



## TRANSCRIPCIÓN ORIGINAL DE STUDIO OCHENTA

### HOW NO TO TRAVEL - EPISODE 8 - ENERGY DRINKS

00:00 LUIS

Extreme sports can be a form of labor and labor can be a form of extreme sports.

00:07 KIONA

Hi, this is Kiona.

00:08 LUIS

And this is Luis.

00:10 KIONA

And we're your host of How Not To Travel Podcast Season 3.

00:13 LUIS

Fasten your seat belts and take your seat at the table.

00:16 KIONA

In this season, we're traveling around the world from our dinner table to see how cultural exchange contributed to some of the world's most famous foods.

00:25 LUIS

This week, energy drinks.

00:28 LUIS

Hey, just letting you know before we start today's episode that this one's actually made up of two recordings. We discovered that we wanted to expand on the topic a little more. That's why you'll hear a slightly different quality and tone in our voices. Anyway, on with the show.

00:44 KIONA

So, let's go all the way back to World War II Japan. During that time, food is scarce, inflation has tripled, and so the Bank of Japan starts printing money in order to try to keep up. They're like, okay, let's flood the system with money.

01:00 LUIS

Yeah.

01:01 KIONA

And they just want to bring back their economy. So they're trying to save domestic industry so they don't have to rely on imports.

01:07 LUIS

Yeah.

01:08 KIONA

So they increase the production on everything. So people are hoarding food and there's nothing on the shelves. And you can't afford it because Japan just keeps printing money. So inflation goes up. So their answer to this whole problem was to flood the market with products. So what do you have to do to flood the market with products?

01:29 LUIS

What do you have to do?

01:30 KIONA

You have to make the products.

01:32 LUIS

Okay, yeah, of course. Step one.

01:34 KIONA

Yeah, exactly. So you have to hire a whole bunch of people to make your products, right?

01:39 LUIS

Yeah, definitely.

01:40 KIONA

Which means increasing labor and hours. And unfortunately, you have to make them work a lot to match demands of bringing an entire economy back.

01:51 LUIS

I think I can see where this is going, unfortunately.

01:54 KIONA

Which brings us to a pharmaceutical company named Taisho Pharmaceuticals produced a legal product called Lipoviden D, which was sold in many bar size bottles and marketed as an herbal energizing tonic.

02:09 LUIS

Okay.

02:09 KIONA

And this was given to truck drivers and factory workers who had to stay awake in order to bring Japan's economy back. So right there is the beginning of the history of Red Bull. It was made for truck drivers who were trying to bring Japan's economy back post-World War II. From Japan, some Japanese expats brought it to their factories in Thailand and gave it to their Thai factory workers. And it's from there that another pharmacist named Chaleo who got his hands on it and adapted it to the Thai market made it sweeter.

02:40 LUIS

Okay.

02:41 KIONA

But you know what really took it over the edge was slapping two red bulls on the bottle and renaming it to “krating dung” or translated to English meaning “red bull”. He placed a symbol of the two bulls in the front of the eternal sun which is actually the current logo of the red bull brand and he puts these two red bulls all over the place. It's forever being attached to power, strength, energy, and fighting champions.

03:08 LUIS

Do you know what's the symbol there? Like what it's representing?

03:11 KIONA

So because Thai culture already had this really strong emotional attachment to bulls, it just blew up.

03:18 LUIS

Okay.

03:19 KIONA

So for you, Luis, what do you think of when you think of bulls?

03:22 LUIS

The bull is this sort of beast that you have to control somehow. I mean, of course, I think of like bull fighting in Spain and Latin America. Of course, there's so much history tied to bulls but also to like facing bulls as a beast to try to control or to try to survive somehow because there's also this ritual in Spain and this Spanish town where people like run away from them, right?

03:46 KIONA

Pamplona, I believe.

03:47 LUIS

Pamplona, yeah.

03:48 KIONA

It's called Running with the Bulls. I was actually in Pamplona a week before that happened and I was like, I have to get out of here. Like there were so many people and like so many people were up for running with the bulls and I was like, I need to leave this town. Now I definitely don't want to run with any bulls.

04:05 LUIS

Yeah.

