



## Food sovereignty on the northwestern coast of Ecuador

Soberanía alimentaria en la costa noroccidental de Ecuador

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## Abstract

The research consisted of identifying the spaces of traditional uses for food security and sovereignty, as well as learning about traditional gastronomy and understanding the mandates of the elders on the importance of rationally managing natural resources for collective well-being in communities located in the upper basin of the Cayapas River, Telembí parish, Eloy Alfaro canton, northwestern coast of Ecuador. The methodology applied was qualitative, using bibliographic review, semi-structured interview techniques and focus groups. The sample included 60 male and female producers and leaders from 10 communities (37% of the universe), applying gender and generational approaches. As a result, it was observed that the inhabitants manage natural resources in close relation to the concept of peasant family agriculture, which responds to the cosmovision and productive practices of ancestral communities. These populations struggle to conserve their territory, sustain the agrifood system to guarantee food security and sovereignty, in a context of antagonism between local actors and hegemonic economic

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groups (agroindustrial capitalism). The communities have clearly identified and manage their traditional uses for food production (hills, canoeras, cantero, forest and river), which have been sustained for more than 300 years in the territory. The way and the reasons for preparing food are linked to daily events, festivals and rituals, allowing the strengthening of traditions through gastronomy. The teaching mechanisms of the elders have contributed to recovering, strengthening, repositioning and reconstructing the existence of the communities as an ancestral right.

**Key words:** Afro-Ecuadorians, Chachis, Food security and sovereignty, Ancestral territories, Collective memory.

### Resumen

La investigación consistió en identificar los espacios de usos tradicionales para la seguridad y soberanía alimentaria, asimismo, se planteó conocer la gastronomía tradicional y comprender los mandatos de las y los mayores sobre la importancia de manejar racionalmente los recursos naturales para el bienestar colectivo en comunidades asentadas en la cuenca alta del río Cayapas, parroquia Telembí, cantón Eloy Alfaro, costa noroccidental ecuatoriana. La metodología aplicada fue de carácter cualitativa, empleando la revisión bibliográfica, técnicas de entrevistas semiestructurada y grupos focales. En la muestra participaron 60 productores y productoras, líderes y lideresas de 10 comunidades (37% del universo) aplicando enfoques de género y generacional. Como resultado, se observó que los habitantes realizan un manejo de los recursos naturales en estrecha relación con el concepto de agricultura familiar campesina, que responde a la cosmovisión y prácticas productivas de comunidades ancestrales. Estas poblaciones luchan por conservar su territorio, sostener el sistema agroalimentario para garantizar la seguridad y soberanía alimentaria, en un contexto de antagonismo entre actores locales y grupos económicos hegemónicos (capitalismo agroindustrial). Las comunidades tienen claramente identificados y manejan sus espacios de usos tradicionales para la producción de alimentos (colino,

canoeras, cantero, bosque y río) sostenidos por más de 300 años en el territorio. La forma y los motivos para preparar los alimentos están ligados a eventos cotidianos, festivos y rituales, permitiendo fortalecer las tradiciones desde la gastronomía. Los mecanismos de enseñanza de los mayores han contribuido a recuperar, fortalecer, reposicionar y reconstruir la existencia de las comunidades como derecho ancestral.

**Palabras clave:** Afroecuatorianos, Chachis, Seguridad y soberanía alimentaria, Territorios ancestrales, Memoria colectiva

## Introduction

This research focuses on the northwestern coast of Ecuador, specifically in the north of the province of Esmeraldas. This area is identified as the biogeographic Chocó zone, one of the areas with the greatest biodiversity on the planet, due to its endemic flora and fauna. In addition, it is a multi-ethnic strip due to the coexistence of indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian communities in the Cayapas River basin (Ministerio del Ambiente. 2020).

In this context, traditional knowledge becomes feasible as a mechanism for reinventing the modern structure, which proves to be unsustainable in the face of the new demands of society - food production in the face of climate change -, based on an enclave economy that was structured in the province of Esmeraldas, represented by an extractivist model.

This area has the highest rates of unsatisfied basic needs (UBN) poverty (95% poverty and extreme poverty at 61.7%) in the province (PDOT Provincial, 2015). Poor nutrition problems mainly affect children living in these conditions, "that is why more than a third (35%) of children belonging to households with consumption below the poverty line suffer from chronic malnutrition" (Estrategia de Seguridad y Soberanía Alimentaria, 2015, p.29).

