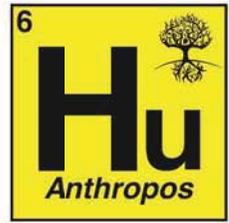
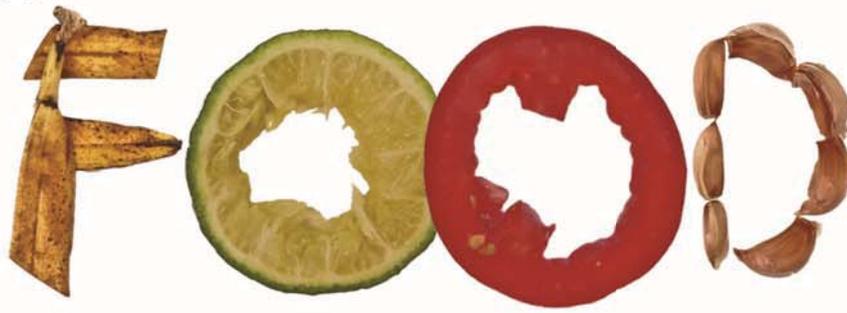
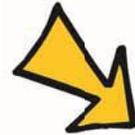
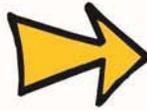
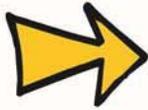


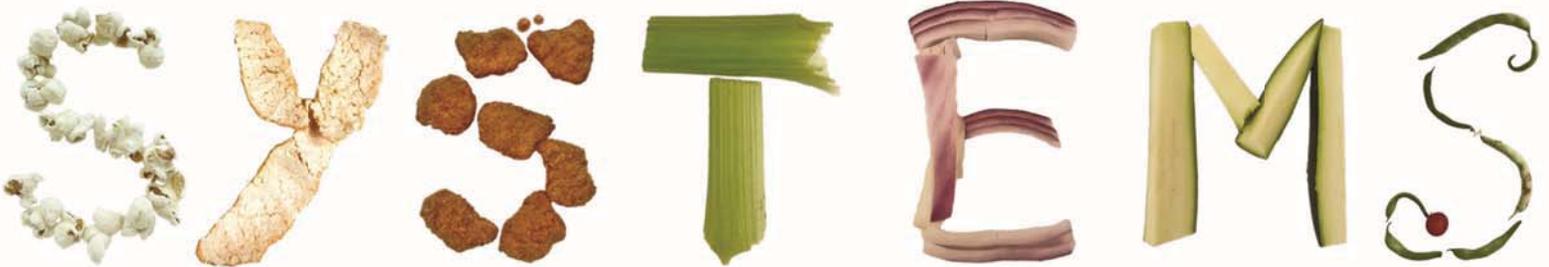
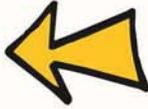
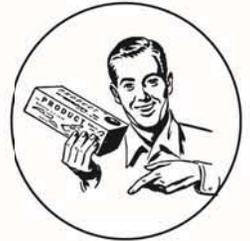
Anthro NOW pology



April 2015



Anthropozine



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WELCOME TO ANTHROPOZINE

Anthropozine, a venue for undergraduate work of and inspired by anthropology, is a special publication of anthronow.com. Look for us in April, September, and December, in coordination with our print publication, Anthropology Now. This is our first issue! It's like a collector's item!

We welcome submissions from current and recently graduated college students of any major on topics relevant to anthropology and culture. Our April and September issues will revolve around a specific theme. The December issues will be open topic. **September's theme is the Body.** To learn more about how to submit, check our call for submissions on page 5 and visit our website <https://anthropozine.wordpress.com/>.

Special Issue: Food

What's for dinner? An ancient question, with many different answers. In this month's issue our authors reflect on how their foodways are representative of diverse cultures and how significant life events continue to shape and inform their changing diets.

About **Anthropology Now**

Like what you see? Maybe you want to read our parent venue, Anthropology Now, a peer-reviewed journal from Routledge/Taylor & Francis that offers cutting edge research from leading scholars in illustrated articles written for a broad audience.

Check your library for the print version, or if you're rich and famous get an individual subscription for just \$55. That's less than sushi take-out! If you're a member of the American Anthropological Association's [General Anthropology Division](http://anthronow.com/) you've already got electronic access. There's also plenty of free content available at <http://anthronow.com/>.

ANTHROPOZINE

Matt Thompson, editor

Andria Timmer, editor

John Cann, cover design

Doug Reeser, anthronow.com webmaster

Maria Vespri, general editor of Anthropology Now

Thanks to our authors!

2015 April



CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Interested in seeing your work published in Anthropozine? We want to see what you've been up to!

We are looking for authors who can communicate their personal connection to the object of their study. How does your identity or personal history interact with your experience of anthropology? What drew you to this line inquiry? To this end we are making an open call for the following:

- **Personal reflections** on academic topics, current events
- **Reviews** of books, movies, museum installations, etc.
- **Stories** that relate personal experiences or observations
- **Poetry and creative writing**
- **Artwork and Photography**

Written works should be creative and engaging and should abstain from jargon, artistic works should be relevant to the issue theme and anthropology broadly construed. Bibliographies are not necessary unless you are including a direct quote in your piece. If so then use APA style in footnotes.

Generally we are looking to publish shorter works, including some that are very brief. If you have a longer piece consider trimming it down before submitting it. Suggested lengths: "Letters" – about 200 to 600 words; "Articles" – about 800 to 1500 words; "Features" – about 2000 to 2500 words.

PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

We publish three issues a year: April, September, and December. We are currently collecting submissions for our September issue on Anthropology of the Body with a deadline of June 15, 2015.

December will be an open topic issue with submissions due October 15, 2015.

SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

1. Feel free to direct questions to matt.anthropozine@gmail.com before you submit.
2. For written works use single spacing, no formatting, and save the piece as a .doc file. Embedded hyperlinks are okay, but we are not doing multimedia yet.
 - a. Name your file LastNameFirstname.doc.
 - b. Visual works should be in a .jpg file, or if already uploaded to a streaming service then sharing the URL link without an attachment is fine.
 - c. Do not submit a .doc with embedded images, send the image files separately. Do not submit .pdf files.
3. Send the file(s) as an email attachment to matt.anthropozine@gmail.com.
 - a. In the subject line use some of the genre terms in bold from the call for submissions to describe the type of submission you are making. Here just say what it is, not what it is about.
 - b. For written works follow this with a number representing the word count, for visual works write “visual” after the genre term.
4. In the body of the email include:
 - a. Your name, school, class year, and major.
 - b. Write a 1-3 sentence bio about yourself in the third person, include something about your future plans. Then state briefly what the submission is about.
 - c. You do not need to submit a resume.
5. Please submit early. You are welcome to submit multiple works. Submissions will be acknowledged within three weeks.
 - a. If you receive revisions you will be expected to make them promptly.
 - b. Visit our work space <http://anthropozine.wordpress.com> for updates.

From the Editors (8) Matt Thompson and Andria Timmer share recipes, each with a story.

Refractions (10) Allison Montoya, Arden Wolfenden, Carter Schrum, Esi Daniels, Hunter Pearson, Minja Miketa, Ryan Leavey, and Tyrone Artis share short stories about food and culture.

A Bite into the Truth (16) Nitasha Embleton goes on a mystical journey and loses her virginity to French fries.

From the Eyes of a Farmer's Daughter (20) Rebecca Payne reflects on how a childhood spent on a farm and invested in 4-H trained her to see food differently.

From Scratch (22) Wade Hunter reveals the diet of a sailor aboard a US Navy aircraft carrier. It ain't pretty.

Imaginary Lines (25) Life in Tijuana or San Diego is quite similar for Marvin Mellado. Being in college is a bigger change.

Growing for the Future (27) J.P. Delisio learns about the Svalbard Seed Vault, but still prefers heirloom tomatoes.

Eating is Beneath Me (29) The stress of Navy life exacerbates Jennifer Harrington's incipient eating disorder.

Of Spice and Men (32) Katharine Freisitzer loves anime and food, and through anthropology can study them both. *Choice Any 4 Items*

A 1. Egg Roll (Shrimp, Pork, Spinach) (5)

A11. Moo Goo Gai Pan

A Millennial's Food Journey (34) Colleen Garrison works on a farm over the summer and learns that food as the forge of family. *Mixed Vegetable*

A 4. Chicken Wings (6)

A14. Pepper Steak w. Onion

A Combined Perspective on Society (38) Cortney Epps reflects on how the social sciences are helping to prepare her for a career in agriculture.

A 7. Egg Foo Young (Chicken, Pork, Shrimp, Beef)

A17. Hunan Style (Chicken, Beef, Pork)

Growing Up and the Family Food (40) Maria Aryza Merida travels through time as she chronicles her journey from the Philippines to the United States.

The Food We Eat (43) Nicholas Nemtala shares stories from La Paz and Florence, and looks forward to Paris.

Front Cover John Cann

Back Cover Ne-Asia Allah

International House of Huevos

Matt Thompson, editor

Growing up in Austin, Texas, my mother would often reward me for attending Mass with going out to eat. Through this Sunday ritual Las Manitas Avenue Café became a family favorite. This little diner on Congress Avenue was known for its many tasty Mexican dishes including migas, huevos rancheros, and huevos motuleños among many others. When I moved east, first to Florida and then North Carolina and Virginia, I missed dearly many of my beloved Texas favorites. Necessity being the mother of invention I experimented until I arrived at the recipe I share with you today. Alas, my favorite diner is [no longer standing](#), but you can still make this Tex-Mex classic for breakfast or dinner. It's easy and it's cheap too!

Ingredients for Migas

Jalapeño peppers, 1-2 to taste
Yellow onion, about half, minced
Garlic, the more the merrier
Cheddar cheese, plenty
Corn tortillas, about 6
Eggs, at least 5-6.



Migas Recipe

1. Preheat your oven to 325 F
2. Chop the peppers and onions, sauté with plenty of garlic in real butter. You'll need a big pan, I use a wok.
3. Grate the cheese
4. Put the tortillas in a stack. Cut the stack in half and then into strips, spread them out on a cookie sheet.
5. Put the cookie sheet of tortillas strips in the oven for about 7 minutes. Check occasionally and stir them around with tongs or a spatula so they get toasty.
6. Beat the eggs, add them to the sautéed vegetables.
7. Once the eggs are done, dump the tortilla strips in. Fold together.
8. Add the grated cheese. Fold together.
9. Cover and let rest so the cheese gets melty.
10. Serve with hot salsa and warm flour tortillas.



Images of Las Manitas via Wikimedia Commons ([left](#)) ([above](#)).