04:06 KIONA

Actually, bull fighting has a really big tie into red bull.

04:11 LUIS

Oh really?

04:12 KIONA

In rural Thai culture, there is an ancient bull fighting tradition.

04:16 LUIS

Yeah.

04:16 KIONA

You see in rural Thai life, life revolves around rice harvest.

04:21 LUIS

Okay.

04:22 KIONA

And in order to plant and harvest rice, Thai people use the water buffalo as a beast of burden and rice cultivation.

04:29 LUIS

Okay.

04:30 KIONA

So there's this deep respect for the buffalo, also known as a bull.

04:34 LUIS

Okay.

04:34 KIONA

So bull fighting or water buffalo fighting, it's just a game of strength where two bulls of the same height and weight charge at each other, lock horns until one of them runs away. Enter Dietrich, an Austrian salesman selling toothpaste.

04:50 LUIS

Toothpaste?

04:50 KIONA

Yes.

04:51 LUIS

So we're back at the pharmacy maybe?

04:53 KIONA

Yes, exactly. Exactly. All of these people are pharmacists, which is crazy to me.

04:57 LUIS

Wow.

04:58 KIONA

So he comes on a business trip to Thailand and takes a Christine Deng and remembers that's the Asian version of Red Bull.

05:04 LUIS

Right.

05:05 KIONA

Yeah. And he realizes it cures his jet lag by giving him the energy he needs to make it to the end of the day.

05:11 LUIS

Okay.

05:12 KIONA

And so he approached Chaleo, the original Thai pharmacist, to see if he could set up a company in Austria to sell the drink abroad.

05:20 LUIS

Okay.

05:21 KIONA

Chaleo as a time manufacturer and Dietrich as the European producer or I guess distributor. So the Asian version is sweet, but not carbonated. The Austrian version is sweet and carbonated.

05:35 LUIS

Okay.

05:36 KIONA

Dietrich ditches the medicine bottle, puts it in a platinum silver and blue aluminum can, and markets it as a beverage of choice in extreme sports.

05:44 LUIS

Oh, so that's where the current can design comes from?

05:48 KIONA

Yes. And they kind of both have the same idea, right? Like first in Muay Thai matches, also have bullfighting competitions. And here we have Dietrich putting in an extreme sports like skiing and F1.

05:59 LUIS

And I'm glad you brought up extreme sports because I'm also thinking of the origin of all of this, this first pharmaceutical in Japan, right? Extreme sports can be a form of labor, and labor can be a form of extreme sports.

06:11 KIONA

Yeah, exactly. You know, we wouldn't have Red Bull if it wasn't for the Japanese post-war ever to keep up with production. Then it went to a Thai pharmacist making the drink sweet and marketing it using ancient bullfighting tradition and attaching it to the connotation of power and endurance. And then from there, like if the Austrian wouldn't have traveled to Thailand to sell his toothpaste, or him adding carbonation and marketing as a beverage for extreme sports, like we just wouldn't have this drink.

06:42 LUIS

Did you know that energy drinks aren't really the drinks with the most, well, energy?

Despite being popularly known for it, energy drinks aren't the most densely caffeinated beverage out there. Coffee has more with about 95 milligrams of caffeine per cup compared to 85 milligrams per cup for energy drinks. But the real king is guaraná, a seed from a South American plant used to make drinks with up to 125 milligrams of caffeine per serving. Of course, this doesn't mean consuming energy drinks won't give you a boost.

A can will usually contain 16 ounces or two cups, which doubles the caffeine content to 170 milligrams. And they are also, of course, very high in sugars.

07:36 LUIS

So, Kiona, continuing our discussion on energy drinks, I also wanted to talk about one that I'm really fond of, or that I find really fascinating. I want to talk about the wonderful world of

an Amazonian energy substance that's been quite literally hyping us up for over a century by now. And it's guaraná.

07:59 KIONA

I have never heard of guaraná, never seen it.

08:02 LUIS

Guaraná is not something that's very obvious in the grocery store. If it's somewhere, it's in a very specific section of the supermarket, which is probably the superfood section where you can get all of these vitamins and all that sort of thing.

