it has improved, expanded and technified its **food industry**.

Extremadura's production and industry

UA clear example of this are the **wines and the ever-improving vineyards** of nationally and internationally renowned bodegas (such as Pago Los Balancines or Habla). Extremadura has been able to protect this evolution with the **Ribera del Guadiana Designation of Origin** and with the wines under the **brand name Vinos de la Tierra de Extremadura** (Wines of the Land of Extremadura).



Pago Los Balancines Winery



Habla de la Tierra, from Habla Wineries



PDO OLIVE OILS
in Extremadura



ACEITE
MONTERRUBIO
DENOMINACIÓN DE ORIGEN
PROTEGIDA



And of course **olive oil**, which also has its own Denomination of Origin. And, of course, everything derived from **pork** (sausages and ham), where this Autonomous Community plays a leading role. To be able to offer one of the great **pure acorn-fed Iberian hams**, the first thing you need is to have pigs and pastures where they can graze, walk and infiltrate the fat into their muscles. And Extremadura is home to the best Iberian pigs and the largest dehesa.

And if Iberian ham is (along with truffles, caviar and foie gras) one of the aces in the gastronomic pack, the region's emblematic cheese, **Torta del Casar**, is one of the most prestigious products of the dairy industry in our country.

Third and fourth links

On the other hand, Extremadura, like all the Autonomous Communities of Spain, participates in a vast and efficient **distribution and trade network**, which allows the best food and drink to enter and leave its borders, feeding the fourth link in the food chain: **the hotel and catering industry**.

The best local representative is **Atrio**, run by **Toño Pérez and José Polo**, with three Michelin stars and an icon for gourmets and tourists who often travel to Cáceres to enjoy an attractive, high-level gastronomic experience. In any case, there are many other **restaurants, eating houses, bars and taverns** that bring prestige to the region and are well worth a visit.

The Autonomous Gastronomy Academies

I would like to end by saying that, in all this great gastronomic evolution that we have been able to experience first-hand, the **Autonomous Gastronomy Academies**, such as the **Extremadura Academy**, have played a decisive role.

And this unique moment would be less well known if it did not have space and resonance in the **media**. For this reason, I would like to thank the magazine **el Atril** which, both in Spanish and in English, makes all destinations aware of what is happening in one of the most unique and attractive regions of Spain and Europe.

Rafael Ansón

Founding President and Honorary President of the **Real Academia de Gastronomía**





Francisco de Pizarro

By Antonio Cebrián Núñez

The Ransom Room

For two hours I sat on the large granite stone that reveals the 'Ransom Room' in Cajamarca, where Emperor Atahualpa was held prisoner for six months before being executed by Pizarro and his men. This room was the measure used by Pizarro to encrypt the Inca's ransom: a room measuring just 12x6x3 (meters), which, once filled with gold, would guarantee freedom for the great emperor of the Inca Civilisation. But despite the promises, in June 1533 he was executed by garrote after being baptised. If he had not accepted baptism, he would have been burned at the stake as a heretic. Terrible history, hard, bloody, savage... but inevitable to wrest power from one of the most powerful castes of all time in pre-Columbian America, in record time. A few years earlier, his countryman Hernán Cortés did the same to dominate the Aztec empire. Some historians suggest that Cortés was Pizarro's inspiration.

I have always been fascinated by the shrewdness and daring of Francisco Pizarro, this Extremaduran who, after descending the coast from Panama to Tumbes - a city in the north of Peru - (some 1,700 km), set off up the Andes towards the city of Cajamarca. He was accompanied by some 60 men on horseback and 110 on foot. The distance to cover between Tumbes and Cajamarca is some 700 km, an incredible distance if one looks at the route marked by the steep escarpments of one of the toughest mountain ranges on the planet. Nevertheless, the irrepresible impulse of this Trujillo native, fuelled by the information that reached Panama: 'a vast empire where its inhabitants wear clothes adorned with heavy gold ornaments' - El Dorado, Pizarro thought - and which was confirmed by some natives when he landed in the north of Peru, made him take courage and set out on the arduous journey to Cajamarca, to undertake one of the most daring ventures of the conquest of America.



Cuarto del Rescate
(Ransom Room) in
Cajamarca



Emperor Atahualpa



Pizarro was no longer so young. He was over fifty, the oldest of the whole expedition. Let's face it, that age – in the 16th century – was very advanced, considering life expectancy at that time.

They arrived in Cajamarca in November 1532. The Inca Atahualpa was waiting for them in the vicinity of the city without a care in the world. Pizarro and his small but well-armed troops camped in the square, occupying the buildings adjacent to it. On the other side, Atahualpa was accompanied by an army of 30,000 men; this numerical difference made it impossible to suspect what happened the following day.

