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The Lácara region lies in the west of the
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OLOROSO SHERRY **Solera 1931** **Academy visit to Almendralejo**

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The foods that reach consumers are not
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SIGNED BY
Fernando Valbuena

Death in the afternoon

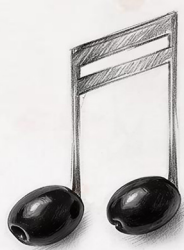
The world is full of rubble. Sometimes, if we are
lucky, it manages to become an antique.
Unlucky antiques. Yesterday, I came across two
little spoons of the kind the human mind once...



HARMONIES
by Rafael Ansón

The basic elements of **quality tourism**

*De la uva
sale el vino.*



*De la aceituna
el aceite...*



THE ACADEMY NEWS

by Evaristo Ramos



Logo of **Wine
Sciences Museum**
in Almendralejo,
Badajoz.

The Academy: visits and meetings at the **European Parliament**

We're currently experiencing some lovely, sweltering days here in Extremadura, which make it almost impossible to get together... for a nice cup of broth.

The pleasant and interesting visit we made to the town of Almendralejo, guided by our dear **Marcelino Díaz** (we'll go into more detail about this in his article) and his wife, **Carmina Vázquez**, allowed us to appreciate the remains of the first inhabitants of these fertile lands.

Afterwards, at the **Museo del Cava** (Cava Museum) we were able to appreciate the enthusiasm and the work that had gone into compiling the collection, all to treat us to a brilliant -and comprehensive- experience of CAVA, including a splendid tasting.

Later, at **Bodegas Paiva**, we were treated to a most interesting tour of their facilities; to round off the day, in their restaurant, we enjoyed an exquisite meal... and excellent service!

When the heat allows, we shall continue to organise visits to local wineries, led by our Academician and Rector of the recently established Private University of Extremadura (UNINDE), **Antonio Macías**.



Marcelino Díaz
Winegrower and
agricultural engineer.
Member of the
Academy, a key
contributor to *El
Atril* and our guide
on the visit to
Almendralejo.



Antonio Macías
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Academic and regular
contributor to El Atril.

Ignacio Sánchez Amor.
A politician from
Extremadura who
serves as a Member of
the European
Parliament.



Marcos Ros Sempere.
A politician from
Murcia who serves as
a Member of the
European Parliament.

European Parliament



Our President,
Evaristo Ramos,
during his visit to
the European
Parliament.



For my part, I would like to report on our recent **visit to the European Parliament** (on 23, 24 and 25 June) **on behalf of the AEXG**, at the invitation of MEP Ignacio Sánchez Amor. Whilst there, a group of 14 of us held meetings at the highest level, where we were given detailed information about the work programmes due to be approved in the coming years. These three days of institutional meetings, held under the theme '**The Extremaduran gastronomy sector as a driving force for international trade, regional development and cultural heritage in the EU**', have enabled us to gain a deeper understanding of a sector that is key to the economy, culture and, more broadly, the profile of Extremadura.

The **Real Academia de Gastronomía (Royal Academy of Gastronomy)** – supported by the other regional academies – had previously submitted a clear and concise **proposal** to the EU: that all schools in the member states of the Union should offer a specific **subject on gastronomy** (how to prepare food, nutrition and its application at the table) for children up to the age of 6.

Well, Marcos Ros Sempere, a Member of the European Parliament and a member of the CUL and MEP Committee, has recently confirmed to us that this proposal has finally been drawn up and **approved**, to be rolled out across Europe **by 2027**.

Admittedly, the European Parliament – and by extension any bureaucratic process – is slow and takes time to put its agreements into practice; but it is also true that, given the scale of its importance, the proposal will ultimately come to fruition (I point this out because we have been awaiting its approval and development for **over five years**).

On another note, I would like to mention that we are finalising a **collaboration** with a new project from the **Regional Government of Extremadura**, specifically its **Department of Culture, Tourism and Sport**. On the 7th, we successfully finalised the plan for the new 2026–2030 objectives, which will begin to be implemented from September onwards.

It only remains for me to mention that we are now **beginning the selection process for candidates for the AEXG Extremadura Gastronomy Awards**, which the Academy presents each year. **We therefore ask you to submit your nominations** to the Executive Committee, so that we can meet in the near future with all your proposals on the table and thus consider these potential nominations for the new awards.

That is all. I wish you a happy end to the summer.

Evaristo Ramos

Presidente of the
Extremadura Academy of Gastronomy



THE WAY MY MOTHER MADE IT

Traditional recipes from Rural Women in Extremadura

A taste of 19th century traditional dishes (I)

Cuisine is not merely cultural heritage: it offers insights into a people and their customs, and their way of life. In Extremadura, many traditional recipes have survived to the present day thanks to being passed down from generation to generation and the preservation of old family cookbooks, true testaments to a cuisine based on making the most of what is available, locally sourced produce and the expertise of those who prepared them.

This article marks the start of a series dedicated to reviving eighteen recipes from the cookbook of a cook at a stately home in Almendralejo, preserved and made available by the Extremadura Federation of Rural Women's Associations (FEXAMUR), specifically by the 'Pura Cepa' Rural Women's Association of Almendralejo.

This is a valuable legacy that offers a glimpse into 19th-century Extremaduran cuisine, where simple dishes coexisted with more elaborate ones, always drawing on the bounty of the regional larder.

Some of these dishes were typical of stately homes, although many were also found, with slight variations, in working-class kitchens. The use of seasonal produce, game and meat from traditional slaughter, fish preserved by salting or pickling, vegetables from the garden, olive oil, eggs and bread as a staple food reflects a cuisine deeply rooted in the local area and the resources available.

A cuisine characterised by the use of every part of the food, slow cooking and preservation techniques that ensured produce was available all year round.

This first instalment brings together six dishes that reflect this culinary tradition: fresh goat's cheese, artichokes stuffed with ham, wild asparagus scrambled eggs in puff pastry, antruejo soup, marinated horse mackerel and cod with potatoes. The remaining recipes will be included in the next two articles to complete this collection.





Fresh goat's cheese

Ingredients (for 1 kg)

- 5 litres of freshly milked **milk**.
- **Rennet**.
- 1 teaspoon **fine salt**.
- 1/2 kg **coarse salt**.

Equipment needed

- A **large** non-stick **pot** (more than 5 litres).
- 1 perfectly clean **cotton cheesecloth**, approximately 50 x 50 cm.
- 1 **thermometer** capable of reaching at least 65°C.
- 1 **large colander**.
- 1 **small strainer**.
- 1 **teaspoon**.
- 1 sharp knife.

Method

1. Place the milk over a low heat to prevent it from sticking and overheating, and **pasteurise** it by keeping it at **65°C for 30 minutes**. Once pasteurised, allow it to cool to **30°C**, then **add the rennet** according to the manufacturer's recommended quantity, stirring very gently.