In the Eloy Alfaro and San Lorenzo cantons, the irrational intervention of these companies through an extractive economic system has led to

the expulsion of populations, especially black communities, as noted by the Esmeraldean writer Juan Garcia (2010). Alberto Acosta (2009) argues that the increase in poverty levels has been caused by this economic system:

Although it may not seem credible at first sight, recent evidence and many accumulated experiences allow us to affirm that poverty in many countries of the world is related to the existence of a significant wealth of natural resources. Countries rich in natural resources, whose economies are based primarily on their extraction and export, find it more difficult to develop. (p.1)

The particularity of these territories is that historically they have developed traditional practices, product of the existence of the Afro-Ecuadorian people, who regrouped in common territories in the northern zone of Esmeraldas as processes of self-repair, of creating and recreating the culture and its philosophy. Regarding the concept of territory, as stated by Minda (2002): "It is much broader than land, farm or lot, and includes all the richness of the black people: their culture, biological and social reproduction expressed as continuity and politics" (p.58).

The existence of the Chachi indigenous community dates back to the arrival of the Afro-Ecuadorian people, in these territorial spaces the guardians of the collective memory transmitted orally the cultural seed to the current generations. According to the local philosophy, the collective memory is:

For us, collective memory is the reaffirmation of what tradition teaches us, of what the ancestor teaches; because it is in the whole collective, people have more or less knowledge about a fact, a way of doing things, a value or a saying, a being, a way of understanding. All the people [casa adentro] know what we are talking about. Collective memory is a collectivized knowledge, it is the entrenchment, the verification of what an ancestral fact is because all the people know it, it is what allows us to continue (García & Walsh, 2015, p.88).

According to chroniclers such as Father Federico González Suárez, the Chachi are believed to have originated in Central America (Nicaragua and Panama) and the blacks from Africa (Rueda, 2000). The spaces

occupied by the Chachi and black peoples in this area have been sustained for more than 300 years despite climatic, social, political and cultural changes. In addition, these territories have resisted the modification of consumption patterns with some innovations promoted by state institutions, non-governmental organizations and international cooperation that have been partially adopted by the communities while the projects are being implemented.

The purpose of the research was to identify the spaces of traditional uses for food security and sovereignty, as well as to learn about traditional gastronomy accompanied by ancestral knowledge, flavors, smells and colors that were generated with the products harvested and acquired in the spaces, and to understand the mandates of the elders on the importance of rationally managing natural resources that allows these peoples "collective welfare or living with dignity".

## Methodology

The methodology used is qualitative in nature, and the focus group technique was mainly used, which consists of data collection through a semi-structured group interview, which revolves around a theme proposed by the researcher. There have been different definitions of focus group; however, many authors agree that it is a discussion group, guided by a set of carefully designed questions with a particular objective (Aigner, 2006; Beck, Bryman and Futing, 2004 cited by Escobar and Bonilla Jiménez, 2009, p. 52). The main purpose of the focus group is to bring out attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences and reactions in the participants.

Regarding the individual interview, Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 643) consider that this technique is the art of asking questions and listening to answers, which is why it has a negotiating character. In this sense, he defines it as "a conversation" where topics that the researcher wants to know are addressed and its success depends on the personal characteristics of the interviewer (cited in Vargas, 2012).

Regarding the application of the techniques, it is important to highlight that this fieldwork has been developed over three years. The focus groups that have been carried out at different times have been integrated by 60 leaders, both Chachi and Afro-Ecuadorian; men and

women, bearers of knowledge and guardians of the collective memory of the native communities of the Telembí parish. Of the 60 people we worked with, 60 % were women and 40 % men. Thirty-eight percent of the women were over 40 years of age; 32% were over 60 years of age and 32% were under 30 years of age. Forty percent of the men who attended these events were over 50 years of age; 30 % were over 70 years of age and the remaining 30 % were over 30 years of age.

The topics raised in each focus group were related to the five traditional use spaces, through which the communities access food in the framework of food sovereignty: hill, canoera, cantero, mountain (forest) and river. The discussions began with a reading on the traditional use spaces that allowed the members of the focus groups to generate an analysis, reflection and debate prior to the issues raised by each space.

