



Universidad  
del Valle



Cuadernos de  
Administración

*Journal of Management*

Print ISSN: 0120-4645 / E-ISSN: 2256-5078 / Short name: cuad.adm.

Pages: e2413411 / Vol: 40 / Issue: 79 / May - Aug. 2024

Faculty of Administration Sciences / Universidad del Valle / Cali - Colombia

## Analysis of the Gastronomic Tourism Potential in the La Candelaria locality, Bogotá

Análisis del potencial del turismo gastronómico  
en la localidad de la Candelaria, Bogotá

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Article of Scientific and Technological Research

Submitted: 06/11/2023

Reviewed: 11/06/2024

Accepted: 05/07/2024

Published: 30/08/2024

Thematic lines: Administration and Organizations

JEL classification: Z32

<https://doi.org/10.25100/cdea.v40i79.13411>

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### Abstract

Gastronomic tourism has established itself as a fundamental pillar for positioning tourist destinations by integrating ancestral knowledge, traditions, and the potential of products passed down through generations. According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), gastronomic experiences are the primary travel motive for 30% of tourists. In Bogotá, various organizations are working to develop this type of tourism, although it is necessary to integrate

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existing studies to formulate a competitive proposal. This research aimed to diagnose the gastronomic situation in the La Candelaria locality. A qualitative methodology was used, beginning with an analysis of the territorial and touristic context, the supply, demand, potential, and trends of gastronomic tourism, following the proposal of the WTO and the Basque Culinary Center. Five in-depth interviews with experts were conducted to analyze and diagnose gastronomic tourism in La Candelaria. The results indicate that La Candelaria has a competitive advantage due to its accessibility to differentiated products. 101 establishments were identified on social networks, 40 preparations in the inventory of typical preparations, 6 gastronomic tours, 18 events/contests, and the La Concordia Market Square as elements that enhance gastronomic tourism. The study concludes that there is a value chain in gastronomic tourism in La Candelaria. However, it is necessary to update the sector's figures and develop joint actions between the government and gastronomic establishments to maximize their potential.

**Keywords:** Planning models; Tourism economics; Tourism and development; Industry studies.

## Resumen

El turismo gastronómico se ha consolidado como un pilar fundamental para posicionar destinos turísticos, integrando saberes ancestrales, tradiciones y la potencialidad de productos transmitidos a través de generaciones. Según la Organización Mundial del Turismo (OMT), las experiencias gastronómicas son el principal motivo de viaje para el 30% de los turistas. En Bogotá, diferentes organismos trabajan para desarrollar este tipo de turismo, aunque es necesario integrar los estudios existentes para formular una propuesta competitiva. Esta investigación tuvo como objetivo diagnosticar la situación gastronómica en la localidad de La Candelaria. Se utilizó una metodología cualitativa, iniciando con un análisis del contexto territorial y turístico, la oferta, demanda, potencial y tendencias del turismo gastronómico, siguiendo la propuesta de la OMT y el Basque Culinary Center. Se realizaron cinco entrevistas a profundidad con expertos para analizar y diagnosticar el turismo gastronómico en La Candelaria. Los resultados indican que La Candelaria posee una ventaja competitiva debido a su accesibilidad a productos diferenciados. Se identificaron 101 establecimientos en redes sociales, 40 preparaciones en el inventario de preparaciones típicas, 6 tours gastronómicos, 18 eventos/concursos y la Plaza de Mercado de La Concordia como elementos que potencian el turismo gastronómico. El estudio concluye que existe una cadena de valor en el turismo gastronómico en La Candelaria. Sin embargo, es necesaria la actualización de las cifras del sector y el desarrollo de acciones conjuntas entre el gobierno y los establecimientos gastronómicos para maximizar su potencial.

**Palabras Clave:** Modelos de planificación; Economía del Turismo; Turismo y desarrollo; Estudios de la Industria.

## 1. Introduction

The gastronomic heritage of an area is identified based on its ancestral knowledge, which is composed of its tradition and its transmission through generations, allowing the identification of the cultural identity and history of a particular region. In this sense, the WTO (2016) states that “Gastronomic tourism offers an opportunity to constantly revitalize and diversify tourism, promote local economic development, involve various professional sectors, and provide different outlets for the primary sector” (p.15). Given this importance, local governments must make efforts to identify opportunities in the sector by analyzing opportunities and weaknesses and proposing alternatives for development. However, no plan focused on gastronomic tourism for the city has been identified.

Gastronomy is closely related to food. Meléndez and Cañez (2010) mention that “food -and particularly cuisine- is related to history, to who we are and to what we belong, that is, to our identity” (p. 185), which requires a strategy to avoid its loss. However, currently, due to trends imposed by the global market, some traditions have been modified or forgotten, resulting in the loss of food culture and, consequently, the process of realization (Leyva and Pérez, 2015). Thus, culinary knowledge and intangible heritage are threatened.

In the locality of La Candelaria in Bogotá, there are establishments, routes, events, and other elements related to gastronomic tourism, but there is no defined strategy to strengthen this type of tourism for the locality. As a result, the potential of this locality is underutilized for Bogotá to become a world-class gastronomic destination. Furthermore, the lack of knowledge about the actions developed by the public sector, the private sector, academia, and local communities leads to scattered efforts that do not allow consolidation and visibility as a gastronomic destination. Another important element is that the lack of a strategic plan hinders the

preservation of Bogotá's culinary identity and distinctive elements.

