

O conceito da culinária oriental e a sustentabilidade das sociedades contemporâneas sul-americanas

The concept of Eastern cuisine and the sustainability of contemporary South American societies

El concepto de cocina oriental y la sostenibilidad de las sociedades sudamericanas contemporâneas

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Resumo: Ocorre a necessidade de se resgatar na linha do tempo as técnicas culinárias que promoveram o melhor aproveitamento dos alimentos, eliminando o desperdício e a redução da geração de resíduos, fazendo com que a sociedade atual tenha no retrovisor da história da gastronomia mais um amparo instrumental para a execução da ODS 2, sugerida pela ONU, garantindo o direito fundamental a uma comida de verdade, num cenário global de insegurança alimentar. Para tanto, utilizou-se a evolução da cozinha milenar asiática, que desde o nascimento desta civilização, foi pedra fundamental da sua cultura. Este trabalho, objetivou, partindo-se destes fatos, relatar as mudanças e adaptações gastronômicas, conforme os avanços geopolíticos das civilizações. A metodologia adotada baseou-se numa revisão bibliográfica em gastronomia oriental e suas modificações regionais. Pode-se observar nesta busca pela contribuição ancestral que a alma da cozinha repousa na agricultura, portanto o cuidado com a preservação da terra é de fundamental importância para a saúde, pelo consumo de alimentos com a pureza do sabor, evitando a fome e suas fatídicas consequências. As expansões territoriais, de alguma forma, levaram a filosofia gastronômica oriental para diversas sociedades. Hoje, esta constatação está numa cozinha onde os cardápios apresentem cor, perfume, paladar, textura e apresentações esmeradas, herança milenar.

Palavras-chave: Gastronomia sustentável; Culinária oriental; Segurança alimentar.

Abstract: There is a need to revisit culinary techniques that promote the optimal use of food, eliminating waste and reducing residue generation. This approach allows modern society to view the history of gastronomy as yet another instrumental support for implementing SDG 2, as suggested by the UN, ensuring the fundamental right to real food in a global scenario of food insecurity. To this end, the evolution of ancient Asian cuisine, a cornerstone of this culture since the birth of civilization, was analyzed. Based on these considerations, this study aimed to report gastronomic changes and adaptations in accordance with the geopolitical advances of civilizations. The methodology adopted was based on a bibliographic review of Eastern gastronomy and its regional modifications. In examining ancestral contributions, it becomes evident that the essence of cuisine lies in agriculture; therefore, preserving the land is of fundamental importance for health, ensuring the consumption of food with pure flavors while preventing hunger and its dire consequences. Territorial expansions have, in various ways, disseminated Eastern gastronomic philosophy to different societies. Today, this influence is evident in cuisines where menus feature color, aroma, taste, texture, and careful presentation—an ancient heritage.

Keywords: Sustainable gastronomy; Eastern cuisine; Food safety.

Resumen: Es necesario rescatar con el tiempo las técnicas culinarias que promovieron un mejor uso de los alimentos, eliminando el desperdicio y reduciendo la generación de residuos.

En este sentido, la sociedad actual tiene en el retrovisor la historia de la gastronomía, un recurso instrumental más para la implementación del ODS 2, sugerido por la ONU, que busca garantizar el derecho fundamental a la alimentación en un escenario global de inseguridad alimentaria. Para ello, se ha recurrido a la evolución de la antigua cocina asiática, que desde el nacimiento de esta civilización ha sido piedra angular de su cultura. Este trabajo tuvo como objetivo, a partir de estos hechos, analizar los cambios y adaptaciones gastronómicas en función de los avances geopolíticos de las civilizaciones. La metodología adoptada se basó en una revisión bibliográfica sobre la gastronomía oriental y sus modificaciones regionales. En esta búsqueda del aporte ancestral, se observa que el alma de la cocina reside en la agricultura, por lo que el cuidado de la preservación de la tierra es fundamental para la salud, a través del consumo de alimentos con la pureza del sabor, evitando el hambre y sus fatídicas consecuencias. Las expansiones territoriales, de alguna manera, llevaron la filosofía gastronómica oriental a distintas sociedades. Hoy en día, esta influencia se puede comprobar en una cocina donde los menús destacan por el color, el aroma, el sabor, la textura y las cuidadas presentaciones, una herencia milenaria.

Palabras-clave: Gastronomía sostenible; Cocina oriental; Seguridad alimentaria.

Introduction

The recognition that human nutrition is more than just a biological fact but also a social and cultural act is well established in anthropological studies (Menasche et al., 2012). Similarly, it is acknowledged that cultural diversity and human creativity manifest in various ways through the use of natural resources and interactions with the environment. This perspective is reflected in studies within the Social Sciences, particularly by Lévi-Strauss (2021), who emphasized that food systems are closely linked to culture, understood as memory and identity.

This study aimed to demonstrate the interaction between East and West by analyzing the influence of Eastern cuisine on the culinary practices of various South American societies. Specifically, it focused on cooking techniques, the use and substitution of food products according to regional availability, and the differentiation of geographical and sociocultural aspects. Additionally, it examined concerns regarding practices that contribute to the full utilization of food items.

