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*Table of Contents*  
**#106**  
*Gastronomy*

<p><b>08</b> FABIO ARANDIA TYPICA</p>	<p><b>24</b> THE BEST STREET AND MARKET FOODS</p>
<p><b>12</b> LUIS ALBERTO 'TITO' EGUINO MARGARITA</p>	<p><b>28</b> WHAT'S COOKING VALENTINA</p>
<p><b>14</b> A Q&amp;A WITH ELLA ASBÚN, GENERAL MANAGER OF GUSTU</p>	<p><b>30</b> THE UNIVERSE OF PLANTS (GOES TO D.C.)</p>
<p><b>18</b> COVID 19 IN LA PAZ</p>	<p><b>32</b> BOLIVIAN CUISINE</p>
<p><b>22</b> TAKE OUTS</p>	<p><b>35</b> GLOSSARY</p>



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# Editorial #106: Gastronomy

By: Caroline Risacher

The foods that one misses the most when away from home are usually the ones that we take the most from granted when we experience them. Like the **anticuchos** you eat, not fully sober, in the middle of the night or the little bag of nuts you grab on your way to work from a street vendor. Because of the pandemic some of us are left stranded somewhere far away from where we want to be and not knowing until when.

When times get tough there is nothing like the warmth of an **api** with a sweet and savoury **pastel**, or nothing quite as refreshing as an **helado de canela** or a giant slice of watermelon to go. Trying to recreate dishes ourselves helps but even if we manage to bake the softest, fluffiest and crunchiest **pancitos** in the world, nothing comes close to being able to share it with someone you love.

In this new world we live in we may not be able to eat outside as casually as before or hang in our favourite bars for hours with our friends. Most places have adapted and you

can now order take outs and food delivered from almost anywhere. Even cocktails. In a very paradoxical way, in Bolivia, food is almost even more available now than before.

Food is comforting, food provides connection, and because here at *Bolivian Express*, eating and talking about food are our favourite activities we concocted another issue (our third one) entirely focused on food, gastronomy, drinks, chefs and everything edible. The issue itself may not be (yet) but it comes with recipes you can try at home.

And now for those of us who have embraced the art of cooking, baking and making cocktails at home, the possibilities are infinite. You don't live in Bolivia (or you do but you can't leave your house) and miss the messiness of a **salteña**? No problem, just bake them at home. The secret is to sweeten the dough and to use some gelatine to create the perfect juicy stew inside. Make your own choripán with chorizo, baguette bread and all the condiments you like, but don't forget the **llajua**. Never forget the *llajua*.

### N.B.

Several Spanish and Aymara words are marked in **bold** throughout this issue. Their meanings can be found in our glossary.



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# FABIO ARANDIA

## TYPICA

TEXT: BX TEAM  
PHOTO: IVAN RODRIGUEZ PETKOVIC

**B**efore Typica opened its first locale in Calacoto, coffee enthusiasts had limited options for specialty coffee. Since its inception in 2013, 7 more shops have opened across Bolivia, with branches in Cochabamba, Oruro, Santa Cruz, Sucre and two more in La Paz. Where caffeine connoisseurs once lacked the access to local coffee of incredible quality, they are now increasingly catered for. Fabio Arandia Loayza is the man behind Typica's founding and is one of the key partners of the franchise. His love for coffee and the shrewd analysis which drew him to this gap in the market has paved the way for Bolivia's coffee revolution.

Arandia has always been drawn to the world of coffee. This attraction led him to the art of coffee making, soon taking up the mantle himself and becoming a barista. His passion for coffee, extended to the coffee of his homeland. 'Bolivia is one of the best coffee producers in the world,' he says. Early on, he saw the potential and the unique qualities of Bolivian coffee. 'The geological and environmental conditions that we have in the coffee-growing regions of Bolivia are very favourable. This is why we are among the best growers of specialty coffee in the world,' he explained.

To better understand the great strides made by coffee culture in Bolivia since Typica's opening, Arandia laid out the coffee basics. Arandia explained the growing success specialty coffee experienced worldwide, stating that 'since 2000, a movement emerged prioritising the traceability of coffee and the quality of coffee beans. Its origin, processing, roasting and preparation methods were taken into account, as well the ability to provide an excellent service as part of the experience.'

Coffee fever hit Bolivia shortly after with

the opening of Typica adding to this frenzy. Instead of reaching far and wide for coveted beans, Arandia looked no further than his backyard. 'We already produced specialty coffee but most of it was exported to markets in North America, Europe and Asia.' As the success of Typica shows, the demand for specialty coffee in Bolivia is ever-growing. In part this is because of the opening of spaces like Typica and a new generation of entrepreneurs like Arandia himself.

Typica was unique for Bolivia at the time. Environmentalism laid at the foundation of their ethos, Arandia stated that they 'use biodegradable packaging that has less impact on the environment and our products are fresh and natural'. Arandia took this concept further and for Typica it meant more than just providing biodegradable packaging. Their concern for recycling even extended to their furniture with restored antiques furnishing their branches across the country, making their shops instantly recognisable. 'Bohemian' is a word often attributed to this chain, one only needs to see it for themselves to get a sense of the tasteful atmosphere created by this eclectic mix.

In the midst of this global pandemic, the service industry has suffered massively and Typica is not exempt. It forced Typica to adapt overnight, Arandia earmarked their main challenge 'this is to provide the same experience that we gave customers in our coffee shops but now in their homes.' As far as Arandia is concerned post-pandemic, he remains optimistic, 'coffee is one of the most consumed beverages in the world, I believe that this will not change and that the situation we are going through now will be an opportunity for learning.' While it's hard to plan for the future now, there is one absolute and as Arandia put it 'I doubt there are people who don't want a good cup of coffee.'