In this context, this research was proposed to contribute to the dynamism of the sector, which in turn significantly impacts the local economy by generating employment, stimulating businesses, and contributing to community development. The work developed seeks to consolidate information to generate analysis and diagnosis of a starting situation as an input for the government to generate a strategic plan for gastronomic tourism. This is achieved by identifying and analyzing the situation of the subsector's supply in Bogotá through information collected on social networks as an input for the following phases to formulate a strategic plan around gastronomic tourism that develops articulated actions for its implementation.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

The field of tourism planning is a dynamic area informed by a multitude of theoretical perspectives that emphasize collaboration, resource utilization, destination design, and strategic decision-making within tourism enterprises. Successful tourism planning requires stakeholder engagement, fostering cooperation between local communities, tourism businesses, and policymakers. Additionally, a resource-based development approach encourages leveraging local assets such as cultural heritage and skilled labor to create unique tourist experiences (Bramwell, 1999; Denicolai *et al.*, 2010).

The concept of destination place planning emphasizes creating attractive and well-designed tourist destinations that meet visitors' needs while preserving local character (Dredge, 1999; Fletcher and Cooper, 1996). Strategic thinking within tourism enterprises is also indispensable. This involves analyzing market trends, identifying competitive advantages, and formulating clear objectives to ensure the long-term viability of tourism businesses within the destination.

By integrating these diverse theoretical perspectives, tourism planners can develop comprehensive strategies that foster collaboration, optimize resource utilization,

prioritize place creation, and guide effective decision-making within tourism enterprises. This holistic approach paves the way for the development of sustainable and prosperous tourist destinations.

Various studies highlight gastronomy as a motivational factor for visitors. In Pakistan, Ullah *et al.* (2022) identified that satisfaction and loyalty towards gastronomy drive many tourists to return to the destination. Heri Prasetyo *et al.* (2022) underscore the importance of local traditions, nature, and gastronomy in the Blora Regency, Indonesia, as key components of gastronomic heritage. In Bolu, Turkey, 60% of visitors recognize local products, and 37.7% acknowledge foods with geographical indications, reflecting an evolution from mass tourism to activities that include local foods and products (Pamukçu *et al.*, 2021). Basaran and Sunnetcioglu (2021) highlight the influence of anime on the perception of Japanese culinary culture, representing an opportunity for gastronomic development.

The gastronomic development of a territory requires identifying the dynamics of local identity and territorial marketing for governance and the formulation of local food policies (Tricarico and Geissler, 2017). In Lyon, France, success has been based on connections between producers, chefs, and institutions (Salvador-Moral *et al.*, 2022). They used artificial intelligence techniques to analyze the profile of gastronomic tourists in Córdoba, finding that these tourists appreciate the variety of dishes and wish to return to the destination.

Similarly, social media dissemination is crucial for the development of gastronomic plans and products. For example, in Ambato, Ecuador, 49% of gastronomic establishments use social media (Ocaña and Freire, 2022), resulting in a 17% increase in sales for a sushi restaurant thanks to an advertising campaign on Instagram (Lozano, 2021). In the Historic Center of La Candelaria, Bogotá, cafes promote tourism through the exchange of knowledge and traditions supported by independent guides (García, 2021).

However, gastronomy as intangible cultural heritage is politically overlooked in many regions. In Brazil, only three of the

eleven historical cities carry out cultural activities related to gastronomy (Leoti *et al.*, 2023). In Santa María Texcalac, Mexico, the lack of interest and changes in economic activities affect the recovery of traditional preparations, negatively impacting food sovereignty (Carmona Silva and Santiesteban-López, 2022).

Authors such as Castellón and Fontecha (2018) state that Colombian gastronomy has untapped potential for tourism development, which should start with significant organization and communication among all actors involved in the process. Mejía-Rivas and Maldonado-Pérez (2020) highlight the importance of using participatory methodologies in social innovation from gastronomy to preserve cultural food heritage and generate changes that favor nutrition and food security. Supporting micro and small enterprises in the sector is crucial, as mentioned by Peñaranda and Acacio (2023), who emphasize the need to generate action plans, provide workshops, and receive support from Chambers of Commerce and academic programs for this strengthening, which is a fundamental element in the value chain.

### 2.1. Inventory of Tourist Attractions

Gastronomy has been strengthened through tourism. In this regard, the WTO (2019) establishes that gastronomic tourism allows travelers to experience activities related to food, such as authentic culinary experiences, innovations, traditional cuisines, and visits to local producers, gastronomic festivals, and cooking classes. This interest derives from their desire to know the history and preparation of this gastronomy.

In Bogotá, gastronomy is also of interest to tourists, as it has a tradition and recognition as heritage. Thus, in the inventory of traditional kitchens of Colombia, which is an integral part of the Política para el Conocimiento, Salvaguardia y el Fomento de la Alimentación y las Cocinas Tradicionales de Colombia (Policy for the Knowledge, Safeguarding, and Promotion of Colombian Food and Traditional Cuisines) (MinCultura, 2012; MinCultura, n.d.), 29 typical preparations of the city are mentioned. Additionally, in the Recetario