The study also sought to discuss the long-standing criteria of Eastern cuisine and its relationship with growing populations in regions that have incorporated variations of this culinary tradition. At the same time, it aimed to evaluate alarming data on food waste in various countries, particularly in Brazil, where food insecurity significantly affects a considerable portion of the population. This issue is highlighted by ONUBR (2015) in its Sustainable Development Goals, specifically “Zero Hunger and Sustainable Agriculture” (SDG 2) and “Responsible Consumption and Production” (SDG 12).

It is essential to understand that national cuisines are the result of historically and socially constructed processes. Sinic and Japanese culinary practices have adapted to native foods, influenced by the cultural, and consequently, traditional aspects of the societies with which they have interacted—most notably Peruvians and Brazilians. These interactions have communicative dimensions that reflect their lifestyles and worldviews, shaped by cultural processes (Rocha and Shimoda, 2014). As Soares and Gaudioso (2013, p. 80) state, “[...] foods, more than just being eaten, are thought about. In turn, trying varied flavors builds individuals capable of appreciating a greater diversity of dishes with different tastes.”

Over time, and with the growing recognition of food's importance for health, cooking as a science has focused on scientifically understanding the empirical aspects of culinary practices. In the search for ancestral contributions, it becomes evident that the essence of cooking lies in agriculture. Therefore, preserving the land is fundamental to health, ensuring the consumption of food with pure flavors while preventing hunger and its dire consequences. This realization highlighted the need to understand the historical and scientific paths involved in food preparation and, in the specific case of this research, its sustainability based on an ancient culinary foundation.

1 The History of Asian Cuisine

China has a vast gastronomic literature, and Chinese writers and poets have been gourmets for four thousand years. It is perhaps the only country in the world where wise men, philosophers, political thinkers, and poets have written treatises on food and compiled collections of culinary recipes (FRANCO, 1995).

In the 2nd century BC, the Han Dynasty promoted agricultural development in China. From then on, the country began to combine ingredients from various sources and absorb a range of culinary influences: table etiquette rules proposed by the thinker Confucius, the selection of healthy recipes based on nutritional analyses conducted by Taoists, and the introduction of vegetarianism, advocated by Buddhists (FUKUOKA, 2009).

Chinese cuisine emerged with the earliest inhabitants of Southeast Asia more than 4 thousand years ago and has influenced the origins of Japanese, Thai, and Vietnamese cuisines (KEVIN, 1993).

Chinese cuisine is represented by four main regions: North, South, East, and West. It is one of the most well-known cuisines in the world, likely due to territorial expansions driven by the pursuit of power. However, despite adopting many of its culinary techniques, the West remains largely unfamiliar with its origins, as well as its richness and variety. Chinese cuisine balances the extravagance of imperial palace dishes with the simplicity of popular preparations and was closely linked to healing and medicinal practices in its early days (FRANCO, 2001).

Some of the most famous dishes, such as Peking Duck, were created during the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644 AD) with the emergence of specialized chefs. Chinese emperors frequently held feasts for spirits and gods, seeking to ensure good harvests (SCHMITT, 2009).

According to Takahashi (2012), the various religious influences and points of contact with the West resulted in a refined cuisine that combines ingredients, textures, flavors, and colors. In addition, Chinese chefs, known for their inventiveness and versatility, developed subtle techniques for preparing and cooking food, transforming their cuisine into one of the most sophisticated in the world. At the time, diners used chopsticks and spoons, just as they do today. Knives were absent from the table because all food was cut into pieces small enough to be picked up with chopsticks. It would have been inconceivable for diners at a banquet or even customers at a popular restaurant to have to cut their meat, given the great abundance of servants, who were also very inexpensive.

The origins of Japanese cuisine date back to the 4th century BC. Initially, rice was used solely to help preserve fish. The fermentation of rice released substances necessary for storing and transporting food. Only the fish was consumed, while the rice was discarded (KEVIN, 1993).

Regarding rice preservation, from the 17th century onward, natural fermentation was replaced by the use of rice vinegar. In this process, rice and fish were arranged in wooden boxes and pressed for nearly a day (KEVIN, 1993).

During the Edo Era (1603–1868), around 1800, on the outskirts of Tokyo, people with increasingly hectic lives snacked on nigirizushi as a "fast-food" option at the entrances of establishments, on the streets, or by the roadside. The preservation method gave way to the concept of freshness and speed of service. Rice began to be molded by hand, where the applied pressure and body heat replaced the use of stones, and the fermentation period was reduced to the moments between its assembly and consumption—almost instantaneous. In this way, nigirizushi, sushi made by hand, was born (FRANCO, 2001).

Although sashimi consists of sliced fish fillets, the term *Kirimi*, which for the samurai of the Kamakura Era (1185–1333) meant "cutting the body" and would be a more accurate term for "sliced meat," was not used (KEVIN, 1993).

