Enchanting restaurants: innovation based on traditional food in Belém (Pará, Brazil)

O encantamento nos Restaurantes: inovação a partir da comida tradicional em Belém (Pará, Brasil)

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ABSTRACT
The city of Belém, capital of the state of Pará (PA), located in northern Brazil, was recognized in 2015 as a Creative City of Gastronomy by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). This recognition is due to the richness of the intangible cultural heritage of the cuisine of Pará, based on traditional and indigenous ways of making, allied to African and European knowledge. At the same time, participation in the Creative Cities Network presupposes cooperation between member cities, where city planning, creativity, sustainability and the encouragement of a socially fairer society are the principles that guide each one of them. In this sense, the objective of the article is to think about the act of enchantment, based on the communicative process, that restaurants promote in their customers, particularly in the city of Belém. In methodological terms, it is a qualitative and dialectical research that seeks to question and deepen knowledge, based on data collected in field research during participant observation. To conclude, we understand that the taste and mastery of traditional Pará cuisine can be restrictive as a tourist offer given the use of local products, unknown to the general public. Thus, gourmetization, the preparation of new dishes with known products and international dishes seek to complement this gastronomic offer. However, the enchantment is not only produced from the food itself, but also from the referents and channels used by the different restaurants.

Keywords: communicative process, creative city, enchantment, gastronomic offer, gastronomic tourism, Pará cuisine.
RESUMO
A cidade de Belém, capital do estado do Pará (PA), no Norte do Brasil, foi reconhecida em 2015 como Cidade Criativa da Gastronomia pela Organização das Nações Unidas para a Educação, a Ciência e a Cultura (UNESCO). Esse reconhecimento se deve à riqueza do patrimônio cultural imaterial da culinária paraense, baseada nos modos de fazer tradicionais e indígenas, aliados aos saberes africanos e europeus. Por outro lado, a participação na Rede de Cidades Criativas pressupõe a cooperação entre as cidades membros, onde o planejamento urbano, a criatividade, a sustentabilidade e o incentivo a uma sociedade socialmente mais justa são os princípios que norteiam cada uma delas. Nesse sentido, o objetivo do artigo é pensar o ato de encantamento, a partir do processo comunicativo, que os restaurantes promovem em seus clientes, particularmente na cidade de Belém. Em termos metodológicos, trata-se de uma pesquisa qualitativa e dialética que busca questionar e aprofundar conhecimentos, a partir dos dados coletados em pesquisa de campo durante a observação participante. Para concluir, entendemos que o gosto e o domínio da culinária tradicional paraense podem ser restritivos como oferta turística dada a utilização de produtos locais, desconhecidos do grande público. Assim, a gourmétização, o preparo de novos pratos com produtos conhecidos e os pratos internacionais procuram complementar esta oferta gastronômica. Contudo, o encantamento não é produzido apenas a partir da comida em si, mas também dos referentes e canais utilizados pelos diferentes restaurantes,

Palavras-chave: cidade criativa, culinária paraense, encantamento, oferta gastronômica, processo comunicativo, turismo gastronômico.

1 INTRODUCTION
The gastronomy of the city of Belém, capital of the Brazilian state of Pará, assumes state, national and international relevance. In this way, the gastronomy of Pará was, in 2011, declared an intangible cultural heritage of the State, while in 2015, the city of Belém was classified as a Creative City of Gastronomy, by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The recognition of intangible cultural heritage aims to preserve knowledge, ways of doing things, forms of expression, celebrations, festivals and popular dances, legends, music, customs and other ancestral traditions for future generations.

The attribution of the title of Creative City of Gastronomy seeks to increase, through an action plan, national and international gastronomic tourism, based on the encouragement of creativity, the commitment to sustainable and inclusive development and the sharing of good practices, in addition to the promotion of programs and networks.
for professional and artistic exchange, partnerships between public entities, private entities and civil society and the dissemination of traditional knowledge and local ingredients of typical local cuisine. This designation results from an annual competition promoted by UNESCO (2022b).

Hence, if cultural heritage and tradition refer to a certain maintenance of the status quo, creativity and innovation seek to surprise and promote the novelty or the “new”, in ever faster and shorter cycles (HOBSBAWM, 1984; CRUZ, 2016).

In the present communication, it is our objective to confront the local and traditional gastronomy with the innovative offer in the city of Belém.

In methodological terms, it is a qualitative and dialectical research that seeks to question and deepen knowledge, based on data collected and participant observation. Thus, the qualitative approach allowed to deepen the knowledge about the research object while the dialectical approach allowed to debate the arguments for and against this construction, therefore seeking to discern and defend the concepts leveraged in the literature review (CRESWELL, 1994; DYBICZ; PYLES, 2011; CORRÊA, 2021).

