

Beat: Lifestyle

Eating pintxos on the street

The new Spanish gastronomy

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USPA NEWS - Eat standing with friends, not one but in a number of establishments on and non-traditional dishes but culinary creations that can be taste in one or, at most two snacks. Is a way that has been extended by large areas of Spain, especially in the Basque Country and La Rioja, and attention of Ernest Hemingway when the US Writer visited Spain in the first decades of the 20th Century. Called "eat pintxos" and their creations, in which involve the most reputable chefs, rivals the traditional gastronomy.

In Spain, social life is done on the street. The bars are especially important: there you can drink coffee, enjoy snacks and drink alcohol. It is also eaten and in areas of Spanish cities like Calle Laurel in Logroño, capital of the wine region of La Rioja, in addition to menus, you can eat "pintxos". The skewers are the heirs of the dishes of olives or nuts with which drinks are accompanied in many bars. But they are more elaborate, they involve the creativity of chefs and an attractive presentation is as important as the taste.

But what's a pintxo? According Adolfo Saenz, chef and owner of the bar-Grill El Muro (The Wall) on Calle Laurel in Logroño, a pintxo is "a food you can eat standing, which does not need knife and fork, that you can hold a hand while with the other is subject the glass of wine and you can eat in two or three snacks." The pintxo, remember Adolfo Saenz, come from the "tapa", originally Andalusian. In that region of Southern Spain, is putting a slice oh Ham on the container of wine to avoid that they got into flies. That slice that hid and customers ate, gave name tapa. "A pintxo is a tapa developed and that meets the terms" above, highlights Adolfo Saenz. In the bar, this chef takes up 30 years developing pintxos, one of the classic of La Rioja.

The culture of pintxo has institutionalized in Northern of Spain. La Rioja held for 17 a contest of pintxos in the involved bars of all the region. During the month of February, bars participants offer to his customers the pintxos presented to contest. A jury composed of prestigious chefs and critical gourmets choose ten finalists, which produce their creations in a public event. The jury awards their elections but also the public that have tasted the pintxos in bars participants. Requirement is large and working, complex.

Because pintxos have become small culinary artworks. And that only can get out of the creativity of professional chefs who his work in the kitchen added hours of research. Is the result of the evolution of a business model that in a while left behind the simplicity of the bar service to convert their desks in small restaurants full of attractants proposals of dining. "Competition is good," say chefs and the great benefit by an offer as numerous are customers.

The proposal of dining is a diverse as bars are in tourist areas of the Spanish cities. In Logroño, capital of wine region of Rioja, Calle Laurel is for foreigners and Calle San Juan is for natives. Between two, add up 70 bars and seven restaurants. More than 100 bars adding other streets in the area. There you can enjoy pintxos as diverse as the Peruvian Kausai at the bar Envero (Travesia de San Juan 6), made with potatoes, chicken, tomato, avocado, mayonnaise, pepper and lime. Also a medallion of Lamb fill with curd foie at the gastrobar La Chatilla (San Agustin 7), made with Lamb, minced meat, caramelized onion, Spanish sauce, honey, Greek yogurt, potato, puff pastry and pad foie. Or eggs with peppers and sausage at the Wine Fandango bar (Vara de Rey 5), made with chorizo Belloto, mustard to the old, Sesame black, tomato, peppers from Tricio, shallot, frothy cheese cream, Sichimi Togarashi and bread glass, among many other proposals.

The usual says that to eat of pintxos have to go a bar to another trying out specialties. The visit hard as much as the two or three snacks of pintxo and wine with that accompanied. Four or five pintxos enough to feel satisfied. And although not cheap, chat with friends, enjoyment of wines of Rioja and the experience wander the oldest streets of Logroño worth.

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