Gastronomic Heritage in Tourist Destinations:
Ambato – Ecuador’s Typical Dishes

O. Paredes-Ochoa,
Faculty of Engineering in Systems, Electronics and Industrial,
Technical University of Ambato, Ecuador.
E-mail: oswaldoparedes@uta.edu.ec.

D. Melo-Fiallos,
Faculty of Human Sciences and Education,
Technical University of Ambato, Ecuador.
E-mail: diegofmelof@uta.edu.ec.

M. García-Carrillo,
Faculty of Engineering in Systems, Electronics and Industrial,
Technical University of Ambato, Ecuador.
E-mail: marioggarcia@uta.edu.ec.

A.R. Guamán-Guevara,
Faculty of Human Sciences and Education,
Technical University of Ambato, Ecuador.
E-mail: adolfoguamang@uta.edu.ec.

N. Armas-Troncoso,
Faculty of Engineering in Systems, Electronics and Industrial,
Technical University of Ambato, Ecuador.
E-mail: natalyarmasta@gmail.com.

Abstract
Ambato is an Ecuadorian city, which has been considered as being one of the most important tourist destinations, it is located at the central part of Ecuador. It is widely characterized by its wide diversity of food, mainly the ones considered as traditional, which happen to be available for the enjoying of national and foreign tourists, which contributes to the economy of the province and the country. The main goal of this study is to present the results of the current situation of traditional food, in addition, a detailed description of the main dishes and the demand that each has, will be provided, in order to enhance the knowledge on the impact of the Gastronomy in relation to tourism.

Key Words: Gastronomy; Local Dishes, Gastronomy in Tourism; Tourist Destinations.
1. Introduction

In Ecuador, gastronomy presents a wide variety of grains and vegetables, which are produced in abounding lands, they are used for the preparation of several native dishes, which are enriched with its customs and traditions contributed by its neighboring regions that make up the country. (Salazar, 2013). In addition, it is important to understand the gastronomy as a set of cultural landscapes that go from the countryside to the markets and to the kitchens (Rio, 2017). Gastronomic tourism has gone from being included in cultural tourism, rural tourism and urban tourism to having its own entity (Fusté, 2016). In an attempt for a technical definition, it can be pointed out that gastronomic tourism is the visit to primary or secondary food producers, participation in gastronomic festivals and search of specific restaurants or places, where food tasting and all inherent experiences, are the main reasons to travel (Hall, 2002).

Ecuadorian cuisine is also known for being creole due to the mix of traditions of different races and cultures that occurred during the process of miscegenation. Typical gastronomy has important input that identifies the ambateños, not only due to the sale of products, but also because of the form of culinary preparation, that are considered as having ancestral traditions. This set of knowledge forms a cultural wealth that influences the moment that domestic and foreign tourists visit Ambato (Flores, 2016).

Ecuadorian gastronomy has been enriched by the mix of various cultures that are dispersed in the region, diversity of climates, variety of spices and products in existence. The Ecuadorian gastronomic supply goes from the classic fritada, ceviche and a diversity of other seafood dishes, a great selection of desserts, and the very famous food wraps, which include: tamales, humas and quimbolitos, that raise the culinary identity of each province (Salazar, 2013).

These typical dishes and the main ingredients vary depending on the natural conditions (Salazar, 2013). Restaurants and various gastronomic businesses, that have appeared in the public scene, offer "grandma's recipes", and they are treasured as an intangible good (Rio, 2017). The gastronomy Ambateña, is one of the most recognized in Ecuador (Coque, 2013).

Tourists might be able to travel without visiting a monument, national park or any type of place of interest, but not ever without consuming the typical or traditional dishes. It is safer to remember a city or a town, for its food than for the attractions they visited. Nowadays, there is an increasing number of tourists who travel to a place outside their destination only to taste typical food of a certain place.

In the latest decade, gastronomic tourism, has been elected as being the most eligible for having the greatest projections for the future, so much so that, thanks to this phenomenon, a totally new dynamic has been developed: gastronomic routes, culinary fairs, specialized wine tours, visits to local markets and finally, tastings in traditional food restaurants (Torres, 2003).
2. Background

Nowadays, tourism is increasingly inclined to be specialized, to satisfy the demand’s needs, gastronomic tourism is going head on to satisfy the new desires that are expected by the tourists, which have been growing faster and faster in dimension in the past years. There are tourists who "nourish” and others who "travel to eat”. It is possible to find people who travel to "experiment, taste and to try new flavors" (Torres, 2003), whether it be in restaurants, festivals or fairs, therefore, the way the tourist faces the local gastronomy and the intensity with which it affects his trip is decisive to understand gastronomic tourism, making its definition related to the value it has in its national food and culinary heritage: national, regional and local dishes; original foods; in other words, typical and traditional foods which contribute to strengthen the country’s identity and its tourism development (Salazar, 2013).