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# LUIS ALBERTO 'TITO' EGUINO

## MARGARITA

TEXT: BX TEAM  
PHOTO: IVAN RODRIGUEZ PETKOVIC

La Paz's culinary scene has experienced a mouth-watering boom in recent years. Its ever-growing prestige has earned its spot at the top, the gourmet food on offer now rivalling that of the Latin American gastronomy capitals of Lima and Buenos Aires. Restaurants like Gustu, Popular, and Ali Pacha continue to receive international praise as they champion local ingredients whilst creating gourmet, affordable well-established dining for food lovers. This has certainly helped to break the stigma attached to Bolivia's food, which is often touted as uninteresting compared to its culinary neighbours. Bolivian food is filling, comforting and full of versatility, something that chef Luis Alberto 'Tito' Eguino showcases in his restaurant Margarita. Located in Calacoto, La Paz, it provides a simpler, yet satisfying, alternative to the big names of his friendly competitors, adding to an already impressive and ever-growing repertoire of fine dining in La Paz.

Eguino was born in Bolivia but he grew up in various countries. 'I think this is why I have an affinity with different tastes in relation to food and varied flavours,' he says. He spoke to his friend and now business partner Jorge (Mealla) and the idea for Margarita was planted. 'He told me how it could be feasible. At that time he said, 'there are no proposals for a restaurant with the characteristics of Margarita. My decision was immediate and in under a month I sorted my commitments abroad and returned to Bolivia. It took us just under a year to build from the ground up.'

Since its opening in 2014, Margarita has offered a large and varied menu to its patrons. Its menu is an ode to fusion, consisting of piqueos, pasta, and steak, all

cooked with Bolivian ingredients. It blurs the lines of conventional foreign cuisine with a blend of flavours from across the globe. Combining rustic burgers with the famous Argentinian/Uruguayan sauce, chimichurri, and the smokey provolone cheese typically used in Italian cooking, these flavours are accompanied by the sacred Bolivian papas. This simple and delectable twist on a well-established classic typifies Eguino's worldwide exposure.

Margarita is a place without fuss, where one can find comfort and a sense of community. For Eguino, 'Food is the basis of society.' Eguino wanted to create a place where people could connect and enjoy each other. 'I think that one of the greatest riches of Bolivia is its people. We have created a place where you can feel the familiarity and affections of our team and our clients.' Margarita proves that it is not only a confluence of cuisines but also foodies across La Paz, a testimony to its popularity and quality.

With the current pandemic in mind, the future is uncertain. It is hard to look ahead but Eguino is positive about Bolivia's culinary future and is convinced that what we have seen so far is only the start. 'It is actually the beginning of a stage. We have to make the change. Our vision in the immediate future is to act responsibly and form positive results in the long-term.' Progress is halted and it is difficult to see past the current situation at hand, as Equino puts it: 'It has affected the public conscience.' Despite being clouded by pandemic, he refuses to drop his focus and his goals are clear. 'We cannot depend on exaggerated and unnecessary supply lines. This pandemic will pass and the lessons learned will be seen in the future.'

# A Q&A WITH ELLA ASBÚN, GENERAL MANAGER OF GUSTU

TEXT: BX TEAM  
PHOTO: IVAN RODRIGUEZ PETKOVIC/COURTESY OF ELLA ASBUN



**E**lla Asbún Ormachea is Bolivian, a lover of her country and passionate about gastronomy and sports. She started her university studies with a golf scholarship at Vanderbilt University and obtained a Bachelor's degree in Communication with a specialty in Advertising from Purdue University. She began her professional career working in marketing until she ventured in the world of food. After receiving professional training at the Argentine Institute of Gastronomy in Buenos Aires, she took up an internship at the Martín Berasategui restaurant, holder of 3 Michelin stars in Spain. Armed with that experience and the dream of contributing to the culinary scene of her country, she returned to Bolivia in 2012 and has since furthered her career in project management and the food industry. In October 2017, she accepted the biggest challenge of her professional career, and took the position of general management at Gustu. In the process she would challenge the preconceptions held by the world in regards to Bolivian food.

## WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF INSPIRATION FOR YOUR PROJECTS?

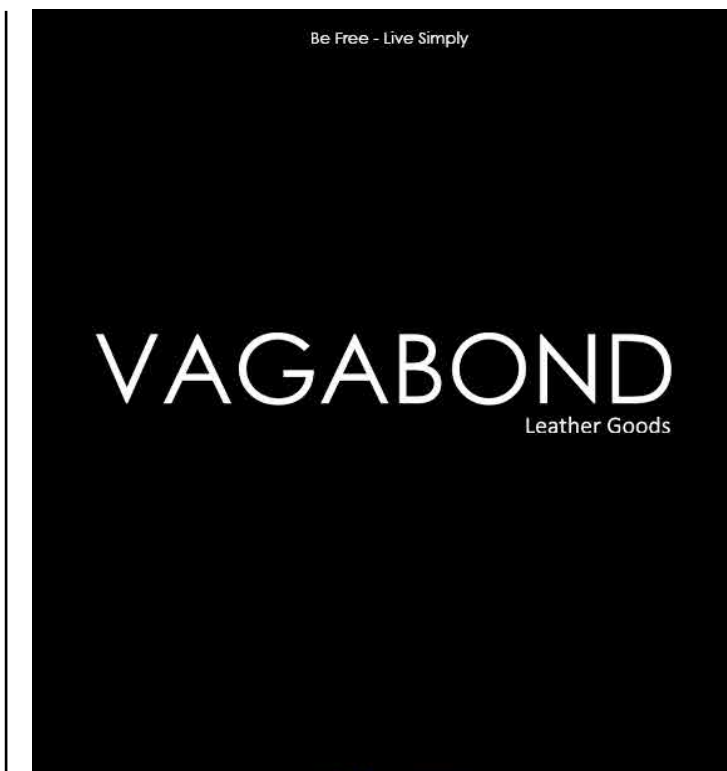
The identity and mission of Gustu. Our key aims are to contribute and enrich the community that surrounds us and to put Bolivian gastronomy at the forefront, it's an engine of national socio-economic development.