Leave to rest for approximately 35/40 minutes, maintaining the temperature. At this point, the surface of the pot will be covered by a yellowish-green liquid, the whey, with the curds forming underneath.

2. It is now time to **cut the curd**. Traditionally, a cheese harp is used, but at home a long, sharp knife can be used instead. Cut the curd into a grid pattern and gently rock the pot back and forth for about 10 minutes. This helps **the curds release their whey**.

3. Place the cheesecloth over a colander set over a large bowl. Using the small strainer, **transfer the curds** onto the cheesecloth. Leave them to drain for a few minutes. Then gather the corners of the cloth to form a small bundle and squeeze it to encourage the whey to drain out.

4. Place a **weight on top** and leave the cheese to drain for two hours. Once this time has elapsed, remove the cheese from the cloth and place it in a **brine** made by dissolving the salt in water. Leave it in the brine for 1 hour, then remove and refrigerate.

Artichokes stuffed with ham

Ingredients

- Artichokes.
- Diced ham.
- 2 spring onions.
- 1 clove of garlic.
- 2 eggs.
- Breadcrumbs.
- 1/2 glass white wine.
- Water.
- Olive oil.
- Salt.
- Parsley (for decoration).

Method

1. Clean the artichokes and cook them in a pot with plenty of water. Season with salt, cover and cook. Once tender, drain and place them on a plate lined with kitchen paper to remove excess water. Allow them to cool slightly, then use a teaspoon to scoop out the inside of the artichokes.

Finely chop the flesh for the filling and set aside both the artichoke flesh and the outer leaves.

2. Place the eggs in a saucepan of water and boil for 10 minutes. Once cooked, transfer them to a plate and allow them to cool slightly. Peel and finely chop them.

3. Finely chop the spring onions and gently sauté them in a frying pan with a splash of oil. Season with salt. Once softened, add the chopped ham. Sauté briefly, then pour in the white wine and allow it to reduce.

Add the chopped egg and artichoke flesh. Cook over medium heat.

4. Place the hollowed-out artichokes in an ovenproof dish and fill them with the mixture. Peel and finely chop half a clove of garlic, mix it with the breadcrumbs and sprinkle over the artichokes. Bake for a few minutes.

5. Finally, garnish with a small sprig of parsley.





Scrambled wild asparagus in puff pastry

Ingredients

For the puff pastry

- 200 gr **flour**.
- 100 gr de **butter**.
- 1 **egg**.
- **Water**.

For the scrambled eggs

- 500 gr wild **asparagus**.
- 4 cloves of **garlic**.
- Fresh **spring onion**.
- 1 slice of **fried bread**.
- 2 **eggs**.
- **Olive oil**.

Method

1. First prepare the **the puff pastry**. Make a **well in the centre of the flour** and add the water, salt and 100 g of butter. The butter should be at room temperature and soft enough to work with easily.

• **Mix the ingredients** in the centre of the flour, gradually incorporating the flour from the sides, and knead. Continue working the dough until it forms a ball that does not stick to the work surface.

Make a cross in the centre, cover with a cloth and leave to rest in the **refrigerator for 20 minutes**.

• After this time, flour a flat surface and **roll out the dough** with a rolling pin.

Place two or three small pieces of butter in the centre and fold the dough over them.

• Fold the dough over the butter, covering it completely, then roll it out again, dusting both the work surface and the dough with flour until all the butter has been incorporated. **Refrigerate** for approximately **30 minutes**.

2. Prepare the **scrambled asparagus**. Heat some olive oil in a frying pan and **sauté the garlic, spring onion and bread**. Remove from the pan, transfer to a mortar and pound to a paste. Set aside.

• Clean and cut the wild **asparagus** and sauté it. Once cooked, add the **pounded mixture** and the two **eggs** to make the **scramble**. Adjust the seasoning.

3. **Divide the puff pastry** into two portions. Place one portion on the base and **spread the asparagus scramble** over it. Cover with the second portion of pastry, fold over and seal the edges.

Brush the surface with a little beaten egg to give it colour.

4. Bake in an **oven** preheated to **200°C** for approximately **15 minutes**, until ready to serve.

Antruejo soup (or Carnival soup)

Ingredients

- 1 **pork knuckle** (preferably salted during the traditional slaughter).
- 1 **chorizo sausage**.
- 1 **ham bone**.
- 5 hard-boiled **eggs**.
- Finely chopped fresh **onion**.
- Chopped **parsley**.
- Stale **bread**, cut into small pieces.
- **Water** and **salt**.

Method

1. Place the **pork knuckle**, cut into large pieces, and the **ham bone** in a pot and **cook** for approximately 1½ hours.
2. When there are about 30 minutes of cooking time remaining, **add the chorizo**.
3. **Strain** the broth and **shred** the pork knuckle meat, ham and chorizo.
4. In another pot, **boil the eggs**. Once cooked, peel them and cut them into small cubes.
5. Finely chop the **perejil** and the **onion**.
6. If possible, use a **clay casserole dish**. Begin with a layer of **chopped bread**, followed by a layer of onion and parsley, then a layer of the mixture of pork knuckle, ham and chorizo, and finally a layer of egg. Continue alternating the layers, drizzling each one with broth, taking care not to make them excessively wet.
7. **Bake** for 1 ½ hours at 180°C.
8. Twenty minutes before the end of cooking, add a final layer of **chorizo** and slices of **hard-boiled egg** and **grill** until crisp.
9. Serve by cutting into portions as though it were a cake.

Note: if you prefer to eat it with a spoon, like a soup, simply add more broth.





Pickled horse mackerel

Ingredients

- 6 horse mackerel.
- 1 clove of garlic.
- 1/2 onion.
- Sweet paprika.
- 1½ glasses olive oil.
- 1/2 glass vinegar.
- 4 bay leaves.

Method

1. Begin by **cleaning the horse mackerel**, removing the guts and heads, and season with salt. Heat the oil in a frying pan and **fry** the fish until nicely browned. Remove from the pan and place in a dish with the **bay** leaves. Set aside.
 2. Add the **garlic** clove to the hot oil and **brown it**. Repeat with the **chopped onion** and, before it takes on too much colour, remove the pan from the heat and allow the oil to cool slightly.
 3. Once the oil has cooled a little, add two tablespoons of **sweet paprika** and the **vinegar**. Stir to combine.
 4. Pour the paprika, vinegar and oil **mixture over the fish** and leave it to marinate for 3-4 hours before serving.
 5. Serve cold or lukewarm.
- Note:** the proportions are 3 parts oil to 2 parts vinegar.

Cod with potatoes

Ingredients

- 800 g potatoes.
- 1/2 kg desalted cod.
- 1 red pepper.
- 1 green pepper.
- 1 onion.
- 3 cloves of garlic.
- 3/4 litres fish stock.
- 2 chillies.
- Extra virgin olive oil.
- Salt.
- Parsley.

