



Good Practice Story Title: Culture and tradition celebrated through Minas Gerais cuisine.

Destination:

Barão de Cocais

Country:

Brazil

Submitting Organization:

Prefeitura Municipal de Barão de Cocais e ACIABAC

Category:

- Destination Management
- Nature & Scenery
- Environment & Climate
- Culture & Tradition
- Thriving Communities
- Business & Marketing

Destination description:

Barão de Cocais was founded in the early 18th century by Portuguese bandeirantes. It spans over 340km², currently with a population of around 32,000 inhabitants. The city is known for its significant historical contributions and stunning natural beauty. Presently, the municipality's economy is driven by mining and seeks to encourage economic diversification through culture and tourism, as well as activities related to adventure sports. Natural attractions dominate much of the territory, with breathtaking sites like the Cambotas Mountain Range, Turtle Rock, waterfalls, trails, and viewpoints providing incredible views of nature. It's also the national capital for adventure sports such as Hard Enduro, Slack Line, Mountain Bike, and Trail Run.

Barão de Cocais boasts both tangible and intangible cultural heritage of national importance in its history, including centuries-old churches, archaeological sites, and a charming district called Vila Colonial de Cocais, featuring



secular churches and colonial architecture. The region is a passage point for the Estrada Real (Royal Road), the country's largest tourist route spanning over 1,630 kilometers through the Brazilian states of Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo. The Cocais District is blessed with two paths of the Estrada Real, the Diamond Paths, and Sabarabuçu. Visitors can indulge in Cocais flavors through the local cuisine, including traditional Minas Gerais dishes crafted from family farming. The historic center of the village is surrounded by imperial coconut trees and 19th century mansions, creating a cozy, romantic, and welcoming atmosphere. And it is there where our story unfolds.

Summary of Good Practice Story:

The Quitanda Festival and Guava Festival is a cultural and gastronomic event held in the city of Barão de Cocais. The festival celebrates the tradition of Minas Gerais quitandas, which are a variety of sweets, biscuits, and homemade bread typical of the state's cuisine. Quitanda is a term used in Minas Gerais to refer to these delicacies, many of which are prepared using traditional recipes passed down from generation to generation.

These events have emerged as transformative movements for the community, created by quitandeiras with the support of the Minas Gerais Technical Assistance and Rural Extension Company (Emater MG), to highlight the dedicated work of family farmers throughout the year. This initiative not only celebrates local culture but also boosts the region's economy, promoting unity and a sense of belonging among participants.

Issues faced:

In the early editions, there were issues such as lack of financial resources. Every event requires investments in tent structures, sound systems, and cultural attractions. There was also a lack of coordination and planning, highlighting the need to involve stakeholders such as the local government, merchants, quitanda and guava producers, artists, as well as the engagement of family farmers, as they did not believe in the event's potential. Without community participation, there could be a reduction in the cultural and economic impact of the festival.

In recent years, one of the problems has been maintaining the originality of the festival and meeting the needs of the growing audience, which now exceeds 10,000 visitors, while the space has become insufficient.

Solution:

The solution emerged as a joint effort of the participants themselves, who dedicated resources to the event, committed vigorously, and intensified the sense of belonging among family farmers. The active participation of the Municipal Tourism Council and the Municipal Cultural Heritage Council alongside the Municipal Government proved equally crucial, providing the necessary support and institutional recognition. Partnerships with local artists for cultural activities, as well as with the quitandeiras themselves for organizing children's workshops, contribute to the attractions to keep the audience engaged at the event venue.





Methods, Steps, and Tools applied:

Among the solutions found, several actions were crucial for the development of the event:

1. Financial Resources: Made possible through the Municipal Tourism Fund and the Municipal Cultural Heritage Fund, as well as funding from the Municipal Government itself, ensuring the event's infrastructure.
2. Coordination and Planning: A committee was established to organize the event, with the participation of stakeholders, the public sector, associations, and civil society.
3. Community Engagement: Over the years, the strengthening of participation solidified, resulting in a sense of belonging and a more equitable distribution of income.
4. Originality: The methods of making guava paste and quitanda were recognized as intangible heritage of the municipality, which now allows offering tourists a unique and incomparable experience.

Other actions that helped consolidate the Quitanda Festival and Guava Festival include:

- Creation of the Quitanda Contest: This contest, with prizes, encouraged the participation of rural producers, where participants can enter up to 4 dishes to compete for cash prizes, contributing to the engagement of family farmers in the event.
- Most Ornate Booth Contest: Stimulated participants to decorate their booths, portraying their daily lives and contributing to the beauty of the event.
- Participation in External Fairs: Increased visibility of products and attracted more producers to the event.
- Establishment of the Association of Family Farming, Quitandeiras, and Sweet Makers: Formalized and strengthened the organization of the event and support for producers.

