Memories of a Dish:

Personal and Cultural Identities Expressed Through Food

Erica Weisman
Senior Project Write-Up
Community, Environment, Planning
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i. Project Abstract

Food practices (cooking and eating) are a reflection of a culture or country. Food is born out of available ingredients and is therefore tied to a geographical location and its established societies. Seattle attracts people from all over the world who bring with them their food culture creating diverse neighborhoods and populations. I explore diverse communities in Seattle through the lens of cooking and eating. I interviewed Seattle residents and university students whose cultural identities differ from the dominant white American one. Based on these narratives, I put together a cookbook made up of first-person stories and corresponding recipes. By documenting diverse food memories into the form of a story-based cookbook, I hope to understand the importance that culinary traditions play in the identity of an individual. I aim to celebrate diverse food narratives through story-telling and the tactile approach of cooking, eating, and sharing food. Through interviews, I found that individuals connect to their culture and identity via food practices. The experience of immigrating or growing up in a culture that is different from one's own drastically changes a person's cultural practices, and food is a way to express past and present identities. A dish cooked today may date back 30 or 300 years, holding historic memory. Food is a political, public expression of where people shop, where they choose to eat, and what their tastes and preferences are. In some cases, communities are known primarily for their cuisines in mainstream American culture. In a country of so many divides, perhaps food can help us heal.

ii. Introduction

Food is personal. It means something totally and completely unique for every person out there, yet it is one of the few things- besides sleeping that we all share. The experience of cooking and eating food encompasses so much of the human lived experience. There is a cultural, biological, and emotional weight to food. Preparing and eating meals engages all of our biological senses- touch, taste, sight, smell, and sound. I can vividly remember waking up on special mornings to the sound and smell of my mom making bacon. My mouth would immediately begin to water, and it felt like such an exciting day right from the beginning. My step-dad and I would then stand around waiting for the bacon to be ready. I remember the feel of a perfect crunch. Crispy-crunchy, and a salty burst in my mouth as we talk eagerly about the day to come. 'Are we going to take the dogs for a walk?' Crunch, crunch, crunch. 'Can I have another slice, mom??' And then I swallow that bacon, and some Texas toast, and a spicy, jalapeno egg scramble. I begin to feel full! Food is what sustains us. Our existence is tied directly to the ability to maintain a sufficient diet each day.

Let's move forward, past the biological need to eat. Humans have developed complex rituals surrounding food. Many of these rituals come from the family. People are fed by their parents or caretakers as children, as I was in the bacon story above. This is the point in which eating and cooking habits are passed down. On my own, I now enjoy leisurely egg scramble-y breakfasts on weekends, signifying a relaxing or special day. I too cook with jalapenos, black beans, poblano peppers, tomatillos, cheese, cheese, and more cheese, and a cast iron pan just as both my mom and dad did. I know these ingredients and their preparation intimately, as I have spent all my life working with them alongside my parents. While not everyone has the same upbringing as myself, culturally or socially relevant food is still an undeniable part of every person's life.

I am a cook, by profession and by passion/personal interest. I think about food all the time. It is my responsibility to understand the social and political implications of the tasty meals I endeavor to cook up. How does a person's culture intersect the food that I cook for them? What does it mean to cook another culture's food? In order to cook a food outside of my own culture, I should have a respect and understanding of its context and significance. This is a topic I reiterate at length via this cookbook.

This cookbook is important in making a small dent in a world full of missed connections. As a cook, I have benefited from getting to know my food and sharing food with others. I've long been frustrated with the commercialization of and inevitable disconnect from food in this modern, busy society. People don't spend time cooking, finding ingredients, or sharing dishes with each other. We are losing a fundamentally beautiful part of the human experience if we continue to disengage from food and from each other.

This world is globalizing. People are moving away from their countries of origins at an increasing rate. This cookbook can give a space for people with multiple cultural identities to delve into their own food memories and cultural practices. I want to demonstrate the potential cooking and foods have to connect people who believe they are different from one another. These recipes and traditions are global, but the people are local.

iii. Context

Cookbooks, made up of recipes and techniques for culinary mastery, have long been created to pass down family recipes and culture. They are a platform to write about personal or cultural taste and discovery that allows others to actively participate vis-à-vis cooking. While I could devote my entire project on the historical and current politics of the cookbook, I will instead attempt to understand the utility of the cookbook platform within the context of my project. I have chosen to create a cookbook as my main method of inquiry on personal and cultural relations to food.

In order to put together a thoughtful and effective cookbook, I conducted a literature review of about fifteen academic articles, journal entries, and books to understand the historical, sociological, and psychological theories surrounding food practices and identity. It was important to first grasp the idea, food is culture, as it is the guiding and central principle of my project. Food is not simply a form of natural sustenance in our daily lives. We have stripped food from its "naturalness" by creating a complex set of rituals in preparing it. These rituals stem directly from culture. Food is culture due to the performance and customs necessary when preparing it. Food is also culture when it is eaten because people have the ability to choose what they eat based on economic and social conditions. Conducting an academic review of food and culture, and its modern day expressions guided how I handle the information I glean from each interview.

Food and its globalization is a relatively new study for anthropologists, but it has occurred for hundreds of years. There is a great circulation of texts among certain regions of the world, congruently so have tastes and hierarchies of dining and the practices of cooking have changed in the past 100 years. I studied the harmful roots of food's globalization from

colonialism and current social politics in order to create something that fights back against the systemic marginalization of communities.

Food is deeply connected to one's feelings and cultural heritage. The literature review proved further that food is personal. Finally, I focused my research on case studies. Case studies provided examples of personal and lyrical writing styles surrounding food and memories. Two key writers I feature are both women of color. It is important to see their narratives. My own assumptions must be challenged to move forward with this project. For example, I learned through this literature review that certain recipes can be appropriated or not properly represented if done with measurements like the quarter teaspoon. The literature review process of the project informed how I analyzed and drew themes from what I gathered in the interview process.