Method

1. Finely **chop** the onion and slice the peppers into thin strips. Place everything in a casserole dish with some oil and gently sauté.

2. Once golden, add the chillies. Peel the potatoes, cut them into thick slices and add them to the casserole. Pour in the fish stock and cook over medium heat for 20 minutes.

3. Heat a little oil in a frying pan and briefly fry the cod loins on both sides. Transfer them to the potato casserole, placing them skin-side up. Cook for a further 5 minutes.

4. Remove the chillies and **garnish** with a sprig of **parsley**.

Note: if the sauce is too thin, mash a couple of the potatoes and stir them back into the stew to achieve the desired consistency.

Coming next

In the next issue, we will continue discovering more recipes from the nineteenth century. As always, our thanks go to the Rural Women of Extremadura (**FEXAMUR**) and particularly to the Asociación de Mujeres Rurales "**Pura Cepa**" of **Almendralejo**.





SHAKEN, NOT STIRRED

by Alfonso Ramos



Paquito¹, grapes and cocido: a sentimental history of Spanish culinary songs

From the grape harvest to the village festival: the culinary songs that tell the story of who we are

There are songs about love, work, travel or nostalgia. And there are others about wine, stews, olives, rice with cod or a simple summer barbecue. At first glance, they might seem like minor or even anecdotal compositions within Spain's vast musical heritage. However, a closer look is enough to reveal that they form an essential part of our collective memory.

Gastronomic songs are much more than just songs about food. They are sung tales of everyday life, agriculture, celebrations and the ways of living together that have defined towns and cities for centuries. In them we find local produce, traditional recipes and culinary customs, but we also find families gathered round a table, groups of workers labouring in the fields, neighbours celebrating a patron saint's festival or friends sharing a glass of wine.

Now that fairs, pilgrimages and local festivals are beginning to spring up all over Spain, these songs are regaining their original meaning. They continue to form part of a collective soundtrack that accompanies culinary gatherings and popular celebrations, just as they did decades or even centuries ago.

¹ Paquito is the diminutive form of Paco, which in turn is a hypocoristic form or affectionate nickname for Francisco.





When food becomes song

The relationship between music and food is as old as **popular culture** itself.

Virtually all societies have created songs relating to the production, preparation or consumption of food. There are songs about **harvesting, milling, grape-picking, fishing and bread-making**. There is also an abundance of festive **songs associated with wine, beer and communal feasts**.

Spain is no exception. In fact, few European cultures have developed such a close relationship between gastronomy, festivities and music. The Spanish festive calendar is punctuated by **celebrations** in which **food takes centre stage**: pilgrimages, pig-slaughtering festivals, grape harvests, agricultural fairs, patron saint festivals and family gatherings. In all of these, **music acts as a unifying force**.

For this reason, many gastronomic songs were not created to be listened to from an armchair or via a digital platform. They were **conceived to be shared**. They were sung whilst working, cooking, dancing or celebrating.

The major categories of food-themed songs

The Spanish culinary repertoire is so extensive that **it is useful to organise** it into several categories.

Songs about the harvest and farm work

For centuries, agriculture set the pace of life across most of Spain. The **harvesting of grapes, olives, cereals and fruit gave rise to countless folk verses** and songs intended to accompany the work.

In these compositions, **agricultural produce** constantly takes **centre stage**. Grapes, wine and olives feature prominently, particularly in regions where these activities form an essential part of the traditional economy.

Harvest songs are one of the finest examples of this tradition. They served not only **to liven up the long working days**, but also to **strengthen the bonds** between those who shared the labour of the harvest.

Songs about cooking and the home

Another important group consists of songs linked to the domestic sphere. Here, cooking ceases to be a productive activity and becomes a family experience. These are songs that evoke recipes, ingredients and culinary tasks associated with everyday life.

The great contemporary example is, without a doubt, '[Con las manos en la masa](#)'², the unforgettable theme tune to the [programme presented by Elena Santonja on Televisión Española \(TVE\)](#)³. Its success was extraordinary because it achieved something seemingly simple yet culturally very powerful: it made traditional Spanish cuisine the star of a popular song.

References to gazpacho, garlic soups, gachas or cocido served as an instant point of recognition for [millions of viewers](#) who [associated these dishes with their own family history](#).

Is is worth noting that the song was [composed by Vainica Doble](#) (a duo comprising [Gloria Van Aerssen](#) and [Carmen Santonja](#) –the presenter's sister–) and was performed as a duet by Gloria Van Aerssen herself and a young [Joaquín Sabina](#)⁴.

Songs about specific dishes and produce

On other occasions, food becomes the central theme outright. This is the case with traditional songs dedicated to broad beans, olives, peppers, sardines or various fruits.

'[Las Habas Verdes](#)'⁵, one of the best-known songs in the [Castilian](#) repertoire, is a splendid example. The same is true of numerous jotás from La Rioja and Navarre that celebrate produce from the vegetable garden, or of Galician songs featuring sardines, bread or wine. These pieces are particularly interesting because they reflect Spain's enormous gastronomic diversity. [Each region sings about](#) what it produces, consumes and considers part of [its identity](#).

Tavern and drinking songs

[Wine](#) has a chapter all of its own within the folk song repertoire.

Songs relating to wine-drinking appear in practically every region of Spain. Some originate from the [agricultural world](#), whilst others arose in [festive contexts](#), linked to taverns, social gatherings or popular celebrations.

In these songs, wine is rarely presented merely as a drink. [It symbolises friendship, hospitality, joy and togetherness](#). That's why many of these songs have survived for generations, even when the circumstances that gave rise to them have disappeared.

² 'With my hands in the dough'.

³ Spanish public television.

⁴ Joaquín Sabina is a Spanish famous singer-songwriter.

⁵ 'The Green Beans'.





Manuel García Matos
A folklorist from Extremadura. A researcher into folk and flamenco music and member of the Spanish Institute of Musicology.



Bonifacio Gil García
A musician, musicologist and folklorist from Logroño who lived in Badajoz as Director of Music for the Infantry Regiment 'Castilla 16'. He laid the foundations for what is now the Higher Conservatoire of Music in Badajoz.



«De la uva sale el vino»: a song, a region and an identity

Within this vast heritage, there is one composition that deserves special attention.

'De la uva sale el vino'⁶. Few phrases are so simple and, at the same time, so **representative of Spanish popular culture**... and it's ours!

This verse opens the famous '**Jota de la Uva**'⁷, one of the most iconic pieces in **Olivenza's traditional repertoire**. Its **anonymous origin** and oral transmission make it a perfect example of how folklore works: a collective creation that transforms and adapts over time.

The song also holds enormous symbolic value. **The grape represents the land and agricultural labour; the wine represents the celebration that follows**. Between these two elements, a narrative is woven that connects production, community and celebration.

