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ORIGINAL

Rediscovering the original recipe for the “empanada sampedrana”

Redescubriendo la receta original de la empanada sampedranac

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ABSTRACT

This paper points out the rediscovery of a traditional preparation such as the empanada sampedrana, a native dish of the municipality of Sogamoso in the department of Boyacá, based on the knowledge of each of the sogamoseños households that prepare it during the festivities of San Pedro at the end of June. Within the exercise, the reason for its origin and the origin of each one of the ingredients that make it up, as well as the festivity that represents it, are evidenced. Due to its complexity when preparing it and the replacement of its ingredients, there has been a limited transmission of its knowledge and a decline in its commercialization, generating a disfigurement of the original recipe, even so, the new dynamics that its preparation acquires with the new generations are shown, but without losing sight of its essence.

Keywords: Empanada Sampedrana; Local Gastronomy; Local Culture; Traditional Recipe; Sogamoso.

RESUMEN

El presente artículo señala el redescubrimiento de una preparación tradicional como lo es la empanada sampedrana un plato autóctono del municipio de Sogamoso en el departamento de Boyacá, a partir de los conocimientos de cada uno de los hogares sogamoseños que la preparan durante las fiestas de San Pedro para finales del mes de junio. Dentro del ejercicio se evidencia su razón de origen y la procedencia de cada uno de los ingredientes que la integran, igualmente se da a reconocer la festividad que la representa. Debido a su complejidad a la hora de prepararla y el reemplazo de sus ingredientes, ha habido una limitada transmisión de su conocimiento y una decaída en su comercialización, generando un desfiguramiento de la receta original, aun así, se muestran las nuevas dinámicas que adquiere su preparación con las nuevas generaciones, pero sin perder de vista su esencia.

Palabras clave: Empanada Sampedrana; Gastronomía Local; Culture Local; Receta Tradicional; Sogamoso.

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INTRODUCTION

In the rediscovery and recreation of a traditional recipe, there is a tendency to perceive the traditional as something ancient that must be preserved in its composition, avoiding its expeditious modification. This has changed with the new generations that have permeated tradition, giving new dynamics to the value of the recipe, transcending from tradition to the needs and products accessible in modernity. In this way*, the Policy for the knowledge, safeguarding, and promotion of food and traditional cuisines in Colombia mentions:*

Culinary traditions are not crystallized or fixed in the past. However, as culinary culture is grounded in the tradition of the peoples, culinary practices change over time, travel from one place to another with migrating families, adapt to new productive contexts, and acquire regional and local particularities.[1]

In a more specific scenario is the empanada sampedrana, a traditional and typical recipe from the municipality of Sogamoso in the department of Boyacá, made during the San Pedro festival season at the end of June and with an origin that can vary for different reasons. This empanada represents different characteristics of the municipality both in its round and elevated shape, as well as in the number of ingredients that compose it; a typical element of this recipe is the conjugation between sweet and salty, which makes it a particular preparation for both tourists and locals during the development of the patron saint festivities.

The culinary heritage is something that represents each region and makes it unique; in the case of the municipality of Sogamoso, the empanada sampedrana is the dish that represents it from a long historical and collective process that has been the result of the knowledge transmitted mainly in the bosom of the sogamoseños homes and transmitted from generation to generation. "Each cuisine has its history and its own narrative, as well as a wealth of knowledge and practices that are transmitted in a living and direct way. Cooking is learned by doing".[1] Even so, this preparation shows an evaporation of its relevance in the face of commercialization and creation within the family due to the limited transmission of knowledge, mainly due to its complexity and the supplanting of ingredients that have disfigured the original recipe, it is essential to indicate that within the families there is still a feeling of rootedness and history that become motivation at the moment of continuing with the legacy and preparation of this empanada every year.

The empanada sampedrana in this document is dated from three specific moments; in the first instance, it is valued from its origin approaching its possible precursor; secondly, it is recognized as the festivity that represents it; and finally, the ingredients that integrate it are related from the analysis of six different recipes that were found between July 2023, this gives way to the understanding and the reason of being of the empanada sampedrana.

