THE CULINARY SANCTUARY OF THE POTATO PARK

PISAC CUSCO PERU
THE CULINARY SANCTUARY

OF THE POTATO PARK

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The culinary sanctuary of the potato park

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And La Pachamama, our Mother Earth
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The Quechua peoples of the Andean region have a rich culinary tradition, based on a long history of domestication of a wide range of crops and animals, and a deep understanding of the local species, ecosystems, landscape and climate conditions. In the Potato Park, the agricultural and ecological diversity, and associated traditional knowledge and practices are celebrated through food. The Culinary Sanctuary of the Potato Park is a way to share this rich heritage with the world, supporting conservation of the agrobiodiversity and culture, and contributing to sustainable local livelihoods and food security.

We invite visitors to come to the Culinary Sanctuary for an experience that recognizes the connection of food to people and the land, and the importance of food for health and nutrition, family, community and culture. A visit to the Culinary Sanctuary can include a range of experiences, including:

- Hiking through potato fields beside picturesque high mountain lakes
- Discussion with local farmers about the history and changing conditions for food production
- Trying your hand at traditional agricultural tools and practices
- Learning about community-based research in agriculture
- Savouring the flavours, aromas and textures of Andean cuisine
- Preparing foods based on Andean cultivated and wild species
- Exploration of issues of social and environmental justice, and the impacts of your actions on the food security of smallholder farmers.
In the highlands of Pisac, Cusco, Perú, surrounded by imposing Apus, the five Quechua communities of Amaru, Chawaytire, Pampallaqta, Paru Paru and Sacaca, have come together to form the Potato Park. The Potato Park is a Biocultural Heritage Territory that hosts the Culinary Sanctuary.

The Potato Park evolved out of the experience of a community led and rights based approach to conservation and development using the knowledge, traditions, and philosophies of indigenous peoples as they relate to the holistic and adaptive management of traditional agricultural landscapes. It was established in 2002 and is locally administered by the Association of the Communities of the Potato Park, with a Board made up of elected members from each of the Park communities.

Located near the town of Pisac, in the Sacred Valley of Cusco, the altitude in the Potato Park ranges from 3,400 to 4,600 metres above sea level. The 6000 inhabitants collectively manage the 9,200 hectares of communal lands and actively participate in the preservation of a range of wild and domesticated species, including 1400 varieties of native potatoes. They also maintain their ancestral knowledge and practices, and protect the Andean landscape, while adapting to changing conditions including climate change.
The Culinary Sanctuary

The Culinary Sanctuary of the Potato Park preserves and celebrates the richness of the culture and cosmovision that has been transmitted generation after generation since before Inca times. Andean cuisine reflects that richness and a holistic way of life with complex relationships of reciprocity creating harmony between nature and the indigenous communities.

We invite you to enter this world of aromas and flavours, of clay pots and fire, fields and rituals.
The Culinary Sanctuary promotes a development model that preserves the cultural identity, heritage and resources of local communities for sustainable livelihoods and food security. There are a number of specialized groups organized for this purpose, working together in the Culinary Sanctuary.

**PAPA ARARÍWA**

The *Papa Arariwa*, or Guardians of the Potato, are the keepers of the native potato diversity and the associated traditional knowledge for cultivation, storage and seed selection of this important crop. The Andes is the centre of origin of the potato and a centre of diversity. The *Papa Arariwa* have documented hundreds of varieties of locally grown native potatoes, and repatriated hundreds more varieties from the International Potato Centre. The traditional knowledge holders who make up this group manage the Potato Park as an in situ gene bank, preserving this important diversity for future generations.

The culinary sanctuary celebrates this diversity in all its forms, including the colourful flowers decorating the landscape, the tubers for food, and special varieties for ceremonial and ritual uses.
**KANTU BOTANICAL GARDENS**

The Kantu Botanical Gardens provide the Culinary Sanctuary with a range of plants for nutrition, health, crafts and decoration. The families participating in this program raise native plants that are used by the Gastronomy, Medicinal Plants and Handicrafts Collectives, protecting the environment by reducing the need for wild harvesting of commonly used plants.