The Literature in Context

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Ethnic cuisine becomes more and more like a museum or a stage on which culture writes its name… for the sake of appeasing our moral conscience and declaring its survival[1]

Food is Culture

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Food is more than a form of natural sustenance in our daily lives, food is a part of human culture. Massimo Montanari emphasizes this point in his masterwork in the field of food academics, *Food is Culture*.[2] The title indeed says it all. While food was once completely born out of our natural environment, humans took these resources, and *prepared* food. Cooking and agricultural practices strip food from its "naturalness." Humans create a complex set of rituals in preparing food. This act of food manipulation, through fire and "carefully wrought technology, is

[1] Ray, Krishnendu. 2016. *The Ethnic Restauranteur.* London: Bloomsbury Academic: 3.
[2] Montanari, Massimo. 2004. *Food Is Culture.* New York: Columbia University Press.

a central expression of culture."[3] The act of eating food is an expression of culture because people choose what they eat based on economic, locational, or "symbolic values."[4] People express their identities through ritual food behaviors. I, for instance, know that my adoration for the dish, queso, exists because I was born and raised in Texas, the birthplace of the cross-cultural, deep fried food bonanza, Tex-Mex.

The birth of agriculture marked an important turning point for the human species around 10,000 years ago. People decided themselves dominant over other species, and grew demographically at an unprecedented rate with the advent of agriculture and domestic settlements.[5] This is the first instance of large-scale food manipulation. Humans and technology grew and produced food for mass consumption at a rate that foraging could never compete with. Present day, if I walk into either a Safeway or the local farmer's market I would only be able to purchase human produced and manipulated items. Fruits, vegetables, and grains have been selected for thousands of years to be most palatable and grow-able (along with the obvious processed foods which take up the majority of store space). I believe this to be an incredibly important starting point for my research moving forward because it sets the baseline idea that food is manipulated by humans. That is what makes food, food, rather than plants or animals. Food is a human product and has been for hundreds of years. We can then draw a conclusion that because food is produced by humans, food is drawn out of culture and culture is drawn out of food production.

Montanari defines culture as the intersection between tradition and invention/knowledge, as expressed by certain groups of peoples.[6] Tradition is expressed over a long period of time

[3] Ibid., xi.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid., 5.
[6] Ibid., 7.

within a large swath of people while knowledge and invention are understood on a smaller scale. Jeffrey Pilcher writes in the *Cultural Histories of Food* that cultural history is "an attempt to understand how people have made sense of their world."[7] Personal taste is culture in action. Edible food is neither good nor bad, we have just been "taught" to understand foods as such.[8] Taste is determined in the brain, an organ partially shaped by socio-cultural experiences and taught values. I have observed that preferences and tastes vary from region to region throughout the U.S., in part due to the different concentrations of immigrants. Large cities contain a wide variety of ethnic food options, and even further, certain ethnic foods are more concentrated in certain cities. I will expand upon these observations in the next section.

Pilcher further delves into the politics of cultural expressions of food. Certain food cultures hold more value to dominant cultures because they align with said dominating practices. These governing ideas of culture hold that cuisine is "high culture—produced by male chefs, consumed in public ceremonies, and recorded in writing."[9] Norbert Elias took this idea even further and argued that European table manners were utilized as a method of "civilizing" common peoples.[10] To take this idea further, Pierre Bourdieu theorized that economic capital was converted to cultural capital or "elite taste" for high end or exotic goods.[11] Food is not merely a reflection of a cultural group, it serves as a political agent that wields the power to generate and grow social inequality or equity. Atsuko Ichijo examines the global, nationalist identity in association with personal relationships with food. This writing fits into the theory of "everyday nationalism."[12] Sentiments of national pride that feed directly into a country's power

[7] Pilcher, Jeffrey. 2012. "Cultural Histories of Food." *The Oxford Handbook of Food History*, Oct: 1.
[8] Montanari, *Food Is Culture, 61*.
[9] Pilcher, "Cultural Histories of Food", 2.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid., 8.
[12] Atsuko Ichijo, Ronald Ranta. 2016. *Food, National Identity and Nationalism: From Everyday to Global Politics.* London: MacMillan: 3.

fit into a person's experience of the mundane, everyday. Food culture creates a bridge between the individual and the national, giving it political power.

Impoverished or minority groups have historically fought these hierarchies of taste with the powers of the culinary. Food in Mexico follows this narrative. Indigenous peoples were able to upend the wealthy conquistador foods of meat and bread with their extremely flexible and flavorful dishes.[13] Masa[14] and chiles provided variety, that even the conquerors couldn't stay away from. Here, we see rural communities feeding the conquering, wealthy. While this time in history was extremely violent and Spanish conquistadors committed countless atrocities against indigenous peoples, food remained a fixture of indigenous expression. The current state of food throughout Mexico reflects hundreds of years of struggle and forced change, yet is primarily indigenous inspired. I examine this upending of power via food practices. In tandem with the cookbook, it's important to zoom out and understand the multi-cultural influences on all foods. How much of the food a person may know today has changed in the past few hundred years due to colonialism, wars, and other mass movements.

Cookbooks exist within power dynamics. Historians and groups of people have puzzled over how some cultures do not write down their recipes, even if they have a defined set of culinary practices. For example, traditional Indian recipes are not written down, but due to colonialism, many of the cooking practices were written down and modified by the British.[15] I understand this as devaluing and appropriating of a cultural practice. Targeted groups who practice their cultural beliefs through cooking have been erased throughout history. In creating a cookbook, I must remain aware of the power I hold in taking a person's culturally relevent recipe

[13] Ibid., 12.
[14] Central-American corn meal
[15] Ibid., 6.

and writing it down in my terms. I will write each recipe as a reflection of each individual person and culture. Taking recipes from people, no matter how careful I am, holds power issues. However, I believe it is important to examine and celebrate diverse voices.