METHOD

As part of the methodology from a mainly descriptive dynamic, a bibliographic search was initially carried out; later, due to the limitation of the information, a convenience sampling was used, which consists of choosing for the sample of a study those individuals who are more within reach and convenient for the research.[2] As part of the research on the sampedrana empanada, a group of people from Sogamoso's villages who make and sell the recipe were sought among the population, who voluntarily participated in the development of the interviews where they provided information on the origin, form, products that make up the recipe, how long they have been making the empanada and if they will transmit this knowledge to future generations to continue with the tradition of the sampedrana; besides knowing if they continue preparing it for longer or only during the festivities of San Pedro. Likewise, an analysis of six preparations was carried out where measures, weights, and ingredients were established to create a comparison matrix of the preparation that will be found in the development of the paper.

Approach to the Empanada Sampedrana, the origin of the récipe

In recognizing the origin of the empanada, two moments are maintained, first from the theory with the support of secondary sources and later validation using semi-structured interviews that gave way to the discourse from those who know the tradition. From the theoretical analysis, it is essential to mention how limited the information related to this recipe is and that the sources that date on it are news-type documents that have tried to publish relevant information on this tradition.

This dish, known as empanada sampedrana, was born as a tribute to the first Pope, Saint Peter, one of the first apostles who followed Jesus and who was given the responsibility of leading the first Roman church. It is recognized primarily as a gastronomic tradition of the families of the sectors of La Playita, La Reforma, Monquirá, La Florida and Santa Ana Mochacá - villages of the municipality of Sogamoso - that for more than 100 years have prepared this mixture, especially for the festivities of June, according to the Boyacá 7 Días newspaper (June 28, 2020, para. 2). In itself, this is the only accessible information dating back to the recipe and coincides with publications in newspapers such as El Tiempo and El Diario, among many other publications on social networks such as Facebook and Tik Tok.

On the other hand, according to the sources related in the semi-structured interviews among the participants, a tentative date of the beginning of the tradition dating between 100 to 115 years is mentioned where said recipe appeared mainly in the Mochacá neighborhood, exactly in intermediations of La Pilita de la Unión de Mochacá, which gave way to its propagation, as it was the access point to the Monquirá district since Mochacá was the obligatory passage to this district and from there the preparation spread to the rest of the municipality (S. Guevara, personal communication, July 6, 2023). Some authors and experts learned and replicated the knowledge of Sandra Guevara's ancestors, who took part in the study and still maintain the preparation to date.

As the recipe's author, a name coincides with and obeys Mrs. Emelina Barrera, one of the precursors of the Sampedrana empanada in Sogamoso more than 80 years ago, according to Mrs. Aura Acevedo. "[Mrs. Emelina] lived upstairs in the second cholera and she made them since she was tiny and taught them to other people" (A, Acevedo, personal communication, July 5, 2023). Continuing

with the story, according to the publication of Boyacá 7 días:

(...) the empanada allowed people not to get drunk so easily with chicha in the sector of La Playita, in the southeast of Sogamoso. She learned to prepare the empanadas from her grandmother, Doña Telésfora, and they used to prepare them for the festivities of San Pedro" *(With a salt and sweet empanada Sogamoso pays homage to San Pedro, June 28, 2020).*

Although the origin of the empanada is very uncertain, and there is no knowledge of who created the preparation for the first time, as well as its seasonal origin prior to the municipality, its singular resemblance to the *Coyotes de Hermosillo*, native of the Mexican pastries, is not unknown. Unlike the empanada sampedrana, the coyotes are usually made with pumpkin candy, which especially shares the braiding of the dough and its particular round and protruding shape. Regarding the date of elaboration of this preparation, it is understood in the words of those who know that this tradition goes back to making it only for the festivities of San Pedro and that as it spread among the families of Sogamos, it became more famous until it reached a point where it represents part of the rural area of the southeast of the municipality.

Figure 1. Empanada sampedrana (Sogamoso) and Coyotas de Hermosillo (Mexico)

The origin of the Festivities

The Feasts of St. Peter are known as one of the most representative celebrations that are usually held every year in different regions of Colombia along with the Festivities of St. Paul, which commemorate the death of these two saints, and these celebrations show considerable similarities to those made to the Virgin Mary in their different representations around the country. These festivities of St. Peter and St. Paul are celebrated in June, and "this event was declared as cultural heritage of the nation, for being a day in which believers of the Catholic faith recognize the virtues of the two apostles" commemorating the two apostles who died on the same day and are also considered patrons of Rome and representatives of the gospel.

