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Traditional Food and Beverages of the Kichwa-Otavalo Indigenous People. Ecuador

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Abstract

*Ecuador has a wide cultural diversity. The Kichwa indigenous people show a richness in their cultural practices in the preparation of food and beverages that have persisted over time and are linked to their territory. This research identifies eighteen traditional foods and four beverages (three fermented and one non-fermented) within their culinary repertoire. These noted foods and beverages hold social and cultural value among the indigenous population. Most of these preparations have maize (*Zea mays*) as their main ingredient, alongside others such as *zambo* (*Curcubita ficifolia*), potatoes (*Solanum tuberosum*), fava bean (*Vicia faba*), mellocos (*Ullucus tuberosus*) and oca (*Oxalis tuberosa*). Certain beverages like *Champús*, *Chicha del Yamor* and *Chicha de Jora* are recognized for their significance in rituals, stemming from their worldview and pre-Hispanic colonial heritage. To conclude, this article presents a list of traditional foods and beverage that contribute to a healthy diet.*

Introduction

Traditional foods and beverage of indigenous peoples are part of the cultural identity of a community, people, region or country (1–3) and are related to local ecosystems and local food use (4). Traditional cuisine has been fundamental in the diet of our ancestors for thousands of years, and continues to be preserved by people who maintain and transmit from generation to generation the knowledge practiced in the material (farm, orchards, etc.) and immaterial (techniques and oral recipes) (5).

Traditional food is associated with healthy, nutritious, and convenient products (1,6); In addition, they happen to be affordable and sustainable, since they are produced locally (7). Therefore, traditional cuisines play an important role in the food security for households, communities, nationalities and nations (8). In contrast, most diets are no longer determined by locally and traditionally produced foods, but rather by current trends that aim to replace many of these foods with industrialized foods, marginalizing traditional food cultures and creating external food dependency (9).

Currently, among the Kichwa-Otavalo indigenous people, there have been changes in eating practices and habits, resulting in the substitution of some traditional food with others that are perceived to have higher social status but may provide lower nutritional value, for instance, fruit juices are consumed less frequently than carbonated beverages. The symbolism of food

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as a marker of social status is evident even during the Colonial and Republican eras of Ecuador, where foods such as potatoes and guinea pigs, closely related to indigenous cuisine, were relegated from the banquet menus served to the Liberator Simón Bolívar in 1822 (10).

On the other hand, the rise of a class of textile merchants⁶ indigenous transnationals throughout the last decades (11), the remarkable social and commercial success that the merchant indigenous people has acquired has created an attitude of superiority towards other rural indigenous communities. However, the indigenous people of the rural sector are considered “original peoples” due to the fact that they live in the communities and are more closely related to nature, customs and traditions. On the other side, the urban indigenous, due to the fact of traveling and interacting with a global world, adopt different customs (12) including the selection of foods and culinary preparations. Therefore, it is important and relevant to identify and document the traditional foods consumed by the *Otavalo* indigenous population.

In the culture of the Otavalo indigenous people, the food on the table is the result of harmonious relationships with Pachamama⁷. These relationships integrate knowledge, wisdom, sensitivity and values, based on community norms and reciprocity between the subjects (indigenous/deities); where Otavalo farmers show respect for Pachamama. They are not only aware of the lunar cycles⁸, seasonal changes, and other natural forces but also conceive themselves as integral agents within this complex system. This kind of agroecological and culinary knowledge connects them to nature and vice versa, particularly through sacred rituals and celebrations (13); Thus, for example, the consumption of Chicha⁹, it could be considered one of the oldest beverages in Latin America, in the current Ecuador, the first reports of Chicha production date back to 200 BC, before the establishment of the Incas in the region (14). In the Inca period, during the Coya Raymi festival, also written Killa Raymi or Kuya Raymi (in Kichwa "The Festival of the Moon", a symbol of femininity in the Andean worldview) it was a special beverage prepared for the *acllaconas* (virgins of the sun) (15).

Celebrations are the main setting for sharing food with family, neighbors, and friends; in the preparation of foods they are helped by the *mingas*¹⁰. Certain foods and the knowledge of specific culinary techniques become specialties of the locality. The transmission of transgenerational knowledge has been key to maintaining an ancestral food culture in Otavalo. Traditionally, elderly women within the indigenous community have been the primary bearers of knowledge regarding ingredients and culinary practices. Therefore, documenting this knowledge is vital to conserving, protecting and promoting the use of traditional foods. This study aimed to document traditional foods and beverages, culinary preparation practices, and their sociocultural roles in the Kichwa-Otavalo indigenous people.

