

Crepes & Waffles:

From root to table, with
purpose and sustainability

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Year of
foundation:
1980



Type of
company
Private



No. of employees
**5.000 a
10.000**



Headquarters
**Bogotá,
Colombia**

Description

Crepes & Waffles is a renowned Colombian restaurant chain specializing in crepes, waffles, salads, pitas, and ice creams. The company was founded in 1980 in Bogotá by two university students who envisioned starting a business they were passionate about. Since then, it has grown to over 240 locations in six countries¹, with a presence in several Colombian cities including Bogotá, Medellín, Cali, Cartagena, Barranquilla, Santa Marta, Pereira, Bucaramanga, and Villavicencio.

Beyond its culinary offerings, Crepes & Waffles stands out for its commitment to sustainability and social responsibility. Certified as a B Corporation since 2016, it operates under a model aimed at generating social and environmental value through its economic activities. One of its most recognized pillars is the labor inclusion of women who are heads of households.

The company also drives multiple community projects, including support programs for vulnerable populations, educational initiatives for the children of employees, and direct purchasing of raw materials from suppliers with sustainability credentials—such as those regenerating ecosystems, practicing agroecology, serving as ecosystem guardians, or transitioning from illicit crop cultivation.

According to Crepes & Waffles' official LinkedIn profile, the company employs between 5,000 and 10,000 people. This includes restaurant staff as well as personnel in administrative, logistics, and support roles.

Crepes & Waffles' strategy focuses on deep respect and admiration for producers and Colombian biodiversity, creating value from farm to table. The company favors ingredients that tell stories of land, people, rural women, conservation, and regeneration. Through the commitment of its entire team, these ingredients are transformed into purpose-driven gastronomic experiences, offering customers dishes that connect them with their roots and showcase the best of native products.

¹ Colombia (country of origin and with the largest number of restaurants), Ecuador, Panama, Chile, Mexico and Spain.



The Challenge:

Harmonizing Territorial Rhythms to Create Meaningful Value

One of the main challenges for Crepes & Waffles has been adapting its internal processes to the production rhythms of the territories it works with. The company has faced major logistical difficulties in transporting raw materials from various regions of the country—due to road infrastructure limitations, varying technical capacities among producers, administrative informality, high climate variability, and communication barriers in rural areas.

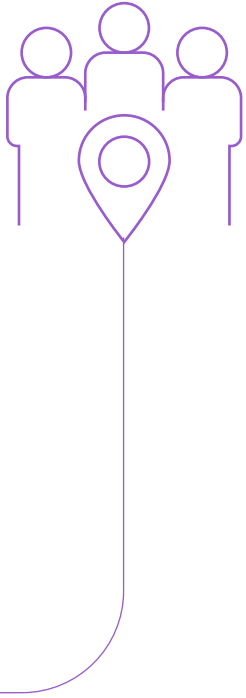
These conditions create natural variability in supply times, volumes, and quality, requiring the company to remain flexible and adaptive. In response, Crepes & Waffles has revised and adjusted its own processes and expectations—recognizing that adding value also means learning from its supply chain and building relationships based on respect for the timing and realities of each territory.

In regions like Montes de María (northern Colombia), the company has built direct, trust-based relationships with small producers—eliminating intermediaries and agreeing on fair prices. This approach has enabled the development of long-term partnerships. Additionally, through alliances with various organizations, it has implemented training and technical assistance programs to strengthen local producers' skills, promote sustainable agriculture, and improve post-harvest practices and overall product quality. This commitment to territorial development has not only improved supply chain efficiency but has also contributed to community well-being².



²Taken from: *Business Call to Action (2021), Crepes & Waffles Impact Management Case Study*
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6049e33a3512a120620cfe14/t/61c48a709e596c4c81c44687/1640270465876/UNDP-Impact+Measurement+Case+Study-Crepes+and+Waffles.pdf>

Innovative Solutions with Territorial Impact

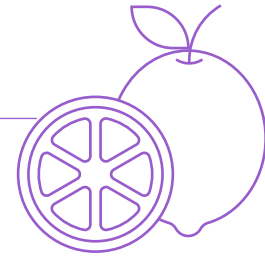


One of Crepes & Waffles' most innovative contributions to the bioeconomy is its involvement—alongside various partners—in the “Saber del Monte” initiative in the Montes de María region. This strategy, led by Fondo Patrimonio Natural, supports sustainable rural development and the conservation and restoration of tropical dry forest through farm planning, conservation agreements, the planting and monitoring of native trees for ecosystem restoration, and training to transform agronomic practices among hundreds of small producers (Business Call to Action, 2021).

As a commercial ally, Crepes & Waffles has created a stable market for local products such as cuarentano beans and honey—sourced through agroecological practices. In some cases, the company has absorbed logistics costs to transport these products from rural areas to its supply hubs and has promoted training and technical support for post-harvest management and quality improvements. These efforts not only ensure sustained income for communities but also add value to production systems that reduce environmental impacts and enhance ecosystem resilience to climate change—consolidating a regenerative business model with real territorial impact.

To achieve this, the company has assembled a sustainability team that works closely and continuously with producers. Rather than offering isolated solutions, the approach is based on deep, human-centered commitment. Support is tailored to the specific needs of each territory with the aim of generating value in the product and well-being for those who cultivate it.





Current Portfolio

The culinary portfolio of Crepes & Waffles reflects its commitment to Colombian biodiversity and to sustainable production systems rooted in local territories. Many of its dishes incorporate ingredients from regions prioritized for their cultural and natural richness.