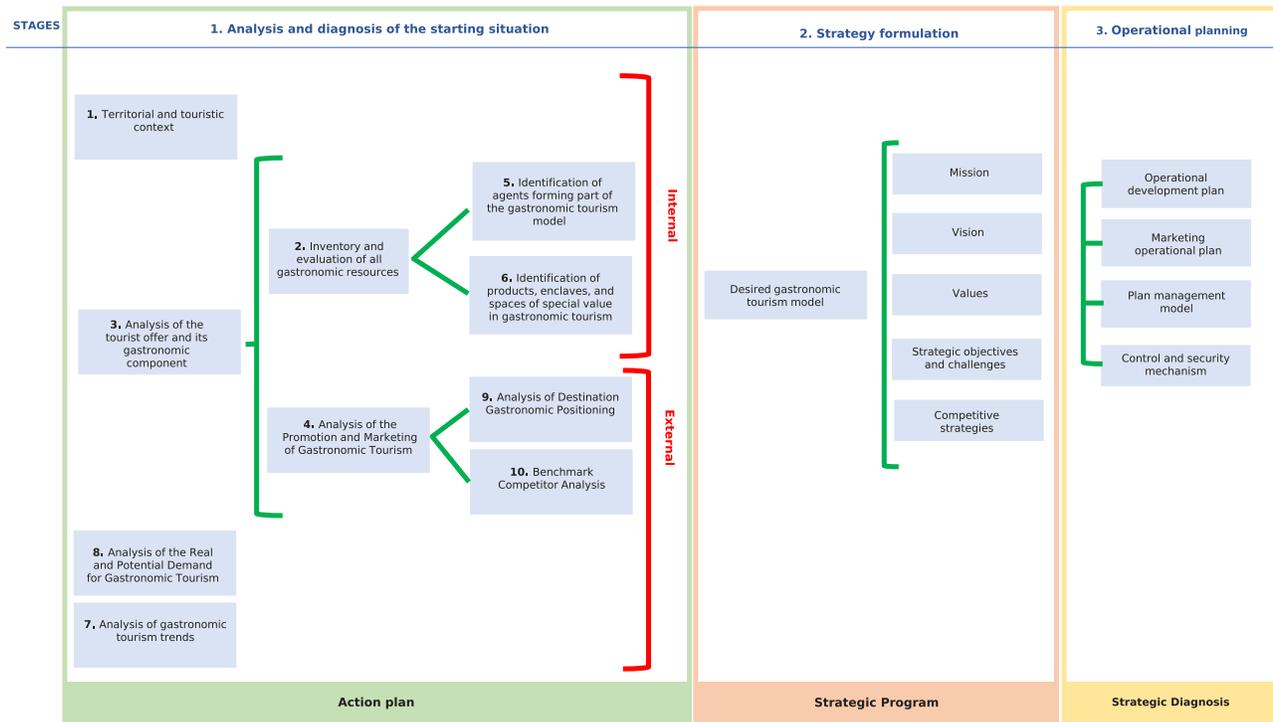
Santafereño (Santafereño Cookbook), (García Ángel, 2012), various preparations are divided as part of the event organized by Instituto Distrital de Patrimonio (District Institute of Heritage) in 2009.

### 2.2. Gastronomic Tourism in Bogotá

The creation of gastronomic zones in Bogotá since 2015 has increased the number of restaurants and promoted the internationalization of the gastronomic offer (Valcárcel García and Venegas Pardo, 2016). According to the Instituto Distrital de Turismo (District Institute of Tourism) [IDT], (n.d.b), gastronomy is fundamental for the city's tourist development, attracting tourists to gastronomic zones and the 12 ADN - Creative Districts defined by Decree 280 of 2020. Public policy to boost the sector includes the implementation and support of gastronomic promotion programs, the Santafereño Ajiaco Contest and Day, the promotion of market squares in coordination with Instituto para la Economía Social (Institute for Social Economy) [IPES], and the publication of gastronomic guides. In this sense, the city's gastronomy is also connected to the gastronomy of nearby municipalities such as Chia, with shared dishes like ajiaco, fruits in syrup, or amasijos (Barón and Cote, 2021).

Market squares play a crucial role in gastronomic tourism, serving as centers of social and cultural interaction. In this context, a study was conducted in four market squares in Bogotá, located in Los Mártires, La Candelaria, and Santa Fe, revealing that only 33% of the typical dishes from the Santafereño Recipe Book are offered, indicating lost opportunities in the sector (Rubio *et al.*, 2022). Additionally, festivals such as Alimentarte Food Festival and Bogotá Wine and Food Festival, along with events like Rock al Parque and the Estéreo Picnic Festival, consolidate gastronomy as a prominent tourist (Rodríguez Arias, 2020).

The IDT (n.d.a) reported that in 2019, La Candelaria had 178 recognized gastronomic establishments, of which 18% form a linear gastronomic route. Furthermore, regarding inclusivity in gastronomic 75.7% have accessible signage (IDT, 2022).

**Figure 1. Methodology for developing a Strategic Plan for Gastronomic Tourism**

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on the methodology of (UNTWO, 2019).

To maximize the potential of gastronomic tourism, a strategy is needed that connects and presents the described elements, generating local and international recognition. The UNTWO Strategic Plan for Gastronomic Tourism (2022) is an essential tool for planning, starting with a diagnosis and establishing strategic lines for destination development. Therefore, this research was proposed to gather information for the first stage of the plan's development.

