

Eating and Writing the Crisis: Spanish Gastronomy during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and *La crisis* (2008)

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The Spanish Civil War and the 2008 economic crisis represent two of the most economically and gastronomically challenging periods in contemporary Spanish history. While the hunger and food insecurity experienced in both periods are rooted in distinct cultural milieux, the reactions and proposed alleviations to that insecurity share many similarities. Cookbooks from both eras exhibit a gastronomic philosophy that champions a return to simplicity as well as an acknowledgement of scarcity accompanied by commonsense advice to do more with less in order to maintain a healthy lifestyle. While both periods follow a similar culinary perspective, their implicit views on Spanish national cuisine show the effects of decades of foreign influence and globalization while also reaffirming the permanence of specific Spanish national dishes. Two cookbooks, Ignacio Doménech's *Cocina de recursos* (1941) and Joan Vila's *Menús de guerra* (1938), partake in a pre-emptive attempt to provide the general Spanish public with sound nutritional and culinary guidance that directly confronts the underlying issue of scarcity in times of war. Not too dissimilar, the cookbooks *Comer bien por muy poco: Consejos para ahorrar en la cocina* (2010) by Miguel Ángel Almodóvar and *La mejor cocina anticrisis: Ingeniosas y riquísimas recetas para gastar poco comiendo muy bien* (2009) by Graciela Bajraj challenge not

the scarcity of *La crisis* but rather economic insecurity as it relates to cuisine. In both cases, the advice is the same: waste less, stretch ingredients more, and maintain as healthy a lifestyle as possible.

HUNGER, SCARCITY AND THE WAR

The gastronomic repercussions of the Spanish Civil War were felt almost immediately after it began. The Nationalists' initial push across the Peninsula left the Republican-protected areas isolated. As Miguel Ángel Almódovar recounts, "la 'zona republicana' padeció hasta lo indecible los rigores de la desnutrición y el espectro del hambre" (*Hambre* 221). In August of 1936, the Republican government issued a law prohibiting "toda elevación en los precios de venta de cualquier clase de mercancía destinada a alimentación" (Martínez Ruiz 149). By November 20, 1936, "entraron en vigor las tarjetas de aprovisionamiento que concedían una ración diaria por persona de 100 gramos de lentejas o judías...un cuarto de litro de leche, medio kilo de pan, 100 gramos de carne, 25 gramos de tocino, medio kilo de fruta, 50 gramos de sopa y cuarto kilo de patata" (Almódovar, *Hambre* 226). Moreover, every two days, Spaniards were able to obtain two eggs and rations of fish, sugar and rice (Almódovar, *Hambre* 226).

Nevertheless, the Republic controlled many of the agriculturally rich areas at the beginning of the war. Maintaining control in "las tres zonas fabriles y mineras más importantes, Cataluña, el País Vasco y Asturias, así como una parte nada desdeñable de la agricultura, entre un tercio y la mitad" (Martín Aceña, *Economía* 18), the Republic held an important industrial and agricultural advantage. Although prices rose exponentially and rationing was implemented within four months of the coup, the Republic held an agricultural advantage in cash crops with 90% of citrus production, 50% of olive oil production, 80% of rice production and a majority of fruit and vegetable production (Martín Aceña, *Economía* 18). Martínez Ruiz acknowledges that those products only represent those most profitable in exportation (111). In Republican Spain, however, "escaseaban muchos de los alimentos básicos de subsistencia, los más importantes para el consumo interno" (Martínez Ruiz 111). While the control of these industrial crops may have been seen as an initial advantage in terms of earning income, it became clear as the war continued that exportation of agricultural products was not possible at the same levels as

before and the Republic soon made food exportation illegal. Furthermore, the Republican government could not feed its people with these types of products alone.

Conversely, the Nationalists held control of the basic subsistence crops like cereals and grains, meat and dairy as well as beans, corn and potatoes. Of these products, the Franco-led forces controlled more than 60% of the potato and wheat crop, half of the corn production and 60% of legumes (111). As for meat and its associated products, the Nationalists were in possession of more than 70% of all cow, ox, sheep and milk production (111). All crop production was in flux, as Martínez Ruiz points out that the productions both rose and fell for subsistence and exportable crops. Citing the production of olives and olive oil as a specific example, olives for consumption (those consumed domestically) saw a rise in cultivation while olives for exportation fell as the author concludes that this is an example of the shift in production towards more domestic consumption rather than foreign export.

Martínez Ruiz sums up the principal preoccupation of both sides as being the ability to “organizar la actividad productiva, asegurando un nivel de producción que garantizase el abastecimiento interno e, incluso, permitiese la realización de exportaciones” (138). While the Republican-controlled areas took measures to ensure production in addition to the implementation of rationing, the Nationalists pledged on October 1, 1936, a strong stance to not overlook agricultural problems associated with the war, including “la no interrupción de la vida agrícola en las provincias reconquistadas, la intensificación del cultivo de las tierras baldías, la promoción del desarrollo ganadero, la repoblación forestal y el fomento de las plantas industriales como el algodón, tabaco y lino” (144). This move was not only practical in nature but also political, an attempt to prove Franco’s ability to feed the nation. Similarly, their agricultural advantage gave the Nationalists a unique military advantage by controlling the majority of subsistence crops. While both sides created commissions to curtail agricultural shortages and the inflation of prices, Martínez Ruiz de-emphasizes these commissions’ tangible wartime effects, stating that those that succeeded in alleviating shortage and inflation were not initiated until after the war.

In Madrid, the scarcity was not only felt in the stomach but also on store shelves. Almódovar describes a situation where “los productos desaparecían a los minutos de ponerse a la venta...y llegaron las colas que formarían parte del paisaje ciudadano durante todo el resto de la

contienda” (*Hambre* 224). This kind of scarcity inevitably led to hoarding, black markets, and malnutrition. Black market prices soared. A pound of chocolate cost 123 pesetas and the price of one egg rose to 1.25 pesetas. Del Cura’s and Huertas’ estimates use historical data to contextualize the rise in price. While one egg on the black market cost 1.25 pesetas, in 1907 a dozen cost only 1.30 and in 1935 only 4.50/dozen. The food crisis reached its peak in the latter half of 1938 when “el precio de los alimentos básicos en el mercado negro alcanzó cifras desorbitadas” (del Cura and Huerta 66). During this period, they further estimate that a dozen eggs cost between 150-200 pesetas while a kilogram of bread rose to 1.20 pesetas, just shy of a 100% increase, based on prewar pricing. Overall, the Civil War produced food insecurity at levels never seen before in Spain and ensured a long road to agricultural recovery in the first years of Francoism.