Several projects have been built on these values, including Sabores Silvestres, Festival Ñam Bolivia, and now ASB, Solidarity Food for Bolivia, which seeks to feed the staff of health centers that are on the front line fighting the pandemic.

## HOW DO YOUR PROJECTS PROTECT THE PRODUCE THAT BOLIVIA HAS AND HOW SHOULD THAT BE CARED FOR?

The Sabores Silvestres project was born with the purpose of giving greater impetus to the work we were doing in regards to revaluing national food heritage and opening markets for producers. This project promotes the conservation of biodiversity and the preservation of Bolivian food heritage and gastronomic culture. We do this through the work of an interdisciplinary group of professionals in conjunction with WCS, the Wildlife Conservation Society. Together we are committed to research, understanding, conservation and transformation of products in the various ecosystems on Bolivian soil. Sabores Silvestres participates in exploration trips to different ecosystems, in which we go through a process of research and product development. Those products are presented on Gustu plates for restaurant guests and the research is listed for an interactive platform.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 12 >



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### HOW HAS THE BOLIVIAN MARKET AND GASTRONOMY CHANGED SINCE YOU STARTED?

I have had a career in gastronomy for more than 10 years. Gustu gave Bolivian gastronomy more prominence on the world stage. The levels of execution and the number of good proposals have risen. I have also seen a dichotomy due to the growing appreciation of what Bolivia produces, there are more ventures that offer alternatives that distance us from that wealth of food culture that offer fried chicken. We have to continue promoting cultural wealth and biodiversity with quality proposals at all levels.

### WHAT RELATIONSHIP DO YOU HAVE IN YOUR PROJECTS IN TERMS OF PRODUCTION IN VIEW OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND CARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT?

There are two different factors that one has to deal with, one is service and the other identity. We look out for where we can reduce waste and improve how we can contribute to caring for the environment. In relation to the experience with clients, we seek that their experience is unique and that they feel at home. Everything we do, we do with love.

### WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE?

Due to the pandemic, there are adjustments to be made. However, we believe that respect for the producer and the product should be paramount. We have great biodiversity and cultural wealth that we must not only preserve but also appreciate. This implies creating experiences for commensals who communicate those values and also respect the production process and the nature that provides us with that produce.

### HOW HAS THE PANDEMIC AFFECTED THE SERVICE INDUSTRY? HAS IT CHANGED OR WILL IT CHANGE GASTRONOMY IN BOLIVIA?

It has had an effect, especially in gastronomy. We have developed a new proposal specifically for the situation we are going through. We understand that

we must always evolve keeping our principles in the process.

We have not only developed a new proposal that is suitable for home consumption for the local market, we are also with the Solidarity Food initiative for Bolivia. Through the support of various institutions and people we are providing nutritious food to staff in health centres so they can have a strengthened immune system during the pandemic.

### WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR THE GASTRONOMY OF BOLIVIA?

The future is open, despite the fact that we are going through a difficult stage. If we unite and collaborate between different initiatives we can carry out the best that Bolivia has to offer and plate food that respects its culture, biodiversity and all the backroom staff that participate in the production chain.

### HOW IS GASTRONOMY DEFINING THE NATIONAL IDENTITY OF BOLIVIA?

Through the tireless work of the various spokesmen that Bolivian gastronomy has in the different regions, Bolivian gastronomy, and therefore Bolivia, is taking center stage. Not only internationally but also nationally.

This enhancement of pride allows the cultural wealth and biodiversity that Bolivia offers to be valued more. This leads to the preservation of Bolivian food heritage and is a source of income for many Bolivians.

### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO FIND LOCALLY SOURCED PRODUCTS RATHER THAN IMPORTED PRODUCTS?

By consuming or working with the local product, you also improve the living conditions of the local producer. Likewise, you reduce the impact on the environment the distance required to purchase the product and if you consume the product in season you will consume it in its best conditions.