### 3. Method

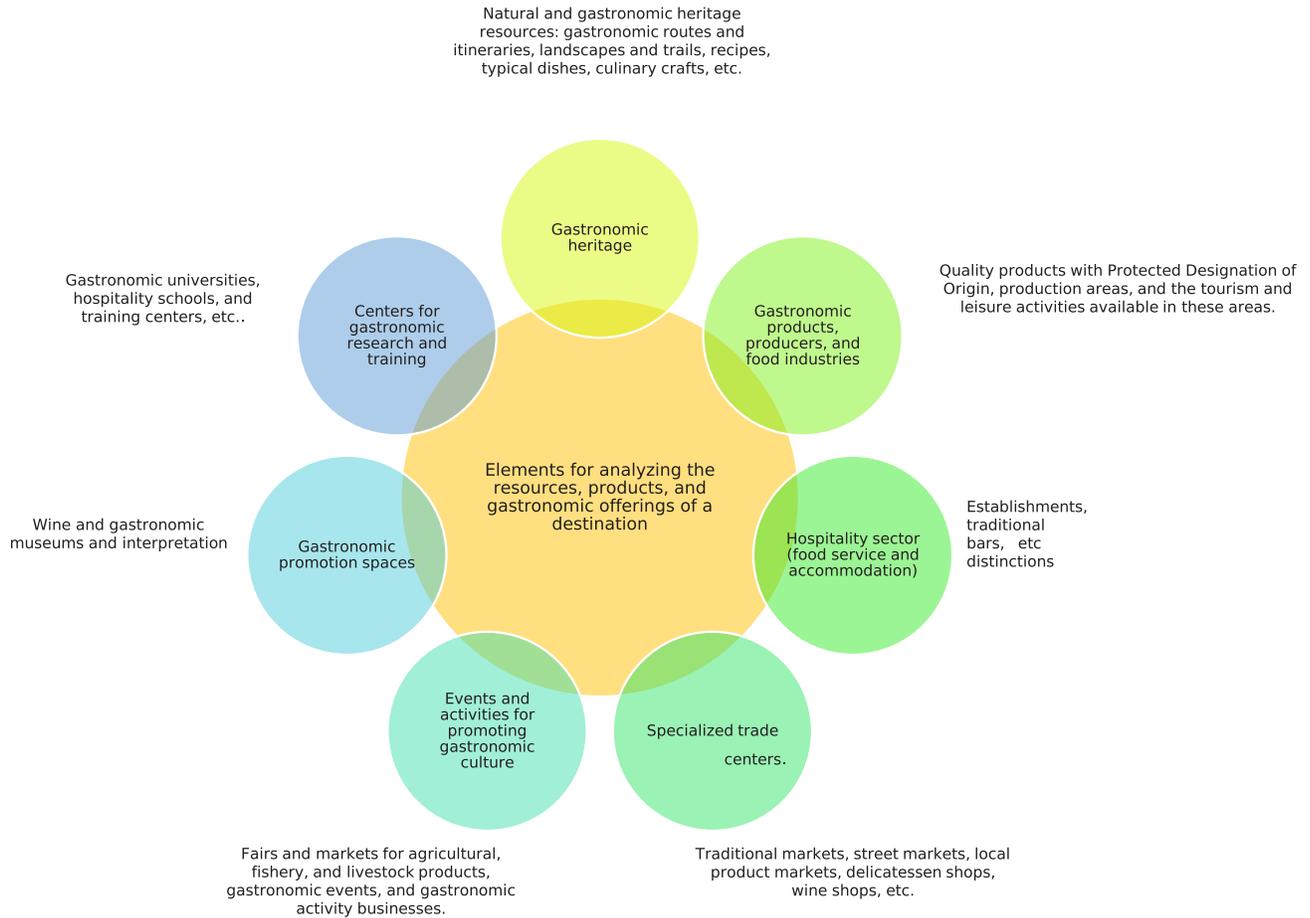
Descriptive research, according to Hernández *et al.* (2014), seeks to identify and consolidate inputs to develop gastronomic tourism in the 17th locality of Bogotá. This includes identifying, collecting, and systematizing information on gastronomic offerings, specialized commerce, gastronomic service companies, universities, educational institutions, market squares, fairs and events, and cultural dissemination spaces. Information was collected through social networks such as Instagram and Facebook,

and online platforms like Tripadvisor, Minube, and Degusta, analyzing 101 gastronomic establishments.

An adapted proposal of the methodology for developing a Strategic Plan for Gastronomic Tourism developed by the WTO and Basque Culinary Center (UNTWO, 2019) is implemented. Figure 1 outlines the activities for each internal and external viewpoint.

As the second part of the research, the first proposed stage, "Analysis and Diagnosis of the Starting Situation," was applied. This stage aims to understand the tourist context of the destination, the situation, and the potential of gastronomic tourism by identifying the conditions that affect the sector, analyzed from the inside out. This was conducted through the Internal Point of View Analysis, which includes the development of four stages, described below, and is complemented by interviews with experts.

The methodology of the Strategic Plan for Gastronomic Tourism developed by the WTO and Basque Culinary Center (UNTWO, 2019) was adapted, divided into two parts: internal

**Figure 2. Value Map of Gastronomy**

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on the methodology of (UNTWO, 2019).

and external analysis. In the internal analysis, the resources and actors of gastronomic tourism in La Candelaria were identified, including inventories of tourist attractions and traditional recipes, and mapping gastronomic products and spaces of value. The agents of the gastronomic tourism model were also identified using new information sources, and the value chain was analyzed. The elements of the value chain related to gastronomic tourism, such as producers, companies, and establishments, among others, were also analyzed, as described in Figure 2.

In the external analysis, promotional and marketing strategies for gastronomic tourism were evaluated using public policies and plans from Ministerio de Comercio, Industria y Turismo (Ministry of Commerce,

Industry, and Tourism) [MinCIT] and IDT. Strategies such as advertising campaigns and web pages were identified. The gastronomic positioning of the destination was analyzed using Google Trends with specific search criteria. Additionally, a comparative analysis of international gastronomic destinations and the actual and potential demand for gastronomic tourism was conducted using data from government entities and information systems such as Centro de Información Turística (Tourist Information Center) [CITUR].

