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**FOOD STUDIES EN ESPAÑOL.
INVESTIGACIÓN ACTUAL EN GASTRONOMÍA Y COMUNICACIÓN**

**FOOD STUDIES IN SPANISH.
CURRENT RESEARCH IN GASTRONOMY AND COMMUNICATION**

**ESTUDOS ALIMENTARES EM ESPANHOL.
PESQUISA ATUAL EM GASTRONOMIA E COMUNICAÇÃO**

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Yanet Acosta and Rebecca Ingram (editors). *Food Studies en español. Investigación actual en gastronomía y comunicación*. Madrid, Editorial Fragua. 2024. 180 pp.

The introduction of this edited volume establishes a need to study gastronomy and gastronomic communication at the university level in Spain. Despite the regular presence of gastronomy in popular media, the editors argue that very few doctoral theses, peer-reviewed articles and communications conference presentations address food studies, with some meaningful exceptions such as the work of María Ángeles Pérez Samper, Isabel Gómez Turmo, and Carmen Simón Palmer. This is changing in recent years with collaborations between academics and journalists such as H. Rosi Song and Anna Riera's *A Taste of Barcelona* (2019) or books with food studies approaches by Inés Butrón (*Comer en España*, 2020) and María Arranz (*El delantal y la maza*, 2024). This collection represents an important step to create more cross-disciplinary pollination, which is one of the goals of food studies, a branch of cultural studies inspired by the Frankfurt School in the 1970s and well established as an academic discipline with connections to identity, communication, and feminist and gender studies, among others. In Spain, scholarly contributions in anthropology have studied the relationship between food and culture, such as the work of Mabel Gracia Arnaiz and Jesús Contreras Hernández, but they do not take the interdisciplinary approach that the broader lens of food studies provides. Both Acosta and Ingram are

pioneers in encouraging this kind of collaboration. Acosta's work as a journalist and in establishing the Masters in Communication and Gastronomic Journalism (*The Foodie Studies*) based at the Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, along with various courses and workshops in food studies show her dedication to this burgeoning field. For her part, Ingram has completed multiple books and projects focused on Spain such as her monograph *Women's Work* (2022) about women's contributions to culinary cultures in modern Spain, her collaboration with Lara Anderson "Transhispanic Food Cultural Studies" (2020) and another recent edited volume with Anderson and Eugenia Afinoguénova: *Digestible Governance* (2024) about foodways and gastrocracy. Together, Acosta and Ingram have participated in numerous conference and workshops in recent years that included journalists, food writers and academics, and this volume includes these perspectives and contributors from art history, anthropology, history, and communications. The volume is written in Spanish, which is notable for two reasons: it can foment more alliances in the Spanish-speaking academy across the globe and with other fields, and will also be a useful book for instructors teaching food studies in Spanish. The authors in the volume hail from a variety of backgrounds, countries, and professions, which is one of its strengths in putting forth diverse points of view.

While not directly about food studies, Gloria Gómez-Escalonilla's chapter is a particularly useful one for those new to cultural studies theory, especially students interested in discussing the latter in Spanish courses. She introduces concepts such as mass culture, class struggles, cultural hegemony, and how to employ discourse analysis to reveal ideologies behind cultural products. Gómez-Escalonilla notes that the cultural studies approach has been criticized for pillaging from other fields, but ultimately concludes its utility in doing just that due to its multidisciplinary approach, especially in conducting qualitative research.

In chapter two, Rebecca Ingram explains how the academic study of food has often been marginalized due to being seen as a women's domain, but reverses this in framing its powerful feminist potential by recognizing foodwork and highlighting women's often unpaid or unrecognized contributions. Building on the previous chapter about cultural studies, described by Mabel Moraña in 2021 as "disciplinary disobedience," Ingram explains the genesis of food studies as a field where scholars in numerous fields provide new ways of understanding the intersections between food and society. This chapter is helpful for students of food studies to learn about its origins, methodologies and potential areas of unexplored research.

Chapter three, written by F. Xavier Medina, takes on the concept of food heritage as intangible in that it includes practices and quotidian activities that do not always leave a trace. Dovetailing nicely with the previous chapter, he points out this heritage is largely feminine and is only recently receiving the recognition it deserves. Importantly, Medina notes that this heritage is constantly evolving and composed of borrowed elements, such as how the colonial encounter altered both Mediterranean cuisine and that of the Americas. The chapter talks about heritage in relation to identity, power structures, and the economy, touching on the complexity of tourism as both positive and a risk, a compelling topic of study at a time when Spain is receiving record numbers of tourists.