As the Civil War gave way to the Franco dictatorship, postwar rationing was officially instituted on May 14, 1939, two months after Franco’s victory, and continued until June 15, 1952. The rationing cards were given to “cada familia censada y estaban clasificadas en tres categorías – primera, segunda y tercera – que se establecía en función del nivel social, del estado de salud y del tipo de trabajo del cabeza de familia” (del Cura 74). Del Cura and Huertas remind us, however, that these cards were only valid for certain products at certain prices depending on supply and demand (74). As a consequence, they describe the gastronomic situation of postwar Spain as a daily struggle: “la comida para la mayoría de la población consistía en ‘engañar al estómago’ con hidratos de carbono y calorías a base de sopas, legumbres y tocino cocinados de forma poco variada día tras día” (75).

WARTIME COOKBOOK PRODUCTION

As a result of war, the Spanish National Library’s cookbook database only registers one cookbook published during the war years. While the BNE database is not an accurate representation of all publications, it does underscore the impact that the Civil War had on the production of written gastronomic culture. Cookbooks were still produced, nonetheless, by entities like the *Generalitat de Catalunya* to increase awareness of scarcity and to provide guides for its citizens. These do not appear in the BNE’s registry, but María Paz Moreno points to cookbooks like *Menús de guerra* or *El menjar en temps de guerra* as examples of this wartime

preoccupation with cooking with few resources (Plato 28). As cookbook publishing was considered a luxury during this era, their production followed a similar trend of literature and cultural production that experienced a steep decline. While the film industry continued production during the war, largely due to propagandistic reasons (Crussels 123-4), it is easy to see why a largely solitary, home-based cultural product did not thrive under wartime conditions. Economically, neither consumers nor producers were willing to spend on cookbooks or food literature; it was much more important to save money for actual food instead. The cookbooks analyzed, however, situate themselves as guidebooks that gave advice on how to do more with less and create familiar dishes with substitute foodstuffs, furthering this analogy of “tricking the stomach.” *Menús de guerra*, published by the Catalan regional government, represented a government project that sought to alleviate the gastronomic consequences of the war by offering a free resource to its citizens in order to combat scarcity. Doménech’s cookbook, however, stands out as the lone example of a cookbook actively confronting food scarcity after the Civil War. Notably void of political propaganda, it serves only as a guide to make more with less.

COOKING UP THE SHORTAGE

By the 1938 writing of *Cocina de recursos: Deseo mi cocina*, Ignacio Doménech had already established himself as one of, if not the, leading Spanish chef of the early twentieth century. Trained under French greats like Pierre Lacam and Auguste Escoffier, Doménech took his French haute cuisine background and brought it back to Spain and adapted it for his native country (Simón Palmer, *Doménech* 6). While he was prolific in both his cooking and writing, his most important work is *Cocina de recursos*. First published in 1941 (though importantly written in 1938), Doménech’s book was able to supersede early Francoist censors by using a “serie de ingeniosos recursos discursivos y de una compleja retórica” (Plato 35). Citing the prologue by Yago César de Salvador, Paz Moreno explains that the subject matter, an obvious reference to Spain’s hunger, is overshadowed by Doménech’s willingness to extol the virtues of Franco’s victory. Such is the case in the following summary of the work as “tan útil por su sencillez en el aprendizaje, mayormente en estos momentos difíciles

en que el español bien nacido ofrece gustoso sus sacrificios en aras de la resurrección de la Gloriosa España Imperial” (*Plato* 41).

Doménech’s respectful and elevated tone and inclusion of phrases and passages like the above quote represent the sleight of hand used by the author in order to publish his cookbook. The pretense of a historical study and its air of objectivity and authority paradoxically secure the cookbook’s passage through the censors but simultaneously provide the central irony and social critique of the book. Paz Moreno argues that for Doménech’s readers, it is “evidente que Cocina de recursos no habla solo del pasado, sino también del presente de la posguerra, en que la situación no había cambiado gran cosa” (*Plato* 40). The gastronomic problems of 1938 were still the gastronomic problems of 1941 and the general public likely understood this sly, historical metaphor to reemphasize the difficulties felt by families during the postwar era. This purported aggrandizement of Franco and his Nationalist cause may have saved this cookbook from certain censorship but its content matter nonetheless constituted a reminder and strong critique of Spain’s ever-present scarcity and hunger that stood in stark contrast to the glorious rebirth of Franco’s vision of an imperial Spain.

The recipes in this cookbook continually reference scarcity and hunger. As the recipe for “Las tortillas sin huevos de gallina...” illustrates, many of these recipes combat food insecurity by replacing common items and ingredients with alternative options. While attempting to create a flavor profile and consistency similar to a traditional tortilla, Doménech’s recipe is nothing more than an omelet-flavored baked good. The flour-based batter creates an illusion of similar consistency by frying up to resemble a tortilla and the added spices and flavorings result in “un sabor mucho más agradable que el huevo mismo” (88). He also adds that this version of a Spanish classic is prepared at “un cuarenta por ciento de economía” (89). Leaving aside questions of taste and consistency, the exclusion of eggs leaves this tortilla version void of necessary nutrition. With a flour base, the nutritional profile would be more akin to that of bread. The flour yields carbohydrate-based calories but the added spices bring little to the table. Yes, this recipe would provide energy but gone are all the egg’s nutritional benefits such as much needed protein and fat. This illustrates the dire nature of wartime and post-war cuisine. Recipes and everyday cooking were much more focused on providing caloric energy than with nutritional concerns. The lack of availability of a foodstuff such as the egg, traditionally considered a cheap protein source, represents not

only the consequences of hunger but also the nutritional consequences as well.