Cookbooks and recipes can act as a method for silenced peoples to reclaim some space in the global and historical conversations. Lynne Phillips in *Food and Globalization* writes about gendered practices in food production: "Women remain invisible as food production innovators."[16] Women, historically invisible, have acted as primary cooks and recipe creators, and found a way to document their domestic experiences and converse with each other through cookbooks. This is an example of food preparation giving a voice to overlooked peoples throughout history, while conversely, African American cooks were falsely depicted as primitive, oral cooks, rather than artists. An example is the well-circulated imagery of Aunt Jemima.[17] Aunt Jemima spokes-women in the late 19th century were exploited by white businessmen to sell a product and set into society the mammy archetype. I will expand upon the current role of food 'artists' in modern day cities in the coming few pages.

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Globalization [is the] flow of ideas and people across institutionalized borders.[18]

The Globalization of Food

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The globalization of food is a relatively new study for anthropologists, but its proliferation has been going on for hundreds of years. Lynne Phillips asks in *Food and Globalization* how food has been mobilized on a global scale. How does food shape global thought or the "global imaginary"?[19] The global imaginary is an understanding or feeling of

[16] Phillips, Lynne. 2006. "Food and Globalization." *Annual Review of Anthropology* (Annual Reviews) 35: 44.
[17] Pilcher, "Cultural Histories of Food", 7.
[18] Phillips, "Food and Globalization," 43.
[19] Ibid., 44.

belonging to the global community.[20] This recent explosion of cross-cultural and global food is a reflection of the global imaginary. Food texts aid in circulating recipes from all over the globe from regionally based Chinese cuisine, to Egyptian cuisine, to Brazillian cuisine. Anyone with internet access to cook a food that originated 8,000 miles away. The cookbook is in itself an exploration of how individuals can feel connected to multiple globally expansive cultures through cooking and eating habits. In most cases, everyone in the cookbook is globally minded because of their heritage or birthplace, food practices are the source of their connection to global regions. However, globalization of cuisines is a reflection of immigration and travel.

Cities are microcosms of global/cultural mingling and diasporic communities. Food is diverse and unique to that area, as it can grow and mix with other food cultures. I see Seattle as a city stuck on the global imaginary. As of 2014, 18% of Seattle citizens are foreign born, from the top three countries of China, Vietnam, and the Philippines.[21] Seattle appears to be a diverse city. Diversity is a theoretical framework for my project, based in the context of personal food practices and stories. The cookbook features a diverse mix of ethnicities, nationalities, ages, economic statuses, and life experiences. Defining diversity is valuable, as diversity holds multiple meanings, some useful or descriptive and others problematic. I aim to understand the positive and beneficial definitions of diversity.

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"Often that which is considered to be the objective diversity of individuals in society (e.g., cultural diversity, social diversity, different status and roles) can be translated as a universal principle that one finds in the concept of identification – a group or collective's reason to exist."[22]

Diversity (of Food)

[20] Ibid., 43.
[21] Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs. 2014. "Seattle's Immigrants and Refugees." https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/OIRA/2016_OIRA_DataSnapshot_FINAL.pdf.
[22] Gardini, Emilio. "Diversity and Sociology." In *Diversity Research and Policy: A Multidisciplinary Exploration*, edited by Knotter Steven, De Lobel Rob, Tsipouri Lena, and Stenius Vanja. Amsterdam University Press, 2011. http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt6wp727.6: 45.

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The etymology of 'di-verse' is "that which converges elsewhere" or rather a divergence from something.[23] This frame is potentially dangerous as it can lead to assumptions that diversity is "not in line" with the dominant philosophy.[24] Diversity defined has the potential to support power dynamics and judgments. I use diversity within the sociological framework that diversified urban societies lead towards "greater tolerance, rationality, and secularization of the person, although… (it possesses a) schizoid character."[25] How does greater tolerance come to be? I believe it is through the proximity cities force upon their diverse residents. Those who differ from one another regularly and mundanely interact with one another. They even mundanely interact with one another's diverse cuisines.

Diversity as a benefit to societies is not always fully realized. Krishnendu Ray, in his work, *The Ethnic Restauranteur* states that ethnic producers are central to Western, metropolitan culture; "immigrant designs" exist throughout all cities, sterilized, objectified, or hidden.[26] Diversity here is hidden. It is productive and important to focus on immigrant cooks, as they determine and upend urban social values.[27] Academics have long ignored the phenomena and weight of ethnic businesses.[28] I believe an understanding the importance and metrics of ethnic businesses resembles understanding the importance of ethnic, personal food practices.

Now, what does "ethnic" mean? An ethnic is a "visibly different immigrant… one that is too close to be foreign, too different to be self."[29] Stefani Gonzales, author of *Lessons from*

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[23] Ibid., 44.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Uherek, Zdenek. "Diversity and Social Anthropology." In *Diversity Research and Policy: A Multidisciplinary Exploration*, edited by Knotter Steven, De Lobel Rob, Tsipouri Lena, and Stenius Vanja. Amsterdam University Press, 2011. http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt6wp727.5: 25.
[26] Ray, *The Ethnic Restauranteur*, 24.
[27] Ibid., 18.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid., 1.

Immigration: Acculturation through Art, found that a similar term, immigrant, was created in the early 19th century to define migrants to the United States. It has since changed and morphed to mean any migrant from one country to another. As people migrated and laid down roots in foreign countries, food practices followed closely behind. Historians, such as Jeffrey Pilcher, studied for the first time the changing landscape of food through three intersecting fields: the great circulation of texts among certain regions of the world, the tastes of dining, as Ray focuses on in *Ethnic Restauranteur*, and the practices of cooking, at home and in businesses.