Finally, trends in gastronomic tourism were examined, and interviews with five gastronomy experts from La Candelaria, including sector leaders and academics, were conducted to obtain a comprehensive view of the context and potential of this activity in the locality.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Territorial and Touristic Context of the Gastronomic Tourism Product

At the national level, gastronomic establishments in Colombia are classified into various categories, including traditional restaurants, self-service, fast food, street food, food trucks, piqueteaderos, fish markets, cevicherias, ice cream parlors, fruit shops, cafes, pastry shops, bakeries, and confectioneries. Additionally, bars are divided into live music bars, social bars, and gastrobars (Decree 343 of 2021). To position gastronomy as a tourist product, the strategy Colombia a la Mesa (Colombia at the Table) was implemented, which included programs such as Nuestras Cocinas y Colombia (Our Kitchens and Colombia), a Journey of Flavors (MinCIT, 2018). Furthermore, Ministerio de Cultura (Ministry of Culture) policy promotes the safeguarding and promotion of Colombian traditional food and kitchens.

The Tourism Sector Plan, titled “Tourism in Harmony with Life,” establishes the Sustainable Tourism Development Program in its strategic axis “Tourism: An Alternative for Economic Transition and Nature Protection.” This program includes the creation of the Mission 2023 Program, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), through working groups with experts and collaborative social participation strategies (MinCIT, 2022).

At the local level in Bogotá, the Plan de Desarrollo Distrital 2020-2024 (District Development Plan 2020-2024): “A New Social and Environmental Contract for 21st Century Bogotá” proposes the strategy “Region, the Best Destination to Visit,” which seeks to promote tourist and cultural attractions, including gastronomic ones (Concejo de Bogotá, 2020). Additionally, the Mayor’s Office and the District Institute of Tourism conduct analyses and promote initiatives such as the Institutional Strategic Plan 2020-2024 and Project 7705, which strengthen Bogotá’s tourism system to adapt to sector trends and opportunities. This normative and institutional context is designed to strengthen the gastronomic sector as a key driver of tourism at both national and local

levels, promoting sustainable development and cultural integration through strategic and collaborative initiatives.

### 4.2. Analysis of the Tourist Offer and its Gastronomic Component

The IDT has established actions such as participation, implementation, and support of programs that promote gastronomy and the actors in the value chain; improvement and promotion of market squares; development of the Santafereno Ajiaco Day contest; publication of gastronomic guides; and strategies that seek to strengthen this type of tourism, which reflects the culture and part of the city’s intangible heritage (IDT, n.d.b).

Additionally, the local government created the Bogotá Gastronomic Guide, which presents various gastronomic manifestations and zones, one of which is La Candelaria, highlighting establishments that offer national food from the Boyacá, Santander, and Bogotá regions, market squares such as La Perseverancia that offer foods like fruits, vegetables, tubers, among others, and various preparations. Finally, a directory of 20 gastronomic establishments, including traditional restaurants like La Puerta Falsa, Casa Santa Clara and cafes, is listed (IDT and FETB, 2015), expanding the offer.

**4.2.1. Inventory and Evaluation of All Gastronomic Resources.** In Bogotá, the Chorro de Quevedo Plaza and the Callejón del Embudo are part of the tangible immovable cultural heritage, where gastronomy is a fundamental part of the environment. Additionally, as intangible cultural heritage, almojabanas, changua, tamal con chocolate, fritanga, sobrebarriga con papas chorreadas, puchero, ajiaco, chocolate y tamal santafereno, arroz con leche, brevas con arequipe, canelazo, chicha, colaciones, cuajada con melao, dulces de frutas con almibar, obleas, and postre de natas are recognized (IDT, 2020a).

The following table 1 presents 40 gastronomic preparations of the city, identified in the inventories of tourist attractions related to gastronomy in Bogotá carried out by the IDT (2020b) and traditional Colombian cuisine recipes prepared by the Ministry of Culture as part of the Policy for the

**Table 1. Inventory of the city's gastronomic resources identified by government agencies**

| Gastronomic preparation                | * | ** | Gastronomic preparation           | * | ** |
|--|---|----|-----------------------------------|---|----|
| Acelgas o espinacas guisadas           |   | •  | Fritanga                          | • | •  |
| Ají de aguacate o guacamole            |   | •  | Marquesas                         | • |    |
| Ajiaco santafereño                     | • | •  | Mazamorra bogotana                |   | •  |
| Almojábanas                            | • |    | Merengón                          |   | •  |
| Arroz con Leche                        | • | •  | Merengues                         |   | •  |
| Bolas de cacao (chocolate santafereño) |   | •  | Murillo estofado                  |   | •  |
| Brevas con Arequipe                    | • |    | Naco o puré de papas              |   | •  |
| Buñuelos bogotanos                     |   | •  | Obleas                            | • |    |
| Caldo batido                           |   | •  | Piquete bogotano                  |   | •  |
| Canelazo                               |   |    | Postre de Natas                   | • | •  |
| Changua                                | • |    | Puchero Santafereno               | • | •  |
| Chicha                                 | • |    | Sobrebarriga con Papas Chorreadas | • |    |
| Chocolate Santafereno                  | • | •  | Sopa de coliflor                  |   | •  |
| Colaciones                             | • |    | Tamal con Chocolate               | • | •  |
| Crema de alcachofas                    |   | •  | Tamal Santafereno                 | • | •  |
| Crema de curuba                        |   | •  | Torta de manzana                  |   | •  |
| Cuajada con Melao                      | • |    | Torta de mojiçón                  |   | •  |
| Dulces de Frutas con Almibar           | • |    | Torta de mojiçón cubierta         |   | •  |
| Ensalada de repollo y piña             |   | •  | Ubre escabechada                  |   | •  |
| Envueltos o bollos de mazorca          |   | •  |                                   |   |    |

Which recognizes the \*Patrimonio Cultural Inmaterial de la Ciudad and the list of Cocina Tradicional Colombiana recipes which establishes the \*\*Inventario de Cocinas Tradicionales de Colombia”.

