



*Tejas de limón, traditional dessert
of the Ica region in Peru*

Photography: Edward Alba / Le Cordon Bleu University

Notes

The Peruvian desserts

Before the arrival of the Spaniards in America, sugar was unknown in the continent; however, chroniclers point out that the ancient Peruvians consumed sweet products extracted from fruit and some vegetables. To that end, they used the *cahuichado* or *asoleado*¹ system, which consisted

of leaving the fruit and vegetables under the sun in order to increase their sugar levels. With this system, ancient Peruvians made the sun-dried *ocas* and *camotes* (sweet potato) distill honey when they were roasted. The chronicler Fernández de Oviedo (1526) describes it as follows:

“...which are very good cooked, and roasted have a better flavor or, in the other way, they taste as very good chestnuts ... they are very good at night if roasted and accompanied with wine; and also they are good cooked in a pot... somewhat windy though.

But the sweet potato is even more delicate and mellow...”

In ancient Peru, fruits were dried in the sun and then prepared in sweet *mazamoras* called *apis*, some of which are still consumed. For example, the *mazamorra morada* (purple porridge or pudding) is one of the best well-known because it is prepared with purple corn, a product native to Peru, and accompanied by pineapples,

prunes, *guindas* (dried sour red cherries) or *capulí* (dried black cherries) and thickened with sweet potato flour. Nowadays, the *mazamorra morada* is also prepared with some spices, such as anise, cloves, and cinnamon. Moreover, it is sweetened with sugar, becoming one of the most consumed traditional desserts in Peru.

¹Asoleado means warmed or dried in the sunshine; exposed to the sun's rays.

According to Antúnez de Mayolo (1981), honey or tocto was highly valued in Peru. This honey was produced by bees that did not have a sting. In addition, he explained that a delicious chancaca (panela) was made by boiling the crust of the maguey. Furthermore, sweet and pink syrup from the fruit of the molle was extracted, which, after fermenting, became chicha. Something similar happened with the algarrobo (carob tree), specie that abounds in the north of Peru, from which a thick honey, today known as algarrobina, was produced.

The arrival of the Spaniards in America brought sugar along with the forms of preparation of exquisite desserts from Europe, which were in great demand by the new aristocracy settled in Peru. According to the chronicler Xavier Domingo, the vast majority of the convents that proliferated throughout Ibero-America in the 17th and 18th centuries built enormous fortunes out of various businesses and investments, including, from the very beginning, pastry-making, confectionery, and canning.

The nuns from the convents prepared and sold whole dishes and meals making use of old Spanish recipes, and offered great feasts to those who hired them, practice that continued until the 19th century.

The renowned Peruvian chef Gloria Hinojosa states that convents were the place where the wealthy families of the colony sent their daughters to be educated and protected from the world's problems, without losing their comforts. Each one had spacious cells with a kitchen, bedroom, and bathroom. There were numerous indigenous maids and black slaves. Therefore, it was in the convents where a true blending in the culinary industry was carried out, which merged the cuisines of two worlds while exchanging recipes and new products between both continents. The nuns, daughters of wealthy families, were accompanied by their black slaves and indigenous servants, who became the true makers and protagonists of this exchange.

As shown, convents became important factories of colonial

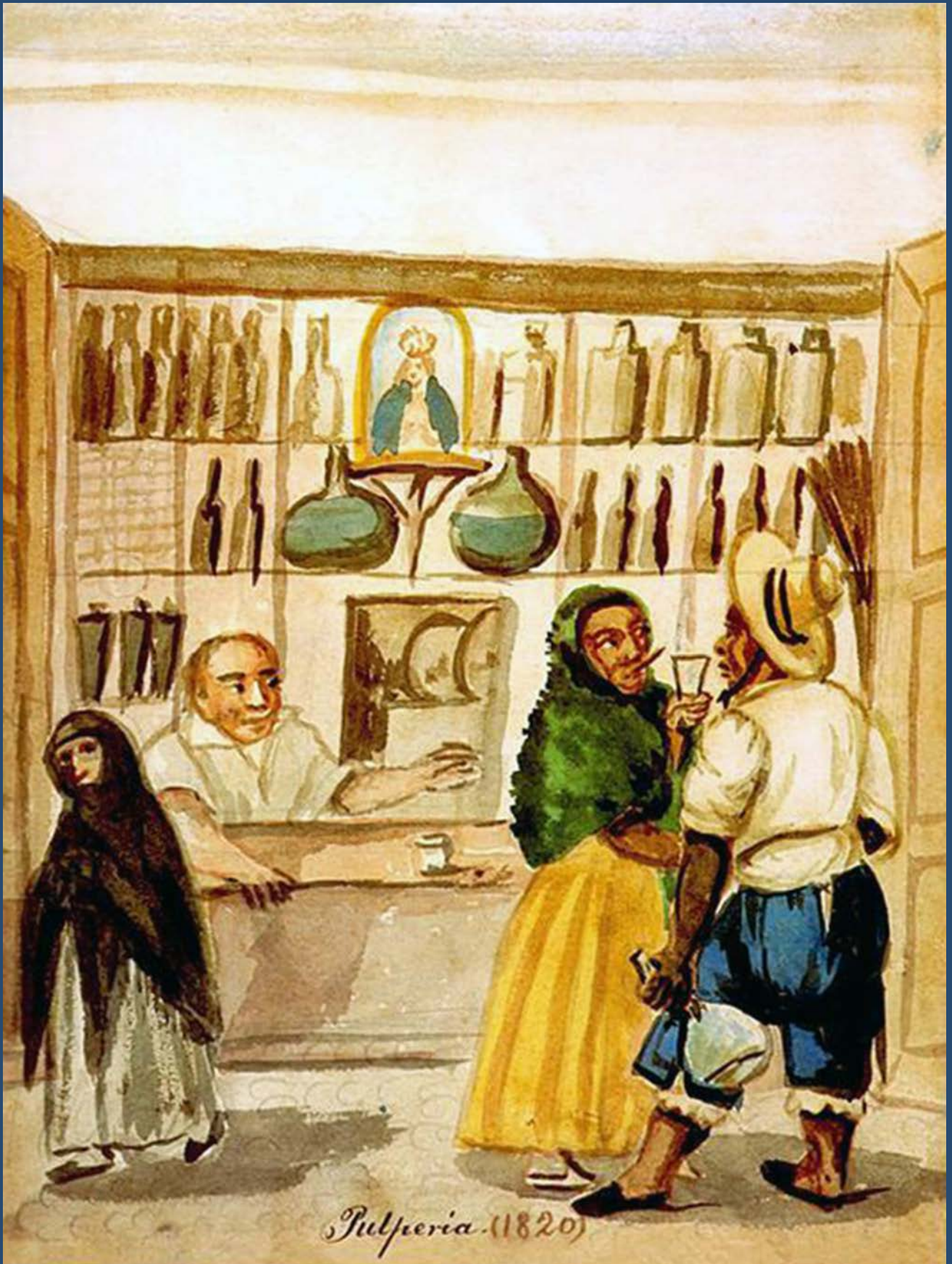
confectionery. There, women were educated in the activities specific to women of the time, where pastry-making, cooking, and all kinds of hand crafts were practiced.