Krishnendu Ray highlights the importance of recognizing the ethnic immigrant restaurateur and micro-business owners in academic discussion. Yes, culinary imperialism is a real phenomenon, occurring with a "complete lack of acquaintance" that only deepens the "otherness" of "others." However, restaurants are an important source of income and autonomy for immigrants in the West.[30] An immigrant must deal with a "body out of place." By producing ethnic foods, one is able to show clearly what is not clearly seen in other cultural practices.[31] There is a dangerous side to the eating of immigrant or ethnic foods by dominating cultures.

The danger is in the idea of "eating the other" in which white supremacist, capitalist, patriarchal standpoints hope to quench their desire to consume and experience the primitive and fantastical "other." And by doing so, they exploit and enforce that title upon the "others."[32] I have observed, as has Ray, that "taste hierarchies exist."[33] Certain foods are marked as 'scary', 'gross', or 'cheap' because they do not align with the dominant U.S. cuisines. I see this in restaurants such as Taco Bell, Taco Time, or Taco del mar. However, as cosmopolitans fawn over uni or blood sausage, not a problem in itself, they in part assert that culture marks class or

[30] Ibid., 7.
[31] Ibid., 26.
[32] Ibid., 4.
[33] Ibid., 19.

socio-economic status. Pilcher affirms that taste as a concept has throughout history been an indulgence retained only for the wealthy.[34] Certain ethnic foods are deemed highbrow, refined, and worth the price, while others are popular when cheap, fast, or heavily Americanized.

Krishnendu Ray researches specifically emigrated business owners, while I am talking with primarily non-professional cooks. One interviewee exclaimed to Ray that "it is business. It is just business."[35] This highlights the difference in our research. Most home cooks are not running businesses, they are cooking for themselves, their friends, or their family. Some interviewees, however, did express feelings of obligation or duty, rather than pleasure or expression, in response to my questioning to why they cook.

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"*In reading lots and lots of cookbooks it occurred to me that people very casually say Spanish rice, French fries, Italian spaghetti, Chinese cabbage, Mexican beans, Swedish meatballs, Danish pastry, English muffins and Swiss cheese… White folks act like they invented food and like there is some weird mystique surrounding it—something that only Julia and Jim can get to. There is no mystique. Food is food. Everybody eats!*"[36]

Food is Personal, Food Belongs to Everyone

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Food is a tool for personal expression. Every time someone creates their personally or historically relevant food, they make a political statement. As explored earlier, food is political. Ray aptly states that "ethnicity is not detached from ethnic producers."[37] Food is personal. One creates it with their own body. The entire experience of cooking and eating with one another is incredibly personal and vulnerable. It is how familial bonds are often expressed, and how many

[34] Ibid., 12.
[35] Ibid., 35.
[36] Smart-Grosvenor, Vertamae. 2011. *Vibration Cooking Or, The Travel Notes of A Geechee Girl*, 1. Georgia: The University of Georgia Press.
[37] Ibid, 8.

of my fellow college-mates form new friendships. The table can be viewed as a medium for positive change. It makes one talk with another.[38]

Schoneweis reviews and analyzes the novel, *Pears on a Willow Tree* which focuses on the lives of Polish, Polish-American women who struggle with their identities. Many key parts of the book revolve around older generations passing down food knowledge. Food is a "powerful symbol of identity" and can signify the acceptance of an ethnic culture. Food is deeply connected to feelings and cultural heritage.[39] Here I can evaluate the disconnect between an older generation who better remembers their cultural heritage, the Polish mother, and a younger generation with a greater separation of their heritage, the Polish daughter. The generation gap is expressed in food culture and throughout the cookbook.

Emotion and food practices are closely linked. Throughout my interview process, many interviewees became visibly moved when recollecting various congregational cooking and/or eating stories. It is possible to express the emotion felt during food practices with writing. Gail Nomura explores this in *Filipina American Journal Writing*: a correspondent, Dorothy Cordova held a focus group in Seattle to write about memories and emotions based on the prompt: "The Kitchen."[40] A few women described vivid experiences: "the wood stove…help auntie and uncle chop and stack the wood…loads of canning…the weekend trips to pick the vegetables and fruits.."[41] It is often that maternal or paternal pieces of knowledge and affection are passed on when cooking or eating together. The act of a parent or parent-figure feeding a child is caregiving at its most poignant. Interviewees fondly recalled the various meals they enjoyed

[38] Ray, *The Ethnic Restauranteur*, 5.
[39] Schoneweis, Caroline. 2008. "The Acceptance and Rejection of Culture through Food in "Pears on a Willow Tree"." *Polish American Studies* (University of Illinois Press) 65 (2): 71-83.
[40] Nomura, G. M. 2003. "Filipina American Journal Writing: Recovering Women's History." In G. M. Nomura, *Asian/Pacific Islander American Women: A Historical Anthology*, 140. New York: Mew York University Press.
[41] Ibid.

prepared by a parent or family members. In some cases, the memories of eating together and taking care of each other outweighed the memory of the actual food at hand.

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"*As the saying goes, my relationship with pho began as a dalliance—a sometimes indulgence. When I first started writing about pho, I didn't know how much I would have to say. Now I can't stop talking about it*."[42]

Case Studies

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Case studies provide examples of personal and lyrical writing styles surrounding food and memories. I gleaned story-telling techniques that inspired how I organized each person's narrative. Two writers I look at are both women of color, which is important to see other narratives. I also read a Seattle-based project**,** *Our Table of Memories: Food & Poetry of Spirit, Homeland & Tradition*, which is based on ethnographic interviews, poetry, and art surrounding immigrant food memories. The language and stories here may directly inspire what I write about and how I frame it. A poet from Mexico who participated in this project wrote, "I believe that food is the blood and soul of our ancestors and that making food is an art.**"**[43] This statement gets across a point loud and clear. If an academic subject holds emotional and personal weight, it is extremely important to use language that gets this weight across to an audience.