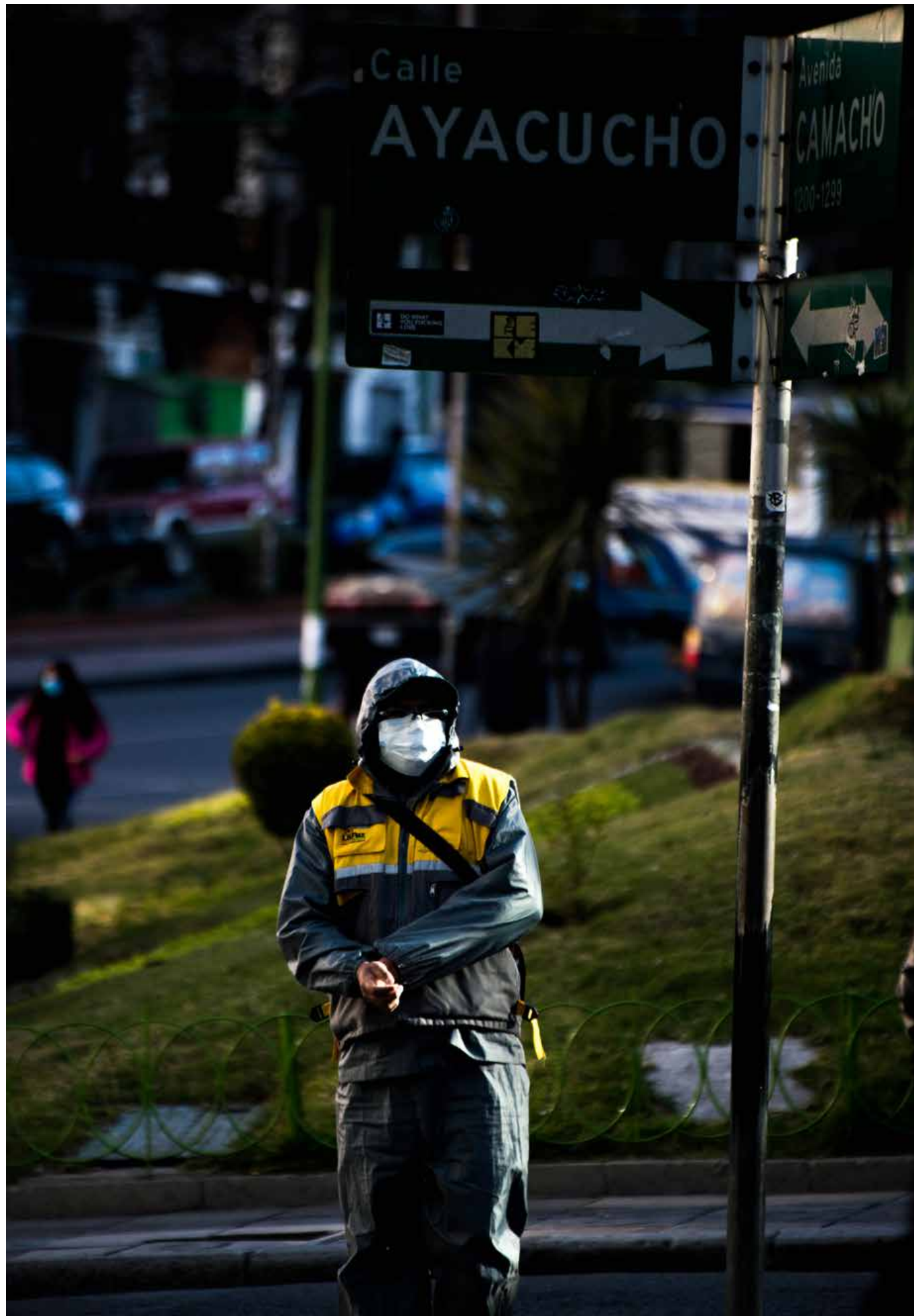


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Our favourite coffee time tunes over a latte or distinct clatter and chatter of our favourite restaurants may seem like whispers from a bygone era. While we won't be able to soak up the atmospheres of our much-loved restaurants and coffee shops, we have the next best thing in the form of a takeout box. Take-outs are not a new concept, especially not to the bed confined Sunday loungers, but were often limited to more casual venues in Bolivia. Upscale restaurants have needed to adjust and rethink their dishes, finding new transportable homes for their once crockery bound bites. By keeping the gastronomic heart of Bolivia beating, there is no doubt these humble containers will change the face of the food industry in Bolivia after the pandemic.



# T A K E O U T S

TEXT: BX TEAM  
PHOTOS: IVAN RODRIGUEZ PETKOVIC



# THE BEST STREET AND MARKET FOODS

TEXT: CAMILA SWIFT  
PHOTOS: BX TEAM & AZAFRÁN

*This article was originally published in the issue 8 of Bolivian Express. It has been updated and re-edited.*

People say that eating out in Bolivia can be hazardous, especially on the streets, and this is one area where travellers should not over-economise; the satisfaction accrued from saving the odd dollar here and there by eating in the markets and on the streets will soon be outweighed by the trauma of spending hours on the toilet. This I don't deny, but there are just so many tasty local specialities to try that, as long as you're careful and give your stomach time to adjust, it would be a real shame to miss out. After some research and having asked the locals where is the best place to try each snack, I hit the streets of La Paz and tried the lot... So far my stomach is holding out! From huminta to fricasé to llaucha, choosing was difficult but here are my Top Bolivian street and market foods.

## 1. SALTEÑA

You can't fail to spot the salteña, a meat or chicken pasty which is sold absolutely everywhere. Mostly eaten as a mid-morning snack, you will find salteñas being sold at little side stalls, on almost every street, any time between 9am and noon. These small and incredibly moreish pasties are usually filled with meat (although vegetarian ones are sometimes available), olives, and slices of boiled egg, and are completely irresistible. The trick is to eat them without spilling the copious amounts of sauce all over yourself (not very easy, particularly on buses or on the move).

'It's food that's quick, easy and tasty to have on the go,' says Doña Cecilia, who now recognises me I'm such a regular customer of hers!

