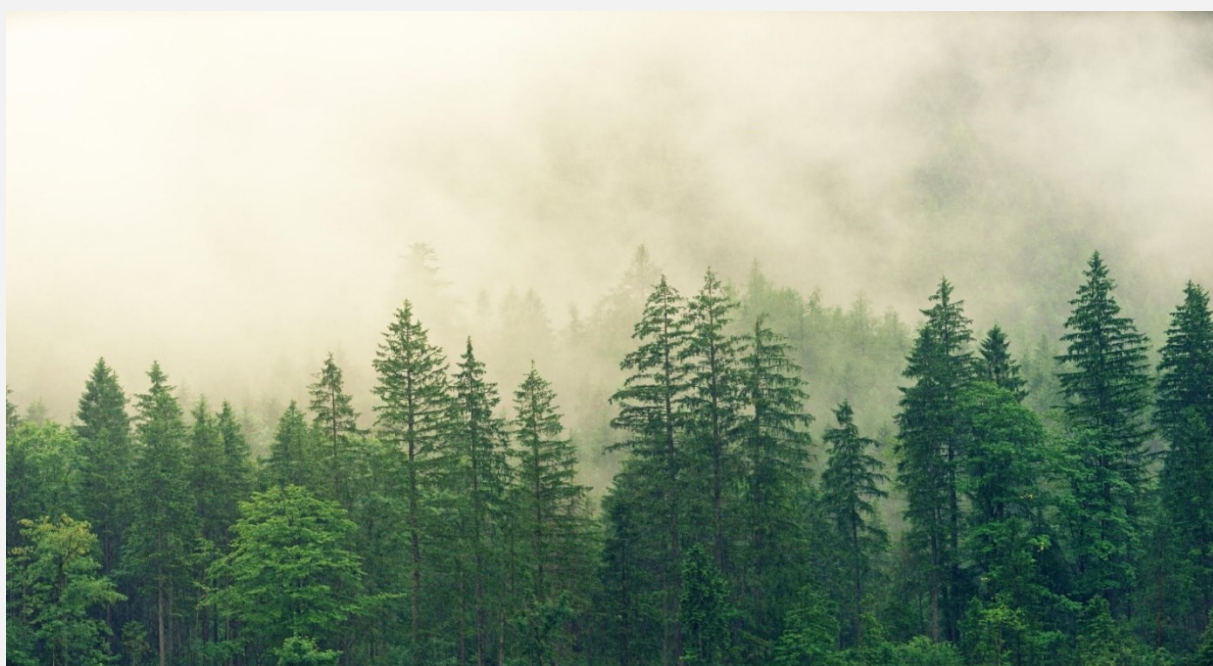


TOURISM FOR SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC
CONFERENCE

18-19 MAY 2023, BULGARIA



AVANGARD PRIMA
2023

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AMAZONIAN GASTRONOMY: THE ORIGINALITY OF REGIONAL CAFES IN THE CITY OF MANAUS (AM)

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***Abstract:** The purpose of this research is to determine how original the so-called regional cafes located in the city of Manaus are. The methodology employed was qualitative. In terms of research methods, a bibliographic survey was conducted from the Google Scholar database of scientific papers, as well as semi-structured interviews with three managers of regional cafes in the city of Manaus (AM). And a non-participant observation was made in loco. The results show the food offered by regional cafes in the city of Manaus preserves local cultural roots through the sale of regional foods.*

Keywords: Regional foods, typical gastronomy, food culture, Amazonas, Manaus.

INTRODUCTION

Gastronomy is an important part of the image of many tourist destinations; the food culture of each region is determined by its flavors, aromas, and colors (LONG, 2018). As Dentz (2011) explains, gastronomy is a defining feature of human groups' beliefs, values, and ethical characteristics.

Regional foods in urban and rural environments have unique characteristics that vary according to the ecosystems of the regions as well as cultural diversity. Several types of unique foods that are consumed by residents and visitors can be found in certain environments of relationships and conviviality.

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The Amazonian cuisine has distinct characteristics that stem from indigenous culture, though it has been influenced by other peoples, such as Europeans. A visit to a regional cafe allows customers to indulge in a menu rich in local flavors. The tucumã, tapiocas, traditional cakes, the traditional X-caboquinho (a sandwich made of French bread, fried banana, coalho cheese, and tucumã), pupunha, fried pacovã banana, macaxeira, cará-roxo, farofas, and juices such as cupuaçu, taperebá, and passion fruit (LIRA; COUTINHO; FERST, 2019) make up a diverse menu.