In the fourth chapter, María Paz Moreno presents a helpful methodology to study recipes, establishing their worth as texts, considering authorship, context, impact, audience, publication and ingredients. Moreno shows us the rich possibilities held in studying cookbooks and food manuscripts as we can learn about hygiene practices, the variety of purposes cookbooks have, and how they are often hybrid texts that include literary references. The outline and accompanying questions about how to study recipes she provides would be extremely useful in a food studies course.

In chapter five, Vicky Hayward examines *El caso de nuevo arte* by Juan Altamiras (1745). It dialogues with the prior chapter as a kind of illustration of all that a recipe book can teach us as she highlights how Altamiras, a Franciscan, championed humble ingredients like garlic and bread, even featuring onions as a protagonist, in opposition to aristocratic cuisine and reflecting his religious order's beliefs. Hayward describes the crop devastation due to cold snaps leading to widespread hunger around the time of the book's publication, bringing in historical context that explains the need to use more modest ingredients. Hayward's account of the significant contributions of *moriscos*, Muslims who converted to Catholicism in 1520, is an illustration of the cultural value of minority populations to creating agricultural practices that still exist today.

The sixth chapter, composed by Rosa Tovar, continues the thread of valuing recipes as texts, particularly in deciphering ancient ones. She notes the difficulty of doing this task when language has evolved, or recipes were copied multiple times by people who altered them, and the fact that some are translations or even interpretations by translators not familiar with cooking techniques. Sometimes, recipes reference texts that are no longer available. However, Tovar offers an optimistic view that recipes should be

studied carefully, affirming similar ideas outlined in previous chapters about considering their broader context, the origin of ingredients, and the need to cross-reference texts to confirm information. Tovar's chapter is beneficial in that she emphasizes the time it takes to study recipes in depth to comprehend them.

Chapter seven is Yanet Acosta's explanation of her methodology and timeline for a project to preserve thousands of recipes from the Canary Islands in an online repository. She observes the lack of critical analysis about recipes from this region in Spain and offers possibilities for future research with this archive on topics like gender and identity, migration, colonization and slavery (especially between the Canary Islands and the Caribbean), and differences between the Canaries and Peninsular Spain. This chapter serves as a reminder of Derrida's concept of the archive related to political power, for the project is supported by government funding to preserve the cultural heritage of the Canaries, thus giving it more visibility.

Ana Vega Pérez de Arlucea's contribution in the eighth chapter offers an excellent example of how to do research and write for a popular audience from a gastronomic journalist's perspective, giving a true appreciation for the research process and labor behind it, including employing digital resources and participating in a documentary film. Food studies students will benefit from this piece as it communicates the joy and unexpected findings a researcher can come across. Pérez de Arlucea's detailed account about two professional Basque cooks, Emilia Galiano and Emilia de Dañobeitia, illustrates that prior to the 19th century Basque women were responsible for creating the basis of traditional cuisine in the region. Before any of the current Michelin-starred Basque chefs, Dañobeitia was awarded Basque cuisine's first two Michelin stars in 1936, a noteworthy discovery that shows the potency of women paving the way that Ingram and Acosta seek to highlight.

Chapter nine, written by Yeon-Soo Kim, offers another unique view of how food studies may be used as an entry point into studying topics like racism and resistance. She analyzes works of three Spaniards of Asian heritage whose texts may be used to research and understand identity and belonging through food metaphors such as *Gazpacho agridulce* (2015) by Quan Zhou Wu, *Chiñoles y bananas* (2016) by Susana Ye, and *Arroz tres delicias: Sexo, raza y género* (2019) by Chenta Tsai Tseng. This chapter includes an excellent collection of food studies references and ideas for objects of study such as recent changes in packaging of products like ColaCao

and Conguitos in Spain and newspaper articles with sensationalist and anti-Asian racist narratives. Kim invites us to be critical of what we consume by expertly questioning packaged narratives.

The final chapter by Vanessa Quintanar Cabello exemplifies how works of art are valuable resources to instruct us about food history. Even through the use of symbols, we can learn more about ideas and prejudices toward certain food products. She presents researchers and students with a very useful notion of studying visual culture: to look both at what is present and what is absent from images to give clues about foods from certain periods. For instance, the presence of a pepper (una guindilla) by Velázquez in two paintings in 1618 demonstrates the inclusion of food items from the Americas into the cuisine of Spain.

To conclude, as the editors point out, the book is an invitation to academics, undergraduate, and graduate students to see that gastronomy is a field rich with research possibilities and methodologies. In this sense, it is a fundamentally hospitable book: it gathers people together, welcomes diverse perspectives, and seeks to share knowledge freely with others as it will be available via open access.