In China, rice plays a central role in gastronomic habits. In contrast, Japanese cuisine is primarily based on fish and seafood. In the past, in the Kyoto and Osaka regions, the birthplace of Japanese cuisine, only one type of fish was eaten as sashimi. To fully appreciate its flavor, no other flavors could interfere. Over time, this practice was abandoned, and the combination of several types of fish, with different colors and flavors, in a single dish became more common (KEVIN, 1993).

Once the entire food chain was consolidated and essential condiments were produced, the Japanese also began to focus on the aesthetic aspects of cuisine. This attention stems from the Zen Buddhist tradition, where the act of eating is associated with purification. It encompasses the shapes ingredients take during preparation, the composition of colors on

the plate, the harmony of flavors, and the aroma of the food. The arrangement of the dishes expresses the language of the seasons, incorporating elements of garden landscaping, Ikebana, and the tea ceremony (TAKAHASHI, 2012).

In India, meat—especially beef—is difficult to find. The country's wide variety of dishes is predominantly vegetarian and seasoned with an array of spices (KEVIN, 1993).

JESUS (2013) emphasized that the freshness of ingredients is also a distinctive aspect of Japanese cuisine. Unlike French cuisine, which relies heavily on sauces, Japanese cuisine presents food raw or nearly raw. Serving ikizukuri—fish and certain seafood still alive and moving—is not only a controversial and cruel ritual but also an exaltation of this freshness.

A well-balanced Chinese meal should have contrasting elements: one dish should be sweet (yin) and another salty (yang); one cold (yin) and another hot (yang); one soft (yin) and another crunchy (yang). The final result is a banquet that stimulates all the senses. A good Chinese dish must have color, aroma, taste, texture, and meticulous presentation (JESUS, 2013).

Hmitt (2009) also noted that the essence of Chinese cuisine lies in agriculture. A Chinese person is never far from the land, as hunger and hard work have been integral parts of their culture since ancient times.

Kanten gelatin (agar-agar), black sesame, and vinegar are among the foods that have recently gained popularity in Japan due to their therapeutic properties (ishoku dogen), which emphasize disease prevention rather than treatment (FUKUOKA, 2009).

In Japan, small animals are the most commonly consumed meat sources, particularly pork and chicken. Veal, lamb, and goat are rare and were introduced into northern Japanese cuisine by Mongol Muslims. All parts of the animal are utilized, from offal to bones. Due to the historical lack of refrigeration, meat was typically dried and cured before being mixed with vegetables (SCHMITT, 2009).

During the Meiji Period, Japan assimilated Western culture across various domains, from food to technology, and opened its doors to foreigners, allowing for cultural exchange. In the 19th century, Western diplomats introduced Japanese foods and cooking techniques to the West (Franco, 2001). Some dishes, such as Shanghai-style shrimp, require extremely high temperatures and can be cooked in just 15 seconds, whereas others, prepared over lower flames, may take up to 48 hours to cook (FAHRNOW, 2000).

Dantas (2017) commented that the consumption of highly exotic delicacies—such as shark fins, dog meat, snakes, scorpions, and grasshoppers—is not a recent phenomenon. These eating habits, considered unusual by Western standards, were adopted by the Chinese throughout history as a response to periods of poverty, war, and food scarcity.

In the southern regions of China, sweet flavors—representing yin—are abundant, and menus are highly diverse. Due to the vast production of sugarcane, sugar is commonly used as a seasoning. It also plays a significant role in food preservation, particularly during Chinese

New Year. Cantonese cuisine is considered one of China's most prominent culinary traditions, as it favors steaming, grilling, sautéing, and minimal frying (CARNEIRO, 2005).

According to Jesus (2013), Shanghai cuisine exemplifies the culinary traditions of eastern China. A longstanding practice in this region is seasoning food with a combination of soy sauce and sugar (yin and yang). Additionally, rice brandy and pork stews are notable. Pork is one of the most abundant meats in the area, and the region's ham is among the two most famous in China, the other coming from the western region.

Japan's western region is mountainous, with few plains, making food transportation difficult. As a result, the inhabitants rely on local products and have developed preservation techniques, commonly using dried meat and vegetables preserved in brandy or rice vinegar. The fermentation process gives the cuisine of this region a more bitter flavor, symbolizing the element of fire in the Chinese concept of the five elements, which represent the energy fields that surround us (FAHRNOW, 2000).

In northern China, the cold climate increases the inhabitants' caloric needs. In this region, which borders North Korea, wheat-based foods such as steamed bread and various types of noodles are preferred for their density and sustenance. Sugar is scarce, but salt is commonly added to dishes. In the northeastern region, far from the sea, game meat is a dietary staple, alongside cabbages and potatoes, resembling culinary traditions in the Nordic countries of Europe (FAHRNOW, 2000).

