

A COLLECTION OF PERSONAL FOOD MEMORIES
MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE SPRING 2012 LITERARY FEASTS SECTION A

Tell me what you eat and I will tell you what you are
Anthelme Brillat-Savarine (The Physiology of Taste, 1825)

Dear students,
Thank you for these wonderful personal stories, and for your participation in the Literary Feasts. I think that together, this semester, we have indeed learned a lot about *what we eat and what we are*.

I hope that whenever you are eating or reading about food, the subjects of our discussions will continue to inspire you. Buon appetito! ~SC



Bear in mind that you should conduct yourself in life as at a feast.

~Epictetus (Stoic philosopher, 135 AD)

Grazie mille

Many thanks to Hanna Howell and Genevieve Dukes for the editing of this book, and to Sarah Boyd for the cover art.



Table of Contents:

Tastee Diner <i>By: Jack Balaban</i>	3
Too Brownies Too Many <i>By: Sarah Boyd</i>	7
Florentine Meals <i>By: Billy Chapman</i>	11
Cracking Crabs at Bethesda Crab House – Post Game <i>By: Alex Englert</i>	17
Pig on Independence Day <i>By: Zach Faber</i>	22
Foote Birthday Dinners <i>By: McCallum Foote</i>	28
No More Dairy <i>By: Dan Fullam</i>	34
Pyrohy <i>By: Edward Giandomenico</i>	39
The Evolution of a Tradition: Christmas Eve Dinner <i>By: Michael Graham</i>	45
Beef Noodle Soup <i>By: Yoji High</i>	50
A Californian Feast <i>By: Nick Hodder-Hastorf</i>	57
The Garden, the Sushi, the Soy Milk <i>By: Thomas Huang</i>	61
Hunger Bites <i>By: Robert Hutton</i>	66
Friend or Food? <i>By Lany Jenna Khattiya</i>	71
The Sins of Celiac <i>By: Rachel J. Kim</i>	74
Makin’ Lobsters <i>By: Carter Makin</i>	77
The Evolution of my Chocolate Chip Cookies <i>By: Hannah Newman</i>	83
The 9-hour meal <i>By: Vijit Nanda</i>	87
The Flavors of Language <i>By: Cary Palmisano</i>	95

Dinner with Pavlov’s Dogs <i>By: Doug Parizeau</i>	101
Lagoas Das Furnas <i>By: Derek Pimentel</i>	106
Food is Strong than Language, Eating to Survive <i>By: Nick Resor</i>	112
Food Rules <i>By: Astrid Schanz-Garbassi</i>	117
An Offal Memoir <i>By: Charlie Steinberg</i>	122
Pashka, Once a year, every year <i>By: Stephanie Terfloth</i>	127
Grandma’s Cookies <i>By: Erin Tormondsen</i>	133
The Fiesta That Keeps on Giving <i>By: Piper Underbrink</i>	138
A Chappaquiddick Feast <i>By: Alex Walsh</i>	141

Tastee Diner

By: Jack Balaban

*“What keeps me motivated is not the **food** itself but all the bonds and memories the food represents.”*

-Michael Chiarello

The Tastee Diner is a real diner, a transformed train car with red leather seats and fake marble counters, yellowed from age and grease and smoke. There is a sign on the door that says, “Open 24/7 except Christmas Eve, Christmas, and New Years Day” and then a couple spaces down, “ Don’t even ask to be seated unless your entire party is present.” It is the kind of place where no one looks at the menu, partly because they will make you anything you want and partly because everyone there is a regular or at least wants to be. There are still manual jukeboxes on each table that if you drop a quarter into will play Elvis. The manager’s name is Frank and the cook’s name is Alan and the waitress’ name is Brenda and if you don’t root for the Redskins you can take your business elsewhere and if you don’t know what you want when the waitress asks you, then God help you.

The Tastee Diner is probably the thing in my life that has changed the least during my lifetime. It seems exactly the same. The same customers eating the same food cooked by the same cooks and served by the same waitresses. There’s one waiter named John who talks way too much and uses a pen the size of a small umbrella but its hard to tell if he is joking. Alan the cook left for a couple years to take care of his mother in North Carolina but now he’s back. Frank the manager got sick a couple years ago and missed a couple months but now he’s back and directing people to their seats just like he used to: with a fast smile and a faster

wave of his hand and an even faster

‘lastboothinthebackontheleftgo’ondownnowpleasethanksverymuchnow.’ Isabella runs the counter, and I don’t think she has missed a day of work since before I was born. (She and my younger brother Joey get along very well because they both like Boston Crème donuts a lot and sometimes if she doesn’t want to finish hers she gives it to Joe to scarf down even if he’s in the middle of his meal.) The place had a devastating fire a couple years back and I swear after 6 months of renovations it looked the exact same as it did in 1996. They must have spent a couple days straight rubbing grease into the new burgundy tile floor so that everyone felt right at home.

People around town know about the Tastee Diner and the greasy spoon food and the lines around the corner on Saturdays. It comes up in conversation all the time: “ Have you ever been to the Tastee Diner?” Of course I have, but to me, it always seems an odd question—something sounds different—and it’s because to us, we’ve always just called it The Diner. Everyone probably calls it the Tastee --that would be much more descriptive—but we never need the extra description because it is just a part of who we are.

I’ve been going to The Diner for as long as I can remember. Its right around the corner from the house I grew up in and when I was little and it was nice outside, my dad and I would walk through Bethesda and pass all the people going into other restaurants and my dad would tell me that those “morons don’t know what they’re missing at The Diner, but that’s good for us because it means the line won’t be too long.” When it was colder, we drove and my dad would park on the top floor of the garage so I could stand on the railing and look out over the neighborhood. (Back then, Bethesda really felt like a neighborhood. Now it feels like a suburban city with fancy restaurants and shopping and apartments buildings and all kinds of stuff

that makes it feel different than the place I grew up. Like I said, The Diner is the place that changed the least). The first person we added to our Saturday morning trip was my brother Hank, and then we added my brother Joe. Sometimes we asked my Mom to come, but she always said there wasn't enough room at the booths and the food was too greasy anyway. Not to be sexist, but maybe it's just kind of a guys' place.

When I go with my Dad and brothers, we always get the same things. No matter what time of day we go. My dad and I used to go early in the morning on weekends, but as I got older and we added my brothers, sometimes we would sleep later. Around 11am the lines can get pretty long on a weekend, but we always said we didn't mind waiting for our favorite place. Other people usually get the standard breakfast-brunch items at those times: pancakes, waffles, omelets, bacon, sausage, oatmeal, fried eggs, etc. The Balaban Boys always ordered a little differently. I definitely don't remember why, and my Dad claims he doesn't, but for as long as I can remember, whenever I went to The Diner, I got a side of ham with a side of French fries and a Sprite. And my brothers followed in my footsteps. I don't know how it happened, and I know it's weird, but it's just the way we have always done it. The French fries are always golden brown and freshly hot, crispy and thick and delicious. The ham is a round piece of pink pork, with brown grill marks, greasy and tough and delectable. And the Sprite, in a tall thin glass, with crushed ice; the Diner has the best Sprite on Earth. When I cut up my ham into small squares, and load up a forkful of ham pieces and fries, it melts in my mouth. Washing it down with a Sprite through a straw is refreshing and makes me beg for the next bite. Writing about it now, I can really taste each bite. As we got older, we needed more than one piece of ham to keep up with our appetites, and sometimes Hank will add a

waffle or Joe a cheeseburger if they are really hungry, but we always get our ham and fries.

Food is an amazing thing; it is so much more than our everyday sustenance. It gives us memories and forges bonds and creates traditions. Now, we have moved away from The Diner and it is no longer just around the corner. I have been away at school for four years, Hank is going to college in the fall, and Joey will be going soon enough. But whenever we can find the time, my Dad and my brothers and I go to The Diner and get our ham and fries and Sprite and put a quarter in the jukebox and Joe eats a donut with Isabella and we let it all remind us of the old days and how much fun we've had with each other. Without food, who knows how we would remember?

Two Brownies Too Many

By: Sarah Boyd

“Beware the hobby that eats” –Benjamin Franklin



I have never been the best at self-control. I am the girl, who on the way out of the dining hall grabs a snack for later, only to eat it as I walk back to my room. But if you think my self-control issues are out of control now, meet me at age nine. As a little girl, I would eat anything of any quantity placed in front of me, unless it was seafood, zucchini, or asparagus. Needless to say, there were many occasions in which I would overeat and end up with a

massive stomachache.

To demonstrate my battle with self-control, here is a short saga of this disturbingly common theme in my short life. My first memorable offense occurred on my second Easter after my sister and I found our baskets. My sister, even though she was quite chubby, had always asked permission to eat her Easter candy, and my parents assumed that I would do the same. But when they were not paying attention, I seized the opportunity and stuffed as much candy in mouth as I could fit. I was so eager to eat the candies that I found it unnecessary to take the wrappers off the chocolate. So when my parents turned around, they were shocked at the sight of me. Instead of the picture-ready, cute 18-month-old baby they had seen only moments before, they found me with candy wrappers and chocolates drooling out of mouth onto my once, adorable Easter dress.

My second unforgettable incident occurred at my mother's fortieth birthday party when I was four. In my family we have a tradition where our extended family appears unannounced to surprise the soon-to-be forty-year-old. That night for dinner my mom had made spinach pizza, one of my favorite meals. Just as we were sitting down to eat, there was a knock on the door and ten of my aunts and uncles, two of my grandparents, and eight of my cousins were on our front porch. Since there were so many guests in our house, no one was paying attention to how much I was eating. I do not quite remember the amount I ate, but it certainly was enough to make me throw-up all over our living room carpet in the middle of the party. And to make matters worse, while my mother was getting me into the tub, my father attempted to clean the carpet by vacuuming up my mess. Needless to say, my eating habits caused an interesting end to my mother's party, and my eating frenzy is often retold at family reunions.

My last true battle with self-control occurred when I was nine. My family was headed to our neighbor's house for a Christmas party. Like most Texas neighborhood parties the children were running around the house, while the adults were spread out in the kitchen and the living room talking to one another. I was quite the active child and at the beginning of the party I was playing hide-and-go-seek with a gang of friends. Eventually, my sister and I made our way into the kitchen to find some sweets, and we immediately gravitated towards a huge plate of brownies. The platter was not only enormous, but each of the brownies was almost the size of a postcard. My sister and I both grabbed one, and as I sunk my teeth into the brownie, I fell in love with its rich, dense taste. However, my sister, always the picky eater, took one bite and made a face. For some reason, she did not enjoy the taste of the brownie, and she instantly handed the brownie over to me to finish. Not

wanting to waste a perfectly good brownie, I shoved the remainder of my brownie into my mouth and grabbed hers from her hand. And within five minutes I had devoured two richly dense brownies.

After my snack, I continued playing with my friends. We had probably only been playing for about thirty minutes, when I ended up in the kitchen again. Once again the platter of brownies lured me towards them. I simply could not say no, and so for the third time that night I ate a huge brownie. After licking the last crumbs off my fingers, I started to feel fairly full, but another round of hide-and-go-seek was starting, so I ran off with my friends.

About this same time, my mother had gone to the kitchen to grab a dessert and was also drawn to the brownies. As my mom grabbed a brownie from the tray, she commented on the size of the brownies to a man standing next to them, who laughed and agreed with my mom. She remarked about the density of the brownies, and the man chuckled. He went on to tell her about a little girl at the party he had seen devour three of the brownies in record time. He told my mom how this girl had eaten one brownie and then immediately finished a second one after another girl, whom he thought was this girl's sister, decided she did not like the taste. He then remarked that this same little girl returned a little while later and helped herself to another. He snickered again, and predicted she was going to have one hell of a stomachache later. My mom smiled, and then asked what this little girl was wearing. The man pondered for a second and answered a red jumper. My mom smiled again as she replied that the little girl was most likely her youngest daughter.

Almost immediately after this exchange of information was made, my stomach began to hurt. It was not the usual 'I ate too much, and I cannot move because I am so full' stomachache. It was the 'I think I am going to hurl from the

amount of food I just ate' stomachache. I was no longer in the mood to play hide-and-go-seek, so I sat down on the couch. I thought the pain was just from all of my running, and that my stomachache would disappear with a little rest, however, even after I sat on a couch for some time, my stomach still was not settled. Consequently, I resorted to my last option, finding my mother.

I knew my parents would be disappointed that I had once again gorged my way to a stomachache, so I planned to not relinquish the details of the quantity of my consumption at the party. I walked up to my mother and whispered into her ear that I had a tummy ache. I was about to blame it on possible food poisoning, but before I could continue my mother told me that was what happened when you eat three incredibly large brownies. I was confused about how she determined how many brownies I had eaten, but I assumed someone had ratted me out. I apologized, and since my stomach hurt so much, my mom rallied our family together, and we went home.

The next morning I woke-up with a still full stomach, and I knew that my parents were going to talk to me about my dreadful party eating habits. My parents are not hotheaded individuals, so I was prepared for a "we are disappointed in your choices" conversation. Sure enough as soon as I appeared downstairs, my parents and I discussed what had happened at the party. I am not sure if it was the stomachache or the talk I had with my parents, but after this incident I learned my lesson. And while sometimes I still cannot turn down a good-looking brownie, I have learned not to eat my way to an uncomfortable stomachache.

Florentine Meals

By: Billy Chapman



“If you really want to make a friend, go to someone's house and eat with him... the people who give you their food give you their heart.” –Cesar Chavez

In the summer of 2011, I went abroad to Florence, Italy and London, England for a total of seven weeks. While they both combined for an amazing experience, they both added different elements to the trip. Spending four weeks in Florence first made it hard adjusting to the food in London, especially because the quality of food in London is not nearly as good as food in America, let alone anywhere in Italy. The food in Italy alone is enough of a reason for me to go back, but there are many tangibles that added to this great experience.

I went in knowing two girls in the program, also Middlebury students, who convinced me to go to Florence with them. Looking back it was the second best decision I have made thus far in my life, the first being coming to Middlebury. There were twelve of us on the program, including Margaret Souther, Liz Gary and me. My roommates were two guys from Fairfield University, as were five girls on the trip. The remaining two girls went to Coastal Carolina and Bentley. We all met during orientation and over the course of three and half weeks we became a close

group that basically took over the city of Florence. Each week we had dinner as a program, with our program head Melissa, who was kind of a bitch, Emilia, the next in line to be program head, who was much nicer, and Claudia, the Italian girl who helped out with the program. Through the different food, gelato and wine we would consume on a daily basis we bonded and became a close group.

The first meal we ate as a group was the third night of the trip. Margaret, Liz and I decided to cook for everyone and we had the most difficult time in the grocery store, not because we could not find the ingredients we wanted to cook our meal, but we could not figure out how to self-check out. Regardless of what country you are in, you will always be able to figure out which food is which because of the look and/or smell. No one working in the grocery store spoke English so it took about fifteen minutes and seven people to pass through before an English speaking Italian was able to help us check out with our groceries that consisted of tomatoes, basil, buffalo mozzarella, spaghetti, sausage, peppers, onions, marinara and Peroni. We prepared caprese salad for everyone as antipasti and then a spaghetti dish with sausage, peppers, onions and a light marinara sauce dish for the main dish. The girls brought some cheap wine for anyone to drink if they wanted wine, and the boys, Ruby and Hull brought Jagermeister and Red Bull.

As we enjoyed the meal we prepared, we enjoyed the company more. Although we did as much as we could to prepare the meal, had an Italian prepared the dish, or someone with more experience cooking, it would have been a better meal, taste wise. As we finished our meal and cleaned up our dishes we treated the rest of dinnertime as a pre-game before we went out to the Lion's Fountain for drinks. We bought enough Peroni at the grocery store for a few games before we left for the night, so we started with a game called “Zumay! Zumay!” This game is

played while drinking alcohol, but doesn't need to include alcohol. As the night transpired we made it out the Lion's Fountain and had drinks there and continued our game of "Zumay! Zumay!" We got some funny looks but it was a very Americanized bar so people were just kind of laughing, or were jealous they could not play. The night ended and the next day we found out that Ruby, Hull and the Fairfield girls came across and found a bakery on one of the alleys on their walk home. They called it "La Secret La Bakery" and from that night until the end of the trip we searched for La Secret La Bakery until we found it.

The next three weeks flew by and before we knew it classes were over, it was June 24th, which meant it was a feast day for San Giovanni Battista, the patron saint of Florence, and we were all going our separate ways the next day. All of the girls were going back to the United States where as Ruby, Hull and I were going to Bologna and Venice. We all made plans to watch the fireworks by the Arno River and were going to eat on our own before. Margaret Liz and I decided to go to Trattoria ZaZa for our final meal, because one of them suggested it. We figured we'd be able to be in and out of there in an hour and meet up and watch the fireworks with the rest of the group, little did we know we would end up having the best meal of the trip.

It took about twenty minutes to realize that we were not going to meet up and watch the fire works, as the three of us had finished a bottle of wine and had our second basket of bread on the way. We each ordered something different antipasti because we were in the mood to try some of each and wanted our own meal. I had bruschetta, Margaret had caprese, and Liz had prosciutto and melon. We each shared our appetizers and were enjoying our meal entirely until a local man came up to us trying to sell us roses. He tried to sell me two roses for the two lovely

ladies I was with and the only way to get him to leave was to tell him I hated the two girls I was with. Some restaurants allow these men to come by, if you are seated outside, where as others will get mad if they come by. These locals have gotten good enough to avoid being seen, and this man was going from table to table.

About the time we got our third breadbasket and were polishing off the second bottle of wine, the fireworks started to go off, and we were in no hurry. Our main dishes were coming out soon and we figured we'd get another bottle of wine. The conversations and memories we shared over the course of dinner were remarkable and reminded us on what an amazing trip we had experience and although we were leaving the next day, we had all year to reminisce on the memories during this three-week long trip. By the time our main dishes came out, my appetite had grown, so the timing was perfect. I had ordered the Spaghetti alla Za'Za'con gamberi, which was the best item on the menu, in my opinion. I figured it would be good to enjoy a nice Italian pasta dish on my last night in Florence and it was a meal I will never forget, until I go back and eat something better. The ingredients, servings for four people, via their website, with their amounts are such:

- 400 grams of spaghetti
- 300 grams of shrimp
- 1 hot pepper
- 3 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 medium onion
- 1 handful of parsley
- 200 grams of tomatoes
- 1/2 cup white wine
- 50 g pangratto

- 1 Noca butter
- Salt and pepper to pleasure

By the end of dinner, I was stuffed and couldn't think of a better way to enjoy my last meal in Florence.

After dinner we went back to the apartment and met up with the Fairfield kids and began to drink some wine, Peroni or Jagermeister and Red Bull with the group. We played a few games before our last night out and decided it would be best not to go to sleep, or for the kids who were flying out in the morning because they were leaving so early. Over the course of the night we hopped around between two or three bars/clubs that we found to be the most fun over the course of our three weeks and were enjoying our last night. Before we knew it, it was 2:30 am and most of the group was leaving around 5 am. We decided to head back to the apartment but not before looking for "La Secret La Bakery." We had not found "La Secret La Bakery" and one of the Fairfield girls was with us trying to find it as well. Around 3 am, we were walking through some smaller streets and heard a few people talking outside and wandered around the corner to find them standing outside placing an order.

The way "La Secret La Bakery" worked was that someone would go to the door, which was on a side alley and was the back door, and would tap lightly until someone came to the door and you would then whisper your order. If you didn't whisper water would be thrown on you and you wouldn't be allowed to place an order. So Liz tapped on the door and whispered an order for three pieces of nutella pizza and three croissants with nutella. Now when I said that my meal during dinner was the best meal that I had in Florence, this had to have been the best food that I had in Florence. This might have been the best food that I have consumed thus far in my life. The chocolate was so rich and the bread, whether in the pizza or in the

croissant, just added to the delicious taste. The amazing taste, combined with my non-sober state and the three girls I was with made for the best food of the trip. While the food from "La Secret La Bakery" might have been the best food I ate in Florence, my two favorite meals were at Trattoria Zaza and the meal we cooked for our group.

I would not say that the food I ate in either of those meals were to die for but the other components and elements that made up the dinner was what made these two meals so memorable. The company and conversation heightened the meals to levels I did not think possible and helped create friendships and bonds with individuals I had just met. Going into Florence I did not expect to come out with the kind of relationships with the kids from Fairfield as I did and one of those reasons is because of the power of food. Through the different meals together over the course of three and half weeks we were able to grow closer and build friendships that go past college.

Cracking Crabs at Bethesda Crab House – Post Game

By: Alex Englert



My Dad and I eating crabs together at home

“One of the very nicest things about life is the way we must regularly stop whatever it is we are doing and devote our attention to eating.”— Luciano Pavarotti and William Wright, My Own Story

In my family eating Maryland Blue Crabs is a pastime and something that is highly valued by all family members. My grandfather and grandmother had their first date together at a crabbing dock. My grandfather asked her out on a date, she said yes, and immediately after he told her to meet him at the local dock at 8am for a crabbing date. The passion for crabs that my family, aunts, uncles and grandparents all have stems from that first date. Since then, crabs have been a crucial social aspect for the Englert Family with holidays, birthdays and casual dinners all involving crabs. I have been eating crabs my whole life, however during my sophomore year at Middlebury I had the best crab feast experience of my life.

Every year for Lacrosse our spring break trip consists of us playing Washington and Lee at Georgetown University under the lights, a season defining game as both teams are usually undefeated going into the game. Sophomore year

we made the twelve hour trip down to Washington D.C. for our annual spring break trip. The way that it typically works is that team members stay with teammates that are from the Washington D.C. area. This works out well as the Mid-Atlantic is a high school lacrosse hub and many kids on our team are from this area. I have family in that area so I asked my coach if I could stay with my aunt and uncle that lived close to Georgetown University. Thankfully he agreed to the arrangement because this housing situation included a crab feast at the Bethesda Crab House, my favorite place to eat crabs in the world.

We won by one goal in the fourth quarter, shook hands and I quickly got the eye from my dad that I needed to hustle off the field so we would arrive at the Bethesda Crab House before it closed. My aunt, Gretch, had spoken to the owner earlier in the week and he had reserved Jumbo crabs for my family. A quick side note, the way most people categorize Maryland blue crabs based on size is the following, smallest to biggest. Small, Bay crab (medium), Large, Extra Large, and Jumbo. So, when the owner told my aunt that we were getting Jumbos for the dinner, word traveled fast and we were all excited for the game to end so we eat crabs. Anyways, Gretch, my dad and I quickly hopped in her car and sped to the crab house to meet the rest of my family. We arrived just before they closed and we were the only people in the restaurant.

I like this crab house so much because it is basic and simple. Some crab houses try to be fancy but this one looks like a shack on the side of the road. The tables are old, the posters on the wall are torn in some spots and the beer never seems to stop flowing. The bar usually has a few local drunks watching sports giving this crab shack even more character. It also is very small, probably no more than one thousand square feet. The crab house has a very distinct smell that

unfailing hits me every time I walk in through the main door, steamed crabs and old bay seasoning.

