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The gastronomical treasures of the municipality of Lal-lo, Cagayan

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Abstract

Lal-lo, formerly Nueva Segovia is one of the first four cities of the Philippines during the Spanish regime, served as the melting pot of rich and unique cultural as well as gastronomical heritage in the north-eastern part of the province of Cagayan. The awareness of Lal-loqueños' gastronomical heritage would help preserve and create a link or bridge the gap between their past generations to the present because they are gradually vanishing due to the modernized way of living or due to acculturation. This study utilized the qualitative-ethnographic research design. Thus, interviews and observations were carried out to determine the participants' food choices, herbs and spices used in preparing and cooking their food, preparing, cooking and serving practices, the socio-cultural beliefs and significances accorded to their foods, and their traits and values that can be associated from food significances and beliefs. Excessive use of oil is the distinct feature of Lal-loqueños cookery. The findings show that their snacks were native delicacies and made of cassava and glutinous rice. On extraordinary occasions most of foods served include various meat dishes, while vegetable and fish dishes are seldom served. In the same way, best table appointments are used in serving their food, while on ordinary days any table appointment may be used. Moreover, Lal-loqueños lives are integrated with food; believing that good foods are those which give nourishment and wellness to the body and bad food are those on the contrary. Hence, they are very much careful from planning, preparation and serving of food. Lastly an undying attribute of Lal-loqueños' value orientation is deeply rooted in the exchange of food items or abundant produce to his/her neighbors.

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Introduction

Food is an indispensable part of man's culture and tradition. Through food one's own culture is diversely reflected through his choices and on ways he prepares, cooks, plates, serves and eats them. Moreover, food is regarded as the "palate of a place", because in many cases food is dependent on the topographical and geographical context of a certain place. The place's topographical and geographical characteristics restrict the local food produced or harvest, thus many countries and regions differ in their traditional dishes and in some, maybe the same. But the extraordinary flare of said dishes are on the herbs and spices added or the preparation and cooking methods used which makes the dish an authentic regional palate treasure.

The Philippines is an archipelagic country which is comprised of thousands of islands and islets making as world's 5th largest island country. With its rich historical heritage alongside its magnificent geographical features, the populace is composed of various ethnic (majority or minority) groups dispersedly located among the 17 regions throughout the country. One of the well-known ethnic tribe located in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) are the builders of one of the National Cultural Treasures, the renowned Banaue Rice Terraces in Banaue, Ifugao are Igorots. Prominent for their distinctive bravery, creativity, industry and of course their delectable traditional foods, the Igorot tribe are recognized to cook food with noteworthy rituals in different walks of life and occasions.

They use native hot pepper to spice most of their food and preserved their meat produced through curing, smoking, air-drying, salting and fermenting like the *etag*. *Etag* is a flavorful cured slab of wild deer or pig or native pig meat, and smoked with *alnos* wood. It is grilled or added as protein source to vegetable dishes of the tribe and boiled into a broth with *pinikpikan* (chicken that was beaten slowly to death). But to some, it may look and smell nastily since it has milky-white molds which gives off the foul odor and aids in the meat fermentation to make the *etag* distinctly flavorsome.

