CHEF LUIS CASTILLO

Luis Castillo was born in Quito, Ecuador, on October 9, 1979. He grew up in the La Floresta neighborhood. His parents are Luis Antonio Castillo and Rosa Marroquín.

Nominated for an international chef award in Belgium, he is also part of the Latinos Top USA and Bolivia edition.

His parents taught him to cook, and his grandparents prepared food with ancestral flavors over charcoal fires. This is the origin of his love for cooking, which began at the age of 10 thanks to his family, from whom he acquired his culinary skills and appreciation for aromas and flavors.

Her fondest memories are of when her father cooked for the whole family on weekends. He would get up very early, at 5:00 a.m., and teach her the art of cooking. There, she learned to prepare a traditional ancestral dish called Uchu Jacu, a Quichua-style spicy cornmeal dish made with six or more grains from the Cayambe Canton in the northern part of the Pichincha province, a region known for its cheese and flower production. Her grandmother made bread for the Day of the Dead, as well as creams, soups, and many other dishes.

She currently resides in Antwerp, Belgium, a city known as the Diamond Capital of the World and the largest exporter of diamonds in Europe.

Years ago, she moved to this country, deciding to settle in this metropolitan city because it is one of the most important in Northern Europe and offers her a stable standard of living and a stable economy.

He trained in 10 classes covering Latin American, French, Dutch, German, Spanish, and Mediterranean cuisine. His specialty is barbecued meats, using different cuts of meat and various grilling methods, both over charcoal and on volcanic rock, a less common technique he learned and gained experience with in the Canary Islands.

He studied at the Piva School of Gastronomy in Belgium.

He trained in Peru at the Galia School.

He studied at the Albaka Cooking School in Getafe.

He has worked in Spanish kitchens in Madrid, Marbella, the Canary Islands, Barcelona, and Valencia.

He has worked in various hotels, restaurants, and resorts across Europe.

He recently received the Gastronomic Ambassador certification for the city of Antwerp, Belgium, awarded by Latin American Gastronomic Identity.

He currently works at the Black Smoke restaurant as a sous chef in both the hot and cold sections.

He also owns the Yanuk Gastro Bar in Antwerp, Belgium, showcasing Ecuadorian cuisine and preserving its roots on the other side of the continent.

His Purpose as a Gastronomic Ambassador

The best part of his job is the satisfaction of his customers when they receive a dish prepared with love. Their happiness shines through as they savor it; it's a unique and truly gratifying moment to see them enjoy his creation and congratulate him, motivating him to continue.

He has received numerous accolades throughout his professional career as a Gastronome, Cook, and Chef in restaurants, hotels, and his own restaurant in Spain, where he has been promoting Ecuadorian cuisine. He has garnered international recognition from embassies and culinary schools in Antwerp, Belgium, as well as in Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, Argentina, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Spain, Italy, France, Sweden, Prague, Germany, Norway, Poland, and the Canary Islands.

He is also participating in the selection process for Gastronomic Ambassador on behalf of the Ecuadorian Ministry of Tourism.

Among his future plans for 2023 is opening a restaurant with a diverse menu of typical Latin American and European dishes, which would represent the pinnacle of his career.

Latin American gastronomy is opening many doors, so another of his goals is to compete with the top restaurants in the region.

My message to the Latin community is to support all the chefs who bring flavor to our dishes in different countries, and to help us promote tourism, culture, and gastronomy so that Europeans and Americans can discover our typical dishes from various countries, cultures, regions, etc. It is important that we, as Latin Americans, make ourselves known, especially Ecuador, as this will help us achieve significant recognition in the world of gastronomy.

"To promote ancestral cuisine, to rescue those authentic dishes that our ancestors prepared and that have unfortunately been lost over time."

Luis Iván Castillo Marroquín