08:20 KIONA

So for the healthy people.

08:22 LUIS

Yeah, exactly. It's usually sold as an extract. Basically like a powder that you can add to your drinks. That's how you usually see it, although you can also see it in several energy drinks as well. So the reason that guaraná is a very in demand product, at least for certain people, is because it's a drink that gives you a lot of energy, basically.

08:46 KIONA

I guess that's why you would find it in the health section, because those people are all about fitness and gym and getting energy to pump up your day or whatever.

08:55 LUIS

Exactly.

08:56 KIONA

But would it be an energy drink, like how Red Bulls in energy drink or Monster? Is that how it's consumed?

09:02 LUIS

Yes. And that's the other area where you could probably find guaraná. It would be in certain energy drinks. As you mentioned, Monster is one of those energy drinks. One of those brands that actually has guaraná in their formula. Another one is Rockstar.

09:17 KIONA

But what exactly is guaraná made of?

09:21 LUIS

Guaraná is a plant. It's native to the Brazilian Amazon. And it's a fruit, but it's best known for its seeds. So the seeds are approximately the same size as coffee beans, but they contain about twice as much caffeine in them.

09:39 KIONA

Twice as much as coffee?

09:41 LUIS

Basically, yes. It has a lot of caffeine. And so you get a lot more energy out of it. Something that's really interesting about guaraná is its appearance. What would you say it looks like?

09:56 KIONA

It looks like somebody with tripophobia's worst nightmare. It looks like a whole bunch of eyes staring at you. Like it's like a sci-fi plant.

10:04 LUIS

The fruit itself has this brownish, reddish exterior. And then there's a moment during its life cycle where it splits open. And so it has this white, fleshy interior. And then on the inside of that, there's this black seed. So basically, the red exterior, the white interior, and the black seed makes it look kind of like an eye. And then they sort of grow in these hanging bunches kind of like grapes. And so it can be surprising and almost a little unsettling because it does kind of look like a bunch of open eyes, just hanging out from a vine.

10:44 KIONA

I just want to be taken back to the first person who discovered it. What did they think? What did they say?

10:51 LUIS

It all goes back to an indigenous people from the Brazilian Amazon. They're called the Sataré-Mawé People. And they were the first to cultivate and domesticate this plant. Even though guaraná is a fruit, it really isn't something that you can just pick up and bite into, like an apple or something like that. There are different ways of consuming it, but most of them involve grinding it and mixing it into a drink. And the way we know that is because in 1669, there was this jesuit priest from Luxembourg, whose name is Johannes Philippus Bettendorf. And he was the first European to make contact with the Sataré-Mawé People. So he's kind of like the one often credited with quote and quote, discovering the guaraná for Europeans.

11:40 KIONA

How typical.

11:41 LUIS

Yeah, exactly. Like what he did was write about it, basically. In his chronicles, he talked about how they would roast it very similar to coffee and like over this huge fire. And then they would grind them into a very fine powder and then immerse in hot water. So they make a sort of tea out of it. And then this guy Bettendorf, the jesuit priest, then wrote that when they consumed this product, they could go basically a full day of hunting without eating or without really feeling any hunger. It gave them that much energy.

12:15 KIONA

This is a diet supplement.

12:17 LUIS

Yeah, it is. And in fact, it does actually have that use as well. Like it has been used as a sort of weight loss supplement. Even like back then, the indigenous people would use it also to cure fevers and headaches and cramps. And then again, it would just give you so much energy. I also wanted to talk about a very interesting origin story of this guaraná fruit.

12:41 KIONA

I love origin stories.

12:42 LUIS

The Sataré-Mawé people have a legend that tells the origin of this fruit, there's a story of a couple from the tribe who wanted to have a child, but they hadn't been able to. So one day, they asked the

king of their gods, whose name is Tupá, to help them have a child. And because this god knew that they were a good and kind couple, he decided to grant them their wish. And so they did. They had this beautiful child. However, there was this other god, the god of darkness, whose name was Juru Pari. And this god basically became envious of the child's peace and blissfulness. So one day, when the child went out to collect fruit, this god transformed into a venomous snake and bit him, killing him. And so the tragic news spread all over the community. And as the fate of the child was discovered, the village was suddenly surrounded by lightning and loud thunder. And then the boy's mother understood this phenomenon to be a message from Tupa, from the king of the gods, who told her that she must plant the eyes of the child in the ground. And that would yield a new plant that would then give them this delicious fruit. And that is the story of why, first of all, guaraná has this distinctive eye shape and also why it's so precious and so valuable to this people.