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on the inventory of tourist attractions (IDT, 2020b).

Knowledge, Safeguarding, and Promotion of Traditional Colombian Food and Kitchens (MinCultura, 2012).

Among the most recognized preparations by both government entities are ajiaco santafereño, tamal santafereño, arroz con leche, fritanga, puchero santafereño, and tamal santafereño with chocolate. In total, 13 desserts, 9 main dishes or their components such as meats and side dishes, 7 soups, 3 beverages, 3 alcoholic drinks, 3 leaf-wrapped products, and 2 baked goods are identified as part of the city's traditional gastronomy.

#### **4.2.2. Identification of Agents Forming Part of the Gastronomic Tourism Model.**

Between March 1 and May 15, 2023, the agents forming the gastronomic tourism model in La Candelaria, Bogotá, were

identified using digital platforms and social networks, listed as follows:

- **Gastronomic Products:** Six tours include visits to traditional restaurants, tastings of baked goods, main dishes, traditional beverages, and exotic fruits. An additional tour features international and contemporary dishes, with a user rating of 4.86/5.00. Additionally, three gastronomic experiences focused on local food, typical beverages, and a coffee route, with an average rating of 4.92. The Callejon del Embudo is also highlighted for the commercialization of chicha, a fermented corn beverage.
- **Hospitality Sector:** 101 establishments were registered on platforms like Tripadvisor, Degusta, Minube, Instagram, and

Facebook. Of these, 69% are restaurants, 19% cafes, 10% dessert places, and 2% snack bars. 87% of the establishments use a platform or social network for advertising, preferring Tripadvisor (45.8%), followed by Instagram (17.5%) and Degusta (15.8%). Only 25% of gastronomic establishments have a website. Regarding food, 16% of restaurants offer Colombian preparations, 10% coffee, and the rest offer Latin American, South American, international, European, and Central American dishes. Vegetarian, vegan, and gluten-free options are present in 8%, 4%, and 4% respectively, and 8% offer healthy menus.

- **Specialized Commerce:** The La Concordia Market Square and the Chorro de Quevedo Plaza are important references. The Chorro de Quevedo Plaza is known for its fermented corn beverages, cafes, bars, and restaurants. Other points of interest include the San Alejo Flea Market and delicatessen stores.
- **Events and Activities:** 18 annual events and contests are held, including cooking championships, typical dish contests like ajiaco and tamal, and gastronomic festivals.
- **Gastronomic Dissemination Spaces:** The Chicha Museum recreates the tradition of this beverage, being a significant element of gastronomic tourism.
- **Gastronomic Heritage:** 19 preparations have been declared as intangible cultural heritage of the city and 28 are included in the inventory of traditional Colombian kitchens. There are two universities with research and gastronomic training centers in the locality.

**4.2.3. Identification of Products, Enclaves, and Spaces of Special Value in Gastronomic Tourism.** There are 39 dishes recognized as intangible cultural heritage of the city (46%) and related to the inventory of traditional Colombian kitchens (72%). According to fieldwork, almost all these dishes (97%) are offered in market squares, while 76% can be found in restaurants, 41% are offered by street vendors, and 33% in cafes, bakeries, or pastry shops. These dishes remain present in the locality's gastronomy. This is confirmed by the study conducted by Rubio et al. (2022), which found that 66% of

the typical dishes described in the Recetario Santafereño are offered in Bogotá's market squares, presenting a loss or transformation of gastronomic culture.

Experts interviewed highlighted that there are gastronomic spaces of special value in La Candelaria, such as the La Concordia Market Square, an ideal place to experience local gastronomic culture, traditional restaurants that offer authentic Colombian cuisine, cafes, and pastry shops, and gastronomic tours that allow visitors to explore the culinary scene. They agree that La Candelaria has great potential for the development of gastronomic tourism due to its gastronomic offerings, privileged location, and tourist attractions.

### *4.3. Analysis of the Promotion and Marketing of Gastronomic Tourism*

The Colombian Tourism Sector Plan 2022-2026 highlights the need to implement digital marketing and experiential strategies to promote local gastronomy (MinCIT, 2022). These strategies include creating tourism brands and products, promoting on social networks with influencers and experts, organizing food festivals, gastronomic routes, and market square visits, as well as training gastronomic tourism actors and collaborating with the private sector.

Publications and international rankings, such as the list of the 50 best restaurants in Latin America, are key tools for marketing. In 2022, three Colombian restaurants were included in this list, and in 2023, two more, positioning Colombia as a prominent culinary destination in the region.

Government initiatives such as 'Colombia a la Mesa' and promotion on platforms like Colombia.co (n.d.), aim to position Colombian gastronomy internationally (MinCIT, 2018). In Bogotá, the District Development Plan 2020-2024 promotes gastronomy through portals like bogotadc.travel, integrating the creative and tourist economy (Concejo de Bogotá, D.C., 2020). The IDT also proposes culinary programs, contests and events, improvements in market squares, and the publication of gastronomic guides.