## Results

The Ecuadorian Constitution (2008) states that "food sovereignty constitutes a strategic objective and an obligation of the State" (p. 107), specifying the responsibility of the State in 14 clauses according to Article 281 of the Constitution to "ensure that individuals, communities, peoples and nationalities achieve self-sufficiency in healthy and culturally appropriate food on a permanent basis" (p.107).

The Organic Law of the Food Sovereignty Regime (2009) values the multifunctionality of peasant agriculture, small and medium rural producers and proposes to guarantee (among other rights) access to water, human rights and land as a social function.

In 1990, the concept of food security, a term constructed by some countries around the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), was developed:

Food security exists when everyone at all times has economic and physical access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for a healthy and active life. (FAO cited by Gordillo & Obed, 2013, p.4).

Via Campesina (1996) introduces the concept of food sovereignty in the framework of the World Food Summit with the following words: "the right of peoples, their countries or unions of States to define their agrarian and food policy, without dumping vis-à-vis third countries" (p.1). From a more local vision, as stated by leaders of Chachi and black communities (2017) food sovereignty is:

The right of peoples and nationalities to have access to healthy, safe, permanent, nutritious and culturally appropriate food. The right to the rescue of local agrobiodiversity and ancestral knowledge; as well as to conserve their territory, to keep their rivers clean, to decide where to produce, how to produce .

Based on a holistic and integrating vision, food sovereignty is defined as the right of rural communities -peoples and nationals- to have access to land to produce healthy, permanent, nutritious and culturally appropriate food; but it is also the right of consumers to have permanent access to healthy food with high nutritional value. This right is recognized in Article 281 of the Constitution of Ecuador - as mentioned above - and is complemented by Article 282, which states the construction of a process of land redistribution with a social and environmental function.

Taking into account this referential framework, food sovereignty is understood as a paradigm that proposes the right of peoples to define how they produce, distribute and consume their food in a context where traditional knowledge and practices are closely related to the concept of family farming, biodiversity, climate change, sustainability, gender and interculturality.

### **Territory and ancestral territories, a holistic perspective**

To understand the category, we quote Beraún and Beraún (2006): "It is a space defined and delimited by and based on power relations" (Lopes De Souza, 1996 cited by Beraún and Beraún, 2006, p. 2). Under this vision, and in context, we understand that the locality of the study has been marked by the degree of control of social actors, who tend to objectify the space with their rules and actions.

From a local perspective - Afro-Ecuadorian and indigenous populations - the concept of territory externalizes a model of traditional and legal social organization for the production and

conservation of traditional knowledge space, as expressed in the following quote:

The territory is the space for reunion and social, cultural recreation, where traditional knowledge and practices are expressed, for the conservation of forms of production, and care of nature, which make traditional knowledge the mechanism for reinvention in the face of modern ideas that show to be unsustainable (Workshop in northern Esmeraldas, 2016).

From a vision of rights, ancestral territory is understood as a space for the preservation of culture, language, uses and customs, substance of the identity and self-determination of peoples and nationalities; in addition, it is considered as a collective right provided for in international conventions and treaties, therefore, an obligation for States (International Labor Organization-ILO, 2014).

Ownership of the territory of Afro-Ecuadorian and indigenous communities is based on the constitutional mandate. The Constitution of the Republic (2008) recognizes these territories by accepting the formation of communes, centers, associations and other forms of social organization that have collective ownership of the land as an ancestral form of territorial organization, as expressed in Article 57, paragraphs 4, 5 and 6.

### **Territorial units and current land use**

As mentioned above, the communities in the study area are located in the upper basin of the Cayapas River and its highly biodiverse tributaries, covering 72,346.94 hectares, organized into three zones or territorial units as shown in Table 1. For the purposes of the study, we selected two communities from zone 1, six communities from zone 2, and one community from zone 3, whose names are in italics.