## 2. ANTICUCHO

As the sun sets on the bustling city of La Paz, vendors set up their stands in anticipation of their hungry patrons on their way home from work. From hamburger carts to lomito and salchipapa stands, there is still nothing quite as tantalising as the thick, smoky aroma of grilled meat – I am of course speaking of the famous anticucho. Since I first tried anticucho it has been a favourite of mine, even before I learned what they were made from: anticuchos are small slices of beef heart and boiled potatoes on a skewer cooked over an open grill. The meat, often marinated in spices such as cumin and garlic, and served with a



delicious ají de mani sauce, is so tender I found it hard to believe it wasn't just thin slices of filet steak.

The anticucho's origin dates back to pre-Columbian times and it was a popular dish among the inhabitants of the Inca Empire too, with scientific evidence and documentation from the Peruvian National Library Archive which shows that the Incas prepared the dish using llama meat as well as other local meats. The name anticucho is an Hispanicised Quechua word 'anticucho' (anti = Andes and kucho = cut). It is still popular throughout South America, particularly in the Andean regions of Bolivia, Peru and Chile, with anticucheras readily found on many street corners.

'It's a very traditional dish, not just here in La Paz but throughout Bolivia. What makes it special is that it's cooked over an open grill and not in an oven,' explains Doña Bartolina.

## 3. TUCUMANA

Also eaten as a mid-morning snack or brunch, a tucumana is similar to a salteña but is deep-fried rather than baked, and has a higher potato content. This crescent-shaped pasty is filled with meat (normally beef, occasionally chicken, or charque), potato, egg, onion and sometimes even olives, carrots, peas and other vegetables. At first, I considered the tucumana as just a slightly inferior salteña until I discovered the giant ones at Rodríguez market – my point being that it really depends on where you try these things.

## 4. CHAIRO

Chairo – 'soup' in Aymara - is a thick meat and vegetable broth typical of La Paz. It consists of Andean vegetables



CONTINUES ON PAGE 12


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such as chuño and is flavoured with oregano and hierba buena. This soup would provide energy for the day's work and nowadays you find it served in most markets at lunchtime.

### 5. CHORIPÁN

The simplicity of this nomenclature is brilliant. Choripán is exactly what it says on the tin: chorizo and bread - a heavily-condimented spicy sausage in a bun. As the caserita selling choripán on Plaza Avaroa told me, 'It's a great snack, whenever you're a bit peckish, at whatever time of day,' she adds 'the chorizo is really tasty and it's not too heavy or fattening.' Also a very popular street food in Argentina, choripán here in Bolivia is usually served with chimichurri - an Argentinian sauce made with garlic, chili, parsley and olive oil.



### 6. SILPANCHO

Silpancho is a popular Bolivian dish from Cochabamba, mainly served in markets rather than in street stalls. It consists of a thin fried breaded meat (a bit like a schnitzel) on a layer of rice and potatoes, topped with a fried egg and served with chopped onion, tomato and locoto pepper.



Like most traditional dishes in Bolivia, silpancho is a huge and extremely filling meal that certainly doesn't skimp on the carbohydrates.

### 7. CEVICHE

Although technically speaking ceviche is originally from Peru, it is so widely eaten here in Bolivia that even Bolivians often don't know it's Peruvian! The basic ingredient is raw fish which is marinated in lemon juice. The citric acid in the juice changes the texture of the fish, without changing its 'raw' taste. Ceviche is an old tradition in South America, dating back to the Incas who preserved their fish with fruit juice.

This tasty lemony fish dish is often served from little stalls on the roadside or around the outside of plazas or parks. However, be warned! The lemon juice 'cooks' the fish and alters the structure of the proteins, making it appear opaque and firm, but it does not kill bacteria and parasites as well as heat does. So, unless the fish is fresh and prepared in clean surroundings, ceviche can result in an unwelcome case of Atahualpa's Revenge!



Ceviche is typically eaten at lunch or brunch and, because it is so light and refreshing, it is popular during the warmer months.

### 8. CHICHARRÓN

Chicharrón is deep-fried pork belly which is first boiled and then cooked in its own fat. It is served with mote, chuño and tunta (another form of freeze-dried potato) and is also an ingredient in other dishes such as chairó.



### 9. HAMBURGUESA

Although not authentically Bolivian, or even South American, these street burgers are truly delectable! Made with fresh ingredients, including fried cheese, cooked on the grill, topped with plenty of chips and lashings of picante llajua sauce!



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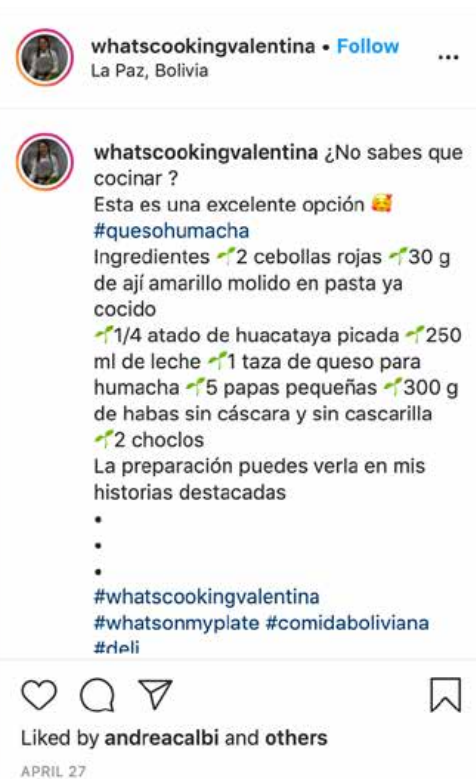


# WHAT'S COOKING VALENTINA

A RISING FEMALE CHEF IN BOLIVIA

TEXT: MARIE DE LANTIVY  
PHOTO: MARIE DE LANTIVY & LUCIANO CARAZAS

*This article was originally published in the issue 82 of Bolivian Express.*



**W**e all know women who cook: mothers, sisters, grandmothers, the woman around the corner who makes api con pastel. Finding a female cook is easy, but finding a female chef? That's another story. The culinary world is still a male-dominated space, even though these chefs usually talk about how following the recipes of their mothers.