Historically, the town of Lal-lo is known as Ciudad de Nueva Segovia, one of the four cities established by the Spaniards in the Philippines during their regime. Lal-lo is located in the north-eastern part of Cagayan Province. It is bounded by towns of Sta. Teresita, Gattaran, Camalaniugan and Lasam, respectively. Lal-lo is chiefly inhabited by Ybanags and Ilocanos who are mainly agricultures and fishermen. Among their crop produce are *bagga* or *bagas nga munaw* (rice), *deco* or *diket* (glutinous rice), *mangi* or *mais* (corn) *camasi* or *kamatis* (tomato), *barangjenas* or *tarong* (eggplant), *antak/agaya* or *uttong/bukel ti uttong* (string beans), *balatung* or *balatong* (mung bean), *sili* or *sili* (sweet pepper), *karabasa* (squash), *mani* (peanut), *singkamas* (turnips), *sandiya* or *sandya* (watermelon), *pinya* (pineapple), *kahuy* or *kahoy* (cassava), *gavi* or *aba* (taro), *uvi* or *ubi* (yam), and *camosi* or *kamotit* (sweet potato). They also raise farm animals such as *bavi* or *babuy* (pig), *manu* or *manuk* (chicken), *nuwang* (carabao), *kazzing* or *kalding* (goat) and *baka* (cow) which are slaughtered on special occasions and during friends visit. On the other hand, the households who are dwelling along the bank of the mighty Rio Grande de Cagayan or also known as Cagayan River, the longest river system in the Philippines are fisher folks. This river is teeming with seasonal aquatic food resources, thus, they harvest shellfishes like the agro-industrial product of the town *the cabibi*, *assisi* or *binnek*, *ginocan* or *unnok*, *ala*, *bukasit* (Espada, 2019) and catch fishes like *ifun* or *ipon*, *lurong* or *ludong*, *kurilaw*, *kakak*, *karpa*, *kattang*, *igat*, *tilapia*, *birut* or *bunog*, *mori*, *garapo* or *udang*, *furung* or *purong*, *manitton*, *kappi*, *lalakasen*, *lasi* or *lasik* and more. Aside from the *dappa* or *river*, they also gather or catch food sources on *ueg* or *waig* and *koman* or *taltalon/kumkuman* such as *liddeg*, *visocol* or *bisukol*, *kappi*, *tuka* or *tukak*, *abaleng*, *agurung* or *agorong*, *taruru* or *uong* (wild mushroom) *ansit* or *kalunay/kwantong*, *kulivavak*, *alibabag* or *alukon*, *katuday*, *afutu na dufo* or *sabunganay*, *rabung* or *rabong*, and more.

The environmental lushness of Lal-lo is also at par with its cultural wealthiness that can be traced on its colorful historic past.

It takes pride of its wide selections of indigenous or traditional foods together with different cultural food practices attached to it. But then again the biggest challenge today is on the preservation and promotion of the aforesaid cultural possessions. It was found out that some of Lalloqueños food and food practices slowly vanishing as sets of generations were born. Hence to avoid endangering these culture or worse the total obliteration of these practices prompted by the influence of acculturation as a result of modernization and development, the study endeavored to document the gastronomical heritage of Lal-lo specifically the food and food preparation practices of Lalloqueños as enriched by their unique cultural inheritance from Spaniards and other colonizers and refined over the years. It also recorded and presented socio-cultural practices observed by Lalloqueños inclined to food preparation. Furthermore, this study paved for the creation of written records on food and food practices and recipe compilation of indigenous foods of the town that can be passed on to the next generation and generations to come as a form of cultural preservation and promotion.

The study was directed towards investigating and documenting the food and food practices of Lalloqueños and analyzed the cultural practices associated to the food they eat. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the food choices of Lalloqueños in terms of:
 - 1.1. Snack;
 - 1.2. Appetizer;
 - 1.3. Main Dishes;
 - 1.3.1. Meat Dishes;
 - 1.3.2. Poultry Dishes;
 - 1.3.3. Fish;
 - 1.3.4. Shellfish;
 - 1.3.5. Vegetable Dishes;
 - 1.4. Dessert; and
 - 1.5. Exotic Dishes?
2. What herbs and spices are used by Lalloqueños in preparing and cooking their food?

3. What are the food practices of Lalloqueños with regards to:

- 3.1. Preservation;
- 3.2. Preparation;
- 3.3. Cooking; and
- 3.4. Serving?

4. What socio-cultural beliefs and significances do Lalloqueños accord to their foods?

5. What Lalloqueño traits and values can be associated from these food significances and beliefs?

Materials and methods

Qualitative-ethnographic research design was utilized in the study. The participants of the study were Lalloqueños which are composed of two ethnic groups namely, Ybanags and Ilocanos; whose ages range from 60 to 80 years old. There were 35 Ybanag elders and 15 Ilocano elders (50) purposively identified participants through the list secured from the municipal and barangay offices and from recommendations of some officials in town. Furthermore, questionnaires and interviews were the primary data gathering instruments and supplemented by observations on their food, food preparation, cooking and serving practices which were recorded through video camera and still camera. The data gathered was analyzed in contemplation to the sociological and geographical background of the study.