It is no coincidence that the jota originates from Olivenza. Situated **on the border between Spain and Portugal**, this town has developed a unique cultural identity in which **influences from both countries converge**. The lyrics themselves refer to this historical and social reality.

*Las muchachas de Olivenza,
No son como las demás ¿Por qué?,
Por que son hijas de **España**, ay,
Y nietas de **Portugal**.*⁸

The composition has been so popular that its verses have ended up appearing in other festive and traditional contexts far removed from its place of origin.

Extremadura: a land where gastronomy is also celebrated in song

If there is one autonomous community that is particularly rich in songs about food, it is Extremadura.

The historical importance of agriculture and livestock farming has left a deep mark on its musical heritage. The compilations produced by **Bonifacio Gil** and **Manuel García Matos** reveal an extraordinarily wide-ranging repertoire of jotas, romances and coplas linked to food.

The **grape harvest** features prominently, particularly in regions such as Tierra de Barros. There are also constant references to **There are also constant references to olives, pitarra wines, pork products** and the celebrations associated with **traditional pig slaughtering**.

These are not specifically gastronomic songs in the modern sense of the term. They are **songs about everyday life** in which **food forms an inseparable part** of the collective experience. And that is precisely where their **heritage value** lies.

⁶ 'From the grape comes the wine'.
⁷ 'Grape Jota'. Jota is a type of music that accompanies a popular Spanish dance of the same name. It generally consists of four eight-syllable verses.
⁸ The girls of Olivenza, | They're not like the others. Why? | Because they're the daughters of Spain, oh, | And the granddaughters of Portugal.

From cocidito madrileño to mojo picón

Spain's musical landscape can also be explored through its cuisine.

· Madrid contributes the famous 'Cocidito madrileño'⁹, which has become a musical symbol of the capital.

· Andalusia offers pieces such as 'Sarandonga'¹⁰; where a simple cod and rice dish serves as a pretext for singing about family togetherness and celebration.

· The Canary Islands contribute songs linked to **mojo picón**¹¹, **gofio** and parranda gatherings.

· Galicia preserves numerous folk songs featuring sardines, cornbread and traditional wines.

· La Rioja y Navarre boast jotas that extol the produce of their vegetable gardens and vineyards.

Although I have highlighted a few regions, the common thread running through them all is the role of **gastronomy** as an expression of belonging to a specific region.

The main ingredient: the party

Broadly speaking, celebration is the common thread running through almost all these compositions.

This is because the most popular songs about food are not necessarily those that best describe the food itself, but rather those that best accompany moments of celebration. And no example is more obvious than 'Paquito el Chocolatero'¹²; although it is an instrumental pasodoble, few pieces are so closely associated with Spanish folk festivals.

The same is true of 'La Barbacoa'¹³ by Georgie Dann, which for decades has become a sort of unofficial anthem of Spanish summers.

Both tracks reveal **gastronomy** can act as a powerful force for social cohesion. Food ceases to be merely sustenance and becomes a shared experience.

Much more than just recipes set to music

From an anthropological perspective, songs about food form part of intangible cultural heritage.

They preserve vocabulary, customs, recipes, ways of working and ways of interacting that have either disappeared or are evolving.

Listening to a grape harvest jota, a song sung by olive pickers or a song about a traditional stew is, in a way, like listening to the memory of a community. That is why these songs remain relevant today.

And they do not survive merely because they talk about specific foods; they express something much deeper: the human need to come together.

⁹ 'Madrid-style stew'.

¹⁰ 'Sarandonga' is a famous song made popular in Spain by Lolita Flores in 2001, although it actually originated in the 1950s with the Cuban duo Los Compadres (Lorenzo Hierrezuelo and Francisco Repilado). It is said that 'Sarandonga' was the affectionate nickname Hierrezuelo used to call his wife, Sara.

¹¹ Mojo picón is a traditional, spicy sauce originating from the Canary Islands, famous for its deep red colour and strong flavour. It is the essential accompaniment to the famous 'papas arrugadas' ('wrinkly potatoes').

¹² 'Paquito the Chocolatier'.

¹³ 'The Barbecue'.

Mojo Picón

Cocido madrileño



The soundtrack to togetherness

Perhaps that is the great lesson hidden within Spanish songs about food.

When we listen to 'Con las manos en la masa', 'Sarandonga', 'Cocidito madrileño', 'Paquito el Chocolatero' or the Extremaduran 'Jota de la Uva', we are not merely hearing culinary references. We are listening to stories of families, neighbours, teams of grape-pickers, fairground workers, cooks and friends sitting round a table. We are listening to the music of a way of life.

And perhaps that is why, generation after generation, these songs continue to find their place at local patron saint festivals, pilgrimages, open-air dances and family gatherings. Because as long as there are people willing to share food, drink and conversation, there will continue to be songs to accompany them.

After all, as the old Extremaduran folk song reminds us, wine comes from grapes... But so do the festivities, the memories and the songs that ultimately become part of a town's collective memory.

Alfonso Ramos Retamar

Amigo de la AEXG

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The Lácara region

The Lácara region is situated in the west of the province of Badajoz and comprises 21 villages: Aljucén, Arroyo de San Serván, Calamonte, Carmonita, El Carrascalejo, Cordobilla de Lácara, Esparragalejo, La Garrovilla, Gadiana del Caudillo, Lobón, Mirandilla, Montijo, La Nava de Santiago, Puebla de la Calzada, Puebla de Obando, Pueblonuevo del Guadiana, La Roca de la Sierra, Talavera la Real, Torremayor, Trujillanos and Valdelacalzada.

This region boasts outstanding artistic and natural monuments, such as the **Lácara dolmen** –one of the finest in Spain and over 4,000 years old– situated on the road linking Aljucén and La Nava de Santiago, in the heart of the Extremaduran dehesa; or the **cave paintings at Arroyo de San Serván**, found in 27 rock shelters in the Sierra de San Serván, featuring idols and hunting scenes, dating from between 1,500 and 500 BC. Set amidst unspoilt nature, the Camino de Santiago, or Mozarabic Way, runs from Seville to Astorga, whilst the Ruta de la Plata stretches from El Carrascalejo to Aljucén, where the remains of a **Roman bridge** can be found.

From more recent periods are the **Casa del Navegante**, right in the heart of Montijo's Plaza de España, now a municipal cultural centre; the **Church of San Pedro** and the **Convent of the Poor Clares**, or the **Palace of the Marquis of La Vega**, dating from the early 19th century, on Calle Badajoz in Puebla de la Calzada.

But tourism isn't just about visiting heritage or natural sites; it's also about **connecting with the locals**, discovering their bars and pubs, and sitting down at a restaurant worth visiting to sample the local cuisine: the humble yet delicious '**sopa molinera**', made with small river fish; '**ajos de peces**'; or '**salmorejo de bogas**' –a traditional stew–.

Lácara region



Lácara dolmen



Sopa molinera
(literally translated,
'miller's soup').



