

International Palette:

A Multi-Sensory Experience as a Food Critique

Restaurant: *Campesino Dominicano*

1987 University Avenue, Bronx, NY 10453

Mia Washington

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?

When I opened the front door to the restaurant there was no dine-in guest at the time, assuming 8pm on a Monday night was not their peak at all. Before I completely entered I was greeted with a smile by a waitress who was tidying up the kitchenware that was on standby for when there was active movement. I was seated right away as I decided to seat in the middle to soak up every angle of the establishment.

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 decor included wooden paintings of farm animals such as a cow and rooster. They had one door that resembled a barn's, but the passage behind was unknown. I wasn't handed a glass for

my drink. Instead, I drunk from an old-fashioned mug with a painting of a farm that was chipped in several areas due to its age. My straw was already inside my cup with only a piece of wrapper to be removed before enjoying the refreshment. All-American restaurants leave your straws for one open when ready. My meal and appetizer was served on wooden plates. The utensils were given in a handmade bamboo pouch designed with a flower and the name of the restaurant. Surprisingly there was no true odor that roamed the place, but I instantly felt the comforting and relaxing atmosphere created by the playlist which began with Hector Levoe's "Todo Tiene Su Final (Everything Has an End)" (Lavoe, 1973). The remainder of my dining was accompanied by salsa and bachata hits from artists like Frank Reyes, Romeo Santos and Marc Anthony.

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?

The menu was one sided with the only words in English being the address and "menu". There were no translations for any items on the menu nor were ingredients mentioned. Spanish and Dominican foods had to be known prior or one would have to seek translation to pick an option to indulge in. I ordered chuleta and mofongo with tostones as an appetizer and limon juice (*Camepesino Dominicano Restaurant Menu, 2020*).

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

The main dish included salad, but not a garden or caesar. It was simply purple and green lettuce with a few slices of tomatoes and French dressing. No bread, no croutons on the side. wanted to buy a tres-leche (3-milk cake) to take home but they were sold out. The cake is popular amongst the culture, as some bakeries in Santo Domingo are famous for their versions of the dessert (Gonzalez, 2020). There was no indication of when there would be a restock, which can be inferred that they had an amazing reputation for the cake as well.

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

Picking what to drink came easy as there was not a large selection. No alcohol was served, leaving the choices between water, natural juices or canned sodas. An American chain restaurant would not have fresh fruit drinks such as limon (limeade). Beer would typically be sold.

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 & fish (sushi) is popular in Japan & it is part of the G8). Describe approximately where in the world (continent & location) and from country this culture's food is best known.

Tostones are twice-fried and smashed plantains (yellow banana) and the limon was a homemade juice made from freshly squeezed lime as I can see some pulp from the fruit inside my cup. The use of plantains and fried foods was presented to the Dominican Republic around 1503, when enslaved Africans were taken to the island of Hispaniola, thus adding to the cultural origin new knowledge and influence due to food supplies of the time (Gonzalez, 2001). Spaniards brought with their arrival the introduction to meat animals, as Taino Indians (natives of Hispaniola) were initially consuming seafood (Gonzalez, 2001). My main course translates to pork chops and fried mashed plantains (green banana).

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 wait staff wearing?

Servicing employees were wearing all black uniform that consisted of a black polo and cap, both with the restaurant's logo promoted. Customers were given the opportunity to dive-in to the farmland atmosphere with the availability of straw hats to be worn at the tables or used in pictures taken next to the country-life backdrops that were made part of the dining areas.

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

With all factors of my experience considered, Campesino Dominicano gets an A-rating. The workers gave "ready to serve" hospitality, which made it more welcoming to someone sitting

alone trying to get comfortable. The place was well-kept and friendly to those who just needed the restroom or atm. At one point, a few guys came in to hang with workers who were not actively working. Dining out at an affordable expense is very popular in Santo Domingo ("Culture of Dominican Republic - history, people, clothing, traditions, women, beliefs, food, customs, family", 2020). From visiting the country, I knew that once a group was formed, either a meal or activity like dominoes or storytelling would commence. This showed the restaurant expressed themselves as being welcoming. It wasn't until I was gathering myself to leave that I noticed I was sitting underneath a painting that said "HOME" and I felt like I was in theirs.

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

There is a large portion of the Dominican Republic still living the rural lifestyle and with its traditions. They are prideful of their culture and take honor in paying homage no matter where they currently reside. One going to this restaurant new or unaware of the culture would have to go with the mindset of learning and exploring. One won't help but to be in admiration with the beauty of legacy and the loving civilization brought forth from the people of the Dominican Republic and establishment that is Campesino Dominicano.

@campesinodominicano_restaurant

ME NU



1987 University Ave., Bronx, NY 10453

100% COMIDA AUTENTICA DOMINICANA

// 917.737.7798 // 917.737.7799

Pregunta! por los platos del dia!

