

Cultural Research Project: PERU

Debrah Sarria Herrera

Fnes 104 – 1 (30807)

Fall - 2017

Table of Contents

1. Per capita income (Gross Domestic Product)
2. Environmental and geographic conditions as they relate to food availability
3. Predominant religion(s) and holiday food practices
4. Level of technology used in agriculture, and channels of distribution
5. Food and spice availability and flavor principles
6. Predominant cooking styles
7. Core and secondary foods identified
8. Food values, beliefs, food taboos, health seeking food behaviors
9. Gender and family roles
10. Influence of housing on food storage, sanitation, and preparation

1. Per Capita Income / GDP

Peru's per capita GDP in 2016 was US\$ 6,204. \$ 30 higher than in 2015, which was US\$ 6,174. To see the evolution of GDP per capita, it is interesting to look a few years back and compare these data with those of the year 2006 when the GDP per capita in Peru was US\$ 3,180. The gross domestic product in 2016 grew by 4% compared to 2015. It is 7 tenths higher than in 2015, which was 3.3%. The absolute value of GDP in Peru grew US\$ 2,989 million compared to 2015. [1]

2. Environmental and geographic conditions as they relate to food availability

Peru is a country of an extraordinary variety of living resources and ecosystems, which today are known as biological diversity or biodiversity. It has 163 million acres of forests and is the second country in Latin America and the fourth in tropical forests worldwide.

The Peruvian sea is one of the most important fishing locations on the planet and it is in a good conservation situation compared to other marine fishing basins. The Andean grasslands, with an area of 44 million acres, is an ecosystem of enormous importance on a global level for its biodiversity. Nowadays, the control of genetic biodiversity is an important and priority objective in national, regional and local politics. The development of productive activities based on biodiversity can contribute not only to improve the diet of Peruvians but also to improve agricultural exports and attract foreign currency. [2]

3. Predominant religion(s) and holiday food practices

The majority of Peruvians are Catholics. All Peruvian cities, towns, villages, no matter how small or remote, have a church. Religious practices carefully combine modern and traditional beliefs. One of the most colorful festivals in October is the celebration of the “Señor de los Milagros” (Lord of the Miracles) also known as the Lord of the Earthquakes. In October, a weekly procession through the streets of Lima features a painting of Christ that has survived successive quakes, trailed by crowds of followers dressed in purple robes. During this month, the majority of the population consume a dessert called “Turrón de Doña Pepa”.



Turrón de Doña Pepa

Another important holiday is the holy week, which starts the second Thursday of April and continues on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. During this long weekend, Peruvians only consume fish or seafood together with vegetables and rice, no beef, or pork or chicken.

A nonreligious holiday that is of great importance to Peruvians is their Independence Day, July 28. On this day, all homes are required by law to fly the Peruvian flag. This occasion is celebrated with much festivity—dancing, eating, and drinking. [3]

4. Level of technology used in agriculture, and channels of distribution

The technology used by Peru in agriculture for the production of the food it consumes and exports is compared to that of the developed countries. The benefits obtained by farmers with the export of food encourage them to use more and more high-tech products of the latest generation, which allows them, in turn, to have one of the highest yields in the world. This level of development is perceived more clearly in the coastal area, where there are large agricultural complexes that use state-of-the-art technology in the cultivation of asparagus, avocados, grapes, sugar cane, cotton, peppers, etc. The channels of distribution are basically categorized into two types: Traditional Channel and Modern Channel. In the traditional channel, you will find for example, bodegas, market stalls, street vendors. In the modern channel, you will find supermarkets and hypermarkets, mainly located in the large shopping centers. These factors determine the decision making of the channel of distribution in Peru. [4]

5. Food and spice availability and flavor principles

Since Peru has a rather extraordinary biodiversity, there is no problem with the availability of food and spices. In fact, if a person wants to prepare a specific dish all what he or she needs to do is take a walk to the nearest market and the person will find a myriad of products ready to be consumed. However, there are times were Peru is struck with torrential rains that can end up causing a shortage of some products such as limes, a main ingredient for

the preparation of ceviche. Regarding the flavor principles, there are four main items within Peruvian cuisine that give the food its characteristic spicy flavor.