Result and discussion

Food Choices of Lalloqueños

The food choices of Lalloqueños revealed the grandiosity of the town as Ciudad de Nueva Segovia during the Spanish regime. They come in myriads of colors, shapes and flavors mirroring the colorful lifestyle of the town's people. Their food were categorized and presented as *pammerienda* or *meriendar* (snack), *mappaganas ta acaccan* or *pangpaganas ti pinnangan* (appetizer), *maca-macan* or *masida* (main dish), *paddulse* or *sinam-it* (dessert) and *tantanacuan nga macan* or *naidumduma nga makan* (exotic dish).

Pammerienda or Meriendar (Snack)

The *pamerienda*, *meriendar* or snack preferences of the Lalloqueños comprises of native delicacies of

various kinds made from local harvest such as *camosi* or *kamotit* (sweet potato); *dufo* or *saba* (*damilig* banana); *una* or *unas* (sugarcane), *mangi* or *mais* (corn) *gavi* or *aba* (taro) and the extensively used main ingredients, *kahuy* or *kahoy* (cassava) and *deco* or *diket* (glutinous rice). On ordinary days the simplest snacks served are *sisi na mangi* or *siksik ti mais*, *sinibbang* or *liningta* (boiled) *nga mangi*, *dufo*, *kahuy*, and *camosi* or any ripe fruit in season like papaya, mango, watermelon, pineapple and banana (*lakatan*, *amorosa* or *señorita*) Furthermore, during rainy season *ninyogan*, *pinataro* or *tambo-tambo*, *pinaltao* or *kalasukos*, *ginatan na kahuy* or *naduydoy nga kahoy*, *sopas*, and *arroz caldo* are served best, while, during especial occasions such as weddings; birthdays; christening; even during wake and burial and when family friends visit; they cooked and served *bebengka* or *bibingka* (cassava/glutinous rice), *badoya* or *baduya* (cassava/glutinous rice), *binagkal* or *sinuman*, *pinanana* or *linapet* (ground) */sinuman* (whole grain), *zila-zila* or *dila-dila*, *pinakufu* or *kaskaron/tinudok* (skewed), *patupat*, *binalay* or *binallay*, *putu nga uzzin* or *puto nga nalabaga*, *dudol* (rice), *kalamay* (glutinous rice) *tinubong* and *tinupig*. These native delicacies are paired or served with native hot beverages such as *cafe* or *kape* (brewed coffee), *kape nga bagga*, *kape nga bagas*, *kape nga vullung na kapo* and *kape nga bukel ti kapasanglay*, and *tsokolati cacao* or *tsokolate nga cacao*. For kids *gatto na nuwang* or *gatas ti nuwang* is served to them most especially during breakfast and before going to bed. And sometimes, during celebrations, these native delicacies are equally distributed because they are intended as take home for relatives, friends and all those who help from the preparation up to the upkeep of the celebration venue.

Every sugarcane harvesting season, the so-called *paddafil* or *pinagdapil* takes place. This is the process by which sugarcane juice is extracted from its pulp and cooked into *issi* or *tagapulot* which serves as sweeteners to beverages and native delicacies through a stone mill operated by a *nuang* which is driven in a circular motion during dawn or twilight. When cooking the *issi*, many snacks can be cooked or

prepared through *lablab*, *kalti* or *ginalut*. *Lablab* is a term used to refer the process of taking out the molasses that stick on the brim of the *sinublan* or large vat using a bamboo or wooden-made scraper and turned into *pulitipot*. Among others, this is also a great chance to *kalti* (dip) *sinibbang nga kahuy* or *dufo* and to make *galot*. *Galot* or *ginalot* is the process of dipping food materials to cook and to add sweetener such as *sinambong*; water-soaked glutinous rice encased in a ball-like weaved coconut leaves, *lengua* (sesame seed); usually called *nali* or *ginalot nga lengua* and prepared stem of male papaya plant known as *ginalot nga papaya*.