Jesus (2013) also noted that, alternatively, chef Liu Guo Zhu classifies China's culinary diversity into the seven "culinary zones" identified by historian Li Xueqin during the Dong Zhou Dynasty: the cultural zone of the northern nomadic minority; the Chung Yuan zone, along the Yellow River; the Qi-Lu Dynasty zone, in present-day Shandong; the Chu Dynasty zone, along the Changjiang River; the Wu-Yue Dynasty zone, below the Changjiang River and in the Huaipei Basin; the Ba-Shu-Dian Dynasty zone, in the southwest; and the Ching Dynasty zone, in the northern territories.

The techniques used to prepare and cook food can vary widely, but according to Chef Liu, what best distinguishes one region from another is the preference for specific flavors. Some regions favor more intense flavors, while others prefer spicier ones, among other distinctions (JESUS, 2013).

Sichuan (Szenchwan) cuisine, originating from one of China's most populous provinces, is characterized by a diminished emphasis on the natural flavors of ingredients due to the presence of strong spices and aromas. Located in the central part of the country, the region is isolated by mountainous terrain and traversed by the Yangtze River. Rice and wheat plantations dominate the landscape, and Sichuan dishes are famous for their spicy and intensely flavored profiles (FUKUOKA, 2009).

Guangdong cuisine is the most well-known Chinese cuisine, owing its richness and diversity to a historical event: the fall of the Ming dynasty in 1644, which led to widespread migration to the south. Venerable chefs from Beijing, along with their imperial palace kitchen

equipment, embarked on a long journey southward. Along the way, they gathered and incorporated renowned provincial dishes into what would become Cantonese cuisine (SCHMITT, 2009).

In Canton, farm animals such as dogs, cats, snakes, and monkeys are served as food. As cooking is an art without borders, Chinese cuisine has also been influenced by other culinary traditions: ingredients such as tomatoes, potatoes, celery, carrots, cabbage, and star anise were introduced from the West. Conversely, China is credited with bringing noodles to Italy (CARNEIRO, 2005).

In addition to the concept of yin and yang, Chinese culinary philosophy also incorporates the theory of the five elements. The Chinese believe that they are surrounded by five energy fields—fire, wood, earth, metal, and water—each of which corresponds to a specific flavor: (a) Bitter – Fire; (b) Sour – Wood; (c) Spicy – Metal; (d) Sweet – Earth; and (e) Salty – Water.

2 - Eastern Cuisine in Contemporary Gastronomy in the South American Continent.

Food products, along with the objects and knowledge involved in their production, transformation, and consumption, have been recognized as cultural artifacts that convey the history and identity of a social group (Poulain, 2013). Food is tied to representations and imaginaries; it involves choices, symbols, and classifications, with different forms of food production and consumption revealing cultural identities (Santilli, 2015). As defined by Contreras and Mabel (2011), it is "[...] the set of inherited and/or learned representations, beliefs, knowledge, and practices associated with food and shared by individuals of a given culture or social group."

The variety of native foods, combined with those introduced through conquests or imported from distant lands, endowed China with a cuisine far richer than that of medieval Europe. This cuisine, refined through the development of subtle techniques, would later influence Western culinary traditions as well (FRANCO, 1995).

Japanese cuisine captivates palates worldwide. Carefully prepared and visually appealing, it offers a wide variety of dishes and unique flavors. Due to its appreciation and deep historical significance, washoku (traditional Japanese cuisine) was inscribed on UNESCO's list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in December 2013 (KUMAKURA et al., 2014; SANTILLI, 2015).

For a long time, Japanese cuisine was influenced by Chinese culinary traditions until it developed its own distinct identity. Due to food scarcity and the country's geographical isolation, the Japanese relied heavily on hunting and fishing, which explains the prominence of fish and seafood in their gastronomy.

Over the centuries, the influence of other countries introduced new ingredients to the Japanese menu, including rice, vegetables, and various types of meat.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Japanese immigrants arrived in Brazil, bringing their culture and, naturally, their rich cuisine. Over time, typical Japanese restaurants began to emerge, gradually popularizing dishes that are now highly appreciated by Brazilians. One example of Japanese influence on Brazilian cuisine is panko flour, derived from the Japanese word *pan*, meaning bread. The Japanese, in turn, learned to make bread from the Portuguese.

Another notable influence is the consumption of specific dishes on celebratory dates, such as mochi on New Year's, toshikoshi soba on All Souls' Day, and chimaki on the Doll Festival and Children's Day.

Eastern cuisine refers to the traditional gastronomy of East Asian countries, including China, Japan, Thailand, and Korea. Some typical dishes of this culinary tradition include Schezwan chicken, Peking duck, Thai roast chicken, Gka Prow Gai, and sushi.

Japanese cuisine also left its mark on Peruvian gastronomy, where Japanese immigrants adapted their culinary techniques to local ingredients. Following the abolition of slavery in the 18th century, there was a growing demand for cheap labor in agriculture, leading to Asian immigration, not only from China but also, years later, from Japan. With landowners no longer having access to enslaved labor, they sought alternative sources of workforce (Guardia, 2016). Subsequently, Spanish cuisine—particularly influenced by the Moors' presence in the Iberian Peninsula—also contributed to Peruvian gastronomy, along with culinary customs brought by enslaved people from the Atlantic coast of sub-Saharan Africa (RODRÍGUEZ and VENTURO, 2007).