These festivities in the framework prior to the Patron Saint Festivities of the Municipality of Sogamoso held in July, become the prelude, not only of the tradition they have but also recognize and economically impact the territory thanks to the number of tourists who come to know the municipality and the attractive elements around it—concentrating on the gastronomic tradition that includes the empanada sampedrana, which in the years following the pandemic has increased in its purchase and order.

Although the consumption and reservation of this preparation has reached more of the public, a large part of the inhabitants of Sogamoso are not aware of this characteristic dish, as well as the periodicity of the same and the Empanada Sampedrana Route that has been promoted since 2019 by the Municipal Mayor's Office and the Community Action of Monquirá. During the tracking of the preparation in the central area, elusive comments were evidenced in front of the preparation or tacit ignorance of it, others very hand in hand with the projection of a new order for it to be elaborated and others with the assertion of waiting a year again to market them. Another element of evaporation of the recipe obeys the traditional way in which it is prepared; among the makers found in the destination, there are discrepancies in the ingredients used in the preparation; in some of these creations, it is chosen to remove some ingredients or to add more, to vary sizes of the same so that people consume them and take them. However, this demonstrates that the empanada is not equal to those made in the past, and its authentic preparation is lost.

Ingredients that make up the Sampedrana Empanada

The preparation of the sampedrana empanada is characterized by the diversity of ingredients that compose it and the peculiar sweet-salty relationship that identifies it, with approximately seven to nine ingredients in its composition. Regardless of the variation that the preparation itself has undergone, all of them have a dough based on wheat flour and butter that gives it its shape, and as an integral part, the following ingredients permeate it:

Rice

It is one of the oldest essential ingredients in the world and is an integral part of the recipe; whether in its presentation as white rice, with parsley, or with seasoning, its quantity varies according to the preparation. It is noted that "it began almost 10 000 years ago, in many humid regions of tropical and subtropical Asia."[3] The historian Fray Pedro Simón 1961 affirms that in the Magdalena

Valley in Colombia, there were sowings in 1580 in Mariquita (Tolima). In the municipality of Prado, it was cultivated 300 years ago, and in 1778, the Jesuits introduced it to San Jerónimo in the department of Antioquía (Historia del arroz, n.d.). It is currently present in all regions of Colombia, prioritizing the Caribbean region in the department of Córdoba.[4]

Chickpea

The chickpea is introduced to the sampedrana in its cooking free of seasonings; this ingredient is not typical of the municipality; in fact, it is recognized that "in the twentieth century archaeologists studied the cities of Hacilar and Catal Huyuk where they found the first traces of the domestication of the chickpea plant".[4] According to the above, it can be deduced that the chickpea originated in Turkey. Although it is not known by whom and in what year exactly it arrived in Colombia, it is known that the Spaniards brought it and that it is planted in three different departments: Cauca, Boyacá, and Cundinamarca.[5]

Chicken and Eggs

Chicken is one of the most popular products in Boyacan agriculture and makes up the recipe in its presentation in cubes, and half a boiled egg is added; it is mentioned that this animal had its origin in the Indian Valley in Asia more than 4000 years ago, and with commercial exchanges, it began to be distributed to Europe and Africa. Later, the Europeans brought it to the American continent and Colombia.[6] Within the country, a large part of the region produces these animals. These places produce the eggs: Cundinamarca, Santander, Valle del Cauca, Cesar, Eje cafetero, Antioquia, and Meta.

Pig

Everything indicates that the domestication of pigs, sheep, goats, and oxen occurred in Anatolia in Turkey once hominids settled.[7] It is one of the first animals consumed in the world; besides being descendants of wild boars, in the voyage of Christopher Columbus, it was the last animal brought to Cuba in 1493. In 1525, Rodrigo de Bastidas introduced 300 Extremeña Lampiña or pelada breed pigs to the Colombian department of Córdoba. From there, they began to produce Creole pigs.[7]

The leading pork producers in Colombia are the departments of Antioquia, Cundinamarca, Valle del Cauca, and Meta.[8] It reaches the preparation in its variation of bacon that complements the mix of ingredients that make up the preparation, a presentation very similar to the one used in the complement of the tamal cundiboyacense.