Another customary and traditional snack among Lalloqueños which became part of teenagers' lives is the *nilabbo* or *linubian* which is prepared during summer nights in the moonlight. The *nilabbo* is prepared as a symbol of friendship among the single men and women in the barrio. More often the knot, group of men will visit neighboring barrios to befriend the single ladies and some *dayo* (lady visitors). The men will bring cassava or banana and other ingredients of *nilabbo* to the house of the lady they wish to visit. The visit will then serve as a gathering among all single men and ladies in the barangay and this momentum, some men express their affection to the lady they wish to court as they show off their prowess in making the *nilabbo*. *Nilabbo* is traditionally made with either boiled cassava or banana or with glutinous rice, Royal True Orange, grated coconut meat, brown sugar, and topped with *mantekilya* (margarine) or condensed milk. This snack got its name from its preparation which uses *attung* or *alsung* (pestle) and *alu* or *al-u* (mortar), to ground big cut ingredients (an indigenous equipment to ground and deshell nuts, rice and other food materials), to homogenize ingredients and to arrive or achieve a smooth, fine and creamy mixture consistency.

Among numerous snacks served in the town, Lal-lo is very well-known of its iconic snack called *sinanta* or *sinantak*. It is a local noodle soup cooked with sautéed garlic, red onions and filleted chicken breasts, topped with onion spring and boiled eggs, seasoned

with salt, fish oil and pepper, and colored with *asuete* (anato seed). Moreover, the noodles are made of flour kneaded with soda bottle, cut into thin and flat strips and sun dried.

Mappaganas ta Acaccan or Pangpaganas ti Pinnangan (Appetizer)

Every meal of Lalloqueños starts with servings of *mappaganas ta acaccan* or *pangpaganas ti pinnangan*. These flavorful portions of the meal are served in small amounts that whet the appetite during the meal. Lalloqueños' appetizers are created out of common cooking ingredients found or harvested around the locality such as onions, ginger, tomatoes, vinegar, fish paste, salt, ground pepper, calamansi juice, lemon juice and pickled hot pepper.

Mappaganas ta acaccan in Lal-lo includes the most sought-after appetizers such as *bagong con camasi* or *baggoong ken kamatis*, *nagisa nga bagong con calamansi o dalaya* or *ginisa nga bagoong nga adda kalamsi wenno dalayap na*, *kinilaw nga afutu* or *kilawen nga sabunganay* (banana blossom), *kinilaw nga rabung* or *kilawen nga rabong* (bamboo shoot), *sarmuela nga adduru* or *nasarmwela nga piyas*, *sarmuela nga rabanus* or *nasarmwela nga rabanos* (raddish), *ensalada nga baleva* or *nasalad ngaballayba* (water leeks), *ensalada nga don na camosi* or *nasalad nga rangaw ti kamotit*, *ensalada nga don na nasi* or *nasalad nga kalunay/kuantong*, *ensalada nga don na apafe* or *salad nga bulong ti parya*, *ensalada nga don na kubay* or *nasalad nga bulong ti kubay/bilunak* and the all-time favorite *richada nga kapaya* or *rabung* (pickled papaya or bamboo shoot). Moreover, fish appetizers are also served such as *kinilaw nga ikan* or *kilawen nga ikan*, and *kinilaw nga lasi* or *kilawen nga lasik*. Typically, these are served with *sili nga artem* or *naartem nga sili* which boosts the appetite that can even make everyone eat in bare hands and savor the rest of the meal.

The distinctive appetizers served by Lalloqueños when having visitors or during occasions are their bivalves and seasonal fish catch called *ifun*, which are prepared in various ways such as *pinalkang* or *kinigtot*, *inasin* or *inasinan* and *paksial*.

Among the appetizer recipes are *pinalkang nga assisi* or *kinigtot nga binnek*, *pinalkang nga ginocan* or *kinigtot nga unnok*, *inasin nga asisi* or *inasinan nga binnek* (with shell), *inasin nga ginocan* or *inasinan nga unnok* (with shell), *vinutong* or *binutong* (without shell), *paksial nga ifun* or *paksial nga ipon*, and *bagong nga ifun ana camasi* or *baggoong nga ipon ken kamatis*.

Main Dishes

Lalloqueños' main dishes or entrée are categorized further according to their sources namely: vegetable, poultry, fish, shellfish and pork.

Vegetable Dishes

One of the past-time of Lalloqueños is gardening not only ornamental plants but also common vegetables in their backyard which serve as viable sources of their everyday vegetable dishes. To enhance flavors of these dishes *sabbung* or *sagpaw* are added. *Sabbung* or *sagpaw* is a little portion or amount of meat (*sarmuela*) or fish (*tinapa*) or shrimps (*lasik* or *aramang*) which are commonly preserved through sun-drying or curing and added to vegetable dishes. The most common ways of cooking their vegetable dishes are *ginisa* or *nagisar (sautéed)*, *adobo* or *naadobo* (sautéed with soy sauce and seasonings), and *inabraw* or *dinengdeng* (boiled).

