

foodculture

TASTING IDENTITIES AND GEOGRAPHIES IN ART

edited by Barbara Fischer

YYZ BOOKS

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Published by YYZ Books
401 Richmond Street West Suite 140
Toronto Canada M5V 3A8
and
ArtLab, Department of Visual Arts
The University of Western Ontario

Printed in Canada by Kromar Printing Ltd.

Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data

Main entry under title:

Foodculture

ISBN 0-920397-27-1

1. Food in art. 2. Art, Modern-20th century-History. I. Fischer, Barbara, 1956- .
N8217.F64F66 1999 704.9'493941 C99-932522-1

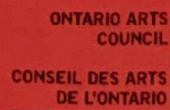
Design and Production: Michelle Teran
YYZ Director for Operations and Publishing: Melony Ward

YYZ Books is an alternative Canadian press dedicated to publishing critical
writings on art and culture. YYZ Books is associated with YYZ Artists' Outlet, an
artist-run centre that presents challenging programs of visual art, film, video,
performance, lectures and publications.

YYZ Artists' Outlet is supported by its members, the Canada Council for the
Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, and the Toronto Arts Council.

YYZ Artists' Outlet acknowledges the support of the Canada Council for the Arts
for our publishing program. The financial support of the Canada Council, the
Ontario Arts Council and the Government of Canada through Canada's Year of
Asia Pacific for the *foodculture* project is gratefully acknowledged.

Cover image: Millie Chen, *Crave*, 1994. Earthenware, curry, turmeric, paprika,
chili, cayenne, black pepper, kalongi, mustard, coriander, henna, star anise,
black sesame seeds, paan masala, cinnamon stick, cloves. Installation 20' x 20'.
Photo: courtesy the artist.



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Elaine Tin Nyo,

Egg Curry, Performance.

Photo (ArtLab perfor-

mance, 1997): David

Merritt. Video Stills:

Elaine Tin Nyo.

My Mother's Egg Curry

My three siblings and I were latch-key kids before there was a term for it. We would patiently eat junk food and do our homework until mom came home to cook us dinner. We lived in a community where few families had mothers with jobs and even fewer were not Anglo. Basic Asian ingredients were hard to come by. This was one of mom's quickie specialties and one of my favourites. This is the way she used to make it.

12 eggs, hard boiled and peeled ahead of time
2 cloves garlic or garlic powder to taste
1 medium onion or dried onion flakes
1/2 inch fresh or powdered ginger root
peanut oil
1/4 t. turmeric
dried red pepper flakes
1-4 oz. can of tomato paste
soy sauce
fish sauce (if available)
cilantro (grown in the back yard)

Cut the eggs in half lengthwise and set aside.

Mince garlic, onion and ginger root. Heat oil in a cast iron skillet large enough to fit all the egg halves in one layer. Sauté garlic, onion and ginger until golden brown (or just the dried onion flakes if you are using dried spices). Add turmeric and red pepper flakes, sauté 20 seconds more. Mix the tomato paste with an equal part of water and add all at once to the skillet. Bring to a simmer and add soy sauce and fish sauce to taste. Carefully place the eggs in the skillet cut side up. Turn down the heat a little. Simmer until the sauce is thick and the eggs are heated through and a little brown on the bottom.

Sprinkle with chopped cilantro and serve with hot white rice.

Serves four ravenous children or six polite adults.

Grandma's Single Serving Curry in a Hurry

Recently my Grandmother and I were talking about what she eats when she's home alone. This is the way I remember her recipe. You can add boiled eggs but my Grandma won't because of the cholesterol.

Pour a little Mexican salsa (the kind that comes in a big plastic jug at the supermarket) into a pan. Add a spoonful of mango pickle (such as Patak brand). Stir it up. Heat to simmer. Add cut up vegetable of your choice, or mixed pickled or frozen vegetables. Stir it up. Heat a little more. Eat with hot rice.

How to Boil Eggs

Place eggs in a pan in a single layer and cover with cold water. Bring to a boil over moderate heat. Cook 5 minutes. Drain soak in cold water 5 minutes. Peel and cut in half lengthwise. The whites will be hard and the yolks will be soft and partially cooked.





My New World Egg Curry

I make this version for my loved ones and friends during the summer when tomatillos are plentiful at the Union Square Green Market.

