

Digital Resources: Latin American Food and Food History

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Subject: Digital Innovations, Sources, and Interdisciplinary Approaches

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To conduct research in the burgeoning field of Latin American food studies requires a certain amount of creativity, agility, and resources. Archives and libraries across the world, including in Latin America, have not deliberately preserved food-related sources (such as cookbooks, visual ephemera, or cooking utensils) and such sources often find their way to kitchen cupboards, second-hand markets, personal or collective memories, or even trash heaps. Governmental institutions have been more likely to create, and therefore to preserve, documentation related to agriculture, commerce, or nutrition, though such material is not always organized or easily identifiable for food-related researchers. The digitalization of such materials by both official entities (like archives and libraries) and non-official ones (such as culinary enthusiasts) therefore promises the possibility for expanded access. This is particularly important in a region as large, dynamic, and unequally resourced as Latin America. While scholars from the Global North tend to have more financial support to travel and use fee-based databases, scholars in the Global South often have less funding and access.

The digitization of sources about Latin American food and food history is a relatively new and scattered endeavor, but nonetheless one that holds significant promise. There is to date no digitized, region-wide collection focused on the food or food histories of Latin America. A small number of national libraries and institutions (especially in Chile and Colombia) have undertaken more significant digitization efforts that include a deliberate emphasis on food. Further, some networks of food studies scholars [such as the Red de Estudios Históricos y Sociales de la Nutrición y Alimentación en América Latina (REHS-NAL)] have initiated websites focused on researching Latin American food and food history starting in the 2010s.

As in this case, digital sites associated with scholars and librarians as well as research libraries and archives offer bibliographic and contextual knowledge that enhances users' abilities to work with these collections. Two impressive digital collaborations that provide broad regional coverage and significant material from other libraries and institutions, are the Biblioteca Digital del Patrimonio Iberoamericano (BDPI) and the Digital Library of the Caribbean (dLOC). The BDPI has themed collections (particularly relevant here is their "gastronomy" collection), while the dLOC does not. Both provide useful starting points to

open-access materials pertaining to the food and food history of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Food as Scholarly Topic

Around the turn of the 21st century, scholar Warren Belasco described the study of food and food history as an important “emerging field,” but one still in need of some validation.¹ By 2014, historian Paul Freedman felt differently. Food history, he explained is “a field that can no longer be described as ‘emerging,’ but that has achieved visibility and widely acknowledged importance.”² In the United States academy, this importance is evident in everything from the high-profile food history compilation in which Freedman made this assertion, to the growing bibliographies of food scholarship published and reviewed in the ensuing years.³

In the specific case of Latin America, primary sources reveal the crucial role food has played in the region and records about it since the encounter between people from the so-called “Old World” and the “New World.” In one of the earliest examples, conquistador Hernán Cortés wrote back to the Spanish Crown about the splendors he found in the Aztec marketplace in Tenochtitlan. After detailing the fowl, game, and herbs sold in the city, he continued:

There are all kinds of green vegetables, especially onions, leeks, garlic, watercress, nasturtium, borage, sorrel, artichokes, and golden thistle; fruits also of numerous descriptions, amongst which are cherries and plums, similar to those in Spain; honey and wax from bees, and from the stalks of maize, which are as sweet as the sugar-cane; honey is also extracted from the plant called maguey, which is superior to sweet or new wine; from the same plant they extract sugar and wine, which they also sell.⁴

Even as food (along with precious minerals) played a starring role in primary sources produced since the encounter of people from the “Old” and the “New” Worlds, food studies as a distinct field within Latin American studies is relatively new. As in other regional contexts, anthropologists took the lead, with pioneers such as Sidney Mintz, in the 1980s, pointing attention not only to the history of sugar, but also the possibilities of rethinking capitalism and the modern world by studying the production and consumption of food.⁵ In the ensuing decades, more Latin American scholars (both outside and inside of the region) would study food.⁶