The economy of the province of Tungurahua revolves around the canton Ambato, with agriculture and livestock as its main economic activities and whose production is mainly for local, regional and national consumption. The main crops which are included are: wheat, barley, corn, potatoes, oats, tomatoes and onions. The most visited tourist and gastronomic cluster spots are: Quinsapincha, Pinllo, Ficoa, Atocha, Izamba, Pelileo, Cevallos, Totoras, Salasaca and Picaihua. Among the most representative dishes we can highlight: yahuarlocro, broth, hornado, llapingachos, fritada, caldo de teinta y uno (31), rabbit, guinea pig and roasted chickens, tortillas, colada morada with empanadas, sugar cane juice and pumpkin arepas.

Ambato, capital of the province of Tungurahua, is known as “the land of flowers and fruit”, nickname given due to the great variety of fruits that it produces, among the main and most emblematic of the region are claudia and peaches (Salazar, 2013). Previous research concludes that there is a shortage of knowledge in culinary preparation, because of the loss of the methodology used in the preparation of the different typical dishes, since they are mostly transmitted from parents to children or between family groups.

Through some educational institutions of a technical and technological nature in the culinary field, it has been possible to strengthen the value of the gastronomic identity in the city, by means of sonorous and video conferences, encouraging the stimulation in instructors and students, that allow to strengthen the meaning of gastronomy through workshops to expand the information obtained, with emphasis on the importance of staying and using the preparation of the ambateña gastronomic tradition.

Many countries have achieved large-scale tourism development, with great emphasis in the gastronomy department, as a generator of economic income and promotion of new tourist destinations (Perez, 2010).
Ambato is a city that has been favored by its own and strangers, due to the kindness of its people, its cultural legacy, thanks to illustrious citizens like the three Juanes and their historical homes (quintas), the presence of beautiful landscapes, fantastic natural places, tranquility and gastronomic variety; which have caused countless souls to be attracted by their magic and traditions, generating tourism that is internationally recognized (Perez, 2010).

3. Methodology

The data used in this research was collected from a survey applied to the population made up of domestic and foreign tourists, food vendors and local consumers. The sample number of people surveyed was calculated with a formula that focuses on a finite population, where approximately 97% of the people surveyed were local and regional tourists.

Respondents were selected randomly and systematically, with a variation in the days, hours and sites frequented by tourists, for the application of the pre-established questionnaire which was made up of 10 multiple choice questions, grouped in 3 blocks: the influence of gastronomy in the tourism, current situation of the gastronomy in Ambato and finally, the sociodemographic profile of the people surveyed.

The methodology used is the case study of the traditional foods in Ambato, will have a quantitative and qualitative approach and a modality of bibliographical and field study.

– The qualitative approach seeks to explain the reasons for the different aspects of such behavior, where we will analyze the typical dishes of Ambato from a descriptive and conceptual point of view.

– The quantitative approach is one that allows to examine the data in a scientific manner, or more specifically in a numerical representation, therefore, the results obtained from the surveys of 350 people (sample) are analyzed, on the current state of traditional gastronomy in Ambato.

– Bibliographic study consists of a collection of more detailed information of the main source that serve as a theoretical and scientific basis for the development of the mentioned project, i.e., for the present research, information from previous studies, books, internet and The Gastronomic Guide of Tungurahua were consulted.

The field study was carried out through direct research in places such as: restaurants, parks and markets of Ambato, to obtain information on the supply-demand and the current state of the gastronomy specifically from Ambato, to assess its impact on the territory, its nutritional value in the diet and in the social aspects that are generated.

4. Case Study

This section describes 12 examples of traditional gastronomic dishes from the Canton Ambato, which were obtained from the Tungurahua Gastronomic Guide. Among the typical dishes of the city of Ambato, are: llapingachos, which consists of tortillas made from potatoes, chorizo, fried eggs salad
and avocado, fritada, chinchulines, yaguarlocro, chicken hotpot, famous roasted hens and guinea pigs and bread from Pinllo. Ambato bread is very well known in the country since colonial times, due to its incomparable flavor (Rodriguez, 2011).