⁶The *Kichwas-Otavalo* indigenous people belonged to the lowest scale of social hierarchies until the late 1940s. The “textile” fabric boom coincided with the increase in tourism at the end of the 1960s and at the beginning of the 1970s they were in great demand by tourists. By the 1980s, the Otavalo sought markets in Europe and the United States (30). In addition, achieving cultural recognition, currently the “Plaza de Poncho” is an artisan market in Otavalo and an important tourist destination nationally and internationally (31).

⁷*Pachamama*, Quechua word that translates as “Mother Earth”, a deity in Quechua culture.

⁸The Inca Empire reached a knowledge and understanding of natural phenomena (the periodic movement of the sun and the moon), this knowledge was useful for the social (solar calendar) and agricultural (lunar calendar) organization, establishing appropriate dates for the agricultural tasks of planting, watering, pruning and harvesting, and the celebrations that accompanied them (32). After the Spanish conquest, the lunar calendar is still used in the Andean worldview.

⁹*Chicha* or low-alcohol beer. Beverage traditionally prepared, derived from the spontaneous fermentation of cereal (mainly maize). They are associated with aboriginal communities of the Andes (33).

¹⁰For Luis Cordero, the term *minga* means “Invitation or treat for some job. (...) Meeting of people who work, eat and drink (...) [from] *Mingana*. Invite for some free work, in which the guests have to eat and drink ”(34). This is the central organizing principle of the traditional social structure of the Andes.

Traditional Foods: Approaches and Concepts

Based on culinary and gastronomic studies, the definition of the category "traditional cuisine" is of polysemic significance; In other words, it is loaded with various meanings and is also interrelated with various fields, such as: economics, sociology, anthropology, archaeology, etc.,(16).

Food constitutes a fundamental component of the social and ecological traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples, transmitted over the years. In this context, Nor et al. (17) stated that the transmitted attributes or knowledge include the use of ingredients, preparation techniques, cooking methods, utensils, and culinary skills.

The Dictionary of the Spanish Language (DLE) (18) defines "tradition", in its third meaning, as "doctrine, custom, etc., preserved in a people through the transmission from parents to children". In other words, it suggests the transmission of cultural elements, such as knowledge, techniques, know-how, representations, memory, and heritage, among others. Therefore, tradition means generational transmission (19). In this process of generational transmission, knowledge is the element to be transferred.

The definition of traditional foods has been the subject of several studies, and conceptualizing it has been complex and, at times, controversial. Nevertheless, there are several characteristics repeatedly mentioned or with similar meanings that define what constitutes a traditional food. For example, Gellynck and Kühne (20) defined traditional food products according to four criteria: (1) the production steps must be carried out in a specific area, which can be national, regional or local, (2) a local recipe (ingredient mix), origin of the material raw and/or production process, (3) having been on the market for 50 years and (4) being part of the gastronomic heritage. Guerrero et al. (21) from the perspective of traditional food consumers in six European countries, indicate that a traditional food product is a product prepared and consumed on specific celebrations and/or seasons, which is passed down from generation to generation, distinguished by its sensory properties and which are exclusive to a certain area, region or country. Also, the popularity within a specific region, an authentic way of cooking a relatively long history of consumption and production (22). Hsu et al., (23) suggest that traditional foods are related to specific cultural groups, a specific territory, local ingredients and recipes, and have been in use for over 25 years. Another author affirms that traditional cuisine comes from a popular root that is reproduced in 3 and 5 generations (24).

The most frequently reported characteristics to define traditional food are associated with place, people, time, and transgenerational transmission. Table 1 presents the different characteristics that various authors use to define traditional foods.

Therefore, the conceptualization of traditional food may generate different conceptual positions, which in turn converge in certain commonalities, such as the necessary resource for the transmission of culinary technical knowledge for the permanence of a preparation in current times, which in turn must be loaded with significance generates a sense of identity in a determined population, as long as traditional elements are maintained in the codification of the preparations considered traditional.

Table 1: Related Characteristics to Define Traditional Foods.