We had a party of ten people all seated around a large round table in the middle of the restaurant. I had escaped from the game so fast that I still had eye black, my game shorts and cleats on as I sat down for this crab feast with my family at ten o'clock at night. The owner was our waiter who gave us special treatment given that we were the only ones left in the restaurant. Beers for everyone is the standard order, or a soda for the youngsters, because beer helps reduce the spicy sensation that comes from the old bay seasoning. We ordered shrimp at the same time as the beer, just as a starter before the four-dozen crabs arrived at the table. The beer was served very cold with foam streaming down the side of the frosted mug. The cold glass melted onto the newspaper that covered our table, which created moist circles of split beer around our table. Every table in the crab house was covered in newspaper to make for a quick and easy clean up of all the shells. Shortly after the beers arrived, the two pounds of shrimp we ordered was placed in the center of the table for us to snack on before the feast arrived. Feast is a term associated with crabs as many people gather around tables in groups to crack crabs as a social event involving a lot of people. This night was certainly a feast because of our large group of ten people but also because of how many crabs we had ordered. Four-dozen Jumbos is a lot of crab with most people eating four to six jumbos, if you're lucky. We were served another round of beers as the fresh crabs were almost finished being steamed in the kitchen and the table became anxious to eat as we all casually sipped our beers at the table.

The first two-dozen arrived at the table steaming hot and seasoned perfectly with a crust of old bay surrounding every crab, everyone was grinning from ear to

ear. Weight is the biggest factor when considering what crab to choose and typically in our family we pick crabs for each other. The only way to pick for someone else is to try to select the heaviest crab and then pass it off to someone else. We never pick a heavy crab and take it for ourselves but rather make sure to give someone else the best crab in the batch. Sometimes if you grab the heaviest crab it is hard to give it away because you know it will be so delicious and filled with meat but the rule stands and you must pass the crab. Thankfully because we had four-dozen crabs that were all Jumbos, finding a good crab was an easy task. This crab house brings out crabs in segments so you do not have crabs getting cold on the table, a little nuance from most crab houses that I really like. Crabs taste great cold but there's something about cracking shells and having steam rise from the fresh crab on the table. We polished off the first wave of crabs in less than a half hour as everyone devoured their crabs as quickly as possible because they had been waiting so long for the family delicacy. The second round of crabs was as fresh and as large as the first with everyone stuffing their face. In the second round we had people tapping out after three or four crabs, which only meant one more thing – more crabs for everyone else.

Collectively as a group we polished off close to fifty crabs and the whole time we smiled, laughed, told stories and talked lacrosse. This crab feast meant a lot to me because I was eating dinner with my family devouring our favorite food, in my cleats, and closed down the place. I love crab feasts because when my family and I sit down to crack crabs nothing else matters. If someone is sad, worried, or stressed it seems to be forgotten as we sit down and smash shells. Joy and happiness is the mood when cracking crabs with my family and I could not have enjoyed the event more. I love the taste of crabs but I value how close they bring my family together.

We all love crabs and this brings us together. It really is amazing how food can allow people to come together and escape from reality for a few hours. My dream is to open my own crab house someday and call it Chezzer's. Named after my grandfather that took my grandmother on that first date to the crab dock, which in turn brought crabs into our family. Look out for Chezzer's Crab House in the near future and remember our slogan.

Chezzer's Crab House

- "We rack 'em, You crack 'em"

Pig on Independence Day

By: Zach Faber

"Eating is always a decision, nobody forces your hand to pick up food and put it into your mouth."

—Albert Ellis, Michael Abrams, Lidia Dengelegi, The Art & Science of Rational Eating, 1992

Throughout my childhood years, my family had the tradition of roasting a pig on Fourth of July. Growing up, Fourth of July was always one of my favorite holidays, and this was not just because of the fireworks that represented our nations freedom. To me, Fourth of July represents a roasted pig. My dad, who can cook anything given the right ingredients, started our family "pig roast" tradition the first year I was honored to play on the little leagues all-star team. He thought that roasting a pig on Fourth of July would be a great way to bring together family and friends, and also fill up the stomachs of my teammates and I before our first game in the District Tournament. The only problem was that he had no idea how much time and preparation were needed to cook a pig. Although my dad had never cooked a pig before, he was ready to give it his best shot.

In order for my dad to start organizing his plan, he needed help. Luckily he had his brilliant wife (my mom), who was clearly the brains of the project. Working together, they were able to come up with a list of things that were necessary for preparing, cooking and serving the pig:

Matt & Dianne Faber's "Pig Roast" checklist/preparation:

- 2+ weeks in advance-Order Pigs from local meat market past anywhere

from 85lbs – 150lbs

- Order portable spit with electronic turner thing J
- Buy 2 big bags of hickory smoke charcoal ([Mesquite charcoal](#))
- Buy bag of apple, dried apricots, lemons/limes, and [special marinade](#)
- Neighbor (construction guy) built a special rack 10 years ago that fits the roasting spit so the pig can go straight from the grill to the display table covered with cannas flowers and big tropical leafs. Decorations come directly from back yard that the family grows. Serving table with pig in the middle is about 18 feet long.
- Day before late afternoon pick up pig and lots of ice to cover over night...pick up ice before pig since Safeway thought I had a dead child in back seat with blue eye sticking out of “body bag”
- Neighbor helpers/friends appear on the day of ~6:30 am and help lift pig onto spit and dress inside with fruits then suture up with wire takes a couple hours....let roasting begin. Mesquite coals started and burn down while pig is being prepared. Pig is cooked on an open spit that continually turns pig the entire time for even cooking.
- Monitor roasting from 9:30 to 4:30 ish and continue to add and move around coals. Pig is ready when internal temperature reaches about 170 degrees
- Carving is a major task and deciding who gets special body parts is always funny too
- ***Guests line up on both sides of serving table. We have anywhere from 60 to 100 guests at these annual events.***

Lets just say that my dad’s first experience with the “pig roast” was laborious. So much needed to be done for everything to go as planned: from the ordering of the right sized pig, all the way to where the pig would be placed after being taken off the barbeque for serving.

A few days before the fourth, I remember coming home to a huge garbage bag in the middle of our kitchen. I had no idea what it was so I tried to pick it up. Inside the bag I could make out a large object, almost in the shape of a human. For a moment I started to worry, was someone in my family a murder! Seconds later my mom came into the kitchen: “I see you found our pig! Can you believe that sucker ways over 150 pounds?” Sense my dad was still at work, my mom and myself were put on the duty of moving the pig. I think my mom may have even tweaked her back trying to move the pig herself. My mom and I worked together to move the pig into the wine cellar, were we laid the pig over ice to keep it cold. When we took the pig out of the garbage bag I couldn’t believe how preserved it was. I would have believed it was alive if someone told me. It still had the light pink/pale tint to its skin, and its eyes were still in perfect condition. It kind of freaked me out to tell you the truth. I went to bed that night so excited to see how the pig had turned out, and if my dad could please the crowd with his barbequing skills like usual.

Early the next morning I got woken up bright and early to the chatter of my dad and his friends. “Make me a bloody marry!” my dads friend yelled across the house. I was surprised how casual my tad was taking this taunting task of preparing a pig for so many people. Then again, I guess a great chef should never feel intimidated by a challenge. Once I found the motivation to get myself out of bed and grab breakfast, I went outside to see how everything was coming and if I could be of any help. My dad was in the corner of our back yard, were everything was set

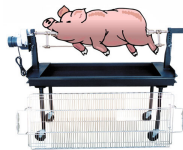
up and ready to go. He was preparing the pig with three of his close friends to be put on the rotisserie. I learned a lot of things that day about preparing a pig and roasting it. I had no idea that you could stuff a pig, just like you would do a turkey on thanksgiving. I was amused watching my dad cut the pig from the pelvis all the way near the throat. The next dilemma was pounding the rotisserie spit through the entire pig. This was my job. I was a lot harder then I expected, not knowing that I had to make a precise incision through the pig's anus and out its mouth. After the cut was made, my dad and his friends continued by filling the pig with their home made stuffing, made with bread crumbs, apples, dried apricots and a special marinade. The savory combination of ingredients in the stuffing caused my mouth to starting watering. I could feel my stomach start to grumble already. The coolest part to the pig dissection was watching my dad sew the pig up after he was done stuffing it. I thought I was witnessing a surgery. Other then the fact that the stiches were not of normal size, and the patient was a pig. My dad had to use strong enough wires to sew the pig back up, so he could be sure that it would not fall apart while it was being cooked. The final step of preparation before cooking was filling the pit underneath the rotisserie with charcoal. Who knew it would take two full Costco size bags of mesquite charcoal to cook a pig!

Once the pig was finally cooking it was time to sit back and relax. The pig is usually cooked for seven plus hours depending on how big it is. By the time we finally stated roasting the pig it was probably around 7:30am or 8:00am. Starting around 9:30, and all the way until the pig was taken off the barbeque around 4:30pm, monitoring was taking place. For the most part, my mom was lucky enough to have this job. The monitoring job consisted of adding and removing

coals, checking the internal temperature of the pig and repairing any tares around the suture.

Around 4:30pm the pig was finally ready to be taken off and served. I could finally see the hard work from my parents and friends starting to pay off, as the crowd crowded around the table to see the final product. The thoroughly cooked pig had a wonderful aroma that drew the attention of everyone. The once pink toned skin, was now a light brown and looked ready for eating. My dad and I took of the pig that was still emitting heat, and placed it on the huge 10-foot display table. We were lucky enough to have the table given to us from a neighbor, because it was the perfect size for a pig and already had arms built in to place the roasting pit which held the pig. The table looked professionally decorated, all thanks to my mom who spent hours garnishing the table with cannas flowers and other large tropical leafs. The final layout of the pig was truly a piece of art. Everyone at the party demanded that they get a picture with the pig on the finely decorated table. Before my dad sliced into the enjoyable sections of the pig, the parts that no one was intimidated to eat, my dad thought it would be funny for some of us to try the more untouched but still edible body parts. My dad took the honor of eating the pig's ears. I can still remember the loud crunch that came from his first bite. I was luckily enough to be given one of the eyes of the pig, and to say the least I wasn't happy. At first I turned the offer down, because I was just grossed out by the thought of eating its eyes. Finally I decided to man up and take one down. As I bit through the eye for the first time, it sounded like I was releasing air out of a balloon. Once our fun was over, my dad served the entire party slices of the freshly roasted pig. He had to actually stop people from coming up for seconds and thirds, to make sure he could try his own masterpiece.

My first pig roast on Fourth of July was an unforgettable food experience to say the least. Roasting a pig is something that I can say I've experienced, knowing that many people in this world have probably not been fortunate enough to be a part of. Although I have had many other stories in my life revolved around food, none of those compare to the amount of fun that was extracted from cooking an entire pig! The amount of family support and bonding could not have been accomplished in any other setting, and the ambience could not have been enhanced. The time required to prepare, roast, and present an entire pig all added to the feeling of success that was shared between my family members. I am so thankful to have shared this experience with the people that matter to me most, and will continue to look forward to many more pig roasts to come.



Foote Birthday Dinners

By: McCallum Foote



"Celebrating an individual's birthday is important because there should be at least one day in a person's life that it is really all about him or her. I believe that everyone deserves a homemade birthday cake—and homemade dinner of choice—because anyone (more or less) can buy a cake or pay for take out, but taking the time and effort to make food to celebrate a person is a way to show love—it is a labor of love. To stop all the other activities that overfill our lives and come together over a meal, to enjoy good food, laughter and good conversation is always a wonderful event, but to do it on someone's birthday is to do so in honor of the individual's life." –Jane Foote

Birthday dinners have been a staple in the Foote household since my older brother Thomas graduated from eating mashed peas and carrots, courtesy of the fine folks at Gerber. This of course was before my time, as he is four years my elder. Shortly after my brother's arrival, my older sister Katharine was born. Three years later, I came along. My older siblings had already been enjoying the delicacies of "people" food as opposed to "baby" food, for a few years by the time I was born. At an early age I enjoyed a heavy dose of breast milk followed by the usual Gerber Baby mashes for my toothless mouth. I thus earned myself the nickname of Fat

Boy, which my dad still occasionally uses. And although it has become less and less often that he uses that nickname, the story behind Fat Boy always seems to come up at family gatherings, especially the birthday dinners as we reflect back on the years that have flown by. A couple years later, I proceeded to outgrow my toddler nickname when I joined Thomas and Katharine in the world of people food. I was introduced to a wide variety of foods that they had had the fortune of chomping down on for years now: chicken nuggets, peanut butter and jelly, pasta, and of course pizza. As I became accustomed to people food, we introduced another member of the family to the Foote household: my sister Reilly, who then started the cycle all over again with first the breast milk and then the pleasures of slurping down the Gerber mashes.

Later the next year I was lucky enough to experience my first real birthday dinner upon turning the ripe age of three. As it is hard to say exactly what I chose as my dish that night, as it was almost eighteen years ago, I think it is safe to say it was pizza because my love with pizza certainly started early. Whose doesn't? I can say with confidence, however, due to a popular family photo that can be found on our wall today, that I had cake for dessert. My mother neatly designed the cake as the number three, and half of the cake seemed to find its way onto my face. The icing was light blue and red and the cake was vanilla. My mouth is wide open as my little hands try to shove more of the cake into my already full mouth. My older siblings can be seen peering on eagerly, waiting for their chance to get a piece my birthday cake. I love that picture because it reminds me that my love for food has always been there, and to this day, I sure do love my cake.

A couple years later came the seventh and final addition to the Foote family with a baby girl, Donovan, and of course she too had the pleasures of breast milk

and Gerber Mash. By this time, we four older siblings were well on our way to becoming immersed in food. Early on in our lives, we were the children of teachers at boarding schools, so we were able to reap the benefits of the all-you-can-eat dining halls that these places provide. Although the dining halls did not have very diverse menus, there sure was always tons of food, and that allowed us to develop healthy appetites. However, we never had the birthday dinners in the dining halls, as this wasn't any ordinary dinner. They were, and continue to be, done with the entire family at our dinner table, and the king or queen of the day chooses the menu.

When we were young, the menus remained relatively simple, but as we have grown older, each of the siblings has developed either a single favorite dish or multiple favorite dishes to order through Chef Mom or Grill-Master Dad. My older brother Thomas has kept it simple over the years, usually going with grilled steaks with sides of white rice or mashed potatoes and uncooked carrots with Ranch and Bleu Cheese for dipping sauces. I always see this dinner as a treat for me as well because I am a huge steak fan myself, and my Mom always buys the expensive steaks for the birthdays. He bucks the usual birthday cake trend by ordering up one of my mom's famous apple pies. Again, you do *not* see me complaining. Katharine also loves her steak, except she likes them in the form of tips, and then she goes with the side of Caesar salad and Fingerling potatoes. She is also a fan of pie—again, you don't see me complaining—but she goes with blueberry instead of apple.

Now comes the real king's meal: mine. My main dish of choice is Chicken Francese: juicy pieces of chicken dipped in egg and flour and then smoothly fried. It is then topped with some fresh squeezed lemon. My mouth is watering just thinking about it. The sides of choice have actually tended to change over the years, but recently I have been going with grilled zucchini and rice pilaf. In my earlier days I

went with the more unhealthy choice and ordered French fries and onion rings. And because it was my day and I could have whatever I wanted, I chose that the French fries to be fresh from McDonald's. I have, of course, grown out of that. I have not, however, grown out of my dessert of course. It has always stayed the same: vanilla cake with chocolate icing. I enjoy this meal because not only do I love it, but everyone in the family loves it too.

Reilly is the wildcard, always changing up what she orders. She loves my mom's spaghetti and meatballs and last year tested my mom by requesting barbecue pulled pork. My mom's spaghetti and meatballs is one of my favorite dishes as well, and so I very much enjoyed when Rei chose to order that. Pulled pork on the other hand, has never been kind to my stomach, so I am going to have to work on steering her away this summer when she turns nineteen. Her favorite side is corn bread, and she will eat that with literally anything. Spaghetti and meatballs with a heavy dose of corn bread? Sure, why not? For her dessert she tends to order this incredible ice cream cake with Oreo layering. That is definitely one of my mom's specialties and one you will never see me turn down. Donovan has followed in the right footsteps and jumped on the Chicken Francese bandwagon. Again, no one in the family complains. Her only side is Caesar salad, extra Caesar dressing. You must be crazy if you think she would order any type of healthy fruit or vegetable. For dessert, she always gets the classic Funfetti cake with Funfetti icing and makes it easy on my mom. We each have our favorite meal that we love and our parents have always done a great job making us feel special on our special day. As we have gotten older, however, we have realized that these birthday dinners go beyond the food.

I have always embraced my big family, and one of the reasons why is because of all the special times we have shared at the dinner table. As we have grown older, our schedules have gotten busier, and less of these dinners take place. Throughout my siblings' and my elementary and teenage years, the Foote family dinner was a standard. We would have all seven of us around the table every night, and countless memories were created eating those meals, sharing the best and worst thing about our days. However, when my older brother went off to college and my older sister off to boarding school, those dinners with the entire family became rare. However, the birthday dinners always brought us back together, and we celebrate a special day with a special meal with our family. We have always been only a drive away, and for the birthday dinners, it is easily worth it. Food has a way of bringing my family together, and I cherish the times I get to share with them around the dinner table.

Recipe: **Chicken Francese** (serves 6-8)

Ingredients:

2 bags of Natures Promise chicken

6 eggs

3 cups of flour

1 cup of milk

3 cups of vegetable oil

2 lemons

Directions: Heat oil in frying pan, iron-clad works the best. On three separate plates put milk, beaten eggs, and flour. Take piece of chicken, cover thoroughly in milk, then the eggs and then cover in the flour and then place into the frying pan. Flip the

chicken when golden brown. Repeat with all of the pieces of chicken. Replace ingredients as needed. Once the chicken is done, place on paper bags which will soak up the excess oil. Sprinkle the chicken with lemon juice. Serve hot and enjoy.

No More Dairy

By: Dan Fullam

“Most human beings have an almost infinite capacity for taking things for granted.” –Aldous Huxley

I can remember the awful pit that I felt in my stomach as if it was yesterday. I had just gotten home from a second trip to the hospital in as many days and was laying sprawled out in my bed with a frosted glass of Gatorade next to my head. My mom came to check in on me every half hour or so and almost always carried with her at least one component of my BRAT diet, consisting of bananas, rice, apple sauce, and toast. She was greeted to an attempted smile on my part whenever she added some sort of variation to this unfulfilling diet, whether it was peanut butter added to the banana or some cinnamon mixed into the apple sauce or toast. I certainly learned to appreciate the value of more wholesome foods such as pastas, poultry, and meat as I lay in my bed for these two nauseas-filled weeks.

It was the summer of 2004, in between my fifth and sixth grade years, so at least I had the opportunity to soak in the action of the Summer Olympics being held in Athens. I watched so much of the Olympic games that if someone had asked me to name a few players for any given water polo team, I would have reeled off an

entire starting lineup. The struggle originated from one unprepared meal eaten in a popular restaurant in my family’s longtime Jersey Shore vacation town of Lavallette, New Jersey. After returning to our shore house with my family, I awoke the in the middle of the night dripping wet in sweat, realizing that I was incredibly nauseas. I immediately sprinted down the stairs to the bathroom. I spent the night switching back and forth from hugging the toilet bowl and sprawling on the tiled bathroom floor attempting to sleep. The next morning, my mom packed up both her and my bags and loaded them into her navy Toyota Sienna, officially ending both of our summer vacations. We headed back home up the Jersey Turnpike. Not more than two hours after literally crawling into bed, I alerted my mom that I had a severe pain in my lower right abdomen. Immediately, her face turned pale white and I realized what was bringing her pulse up into her head: the possibility of appendicitis. She helped me stumble down into her car and we drove fifteen minutes to Morristown Memorial Hospital.

The symptoms I described to my doctors immediately spurred them to put me under tests for appendicitis. Before the CT scan, I was told to drink a bottle of what tasted like a milky concoction of liquified chalk while a rookie nurse fumbled with the needle in my arm as she attempted to hook me up to an IV. A bit of morphine was added to my IV so that the excruciating pain subsided as I underwent imaging. Fortunately, after reviewing the tests, the doctors found no signs of appendicitis; yet they could not place a finger on the origin of my severe abdominal pain as well as its connection to an incessant feeling of nausea. I was sent home at 11 p.m. on the condition that I return the following morning if the same pain persisted in my lower right stomach. At the break of dawn I was back in the car on my way to the hospital. Numerous doctors were called in my room throughout the day to look over

my medical images and perform various tests to gain an understanding of what was occurring in my stomach. Some guessed that it may be a flare-up to an undiagnosed Crohn's disease, others suggested it was merely food poisoning that would subside in the next 24 hours. The process went on into the night, which even caused one doctor to pull my mom and dad aside and inform them (as they later told me) that he believed the pain "was likely all in Dan's head".

I returned home with a slightly lower level of sharp pain but the same amount of nausea. I was confined to my room and my furthest venture for the next two weeks was downstairs to the kitchen to spice up a certain ingredient of my BRAT diet. My brother, like the doctor at the hospital, began to express his feelings that I was exaggerating my illness, which only added to my frustration. After a few monotonous days, my home phone received a message saying that the doctors had discovered the cause of my stomach issues: salmonella, a rare but serious form of food poisoning that can significantly destroy the stomach lining. Because of this, the doctors urged me to come back in to test if the infection had created any sort of long-term complication. I performed a few tests at the hospital itself, and afterward was told by the head gastroenterologist to completely cut out any lactose products from my diet. I was also to keep a journal of every drink and food I consumed for the next week and a half. Sure enough, my symptoms began to recede and this doctor's assumptions were proven true: I was lactose intolerant and would have to permanently cut out dairy products from my diet because of my ruined stomach lining.

While the news certainly did not qualify as life-altering, for a kid who never had to wear braces nor broke a bone, this sort of health problem was a completely new experience. Lactose intolerance also made me realize many of the fulfilling

aspects of my diet that I had come to take for granted. Every trip past the town's popular ice cream and pizza spot was a reminder of my new, seemingly deficient diet. I learned to embrace the taste of Lactaid brand milk (refusing to drink the soy milk my mom had suggested), replaced butter with margarine, and realized what my favorite Burrini's Deli sandwiches tasted like without cheese. Piles of cookbooks piled up in the kitchen as my mom attempted to uncover creative recipes for my newly constrained diet. Upon returning to school, I presented the school nurse with a note from the hospital stating that my stomach condition could flare up depending upon certain foods I consume. Admittedly, I may have used the 'stomach excuse' a few times if I felt unprepared for a test. More often than not, however, my mom picked me up early for school because the pains in my stomach would severely flare up after lunch. I ate as bland of a diet as possible for my entire sixth grade year, despite how tempted I was to grab a bag of Oreos or Doritos during lunch period. The most frustrating point of my food allergy came at a hockey tournament in Lake Placid, NY. That morning, I had been promised that the eggs given to our team were free of any sort of milk product. About midway through warm-ups I discovered that there must have been a miscommunication because I lost my breakfast in a garbage can on the bench. I remember leaving the ice wondering if I would truly be stuck with this lingering stomach condition for the rest of my life.

