

 **Naturaleza
y Sociedad**
Desafíos Medioambientales

Regional Cuisines and Natural Heritage: Questions, Initiatives, and Challenges

GUEST EDITORS

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Objective

This thematic issue aims to present, from multiple perspectives, an analysis of research, initiatives, and innovative tools on regional food and cuisines as a driver for biodiversity conservation in Latin America and the Caribbean. We invite all interested authors, including representatives of Indigenous peoples and communities, to submit their contributions.

Key descriptors: academia, food biodiversity, regional cuisines, food and culinary heritage, food sovereignty and sustainability, society

Theoretical framework

In Latin America, recent interest in valuing regional (community, ethnic, departmental, national) cuisines from a patrimonial perspective has led to the proliferation of initiatives promoted through multiple strategies and from varied perspectives. It means that, in different countries and in the voice of diverse actors, regional cuisines are considered something precious to be preserved because they represent a particular group and are part of its collective identity (Bak-Geller et al., 2019). Gastronomic heritage is, in this sense, a social and political construction of collective mem-

ory, the figures of an “us” and the “other,” which are reflected in a reasoned selection of ingredients, preparation techniques, and aesthetic elements, as well as in a historical narrative about the origins and authenticity of each cuisine.

Patrimonializing initiatives related to regional cuisines include the realization of academic events, gastronomic fairs, recipe books, workshops, competitions, meetings around the stove, and numerous publications of diverse nature around food cultures, among many others, which day by day motivate and invite us to reflect on the identity value of the phenomenon of food and cooking in different places in Latin America and the world in general (Asfora and Saldarriaga, 2012; Carolan, 2011).

However, we believe it is urgent to stop along the way and study the relationships woven between these initiatives and biodiversity conservation that sustain regional cuisines. To what extent has this patrimonializing euphoria contributed to improving the conditions of vulnerability of local species of plants and animals (Bak-Geller and Pasquier, 2020)? Is it possible to imagine that actors from the gastronomic field contribute to the knowledge of biodiversity and its conservation? What is the

role of chefs in promoting regional cuisines and endemic products? Are patrimonializing practices and discourses related to a *food justice* horizon (Cadieux and Slocum, 2015)? How to channel institutional heritage projects towards a valorization beyond the commercial and touristic aspects of food cultures? How to establish, from academic contexts, more effective dialogues with society so that addressing environmental challenges is really a shared and not a parallel agenda?

We consider it of great importance to reflect in this dossier on the role of heritage in valuing endemic ingredients throughout the value chain (production, procurement, preparation, distribution, waste management) and, in particular, on how these initiatives are linked to more sustainable lifestyles (Kuhnlein *et al.*, 2009; Van Esterick, 2006). This implies questioning the active role of various social actors in the selection and safeguarding of genetic material (Linares *et al.*, 2022; Organização Indígena da Bacia do Içana, 2018), promoting good practices of cultivation and food supply, encouraging the consumption of native or local varieties, or raising awareness of biodiversity loss on a long-term scale (Ramos Roca, 2014, 2019, and 2020; Ramos Roca and Castañeda, 2019), to mention just a few aspects.

Thus, this issue seeks to compile a series of multidisciplinary proposals that illustrate in the Latin American context the viability of projects we could consider successful in biodiversity conservation and the promotion of new interactions between humanity and nature or those that generate new uncertainties and problems to analyze.

Thematic strands

- Up-to-date thematic reviews or reflections derived from initiatives to promote and implement projects for biodiversity conservation that directly involve regional food and cuisines.
- Advances or research results that critically analyze and discuss alternatives to mitigate tensions between food, culinary heritage, and natural heritage.
- Academic discussions on the relationship between food and culinary heritage, natural heritage, and the impact of tourism on this relationship.
- Discussions on the impact that can be generated from the academia and in partnership with communities on the issue of regional food and cuisines as an engine for biodiversity conservation.

- Academic dissemination content that contributes to contemporary discussions on food biodiversity, the environment, and society.
- Results of research and/or concrete projects that deal with the relationship between food biodiversity, the environment, and society.
- Research and/or project results that directly contribute to analyzing current problems on food security, food sovereignty, food biodiversity, and the environment.

Types of content

The types of content received for this *dossier* include:

- **Research article.** Original articles that present research advances or results. They can propose replicable models; develop theoretical, experimental, historical, empirical-quantitative analyses, etc.; or present qualitative case studies.
- **Balance.** Articles that develop up-to-date thematic reviews or reflections in a specific field of research.
- **Document, debate.** Analytical writings that promote academic discussions from different perspectives. They can offer interpretations or

analysis of articles published by this journal or other journals on related topics.

- **Dialogues.** Academic dissemination articles that contribute to contemporary discussions on nature, the environment, and society. They are aimed at diverse audiences since they seek to encourage dialogue on topics of broad interest to academics and other audiences. **Types:** Interview, presentation, short reflection article, working document, partial research results, photo essay, commented exhibitions, and others. **Formats:** Textual or multimedia.

Submission

Information on the journal's editorial process and the guidelines for preparing and submitting a proposal are available at: <https://revistas.uniandes.edu.co/index.php/nys/article-prep>. Submission must be sent via the journal's editorial management site: <https://revistas.uniandes.edu.co/index.php/nys/login>

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