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Portuguese autochthonous *Laurus* sp.: nutritional and phytochemical composition of leaves

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Medicinal plants have been used for centuries as remedies for human diseases due to their chemical components of therapeutic value. *Laurus* sp. belongs to the family Lauraceae, which grows in the Mediterranean region. Their leaves have been used to treat neurological disorders, while the essential oil is useful in pain relief and presents antibacterial activity [1]. In Portugal, there are only three species of *Laurus*: *L. nobilis*, native to mainland Portugal, *L. azorica* (Seub.) Franco and *L. novocanriensis*, two autochthonous species from Azores and Madeira archipelagos, respectively. Scarce information exist about autochthonous *Laurus* sp. collected in Portugal, especially those usually consumed in the Portuguese diet [3,4]. Therefore, in this work, we studied the nutritional value and some phytochemicals content of fresh and dried plants collected in the North of Portugal (*L. nobilis*), Azores (*L. azorica*), and Madeira archipelagos (*L. novocanriensis*), where people frequently use them for traditional medicine and gastronomy.

Moisture, ash, protein and fat contents were evaluated according to AOAC methodologies [5]. Total carbohydrates were determined by difference. Fatty acid profiles were obtained by GC-FID analyzing fatty acid methyl esters which were prepared by transmethylation using BF_3. Total phenolics, flavonoids, and tannins were also isolated and their contents determined by spectrophotometric measurements.

Qualitative and quantitative chemical differences were observed between *Laurus* sp. collected from the three different regions of Portugal. Samples also showed different morphologic properties. The results suggest that species discrimination could be possible based on their leaves characteristics.

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