**SÍPAS WARMÍ MEDICÍNAL PLANTS AND NATURAL PRODUCTS**

*Sípas Warmi* is a group of women with specialized knowledge of native plants for food and healing. They have developed skills in the transformation of plants into ointments, tinctures, syrups and teas to treat a range of health issues including saroche (altitude sickness), digestive problems, joint pain and skin conditions. They also apply their knowledge of the properties of native plants to the production of personal hygiene products including soaps and shampoos.
**BIOCULTURAL GUIDES**

A group of young men and women from the Potato Park have been trained to interpret the biocultural diversity of the area. The guides have a broad understanding of the local ecosystems, species, agricultural practices, history and traditions, which they share with national and international visitors who take driving and hiking tours of the Park.

**ÑAUPA AWAY HANDICRAFTS**

A group of competent artisan weavers in the Potato Park bring new life to ancient designs. They use natural dyes and traditional weaving techniques, integrating old and new designs. These weavings join the culinary sanctuary in its celebration of Andean agriculture, highlighting potato flowers and tubers, domesticated plants and animals, along with sacred elements of the local landscape.
The members of Qachun Waqachi play a central role in the Culinary Sanctuary. This collective prepares food for visitors, either in the field or in the restaurant. The group is made up of members of each of the five communities of the Potato Park, who are culinary experts, preserving and revaluing traditional food preparation practices and traditions, while at the same time creating new dishes based on local cultivated and wild foods.

By sharing the Andean culinary traditions, the members of this group promote the local biological and cultural heritage, strengthen local food security, and support the livelihoods of their families and communities.

The Gastronomy Collective takes its name from this irregularly shaped potato. This variety was used to test the patience and ability of a prospective daughter-in-law, who was expected to peel the potato to the satisfaction of the future mother-in-law to prove their worthiness to marry the son. It is a symbol of the traditions maintained and promoted in the Culinary Sanctuary.
The Culinary Sanctuary boasts a restaurant called Papamanca, located in the community of Chawaytire. It offers a variety of traditional and innovative dishes based on the incredible diversity of native wild and cultivated species in the Potato Park. The restaurant celebrates Andean gastronomy, combining diverse local products according to the season, with a special emphasis on plants with nutraceutical properties. Among these are colourful local potato varieties, other Andean tubers, quinoa, and wild greens. These are accompanied by animal products, including alpaca, fowl, and cuy (guinea pig), to provide nutritious and tasty meals.
The Andean concept of Sumaq Kausay is the guiding principle of the Culinary Sanctuary. Sumaq Kausay means harmonious existence or a good life, based on respectful coexistence within a broad understanding of community called Ayllu.

In Andean cosmovision, there are three intimately connected Ayllu that make up the whole, encompassing all that exists in a fluid and vital relationship. Runa Ayllu is the realm of humans, including people, their fields, homes, domesticated species and communities. Sallk’a Ayllu represents the realm of the wild, comprised of non-domesticated animals, plants, rivers and rain. Auki Ayllu refers to the sacred, including the Apus (mountain deities), sacred sites, spirits of the ancestors, and Pachamama, as well as the rituals and feasts in their honour. Respectful and reciprocal relations between the three ayllu maintain balance, with the aim of achieving Sumaq Kausay.
Sumaq Kausay is reflected in the elements of the Culinary Sanctuary and the relations between them.

Runa Ayllu is represented by:

- Livelihood activities in the Culinary Sanctuary, including gastronomy, crafts and natural products development.
- Domesticated animals and plants that are cultivated for food.
- Water directed through channels for irrigation.
- Interactions with local, national and international visitors.

Sallk’a Ayllu refers to:

- Wild species which are indicators for agriculture, and may be collected for food and medicine.
- Rain and rivers that nourish the soils and provide the water for animals and plants.
- The landscape that supports all life and in which the culture, agriculture and food systems have developed.
Auki Ayllu includes:

- **Apus**, sacred mountains that protect and provide for communities, and participate in their governance.
- Celebrations of thanksgiving for the abundance provided by Pachamama, and the spirits of the plants and animals.
- Ethical considerations of justice, respect, complementarity.

When there is balance among the Ayllu, people live in harmony with each other, and with Pachamama, respecting the traditions of the ancestors and maintaining all that is good for future generations. This is *sumaq kausay*. 
Learning in the Culinary Sanctuary

The Culinary Sanctuary promotes intergenerational transmission of knowledge, where elders with extensive knowledge of plants for food, medicine, and crafts, as well as an understanding of the local biocultural system can share with youth interesting in learning from them. Participants in the specialized groups in the Culinary Sanctuary have an increased appreciation for their traditional knowledge and values, and strengthened capacity to support their families and communities in achieving food security. Capacity development for the members of the Potato Park communities has involved workshops and seminars with chefs, food safety experts, nutritionists, servers, farmers and producers of natural products.