The District Market Square System, led by the IPES (2023), promotes these spaces

as tourist attractions, while the Bogotá Gastronomic Guide offers information about local and international establishments. The Bogotá Chamber of Commerce Food and Gastronomy Cluster strengthens the sector through training and promoting quality and innovation Cámara de Comercio de Bogotá, (CCB), n.d.).

La Candelaria, with its gastronomic offerings and rich history, is a prominent tourist destination. The IDT Sustainability Report (2022) highlights sustainable practices in establishments, promoting marketing strategies that highlight local culture and contribute to the locality's economic and social development.

An important element in the locality is the impulse and organization generated by the La Candelaria Tourism Cluster and the Federation of Gastronomy and Tourism ([FEGAT], which jointly develop activities to promote gastronomy, such as the Gastronomic Congress, which has been held in 10 editions and brings together gastronomic establishments, educational institutions, local consumers, and tourists to showcase the sector's gastronomic attractions (FEGAT, n.d.).

**4.3.1. Analysis of Destination Gastronomic Positioning.** Colombian cuisine is recognized for its regional diversity and stands out in Latin America for its culinary richness (Díaz Madurga, 2023). It has received multiple awards, such as the title of Best Culinary Destination in South America at the World Travel Awards 2020. Additionally, the city of Popayan was declared the first gastronomic city in Latin America by UNESCO in 2005, followed by Buenaventura in 2017. Bogotá is also included in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, standing out in the musical field (UNESCO, 2017).

In the TasteAtlas Awards (2022) ranking, Colombia ranks 71st with dishes like coffee, arepa, and bandeja paisa. However, according to National Geographic, Colombia ranks first for its variety of typical dishes and regional diversity. This disparity highlights a weakness in the promotion and planning of gastronomic tourism in the country, needing improved marketing strategies and organization to leverage its culinary richness.

Four Colombian restaurants are among the best in Latin America in 2022: Mesa Franca (ranked 49th), Celele (ranked 19th), Leo (ranked 13th), and El Chato (ranked 5th) (Latin America's 50 Best Restaurants, n.d.). Additionally, Colombian chefs like Juan Manuel Barrientos and Jorge Rausch have taken their talent abroad, while international chefs have established restaurants in Colombia, contributing to global recognition of its gastronomy (Díaz Madurga, 2023).

A Google Trends analysis reveals that most searches about gastronomy in Bogotá come from abroad, especially in English. Terms like "Restaurant + Bogota" and "Gastronomy + Bogota" show higher interest, with Canada, the United States, and European countries leading the searches. In Spanish, searches are more frequent in Colombia and Venezuela, as well as in countries like Mexico, Peru, and Argentina. This highlights the importance of a marketing strategy aimed at both national and international audiences to better position Bogotá's gastronomic offer.

Experts interviewed believe that the international or Colombian cuisine offerings have different approaches to handling products, located in a tourist area with divided opinions between good positioning and lack of recognition. They suggest that training, unity among merchants, government district support, and private companies' collaboration, as well as increased security, are needed. They also mention that the work developed in the locality has generated recognition of the area as a gastronomic zone of Bogotá.

**4.3.2. Benchmark Competitor Analysis.** Competitor analysis was based on search data provided by Google Trends using the terms "Gastronomy + Bogotá," "Restaurants + Bogotá," "Gastronomy + Bogota," and "Restaurants + Bogota," comparing ten gastronomic destinations mentioned by National Geographic (Díaz Madurga, 2023). Peruvian gastronomy stands out significantly in English searches, followed by searches in Spanish in countries like Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, Peru, and Spain.

Between 2017 and 2019, the popularity of Peruvian gastronomy increased but declined with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. As the health situation improved, interest

**Graph 1. Comparison of the search criterion “restaurant” in 4 American countries known for their gastronomy**



**Note:** Comparison of the search criteria “restaurant + Colombia,” “restaurant + Mexico,” “restaurant + Peru,” and “restaurant + Argentina,” countries in the Americas nominated for the World Travel Awards. Analysis of people’s interest from January 1, 2015, to July 7, 2013, for worldwide web searches.

Source: Google Trends.

**Graph 2. Comparison of the search criterion “restaurant” in 5 countries worldwide known for their gastronomy**



Note. Source: Google Trends. Comparison of the search criteria “restaurant + Colombia” with “restaurant + India,” “restaurant + Peru,” “restaurant + Australia,” and “restaurant + France,” countries annually nominated in the World Travel Awards over the last 8 years. Analysis of people’s interest in the period from January 1, 2015, to July 7, 2013, for worldwide web searches.

Source: Google Trends.

in Peruvian gastronomy rose again, with a notable increase on Tripadvisor for local restaurants. Graph 1 shows that Mexican gastronomy has a wide search interest, while Argentina and Peru have a similar average. Colombia has shown growing interest over time, especially since 2015 when it was recognized in the World Travel Awards, surpassing Peru in search interest since 2023. Most searches for “restaurant + Colombia” come from Venezuela, Ecuador, Spain, and Luxembourg.

According to Graph 2, there is significant interest in India’s gastronomic offerings, while the search criteria associated with France and Australia have a similar average. However, Colombia also begins to show interest over time alongside Peru.

The TasteAtlas Awards (2022) in the World’s Best Cuisines category rank Italy, Greece, and Spain as the top countries according to audience scores for their cuisine, with Colombia in 71st place. National Geographic highlights Colombia, followed by Argentina

for dishes like asado, soups, choripanes, and other meat products, as well as the quality and flavor of its wines; and in third place, Peru for dishes like ceviche and its role in chifa (Peruvian-Chinese cuisine) and nikkei (Peruvian-Japanese cuisine) gastronomy.

