

# Almanac of the **Future**

A STORY OF SUCCESS

Motivational Experience No. 52



**OF RUSTIC BREAD AND  
AUTHENTIC COHERENCE**

## MORE RUSTIC THAN ORTIZ

*While walking along Medellín Street on our way to the downtown area of Mexico City, we bought a loaf of bread by pure chance. The bread did not last long as the family ate it in no time at all. We went back to buy again at the same place, when Iván invited us to visit the bakery, the mill and told us about some of the many secrets to make artisan bread. Since then, a year passed, time that made Almanaque del Futuro grow even more curious to cover this motivating experience that speaks of real bread and authentic coherence.*



When I ask him, somewhat naively, if his last name is really Rústico, Iván laughs: "Even my mother calls me Rústico; but my last name is still Ortiz". Being in Iván's bakery, completely artisanal, where one looks in vain for freezers, refrigerators, big machines that work the dough; what one finds are tables, some shelves, the oven, sacks of wheat grains and flour. Flour milled in the same bakery with a wooden mill with large stone discs. "Speaking of making bread, there are 3 relevant topics: the cultivation of the grain, the milling and the preparation," explains our interviewee. Iván, the sixth of seven siblings whose parents have been cooks, remembers his childhood; his father used to tell Elliot, the youngest brother, and Iván: "If you like something to eat, learn how to prepare it". That's how, even as a child, he began to learn about baking. Then Iván became more rebellious and instead of studying gastronomy, he studied audiovisuals at university and started working in the

world of television. But before that he also studied gastronomy. *"I earned very well but everything revolved around brands, profits; at that stage of my life, it was a therapy to make bread at home at night"*, recalls Iván. When he finally made the decision to leave the world of television, he first started an online magazine about healthy food and products. He loved what he was doing but still went bankrupt within a year. Then he dedicated himself in partnership with some of his brothers to a PET bottle recycling venture. Iván collected bottles from everywhere with a trailer. Finally, he decided to dedicate himself to what he had liked the most and this from the beginning: to make bread, but an authentic bread, an artisan bread, a bread that takes care of who eats it.

## RUSTIC CRAVINGS

Iván likes to work with his hands. Almost all the furniture, shelves and tables in



his bakery were made by him and his team. He remodeled the trailer and sold with this mobile point of sale what he produced: bread, pasta and empanadas (baked or fried filled pastries). Soon after, a friend gave him a baking oven and his mother left him a room to set up a small workshop.

*"Bread is the love story of my life"*, Iván confesses and continues: *"I feel very happy and I have found the ideal life for myself"*. For Iván, the bakery is more than a business, it is a place to share life. Until he had the bakery, Iván made his sourdough bread and sold on a bicycle. All along the way, Iván was guided by an inner voice. *"As a child, I used to climb a fig tree and sit in it for long periods of time and telling it: you show me the way..., nature never left me, even when I quit the world of audiovisuals"*.

## TO THE POINT ... (THE GRAIN)

With his products, Iván was accepted to sell in an organic market, but since no two people could sell the same thing (to avoid competition), he sold pasta and pizzas. But there was no shortage of people who had heard about Iván's sourdough bread and asked him to sell it *"under the table"*. Finally, he asked for permission and

got the authorization to sell his bread in the market. Iván, already at that time, was looking to source his bread from organic wheat grain. Alejandro Aguirre, a producer from Puebla, sold him his first bag of organic wheat at the same market. Iván used a corn mill for milling, resulting in a very coarse flour. This flour, with sourdough, water and salt produced a bread that Iván remembers: *"I got a stone of bread, a rock; with a rich taste but barely chewable"*. His family would say, *"Go back to your own thing!"* but Iván felt he was right in his own thing. *"Corn flour is one thing and wheat flour is another"*, explains our baker and continues, *"I pooled my meager resources and bought a wheat mill"*. With this mill Iván was able to grind finer flour. At the organic market he made friends with Abel, who invited him to visit his wheat field in Tepetlixpa, Mexico State. *"We go on the horses"*, Abel told him. *"We visited a wheat field in the middle of the mountain, surrounded by trees and vegetation, and the wheat shone in the sun's rays like gold"*. Iván says this visit was like climbing back

up his fig tree, his confidant.

The first regular customers of Iván's bread were mostly foreigners. Iván remembers the comments of many Mexican people about his bread: *...too small, too heavy, too dark!* People are used to a white bread, soft, with bubbles in its texture, sweet. *"I understood that there are 2 types of bakeries; the ones that look for profitability and massive sales, using bleached flours with very little fiber and a lot of protein and starch; the*

*other type, let's call it artisan bakeries which work with ancient wheat grains and species, milling whole wheat flour, with a lot of fiber, low in protein and little starch. While in modern baking there is a very high percentage of gluten, approximately 17%, in artisan baking the percentage of gluten is always variable, and can range from 3% to 7%".* The high percentage of gluten, which is a set of proteins, generates elasticity that facilitates the work of the dough; it also helps to absorb water and air.



This helps to reduce production costs, as well as the use of yeast instead of sourdough, which allows to generate breads with more volume. What this implies for the digestion of this bread by our body is an open secret.