Since the 2010s Latin American scholars within the region have begun to identify themselves as food scholars of the past or present and a sense of food studies as a discrete field has begun, in some places, to take shape. An important testament to this trend is the creation of the Red de Estudios Históricos y Sociales de La Nutrición y Alimentación en América Latina (REHSNAL); Network of Historical and Social Studies of Nutrition and Food in Latin America, which was conceived in 2014. This initiative is directed by Stefan Pohl Valero and a group of his colleagues. As of July 2019, this path-breaking interdiscipli-

nary food studies research group already possesses some twenty-five members from across the region and a website that serves as a useful starting point for identifying other researchers, a bibliography, and links to resources focused on the study of food and nutrition in Latin America.⁷

Methodology

This article is written by a research librarian and a historian dedicated to food history, so the search for open-access digital resources on Latin American food and food history began by querying colleagues. Specifically, members of REHSNAL and the Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Materials (SALALM) were asked to see whether they or anyone they knew had worked with digitized sources pertaining to the food and food histories of Latin America. A handful of replies pointed to the general lack of awareness of work done with such sources as well as an explanation that founding of REHSNAL was motivated, in part, to create a network of food studies scholars to share food studies resources (for now, mostly open-access articles). Responses from members of SALALM pointed to a few personal projects, one of which is discussed in the “PERSONAL DIGITIZED CONTENT” section of this article.

The search continued via Google using various combinations of the following terms: “Latin America,” “Latin American,” “digital collections,” “digital sources,” “food,” and “food history.” The search results mostly contained LibGuides (resource lists from academic libraries) from US universities and colleges. While the LibGuides offered some potential sources for this project, the majority of them are not open-access resources. After getting a broad sense of the types of US resources available (both open access and subscription-based), a number of academic libraries known to have strong Latin American holdings were consulted online to see if they had digitized any food or food history materials. These included libraries at the University of Texas, Austin, Tulane University, Brown University, University of Florida, Duke University, and the University of New Mexico. Although there are digitized collections at these institutional libraries, there is no significant material digitized on Latin American food or food history yet.

The next step was to search known culinary collections in the US for digitized materials on Latin American food or food history. Specifically, the New York Public Library (NYPL) digitized collections, University of Michigan’s Janice Bluestein Longone Culinary Archive, Harvard University Schlesinger Library, University of Texas Library, University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) Mexican Cookbook Collection, the Culinary Institute of America Library, and the American Institute of Wine and Food Culinary Collection at University of California, San Diego (UCSD), were consulted.⁸ The NYPL and UTSA’s Mexican Cookbook Collection are the only collections that have digitized sources for potential use by Latin American food historians. Users can search over 850,000 digitized items in the NYPL Digital Collections site. For example, searches for “maize” and “tortillas” come up with a number of images. UTSA’s collection of more than 1,800 Mexican cookbooks is only partially digitized. However, researchers can benefit from the selection of forty-seven digi-

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tized manuscript cookbooks (primarily from Zacatecas, Puebla, Toluca, and Durango, Mexico) dating from 1789 to the 1960s.

Within Latin America, LANIC (Latin American Network Information Center at the University of Texas at Austin (UT-Austin)) and Biblioteca Digital del Patrimonio Iberoamericano served as guides for searching individual Latin American national and academic libraries and national archives. All national libraries and national archives sites were also checked for digitized collections available on their sites. As discussed in greater detail in the “NATIONAL DIGITIZED CONTENT” section, the National Libraries of Colombia and Chile have digitized materials for potential use by Latin American food history scholars.

With any database, it is important that scholars carefully consider who has created the digitized sources they have found and their logics of inclusion and exclusion. Indeed, scholars who conduct digital research today (and who does not regularly consult search engines, or “googlearlo” as they say in Latin America), would be well served to read scholarship that engages not only the benefits but also the drawbacks and implications of this revolutionary method of inquiry.⁹ Starting with a website such as Beyond Citation, which “aggregates information about academic databases to encourage critical thinking about how these resources affect scholarship,” is a useful first step in understanding how major databases like Artemis, HathiTrust, and Google Books are organized and how they prioritize search results.¹⁰ As with other topics, databases like these provide access to a wealth of primary and secondary material that is keyword searchable. In addition, general internet searches can lead both to useful finds and their opposite. In either case, ideally scholars should not only seek out new sources available online but also study the dynamics of digitization, databases, and search algorithms to understand what they will and will not find online and the implications of this. In addition, scholars will benefit from continuing to visit actual libraries, archives, and institutions to consult their non-digitized materials alongside those that have been digitized.