14:06 KIONA

In Hawaii, we have like a similar origin story for the Kahlo or Tero root. And that like, it was a mother and a father who had a baby and the baby was still birth. And they planted the still birth baby into the ground and outsprouted the Tero root. So and that Tero root is actually like the base carbohydrate for all of Hawaii, which we talked about in our Hawaiian pizza episode. But it actually like instills lifeways into people. So the Hawaiian people believe like when you take care of the Tero, when you take care of your brother, your brother takes care of you. And because your brother is the Tero or the land or the carbohydrate, like when you feed it, take care of it, like it then in turn feeds you and takes care of you.

14:55 LUIS

Now that I think of it, it's fascinating to see how when a crop, a plant is so valuable to a community, they have these stories that are a form of sacrifice even that made that plant exist.

15:09 KIONA

I feel like in this case, like something died in order for something to grow. And I think those are like really excellent like life lessons kind of planted into like origin stories that I just I frequently find so much value and mythology more than it's just a story. It's like a whole philosophy or a life way.

15:30 LUIS

Did you know that caffeine is actually supposed to be deadly?

Well, not to us at least, but certainly the insects. Caffeine of course occurs naturally in many different plants, such as coffee, tea, yerbamate, guaraná, cacao and colones. But have you ever wondered why all these plants have that chemical in the first place?

Well, it's as a natural pesticide for protection against predator insects. It actually reminds me of capsaicin, the substance that makes chili peppers hot, and that basically deters most animals from consuming them. So I think it's pretty fascinating to know that we humans have learned to love things that are technically supposed to hurt us.

16:19 LUIS

It wasn't really until the beginning of the 20th century, until 1905 that a Brazilian doctor eventually developed a processing technique that turned the fruit into this super strong extract that could basically be the base flavor of a beverage. And so this takes us to what is perhaps one of, if not the most famous beverage in Brazil, which is Guaraná Antártica.

16:45 KIONA

Oh, man. So that's the first thing I'm trying whenever I get to Brazil. I've never been.

16:50 LUIS

Yeah, please try it because it's delicious. And their story actually kind of reminds me of our Tabasco episode. Now Guaraná Antarctica isn't quite as old as Tabasco, which, of course, your remember was



founded in 1868. So that's over 150 years old. But Antarctica is still pretty old. The soft drink actually appeared in 1921. So it is now nearly 102 years old. So it's a pretty good run. And it actually developed as a way for the Brazilian Antarctica company that had previously only made beer to attempt to get into the soft drink industry. At least in the 1920s, their idea was that beer is a drink for men. And so now we want to cater to women and children as well. And so that's why we want to make this soft drink as well.

17:38 KIONA

I am a woman and I am a heavy beer drinker. But I imagine back in the day, maybe it was taboo or something.

17:46 LUIS

In fact, it's interesting that the first version of this drink was actually called Guaraná Champagne, which is kind of ironic, if you think about it, because, of course, not only was it not champagne and not an alcoholic drink, but they were actually specifically trying to cater to what they assumed was a non-alcoholic drinking market. Maybe they wanted it to sound fancy and sort of emphasize the bubbleiness, the fizziness of the carbonated drink.

18:15 KIONA

Right, right.

18:16 LUIS

And also it was in this beautiful slim bottle that kind of evoked the idea of champagne.

18:22 KIONA

Kind of like Tabasco, like you mentioned, where it was like originating the perfume bottles like you learned before.

18:28 LUIS

Exactly, yeah. And I'm glad you mentioned Tabasco because there are actually more parallels to the Tabasco story that we covered in that episode. Because another reason this reminds me so much of Tabasco is that this is one of those companies that really manages to keep such a strong brand identity for decades. There's a picture here of a Guaraná can. What would you say it looks like?