In fact, on one of his ceremonial journeys, the emperor made his way to the square of Cajamarca, mounted on a litter and surrounded by his faithful warriors. Pizarro's soldiers watched the procession half-hidden from the adjacent buildings. It seems that Atahualpa and his army thought they were not going out for fear of seeing such an imposing army. At one point the clergyman Valverde, who accompanied Pizarro's expedition, went to Atahualpa's litter and made him the *Requerimiento Real* (Royal Requirement), a kind of legal formula, letting him know that he must obey his great lord the emperor Carlos V while handing him a bible as the sacred book of his religion. Atahualpa glanced at the book, understood nothing and threw it to the ground with contempt. That grievance was decisive: Atahualpa warned his army and Pizarro's soldiers immediately sounded the roar of artillery; the disbanding of the Inca's army did the rest. Frightened and crushed by the horses of the Spaniards and slashed by the Toledo swords of the infantry, the massacre was consummated. In this chaos of terror and fear, at which the Spaniards were experts, Pizarro prevented Atahualpa from dying, was taken prisoner and taken to *El Cuarto del Rescate* (The Ransom Room) and there he stayed for six months while his people carried large quantities of gold in jewels until he was filled, as agreed between Pizarro and Atahualpa. It is estimated to have amounted to eleven tons of gold, which was melted down to facilitate its transport. Pizarro and his lieutenants suspected that if they let the Inca go free, revenge would not be long in coming and they decided to kill the great Atahualpa as a measure of salvation, not without hesitation and pain on Pizarro's part, as the relationship between the Inca and the Spaniard, after six months, enjoyed a reasonable degree of sympathy.

And this is the hard story that ended the life of the last Inca emperor. The Inca also achieved the very early domination of an entire empire, centuries old, with high technology in the construction of its cities, in the irrigation of its crops and in a powerful, decentralised but very efficient political organisation.

To establish a measure of the time taken for such a feat, **Pizarro** was **assassinated in 1541 in Lima**; I am therefore struck by the brevity with which a small number of Spanish careerists, sometimes ruthless and justifying their massacres in the name of **God** and the **Emperor**, **dominated such a vast territory in just 9 years**. To give us an idea, we have to add today's Ecuador, a large part of Colombia, today's Peru, Bolivia and a large part of Argentina and Chile: practically **ten times** the size of **Spain**. The prestigious Peruvian historian **Enrique Tord**, an expert on that period and the successive eras of the viceroyalty, commented to me in Lima after one of his lectures that it was an **unrepeatable feat**, full of light but with many shadows, as has happened throughout the history of mankind.

The conquest of Cuzco

Two weeks after Atahualpa's execution, Pizarro and the small group of Spaniards set out **for Cuzco**, accompanied by the defeated emperor's recently joined army.

They descended the **eastern side of the Andes**, a difficult route of some 1,000 km, along which **they gained the support of ethnic groups** tyrannised by the Inca rulers, but they also had to confront and defeat peoples sympathetic to the recently defeated dynasty.