Gradually, I was able to incorporate more dairy products into my diet with the help of Lactaid pills taken before any meal with lactose foods. However, these pills were a hassle to carry around and commonly failed prevent nausea. I felt particularly ambitious one day in eighth grade and tried a slice of pizza from my favorite hometown spot of Pizza Palace without a Lactaid pill. For the next few

hours, I waited for the nausea to come and I stayed glued to my couch, right next to my downstairs bathroom. But it never came. I was so surprised and excited that I went upstairs to devour a pint of ice cream, which was not as kind to my stomach but still did not produce the pain that lactose products had in the past few years. As I entered high school, I began eating all dairy products once more. My doctors explained to me that the ‘hairs’ in my stomach that broke down the lactose particles had grown back over the three-year period. No longer was I forced to refuse a trip to Maggie Moo’s Ice Cream, Pizza Palace, or any other place where my mouth would be left drooling over the food my stomach could not handle. My long struggle against my stomach had finally come to an end. Consequently, my mom no longer felt guilty stocking up our fridge with gallons of ice cream and frozen pizza that not only my brother, but also myself, sorely missed.



PYROHY

(Potato-Filled Dumplings from Ukraine)

By: Edward Giandomenico

“One of the very nicest things about life is the way we must regularly stop whatever it is we are doing and devote our attention to eating.” –Luciano Pavarotti

Dice 4 large onions. Melt ½ lb. butter or margarine in a heavy skillet under medium-low heat. Sauté onions gently, stirring often, until just golden. Remove from heat and set aside.

Place 3 cups flour and 1 tsp. salt in bowl of food processor. With machine running, add 2 well-beaten eggs, 1 tsp. corn oil and approximately ½ cup of warm water. Mix until well-combined. Test the dough – if too sticky, add flour, 1 tbsp. at a time. If grainy and dry, add water, 1 tbsp. at a time. Process for about 30 revolutions. Dough should be smooth, soft and elastic. Remove from processor, wrap in plastic wrap and let rest for at least one hour at room temperature.

Peel 3 lbs. Russet or Idaho potatoes, cut into eighths, and boil in salted water until soft, but not overcooked. Mash with ¼ cup onion and butter mixture (mostly onions), 4 slices of yellow American cheese and 2 oz. of cream cheese. Mix well. Taste and add salt and pepper if needed. Set aside and keep warm.

Remove dough from wrap, cut in half, and rewrap one half. On a floured surface, roll dough out to 1/16” thickness. Cut rounds with a biscuit cutter, the top of an opened can or the open end of a glass.* Put the round of dough in your palm. Place a rounded spoonful of mashed potato filling in center of the dough, fold over

into a half-circle, and press the edges together firmly. Be sure to seal edges well and keep the edges free of the filling, or the dumplings open when cooked. Place the finished *pyrohy* in a single layer on a floured board or tea towel, and cover them with another towel to keep them from drying out. Prepare *pyrohy* in the same way with the second half of dough.

Bring a large pot of salted water to a rapid boil. Drop *pyrohy* a few at a time gently into the water. Do not attempt to cook too many at one time. Stir very gently with the back of a wooden spoon to separate them and to prevent them from sticking to the bottom of the pot. Continue boiling rapidly for about 3 minutes, or until the *pyrohy* all float to the top and appear puffed. The exact cooking time will vary depending on the size of the *pyrohy*, and the thickness of the dough. Remove them with a slotted spoon to a colander and drain well. Place them in a large bowl and sprinkle with the sautéed onions and butter. Toss gently to coat them evenly with butter and prevent them from sticking together. Cover and keep them hot until all are cooked. The traditional accompaniment to *pyrohy* is a dollop of *smetana*, sour cream.

*Save the scraps of dough from between the cut-out rounds. They can be saved and frozen or cooked separately as a noodle side dish.

Pyrohy

Even before I wake up, the smell of onions and butter enter my dreams. Outside the snow is glistening and upstairs my bed is warm, but downstairs the kitchen is alive with activity. The knife is thumping, the butter is sizzling, and my mother is crying. Cutting onions always gets her. When I join her I am only partially awake. After rousing myself with a piece *paska* smothered in caramelized onions, I offer to help.

“The table needs to be set, the dishwasher needs to be emptied, the living room needs to be vacuumed, and we can always use more onions” she responds.

“I should have stayed in bed,” I grumble. But I still do my chores without complaint. Most Saturday mornings I could not be bothered with chores. But this day is January 6th, Ukrainian Christmas Eve.

My family celebrates Catholic Christmas every December 25th, but we also celebrate on June 6th in honor of my mother’s Ukrainian heritage. The 25th is the more traditional Christmas, complete with presents, church, and a beautifully decorated tree. The 6th is a more special time. Long after Christmas has exited the minds of most, we celebrate again. But this time around Christmas is more about food and family rather than religion and tradition.

The best part of Ukrainian Christmas comes not during the celebration but rather in the preparation. After waking up to the smell of onions I busy myself with small tasks to prepare for dinner. I wash dishes, dust shelves, and sweep floors all with the hope of helping my mother with my favorite task. When the time comes, she asks me to help her with the *pyrohy*. It may sound crazy to some but my true favorite part of the Christmas season is the making of these small potato dumplings.

We start by mixing up the pasta dough. Most of the time in my house, homemade pasta is made in a food processor but for Ukrainian Christmas my mother always works with her hands. She works her dough with time tested ease and perfection and always finishes her portion well before I do. While the dough settles, we mash the potatoes.

She keeps a close eye over my shoulder as I mash, warning me “Not too fine but don’t leave any clumps. And stop tasting it...the more you eat, the less *pyrohy* we make.”

The process for her is second nature. A puff of flour on the counter and soon she is rolling out the dough into huge, flat pancakes. A quick press on the dough with an old Mason jar cap and a perfect circle is cut. A scoop of potato, fold it, and fork together the edges. Check the seams and set it aside. One down, hundreds to go.

We work together for hours. The work is natural for her; her hands seem to work apart from her body at a frantic pace. I struggle to keep up at first but start to get the hang of it. As we work she always tells stories of her childhood, stories of making *pyrohy* with her mom. She doesn’t talk much about her time as a kid but Ukrainian Christmas always brings out her nostalgic side.

This holiday is special because it is unique to my family. Not many Americans celebrate Ukrainian Christmas, and not many Ukrainians celebrate the way we do. Parts of our meal are traditional but parts are unique to my mother. We do not follow all the rules but the holiday is about much more than following the rules. It is an excuse for everyone to come together and share a meal. It is an excuse for us to make a meal from scratch.

As our fingers tire, reinforcements always show up. Some years my cousins come, other times my aunt, sometimes even my father helps out. The process is not a chore but rather an experience. We are brought together by the making of food and reap the benefits of our work through the eating of the food.

After all our work, we are left with cookie sheet after cookie sheet filled with *pyrohy*. As mealtime approaches my mother kicks most people out of the kitchen. This year, she asks me to stay.

“Drop the *pyrohy* in the water and when the float, pull them out. Put them in the bowl and layer with the onions and butter,” she says to me.

A little intimidated by my newfound responsibility, I nevertheless proceed. Her instructions are clear and I do just as she says. I shuffle load after load into the dining room and every time I return to the kitchen loaded down with empty dishes. Once my family begins to slow their eating, I take a seat and eat some myself.

The flavor is amazing. Nice chewy pasta loaded with butter and sweet, caramelized onions, all wrapped around the savory, creamy mashed potatoes. I eat as many as I can and return to the kitchen. There I find my mother, clearly exhausted, eating some of her own *pyrohy*, apart from the dinner party. I always used to feel bad that she never got to truly experience the meal because she spent so much time working in the kitchen. But once I put myself in her situation by working the meal instead of consuming it, I understood. Ukrainian Christmas may not have many similarities to regular Christmas but one thing certainly carries over. Joy truly comes from giving, not receiving.

By cooking this meal with my mother I experienced the joy of giving. I did not care that I missed out on a nice sit-down meal because I was able to soak in the joy that I was giving to my family members. I was able to watch the people I love

enjoying my hard work. Ukrainian Christmas reminds me every year why giving is truly better than receiving.



The Evolution of a Tradition: Christmas Eve Dinner

By: Michael Graham

“All under one roof, leading separate lives, still we worry for each other. This worry, that’s what makes us family.” –Chef Chu, Eat, Drink, Man, Woman

“We communicate by eating.” –Jia-Chien, Eat, Drink, Man, Woman

In the Graham household, Christmas Eve is unanimously the best day of the year. Since I can remember, I have looked forward to December 24th more than birthdays, Easter, the Fourth of July, and Christmas itself. As is the case for many families with respect to holidays, my family’s Christmas Eve has come to be defined in a very unique way by the traditions with which we associate it, and at the heart of our Christmas Eve traditions is food.

Each December 24th unfolds in roughly the same way at 1002 Dunning Drive. Starting in the early afternoon, the family (dogs included) gathers in the family room for a movie marathon. Unfailingly, the marathon kicks off with *A Christmas Story*, which after so many years is watched more out of tradition than anything else, and ends with a movie of my younger sister’s choice. Generally, my dad is asleep less than 45 minutes into *A Christmas Story*, but with the lights low and a fire glowing in the fireplace, it is hard to blame him.

After the movies, we put on our Sunday best and head to church for Christmas Eve mass. Though our time in church is nice, our anticipation of the post-church feast, makes the already-longer-than-normal service feel like an eternity. Finally, the mass ends and we hastily return home to begin the best part of the day: Christmas Eve dinner.

Our Christmas Eve dinner is not simply a meal; it is a process. Each year, the process begins a few days prior to Christmas Eve when my mom asks each of us, “If you could pick any dish in the world to eat on Christmas Eve for dinner, what would it be? You name it, I’ll make it for you.”

Despite the infinite number of choices, year after year, each family member always opts for the same dish: fettuccini carbonara for my sister, a thin crust pizza for me, and my mom’s famous meat lasagna for my dad. When we return from church, my mother earnestly and enthusiastically sets about assembling the feast. By nature, my mother tends to be passive and accommodating, but on Christmas Eve, like Babette in *Babette’s Feast* and Chef Chu in *Eat, Drink, Man, Woman*, she transforms when she enters the kitchen. For those few hours, she is a single-minded whirlwind of artistry and precision as she prepares each family member’s favorite dish. Despite the daunting amount of work my mom faces in preparing the meal, when my sister and I ask if we can help, our requests are dismissively shrugged off by the head chef (I don’t think she trusts us in the kitchen), so instead my dad, my sister, and I admire her work from the kitchen table. Using my late grandmother’s lasagna recipe and a couple of other recipes she has picked up over the years, over the course of three hours, my mom turns a countertop full of ingredients into a meal worthy of El Bulli (well, maybe not, but close at least).

During those three hours, our anticipation builds as the alluring aromas waft to our side of the kitchen, and when the meal is finally ready, it feels as if we could not wait a moment longer. In contrast to one of our typical dinners, on Christmas Eve we eat slowly, savoring the food and company. The food is excellent, and my mother knows it. She smiles smugly when we complement her work. By the time

we finally finish dessert, it is late and we all go to bed with full stomachs and in good spirits.

Put simply, my mother communicates through food on Christmas Eve. Her meal preparation reminds me of Chef Chu’s in the opening scene of *Eat, Drink, Man, Woman*. As is the case for Chef Chu, the time, effort and care my mother invests in Christmas Eve dinner is symbolic of her unwavering love and care for her family. On Christmas Eve, she displays an attention to detail and passion for perfection that are not as noticeable the other 364 days of the year. My mom’s attitude after the meal reminds me of Babette’s after the congregation has finished her feast. In both cases, the women know they have, for the first time in a long while, reached their culinary potential. Further, just as Babette responds, “For your sake? No. For my own,” when Philippa says, “you ought not to have given away all you had for our sake,” it is clear that Christmas Eve dinner has a deeper meaning to my mother than simply providing sustenance to her family. My mom’s work serves to remind herself and the rest of the family that she can still amaze us with her cooking and that the Italian cooking legacy she inherited from my grandmother remains in tact.

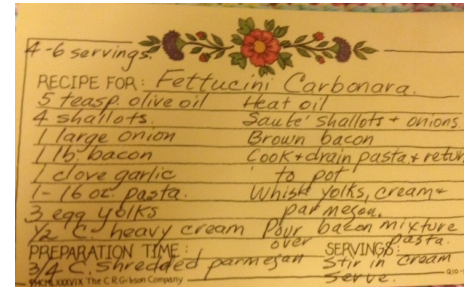
In general, many things have changed in my life over the past 20 or so years, but these traditions have not. They offer a welcome sense of structure and consistency in my life, especially as I enter the intimidating “real world.” To say simply that my family has followed the same Christmas Eve traditions for many years is not, however, indicative of the extent to which my perception and understanding of these traditions have evolved over the years. In fact, the reasons I look forward to Christmas Eve today differ greatly from the reasons I looked forward to Christmas Eve when I was younger.

Though pizza has always been my Christmas Eve dish of choice, my pizza's toppings have varied greatly over the years. When I was younger, it did not take me long to realize that Mom was serious when she said, "You can have *anything* you want to eat on Christmas Eve." While it never crossed my mind to choose a dish besides pizza, I did begin asking for progressively more outlandish and extravagant toppings. For example, when I was 7, I asked for a taco pizza. The next year I requested meat lover's pizza with sausage, pepperoni, bacon, and ham. Two years later, my mom whipped up a Hawaiian pizza at my request. Despite the extra shopping trips, the extra money, and the extra preparation time these obscure topping requests entailed, my mother never showed any sign of displeasure or frustration. In the same way that Babette sacrificed her fortune for the sake of the Dean's anniversary dinner, my mother was happily willing to go to any length to prefect Christmas Eve dinner.

When I was younger, however, it was not my mother's sincere and selfless display of love that I looked forward to on Christmas Eve. Rather, it was the feeling of indulgence that accompanied my extravagant pizzas and the anticipation of the following day's presents. In hindsight, I was guilty of both gluttony and greed.

Over time, however, I have come to realize that our traditions, especially my mother's dinner, have meaning beyond culinary indulgence and materialism. That is, my mom's Christmas Eve feast takes on a meaning far deeper than it would outside of the context of our tradition. Far more than the dishes themselves, I have come to appreciate the effort, care, and passion with which my mother prepares the dishes. Though it took me a few years to realize it, Christmas Eve is more about family than anything else. Food brings my family together and reminds us of our love for each other. I can only hope that the Christmas Eve traditions that have

played such a crucial role in my life for the past 22 years will continue to be a part of my life for many years to come.



My grandmother's carbonara recipe

Christmas Eve 1996



Beef Noodle Soup

By: Yoji High

“Sharing food with another human being is an intimate act that should not be indulged in lightly.”

–M.F.K. Fisher

“*Tai hao chi*,” I exclaimed as my now-empty bowl that once contained a portion of *hong xiao niu rou* – Chinese beef noodle soup – fit for a king was removed from in front of me. She was wearing an apron with various adorably anthropomorphized creatures adorning the front. Seeing the now empty bowl devoid of any last drops of broth, the woman blushed a little, her cheeks turning a shade of pink close to that of the cherry blossoms that were just beginning to bloom outside balcony of the two-story house. Then, without hesitation and with a distinctive pep in her step, she disappeared into the back kitchen only to reappear with another bowl of *hong xiao niu rou*.



My stomach was trying to desperately relay a message to my brain saying, “Yoji, this is your fourth helping! I can’t take anymore.” Unfortunately, the complex aroma rising from the bowl seemed to inhibit the firing of this message

through my nerves, keeping it from reaching my brain. Perhaps I could have stopped myself if only the smell was present, but the sight of the delicacy in front of me was too much for me to keep from instinctively salivating. The heaping bowl was filled to the brim with noodles of just the right consistency, with refreshing green springs of parsley and translucent slices of beef that allowed the star player of the dish – the broth – to shine through with the intense, but complementary and comforting flavors that I had grown accustomed to from the first three bowls I had voraciously devoured. I picked up my chopsticks in my right hand, and brought the bowl to my face with my left hand, feeling the steam warm my face and the smells playfully tingle my nostrils. Then, as if someone had fired a pistol at the beginning of a 100-meter dash, I shoveled the broth and noodles into my mouth with amazing efficiency. Around me, I vaguely heard the woman – my host mother – and my host father as well as their two young children having a lively conversation, but I was too entrenched in my bowl of heaven that I didn’t care. The younger of the two children started tugging at the sleeve of my jacket, and the family golden retriever put his paws up on my lap, but none of this even fazed me, as I polished off half the bowl. The adventure through the second half of the bowl saw more ignored questions, quizzical looks from the family members, and puppy faces from the puppy.

Finally, satisfied and filled up to here, I set the ceramic bowl down on the rickety table, producing a distinctive clatter. As my eyes scanned the dinner table, they met each persons’ inquisitive gaze starting at the father at the head of the table, the mother who was standing with her hands in her apron, and the two children in high chairs. I didn’t know what to say or how to react, so I just repeated the only words I had said through this whole meal – *hen hao chi*. Upon hearing these words,

the mother once again started to blush, and started pacing towards the kitchen. Scared that she was going to bring out another dish, I blurted out, “Please, I am full! I don’t need any more!” Enter culture shock.

Apparently, what I did not know was that by saying this phrase, I had insulted her cooking. Growing up with a Japanese mother, I was used to having more food than our family could finish at the dinner table. However, at home, when my mother would get up and ask us one by one, “Do you want some more,” and we answered “no thank you,” she would stop piling food on her plates. No fuss, no argument. She would gain pleasure from knowing that we were satisfied and well fed. However, things tend to work a little differently in rural China. By not wanting more, I was insinuating that the dish was not worthy of my stomach.

Thankfully, the father later explained the situation to me, and told me to just be careful during future meals. Although we were alone in the room, he spoke in a hushed voice usually reserved for intimate moments and secrets. He told me, “The only way to politely refuse further food is to leave a little bit of what you are eating on your plate, in your bowl, etc.” I was raised by my parents to leave nothing on my plate, and in fact, when I was little, my mother and father would take away my dessert privileges for the day if I left anything on my plate. To my four-year-old self, getting denied ice cream or cake or fresh slices of watermelon was objectively the worst punishment ever, and I quickly learned to only take what I knew I could finish. My mother also told me repeatedly that I should be appreciative of every grain of rice on my plate, because a farmer put in hours of work to produce the rice. All these adages and stories I had grown up on were swimming around my head as I tried to comprehend how leaving food behind on a plate was respectful. Since Chinese food and Japanese food have many similarities in flavor profiles and

methods of preparation, I was surprised by the differences in food culture between my home and this house. I decided to set this internal conflict aside and just accept that I should behave accordingly, and armed with this new-found confidence and knowledge, I sat down to dinner the next day.

The mother smiled at me – a genuine smile for sure – but I was convinced that there was something underneath that smile she wasn’t sharing with me. I politely smiled back, and patiently awaited the arrival of my food. The conversation I had with the children the night before concerning our favorite foods apparently had made its way to the mother, who was preparing the same dish again – *hong xiao niu rou*. In China, it is rare for a family to have the same main dish two nights in a row, so I took this as a sign that the mother was trying a second shot to impress me with the dish. The familiar smells were coming from the kitchen, and I was instantly taken to a place of desire that could only be satisfied by the piping hot broth mixed with the noodles, beef, and spices.

The first bowl came out, as grandiose as ever, and I quickly devoured this. Not missing a beat, the mother brought out a second bowl, which I started off as quick as the first bowl, but I gradually slowed my pace, stopping between mouthfuls of noodles to chat with the family members about the days’ events. The children were telling me about what they learned at school that day – one about basic addition, and the other about making a volcano out of baking soda and vinegar. I laughed with them as the younger one recounted a story about a small victory at recess where he beat a fellow classmate at dodgeball, and he had made the classmate cry. I took a few more sips of my soup, and then laid my chopsticks across the top of my bowl, just like the father had told me to do the night before. There was still a good quarter of the soup I had not finished that was sitting in the

bowl, and it was rapidly getting tepid. Knowing that it tasted so good, I had to physically restrain myself by placing my hands under my legs in order to not pick up my chopsticks and keep eating. Looking at my unfinished bowl of soup, the mother looked at me, and with a full smile exclaimed, “You must’ve enjoyed it! I’m glad!” The mother then took my bowl away happily, and returned not with another filled bowl, but instead with orange slices, a sign that I had gotten to the coveted dessert. I had succeeded in balancing my desire for *hong xiao niu rou* with my desire for acceptance from the family.

This was certainly not the first or last culture shock I had to overcome throughout my journey in China, but gaining acceptance in a family wraps one in a blanket of warmth, and I was in a very happy place. When I went back home and told my mother about what had happened, she scolded me extensively for leaving food as she always does, but I knew in my heart that I had done the right thing. As M.F.K. Fisher said, “Sharing food with another human being is an intimate act that should not be indulged in lightly.” There is an innate pleasure that can be derived from pleasing someone through food, and my mother had always said to my brother and I that seeing us happily eating her food brought her unparalleled happiness. By letting the mother know that I was satisfied with her food, I had brought her the happiness she deserved for cooking such a delicious meal for us. I will never forget the lessons I learned and the food I ate during this journey.

Recipe for *Hong Xiao Niu Rou* (Chinese Beef Noodle Soup):

8 lbs. beef shanks, cut crosswise into 2"-thick, bone-in pieces
1/4 cup Chinese rice wine
3 tbsp. whole black peppercorns
14 cloves garlic, crushed

8 plum tomatoes, quartered
8 whole star anise pods
4 yellow onions, quartered
2 dried chiles de árbol
1 4" piece ginger, chopped
3 tbsp. Chinese black vinegar
Dark soy sauce, kosher salt, and sugar, to taste
12 baby bok choy
1 1/2 lbs. thin egg noodles
Chopped pickled Chinese greens, for serving

1. Put beef in a pot, cover with cold water; bring to a boil. Drain beef; transfer to a clean pot with wine, peppercorns, garlic, tomatoes, star anise, onions, chiles, and ginger. Add water to cover ingredients by 1/2"; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium; simmer for 1 hour. Remove from heat; let sit covered for 1 hour. Transfer beef to a cutting board. Skim fat; strain and reserve broth; discard solids. Add vinegar and season with soy sauce, salt, and sugar. Pull beef from bones; cut into large chunks and add to broth.
2. Bring a pot of salted water to a boil. Add bok choy; cook until just tender, about 2 minutes. Transfer bok choy to bowls. Boil noodles until softened; drain. Divide broth, beef, and noodles among bowls. Garnish with greens.