The eminent vegetable dishes served by them are *adobo nga rabung*, *adobo nga afutu na dufo*, *adobo nga balangag*, *adobo nga antak* (string beans), *ginisa nga pinatugu nga balatong anna kabatiti*, *ginisa nga kandoli*, *ginisa nga bitwelas nasabbungan ta don na kamosi*, *ginisa nga agaya nga nasabbungan ta kubay*, *don na kamosi* or *don na marunggay*, *ginisa nga kandoli nga nasabbungan ta sardinas*, *ginisa nga petchay*, *ginisa nga kandoli* or *kabatiti*, and *zinagan nga kandoli*.

Inabraw and pinakatta are two distinct vegetable dishes Lal-loqueños are known for. Inabraw is the Ybanag version of Ilocano's dinengdeng which is cooked from an assortment of fresh vegetable fruits, leaves, seeds and flowers boiled in *bagong*, *tinapa* or dried *aramang*, *sebolyas*. It includes *don na kamosi*, *don na marunggay*, *okra*, *baranghenas*, *patani* and *alibabag*.

On the other hand, *pinakatta* (sautéed young jackfruit/bread fruit with coconut cream) is made from cube sliced young *nangka* or *rimas*. *Cubed nangka* or *rimas* are sautéed in crushed garlic and onions. *Pindang*, *tinapa*, or *aramang* are common *sabbung* or *sagpaw* and cooked until *nangka* or *rimas* are tender. When cooking is almost done, coconut cream is poured, seasoned with salt to taste and served with steamed rice.

Poultry Dishes

Chicken *manuk*, or *manok* is one of the common domesticated poultry animals by Lal-loqueños. That is why they have abundant supply of chicken meat. Chicken meat is cooked into *sinunu* (tinuno), *adobo*, *siniwsiwan* (*zinagan*) and *pinazigu nga manuk* (tinola).

Adobo nga manuk is prepared during special occasions and when friends and relatives visits. *Adobo* is prepared through sautéing the chicken meat with garlic, ginger, and onions and seasoned with *patis* or *bagong* to remove the *lansi* or *langsi*, then soy sauce, bay leaves, black pepper, vinegar, salt to taste and cooked until the meat is tender.

Pinazigu nga manuk or *tinola* is another chicken dish among Lal-loqueños. After a tiring chore of planting or fishing, housewives prepare a steaming chicken soup for their husband to regain their lost strength from their work. The same is through with wives who just gave birth and lactating; *pinazigu nga manuk* is prepared to regain their strength after hours of tedious laboring/giving birth, and during lactating to supply ample amount of breastmilk to their babies. It is cooked by sautéing cut chicken meat with *sebolyas*, *ahus* and *laya*, seasoned with *patis* or *bagong* to remove the *lansi* until partially golden brown. Ample amount of *mekarua nga nabbagawan ta bagga* (rice wash) is added for the soup. When the soup boils, it's the time to add prepared young *kafaya fruit* and cooked until tender. *Don na sili*, *don na marunggay* or *don na apafe* is added and then served hot in a bowl.

Sinunu nga manuk or grilled chicken is the simplest chicken dish prepared by Lal-loqueños. The recipe only calls for salt rubbed into the chicken meat, skewered and charcoal-grilled to perfection.

Sinunu nga manok is sometimes used as *sabbung* to some vegetable dishes.

Siniwsiwan or *zinagan nga manuk* is a unique way to cook chicken internals such as *agal* (liver), *bagis* (intestines), *bitugal* (gizzard), some bony parts and *daga* (blood) sautéed in onions and garlic seasoned with *paminta* and *patis*.

Fish (Ikan) Dishes

Fish is another source of delectable entrée of Lal-loqueños. *Ifun* or *ipon*, *kurilaw*, *kakak*, *karpa*, *kattang*, *igat*, *tilapia*, *birut* or *bunog*, *mori*, and *furung* or *purong* and the most expensive fish called *lurong* or *ludong* are major fishes cooked into *pinalsaman nga ikan*, *nafiritu nga ikan*, *sinunu nga ikan*, and *pinanango nga ikan*.