According to Rocha (2019), between 1849 and 1874, approximately 90,000 Chinese settlers arrived in Peru to work on cotton and sugar plantations. Some also provided services in private homes, while others engaged in trade, with some achieving great financial success. By the late 19th century, Chinese immigrants in Peru generally fell into two social groups: the wealthy merchants and the poor laborers.

The Chinese also played a significant role in shaping Peruvian cuisine. After completing their mandatory eight years of labor on farms, many left agricultural work and began selling food along the Peruvian coast, particularly in Lima near the Mercado Central. This new style of cooking initially emerged in poorer areas, and it was through Chinese immigrants that Lomo Saltado, one of Peru's most traditional dishes, was created (ROCHA, 2019).

It was also through Chinese immigrants that rice rose to a staple of Peruvian cuisine. This culinary fusion led to the creation of several iconic Peruvian dishes, such as arroz chaufa, a fried rice dish reminiscent of paella but featuring distinct Chinese seasonings (GUARDIA, 2016).

The first Japanese immigrants arrived in Peru around 1889, with the same objective as the Chinese: to work on cotton and sugar plantations. Over 47 years of successive immigration, the Japanese population in Peru grew to approximately 36,000, with most settlers coming from Okinawa, Kumamoto, and Fukushima—regions known for their distinctive seafood-based cuisine (GUARDIA, 2001).

Japanese cuisine in Peru has since evolved into two distinct variations. The first is the traditional style, served in Japanese restaurants worldwide, featuring classic dishes such as tempura, sushi, and sashimi. The second is Nikkei cuisine, a fusion of Japanese culinary techniques with Peruvian flavors and ingredients, similar to the earlier adaptation of Chinese cuisine in the country (GUARDIA, 2011).

Ferreira and Fernandes (2010) reported that the influence of Japanese cuisine in Brazil, which began around 1908 with the arrival of the ship *Kasato Maru* and its 781 immigrants, introduced a rich culture and distinct eating habits. Integrated into Brazilian customs, these influences contributed to reshaping the national menu. The Japanese introduced soybean and cotton cultivation, as well as rice and poultry farming, in addition to growing vegetables and fruits in greenhouses. Over the years, this influence has led to an increased consumption of vegetables and fruits such as persimmons, apples, pears, chard, Japanese spinach, bean sprouts, bamboo shoots, radishes, and squash. This shift has helped reduce the consumption of fried foods and meats, promoting a more natural, light, and healthy diet.

On the other hand, most South American countries have experienced little or no influence from Eastern cuisine on their eating habits. Argentine cuisine is characterized as a rich and diverse blend of Mediterranean influences. Unlike the rest of Latin America, Argentina has undergone extensive European immigration, with minimal influence from Asian or African cuisine. This, combined with the availability of local ingredients in different regions, has shaped its unique culinary identity (HAMRE, 2024).

Argentine cuisine includes many Spanish-style dishes, as well as Italian pastas and pizzas and French pastries. Other immigrant groups, such as Germans, Jews, and British settlers, have also contributed to the country's gastronomy, alongside indigenous influences, particularly those of Andean and Guaraní origin. However, the colors, aromas, and culinary presentations largely trace back to ancient Old World traditions (CANTO, 2018).

Like other South American countries, Chile has been influenced by a variety of culinary traditions from different regions and peoples. Some aspects of Eastern cuisine are present, but European culinary influence is more dominant, as seen in the fusion of various traditional foods. Immigrants brought their ingredients and cooking methods, leading to an evolving and diverse food culture (BAILLARGEON, 2024).

The foods introduced through immigration merged with local ingredients, evolved over time, and incorporated elements of native Chilean cuisine, particularly that of the indigenous Mapuche culture. However, there was no direct influence from Asian or African cuisine. Modern Chilean cuisine emerged from this extensive blending of traditions. Among the key immigrant groups contributing to its development are Arabs, British, Indians, Italians, and Spaniards. The Spanish, in particular, introduced culinary customs such as the use of chicken and pork, as well as seasonings like garlic and onion (MONTECINO, 2009).

Colombian cuisine is a distinctive blend of Spanish, African, and indigenous influences. Corn is a staple ingredient in many recipes, along with potatoes and bananas. It emerged from

the fusion of European cuisine, particularly Spanish, due to Colombia's long history as an Iberian colony; African cuisine, introduced by enslaved Africans who arrived on its coasts in the 17th and 18th centuries, bringing their culinary traditions; and indigenous cuisine, rooted in the Andean mountains (MARTINEZ, 2024).