The lack of quality and nutritious foods available gave rise to innumerable health and psychological problems during the war and during the years following the war. During wartime, Jesús M. Culebras finds that nutritional problems were the cause of diseases such as pellagra, lathyrism and the previously unseen Vallecas syndrome.¹ All these resulted from vitamin deficiencies. Lathyrism, however, came from an excess of one foodstuff: chickpeas or Garbanzo beans. As Culebras states, this disease only arose when chickpea consumption “represent[ed] more than 30% of the daily calories consumed for a prolonged period greater than two or three months” (712). Pellagra resulted from a deficiency of B2 vitamins, “que en dietas normales se aporta principalmente por los alimentos animales” (714). These wartime diseases demonstrated the nutritional danger associated with food scarcity. Both the exclusion and inclusion of abnormal amounts of certain foodstuffs brought on equal amounts of nutritionally related diseases. Symptoms ranged from generalized intestinal discomfort to muscular cramps to glossitis and in severe cases, partial paralysis of the extremities. While this cookbook and Vila’s tome provided valuable and valiant gastronomic advice during hard times, there were unintended nutritional consequences associated with advocating substitute ingredients. By no means does this mean that Doménech or Vila is to blame. Many of these diseases were unknown or never previously observed because the gastronomic conditions were never in place during peacetime.

In order to combat this scarcity, Doménech clearly states his purpose: “El tema general de mi obra...está repleto de enseñanzas evidentes que les ayudarán en esta época de necesidad” (45). He directs his cookbook to all those “que les gusta todo lo que sea interesante en los casos de cocina y comedor” (45) and states that the conditions that plagued Spain during this period were “un tema absolutamente nuevo para todos aquellos que necesitan orientaciones e inspiraciones de cocina práctica

¹ The term “Vallecas syndrome” is derived from the Madrid neighborhood where it was first witnessed. Culebras notes that the syndrome resulted from “vitamin B complex deficiency...[and] manifested by muscle cramps and weakness” (713). Culebras found that the administration of calcium, phosphorous and thiamine doses “achieved a considerable reduction in the frequency and severity of the cramps, or their complete resolution” (713).

para poder comer y no malgastar el dinero de una manera inconsciente” (45).

While the seemingly rosy outlook presented by the cookbook’s cover stands in stark contrast to the difficulties of everyday life in Spain during this period, Doménech’s cookbook represents a distinct departure from his previous works and his previous cooking style that could only be described as haute cuisine and clearly middle to upper class. For one, he is directing his new gastronomic advice to a broad audience. While he does not state this explicitly, Doménech’s book is clearly aimed at those who had followed his culinary guidance in the past. Those middle-class readers who were once preoccupied by the etiquette of entertaining and dinners that included more French dishes than Spanish, are exactly those who were in need of practical cooking and domestic advice in the face of the war. Where once his readers were less inclined to save money or make the most out of a whole chicken, these middle-class readers now needed this advice more than ever.

Doménech continues his formal, hospitable tone throughout the present collection. He usually addresses his readership directly by calling them his “lectores amigos” or “queridos lectores,” phrases that convey a friendly, albeit respectful relationship between reader and chef/author. His recipe instructions always reference the *ustedes*-formal conjugation, never engaging his audience with the more familiar and common *vosotros* form. He often, though not consistently, includes himself within the readership’s domain by employing the *nosotros*, the first-person plural or “we” conjugation. Playing off his introduction where he describes his own troubles during the war to find inspiration and cook responsibly in his restaurant, he humanizes himself and the war and assures his middle-class readers that they are not alone in finding themselves combating new circumstances. Most of his asides and narrative sections speak to his own personal difficulties. He mixes in many anecdotes and his tone is strikingly narrative in nature, utilizing a didactic, historical approach that allows him to infuse normally dry and straightforward recipes with contextual information and helpful tips.

Although subjected to early-Francoist censors, the recipe collection does not stray from discussing the war and its effects, albeit from a detached historical perspective as mentioned earlier. Food became “la obsesión de estos meses finales de 1938” (45). He states that “en las fábricas, talleres, oficinas, en todas partes, todos los días, semanas y meses, pasan en los que no se suele soñar más que con la comida” (46).

Regardless of its historical tone and references, it is still worth noting again that this work made it past the censors with language that directly engages with the narrative of hunger during the war. Although he originally cites 1938 as his reference, Doménech makes sly use of the present tense in the previous sentence, signaling that this is not a historical hunger but a contemporary one. He continues this theme of dreaming about food, discussing one of his own dreams with story-like narration using illustrative language and sensorial descriptions in an effort to relive his good days in bustling kitchens and sprawling markets, everything that was missing from Spain during the last months of 1938. This passage in particular, as well as most of his anecdotes and narrative portions, exemplifies his mastery as a writer. He was at the same time a didactic chef espousing helpful hints in sparse language while at other times quite literary in his descriptions and use of the senses to describe the heat and smell of kitchens or dishes. He ends his dream sequence, however, with a simple exclamation: “¡Nada! ¡Ha sido una pesadilla!” (46). And thus for him and his readers, the glory days of packed markets overflowing with fresh and delicious foods only live in the dreams of days past. Instead, 1938 and his contemporary Spain were nothing more than a “cuestión de tíquets, carnets, cartas de trabajo [y] cartas de racionamiento” (48).

In addition to his famous *tortilla sin huevos* recipe, Doménech strove to recreate familiar dishes and taste profiles while utilizing what was available during the war. His recipes and advice continuously recall the need to ration and reinvent. Interestingly, his first section does not refer to food itself, but to the cooking process. While it is obvious that the Civil War created foodstuff shortages, what is less discussed is the shortage of food-related items. Doménech brings to light the shortage of fuel needed for cooking, specifically charcoal. His first chapter is entitled “Los combustibles.” His first “recipe” sets the tone for the rethinking of old recipes and repurposing lesser-used resources for his collection by introducing ways to create charcoal. Titled “Transformación del papel viejo en balas de carbon” (51), the chef explains how to repurpose recycled paper by placing ripped shreds into a water bath over the course of a few days until they form a paste. From there, one would only need to form briquettes from this paste and set them aside to dry. Once dried and lit, the recycled paper briquettes constitute a “combustible magnífico” (52). Although trained as an haute cuisine chef, Doménech transcends class in many ways to provide advice that is accessible and needed to all classes of people.