**Table 1.** Territorial units of the communities in the Telembí parish

Zone	Center/Commune	Territorial units area, has
ONE	Large Squash	806,6
	Comuna Río Santiago Cayapas (Aquí Me Quedo, Montalvo, Tiguanero, Inmaculada and Telembí)	7.042,00
	Tsejpi	6.688,00
	Jeyambi	1.991,00
	Chispero	800
	Guadal	1.796,53
	<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>19.124,13</b>
	TWO	Majua
San Miguel Chachi		5.813,00
San Miguel Black		2.500,00
White Water		1.687,50
Smallpox		5166,8
Mansa Street		1.796,53
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>		<b>21.230,83</b>
THREE	Large Current	6.583,68
	Sabalito	6.392,91
	Bellavista	1.050,00
	Hualpi del Cayapas	2.592,23
	White Sheet	3.451,50
	Naranjito de Hualpi	1.218,66
	Chontaduro Rivera	2.300,00
	San Francisco de Hojas Blanca	2.703,00
	Hidden Treasure	2.500,00
	New Homeland	2.500,00
	April 10th	
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>31.991,98</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>72.346,94</b>	

Source: Telembí Parish Government, 2011.

Regarding current land use, the Telembí parish has 88% of its territory covered by forests, state and private reserves, 7% in crops, 0.5% in populated areas, 3.00% in stubble and 1.50% in mining areas (see Table 2), which undoubtedly ensures an important area of territory for food sovereignty.

**Table 2.** *Current land use*

LAND USE	ZONE ONE	ZONE TWO	ZONE THREE	TOTAL
Forest harvesting forests	9.888,30	12.654,30	48.424,61	70.967,21
State Reserve Forest	18.508,71	22.434,80	15.143,49	56.087,00
Private Reserve Forest	3.223,32	5.541,05	5.806,57	14.580,94
Agroforestry Crops	2.019,99	1.156,34	2.979,00	6.155,33
Mining Area	1.916,00	595	-	2.511,00
Pastures	117,34	-	4.072,50	4.189,84
Human settlement (population centers)	115,5	95,5	-	349
Stubble	1.467,00	1.130,50	2.250,00	4.847,50
Short cycle crop	366,68	58,14	1.395,00	1.819,82
African Palm	-	-	49,5	49,5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>37.632,84</b>	<b>43.665,63</b>	<b>80.258,67</b>	<b>161.557,14</b>

Source: Telembí Parish Government, 2011.

From the conception of territory - in the locality of the study - they develop interesting dynamics in which traditional and juridical models of social organization, production and commercialization relations typical of rural and ancestral societies are revealed. Hence, this collective considers the territory as a source of food and other factors for coexistence. This is how they explain it in the focus groups:

The territory for us is everything, the life of people, plants and animals depends on the territory, our rivers, in the river we obtain products for food and it is also the access route; everything we plant to eat, the forest and all the wealth that exists in the ecosystem is settled in a territory, but the threat we have is strong.

The Afro-Colombian and indigenous Chachi communities located in the context of the study have inherited a historical and cultural life project. They develop a survival strategy in close relationship with nature; the inhabitants of this territory define themselves as the guardians of the forest and, currently, these communities struggle against the adverse effects and socio-environmental risks produced by the interaction with actors that show interest in territorializing the region, as mentioned above, determined as "a space defined and delimited by and based on power relations" (Lopes De Souza, 1996 cited by Beraún and Beraún, 2006, p. 2).

Nevertheless, these communities persist in the defense of their rights, preserving their geographic, social, productive and cultural space. They struggle to maintain territoriality in the region and prevent new social groups from imposing their rules through objectification and incidence in time and space. The concept of territoriality is understood as: "The degree of control of a given geographic space by a person, a social group, an ethnic group, a company or a State" (Montañez, 1997 cited by Rodríguez, 2010, p.198).

Traditional spaces for family food production, considered ethno-knowledge, are key to food security and sovereignty. As explained by the members of the communities interviewed, and published in two GIZ documents (2013), they were inherited from the elders and have been developed and adapted in relation to the geographic location where they are settled (river and/or mountain). These spaces, established by the local people, are hill, canoera, cantero, river and mountain.

Colino. This is the most favorable space for the communities' food security and sovereignty. It has an area of approximately one hectare where bananas (the most important food for black families) and other crops such as coconut, pineapple, corn, arazá, avocado, papaya, borjón, yuca, pumpkin, cocoa, beans, etc. are grown. Some cocoa plots are generally planted alone or in association with plantains. Of

the aforementioned products, cocoa is mostly destined for sale and corn is used especially for raising domestic animals such as chickens and pigs. This conclusion is the result of observations made during several years of work in Chachi and black communities by one of the co-authors of this document.