From America to Hungary and Back

Andria Timmer, editor

At the beginning of the day, Erzsi neni, the old Roma (Gypsy) woman whose house I stayed in while doing field research in a rural Roma village in Hungary, would make a big frying pan full of lescó, peppers and onions fried in copious amounts of lard and often served with sausage. This would be served alone or with eggs for breakfast. At the end of the day, dinner would be bread dipped into the congealed leftovers. My informants proudly told me that “Gypsies eat meat!” I, on the other hand, had been a vegetarian for most of my life and I had only recently started to eat meat because I found it very hard to be a vegetarian anthropologist. I have to admit, if you didn’t pay too much attention to the pools of grease, this was a rather tasty meal. But after days of eating this, I felt lethargic and, well, gross.

I looked forward to dinners with Melissa and Neik. Melissa from the United States and Neik from Holland were volunteers working

in the same village. On the nights I would stay with them, Melissa would cook some of her favorite recipes modified to use Hungarian ingredients. She relied on many of the same ingredients as my Roma hosts, but eliminated much of the fat and meat so they felt lighter and comforting. Melissa inspired this dish that I make to this day when I am feeling a little nostalgic for Hungary. It is a classic American comfort dish with Hungarian flavors and Gypsy ingredients translated by Melissa to Hungary and by me back to the U.S.: Multicultural Frank and Beans.

Ingredients:

- 1 large onion, diced
- 2 diced red bell peppers
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- Oil of choice
- Seasonings to taste (I use a lot):
Hungarian paprika (preferably hot),
cayenne pepper, chili powder, cumin,
salt, pepper
- 1 can diced tomatoes
- 3 cups kidney beans
- 4 (or more) hot dogs
- 4 cups water or chicken broth

Sautee onions, peppers, and garlic in oil until soft and fragrant. Add seasonings and blend well. Add tomatoes, beans, hot dogs, and water. Simmer for at least 30 minutes.



Image of Hungarian lescó via
Wikimedia Commons ([link](#)).

REFRACTIONS

Short stories about food and culture

Sauerkraut for Thanksgiving

Allison Montoya

When I think about food in my family, I immediately think about holiday traditions. Thanksgiving is an important holiday in my family and we take our food very seriously. The family that is hosting Thanksgiving will usually prepare the turkey, a side dish, and maybe a dessert. My extended family on my dad's side will then prepare more side dishes, appetizers, and desserts. Without a doubt, you will always be able to find turkey, mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, stuffing, green beans, and pumpkin pie on our table. I wanted to know more about the food we have at Thanksgiving, so I called my parents. From the call, I actually learned that the food we have at Thanksgiving now, we did not always have. My dad told me a story about how when he was younger, his grandmother would make sauerkraut every Thanksgiving. Sauerkraut at Thanksgiving sounds absolutely disgusting in my opinion, so I questioned why my dad's grandmother served that dish.

My great-grandmother would make sauerkraut every Thanksgiving for her kids and grandchildren. After doing some research, I found that eating sauerkraut at Thanksgiving is mainly a Maryland tradition, specifically in Baltimore. According to an article I read, when Abraham Lincoln declared Thanksgiving a national holiday, one-fourth of the people living in Baltimore were German. Many of the immigrants that first came over from

Germany started the sauerkraut tradition in America. The Baltimore tradition of sauerkraut and turkey has been around for over 150 years.

The tradition of having sauerkraut makes sense now because my great-grandmother was part German. However, the great sauerkraut tradition did not last long in my family. Once my great-grandmother stopped hosting Thanksgiving, the sauerkraut stopped being a part of holiday dinners. My dad told me that his family did not particularly like the sauerkraut, they just ate it to be polite. I do not think this tradition will arise again for my family's Thanksgiving dinners, but it would be interesting to cook a Thanksgiving meal and have the exact same food as my great-grandparents did.

Every family is going to have different meals depending on where their ancestors are from. Outsiders will look upon some of these food tradition as weird or gross, but to that one family it is a little piece of their family history. Eating the same meals as your ancestors did is extremely cool and helps connect you even more to your family history. I only wish that the sauerkraut tradition could have been something more appetizing.

The Child Cheater

Arden Wolfenden

Anyone who doesn't irrationally fear trace amounts of uncooked egg knows that getting to lick the sugary batter from the bowl is every child's (and many adult's) favorite part of the baking process. To

children, that 20-50 minute baking time that stands between them and their sweet treat is far too long. So the leftover brownie or cake batter, on the edge of the bowl or stuck on the beaters, is the perfect taster to hold them over.

Seeing the unused batter wasted, someone in the baking world invented a tool to help bakers eliminate the problem. The rubber spatula's flexible construction held the magical ability to bend and form to the edge of any bowl or container like a squeegee to ensure every last drop of batter made it from mixing bowl to baking pan.

Growing up a simple rubber spatula was held superior to other baking utensils in my home. My mother called it the "child cheater" because it could scrape mixing bowls so clean there was no batter left for my sister or me. She was a merciful mother, however, and did not use her rubber spatula to its fullest capability because she did not want to rob her children of such happiness.

Gravy Potpourri

Carter Schrum

Throughout my life my mother has been the one person that I can count on to put dinner on the table. She is a fantastic cook and can make just about anything. She is always trying to mix things up with different kinds of food from frozen pizzas to cooking chicken cordon bleu. She rarely messes up and makes sure that dinner is always on the table waiting for the whole family to get home. My mother is very talented when it comes to multi-tasking. She usually gets home at 6:00 and has dinner on the table ready at 6:30.

A long time ago, when I was still a baby, my mother was cooking dinner for her family (my dad, my brother and sister, and myself). My mom was preparing a meal that she has made many times before. She was preparing gravy for her mashed potatoes. While she was making dinner, she accidentally switched one of the ingredients without realizing it. The whole time she did not realize what she had done until my dad began to eat it. Out of the whole family, luckily my dad was the first one to take a bite. As soon as he tasted what she gave him, his eyes suddenly grew in size as if they were about to pop out of his head. He spit out the food as he started coughing. He immediately stopped all of us before we took our first bite. My father questioned my mother as to what she did differently. She had no idea as to what she had done until she took a bite. She quickly realized that instead of using grease to cook the gravy like usual, she accidentally grabbed an old jar of liquid potpourri that just happened to look exactly the same as the grease jar. As soon as she realized, she quickly started laughing.

From that point on my father always joked about how my mother was trying to kill him. Even though it was obviously an accident, my father always joked about it especially since months after, my mother did the same thing to my brother except with different ingredients.

Bragging's NOT Cute When You're Pounding Fufu

Esi Daniels

It was a typical Sunday in Dansoman, Ghana. We had all come back from church and were ready for the next stage of the day. We were hot, tired, and

STARVING! My mother refused to buy me some chicken and fries from the local *Mr. Big's* restaurant. That really upset me! She said we would be eating fufu and my favorite soup, palm nut soup. To make matters worse, she ordered me to go outside with my aunts and learn how to pound fufu.

Now to the main character! My Auntie Faustie was the one who said that she was going to show me how to pound fufu. She explained that the process was a very intricate one and that it takes a special person to do it. I was told that because of the quickness of the process, it is very easy to get hurt. She then went on to boast about how she was an expert at pounding fufu and that she has never gotten hurt in ALL her years of doing it. None of this surprised me, because my auntie is a woman that likes to talk a lot. She is sweet, beautiful, and intelligent, but boy can she talk! Most of the time she can never back up what she is saying. "Maame-Esi, you will be surprised at the number of women in this town that are jealous of me because I pound fufu the best." She said all of this with a condescending smirk on her face. Through all of this, my Auntie Matilda was laughing at her saying, "Now Faustie, why are you lying after we just came back from church? Shame on you!"

They finally started preparing the fufu and at first, Auntie Faustie was the one holding the stick and pounding the fufu. Throughout that whole processes she would not stop bragging and talking trash about anyone and everyone. She then grew impatient of my Auntie Matilda and demanded that they switch because she could do a much better job. As she sat it felt as if her trash talking got louder and more frequent. "I AM the best Maame-Esi. Do you see how well I do this?" Next thing you know, I hear a huge scream and

I see Auntie Faustie sprinting up and down the street, cursing in our language. It was the funniest thing I had ever seen! My Auntie Matilda was crying because she was laughing so hard. "Yes, I see how well you can run. You should have joined Ghana's Olympic team. That's what you get! You talk too much." Needless to say, that was the best fufu I ever had and I'm glad I didn't eat at *Mr. Big's*.

Prayers Before my Family Eats

Hunter Pearson

My family is quite religious and we say a prayer before we eat, every time. I have been taught to pray since I was little, so even when I am eating alone I say a quick prayer thanking God for what I have. I was raised on that aspect and I believe it is a good way to thank the Lord for what he has provided. That is the last sentence in every prayer we say. "I want to thank the Lord for what he has provided, Amen."

That sentence means so much to my family and I because I was brought up in such a manner that we relied on the Lord giving us what we had. We believe that we are in his hands and he will protect us and ensure that we have plenty of food and life to go around.

When I was growing up it was hard because my father's business was not going well. We were scraping pennies together so that we could have the things that we needed. Every opportunity that we had we believe was because of the Lord and that's why we always thanked him when we prayed. Though we prayed at church on Sundays and before we go to bed as a family we all held hands and prayed before we ate. It is kind of funny because when I was in middle school I

began to question the reason why we prayed because I thought we were really not being helped. But my dad just said that God has a plan for everyone and in time, things will change. Within a month my dad's business took off and thankfully now we are not struggling to live. My dad has raised enough money for me to go to school without worry and is living a happier life. I believe that God did help us immensely and I believe saying our prayers at dinner and really at every other time helped us in our position.

A Thief is a Thief

Minja Miketa

Back when my family still lived in Croatia my parents owned a fruit stand. Every day my dad would drive to another city and pick up the fruit from farms and other vendors to ensure fresh fruit for the day. He would then drive back to our city and sell fruit all day. This in and of itself is rather boring and doesn't make a good story unless something out of the ordinary were to happen and lucky for you it did, at least a few times. I'm going to be telling you the story of the day someone decided to steal something from the fruit stand.

My dad and my mom were manning the stand on a day like any other, except on this day someone decided to steal from the stand. At this point my dad has no clue what the guy took. Was it money? Was it a piece of fruit? It's impossible to tell and the guy is running. Now someone else might have let it go or called the cops to deal with it, but my dad isn't that kind of guy. He gave chase to the guy that took whatever it was. It was like the scene of a movie, the guy was pushing through people and jumping over stuff while my dad pursued.

After what my dad claims was five minutes, although it was probably a lot shorter than that, he caught up to the guy. My dad threw the guy to the ground and demanded to know what he took. The guy had a sad look on his face, like he was scared and ashamed. He shyly handed over a single nectarine. It was at this point my dad felt guilty. When he started the chase the guy could have stolen anything including a lot of the money they had earned that day, but now it looked like it was just a piece of fruit. When my dad tells the story he says the guy should have just said something, if he had just asked for some fruit and said he didn't have the money he would have given him one to take. It just goes to show that a thief is a thief and if you decide to steal it could end with you being thrown to the ground.