But things are slowly changing. Not long ago I met Valentina Arteaga, the woman behind the WhatsCookingValentina Instagram account. Arteaga is a cooking teacher for children at the Alalay foundation, she makes videos of recipes for the food magazine Azafrán and is the owner and chef of a soon-to-open restaurant. Cooking has always been her passion. She studied in a culinary school in Peru for three years, interned at Gustu, worked as an intern for a year at a Ritz Carlton in the United States and completed a master's degree in Spain.

Two years ago, Arteaga came back to Bolivia. At first, she wanted to open a restaurant, but the project seemed too complicated at the time. So she became a food consultant. Five months ago, she started her Instagram account, which has now more than 2,000 followers. In light of this quick success, she decided to launch her brand What's Cooking Valentina, with the goal of doing something new, something that doesn't exist in Bolivia. That's how she started taking pictures of her meals in her kitchen, sharing recipes and writing about the places where she likes to eat.

Everything about her brand concerns

Bolivian food and culture. It gives people from abroad an insider's look into Bolivian cuisine and the local way of life. She shows the Bolivian way of cooking sopa de mani for example. She combines traditional products with non-traditional meals, like an avocado salad with roasted chuño, tomatoes, onions and a cilantro dressing.

**'WOMEN NEED TO EMPOWER EACH OTHER TO TAKE THE BOLIVIAN GASTRONOMY TO ANOTHER LEVEL.' — VALENTINA ARTEAGA**

Arteaga's dream of taking her vision to the next level and opening a restaurant is close to becoming real. She recently found a place and says that in three or four months people will be able to sit at one of Phayawi's tables. Phayawi 'will serve Bolivian food, but I can't tell you more, I am keeping it a secret for the moment,' she says. The concept of Phayawi (which means kitchen in Aymara) is also to prove to young cooks in Bolivia that, 'there is a lot to do here... This is a moving country... Everything is yet to be built.' A lot of her Instagram followers have asked if she thinks it's worth moving back to Bolivia, to which she always answers 'Yes, you should come back and invest in Bolivia.'

Teaching and sharing her love of cooking is equally as important to Arteaga. This is why she is involved with the Alalay Foundation where she

gives cooking lessons to children. The purpose of the foundation is 'to reverse the conditions of affective, economic, social and spiritual poverty for children and teenagers in high risks situations.' She volunteers two times a week, one time to cook with the boys, and the other time to cook with the girls. In one of her lessons for girls she taught them how to prepare greek yoghurt with fruits. Arteaga not only teaches her students how to cut and select the ingredients. She also teaches them why it is important to have clean hands before cooking and to be polite and respectful to others. She takes the children to different restaurants so they can discover new types of food. The next visit in her lesson plan, for example, is a Japanese restaurant where her students can try sushi and other dishes for the first time in their lives.

Even though Arteaga is a rising chef in Bolivia, being a woman in a man's world can sometimes be hard. A colleague once told her: 'You are pretty, you are going to be successful,' but comments like those only get on her nerves. One of the reasons she came back to Bolivia was to show people that women could be as successful as men in this trade. After all, there are very successful female chefs in Bolivia, like Marsia Taha Mohamed, the current head chef at Gustu, or Gabriela Prudencio, chef at Propiedad Pública. Arteaga wants to inspire women, which she is already accomplishing through her Instagram account.

'Women need to demonstrate they are capable of doing what men are doing,' she says. 'Women need to empower each other to take the Bolivian gastronomy to another level.'



# THE UNIVERSE OF PLANTS (GOES TO D.C.)

SEBASTIAN QUIROGA'S GOURMET MEAT-FREE MISSION

TEXT: #BOLIVIAJANDO  
PHOTO: IVAN RODRIGUEZ PETKOVIC

*This article was originally published in the issue 82 of Bolivian Express, We are reediting it with an update on Quiroga's new project.*

**A**longside Santiago Diaz, a long time D.C. resident who grew up in La Paz, Sebastian Quiroga co-founded Ali Pacha DC. The pair have been best friends since the age of four and have remained close despite their lives being rooted in different cities. In 2018 they came together and the idea for Ali Pacha DC germinated, leading to its pending launch. Ali Pacha DC's launch will be a massive statement to the culinary world. With the aim of providing their Washingtonian patrons with a taste of Bolivia, it is another step into the light of global recognition for Quiroga, Ali Pacha and Bolivian cuisine.

On the corner of Calles Potosí and Colón in the bustling, chaotic centre of La Paz, tucked between two chicken restaurants, almost out of sight, stands the gourmet vegan boîte Ali Pacha and newly opened café-bar Umawi. Here I find head chef and founder Sebastian Quiroga. As I sit down, he presents me with an espresso shot placed on a floppy-disk coaster. Like everything else here, the coffee is 100% Bolivian; the taste and the presentation reflect the overall quality of the experience.