Moreover, Doménech does not shy away from reintroducing and reclaiming recipes from the rural poor. These recipes have always been traditionally comprised of minimal ingredients, utilizing an efficient cooking style and packing a caloric punch. Most often associated with laborers, such dishes needed to fuel workers from first light to the end of the day. One such section, “Sopas y potajes” (53), introduces the recipe for a dish named, “Sopa de pobres a la marsellesa” (55). In this time of scarcity, even the classically French-trained chef forgoes his culinary complexity in favor of ease and availability. In the recipe for “Sopa de pan a la catalana” (53), the chef informs us that his recipe is based “en la cocina catalana de la gente del pueblo” (53). While it is striking that a chef of such stature would advocate this type of food, what is generally considered rural or peasant cuisine serves as an excellent example for combating scarcity and culinary limitation. As stated earlier, this type of cuisine has been fine-tuned through centuries of struggle to provide the most efficient dish, both nutritionally and in a culinary sense. One must only adapt. In order to season such dishes, Doménech laments the lack of saffron but suggests that a little pepper will do well to replace the flavor.

Doménech, however, moves beyond simple peasant cuisine in his radical approach to cooking during wartime conditions. He goes so far as to advocate for the use of nontraditional vegetables that were previously served only “de forrage a las vacas” (62). His advice, however, sounds more radical than what it actually is. Eating cow’s food, for Doménech, consists of vegetables like carrots, turnips, beets, parsnips and salsify (also known as the oyster plant), a carrot-like root vegetable. It must be noted there do exist forage varieties of vegetables for animal consumption but based on the context, it appears more likely that Doménech is referring to human varieties of these foods that were not often included in the diet of that period.

The inclusion of these forage vegetables speaks to a larger and continued trend in global cuisine as well as in Spanish national cuisine. Harkening back to Dionisio Pérez’s treatise on the state of Spanish national cuisine, these vegetables and Doménech’s insistence on calling this wartime cuisine, peasant cuisine or *la comida del pueblo*, doubles down on the insistence that Spanish national cuisine is rooted in a regional milieu. Simple and delicious while exemplifying local agriculture, this type of modest and unpretentious Spanish cuisine based on regionality began yet again to exert itself as the dominant national cuisine. Whether out of necessity or by fad, food trends often follow a bottom-up trajectory

wherein haute cuisine reclaims and elevates the status of foodstuffs and dishes that were often considered the opposite of cosmopolitan food. Doménech's acceptance of this type of cuisine reminds us that gastronomy is dependent upon external events. The war shortages force Doménech to reevaluate his haute cuisine, French-influenced approach to Spanish national cuisine by once again returning the national cuisine to the people. The postwar period reaffirms Thebussem's and Post-Thebussem's² assertion that Spanish national cuisine is a conglomerate of regional cuisines that have, for centuries, slowly expanded and shared ingredients as well as cooking techniques. This plurality approach embraces regional and local agricultures but also refuses the idea that each region is creating or propagating radically different cuisines. The underlying theories of cuisine remain the same regardless of the substitution of fish for chicken or rice for lentils. The cuisine that Spain developed during the war and postwar periods as evidenced in these cookbooks is a cuisine that advocates combinatory dishes including meats, starches and other vegetables cooked in one vessel that glorifies local agriculture whether by necessity or by desire. As the two culinary nationalist forefathers suggested, Spain, to this point, is still a national cuisine dominated by the *potaje* or *cocido*.

MENÚS DE GUERRA: WRITING THE WAR EXPERIENCE

The cookbook *Menús de Guerra* was written and published in 1938 as a "pequeño folletín bilingüe (en catalán y castellano) de 13 páginas no numeradas, sin fecha de edición" (Paz Moreno, *Plato* 28) intended for use by Catalans struggling with the food insecurity during the war. As a part of the Republican Catalan government's efforts to assuage the difficulties facing their population, the propaganda department partnered with Chef Joan Vila to produce this helpful pamphlet. The edition consulted for this project is a facsimile in Catalan reproduced by the Museu d'Història de Catalunya as part of their 2014 exposition "Menús de guerra, Cocina de vanguardia y supervivencia." The reprint includes a back-cover write-up

² Thebussem is the pen name of Mariano Pardo de Figueroa whose 1888 book *La mesa moderna* began the theory of Spanish culinary nationalism as one comprised of multiple regional cuisines. His successor, Dioniso Pérez, chose the pen name Post-Thebussem in honor of Figueroa in his 1929 *Guiá del buen comer español*.

of Vila proclaiming him “El Mestre Cuiner de la Generalitat” (15). In addition to this publication, the biography includes among his accomplishments working at the Grand Restaurant in France, stops in Paris and London while finally returning home to San Sebastián, Madrid and ultimately back to Barcelona.

In his introduction, Vila explains his thesis and summarizes his reason for writing this cookbook in the heading to the brief introduction “Un bon menjar solament consisteix en l’indispensable” (2). This one page introduction does not shy away from confronting the gastronomic repercussions of the Civil War. Unlike Doménech’s *Cocina de recursos*, Vila attacks the subject matter from a present-day perspective without the risks associated with censorship. The lack of censorship allowed Vila to clearly state that “la guerra imposa restriccions que cal acceptar com deure moral” (2). While we must analyze this work as an extension of the propaganda presented by the Generalitat, Vila manages to avoid overt political discourse by situating rationing and food insecurity as a moral obligation to humanity and to Spain, regardless of political and military alignment. It could, however, be read as a moral obligation in support of the Republican side.

Continuing his advice on wartime cooking and eating, the introduction states that “ningú no demana que no es mengi el sufficient, perquè el que importa es menjar del que hi ha” (2). In the face of extreme shortages, it may seem useless that Vila is suggesting to hungry people that they should not go hungry. Instead, Vila seems to be shifting the focus from what is missing to what there is. If one focuses on meats, eggs and other scarce foodstuffs, they may go hungry. Vila, however, is reaffirming that there is a supply of food. It is just different from what came before and that the cook and eater need to adapt to this new normal. He summarizes his position: “Solament es necessària una mica de comprensió i de gust per reduir a un mínim aquelles privacions” (2).