Regional Digitized Content

Contemporary scholars tend to be keenly aware of the ways in which collections have been historically grouped in discrete national contexts, even though the documents within often predate or transcend these national borders. With Latin America, most nations have founded both a national archive and a national library (a few of which are addressed in the next section, “NATIONAL DIGITIZED CONTENT”). Here the focus is on two collaborative digital libraries that are deliberately regional in scope and incorporate materials from multiple national and local libraries and institutions. Both serve as useful starting points for research on the food and food histories of Latin America as they provide a one-point search and seem likely to be preserved and expanded in the coming years.

In 2012, the Asociación de Bibliotecas Nacionales de Iberoamérica (ABINIA) released a digital library called the Biblioteca Digital del Patrimonio Iberoamericano (BDPI or Digital Library of Iberian-American Patrimony).¹¹ Designed and since maintained by the National Library of Spain (in collaboration with other national library members), it sought to

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provide “one-point” searches for digital materials in libraries in Iberia (specifically, Spain and Portugal) and the nations of Latin America previously colonized by them (though, of course, they have not expressed it this way). In 2014, the General Iberian-American Secretary (SEGIB) declared this initiative “a fundamental tool in the construction and security” of the preservation of Iberian-American culture.¹² According to the explanation on the BDPI website the aims of this collaborative digital library are threefold: (1) to expand citizen access to sources across the region, (2) to serve as an example of international Iberian-American cooperation, and (3) to promote digitization projects within member libraries.

As of July 2019, more than fifteen participating libraries had provided access to their digitized materials.¹³ These include both the National Libraries of Spain and Portugal as well as many National Libraries of Latin America, specifically those of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama, Peru, and Uruguay. Notably absent are libraries from former parts of Spanish-America including Honduras, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Guatemala, as well as the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Additionally, nations that were colonized by the French, British, or Dutch do not appear as participants in this digital collection; for example, neither Haiti nor the United States are part of this “Ibero-American” initiative.

With the contexts it covers, the BDPI portal provides the user with the ability to undertake a basic or advanced search using keywords across a large swath of Latin America (and all of Iberia). The site uses Dublin Core metadata and, as such, the search can be conducted with common search methods (e.g., by specifying author, title, keywords, etc.). Users can also undertake advanced searches and isolate particular national contexts, types of documents, and languages. The BDPI does not digitize or hold the actual digitized files, but rather the bibliographic information and metadata about them. Therefore, when users click on a particular result, they are directed to the holding library to seek access to the file. Searches on the site have led to both easy access to some sources (that ranged from photographs to cookbooks) and lack of access to others (where no digitized file of the item in question appeared). Even more sources were found when the search was replicated in the original library’s database. That is, the BDPI portal serves as a fantastic starting point, but not as the only definitive record of materials that have been digitized, even by its members.

Particularly useful for scholars of food and food history is the themed collection that BDPI has created entitled “gastronomía” (or gastronomy). In July 2019, there were 517 sources included in this collection from across the Ibero-American world. Still, it is important to keep in mind that this collection is geographically uneven and far from definitive. Most records tagged as part of the gastronomy collection came from Spain (218 in total) and there were also an impressive number from Colombia (169) and Chile (106). In contrast, there were just twelve sources in this collection from both Argentina and Panama, seven from Ecuador, and one each for Brazil, El Salvador, and Peru. Nevertheless, these numbers can be misleading, as not all food-related sources have been included in this collection. For example, with a search for the term “chocolate,” the largest number of results

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comes from Spain (seventy-three of 134) but the second largest (twenty-seven) come from Ecuador, far outnumbering their supposed contribution to the entire gastronomy collection.