Cave paintings
at Arroyo de
San Serván

Ajo de peces (literally
translated, 'fish garlic').



Extremaduran-style rabbit, a dish that pairs perfectly with a Ribera del Guadiana wine.



Satsuma oranges



Tomatoes



Braised lamb stew

The Poor Clares of the Montijo convent making traditional sweets.



In addition, it is worth noting that the region is home to the unique **Satsuma orange**, which is grown on the orange groves in the El Arenal de Lobón area. Satsuma is a variety of Japanese origin, juicy and seedless, harvested between November and April and used to make various orange-based desserts. We mustn't forget the **region's star product: the tomato** or '**xictimatl**', as the Aztecs called it, which the Spanish brought to Europe in 1540.

As for **meat dishes**, there is the **braised lamb stew** simmered slowly with garlic, paprika and onion; to this can be added **game dishes**, featuring partridge, hare, rabbit or wild boar from the nearby **Sierra de San Pedro**, which forms the northern boundary between the region and the province of Cáceres.

We mustn't forget the region's **traditional sweets** such as the delicious '**perrunillas**'; or the pastries made by the Poor Clare nuns at their convent in Montijo, as they work in silence and prayer, such as '**costrada**' (a mille-feuille made with puff pastry, meringue and almonds), the '**Flor de San José**', '**corazones de almendra**' and '**corazones de obispo**', , honey-based '**pestiños**' and '**flores extremeñas**'; as well as cheeses, artisan jams, chocolates and honey.

And to **accompany** all these traditional dishes, the **wines** of the '**Ribera del Guadiana**' Designation of Origin from the sub-regions closest to the Lácara area: '**Ribera Alta**', '**Ribera Baja**' and '**Tierra de Barros**', not forgetting the traditional **pitarra wine**, produced by many local families.

Francisco Rivero

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



WINE OF THE MONTH

by Marcelino Díaz

Academy visit to Almendralejo

On 23 May, a group of thirty **Academy & Friends** members and accompanying guests travelled to **Almendralejo**, where they took part in a **packed programme** organised by fellow Academy member **Marcelino Díaz**.

First, they visited the **prehistoric tomb at Huerta Montero**, a site dating back to 4,000 BC and belonging to the Chalcolithic culture. There, guided by Carolina, a guide provided by the Tourist Office, we Academicians were able to see **how our ancestors lived** during that period, learn about their **burial rituals and their building techniques**, which made use of rammed earth and the abundant granite and gneiss rocks found on the site.

The group then made its way to the **Almendralejo Cava Museum**, taking a detour around the outskirts of the town to avoid the traffic congestion caused by the military parade commemorating the centenary of the Civil Guard barracks, which was taking place near the Museum. Once there, the Academicians listened attentively to **Marcelino's explanations** regarding the **forty four year history** of cava in Extremadura, as well as his family's **hundred-year history of winemaking**.

They were all able to view the **numerous items** on display there, including the collection of wine and cava bottles that Marcelino has built up over the course of his professional life (notably the **first seven bottles of cava that came onto the market in 1983**); or copies of the Supreme Court rulings of 1987, which recognised the family-run company **INVIOSA's right to continue producing cava** and incorporated the municipality of **Almendralejo** as an integral part of the geographical area of cava production.





Andrés
Barrera



Javier
Hergueta



Aurea
Beatriz
López



Jesús
Medina



José
Menguiano



Once the tour was over, we moved on to a **tasting of various Puerta Palma cavas**, paired with **Iberian ham** ("A Cava con jamón" – "Cava with ham", as Marcelino calls it), and continued with a **gastronomic tour** in which the **Museum's wines** were alternated with different **tapas**.

Among these, the pairing of an oloroso wine, **Solera 1931** – the first produced by the family in that year –, with a **cold meat platter** prepared by our hostess, **Carmina Vázquez**, stood out.

This was followed by the Puerta Palma whites and reds, with which Marcelino brought the visit to a close.

Lunch at Bodegas Paiva

Prior to this, **Alfonso Martínez** – a member of the third generation of the family that owns the winery – welcomed the group, showing them the winery facilities, where machinery and stainless-steel tanks are combined with oak barrels for ageing the red wines.

Marcelino led a **guided tasting** of the winery's wines: a **2025 white wine**, **Solo Cayetana**, made from the grape variety of the same name; a **red wine**, **56 Barricas**, an aged Tempranillo; and finally the **Paiva brut nature Cava** which the family produces in a separate winery under the **D.O. Cava designation**.

Just after three o'clock in the afternoon, we began our lunch at the winery's excellent restaurant, where we also enjoyed a magnificent **roast cod**, preceded by **pork loin and cheese**, and a **shrimp salad**. The rest of the group opted for a **beef cheek stew**.

Over dessert, our **President**, **Evaristo Ramos**, accompanied by **Manuel García**, the **Academy's secretary**, presented the necklace to the **new members of the AEXG**: **Andrés Barrera**, **Javier Hergueta**, **Aurea Beatriz López**, **Jesús Medina** and **José Menguiano**.

This was followed by the customary farewells and the return to their respective homes, bringing to a close an **intense day of fellowship**, steeped in the **history of our ancestors, oenology and gastronomy**, a story that would be reported the following day in the Extremaduran newspaper Hoy.

OLOROSO SHERRY WINE

Solera 1931

Marcelino Díaz Wineries

Ctra. Arroyo de San Serván, s/n · Almendralejo (Badajoz)

An oloroso Sherry wine first produced by Salamanca-based olive oil industrialists **Pedro, Felipe, Isidoro and Marcelino Díaz Sánchez** when they settled in Almendralejo in 1931.

Ever since then, their descendants have treasured it like a precious gem and enjoyed it with friends on very special occasions, such as the event that took place on 23 May, when the **Extremadura Academy of Gastronomy** visited the Cava Museum.

It is an ideal wine to enjoy as an aperitif and pairs very well with acorn-fed Iberian pork loin, ham cubes or the chicken cold cuts from **Carmina Vázquez's recipe**.

Vino oloroso Solera 1931

Marcelino Díaz Wineries, Almendralejo.

Characteristics

- Produced in 1931.
- Ideal as aperitif.
- Pairs with Iberian pork loin, ham cubes or chicken cold cuts.

Tasting notes

- 👁️ **Appearance.** Bright amber colour.
- 👃 **Nose.** Intense, complex and fragrant.
- 👄 **Palate.** Full-bodied, harmonious, with hints of dried fruit.