18:51 KIONA

It's green that kind of looks like seven up, even with the red berries on it. It looks like cherries to me.

18:57 LUIS

Basically, they have this very kind of old-fashioned logo. The way it's written kind of evokes this older hand writing cursive-ish, right? And then also the color, the green, it's like this very bright green, right? And it's actually very similar to the green on the Brazilian flag. And then also, just like Tabasco, as we mentioned in that episode, grows and processes its peppers on Avery Island in Louisiana, like they have that specific place. Guaraná Antarctica also has something similar. They actually own a huge plot of land in the Amazon Basin, actually not too far from where the original cultivators of guaraná, the Sataré-Mawé, where people live. And now this place, this plot of land, has now become the world's largest guaraná gene bank. And so in addition to growing it there and producing it for their beverages, they also conduct research. So they're actually finding ways to make the plants more resilient to its plagues and all sorts of things, finding different varieties. And so it's actually quite interesting that they have this specific location.

20:07 KIONA

Yeah, it's at their headquarters.

20:09 LUIS

So yeah, Guaraná Antarctica is Brazil's largest beverage, at least it's largest soft drink. It kind of also reminds me of KFC a little, you know, like that super secret formula with the 11 herbs and spices. Well, Guaraná Antarctica has something similar. They have like this top secret formula and they say that it's locked behind seven locks that only two people in the whole world know what the formula is. And they even say that they're never allowed to be on the same airplane together.

20:41 KIONA

Oh my gosh, this is like some top secret ingredient recipe here. Like pass down through generations and like is written out in somebody's will. Like you will be bestowed with the recipe of Guaraná Antarctica. I really love that they're so proud of this fruit. That is like from Brazil and that this company is Brazilian. But since that indigenous peoples were the, I guess founders of this plant and that they were the first to domesticate it, like do they like are they working on the farm or like what is their involvement?

21:16 LUIS

The indigenous people who originated the plant the Sataré-Mawé people aren't the only ones currently cultivating the plant and harvesting it and all of that. But they are still doing it definitely. Not only are they still working on it and still producing it and selling it, but they also recently, according to a 2021 article in BBC travel, they were actually awarded a Brazilian Appalachian of Origin status, which officially recognizes that link between the product and its place of origin and the people that originated it. This is actually the first time that an indigenous Brazilian community has received this certification. And it's actually opened the door for the European Union to potentially grant it a similar sort of protected destination of origin, which is great news for them.

22:04 KIONA

And also partial, I don't know if you would call it ownership, but at least they have some stake in the game.

22:12 LUIS

The good thing is that this is actually more than a symbolic sort of acknowledge made or something like that. This sort of protection is actually, actually has some legal benefits. I'm not an expert in exactly what it is of course, but what I do know is that it can potentially help them have more autonomy over the use of their land, over their finances, over their clients. And so the good thing is that they actually still produce and export this guaraná to partners in over 22 countries, right? It's interesting. Yeah, their production is small compared to the industrial scale productions of Antarctica and other companies, but they are still doing it. Guaraná is a substance that is very Brazilian and it continues to be. And it's interesting that it hasn't really made a huge impact outside of Brazil. The places where it has is in these energy drinks, right? And how they have this guaraná extract that you use basically because it's this high energy substance. But it's interesting that there's this whole origin story. There's this whole community who originated it and who brought it to the world the way we know it.

23:27 KIONA

Now I feel like I'm actually gonna have to go down that aisle because I usually skip it.

23:31 KIONA

And that's it for this episode.

23:38 LUIS

If you're still hungry for more, stick around and listen to our other episodes this season.

23:44

How Not to Travel is produced by Studio Ochenta and hosted by Dr. Kiona and me, Luis Lopez. Our executive producer is Lory Martinez. Production and sound design by me and Chiara Santella. Our production coordinator is Catalina Hoyos and our social media manager is Sofia Rodriguez. You can follow us on Instagram at @hownottotravelpod and at @ochentapodcasts. You can also find us on Twitter at @OchentaPodcasts and on TikTok at @studioochenta. Read more about the show and about our other productions on our website: ochentastudio.com. Thanks for listening and good provecho.