Regional foods are classified into several food groups, ranging from fruits and tubers to vegetables and legumes. They can be found in a variety of places, including food fairs scattered throughout cities, supermarkets, restaurants, regional cafes, and so on. In this context, regional cafes in Manaus offer a variety of foods characterized as typical of the region. As a result, the research question is: how original are the so-called regional cafes in the city of Manaus?

To answer this question, the research is justified by the changes in people's lifestyles that have occurred in recent decades as a result of technological advances that have enabled humans to learn new ways of relating to their surroundings, allowing for the incorporation of new eating habits and customs.

REGIONAL FOODS FOR FOOD CULTURE

Food or the act of eating can be understood as a social activity conditioned by the dynamics of social relationships and organization, in an order of societies to ensure the acquisition and distribution of food. Thus, food practices reveal behaviors, customs, and cultures, and man's intrinsic relationship with food varies from micro to macro, with local, regional, national, and global variations (COELHO, 2014).

Therefore, food is essential for the individual's survival and development since it characterizes the food security for the individual in the region where he is (MARTINS et al., 2015). In terms of the "definition" of eating habits, according to Coelho (2014), they are the ways that individuals or groups of people find to deal with social and cultural issues; as a result, they consume and use a portion of the food available in the region, associating the food habit, in particular, to culture.

Thus, we considered Martins et al. to better understand regional foods:

Regional foods (fruits, vegetables, tubers and legumes) are those available in each region of Brazil and have as their main characteristics: easy access, low cost, and high nutritional value. As a result, by consuming these foods, a diet based on regional culture becomes an effective alternative in combating food insecurity (MARTINS et al, 2015, p. 243).

Food varies in Brazil due to heterogeneity of the regions and cultural diversity, resulting in each region having its own food culture, or rather, eating habits. Even if they have their own regional habits, these can change due to new modes of consumption and the introduction of new products into the region (SANTOS, 2011).

People's eating habits can be transformed by their interactions with individuals or groups; this is one of the dynamics that shape regional culture, which at any given time tends to be practiced by several people and cause radical changes, but much of the customs and physiological needs, such as food, can preserve the food culture left by ancestors (CHOTA; GUIMARES; MARTINS, 2013).

In this sense, low-status establishments (located in neighborhoods, streets, etc.) are influenced by modern values through the production and reproduction of new food patterns focused on urban life, because they have been observed and valued by such urban environments, which represent the practicality of production and sale, as well as fast preparation foods and the insertion of products / inputs from other regions. (COELHO, 2014).

The eating habits or regional foods consumed are deemed unimportant in this interventionist process from other regions to a specific location. Despite these occurrences, some localities continue to use their own regional foods, which is often due to family tradition or an appreciation of their own culture, because the region in its particularities offers a diverse range of food products.

Furthermore, according to Martins et al. (2015), regional foods belong to several food groups: fruits, vegetables, tubers, and legumes; as a result, there are numerous ways to incorporate them into people's eating routines. This food variety (mentioned earlier) can be found in a variety of settings, whether on a street, in a neighborhood, or in the city center, where they, in particular, reflect the image of the population, because they are made up of parts of cultural heritage that have been reorganized and adapted to meet the needs that have arisen over time.

In recent years, the Brazilian diet has a decrease in traditional foods such as rice and beans. These changes may be reflected in the consumption of changed, particularly in terms of diet quality. Recent national studies have found increased consumption of processed foods and fast foods, as well as regional foods that are often undervalued and underutilized (COELHO, 2014, p 10).

Consequently, regional consumption should correspond to the use of regional products as appreciation and cultural characteristics of certain peoples, or people in general, who are in

the region, as a way of food practices strengthening regional culture and continuously improving regional products (QUINZANI; CAPOVILLA; CORRA, 2016).

Regional foods, therefore, should be gradually valued through the use of local products and consumed primarily by people who live in the region. Since, the food panorama in Brazil is very complex, regions shape their own culture or food habits, which are determinants for the benefits of some products/species of consumption (COELHO, 2014; PIMENTA et al., 2011).

METHODOLOGY

The current study is both descriptive and qualitative in nature. To achieve the proposed goal, a bibliographic survey was used as a research method, where it was possible to understand the field through access to digital databases of scientific papers such as Google Scholar. Semi-structured interviews and simple observation in loco, were used to gain access to the field.

