



Mapping for the Ark of Taste in Nariño and Chocó, Colombia

© 25 January 2016

Nariño and Chocó – Under agreement No 204 of 2015 between the **Department for Social Prosperity** and the **Latin American Center for Rural Development – RIMISP**, and as part of the process to implement food and nutrition security policy in Colombia, RIMISP, Slow Food and **Diversidad & Desarrollo** have, since 2013, been carrying out a series of projects to Promote Regional Food Heritage in three departments of Colombia: Nariño, Chocó and La Guajira.

In the second half of 2015, in Nariño and Chocó, a map was drawn up of products that could potentially be added to Slow Food's Ark of Taste, specifically in the municipalities of Buesaco, Los Andes Sotomayor, Pasto (Nariño) and Quibdó (Chocó).

MAPPING IN NARIÑO

The first municipality visited in Nariño was Pasto, where the markets of Bombona and Potrerillos were visited and meetings were held with several associations, notably including the Asociación para el Desarrollo Campesino (ADC). Together with representatives from Minga Asoyarchocha they helped to establish criteria for selecting products, with a focus on community processes and protecting native seeds and products, which are vital in the area. The visit to the El Cristalino nature reserve, at La Cocha Lake, gave an insight into the indigenous and farmers' project in the area, which several local organizations have been working on taking an agroecological approach, characterized by the absence of chemical products and complete autonomy at every level of the food chain.

The second municipality visited was Buesaco, where maize is a symbolic product and hugely valuable in terms of heritage, which can also be clearly seen in local activities like the Feria del Maíz, which has been held in the village of Villa Moreno for 18 years. The visit provided an insight into the main products sold locally: coffee, honey, pan de piso, peanuts, queso fresco, maize wraps and pancakes. The local marketplace provided an opportunity to understand the importance of Andean tubers and the central role they play in local food habits, as well as plátano macho and a wide variety of fruit.

Mapping of the department ended in the municipality of Andes Sotomayor, where talking to locals and exploring its streets and main market led to the discovery of the rellena de yuyo sausage, a local and distinctive delicacy which is prepared very sporadically, as it is made with the flowers of a local variety of plantain. Another find during the mapping process was a tuber known as cun, the properties of which make it very versatile and very memorable but which has started to disappear, vanishing from the population's regular diet.

The mapping work carried out in Chocó focused on the municipality of Quibdó. First, several key stakeholders in local systems of food production were identified in the city, such as the women who work with achín (known locally as papa china), and the local artisans of milpesos palm oil. The search was complemented with visits to the marketplace where local fruits, such as lulo, pineapple, bacao and chontaduro could be found, along with a wide variety of bananas and local river fish. There was then a visit to Tadó to learn about a project by young people to save local food heritage, particularly products that are at high risk of disappearing due to difficult local conditions, such as extensive mining, violence and the presence of armed gangs in the area.

Across these regions, mapping provided an opportunity to consider changes in food habits, both for cultural reasons and because of widespread media messages that largely confuse children and young people. It also gave a great insight into local food heritage and the risks it faces in terms of local food and nutrition security.

by Luisa Acosta
Slow Food

[Click here and discover the photos!](#)