Burning Up

Ryan Leavey

My favorite food group growing up was breakfast. Especially when my family came back from Texas with pounds of tortillas and homemade baozi. Baozi are boiled dough that has meat inside. However, since they were premade we would have to heat it up in the microwave whenever we wanted to eat them.

When I was five or six years old my mother would always make it for my sister and me. On one early morning my mother was getting ready for work and was a little behind for some reason. I was starving and was getting impatient so I decided to put on my big boy pants and finally ask my mom if I could make a baozi. She finally agreed and told me to put one baozi in for thirty seconds. However with my excitement going on, I misunderstood her and put it in the microwave for thirty minutes. Not knowing what I did I went

upstairs to take a shower and midway through my shower I hear the fire alarm go off and my mom started yelling at the top of her lungs. Twenty minutes in the baozi decided to catch fire. Luckily my mom picked up the microwave and put it in the sink to extinguish the fire. The baozi was burnt completely and looked like a black ball, the smell was horrendous. The entire house smelled like someone had died while eating year old expired tuna. My mother was pissed, she asked how long I put the baozi in the microwave and when I responded with, "You said thirty minutes so I put it in for thirty minutes," words came out that I have never heard before. She started out with, "I said thirty seconds! Why would you think I said thirty minutes?" and that was the last statement I could remember.

As a result of the microwave fire, I lost my allowance for a month because the baozi destroyed the microwave and almost the entire kitchen if it wasn't for my mom's fast reaction. I also learned that I would be on "probation" where I could not cook baozi by myself until I got older and learned how to listen to directions.

Food for thought

Tyrone Artis

It has been argued for the longest time by most drunks, alcoholics, and spirit drinkers that beer should be considered as a meal not a beverage. I can see where the confusion comes into play, based on the ingredients used for fermentation and the cooking process. And the time of day of consumption.

Most have to have it to start their day for breakfast saying they got to get the shakes off. You have a handful that drink during lunch because they're working and don't

want to lose their job. Especially if it's a good one. Now here's where the bulk of your drinkers come into play, in the evening after work and on the weekend. With the first thing being said coming outta their mouth, "It's beer thirty!" What I can't figure out for the life of me is why people want to over indulge themselves, and put not only their lives but the lives of other people in danger. The response to that I hear the most is, "You're not a drinker."

Which is totally untrue I've been drunk a plenty of times, I started drinking before I was twenty-one. Back in high school when, somewhere around sixteen or seventeen, my second job was at Food Lion as what I would call a triple threat: stocker/ cashier/ bagboy (see, now I'm telling my age I don't think they have them around anymore, if so they're not called that). Basically I would get someone I knew to come through my line and purchase the particular beers I wanted. I've given them the money before the purchase because as cashiers it was against company policy to ring yourself up. Another cashier had to do it unless you were going on break and they were too busy. Moreover, I was known at school as the bartender, the mobile bar.

In all actuality I've been drinking way before that, before I turned a teenager. I'm from the country. Me and my younger brother used to sneak and steal our aunt's and uncle's corn liquor. Back when we was growing up when you got sick for medicine you was given castor oil, some stuff they gave to horses, or what was called an "hot toddy" where they boiled corn liquor, lemons, and honey. So it's my parents fault.

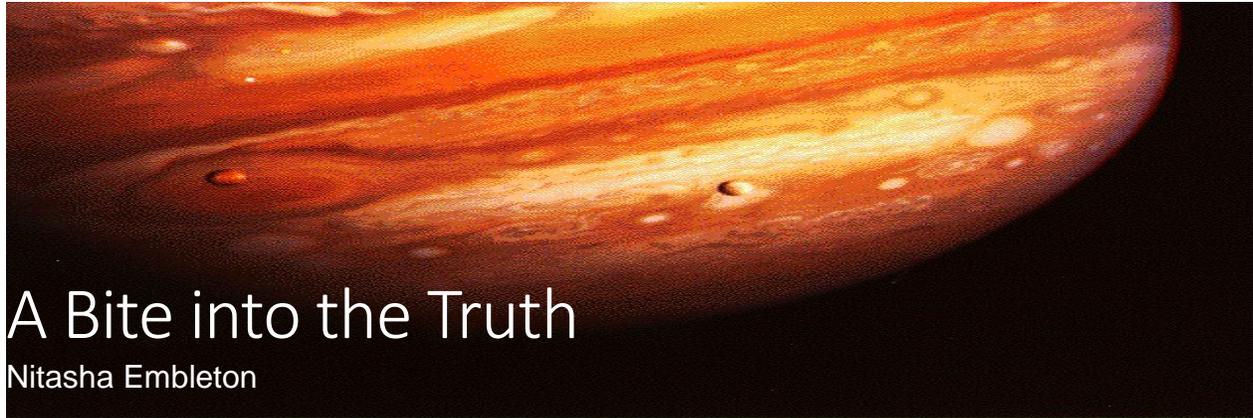
Corn liquor is mainly my liquor of choice. I get it in five gallon buckets and the flavor is called apple pie. Sad to say that

turned me and my brother into heavy drinkers. Particularly with already having certifiable drunks in the family, the kind the family shunned away because of their drinking habits. Seemed like every time we had a family function here comes Uncle So-and-so staggering down the street singing, cussing, and fussing. As a little kid I was amazed as to how in the world this dude knew when and where the parties were because everybody made sure not to tell him. Today he has done a 180, gave his life to the Lord. Very active in the church, married no kids just step ones, and a good government office job. It was a time he used to walk everywhere or bum a ride. Now he has a nice home, car, and even a Harley-Davidson motorcycle. Whereas I use to be ashamed of him now I'm very proud.

Currently I think me and my brother has taken his place. My brother has gotten drunk, fell in the ditch, wrecked his truck a few times, and even had to have a blow starter installed in his truck. As for myself I've backed my truck into the ditch twice. Being that I slowed down now I'm what you would called a light drinker or as I would like to put it I get sociably high.



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A Bite into the Truth

Nitasha Embleton

The earth as it had been known to the gods for centuries had become old. It's once mystic blue eyes started to become tainted with green, wrinkles pressed down the mountains that were the world's knuckles, and a blanket of gray masked the skies where it once sang in crystalloid tunes.

As the earth's breaths became softer and weakened, it managed a breath, looked to the gods and pleaded "Let there be one human, one born under my brother Jupiter, who contains the heart of corrupted but enlightened Zeus, and the stomach of a black abyss, to roam and find the hidden treasures all others have failed to. Let there be one human whose ambition isn't to poison me, or shed blood on my skin, but whom will spend their life fulfilling what all others have missed."

The gods had spent lifetimes infatuated with the earth. They had become so madly in love with the way the earth sung to them in the morning and kissed them goodnight, the way it flirted with them with by coming so close with its fingertips yet only grazing the clouds that homed the gods, the way it held their children in its arms for protection. The gods knew that they could do nothing but grant its dying wish.

So on a night where the air was thick with frozen songs and harmonies, under a moon that shone brighter than any other before it, Jupiter came down and placed on the fragile

skin of the earth a child with the heart of Zeus, Jupiter's fatherly thirst for adventure and importance, and the stomach of a black abyss. This is where my legend began, the day my destiny became the last igniting flame the earth pulsed through its veins. I am that child, and my purpose was to do what every other human had failed to do: taste all of the food that the earth had given.

* * *

The family I was 'born' into was small and contained, leaving me unaware in my first years of what I had been born to do. Every night I sat at the table in my house with my brothers and I would push my food around with my fork or aid my peas with an escape plan into my napkin. Little did I know I was under the influence that every other human in my lifetime was under: food.

Food was not the greatest treasure of life. My father cooked more than my mother did and I was left to eat the same New England food he was raised on. Green beans in a can drowning in water, sauces that were processed and forced into a pulp, and manly ground beef. It took me years to overcome these habits. I would waste food, erode my life meaning by sucking on lollipops and chewing bubblegum as I cleaned the kitchen with my brothers and threw away the scraps. I was kept away from grilled goods, deep fried amazements and honey mustard

smothered meats for what felt like millenniums.

On one fateful night as I lay in my bed, the smells of temptation and desire lingered into my room and seduced me to follow them. In my kitchen there was a bag glowing, whispering my name to come closer. Carefully I approached it, and with clammy hands and trembling fingers I opened it. Inside there laid in the most beautiful display I had ever witnessed: golden fries married with salt. My virgin mouth had never watered before the way it did that fateful night and as I picked up the fry and slowly carried it to my mouth, as I took my first bite, the world shook with joy and the gods who had been watching me since my first breath shouted at the top of their lungs. Time froze, and before my eyes I saw Jupiter bring me to here, I heard in my novice ears the earth's plea to have me walk among it and bring pride to what had been shamed. From that moment on, I vowed to never again to play with boring vegetables and plan escape routes, instead I would plan victories of wars in name of my true love.

Ever since that night I wasn't able to keep my hands off of all the treasures that surrounded me. Every second that wasn't occupied with the necessary things to survive in my life, revolved around plotting what things to mix in order to create such tastes I thought I might die and join my creators. My childhood was scorned with bland taste, repetitive meals served hot and cold. My soul cried out for justice, to bring more into my life. The days after I crammed my head through books with knowledge about the people before me who had failed, I ran to indulge in my secret affairs. She was the sweetest guilt I had ever known and the most honorable torture I could have dreamed of. Growing up a white household though deprived me of a lot of her riches, and I ached to have them under the impression that I never could any time soon.

My teenage years were far more different than those of my childhood. My mistress and I found several ways to please each other despite the distractions. The earth was eager to help us find our way to each other too, constantly showing me new things on innocent walks and lazy afternoons.

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|

I was hopeless but to fall in love with food the way that the gods did with the earth. One day I was shown the sweetness of a honeysuckle, the next the sexual allure of a double fudge brownie. My insides were tickled with coffee crumble cake, the burst of a grape, or even the succulent arousal of chocolate covered strawberries. The relationship I had was young and naïve, but I would have been a fool to not think of it as true love granted by the gods themselves. Because it was.

I hit my lowest day not many years after I had lost my innocence and entered into high school. Food was there to comfort me, an everlasting reminder of my journey and purpose in life. I spent days sitting on a couch, shoveling in ice cream and chips until I didn't recognize myself anymore. My lover didn't take kindly to my habits then, and gave me cavities and pimples instead of a divorce.

In retaliation I did damage. I deep fried my pickles, I cried into the cheese of my nachos, I even dared to put extra whip cream on my afternoon pie. There was a moment after I had abused my lover once again and had fallen

greedy too, and indulged in her guiltiest of pleasures with baking cakes and muffins. I explored her with handmade pasta and chicken wings. College was never an easy place to make a good meal, so I had taught myself to stay making love to my wife.

I had become content with where my life and destiny had gone. I had my lover by my side in any form I needed, I had the lessons that came along with it. There was nothing else I could have needed, at least I thought. Again as I slept in a slumber with her lips still lingering around my mouth, Jupiter visited me again. He told me I had done well, but that I had followed the heart of Zeus inside of me. I had tasted so much, but I had used the stomach of a black abyss that guided me. I now needed to tap into my soul, the child Sagittarius of Jupiter, and make myself important.