As in Brazil, Colombia does not have a single, unified gastronomic identity. In the south, guinea pig is consumed, a tradition that dates back centuries. The cuisine of the Pacific coast is rich in fish, a characteristic also present in ancient Chinese coastal cuisine. Even before the arrival of the Spanish conquerors, Colombia had a diverse range of culinary options, with corn as a dietary staple. Indigenous cultures cultivated corn and used it to prepare foods such as arepa, chicha, and mazamorra, among others. These traditional foods were later influenced by European and African culinary traditions brought through colonization. While Eastern cuisine did not have a direct impact, some aspects of immigrant cuisines, such as the use of aromatic spices, contrasting flavors, and colorful vegetable and herb arrangements, contributed to Colombian gastronomy. The Spanish introduced non-native products such as beef, carrots, lemons, cinnamon, pepper, walnuts, and anise, which remain essential in Colombian cuisine today (MARTINEZ, 2024).

The culinary history of Venezuela, defined as Creole cuisine, began taking shape in the 15th century with Spanish colonization, and there is no record of direct Eastern influence. However, in addition to European colonizers, South American natives played a significant role in shaping Venezuelan cuisine. They cultivated a variety of corn, potatoes, yams, cassava, avocado, pumpkin, tomatoes, and beans—ingredients also found in Asian cuisine—which are typically served with beef, pork, chicken, or seafood. A traditional staple is arepa, a circular cornmeal cake (WOODWARD CULTURE, 2024).

Bolivian cuisine has been influenced by Argentine and Brazilian gastronomy, the latter incorporating some Asian elements. However, it has been shaped to a lesser extent by the cuisines of other neighboring countries. It primarily originates from the fusion of Spanish cuisine with indigenous ingredients and Aymara traditions, later enriched by the culinary contributions of German, Italian, French, and Arab immigrants.

The staple ingredients of Bolivian cuisine include corn, potatoes, quinoa, and common beans. These native ingredients were combined with foods introduced by the Spanish, such as rice, wheat, and meats, including beef, pork, and chicken (BOLIVIAN LIVES, 2024).

Bolivian cuisine varies by geographic location. In the Altiplano, western Bolivia, the high-altitude and cold climate influence the use of spices in cooking. In contrast, the lowlands, especially the Amazonian regions, feature dishes made with locally abundant ingredients such as fruits, vegetables, fish, and cassava.

European immigration to Bolivia has been less significant compared to other Latin American countries. While German, Italian, Basque, and other cuisines have contributed to Bolivian gastronomy, Spanish cuisine remains the predominant influence (ROUFS and ROUFS, 2014).

Ecuadorian cuisine shares similarities with that of neighboring Peru, which has strong Asian influences, and with Colombia. Some characteristic dishes include ceviche, empanadas made with plantain or corn dough, and a variety of meat and vegetable stews. Ecuadorian cuisine is deeply rooted in indigenous traditions and Spanish colonial heritage. Today, the country offers a diverse array of exotic meats, as well as an abundance of fruits, fish, and seafood (GARCIA, 1995).

Meanwhile, Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, and Brazil have already embraced the fusion of Peruvian-Japanese cuisine, with new restaurants set to open across the continent in the next few years. The success of Peruvian Nikkei cuisine abroad is driven by carefully selected ingredients, innovative techniques, and skilled professionals who have taken their culinary expertise beyond Peru's borders (WONG-KIT, 2024).

Uruguayan cuisine is a fusion of European and indigenous influences, resulting in a unique culinary identity that appeals even to the most discerning palates. Uruguayan dishes are characterized by their simplicity and high-quality ingredients. The highlight of the country's gastronomy is undoubtedly its meat. Beef is a national passion, and Uruguay is renowned for producing some of the finest meats in the world (GAGLIARDI, 2024).

Typical Paraguayan cuisine results from the combination of Hispanic culinary techniques with native ingredients, as well as products introduced by the Spanish, such as vegetables, rice, and beef. While Paraguayan gastronomy shares common elements with other regions of the Americas—such as corn, cassava, peanuts, and legumes—it is also shaped by the natural resources and cultural heritage of the Guaraní people. This fusion with European influences sets Paraguayan cuisine apart from the rest of the Americas and MERCOSUR (PARAGUAY, 2024).

3 –Sustainability according to the SDGs, aiming at food security

In recent years, gastronomy as a science has increasingly positioned itself as a fundamental component in discussions about environmental responsibility, a topic of growing global importance. According to estimates from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), “1.3 billion tons of food are wasted each year worldwide, approximately one-third of all food produced globally. The production of this wasted food accounts for 8% of greenhouse gas emissions” (AKATU INSTITUTE, 2021).

The statistics in Brazil are equally alarming. Despite being one of the world's largest food producers, the country is also among the most wasteful. According to IBGE data, “[...] around 30% of the food produced in the country is discarded, amounting to approximately 46 million tons of food per year.” (Brazil is the 10th country that wastes the most food in the world, 2023). A 2018 study by Embrapa found that an average Brazilian family “[...] wastes nearly 130 kg of food per year, which equates to 41.6 kg per person. The most frequently discarded foods, as a percentage of total waste, are rice (22%), beef (20%), common bean (16%), and chicken (15%).” (INSTITUTO AKATU, 2021).