The investigation in terms of its nature was constituted as a basic investigation that had as objective the creation of new knowledge (SCHAUZ, 2014). Regarding the objectives, it is an exploratory research that aimed to provide greater familiarity with the problem, in order to make it more explicit. Regarding the procedures, we classify it as a documentary investigation (SAKYİ; MUSONA; MWESHİ, 2020).

Next, we will present three sections where we treat these variables. In the first, we discuss the concept of intangible cultural heritage related to the gastronomy of Pará, while in the second section we discuss the creative city in theoretical terms, as well as contextualize the attribution of this qualification to the city of Belém. In the third section, we present the field study on the production of enchantment in restaurants, based on food and its scenic environment. Finally, we present our conclusions.

2 GASTRONOMY: İNTANGİBLE CULTURAL HERİTAGE

Food is intended to satisfy basic or biological needs. It is a social fact because it corresponds to habits and ways of acting and thinking that determine behaviors in a
society such as the distribution of meals during the day, the socio-spatial distribution of food and the type of gastronomy.

Therefore, Durkheim (2004) understands that social facts are manifested in rules, values and social norms that determine behaviors framed in cultural patterns. In this article, it is mainly important to reflect and debate gastronomy as an intangible cultural heritage.

In the 18th century, the emergence of European Nation-States determined the conceptual change of heritage as a set of private, inherited and family goods to emerge as an element with public and collective status to legitimize national identity and past (FLORESCANO, 1993; WINTER, 2020).

The field of heritage presents itself as a set of goods, to which an economic value can be attributed, although many elements of heritage cannot be evaluated. But heritage is a social construction (CRUCES, 1998). In this sense, cultural heritage can be defined as the symbolic representation that strengthens identities, promotes solidarities, produces social bonds, resolves differences and conflicts and builds the image of the community (PEREIRO, 2006; CRUCES, 1998).

While culture is constantly changing, cultural heritage tends to hold a certain permanence and only this can be patronized (PEREIRO, 2006). In this sense, today, according to Pereiro:

cultural heritage is a debate about social values and patrimonialization is a process of attributing new values, meanings, uses and meanings to objects, forms, ways of life, wisdoms and social knowledge. Patrimonialization is also a mechanism for affirming and legitimizing the identity of a group or of some versions of identity, which is not exempt from struggles, dialectics and negotiations. Patrimonialization can also be understood as a process of activating memories, always linked to the processes of forgetting (PEREIRO, 2006, p. 28).

In recent years, UNESCO (2022a) has been promoting intangible heritage through various instruments such as the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) and through the appeal to the need to record, preserve, study and enhance the traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors. In this way, they are integrated as categories of intangible cultural heritage, oral traditions and expressions,
including language, knowledge and skills, as well as instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated with them, social practices, rituals and festive events related to the life cycle of individuals and of the groups (MUSEU..., 2017). As confirmed by Müller:

Tradition, the symbolic value of food, history, flavors and knowledge, production techniques and food methods are responsible for the formation of regional gastronomic cultures. These intangible values together constitute the so-called Intangible Cultural Heritage (MÜLLER, 2012, “No page number”).

According to the Preamble of the UNESCO Convention (2022a), intangible cultural heritage is the melting pot and the guarantor of cultural diversity. Furthermore, it fulfills the function of approach, exchange and understanding between human beings, individually or in community.

On the other hand, if dialogue between communities allows the processes of globalization and social transformation to be promoted, attention must be paid to the possibility of deterioration, disappearance and destruction of this type of heritage in the absence of resources to safeguard it (MADARIAGA, 2022).

Thus, UNESCO defines intangible cultural heritage as:

practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage (UNESCO, 2022a, p. 5)

As Madariaga (2022) highlights, there is interdependence between intangible cultural heritage – such as uses, representations, expressions, knowledge and techniques – and cultural and natural heritage such as instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated with the former. This is, according to the same author, an arbitrary and imagined division.

Thus, gastronomy, as an intangible cultural heritage, contributes to the imagination and social, cultural and tourist experiences of different places, such as the city of Belém. It features dishes that combine indigenous, African and European (especially Portuguese) cuisine. But it is the use of local natural resources that stand out
in the cuisine of Pará, such as manioc, in addition to the variety and peculiarities of the local flora (LOBATO; AIRES; RAVENA-CAÑETE, 2019).