Furthermore, Vila situates the current predicament as a challenge to not only the everyday person but also to the greatest chefs. He says that even “els grans mestres de la cuina sempre han parlat de la conveniència d’aprendre a confeccionar menjars apetitosos amb els elements cuinables més senzills” (2). Elevating the plight of all Spaniards to one of high cuisine, Vila evens the playing field amongst all cooks, amateur and professional. Readers find reassurance in the fact that it is not only a minority that is suffering from the war, but everyone - even the greatest chefs, Vila included - must reshape their cooking philosophy. Moreover,

the introduction invokes the soldiers fighting, explaining that those simple elements are those that “per cert, si no abunden a la reraguarda, tampoc no escassegen” (2). This recalls the reasons for the shortage and new culinary philosophy but also appeals to the reader by invoking this idea of moral obligation. By doing their part at home, they are in turn helping the soldiers on the front lines. Towards the end of the introduction, Vila once again invokes this motto and attributes it to the famed French gastronome Brillat-Savarin. This gives hope to the public that even during periods of scarcity one can still enjoy good taste.

The collection includes 24 recipes. Perhaps indicative of the shortages and scarcity of certain foodstuffs, the cookbook only includes five recipes based on meat or fish with three recipes featuring seafood and two recipes featuring beef and pork, respectively. While a dearth of beef, pork, and chicken recipes is not surprising given the lack of meat products produced in Catalonia and the transportation issues mentioned earlier in this chapter, the lack of seafood is startling for a province whose diet was so deeply rooted in the fruits of the sea. Dried or fresh, the inclusion of only three seafood dishes suggests a decline in the fishing industry that would affect the inland cities and towns of Catalonia and across Spain more so than those coastal cities. While coastal cities could still enjoy fishing for subsistence, the industrial fishing needed to supply even Catalonia’s wartime population would have been affected by the transitioning of manpower from fishing duties to war-related labor activities. We can assume that the decline in fishing activities would be on par with other agricultural industries discussed above.

The rest of the recipes are comprised of rice and vegetable dishes; two recipes feature eggs, another product that saw a steep decline in availability during the war. Nonetheless, the egg was a valued source of protein and calories, and was included on ration cards. Staying with the theme of cooking with minimal ingredients, eighteen out of the twenty four recipes feature six ingredients or less. This count does not factor in spices such as salt and pepper which are included at the end of each recipe for flavoring and Vila does not include a specified amount for each.

Stylistically, each recipe is simplified in its presentation, only consisting of roughly a two-inch by two-inch box in small font. Two recipes adorn each page. The facsimile provides an accurate historical size to the pamphlet as it is set to today’s standard eight and a half by eleven, but the miniscule size of each recipe suggests that the pamphlet would have been small as well. To either the left or right, the title stands in bold

to the side of each recipe box. Above or below this box, the ingredients list is opposite the title appearing as mirror images of the two recipes on each page. The design and layout exemplify the simplified nature of the text. The illustrations are not distracting nor are they functional. There are no added text boxes or paragraphs to clarify recipes or techniques. The recipes are not divided into chapters or subheadings and they do not appear to be arranged in any logical manner. Meat recipes are peppered among seafood and vegetable recipes alike.

The recipes themselves are simple and easy to follow. Utilizing the passive “se,” Vila eschews command forms that represent an authoritative control over each recipe. The neutral passive “se” provides readers with clear and concise instructions without creating an interpersonal tone. In contrast to using the “nosotros”/we form as a means to create a sense of community, the passive “se” creates a distance between reader and author that is neither cold nor inviting. This lack of collegiality and familiarity is evidenced in the recipes themselves as there is no direct communication to the recipe reader. Furthermore, there is no inclusion of any narrative within the recipes. The only narrative comes in the form of subtle didactic instructions that clarify certain gastronomic terms. In “Carxofes al forn” (7), Vila uses a fairly technical term, “es coronen”, instead of using a more simplified word. He does, however, go on to clarify these by stating: “o sigui que es tallen les puntes de les fulles, deixant les exteriors a un pla de tres or quatre centímetres” (7). The recipes are singularly focused on providing the most accurate cooking instructions in the least amount of words. The simplicity of the dishes is not overshadowed by lengthy, loquacious recipes. The instructions are clear and concise but also impersonal and lacking any accompanying narrative. With that being said, Vila accomplishes his goal of creating a cookbook that exemplifies simplicity in all aspects. From brevity of writing to minimal ingredients, Vila constructs a useful, straightforward recipe collection that aims to provide even the most amateur of chefs with the basic knowledge to prepare a simple yet satisfying meal.

In reading this cookbook and analyzing the unintentional national cuisine consequences, we can see a clear correlation to the larger cultural context evidenced in this recipe collection. *Menús de guerra* reinforces the idea that culinary culture does not exist in a vacuum but rather is indicative of the larger political, economic and social concerns of the era. This is not to say that culinary culture is a direct imitation of other cultural productions, but it is fair to conclude that it takes direction from larger

cultural contexts and situations. The shortages that existed during the war are addressed directly here in the cookbook. Direct conversations about food insecurity and ways to combat this in everyday life stand in stark contrast to the postwar censorship of even cookbooks during the Franco era. *Menús de guerra* is a prime example of how the larger sociopolitical and economic context influences gastronomic culture. Moreover, this cookbook demonstrates that the idea of national cuisine is a plastic one, ever molding to account for changes in all political, social and economic aspects of a nation.

This cookbook does not explicitly analyze the national cuisine of Spain. I would argue that the war provided the most opportune time to see what Spanish national cuisine truly was. Following Vila's charge, a good meal is best when it is at its simplest. In the face of wartime scarcity, Spanish cooking regressed to its most basic and most simple, to those dishes that most exemplify the Spanish tradition. Reviewing Vila's collection, recipes like "Espinacs al forn," "Arrós amb verdures," and "Bacallà amb mongetes blanques" express the fact that Spanish national cuisine is rooted in traditional ingredients, prepared in traditional ways.