Author	Link/relationship	Temporality	Geographical space	Origin of ingredients	Origin of the recipe	Other aspects
(20)	–	50 years	Determined area (national, regional or local)	–	Authentic	It is part of the gastronomic heritage
(21)	Celebrations, specific seasons	–	Exclusive to a zone, region or country	–	–	Distinguished for its sensory properties
(22)	–	Long history	Popular in area or region	–	Authentic way of cooking	–
(23)	Cultural group/ethnicity	Used more than 25 years	Specific territory	Local	Local	–
(24)	–	3 to 5 generations (45 to 75 years)	Popular	–	–	–
(19)	Cultural significance (ritual and symbolic character)	25 years or a generation	Defined place, local, regional or national	–	–	Know-how. What? (raw material to use), How? (techniques and production processes), and Who? (person in charge of preparation)

Recognizing the importance of traditional foods in culture, heritage, health, and agroecology, the European Union has developed mechanisms that have been significant milestones in the European Quality Policy. Thus, in the European region a traditional food must keep three quality seals linked to the origin: Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) refers to an agricultural or food product that is produced, processed, and prepared in a defined geographical area; Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) describes a product that is produced and/or processed and/or prepared in a defined geographical area, and Traditional Specialty Guaranteed (TSG) refers to food products made with traditional or distinctive ingredients due to their traditional composition or process of production (19).

In Ecuador, there is a legal figure called “Especialidad Tradicional Garantizada” (ETG) registered in the Organic Code of the Social Economy of Knowledge, Creativity and Innovation (25), legal protection is granted to a type of agricultural or food product that has specific characteristics that distinguish it from others. These characteristics may include the use of traditional ingredients, a specific composition, or traditional methods of preparation or production. However, it is important to note that this protection is not linked to a defined geographical area, otherwise, the food will not be registered as ETG.

Methodology

Study Area

The study area is the Otavalo canton, located in the northwestern province of Imbabura in Ecuador, at an altitude ranging from 2,460 masl in the cantonal capital to the top of the

Imbabura volcanoes at 4,609 masl and Cotacachi at 4,944 masl. The altitudinal differences in the area have allowed for the existence of microclimates and ecological niches suitable to produce a variety of Andean crops.

The Otavalo indigenous people are one of the 15 indigenous peoples of the Kichwa Nationality in Ecuador, they are bilingual (Spanish-Kichwa¹¹ vernacular language).

Figure 1 shows the map of the study area with the nine rural parishes of the Otavalo canton; Eugenio Espejo, San Pablo del Lago, González Suárez, San Rafael, San Juan de Ilumán, Dr. Miguel Egas Cabezas, San José de Quichinche, San Pedro de Pataquí and Selva Alegre. It is important to mention that the rural area has a greater dependence on traditional food and beverages, and for the greater amount of indigenous population.