The food is typical when it is part of a culture and, therefore, presents local specificities that can go through the “appreciation of the flavors belonging to the native elements of the region, produced by the small producer with geoclimatic peculiarities (terroir), in accordance with artisanal standards” (MULLER; AMARAL; REMOR, 2010, “No page number”).

Thus, in the gastronomy of Pará there are typical dishes: maniçoba, duck in tucupí, tacacá, pirarucu with coconut milk, crab shell and others.

Knowing a little more about these dishes:

- **Maniçoba**: made with the leaves of manioc, the maniva, which is crushed and cooked for seven days to remove the toxicity of the plant. Added to the broth: pieces of jerky and desalted pork.
- **Duck in tucupi**: made with the boiled liquid of manioc, poultry and jambu. The dish is served with rice and baguette flour.
- **Tacacá**: is a broth prepared with tapioca starch, shrimp and jambu.
- **Pirarucu**: is one of the largest freshwater fish in the Amazon. When dry and salted, it can be called regional "cod". The pirarucu dumpling is served as a snack and can be tasted with pepper sauce.
- **Crab or 'knock-knock'**: boiled in salted water and then soaked in tucupi with jambu. To be savored, people usually 'break' the crustacean into parts and 'take off' the meat with a mini metal hammer. Crab can also be present in soups, risottos and stews.

### 3 CREATIVE CITY OF GASTRONOMY

The Creative City was understood, at first, as a qualification for the “spirit” of the city, designed by the neighborhood where the artists projected their activity. However, with the projection of the economic importance of the creative industries, the concept of Creative City proposed to define its cultural identity. A third meaning is related to the
representation of the “Creative Class”, which could be quantified and, in this way, rank creative cities among themselves (CRUZ, 2019a).

Landry (2011) understood the Creative City as one that has creativity as its central and transversal element, in terms of urban planning. Therefore, it was not restricted to the existence of a large number of industries or creative and cultural sectors or the significant presence of the Creative Class. For this author, creativity extended to Public Administration, which should present and propose innovative solutions in sectors such as health, social services or governance.

On this subject, it is important to note that for Landry (2011) only a few cities could be classified as Creative Cities. We understand, however, with Cruz (2019a) that all cities are creative, although urban creativity varies in intensity, so that some cities are more creative than others.

The creative city implies the existence of a creative sphere or environment that stimulates the emergence of new ideas and public participation. This is not a mere concentration of creative sectors in urban space. It is, in short, new forms of organizational culture that imply the appearance of new conditions of thought, planning and action put into practice in the resolution of urban problems (CRUZ, 2019a, p. 93).

In 2004, the Creative Cities Network was created within UNESCO, in order to promote cooperation between cities that understand creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development.

Currently, the Network comprises 246 cities, with the aim of placing creativity and creative industries at the center of the local development plan and promoting cooperation at an international level (UNESCO, 2022b).

The creative industries are, therefore, enterprises whose object is culture, art or heritage, at any stage of the economic cycle, as well as traditional enterprises that integrate these elements, with the aim of increasing their income (CRUZ, 2019b). This also includes the informal sector organized within the scope of the aforementioned object.

The Creative Cities Network promotes the organization of cities around seven creative industries, namely: crafts and popular arts, digital arts, cinema, gastronomy, literature and music. In this way, these adhering cities commit to sharing their best
practices and developing ties between the public and private sectors and civil society, in order to:

- Strengthen the creation, production, distribution and dissemination of cultural activities, goods and services;
- Develop creativity and innovation centers and increase the opportunities available to creators and professionals in the cultural sector;
- Improve access and participation in cultural life, in particular for the benefit of disadvantaged groups and vulnerable people;
- Fully integrate culture and creativity into their sustainable development plans (UNESCO, 2022b, “no page number”).

Thus, regarding the meaning of Creative City, we highlight a triple criterion for the classification of creative cities by UNESCO. On one hand, (1) the cultural relevance and, in particular, the cultural heritage of the city; (2) innovation in the creative sector with the sharing of good practices among member cities; and (3) the political factor, based on the commitment to combine urban planning with the cultural area and sustainability in a socially fair way.

In Brazil, the cities of Florianópolis (2014), Belém (2015), Paraty (2017) and Belo Horizonte (2019) are creative cities of gastronomy. The attribution of this title aims to boost the development of gastronomic tourism in the member cities (GREENME, 2015).

In terms of new dishes in the city of Belém, we can mention: ravioli of maniçoba, chocolat ball of Brazil nuts with rum of jambu, quinoa salad and smoked avium shrimp, among others. In addition, events promoted in the city such as Festival Ver-o-Peso or Festival Belém Islands and Flavors also promote new dishes and foods. These attract the local population as well as tourists and visitors.