While this recipe collection speaks more to Catalan regional cooking, each region experienced a return to roots during the war where the cuisine was defined by the most basic ingredients in the simplest preparation. As a consequence, the wartime national cuisine did not resemble the French-influenced cuisine of prewar twentieth century. This is not to say that Spanish national cuisine is defined neither by simplicity nor by traditional food scarcity. It does underscore, however, the malleability of the concept of a national cuisine. Dionisio Pérez's *Guía del buen comer...* (1931) warned of the effects of French influence on Spanish cuisine. Five short years later, the country was engaged in Civil War and in 1937, Vila's wartime culinary manifesto makes no mention of French influence or the problematic inclusion of regional cuisine into the national cuisine. National cuisine is not stable; instead, it ebbs and flows in conjunction with political, economic and sociocultural ideas and situations. This cookbook and the change effected by the Civil War is evidence that a preternatural national cuisine does not exist. Instead, we must focus on conceptualizing national cuisines as an organic process that continually evolves and flows between ideals of tradition and innovation while often succumbing to external forces.

LA CRISIS: THE GREAT RECESSION AND SPANISH COOKBOOKS

In 2013, Spain officially exited its multi-year recession with growth of only .1% while Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy continued his plan of “unpopular spending cuts and tax hikes in order to comply with budgetary targets in accordance with Spain’s European partners” (Minder, “Recession”). This good news came after nearly five years of economic recession that marked lows across all sectors that had not been seen since early Francoism. The damage had already been done. 2012 saw a new nadir in unemployment. Unemployed Spaniards “surpasse[d] 25 percent [and]...the ranks of the unemployed swelled to 5.78 million people at the end of the third quarter compared with 5.69 million a quarter earlier and 2.6 million four years ago [2008 pre-crisis level], when Spain’s property bubble burst” (Minder, “Unemployment”). Even worse, unemployment for Spanish young adults remained high, above 50% for this key demographic (Minder, “Riots”). The economic austerity imposed upon Spain by European economic powers and Prime Minister Rajoy’s conservative *Partido Popular* created a slow, almost unseen recovery that has stalled all labor sectors, including the restaurant and hospitality sector.

As Minder describes, restaurants confronted problems that had not been seen during the relative economic prosperity pre-2008. For restaurants, “their chief rival is now a home-cooked meal” (Minder, “Chefs”). In the realm of haute cuisine, “some of the very best restaurants are giving up Michelin stars to offer lower-cost alternatives” (Minder, “Chefs”). While Spanish culinary legends like Ferran Adrià claimed that “crisis or not, you’ve never eaten as well as now in Spain” (Minder, “Chefs”), Minder quotes Nielsen Spain reports that find that restaurants were closing at an incredibly high pace: 5,000 closed in 2009, 4,000 in 2010, 3,000 in 2011 and 2012 saw the total number of restaurants sink to a 1997-low of 220,000 (“Chefs”). Michelin starred restaurants like *Evo* in Barcelona and *Ca’ Sentro* in Valencia and Madrid’s *Príncipe de Viana* and *Club 31* were forced to abandon operations due to economic difficulties (Minder, “Chefs”). Beyond restaurants and discretionary spending, everyday food decisions have been impacted by the economic crisis with one of the largest industrial fishing companies, *Pescanova*, requiring an economic bailout in 2013 (Minder, “Aid”). All this evidence spells out that Spain was suffering its most debilitating gastronomic crisis since the Civil War and its subsequent years of hunger.

In contrast to that period, chefs and culinary writers actively combated this recession in a very public forum. Not confined to Francoist rhetoric and censorship, contemporary cookbook authors explicitly confronted the economic scarcity that put a strain on the vast majority of Spaniard's gastronomic decisions. While the economic turmoil is comparable to the post-Civil War era, the main difference is that Spain is not suffering simultaneously from an agrarian crisis nor from the same level of food insecurity. The early Francoist period suffered equally from a sluggish autarchic economy, and these policies put a burdensome stress on an already faltering agricultural sector.

While the recalibration of income distribution in relation to food could account for some of the grim restaurant (read: luxury) closures during the immediate impact of the Great Recession, actual food insecurity did not come close to levels seen during the Civil War and early Francoism. In fact, according to a recent survey of European food insecurity during the Great Recession, the authors noted that contrary to public discourse, Spain was stable in its food insecurity level between 2009 and 2012 (Loopstra et al. 46). In comparison to other European countries like Italy, Greece or Ireland who shared much of the bad economic press with Spain, food insecurity in Spain did not rise by more than 1% as it did in those previously mentioned countries with Italy and Greece experiencing the greatest rise in food insecurity for the countries surveyed. Spain's Iberian counterpart Portugal, another economically maligned nation, actually experienced a decrease in food insecurity over the same period.

What Loopstra et al. demonstrate is that despite harsh traditional economic markers (wages, unemployment, consumer spending), "there was no apparent patterning in the magnitude of change over the period by the level of food insecurity" (45). While the authors did identify a link between rising unemployment and falling wages as a good predictor of rising food insecurity, they also concluded that those factors "do not inevitably lead to households being unable to afford food" (Loopstra et al. 47). They found that the variable of social protection spending did positively impact countries like Spain, where unemployment was high and wages low yet food insecurity remained stable. Regardless of the discrepancies in food insecurity, the cookbooks analyzed previously and the cookbooks that will be seen share much of the same rhetoric and themes.

EATING THE CRISIS

As the 2008 crisis reverberated throughout Spain, one author is uniquely equipped to understand the gastronomic difficulties facing the Spanish people. Miguel Angel Almodóvar is the author of the first cookbook analyzed in this section, *Comer bien por muy poco: Consejos para ahorrar en la cocina* (2010), as well as being the author of the seminal Spanish food history, *El hambre en España: Una historia de la alimentación* (2003). The present cookbook, like those ancestors of the wartime period, seeks not to reinvent Spanish cuisine, but rather to reconnect with a simpler cuisine that dominated long before “fórmulas gastronómicas foráneas y deificación simplista de técnicas de laboratorio arropadas por irreflexivos ritos tecnoemocionales” (Almodóvar, *Comer* 6). The cuisine that Almodóvar, Doménech and Vila support is a culinary approach that seeks to “recuperar esencias de aromas, texturas y sabores acendrados durante siglos de experiencia en ollas, fogones y yantares compartidos” (Almodóvar, *Comer* 6). This essence of Spanish cuisine is directly in line with what we have seen throughout this project. While making an indirect critique of the cost-inefficient Spanish haute cuisine and molecular gastronomy movement, Almodóvar’s version of Spanish cuisine should be “entendida como suma y sigue de cocinas regionales...la más rica y original del mundo, gracias y desgracias al histórico paso por sus tierras de un sinfín de pueblos y culturas culinarias, y a siglos de penurias, escaseces y hambrunas que obligaron a tirar de imaginación a raudales para replicar a lo poco que la despensa ofrecía” (Almodóvar, *Comer* 6).