#### 4.4. Analysis of the Real and Potential Demand for Gastronomic Tourism

According to the consultancy firm KPMG (as cited in Domínguez, 2021), gastronomy significantly contributes to a country's economy, representing 33% of GDP and 20% of employment in 2019. The demand for gastronomic tourism is continuously growing; for example, in Spain, 86.5% of international tourists and 20.5% of national tourists traveled for gastronomic reasons (Redacción TH, 2023).

In Bogotá, the number of gastronomic establishments grew by 24.1% from 2015 to 2019. According to a report by the District Institute of Tourism in 2019, Bogotá received 12,462,731 tourists, with 84.7% being national tourists and 15.2% international tourists. Of these, 290,354 tourists were motivated by the capital's gastronomy, with 61% being foreigners. Among the foreign visitors, 55.6% were men and 44.0% were women, with the majority aged between 31 and 45 years (IDT, 2019).

Regarding the gastronomic tourism offer, 54.7% of travel agencies offer products and services related to Bogotá's gastronomy. Gastronomic tours are also offered in different market squares, such as Paloquemao, La Perseverancia, and 7 de Agosto, which are the most visited. Additionally, tourist activities are concentrated in the gastronomic zones of La Candelaria and Zona G. Finally, in Colombia, there is an increase in restaurant and home delivery expenses, with accumulated inflation of 18.7% (Portafolio, 2023), presenting a good prognosis for the sector.

Experts interviewed mentioned that demand is growing and diverse but requires special attention to customer service. This growth has been driven by tourist recommendations, especially after the pandemic, as gastronomic establishments have been renovated, generating a higher

number of visits from tourists seeking authentic experiences related to traditional preparations.

#### 4.5. Analysis of Gastronomic Tourism Trends

According to the World Food Travel Association (n.d.), there are various types of gastronomic tourists: 46% are authentic, 44% seek a variety of experiences, 35% prefer local foods, 30% are social and relate food to the social environment, 23% are innovative, 22% seek economic prices, and 19% are adventurous. These profiles highlight the importance of typical, traditional, and innovative food. In this context, new forms of socialization around food translate into the search for restaurants offering diverse experiences.

Traditional cuisine is experiencing a renaissance, revaluing classic dishes with modern twists and merging flavors from different cultures. Trends such as unfocused time slots, reservations to avoid crowds, outdoor restaurants, and hidden kitchens that reduce costs and expedite home deliveries are also observed. The inclusion of technology is notable, with the use of robots, payment applications, QR codes for menus, and the implementation of augmented reality and artificial intelligence (Raddar, 2022).

Additionally, sustainable eating is a growing concern, evidenced by awareness of food waste, environmental concerns, and health. This drives a greater demand for sustainably produced foods such as local, organic, and artisanal products, as well as eco-friendly packaging and community connection (Latin America's 50 Best Restaurants, n.d.). There is also a growing demand for healthy, plant-based foods and flavor innovation (Winterhalter, n.d.). These trends reflect the search for authentic flavors mentioned by the UNTWO (2022), established as one of the pillars in their gastronomic tourism model.

Experts also highlight the creation of experiences based on typical gastronomy, consumption of local products, diversity of cuisines, recognition of traditional bearers, and activities developed in market squares.

These trends indicate a growing demand for authentic and enriching experiences in gastronomic tourism. Destinations that offer these experiences and adapt to these trends can stand out and attract tourists interested in gastronomy and local culture. In Colombia, restaurants have invested in technology, developing web platforms for home delivery service and adopting digital menus, meeting consumer needs (Portafolio, 2023).

## 5. Conclusions

A model for the development of a Strategic Plan for Gastronomic Tourism is proposed, based on the methodology proposed by the WTO and Basque Culinary Center, which in its initial phase allows analyzing and diagnosing the starting situation of a place, establishing a tool to facilitate, guide, and support governmental entities and other institutions participating in the development of gastronomic tourism.

From the analysis and diagnosis of the starting situation, a wide variety of establishments and activities focused on gastronomy are identified. Additionally, studies and reports on the gastronomic sector require governmental updates to establish a city-focused plan for gastronomic tourism. However, only a quarter of gastronomic establishments offer Colombian dishes and coffee, while other establishments focus on Latin and international preparations. Therefore, joint actions are needed to strengthen the typical gastronomic offer of the city.

Recognized as intangible cultural heritage of the city, dishes are offered in gastronomic establishments, and activities are developed by the La Candelaria Tourism Cluster. However, experts mention the need for training, greater unity among merchants, district government support, private companies, and increased security in the sector.

Government organizations implement participation, execution, and support actions for activities, programs, and promotion of the gastronomic sector, including all value chain actors. However, a comprehensive and inclusive review of gastronomic

establishments is needed, including new sector trends globally and locally.

La Candelaria has great potential to become an international gastronomic tourist destination. However, joint efforts from the public and private sectors are required to strengthen the gastronomic offer, improve security, promote the area, and develop effective marketing strategies.

## 6. Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## 7. Source of Financing

This research is sponsored by Research Office of Fundación Universitaria Los Libertadores.

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#### How to cite this paper?

Cote Daza, S. P., Guzmán Jiménez, M. J Quintero Hernández, L. F., Beltrán Virgüez, J. E., & Barón Chivara, J. A. (2024). Analysis of the Gastronomic Tourism Potential in the La Candelaria locality, Bogotá. *Cuadernos de Administración*, 40(79), e2413411. <https://doi.org/10.25100/cdea.v40i79.13411>

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