## CARE FROM THE BREAD

"I'm not going to sell something to someone which I don't eat", Iván says in the courses he offers with

great success to those who want to learn his artisan baking arts. There are people who come all the way from Canada or Denmark to attend. But there are also people from the branch who come out of curiosity. *"I remember a person who, being the owner of one of the industrial mills in Mexico, came to the course and told me that he wanted to know the secrets of making bread in an artisanal way"*. Two years ago, Iván invested in a mill, handmade in Austria and designed of wood and large stone discs. With this mill he processes between 30 to 60 tons of organic wheat grains per year, supplying his bakery and for the sale of artisanal whole wheat flour. To get in tune: an industrial milling plant needs one hour for 60 tons. They are completely different worlds. Taking into account that the consumption of wheat flour per person / year in Mexico amounts to 80 kilos, consumed in the form of tortillas, bread and other foods, we have an idea of the relevance of this branch of industrial dimensions.

The norm in this world, that is, in the modern bakery, where the vast majority of us buy bread, is that ultra-processed flours are used, eliminating the grain's husk, the fiber, using bleach such as benzoyl peroxide, which is prohibited in the European Union. *"The key is communication"*, says Iván. A conscious palate does not make mistakes. Every day, José Luís or Iván or one of the six people who know how to do everything put a pound of crumbs of their bread on the entrance sidewalk. This delicacy attracts pigeons, turtle-doves and various species of birds. When a neighbor noticed this spectacle, she went out and placed crumbs of her industrial bread, but her invitation did not attract any diners.

## COMPLAINTS ABOUT SIZE

With the operation of the new mill, Iván began to bake only with flour milled in his bakery. Until then, a smaller percentage of organic, finer, standard-

ized and purchased flour had been used. Breads with 100 percent organic wheat flour, milled with its husk and fibers had the same weight but had less volume, due to less starch, protein and zero additives. "Iván, what a pity that you have shrunk your bread", were comments even from former customers. In fact, by no longer using white flour, the bread was now of rather higher quality. Iván identifies three lines of sales: bread, organic whole wheat flour and courses. "In the courses we talk about and get to know not only the baking technique but also the obstacles and dangers around bread, such as agro-toxics, genetically manipulated substances and ultra-processed substances". The problem is that in spite of additives and harmful substances, the bread produced from these ingredients is declared edible.

"For many of my students, one obstacle is sourcing organic whole wheat flour. There are people who through their persistence have managed to find sources of supply such as Lorena in Toluca, Haydee in Veracruz or



Jesus, who opened their own bakeries". In fact, it is not easy to find producers who choose to sow and cultivate old wheat species because their yields per hectare of 1.7 to 2.5 tons are lower than those of improved seeds that reach 7 tons and more. But these improved wheats have less

fiber, more protein and starch. To get from these flours an artisanal bread, friendly to the human intestinal and digestive apparatus and where the consumption of bread does not become another food sin is an exercise of little sense.

## CAVEMAN BAKER

"That's what some people call me, but I love it here; we take care of each other here, those who come to buy and those of us who produce and sell". Most of the clients are historical and take care of voice to voice, widening the circle of clients. With a friend, Iván is currently working on a book that talks about the things we should know about bread. "It will be a compendium of anecdotes, since my life project is based on anecdotes".

Many people who come to buy bread from Iván know that buying bread from him is buying his passion. "My dream is to buy a field of one

hectare and document from scratch the production of artisanal organic wheat, cultivate it respecting biodiversity, natural fertilizers and without synthetic chemicals, that is very close to everyone so they can visit it often". Iván lives seven minutes by bike from the bakery; he does not want to lose part of his life in traffic and is seriously thinking about getting a cargo bike to sell bread on the road.

"Those of us who work here, between José Luís, Daniel, Adriana, Germán and my mother Rosa, taking care of the accounting, we are happy". They work 5 days a week, 8 to 9 hours a day, no night work. It is a business model, just for the client friend and those who work. When asked what they do, Ivan is quick to answer: "We make happy bread".



## MESSAGES TO THE FUTURE

- Authentic coherence and mutual care, perceptible by our second brain, the intestine.
- When ethics are more important than aesthetics: documented experience shows us that the ancestral craftsmanship in food is something so valuable that we should begin to understand and appreciate it before our body and our health force us to reconsider.
- Let's not wait for a change of course in businesses around what we eat. Eating is a political act as well as a caring one. As consumers we have the upper hand and there is nothing better than to start changing habits in something daily as eating: healthy, responsible and also tasty.

# Almanac of the Future

The text was written after having visited and talked, very cordially and extensively, with Iván Ortiz, "El Rústico", in the most welcoming bakery that the Almanaque del Futuro has ever known, not to mention the spectacular bread - for those who want to taste the bread on the road to happiness: Medellín 265, Roma Sur, Alcaldía Cuauhtémoc, entrance through the wooden door on Tlaxcala, it is a yellow corner. Very grateful to Iván for sharing his secrets about bread and happiness with the Almanaque.

Authors: **Jorge Krekeler**  
jorge.krekeler@posteo.de

Design: **Ida Peñaranda - Gabriela Avendaño** Photographs: **Iván Ortiz - Jorge Krekeler**  
Translation: **Olaf Niemtschik**

Contact information regarding the documented experience:

**Panadería El Rústico**  
**Iván Ortiz**  
contactorusticopan@gmail.com  
Instagram: ivanrustico

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