Horizontal learning and participatory research takes place under a Farmer Field School model, where farmers define priorities, carry out research and analysis, and make decisions about how to use the results of the research. Horizontal learning also takes place in collaborative research with non-government organizations such as ANDES; scientists from research centres, including the International Potato Centre; students and researchers from national and international universities; and policy makers from the municipality, region, national government bodies and international policy process. Such research has supported innovations in agricultural practices, an increase in agrobiodiversity, adaptation to climate change, and development of biocultural products.
Community members from the Potato Park’s Culinary Sanctuary want to share their wealth of knowledge and the benefits of their biological and cultural resources with the world to create a better future. The organization of South-South exchanges in the Park and participation in events in other parts of the world help to disseminate the lessons learned.

Communications technology and social media are other ways they are reaching out to the world. They invite people to visit and learn with them, and love to be able to respond to invitations to share in other places. The previous support of partners such as The Christensen Fund in the US, and the International Institute of Environment and Development in the UK for such events is greatly appreciated.

The Culinary Sanctuary supports learning to better understand the world in order to transform it, based on a vision of social and environmental justice.
QUINOA SOUP

INGREDIENTS:

¾ cup of Quinoa, rinsed
1 tbsp. oil
1 onion, diced
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
3 medium sized potatoes, in small cubes
1 carrot, thin matchsticks
½ cup squash, in small cubes
8 cups water
salt, pepper and cumin to taste
½ cup spinach, chopped
2 tbsp of Huacatay, finely chopped.

PREPARATION:

Add oil, chopped onion to large pot, and cook on high for 2 minutes. Add garlic, and cook until golden. Add potatoes, squash, carrots and quinoa, and sauté for 3 minutes. Add water, salt, pepper, and cumin. Cook soup on medium heat until quinoa turns clear with white outer ring, and potatoes are cooked (approximately 15 minutes). Add spinach and Huacatay and cook for 3 minutes. Serve and enjoy!
Quinoa, a species of Chenopodium, is a pre-Hispanic grain domesticated approximately 4000 years ago. For the Incas, Quinoa was sacred and referred to as Chisaya Mama (mother of all grains). It generally grows between 2500 and 4000 metres (8200 and 13100 feet) above sea level. It is an excellent source of protein, iron, phosphorus, magnesium, calcium and fibre, and it is gluten and cholesterol free.

Quinoa soup is a hearty and delicious dish, and is easy to digest. The inclusion of potatoes adds substantial amounts of vitamin C, potassium, and vitamin B6, among other nutrients. Huacatay (Tagetes minuta, or Peruvian black mint) adds a distinctive Peruvian flavour to this recipe, and may help to help treat colds, respiratory inflammations and stomach problems.

This soup recipe is flexible and can be prepared as a vegetarian dish, or add chicken or beef for a non-vegetarian version. Try adding other seasonal vegetables and herbs, or cubes of feta cheese, to create soups with different flavours, colours and textures.
The Potato Park offers an alternative to modern models of conservation and development, based on an Andean perspective that respects the relationship between food health, culture and the earth. The Quechua peoples understand that all elements of the earth are alive and have spirits, and that all are interconnected. Within relations of respect and reciprocity, we can achieve *Sumaq Kausay*, a harmonious existence.

The communities of the Potato Park open their doors to visitors to become acquainted with our Culinary Sanctuary. We invite visitors to share fresh healthy food based on our traditional knowledge and biocultural heritage, and prepared with our creativity and love of the land, food and people. We invite you to live enriching and transformative experiences en the embrace of our *Pachamama*. 
Glossary of Quechua terms

Apus – Spirits of the sacred mountains that guard the communities in their folds.

Auki Ayllu – The realm of the sacred; ethics.

Ayllu – A broad and holistic understanding of community.

Ayni – Reciprocity.

Cuy – Guinea pig.

Ñaupa Away – Traditional weavings.

Pachamama – Mother Earth.

Qachun Waqachi – Potato variety used to test prospective daughters-in-law.

Runa Ayllu – The realm of humans.

Sallk’a Ayllu – The realm of the wild; conservation.

Soroche – Altitude sickness.

Sipas Warmi – Young women.

Sumaq kausay – Harmonious existence, balanced life; Buen vivir in Spanish.

VARAYOC – Traditional authority of the ayllu, who carries a cane as a symbol of authority.
THE CULINARY SANCTUARY

The Potato Park