

What Can Food Tell Us About Peace?

Part of the Transitional Justice Speakers Series

Dra María-Paula Espejo Duarte
International Development Research Centre

Thurs Oct 23, 2025

1030am to 1130am

Social Science Centre 5220

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Food is more than sustenance; it is part of our everyday life and, as such, has often been weaponized in contexts of war and conflict around the world. Yet it can also inform peace, serving as a mechanism for (re)building the social fabric. Food offers a lens through which we can explore possibilities for more equitable, sustainable, and peaceful futures from a creative and interconnected perspective.

Drawing from her doctoral dissertation, *Peace, Agroecology & Gastronomy: A Case Study on How Colombia Can Build a Sustainable Future*, this talk examines how everyday practices of growing, cooking, and sharing food reveal cultural, political, and economic dimensions relevant to peacebuilding. Through the story of ASOCOMAN — the *campesino* (smallholder farmer) association in Montes de María, Colombia, she explores the powerful alternatives that emerge from often-overlooked quotidian spaces with the potential to advance peace-building and transitional justice agendas. This perspective invites us to shift our

gaze toward the horizontal level, where we interact as and with fellow citizens.

Dra María-Paula Espejo Duarte (Hispanic Studies and Transitional Justice, UWO 2025) is a researcher and practitioner working at the intersection of peace-building, food systems, and sustainable development. Her work bridges academic research and practice, drawing on participatory methodologies and community-based collaborations with rural organizations, academia, and the private sector. In addition to her academic work, María-Paula works with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) within the Sustainable Inclusive Economies program, focusing on the care economy, gender equality, and inclusion. In her home country, Colombia, she has led specialized teams in the Ombudsperson's Office, the Ministry of the Interior, and the Colombian National Congress.