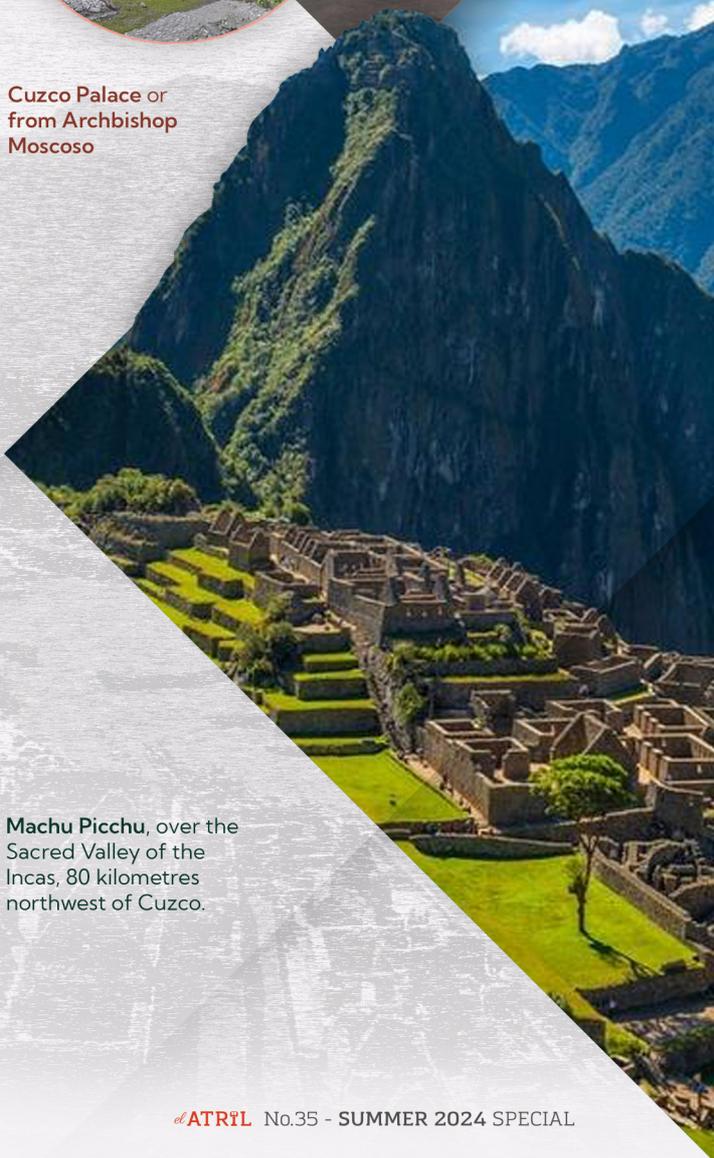
The battle in the vicinity of **Jauja** was terrible, and there were many days of intense fighting. **Gonzalo Pizarro**, lieutenant and brother of the conqueror, confessed: '**We don't even have time to clean our swords of blood**'. The route to Cuzco was very hard; only the ambition to capture the wealth of the empire kept such a tough enterprise going. It was an intoxication of blood and death. **They mercilessly slaughtered** any resistance they met in orgies of desolation and death, under the permission, however, to carry out these massacres: on the one hand, the **Royal mandate of conquest**; on the other, the **greed for gold** that overcame them; and finally, the **initial hesitation of the Catholic Church** in the procedures to be employed for a proper **evangelisation**.

The powerful army that accompanied Pizarro entered **Cuzco a year after** leaving Cajamarca. The population – 100,000 strong – welcomed Pizarro and his army with cheers and praise, **without any resistance**. Once he had taken control of the city, the Trujillo-born Pizarro appointed **a puppet emperor** – **Manco the Inca** – who ruled as he pleased and obeyed the orders of the Spaniards without much objection. Nevertheless, **Pizarro left two brothers in control of the conquest** and he left for the coast to found the **Ciudad de los Reyes (City of the Kings)**, now **Lima**, in 1535.

Lima Cathedral, example of colonial architecture built between 1535 and 1622



Cuzco Palace or from Archbishop Moscoso



Machu Picchu, over the Sacred Valley of the Incas, 80 kilometres northwest of Cuzco.



Inca vessel
two felines



Detail of Inca
architecture



This city, besides offering a milder climate than that of the high Andes mountains, made it possible to control the entry and exit of ships from the nearby port of Callao, the most important port on the Pacific for the next three centuries.

Let us conclude by saying that the success of this imposing conquest was achieved basically thanks to the war between the heirs of the emperor Huayna Capac – who died in Quito in 1527 of smallpox – and which had divided the population: in the north, Atahualpa; in the south, Huascar. Fortunately, at that very moment, Pizarro arrived, who did nothing more than precipitate the decomposition of the empire already underway due to the disputed power of its rulers. Every great empire tends towards destruction shortly after its peak. The Inca civilisation, which was born near Lake Titicaca and managed to extend its dominions and culture over a vast territory of South America, did not escape this rule. The remains of his work can still be seen today. The streets of Cuzco and the geometry of its stones can give us an idea of their solid knowledge of architecture, their mastery of space and the high technology they mastered.

The conquest of Peru, although initially carried out by a group of fierce and marginalised Spaniards, was basically an economic enterprise that justified, with a few honourable exceptions (Bartolomé de las Casas), the sacrifice of millions of natives. The population of the Inca Empire at the time of the Spanish arrival was estimated at twelve million; three decades later, it was barely one million. The harshness with which the Spanish encomenderos treated the natives – subjecting them to extremely hard labour to obtain gold and silver, as well as the spread of European diseases (smallpox, influenza) soon brought the indigenous population to the brink of extinction, and they even committed collective suicide and slaughtered their children to prevent them from the suffering that awaited them at the hands of the Spaniards.

The Spaniards who arrived later almost surpassed Pizarro and his people in cruelty...

Antonio Cebrián Núñez

Academician of the AEXG

el ATRIL

THE AEXG MAGAZINE

desdelatril@gmail.com



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