The interviews were conducted in person on September 9, 2022, with three managers who work for regional cafes, in the city of Manaus (AM). The observations were conducted on the same day as the interviews, with a focus on the food offered by the establishments and the food consumed by customers. The data were analyzed descriptively, with tables and figures used to elucidate the answers.

RESULTS

The researchers transcribed the data collected during the semi-structured interview. For security reasons, the identities of the establishments' managers were replaced by codes: Cf-g - large regional cafes; Cf-m - medium-sized regional cafes; and Cf-p - small regional cafes, all of which are located in Manaus (AM).

DISCUSSION

The importance of regional foods in preserving local culture

Regional foods are of great relevance to Amazonian culture, however, for this culture to be preserved it is necessary to keep in practice the traditions and customs. The following statements about cultural preservation were made during interviews conducted in regional cafes. When the managers were asked about the importance of selling regional foods, it was possible to reach the following conclusions:

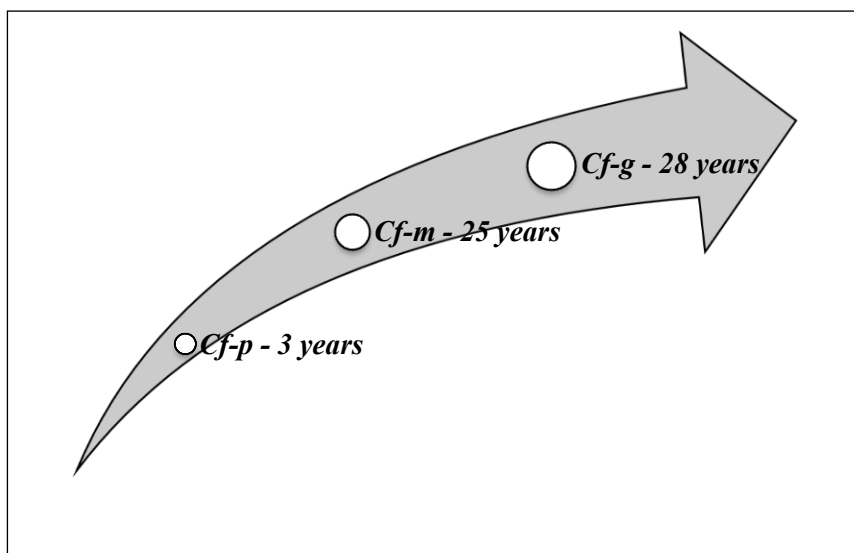
Cf-g: I believe that the importance is in expanding, not letting this culture die, and showing this culture to the rest of the country;
Cf-m: The foods are healthier, and because they are natural;
Cf-p: To preserve the region’s traditional cuisine alive.

The existence of convergent and divergent points about the importance of regional foods can be seen in the interviewees' speeches. According to interviewee Cf-g, the importance of selling regional foods stems from cultural preservation and the expansion of regional food culture to other parts of the country.

Respondent Cf-p shares the same perspective, viewing regional foods as a way of preserving the region’s traditional food culture. Respondent Cf-m presents a perspective that differs from that of the other respondents in a positive way by emphasizing the importance of regional foods for health, pointing to a lack of understanding about the importance of selling regional products from cultural aspects.

In order to identify the management time in the companies by the respondents, the following question was asked: how long have you worked for a regional cafe? Figure 1 depicts the results obtained.

Figure 1: Management time in regional cafes



Source: Elaborated by the research, 2022.

It is assumed that the interviewees have three to twenty-eight years of management experience in regional cafes. However, it is important to note that the time of experience influenced the perception of the importance of selling regional foods for the Amazonian culture but is also related to the experience of the culture itself, because the interviewees Cf-p and Cf-

g, have three to twenty-eight years of management, and their responses on the importance of these foods led to a cultural perspective in order to maintain regional roots.

The interviewee Cf-m, who, despite his 25-year management experience, has associated the importance of these foods with health, distancing itself from the cultural significance that these foods have. As a result, it is clear that some managers do not consider the sale of regional foods as the most important factor in preserving cultural roots.

The foods that are part of the regional culture in the city of Manaus

Although there are products specific to the culture of the region, it is important to highlight which products are sold by regional cafes in the city of Manaus in this study. To achieve the desired results, the following question was asked: What are the foods sold in your establishment? Table 1 contains the answers.

Table 1: Food sold in regional cafes.

