

## UMAMI WORKSHOP - TASTE CONSCIOUSNESS

### 1. BASIC DATA

- Event:** Taste consciousness – Umami Workshop in Lima
- Date:** Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2009 (18:00 – 20:30)
- Venue:** Suasi conference Room – Casa Andina Private Collection Hotel
- Objective:**
- To deepen understanding of umami concept and its application
  - To point out close relationship between basic science and gastronomy
  - Approach to umami concept and its importance from different perspectives: scientific recognition, presence in natural food, creation of new dishes, physiologic functions, pairing.
- Attendees:** 45 people
- Chefs and owners of restaurants, gastronomy professors in cooking schools, sommeliers, food industry related professionals, gastronomic journalists. Figure includes lecturers and Ajinomoto Staff
- Format:** “Salon” format to foster interactive conversation and learning in a comfortable atmosphere, combining lectures with tasting and pairing sessions as well as free Q&A.
- Sponsor:** Umami Information Center (UIC)
- Organizer:** Ajinomoto del Peru S.A.

#### Material given to participants:

- 1) UIC Folders
- 2) Brochure “Sweet, Sour, Salty, Bitter and Umami”
- 3) Book “Umami el Mundo”
- 4) Sheet of pictures with umami rich Peruvian foods.
- 5) Pencil

### 2. PROGRAM

#### Lecturers:

**a) Mr. Bernardo Roca Rey:**

Biologist performs as gastronomic journalist of the main media Group of Peru “*El Comercio*”. Pioneer in investigation of native food ingredients and promoter of their use in new Peruvian cuisine. He opened the event talking about the long history of gastronomy in Peru since Caral civilization (5000y BC) where there were found wooden pots indicating that men of those times already prepared food. In these 7,000 years of gastronomic culture, Peruvians have learned how to combine elements of 5 basic tastes to create delicious dishes.

In current days when we experience a revolutionary approach to Peruvian gastronomy, it is important to reconcile science and gastronomy as both are required to promote this new Peruvian cuisine.

**b) Dr. Teresa Blanco**

Chemist with a Doctor degree in Nutrition and Biochemistry. Currently she is the Principal of Nutrition and Dietetics Career at Universidad Peruana de Ciencias Aplicadas (UPC).

She pointed out how important is for chefs to recognize the huge number of structures contained in food and their reactions and transformations in order to create wonderful dishes, to recognize and understand the chemicals processes that occurred during cooking and their impact on taste receptors and how this knowledge can be used to control and improve results and to create new dishes.

**c) Mrs. Kumiko Ninomiya**

Director of the Umami Information Center. She explained more about umami concept and the elements that provide umami taste. For better understanding, a tasting session with cured ham, ichiban dashi and konbu dashi was offered to all participants. She also introduced the most recent activities of the Umami Information Center in different cities with renowned chefs and their experience after umami discovery, their comments and how they apply this information to create new dishes and improve their cooking. There was also a discussion among attendees about umami rich foods in Peruvian cuisine and the importance of amino acid analysis of foods to set some standards.

**d) Dr. Ana San Gabriel**

Main researcher at Ajinomoto Life Science Laboratories. She explained about physiology and mechanism of taste systems, how tastes are perceived in the oral cavity and also in the gastrointestinal tract to regulate digestion and metabolism. "This information is useful for you, for the preparation of your dishes and to keep in mind that when people enjoy food they will have good health" Dr.San Gabriel remarked..

Participants were interested in the interaction of taste and smell, importance of flavor. They wanted to know if there are other umami substances besides glutamate and nucleotides. It was explained that it is possible but there are no researches to prove, it is possible that specific peptides also confer umami taste by binding to umami receptors

**e) Mr. Jorge Llanos**

Biologist and sommelier. Specialist in fermentations and enological microbiology. Main professor of Pisco and Wine Institute and local Universities. Honorific president of Peruvian Sommelier Association.

He explained that understanding umami effect is very important for pairing as it will influence wine selection. There was a practical demonstration of pairing wine with 3 basic tastes: salty, sour and umami.

### **3. COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS**

**Paco Lozano** (Chef of Fiesta Restaurant)

This workshop has strengthened the knowledge we have had and motivated us to continue with this investigation path.

**Ivan Kísic** (Chef of Cala Restaurant)

This workshop was enriching, important to know more about umami... we are still inexpert; we are just starting to know this whole world of the fifth basic taste.

**Isabel Álvarez** (Food researcher)

I think it is very important, first of all, we get closer to the world of umami that we enjoy since we were born, and also because we get conscious about the importance of the

investigations about tastes. The umami is a world itself in the whole universe of tastes and flavors.

**Jorge Llanos** (Sommelier)

When we talk about umami, and we give information about how it is originated, where it can be found, how you perceive it in your mouth, in your body, how it gets to the brain, what is the taste it gives and how it is combined with foods then I think this workshop has been really successful, the reason: it combines multiple approaches.

**Manuel Baldeón** (Medical Doctor of San Francisco University – Quito)

You should keep doing this kind of events, not only for people who cook but also for professionals in the fields of food industry, nutrition, health because everything is interconnected. We enrich our knowledge while listening to others.

**4. FINAL REMARKS:**

- The informal atmosphere offered a space for attendees to feel free to comment and express their doubts about umami concept.
- Most participants already had participated at least in one of the previous umami workshops performed in Lima (in 2005 and in 2008) and for some of them this was the 3<sup>rd</sup> event about umami. Thus, they had certain knowledge of umami.
- Questions and comments were very interesting and complex due to the high level of the attendees.
- Practical demonstration and tasting helped attendees to better understand concepts explained.
- There is a great scientific interest of the chefs to investigate more about food and to apply scientific concepts to their dishes.
- Q&A session should be programmed after all lectures to give the opportunity to all lecturers to comment about.



LECTURERS



MRS. KUMIKO NINOMIYA



DR. ANA SAN GABRIEL



TASTING DEMO OF KONBU DASHI AND ICHIBAN DASHI



CHEFS: Paco Lozano, Ivan Kisic, Toshiro Konishi, Giancarlo Bontemps with Mrs. Ninomiya and Dora Sato