The second major regional digitized library, the Digital Library of the Caribbean (dLOC), is a cooperative digital library that offers access to research materials on Caribbean culture and history from archives, libraries, and private collections across the region. It was first conceived in 2004 by three members of the Caribbean Library Association (ACURIL), who aspired to create “a cooperative digital library among partners in the Caribbean and circum-Caribbean,” to provide “users access to cultural, historical and research materials held in archives, libraries and private collections.”¹⁴ Its membership includes some of the missing partners from the BDPI initiative. Specifically, national and local libraries and archives from the former Spanish colonies of Puerto Rico and Venezuela are members, alongside partners from regions previously colonized by others, including Barbados, Belize, Curaçao, Haiti, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, and the Virgin Islands. Some libraries from local regions, such as the Yucatán, also participate. Cuba is unique in appearing on both this site and BDPI’s, while Central America remains underrepresented in both databases (with Honduras, Nicaragua, and Guatemala’s national libraries absent on both). Several US universities also participate, as do some faith-based organizations.¹⁵ The University of Florida has apparently taken the lead in providing the technical infrastructure for this site.

Since its founding, the dLOC has actively supported digitization projects across the region, creating a growing number of publicly accessible resources. According to the organization’s site, the dLOC hosts some 41,000 titles with more than 4 million pages of content. These include “newspapers, official documents, ecological and economic data, maps, histories, travel accounts, literature, poetry, musical expressions, and artifacts.”¹⁶ Within this large and varied collection, a “one-point” search can be constructed or search results can be filtered by geographic area, topic, language, publisher, and genre. Researchers can also conduct a “full text search” with a specific term across the word-searchable part of the collection. The site also has been set up to browse by country, a process that will go more smoothly for countries with a smaller number of documents associated with them, such as Aruba (with some fifty-three titles), than with those with more substantial coverage, like Cuba (with some 862 titles). One can also search by commodity; for example, a general search with the term “coffee” or “sugar” turned up sixty-nine and 610 titles, respectively, making coffee much easier to browse than its sweeter counterpart and sugar easier to research in greater depth than coffee on this site.

The dLOC has also created thematic groups, which it calls “topical collections.” While there is no specific group for food or food history, the most relevant is a collection entitled “Agriculture” (which as of July 2019 contains some 606 files). There is another large collection entitled “Culture and History” (with over 10,000 files), but given the scale, this is a collection within which to search rather than browse. Researchers can also search the Cuba and Panama Canal Collections. For example, there is quite a bit of material on sugar in the Cuba Collection, as well as the specific “Braga Brothers Collection,” an im-

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pressive archive of a large North American company that was in the sugar business in Cuba for almost a century.¹⁷ As a result, scholars interested in Cuba or Caribbean commodities will likely wish to take a close look at this digital archive.

Two other region-wide sources afford access to specific types of sources. The Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes provides access to digitized literature from across the region.¹⁸ Food researchers may be particularly interested in their small collection of digitized cookbooks, in addition to their travelers' reports, memoirs, and other genres of literature in which food is often mentioned. In turn, for those conducting visual research, the US Library of Congress and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO's) World Digital Library (Latin American and Caribbean Collection) offer materials, including maps, illustrations, and photographs, that one can browse by country.¹⁹

National Digitized Content

Most national libraries in Latin America and the Caribbean are part of one of the two consortiums of digitized sources that have been described in detail (BDPI and dLOC). Nevertheless, it is important to reiterate the benefits of also visiting the original library site and the library itself to gain access to a larger number of materials (for example, in the National Digitized Library of Brazil) both digitized and not.²⁰ In this section, the focus is on efforts by Chile, Colombia, and Mexico that go beyond the digitization of items in their respective national libraries to create collections explicitly related to food and food history.

Since around the mid-2000s, the National Library of Chile's project entitled "Memoria Chilena" (or Chilean Memory) has undertaken a major effort not only to digitize but also to curate and contextualize specific collections. Most interesting here are two specific collections, the first squarely focused on food and the second on advertising. The first is entitled "Familia y alimentación en Chile (1911-2016)" (Family and Food in Chile, 1911-2016).²¹ This specific section, like all others on the site, includes a useful synthesis of the major trends in Chilean food history over this period. In addition, it offers some sixteen digitized books, as well as a small number of magazines, images, and a short video on the *ollas comunes* (or soup kitchens) of the mid-1980s. The second section of relevance for food researchers is actually a subsection on food and drink within a larger collection of early 20th-century advertisements.²² There are, as of July 2019, twenty-eight high-quality scans of such advertisements for products that range from wine to lactation supplements in this particular collection. Many more sections merit food scholars' attention, and browsing the entire site can lead to themed collections such as one on alcoholism, "Alcoholismo en Chile (1870-1940)," and another on domestic work, "El servicio doméstico en Chile (1830-1931)."

