

New York City College of Technology  
Jessica Rosa  
BUF 4300-International palette



Figure 1 “La Masa” restaurant



Figure 2 “La Masa” restaurant



Figure 3 “La Masa” restaurant

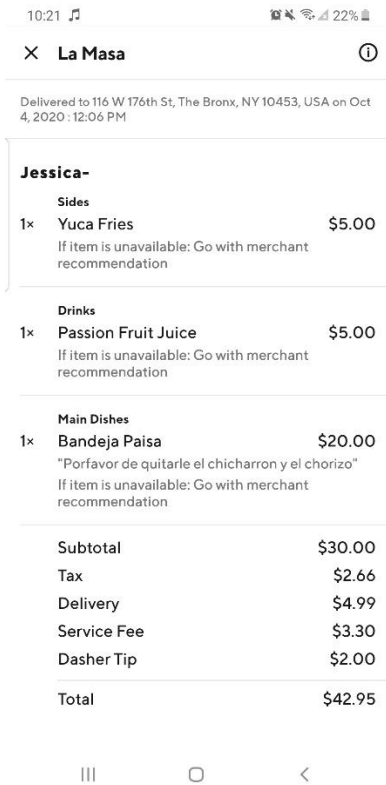


Figure 4 "La Masa" restaurant receipt

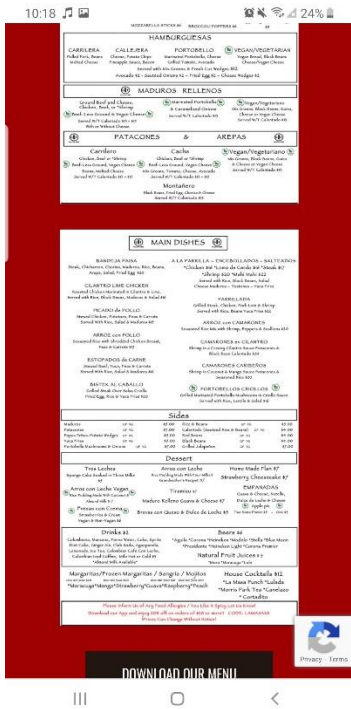


Figure 5 "La Masa" restaurant menu

**A. How were you addressed when you entered into the restaurant? Did you need to make reservations? How long was the wait before you were seated?**

Due to COVID, indoor dining is not available. The only two options were delivery and pick-up. I ordered to have it delivered at home, and I ordered through an app called "DoorDash". The estimated time at first was 55 to 65 minutes. I ordered at 11:30pm, and the system updated stating that it will arrive by 12:22 pm. Delivery came early, it was set to come at 12:22, and I received the food by 12:05. I ordered from the restaurant "La Masa" located 1000 Morris Park Ave, Bronx, NY 10462.

**B. What are the cultural differences you notice? Using your five senses of taste, touch, sight, smell, & sound describe some of the cultural differences that you are not accustomed to in comparison to All-American restaurant or restaurant chains. For example, one can describe but not limited to the sights in the restaurant décor, odors from unusual foods, and sounds from music. One should use all five senses in this cultural experience.**

The first thing I noticed from images online was that the restaurant has their flags outside the restaurant. The restaurant does not have any curtains or tablecloth. I see that they have a red background and a wood furniture. The food reflects the Colombian culture because they include flatbreads as their basic side dish and green and yellow plantain with their food. I was a bit surprised that they included a spicy sauce because it states that Colombians are sensible to spices. The flat bread when I squeezed it felt bouncy.

**C. Look at the menu. What are the types of foods they offer? What are some unusual items? Do they describe the ingredients in the food? List various food items from the menu. What menu items did you order? Is there more than one language used to describe the foods on the menu?**

Some of the foods on the menu are *Patacones* (Green fried plantain) and *Arepas* (made out of ground maize dough). In this section, they have *Carrilero* (beef-less ground, vegan cheese beans, and melted cheese). *Cache* (Beef-less ground, vegan cheese mix greens, tomato cheese, and avocado). "*Montanero*" includes black beans, fried egg, chorizo, and cheese. There is a vegan and vegetarian option. The option for both is mixed greens, black beans, guiso, cheese or vegan cheese. All foods are priced at \$13.00 dollars. (La Masa restaurant menu, 2020).

I ordered the dish "*Bandeja Paisa*" this is the typical dish in Colombia. This dish includes steak, chicharron (pork skin), yellow plantain, rice, beans, arepa, salad, and a fried egg at a cost of \$20.00. I also ordered yuca fries, and a passionfruit juice. I do not eat pork, so I gave instructions for them to remove the sausage and the chicharron (pork skin). I was pleased that they followed instructions and my food came in with the adjustments I requested. In addition, the menu is in both English and Spanish. The name of the dish will be in bold and in Spanish. Then a brief description underneath of what the dish includes (The menu was shown like that in the Doordash app).

