

Type: Street food / Take-away
Country: UK



Why it is a good practice?

Guasa demonstrates innovative approaches to Healthy fast-food. They use fresh, quality ingredients throughout their menu and have introduced a relatively un-heard of cuisine into the London street food market, thus are keeping the Venezuelan culinary heritage alive, through the use of traditional recipes and methods. By considering their customers' needs and input they have made the filling choices adaptable to suit western palates. As a result of Covid-19 they have also demonstrated their ability to adapt and innovate their main business model to suit the new demands/trends imposed as a result of the crisis and create boxed meal kits and therefore are continuing the quality service and delivery of their product. At all times the business considers the impact of wasted ingredients on the planet and through correct menu planning and waste management are keeping their food waste to a minimum.

Challenge

Venezuelan cuisine has never been common on the UK food scene and so David's dream was to bring his native flavours to the street food markets of Britain and demonstrate to foodies just how delicious Venezuelan food is. Initially, David introduced a very traditional Venezuelan menu whereby he taste-tested dishes every week until he got the flavour just right! He looked at offering 20 or so fillings but quickly realised that a large fresh food stock meant there was going to be a lot of food waste which, ethically or margin-wise, they didn't want. Instead, David opted to offer a select few fillings as part of Guasa's food line-up. He admits that appealing to new customers is a key challenge and the burger and pizza still win at times, but once he gets a new customer, he tends to keep them, as those who try his offerings love the flavours that they sample in Guasa's food.

About

Born in 2013 at London's Deptford Market, Guasa was the brainchild of young entrepreneur, David Gutierrez, who's dream was to bring the colourful flavours of his native country Venezuela to the palates of metropolitan Londoners. The economics graduate from Caracas combined his love of food with his degree, carefully calculated how he could successfully bring his native food to the streets of the UK with little or no experience. After teaching himself how to make the perfect Arepa – a traditional South American cornbread usually stuffed with beef, pork or eggs; David jumped straight in and set up his very own catering business. Now in the seventh year of trading,

David and his team have pitched up across the city and are also trading at Tooting Market and Mercato Metropolitano. They have also created quite the buzz at musical festivals amongst street food lovers; many of whom, had never heard of an Arepa prior to finding Guasa. After securing international media coverage for his work and the praise of tourists the world over, David has proved that a good head for business combined with hard work and passion are the key ingredients for success.

Action

The menu has been evolving through the years; they now adapt for each market/event and their customer needs in each location. David continues to listen to customer feedback when it comes to developing new recipes as he considers their input important in developing new additions to the menu. David's passion remains, he gets joy from preparing fresh food and cooking it in front of the customer and that feeds his love of working in the street food industry. He says; *"in a restaurant the chef rarely gets feedback, but with street food, people tell you straight away what they liked about the dish. It's about the whole vibe of seeing your food being made and then eating it in such an informal setting"*.

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Result

The ultimate goal from the beginning for David was simply to bring Venezuelan food to the UK and Guasa is now in the fortunate position of being a brand that is recognised for that. Looking to the future he would like to keep expanding the business, possibly into food halls and brick and mortar restaurants. David admits that he and the team get invited back to a lot of events now that they have a loyal following.

Having found a niche cuisine in which to base their menu around, the Guasa team have made quite a name for themselves amongst the London street food scene and it is thanks to their wide appeal and ability to consistently deliver high quality, fresh food that they have been featured in the Times, The Guardian and in South American press. David now has four fixed site locations under his belt and 16 people on the team. He has been keeping going through Covid-19 by offering Lockdown boxed-kits and food deliveries straight to people's door via Uber Eats.

Healthy

All menus are prepared from fresh quality ingredients. The foundation of the menu is based on the Arepa (corn bread/ bun) which is naturally gluten, dairy and nut free so it enables those with particular dietary requirements order and only have to consider their fillings. There are fillings to suit all needs.

Sustainable

Guasa take several measures to avoid food waste at all levels. They ensure to tailor their menu for different events in order to avoid plate waste and have also reduced their menu in size in comparison to traditional Venezuelan cuisine, which reduces the need to stock large amounts of fresh food.



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