Marcelino Díaz

Academician of the AEXG





PERFECT HARMONY

Chicken and bacon cold cuts

by Carmina Vázquez

Below, we present the **chicken and bacon cold cuts**, a recipe with which **Carmina Vázquez** delighted us during the Academy's visit to the **Cava Museum** and which paired superbly with the magnificent **Solera 1931** oloroso Sherry wine:

Ingredients

- 1/2 kg minced **chicken**.⁽¹⁾
- 1/2 kg minced **pork**.⁽¹⁾
- 350 g **Roquefort** cheese.
- 2 **eggs**.
- Thinly sliced **smoked bacon**.⁽²⁾

Method

Start by chopping the chopped; add the minced chicken and the Roquefort (take the cheese out of the fridge beforehand so that it comes to room temperature. This will ensure the mixture is smooth).

Once everything is well mixed, add the beaten eggs and mix well again. Set aside.

Next, cut three large pieces of aluminium foil. On each piece, arrange the bacon slices so that they overlap one another.⁽³⁾

Spoon some of the mixture onto the bacon, shaping it into a rectangle. Using the same aluminium foil, fold it over at one end and then the other; you'll see how the bacon sticks together on its own (make sure to seal the parcel tightly on all sides). Repeat the process to make the other two rolls.

Place the rolls on a baking tray and put them in the preheated oven, baking them at 180° with heat from above and below for about 40 minutes.

Remove them when they are lukewarm and place a weight on top until they have cooled completely.⁽⁴⁾

Then pop them in the fridge; once they're cold, slice them up and... they're ready to eat!

(1) When you buy the chicken, ask the butcher to mince it for you along with the chopped vegetables. If that's not possible, you can do it in the Thermomix.

(2) I buy *La Selva* from Mercadona.

(3) I usually use 7 slices; it's a good size for a roll. You usually end up with three rolls, and it goes a long way..

(4) I leave them like that for about 5 or 6 hours.



MISCELLANY
by Domingo J. Álvarez

Food products ranges

Foods that reach the consumer are not always in their original state. **Advances in preservation, processing and packaging** have made it possible to produce safer, longer-lasting products that are tailored to the needs of contemporary society. As a result, the food industry and the gastronomic sector have developed a **classification system** known as 'food product ranges', which groups products according to their degree of processing and the technological treatments applied.

This classification distinguishes **five main categories**, ranging from fresh foods to ready-to-eat prepared meals. Understanding this classification is of particular interest to professionals in the fields of gastronomy, catering, nutrition and food safety, whilst also contributing to a better understanding of the foods that form part of our daily diet.

1st range: fresh foods

The first range comprises **foods sold in their natural state or with minimal processing** intended to facilitate their distribution and sale.

This includes **fruit, vegetables, meat, fish, seafood, eggs, cereals** and other fresh produce that has not undergone industrial preservation treatments. These foods retain all their original characteristics and require specific storage and handling conditions to ensure their quality and safety.

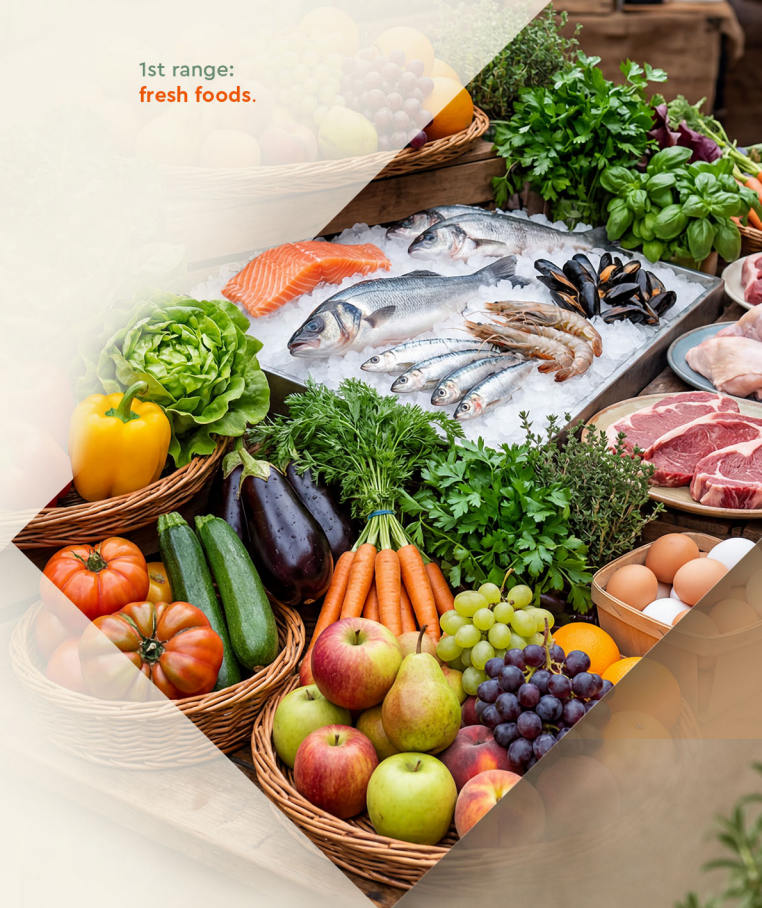
Their main advantage lies in the preservation of their organoleptic and nutritional properties, although they have a **relatively short shelf life**.

2nd range: tinned and semi-preserved foods

This category encompasses **foods that have undergone preservation treatments**, mainly thermal, and are subsequently hermetically sealed.

This category includes **tinned vegetables, cooked pulses, tinned fish, fruit in syrup** and certain **sterilised products**. The treatments applied destroy or control the microorganisms and enzymes responsible for food spoilage, thereby considerably extending their shelf life.

1st range:
fresh foods.



2nd range:
tinned and semi-preserved foods.



3rd range:
frozen foods.

Thanks to these processes, second-range products can be stored for long periods without the need for refrigeration, whilst maintaining adequate food safety standards.

3rd range: frozen foods

This range comprises foods that are preserved by freezing or deep-freezing, generally at temperatures of -18°C or below.

Vegetables, meat, fish, seafood and numerous processed products fall into this category. Freezing very effectively slows down microbiological and enzymatic activity, allowing for prolonged storage with minimal nutritional loss.

The introduction of deep-freezing technology during the 20th century marked a decisive breakthrough for the food supply chain, facilitating year-round access to seasonal produce and expanding the possibilities for modern catering.

4th range: minimally processed fresh products

This category comprises fresh foods that have undergone sorting, washing, sanitising, peeling, chopping or slicing, without undergoing any heat treatment such as cooking.

They are generally sold packaged in modified or protective atmospheres that enable them to retain their characteristics for a limited period whilst refrigerated. These are products ready to eat or to cook with minimal preparation.

Ready-made salads, chopped vegetables, sliced fruit or vegetable mixes for immediate consumption some of the most typical examples.

Their development responds to growing consumer demand for convenience, enabling preparation times to be reduced without compromising on the freshness of the raw ingredients.



4th range:
minimally processed
fresh products.

FONDO DE
CARNE
(Meat Stock Base)

Dehydrated and
semi-prepared
products

5th range: cooked, ready-to-eat foods

The fifth range represents one of the greatest advances in the application of food technology to gastronomy and the catering industry.