The finest and most laborious desserts were made in these convents, such as alfajores de viento, arroz con leche almendrado (rice with almond milk), bienmesabe, champú limeño, encanelado, guargüeros, volador, huevo chimbo, suspiro de limeña (sigh of a lady from Lima), mazamorra morada, and the delicious tejas de limón, to name only a few of these exquisite desserts.

In this edition, two recipes of the traditional Peruvian pastry will be provided: the mazamorra morada, a unique dessert native to Lima; and the tejas de limón, which, over the years, have become one of the traditional desserts of the Ica region, on the coast of Peru. The tejas de limón are currently prepared in various versions: lemon, orange, and pecan tejas.

Enjoy your desserts!

“As shown, convents became important factories of colonial confectionery”



Pulperia. (1820)

Source: *Pulperia*, watercolor of Pancho Fierro (Lima, 1820).

Mazamorra morada

Ingredients (4 servings):

1/2	kilo	purple corn
2	rajas	cinnamon sticks
10	units	Cloves
1	unit	Pineapple
1	unit	Quince
1/4	kilo	prune
1/4	kilo	huesillo (dried peaches)
100	grams	Guindas
1/4	kilo	camote flour
1/2	kilo	Sugar
1	unit	Lemon
1	tablespoon	ground cinnamon

Preparation:

Boil the purple corn in 3 liters of water with the broken corncobs, the cinnamon stick, the cloves, quince, and the peel of the pineapple until the corn kernels pop.

Strain and put pan back to the fire. Add the dried fruits, washed and soaked two hours before, to the liquid.

When the fruits are soft, add the pineapple chopped into medium dices. Then add the sugar right away.

Dissolve the flour in some cold water, adding it little by little, while stirring with a wooden spoon.

Remove from heat and stir in the lemon juice. Pour into a serving bowl and sprinkle with ground cinnamon.





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Tejas de limón

Ingredients (4 servings):

Glaze:

20	units	big lemons
2	kilos	white sugar

Filling:

5	jars/liters	evaporated milk/ fresh pure milk
1/2	lkilo	white sugar

Coating:

1	kilo	white sugar
1	tablespoon	glucose
1	unit	lemon

Preparation:

Glaze: Extract the juice from the lemons and boil them in plenty of water with a pinch of salt.

Drain them, and remove the skin with the help of a teaspoon.

Boil them again with plenty of salted water and repeat this procedure six times in total.

Add the sugar, a liter of water, and the lemons to the pot. It must boil for an hour and a half until the lemons get soaked. Strain and drain the lemons on a rack. When they have dried, the honey is boiled again and the lemons are glazed on the rack, leaving them to dry.

Filling: Pour the milk into a thick aluminum or copper pot, being the latter one ideal. Add the sugar, and stir constantly with a wooden spoon. Simmer until thick.

Coating: Mix the sugar with half a liter of water and the glucose, until it gets a thread-point consistency. Afterwards, pour it into a bowl sprinkled with lemon juice, and whisk vigorously with a wooden spoon until it turns white. Coat the filled lemons with this fondant of manjar blanco (blancmange or caramelized milk).

Wrap with onion paper and fringe.

Bibliographic references:

Antúnez de Mayolo R., Santiago Erik. 1981. La nutrición en el antiguo Perú. Banco Central de Reserva del Perú, Oficina Numismática. Lima, Perú.

Fernández de Oviedo, Gonzalo. (1526).2011. Sumario de la Historia Natural de las Indias. Red-ediciones. Barcelona, España.





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