Apple

Apples came to Europe from the Middle East, and it was on this continent that it evolved thanks to the Greco-Roman culture. Hesiod, 800 years B.C. C already refers to the apple. In 2010, a study was carried out where it was established that the wild ancestor of the apple tree was the Malus sieversii; its origin is located in the Tien Shan mountains between Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and China. The Spaniards brought the apple fruit to America and spread it throughout the continent. Moreover, new varieties of apple trees were born thanks to grafting (Historia de las manzanas, n.d.).

Apple cultivation in Colombia has become an increasingly important agricultural activity. The introduction of this fruit in Colombia took place in the 1950s, mainly in the region of Antioquia and in the department of Boyacá. (Cultivos de manzana en Colombia, n.d.). This ingredient gives the sweet component to the preparation, and the so-called water apple is used, which has a higher glucose content. This is caramelized before incorporating it into the preparation.

Carrot

The carrot is native to Central Asia and the Mediterranean. It has been cultivated and consumed for centuries by Greeks and Romans. During the first years of its cultivation, carrot roots were purplish; from 1700, only its leaves and seeds were consumed. The English introduced the carrot in America in the 17th century, and quickly, on this continent, they began cultivating carrots.[9] Cundinamarca, Boyacá, Antioquia, Nariño, Valle del Cauca, Norte de Santander, Tolima, Caldas, Cauca, Cesar, Santander, and Caquetá are the central carrot-producing departments in Colombia.

Parsley

It is native to the eastern Mediterranean from the island of Sardinia, spreading to all Mediterranean countries (Parsley, n.d.). It was introduced in England and America in the sixteenth century with the first settlers' arrival. It is present in the Caribbean area of Colombia, but it can occur anywhere.[10] It complements the preparation as a seasoning for chicken or rice.

Sugar

In ancient times, more than 5000 years ago, sugarcane was already considered a food plant in New Guinea, and from there, it was traded to India, and merchants transported it to the Asian continent. From India, it went to China and the Near East, where it found a suitable climate, and from there, it spread to other continents.

Sugarcane reached the American continent in 1493, and the first plantations were in Santo Domingo, from where it reached the rest of the Caribbean (Historia del azúcar: origen y expansión, n.d.). Currently, sugarcane crops are found in Valle del Cauca, Cauca, Meta, Caldas, Risaralda, and Quindío. For the particular case of the empanada, sugar "paints" the preparation and is part of the final presentation, with a toasted sugar shell complementing the initial sweetness of the caramelized apple.

RESULTS

To trace and obtain the ingredients for the preparation, access was gained to the study of six recipes present in the municipality, obtained in July 2023. All the preparations were acquired directly from their producers, and a detailed review of each was allowed to extract ingredients in distribution and weight. It is important to note that the sampedrana empanada is more significant than a conventional empanada, making it more than a snack; it is usually shared due to its large size and the ingredients that make it up.

Figure 2. Empanadas Sampedranas selected for study, traditional presentation

The additional ingredients present in some of the preparations were also determined among the participants in the study: (1) Bambi Bakery, traditional since 1983 in the municipality of Sogamoso, and which markets the empanada only during the festive season. (2) Chaplin's Once Salon, present in front of the municipal library, offers the empanada in a miniature version, omitting several ingredients and preparing the traditional recipe only by order. (3) Bee Tochua, an establishment in the Monquirá village, commercializes the empanada all year round. (4) La Horqueta, the most popular place of sale and preparation in the Monquirá village, commercializes only in the June and July seasons and by order. (5) Miguel Gourmet commercializes the product all year round. Moreover, (6) Sandra Guevara prepares the recipe to order in her Sandra Factory enterprise.

Table 1 below lists each of the empanadas analyzed. The base ingredients previously presented are named with a specific shading, and the additional findings present in part of the preparations are included, as is the case of raisins, caramelized pineapple, and sausage, among others.

In the comparison of each empanada, it was possible to highlight that rice is one of the fundamental products in each of the six empanadas analyzed, together with chickpeas, pork, chicken, and eggs, since these foods are recurrent in each of the six empanadas analyzed. Ingredients such as parsley, carrot, and apple, which stood out among the main ingredients, differ in several presentations, as in the case of Bambi (1), which omits this sweet ingredient but adds raisins and pineapple, being the only preparation with this variation.