Pinalsaman nga ikan is usually cooked with *nalsam nga vunga* like *calamagi*, *addulu*, *bayabo*, *santol*, or *manga* with *camasi*, *sebolyas*, *ahus* and *laya* seasoned with *patis* and salt to taste. Fish like *kurilaw*, *kakak*, *karpa*, *kattang*, *tilapia*, and *furung* or *purong* are best for *pinalsaman nga ikan*.

Nafiritu nga ikan is done by rubbing salt to the prepared fish and cook in sufficient amount of oil to make the fish flesh crispy in the outside but juicy inside. The *nafiritu nga ikan* when not consumed immediately is kept as *sabbung* for vegetable dishes the following day.

Same with *nafiritu nga ikan*, *sinunu nga ikan* is also rubbed with salt but skewered and charcoal-grilled. And they are also kept as *sabbung* for vegetable dishes when not consumed at once.

Pinanango nga ikan by Lal-loqueños is cooked peculiarly with *don na dufo* as an under liner to the *banga*, lemon grass or *addulu* bedding, sliced *sebolyas*, *laya*, *ahus* and *camasi* or *suka* and salt to taste. But in the case of fishes like *ifun* and *birut* they are wrapped with *don na dufo* with minced onions, garlic, ginger and tomatoes since they are tiny fishes. The fish is simmered until dry and added with small amount of *manteka* (lard). And best served cold to make the fish flesh firmer preventing the disintegration when removed from the *banga*.

On the other hand, *ifun* among Lal-loqueños is also be made into the sought-after *bagong nga ifun*. *Bagong nga ifun* is enjoyed as *sawsawan* with *camasi* or simply added with *calamansi* juice or lime juice and can be eaten with *salad na don na kamosi* or *sinibbang nga baranghenas* and *okra*.

Shellfish Dishes

Lal-lo is blessed with shellfishes that is why the municipality is dubbed as “Cabibi Town” added by the prestige of the Cabibi Festival celebrated annually every 4th of August (Espada, 2019). The shellfishes abundant in the municipality are *akaya*, *kusifan*, *lasi*, *cabibi*, *basikul*, *liddak*, *agurung*, *unnuk* and *asisi*. These shellfishes are cooked by *pinalkang* (blanching), *sinibbang* (boiling), *sinela* (parching).

As the Cabibi Town, Lal-lo has a different way of preparing *cabibi*, *unnuk* and *asisi* into a special entrée. These bivalves are cooked as *gasagas* (deshelled) and used as *sabbung* to soups, omelet and other vegetable dishes. Moreover, *unnuk* and *asisi* are deshelled and prepared as *bagong*, an accompaniment to *camasi* or simply added with *calamansi* juice or *kapitang* juice (Espada, 2019).

Meat Dishes

The center of main dishes among Lal-loqueños is meat. This is the due to the fact that they believed that eating meat food products strengthen their bodies (*mappasican*) thus, prolong their lives (*mappa-apaddu ta attolay*) and likewise, improved way of living (*malladda y attolay*). Among the common meat dishes are *laoya*, *adobo*, *bola-bola*, *igado*, *bistik*, *caldereta*, *zinagan* and *minidensiya*.

Zinagan is one of the unique recipes of Lal-loqueños and one of their main dishes present in their occasion at all times. Lal-loqueños’ *zinagan* is cooked from *trapilya* or intestines of pig. Intestines are washed thoroughly until free from undesirable smell. After which, they are boiled, drained and cut into cube. Cut intestines are sautéed in patis, garlic, onions, black pepper and bay leaves and stired constantly until oil is produced. Excess oil is removed and water is poured and cooking continues until crispy. This is called *sinaroni nga trapilya* or crispy intestines. *Set aside*.

On the other hand, the blood is then poured in a bowl and mixed with thoroughly with vinegar. The mixture is poured in a pan while constantly stirring to attain a smooth blood consistency over a low fire and season with salt and pepper. The cooking continues by simmering the mixture to become smooth and thick and brings out an authentic flavor and aroma. Once the oil reaches the surface, cooking is done and ready for serving. The cooked blood mixture is dished out in a platter and topped with the *sinaroni nga trapilya*.