Strikingly similar in tone to the many authors studied thus far, Almodóvar’s Spanish cuisine is influenced by such culinary nationalists like Dr. Thebussem and Post-Thebussem while also taking a pragmatic stance to the natural hardships that have influenced the Iberian Peninsula throughout the centuries. Imitating other authors, Almodóvar alludes to the myriad influences that have shaped Spanish cuisine from the Roman invasions to the New World conquests. Differing from the majority of authors, Almodóvar, however, makes a distinct claim that Spanish cuisine is equally indebted to these culinary invasions as it is to its continual struggle in the face of gastronomic insecurity. This next stage, the 2008 economic crisis, is no different from the previous famines and periods of scarcity. What one must do is to return to a sensibility of simplicity and tradition, not to innovation. The foundation of Spanish cuisine is laid with

simple provincial dishes that not only encapsulate and exemplify the Spanish flavor profile of garlic, olive oil, cured ham, chorizo and garbanzo beans but also naturally lend themselves to simple, nutritional and cost-effective preparations. As we have seen, the most commonly referred to national dish, the stew known as *cocido*, packs a nutritional punch while also simplifying cooking methods via the use of one vessel and consisting of flavorful and fresh yet cheaper natural products. As the author states simply in his front cover insert, “la cocina tradicional es una fuente inagotable de ideas para elaborar platos sencillos y económicos con ingredientes naturales y accesibles a todos los bolsillos” (Almodóvar, *Comer*).

Replicating the tone used by Doménech and Vila, Almodóvar states that his recipe collection “no solo brinda recetas baratas, sino consejos para la conservación y reutilización de alimentos, trucos para ahorrar dinero y energía, calendario de alimentos de temporada, un listado de alimentos por debajo de tres euros y otro de vinos de calidad cuyo precio no excede de los siete” (*Comer* 11). His mission is simple: provide enough information in the form of foods and dishes that the common family or individual can utilize to make the most out of little. Following in the footsteps of his previous culinary writers, the author seeks to create meals that are comprehensive while providing options for more dishes that utilize leftovers. The tricks he refers to, however, take a different form than those suggested by Doménech and Vila. Those authors, confronted with strict scarcity and rations, formed recipes that simultaneously made the most out of scarce economic resources but also proposed ideas that transformed simple foods into representations of common pre-war dishes. Instead, Almodóvar focuses on the economic aspect of cooking and seeks to provide each reader with foods and dishes that can be made and remade with relative technical and economic ease.

Similarly, Graciela Bajraj expounds on the economic crisis in her cookbook *La mejor cocina anticrisis: Ingeniosas y riquísimas recetas para gastar poco comiendo muy bien*. Immediately, Bajraj invokes periods of past hunger by stating that this economic crisis “no es una cosa nueva...A lo largo de los años, hemos visto cómo se repiten una y otra vez las épocas de vacas flacas” (Bajraj 9). Echoing the sentiment of Almodóvar, the author states that the best thing to do “para poder seguir alimentándonos bien y saludablemente...es lograr una efectiva economía doméstica haciendo mucho con muy poco” (Bajraj 9). She concludes her

opening prologue section with five keys to achieving an ideal level of economic efficiency:

- Empieza por planear todo antes de hacer la compra.
- Fíjate cuáles son los productos de temporada, pues siempre resultan más frescos y más baratos, aprovechándolos para el menú.
- Estudia cómo poder proporcionar a tu familia y a ti la misma cantidad de sustancias nutritivas al más bajo coste.
- Dale a cada producto los mejores cuidados, de modo que no desperdicies nada.
- Guarda todo lo que sobre y aplica una forma nueva de llevarlo a la mesa en otra (Bajraj 9)

Bajraj's ideas are by no means revolutionary but as seen thus far, sometimes the most simple dishes and advice create the most effective strategy to make the most out of what you have. While some advice such as making a list before going to the supermarket is not necessarily transformative within the kitchen, the idea of planning is infused throughout all her helpful tips to attain maximum efficiency. This emphasis on efficiency recalls not only the post-war period but also the transition of autarchic economic policies to technocratic liberalization. Combining rhetoric from both of these movements, Bajraj seeks to advise her readers on how to create the most streamlined approach to all things cooking. From the initial plan to the point-of-sale to kitchen execution and finally to repurposing of leftovers, the author's strategy is one that is comprehensively efficient while avoiding wasteful habits. While the rhetoric of efficiency through technology is not present, this trend of advocating efficient gastronomic behaviors should not be a surprise given the Spanish historical context.

With her second tip, we again see a trend towards seasonal eating. The idea of eating locally and seasonally in the face of a globalized gastronomic landscape may appear as trendy to some in our current gastronomic situation. Instead, this is an age-old technique of economizing gastronomy that was well evidenced in the works of Vila and Doménech. The benefits were obvious to each chef/author despite the fact that these authors were forced to eat locally and seasonally out of necessity. Bajraj employs the same logic here advocating that consumers continue to eat fresh (and as a consequence, continue supporting local economies) rather

than turn to convenience foods that often supply a severely diminished nutritional profile. Local, seasonal produce, as she states, will be found “a mejor precio, y serán más frescas y nutritivas” (Bajraj 17). She does not mention canned fruits or vegetables which are canned using preservatives, most often sugar and syrup which diminishes the nutritional profile. Economically speaking, buying fresh apples for example out of season would incur import/export tariffs, transportation costs and thus theoretically carry a higher price to the consumer.

