**The Philosophy of Le Pithos**

**A Fivefold Approach**

Food involves all the senses, hence enjoyment of food can be seen as a totality of experience. The five senses are sight, smell, touch, hearing, and, of course, taste. Inspired by these five sensory gateways to the world of food, we’ve crafted a philosophy of food based on five qualities that are unique to every authentic foodstuff: locality, season, heritage, community, and adaptability.

*Locality*

Where the foodstuff is found can determine its quality: from the temperature of the waters by the seashore to the humidity seeping into the soil where fruits and vegetables are grown. The location of Spain on the Iberian Peninsula is critical to everything else when it comes to understanding the philosophy of Spanish food: a diverse landmass that allows for all kinds of foodstuff to be cultivated, from plants to seafood to livestock, a melding of many cultures since ancient times, from the Mediterranean to Africa and Arabia, and of course, Continental Europe and South America.

At Le Pithos we make it our mission and passion to research and identify the uniqueness of each locality where we source our foodstuff, because the same ingredients can have varying textures and flavours if they come from different places. We seek to bring this journey of wonder to your kitchen and table.

*Season*

A mango picked too soon is sour and hard; a banana eaten too late is mushy and unpleasant. *Time* is as much of a factor as *place*, and indeed are inseparable. The farmers of olden times, just as they do today, understood that a good harvest is the culmination of well-timed picking. In the same way, seafood or livestock are often at their best only during a certain time of their life cycle. Time is everything, because it’s not just nature’s clock, but also the march of history - and history, humanity’s tribulations and triumphs through time, leads to heritage.

The four seasons all have their place on our company calendar: it’s not just where we source it, but when. We are intimately familiar with the best times for when to obtain our foodstuffs, and we can only know such things through keeping in close and collaborative touch with the local communities that know the locale’s seasons best.

*Community*

Where the place and the time is right for people to thrive in, communities are built and endure over centuries. Community simply means a group of people that have, whether for centuries or only for a few months, congregated in a certain locale over a period of time and developed their own history together. The community makes sense of food and contextualizes the meaning of food into dishes, pairing different foods and drinks, and, going back to heritage, a greater community of people from different ethnic, religious, social, and cultural backgrounds.

To truly *know* and understand locality and seasons, Le Pithos has sought out the communities that are most passionate and skilled with their foodstuffs - communities with family knowledge (sometimes handed down the generations) of food production, or those that have impressed the global food scene with their creativity or innovation. All of these communities are committed to organic sourcing, placing them at the top of the sustainability rankings.

*Heritage*

Where there is time, there is history. There is no history with people, without community. Locality, season, and community therefore all, connect to heritage. Spanish food embodies heritage: from “Al-Andalus” gastronomy to Jewish, Christian, and “New World” cuisine. Specific customs like the Tapas tradition is said to have begun in Seville when bartenders put food (especially ham) on top of plates that kept drinks fresh. Tapas embodies the beautiful synthesis of locality, season, and community in these common and beloved tapas foods: “calamares” (fried squid), “gambas pil-pil” (prawns in hot, garlic oil), “boquerones*”* (anchovies), “chorizo” (sausage), and “jamón serrano” (cured ham). In Seville, a common way to enjoy tapas is to have three to four selections at one restaurant, before moving on to another one. This heritage is part of how tapas evolved from specific cultural contexts into the community-based practice it is today.

Consider, also, the heritage of paella, Spain’s most famous rice dish. Its association with seafood is relatively recent, with earlier recipes from its region of origin, Valencia, containing chicken, rabbit, and snail (making it more of a mountain, inland dish). It also evolved out of a tradition of communal, afternoon cooking, prepared in an open space like the town square using considerable time and resources. The saffron used to flavour the rice, the large shallow open pan in the open fire - these are all components of paella’s unique heritage.

Le Pithos respects and treasures each region’s heritage. When people enjoy a dish prepared with the best ingredients, they are appreciating and celebrating the very communities that have worked so hard to produce the foodstuff that make up their eating experience. They are tasting a piece of heritage. Le Pithos is uniquely positioned to articulate and offer advice about the heritage of many different places and foodstuffs for your kitchen.

*Adaptability*

Tradition matters, but that doesn’t mean food is stuck in the past or saddled with only one or two “legitimate” methods of preparation. Spanish food is a perfect example: despite being steeped in the above four qualities, some of its biggest celebrity chefs are pioneering with bold experimentation, such as deconstruction. Pioneered by at Ferran Adrià’s now closed elBulli restaurant, deconstruction seeks to creatively change the form but not the basic nature of the dish, with the idea of awakening all the senses, not just those of taste and smell. This philosophical approach and methodology has enabled innovative techniques to be created and developed to change the texture of food, such as gelification and foams. The best kind of adaptability, Ferran Adrià and his disciples would surely agree, respects and cherishes the original tradition and culinary lineage of food, which in turn must embrace the community, heritage, season, and locality from which such food comes.

Heritage is not the same as orthodoxy. We at Le Pithos are adventurous and like to take the best of our products and introduce new, innovative ways to make them delicious components of beautiful dishes. For example, Spanish legumes can be applied to Asian stews and soup, while olive oil is already being used in Asian cooking for its health benefits. Flavouring and seasoning in fusion styles are all part of this grand experiment. Fine truffles are not a traditional Asian ingredient, but is now part of the luxury Asian gourmet experience. Iberico pork is a sought after ingredient in Chinese dishes for its richness and succulent texture. Iberico *jamon*, for example, is a ham comparable to Chinese dry-cured ham from Jinhua ham and Xuanwei ham from Yunnan. Such natural affinities make fusion ideas natural for Chinese tastes.

With limitless possibilities, we believe in adaptability as not just a pillar of food philosophy, but something to aspire to.

**Conclusion**

Food is experienced by the five senses. Food is drawn from the five philosophical concepts of locality, season, community, heritage, and adaptability. Therefore, a true food experience, holistic, real, authentic enjoyment, means absorbing and savouring an entire world, a universe of human experience and collaboration with Mother Nature.