I began to study what my earlier thirst in life had brought me: the desire to do more than taste easy American foods. I spent hours abusing my eyes to learn every curve, crevice, and dip there was to my lover. To my pleasure and dismay, I came to learn of others who lived on the same earth yet did not have what I had. People would hunt for their meats once a week when I spent twenty minutes in the freezer section. I was baffled to discover that their lives revolved around such beauty in such different ways, as though they learned a different dance than I. I had vowed to love the sweeter parts, but I could never imagine eating berries as the main category of my meal.

Through this discovery it was brought to my attention that the world, and my lover, was more different than I had ever imagined. She was so humble with others, she gave all that she could, and I would have been wrong to have asked her to give any more than she did.

The earth stretched out its arms and engulfed me, then gently placed me at the gates of the gods. They were pleased and told me that I could do more than what I was there to do. My real destiny was to study every form my sweetheart came in, study her, immerse myself in it in all her different forms, languages, and cultures, and bring it to my journey as the greatest journey ever lived.

Nitasha Embleton is currently studying Communications, but is waiting acceptance to continue her studies in the fields of Sociology and Anthropology at Virginia Commonwealth University. She is looking to graduate in the spring of 2017 and hopes to continue writing and publishing along with becoming a member of the world of Anthropology.



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From the Eyes of a Farmer's Daughter

Rebecca Payne



Growing up as a farmer's daughter is not something a lot of people can pride themselves on. I was raised in the small town of Hamilton, Virginia where my father farms over a thousand acres and raises cattle on our family's farm. Not only was I raised with an agricultural background, but I also immersed myself into a world of agriculture and the Loudoun County 4-H program. This has made me appreciate having a fresh pork chop or juicy steak on my plate with an ear of sweet corn that I handpicked off the stalk in front of my house. Due to my past I have gained a whole new respect for agriculture and food from a personal perspective that not many have access to.

My father is one of the biggest, if not the biggest farmer in Loudoun County. While most think that Loudoun County is a very urban area, anyone who lives there will tell you differently. This county is home to my family's farm that is owned and operated by my father and grandfather. For a very long time they bred and raised hogs and cattle, but now they have downsized to only raising

cattle and selling the meat as freezer beef to friends, family, and other locals in the area. Having fresh beef available at all times is something I took for granted for a long time, but now knowing where my meat comes from is a priority. Aside from selling meat, this dynamic duo grows soybeans, corn, and wheat. The biggest money makers are the straw and timothy hay my father grows with pride. Season after season I witnessed seeds being planted, popping up from the soil, then crops being harvested. My father works sun up to sun down, no matter the weather, or time of year to provide food not only for his family but others as well.

For ten years, I dedicated my life to raising market lambs, goats, hogs, and steers. Year after year I would walk out of the county fair's show ring with purple banners, but being in 4-H gave me so much more than that.

Raising my 4-H projects taught me responsibility, but it also taught me how to feed animals to achieve just the right amount of muscle and fat or how to look at several

cuts of meat and tell you which one is the best to eat. As well as showing the animals I raised, I was also a member of our Livestock Judging team for numerous years. As a part of this team, I was trained to identify feeds and meat cuts, place animals, and give reasons for how I placed these animals.

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This has made me appreciate having a fresh pork chop or juicy steak on my plate with an ear of sweet corn that I handpicked off the stalk in front of my house.

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This is a skill set that many people lack, but I feel confident knowing what meat is the best when I walk into grocery stores. I have also had the pleasure and joy of butchering hogs with my own two hands. At the end of each county fair, it is time for my projects to be loaded onto the trailer and head off to the slaughterhouse. I usually grew attached to

these animals, but I always knew the time would come to say goodbye. All my hard work and perseverance went into making these animals market ready to be auctioned off and sold for the sole purpose of being food on someone's plate. Some say 4-Hers are desensitized to the idea of death and slaughter, but we are raised to know it is the circle of life and to instead be proud of all of our hard work. 4-H has truly made me who I am today and I'm proud of my successes and obstacles I faced while showing.

Being raised on a farm and then furthering that knowledge to my passion of showing cattle, sheep, goats, and hogs in 4-H taught me to appreciate agriculture and the food on my plate at each meal. Not only do I respect farmers and other agriculture related careers, I can understand and put myself in their shoes or should I say worn out, dirty boots. I had a very unique childhood and I believe that is why I have an admiration for the field of agriculture and growth of food.

Rebecca Payne is a junior at Christopher Newport University, earning a Bachelor's degree in Sociology with minors in Psychology and Childhood Studies. After college, she plans to dedicate her life to bettering the lives of mentally and developmentally handicapped teenagers and adults.



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Images courtesy of Rebecca Payne.



The Argentinean cacao farmer relinquished his harvest for a meager sum. Pods dried on rafters in the heat of the sun and shelled. They are shipped across the equator by freight in burlap sacks. Pressed. Centrifuged. Coco liquor separated to be reintroduced later. Mixed with subsidized corn syrup and milk products, artificial flavors and preservatives. Congealed and formed by steel mechanizations, coated with cornstarch, gum Arabic, and less than 1% of Blue, Red, and Yellow ones, twos and threes – colors sourced from beetle shells, chlorophyll, synthesis, and alchemy. Machine vision aids a robotic stamp in pressing an ‘m’ on each individual shell. Layered in packing and moved through shipping lines. Now, purchased by me to be consumed in ignorance.

Here I am, munching on these artificial berries and waxing of my one self-sustaining camping trip I took earlier this year, as if a weekend of playing forager brings me any closer to paralleling a true hunter-gatherer society like the Kung. These are bushmen whom breathe the petrichor caused by the sweat of their brow hitting the dry earth of the Kalahari, seen as a foreboding and desolate place through the lens of the first-world. They live as humans had lived before we sowed fields, when the earth itself swelled

with tubers, nuts, and berries hidden from lackadaisical gazes. Despite common beliefs, their diet can be as, if not more, nutritious and varied as any supermarket shopper’s. With the staple of the mongongo nut having vast amounts of necessary nutritional value and variance, even in times of scarcity there is little chance of malnourishment. While meat is an occasional treat due to inefficient methods, it still plays an important role in displaying worth amongst the men of the tribe. However, if a man were to bring game back, he must humble himself to his people. It is only this way – with tight binds of nuanced culture – that such a society can exist without explicit leadership.

The very essence of their interactions are imbued with gathering and consuming food, the manner of which it is done, and the positions of esteem one holds within the tribe from it. However, even in the modern environment of obfuscation, where a microchip and a potato chip may have near equal number of steps and hands involved in production, there still must be similarities for those who live freely from the land and us within our self-built institutions.

* * *

Through the Navy I found a ticket out of what felt like a death spiral in Florida. My ASVAB was an almost perfect score and with it came a good rate offer – I signed a contract to become a Nuclear Electronics Technician. Boot camp was a sterile, godless place where the only reprieve was the mess hall. We had three meals a day of non-distinct, nutritionally-complete proto-food whose perfection could only be sought from government contractors with committee decreed nutriment plans. Three times a day I was able to sit down, shovel something into my face and taste a flavor besides sweat; all without getting screamed at. Pure bliss.

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**Occasionally, there was
a good meal, but this
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Lobster and steak? I
guess we're getting
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another two months.**

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Because of my rating, I spent a good chunk of my Navy career in training, seeing a large portion of both the east and the west coast. Combined with a decent expendable income and bachelorhood, I became a gourmand and learned that food can be an appreciable art form. I've tried everything from down-home southern cooking and Thai street foods to two and three Michelin star avant-garde restaurants. I feel that my passion for cuisine stemmed from these travels, but due to limitations on having a kitchen of my own, I couldn't express the inspiration that the duplicity of cultures and flavors I had witnessed impressed on me.

With training complete, I was assigned to the carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN-72) as a Reactor Operator. There are few places I have ever witnessed food as bad and curious as I did at times there. Add one part Alpo-like beefy chunks, two parts old spaghetti, and call it sukiyaki. Most of us subsisted by getting instant ramen or oatmeal delivered to the ship by post and storing it where we could. Occasionally, there was a good meal, but this often meant bad news. Lobster and steak? I guess we're getting forward deployed for another two months.

When I came to Norfolk, Virginia, and left the ship, I was fortunate enough to meet the love of my life. Much of the courting period was spent with me cooking for her in her tiny studio-sized kitchen, replicating the cuisines I had sampled throughout the years. When we moved in together, I started accumulating more equipment. I taught myself how to bake bread and even make croissants. I began experimenting with 'modernist' cooking techniques, such as sous-vide baths and pressure infusions – going so far as to understand the chemical reactions that occur in these processes and utilizing them for startling effect.

These days, while I still enjoy an occasional experimental meal, I find myself returning to the basics. My partner, Sherri, bought me a large Dutch oven for camping, and since then I have gone to the wilderness at every opportunity we can muster. Recently, Sherri has been researching mycology and mushroom foraging, which when combined with my fishing and a few key ingredients, can often mean enough food to feed the camp.

* * *

The sun yawns wide by the horizon in the west, stretching in wavelength, casting the sky in layers of rust and bruise. As evening approaches, fires are started and stomachs growl. There – women return with mongongo nuts by the satchel, their impervious shells to be cracked with mewling children in arm. Here – Sherri returns from the path with armfuls of foraged maitake, their delicate shelves to be preened and cleaned of insects.

Poking hot coals, we men sit idle. In my case, the hunt was unsuccessful; maybe, this time, for them as well. We seek game by different mediums with different tools; for them, by the land with spears hewed and honed, and for me, by water with hooks and pole. Pots boil and stews render regardless. We stand bivouacked to the land, there by the swelter and bush of the Kalahari – here, the amber glow and chill of autumn in the Shenandoah Valley. Here and there, faces are framed with flickering light and laughter as the outside world dims beyond the luminescence of the circle. We eat.



Navy veteran **Wade Hunter** is an undergraduate student at Old Dominion University pursuing degrees in Electrical and Computer Engineering.

Image of USS Abraham Lincoln by Photographer's Mate 3rd Class Jordon R. Beesley made available through Wikimedia Commons ([link](#)).

Campfire image also by Wade Hunter.



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Imaginary Lines

Marvin Mellado

The household I grew up in was quite typical for Mexicans living in close contact with American culture. Living quite close to the border, San Diego was almost as much a home as Tijuana, although I lived mostly on the Mexican side. Nonetheless, all the essential elements of American culture permeated into my life. Not just the cuisine, but the movies, the TV shows, the slang, and the imported consumer products. In this way I assimilated both languages. I was especially fond of playing videocassettes repeatedly. Films such as Star Wars, Independence Day and Jurassic Park were burned into my retina.

