

# Cuenta y Razón

Founded by Julián Marías in 1981

## New Gastronomy Salubrious, Solidary, Sustainable and Satisfactory

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**F**our S's are the first letters of four adjectives that identify the key elements of a great revolution. That is how "New Gastronomy" can be described, or at least, should be, in the 21st century, in which Spain undoubtedly plays a role that is as decisive as it is facilitatory.

At the onset of this revolution, from the 19th century onwards, and, above all during the Belle Époque in Paris, pleasure at mealtimes was advocated (above all that of the privileged few who were able to enjoy eating). And, as this has been the case for a very long time, support for or sponsorship of gastronomy appeared to only serve the chosen few's enjoyment of food.

## Spain, at the forefront of the sea change

Nevertheless, since the 20th century, in the 80s and 90s, a sea change has taken place in the food and gastronomy world, with Spain at the forefront. On the one hand, "**freedom cuisine**" emerged, both for the chef as well as for the diner, which, to a large extent, is embraced by Ferrán Adrià, an authentic revolutionary saddled between two centuries. Based on the Costa Brava, this chef ceased being a craftsman to become an artist, a creator.

It was he who inspired the birth of **signature cuisine**, innovative cooking, which was soon to achieve universal acclaim, since his el-Bulli restaurant was visited by aspiring chefs from across the planet. And **great kitchen creators**

**and artists emerged in practically all countries of the world**, not only in one, as occurred in bygone times, when France was the only international "Mecca" of gastronomy.

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The advent of this "freedom cuisine" was coupled with the gradual inception of an overall vision of food and nutrition, which takes into account the different ingredients that make up the "act of eating": a **healthy** appearance, its effect on **social relations, culture, education** and its impact on the **economy, employment, healthcare and tourism**. All of these form part of gastronomy's single act, when considered from a general perspective.

It was in this way, in tandem with **new cuisine** ("the new Nouvelle Cuisine" or "The New Nouvelle Cuisine", as it was coined at the time by The New York Times on referring to the Adrià phenomenon), that New Gastronomy emerged. Associated with the different aspects of food and nutrition and linked to the "four S's" that headline this article, it has to be "**salubrious, solidary,**

**sustainable and satisfactory**”, four essential and irreplaceable values.

### Salubrious

New gastronomy is or should be **“Salubrious”** because there is a general consensus that the most important thing when it comes to eating is to consume the necessary calories and nutrients to ensure **quality of life and health**. In this aspect, gastronomy is related to science and nutrition, two disciplines, which, nowadays, go hand in hand with cooking when it comes to defining the way we feed ourselves.

Health is basic to quality of life and any quality gastronomic proposal has, in principle, to be healthy. Furthermore, making a firm commitment to nutrition is a highly interesting concept from an economic perspective as well, since an unhealthy diet leads to absenteeism and a lack of workplace efficiency, in addition to enormous healthcare costs related, for example, to overweight and obesity and diabetes.

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**Knowing how to eat leads to a more efficient professional performance and more and better personal relationships**

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On the contrary, knowing how to eat leads to a more efficient professional performance and more and better personal relationships; in short, greater satisfaction. As was said by the Brazilian singer Roberto Carlos, you can aspire to having a “million friends”, because a good diet reinforces self-esteem, optimism and enthusiasm for undertaking all kinds of activities.

It is true that we have to eat healthily but, in fact, as Professor Francisco Grande Covián, the creator of the Spanish Nutrition Foundation in conjunction with Gregorio Varela and myself, used to say, **“People will eat what they should, if they like it”**. In other words, nutrition and gastronomy’s trajectories do not run parallel to each other but they come together and merge into eating, which is a single act, the essential activity of the human being.

### Solidary

It is **“Solidary”** because nowadays we all agree that it is not a question of the privileged few

eating well but that, above all, **hunger and malnutrition have to be eradicated in the world**; nobody’s life should be jeopardized by a lack of food, an unwavering goal for social interaction. In other words, all human beings have to eat what is required to have good health and, if possible, to enjoy eating as well, because, **to some extent, gastronomic pleasure should be available for everyone**.

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But there is another fundamental aspect in this solidarity: the importance of sharing. Without a shadow of a doubt, eating well means not only doing so healthily and enjoyably but also doing so in company. Moreover, good food is not enjoyed in the same way if it is eaten alone; the meal table is a place for meeting, conversation, family life and friendship. While you eat, you chat, you share, you argue in a relaxed way. In fact, throughout history, serious arguments have been settled around a well-laid table and a good meal. When you eat on your own, you undoubtedly eat worse and quicker and your meal is less likely to be well balanced and healthy.