Desserts (Paddulse)

Lal-loqueños prefer *dufo* and sweet ripe fruits sourced-out from their backyard as dessert such as *kafaya*, *atis*, *anonas*, *chico* and *chesa*. During special occasions *bukayo* and *dulce nga rimas* is prepared for dessert.

Bukayo is made from shredded coconut meat and cooked with brown sugar or *issi*. Sometimes it is used as toppings to steamed *luffuc nga bagga* and other native delicacies.

On the other side, *dulce nga rimas* is prepared from young thinly sliced *rimas* (bread fruit nut) and cooked with sugar, *issi* or *kalti*. Some would say that *dulce nga rimas* is the best substitute for *camote cue* since they resemble same taste and aroma when *camosi* is not in season.

Exotic Foods

Lal-loqueños love to prepare and eat exotic foods such as *birabid*, *basikul*, *agurung*, *adobo nga tuka*, *adobo nga baniyas*, *adobo nga adobo nga ayong*, *sinela nga asimmawa*, *sinela nga abalin*, *sinela nga kuriat*, and *sinela nga ganta* (Cebu-Philippines.Net, 2018).

Herbs and Spices Used in Food Preparation and Cooking

Lal-loqueños’ passion to cook to celebrate and hold gatherings such as simple birthday party to a grandiose fiesta is mirrored to their rich food heritage. In the same way it can also be seen on the various herbs and spices in cooking their food such as *pimiyenta* (black pepper), *laurel* (bay leaf), *atsuete* (anato seed), *sebolyas* (onion), *ahus* (garlic), *laya* (ginger), and *baraniw* (lemon grass).

Food Preparation, Cooking, and Serving Practices

Gathering among Lal-loqueños would not be complete without preparing and serving foods. Thus, they use a number of cooking practices as they serve wide array of food choices. Their cooking practices are *pinanango* or *sinaluposupan* (steaming), *sinela* (parching/toasting) *finiritu* (frying), *napazigu* (boiling), *ginisa* (sautéing), and *sinunu* (roasting). Lal-loqueños are also fond of preserving food for future use. Some of the preservation methods used are *binisag* (sun/air-drying) for fish and meat, and *richada* (pickling), *dulce* (glazing/jamming) for fruits and vegetables.

Additionally, food preparation practices among Lal-loqueños include the habit of washing meat, fish and poultry thoroughly with water until free from slimy texture. Salt or vinegar is also used in washing to remove the *lansi* (slimy odor). On vegetables and fruits are washed, peeled, pared and cut correspondingly before serving or using them, while shellfishes are *mapakawe* or soak on basin of water to let the residue inside the come out of the shell.

Lastly, on their serving practices, Lal-loqueños are always conscious of the quality of table appointments they use most especially when visitors arrived or during special occasions such as fiesta or wedding. They use their best sets, however on normal days they serve their food in simple ways.

Foods on events such as fiesta and wedding are often arranged and served in a buffet style where serving is systematic. Visitors would cue at the table once they are given a napkin as a signal that they are to partake of the food. Buffet style service in gatherings became popular and modifications have been made. Visitors are assisted to scope out food to their plate to speed up the cue and to avoid wastage of food.

Conclusion

Lal-lo has a rich food culture making it unique over other municipalities. Their gastronomical heritage is overflowing with multifaceted and predominantly delectable and nutritious *pammerienda* or *meriendar* (snack), *mappaganas ta acaccan* or *pangpaganas ti pinnangan* (appetizer), *maca-macan* or *masida* (main dish), *paddulse* or *sinam-it* (dessert) and *tantanacuan nga macan* or *naidumduma nga makan* (exotic dish). Above all is the resourcefulness and artistry of Lal-loqueños. Added to this is their practicality and adoptability to readily obtainable food resources in their community. Moreover, food is a integrative component in the Lal-loqueños social system as it paves way for them to gather and celebrate as one happy community.

Recommendation

The university may consider to assist the researchers financially for the production of Lal-lo Recipe Book of Indigenous Foods and Lal-lo Gastronomical Heritage coffee table book as one of the outputs of the study. On the other hand, the LGU Lal-lo may launch activities that may promote indigenous foods and related socio-cultural significance as part of the annual celebration of Cabibi Festival.

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