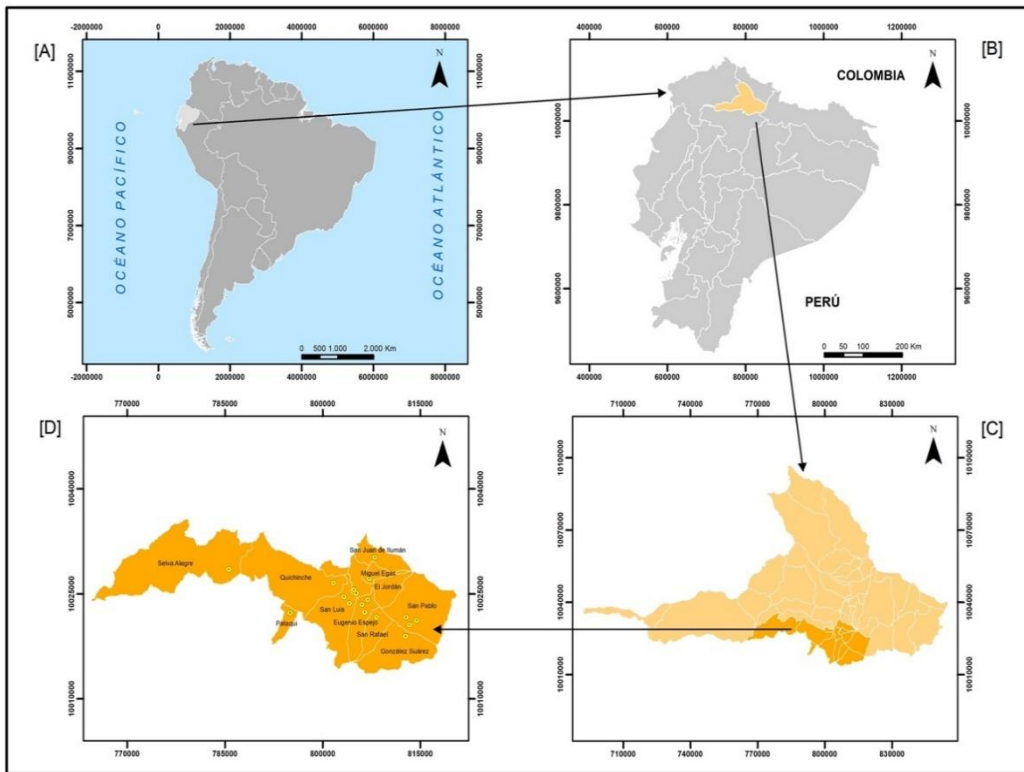


Figure 1: A. The Map of the Americas with the Country of Ecuador Clearly Marked on It. B. Map of Ecuador with the Province of Imbabura. C. The Map of the Otavalo Canton. D. The Map of the Rural Parishes of the Otavalo Canton, Places Where the Information was Collected.

Household Selection and Data Presentation

This study used semi-structured interviews to document traditional foods and beverages. The interview process was conducted by the main researchers and two students (postgraduate and Gastronomy degree from the Universidad Técnica del Norte) among June and September 2022, aimed at 44 informants identified by community leaders as having of a high knowledge

¹¹Kichwa is the language of the Otavalo indigenous people. It is known that it was not their mother tongue, in fact the Spanish at the time of the conquest used *Kichwa* as the correct language to put an end to the multiplicity of local languages. At present, most of the indigenous people are bilingual (*Kichwa*-Spanish). The *Kichwa* is also an important element to identify the indigenous (35)

in traditional foods and beverages. After obtaining their consent to participate in the study, the informants were asked to list and explain the type of traditional food and beverage they prepare at home, the method of preparation, the ingredients, the purpose of preparation, and the frequency of preparation. .

The data were analyzed by means of descriptive statistics and presented by percentages.

Results

Demographic Characteristics

The age of the respondents ranged from 25 to 95 years of age. Female respondents outnumbered males, with 38 women (86.4%) compared to 6 men (13.6%). All respondents were born in the study area. Table 2 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents.

Demographic variable	Category	N	%
Gender	Male	38	86,4
	Female	6	13,6
	Total	44	100
Age	25-45	6	13,6
	45-65	14	31,8
	65-85	22	50
	more than 85	2	4,5
	Total	44	100
Occupation	Farmer	36	81,8
	Trade	5	11,4
	Employee	3	6,8
	Total	44	100
Rural community	Eugenio Espejo	6	13,6
	San Pablo del Lago	5	11,4
	González Suárez	4	9,1
	San Rafael	5	11,4
	San Juan de Ilumán	6	13,6
	Dr. Miguel Egas Cabezas	5	11,4
	San Jose de Quichinche	5	11,4
	San Pedro de Pataquí	5	11,4
	Selva Alegre	3	6,8
	Total	44	100

N Number of Respondents, % Percent of Respondents.

Traditional Food and Beverages Prepared by Kichwa-Otavaló Indigenous People

In total, informants from the nine rural parishes of Otavaló described eighteen traditional foods and four traditional beverages consumed by the Kichwa-Otavaló indigenous people, according to their seasonal availability. The traditional foods and beverages, along with their main ingredients, culinary techniques, and preparation methods, are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Food and Beverages Identified by Name, Ingredients, and Method of Preparation.