Like Chile, Colombia has also taken an active interest in creating digital collections centered around food and food history. The Banco de la República Digital Library offers pamphlets on food, nutrition, and agriculture in Colombia. The Biblioteca Básica de Cultura Colombiana (Basic Library of Colombian Culture), a digitized collection of secondary

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sources within the Colombian National Library, contains searchable categories including “cocina.” A search for “historia” within the “cocina” category brings up four full-text digitized books including a work on the regional cooking of the Cauca Valley during the colonial period. In turn, a US research university, Vanderbilt University, offers a wide range of primary sources on Colombian history and culture in the J. León Helguera Collection of Colombiana. While not all of their materials are digitized, there is some material available on their site from Colombia on the salt industry, plátanos/bananas, coffee, cassava/yuca, peanuts, and wheat.²³

The Ministries of Culture in both Colombia and Mexico have not only supported research and writing on their respective nation’s food histories, but also digitized and promoted them. The Colombian Ministry of Culture’s website provides digitized versions of a beautiful collection of nineteen books it has sponsored on Colombian cooking from the pre-colonial period through to today, entitled “The Basic Library of Traditional Colombian Cooking.”²⁴ Each book opens with the mission statement of this initiative, “Política para el conocimiento, la salvaguardia y el fomento de la alimentación y las cocinas tradicionales de Colombia” (Policy for the Knowledge, Safeguarding and Promotion of Food and Traditional Cuisines in Colombia). In both Colombia and Mexico, such endeavors are not only aiming to preserve patrimony but also encourage tourism. The Mexican Ministry of Culture site offers access to their “Cuadernos del Patrimonio Cultural y Turismo” (Notebooks of Cultural Patrimony and Tourism) by referencing books commissioned by them on topics such as corn and the complex range of fragrant sauces known as *moles*. As these examples suggest, political and economic interest in paying more attention to food is starting to produce new kinds of sources and the digitalization of some of them in particular contexts.

Personal Digitized Content

As with other fields, the digitization of food-related materials has been undertaken not only by institutions but also individuals. For example, Melissa Gasparotto, Assistant Director of Research Services at the NYPL and member of SALALM, started an Omeka site called “Open Latin American Cookbooks.”²⁵ As her introduction at the beginning of her exhibit explains, “This collection in progress brings together freely available online cookbooks and works on gastronomy from Latin America.” The author has employed her method of finding open-access and cost-free e-books from Latin America, which she has described elsewhere, to identify sources for this site.²⁶ In connection with the discussion in the previous section “NATIONAL DIGITIZED CONTENT,” Gasparotto explains that the majority of the books on the site, “were made digitally available by the government ministries and secretariats supporting their publication; others were provided directly by the publishers.”²⁷ Such that, even on a personal research librarian’s site, governmental initiatives to preserve national patrimonies and encourage tourism have made a significant impact on what is included (and not) in this collection, as has the willingness of publishers to provide open-access content. Perhaps, as a result, most of this collection is contempo-

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rary, and, as such, will be more useful for someone interested in newer rather than more historical cookbooks.

Due to Gasparotto's initiative, cookbooks and the compilations from culinary conferences, all of which had previously been produced in specific national and regional contexts, are now available in one place. She has made her site browsable by country or region, and keyword searchable. For example, if one enters the term "empanada" into the search, cookbook files from countries including Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Venezuela appear (somewhat counterintuitively, a nation like Argentina, which prizes its way of making empanadas, does not). However, the searcher still needs to do the work to find the specific reference to the "empanada" within the text itself.

