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VIII INTERNATIONAL ETHNOBOTANY SYMPOSIUM



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Edited by
O. Silva, R. Serrano and R. Chaves

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Herbs and spices in traditional Portuguese culinary: A preliminary picture

DIAS A.S., DIAS L.S.

Departamento de Biologia, Escola de Ciências e Tecnologia, Universidade de Évora Ap. 94, 7002-554 Évora, Portugal; alxandra@uevora.pt; Tel: +351 266 760 881

Abstract

Aromatic plants of intense smell and taste known as herbs or spices are used worldwide and seem to be present as essential flavouring elements in almost all culinary traditions of settled people and also in nomadic herdsman cultures.

Nowadays the use of aromatic plants in national or regional characteristic culinary becomes in many places an auto-perpetuated traditional trait based on a culturally made taste.

The particular traits of the regional traditional culinary can reveal important aspects of the relationship of local cultures with nature and specifically with plants. The mixture of ingredients that make up the singular character of a regional traditional culinary can also reveal a complex history in a local level of the human relations with nature and also of the importance of commercial exchanges, poverty or wealth, need and luxury.

Although Portugal is a small country, it has a lot of distinct culinary regions that we intend to characterize based on the ingredients including herbs, spices and other seasonings present in the traditional recipes.

An inventory of regional recipe ingredients was built from books of traditional Portuguese cuisine that cover the whole country and consider its distinct regions. Here we examine the herbs, spices and other seasonings used in regional recipes looking for differences between regions and make a preliminary characterization of the distinct regional bouquets of condiments.

Pedidos de cópia desta publicação para Alexandra Soveral Dias, Departamento de Biologia, Universidade de Évora, Ap. 94, 7002-554 Évora, Portugal ou, de preferência, para alexandra@uevora.pt.

Reprint requests to Alexandra Soveral Dias, Departamento de Biologia, Universidade de Évora, Ap. 94, 7002-554 Évora, Portugal or preferably to alexandra@uevora.pt.