These data are particularly concerning as they contrast with the high rates of food and nutritional insecurity in Brazil. Food insecurity can be classified as mild, moderate, or severe, depending on the degree of food deprivation. It is estimated that “[...] approximately 116.8 million Brazilians were in a situation of food insecurity (mild, moderate, or severe), of which 19 million experienced severe food insecurity, meaning hunger.” (Sousa et al., 2022, p. 03). This highlights that food waste is a global issue with negative social, economic, and environmental impacts, posing a significant challenge to sustainability.

There is, therefore, a clear need to reflect on food loss and waste and the impact these practices have on the food system as a whole. The costs and benefits of reducing food losses and waste “[...] are fundamental to understanding their impacts on Food and Nutrition Security and identifying who the winners and losers are, given appropriate policy interventions.” (BELIK, 2018, p. 13).

A prevailing perspective among scholars on this topic is that food systems serve as both a lever for economic and social development and a contributor to health and well-being challenges, including food insecurity, hunger, obesity, chronic diseases, and environmental degradation. Different population groups “[...] are affected unequally by these problems, due both to broader inequalities characteristic of national social structures and to systemic determinants of inequality specific to markedly inequitable food systems.” (MALUF and BURLANDY, 2022, p. 10).

Without limiting itself to a pessimistic reflection, this research recognizes the strategic importance of food systems in promoting health across different dimensions and scales, in alignment with the major transformations taking place worldwide, particularly in accordance with the 2030 Agenda. In September 2015, during the 70th General Assembly of the United Nations (UN), representatives of 193 member states approved the resolution Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This document, commonly referred to as the 2030 Agenda, acknowledges that

[...] the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. We are committed to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social, and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner [...] We resolve, between now and 2030, to end poverty and hunger everywhere; to combat inequalities within and between countries; build peaceful, just, and inclusive societies; protect human rights and promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; and ensure the lasting protection of the planet and its natural resources. We also resolve to create conditions for sustainable, inclusive, and economically sustained growth, shared prosperity, and decent work for all, taking into account the different levels of development and national capacities (NORONHA et al., 2023, p. 20).

Thus, the 2030 Agenda is based on a broad and incisive diagnosis of the challenges facing humanity in the early 21st century, concluding that the survival of many societies and the planet's biological systems is at risk. In this context, the resolution outlines "[...] a comprehensive, ambitious, and people-centered set of universal and transformative goals and targets, designed to stimulate sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social, and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner." (Barcellos, 2020, p. 151). The 2030 Agenda is structured around 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 associated targets, which are strongly interrelated and must be analyzed in an integrated and inseparable manner.

SDG 2, dedicated to Zero Hunger and Sustainable Agriculture, and SDG 12, which focuses on Responsible Consumption and Production, deserve special attention. Through these goals, the world's nations have committed to ending hunger and food insecurity, improving nutrition, promoting sustainable agriculture, and addressing food production and waste. However, data indicate that eight years after the Agenda was approved, there is little to celebrate. In the case of Brazil, in particular, food systems remain marked by deep inequalities and a persistent state of food insecurity among the population—an issue that has long affected the country and was further exacerbated by the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In this context, promoting food justice and equity takes on a broader meaning, encompassing the pursuit of social justice and equity through food and nutrition. Consequently, the various supply chains and networks, along with the diverse range of products that circulate within them, do not exist in isolation but are "[...] entangled in ways that reflect the sociopolitical characteristics of their respective locations, the strategies of the actors that integrate them, and the disputes surrounding food supply." (MALUF and BURLANDY, 2022, p. 19).

It is also evident that major and rapid changes are currently occurring in food consumption. These changes result from transformations across different dimensions of the food system, from production and processing to food availability and consumption patterns. Consequently, complex and globalized systems "[...] have been proposed for the analysis of these multiple relationships and draw attention to how the food system has influenced eating behavior in recent years, both at an individual and collective level." (Sichieri et al., 2023, p. 327). Therefore, addressing food waste from the perspective of environmental sustainability and food security is essential, given the global significance these issues have assumed.

From this perspective, a connection is easily established between food waste and food security, as waste directly impacts the safeguarding of a fundamental right and the dignity of individuals. One of the countries that has taken the most action against food waste is Japan, a phenomenon that can be attributed to the country's historical and geographical context, as well as its efforts to spread its gastronomic practices internationally. Studying Japan's

techniques, from sustainable agriculture to responsible cooking, offers valuable insights into reducing food waste.

Due to its geographical limitations and historical events, such as wars, Japan has developed a culture where waste is not an option. This has given rise to a lifestyle known as *mottainai*. More than just a word, *mottainai* conveys a philosophy of maximizing the use of any resource for its entire lifespan. Today, this concept is closely linked to a form of sustainability. The zero-waste model closely resembles the principles of a circular economy, yet “[...] the difference is that, when practicing *mottainai*, the person is adopting a change of habit, and not just a custom for the benefit of the environment.” (MOTTAINAI: O PENSAMENTO JAPONÊS NO COMBATE AO DESPERDÍCIO, 2019).