It comprises **pre-cooked foods or dishes which, once prepared, are vacuum-packed or packed in a modified atmosphere and undergo stabilisation treatments**, generally through pasteurisation and refrigerated storage.

Unlike traditional ready-meals, this range aims to preserve the gastronomic, nutritional and sensory qualities of a freshly prepared dish. The consumer or catering professional simply needs to reheat the product before consumption.

Key advantages include improved food safety, optimisation of human resources, reduced food waste, consistent quality of dishes and speed of service.

Currently, numerous **ready meals, stews, cooked meats, fish, rice dishes, sauces and desserts** are marketed using this preservation method.

Dehydrated and semi-prepared products

Although they do not form part of the five classic product ranges, dehydrated and semi-prepared products occupy an important place within the food industry and the professional catering sector.

This category includes culinary bases, dehydrated soups and stocks, baking mixes, ice-cream mixes, dehydrated eggs, instant creams and bases for various culinary preparations.

Their use helps to simplify certain production processes, improve standardisation and optimise working times in professional kitchens.

PREPARADO PARA
REPOSTERÍA
(Baking Mix)

QUINTA GAMA

GUISO DE
TERNERA

Listo para Degustar

QUINTA GAMA

ARROZ MELOSO
DE SETAS

Listo para Degustar

5th range:
cooked,
ready-to-eat
foods.



The 'fifth range' and its influence on contemporary gastronomy

The evolution of the 'fifth range' has profoundly transformed the Spanish catering industry over recent decades. Initially associated with institutional catering, hospitals, educational establishments and catering services, technological advances have enabled it to achieve levels of quality that now place it within the most demanding gastronomic spheres.

Improvements in low-temperature cooking techniques, refinements in vacuum-packing and precise control of the cold chain have made it possible to preserve complex dishes whilst retaining much of their organoleptic qualities. As a result, many restaurants now use 'fifth range' systems to organise production, ensure consistent service and optimise resources without compromising culinary quality.

In Spain, leading figures in contemporary gastronomy have contributed to the spread of these technologies, promoting a more technical and professional approach to food preservation and regeneration processes. Far from replacing traditional cooking, the 'fifth range' serves as a tool that enables high-quality culinary creations to be preserved and adapted to the logistical requirements of modern catering.

In conclusion

The classification of food into categories is a useful tool for understanding the evolution of food preservation and processing systems. From fresh 'first-range' products to 'fifth-range' ready-to-eat meals, each category meets specific needs relating to safety, preservation, distribution and convenience of consumption.

Far from establishing hierarchies of quality, the different tiers reflect the diversity of technological solutions developed to ensure access to safe food that is suited to contemporary lifestyles. Understanding this allows us to better appreciate the processes involved between production and consumption, as well as to understand the close relationship between technological innovation and gastronomic development.

Domingo Jesús Álvarez Zambrano

Culinary Director, GEBIDEXSA
Academician of the AEXG



SIGNED BY
Fernando Valbuena

Detail from the painting
"The absinthe drinker" by
Viktor Oliva, 1901.
Absinthe was nicknamed
'the green fairy' or
'the green devil'.



Death in the afternoon

The world is full of rubble. Sometimes, if fortune smiles, it survives long enough to become an antique. Antiquities that got unlucky. Yesterday I came across two of those little spoons the human mind devised for diluting absinthe. Neat absinthe is no joke. A sheer vertical wall fit only for suicides. Its many degrees of alcohol call for water... and its bitterness for sugar.

A flat, perforated spoon placed over a glass of absinthe would hold a sugar cube (another relic of the past) over which ice-cold water was slowly dripped, one drop at a time. Some people, eager to lend the ritual an infernal warmth, would first set the sugar alight, which, incidentally, burns quite well with a couple of drops of absinthe. With two drops of absinthe, almost anything burns well. The original stuff –the one made by Swiss nuns–, hovered around eighty proof degrees. Everything else came from the aromas of the holy trinity of botanicals: anise, wormwood and fennel.

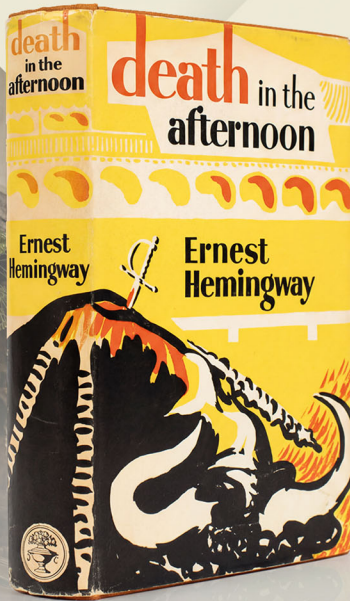
There was a time when people claimed that wormwood caused not only an intensely bitter flavor but also severe mental deterioration. That Van Gogh cut off his ear because of all the absinthe inside him; that some French farmer murdered his two children in an absinthe-fueled frenzy... Much to the dismay of bohemians of every stripe, absinthe was gradually banned throughout the world in the early twentieth century. In Switzerland as much as in the United States. Within a few years it went from being France's best-selling spirit to a symbol of dipsomania. Absinthism, what a curious word. One word, and two perforated spoons. Both for absinthe.

The background features "Jane Avril", one of the famous posters by Toulouse-Lautrec, the most important visual chronicler of the Belle Époque.

Absinthe
little spoon



Ernest Hemingway
enjoying the
Spanish festivities.



As the icy water fell, the essential oils of the botanicals—soluble in alcohol—ceased to be so, and the mixture clouded over, producing enchanting opalescent swirls. **Wilde** claimed that **absinthe had the color of sunset**. At least once it ceased to be green and became **magically cloudy**. Perhaps rather like Wilde himself. From Chelsea tea to the absinthe of Saint-Germain-des-Prés. Absinthe, sugar, and ice water in free fall.

Absinthe had **poets** as well as enemies. And not only French ones. It spans the distance from Baudelaire to Hemingway. For **Baudelaire**, absinthe was **the poison of green eyes**, the green of a lover's eyes. **Hemingway**, less inclined to poetic flourishes, **allowed himself to be poisoned in peace**.

In truth, he came to Europe to be poisoned: **by absinthe and by bulls**. With a strange vitality. A vitality under shifting clouds. Forever grappling with himself.