**D. Is a traditional salad offered? If not, describe what is offered. What types of breads are offered (flat bread, pita, tortilla chips)? What type of desserts (cheesecake, fortune cookie, coffee)? What are they like?**

Salad one and two are traditional salads with mix greens, corn, tomatoes, and cranberry. Salad 3 is different because it includes fruits. Salad 3 has mixed green, strawberries, apples, almonds, and croutons. All three salads cost \$7.00. They also offer dessert, and this includes tres leches (Sponge cake soaked in three milk, flan, cheesecake, tiramisu, rice pudding, and apple pie(La masa restaurant, 2020). Also, flat bread, and empanadas are part of the Colombian culture, so this is definitely part of the menu.

**E. What types of beverages are offered? Do they have an alcohol menu? What is not typically offered in an American chain restaurant?**

The Drinks from “*La Masa restaurant*” are Colombian coffee with milk, also available as iced coffee. Juices: passion fruit, blackberry, aguapanela (juice made out of sugar cane), apple, Colombiana (soda), and Milo (chocolate milk). They also have available natural juices. In a traditional American chain restaurant drinks like aguapanela, and Colombiana will not be offered. For the American restaurant usually a section of beer will be offered. Natural Juices may sometimes be included in the American restaurants. I noticed that in the app they do not have an alcohol menu but in the store they have it.

**F. How is the food reflective of the cultural geography and the economic geography? (i.e. spices are abundant in India which is rich in spices and fish (sushi) is popular in Japan & is it part of the G8). Describe approximately where**

**in the world (continent & location) and from what country is this culture best known.**

Colombia is located in the north of the Southern America continent. Colombia is known for having a lot of mountains. The mountains help with producing coffee it is called “*Colombia’s coffee zone or eje cafetero*” (cultural landscape). The center of the country produces coffee the most. Colombian coffee has a higher quality coffee bean, and the geography has helped in exporting coffee as well. The forth-largest producer of coffee in the world is Colombia. Another food product that is grown in Colombia are Cassava(yuca) and wheat. Cassava is produced in *Tierra caliente*, and Wheat is produced in the *paramos margins* (Britannica, 2020).

**G. Describe the dress? (Dress is inclusive of all five senses -You smell perfume, hear jewelry, see make-up, etc..) What are the employees, such as hostesses or what is the staff wearing?**

From images online I noticed that the staff wears a black shirt with blue jeans, and no makeup. Their hair is in a low ponytail.

**H. Rate your experience as a food critic (as in the LA Times or Houston Chronicle). Ratings should be dependent on taste, service, service, décor, cleanliness, authenticity, quality, and price and should range from A-F (“A” being the best best). Explain why you chose this rating Be thorough and detailed in your explanations.**

The platter included rice, fried egg, steak, and flour flatbread. The smell of the beans and rice reminds me of my country Dominican Republic. The flatbread on its own tasted a bit dry but then I put the sauce mayo and ketchup mixed and it moistened the flatbread and

it was a soft bite. When I hold the bread and squeezed it a little bit it felt bouncy. Also, in the order came with four yellow plantains were well done; it was just one that was a little burnt. The steak was well done. One can feel the season of natural ingredients such as coriander, bell pepper, garlic, and seasoning. On the other hand, the beans at first glance the sauce looks watery. When I tasted the beans, it felt like it needed more seasoning, yet the texture felt soft and easy to eat.

The lettuce had mixed greens, tomato, cucumbers, shredded carrots, and corn. In the order came a green sauce. The green sauce is a little bit spicy. When I tasted it, I can taste the green peppers, it was not watery, and it did not have a creamy consistency. The cucumber and tomato looked a bit old. I believe the distance might have been a factor for that. It is very interesting how the mix of the spicy sauce and the freshness of the salad complement one another. The freshness of the salad calms down the spiciness of the green sauce. Another food I ordered was the yuca fries. They were very crunchy but with every bite, one can taste the excess oil as well. Furthermore, one of their popular drinks is the passionfruit. The passionfruit's taste was balanced. The passionfruit naturally has a strong taste and it needs water to town down the strong taste. The drink had ice and it really helped that it was delivered on time. The drink was very refreshing.

I really liked the experience of having a taste of another culture. I found a lot of similarities with my culture. In Colombia, they are all about rice, beans, meat, and flat bread. For me the letter grade will be based on quality, taste, authenticity, and price. I would give this restaurant an B+.



**I. What did you learn from this experience that you could contribute to a multi-cultural experience in a class discussion?**

The food was okay overall. The beans as stated before was bland and the yuca fries were over fried. The authenticity was true to the culture. I learned from this experience that cultures can have more similarities than difference. It is also important to try other cultures to be more understanding of their ways of doing things. One becomes more cultural sensitive and avoid any disrespectful behavior towards other cultures.

**References**

Colombia Tours and Holidays |. (n.d.). Retrieved October 04, 2020, from <https://www.uncovercolombia.com/>

Living and Travel Tips from Experienced Expats. (2020, October 03). Retrieved October 04, 2020, from <https://medellinguru.com/>