	Traditional food/beverage	Main ingredients	cooking by	culinary technique
	Carnes Coloradas	Pork meat	fat	fry
	Chaguitanda	Maize	Wet/liquid	Steamed
	Colada de Churos	Maize, snail	Liquid	boiled
	Cuy Asado	Guinea pig	air/fat	roast
	Fritada	Pork meat	liquid/fat	Boiled/fried
	Habas Calpu	Fava beans	Dry / liquid	boiled
	Locro de Zambo	Zambo squash	Liquid	boiled
	Oca Cocinada	Oca	Liquid	boiled
	Papa Cariucho	Potato, zambo squash	Liquid	boiled
food	Pachamanka	Variety of tubers, meats and vegetables	Dry	bake
	Papas con Berro	Watercress, potatoe	Liquid	boiled
	Papas con Sangre	Potatoes, beef blood	liquid/fat	Boiled/Steamed
	Sopa de bolas de maíz	Maize	Liquid	boiled
	Sopa de Chuchuca	Maize	Liquid	boiled
	Sapiroque	Oca, potatoe	Liquid	boiled
	Sopa Timbushca	Beef meat, maize, potatoe	Liquid	boiled
	Uchujacu	Maize	Liquid	boiled
	Zambo Asado	Zambo squash	Dry	roast
Beverage	Chicha de Jora	Maize	Liquid	Germinate/boiled/ferment
e	Chicha Yamor	Maize (7 varieties)	Liquid	Boiled/fermented
	Champús	Maize	Liquid	Boiled/fermented
	Zambo de Dulce	Zambo squash	Wet	Boiled/confit

Colada de Churos

Colada de Churos (Figure 2) is a traditional dish from the Ecuadorian highlands, particularly from the northern provinces of Ecuador (Pichincha - Imbabura). It is a thick soup or “colada” made from maize meal (*Zea mays*), fava bean (*Vicia faba*), green peas (*Pisum sativum*) and accompanied by cooked “churos” (*Pomacea* species, Ampullariidae family). Its preparation begins a day in advance; first, the “churos” or freshwater snails are collected in the morning hours near lakes and rivers, washed and soaked in water for 24 hours to remove any bitter substances. Then, the flour are obtained from the dry toasted grains in a clay pot¹² and ground separately in hand mills¹³. Finally, on the day of preparation, the colada is made by combining the flours, a seasoned sauce and cooked in water over low heat, making its consistency thick. The snails are cooked in water at 100 °C for 30 minutes to soften the meat, they are served with a slice of lemon alongside the colada.

¹²Culinary tool made of clay, with a normally flat design that allows roasting and toasting food, an artifact of the traditional cuisine of Ecuador that is still in use (36).

¹³Old mill used since before the invention of electric power.

Sopa De Bolas De Maíz

This soup is part of the daily menu for families (Figure 2). Its preparation begins with the grinding of dry maize (*Zea mays*) to obtain flour, a hot soup based on beef or pork flavored with cumin and salt is added to this flour, it is mixed until a smooth and moldable dough is obtained. The dough is used to make balls filled with cheese, zambo seed (*Curcubita ficifolia*) or in some cases minced meat. Once the stuffed maize balls are ready, prepare the soup with refried green onion (*Allium fistulosum*), annatto (*Bixa orellana*) and pork lard, then add the flavored soup, the maize balls, cabbage (*Brassica oleracea*), potato (*Solanum tuberosum*) and turnip (*Brassica rapa L.*). The choice of vegetables may vary depending on the family recipe. Its cooking takes approximately 30 minutes.

Habas Calpo

The informants reported that Habas Calpo (Figure 2) is one of the most common homemade preparations, considered as a snack during working days in the field. It is prepared from fava beans (*Vicia faba*) that have been sun-dried (natural dehydration) and toasted in a clay pot for 15 minutes. To then be cooked in salted water for 20 minutes until softened. Usually, they are served with potatoes (*Solanum tuberosum*), maize (fresh maize in masorca), mellocos (*Ullucus tuberosus*), ocas (*Oxalis tuberosa*) cooked and traditional stone-ground ají sauce (*Capsicum annum*).



A



B



C

A. *Colada de churros*. B. *Sopa de bolas de maíz*. C. *Habas Calpo*

Figure 2.