In 2012, Quiroga, born in La Paz, travelled to London to study at Le Cordon Bleu culinary school, where he received classical training in French cuisine. He then joined the team at Copenhagen's famed Restaurant Relae for a six-month internship. There, he was introduced to a new idea of cuisine, one which doesn't necessarily involve meat as the centerpiece of the dish. He then returned to Bolivia with a freshly formed idea of starting his own business. One and a half years later, Ali Pacha was born. Since then, the restaurant has received international recognition in three different categories at the 2017 World Luxury Restaurant Awards: South American Cuisine Global Winner, Best Cocktail Menu Continent Winner and Gourmet Vegan Cuisine Continent Winner.

Quiroga's concept is simple: give a flavourful, 100% Bolivian gourmet experience, without using any animal products. And this vision doesn't stop with the food and drinks; it also involves Ali Pacha's service, decor and design. Most of the objects in both the restaurant and the café-bar are secondhand, recycled items purchased locally that also carry cultural significance. Pointing to the electrical cables that decorate Ali Pacha's ceiling, Quiroga

explains that it's all meant to reference the chaos of La Paz outside the door – albeit in a more organised way – and that the essence of the place is truly Bolivian in nature.

For Quiroga, the restaurant and café 'showcase what the country has to offer, which also happens to be vegan.' Everything is plant-based, and everything comes from Bolivia, from the quinoa and potatoes native to the west of the country to exotic and less-known tropical fruits found in Bolivia's eastern jungles. Quiroga brings the entirety of the country together on the plate, carefully and creatively combining ingredients that would never have met elsewhere.

Ali Pacha means 'Universe of Plants' in Aymara. Veganism came as a surprise to Quiroga, something that he learned about during his time abroad and after watching the 2005 documentary Earthlings, which powerfully and brutally depicts the realities of the meat industry. 'I come from a family of meat-lovers. I used to go fishing and hunting when I was younger,' Quiroga recalls, still slightly surprised by how much he has changed. Alongside a growing vegan/vegetarian offering in La Paz, Quiroga wants to provide a high-quality cuisine in which flavour comes first. 'The priority is not necessarily to be healthy; it's to cook good food,' he says. 'Sometimes people walk in and they don't know that there is no meat, so I need to convince them to stay,' he adds. 'When that happened [when we first opened], I used to tell these people, "If you don't like it, you won't have to pay." But people have always paid.' The food, it seems, speaks for itself.

Opening the restaurant in the centre of La Paz wasn't an obvious or easy choice. In an area where fast-food options proliferate and buildings are falling apart, Quiroga saw potential and an opportunity to revitalise the old centre. Two years after opening, Quiroga's bet is paying off, with the addition of the new café-bar Umawi, which in Aymara means 'Let's drink!' Umawi offers a selection of the best Bolivian coffees and liquors, accompanied with a selection of sandwiches and snacks. Quiroga wants to see these ingredients shine in signature cocktails and by using modern coffee-making techniques. Undoubtedly, when visiting Ali Pacha and Umawi, Quiroga's passion for gastronomy and his country stands out and can be appreciated in the care and consideration put into each detail.



Exceptionally, this issue will not have a cultural agenda nor recommendations. This month is all about food and treating ourselves so here is our selection of favourite Bolivian dishes with substitutions for those who can't find the original Bolivian ingredients.

## CUÑAPE

*Cuñape* is a type of cheese bread made with yuca (tapioca) flour. It's from the eastern part of the country and comes from the guarani word for 'breast.' They are traditionally made with queso fresco and are served hot. Any cheese that you like will do here. You can reheat them in the oven or the microwave for 30 seconds. They are best enjoyed with some coffee.

**SERVINGS:** 12

### Ingredients

2 cups cassava / yuca starch  
2 cups shredded or grated cheese  
1 egg  
1.5 tablespoons/20 grams butter softened  
1.5 teaspoon salt (depending on the cheese you use)  
5 tablespoons milk

### PREPARATION

- Preheat oven to 400F/200C and grease 2 baking sheets.
- In a big bowl, add starch, cheese, egg, and butter and salt. Mix with the tip of your fingers. Add 3 tablespoons of milk and mix with your hands. (it's going to look like big crumbs)
- Dump it all on a clean surface and knead the dough for 2 to 3 minutes. If it doesn't come together, add 1 tablespoon of milk at a time.
- Divide the dough into 12 equal portions. Make a round ball with each portion and place them on a greased baking sheet.
- Bake for 20 minutes.



## PIQUE MACHO

Pique macho is a very popular dish from Cochabamba in Bolivia, made of beef cuts and fried sausages with fries, eggs, chili peppers and tomatoes. It's best when shared with friends and family.

**SERVINGS:** 4 people

### INGREDIENTS

2 lb beef loin  
1 lb sausages , sliced  
8 medium potatoes , cut into French fries  
3 tablespoons vegetable oil  
4 large onions, chopped  
2 medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded and diced  
8 locotos or any small red chili peppers, diced  
2 cloves garlic, chopped  
1 teaspoon cumin  
Frying oil  
Salt  
Ground black pepper  
4 hard-boiled eggs

### INSTRUCTIONS

- In a pot, heat oil and add the potatoes. Fry for 8 minutes.



- Drain and set aside. Keep the cooking oil.

- Heat 5 tablespoons of the cooking oil in a pan and fry the sausage slices for a few minutes. Drain and set aside.

- Cut the meat into small pieces and season with salt, garlic, black pepper and cumin. Mix well by hand to soak the seasoning.

- Heat 3 tablespoons of vegetable oil in a pan and fry the locotos for 2 minutes, stirring constantly. Add the onion, tomato and a pinch of salt. Mix well.

- Add the meat and mix.

- Heat oil again and fry the potatoes again for 3 minutes. Drain and season with salt immediately.