SERVES 10–12

A Californian Feast

Nick Hodder-Hastorf

“Food for the body is not enough. There must be food for the soul.” - Dorothy Day

My mom is a paleoethnobotanist; she studies how people have used plants as food for millennia. She has also written a book using examples from her archaeology as well as some from the present to discuss food ways. Needless to say she always paid a lot of attention to the preparation and the quality of the food we ate as children. The only times we had take out were when she was away.

Not only did she always cook sumptuous meals of stir-fried vegetables or wonton soup, she also appreciated the importance and the satisfaction of gathering your own meal in nature. So, every once in a while, when a soccer game did not consume our Saturday, my mom, my brother and I would drive the hour and a half north to Tomales Bay in order to gather and enjoy a wholly Californian feast.

During the drive we left the bustling metropolis and soared over the glistening bay with nothing but the iron and might of the Richmond Bridge and the roof of the car between us and the cool blue waves and the endless sky. Across the bay, we wended our way through the cathedral of redwoods and golden brown hills until we climbed the last hill and could see Tomales Bay stretching out before us. This time however we could not go straight to enjoy it, but instead took the left fork heading west to Drake's Bay and the famous oyster shop. Sometimes we would come here and enjoy fresh oysters straight from the shell with a little Tabasco sauce. But this time we were to prepare a feast and there could be no distraction from our goal. We bought two-dozen mediums, caught fresh that morning and continued on our way, one step closer to our celebration.

Now we headed back away from the crashing Pacific over the hill to the bay. Finally we had arrived at our destination, a tiny cove with a few decaying boats on the beach and a horseshoe pit always overgrown with weeds. But it was full of life. The frogs and the crickets were in full song and the soft waves lapped peacefully on

the beach. There were a couple jellyfish washed up on the shore so we had to step carefully to avoid being stung. Across the bay we could see Elephant Mountain and the long line of hills shaped like a man lying down. The tide was going out so we waited for a while, my brother and I playing soccer (football as we called it) on the beach while my mom rested on the sand. Soon it was time and we walked over to the end of the beach where the cliff curved around. We searched for our treasures, walking on the sand as far as possible without getting our feet wet and then climbing along the rocks. We did not have to search long. Around the corner there was a whole ripple of mussels bursting at the seams. We picked as many as we could fit in our little bucket, mostly big ones with a few small ones for good measure and made our way back to the beach. However, our foraging was not complete. On the way back up to the cabin we stopped to pick wild blackberries growing by the side of the dirt road.

Before we left home we had gone out back to the small raised beds to pick a couple dozen large leaves each of kale, chard and lettuce. Now my mom and my brother prepared a salad and stuck some oiled kale leaves in the oven to make chips. Meanwhile I got out the fifty-year old grill and cooked the oysters. My mom has always preferred mussels, cleaned thoroughly, cooked in a sauce of oil and lemons from a friend's tree. As we cooked, we sang and drank; my mother takes the European approach to alcohol. And although we were alone, we felt that we were the sky, still clear blue, the bay and the golden brown hills across the way. For what is there to life but to eat and drink with those closest to your heart and to see the world as a beautiful place?

When the food was done we put everything in its place and sat down to watch the line of the sun slide up the hills until it was gone. We sat there together and

talked of mundane things, nothing at all, and felt no strife, no unease. We were connected; we were together; we were a family. And we ate. It was crispy, crunchy, slimy and sweet. The kale was tangy with lemon juice and spicy with fresh garlic; the oysters and mussels tasted like the sea. The blackberries burst in our mouths, full of the taste of sun. It was a meal from the earth, from the sea, a Californian feast. And on that evening, when we looked over the bay, the tranquil bay, we felt that we could melt into it. We felt we could leave the shells of our bodies, of our identities, and melt into the ground—and yet, eating, we were grounded in our bodies. I will never forget that evening because it was a time when I knew who I was; I was nothing, nothing but the sea, nothing but the land, and nothing but the sky.

The three small humps on the left are the forehead, nose and chin of the lying man, whose body trails off to the right after the bulge of his chest and belly. The obscure bulge on the right is Elephant Mountain.



The four middle crests are the legs, while the rightmost one is the tail and the bulges on the right are the elephant's head.



The Garden, the Sushi, the Soy Milk

By: Thomas Huang

“Food is our common ground, a universal experience” –James Beard (Father of American Cuisine)

These stories are dedicated to my maternal grandfather who was such an inspiration in my life.

I still remember the stories of my childhood. Many of these tales had something to do with food. My parents have many videos of my siblings and our family throughout the years. It is interesting to note that the cameras and videos are usually at special occasions which are inextricably tied to celebrations with food. As the firstborn of Taiwanese immigrants to America, there was a gaping cultural barrier between my parents and myself. Even though this is commonly seen with Asian parents universally, being raised in a predominantly white community really brought out the differences between Oriental and Western cultures.

Cognizant of these differences, my parents made a valiant effort to bridge the gap between the two cultures without the same childhood experiences. Between Christmas with the tree and lights and the countless failed attempts at stuffing turkey for Thanksgiving, what ended up happening was a fusion of American and Taiwanese culture. As much as my parents assimilated to American culture by sending me to play football, dance and hockey, their Taiwanese connection to food could not be denied.

Hot pot dinners frequently substituted the ham or turkey eaten at Christmas and other special occasions; dinners are frequently served with rice and supplanted with stir-fry dishes. All of these customs are a deep part of my identity and obviously meals are typically consumed with chopsticks instead of forks. It is here that I felt at home, at peace and comfortable. These foods are a part of me and I appreciate all of it.

Every summer, my maternal grandparents would spend several months at our home in Massachusetts. My grandfather was an engineer and my dad was a civil engineering major so the two of them always had something to talk about. One day after chatting for a while, they both disappeared for several hours. When my mother and grandmother found them again, they had purchased an array of fencing, piping and other materials and had placed them at the far edge of our half-acre backyard.

I was still really young at the time and paid little attention to whatever they were doing but very soon, the pile of pipes marked the edges of garden that was surrounded with metal fencing with a gate built in to prevent larger animals from pilfering the foods but allow us to tend to it. The garden took on a life of its own as my grandfather tended to it and slowly cultivated the soil.

My grandfather was an avid reader and I can still remember him sitting cross-legged after dinner reading his countless books and never gave it a second thought as I went off to play with my toys. He would always join us and it was always fun to play with him. My siblings, being much smaller than me at this time would always latch on to each leg and he would care both of them around the house like he was superman. I'd like to think that it was because he was a blacksmith when he was younger and his work in the garden that gave him so much strength at such an old age.

My grandfather loved building things and even built a rock barrier around all the bushes and shrubs surrounding the home. He took care of the second garden next to the porch in addition to the fenced-in one at the far edge of our yard. As days turned to weeks turned to months, I saw gorgeous tomatoes, scallions, snow peas, asparagus, gourds and even fruits such as strawberries and watermelons. Before my grandfather passed away from throat cancer, he would always be engrossed with his garden because in Taiwan, there was hardly space to even cram all the apartments and businesses into the area let alone have a garden. This garden was his baby; and it seemed like working in it allowed him to rediscover the fountain of youth because he was such an energetic and active man for being in his sixties.



Besides being a full-time gardener and part-time babysitter, a responsibility that he shared with my grandmother, my grandfather was quite the sushi maker. He was a very meticulous and nimble with his

hands in everything that he did especially when it came to sushi. I still remember those amazingly delicious dishes of sushi that were painstaking made several hours before dinner.

Peering into the dark, unlit kitchen, I saw my grandfather tirelessly toil by carefully preparing all of his ingredients and tools. Our house did not have air-conditioning so leaving the lights off saved energy and money but also kept the place cool. The bamboo skewers strung together into a mat was the most important tool because that allowed him to carefully form the sushi into whatever size he wanted. I am hesitant to guess that there were slices that did not come out as perfectly as he wanted but at the dinner table, I would only see rolls of sushi made to perfection. I only wish I could have learned his secret techniques and recipe before he passed. To this day, I have never seen homemade or generic restaurant sushi that has been able to compare to his.

Another signature thing made by grandpa was his hand-pressed soy milk. I must apologize because this memory, like the garden and sushi is more than 10 years old so some details have become a bit fuzzy and unclear but I shall recall everything to the best of my ability. Soymilk is the Taiwanese equivalent to milk. In Taiwan, soymilk complements everything. In the morning, breakfasts would be washed down with soymilk and warm bowls of soymilk were even part of a famous breakfast combination.

As sustainable as growing our own soybeans and rice from our garden would be, these were even more time-intensive and tedious crops that my family never grew. Instead our soybean was typically supplied from the Chinatown in Boston. After buying them in bulk, my grandfather would open a package and soak them in water for a long time.

I always marveled at how the soybeans would soak up so much water and am also amazed that those soybeans produce this milk-colored liquid that is thick and tasty. This was another one of grandpa's secrets that I wish I was old enough to ask him for it or to have him teach it to me. To process soybeans into soymilk requires cooking, pressing and straining through cheesecloth. The whole process took several days and would involve meticulous attention and careful preparation and cooking. I honestly cannot remember much of the process; however, I do remember the delight I felt when we had freshly made soymilk for breakfast to pair with our rice balls or other breakfast foods made by my grandmother.

If I were to count all the lost secrets that my grandfather took with him, it would be a depressing story; instead, I choose to celebrate the moments we had and the time and energy he spent in the process of making all these wonderful things for us.

Soy Milk Recipe

1. Soak one measure of dry soybeans for 6 to 12 hours.
2. Load and run soymilk maker as per the directions that came with the machine.
3. Cool the milk in the refrigerator till it is at least lukewarm.
4. Add 1/4 tsp. of salt.
5. Add 2 Tbs. of sugar.
6. Add 3 Tbs. of Barley Malt.
7. Add 1 Tbs. Of Vanilla flavoring.

Each batch yields approx. 1/3 gallon of soy milk. I typically make 2 batches at a time and store it in a plastic container in the refrigerator.

Hunger Bites

By: Robert Hutton

*“It is a difficult matter to argue with the belly since it has no ears” - Plutarch,
The Life of Marcus Cato*

My stomach awoke first. The rest of my body followed – albeit grudgingly. For a few futile moments, I sought to return to the blissful oblivion of slumber. A light breeze plucked at the synthetic fabric of the tent.

With an ominous growl, my belly voiced its displeasure. I fumbled for the stud on my wristwatch, and a small nimbus of green light flared into existence. 4:40 AM.

God damnit.

My nocturnal flailings had not gone unnoticed: the face of Steve hove into view, his eyes slitted in protest against the feeble illumination. “Turn that s--- off, man,” he growled. The burly Iowan glared at me for a moment longer before turning on his side.

I complied. In any case, my vision had adjusted to the burgeoning twilight. With sleep seemingly out of the question, I gingerly extricated myself from my sleeping bag. Carefully, wary of further provoking those with whom I shared an uncomfortably intimate space, I retrieved my journal from its waterproof case. Inspiration proved elusive, however. My thoughts seemed to follow an inevitable pattern.

I spent the next two hours scrawling one word across the margins:

Hungry.

* * *

The summer after my freshman year, I took an extraordinary hiking trip through the Wind River Range of Wyoming. This expedition, one of the many annual programs offered by the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS), covered almost 700 miles in 30 days. Physically and psychologically, it was an unprecedented challenge. A year of college – the first time I had ever enjoyed complete control over my diet and exercise regimen – had not done wonders for my physique. Fortunately, the human body obligingly adaptable; by the end of the second week, I had more or less reached fighting trim. The demands of the human mind, however, are less readily accommodated.

The philosopher Thomas Hobbes famously argued that in the absence of civilization, human life is “nasty, brutish, and short.”¹ When man’s access to fundamental necessities is disrupted, his social and psychological condition begins to deteriorate. I do not presume to suggest that the month I spent in the mountains of Wyoming was a struggle for survival – yet it was an experience inescapably haunted by the specter of hunger. The NOLS paradigm eschews the use of ‘survival’ food – that is, rations which have been specifically designed to yield high nutritional value at a low weight. The result? A diet that might be generously described as ‘frugal’.

Under such circumstances, the mind’s eye narrows its focus; the entirety of human consciousness – fantasies, fears, calculations – centers on the consumption of food. Gradually, this rude calculus of myopic pragmatism makes its presence felt in the realm of social interaction.

* * *

¹ See Michael Szpir, “Nasty, Brutish, and Short?,” *American Scientist* 81 (1993), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29774966> (access. May 12, 2012).

“Next?” Matt repeated, a note of impatience creeping into his voice.

I remained frozen – transfixed by the glutinous portion that he had ladled into my Tupperware bowl. My eyes darted up, accusing, but my fellow diners swiftly averted their gaze.

There was an awkward pause.

At length, Steve’s hunger overcame his hesitation. Ignoring my expression of pained indignation, he shuffled past me to receive his serving.

To butcher an old aphorism: we may all be equal in the eyes of God, but he saw fit to make some of us larger and stronger. In the context of a NOLS expedition, necessity dictates that such individuals carry a heavier load. To compensate for this increased exertion, they are allocated a marginally larger portion at mealtimes. Fair enough, at least in theory.

As the lightweight of the group, I had grown used to receiving slightly smaller servings at our meals. I recognized that this system of apportionment was necessarily inequitable, and my occasional complaints were generally couched in humorous terms.

This time, it was different. We were only two days away from being resupplied, so our packs were light. Across the group, the distribution of weight was – for the time being, at least – relatively equal. In moment of selflessness, I had even offered to carry the tent for the day.



But Matt had clearly served me a lightweight’s portion. He knew it; the rest of the team knew it. Yet nobody said anything.

The group ate breakfast in silence as I sat, fuming. Violent and angry impulses bubbled in

the hollow of my gut. Drawing a sharp breath, I prepared to spit out a litany of malignant sentiments.

But then Steve upset the survival stove, nearly drenching the remainder of our rations with fuel. We forgot our meal in a brief frenzy of preventative action.

The moment passed.

* * *

Today, my recollections of NOLS are fuzzy and indistinct. Journeying through harsh and often beautiful terrain, we followed the same daily routine. Try as I might, it is difficult to accurately remember the experience of *walking* (which, together with sleeping, consumed the bulk our time). The trail, the summit, the descent – all have gradually blurred together.

Here and there, like crumbs scattered on a table, a few memories remain vivid. Almost without exception, they have one thing in common: they revolve around the consumption of food. Many are unpleasant, apropos my comments regarding the behavior of man in the Hobbesian “state of nature.”

Some, however, are not so bad.

* * *

On the last day, we rested. A final burst of effort had brought us down from the mist-shrouded peaks, into the mild foothills of the Wind River Range. In the dusk of the evening, we could see the distant, twinkling lights of a city, the first sign of ‘civilization’ we had witnessed – baring the occasional plane – in over three weeks.

I was as hungry as I had ever been. We had eaten the last of our supplies the day before. Yet somehow, it didn't seem so bad. In the final, rosy fingers of sunlight stretched row after row of cornfields, dancing in the breeze.

Friend or Food?

By: Lany Jenna Khattiya

"Vegetables are a must on a diet. I suggest carrot cake, zucchini bread, and pumpkin pie." --Jim Davis

I am a first-generation Laotian-American with a mixed cultural background. My family immigrated to the United States a couple of years before I was born, yet even after more than twenty-two years of living here, they have still retained much of their Laotian culture. Rather than fully-integrating into the foreign environment, my family formed a Laotian community and held fast to the traditions and beliefs they practiced back in their homeland. For generations, my family lived in a tiny, rural village on which their sustenance depended on farming and hunting. They foraged, planted, grew, stalked, and hunted—their lives revolved around food and the ability to live off of the land to ensure their survival. These skills were absolutely necessary for them, so when they came to America, they brought this knowledge with them. Rather than conforming to the American food culture and adjusting their ways of eating and procuring food, they just continued to do things their Laotian way. This explains why I grew up the way I did. In my house, we ate with our hands; I actually did not learn how to properly use and hold a fork and a

knife until I was in middle school! We also ate the way they did back in the village: communal family-style eating with our legs crossed on the floor.

Our family grew a gigantic garden in the backyard that comprised of most of the vegetables that we used for cooking, from cilantro to tomatoes to green beans. I loved being able to run into the backyard and harvest all of the necessary ingredients for that night's dinner. We also raised animals in the backyard. Chickens and ducks would come and go and it would always cause a pang of guilt every time I ate a dish, but that was the way things worked in our household and I had to deal with it or go hungry for the night. It also did not help my case that I was a huge carnivore and absolutely loved animals, but in all forms—alive or cooked! It was a huge internal battle and I was conflicted about the pleasure I derived from befriending animals, but also from eating them.

At some point, I had gotten particularly close to a chicken named Chickadee. She was such a spunky little chicken and we quickly became the best of friends. We would hang out in the backyard and she loved coming into the garden with me, pecking at the plants while I gathered the vegetables for dinner. As the other chickens came and went, I begged and begged my mom to let Chickadee stay with me for a little while longer. Seeing my big, watery eyes and hearing my quivering, desperate voice, my mom would always give in. Each time, my hopes grew that Chickadee's fate could be changed.

One day, I came home from school and ran outside to greet my best friend. Chickadee did not come clucking to me like usual. Alarmed, I began to scream, "Mom! Mom, where is my chicken? She's not here!" My mom looked at me with sad eyes, and replied, "Lany, I know...Chicken is not here anymore." Aghast, I began to sob and continued to search for her even though I knew that she was no

longer there. Later, after I had calmed down and was able to speak coherently, I asked my mom why she took my best friend from me. To my surprise, I learned that was not actually what happened. Rather than becoming one of our meals, Chickadee had wandered outside the gates of our backyard and unfortunately met her demise with a dog named Roxy. Her fate had changed hands, but not paths.

In Chickadee's memory, I devised an elaborate dinner in her honor: a full-fledged vegetarian meal comprised of all of her favorite vegetables from our garden. I harvested tomatoes, carrots, lettuce, and every other vegetable I could get my hands on to put into my Chickadee Soup. I also made a hearty vegetable sauté and a salad dish as well. I put my emotions into each and every dish. I thought of her as I cut up each vegetable and finally learned what it meant to cook with love. That night, we had a feast of vegetables, all grown from our backyard and infused with all of my hard work and thoughtfulness. It took me hours to prepare, cook, and put together each dish, but I was determined to do this for her. Although my family was used to having dishes packed with protein and meat, they allowed me to have this feast. It was incredibly important to me to have this feast in honor of one of my best friends, Chickadee, the chicken that taught me that food could be friends, too.

The Sins of Celiac

By: Rachel Kim

*"Part of the secret of success in life is to eat what you like
and let the food fight it out inside." –Mark Twain*



Rachel and her three best friends in Italy

Gluttony is the only one of the Seven Deadly Sins that is related to something that is essential to human survival. Humans need food to live, but how much food are we really intended to eat? What kinds of food are we supposed to eat? Mankind will never truly know what the human body is supposed to ingest for survival, but there are certain people out there, like me, who know that there are certain foods that they are not supposed to eat.

When I was a junior in high school, I found out that I had a gene that prevented me from eating gluten, or in other words, wheat, rye, and barley. Luckily I did not have Celiac, which is a much worse condition, but not being able to eat foods that are so regularly part of one's diet was still difficult. For a long time I had problems that not only effected my stomach, but also my health, my physical appearance, and my athletic stamina. I could no longer have bagels, sandwiches

with regular bread, pasta, and worst of all, good old New York style pizza. However, there were many products out there like gluten free bread, crackers, and pizza crust that allowed me to eat foods that I previously was unable to have, but it is *never* the same.

The worst part about having gluten-intolerance is that I can still technically eat gluten, and I do. Sometimes it is too much of a hassle and quite difficult to go out to a restaurant or to the dining halls in school and eat a whole meal without having one bit of gluten in it. I'll often steal a bite of my friend's pasta, grab a small slice of pizza from Ross Dining Hall, or just full-on order my own everything bagel toasted with cream cheese from my favorite bagel store at home.

Gluttony is technically defined as "excessive eating and drinking" (dictionary.com), but I asked myself; when I eat *gluten* am I being a *glutton* in some twisted way? Not only am I excessively eating food that is salty, delicious and filled with wheat, but I am also eating food that is hurting my body and my belly. When I eat food that I am not supposed to have I always feel guilty right after and it reminds me of the feeling that someone would have when they overeat and indulge in a feast. It is almost as if it is a sinful act where I am breaking the rules of some higher power. However, gluttony seems to be the easiest sin to fall into and everyone has excessively eaten food at one point in his or her life.

Gluttony is a common characteristic of American society and it has caused people to take the taste of food for granted. Rather than concentrating on quality we concentrate on quantity. When I started to cut out wheat products from my diet I just ate more of other foods that I could have. Instead of eating 1 cookie I would eat 3 bags of potato chips because in my mind those two amounts of foods would equally satiate my appetite. One would expect that a person who follows a gluten-

free diet would have a healthier diet that is not filled with processed foods, but I would fill in those gaps with other processed foods that I *am* allowed to eat like popcorn, rice krispies and french fries.

Reflecting back on my journey of finding out that I was gluten free and having to eat gluten free made me realize that there are still foods out there that I can truly enjoy and that I should really appreciate. Food is such an easy thing for people to take for granted because it is something that we must have everyday in order to survive. People mindlessly fill their plates with food, sit down at the dinner table and eat quickly, and move on to other things in their lives that they believe is more important. After being diagnosed with gluten intolerance I came to realize that people must value the food that they can eat. It may seem like a simple slice of pizza, but there are people that cannot eat the crust, cheese or sauce because it contains wheat, dairy and soy. I have come to appreciate the foods that I am allowed to eat and that is how I become gluttonous.

After my senior year I went to Italy with my three best friends and I had some of the best food of my life. Italian food is filled with bread, pasta, and pizza so it was incredibly difficult to stay gluten free. My friend's dad would make unbelievably delicious pasta dishes almost every day for lunch. When people in their town eat lunch all of the stores shut down and everybody goes home to enjoy a 2-hour meal. We would normally start off with some time of appetizer of charcuterie and cheese then move to pasta, then to the protein, and then end it with dessert. Experiencing this type of dining habit every day for a week was a culture shock. I did not understand how people in this small town in Italy could eat meals like this every single day! Every day my friend's dad would make a different dish and we would savor and appreciate every single noodle of pasta. I never wanted to

stop eating the amazing pasta because I knew that I would have to go back to America and have regular gluten free pasta with sauce that would not even be half as good as what I was eating in Italy. We would also go out for meals and have whole Napoleon style pizzas to ourselves with lots of appetizers and sides. My friend's father also makes his own olive oil so we would come back home late at night and eat bread doused in olive oil or make mozzarella sandwiches with French bread and chili sauce. I would definitely have called myself a glutton when I was in Italy because I would eat until I could not swallow another bite of pasta, slice of pizza, or piece of bread, but I justified my sinful acts because I knew that I would not be able to have this type of food for a very long time. Can you really call me a glutton when I was trying to truly appreciate the delicious Italian food that I knew I would never have again?