With regard to the food, it was a mix of American and Mexican cuisine. Naturally things such as hamburgers, hot dogs, hotcakes

and the like were ubiquitous. All the typical fast food chains and restaurants existed. In particular, I was always fond of Chinese food. Chinese restaurants are abundant in Mexico, as the rice and meat-based dishes are quite compatible with the Mexican appetite. Chicken, pork, and beef in some form or another are staples of the Mexican diet, usually accompanied by rice and beans. Fresh fruits were especially common. They were usually purchased in outdoor markets, commonly referred to as “Sobreruedas”. Another quintessential food is the tortilla. We eat it with virtually anything, much in the same way Indians have naan bread.

I used to be a picky eater. There were two important ingredients in most Mexican dishes

I despised as a child: scrambled eggs and onions. Today it means little to me, but back then I struggled through this food. At home these tended to be served on a daily basis.

Certain foods were eaten on special occasions or holidays. We didn't celebrate Thanksgiving, but had a tradition of feasting on turkey with mashed potatoes and the usual side dishes on Christmas. This included both Christmas Eve ("Nochebuena" as it is known in Mexico) and Christmas day. Another highlight is the Rosca de Reyes, a kind of large donut-shaped bread eaten on the celebration of the Three Kings. It's more reminiscent of a cake, but with an outer lining of candy fruit. Inside were hidden miniature plastic baby Jesuses. Whoever got one had to prepare tamales a few weeks later. Tamales are a kind of corn dough steamed and wrapped in corn leaves, often prepared with chicken, potatoes and spices. These were often seen at special events, such as parties, but could also be bought on the street. Finally, there was Pan de Muertos, a special sweet bread made specifically for the Day of the Dead celebrations. These were usually sugar coated but could also have candy fruit or similar coatings. These were offered to the dead in specially constructed altars.

However, many of these things lie in a distant past for me. Since I've been in college, I've lived on my own. Consequently this is the period in my life where I've had to learn how to acquire and prepare food on my own. I gradually discovered how to shop, and how to prepare basic meals. By no means am I a skilled cook, and often times I opt for buying ready-made foods in the interest of time and energy. It could also be due to the lack of interest in cooking elaborately. It may not be an optimum solution for my nutrition, but calorie counts are hardly an important concern at this stage of my life. Practicality and brevity take priority over selection.

Many of the above traditions stem from a mixture of diverse cultures. Some are of

Mesoamerican origin, many were assimilated from the Spanish and bare the staple of Catholicism, the most popular religion in the country. It's deeply tied to the culture and psyche of most Mexicans. And of course, many things were introduced by the United States, and continue to be. Perhaps one of the most visible appropriations of American culture is Coca-Cola, which has become a ubiquitous drink in Mexico in particular.

Marvin Mellado is a senior at Old Dominion University majoring in physics.



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Image of Tijuana, Mexico by Sgt. 1st Class Gordon Hyde, made available through Wikimedia Commons ([link](#)).

Growing for the Future

J.P. Delisio



As a child growing up, every year during the summer my family would visit my grandparents who lived in New York. While there one of my favorite pastimes was helping my grandfather with his garden. He would take me outside in the slightly cool northern summer weather to see how the tomatoes were growing, make sure the garden was in good shape, and, when the time came, pick tomatoes to be eaten soon after. These tomatoes were not an integral part of meals; it was just as easy and quicker to pick up tomatoes from the supermarket within walking distance, but these tomatoes were special because they were the fruit of my grandfather's labor. This is what got me interested in horticulture and food and started me on the path to examining the role of the Svalbard Seed Vault. I have followed the footsteps of my grandfather and each spring plant a garden in my backyard with a focus on

heirloom plants. Heirloom plants are specific plant species which have not been modified by humans and are considered older original species. The main source for growing heirloom plants is through purchasing their seeds and growing them. This entails buying heirloom seeds from either retailers or online companies, planting the seeds, and finally harvesting new seeds from fully grown plants enabling the seeds to be renewable.

An interest in seeds brought to my attention seed vaults and in particular the global vault located in Svalbard, Norway. Svalbard has been dubbed the "Doomsday Vault" because it was created to protect against a doomsday event that will wipe out agriculture. The vault supposedly houses copies of seeds housed in any country's national seed vault that would like to store them there. When I found out about Svalbard's mission I thought it was an

important step in protecting the world's ability to support itself agriculturally and ensure that genetic diversity is not wiped out. After doing further research into Svalbard it became apparent that this was not the case. Svalbard does not cater to farmers or agriculturalists but instead to scientists. It is not about spreading genetic diversity and making seeds from around the world available to farmers but instead is focused on locking away seeds with genetic potential to be tampered with and experimented on to create "Frankenstein seeds." The monster Frankenstein was created from the different body parts of various dead bodies and these seeds that the scientists are creating are made from different genes taken from various seeds and melded together into a hybrid seed.

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To be frank, as a member of the developed world I do not want to change my diet and give up eating foods I love because we have too much food, but changes are necessary.

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The organic food movement and other activist movements see these seeds as monsters because they are unnatural. I agree with the activist movements because I believe that the monster seeds are not needed and should be replaced with heirloom seeds which serve the same function. The vault was initiated because of the fear currently that there is a problem with global food security. The human population is growing at a rate the Earth cannot sustain and worldwide malnutrition and hunger are large problems.

The problem though lies not in the amount of food produced but the distribution of it.

There is a myth that in order to feed the world we need to actively increase agricultural production because the Earth is incapable of sustaining us. Globally there is enough food for everyone not to go hungry and be nourished, but the majority of food is located in Western developed countries such as the United States. To be frank, as a member of the developed world I do not want to change my diet and give up eating foods I love because we have too much food, but changes are necessary. These changes do not have to be on a grand scale. I do not foresee becoming a vegan or even a vegetarian, but I could and should follow the footsteps of my grandfather - spending the effort and energy to grow tomatoes each summer so that I do not have to buy them from a commercial entity like a supermarket. This would make me less reliant on big business to feed me and make me more self-sufficient. To achieve that, each year I grow tomatoes as well as peppers and cucumbers. I try to plant a self-sufficient garden including the planting of flowers to attract natural pollinators and arranging plants in a symbiotic pattern. Even though it is a small change and would account for a very small percentage of my annual groceries, every little bit helps and every small step is a step towards changing the world and solving the food crisis.

J.P. Delisio a senior at Christopher Newport University majoring in History with a minor in Anthropology. He intends to continue his studies in graduate school studying modern American history.



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Image of Svalbard Seed Vault by Dag Endresen and made available by Wikimedia Commons ([link](#)).



Eating is Beneath Me

How Starving Myself Made Me Feel Strong

Jennifer Harrington

Having spent the first eight years of my life growing up as a mixed race child in the rural Midwest, I was exposed to very dichotomous cultures early on. There wasn't an Asian cultural presence until my mother came around, and her arrival was met with some considerable friction in this small, predominantly Caucasian town. One of the most obvious ways in which this cultural dichotomy manifested itself, especially to a child, was through food.

My father's family subsisted on food that is best described as "meat and potatoes," derived from their predominantly Scottish heritage. My mother on the other hand, who ate a traditional Korean diet consisting largely of (but not limited to) fish, vegetables, spices,

and rice above all else, made it no secret that she didn't enjoy such a simple, bland and heavy diet. It wasn't uncommon for there to be two separate meals prepared at dinner time, and I was often faced with the task of choosing one or the other. Neither parent attempted to mask their glee or disappointment in which meal I chose for the evening. To them, I was choosing more than food, I was essentially, in their minds, choosing which parent I liked more.

So it's likely no surprise that I developed a rather complicated relationship with food at a young age. Choosing no food meant avoiding any guilt trips set forth by my parents. Add to the fact that at five years old I had made the connection between food consumption and

bowel movements, which I considered disgusting and beneath me (I was a very pretentious child, okay?), I swore off eating most foods for the better part of three years. I ate only mashed potatoes or rice, because I wanted to, and consumed a lot of PediaSure, because my doctors made me. Apparently, rice and potatoes don't make for a very healthy diet.

In retrospect, it's easy to see how these early interactions with food, through which I learned how to influence and control the world and people around me, paved the way to my developing a restrictive eating disorder.

Finances were never much of an issue in my family growing up, and I was able to participate in a multitude of traditionally expensive activities: figure skating, classical piano lessons, and language instruction. When we eventually left our sleepy town for the west coast, there were so many more opportunities to pursue these endeavors and so many others trying to do the same. I learned to be competitive, excel in whatever I did, and was always encouraged to be better than my peers. To me, food was just another means of achieving perfection, and I began to view hunger as a sign of weakness. Everybody needs to eat, right? But, I wanted to be better than everybody.

After graduating high school and a failed first year at university (turns out you have to actually do stuff...), I ended up joining the Navy's very challenging and rigorous Nuclear

Propulsion Program. In this highly competitive and perfection driven program (it's nuclear power, would you want anything less?) my eating disorder grew and it thrived. In my mind, it seemed like the appropriate response to the pressures placed on me. I was determined to be the smartest, thinnest, and generally the best "nuke" they had ever seen. I was going to be perfect.



That backfired. Quickly. I lost any muscle mass I had and began failing my physical fitness evaluations. There weren't any obvious warning signs since my already baggy uniforms hid any weight loss. Before weigh-ins, I would gorge myself on food and drink so much water that the scales said I was at an acceptable weight. Unfortunately, there's no easy, short term way to fake physical performance and I ended up on the Fitness Enhancement Program, or FEP.

The people who failed to maintain what the Navy considered an acceptable body fat percentage were in FEP, so I fell in the "obese" category. For this reason, the workouts were all geared towards maximum weight loss. The people leading these workouts would shout at the group during mandatory workouts about losing weight. The meetings always featured a balding, senior enlisted, male authority figure (with a beer gut for irony of course!) yelling at us for being on FEP because we were "eating too many cheeseburgers," making us horrible human beings, apparently. While neither of these things were directed at me specifically, considering that my situation was fairly

uncommon, I still became extremely vengeful. I was better than they were. I had more self-control. And I would show them, I thought to myself often.

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**I began to view hunger
as a sign of weakness.
Everybody needs to eat,
right? I wanted to be
better than everybody.**
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Within a year and a half of being in the military, I had gone from having a strange, yet relatively sustainable relationship with food, to subsisting on an average of under 500 calories a day. A small scoop of white rice with a small piece of garlic butter salmon (one of my mother's specialties), a few sips of Dr. Pepper, and half of a Luna Bar was my go to "safe" meal. I'd spend hours on a stationary bike at the base gym, only because I was too lightheaded to keep myself upright on the treadmill.

I became high on hunger. Not specifically hunger, but the euphoric sensation that came after those painful, internal stabbing sensations that would bring any sane person to the dinner table. The pain where it felt like your stomach was trying to consume or murder itself. If I could just make it through that intense pain, the feeling that came after was amazing. The more intense the hunger pains, the better the high. And since eating is such a primal human need, it felt like I was transcending what it meant to be human. I was superhuman in my mind.