Achievements and Results:

Research conducted during the event shows a significant increase in tourist stay, with 39.4% of visitors already familiar with previous editions. It also indicates increased activity on social media, with a 54.2% increase. Additionally, 90% of visitors stated their intention to return for future editions.

As a noteworthy result, 5 families of family farmers are preparing their properties for Rural Tourism practices.

The strengthening of cultural identity and the sense of belonging within the community has been consolidated.

There's been diversification of the local economy and income generation for family producers.

The event has contributed to the valorization and preservation of local culture and tradition, transforming traditional practices into intangible heritage of the municipality, with the festival now in the process of being registered as intangible heritage as well.

Lessons Learned and Advice:

Persistence and unity around a common goal were fundamental to the success of the festival. The main lesson learned was that, even in the face of challenges, cooperation and dedication can lead to great achievements. The advice left by the organizers is clear: when the community comes together, it is capable of accomplishing great things.



The Quitanda Festival and Guava Festival are inspiring examples of how unity and the appreciation of local culture can transform a community, serving as a model for other areas seeking to promote their traditions and boost their economy.

Recognitions and Additional References

Participants are often invited to take part in various events as special guests to exhibit and sell their products, such as in the recent editions of the Ouro Preto International Tourism Festival, the Brumal A Gosto Festival, where they participate in cooking shows, among others.

The "Modo de Fazer Quitanda e Goiabada" (Way of Making Quitanda and Guava Paste) was recognized as Intangible Heritage of the municipality by Decree 229 of 2018.

Making Guava Paste - decretos-patrimonio-historico_60_2012

https://www.baraodecocalis.mg.gov.br/arquivo/legislacao/decretos-patrimonio-historico_60_2012

Making Quitandas - decretos-patrimonio-historico_229_2018

https://www.baraodecocalis.mg.gov.br/arquivo/legislacao/decretos-patrimonio-historico_229_2018

Appointment of the committee - portaria_234_2024

https://www.baraodecocalis.mg.gov.br/arquivo/legislacao/portaria_234_2024#search=festa%20da%20quitanda

The Quitanda Festival, year 2022 – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNeEXOSwQGE>

The Quitanda Festival, year 2023 – <https://www.instagram.com/stories/highlights/18086614678327706/>

The Quitanda Festival, year 2024 – <https://www.instagram.com/p/C6w1ZKkyRK4/>

Preparation for the Festival in 2024 – <https://www.instagram.com/p/C6gxNEWOJ2e/>

Quitanda Contest of 2024 –

https://www.instagram.com/p/C6jJSFwPjsT/?img_index=1

https://www.instagram.com/p/C6hcdENPmKC/?img_index=1

Prize awarding of the Quitanda Contest in 2024 – https://www.instagram.com/p/C6rWlwsPol6/?img_index=2

Musical Performances in 2024 – https://www.instagram.com/p/C6udPEfNend/?img_index=1

Other publications –

<https://www.baraodecocalis.mg.gov.br/detalhe-da-agenda/info/iii-festival-da-quitanda-e-ii-da-goiabada/122>

<https://www.cmbaraodecocalis.mg.gov.br/detalhe-da-materia/info/festa-da-quitanda-2022-planejamento-do-even-to-e-apresentado-em-reuniao-com-os-veredores/131005>

<https://www.hojeemdia.com.br/gastronomia/festa-da-quitanda-e-festival-da-goiabada-de-bar-o-de-cocalis-est-o-d-e-volta-1.897179>





<https://www.sistemampa.com.br/noticias/regional/festa-da-quitanda-e-festival-da-goiabada-de-barao-de-cocais-estao-de-volta/>

<https://ibi.org.br/noticia/16165/festa-da-quitanda-e-festival-da-goiabada-de-barao-de-cocais-estao-de-volta>

<https://www.minasgerais.com.br/pt/eventos/barao-de-cocais/festa-da-quitanda>

<https://www.barao-de-cocais.mg.gov.br/detalhe-da-materia/info/quitanda-e-goiabada-atraem-centenas-de-visitantes-a-cocais/48053>

<https://regionalzao.com.br/2022/04/28/festa-da-quitanda-e-festival-da-goiabada-de-barao-de-cocais-estao-de-volta/>

<https://www.hojeemdia.com.br/gastronomia/festa-da-quitanda-e-festival-da-goiabada-de-bar-o-de-cocais-est-o-d-e-volta-1.897179>

Photos from the Quitanda Festival and Guava Festival -

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/2/folders/1KlhvCqOjh8hSE9QCW4bVa5SxzUwFTUVw>