Andrea Nguyen wrote a very personal and poignant article based on her food memories and historical research in *The History of Pho*. Nguyen's writing inspired the tone I want within my cookbook. She begins the article by writing: "Pho is so elemental to Vietnamese culture that people talk about it in terms of romantic relationships. Rice is the dutiful wife you can rely on, we say. Pho is the flirty mistress you slip away to visit… I once asked my parents about this

[42] Nguyen, Andrea. 2016. "The History of Pho." *Lucky Peach.* http://luckypeach.com/the-history-of-pho-andrea-nguyen/.
[43] Hecht, Merna Ann. 2013. *Our Table of Memories: Food & Poetry of Spirit, Homeland & Tradition.* Seattle: Chatwin Books.

comparison."[44] She brings the dish of Pho alive to the reader, while also offering deep insight into Vietnamese culture. This is done by telling a story about her family and the history of pho in tandem.

Verta-Mae Smart-Grosvenor has also inspired me, along with countless others, with her work, *Vibration Cooking*. In it, she switched between dialogue, story-telling focused on her life and loosely written recipes. She does not give precise measurements for many recipes, as they are recipes passed down orally by "gee-chee," South Carolina African Americans, family members.[45] Verta-Mae has helped me understand that my person- and culture-based cookbook should not be constrained by exact measurements or a stuffy tone. Certain recipes may be appropriated or not properly done if done to the quarter teaspoon. *Vibration Cooking* is an example of a combatant against the power dynamics within food, discussed earlier. I draw inspiration from Smart-Grosvenor's personal recipe style, as I customize each person's recipe in the cookbook to reflect how they cook the dish.

As I first set out to complete this project, I soon realized I needed aid with the interview process. How can I get the most out of fifteen individual interviews, through choosing who to interview, questions to ask, and conclusions to draw? *The They Voice* is an excellent guide for how to interview and work with people as it examines the complexities of working with people.[46] Orne and Bell talk about the importance of intentionality with choosing a group of people to study and/or interview. I am intentionally focusing on people I know who have ties to a non-dominant culture/ethnic group or those who balance multiple ethnic identities. I want to

[44] Nguyen, Andrea. 2016. "The History of Pho." *Lucky Peach.* http://luckypeach.com/the-history-of-pho-andrea-nguyen/.
[45] Smart-Grosvenor, Vertamae. 2011. *Vibration Cooking or, The Travel Notes of A Geechee Girl.* Georgia: The University of Georgia Press.
[46] Jason Orne, Michael M. Bell. 2015. "The They Voice." In *An Invitation To Qualitative Fieldwork*, 23-35. New York: Routledge.

interview people I know in some capacity, so they feel comfortable talking with me. It opens up a freer dialogue in which they can share their memories surrounding food. However, this decision excludes a wider variety of stories and faces, as I will have little diversity of ages and education level featured.

Orne and Bell's theories on 'multiplicity' and 'singularity' within fieldwork are important to my interview process. There are so many different and complex scenarios and people to engage with, while at the same time, on a micro-level, there is a complex singular experience of a single person, that cannot be simplified. I cannot interview participants as one-dimensional characters that simply fit into this cookbook. Rather the people I talk with are complex and rich resources who have the power to shape my work entirely. Drawing from *The They Voice*, I will interview in an open manner, allowing for a singular complex story to develop as the interviewee sees fit, yet I will still drive the conversation towards food-related memories, not allowing that complexity to overwhelm the overarching goal of the project.

iv. Methodology

Creating a thoughtful and unconventional cookbook required extensive research coupled with the traditional tasks of recipe gathering, design, and other content development. I decided to create a cookbook in order to delve into my project thesis of food practices as a reflection of personal and familial cultures. Storytelling and personally written recipes are the most comprehensive methods to understand this thesis. The context is an important piece of this project, and is featured in the prior section. However, the academic literature fails to capture the

intimate nature necessary in understanding relationships with food. I am tasked with creating a platform for unique and subjective stories based within the larger thematic context of food memories and identity, and in the following paragraphs I will lay out my methodological path in doing so.

Interviews

I held fifteen, hour long open-ended interviews aimed at giving each interviewee time to tell their story of growth, family memories, and food practices. I first set about understanding how to conduct effective and healthy interviews in this way. "The They Voice" is an excellent guide for how I wanted to interview and work with people for this project. In it Orne and Bell talk about the importance of intentionality with choosing a group of people to study and/or interview. I intentionally focused on people I knew who have roots in immigration or other cultural groups. Every person I spoke with did not fully associate with the dominant white American identity. Many of the people experienced immigration or self-identified as immigrants. Many others held multiple cultural identities.

I interviewed people I knew so that a baseline of comfort with each other was established. It opened up a free dialogue in which they shared their memories surrounding food. Time also constrained my ability to reach out beyond people I already knew. I incorporated Orne and Bell's thoughts on multiplicity and singularity within fieldwork. There are so many different and complex people and stories to engage with, while at the same time, on a micro-level, there is a complex singular experience of one person that cannot be simplified. I did not interview participants as 1-dimensional characters that fit into this cookbook. Rather, I interviewed each person understanding they are complex and rich resources who hold the power to shape my work entirely.

I anchored the interviews in a set of open-ended questions (see Appendix for sample questions). These questions revolved around getting to know the interviewee's *story*. Why do you live in Seattle? What is a fond memory you hold of cooking or eating? I asked the question: 'could you elaborate more on that?' frequently in each interview. I followed interviewees down their individual rabbit holes, so to speak, asking deeper and deeper questions within a narrative they directed. I recognize that within this project there are unavoidable power dynamics. I ask for specific memories from each person and guide the interviews. My presence as a white, U.S.-born woman may have affected the way I asked questions, which questions I do ask, and more importantly, the way people answer them.