I don't remember exactly what or how it happened, but eventually my mental health started to reflect my caloric intake, and my demeanor became erratic and impossible to ignore. I could no longer hide how thin I had

become. I was involuntarily pulled from the program just days short of graduating my last class in the two year training. From then on I became very intimate with the workings of Navy Medical and the VA system. Eventually it was decided that I would never be able to return to a healthy weight and mental state while still in the environment, so upon reaching a minimally healthy weight, I was permitted to be honorably discharged.

Food is now something I'm constantly forced to be aware of. I have this innate ability to ignore my body's needs, which unfortunately, isn't as great as it sounds, and if you're a "normal" person, it probably doesn't even sound great at all. What could be considered a slightly lower than appropriate caloric deficit for most people, can trigger, in me, an onslaught of "crazy" and erratic behaviors. When I'm feeling overly stressed, I still have a tendency to want to turn to these habits.

Jennifer Harrington is a senior majoring in Applied Mathematics at Old Dominion University. She hopes to pursue a PhD in Mathematics and/or Astrophysics someday.



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Anthropology has always been something that has interested me, though I didn't know it at the time. As a child I devoured books on practices of Ancient Egyptians, Incans and Chinese peoples. My family supported my love as best they could by taking me to museums, constantly dropping off library books, and occasionally allowing me to stay up past my bed time to watch documentaries. As I grew older, my supporters also became focal points of cultural interest as I started to notice the differences between my mother's American family, my father's Austrian-Italian family, and my Thai/Indonesian coworkers when I started working at a Thai restaurant. I became fascinated with how cultures interact and influence each other.

My interest expanded as my education progressed. In middle school I was introduced to two interests that I never thought would ever coincide: Japanese anime and food. My first day of middle school was an interesting one. I was very quiet and shy since I had just moved to the area. I was assigned a seat next to a small girl with long, brunette hair and

sparkling eyes. She looked at me and waited for me to introduce myself. Seeing as I was too shy, she broke the ice, "Do you like Yu Yu Hakusho?" Not knowing that she would become my best friend (even to this day), she introduced to me all kinds of anime and foreign culinary delights. I would come over to her house on the weekends where we would stay up late watching anime or movies while munching on Japanese candies or gorging ourselves on her mother's homemade Indonesian cooking.

I am (and always have been) a huge foodie. I love eating good food and I love even more to share good food with people that I care about. Food was special to me, but I didn't understand how until I went to CNU. I took a class called Food and Culture, and I began to understand why food was so important, as well as different. I learned that food affected everything in our lives: our health, our politics, our culture, and our very lives!

It was no surprise that when I learned about a certain anime, *Toriko*, that I had found my

missing link. An anime that depicted a society where food was in the forefront (instead of hidden behind the scenes like ours), *Toriko* was a show about “the world’s manliest heroes questing for yet undiscovered culinary delights.” Finally! Two nerdy loves wrapped into one!

|
I love eating good food
and I love even more
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people that I care about.

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The depth and breadth of anthropology never ceases to amaze me. Who would ever believe that two weirdly different hobbies could be brought together to not only be an interesting study, but a socially relevant one?! Only through anthropology can one take a look at America’s foodways and see patterns that resemble those in a random Japanese anime.

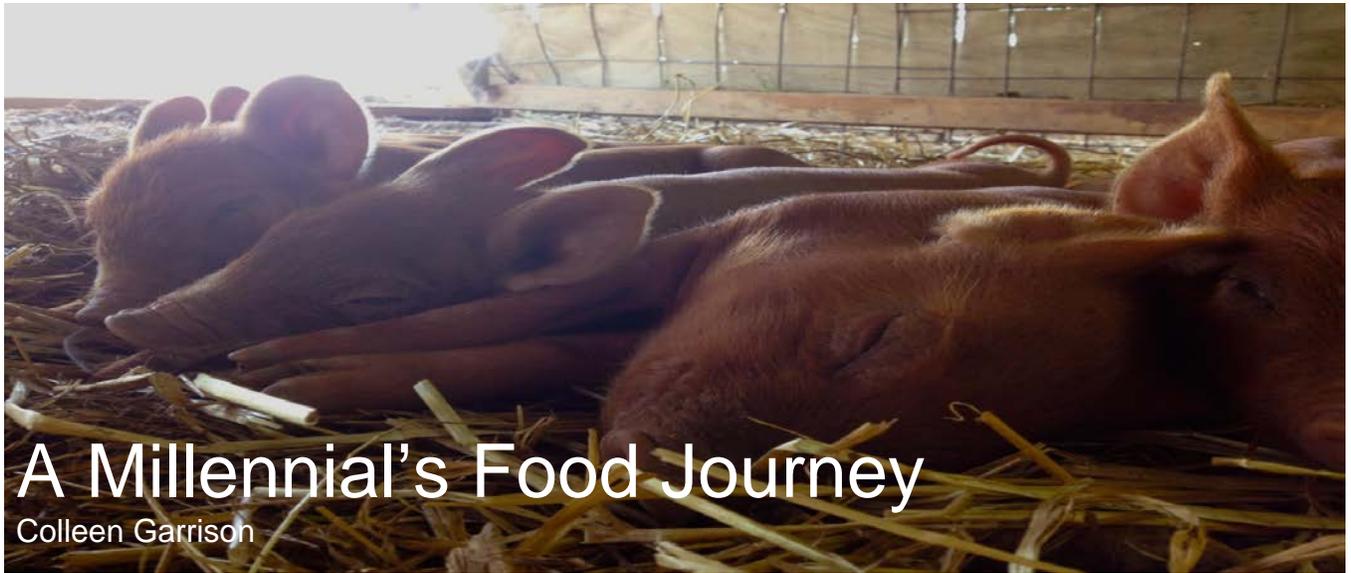
Strange, different, and at times difficult, anthropology really opened up new worlds for me. It has always been interesting and I feel that there will always be new things to learn. Though I have no idea of what life holds for me, I am sure that anthropology will continue to play a part, big or small.

Katharine Freisitzer is a recent CNU graduate in Sociology with a concentration in Anthropology. She currently resides in Northern Virginia where she works full time. She hopes to attend Graduate school for Cultural Anthropology in the next few years.



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Screenshot from *Toriko* from the Toriko wiki ([link](#)).



A Millennial's Food Journey

Colleen Garrison

I can still remember watching my dad churn the crank that would soon transform our ropes of homemade pasta into ravioli. Even in kindergarten, I knew the difference between the delicious, mouth watering rustic pasta and the stuff that came in a can. This memory is amongst many memories around the topic of food. Some of my more outstanding memories include helping Dad make beer in our garage and picking and slicing apples for autumn pies. I can gladly thank my parents for shaping me into the foodie I am today.

My family was, and continues to be, big on communal dinners. Not only are we big people size-wise, we have massive personalities. If you wanted anyone to hear you in our house, you'd have to shout. With three girls running around, you can imagine what this might be like. Mom always had to herd us girls to get downstairs for family dinner time. Regardless of Dad's twelve hour night shifts, the three of us girls and our mom sat at the table with some sort of feast before us.

Later on in life, when friends would spend the night, I was often baffled by the surprise my friends exhibited when they were forced to join us at the dinner table. This idea was foreign to them. It was not infrequent to hear

statements such as "we hardly ever did this with my family" or "we always eat on the couch." Needless to say, I was surprised.

Sitting on the couch with food in your lap all while enjoying some quality TV time?! That sounded like a dream to preteen me. Wishing to experience this new found reality, my sisters and I would beg and beg our parents to let us have TV dinners. This was especially true if there was a good movie on. These efforts were for the most part, futile. Occasionally, we were allowed to watch a show of our choosing while we ate. This usually led to quiet dinners, but I'm not sure what quiet dinners mean.

The youngster I once was did not fully appreciate the conversations, love, and effort that resulted from these family dinners without the TV present. But, of course, we continued with the rhythm of family dinners. And some nights, they enlisted us into the dinner making process. It was from my mom that I learned the proper way to bake a chicken. From my dad, I acquired the chopping, slicing, and flavor pairing techniques needed to make a bangin' homemade spaghetti sauce.

I was also lucky to be surrounded by friends who loved to cook and EAT as much as I did.

The weekend I turned 17, I woke up to find a



feast of homemade cupcakes, doughnuts, and fresh fruit before me all thanks to my best friends and their parents. We always found ourselves eating together even with our crazy schedules outside of school.

As I reached the college application period in high school, dinners became more and more tense. On top of this stress, and unbeknownst to us girls, my parents were facing monetary issues. Despite these problems, they carried on with their daily lives and making us dinners.

I quickly learned just how fortunate I was to have parents like mine after my first few weeks of the dining hall food at Christopher Newport University. Whenever I returned home, they always made a point to make my favorite meal. I think they not so secretly hoped to keep me home with these diversions... alas, I always returned to the deprived foodie state of a kitchen-less student at CNU. I found sympathetic roommates and peers especially in Green Team. As a part of the Green Team, I was introduced to the movie *Food Inc.* As a biology student and self proclaimed foodie, this movie hit home for me.

Not long after this movie viewing, my summer after sophomore year was spent with a great friend of mine, Caroline, in Charlottesville, Virginia. Together, we worked at Open Gate Farm which reignited my desire and passion for food. We fed the very chickens that ended up on our plates at the end of the day, played with the piglets that would one day end up in a soup, and milked the goats whose milk produced the most amazing chev you'll ever taste.

Every six weeks an event dubbed "chicken processing" occurred. A group of volunteers, us interns, and the owners started the processing of over 120 chickens before the sun even touched the farm. I will not reveal the details of this process, but I will tell you the smell associated with it will never be forgotten.

I found myself crashing on couches and going to concerts, talking for hours on end and always, always eating with these people.

Grody smells and sights aside, these days were actually a blast. Caroline and I learned how to completely clean and take apart chicken, something not every twenty-some year olds know how to do. They also ran a farm stead camp, "Summer Dayz," which taught children between the ages of 8 and 12 the basics of running a farm.

At the end of the summer, our employers made a decadent dinner and invited both our families and the previous year's interns. We shared stories and drinks, laughs and, of course, amazing food all from the farm. The night ended with sad goodbyes, hugs, and pictures of the new family I had created. I left the farm with one week to spare before returning to CNU.

Once again, I returned to CNU craving and yearning for the homemade sourdough bread, fresh milk, and applewood smoked bacon from Open Gate. I spent the year attempting to buy produce from CNU's Farmer's Markets, but with limited options and a cold spring I was left disappointed.

Knowing me all too well, both a professor and friend suggested that I investigate another summer internship on a farm in the area. Thus, I volunteered my time at New Earth Farm and interviewed with the owners, Kevin Jamison and John Wilson. Thankfully, I was awarded another summer on a fantastic farm, this time in Virginia Beach.

Another CNU intern, Megan, and I spent our Thursdays through Saturdays together on the farm throughout the months of summer. We spent early evenings on the beach with our fellow employees and other nights assisting with cooking classes run by the farm. I make it sound like a fantasy world, but believe me those early evening swims were needed after working with the soil anywhere from 8 to 10 hours in the sun.