Notable ingredients include honey from Montes de María, featured in the Pumpkin Pancake; cuarentano red beans, which star in the Montes de María Crepe and Salad; arracacha chips from Cajamarca, used in the Waffle Sandwich; Tumaco chocolate, which has its own ice cream flavor; and hearts of palm from Vigía del Fuerte, offered at the salad bars. Other regular ingredients include pepper from Putumayo, turmeric from Bojayá, and mandarin lemon from Ibagué, Rovira, and Cajamarca.

Crepes & Waffles regularly updates its menu to include seasonal ingredients from new productive partnerships. This practice allows it to diversify its offerings and strengthen its sustainable supplier network—expanding the territorial reach of its positive impact.

“ We are committed to ingredients that tell the stories of the land, of its people, of rural women, of conservation, and of regeneration. ”

Luis Miguel Casabianca González,
Sustainability Coordinator,
Crepes & Waffles



Strategic Partnerships

The company amplifies its impact in the field through strategic partnerships with key actors in each territory. These include Fondo Patrimonio Natural, FAO, KOICA, USAID, and UNDP. Such collaborations have been essential to strengthening best practices among small rural producers and reducing the environmental footprint of agricultural production.

These partnerships have also helped build direct relationships with producers. As a result, the company now plays a role not only as a buyer, but also as a technical and logistical ally—essential in generating stable demand for local products. Through these efforts, Crepes & Waffles has impacted more than 800 farming families and their associations through direct, stable-price purchasing.

The “One Menu, One Tree” campaign further reinforces the company’s commitment to conservation and sustainability. In partnership with local and regional organizations—such as Fundación Proyecto Tití—Crepes & Waffles supported the planting of over 157,000 native trees in the tropical dry forest of Montes de María. The reforestation was carried out by local farming organizations as part of efforts to restore the habitat of the critically endangered cotton-top tamarin monkey.



Business Model

Crepes & Waffles begins by identifying ingredients with high social, cultural, and environmental value to generate shared value between the company and its producing communities. It aims to build a stable and fair supply network that allows for the creation of dishes that tell stories of the land. Each preparation is designed to highlight the people behind the ingredients and to emphasize the importance of their work in preserving traditional knowledge, ecosystems, and culture.

Within this framework, the company acts as a creator of sustainable demand by incorporating agroecological products into its culinary portfolio.

Through its B Corporation certification, Crepes & Waffles reports the impact it generates on the community, the environment, its workers, customers, and governance—using some of the most rigorous standards in the world.

Driving Sustainable Development with Communities

As shown throughout its operations, working with rural communities and producers is one of the core pillars of Crepes & Waffles. Through direct relationships in the field, the company prioritizes dialogue, recognition of local knowledge, and the value of rural production systems. It builds long-term relationships of trust based on transparency and mutual respect.

With this philosophy, Crepes & Waffles promotes ecosystem regeneration by encouraging sustainable farming practices that strike a balance between production and the protection of Colombia's natural resources.

By incorporating native ingredients into its dishes, the company offers customers culinary experiences that honor origin, strengthen connection to the land, and make visible the cultural and environmental value behind each ingredient.

Risks and Critical Success Factors

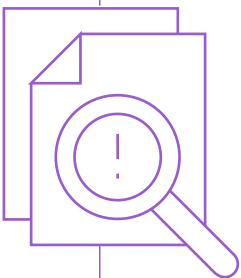
According to the sustainability team, key challenges Crepes & Waffles faces when working with biodiversity-based ingredients include:

- The scalability of certain supply chains,
- Compliance with regulations in contexts of low institutional presence and high informality,
- High logistical costs associated with difficult-to-access regions.

These are compounded by climate factors that directly affect the availability and quality of ingredients, as well as challenges in traceability.

Nevertheless, the company chooses to approach these issues as opportunities to innovate collectively, fostering collaborative solutions without compromising its principles of sustainability and inclusion.

Rather than seeing these barriers as obstacles, it views them as part of a shared learning process with its territorial partners:



“When an ingredient tells a powerful story and creates opportunity, it’s worth finding a way to make it happen.”

Luis Miguel Casabianca González,
*Sustainability Coordinator,
Crepes & Waffles*

Commercial Challenges and Positioning Opportunities

Crepes & Waffles has made communication a key tool for highlighting the social, environmental, and cultural value of the ingredients in its portfolio. The company has actively participated in knowledge-sharing spaces such as COP16, where allied producers shared stories about their regions, their products, and the hard work of communities and families who bring them from field to table.

Communication is integrated into everyday customer touchpoints—such as menus, social media, and digital publications—so that each guest not only enjoys a thoughtfully crafted dish, but also understands the positive impact of each ingredient and flavor from origin to table.

Investment Needs

Crepes & Waffles no presenta actualmente necesidades de inversión en su operación directa, pero sí ha identificado oportunidades en su cadena de abastecimiento. Por esta razón, ha asumido el papel de facilitador del acceso a financiación para los productores con los que trabaja, aprovechando la articulación con aliados y acompañándolos en su crecimiento, fortalecimiento de capacidades y acceso a nuevas oportunidades.

Además, ofrece programas de formación, asistencia técnica, inversión en procesos de transformación en origen, tecnologías apropiadas para contextos comunitarios y soluciones logísticas que garanticen frescura, trazabilidad y calidad en cada etapa de la cadena de suministro.