4.1 Llapingachos

![Llapingachos](image)

Source: Tungurahua Gastronomic Guide

The word llapingacho comes from the Quichua word "llapiy" which means to crush. It is a tortilla made with a preparation of crushed potatoes. The llapingacho is a dish that was initially consumed by people from highlands, because the potato is a highly appreciated in these areas due to its energetic qualities.

**Nutritional value:** Contains Carbohydrates (potato), proteins (Chorizo and egg), natural fats (avocado and peanuts).

4.2 Ficoa Guinea Pigs

![Guinea Pigs](image)

Source: Tungurahua Gastronomic Guide

The guinea pig is an emblematic animal when it comes down to the indigenous peoples’ way of cooking in the mountain range, it is roasted, although the indigenous and peasant communities prepared it, dozens of years ago, in soup or locro. Guinee pig is a type of rodent, which is a source of animal protein.
Nutritional Value: The guinea pig has a high protein value, can be an element of great importance to help solve hunger and malnutrition. This meat contains a lot of protein and zero cholesterol.

4.3 Morocho Empanadas

Figure 3 (c): Morocho Empanadas

Source: Tungurahua Gastronomic Guide

These peculiar and delicate empanadas, of pre-Columbian tradition were first made over 109 years.

Nutritional value: The morocho is a legume. Its caloric value is high because it contains carbohydrates and calcium. In all preparations, morocho is a food with high nutritional value, but must be consumed in moderation, due to the large quantities of oil used for frying.

4.4 Pinillo Bread

Figure 4 (d): Pincho Bread

Source: Tungurahua Gastronomic Guide

The bread of Ambato became famous for being: "well kneaded, well fermented and well cooked", a good bread must in its interior form eyes and whose crumb is crumbling easily.

Nutritional value: It is known to be high in caloric value and its nutritional contribution in fiber, potassium, phosphorus, iron, zinc, sodium, magnesium and carbohydrates.
4.5 Colada Morada and Empanadas de Viento

**Figure 5 (e): Colada Morada and Empanadas de Viento**

Colada morada is a delicious drink traditionally made in November, is now sold throughout the year in Atocha, changing its complementary side dish, rather than bread “guaguas”, empanadas de viento can be seen accompanying the colada.

**Nutritional value:** The main raw ingredient used to prepare this beverage is dried flour, which comes from corn. This is the most widely produced cereal in the world, due to its large amount of vitamin A, B1, B3, B9, C, iron, magnesium and potassium.

4.6 Gallinas de Pinllo

**Figure 6 (f): Gallinas de Pinllo**

This creole hen is served with potatoes and peanut sauce. The hen has become a tradition of the parish of San Bartolomé de Pinllo.

**Nutritional value:** It is recommended as part of a soft diet, because of its easy digestion, provides optimal protein value, in addition to vitamins B, B6, B9, B3, phosphorus, potassium, magnesium, iron and fats.
4.7 Juice and Shakes

Figure 7 (g): Juice and Shakes

Source: Tungurahua Gastronomic Guide

More than four decades have gone by since we started to sweeten. A variety of juices and shakes have been developed, such as: "happy juice" with avocado, naranjilla and coconut, or "levanta muertos" (revives the dead) with alfalfa, spinach, bacon and malt, "noche de luna" with beer, quail eggs and borojó, "punch of bride"; and, the traditional milkshakes of guanábana, coconut with mora, mango and babaco.

**Nutritional value:** Practically, all the juices that are sold in diverse localities, are made with more than one fruit. Milkshakes carry milk and sometimes egg and / or malt; due to this reason, they are considered to be of great nutritional value.

The combination of fruits and dairy, these "nutribatidos", as they have been cataloged, are a source of vitamins and proteins. They are ideal for balancing the organism. Alfalfa juices are a world apart from the rest of the other juices due to the iron and folic acid content they contain.

4.8 Corn tortillas with Chochos Tinapa

Figure 8 (h): Corn tortillas with chochos tinapa

Source: Tungurahua Gastronomic Guide

This peculiar business is approximately 80 years old. Delicious and delicate tortillas, also called "nylon tortillas" because of the soft texture of the dough. Its taste is unique, you can taste the exquisite aroma of corn and cheese, which melt in your mouth. These are served accompanied by tinapa, which
takes its name from the use of these small sardines and chochos which make this dish the perfect fusion.