Makin' Lobsters

By: Carter Makin

"Work before eating, rest after eating. Eat not ravenously, filling the mouth gulp after gulp without breathing space." –Maimonides

As my mom packs the lunch and the beach bag, I collect the buckets and bait from my grandmother's house while my brother, Jory, puts the fishing poles in the car. When we get to the dock, we all help bring the gear from the car to the boat. Everyone jumps on the boat and starts taking the covers off the steering wheel and seats. I head to the bow to unhook the boat from the mooring and my dad grabs the

key from its hiding place and starts the engine. My grandmother, Mimi, full of wisdom and experience, pulls out a line of rope and starts tying different kinds of knots. Her appreciation for the nautical world and nature has influenced me and she has taught me everything she knows about my favorite family pastime - lobstering.

Lobstering has been a tradition on my father's side of the family for over thirty years. It is a team effort that has given me an understanding of what gives me solace and strength. As my dad drives the boat alongside the orange lobster buoy with a green stripe, I grab it. Knowing that I will work just as hard to pull up a trap full of lobsters as I will to pull up an empty one, I haul the trap up while the salt water splashes onto my legs. I love the surprises that come with lobstering; you never know what you're going to catch. When the yellow lobster trap comes into sight, Jory helps me hoist the trap over the side of the boat. Sometimes the trap is completely empty and all of the bait is eaten, but in this particular trap we find two lobsters, a couple of small crabs, a sea skate and some sea urchins. My mom gives me a metal tool to pry the claws off the side of the trap while Jory willingly grabs the wet and slimy shell. We seize both of the lobsters out of the trap and Mimi measures them to make sure they are of adequate size to keep. My dad takes the job of pulling the sea skate out of the trap. I clear the trap of the crabs and seaweed and my mom restocks the bait bag. Fortunately, with my family's team approach, everyone is willing to handle any task, whether fun or dirty. Lobstering has taught me to appreciate the efficiency of teamwork and embrace tasks that I would otherwise find monotonous.

Any opportunity I have, I try to be outside and immerse myself in my surroundings. As we drive to find the next buoy in the cove, I look out at the ocean and sky. Being on our boat allows me to admire the beauty of Gloucester. I feel

the salt in the air, and the wind blows my hair as the boat speeds up towards the next orange buoy. The fishy smells permeate the air, and a seagull encircles a tower in the middle of the harbor where it has built a nest. The thrill of the boat rocking back and forth as we cross over the waves makes my stomach lurch; but I enjoy moving with the waves. I feel myself relax. I can hear the clang from the historic green bell buoy offshore and the sound resonates in the air as we speed by it.

We slow down as the boat approaches another buoy and Jory bends over the boat to grab it. No one knows what the trap will contain and we brace ourselves in hopes the trap will reveal as much excitement as the last one. Using his strength, Jory yanks the trap through the water. A motorboat speeds by us, and its wake causes the boat to rock back and forth aggressively, causing Mimi to lose her balance. I immediately feel a tightening in my stomach as she is the matriarch of our family and I fear losing her, as she is the inspiration for our continued passion. My dad quickly grabs her to prevent her from falling. As she regains her balance she seamlessly starts asking me questions about lacrosse and my summer plans. Yet again, Mimi shows me her strength and resilience. In that moment, I realize the importance of experience and conversations that have made our family such a cohesive unit.

As we cruise back towards the harbor, I think about the fabulous meal we are going to have tonight. Since it is approaching the end of the summer, the lobstering season is coming to a close and we want to relish in the hard work and commitment we put into this lobstering season. My dad drives the boat up to our friend's dock where we have a "keeper trap", which is the lobster trap that keeps the lobsters in a safe trap in the salt water, in order to stay fresh, until we want to eat them. We caught two lobsters that day, so we stop at the dock to pick up the rest of the

lobsters in order to have enough for our family to enjoy. I routinely hop off of the boat and onto the dock to guide the boat to its proper location alongside the dock and effortlessly tie the boat to the wooden cleat. I get back on the boat after grabbing the remaining lobsters from the trap and we head back to our mooring in Gloucester harbor.

We drive back to Mimi's house on the narrow, windy roads and prepare for our end of summer feast. Mimi and Dad are always in charge of cooking the lobsters, while Jory and I always husk the corn, and Mom makes the salad. We all know our duties for family dinners and complete our roles with no complaints. After I husk all of the corn, I set the table on the screened-in porch and light the candles. We all wait in anticipation for the lobsters to be ready. This annual dinner brings some sad emotions along with positive ones. It marks the end of the summer right before school starts, but it also allows us to reflect on the summer and appreciate how much fun we had together out on our boat in Gloucester and other experiences we shared together. Tonight we reminisced about our adventures going paddle boarding and putting our dogs on the boards and standing up to paddle along the beach. My dad recounts the story of when my uncle fell off the side of the boat while trying to push it away from the dock. I look up from my plate full of lobster and notice that everyone is keeling over with laughter. I am on the verge of tears because I am laughing so hard and these are the moments that I wish would last forever.

At the end of dinner we bring out the apple pie and vanilla ice cream and pass it around the table. The fresh aroma of the lobster still engulfs the house and will for a couple of hours after dinner. We scrape all of the lobster shells into the trashcan and bring the trash bag outside so my dogs won't be tempted to break into

the garbage full of attractive smells. I curl up next to my dogs in the living room and rest my head on their stomachs. The rest of my family comes into the room and we all watch a movie together. It was a great end to a wonderful night.

Our lobstering expeditions have provided the entire family with an appreciation for more than the lobsters themselves. Mimi has encouraged us to keep this thrilling tradition of more than thirty years alive by motivating the family to stay committed to lobstering. Our excursions have provided me with insight about myself, the importance of family, the value of tradition, and the beauty of nature. It is soothing for me to be connected by true and meaningful conversations as opposed to emails, text messages, and other modes of electronic communication. Given my structured, repetitive, and hectic school year, the opportunity to get out on the ocean with family allows me to refresh myself and appreciate life's simple pleasures. Multi-generational pastimes are scarce and I feel so grateful that I have one to share with my current and future family.

How to boil a lobster:

Make a tasty cooking broth by combining water, thyme, & bay leaves in a big pot. Squeeze some lemon juice into the water & then drop in the empty rinds. Bring the pot up to a high boil. Pick up the live lobster & quickly place it head first into the boiling water. Cover the pot & boil for 15 minutes. The lobster shell will be



bright red & the tails will be curled when they are done. Melt some butter and put it in a small dish to dip the fresh lobster meat into.

The Evolution of my Chocolate Chip Cookies

By: Hannah Newman

"I am still convinced that a good, simple, homemade cookie is preferable to all the store-bought cookies one can find." –James Beard

In my family, cookies aren't bought from the store – they are made from scratch. It seems as though this lesson is as much a part of me as my DNA.

Baking chocolate chip cookies in my house has always been a production. When the curtain opens, you get a choice: the wet or the dry ingredients. As you read the recipe an orchestrated synchrony ensues in the kitchen. Much like a dance, the performers shuffle around to and from the ingredients and measuring cups with ease. It is evident that this choreographed routine has been practiced hundreds of times. The first half of the show ends as the wet and dry ingredients are compiled in two separate glass bowls. As the mix-master is taken out and placed onto the counter-top anticipation builds for the final scene. First, the wet ingredients are blended; this includes the creaming together of the butter and sugar, which begins to infuse the air with a familiar aroma. My dad, who never participates in the production (but is always ravenous once the final product is complete), hears the mix-master begin to rev and cranks the volume up on the TV with a giant smile on his face.

With the wet ingredients fully blended, the dry ingredients are added ever so slowly so as not to cause an eruption of flour all over the counter (although when this does happen we all smile and proceed to scoop up what remnants we can and add it back to the bowl). As the mix-master picks up speed, the magic begins to happen. The ingredients take on a new life as they become more than their individual parts and merge into a delicious whole. This elaborate display culminates in the slowing down of the mix-master and the addition of the chocolate chips. Once they are fully mixed in, the big bowl is lowered off its mount and we go to work spooning the batter onto the parchment-paper-lined cookie sheets. The sheets are placed into the double oven and the timer is set, but this isn't even the best part.

My fondest childhood kitchen memory is licking the raw cookie-dough batter off the end of the spatula while watching the cookies bake through the small oven window.

As is probably evident by now, chocolate chip cookies in my family are a big deal. There is a certain texture we strive for (undercooked is always better than overcooked), and certain traditions that are upheld. The main one being: I always get to eat the batter raw – always. I have never gotten salmonella and I am convinced that I never will.

As I grew up, the chocolate chip cookie tradition began to transform. There was no longer time for the production during the evenings or even on the weekends. My nights became filled with practices and homework and my weekends consisted of tournaments and Hebrew School. That's why Fridays became so special.

My mom, the chocolate chip cookie master, is a lawyer who made a choice. She could have sold her soul to her job, working 5 or 6 days a week, spending

countless hours in the courtroom, and ultimately making a higher salary. Instead, she chose to work 4 days a week – giving her every Friday off for a majority of my Elementary and Middle School career.

These Fridays became associated with the infamous smell of warm chocolate chip cookies that came fresh from the oven. My mom had the timing down perfectly. As soon as my sister and I walked in the door, we were greeted with her smiling face and sheets of cookies on the counter-top. I imagine this is what most kids probably feel like on Christmas morning; and while I don't celebrate Christmas, I got this feeling once a week, rather than once a year.

This Friday afternoon ritual became a time that I grew to cherish. The school week was over. There was a moment to sink into the kitchen-table chair as the chocolate melted onto my tongue. We were able to relax and breathe as the three girls sat and swapped stories of our day. This was our special mother-daughter time that no one could take away from us.

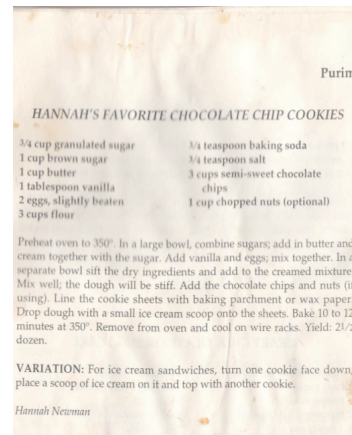
But, as any college student can attest to, times change and life gets busier. There are fewer moments to relax, more studying to do, more meetings to attend, and more sports to get better at. For my mom, there were more hours to bill, and less Friday afternoons to spare, so the ritual began to fade as even our Friday afternoons became filled with activities.

But the chocolate chip cookies were never lost.

As I grew from an Elementary School student to college freshman, the cookies transformed. Upon entering college, the chocolate chip cookies took on a new role. They brought people together, got friends through tough times, and provided a surprise treat during finals week. Whenever I receive a package of cookies, a little piece of my mom is always sent with it. When I watch my friends

eat these cookies, I feel like they are at home with my mom and me. She is able to remain a part of my life through her delicious chocolate chip cookies. My friends are now able to tell a good batch from a bad batch, they are free to email her with cookie requests at any time of the year and they know, without hesitation, that a package will be waiting for them within the week.

These chocolate chip cookies have always been, and will continue to be a very big part of my life. They have spanned decades and have never failed to make me smile, remind me to breathe, or bring me a little piece of home when I'm feeling lonely. My mom has been the vehicle through which all of this has become possible and I am forever grateful for her teaching me how to perfect these cookies and for always making it home-made, never store bought.



The 9-hour meal

By: Vijit Nanda

"To eat is human, to digest divine." -Mark Twain

Going to another country to study is always hard. Culture shock. Unfamiliar surroundings. Leaving your family behind while you travel halfway across the world. Acclimatizing to the radically different weather. Trying to fit in to a community of people very different from you.

Those were some of the things I should have been worrying about. Instead I was forced to bother my already stressed out brain with issues that should have been of considerably less importance. My parent's friends forced me to agree to call home at least twice a day. My dad told me to maintain a 5.0 GPA. My mom warned me not to drink alcohol. My uncle warned me not to drink bad quality alcohol. My sister, always the hygiene freak, reminded me to shower twice a day and brush my teeth four times a day (when I reminded her I wasn't going to study in England, she reduced it to three). Then came the lecture from my grandparents. They set out on a mission to educate me on the evils of the West and loosing touch with one's roots. I was warned by my grandmother not to even think about having a relationship with an American girl. My grandfather was insistent that I not let my Indian friend to American friend ratio drop anything below 2:1. Don't get me wrong- I love my grandparents. I mean, they taught me all the unintentionally racist things they used to call British people. But this was getting too much.

Food is always on my mind. Literally. I have a tattoo of a steak in Béarnaise sauce on the back of my head. It's the one thing I still had place in my brain for,

despite the constant assault on my mind. It presented a sort of refuge for me during these stressful times.

A week before my flight out, I was having a chat with my friend who was also going to the US to study, when we both realized how much we would miss Bombay. We have both grown up and lived all our lives there, and neither of us had lived anywhere else for longer than 3 months. We had to go and relive all the aspects of the city we loved before we left to pursue our degrees. And what aspect of Bombay were we going to miss the most, but the food?

Thus was born a dream. And from that dream was born a vision. A vision that someday we would revisit the restaurants, the cafes, the roadside stalls and the hidden gourmet gems, that made Bombay what it was for us. We would go back to each and every one, not leaving out a single place, and experience them for a final time. Well, at least until we came back in the summer.

And so, with that most awesome of awesome ideas, we went home, turned the TV on, and forgot about it. And so it remained forgotten, until it was two days before we were meant to leave. My neighbours will always remember that day as the day they awoke thinking a dolphin was dying outside their door, for I had emitted a low, mournful groan that slowly turned into a high pitched squeal. I had just realized that we had the whole week to fulfill that dream of ours, but had done nothing about it. Now, with just two days remaining till we were to be ejected from the motherland, there was no way we were going to be able to complete it. With an air of dejection, I called my friend. He, however, always the optimist, with his glass-is-always-half-full BS, didn't seem to be the slightest bit crestfallen. He recommended that we just cram all that we had planned out for the week, into one day. Now usually I would scoff, laugh it off and then mock him for coming up with

such nonsense. But that day, I was feeling especially determined. I wasn't going to let my last few days in Bombay go by, feeling like a wet sock that has been cast away to the furthest reaches of its owner's laundry basket. So I agreed.

The task before us was gargantuan. We had so many places to go to, and so little time. So we decided to go to our usual haunts around our high school to begin with, and then gradually branch out and see where the stars (and our stomachs) took us. We laid down a few ground rules for us to adhere to- we had to order the most famous item at each place we went to, finish it by any means possible, and, just to make it a challenge, go the whole time without any toilet breaks.

August 29, 2011. 3.15pm. Having starved ourselves appropriately for the occasion, me and my friend (his name is Ishaan, by the way) step out of our cab into the musty alley of Maharishi Dadhichi Road, a bye-lane, running parallel to our school. The air is hot, but dry, with short gusts of wind slapping our faces, carrying away the rumbles of my stomach far into the void. It is time to eat.

The first stop is the 'J.B. Sandwichwallah'. '*Wallah*' is a Hindi, slang term for vendor. Located bang across the street from our high school, this guy's sandwiches gave us a moment's respite, after a long day of classes, exams, essays, interviews or suspensions (only once). He is one of many '*sandwichwallahs*' who litter the streets of Bombay, providing satisfying 20 rupee meals to commuters from all over the city. The perfect Bombay sandwich, which the J.B. sandwich*wallah* calls a 'Royale', is basically a lot of raw tomato, onion, green bell pepper, beetroot, cucumber, grated processed cheese (keyword: processed), ketchup, a mint/green chilly chutney and an ingredient known as sandwich masala, a mixture of a ton of spices, powdered up together. This is all pressed between two slices of bread, a dollop of butter smeared on the top, and then toasted over an open fire, using one of

those ancient hand-held toasters which no one except the sandwichwallahs seem to manage to make work.

A block down from the sandwich guy is our favourite roadside '*bhel*' vendor. '*Bhel*' is a savoury Indian snack made out of puffed rice, vegetables and a tangy tamarind sauce. The spicy *bhel* is scooped out with spoons made from carved out '*kairi*' or raw mango. In a moment of distraction on his part, I swipe Ishaan's spoon, and take a huge bite out of it, rendering him spoonless. He vows revenge.

Stop number three is the infamous Café Excelsior (or Café X, as it is affectionately referred to by its seasoned patrons, a.k.a us) one of the famous Irani cafes in Bombay established by Persian immigrants who came to India in the 19th century. The most famous dish served here is also the simplest. It is '*brun maska*'. Freshly baked 'sweet buns', cut open lengthwise, with lavish lathering's of butter on the bun's inner surface. The 'sweet buns' are velvety soft buns with dried raisins and other candied fruits baked into the bread. The '*brun maska*' is enjoyed with a steaming cup of invigorating Irani chai, infused with spices and mint.

Right outside Café X is an unassuming man and his tarpaulin sheet, propped up against the wall with two sticks. This is where he runs his business, and makes most of his profit- for he is a '*vada pav*' vendor. Arguably one of Bombay's most famous dishes, it consists of a ball of potatoes and spices, dipped in batter and then deep-fried. The ball is then placed between a '*pav*' (an Indian bread similar to a burger bun) and then various chutneys are added to it (we had ours with the classic combination of tamarind chutney, mint chutney and dried red-chilly and garlic powder).

A bit weary of our surroundings, we decide to switch it up for destination number five. We travel to another part of Bombay, closer to our homes, where the

best '*dosawallah*' on the South side of Bombay resides. The '*Babulnath Dosawallah*' makes all sorts of dosas (crispy, South Indian rice pancakes, eaten with a vegetable stew made with tamarind, and a coconut chutney). While I am paying for the dosa, Ishaan unwraps my dosa, removes the filling (steamed potatoes with onions and spices), and re-wraps it. When I take my first bite, expecting to chomp into wonderfully soft spiced-potatoes, all I get is the bitter taste of slightly burned dosa without any filling. He has had his revenge.

Stop number six is on the iconic Marine Drive. It is a juice stand called '*Bachelor's*'. One of the waiters recognizes us from our multiple previous visits. This is where we indulge ourselves in the sinful yet delicious strawberries and cream. We are really not thinking this through properly. We still have a good number of places left to go to. Things are just getting started. Stomach radius has increased by 5%.

Number seven is another establishment setup by the Parsis, or descendants of the Persian immigrants who landed in Bombay in the 19th century. It is called '*K. Rustam's*', probably after the man who set it up many years ago. It is one of Bombay's oldest ice-cream parlours, and still serves some of the best ice cream in town. Their specialty- peppermint and raspberry ice cream-sandwiches. Pure bliss.

Number eight is a special one. '*Paan*' is an Indian breath freshener made with a betel leaf and various spices and pastes. Usually, it contains cured tobacco, but we are just after the taste of the perfect '*Paan*'- a delicate mixture of the betel leaf with coconut, fruit preserves, rose petal preserves, various spices, candied fruit and various other spice-infused pastes. This is all rolled up in the leaf and eaten in one bite. '*Paan*' is often spiked with psychoactive stimulants and drugs if bought on the

road, something we clearly do not want to indulge in. But we still want good quality ‘*paan*’. So we decide to up the ante a little bit. There is an extremely top-end restaurant in one of the best five-star hotels in Bombay, which serves ‘*paan*’ to its guests, but only after their meals. We embark on a side-quest of sorts, to try and obtain the ‘*Paan*’. A lot ensues. Long story short, we went in, and while Ishaan distracted the receptionist with long-winded queries about the optimal dynamics of seating arrangements in a square-shaped restaurant interior, and the correlation between the length of waiter’s ties and the restaurant’s monthly profit margin, I pilfered a few of the ‘*paan*’ lying on a tray near the exit, for people to take when they left the restaurant. Deeming this mission accomplished, we set off for destination number nine.

August 29, 2011. 7.26pm. A second friend of mine who lives in the area joins us for the remaining stretch of our food run. Being a Muslim, he knows all the best locations in the predominantly Muslim parts of town around the Colaba and Crawford Market neighbourhoods. He takes us first to a small shawarma stand near the Gateway of India. The Middle East’s celebrated street snack is found widely in the city, and the Indianized version of it is true street ‘fusion’ food at its best.

A block down from the shawarma stand is Modern Juice Centre, which becomes our number ten. Glasses of their rich ‘kesar-badam milk’ are what we drown ourselves in. ‘Kesar-badam milk’ is warm milk infused with saffron and roasted almonds. It has started to rain by now, so we crowd under the thin tarpaulin roof of the Modern Juice Centre, and wait for it to subside as we savour the steamy concoction in our hands, sip by sip.

When the rain finally ends, and we are more than drenched, we enter the Paradise Café. Since we are soaking wet, we are prohibited entry, but the manager

allows us to order three ‘*double-paani chais*’ (literally, ‘double-water chais’. It is Paradise Café’s own special concoction, which basically involves a lot of spices and milk). We sit on the porch of the café with our cups and watch the cars flit up and down Colaba causeway.

August 29, 2011. 10.05pm. We have been eating for almost 7 hours now. The going is getting tough. But we persevere. Number twelve is the famous Shiv Krishna Veg Restaurant. This is the true test of our endurance- we order the ‘*pav bhajji*’, probably the heaviest dish on the menu. ‘*Pav Bhajji*’ is a thick, spicy, potato-based vegetable curry eaten with the same bread used to make the ‘*vada pav*’ we ate towards the beginning of our food run. The curry is made with loads of ‘*ghee*’ or clarified butter. It is extremely tasty, and even though we are full, we manage to finish it off, till the plate is clean.

Number thirteen, however, is the crown jewel. We travel to Muhammed Ali Road, the foremost street food destination in Bombay. It is one long street that looks like any other small Bombay lane during the day. But at night, it is totally transformed. Restaurants and stalls are crammed together, with each establishment spilling out onto the asphalt with their tables and chairs. All the Muslims who observe the holy month of Ramadan, and fast during the day, flock there in hordes after sunset, and keep eating all the way until sunrise. Aside from the regular chicken and lamb dishes, it is common to find stalls selling such delicacies as ‘*bheja fry*’ (‘fried lambs brains’), cow’s udders, lamb’s kidneys, lamb’s heart and monkey’s testicles. (Okay, okay I’m kidding about the monkey’s testicles part. They were actually bull’s testicles.) We steered away from the adventurous path because we were leaving in a couple of days, and contracting bouts of Proctalgia Fugax was not on our to-do list. We instead went for the heavy yet sublime dessert

combination of ‘*malpua*’ and ‘*phirni*’. ‘*Malpua*’ is a deep fried rice pancake made with flour and sweetened milk solids. Once formed, the pancake is dipped in sugar syrup, and eaten hot. ‘*Phirni*’ on the other hand is an Indian rice pudding, steamed first and then chilled. It is made with sweetened milk, saffron strands, and chopped almonds and pistachios. Both these, when eaten together, is the perfect combination, a harmony of perfect sweetness, never too bitter, never too cloying. Despite our over-satiated appetites, we still finished every morsel of ‘*malpua*’ and every bit of ‘*phirni*’.