**Solidarity is sharing, it is friendship, it is companionship, it is teamwork and, therefore, it is more efficient and more humane.**

### Sustainable

Thirdly, new gastronomy is **“Sustainable”**, because **it always has to consider future generations**, who should enjoy the right to eat healthily and pleurably. Furthermore, this sustainability, environmental friendliness and respect for ecology can facilitate gastronomic pleasure. In this spirit, the preservation of **family vegetable gardens**, spaces near the consumer’s location, is important, so that we can eat fresh foods, as Nature gives them to us, without the need for long journeys or complicated transportation where they spend a long time in cold storage.

**Proximity has enormous value when it comes to feeding ourselves and advocating quality of life.**

Sustainability is also related to caterers' concern for the environment; they are always ready and willing to give back to producers, whether farmers, cattle breeders or fishermen, everything they contribute so that our society continues to respect nature and to guarantee our civilisation's future. This collaboration, for the diner's benefit, is, together with health and pleasure, another of the cornerstones of haute cuisine in these times.

### Satisfactory

Last but not least, it should be **“Satisfactory”**, because **people will eat salubriously, solidarily and sustainably as long as they enjoy doing so**. The important thing when it comes to combining health and pleasure is to always take into account that sensorial matters are not only based on knowledge but also on experience.

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For the first time, Food, Nutrition and Gastronomy teachings and taste workshops will be incorporated into Infant Education curricula design in Spain

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In other words, it is not enough for everyone to know what the Mediterranean Diet is, the most nutritional way of eating known (also based on our tradition), but they need to put it into practice too, within the great global goal, which is **knowing how to eat well**. And this is not precisely what is happening in our country, where we frequently forget the food and nutrition values we thought we had internalised.

To sum up, satisfaction entails learning how to eat (FOODSOPHY) and knowing how to do so in order to enjoy the gastronomic act to the utmost, in other words, attaining pleasure. Moreover, achieving it contributes to **psychological balance, mental health, better quality of life and greater happiness, not only personal but also that of the family environment**.

### New Gastronomy in education

Endorsing the same values and priorities, the Royal Academy of Gastronomy and the Spanish Nutrition Foundation have signed, with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, an important agreement for the creation of a pioneering project **“to teach children how**

**to eat well”** through the Food, Nutrition and Gastronomy Programme for Infant Education (**PANGEL**).

Its start-up and the Administration's involvement mean that, for the first time, teachings in Food, Nutrition and Gastronomy and taste workshops will be incorporated into Infant Education curricula design in Spain.

### Theoretical modules and taste workshops

The model that will be implemented means that not only will theoretical knowledge be taught through modules, but a practical part via taste workshops will be included as well, because, as we explained previously, in 21st century gastronomy, **enjoying experiences is just as important as acquiring knowledge**.

And all of the above in the quest for gastronomy of the “Four S's”, which, for many years now, has been accompanied by online promotion initiatives that have become Borges' Aleph or, in other words, “the centre of everything”. Such initiatives include those developed successively by Google, Youtube, Microsoft and Disney, which are becoming increasingly aware of the prominent role played by diet in contemporary culture.

**Anything is possible thanks to the digital world and new technologies**, which facilitate the development of acquired knowledge and the enjoyment of experiences which are increasingly possible and even within reach of the broadest groups.

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The European Parliament Resolution of March 2014, (...) recommends that the Governments (...) of the 25 member countries incorporate food and nutrition knowledge and taste instruction into the education system

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### Learning how to eat in the same way as you learn how to read and write

In short, **you have to learn how to eat** in the same way as you learn how to read and write, travel and live, in order to ensure that you can enjoy food without this pleasure adversely affecting your health and quality of life.

Knowing how to eat is, therefore, the great universal goal of the 21st century, taking into account that whereas, in the past, mealtime experiences were had at home and with the family, now they should be incorporated into the education system.

I believe that this is the primary key to this **“Manifesto of the Four S’s”** through which we can affirm that our generation has been very fortunate on having had the opportunity to witness a **true revolution, which is not only gastronomic, but also educational and lifestyle and health related.**

Nowadays, its guidelines are widely accepted and I am convinced that, thanks to this dietary and culinary explosion, today we can eat better, have more opportunities to do so and thus gain in quality of life and expectancy. Therefore, these four S’s, which are so descriptive and important and open up new scenarios and new paths, should be welcomed as part of the quest for happiness.

### **Resolution of the European Parliament**

This renewed “single dietary act”, this “New Gastronomy”, should be projected on the continental scale, as is specified in the Resolution of the European Parliament of March 2014, which recommends that the Governments and Parliaments of the 25 member countries incorporate knowledge of food and nutrition and taste instruction into the education system.

Spain was the first country to drive this initiative in its legal system through decisions taken by the Congress of Deputies and in actions implemented by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, during the stage of the Minister and academic Iñigo Méndez de Vigo.

Nevertheless, above and beyond one-off policy, the development of this initiative and these projects should be everyone’s responsibility and for everyone’s benefit. ■

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