Managers	Foods that are part of the regional culture
<i>Cf-g</i>	Tucumã, pupunha, tapioca, fried banana, cupuaçu juice, coalho cheese, macaxeira cake and pé de moleque.
<i>Cf-m</i>	Regional juices, bread with tucumã, tapioca, farofas and cará roxo.
<i>Cf-p</i>	Tucumã, coalho cheese, Amazon chestnut, cará roxo, tapioca, cupuaçu, cuscuz, fried macaxeira and pamonha.

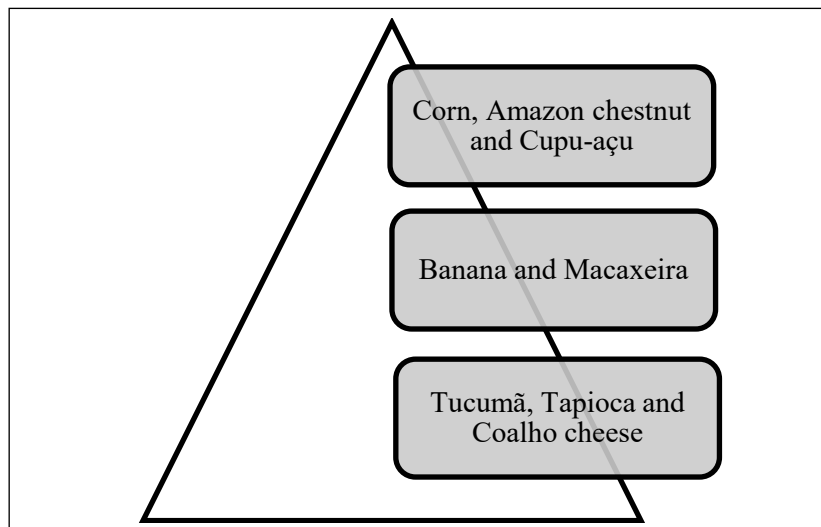
Source: Elaborated by the research, 2022.

According to Lira, Coutinho, and Ferst (2019), who discuss this food culture, the foods mentioned by managers are among the regional foods typical of the Amazonian culture. The presence of the same foods in the interviewees' speeches, such as tucumã, demonstrates its importance and preference among the foods offered by the establishments.

The most popular foods in Manaus' regional cafes in the city of Manaus.

During the manager interviews, the following question was asked: What regional products do you use the most in your establishment? Figure 2 shows the following products:

Figure 2: The most commonly used regional products



Source: Elaborated by the research, 2022.

Amazonian culture has a wide variety of foods. This variety was demonstrated in Table 1 by the supply made available by the regional cafes investigated. Figure 2 depicts the demand for products used by these regional foods, as determined by their degree of relevance from a food pyramid, with the products at the top representing the lowest degree of relevance.

The products at the top of the pyramid were only mentioned once, which corresponds to Cf-p, and the products in the middle of the pyramid were foods mentioned by Cf-m and Cf-p. It is worth noting, however, that all of the products at the bottom of the pyramid were mentioned.

The food pyramid leads us to other questions, such as whether there is a demand for a specific product that would be the most commercialized final product in Cf-g, Cf-m, and Cf-p, for which the following question was asked: What is the most popular item in regional cafes?

However, it is important to note that certain products were used to achieve these results, including: tapioca, corn, pé de moleque, macaxeira cake, tucumã, fried banana, pamonha, corn cake, cará, pupunha, macaxeira, and munguzá porridge. Respondents could, however, think about the question in terms of other products that were not listed.

The following image depicts the products most commonly sold by the surveyed establishments:

Figure 3: Best-selling products at the cafe



Source: Elaborated by the research, 2022.

The words of greater dimension highlighted in the image above were tucumã, tapioca, and fried banana; these products were mentioned by both Cf-g, Cf-m, and Cf-p. Cf-m and Cf-p, on the other hand, mentioned medium-proportion words like pupunha and pamonha as products. While Cf-p mentioned smaller proportion words like corn, cará-roxo, and corn cake, Cf-m mentioned munguzá porridge.

As we can see, there is a preference for certain regional products, as evidenced by the highlighted words, indicating that people who attend the Cf-g, Cf-m, and Cf-p prefer certain regional products.

Several regional products were mentioned by interviewees during the development of the study; therefore, in order to better understand the origin of these products, the managers of the Cf-g, Cf-m, and Cf-p were asked if the product used in the regional cafe came from family agriculture Table 2 shows the answers.