- I. Hot chili peppers (Ajies), these are a key element in the flavoring and color of both traditional and modern Peruvian dishes. The most commonly used are Aji Amarillo and Aji Mirasol.
 - a. Yellow chili peppers (Aji Amarillo) – A must have ingredient in Peruvian cuisine. It has an aromatic fruity flavor and has mild heat. It is added to dishes during cooking or used raw as an edible garnish. [5]
 - b. Mirasol chili peppers (Aji Mirasol) - It is a sun-dried yellow chili pepper with a unique flavor and intensity. It's less floral and citric than the fresh yellow chili peppers and has a more complex and concentrated taste. [5]



Aji Mirasol

- II. Seasoning (Aderezo) – A combination of finely chopped red onion, garlic, and a paste of chili peppers that need to be fried until they get a brownish golden color, basically get them to a point where the Maillard reaction will be present. This serves as the basis for much of the dishes of the Peruvian cuisine. [5]
- III. Cilantro - In Peru, this herb is known as culantro, and it is used to prepare typical foods such as Arroz con Pollo (rice with chicken), and Seco de Carne (beef stew).

The chopped leaves are also used as an ornament, added at the end of cooking or just before serving, on soups and other dishes.

- IV. Huacatay – (pronounced “wah-ka-tay”) here in the United States is known as Peruvian black mint, is central to a number of classic Peruvian dishes. Huacatay is used to give a unique herby flavor to soups and stews, and to make the famous “green sauce” that everybody loves to eat with rotisserie chicken and French fries.



Aji Verde

6. Predominant cooking styles

Due to Peru’s ecological and climatic diversity, there is also a variety of cooking styles that changes depending on where you are located, the Coast, the Andes, or the Amazon Region.

- a. The Coastal Region - In this part of the country, seafood is the core of its many dishes. Perhaps the most popular cooking style is cebiche (fish cooked with lime juice), followed by soups, stews, grilled and stir-fried dishes.



Cebiche

- b. The Andes Region - In this high part of the country, the main food continues being corn, potatoes, and multiplicity of tubers. Some of the main cooking styles of this region are stews, and soups, and the famous Pachamanca (a dish that is cooked with hot stones that are arranged as an oven in a hole in the ground that was specifically made for cooking).



Pachamanca

- c. Amazon Region - The jungle of Peru has a great biodiversity in fauna, which, allows different cooking styles such as grilled (with firewood), soups, stews, and fried dishes.

7. Core and secondary foods identified

Traditional core foods in Peruvian cuisine are corn, potatoes, yuca, rice, amaranthaceae such as quinoa, and legumes such as beans. The secondary foods are mainly chicken, fish, beef, and pork and in some cases depending on the region guinea pig. For Peruvians, it is a tradition to complement their meals with dessert; hence it is a must to include the peripheral foods such as alfajor, paneton, and picarones. [5]



Alfajor

8. Food values, beliefs, food taboos, health seeking food behaviors

As it was mentioned before, Peru has a rather extraordinary biodiversity; therefore, Peruvians appreciate the fact that the land provides them with all these varieties of foods and products for their daily living. However, Peruvians add a special value to specific kinds

of food either due to religion, health or cultural reasons. For example, during the holy week, Peruvians only consume fish, especially codfish (bacalao). When it comes to health seeking food the most used is Maca, this is a root that grows in the high mountains of Peru, rich in nutritional content (potassium, and higher levels of calcium than in milk), it is a natural hormonal balancer which provides great health benefits for both, men and women. Due to its high nutritional value, it is known that it helps to improve energy, stamina, depression, memory, and more.

9. Gender and family roles

Division of Labor by Gender. Men and women have traditionally occupied different labor roles. Since Incan times, women customarily (but not exclusively) were in charge of weaving and minor agricultural obligations while men took care of road construction, farming, and military obligations. A division of labor by gender is even further reinforced today. There are also areas, however, where this division is being blurred. As women gain more training and formal education, traditional occupations such as in business, politics, and the police are becoming viable options. [6]

10. Influence of housing on food storage, sanitation, and preparation

Housing is an important factor to take in consideration when it comes to food storage, sanitation, and preparation of meals. It is directly related to the social and economic stratum. A large segment of the population that lives in Lima, the capital of Peru, has housing stability, which allows them proper food storage, sanitation, and preparation of meals. However, there is still a small segment of the population that lives in extreme poverty and/or in rural areas and they do not have easy access to devices like a refrigerator for proper food storage, or gas, or water and sewer system, this situation affects the sanitation and the handling and preparation of meals.

Appendices:

1. Written Release Form
2. Interview Transcript

References

1. www.datosmacro.com/pib/peru
2. www.enperu.org/peru-informacion-general-biodiversidad
3. www.everyculture.com/wc/Peruvians
4. www.telesurtv.net/news/Tecnologia-agraria-de-Peru
5. 500 Años de Fusión, Acurió Gastón, pg 39-40 Lima – Peru 2008
6. www.everyculture.com/No-Sa/Peru.html#ixzz51XsjwJHm
7. Las Cocinas del Peru, Acurió Gastón, Lima – Peru 2006