Cabbage is a traditional crop managed by both the Chachis and Afro-Ecuadorian communities, and is essential for feeding the families settled in the Cayapas River basin; for GIZ (2013), "cabbage comes from the seed of the banana, not only because green is the most important product of all that is planted in the cabbage" (p.33).

Canoeras. These are traditional spaces managed by black women, generally built one meter wide by two meters long and elevated 1.5 meters above the ground. For the construction of the canoe, local materials such as wood, guadua cane or pambil are used. After the canoe is stopped, different types of earth are placed in it, such as marmaja, which is made of rotten tagua sticks, or the marmaja that is piled up on the banks of the rivers, which is mixed with river sand.

The canoeras are located next to the houses and are spaces that allow us to relate concepts of gender, generational, agro-biodiversity and ancestral knowledge. Aromatic, food and medicinal plants such as chillangua, various types of basil, chirarán, guasca mint, onion, discancer, oregano, plantain, bell pepper, cucumber, chili, etc., are planted in the canoeras (GIZ, 2013).

Cantero. It is a space managed and maintained by a few families where several types of sugar cane are grown, such as coneja, cubana, piojota, etc. In the cantero they have a handmade sugarcane mill. Several people grind the sugarcane by hand and then cook the sugarcane juice to make guarapo, cocadas, panela and different types of sweets that are shared and enjoyed during holidays. Sugarcane juice and honey were traditionally used to sweeten chocolate (a traditional drink of the Afro people) and shampoo, a drink used by the Chachi at Christmas parties or at ancestral marriages. Sugarcane, as well as bananas and other short-cycle crops such as beans and corn are fundamental to the production and nutrition of the local people, as expressed by the people of the communities.

Mountain. GIZ (2013) indicates that from the collective memory, the mountain is defined as "a great village of trees where the memory of the ancestors sleeps" (p.11). The hunting activity is mainly carried out in the mother mountain or forest and begins in the early morning hours; it is carried out by men, using traps that are set in selected areas and kept by the hunters in each community until the following day. It is a knowledge that is not practiced by all the men in the communities; there are people in each community who specialize as hunters.

The construction and assembly of traps and the trapping mechanisms used by them is a daily practice that they learned from their elders. The hunter's experience in the bush (mountain or forest), makes them identify the characteristics of the animal by the footprints, the size of the tracks, the direction they follow and the habitat, mainly by the type of food (fruits, seeds and vegetables) consumed by the animals.

River. According to GIZ (2013), the river is the traditional collective space mostly shared by the communities, as the only means of transportation, in addition to providing vital liquid, it is used for food preparation and personal hygiene, recreational space and other daily activities. Fishing is an activity that is mostly carried out by men, but women also practice it in the river and estuaries .

This is the traditional collective space mostly shared by the communities, as the only means of transportation, in addition to providing vital liquid, it is used for food preparation and personal hygiene, recreational space and other daily activities. The river provides them with different types of fish, shrimp, gazapos and clams. They use some tools such as: tramayo, atarraya, catanga, hooks, corrals, etc; although the activity is mostly carried out by men, women also practice it. The construction and use of traps is something they learn from their elders.

The spaces of traditional uses for access to food offer a diversity of food products of plant and animal origin. The hills, the canoeras, the cantero, the river and the forest (the mountain) still provide a variety of animal protein; components that, according to the work of each family, guarantee the food security and sovereignty of its members. However, it is imperative to optimize management and use of technology.

On the other hand, we can point out that the spaces of use for food production, the knowledge and practices of the population are closely related to the concepts of Peasant Family Farming, where the role of women in this context is central, due to the work they carry out in the production, preparation and exchange of food.

Another objective of the research was to learn about the traditional gastronomy accompanied by the flavors and products harvested and acquired in the spaces for the production and access to food. The way and the reasons for preparing their food are linked to everyday life, festivities and rituals, and in some way these actions have allowed strengthening traditions through gastronomy (Table 3).

**Table 3.** *Identification of dishes at community events*

Type	Cotidianos	Holidays	Rituals	Artisanal food production
<b>Salt</b>	Tapao de pescado Panda de fogón y de perol	de de de	Holy Week festivities: ripe plantain wrap and Broth of dried bearded fish (always smoked)	Deceased: encocao and tapado with smoked meat Wakes: tapao de chancho
<b>Sweet</b>	Corn mazamorra Rice chicory		Holy Week festivities: preserves (with Chilean guineo, rascadera and papaya) Shampoo (with corn and cane honey)	Cocada Coconut striping Coquitos Panela with coconut Liquid Panela
<b>Beverages</b>	Aromatic water (hot) Aged green wash Chontaduro masato		Easter: chocolate with coconut or milk Aged green wash	Births: Cured bottle (small sprue and large sprue).