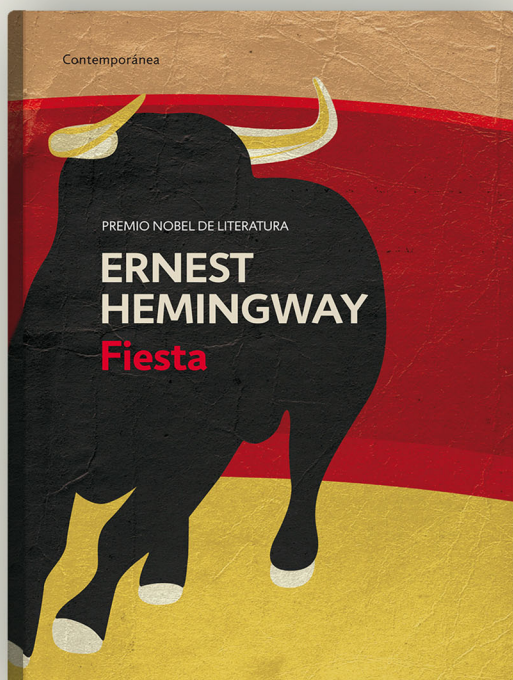
In **Spain**, absinthe was never banned. Bullfighting was, but only briefly. Hemingway knew little about bulls, yet that did not prevent him from writing a delightful treatise on bullfighting, aptly titled **Death in the afternoon**. A treatise about death and the courage required to face it. Published in 1932, it is not a novel but an essay. **It is**, like the man himself, **both dazzled and dazzling**.

Three years later—so the story goes, while in **Cuba** after an afternoon at sea—his imagination produced a curious cocktail. Americans have a tendency to mix foreign ingredients with ease, free from the scruples of Europeans and the shackles of millennia-old, mummified traditions. A publisher back home had asked him to contribute to a book collecting the favorite cocktails of a handful of celebrities. **Mr. Ernesto** devised a mixture which, using his own materials, he called **Death in the afternoon**.

A hypothetical meeting in a
Parisian café – thanks to AI –
between **Baudelaire**, **Van
Gogh**, **Wilde** and **Hemingway**.

Hemingway

Antonio Ordóñez alongside Hemingway in the bullpen. ElMundo.es.



The recipe is as simple as it is beautiful. Halfway between Paris and Pamplona. Like an echo of The Sun Also Rises. An echo of his Roaring Twenties.

Take note: one part absinthe to three parts champagne. The champagne should be chilled and dry, making the opalescence of the mixture, if possible, even more beautiful. Pour it slowly, the way waves move when they are in love. Dry, bitter, powerful and yet fiercely refreshing... tragically alcoholic.

He took his own life on July 2. On his bedside table lay tickets for the Pamplona bullfights and his airline tickets. Antonio Ordóñez was due to appear on July 10, fighting bulls from the Viscount of Garcigrande's ranch; the following day, the matador from Ronda would face bulls from the Marquis of Villamarta.

Death, and the courage required to face it.

Cheers!

Fernando Valbuena

Academician of the AEXG





HARMONIES

by Rafael Ansón

The basic elements of quality tourism

For a long time, it was thought that a country's success in tourism depended primarily on the richness of its landscapes, the beauty of its monuments or the uniqueness of its cultural heritage. Today we know that these factors are essential, but not sufficient.

Quality tourism is the result of a combination of elements that must work together harmoniously. An extraordinary destination can fail if it is difficult to reach. An exceptional heritage site loses its competitiveness if it lacks adequate accommodation. A city brimming with cultural attractions will struggle to establish itself if it lacks a catering sector capable of meeting the expectations of the contemporary visitor.

In my view, there are three fundamental pillars upon which quality tourism is built: connectivity, the hotel sector and the hospitality sector. All of this is underpinned by two essential conditions that form the backdrop to any competitive destination: safety and the quality of healthcare services.

Connectivity: to exist is to be accessible

In today's world, a tourist destination truly exists only when it is easy to reach. Air, rail and road connectivity have become one of the key factors in competitiveness. It is not enough simply to have something interesting to offer: visitors must be able to get there quickly, comfortably and at reasonable prices.

A particularly positive example in Latin America is the city of Madrid. Its international airport has become one of Europe's major hubs, providing easy connections to North America, South America, Europe and the Caribbean. As a result, Madrid has now greatly increased its appeal to tourists and businesses.





Conversely, there are numerous destinations of immense heritage value where connectivity remains inadequate. The Petén region, home to the extraordinary Mayan archaeological heritage, possesses exceptional tourism potential, but difficulties in access and limited international connections have hampered its tourism development for years.

The conclusion is simple: tourist appeal generates interest, but connectivity generates visitors.

The hotel industry: the art of hospitality

The second pillar is the quality of the hotel offering. Today's traveller seeks experiences, but also comfort, professionalism and safety. Hotels are not merely places to sleep; they form an essential part of the tourist experience.

In this regard, Cancún stands as one of the most successful examples in Ibero-America. In just a few decades, it has managed to develop a world-class hotel infrastructure capable of catering to a wide range of market segments, from family tourism to luxury tourism.

In contrast, cities with extraordinary cultural attractions, such as Sucre, still have more limited hotel capacity for certain highly discerning international segments. This is not a lack of tourist appeal, but rather an opportunity for improvement to boost their competitiveness.

Hotel quality is a strategic investment, as it largely determines the visitor's overall satisfaction.

The hospitality sector: gastronomy as a driving force behind travel

The third pillar is the hospitality sector. For many years, gastronomy was regarded as a complement to travel. Today, it has become one of the main motivations for travel. Spain is probably the best example of this transformation. It is fair to say that a very significant part of our leadership in tourism is linked to the quality of our cuisine, our restaurants and our produce.

More and more travellers are choosing a destination because they wish to discover its culinary culture. Cuisine has become one of the most comprehensive expressions of a people's identity.

In Latin America, for example, Lima is one of the most striking examples. The city has successfully turned its extraordinary culinary wealth into a powerful tool for international promotion.

Its cuisine attracts visitors from all over the world and projects a modern, creative and appealing image of the country.



$$et = q + \text{star} + \text{building} + \text{hospital} + \text{lock} + \text{pill} + \text{pill}$$

Safety and healthcare: essential prerequisites

These three pillars can only be sustained on two essential foundations. The first is safety. No destination can establish itself if visitors perceive risks to their personal safety or their property.

The second is the quality of healthcare services. Experience in recent years has shown that travellers increasingly value the availability of modern, accessible and effective medical facilities.

Destinations such as Madrid have fully grasped this reality and have made safety and the quality of healthcare key factors in building trust amongst residents and visitors alike.

A vision for the future

Spain has managed to position itself amongst the world's leading tourism destinations because it has successfully balanced these factors: connectivity, accommodation, hospitality, safety and healthcare.

Ibero-America possesses extraordinary natural, cultural and gastronomic resources. Few places in the world can boast such rich and attractive diversity. The challenge now lies in strengthening those elements that still limit its potential.

Because high-quality tourism does not depend solely on what a country has to offer. It depends, above all, on how it is able to make that accessible to the world.

And to achieve this, it is essential to understand that **excellence in tourism** is not the result of a single policy, but of a shared strategy in which **connectivity, hotels, gastronomy, security and healthcare** work together to offer travellers a memorable experience.

Rafael Ansón

Founding President and Honorary President of the Real Academia de Gastronomía



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