August 30, 2011. 12.03am. Finally, after going at it for nine straight hours, we arrive at the zenith. Number fourteen for us is the infamous Rimzim soda, an Indian masala-based soda, probably the only soda we wouldn’t be able to find in America. And even though we were almost bursting at the seams, we did it. We down the last drops at 12.14am, ending our 9-hour meal. We head home, full, but satisfied, ready for whatever we might face on the new segment of our lives that is about to begin. After using the loo.

Now before you cast us off as psychotic teens with a serious case of Binge-Eating Disorder, realize that this was a one-time operation, borne from a shared love for that city of ours. We shall withhold any urges to repeat this process. Until next summer, that is.



Malpuas being made at Muhammed Ali Road

The Flavors of Language

By: Cary Palmisano

“Life is so brief that we should not glance either too far backwards or forwards...therefore study how to fix our happiness in our glass and in our plate.”

–Grimod de la Reynière

E-mail message from Bigbluesam:

“Bear – I will be on skype tonight at 7 pm my time waiting for you, I have some exciting news! XO, ME”

I log onto skype and there she is, “Bigbluesam,” waiting for me. After a couple minutes of spotty internet connection, the video finally clears and I see my mom’s cheerful face. First, she brings Bella, my dog, up to the screen for a kiss and continues:

--“So don’t you want to know the news?!”

--“Of course” I reply, not expecting more than her everyday happenings at home.

--“Bear, we’re coming to Argentina for Thanksgiving!!”

I immediately squeal, jump up from my seat and run to tell my Mamá and Papá, who are sharing a cigarette in the kitchen. Both Estela and German grab me as I jump up and down and plant large kisses on my cheeks. I run back to my mom and quickly rattle off an extensive list of activities for their visit: showing them my neighborhood, my school, tango clubs, the markets, empanadas, and finally dinner with my host family! Now, my final statement did not quite receive the enthusiastic response I expected. My mom’s smile fell to a worried blank stare.

--“That all sounds so fun! I have to run and get dinner ready, I will talk to you tomorrow!” my mom replied in her high pitched tone she routinely uses to “mask”

her true sentiments. I knew the worry that was behind my mom's "overjoyed" response.

When my mom shared this news I had been in Argentina for five months living with an Argentine family, the Gutmans. Throughout our time together we developed routines. Every afternoon, German, my Papá, would walk me home from the gym on his way back from work, he hated me walking alone past dark. Every evening, Estela hounded me about my day as we prepared dinner. After dinner, German and I would stay at the table for hours talking about world issues or simply his love for cigarettes. Often times one of my host brothers, Fermin, would join us. My family helped me through the thick and thin and constantly corrected my errors to keep my Spanish in line. I had grown to love my Argentine family just as I loved my American family and could not imagine leaving them in a month when my American family arrived.

¿Hablas español?

I very rationally chose Spanish over French that fateful day at the end of fifth grade: so I could talk to my friends on the phone and my three immature older brothers would not be able to understand me. My mother took French growing up so naturally my brothers chose French for my mom's help with their homework. That move backfired when they realized my mom had not actually spoken, written, or read French since college. My father is hopeless with languages.

Despite my family's inability to speak or comprehend anything other than English, languages come relatively easily to me and I soon became oddly obsessed with the Spanish language, culture, and indigenous Latin American groups. I took advantage of every opportunity in high school to learn about Spanish culture and

spent three weeks in a home stay in Spain. I liked Spain but, had my heart set on Argentina after my family and I visited South America.

Although my family has visited South America and Mexico various times, their Spanish remains limited to: "Hola Fishy!" – a phrase coined by my dad in a state of shock on a fishing trip in Mexico as a marlin came flying out of the water at him; and "hamburguesa" and "cerveza" – the only two Spanish words my brothers find necessary. Besides these three "phrases," if you can even call them that, my brothers "speak" Spanish by throwing on a "Spanish" accent – making their voices deeper - and adding "o" to the end of every word. While their antics have provided many humorous scenarios, their outstanding skills would not quite fly in Argentina.

Cahhh-ry ven acá!

I enter the four by ten kitchen to find Estela dressed to the nines in her finest attire and jewels. She has taken the dinner occasion with my family very seriously. My family was heading over to our apartment for drinks before we headed out to "La Cabrera," a respectable Argentine steakhouse. Despite my father's inability to stay awake past 9:30 pm, our dinner was at 9 pm, early for Argentines. Estela recruited me to finish up the preparations for tonight and fires commands at me about platters and glasses to set out, taking care of the groceries from the weekly Thursday 7:30pm delivery, and directions to light the oven and heat the bread.

I begin working away, still wet from my shower and half-dressed when Estela's daily protocol of questions begins. I glance over to find Estela perched perfectly on the tiny yellow stool with a Marlboro red sticking out of her mouth as she paints her nails on the counter. I shake my head and laugh, the usual pre-dinner scene even though we are not even eating at home tonight. Some things never change.

Estela catches my eye as I turn back to the plates. “Nena” she mumbles as she focuses hard not to lose her cigarette. “You seem preoccupied...I know you.” Estela’s right as always, there is no avoiding her. Over the past couple months I learned my lesson: just cut to the chase because she will force it out of you. I shrug my shoulders and finally discuss my nerves about the five non-Spanish speaking white Americans that are about to enter the apartment only to find seven non-English speaking Argentines. I finally realized that on this long awaited day my two families will not even be able to communicate.

Estela could sense my defeated feeling, put down her nail polish and hugged me. She whispered in my ear as she stroked my hair “don’t worry Cary, we are your family, it is impossible for us not to enjoy ourselves, ok?” I could feel tears welling up in my eyes and quickly darted off to my room.

The door buzzer wails. Fermin, notices my discomfort and tries to crack a joke with me, I roll my eyes. As my American family walks in we go through introductions and all proceed to the kitchen table to have a drink. The basic conversation continues until dinner time. We arrive at “La Cabrera” and the parents sit at one end of the 13 person table and the kids sit at the other end. German, Estela, and I decide to order some typical Argentine appetizers to be washed down with a Malbec before indulging in steaks.

First, arrives the chorizo. My brothers are in heaven as they take in the delicious smell, they love chorizo. Upon their first bites I see them smile, finally comfortable surrounded by Argentines and listening to music in a language they cannot understand. All of a sudden, the Gutman’s “limited” English suddenly turns into conversational English as everyone ecstatically raves about how delicious the chorizo is and anxiously awaits the next appetizer.

Next, comes the blood sausage. My brothers’ jaws dropped as my Argentine family and I wolfed down the blood sausage. Just as it sounds, blood sausage is literally congealed blood with some spices mixed in yet, a delicacy at that! My oldest brother slowly cuts into his, examining the insides. Fermin, sees his reaction and immediately calls him a “sissy” and a “girl” – the two most insulting English words he can think of - causing my brothers to instantly throw the blood sausage into their mouths. As the boys try to “man-up” and swallow the blood sausage flawlessly, their acting skills fail them resulting in chewed up blood sausage flying across the table. The table explodes in laughter and Fermin begins high-fiving my brothers. The conversation goes viral as no one can believe their eyes. The language barrier disappears by the time the steaks and fifth bottle of Malbec arrive.

As I glance around at everyone, Papá gives me a wink. Whether the Gutman’s had known English all along or the euphoric affects of food and alcohol had filled them with enough confidence to speak remains unclear. Regardless, the dinner culminated successfully four hours later with laughter, stories, hugging, kissing, and tears at the prospect of leaving each other. The table remained littered in steaks we could not finish, empty bottles of Malbec, and half eaten empanadas. Finally, my two families united for a feast and left feeling as if they had known each other for years. My family still reminisces about that night every time we sit down to enjoy a nice steak or Malbec as we anxiously await the Gutman’s arrival to the States!

Dinner with Pavlov's Dogs

By: Doug Parizeau

"It has long been known for sure that the sight of tasty food makes a hungry man's mouth water."

– Ivan Pavlov

At our dinner table we were no different from Pavlov's dogs. As if we were acting out scripts, each member of my family put on their designated performance between 6:30 and 7:15, five nights a week. Like any performance, our show differed slightly from night to night but the result was always the same. None of us acted intentionally but rather we were meticulously conditioned, after years of trials, to display specific behaviors. To put it even more dramatically, we had no free will during dinnertime.

In 1901, Pavlov discovered what is now known as classical conditioning. He trained dogs, who normally salivate at the sight of food, to salivate at the sound of a bell. To do this, he began coaching the dogs to associate the sound of the bell with the presentation of food. Soon enough, the sound of the bell was enough to elicit the behavior that was once only apparent when food was presented. The dogs had, unconsciously, *learned* what the sound of the bell meant. This finding led to the psychological theory of behaviorism: the idea that our behaviors (are actions, our feelings, and our thoughts) are merely responses to our environment. Pavlov's dogs' behavior, their salivation, had been altered by a new addition to their environment, the bell, and thus they had learned a new behavioral response.

In the most radical sense (i.e. radical behaviorism), behaviorism suggests that our actions are entirely determined by our environment and that we have no free

will. Most psychologists find discrepancies in the radical interpretation of this theory but behaviorism, a theory alive and well in academia to this day, will suffice to loosely explain the relatively strange behavior of my family members during dinnertime. I find that such a scientific approach to my memories of family meals is appropriate because the events of each meal were so consistent. They did indeed appear to follow a script and that script, while it slowly evolved over many years of family members aging and siblings maturing, was used almost every night.

In the case of my family dinners, the environment, a term of utmost significance to behaviorists, can be simplified to include the six people at the dinner table, the animals that were around us, the rules that my parents had set forth, the room that we were in, and the food that we were eating. We sat in the same seats every night: my father and mother were at the heads of the table, my brother (7 years younger than me) and I sat on one side of the table, and my sisters (2 years older and 4 years younger) sat opposite us. We always had two big, black, and hungry dogs. The dogs were not always the same but with each replacement dog the collective animal behavior around, and under, the table remained more or less consistent. We had just a couple hard and fast rules: 1) we don't answer the phone during dinner, and 2) you need to ask to be excused from the table. Other "rules" were interpreted more as suggestions and included eating all of your food and helping to clean up *everything* after the meal. We ate in the same room as the kitchen; a counter separated the table from the cooking and dish washing area.

This environment affected each one of us differently but I will begin by detailing how it caused my little brother to behave. I start with him not only because it provides substantial entertainment but also because of the significant effect that his behaviors had on the five other members. My brother would begin his nightly

saga by coming into the kitchen and grabbing a plate that was designated, by the presence of Tyson chicken nuggets and Annie's mac & cheese, as his own. He was a picky eater. But, of course, this was his environment's fault. Somehow, over the years of personal interactions at meals, he had been conditioned to only want to eat a select few items of food. We often ate appetizing and tasty food in our family but my brother learned, over time, that on nights that he left food on his plate, he received additional attention and he found that he liked it. It didn't matter that attention came in the form of reprimand from his father, encouragement from his siblings, or a 'time-out' on the bottom of the stairs, personal attention was positive reinforcement that came when he didn't eat all of his food. This attention seeking changed the behavior of my mother as she began to cater to his specific desires (see above "Tyson chicken nuggets" and "Annie's mac & cheese"). The result of my brother's new behavior: firmly established behaviors from every one of the family members that were observable at every meal.

My brother found that when he displayed a behavior (not eating all of his food) he was rewarded; this is positive reinforcement, which results in an increase in said behavior. My younger sister, who didn't enjoy long meals and would rather play with the dogs, learned a new behavior through not only positive reinforcement, like my brother, but also through negative reinforcement. Negative reinforcement occurs when a certain behavior leads to the removal of something bad from your environment (this will also lead to an increase in the behavior). The behavior that my younger sister learned was to lie on the floor under the table and play with the dogs.

Every time she slumped down in her chair and ducked her head under the table, my sister was negatively reinforced because she no longer had to participate

in "civilized" dinner conversation and she was positively reinforced as the dogs, Pavlovian in every sense of the word as they had learned she bore food scraps, came over to play with her.

At this point in the meal, the family had already lost one or two members – one had fallen to the wooden floor and was resting on a dog and the other was in the midst of being sent for a "time-out" on the stairs. The empty seats at the table were my older sister's 'bell' that it was time leave and she would turn to my father and say: "Can I be excused to go finish my homework?" He would oblige and she would clear her plate and disappear. I would follow soon after and am therefore unable to give a fully accurate account of what happened next.

My parents, older and more set in their resilient behaviors, were affected and changed by these dinnertime behaviors but not to the same extent as any of the kids. They responded as parents do to the behavior of their children and they tried to steer the nightly dinnertime script towards something that resembled a traditional, normal, and socially acceptable family meal.

Of course, as we all sat down each night to begin our meal we never set out for our dinners to go this way. But they always did loosely adhere to this script. That's not to say that they were not enjoyable or important; I think that sitting down every night, as a family, is a way to ensure that each member of the family is playing a role in each other member's life. A simple look at the common events of a dinner, such as the ones I have just recounted, can show the effects that the people seated at a meal can have on each other. And while I don't believe that we are slaves to the effects of our environment, I do think that repeated events such as family meals could have lasting effects on a person's personality. As a family, nowadays, we share similar memories of dinnertime and we joke about the

absurdities of our behaviors. At the very least we can bond over the childhood food woes of my little brother and my sister's affinity for the hardwood floor under the dinner table.

Lagoas Das Furnas

By: Derek Pimentel

"Feasting is also closely related to memory. We eat certain things in a particular way in order to remember who we are." -Jeff Smith (Author)

"We do not remember days; we remember moments." - Cesare Pavese (Author)

After a six-hour flight, I arrived on the land where my family's tradition originated. It was our first family vacation ever and my parents decided that we would visit the country where they grew up: Portugal. At the time, I was nine years old and it was the first time I went on a plane and the first time I left my native country. Moreover during our three-month vacation, my brothers and I were able to re-live my parent's childhood through the rich culture and food pertained to their home town of the Acores. The most memorable story took place just minutes away from where my Mom and Dad grew up.

My parents woke us up early in the morning to go visit a place called *Lagoa dos Furnas*, which was a volcanic arc area from a volcano that erupted in 1630. The volcano left areas of hot springs in which steam continuously rose throughout the day. I was impressed by the hot springs and mostly that it was just minutes up the road from where my Mom grew up. The only thing that I did not like was the smell

that the hot springs gave off. It was a smell similar to Hydrogen Sulfide but just as I started to complain, my Grandfather began to tell me that it was a smell that would stimulate my appetite for our meal after.

After spending an hour going from one hot spring to another my Mom told us that she would be heading back to house and she would come back in six hours. She told my brothers and I to stay with my Grandfather and my Dad to cook. At first I wondered why we would not go back to the house and cook, but my Grandfather told me not worry the Volcano was going to do all of the cooking for us. We proceeded to walk all the way up to the peak where there were plenty of big circular picnic tables. Next to the picnic area was a large area where about 100 holes about six feet deep were dug. My Grandfather and my Dad took an enormous stainless steel pot and began to cut up ingredients that went into a traditional local dish, Cozido. At first, I was not sure what they were making until my Dad said "This is the Cozido that Mommy makes for you back at home, but this is how we both remember it to be like". After putting all the ingredients in the pot, my Grandfather covered it with a cover that was strongly sealed to the pot. He then brought it to the "cooking" area, which was where all the holes were dug up. My Grandfather told my brothers and I to bring the rope that we had with us. He told my brother Jeff and I to hold the pot right over the hole, while my oldest brother, Rodney, tightly hooked the rope to the top of the pot. My brother then proceeded to slowly bring down the pot into the dug up hole. After the pot was settled at the bottom of the hole, we covered it with volcanic sand until it was completely covered. My Dad told me that was all we needed to do and that the natural heat from the volcano was going to take care of the rest.

Before continuing on with the rest of my memorable experience in the Lagoas Das Furnas here is a list of ingredients that my Dad recently reminded me of that went into the pot that my brothers and I “cooked”.

The ingredients contained in the Cozido my brothers and I “cooked” on July 27th, 2004:

1. Shin of beef
2. Pork
3. Portuguese smoked sausages (Chourico)
4. Cabbage
5. Carrots (Cut into thin slices)
6. Onions
7. Red Wine (1/4 cup)
8. Olive Oil
9. Vinegar (2 tablespoons)
10. Salt & Pepper
11. Pimenta (Portuguese pepper paste)

These are the items that my Grandmother and my Mom made from home that was served with the Cozido.

1. Turnips
2. Rice
3. Potatoes
4. Collard greens

In most European countries traditionally, during dinnertime everybody was always served a glass of red wine regardless of your age.

The cooking time for the Cozido was a slow one as it took anywhere from 4-6 hours to be perfect. My Dad told me that when he use to come here, the Cozido would only take 3-4 hours until it met perfection. This meant that the volcano was cooling down and the possibility of experiencing this unique cooking method was

soon going to be impossible. At the beginning my brothers and I thought that the six hours was going to go by fast. By the third hour mark, we began to start complaining that it was taking too long. My Grandfather then decided to take us on a little excursion. Meanwhile, my Dad began to tell my brothers and I that what we were experiencing was what he used to look forward to do every weekend. He went on to mention that he did not have the luxury to go watch a movie at a movie theatre nearby, or go to an amusement park, or go to an arcade. My Dad and his friends would meet here every Saturday morning at 9:00am, in order for their Cozido to be cooking by 10:00am. Every week it was a different friend that would take care of the spices and marination included with the meats and vegetables in the pot. They would play soccer until all the girls would come and join them just about an hour before the Cozido was ready. When the Cozido was ready, they would sit down and enjoy the Cozido.

My Dad’s childhood story made me realize that in my generation we do not value food as much as my Dad’s generation did. Our generation is more concerned about eating as quickly as possible. This concern has lead us to the acceptance of foods that could be cooked in minutes with the use of a microwave. My Dad looked forward to having his very own prepared Cozido that took up to four hours to cook. It proves how these days we value time significantly more. My Grandfather told me that unlike our generation where it has become a bother for us to stop what were doing in order to sit down and eat, they looked forward to stop doing what they were doing in order to enjoy a meal. Due to the change in mentality, we have found many alternatives in order to make that interruption quick in order to get back to what we think is more important to us.

After our excursion my Grandmother and Mom were already back setting up the picnic table. My Grandfather told my brothers and I to finally pull up our Cozido. My brothers and I successfully pulled out the Cozido from the ground; I remember us having to be very careful since it was scorching hot. We brought the Cozido up to the picnic area where my Grandmother and Mom served us all a plate while my Grandfather poured us a glass of red wine. I do not think that the Cozido was much better than the one my Mom would make for my brothers and I at home. Yet, the fact that my brothers and I were re-living what my parents would do almost every weekend made it that much more gratifying. I remember my Mom telling stories during dinner as it brought her tears of joy. She was delighted to be with her parent's at the place where she was brought up enjoying her favorite local dish that was prepared by a natural surrounding of her home. It simply made the Cozido that much more enjoyable and memorable. Later on that night we made ourselves a campfire as we watched the sunset.

Every time I am home and my Mom makes us Cozido for dinner, I cannot help but think about the tradition behind the Cozido. I get to re-live and re-think moments from my parent's childhood in my head while I enjoy my meal. I am truly astonished about the strong memory connection that this dish brings to me every time I savor it.

Two men pulling up their Cozido from underground.



One of many hot springs remaining from the volcanic arc in my Mom and Dad's hometown.



Food is Stronger than Language, Eating to Survive

By: Nick Resor

“Nothing can stop the man with the right mental attitude from achieving his goal; nothing on earth can help the man with the wrong mental attitude.” –Thomas

Jefferson



In July of 2003, some friends, relatives, and I took our love for hockey to a new level. We traveled to the Ukraine and lived and trained with the U18 Ukrainian National Team for three weeks. While I was very excited about the trip, I was also nervous because I really had no idea about what to expect. By the end of the three weeks, however, the simple game of hockey had brought Americans and Ukrainians together, and the Ukrainians had taught me a lot about embracing life.

For the three weeks, we lived in a very poor part of the eastern Ukraine, already an extremely poor country to begin with. We had been told that we would be staying in dorm rooms, so when, after an eighteen hour bus ride from Kiev, we arrived at the rink first, we did not understand why the Ukrainian players unloaded our suitcases as well as our hockey bags. Quickly, we learned that the

dorm was actually the locker room, our home alongside our smelly equipment. For beds we had mattresses on the floor; the Ukrainians had it no better because they were going to live with us. For the next three weeks, thirty hockey players, including two Ukrainian and three American girls – my sister and cousin and their teammate - lived side by side with only a few portable fans for ventilation. The gross smell that comes when I take my gloves off after practice became permanent in my new bedroom and living room.

I spent the first part of the trip sulking about our living conditions and the food until I realized how spoiled I was acting and how much I was learning from this experience. Looking around the locker room, I saw twenty-year-old equipment duct taped together and discovered that the Ukrainian players had to wear skates much too small for them (they jammed their feet into them and were left with bumps the size of golf balls on the sides of their feet) because they could not afford new equipment. They made these sacrifices in order to play the sport they loved, and they never complained. While they marveled at our modern equipment, they did not resent us for it. They happily shared their passion for hockey, and they acted as our tour guides and translators when we visited town, which was dirty and run down with crumbling buildings. After my father shared our accommodations the last three days before we went home, he would describe our situation to friends by saying, “ You know when kids complain about tough conditions at camps, but the conditions are never as bad as they say; well, this time the conditions were worse.”

My attitude changed completely, to the point where even the food did not bother me. Actually, food played a significant role in the trip because we ate all of our meals together three times a day, and the meals became where we really connected with our Ukrainian peers. The meals were such an important part of the

trip because they were when we got away from the rink and “dorm.” The meals were by no means good or even filling, but the culture of the meals had a huge impact. The food was some of the worst food I had ever eaten, but it actually brought us together and made us realize how lucky we were. Living in other cultures has the power to do this and makes you see things for the first time. At the meals we focused more on each other than on the food. The Ukrainians hated the food just as much as we did because it was such poor quality, but they knew it was all they had. While we Americans came from a place where if we were given poor food, we could decide not to eat it, the Ukrainians had to eat whatever they got because it was all they had. The food was essential for survival, and playing hockey and working out for six hours a day, we knew we needed to eat to have any energy.