But creativity is also promoted through the theming of restaurant environments, scenarios that enchant and instill well-being in customers (CRUZ, 2016; ARAÚJO; CRUZ, 2020). Scenery, utensils, museum design, lighting regulation are some of the examples that allow consumers to experience different taste, olfactory, visual, tactile and auditory sensations. The different senses are highlighted based on the creative element and not just the gustatory one.

In this regard, we can identify for the enchantment action, the interaction between the active subjects (owner, manager, employees, chefs and kitchen staff) and the passive
subjects (customers). This interaction has a referent or context. The absence of these weakens the message, that is, the transmission/acquisition of these emotions.

In this context, it is important to take into account that:

The strictly semiotic approach to communication remains very different from those presented by economic theories or traditional communication theories, of which the aforementioned scheme can be considered representative. To the extent that communication is situated between subjects and to the extent that the values invested in the objects put into circulation (pragmatic or cognitive, descriptive or modal values) are considered constitutive of the subject's being, it is clear that the addressee and the recipient cannot be considered mere abstractions, treated as “empty positions of sender and receiver, but on the contrary as competent subjects, pinched in a moment of their becoming, each inscribed in their own discourse.” (NASCIMENTO, 2002, p. 62).

When sender and receiver do not share the same referents or context, the communication of enchantment may not produce its effects, either due to different states of mind of those involved, different interpretation of the shared environment or lack of habituation to certain foods or spices. Regarding the context, Camargo (2012) reflects:

communication as a social phenomenon seeking to share psychological meanings aims to encode, convey and decode information that exists initially in the “consciousness” of the sender, and later in the “consciousness” of the receiver. In this way, the conditions of recognition and access to the codes that constitute a certain piece of information will influence the effectiveness of the communication process (CAMARGO, 2012, p. 42)

At channel level, it must be taken into account that this concerns the space occupied by restaurants but also other real or virtual spaces in which information about them circulates. We adopt here the concept of ethnoscape (APPADURAI, 2010; CRUZ, 2022), in the sense of including the real and cultural, social, political or other representations, but also the virtual, the desired, the projected or dreamed.

Here, messages or enchantment are conveyed through written text, images, architecture, design, gourmet food, quality/quantity of food, prices, background music, employee clothing, service times and others.

It is a space of flows occupied by residents, tourists, visitors, migrants, families, friends, unaccompanied people, male and/or female. It is, therefore, a space for eating, tasting and socializing.
4 ENCHANTMENT IN BELÉM RESTAURANTS

TripAdvisor has 1230 restaurants registered for the city of Belém. Each is classified into up to three categories. From the survey of the 50 best restaurants, we can see that they are distributed as follows: 35% of the establishments serve Brazilian food while 5% of the restaurants are characterized by serving South American, Italian, pizza, seafood, European, bar or cafeteria, each. American food and fast food categorize 4% each, and contemporary food 3% of restaurants.

In this analysis, we found that 24 are classified as local restaurants. The number of restaurants with typical food is only 20. As for local cuisine restaurants, 84% identify Brazilian food as their first food category. The rest are distributed - 4% each - for Italian, Indian, contemporary food and coffee).

Finally, 90% of restaurants with typical food identify Brazilian food as the main gastronomic category, while the remaining 10% present themselves as Italian food.

Starting from three restaurants in Belém – La Traviata, Tomaz – Culinária do Pará and Ver-o-Açaí – we will exemplify and analyze posters, objects and gastronomic dishes served in them. Participant observation was carried out in the months of June and July 2023, in the three commercial establishments.

La Traviata is a restaurant that highlights on its menu: ricotta raviole or prosciutto raviole; lasagna or rondelli; gnocchi; ricotta cannelloni or prosciutto cannelloni; risottos; spaghettis, tagliarini, longlini or fettuccine; meat; pollo; fish and gamberi; pizza – the latter, only at dinner.

The restaurant Tomaz – Culinária do Pará has the following main options: Vatapá, Tacacá, Vataçoba, Maniçoba, Tomaz Pancake, Caruru, Camusquim, Crab shell, Figueiredo rice, Tomaz rice, Raimunda rice and Crab soup. Finally, the Ver-o-Açaí restaurant’s main dishes are: Dourada, Hake, Filhote, Pirarucu, Pink Shrimp and Exaggerated shrimp bobó.