Some days we gave tours to excitable children and other days we made lunch for our fellow workers. Despite literal and figurative heat waves, lunch time was always a cooling period. A huge cedar shaded the area used to wine and dine class participants by night and shelter workers during the hottest segment of the day. These lunch periods were a much needed relief and always offered a variety of food options because certain days were designated to specific workers for lunch duties. Every single meal was different: some were more plant based, while others had special meats cooked down with the farm's variety of spices.



I found myself crashing on couches and going to concerts, talking for hours on end and always, always eating with these people. Megan and I were dubbed the "sturdy girls" and by the end of summer I heard myself calling them my farm family. Again, another family centered around food.

I noticed this trend appearing: food plus people over an extended period of time always seemed to lead to familial ties. But why? Was it because with each bite of food, we become more sedated, thus open to

discussion and bonding? Or perhaps it is something more. These families were formed around good, mostly healthy food. This difference, the quality of the food, is what stood out to me.

I don't know the answer to that question, but I do know one thing. This hands-on experience enabled me to truly embrace my wants: to create this bond with everyone around me. Not just my relatives and classmates, but the entire community of Hampton Roads, maybe one day beyond. I think going back to our roots, literally, will unleash what has been missing from most of our lives: caring for one another. There's a difference between knowing your neighbor's name and actually *knowing* them. From there, you are able to care for them, you can love them, and share in humanity and community with them.

And it can all begin with a simple, delicious meal.

Colleen Garrison is a biology major and leadership studies minor at Christopher Newport University. Her passions lie within the environmental realm, feminism, food justice, activism, and pretty much any social justice and economic movements. Her motto is: "the environmental movement is a movement of movements." Issues such as racial inequality, student debt, food deserts all have similar roots that tie them to environmental justice.



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Images courtesy of Colleen Garrison.

A Combined Perspective on Society

Cortney Epps

Since deciding to major in Sociology while attending Christopher Newport University, I have become interested in how this discipline, along with my interest in the environment, can be applied to my view of social life and turned into a potential career. I never thought that I would find this connection between two seemingly incompatible fields; however, last summer I worked for an Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Virginia and my entire perspective concerning how society is affected by the environment, specifically agriculture, changed.



While working at the research center, I worked in a group within the Pathology department who dealt exclusively with tobacco plants. During the summer, I aided in field experiments, applications of pesticides, soil sample analyses, and data collection. Through these hands-on experiences, I began to grasp just how fields along the side of the road played a role in society. From my sociological background I know that society itself is complex, but I have learned to

understand it at a deeper level. There are large-scale and small-scale factors that affect nearly every choice we as individuals make. I have learned that in order to appreciate the world I live in, I must be able to look through many different perspectives to comprehend the context of my own environment. Through this discipline, I have the ability to recognize the underlying forces at work when people interact with each other. By applying this knowledge to my previous summer job at the station, a more complete picture of just how interwoven disciplines and fields of studies are

began to emerge. Comprehensively, it was becoming apparent to me that not only is it important to focus on the physical, biological, and natural environment we receive benefits from every day, but these also play a part in our man-made environment as well.

From working with tobacco plants, I began to see that the researchers were not the only ones benefiting from the work being done. I learned that the work we were doing had a further-reaching impact than I initially thought. In pesticide

applications and field experiments, the end goal in mind was to see which pesticides were better for certain varieties of tobacco and overall growth. In doing so, this would later on help to determine which would be widely used by farmers or which would not. Industry standards affect the communities that live nearby and the people who consistently come in contact with the pesticides that have been applied. This is specifically when I started seeing that what I was participating in was more important than just a summer job.

When I came back to school and started taking more Anthropology, Ecology, and Health related courses, it only sparked my interest more. By taking these classes, wider and broader connections were being made to how people, health, and the environment are all large players in society. I realized that my understanding of the dynamics from which humans interact and the way society is shaped because of them was of great use to my personal interest in the environment. These are not just parts of our social life that can be separated; they are all in relation to one another and impact each other. Consequently, the environment is a large influence in the lives of many people, though it tends to go unnoticed as a contributing factor.

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**The environment,
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Currently, that summer job and my major have led to me to look into potential careers that involve this mix of fields. One internship I am seeking mixes these two areas of interest. This internship would give me the experience of working with extension agents in local counties and places within a community. The areas I would work in would be concerned with 4-H, agriculture and natural resources, or family and consumer sciences. In any of these sections, I know that my sociological background, supplemented by my anthropological understanding, would be useful. I say this because I know how valuable

the ability to see someone through their own life circumstances affects the context in which they live and their own understanding of the environment around them.

For instance, information that that might seem common knowledge to me might not even be knowledge at all to another person. In potential positions like this, I could give basic and fundamental knowledge, like how to eat healthier or how to properly transplant flowers when putting them in a pot, but be able to deliver this education in a way that is meaningful to those individuals based off of their own needs and circumstances. In this way, I would be aiding in the development of programs and useful information that could reach a large majority of the counties where this work would be implemented. Ultimately, through potential careers in a field like extension, I am able to mix my educational background in sociology and my interest in the environment into one that will be useful to spreading the understanding of how these fields link to other people. The environment, simply put, is just another way to understand people in the context of their community and social setting.

Cortney Epps is a senior at Christopher Newport University. She will graduate in December 2015 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology with a minor in Psychology. Ultimately, she hopes to use her degree focused in the social sciences as an outreach tool in local communities to further her own experiences and aid the knowledge of others.



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Image courtesy of Cortney Epps.

Growing Up and the Family Food

Maria Aryza Merida

Age 4

Early Morning. The nanny woke her up. Maria Aryza Merida got dressed and was sitting down at the table in fifteen minutes. She looked with dismay at the breakfast her mom made for her family. The dish consisted of a boiled egg and rice. At the far end of the table was a plate of small salted fishes whose smell kept her from even thinking about putting one of them in her mouth. She wished her mom cooked pork and beans or hot dog to go with the rice instead.

At age four, she already knew her family's daily menu consisted of meals made of some form of protein like meat, chicken, pork, or fish as the main dish accompanied by rice, the Filipinos' staple food. The protein is traditionally soaked in stew accompanied by vegetables, other times it would be fried.

Rice made up the majority of the carbohydrates her family consumes. The middle to lower class Filipino families had diets similar to hers. The upper class families also eat this. However, they also have more food options. They could eat higher end foods like rotisserie chicken much more often or have different kinds of sweets for desserts.

Her family strives to eat together every meal time. Her parents taught their children to value their



family and by eating meals together they were able to bond and share. Her mom would always take the time to choose the best ingredients their money could buy and cooked all the complicated Filipino meals as best as she could. Besides the traditional Filipino dishes, she would also bake Filipino pastries that she would sell. Sometimes they would eat at restaurants after attending Mass, after shopping for groceries, or after watching a movie. Maria Aryza would always consider this as a special occasion because it wasn't everyday she gets to eat burgers, fries, spaghetti, fried chicken, and ice cream. She also gets to have the new Happy Meal toys.

The nanny scolds her for daydreaming too much and tells her to hurry. She quickly finishes her breakfast and grabs her backpack just in time for the school service to stop in front of their home's gate.

Age 8

After School. Maria Aryza Merida steps out of the school service van, glad to be home. The nanny greets her and helps her into her home clothes. Maria Aryza sits down in front of the table to eat her lunch. It was the Filipino beef soup her mom cooked earlier that morning. The nanny had reheated it using the gas-stove. Earlier that year, a rat had chewed through their oven and had made it its home. Her parents had set up traps

around the oven but resigned to using a gas-stove that they had placed in their dirty kitchen just outside the house.



Her mother had stopped baking Filipino pastries since her dad retired, as her mom was the only source of income. Their socio-economic status moved from middle class to lower middle class. That meant no new oven nor new kitchen appliances to replace the one the rat destroyed. It also meant they couldn't replace their older pots and pans.

After her meal, she got up and placed the dishes on the sink. When she had reached the third grade, her father taught her how to manually wash the dishes. Her mom is still responsible for cooking but her sisters also help. Her mom also manually washed their clothes and later ironed them. Besides washing the dishes, it was Maria Aryza's responsibility to also sweep the floors, although the nanny or one of her sisters usually sweeps it again afterwards because she would miss a lot of spots.

Her father and her brother did not do as much in the kitchen except occasionally help. In a Filipino home, it is the female's responsibility to maintain the house. Her mother would give her and her sisters most of the chores to teach them housekeeping. The nanny was there to help her mother do the

things her sisters, who were busy, or Maria Aryza, being young, could not do.

Once done with the dishes, Maria Aryza cleans the sink and drags herself upstairs to take her afternoon nap.

Age 12

American Setting. Maria Aryza watched TV with her brother as they wait for their parents to come home from Walmart. They were both excited because their parents either bought burgers and fries from Burger King or they had bought chicken from Hardee's. She was surprised at the size,

amount, and variety of food available to them ever since they had moved from the Philippines to the United States. Every week, her parents would bring home fast food which were always in huge servings. In the Philippines, they did not eat as much fast food as they were eating now.

Their cupboards were packed with cookies and chips, their freezer was full of ice cream, and their refrigerator had several packs of chocolates. She and her brother rarely brought packed lunches anymore since they could have lunch that cost them only ten cents at the school cafeteria. They also had food they never enjoyed in the Philippines such as cereal and real milk, and not the powdered milk they used to drink. In the United States, both of her parents worked though her father had a minimum wage job. It was enough to keep their family in the low middle class in the U.S. but to her, it felt like they were rich. They could afford to buy a lot of the things they couldn't buy in the Philippines. They had nice plates, shiny spoons and forks, and every kitchenware one can think of.

When her parents arrived, the two teenagers greeted them with a smile. They quickly

sorted out the groceries, excited for the burgers that were already on the table. After that was done, they all settled down to eat. She looked around, reminded that it was only her parents, her brother, and herself now. Her two older sisters weren't able to go to the United States with them because they had already gone over the age they were dependent of their parents.

Age 15

Back to the Philippines. When they had come home to the Philippines from the United States, Maria Aryza had to adjust herself once again. Gone were the huge servings and the variations of food she had while she was in America. It was extremely rare for her family to have the snacks they used to have all the time. Because her parents were focusing on returning back to the United States, neither of them continued working. After all the money they saved up during their first stay in the United States was used up, they struggled to keep themselves above poverty. There were days they had to ration their food so they could have enough throughout the week. She was still grateful because she was able to eat different dishes and rice every lunch at school.

Age 21

American College Life. Maria Aryza sat down on her desk as she waited for her Anthropology class to begin. She ignored the grumbling of her stomach. She forgot to eat as she spent the whole afternoon studying. Ever since she began college, she wasn't able to eat every meal regularly. However as far as major changes go, skipping meals was one of the biggest change in her life.

