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REINTERPRETATION OF AVEIRO'S "OVOS MOLES" USING THE "NOTE BY NOTE" COOKING METHODOLOGY

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1. CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Aveiro's "Ovos Moles" (soft eggs) are a traditional Portuguese confectionery product with strong cultural, historical and sensory relevance, recognized as a Protected Geographical Indication (PGI).

This work proposes their reinterpretation through the "Note by Note" (NbN) approach, which constructs food using isolated compounds instead of whole ingredients.

The objective was to recreate a product functionally equivalent to the original, without eggs or wheat flour, preserving its creamy texture, visual identity and symbolic value while addressing contemporary demands related to sustainability, innovation and dietary inclusion.

2. R&D METHODOLOGY

The work followed an iterative experimental process based on theoretical research, functional analysis and formulation testing.

The traditional recipe was deconstructed to identify the role of egg yolk, sugar and water in texture, color, aroma and mouthfeel.

A new system was formulated using water, sucrose, sunflower oil, rice protein, maltodextrin, gellan and sucroester, each selected for a specific structural or sensory function.

The process combined hydrocolloid hydration, gel formation, sugar syrup incorporation and final emulsification with the lipid phase, allowing progressive optimization of texture and stability.

3. ENSURE THE QUALITY

Sensory validation was carried out with nine tasters, using a 9-point hedonic scale and purchase intention assessment.

The original/base version achieved the best results, especially for flavour, with scores between 8 and 9.

Almond, orange, coconut, vanilla and caipirinha versions were also well accepted, while the Port wine version obtained lower scores, around 4 to 5, indicating the need for reformulation.

The filling showed good creaminess and stability, but the wafer remained the most critical element, with texture scores around 5 to 6, mainly due to limitations in crispness and structural resistance.

4. CONVIVIAL MEAL

This work goes beyond a purely technical exercise, positioning the product within a broader context of inclusive, adaptive and culturally sensitive gastronomy.

Reinterpreting traditional recipes through approaches such as NbN makes it possible to adapt emblematic products to people with dietary restrictions, including egg intolerance, gluten-free diets, vegan preferences or specific nutritional requirements.

This is particularly relevant in the case of products such as Ovos Moles, whose cultural value is strongly associated with memory, regional identity and shared consumption.

By preserving key sensory references, the product allows more people to access a traditional gastronomic experience without feeling excluded from the cultural ritual.

In this sense, the project demonstrates how science can support the continuity of culinary heritage, not by freezing tradition, but by making it more accessible, inclusive and responsive to contemporary food needs.

5. CONCLUSIONS & PERSPECTIVES

The results confirm that the NbN methodology can be successfully applied to the reinterpretation of traditional confectionery products.

It was possible to recreate essential characteristics of Ovos Moles, particularly in terms of texture, structure and flavour perception, using hydrocolloids, emulsifiers and isolated compounds.

Despite these advances, challenges remain, especially in reproducing the wafer component and achieving full sensory equivalence.

Future work may focus on improving structural elements, refining flavour systems and exploring the application of this approach to other traditional products, reinforcing the role of science as a driver of innovation in gastronomy.