Bibliographic Starting Points

Several useful bibliographies are available online that do not (as of yet) contain significant digitized content, but which provide useful orientation for bibliographic research. Some are specialized libraries (as in the case of the Fundación Herdez) and others more general databases (such as the US Library of Congress's Catalog). All still require a trip to the host site or access to paid databases (or, sometimes, the added step of finding Open Access databases) to seek full access to the materials.

The Fundación Herdez in Mexico possesses a remarkably rich library on Mexican gastronomy. This non-profit foundation opened the groundbreaking Biblioteca de la Gastronomía Mexicana in 1997; it has developed its extensive collection of more than 6,000 sources in partnership with food scholars and the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, as part of the Programa Universitario de Alimentos (PUAL) (University Program on Food).²⁸ On their site, scholars can search their extensive bibliography and a culinary dictionary, as well as the electronic resources links to open-access journals and sources via different databases (Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), Open Access Library, Red de Revistas Científicas de América Latina y el Caribe, España y Portugal (REDALYC), OpenDOAR, e-Revist@s, and Dialnet). To see most of their unique materials requires a trip to the library itself.

The US Library of Congress provides a very useful annotated bibliography of a selection of sources compiled and introduced in Spanish by Dr. Natalia Silva Prada on its Hispanic Reading Room site.²⁹ Scholars can browse by country or by region. While all of the books (both cookbooks and scholarly works) referenced in this bibliography are available at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, those with access to a library that uses WorldCat may also be able to order them via their library site.

While the Handbook of Latin American Studies (HLAS) does not offer a curated section on food or food history, it does provide a searchable annotated bibliography of books and articles on Latin America (in English, Portuguese, or Spanish). The researcher can also choose to search within the US Library of Congress or outside of it (or both at the same time). If the OpenURL link is enabled, a link icon appears to search for a digitized version

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of the source in question. In an even more direct but less curated fashion, databases like Scielo as well as search engines like Google Scholar and sites like Academia.edu also offer the ability to search for and link directly to mostly secondary material found via one of these searches.

The network of food research scholars called REHSNAL offers a useful and regularly updated bibliography compiled by scholars actively working on the study of food and nutrition in Latin America from both historical and contemporary vantage points.³⁰ As of July 2019, this site offers links to open-access sites from institutions and individuals alike (including several of those mentioned here), as well as other scholarly groups that study food. They also provide a link to one open-resource journal, *Revista Ingesta*, from the University of São Paulo.

Discussion of Related Research Tools and Future Directions and Cautions

As Jeffrey Pilcher points out, food histories of Latin America have the potential to move us beyond the stereotype of an “exotic and exploited” region to one that has much to tell us about agrarian societies, local agency, multiculturalism, globalization, and power.³¹ In the future, it is reasonable to expect that a growing body of primary and secondary sources related to the food and food histories of Latin America will be digitized, and even curated, by entities such as those described in this piece to help us enrich our understanding of this region (and others). Colombia and Chile in particular set a precedent for the potential of digitally curated food-related collections in the future. Still, while such efforts are significant, they will not replace trips to the field for both those who study faraway contexts and those who study the places in which they live. Seeing how local food culture works, observing scarcity and plenty, cooking and tasting local dishes, conducting oral histories, talking to local experts, and visiting libraries and archives to see non-digitized materials remain crucial to food-related research, whether it be contemporary or historical. Researching the “analog world” should continue alongside the digital—especially in a field as material and embodied as food studies.

Indeed, as historian Lara Putnam has explained in 2016, as scholars engage in digital research, it is essential to be aware of the advantages and disadvantages associated with the digital turn. As Putnam warns,

Analog search both requires and provides crucial learning along the way to discovery. Digital search requires almost no learning: that’s what happens when you piggyback on commercial technology honed to connect people to purchases as easily as possible. Of course, it can provide it—if we push ourselves to seek out information on OCR loss rates, proprietary databases, built-in algorithms,

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and better alternatives.³² But, however crucial, that learning is not coterminous with the content- and context-specific learning that analog search requires. It cannot substitute for it. And the more automated and efficient our systems of digital discovery become, the harder it can be to look away from the flood of data before us.³³

As Putnam explains here, scholars learn valuable things from analog searches “on the ground,” but may be tempted to do fewer of them as the digitization of materials grows.