12 eggs, hard boiled and peeled
2 cloves garlic
1 medium onion
1/2 inch or more fresh ginger root
peanut oil
1/4 t. turmeric
1 T. amchar powder (sour mango powder, available in Indian groceries)
1-2 fresh Thai chili peppers
1/2 lb. (10-12) tomatillos, husked and washed
1 T. soy sauce
fish sauce
large bunch cilantro



Put the tomatillos in a pan, barely cover with water, and bring to a simmer. Continue to cook until the tomatillos are soft but not falling apart – about 10 minutes. Strain, reserving 1/3 cup of cooking liquid.

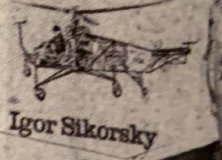
Put the reserved liquid into a blender jar, add half the cilantro, and blend until almost smooth. Add the tomatillos and blend for 10 seconds, no more, to make a fairly smooth sauce.

Cut the eggs lengthwise and set aside.

Mince garlic, onion, ginger root and chilies. Heat oil in a cast iron skillet large enough to fit all the egg halves in one layer. Sauté garlic, onion, ginger and chilies until golden brown. Add turmeric, sauté 20 seconds more. Mix the amchar into the tomatillo puree and add all at once to the skillet. Bring to a simmer and add soy sauce and a generous amount of fish sauce. Carefully place the eggs in the skillet cut side up. Turn down the heat a little. Simmer until the sauce is thick and the eggs are heated through and a little brown on the bottom. Add water if sauce gets too thick. Sprinkle with remaining chopped cilantro and serve with hot white or brown rice.

Serves four ravenous artists or six polite adults.

36 USAirmail



水畫院中有畫團

不紅豆和荔枝雪糕，回來後
好想你，就給你畫了這個
叫作猜忌

看這
草有太陽有冰霜和有烟
好想你名字看見8
告訴他。 24.1.90

FLAT 14A
EVERA BLDG
68 LOK KU R
SHEUNG WAN
HONG KONG

at-sing 包色

今天去了 American Museum of Natural History
不少東西，還買了紀念品，是條恐龍
頭，最失望是最難看的，昨天去了
Museum of Art，行了整天，表面是幻
不，有一卷 Ann 菲絲目，這人好很累，今晚
還有 cats，原來有一些貓不及在 Hongkong 看，可能
是因轉了人，還有最後一行，要站立看到，真的
明天會和梁媽及媽媽一起
去水銀

5 AUG

From: Iris 思菱

Eggplants

Vermicelli made from bean starch
Picked up with chopsticks, savoured
My taste buds report: it is mixed with
Eggplants cooked to a mush

Memories surface, of the first time we met
Conversation drifted, we chatted about eggplants
I remember you said you grew up in Taiwan
Your dad was a Cantonese, your mum from Beijing
I forgot to ask how your folks cooked eggplants
Did you cook it first, leave to cool and dress it with sesame oil?
Eat it with a hot, fish-flavoured sauce? Or have it Cantonese style –
Stewed fish with eggplants, stewed chicken with eggplants?

Isn't it amazing our thoughts all travel from food
To culture bonds, from reactions of the body and
Cravings of the palate to our relations with the world?
We travel non-stop, in the interval between
The lifting of one cooking lid and another, going after
The taste of fermented soya beans
Stopping by a pool of dried soy sauce
Studying the traces

In my old home, shabby but comfortable, I remember
Those plump eggplants mother bought
Placed right in the centre of the sitting room, like Buddha
To be revered. In time life turned chaotic, abroad, alone
I could never recapture that taste in my cooking

With what mixed feelings, I wonder, your parents
Had followed the flux of emigrants and crossed the wide seas
Their vocabulary becoming infiltrated with hybrid fruit, new vegetables
Their tongues slowly getting used to foreign seasonings
Like many of their generation, everyone began to drift away

From a centre, their appearance changed. But now and then
From shreds of something here and bits of
Something else there we discover a vaguely familiar taste
Like meat and skin cooked to a mush, gone apart
Back together again; that taste of ourselves, extinct, distinct

—Ping-Kwan Leung

Ka-Sing Lee (photo
work) and Ping-Kwan
Leung (poem). From
their collaboration
Foodscape, 1997.
Courtesy: the artists.