Transcriptions, Stories, and Recipes

Each interview was recorded, so that I could transcribe them word for word later. This was the best way to demonstrate the character of each person. I transcribed the entirety of every interview, which took a lot of time. It took more time than I thought-- I often needed to rewind or slow down the speech, and each interview was over an hour long. I cut out anything I said as an interviewer and any extraneous or filler words. From this material I then pieced together a logical and narrative storyline. Each story followed a variation of: a person's current whereabouts and job/school information, a bit about their identity/experience moving or changing, a few memories of their family and childhood, a bit about their favorite foods and cooking memories, more about their family's food situation, and finally a section about their relevant food culture. I based this form off of the popular media format, Humans of New York (HONY). I along with millions of other people see HONY as a clear, concise, and honest way to portray another person.

A final piece of this process was to gather recipes in whatever method the interviewee saw fit. For some, they were comfortable with emailing a recipe. Others needed to translate their recipe to English, so I included both the English and native language versions of the recipes. I also cooked with many of the participants as that was the only way they knew to share the dish. Each recipe tells a story, so the process of gathering the recipes mattered. I did not copy down the measurements and techniques in a way that conforms to regulated cookbooks as an attempt to preserve what the dish means to each person- the directions reflect the way in which the interviewee and their culture or family cooks the dish.

Cookbook

I created a 60-page cookbook containing 20 recipes and 15 people's stories. The book contains a backstory and image of each Seattleite I interview, a featured recipe they offer with preparation tips and photographs unique to how they cook and know the dish. It has a 2-page introduction, including background context, the significance of this project, why this book is important to me, and the intention of this project. I kept the introduction concise and easy to read, as I want this book to be approachable yet respectful to any audience member.

Designing the book took time and intention. I wanted the design to be as respectful as possible to those featured, while remaining intriguing, colorful, and cohesive. First, I storyboarded the cookbook, and next I decided on a program to create the book. I settled on BookWright, an easy to use platform offered through Blurb (a self-publishing site). I created the cover (paintings of food used in various featured recipes) with pencil, watercolor, and markers. I kept to the theme of watercolor throughout. Each subtitle page had large splashes of watercolor, and each person's section centered around a unique color and watercolor pattern. I feature

photographs of recipe steps to aid in understanding what one will make. I also include photographs of each interviewee, permission allowing, to give a face to a personal story.

The featured dishes are tied to a specific person and their origins and culture. I place a real PNW or UW community member's face next to dishes that seem difficult to make, global or "exotic" attempting to demonstrate how local "foreign" practices are. I hope to demystify foods and people with a relatable story and a neighbor's face. The cookbook acts almost like a biopic, opening a door to each person's life. Although food preparation and practices may differ throughout, the enjoyment and nostalgia of cooking and eating with one another is something everyone can share.

Each mini section of the book feels different, mirroring each person's unique story. This method of writing allows readers to explore a new person and dish, and feel joy and excitement in doing so. It shines light on the joy and benefits of diversity. I hope to challenge reader's assumptions through the creation of this cookbook. If a reader chooses to use a recipe, the experience of cooking, eating and sharing the dish will connect them even deeper to that narrative.

Limitations

I faced many limits in the progression of this project. Time was the main limitation I had to work around. I did not analyze or transcribe the interviews with a completely thorough system. I transcribed them by only typing down the bits of narrative that I thought of as important upon listening through once. It would have been fairer to the interviewees and given me more potential material if I had transcribed our interviews completely before I chose the sections to feature. Seeing someone's words typed out allows for a more nuanced analysis and understanding of what they have to say.

Time also limited the number of people I had a chance to meet with. I would've preferred to meet with upwards of 50 individuals, to create a full-length cookbook with the potential for publication. This is something I may seek to accomplish post-graduation. Finally, I limited myself when I chose to only interview people I was personally connected with. Time influenced this decision as well since I could not devote too much to reach out to communities I did not know. It limited the diversity of individuals I met with and featured. I was constricted to people who primarily had or were working toward secondary education. The people featured had that privilege and therefor had the means to maintain a healthy and varied diet. The food we talked about they could afford. The demographic of Seattle, on the other hand, comprises a large number of houseless or financially insecure communities. I recognize that no methodology in a large project is free from limitations and mistakes. That is why it is invaluable to recognize and critique what was done unsuccessfully or left out.

v. The Cookbook

Memories of a Dish: Personal and Cultural Identities Expressed Through Food

vi. Results and Analysis

The process of creating this cookbook led to a number of discoveries. My problem statement was fully backed by the interviews. Food does play an important role in familial and personal identities. I think even more importantly I discovered how impactful providing a space for open and honest reflection is for people. The people I interviewed, in part because I knew each of them on some level already, delved straight into heartfelt memories and anecdotes of their families and their growth. Many were visibly moved, and a few even had revelations about various family dynamics during the interviews. A few got their family members involved in the process. I witnessed a strengthening of familial bonds and pride because of this. Parents,

grandparents, and other family members were proud to have their recipes and stories featured. My relationship with each interviewee also changed during this process. I felt a new and deeper connection to each person, almost as if I intimately knew them. It is not often that two acquaintances get together and spill each other's life stories. I did my best to preserve this intimacy within the cookbook. However, it was difficult. A face-to-face conversation is inescapably impactful, while a book needs to be well written or attention grabbing.