Table 2: Origin of products sold by regional cafes

Interviewee	Does your product used at the regional cafe come from family farming?	If you answered yes or some in the previous question, please name the products used	From what region (city) comes the input (product) that you sell in your regional cafe
<i>Cf-g</i>	Some of them	Cheese, tucumã and pupunha	Tucumã and pupunha come from Anori (countryside of Amazonas state), the cheese comes from the county of Rio Preto da Eva.
<i>Cf-m</i>	Yes	Fécula, cheese, and tucumã	Fécula comes from Paranã county (Tocantins state) cheese from the county of Autazes (in Amazonas state), and the tucumã pulp from a salesman.
<i>Cf-p</i>	Some of them	Tucumã, Chestnut	Tucumã comes from Pará state, and chestnut from the SEPRO street fair (in the city of Manaus).

Source: Elaborated by the research, 2022.

The food sold by regional cafes comes from a variety of sources, some of which are directly related to family farming. In terms of their products having family farming origins, only interviewee Cf-m answered yes, while interviewees Cf-g and Cf-p answered that only some of their products have family farming origins.

Identification of potential customers and development of the investigated regional cafes

The managers were asked the following question to better understand who frequented the regional cafes: What type of people frequent your local cafe? Table 3 contains the answers.

Table 3: Target audience of regional cafes

Interviewee	Target audience of regional cafes
<i>Cf-g</i>	Local business owners, workers, and tourists.
<i>Cf-m</i>	Workers, local business owners, and local residents.
<i>Cf-p</i>	Workers, business owners, and residents.

Source: Elaborated by the research, 2022.

The interviewee Cf-g stated that higher-income local business owners go to the establishment during the week and on weekends. Workers from the middle and lower classes go to the café once a month, while tourists only visit the site at certain times of the year, with the end of the year having the highest number of visitors.

Although workers and business owners go to the place every day, only local residents go there on weekends, according to respondent Cf-m. During the interview with the manager of Cf-p, it was revealed that regular customers on weekdays include local business owners and residents; however, on weekends, local residents are the regular customers at the café.

The results indicate that the major regional café has a customer base with higher buying power, possibly as a consequence of the products prices. People with lower buying power will therefore be unable to go to the place more than once a month.

The medium-sized as well as smaller regional cafes have similar customers during the week, workers and business owners are more likely to go to the establishments, possibly due to the location of the establishments, close to companies and more affordable prices.

In order to better understand what were the reasons that have motivated the interviewees to sell regional products, the question was asked: How did the idea of selling regional foods come up? The interviewees reported that:

Cf-g: Our first priority was ensuring our survival. In a small shack in Rio Preto da Eva county. We were the pioneers in selling the famous large tapiocas and our tucumã was "peeled" on the spot. Our business was so successful that we started to expand.

Cf-m: I started working with coffee and regional products because I inherited the cafe from my father, who was a farmer that moved to Manaus and started working with breakfast, then I carried on his work.

Cf-p: The coffee was given to me as payment for the time I spent working for the corporation while I was an employee at the coffee shop.

Cf-p: I was an employee of the cafe, and I got it as a form of compensation for the time of service that I rendered to the establishment.

Given these responses we can affirm that the interviewee of the Cf-g stands out in relation to the others because he uses regional products in an attractive way. The Cf-m makes it clear that the work for a regional cafe is something inherited from his father, a fact that leads us to reflect on the importance of family ties for the permanence of our culture and, the interviewee of the Cf-p emphasized the regional cafe is continuation of an old cafe, received as a labor indemnity.

The speech of the respective managers help us to understand the reasons for the origin of these regional cafes, in this study, within their particularities, each one having its specificity of work, the arguments make it clear that the work for a regional cafe has been the main source of income.

CONCLUSIONS

The problem that motivated the research was to identify how original the so-called regional cafes located in the city of Manaus are. Therefore, the goal of the research was reached. Since, from the theoretical contribution, the interviews and observations, it was possible to achieve answers that will possibly contribute to discussions about the theme, since there is an absence of work focused on the food offered in regional cafes in the city of Manaus.

Thus, it is understood that the foods offered by regional cafes located in the city of Manaus preserve local cultural roots, through the sales of regional typical products. Also, it was observed the regional products sold in these cafes come from some regions of the Amazon, with predominance in the state of Amazonas.

The study, also, pointed out there is a variation in the types of customers of the regional cafes surveyed, where, in the large-sized cafes, the upper-class business owners often go to. On the other hand, in the medium and small-sized cafes there is the presence of certain customers (from the middle and lower classes) that often go to these establishments, however, it is evident that there are preferences for certain regional products, such as, in the case of tucumã and tapioca.

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