Papas Con Berro

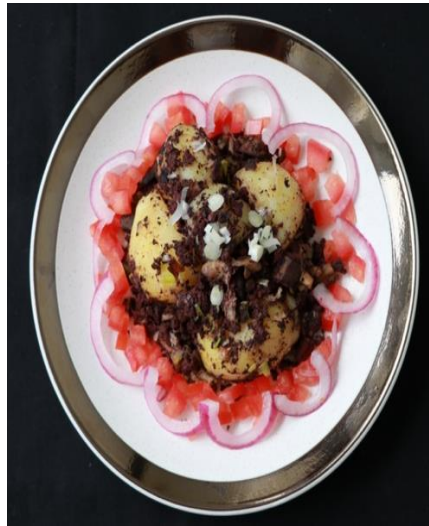
Informants reported the common use of watercress (*Nasturtium officinale*) (berro in Spanish) in their preparations, since watercress is an aquatic plant, present wild in streams and torrents of clear watercourses, which has made it a very popular and affordable option in their daily menu. To prepare *Papas con Berro* (Figure 3), the Otavalo Indigenous people collect and wash the watercress leaves, they are boiled in water for 30 minutes, they are then drained and squeezed until the liquid is removed and set aside. Peeled potatoes are cooked in salted water and set aside. A sauce is prepared by blending or crushing dry seeds of zambo (*Curcubita ficifolia*), green onion (*Allium fistulosum*), garlic (*Allium sativum*), green pepper (*Capsicum annuum*) and salt, cook it for five minutes. Finally, the sauce is mixed with potatoes and watercress, and served.

Papas Con Sangre

This preparation is common in households and is sold in popular markets. The informants proposed the following recipe to prepare *Papas con Sangre* (Figure 3): fresh beef blood is seasoned with green onion (*Allium fistulosum*) and salt, then it is fried in a pan with pork lard until it reaches a firm texture. To this sauce is added "menudo de cerdo" consisting of stomach, heart, and intestines of the pig, cooked and chopped, finally the cooked potatoes are mixed with the blood-based sauce and menudo, served hot.



A



B

A. *Papas con Berro*. B. *Papas con Sangre*

Figure 3.

Locro De Zambo

The informants reported that *Locro de Zambo* is a common dish in the households of Otavalo indigenous people. The informants proposed the following preparation practice: cook tender and peeled zambo (squash variety) (*Curcubita ficifolia*) in water, then add salt, peeled and diced potatoes. Once the ingredients are soft, they should be mashed to form a thick soup, add choclo (shucked tender maize) and let it cook for 20 minutes, finally add a little milk and cheese. It is served with a slice of avocado and toasted dried zambo seeds.

Zambo Asado

Zambo Asado is a specialty in the food culture of the Otavalo indigenous people due to its ancestral cooking technique. The informants provided the following preparation method: fresh zambo (*Curcubita ficifolia*) is introduced into a small hole in the ground, it is covered with a large quantity of residues from the maize harvest (stems and dry leaves), which are set on fire. The embers produced by burning the waste are responsible for cooking the zambo throughout the night. The next day the zambo is removed, its pulp will be very soft, juicy and aromatic, and it can be served alone or with honey. This preparation is carried out by women who help in agricultural work and is served as a treat to the children of the household.



A

B.

A. *Locro de Zambo*. B. *Zambo Asado*

Figure 4.

Chicha Del Yamor

Chicha del Yamor is a traditional beverage exclusive to the Otavalo indigenous people (14)(Figure 5). This preparation plays an outstanding role as a ritual element during the Yamor festivities that is performed with the Coya Raymi (Moon Festival in Andean culture) during the autumnal equinox (September 22) (26) and currently prepared during the Festival of the Virgin of Monserrate (Catholic festival celebrated on September 8). It is a beverage with a low alcoholic content derived from the non-distilled fermentation of maize (*Zea mays*). The informants indicated the following method of preparing Chicha del Yamor: an adequate selection of seven varieties of maize kernel is important: among which white, black, yellow, canguil, chulpi, jora (germinated and dry maize) and the morocho, which will be toasted and ground to turn them into flour. The flours previously diluted in cold water are placed in boiled water, and they are cooked over wood fire for approximately eight to ten hours. Sweet spices are added and it is sweetened with panela honey (sugar cane) until it becomes a yellowish oily liquid known as "flor", it is then sieved through strainers and fermented in large oak barrels for two days.



White maize kernels. B. Black maize kernels, C. Yellow maize kernels. D. *Canguil*, hard maize kernels that are specifically used to make popcorn. E. *Chulpi*, it is a kernel maize is almost exclusively consumed toasted with a bit of salt. F. *Jora* (germinated maize). G. *Morocho*, it is a kernel of maize, white in color, very hard, which in *Kichwa* is called "*muruchi*". H. Maize meals cooked over wood fire. I. yellowish oily liquid known as "*flor*". J. It is sieved through strainers. K. fermented in large oak barrels. L. *Chicha del Yamor* prepared from seven varieties of maize

Figure 5.