A focus on nutrition is one of the key themes that Bajraj espouses. In contrast to the attempts of Vila and Doménech to make the most nutritional meals out of what little the ration cards of the day permitted, Bajraj differs slightly as she declares that the “mayoría de las verduras están disponibles en los mercados durante casi todo el año” (17). She does provide a helpful chart of seasonal vegetables but makes no mention of their nutritional profiles. Simply stating the necessity to provide adequate nutrition, Bajraj falls short in preparing any concrete advice on which foods provide the most nutritional benefits or a recompilation of one’s daily nutritional needs. Without the restrictions imposed by official rationing and an assumed higher level of nutritional knowledge in comparison to the post-war period, the information that Bajraj provides should be sufficient for the reader but a more comprehensive nutritional breakdown is desired.

In the second section, Bajraj furthers her advice providing “dieciséis consejos para economizar en la cocina” (11). She again restates her overall goal of providing the most nutrition at the lowest cost possible as well as general advice of encouraging less wastefulness but her specific suggestions do not form a cohesive or useful strategy that is in line with her overall goals. While some suggestions such as adding water to an egg mixture in order to conserve eggs or adding milk to butter in order to duplicate its quantity are useful tips both practically and economically for all home cooks, other suggestions regarding béchamel and chocolate sauces, whipped cream or flan seem superfluous to those strained by economic hardship.

Nevertheless, each cookbook provides recipes that both reflect the current state of economic difficulty as well as the evolution of national cuisine that we have seen thus far in this study. For Almodóvar, classic and traditional dishes such as the Catalan *Trinxat amb rosta* (a potato and vegetable tortilla), Basque *Marmitako* (tuna stew), numerous classic *potajes* or stews, *Torrijas* (Spanish French Toast) and the omnipresent *croquetas* that serves as the perfect dish to repurpose leftovers are

included. While Almodóvar is an advocate for a traditional approach, his recipe collection also includes many dishes that reflect the new, globalized Spain in which influences from around the world make up the most common dishes. Plates such as Curry Chicken represent the new oriental and Indian influences while other dishes such as Vichyssoise, Risotto, Pizza, Lasagna or Minestrone Soup reflect the more traditional European influences of France and Italy, respectively. Although his introduction glorifies the traditional and provincial ingredients and dishes of Spain of the past, his recipes provide a much different view of Spanish national cuisine. While all the dishes included in the recipe section can be made easily with the use of local Spanish ingredients, the practical version of Spanish cuisine that he promotes is one that is intertwined with the global influences that have infiltrated Spanish gastronomy.

Contrastingly, Bajraj's recipes section avoids national or named dishes altogether. Instead of a collection full of traditional plates such as *potaje*, *Marmitako*, *cocido* or *Fabada asturiana*, her recipes are much simpler. Without the name recognition of famous dishes, Bajraj instead provides plates that are described by their ingredients. Her recipes revolve around a simple collection of ingredients plainly named after those ingredients. Dishes such as *arroz con setas*, *cerdo con alubias* or *pollo asado con manzanas* comprise the majority of the recipes given. Bajraj does include regional-centric variations of dishes such as *trucha a la mediterránea* and of course there are obvious international influences with the inclusion of the seemingly ubiquitous curry chicken, pizza and spaghetti dishes. The difference between Bajraj's selection and the dishes of Almodóvar could be found in the targeted audience of each collection. Almodóvar, a respected journalist and author, is writing for a much more established professional clientele. Being older, this audience may identify more with traditional named dishes that had been so much a part of their youth. Bajraj, on the other hand, is clearly writing for a much younger audience. Her ease of use, basic instructions and simple dishes appeal more to a young audience who has not had much experience with cooking or shopping. In fact, her cookbook is part of a series that also includes cookbooks directed towards the miniscule niche market of emancipated minors. The youth of today do not necessarily identify with nor have the respect for the traditional named dishes even if the semantic difference in names produce an almost identical dish. With much less fanfare and discussion of national cuisine, it is safe to argue that Bajraj and her audience do not preoccupy themselves with such classifications. The lack

of named Spanish (or international) dishes and the nonchalant inclusion of international influences suggest a national cuisine that is simultaneously rooted in local Spanish ingredients but that are combined in ways that are seemingly without national preoccupation.

While both collections give conflicting views of Spanish national cuisine, we see a version of national cuisine that is respectful to Spanish tradition yet open to international flavors and dishes. As both collections espouse similar philosophies to what we have seen in previous chapters, the promotion of local Spanish ingredients and a sensible and economic approach to cooking and eating can hardly be classified as uniquely Spanish. Although external forces such as economics may dictate that a national cuisine refocuses on the use of local ingredients and a philosophy of cooking with less, the shift away from uniquely Spanish dishes evidenced by these two cookbooks suggests a national cuisine that is increasingly globalized and international. Departing from the return to roots cooking seen during the Civil War and early Francoist era, the 2008 economic crisis conserves the essential philosophy associated with previous periods of hardship but replaces its cuisine with one that is decidedly un-national. Globalization of the twenty-first century has rendered dishes such as Curry Chicken, Pizza or Spaghetti without a nation. These ubiquitous foods now belong to an international community. If we use these two cookbooks as markers of the current and future state of national cuisine (not only Spanish but all national cuisines), we see a shift in national cuisine that still maintains and promotes the use of national ingredients and flavors but also has no qualms with the inclusion of international dishes, flavors or ingredients within the national canon. Curry Chicken is, at best, superficially an Indian dish but as its popularity, availability and consumption rise, its appearance as exotic declines, even to the point of losing its notion of being foreign. The risk is, as writers such as Pardo Bazán, Dr. Thebussem and Post-Thebussem warned, that Spanish cuisine and all national cuisines will be subsumed by other, more powerful cuisines. While the immediate threat in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries came from France, today's threat is not that Spanish cuisine will become too French or even too much like any other national cuisine. The threat today is that Spanish cuisine will become too global, too international, that it will lose its inherent Spanishness in favor of a global cuisine where former national dishes such as Pizza or Curry Chicken are so internationally ubiquitous that they ingrain themselves within the national cuisines of foreign nations. The threat today

is that globalization will eliminate all notion of national cuisine resulting in the creation of only one, global cuisine.

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