

# THE IBERIAN PENINSULA AND MOUNTAIN PRODUCTS

## FOOD AND SUSTAINABILITY



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# 1.- MOUNTAIN ECOSYSTEMS IN EUROPE

Shaping different mountain systems in Europe has made the Iberian Peninsula one of the most mountainous areas, with singularities in folding and varied orogeny, which results in setting a multiplicity of lithographic and microclimatic zones.



This configuration also gave the Iberian Peninsula some inhomogeneous ethnic characteristics, lifestyle habits and unique food. These habits were based on the abundance of transhumance, a great culture of cheese, herbs, mushrooms, legumes,

tubers and even viticulture at the foot of the mountain, complemented by with cereals from moors and steppes, and peculiar vegetables and fruits of valleys and coastlines. The fact that the Iberian Peninsula was the nucleus of wool in the Middle Ages; the white pig became the symbol of the confrontation between the Nordic and Mediterranean cultures; the diversity of cheeses spread out because of the different forms of rennet and surroundings; the Iberian bull has been present in our peninsula since ancient times; the fact that Spain was one of the most biodiverse countries in Europe in terms of their livestock movements or coastal towns engaged with fishing as a way to get an accessible protein, gives us an idea of the strength of the mountains on the Iberian Peninsula in shaping our food system.

The relief of the Iberian Peninsula is characterized by being quite mountainous when compared to other European countries, being surpassed only by Switzerland, Austria, Andorra and Liechtenstein.

# 2.- FOOD AND SUSTAINABILITY

On 19 and 20 November 2012, a meeting in Brussels was organized by The European Commission's Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural

Development under the title of Food and sustainability. During the closing meeting, it was established that one of the new tasks for European countries, was to reconcile this system with sustainability from the point of view of climate and environmental footprint, as well as values referred to the biodiversity.

One of the subjects that was identified at the working group number two, was the study of the relationship between collective restoration and provision of sustainable food. And at the plenary session, it was addressed the difficulties of providing protein, as was previously reflected at the European Parliament Resolution of 8 March 2011 about the EU protein deficit and the research for solutions to an old problem (2010 / 2111 (INI)). (<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A7-2011-0026&language=EN>).

In December 2014, Mensa Cívica Spain organized a Conference where we spoke about the current model of livestock and unsustainable fishing, which is very dependent on imports of soya and genetically modified corn from America. This intensive policy has had serious detrimental consequences for food (energy and environmental – CO2 – costs), land grabbing, reduction of seeds, depleted seas and decline of forests (criticized by the FAO). European farmers have criticized this model as highly unsustainable and heavily medicate in comparison with the traditional systems. Systems that have also ceased to produce pulses as a traditional protein source in mountain system.

Eat less meat and fish, of higher quality and sustainable, and the increase of the portions of pulses in our diets, has become of the requirements to implement a green purchasing policy.

### **3.- MOUNTAIN PRODUCTS**

On 19 June 2014, as a result of the efforts of diverse European institutions and associations, it was published the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 665/2014 of 11 March 2014 supplementing Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to conditions of use of the optional quality term 'mountain product' (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014R0665&from=en>).

The Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council opened this term of "mountain product" in order to compete on equal terms with mechanized production systems, such agriculture and livestock systems, globally. In addition, the fragility of mountain ecosystems and the need to preserve their habitats and human activity on them to prevent serious risks of soil erosion, fires, deterioration of environmental conditions, protection of water-producing ecosystems, keep alive these territories as anthropogenic factors of the sustainability of these ecosystems, defense of the biodiversity and food quality. The subsequent development of the Commission, laid down the conditions for the application of this Regulation (EU) No 665/2014.

There are several products (aromatic and medicinal herbs, honey, cheese, meat) that are able to be "retired" from the mountains and be taken to the field of collective restauration, as any other quality standards and regulations referred to food, within the European Union.

We believe that encouraging a green purchasing policy of the food served by catering and own kitchens from European public administrations, which meet the requirements identified by the Commission for mountain products, would be very profitable for these traditional systems and the sustainability of our planet, setting out a rational order in the use of resources. In fact, it would prevent mountain ecosystems follow a process of soil erosion, its culture and sustainability, and much further with the clear evidence that climate change is already having:  
[http://www.fao.org/news/story/es/item/295756/icode/.](http://www.fao.org/news/story/es/item/295756/icode/)