Champús

Champús (Figure 6) is a popular fermented maize-based (*Zea mays*) beverage with a mild alcoholic content and a sweet and sour taste that is consumed on the deceased Day (November 2), a date that coincides with the start of planting of the maize. The informants provided the

following method for preparing this ceremonial beverage: in a clay pot the maize meal is dissolved, letting it rest for four days, allowing fermentation to occur and a low-alcohol beverage is obtained, then sifted and cook for half an hour together with naranjilla juice (*Solanum quitoense* Lam.), panela (sugar cane), cloves (*Syzygium aromaticum*), cinnamon and orange leaves. In addition, the informants indicated that this drink is an important element since when a relative dies, according to their belief, the fermentation process is carried out the next day and does not require additional fermentation time.



Figure 6: A Champús Commonly Served, B Champús Served in Funeral Ritual.

Status and Sociocultural Roles of Traditional Foods and Beverages

Out of the total listed traditional foods, 79% are prepared for daily consumption, with four of them also being prepared for sale in local markets, and 21% to celebrate events, religious festivities and rituals. Of the beverages mentioned, one is from daily consumption and the remaining three are prepared for ritual and ceremonial use. Of the total registered products, 86% are prepared by women and 14% are prepared by men. The sociocultural roles and status of traditional foods and beverages are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Roles and Status of Traditional Food/Beverage Preparation.

	Traditional food/beverage	Purpose of preparation	Prepared by	Preparation rate compared to past
Food	Carnes Coloradas	DC/CP	M	constantly
	Chaguitanda	DC	F	decreasing
	Colada de Churos	DC/CP	F	constantly
	Cuy Asado	CeP	F	constantly
	Fritada	CeP/PC	M	constantly
	Habas Calpo	DC	F	constantly
	Locro de Zambo	DC	M	constantly
	Oca Cocinada	DC	F	decreasing
	Papa Cariucho	DC	F	constantly
	Pachamanka	CeP	F	decreasing
	Papas con Berro	DC	F	constantly
	Papas con Sangre	PC	F	constantly
	Sopa de bolas de maíz	DC	F	constantly
	Sopa de Chuchuqa	DC	F	decreasing
	Sapiroque	DC	F	decreasing
	Sopa Timbushca	DC	F	constantly
Uchujacu	CeP	F	decreasing	
Zambo Asado	DC	F	decreasing	
Beverage	Chicha de Jora	CeP	F	constantly
	Chicha Yamor	CeP	F	constantly
	Champús	CeP	F	constantly
	Zambo de Dulce	DC	F	constantly

DC For Daily Consumption, CP Commercial Product, Cep Celebration Purpose, M Male, F Female.

The informants of the nine parishes stated that they prepare food or beverages regularly and simultaneously, both in their daily lives and in religious festivals and rites. For example, Champús is one of the main elements of the funeral ritual (27), and it is also considered the preferred beverage of the deceased Day of the Faithful Departed or “Finados” (an annual religious festival of the Catholic Church to commemorate loved ones who have passed away, celebrated on November 2). The Chicha del Yamor is a special beverage prepared for the Yamor and the Coya Raymi festivals, currently made during the celebration of the Virgin of Monserrat (September 8). However, in the past, the Chicha del Yamor was "the sacred Chicha of Mojanda that was prepared only for major solemnities and it was attributed with certain magical power" (28). Today, the Chicha del Yamor represents the rescue of the values and cultural roots of the Otavalo indigenous people.

Through the intergenerational transmission of knowledge and practices related to food, social groups maintain their cultural identity, preserve their culinary traditions and face the challenges and specific needs related food (29).

Conclusions

The findings of this research highlight the traditional practice of preparing food and beverages linked to their cultural identity, values, beliefs and agricultural knowledge. The study showed that maize is the food that occupies a privileged place in the diet of the Kichwa-Otavalo indigenous people and the most sacred because it is at the center of most rites (13), a fact that is evident in the consumption of maize meals, roast maize, chichas, soups, and beverages. Grains such as green peas, fava beans and other products such as potatoes, zambo, watercress, and ocas also predominate.

Most of the traditional foods and beverages consumed by the Kichwa-Otavalo people are low in sugar and fats, being healthy (grains, fiber), with high potential for diet diversification in other settings. Furthermore, the documentation provided on the traditional foods and beverages of the Kichwa-Otavalo indigenous people will contribute to raising awareness for the preservation of their traditional culinary culture and serve as reference for further studies.

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Statements

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