- Add the reserved sausages to the meat and mix everything.

- Serve with hard-boiled eggs.

- Garnish with strips of raw chili, sliced raw tomatoes, mustard and mayonnaise.



## SOPA DE MANI

Sopa de mani is one of the most delicious and traditional soups of Bolivia. It is made with peanuts, pasta, peas and potatoes, and can be accompanied by pieces of beef or chicken but makes a filling vegetarian dish in itself.

**SERVINGS:** 4 people

### INGREDIENTS

4 oz. raw peanuts  
1 white onion , peeled and chopped  
1 carrot , diced  
3 oz. peas (fresh or frozen)  
1 stalk celery , finely chopped  
½ red bell pepper , diced  
¼ cup vegetable oil  
3 cloves garlic , chopped  
6 cups beef broth (or vegetable broth)  
4 potatoes , cut into large cubes  
1 teaspoon cumin  
½ teaspoon oregano  
1 small bunch flat parsley , chopped  
Salt  
Black pepper

### INSTRUCTIONS

- Soak the peanuts in hot water for 2

minutes so that they can be peeled easily. Drain them.

- In a blender or food processor, mix the peanuts and a cup of cold water until you obtain a paste. Set aside.

- In a large pot, heat the oil over medium heat and sauté the garlic.

- Add the onion, carrot, peas, and celery.

- Sauté over high heat for 5 minutes, stirring constantly.

- Add the red bell pepper and broth and sauté over medium heat for 5 minutes.

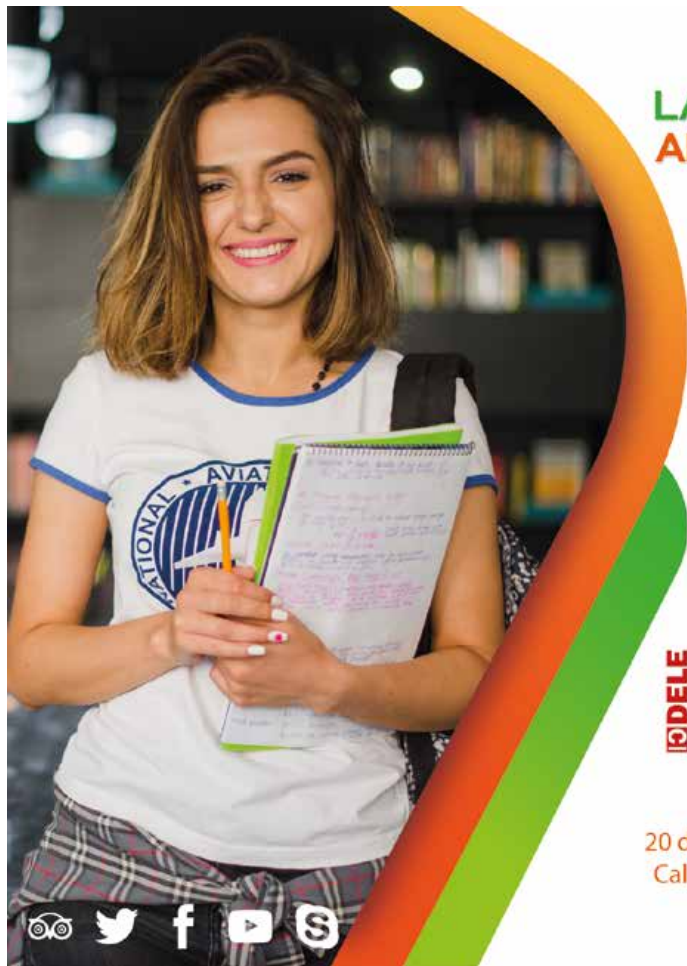
- Add the blended peanuts and stir well.

- Add the potatoes. Add salt, black pepper, cumin and oregano. Mix well.

- Cover and cook over medium heat for 15 minutes.

- Cover and cook over low heat for 15 minutes, stirring regularly.

- Sprinkle with chopped parsley at time of serving.



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# GLOSSARY BX106

## BolivianExpress Magazine

AJI DE MANI	Spicy peanut sauce
ANTICUCHERA/O	Person who makes and sells anticuchos
ANTICUCHO	Popular meat dishes made from cow's heart
API CON PASTEL	A purple corn drink traditionally eaten with a fried cheese pasty
CASERITA	Term referring to someone selling or buying something
CHAIRO	Soup consisting of vegetables, meat and chuño
CHUÑO	Freeze-dried potato traditionally made by Quechua and Aymara communities of Bolivia
HELADO DE CANELA	Cinnamon ice-cream
HIERBA BUENA	An indigenous variety of mint
HUMINTA	Traditional food from the Andean region. It consists of masa harina and corn, wrapped in a corn husk, and slowly steamed or boiled in a pot of water.
LLAJUA	Bolivian hot sauce made of chillies, herbs and tomatoes
LLAUCHA	Type of cheese empanada
LOMITO	Beef
MOTE	Andean corn
PANCITO	Diminutive of 'pan', which means 'little bread'
SALCHIPAPA	Popular street food snack consisting of fried hot dog strips on a bed of chips
SALTEÑA	Bolivian pastry filled with a stewy mixture of vegetables, meat and eggs
SILPANCHO	thin fried breaded meat (a bit like a schnitzel) on a layer of rice and potatoes, topped with a fried egg and served with chopped onion, tomato and locoto pepper.
TUCUMANA	Fried pasties filled with meat or vegetables
TUNTA	Type of freeze-dried potato

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