Another important concept I only began to grasp after I put the book together is that a person's story is more complex and confusing and long and winding than you could ever imagine. Their existence and stories are completely based off of memory, which is something that can alter over time. Taste and touch and smell or the sensory has the power to bring back a flood of nostalgic memories. Recipes and dishes are intertwined with these complex, individual memories. In fact, I found that food itself is its own complex entity that holds a person's memories, a family's memories, or even a nation's memories. While each story and recipe is completely unique, and I keep it that way, I have deduced a number of trends about the nature of identity, culture, memory, and growth in the context of food/cooking from each interview. Below is a comprehensive look at what I've found.

Food plays an important role in familial and personal identities

Most everyone I spoke with expressed that they had a strong relationship with food in one way or another. Many said they use food and cooking as a bridge to connect to their culture. Emily who self-identifies as Chinese-American mentioned in the first 10 minutes of the interview: "I would say honestly **the most I knew about Chinese was probably the food** that I grew up with because of my dad's cooking. My grandma's a really great cook and my dad is a

great cook as well. My grandma and grandpa were both born in China." For Emily, the closest she felt to her Chinese identity was when she ate her dad or grandma's cooking. Alice said, "My relationship with food is **100% influenced by my experience as an Italian**." For Alice, food matters. The way her family has eaten and the way she now eats is Italian. Whenever she cooks or eats she is connected to her Italian upbringing. Even when surrounded by American foods and habits, Alice remains to connected to her identity. Taso, who immigrated to the U.S. at a young age from Greece speaks fondly of just how important food is for him:

> "Food plays a big role in our family's identity. **Food is for me a reminder of the past. It allows me to connect back to my homeland where I was born in Greece**, the old homeland. It's also special because I grew up with the ethos that food is not just something that you merely put into your mouth, but it is an act of bringing the family together. It is a social act. **The idea of food is a celebration. It's very much part of our identity. You rarely ever ate alone.** On the weekends we try to eat together… The food that we had growing up was very traditional Greek food. Was a lot of soups, lentil soup, one of my favorite dishes is a soup with these big kidney beans and carrots, it's called pasolada. It's incredible. A lot of pastas- we ate a lot of pasta, a lot of rice dishes. We also ate a lot of fish, a little bit of meat and cheese. We made our own bread. We raised our own vegetables, wheat, we had olives, and made our own olive oil."

Food is a way for Taso to remember his past life, one that evaporated when he left for the United States. This relationship with food is one of comfort. Taso and his family believe that food is an important expression of familial and Greek values. Eating habits encompass Greek values, and the family is directly shaped by those eating habits. Food is social for Taso, and that social, celebration of food is at the center of Taso's identity. That is how he was raised.

Bhavya touches on how she believes in the power of food to bring people together. She comes from a large family who usually made an effort to eat together meals that her mother cooked. She says, "In terms of expressing an identity through food, I know whenever there are

neighborhood potlucks or other potlucks my mom always makes Indian because people always ask her to. So I think she finds it's really cool that people enjoy it so much, **so there is a sense of pride that comes into it**, but I think the main part is that **it just brings people together**." The food Bhavya's mom cooks brings people together within the family and within the community. Food also is an expression of family identity and pride within the greater community. Bhavya's mom is proud of her culture and family's food.

Nic too speaks about the entanglement of family identity, food, and pride: "One of the things **they have accomplished is good food**. Being able to feed their children. That is so important to them. The fact that they can put good food on the table is their source of accomplishment, their kind of production. **It's just what you do—you cook food for your family.**" Food is important in Nic's family because it is a source of pride. The family works hard to assure that everyone grows up well nourished.

Parallel experiences: Immigrants and Multiple cultures/ethnicities

I feature many people who are self-identified immigrants. People who immigrate to the United States at a young age so their parents can work, or people who immigrate at an older, adult age for educational purposes. Another featured group comprises people who hold multiple cultural or ethnic identities. People who identified as Mexican-American, Latina, Japanese-American, or Native American. Interestingly, these two prominently featured groups of immigrants and various cultures/ethnicities experienced similar, if not parallel experiences of growing up in the U.S. and food. Everyone I spoke with said they had thought about their identities quite a bit, as they do not fit neatly into one categorization. Both expressed the difficulty of identifying with one thing. They felt as if they were in between cultures, places, or

identities. Many felt that some aspects of their lives were shaped by one part of their background while another was shaped by a different part. Some felt as if they didn't fully belong to any country, culture, or ethnicity, as they were not fully rooted in one. Every person I spoke to, however, said they used food as a bridge to connect to one culture or background, as explored above.

Immigrants I spoke with all had a life that was shaped by their home country, and when they moved, that life was uprooted and transplanted to a foreign country. They had to adjust, to shift their previously cemented cultures and mindsets. And once they did adjust to living in the U.S. they felt a great separation from their country of origin. Some expressed a sadness when talking about this experience, while others felt it was more bittersweet. Taso touches on the nuances of this feeling, "For immigrants... you're always kind of in a difficult situation. You don't really feel part of the American culture. I'm removed from the Greek culture. So I live in this intermedia, **in this in between, sort of no person's land**." Rae, born in Poland, touches on this same sentiment, "When I'm in Poland I feel very American, and when I'm here I feel very Polish. So it's like **this in between** that's difficult. **So it's like I'm always a foreigner now**." Finally, Solmaz expands even further Taso and Rae's similar expressions:

> "**When you immigrate** ...**when you leave your country you will never belong anywhere** because a part of you belongs to your own country but, because you have moved out of there and you have lived somewhere else for such a long time, when you go back, you don't belong there because you have changed. You have developed in a different environment, but you don't fully belong to the country where you're living in, because for example, me, I moved to Canada when I was 25. I was an adult. I had a job. I'd gotten my bachelor's degree. I had a network of friends. I had hobbies. I had my network of going to plays, and cinema, and watch movies, concert, and everything. But, when I go back, they have-- for the past 10 years everyone there has moved in a different direction, and I have moved in the different direction, so when I go there, I don't really

belong. But at the same time, my past is very different from people here or in Canada, so I don't feel like I fully belong here either. There's that, there's always that, that belonging, **who am I**. I'm somewhere in the middle. **I'm somewhere in between.**"

All three, all immigrants, say the exact same words when attempting to describe a complex feeling. They experience feelings of the in between: in between to categories, two countries, two identities. I see this as a shared immigrant feeling and experience, a feeling of in between-ness. Balancing two sets of beliefs and cultures. People grow and change constantly, and that change can be dramatic when someone is placed in a totally different environment than before.