The terrible food made us concentrate on the company more than the food at the meals. Since most of our time was dedicated to competition and workouts, the meals were the times to really get to know each other. The Ukrainian kids could speak a little English, but that did not matter because we were able to bond over our love for the game of hockey and for our lack of love for the food. The portions were tiny and the food was unrecognizable – a lot of mystery meats. Most of the meals included soup as the main course, something new for me because I usually had soup as an appetizer. The soup was called borscht, which is popular in the Ukraine, but would not fill me up, even when it was served with bread as an entire meal. In a way, the meals became a highlight of our day, and we used them as an outlet to get away from hockey. One minute we were competing and hitting each other on the ice, and then the next we were using food as a way of making friends despite a language barrier. Better food would not have necessarily made things much more pleasurable (after all our living

conditions were just as bad). However, because of the poor and the very small portions, we had to try everything. While the food was not good to begin with, it did seem to get a little better because of the company we were enjoying it with. We were also realizing how lucky we were to have endless amounts and choices of food at home. The Ukrainian kids did not enjoy the food that much more than we did; they simply were used to it because they had grown up eating what they were given.

In America, my large team meals have usually been free for alls where all the focus has been on the quality and quantity of the food. In the Ukraine, our team meals were anything but a celebration of the food. A. Shapiro says from A Feast of Words, “It is the nitrogen that makes the imagination bloom.” While the food we ate in the Ukraine did not spark much imagination, the food did provide a bunch of American and Ukrainian hockey-playing teenagers the opportunity to bond and shake our heads at the next mystery meal.

Ukrainian Red Borscht Soup recipe

3 medium beets, peeled and shredded

3 carrots, peeled and shredded

3 medium baking potatoes, peeled and cubed

1 tablespoon vegetable oil

1 medium onion, chopped

1 (6 ounce) can tomato paste

3/4 cup water

1/2 medium head cabbage, cored and shredded

1 (8 ounce) can diced tomatoes, drained

3 cloves garlic, minced

salt and pepper to taste
1 teaspoon white sugar, or to taste
1/2 cup sour cream, for topping
1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley for garnish

Food Rules

By: Astrid Schanz-Garbassi

“One’s okay, two’s okay, three gives you a tummy-ache.”



I am seven. It is dinnertime. I am eating at one of my favorite restaurants, “Pizza ‘n’ Brew,” where I can watch the chefs knead and toss the dough right in front of me. I can entertain myself for hours watching them; I hold my breath as the chefs hurl the doughy disks ceiling-ward and exhale only when the pre-pizzas have landed safely without nabbing a near-by customer.

As usual, I have ordered a plain slice, which I plan to smother in Parmesan cheese and red pepper flakes. My parents, brother and I eat happily, I much faster than they. The mound of spaghetti on my father’s plate is barely showing signs of

depletion when I ask for a second slice. My parents acquiesce without much hesitation, and soon I am inhaling more cheesy, saucy, glutinous globs of pizza.

I give my parents pause when I ask for a third slice. Though I can’t remember what was said, I imagine them conferring quietly:

“There’s no way she’ll finish it.”

“She just doesn’t know how full she is yet. Did you see how quickly she ate the first two?”

“But if we say ‘no’ we’re depriving her. What if our bad parenting gives rise to an eating disorder!?”

“I guess if she can’t finish it it’ll be a learning experience ...”

Fearing potential psychological damage more than a bit of wasted pizza, they order me a third slice. They are stunned when I polish it off without a struggle, and without a word a word of complaint or bellyache.

I am nine. It is Saturday. I am watching cartoons in the sunroom when my mother wanders in. She comes to ensure that I have not yet discovered MTV, to make sure that I am not being corrupted by images of half-naked girls eating wings on spring break. But she disguises the visit as an opportunity to ask whether or not I would like a snack.

Obviously I jump at this opportunity, as I do almost every opportunity, to eat.

“How about a yellow pear?” my mother offers. “I have some nice ripe ones from the farmer’s market.”

I don’t deliberate long; partly because yellow pears are, in fact, delicious, but mostly for fear of missing any important plot details in Wily Coyote’s chase of Road Runner while deciding.

“Yummy-yes-PLEASE-mommy!” I enthuse.

She returns a few minutes later with a plate of perfectly sliced pear pieces. I pop one into my mouth and immediately my eyes snap shut. The delicate sun-kissed skin, the melt-in-my-mouth interior, it is all too delightfully sensory. I must block out other stimuli.

When I am finally able to open my eyes, I am startled by the empty plate before me. Apparently my messy little fingers had relocated all of the pear slices to my oral cavity more rapidly than my brain could process. I scurry over to the sunroom door:

“Mommeeee?” I call across the first floor.

“Yes sweetie?”

“May I please have another pear?”

“Sure hun!” She sounds pleased. Any request for a healthy snack is a victory in her eyes. When she arrives with the second plate of pear, I am no longer interested in the cartoons. Instead, I divide my attention, giving a little bit to my mother and all of the rest to the juicy slices of pure joy in front of me. This time, I am careful to savor each slice, eying it lovingly before sending it esophagus-ward. My mother is still chatting with me when I finish the second pear.

“Mommy,” I interrupt in a whisper, knowing that my fate for the afternoon lies in my persuasive power. “May I have ...” I pause, knowing that chances are slim, “... another pear?”

“Another?!” she seems more incredulous than angry. She laughs a bit, “well, I don’t see why not!”

“Hooray!” I celebrate.

I am momentarily gratified by another plateful of pleasure, but it doesn’t take long for my stomach to reject the overwhelming quantity of fibrous fruit now in my stomach. As I run to the bathroom my mom shakes her head. When I emerge, she makes a declaration that will change my life forever:

“Honey,” she chooses her words carefully, “sometimes when we eat too much of something it hurts our tummies. So it’s better just to have a little bit at a time. There will always be more later if you’re still hungry.” I ponder the plausibility of this statement. My food policy until this moment had strongly resembled Britain’s foreign policy in the 16th century: consume everything in sight without restriction until there is quite literally nothing appealing left to obtain, or until some other form of entertainment distracts you. Was there truly such a concept as “too much”? How would I ever know when I had actually reached this theoretical limit? My black hole of a stomach certainly wasn’t going to tell me.

As if reading the confusion on my face, my mother clarified:

“From now on, we’re going to use a new rule: One’s okay, two’s okay, three gives you a tummy-ache.”

This semester we’ve explored myriad ways that food can express emotion to a loved one. Yes, my mother has crafted school lunches for me with all the tenderness and consideration of a Japanese housewife packing Bento Boxes. Yes, my mother has baked me birthday cakes that scream of nostalgia for my past but excitement and pride for my future. Yes, she has sautéed and stir-fried and seared her love for me. But most of all, her love is expressed in this simple rule relating to food.

There are times when the rule is broken – on these occasions the exception needs no verbalization. We all know that no mortal among us can resist the temptation for a third piece of my mother’s carrot cake with cream cheese frosting. To eat fewer than three of her delicious crepes with a hint of cognac would be to disrespect our French heritage. This rule was not meant as punishment, restriction, or law. By contrast, the rule that my mother made was an act of love and protection. I thank her for giving me guidance in the years before I could find it on my own.

An Offal Memoir

By: Charlie Steinberg

“Do we really want to travel in hermetically sealed popemobiles through the rural provinces of France, Mexico and the Far East, eating only in Hard Rock Cafes and McDonalds? Or do we want to eat without fear, tearing into the local stew, the humble taqueria’s mystery meat, the sincerely offered gift of a lightly grilled fish head? I know what I want. I want it all. I want to try everything once.” –Anthony Bourdain

The table reminded me of summer barbeques on the porch of my grandparents’ home. It was a typical piece of patio furniture—a green metal frame, encasing a clouded glass tabletop, held in place by an imperfect caulking job... I’d pick at the protruding bits of factory adhesive while I waited for the burgers to be done. On the table, my grandmother always had a woven basket filled with plastic silverware, paper napkins, salt, and pepper. *This* table sported a flimsy red bucket

filled with individually wrapped pairs of metal chopsticks. I suppose the assumption was that they were *sterilized* before being repackaged—at this point in the trip, my once fervid skepticism had been subdued to amusement. Instead of Grampy’s juicy burgers, Adlyn, our guide for the trip, brought over the anxiously awaited beef of this meal: a steamy bowl of her *favorite* tripe in all of Beijing.

When Adlyn had first suggested we try the tripe upon entering the market, I’d imagine she’d expected a more intense reaction from my family. After all, who eats tripe in America? Well, let’s just say my 13th birthday “party” involved me dragging my two best friends at the time to a French restaurant downtown, where they watched in disbelief as I consumed a plate of sweetbreads *au beurre noir*, and a hearty bowl of *tripes provençales*. I still remember that offal punch, cut by the fresh thyme, and the acidity of those robust stewed tomatoes. Needless to say, that chipped, earthen bowl of Beijing’s finest played to my sense of nostalgia more than my assumed western inhibitions.

Before anyone began eating, we all took a moment to observe. There was nothing *haute* about the imminent snack—my birthday tripe of the past was the Marie Antoinette to this bowl of bourgeois-grub. The specimens floating in the turbid broth were cut into thin strips, stratified into three layers of fat and lining, the outermost layer resembling a once-white shag rug, soaked in a dirty puddle. Slightly more welcoming was the heap of fresh coriander leaves garnishing the soup; though we had been advised that fresh vegetables and garnishes were generally a one-way ticket to Salmonellaville... but that’s what the copious amounts of Loperamide Hydrochloride tablets in my mom’s purse were for (be careful, it *will* stop you up for days). I leaned in closer to smell the dish: I wouldn’t exactly say that my nose hairs full-on curled, but they were certainly stimulated.

Have you ever let a dog in after a spring rainstorm? You have get all up in there, drying, wiping off the mud, loosening tangled pieces of mulch from their coat... and then there's the wet dog smell. I'd never experienced this smell transposed into a culinary setting, not until this bowl of tripe. Granted, there were nice notes of the coriander, as well as toasted sesame oil, but the bouquet was definitely defined by its damp canine-ness.

More conservative individuals might have turned back at this point, but we were coming off of donkey hoagies, deep-fried scorpions, silkworm pupae, and blood-Jell-O stew, so there was little to no hesitation left in any of us. My mom took the first bite, squinting, and giving her signature "hmmm" with a series of tonal inflections that indicated her processing of the flavors and textures. She swallowed, rested her chopstick on the folded wrapper, and passed the bowl along. "Interesting," she said. My sister was next. Being the youngest at the table, she was perhaps the most eager to prove her epicurean prowess. She fished out a piece that my father eloquently dubbed "gnarly," and chewed with a determined voracity. Adlyn seemed impressed. My sister shook her head in a nod of unconvincing approbation, and passed the bowl along yet again. My father, the least concerned with his status as a *gourmet*, was up next. He gingerly roused the smallest piece in sight with his chopsticks, pulled it up eyelevel, gave it a good looking over, and popped it into his mouth. After a few pained chews, his previously apathetic expression quickly evolved into that of a five-year-old working through an unwelcomed dose of amoxicillin... the unflavored kind. "I'm sorry Adlyn," he said, turning to our guide, "but that's rough." She giggled. It was now my turn. Clandestine secondhand viewings of *A Cook's Tour* from the top of the staircase as an 8-year-old had prepared me for moments like these—watching Anthony describe

and eat the buttery brains, the sumptuous cheek meat, and the earthy hearts, I had been determined early on to try it all. I casually pulled out a wet ribbon of tripe, making sure to include a leaf or two of the cilantro. I gently shook off the dripping broth and went for it. To my surprise, the sesame, wet-dog, and cilantro all came together rather harmoniously. This is not to say that I wasn't keenly aware of the fact that I was eating organ meat—the flavor and texture made certain of that—it was just very well prepared organ meat. I took a second, third, and then fourth bite of the soup, uncovering layer after layer of the tripe's complex flavor. Each chew revealed something different: a metallic bite, an herbaceous finish, the lingering burn of garlic. Occasionally, I would encounter a fragment of grit, mid-chew, and would subtly spit it off to the side. I later found out that we had been eating what would be considered "green tripe," or undressed tripe. This means that for the most part, the tripe was essentially as it was in the cow's stomach, save a couple quick rinses and some cooking. That shag rug look was all the digestive fibers that the fancy French restaurants pay to have professionally removed. In other words, I was getting the real McCoy.

Some teens might have seen half a bowl of tripe soup from an alley stall as a raw deal for a spring break souvenir, but I was more than thrilled. Sitting there at that glass-topped table, I found my place in the world—I began to understand where and how we all relate. Now I'm not about to pretend that this tripe induced an all-explaining existential epiphany, but it did *begin* to connect the dots. However calm I may have acted amongst those Beijingers, eating my bowl of tripe, chatting with my family... however casually I may have played off the whole experience, that tripe was *funky* and I sure as hell felt *exotic*. For the locals, that stuff was the equivalent of mom's chicken soup, and here I was being blown away. I'd

considered the idea of cuisine's relativity before, but it was at this point that I really understood—understood what it meant to be a world-diner. I realized that I could never hope to understand any dish in Chinese (or any) cuisine if I didn't first learn how that dish related to the larger context of that cuisine. Sure, this tripe was exotic, flavorful, and exciting for *me*, but in the scheme of this city, it was a quick lunch on the go. Through understanding that someone else's everyday is my exhilarating, I discovered a purpose to continue on. To compare chicken soup with the tripe of the hutongs was to simultaneously understand my difference and my sameness to those around the world.

It is both mystifying and endearing to know that in every country, there is a bowl of tripe waiting for me—some simple peasant's dish, made from the cheapest ingredients, passed down for centuries, something that the locals wouldn't think twice about—waiting to rock my world.



Pashka

By: Stephanie Terfloth

Once a year, every year.

Childhood is the one story that stands by itself in every soul. – Ivan Doig

The woman bounced the little girl on her hip, calming the baby while stirring the lumpy mixture. As she bounced and stirred, the baby calmed down, intently watching her mother cream the butter and sugar. The baby tried leaning down to touch the sparkling sugar, as it caught the Easter morning sunlight in just the right way to grasp her attention. The mother turned to crack the eggs, and the baby's outstretched finger missed the sugar by an inch. And this is how it went: the mother prepared the pashka, as the baby watched perched atop the hip. After hours of loving hard work, the family sat down for their Easter brunch.

This was the first year she was tall enough to stand on the stool, and the first year the apron fit – after a few adjustments. This was her first time as the pashka helper, and she was honored that her mother finally trusted her to assist. It was her absolute favorite, and they only made it once a year. Her little sister had replaced her on her mother's hip, but as long as she got to help like she had been promised, she didn't mind. She was going to get to pour the ingredients into the bowl – the most important job of all. Her mother carefully measured out the amounts, and helped the little girl empty the measuring cups. After hours of loving hard work, the family sat down for their Easter brunch.

This was the first year she was tall enough to reach the counter without the stool, and the first year the apron fit just right. Her little sister had taken her old spot on the stool, and her new baby sister on her mother's hip, but she didn't mind. She was going to be in charge of picking the azaleas from her grandmother's garden – the most important job of all. She had poured many cups of ingredients into bowls by now. It was kind of nice to see how excited her little sister was to take over the job, and she was bored with it anyways. While bouncing the baby, her mother described which flowers to look for, even though she already knew what the best ones looked like. She went outside and picked the most beautiful flowers she could find, one by one, and went back inside to help her mother decorate the pashka. After hours of loving hard work, the family sat down for their Easter brunch.

This was the first year she was strong enough to hold the beater. Her little sisters wanted to try, but she told them they weren't old enough yet. Maybe when they were big girls like her they could do it too. They would have to settle with adding the ingredients and gathering the flowers, just as she had done in the past. This year after the mixture had set, their mother was busy preparing other things for the brunch, so the girl was finally in charge of decorating the pashka on her own. Her mother told her to let her little sisters help. They carefully made five neat lines of almonds down the sides of the pashka, placed the prettiest flower on the top, and covered the base with the rest of the blooms. After hours of loving hard work, the family sat down for their Easter brunch.

This was the first year she made the pashka without her mother's help. She had been looking forward to the time they would spent together making it, but her mother told her that she was old enough and had helped make it enough times that she should try doing it on her own. She carefully read the recipe, and ordered her

sisters to measure out the right amount of each ingredient. She slowly added them one by one, double-checking what the recipe and her mother's hand written alterations directed her to do. With her sisters' help, the pashka thankfully turned out just like it had every year in the past. They carefully made five neat lines of almonds down the sides of the pashka, placed the prettiest flower on the top, and covered the base with the rest of the blooms. After hours of loving hard work, the family sat down for their Easter brunch.

This was the first year she slept until 11. She really had been planning on waking up early to help with the pashka, but she had been up late talking on the phone. By the time she got down to the kitchen, the mixture had already been prepared and the flowers gathered by her sisters. She decided that she had made it enough times in the past; the extra hours of sleep were worth it. This year, she helped set the table instead, as it was the only thing left to do before they ate. After hours of loving hard work, the family sat down for their Easter brunch.

This was the first year she was away at boarding school. She had not been home since spring break, so it had been a few weeks since she had seen her family. She was excited to be with them again, and was up bright and early to help with the pashka. She had slept through making it that past couple of years, and she had missed spending time assembling it with her sisters. To her dismay, she found that her sisters would not be joining her in the kitchen on that Easter morning, as they now slept until 11. She opened the cookbook to the page that showed itself only on this day, and started making the pashka. Once it had set, she carefully made five neat lines of almonds down the sides of the pashka, placed the prettiest flower on the top, and covered the base with the rest of the blooms. After hours of loving hard work, the family sat down for their Easter brunch.

This was the first year she didn't come home for Easter. She was now away at college, and did not have the holiday off from school. She was sad not to be home, so she called her family as they were preparing their brunch, to wish them a Happy Easter. The pashka had already been prepared and decorated. After hanging up, she could picture them, after hours of loving hard work, sitting down for their Easter brunch.



Pashka Recipe, from Martha Stewart's Entertaining

(My aunt Corry originally introduced this recipe into our Easter Brunch 30 years ago, and our family has made changes to it over the years)

For the Pashka:

- 1 lb. unsalted butter
- 1-1/2 cups sugar (*we use ¾ cups*)
- 1 vanilla bean
- 7 hard-boiled egg yolks, sieved or riced (*we use 4 whole eggs*)

- 4-2/3 cups large curd cottage cheese (*we use 2 cups only*)
- 3 Tbsp finely chopped toasted blanched almonds (*we use ½ cup*)
- 3 Tbsp plus 2 t finely chopped candied citron (*we omit this ingredient*)
- 2 tsp lemon juice (*1/4 cup – the excess just comes out in the whey*)
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ¼ tsp grated lemon peel (*2 Tbsp here*)
- 1/8 tsp salt
- 2/3 cup heavy cream (*I often substitute Greek yoghurt for the*
- 2/3 cup sour cream *creams, either the whole amount or partially*)

Garnish:

- ½ cup unblanched whole almonds, fresh flowers or strawberries

To make the Pashka:

Line the mold of your choice with a large piece of cheesecloth (use a cone-shaped chinois or a clay pot).

Cream the butter and sugar until smooth and fluffy. Chop the vanilla bean very finely and add to the butter mixture (we scrape out just the vanilla bean). Beat the sieved egg yolks and cottage cheese into the butter. Mix very well. Add the toasted almonds, citron, lemon juice, vanilla, lemon peel, and salt.

Whip the cream and fold into the mixture along with the sour cream. Pour into the lined mold. Fold excess cheesecloth over the top of the pashka and put a flat plate on top (we weigh it down with small rocks or a brick). The pashka must then be refrigerated until firm, at least 24 hours.

To serve, unfold cheesecloth, reverse onto a serving platter, and unmold. Remove cheesecloth carefully and decorate with almonds. Place flowers or strawberries around the base.

Grandma's Cookies

By: Erin Tormondsen

"Cookies are made of butter and love." – Norwegian Proverb

My Dad's parents are both Scandinavian. Actually, my Grandpa is Norwegian and my Grandma, I call her Gramee, is half Norwegian half Swedish. They live in a small cabin that my Grandpa built on Thunder Lake in Remer, Minnesota. Some of my fondest childhood memories were made there—catching fish off the dock with my Dad, playing in the sand with my Brother, and jumping into piles of leaves that my Grandpa always raked for us in the fall. But most of all, I remember my Grandmother's cookies; in particular, the elaborate collection of Norwegian and Swedish cookies she makes every Christmas. For many people, eating a certain food evokes the nostalgic memories of childhood; it can bring you back to a certain time and place, and my grandmothers cookies will always do that for me.

For as long as I can remember our whole family has celebrated Christmas at my parent's house in Greenwich, Connecticut. Usually my Grandparents fly in around December 20th and stay through New Years. So, my Gramee would bake all the Christmas cookies ahead of time, and bring them with her when they came to visit. Thus, my memories of the cookies have little to do with the actual process of baking them. As a child I only knew the finished product—the way they looked all perfect and beautiful on the handcrafted wooden tray given to my grandmother years ago. She makes about ten different kinds: Spritz, Krumkake, Julpepparkakor, Peppermint Meringues, Pecan Balls, Fruit Cake Bites, Sunbuckles, Peppermint Bon Bons, and usually one or two other's of her choice. Each is meticulously made in a

bite-size shape and beautifully decorated with sprinkles, crushed peppermint, powdered sugar, candied fruit, or even edible pearls. Each cookie has a story, a place of origin, and most of all a process. Almost all the recipes are of Scandinavian origin; they are rich with ethnic tradition and some have been passed down from generation to generation. They are gorgeous, and most importantly, they are delicious. Even though I call them "Christmas Cookies" we usually start eating them about a week before Christmas (or whenever my Grandparents arrive) and then we finish up the last remaining crumbs around New Years. Each kind is kept in it's own tin, stacked between layers of parchment paper, labeled with a post-it so we know which is which. Even the containers have a story behind them; they are old Swedish cookie tins that my Grandma has been collecting for years, each having a unique illustration by Swedish artist Carl Larsson (he is like the Swedish version of American painter and illustrator Norman Rockwell). During Christmastime we always have a tray of cookies on the kitchen counter for everyone to enjoy throughout the day. When it starts to look sparse, my Gramee and I will go down to the wine cellar, where the cookies are kept because it is cool and dry, and replenish it. We arrange each kind according to color, shape, and texture; the light and dark ones should be evenly clustered around the tray so that there is a balance of color, and the crunchy shouldn't be next to the soft because they might absorb some of the moisture. When we are done the plate itself looks like a work of art, and we bring them back up to the kitchen to be devoured.