**Nutritional Value:** Corn flour has a high carbohydrate content; in addition, it is rich in calcium, fiber and potassium, low in fat and sodium. It is considered that of the daily nutritional requirements, the corn tortilla provides approximately 45% of calories, 39% of proteins and 49% of calcium. For their part the pips represent nutritionally, a food full of protein, fat, iron, calcium and phosphorus. It is suitable for growing children, pregnant or lactating women.

4.9 Ficoa Ice Cream

![Ficoa Ice Cream](image)

Source: Tungurahua Gastronomic Guide

Ambato has always been known for its great fruit production, since as far back as colonial times, when the Spanish brought different European fruit seeds, with which they made ice cream. Within its range of flavors, you can taste the following: vanilla with blackberry, vanilla with strawberry, vanilla with chocolate, coconut, blackberry, taxo, rum raisins, avocado, fig, chocolate, among others.

**Nutritional value:** The variety of fruits used in the manufacturing of Ficoa ice cream, make them a source of vitamin C and minerals like iron, which help maintain the neurological state. The presence of dairy, milk and cream, add even more its nutritional value for the calcium they provide.

4.10 Chocolate Ambateño

![Chocolate Ambateño](image)

Source: Tungurahua Gastronomic Guide
This chocolate has been made in this region for 10 years. The process that is used in its manufacturing is, roast in a clay pot and the manually mill with stones, then pass it through the hand mill.

**Nutritional value:** Nutrition experts recommend consuming one cup of chocolate a day, without excess, as part of a balanced diet. Thanks to its fiber and iron content, it is equivalent to an apple or a slice of whole wheat bread, which prevents diseases like colon cancer, fights cholesterol, protects from heart attacks and also produces the same well-being as a relaxation session.

### 4.11 Caldo de 31

**Figure 11 (k): Caldo de 31**

Source: Tungurahua Gastronomic Guide

This type of broth is really a soup with the entrails, legs, ears, head and bull genitalia. It has been prepared from colonial times. As most of, much of the population was indigenous, this type of food became popular and traditional, therefore these customs still exist today.

**Nutritional value:** The nutritional contributions of this broth are very beneficial for the body especially for the stomach. It is a dish rich in protein, fats, calcium, iron, vitamin A and C.

### 4.12 Yaguarlocro

**Figure 12 (l) Yaguarlocro**

Source: Tungurahua Gastronomic Guide

From the quichua word: Yaguara = blood, Locro = broth of potato, that is to say "broth of blood", usually food typical of the Ecuadorian Andes area. Soup of guts and wad of cow, accompanied by avocado, onion and fried blood (black pudding).
Nutritional Value: This dish is rich in protein, fat, calcium, iron, vitamin A and C.

5. Analysis and Discussion

From the survey used to determine the current state of the Ambato's typical gastronomy, the following results have been obtained and detailed.

Table 1: Typical Dishes Most Known and Consumed by the Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISH</th>
<th>Percentage, (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consumed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Llapingachos</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinee Pig</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empanadas de morocho</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinlo bread</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colada morada and empanadas de viento</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinlo Hens</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tortillas de maíz con tinapá de chochos</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ficoa ice-cream</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chocolate ambateño</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yahuarlocro</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caldo de 31</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juice and shakes</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Sociodemographic Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 25</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From 25 – 50</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 50</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technician</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher level</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most traditional dishes are known because they have high values in relation to the percentage. This means that most people know all the traditional dishes from Ambato, while the percentages of dishes consumed have medium and low values, this may be because many people know the dish, but do not consume them, possibly due to reasons such as cost, taste, preparation, among others.
Table 3: Frequency of Consumption of the Traditional Dishes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once a year</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many times during the month</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On weekends</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In relation to the frequency of consumption of the traditional food, it was determined that people enjoy these several times a month, especially on weekends when they meet with the family that visit tourist places and enjoy the gastronomy.

6. Conclusions

Ambato cuisine offers a wide gastronomic variety of typical dishes, which have a unique flavor, thanks to the great variety of ingredients used in its preparation, which can be found in different tourist places in the canton of Ambato.

The gastronomic heritage is one of the most recent and is included in the tourist destinations of Ambato and presents great potential as a key factor in the development of the sector.

It is necessary to have clear sources of information or tourist guides, to present all the gastronomic tourist destinations of the City and Province and that are available for domestic and foreign tourists.

References

A. Perez, “La gastronomía y su impacto turístico en la ciudad de Ambato provincia de Tungurahua en el periodo noviembre 2009 febrero 2010”.