Currently¹, Ver-o-açaí is ranked on TriAdvisor in first place out of 801 restaurants in the city of Belém, as well as in first place in 60 bars in the same city. This restaurant

¹ On December 29, 2023.
was awarded “Travellers’ Choice” by Tripadvisor for the reviews received and for being among the top 10% of establishments on the same website.

In the category of the best restaurants in the city of Belém, La Traviata is in 21st place (and in second place out of 40 Italian restaurants) while Tomaz – Culinária do Pará is in 35th place (29th place in Brazilian food restaurants).

Figure 1 – Posters and photographs at the La Traviata restaurant

At La Traviata, we highlight the use of posters and photographs in the process of enchanting customers. Thus, from the use of photographs that refer to the idea of traditional family, marriage and period to urban and rustic landscapes or even Italian symbols such as the Fiat brand car (cf. Fig. 1).

These photographs and posters take us back to other eras, cultures, cities and eras in a unity that we can call Italian culture complemented by Italian gastronomy with an emphasis on pizza and pasta.

It is a cultural element to attract residents (of Italian descent or not) who enjoy Italian food, but also European tourists who travel to the city and who share this symbolism.
Figure 2 – Objects from indigenous culture (Amazon), at the Ver-o-Açaí restaurant

Another element present in some restaurants in Belém are objects that take us back to indigenous and local culture, as is the case with the Ver-o-Açaí restaurant (cf. Fig. 2). These are ceramics in the form of pots for storing liquids and cereals or handmade bowls used for meals. Instruments linked to Amazonian hunting and fishing activities are added.

These cultural and identity elements make it possible to attract residents who appreciate Amazonian food, but also national and foreign tourists looking to discover local cuisine.

Finally, it is worth highlighting the food element (cf. Fig. 3). The cuisine in Belém has exclusive dishes within the scope of Brazilian cuisine, which allows it to be
characterized as unique and authentic. But it’s not just the dishes already identified above, it’s also fruits such as açaí, vegetables such as jambu, and fish such as filhote or pirarucu that characterize the exclusivity of Pará cuisine.

Figure 3 – Local food, in Belém

The imagery, around the tastes and foods of Pará, brings us closer to a historical and cultural past that brought together indigenous, African and European communities. It is, therefore, a cultural heritage that interests not only residents but also Brazilians in general and foreigners interested in good food and experiencing new flavors. This is the main reason for Belém’s classification as a creative city of gastronomy by UNESCO.

5 CONCLUSIÓN

The gastronomy of the city of Belém currently benefits from a double status. On one hand, it is an intangible cultural heritage of the state of Pará, with public policies for the preservation and safeguarding of this symbolic production.

On the other hand, it is the Creative City of gastronomy, which allows it to participate in the international network and thereby share knowledge and good practices on gastronomy and food. In addition, urban planning based on this creative industry makes it possible to learn about projects and public policies that aim either at the tourism
of the sector or at the renovation of spaces and establishments, for example, gastronomic in order to increase the tourist offer. Thus, it is worth highlighting the importance of public policies here.

Therefore, if the intangible cultural heritage presents characteristics of permanence, preservation, musealization, patrimonialization, memory and uniqueness, on the contrary, the creative city refers to characteristics such as creativity, innovation, dynamism, change, networked knowledge and sharing of practices. If the first is local and timeless, the second is global and temporal.

In this sense, cultural heritage and the creative city establish a dichotomous and contradictory relationship with each other, as they are opposed in essence.

However, it is possible to establish a subsidiarity relationship between these two concepts, since creative cities use intangible cultural heritage as their input, as is the case, traditions and knowledge. Therefore, we are witnessing a relativization of memories, traditions and knowledge. The tourification of this intangible heritage responds to the neocapitalist interests of the city and increases the demand through tourism.

Thus, we can conclude that aesthetics overlaps ethics, since intangible heritage needs a new presentation or language to be able to capture new consumers. Tourists want to consume the typical and authentic but in a gourmet way. Marketing is the ideal tool to capture this new segment.

At the same time, the dichotomy is apparent or formal, since innovation based on intangible cultural heritage subsidizes the creative city, as well as the creation of new consumer segments (gastronomic tourists). Here, culture is explained by creativity and innovation, as well as the need to build “new” narratives.

Enchantment as communication has been used in restaurants to transmit sensations and feelings and in this creative way customers are attracted not only for food purposes. Thematization or gourmentization are two communicative elements increasingly used in a creative city, based on the traditions and cultural heritage of the city and the region.
Belém is the gateway to the Amazon and marks the access not only to the largest forest in the world but also to a vast cultural wealth that is an input and reference in Pará’s food.
REFERENCES


