

A FUTURE SOWN THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO BOLIVIAN PAVILION ENHANCING THE TRADITIONAL FARMING INDUSTRY OF QUINOA

By Xi Fang

The Pavilion of the Pluri-national State of Bolivia is present at Expo 2015 in the Cluster of Cereals and Tubers with the theme of "Quinoa, a Future Sown Thousands of Years Ago". Gastro-cultural and scientific activities related to this traditional plant are presented and most of the decoration of the Pavilion has been realized with colorful grains of quinoa.

Quinoa, called by the Inca population *chisaya mama*, "the mother of all cereals", is the basis of the alimentation of Andean peoples. It is a pseudo-cereal grain, which belongs to the Chenopodium family. It is also known as the *Golden grain of the Andes*, as it was used in daily diet of Tiahuanacu and Inca civilizations more than 5000 years ago.

Bolivia, in its turn, is the number one exporter of quinoa and the only producer of the prestigious variety *real quinoa*, which is being promoted in its Pavilion. This variety grows only in the Southern *Altiplano* of Bolivia, and is adapted to an extremely cold and dry weather (200 to 400 mm of annual rain), salty soils and high altitudes (from 3700 to 4200 m. above sea level). These extreme conditions produce a bigger grain with increased nutritional values.

The nutritional value of quinoa is excellent. It is today the only grain known to provide all the essential amino acids needed by the human body. It contains also significant amounts of protein and various minerals, specially calcium, phosphorus and iron, making it highly nutritious. Its nutritional properties have been recognized by FAO, and United Nations dedicated 2013 as [International Year of Quinoa](#), and they are now on display in the Bolivia Pavilion. The valorization of quinoa by the FAO has greatly promoted the rediscovery of this plant and the development of its farming.

The production of quinoa in Bolivia and in other Andean countries is still guaranteed by small producers and local association, who cultivate it with organic methodology in small communities to benefit thousands of families. The choice of the Bolivian Pavilion underlines the importance



the country attaches to the recovery of traditional food in order to promote local cultures and improve the alimentary quality for the population.

Bolivia regards it a mission to get back to the cultivation of quinoa as an icon of wisdom and harmony with nature. The exposition enhances the extraordinary nutritional qualities of Quinoa, its adaptation to different agro-ecological contexts and its potential to ensure good nutrition. Actually, with the promotion of this traditional farming industry, Bolivia aspires to answer to the problem of hunger around the world. *Quinoa, could be a gift from the past to help the present and the future of our planet.*

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[Bolivia at Expo 2015](#)

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