Until I developed my own love for baking, I had never wondered *how* my Gramee actually made all these delicious and beautiful cookies. They simply showed up at our house, ready to be eaten. Recently I've become more curious to know how she possibly makes hundreds of beautiful cookies, and keeps them all in

tact, tasting fresh and delicious by Christmas. I cannot remember exactly when, but at some point in high school I started making a few of the cookies with my Grandma when she came to visit. In particular, we like to make the peppermint meringues and peppermint bonbons together. Each year we try to improve the recipes, or at least the techniques we use to make them. The peppermint bonbons are the most involved cookies she makes, and that is probably why we do them together. First we make the dough. It is like shortbread, so it doesn't contain any eggs, simply butter, flour, sugar, some vanilla extract, and chopped walnuts. The dry ingredients are sifted together, and the walnuts chopped very fine. After it's made, the dough must chill for at least 5 hours. It needs to be really cold so that when we form the dough into balls they hold their shape nicely. After forming about 3 dozen dough balls, we fill each with a mixture of cream cheese, powdered sugar, and crushed peppermint candy, which has been whisked together until its smooth and glossy. After pressing a hole in the middle of each cookie, we use a pastry bag, like the ones people use to write on a cake, to squeeze the filling into the middle. Then we close the sides and bake them for about 20 minutes. Right after they come out, when they are still hot, we roll the cookies one by one into a bowl of powdered sugar and more crushed peppermint. Then we let them cool on wire racks until they are ready to eat. The whole process, especially filling the cookies, is very "putsy" as my Grandma says. It takes a while but it is so worth it! The meringues are easy, they are made of just two egg whites, ½ cup of sugar, a pinch of vanilla, a few drops of red food coloring (so that they look pink), and ¼ tsp of cream of tartar. The difficulty is in the technique. We put the egg whites in a cold glass bowl and beat them with an electric mixer until they are frothy. Then we add the cream of tartar and vanilla, and beat them on high speed while gradually adding the sugar.

When the mixture is stiff we spoon small drops of it onto a cookie sheet, sprinkle them with crushed peppermint, and bake them at low temperature for about 2 ½ hours. The reason why these processes are important to me is not so much about the cookies themselves, but about the time I get to spend with my Gramee. Not only have I learned some of her tremendous baking skills, but I have also grown very close to her and learned a lot about my family history. She is an amazing person, and one who will be forever in my heart.

Carrying on the family tradition is very important to me. Enjoying and sharing these cookies with family and friends is really the focal point of our holiday season. Christmas without Gramee's cookies just wouldn't be Christmas. For this reason, I want to make sure I learn how to make all the Christmas cookies exactly the way my Grandma makes them, so that someday I can pass the tradition on to my kids or even my grandkids. Having rich family traditions, especially ones that involve food, is the glue that binds each generation of a family together. It gives us a common ground upon which we can form and maintain strong relationships with each other. I will always cherish the memories I have of my Grandmas Christmas cookies, and hopefully I can pass that memory on to generations in the future.

Julpepparkakor
(Swedish Christmas Ginger Cookies)

1 cup light molasses
1 cup packed brown sugar
1 cup shortening (part butter or margarine)
2 eggs beaten
4 ½ cups all-purpose flour, plus more for rolling
1 ½ teaspoons baking soda

1 teaspoon ground cloves

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1. Mix dry ingredients in a small bowl and set aside. Bring molasses and sugar to a boil and pour over shortening in a large bowl. Stir until cool. Add eggs, mixing until well-incorporated. Add dry ingredients, blending to a smooth dough. Chill overnight.
2. Heat oven to 350°. Place dough between two pieces of parchment paper sprinkled with flour. Roll out very thin, about 1/8 inch, and cut with heart-shaped cookie cutters. Carefully place cookies on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Bake about 8 minutes. Let cool on wire racks.
3. Decorate with frosting or sugar. Makes about 6 dozen large cookies or about 30 dozen small cookies.



Swedish Julpepparkakor



Carl Larsson cookie tin

The Fiesta That Keeps on Giving

By: Piper Underbrink

"Cooking is at once child's play and adult joy. And cooking done with care is an act of love." —Craig Claiborne, *Kitchen Primer*

Ever since I can remember my mother's side of the family has always been prideful of their Mexican heritage. I remember sitting around a table of Chile Rellenos, stuffed peppers filled with an amazing mixture of cheese and meats, and hearing stories told by my grandfather of this life living as a Mexican-American, an itinerant worker in Kansas and then Iowa. My grandpa, Ralph, decided before I was born that Thanksgiving would be the day that we "remember where we came from". Every Thanksgiving was a dinning extravaganza filled with tacos, enchiladas, empanadas, and many other wonderful Mexican delights. My entire family, which was usually around sixty or seventy people, would cook all day and when the cooking was finished we would take our food to the beach and eat at the water. I will always picture an image of complete chaos; yelling and laughing danced together with all of the cooks talking over each other creating the perfect tango.

One of the most vivid memories is of my great aunt Shirley making tortillas from scratch in my grandmother's kitchen. Aunt Shirley, my grandfather Ralph's sister, would come to Florida for Thanksgiving almost every year and stay with my grandparents. Shirley would wake up very early in the morning and begin to make the corn dough that was necessary for the tortillas. I would wake up, and with sleepy eyes, drag myself into the kitchen following the sound of her beautiful humming *La Bamba*. There standing in the middle of the small kitchen surrounded

by little piles of dough was my great aunt dancing to the sound of her humming and the low buzz of the fan. The room would be filled with the intoxicating smell of fresh tortillas and the heat from the hot stone on the stove filled your senses and before you knew it, you would be swaying right next to her. She would call out to me, “Hola, mi niña. Ven a jugar conmingo.” I would run to her open arms and she would swing me around, and eventually we would both collapse into a mound on the floor of laughter.

Soon after, great aunt Shirley would stand up and begin to make the tortillas on the hot stone. One little pile of dough ball at a time she would press them flat with the iron press and lay them on a platter next to the stove. Slowly as the day grew longer more people began to arrive at my grandmother’s to prepare and then transport all of the food to the beach. The beach was only several blocks from my grandmothers house so the journey was not long.

My aunt Teeka and I would sneak into the kitchen and steal the tortillas that were still hot and fill them with butter and a little bit of meat. The tortillas were hot and delicious as the butter dribbled down our chins. The anticipation of my great aunt Shirley chasing my aunt Teeka and I out of the kitchen made the tortillas taste that much sweeter.

Once the food and the family had safely made it to the beach the feeding frenzy commenced. Before long everyone, with a full stomach and full hearts, would stand up and begin to dance. My aunts would beg my mother, who has the sweetest voice, to sing and my mother would oblige and retrieve her guitar. When the music began, my grandfather would stand up and begin to dance followed by his sisters and my grandmother. Pretty soon the entire family would be dancing and singing. My grandpa would twirl me around and we would dance for hours.

My family, loud and boisterous, would spend days preparing meals because for us food is not just about survival; it is instead about love. Through their food my family shows each other love, appreciation, and respect (probably one reason why being overweight is such an issue). My family kept the heritage and love alive through the food and the dancing. Now whenever I begin to feel as though I am losing sight of who I am, where I came from, or the feeling of my family I just move into the kitchen and begin to make tortillas, and I am transported right back to that kitchen with my great aunt Shirley.

A Chappaquiddick Feast

By: Alex Walsh

“The summer night is like a perfection of thought”- Wallace Stevens
“Ponder well on this point: the pleasant hours of our life are all connected by a more or less tangible link, with some memory of the table”
– Charles Pierre Monselet

For as long as I can remember, my family would spend a couple of weeks every summer at my grandfather’s house on Chappaquiddick, which is apart of Martha’s Vineyard. Chappaquiddick is remote compared to all the action that takes place across the harbor in Edgartown where tourists fill the streets. Our days were spent at the beach, clamming in Caleb’s pond, and fishing. At night, we would we feast with my grandfather. Striped bass, tuna, lobster, homemade clam chowder, scallops, and swordfish are just some of the meals that I was lucky enough to share with my family. These meals were simply the best part of my time spent on

Chappaquiddick. That all changed when my grandfather passed away in the spring of 2010. After that, the fate of the house was in jeopardy and I thought that I might not be able to experience the feasts that I looked forward to every summer. Luckily, I was able to spend the past two summers on Martha's Vineyard, but at a different house. It was not the same though, as I longed for the feasts that I shared with grandfather at the house that was filled with so many memories. By chance, last summer, I was able to experience a feast that reinvigorated all of those memories that I desperately wished to revisit.

I have always taken great pride in my heritage and my roots in Martha's Vineyard. This is why I strove to find a job on the island last summer. I was working and living on a different part of the island then Chappaquiddick. In the end of July, my cousins happened to be renting my grandfather's old house. My uncle called me and asked me if I would like to join him and his kids for dinner on Chappaquiddick. Without hesitation, I said yes. While I drove there, I smiled just thinking about the feast that my uncle was going to concoct. My uncle shares much more than just the same name as my grandfather. He too also preaches the importance of family memories. When I finally arrived at the little house on Chappaquiddick, feelings of nostalgia engulfed me. As I walked up to the door, I looked around the yard and I had many flash backs of my childhood. I remembered once running up the hill to the house with a fish on my rod. That night, we fried the fish on the grille and had it for dinner. Still, to this day, it was the most delicious fish that I have ever had. Those feelings shifted when I walked through the door and I smelt and heard what was cooking in the kitchen.

My cousins and my uncle greeted me with open arms. The house never looked better than it did on that summer night. I saw through the window the sun setting

over the horizon, which gave off a orange and pink glow. My uncle brought me to the kitchen to show me what he was preparing. I knew it was going to be something magnificent because he works for a fish market in Miami. Sure enough, he had lobsters boiling in a big pot and he was boiling water for the rice. He then took me outside where he was grilling steaks and roasting peppers. As I looked around at everything, I could not help but think of my grandfather. He would have loved everything about this meal. He enjoyed nothing more than sharing with his family. Pictures of him were everywhere in the house, which reminds everybody of who made this all possible. This surf and turf feast that I was about to enjoy was all thanks to him.

Later, I sat down with some of my younger cousins and told them about some of the food memories I had in this house. I told them about the homemade clam chowder that I once cooked with my grandfather when I was eight years old. I told them that it was the best clam chowder I had ever had because I caught the clams and made the soup with him. As we continued to wait for my uncle to prepare the meal (he insisted on cooking alone), we reminisced on our favorite meals in the house. My cousin, David, said that his favorite meal was the scallops that his Dad had cooked a few nights before. He said it reminded him of a dinner he shared with our grandfather at his house in New Jersey a few years ago. I realized that my grandfather was the constant in every one of my cousin's stories. He would have been so proud that we were carrying on some of the traditions that he introduced to us.

When we finally sat down for the feast, I was blindsided by déjà vu. It was obviously not the first time that I enjoyed a meal at this table, but the fact that it was without my grandfather made it quite emotional. I would have to say that the feast

that night was the most delicious meal I had in that house on Chappaquiddick. The lobsters were cooked perfectly, as the meat was tender and juicy. The steaks were grilled just the way I like- medium rare. Pairing grilled vegetables with steak was amazing. We continued a tradition that my grandfather always liked where we dipped potato chips in the lobster juice that filled our plates. At nearly every important meal that we have at that house has included lobster. For me, it triggers many feelings and emotions, most of which are joyful. While I was being absorbed by all the different food options that were in front of me, my uncle stood up to make a toast. He began to talk about the importance of family coming together whenever the opportunity arises. He said that he feels the presence of his father when his descendants surround him. His speech was heartfelt and I knew it was made possible by this feast that he prepared. All the dishes reminded him of his father and all the memories that he shared with him on Chappaquiddick. He too enjoyed countless meals with his father at this very table. At the end of his toast, my uncle turned to his young children and told them to take advantage of their time on Chappaquiddick because it is a special place that has given our family many happy memories for years. He then sat down and enthusiastically told us to finish the meal.

Once I had consumed all the different tastes of the meal, I wondered about what the dessert could be. I was not expecting anything extravagant for dessert because the main courses took quite awhile to prepare. However, my uncle told us all that he had a special surprise for us. He brought us to the kitchen and we saw a tray full of 'black cows.' These were my grandfather's favorite dessert. To most people, they are known as root beer floats. To me, my grandfather's black cows were always the best root beer floats. Sure enough, my uncle made the black cows

the same way my grandfather used to. While I was drinking it, the taste triggered a memory of when I was drinking a black cow with my grandfather on his patio in New Jersey when I was about 12 years old. It was a hot summer afternoon, and the drink was extremely refreshing and delicious. On this summer night with my cousins and my uncle, I was lucky enough to have all these old happy memories come alive in my head because my family and good food surrounded me.

The feast on that one cool July night brought everything that I love together at once. My grandfather's house on Chappaquiddick is one of my favorite places in the world because of its character, location, and all the countless memories. I was able to spend time with members of my family that I rarely get to see. My uncle's assorted meal was prepared with so much love and thought. The different dishes triggered so many emotional memories of my grandfather, which made the food taste that much better.

Indeed, that night brought me closer to my grandfather that I thought was possible since his passing. My uncle was able to recreate a feast that my grandfather used to prepare so often. I am quite sure that I will taste foods in the future that will trigger

memories of that summer feast on Chappaquiddick with my uncles and cousins.



Biographies

Jack Balaban is graduating in May 2012 after four great years at Middlebury. A self-proclaimed ‘foodie,’ Jack loves to make spaghetti Bolognese with his mother and try new restaurants. A geography major, he has studied the spatial dimensions of the food system and believes in ‘voting with your dollar’ so that the current system can see some grass-roots reform. Literary Feast has consistently reminded Jack of why he thinks food is such an awesome topic: because everyday by eating we learn new things and meet new people while remembering old friends and traditions.

Sarah Boyd is a sophomore from Texas, who is majoring molecular biology and biochemistry. She enjoys watching basketball, creating arts and crafts, and listening to Paul Simon. Sarah’s favorite foods range from chickpeas to anything Tex-Mex. This course has sparked an interest in urban farming for Sarah.

William Chapman is a junior from Greenwich, CT majoring in Economics. He likes to play golf, tennis and ski. His favorite food is Chicken Divan, a dish prepared by his mom and his favorite meal is Steak, cooked onions, potatoes and salad. One new thing that he learned in this course was the importance of eating healthy at a younger age, especially in college, because of the significance it can have on the rest of your life.

Alex Englert is a senior from Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts majoring in American Studies and Art History. A member of the Football and Lacrosse team, Alex enjoys outdoor activities and especially enjoys golf. He learned this year that you must save a little extra water on the side after you drain the water when making pasta.

Zach Faber is a freshman from Alamo, California that plays on the Middlebury Football team. He loves spending time barbequing with his family and friends, as well as soaking up the hot California sun.

McCallum Foote is a junior from Newton, Massachusetts, majoring in Economics. He enjoys watching sports, playing golf, and spending time with friends and family. His favorite meal is his mother’s chicken francese. The interesting tidbit he learned while he was in this class was that spaghetti and meatballs is not really an Italian meal! It really blew his mind.

Dan Fullam is a freshman from Randolph, New Jersey majoring in economics. He plays hockey and his favorite dish is chicken pomodoro with pasta. One important thing he learned from this class is the surprisingly influential social, cultural, and economic role that food plays in society.

Joe Giandomenico is a Freshman Feb from Walpole, Massachusetts. He attended the Roxbury Latin School and loves to fish and play sports. His favorite food is pasta with his father’s homemade tomato sauce.

Michael Graham is a senior from West Chester, Pennsylvania majoring in economics and math. He enjoys golf, fishing, and literary feasts class. His favorite dish is thin crust pepperoni pizza. One of the most important things he has learned at Middlebury over the course of 4 years is that to cook pasta properly, it must be boiled in water as salty as the sea.

Yoji High is a senior from Scarsdale, NY majoring in chemistry. He likes to ski, eat, sleep and repeat. His favorite dish (although calling it a dish seems too high class) is a Double-Double Animal-Style with Animal Fries from In-N-Out Burger. One new thing he learned in Literary Feasts is that if you try to open a noodle shop in Tokyo to compete with Tampopo, you’re going to have a bad time.

Nicholas Hodder-Hastorf is a sophomore from California, majoring in psychology. He likes to play soccer and hike in Marin County, when in California. He likes English delicacies such as sausage rolls, pork pies and Fruit Pastilles.

Thomas Huang is a graduating senior and has no idea what he wants to do in the future. He is an avid napper and does not enjoy long walks at the beach. Thomas

is cynically attached to the goal of getting paid to do nothing and believes that graduate school is overrated but not as overrated as a decent salary.

Robert Hutton is a junior from Hong Kong, China. At the moment, he is extremely hungry...

Lany Jenna Khattiya is a West Coast girl, hailing from San Diego, CA. She has 6 siblings & is proud to have survived through her childhood. Her grandest passions include traveling & having daring food-ventures (such as rocky mountain oysters, duck balut, ant egg soup, & so much more). Realistic future goals: Going on a world food tour, learning to fly, & galactic domination... Oh, & of course, doing a double cartwheel.

Rachel J. Kim is a sophomore from Bronxville, New York and currently lives in New York City. She is an Economics major but decided to take Literary Feasts because she wanted to attend a class that talked about one of her most favorite things in life: food. It is quite difficult for her to choose one dish that is her favorite but she loves traditional Korean meals, raw oysters and clams, and tacos.

Carter Makin is a freshman from Wenham, MA and is on the squash team at Middlebury. She is an avid fan of paddle boarding and boating in the summer with her friends and family. Her request for her birthday dinner is always a tasty lobster and she loves all types of seafood. This course has evoked her curiosity in the realm of food and cooking and she is looking forward to expanding her knowledge in this area.

Vijit Nanda is a freshman from Bombay, India, majoring in Undecided. He has an avid interest in the highly under recognized sport of newt flinging. His favourite dish is a tie between Butter, Pepper, Garlic Crab from the western coast of India and Quail Stuffed with Foie Gras.

Hannah Newman is a junior Neuroscience major from Philadelphia, PA. She wants to pursue a career in science journalism and loves doing any sort of activity outside. This class has opened her eyes to the power of food and the unique culture

that surrounds its production and consumption.

Cary Palmisano is an International studies major with a concentration in Latin America and economics. Her favorite food is sushi. She likes cooking with her family. They have top chef tournaments.

Douglas Parizeau is a senior from Wellesley, Massachusetts majoring in Psychology. The piece that he wrote here is a misguided attempt to apply four years of psychology study to his own experience with food. His favorite dish is spaghetti with meatballs.

Derek Pimentel is from Laval, Quebec majoring in Economics and possibly minoring in French. He plays hockey at Middlebury College. His favorite dish is a traditional Portuguese dish, which is Codfish with roasted potatoes. Derek learned that food can be the source of triggering memories and has realized that it is best enjoyed with company around.

Nick Resor is a senior from Westwood Massachusetts. He is an American studies major and a member of the football and hockey teams. His favorite dish is eel and avocado sushi rolls and one thing that he learned in this class is the difference between finely textured lean beef and 100% ground beef and will always buy the 100% ground beef because of this class.

Astrid Schanz-Garbassi is a Physics major from Larchmont, NY. In Fall of 2010, Astrid studied abroad in Kunming, China, where she studied China's future in alternative energy, learned about traditional Chinese medicine, and mastered the art of making dumplings. The most important meal she's ever prepared (and probably will ever prepare) was a dinner party for eight served on the National Mall in Middlebury's 2011 Solar Decathlon home: Self-Reliance. It was scored on a scale of 0 to 100 and counted toward Middlebury's overall score in the competition.

Charlie Steinberg is a first-year from Natick, MA, coming from a family of hardcore foodies. Even back in utero, he worked on fine-tuning his now acutely aware palate to all the subtleties and complexities of fine cuisine. Not once has he

ordered off of the kid's menu, and if you ask him about God, he will talk to you about stinky cheese.

Stephanie Terfloth is a senior from Montreal, Quebec, majoring in Economics and minoring in Political Science. One of her favorite dishes is pashka – it tastes just like her childhood. After taking this course, she thinks twice about where the food on her plate comes from.

Erin Tormondsen is a Senior from Greenwich, Connecticut majoring in Mathematics. She likes watching football on Sundays and her favorite food is ice cream. One important thing she learned from this course is how to cook pasta properly!

Piper Rosales-Underbrink is originally from Florida but also spends time in Minnesota during the summers. She grew up competing in rodeos and working the ranch that her family lived on. Currently, she plays volleyball for Middlebury College and enjoy all recreational activities, such as water skiing, snow skiing, and hiking. She loves to travel and hopes to see as much of the world as she can. Piper likes to make new friends and is always interested in learning something new. She is aspiring to help the environment and make a positive impact on the world.

Alex Walsh is from Basking Ridge, New Jersey. He is a freshman at Middlebury College where he is majoring in economics. He plays ice hockey at Middlebury too. His favorite dish is his father's soft-shelled crab with rice. Alex learned in this course that many emotions are rooted in memories of food.

A Selection of Food Quotes

Wisdom from Around the World:

A tavola non si invecchia ~Italian proverb
("one does not get old at the table" meaning: time spent at the table with good food and good friends is time well spent)

L'appetito vien mangiando ~Italian proverb ("appetite comes while eating")

He who eats alone chokes alone. ~Arabian proverb

After dinner sit a while, and after supper walk a mile. ~English Saying

The more you eat, the less flavor; the less you eat, the more flavor. ~Chinese Proverb

A nickel will get you on the subway, but garlic will get you a seat. ~Old New York Proverb

Worries go down better with soup. ~Jewish Proverb

Laughter is brightest where food is best ~ Irish Proverb

In vino veritas ~Latin proverb ("In wine [there is] truth" meaning wine loosens the tongue)

On National Identity and the Trouble with Other Cuisines

What is patriotism but the love of the food one ate as a child? ~Lin Yutang

The trouble with eating Italian food is that five or six days later you're hungry again. ~George Miller

I don't think America will have really made it until we have our own salad dressing. Until then we're stuck behind the French, Italians, Russians and Caesarians. ~Pat McNelis

In Mexico we have a word for sushi: bait. ~José Simons

I'll bet what motivated the British to colonize so much of the world is that they were just looking for a decent meal. ~Martha Harrison

And I find chopsticks frankly distressing. Am I alone in thinking it odd that a people ingenious enough to invent paper, gunpowder, kites and any number of other useful objects, and who have a noble history extending back 3,000 years haven't yet worked out that a pair of knitting needles is no way to capture food? ~Bill Bryson

When I'm at a Chinese restaurant having a hard time with chopsticks, I always hope that there's a Chinese kid at an American restaurant somewhere who's struggling mightily with a fork. ~Rick Budinich

Food and Language

The whole of nature, as has been said, is a conjugation of the verb to eat, in the active and in the passive. ~William Ralph Inge

I went to a restaurant that serves 'Breakfast at any time'. So I ordered French Toast during the Renaissance. ~Steven Wright

Serious questions we did not have the time to answer

High-tech tomatoes. Mysterious milk. Supersquash. Are we supposed to eat this stuff? Or is it going to eat us? ~Annita Manning

If organic farming is the natural way, shouldn't organic produce just be called "produce" and make the pesticide-laden stuff take the burden of an adjective? ~Ymber Delecto

Do vegetarians eat animal crackers? ~Author Unknown



*The
'others'*