Indeed, there is a growing movement not only in Japan, but globally, promoting awareness of sustainable gastronomy. Gastronomy plays a significant role in tourism, both culturally and economically. Additionally, it extends beyond these dimensions to encompass social, recreational, artistic, and health aspects, positively influencing climate conditions, social well-being, and ecosystems while maintaining economic viability. This idea aligns with the Slow Food movement, founded in the 1980s by Italian journalist Carlo Petrini (1949) with the aim of “[...] promoting a gastronomic culture capable of combining the pleasure of food with a deep knowledge of local traditions, capabilities, and resources necessary to produce quality products.” (CÂNDIDO and BRITO, 2020, p. 71).

The movement initiated by Petrini has expanded the concept of sustainable gastronomy by raising awareness and driving change within the gastronomic sector through initiatives that encourage greater knowledge about food. Thus, combating unsustainable practices begins with the rediscovery of regional foods and traditional cooking methods. Sustainable gastronomy seeks to rethink the food production chain, generating direct impacts on kitchen management and logistics. Within this sustainability movement, “[...] the aim is to reduce impacts on the environment, as well as make better use of natural resources, avoiding waste at each stage of production. [...] The main motto is zero waste” (DIAZ et al., 2021, p. 175–176).

Sustainable development in gastronomy is driven by awareness of the impact that food practices have on the environment and society. This process is supported by programs and organizations that combat waste and food insecurity, addressing the needs of many families and individuals facing acute social and economic challenges. One of the core principles of sustainable gastronomy is integral food utilization. This important concept requires further definition within the scope of this discussion. Integral food utilization refers to the practice of using “[...] all food and all its parts, whether of plant or animal origin— particularly foods that are most often discarded in the preparation of meals intended for human consumption.” (Steuer, 2013, p. 01). In this sense, food utilization “[...] aligns with today’s world because there is a need to form conscious consumers and healthy citizens, which can be achieved by reducing waste generation and environmental pollution through saving habits and nutritional awareness.” (TEIXEIRA et al., 2006, p. 2256).

Japanese cuisine has gradually incorporated these philosophies, making the preservation of ingredients' essential characteristics a defining feature. This approach values authenticity and establishes a healthy diet as a dietary reference. "In Japan, ingredients are selected to be used when they are in their best season, which increases their quality and availability in greater quantities." (Castro and Shinohara, 2023, p. 173). The adoption of these philosophies in Japanese culinary traditions reflects a longstanding concern for food preservation and waste reduction.

In this sense, Japanese culture and cuisine can make a positive contribution to environmental sustainability, offering concrete practices that could be expanded, particularly within the Brazilian context (Seixas Filho et al., 2020; Ide et al., 2021). Japanese cuisine is distinguished by its balance of simplicity and sophistication, prioritizing ingredient quality and harmony of flavors.

In Japan, ingredients are carefully selected to be used at their peak season, enhancing both their quality and availability. Traditionally, preserves are made during times of abundance, ensuring food supply during less productive periods. Beyond seasonality, it is important to note that ancient cultures, such as Japan, have long understood that fermentation processes not only preserve food safely for later consumption but also enhance its nutritional value, increasing levels of B vitamins due to the proliferation of fermenting bacteria (CASTRO and SHINOHARA, 2023, p. 173).

The above-presented reflections demonstrate the growing importance of sustainability in gastronomy, as culinary professionals play a crucial role in fostering a sustainable relationship between man and food. Awareness of the need for sustainable gastronomy must be instilled in each and everyone involved in this field. Moreover, such changes should be accompanied "[...] by a review and planning of new production, distribution, and consumption standards based on the analysis of the reflective capacity of the actors involved and the consolidation of their participation as political agents." (Nascimento et al., 2020, p. 220). Encouraging knowledge on this subject is therefore essential to raising public awareness as a strategy to combat food waste. It is important to acknowledge that making full use of food should restore "[...] care for food, the cultural value of avoiding waste, and appreciation for regional cuisine, while also promoting environmental education, maximizing resource use, and recovering the practice of healthy eating." (FARIA et al., 2023, p. 37).

final considerations

It is necessary for the world's population to immediately implement SDG 2, suggested by the UN, in order to eliminate food insecurity, guaranteeing the fundamental right to real food. To this end, it is necessary to continuously and deeply raise awareness, using instruments that promote culinary techniques for better use of food, eliminating waste and reducing the generation of residues, allowing today's society to have in the rearview mirror of

the history of gastronomy another support for understanding gastronomic changes and adaptations, in accordance with the geopolitical advances of civilizations.

The ancestral contribution has allowed us to understand that food security rests on agriculture and that this directly depends on the preservation of the land, which is of fundamental importance to avoid hunger and its fateful consequences.

The Eastern gastronomic philosophy has been sown in various societies, and this cultural value in the concern with waste results in the promotion of environmental education, whose adequate use of natural resources will allow the population to restore both food and nutrition security.

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