What’s at stake in this shift for the fields of food history and food studies? As in other fields, scholars heavily dependent upon digital sources might have a proclivity to overemphasize the importance of topics, sources, and subjects that are more accessible online than others. It seems reasonable, for example, that in the field of food history digitized cookbooks (like digitized newspapers) would grow to be overrepresented in publications in comparison to their non-digitized counterparts, regardless of their importance, but rather due to their enhanced accessibility.³⁴ Conducting ethnographic fieldwork, archeological digs, surveys, or oral histories, have proved crucial ways in which scholars have learned about past and contemporary societies’ relationships to food. However, if researchers rely more heavily on digitized cookbooks, and do not visit the field for as long or conduct deep research there, this would shape who and what is studied and written about. In this hypothetical case, because cookbooks have primarily been written and consumed by the top and most literate echelons of society, relying exclusively on them would tell us relatively little about the cooking and eating practices of the poor majority.³⁵

In sum, while the digital turn holds great potential for scholars of food (and other topics), it still requires careful consideration of what kinds of sources predominate or remain absent from the digital world and why. Further, digital databases (like libraries and scholarly articles) benefit from the curation and contextualization of librarians, scholars, and subject-specific experts—hence the emphasis here on databases that offer the fruits of such labor alongside the sources themselves. Finally, while the digital turn expands the number of easily accessible sources, hopefully scholars will embrace the enduring importance of combining digital searches with analog ones. Recapturing the diverse relationships between humans and food over place and time depends upon it.

Links to Digital Materials

Beyond Citation: Critical Thinking About Digital Research

Biblioteca Básica de Cocinas Tradicionales de Colombia, Ministerio de Cultura de Colombia

Biblioteca Básica de Cultura Colombiana, Biblioteca Nacional de Colombia

Biblioteca Digital del Patrimonio Iberoamericano

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Biblioteca Nacional de Brasil

Biblioteca Virtual Miguel Cervantes: Biblioteca Americana

Bibliografía anotada sobre alimentación, gastronomía, cultura y hábitos alimenticios en el mundo ibérico (Europa y America) y el Caribe, Library of Congress

Fundación Herdez, Biblioteca de la Gastronomía Mexicana

Handbook of Latin American Studies (HLAS)

Digital Library of the Caribbean

Familia y Alimentación en Chile (1911-2016), Biblioteca Nacional de Chile

J. León Helguera Collection of Colombiana, Vanderbilt University

La Publicidad en Chile (1900-1940)—Alimentación y Bebidas, Biblioteca Nacional Digital de Chile

Mexican Cookbook Collection, UTSA Libraries

NYPL Digital Collections

Open Latin American Cookbooks

Red de Estudios Históricos y Sociales de La Nutrición y Alimentación Latina (RE-HSNAL)

World Digital Library (Latin American and Caribbean Collection)

Further Reading

Ayora-Diaz, Steffan, ed. *Cooking Technology: Transformations in Culinary Practice in Mexico and Latin America*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017.

Bourges, Héctor y José M., and Alejandro Bengoa O'Donnell, eds. *Historia de la nutrición en América Latina*. Panama: Sociedad Latinoamericana de Nutrición, 2009.

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Pilcher, Jeffrey M. "Review Essay: The Embodied Imagination in Recent Writings on Food History." *American Historical Review* 121.3 (2016): 861-887.

Putnam, Lara. "The Transnational and the Text-Searchable: Digitized Sources and the Shadows They Cast." *American Historical Review* 121.2 (2016): 377-402.

Notes:

(1.) Warren Belasco, "Food Matters: Perspectives on an Emerging Field," in *Food Nations: Selling Taste in Consumer Societies*, ed. Warren Belasco and Philip Scranton (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 2-23.

(2.) Paul Freedman, "Preface," in *Food in Time and Place: The American Historical Association Companion to Food History*, ed. Paul Freedman, Joyce Chaplan, and Ken Albala (Oakland: University of California Press, 2014), xi.