Table 1. Comparison of the ingredients of each of the empanadas sampedranas participating in the study

#	Participant	Ingredients																
		Mass	Sugar	Rice	Cumin	Parsley	Chickpea	Pig	Chicken	Longaniza	Tocineta	Bacon	Sausage	Egg	Carrot	Apple	Grape	Raisin	Pineapple
1	Bambi	X	X	X			X	X	X	X				X		X	X		X
2	Chaplin's	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X					
3	Bee tochua	X	X	X		X	X	X	X			X	X	X					
4	La Horqueta	X	X	X		X	X	X	X				X	X	X	X			
5	Miguel Gourmet	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X	X				
6	Sandra Guevara	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X			X	X	X			

Despite the importance of apples in the preparation, only three of the six recipes keep them in their caramelized presentation; curiously, the sweet element must be included in the preparations marketed throughout the year. Table 2 contains the grams and weight distribution of each recipe analyzed:

Regarding grammage, representative variations were found among the ingredients implemented and the quantities, wherein in all the preparations, these weights are proportional. An exceptional case is presented in test number two, Chaplin's, which is the only preparation in small presentation compared to the others, with a total weight of 153 grams and a diameter of 6 centimeters.

The diameter of the other samples ranges between 11 and 15 centimeters representatively. Sample three is fascinating: Bee tochua, which has the highest total weight but a total mass of 210 grams, meaning that more than 70 % of its composition is only dough, followed by rice, protein, and chickpea.

Table 2. Grammage of the ingredients of each preparation and total weights - sampedranas empanadas

#	Participant	Ingredients[1]														
		Mass	Rice	Chickpe	Pig	Chicken	Longaniz	Tocineta	Bacon	Sausage	Egg	Carrot	Apple	Raisin Grape	Pineappl	Total, Gramos
1	Bambi	154	8	8	8	36	11				1/2[2]		12	16	2	283G
2	Chaplin's	70	43	3	11	3	9	7			1/4[2]					153G
3	Bee tochua	210	68	12	9	33			2	9	3					357G
4	La horqueta	134	68	15	28	27				10	1	1	5			334G
5	Miguel Gourmet	166	70	21	7	41	6				3					324G
6	Sandra Guevara	115	41	24	16	14		21			1/4[2]	7	28			267G

1. The following ingredients: sugar, cumin and parsley do not appear in the table because the exact weight could not be obtained.
2. This measure obeys to unit, not grams.

The preparation that is closest to the original recipe is due to test six, Sandra Guevara, which has the least amount of dough (115 grams) in representation of those of the same size and a uniform distribution of the other ingredients present in the recipe with a total weight of 257 grams and a diameter of 15,2 cm.

On the other hand, the shape of the empanada is a topic entirely unknown to the preparers of this recipe since only some have the reason for its shape or only say that it is because of the amount of ingredients it contains inside.

The analysis of the ingredients found shows that most of them belong to the municipality and are present in the region. This demonstrates that the empanada is a very typical food of the municipality not only because of its shape and origin but also because of all the ingredients that are part of it.

CONCLUSIONS

The empanada sampedrana is a product that, although it represents the municipality, it is necessary to approach the tradition, as well as to understand the reasons why it is made, besides spreading it more among the residents and visitors using its original ingredients so that the tradition is not lost, in the same way, that the people who buy them are not satisfied with any presentation that is offered to them.

It is also essential to understand those feelings that are transmitted when making this preparation since it has a great work of elaboration. It is not only to make one more empanada and add the ingredients that are requested but to give a special treatment to each part of the recipe since each ingredient has a previous cooking before integrating them into the dough of the empanada and giving them that touch of salty and sweet that represents it so much.

Likewise, access to the few places that could be visited was difficult since the only way to get there was by car, and it was not possible to walk there because of the long distances between places, besides the orientation in the place when traveling the route of the empanada Sampedrana is confusing.

Even so, some people who agreed to give their opinion mentioned that they usually made the empanada to order, which lost customers and the knowledge that more places sell these empanadas. Since they do not have easy access to them, it is not easy to acquire them for consumption.

By making the empanada separately, it is possible to see the work involved in cooking each ingredient separately, as well as how to make the dough and the reason why the oven has to have an exact temperature so that the empanada is just proper and does not burn or taste different from the traditional preparation.

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AUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTION

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