	Masato de maduro	de		Aguardiente, Canelazo
	Juices with seasonal fruits	with	(sugar cane product)	Guarapo
<b>Condiments</b>	Cura basil Chillangua Chives Sweet and spicy chili Chirarán Oregano		-----	----- -----

Source: Participatory workshop communities Majua, San Miguel and Playa de Oro, 2017.

There are many ingredients that make up the traditional cuisine of Esmeraldas, for example: banana, coconut, cassava, sweet potato; herbs such as: chillangua, oregano, chirarán, cilantro, hierbaluisa; plants such as sugar cane, from which honey, molasses, raspadura and panela are obtained; it also has an almost infinite variety of poultry, such as: guacharaca, pava de monte, partridge, just to cite a few examples. The main dish is the tapao, it is registered as the main dish, for being quick to prepare, nutritious and tasty; the way to make it goes from fish and bush meat, whether fresh, dried or smoked. The base of its preparation is the fish, wrapped in white leaves and seasoned with chillangua, chirarán, oregano and green plantain. The encocao, typical in the region, is also reflected as part of the daily diet of the community, it is prepared with fish, bush meat and poultry, can be fresh, dried or smoked.

Finally, it was proposed to understand the elders' mandates on the importance of rationally managing natural resources for collective wellbeing. The communities consider that collective memory (understood as a decolonial philosophy and practice to recover, strengthen, reposition and reconstruct existence as an ancestral right) is what allows them to preserve traditional agricultural and livestock practices and the conservation of the territory.

In this sense, local actors fight for the control of their territory, as an important resource and space for their life project, which was inherited as a reparation for the damage caused to their ancestors in the processes of dispersion of the family trunks. The population bets on the development of the capacities of the environment and its local actors, especially youth and women, to achieve food sovereignty and common welfare. A well-being that will be achieved through the mandate of the elders, the struggle for the defense of the territory and the fundamental rights to live well, such as access to land, the democratization of technical and financial services, access to markets and the preservation of ancestral knowledge.

## Conclusions

The peoples of the northern zone have clearly identified several traditional spaces for production, such as the hill, the canoeras, the cantero, the mountain and the river. These allow them to plant, maintain and recreate their cultural-ancestral agricultural and livestock practices, which have remained as part of the peoples' acts of resistance to colonization processes and have been sustainable for more than 300 years.

Protein production is increasingly difficult due to deforestation, contamination of rivers by mining and palm oil companies, changes in consumption patterns and the loss of some peasant seeds, which affect the way of life and food security of these populations.

The bearers of knowledge fulfill the mandate of the elders to transmit, especially orally, their cultural practices to the next generations and the relationship of the crops with the religiosity of the people. Women take on the role of managing and maintaining the canoeras and the cantera; they participate in the milling process and in the preparation of sweets from the panela or sugarcane honey. Back home, in the river, she takes the smell of the mountain; she brings up the harvested inputs and prepares food for the family.

Women are key to the conservation and maintenance of native seeds, as they know the entire process of harvesting, preparing and making handicrafts from fibers obtained from the mother mountain (primary forest). Mothers transfer their knowledge to their daughters in the



colinos, canoeras and canteros. The men are in charge of hunting activities, while the whole family participates in fishing.

The basic food of these people is green plantain, coconut, bush meat (tatabra, saíno, venao, guanta, bush mouse, poultry, etc.), river fish and, to a lesser extent, sea fish and shrimp. These foods are seasoned with ingredients produced in the canoeras, such as chiyangua, oregano, onion sticks, basil, chili, etc. The favorite dishes are "el tapao" and "los encocaos", accompanied with aromatic waters of lemon verbena, mint or oregano.

There are still many challenges to guarantee the sustainability of the food system for current and future populations, for example: implementing a program for the rescue and return of native seeds to the communities, strategies such as: promoting agroecological fairs for the commercialization and exchange of seeds, are sustainable alternatives that are part of local traditions. Likewise, establishing simple technologies that can be adapted to the conditions of the area to improve productivity is an impressive necessity for the communities.

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