Maria Aryza Merida was born in the Philippines and moved to the United States when she was nine years old. She majors in Speech-Language Pathology at Old Dominion University with a minor in Special Education.



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Image of batchoy soup by "Heidigutierrez" made available through Wikimedia Commons ([link](#)).

Image of Burger King hamburger by "mathieu dreo" made available through Wikimedia Commons ([link](#)).

The Food We Eat

Nicholas Nemtala



Before I can begin with the journey of my dietary practices, I feel it is important to give some background. I was raised in an upper class family in La Paz, Bolivia. Like most of the families in our socioeconomic level, we have nannies, cooks, and drivers. The uniqueness in my case was the relationship formed with my nanny. Calling her my “nanny” sounds awfully inaccurate and borderline offensive because it transcended the employee-to-employer relationship. She was, and is still to this day, as important as my biological mother. My brother growing up called her “Mami-Nana” (mommy-nanny), which at times he would just abbreviate to “Mami”. This did upset my biological mother at times, but it made no difference. My brother still calls her that to this day. For some reason I began calling her “Poppa-Joe” (her name is Juana.)

My earliest recollections of eating are of Poppa feeding me soup and vegetables. I remember when I did not want more food out of boredom or genuine satisfaction, she would guilt me into eating by saying things like, “One more for your dad, one more for your mom” and so on until it reached extended family. It was a form of extortion where when I had already eaten for my uncle, I could not refuse to eat for my grandmother.

When I was a little older, we had a rule where we ate at the dinner table at eight on the dot. This rule was enforced by my grandfather, who had a strict demeanor and ethic. I have memories of the dinners, the formality at times was flirting with extravagance. My grandfather in his suit, my grandmother in pearls, the Lebanese food, and the Johnnie Walker Swing that was never out of hand’s reach. Playing

with that bottle was one of the things that kept me from extreme boredom in those dinners, although it did upset my grandma when she had her political friends over. There were always guests dining with us, more often than not they were my grandmother's friends from the government. A specific occasion comes to mind, my grandmother once hosted a very lavish lunch for President Hugo Banzer. To the surprise of everyone it was focused on seafood, a luxury to a landlocked country.

All this ended with the sudden death of my grandfather at age 55, and soon after the change of government in the country. The lavish dinners ended, and tradition of eating at the dinner table as well. Dinner was then moved to our smaller table upstairs which only sat four. Normally only my brothers and I ate together, while my mom ate by herself in the TV room later at night. This infuriated my dad to no end because the tradition of eating together was one he wanted to maintain but couldn't enforce because of his absence.

When Evo Morales ascended to power, his government began to persecute people who were involved in the opposition, forcing my father and grandmother to spend more and more time in the U.S. Worried that his constant absence would lead our family to disunity, he emphasized brotherly unity and started a tradition where we would all go out to eat on Wednesday nights. Later in life while building our new house, he purposely made an immense dinner table and a barbecue area to host large family events. Hosting people was important to strengthen family ties.

The food we ate was at one point predominately Lebanese food, but when my grandmother passed away unfortunately she took her excellent cooking skills with her. I will never forgive my mother for not taking more time to learn more of her culinary secrets!

The food my family ate was never the same as what the employees ate, we gave our cook

certain amount of money to go buy ingredients for what they wanted to eat. Many times as a kid I would find myself in the kitchen eating with them, I enjoyed what they cooked for themselves much more than what they prepared for us, even if it was unbearably spicy at times. They usually prepared very typical foods that almost always included some sort of potato (there are more than 10,000 different varieties of potatoes in Bolivia). Some other common dishes were *majadito* – rice, dehydrated meat, plantains, and egg; *chairo* – a stew made of vegetables and beef; and, *antichucho* – skewered cow heart.

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Poppa and another lady working for us at the time went over with a piece of my clothing to call my soul back

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I returned because of the joy it brought our employees for me to eat with them. To this day I still sit down with them to *tomar té* (drink tea). This event is commonplace for all social classes in La Paz. Much like the British tradition it's a leisurely moment around 5 o'clock when everyone goes out to get coffee and pastries. This is the perfect moment for extended family to make a visit, or to go visit family you can only stand 30 minutes at one time. At home my mom allows this break for the employees to relax, and when I'm home I'm usually there with them enjoying a coca leaf tea and a *marraqueta* (a bread unique to South America). They take this opportunity mainly to talk to me about something that is troubling them or to complain about my mother.

Coca is considered sacred and is tremendously important to the indigenous people of the country. Chewing coca leaf helps people endure a hard day's work by giving them energy

and decreasing hunger. The U.S.'s persecution of the coca leaf led to the resentful feelings many Bolivians hold against Americans.

Something else I've found interesting eating with our employees was their superstitions; how they refuse to directly hand over knives believing it will create tension between the people passing it, or how they spill some drink on the floor for the *Pachamama* (mother earth). These go beyond the dinner table, for instance once when I was 14, I took my parents' car for a joyride only to cannon into a tree not a mile away from my house. Poppa and another lady working for us at the time went over with a piece of my clothing to call my soul back, which had supposedly escaped me at the moment of fright. Another more extreme case was when my mom believed our house was cursed, and to my horror was convinced by our cook to hire a witch to burn a baby llama in our garden.

Lunch was eaten at school and it was the norm that the kids' moms or nannies would go and drop off home cooked meals. This was particularly interesting because my school ACS (American Cooperative School) was a private American school funded by the U.S. government, therefore we had numerous kids that were children of diplomats or military from all over the world. The food these kids received were usually something from their hometown and often we would exchange our food. I learned a great deal of other culture's foods doing this. It was especially symbolic because this action of exchanging food was a representation of acceptance into social circles.

During summer vacations, my family would travel to the U.S. There my brothers and I would indulge on foods unavailable to us back home, which was usually fast food. We would visit McDonald's almost religiously every summer. Not surprisingly our pants were always a size too small by the time summer ended. McDonald's is a symbol of the United States to me, the term McDonaldization coined

by George Ritzer perfectly describes my view of American society. Spending much of his time in the U.S., my father adopted this unhealthy diet permanently which eventually changed the way I ate forever.

When I was 17 my father passed away from a heart attack at 50 years old. It was apparent that heart problems ran in my family since both my paternal grandfather and my father died from cardiac arrest in their fifties. We decided to take a drastic change in our diet. Immediately the food served in my house became healthier; we ate more vegetables, less salt, and stayed away from fatty foods. It wasn't until around a year after his death that I found myself in a McDonald's again.

* * *

I moved to Italy for a year after high school. I was living in an apartment by myself mainly because I felt the need to be independent after living a comfortable life where everything was cooked and cleaned for me. Before leaving I asked Poppa to teach me how to cook basic things like rice, the rest I learned via YouTube. I sincerely enjoyed cooking for myself and found pleasure in being independent. The only problem I encountered when it came to cooking for myself was money, I was traveling as much as possible and it left me counting coins. When I was especially broke, I ate concernedly cheap gyros at one of the many joints opened by Middle Eastern immigrants. I was surprised to learn about the substantial amount of immigration in Italy.

I was saved from a potential stomach infection when I started dating a girl who was in a homestay with an Italian woman named Cinzia who cooked for her. Cinzia was a very nice lady, and would allow me to join them in their meals. The food was incredible, I could see just how much food means to the Italians. It isn't something to do only because you need to eat, but a daily ritual made with care meant to be enjoyed to the fullest.

Cinzia's apartment wasn't very big, so her bedroom doubled as a dining room. I found this uncomfortable at first, but then again in a cramped city like Florence apartments are very small and space had to be used efficiently. Having to use the bathroom at her place was always something I tried my very best to avoid, the constraining space just made for an awful experience.

It was dining with Cinzia that I acquired a taste for wine, there was always wine at her table. Although to my surprise, the most significant food culture I learned while in Italy was that of coffee. One of the first sentences you will learn in almost any Italian course right after basic greeting is: "*Andiamo al bar a prendere un caffè* (Let's go to the bar for a coffee)." I didn't think much of it at first, but soon I learned the vast culture hiding behind that phrase. Italians drink coffee as much as they drink wine, the smell of espresso is ubiquitous in any Italian town or city. My first challenge when I arrived was to learn how to operate an Italian coffeemaker, its ingenuity enthralled me. This is still the only way I ever make coffee.

The culture of drinking coffee was more significant at a *bar*. The bar serves coffee,

alcohol, and snacks all consumed "*al bar*," meaning at the counter. Your selection is consumed on your feet, elbow to elbow with other people. If you wish to sit down you may, but an espresso can easily double in price if you do. I began to take my breakfast in this fashion, it wasn't too hard to get used to since an Italian breakfast is a *cornetto* (croissant), usually filled with *crema* (custard), Nutella, or honey, and a cappuccino you dunk it in. I noticed people sipping espressos and conversing in the bar on the corner of my university and thought, "When in Rome." I made it a habit to stop by the bar in between classes to drink espressos. I realized that bar culture transcended the drink; it was a place to interact with others, catch up on the news, and for me to practice my Italian.

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How I drank coffee was one of the things that drastically changed when I moved to the U.S. Suddenly those delicious espressos were replaced with the unpalatable drink that Starbucks somehow convinced people is coffee. Coffee is no longer part of my daily routine, now coffee is about driving somewhere. I now have the diet of a college student in the U.S., complete with a meal plan.



Eating has become very detached sentimentally to me, I eat because I'm hungry. The food I eat now is dictated by what the cafeteria is serving, and the occasional fast food like Chic-Fil-A. Eating is frankly quite unenjoyable. For most college students food is not a priority, many times a nuisance, quick and accessible is preferred. If humans didn't need food to survive, college students would probably go weeks without eating.

Eating a good meal is now a rare luxury to me, it's only when I have some extra cash and want to treat myself that I go to a restaurant for a good meal. This way of eating is going to change in around 6 months. The next scholastic year I'm either going to be living in a house, where I can cook for myself or studying abroad in Paris. If the latter is where life leads me, I'm excited to see what new food culture I'll experience.

Nicolás Nemtala was born in La Paz, Bolivia, and is currently studying International Studies in Old Dominion University. He hopes to finish his studies in Paris, France, and pursue a career in global development



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THE GOOD LIFE

PROBLEMS
SOCIAL ROLES
GENDER
MINORITIES
STEREOTYPES
SEXUAL ORIENTATION
AGEING
BEAUTY
TOYS
EMOTION
SPEECH
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TOXICITY
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TRANSPORTATION

WHAT PARTS OF OUR CULTURE WE SHARE WITH THE ENVIRONMENT

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- MARRIAGE
- KINSHIP
- MORALS/NORMS
- BELIEFS
- HOLIDAYS
- CELEBRATION
- COMMUNITY
- GREETINGS
- FAREWELLS
- ART
- SUBCULTURE
- CHILD REARING

WHAT STRENGTHENS OUR CULTURE

WHAT SUPPORTS OUR CULTURE

POWER
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POLITICS
GOVERNMENT

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