(3.) Freedman, Chaplan, and Albala, eds., *Food in Time and Place*; and Jeffrey Pilcher, "Review Essay: The Embodied Imagination in Recent Writings on Food History," *American Historical Review* 121, no. 3 (2016): 861-887.

(4.) Hernán Cortés, *Cartas y relaciones de Hernán Cortés al emperador Carlos V*, ed. Pascual de Gayangos (Paris: A. Chaix, 1866). Translated and transcribed by Dr. Nancy Fitch as *Letters from Hernán Cortés*.

(5.) Sydney Mintz, *Sugar and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Penguin Books, 1985).

(6.) Jeffrey Pilcher, "Latin American Food between Export Liberalism and the Via Campesina," in *Food in Time and Place*, ed. Freedman, Chaplan, and Albala, 120-141; and REHSNAL Bibliografía General.

(7.) REHSNAL.

(8.) NYPL Digital Collections; UTSA Libraries Mexican Cookbook Collection.

(9.) See, for example, Tim Hitchcock, "Confronting the Digital," *Cultural and Social History* 10, no. 1 (2013): 9-23; and Lara Putnam, "The Transnational and the Text-Searchable:

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Digitized Sources and the Shadows They Cast," *American Historical Review* 121, no. 2 (2016): 377–402.

(10.) Beyond Citation explains this intent on its banner.

(11.) BDPI.

(12.) Ibid. "Herramienta fundamental en la construcción y afianzamiento del Espacio Cultural Iberoamericano."

(13.) There were two separate libraries from Chile, along with one each from Spain, Portugal, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama, Peru, and Uruguay.

(14.) According to the summer 2019 newsletter posted on the site, these members were "Cathy Marsicek of Florida International University, Judith Rogers of the University of the Virgin Islands, and Erich Kesse of the University of Florida."

(15.) The US universities include Barry University, Brown University, Duke University, Florida International University, Florida State University, University of Central Florida, University of Miami Libraries, University of Florida, University of Puerto Rico, and University of South Florida, and the faith-based organizations are American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Moravian Church Archives, and Barbados Synagogue Restoration Project.

(16.) dLOC, Fact sheet.

(17.) dLOC Braga Brothers Collection.

(18.) Biblioteca Americana.

(19.) As with previous collections, this one provides a greater number of sources for some countries (e.g., Argentina, with 994 items) than others (e.g., Bolivia, with twenty-four). World Digital Library (Latin American and the Caribbean).

(20.) Biblioteca Nacional Digital Brasil.

(21.) This is housed within a larger collection of materials found in the "History" section of the site under a further subcategory called "Salud y Bienestar."

(22.) Memoria Chilena.

(23.) The J. Leon Helguera Collection of Colombiana.

(24.) Biblioteca Básica de Cocinas Tradicionales de Colombia.

(25.) Open Latin American Cookbooks.

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- (26.) Melissa Gasparotto, "Using Google's Custom Search Engine Product to Discover Scholarly Open Access and Cost-Free eBooks from Latin America," *Revista Interamericana de Bibliotecología* 41, no. 2 (2018): 153-166..
- (27.) Open Latin American Cookbooks.
- (28.) Fundación Herdez.
- (29.) Hispanic Reading Room.
- (30.) REHSNAL.
- (31.) Pilcher, "Latin American Food."
- (32.) Putnam points our attention to the site, Beyond Citation, which explains on its banner that it "aggregates information about academic databases to encourage critical thinking about how these resources affect scholarship." Putnam, "The Transnational and the Text-Searchable," 399.
- (33.) Ibid.
- (34.) In a powerful case study of this effect, Ian Milligan shows that after it was digitized the Canadian newspaper the *Globe and Mail* went from being rarely cited to being the most-cited newspaper in the *Canadian Historical Review*. Ian Milligan, "Illusionary Order: Online Databases, Optical Character Recognition, and Canadian History, 1997-2010," *Canadian Historical Review* 94, no. 4 (2013): 540-569; esp. 542; original reference from Putnam, "The Transnational and Text-Searchable," 388.
- (35.) Ken Albala, "Cookbooks as Historical Documents," in *Oxford Handbook of Food History*, ed. Jeffrey Pilcher (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 227-240.

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