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Entradas Campesinas

- Croquetas de Pollo 3 \$7.00 – 6 \$14.00
- Croquetas de Mariscos 3 \$7.00 – 6 \$14.00
- Alitas de Pollo 3 \$6.00 – 6 \$12.00
- Ceviche \$12.00
- Mini Tablita Campesina \$10.00



Carnes

- T-Bone Steak \$27.00
- Churrasco \$25.00
- Chuleta a la Parrilla \$17.00
- Pechuga a la Parrilla \$17.00
- Pechuga al Limon \$17.00
- Pechuga a la Gordon Blue \$25.00
- New York Steak \$25.00
- Asado Campesino \$32.00
(Chorizo, Chuleta, Rib Eye)
- Tablita Campesina
1p \$25.00 – 2p \$40.00 – 6p \$120.00
(Chuleta, Pechuga de Pollo, Longaniza, Salami, Queso, Chorizo, Papa y Tostones)



Del Mar al Campo

- Pescado Entero 2Lb (Frito, Vapor, Salsa Roja, Salsa Coco) \$23.00
- Pescado Relleno Campesino (Maticico Mixto, Pito) \$45.00
- Langosta Campesina \$45.00
- Camarones Empanizados \$18.00
- Camarones a la Parrilla \$18.00
- Camarones en Salsa Roja \$18.00
- Camarones al Ajillo \$18.00
- Arroz con Camarones \$19.00
- Salmon \$20.00
- Filete de Mero al Vapor \$18.00
- Filete de Mero Frito \$18.00
- Asopao de Camarones 1p \$18.00 – 2p \$35.00
- Asopao de Marisco 1p \$18.00 – 2p \$35.00
- Canoa de Marisco 1p \$35.00, 2p \$50.00, 5p \$140.00

Mar y Tierra

- Campesino Mar y Tierra \$35.00
(Churrasco, Mofongo, Camarones)
- Campesinito \$32.00
(Churrasco, Mofongo, Chicharron)
- Churrasco & Camarones \$30.00
(Camarones, Salsa Roja) o (Camarones a la Parrilla)
- T-Bone & Camarones \$35.00
(Camarones en Salsa Roja) o (Camarones a la Parrilla)
- Chofan al Pastor \$19.00

Mofongos Campesinos

- Camarones en Salsa Roja \$18.00
- Camarones en Salsa Blanca \$18.00
- Camarones al Ajillo \$18.00
- Chicharron \$15.00
- Pernil \$14.00
- Bistec \$14.00
- Pollo \$14.00
- Res Frita \$14.00
- Chuleta \$14.00
- Churrasco \$28.00
- Longaniza \$14.00
- Plain \$7.00



Chimi Campesino

- Chimi de Res \$10.00
- Chimi de Pollo \$10.00
- Chimi de Pernil \$10.00
- Friquitiqui \$10.00
- Chimi de Pechuga a la Plancha \$10.00

Ensaladas

- Ensalada con Camarones \$17.00
- Ensalada con Churrasco \$17.00
- Ensalada con Pechuga de Pollo \$12.00
- Ensalada de Marisco \$17.00
- Ensalada de Papa \$5.00

Guardiciones

- Arroz Blanco \$4.00
- Tostones \$4.00
- Papa Frita \$4.00
- Yuca Frita \$4.00
- Yautia Frita \$4.00
- Vegetales al Vapor \$5.00
- Pure de Yautia \$5.00
- Pure de Papa \$5.00
- Mofongo Plain \$7.00

Jugos Naturales

- Tamarindo \$5.00
- Guanabana \$5.00
- Chinola \$5.00
- Piña \$5.00
- Limon \$5.00
- Morir Soñando \$6.00

Postres \$3.50

Tres Leche • Flan • Coco y Batata



Si sufre de algun tipo de alergia o intolerancia a algun alimento, por favor dejarle saber al mesero a la hora de ordenar, tambien si es vegetariano o vegano. // Tax no incluido en el precio.

Figure 1. Campesino Dominicano's Restaurant Menu (2020).

References

Campesino Dominicano. (2020). *Campesino Dominicano Restaurant Menu*.

Culture of Dominican Republic - history, people, clothing, traditions, women, beliefs, food, customs, family. (2020). Retrieved 9 March 2020, from <https://www.everyculture.com/Cr-Ga/Dominican-Republic.html>

Figure 1. Campesino Dominicano's Restaurant Menu. (2020). Retrieved from *Campesino Dominicano, 1987 University Avenue, Bronx, NY 10453* on March 9, 2020

Gonzalez, C. (2001). About Dominican Cooking - History and Origins. Retrieved 9 March 2020, from <https://www.dominicancooking.com/1370-about-dominican-cooking.html>

Lavoe, H. (1973). *Todo Tiene Su Final* [Lo Mato]. Fania.

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