I found that some identities were bolstered by place-based attachments. A few people I talked with felt more in touch with one side of their identity because of their location/a place. Nic talks about his identity as a "white-passing Mexican." Not a lot of people know he identifies as Mexican as well as white because… "I am white... So in college I feel like I lost and gained part of my identity because a lot of my ties with my identity were due to the fact that I lived in Arizona. So I lost a lot of my Spanish moving up here, and it sucked." He felt more in touch with his Mexican side because of the culture in Arizona. When he moved up here he had to create other methods to remain in touch with his Mexican background. Madeline experienced a similar feeling. She says that, "It feels a little weird sometimes that I identify as Mexican ...because my last name is very German... My mom is full Mexican, and **I grew up in Los Angeles** till I was like 8. My grandma lives right next to East LA, so there is a very big Mexican population and then there is a Chinese population and then it's next to Rosemead, which to my understanding is Korean. **My more formative years were spent up here in the Seattle area**, though, but we'd go down there frequently because family is such an important thing in that type of culture." Madeline used location as a way to talk about her growth and identity. She knows Los Angeles as her Mexican-American experiences.

Jordan delves into the inner-mechanisms and experience of a biracial/multiethnic person in the U.S.

> "I think being a biracial person is knowing that **you're not really part of either group at any given point in time**. I could see that yesterday when I was with First Nations doing Pow Wow stuff. It's like this is kind of my group but I'm also like no this is a little off, so it was always kinda like that with the tribe. Also me being in urban areas makes it a little complicated… being like 'the city Indian.' I would get called hó kwat' by some of my family, hó kwat' is a sort of derogatory term for white people in Quileute language. It's the only word for white people, but with a negative connotation. It was a half joke by my extended family, on my mom's side in La Push. It's odd balancing my identities because it's sort of like your…Ok I'll give a positive side to it first, I'll definitely pull out the Native American card a lot like when people start talking about 'white people blah blah blah blah,' and I'm like 'whoa whoa I'm not a part of this; I'm an enrolled tribal member!' I don't know it's just this weird… I think a lot of time when people start talking about race and stuff **it's really difficult to find out where to fit in**, especially if they start talking about **privilege**. Obviously I'm light-skinned, to an extent I have that privilege- not outwardly looking like that, but in terms of certain things like education and stuff yes I am outwardly white, but I also have that history that Native American history to my family. My mom went to college but dropped out because she was not academically prepared for it."

Jordan experiences two sides, affecting his decisions, abilities, and privileges. Similar to the self-identified immigrants above, he talks about not feeling a part of one thing or another. He is extremely self-aware of his position in either group because he's thought extensively about how he does not cleanly fit into either group. I saw a few interviews ask- how much can a person identify with one ethnicity or another? Brady touches on this question, "Although I am actually a quarter Japanese... **I identify probably more than I should with that culture**. **I look white**. Like a white male, living in the US. But I've always really been drawn to Japan since a young age. I've always been close with my Japanese grandmother." Both Brady and Jordan touch on

their outward appearances, and the privilege associated with looking white in the U.S. Yet, their family's culture, whether it be Jordan's family ensuring he is an enrolled tribal member or Brady's close relationship with his Japanese grandma pull them both to a culture that differs from the white, American one. Some express alienation from their non-American identity. Emily talks about her grandma, "My grandma is an author and has published 25 novels in Chinese, but I just can't read them."

Old/young gap

Age matters in this cookbook for a few reasons. Many people I interviewed are younger and expressed how their cooking and eating habits pushed back against their older family members'. For a few interviewees, the older generation sticks to recipes, while the younger experiments and mixed methods of cooking due to the availability of ingredients and knowledge of more diverse foods. Young generations who immigrated out of their home country, for instance, were comfortable experimenting with new cooking methods. Bhavya and Jordan, both college-aged, spoke about old-school gender roles and cooking within the family. Jordan said, "My parents both love to cook. My dad -- it's almost very stereotypical, but my dad likes to grill and that kind of stuff. Then, my mom does more stove-cooking, baking, that stuff." Bhavya mentions too, "My dad does not cook at all- my mom does all the cooking. It's kinda her persona, and she's known for that within the community." In many cultures, it is traditional for women to be the primary, everyday cooks for the family. Women were the primary caretakers, and many of the people I interviewed grew up with mothers who acted as such. To clarify, I do not place a value judgment on any experience thus far. It is interesting that, although women of an older generation are the primary home cooks, the younger generation in the book did not seem to perpetuate that gender role.

Solmaz talked about how young people in Iran are changing the landscape of gender roles and cooking: "**The gender roles are changing in Iran**. It **used to be just women who cooked**, but now it's changing in my lifetime… a lot of my friends, especially girls who are self-identified as feminists or are more forward-looking, they even say that 'I don't know anything about cooking**, I don't want to cook**. I don't know anything.' Then the other interesting thing is that a lot of them would move outside of their realm." As the roles around cooking change, families' relationships with food change. With the onset of a social justice movement, say feminism, food is affected. An interesting point I will continue to make is that cooking traditions and dishes are ever evolving. The tensions and resolutions between the old and young generations result in a constant growing and changing food culture within families and within nations.

Traditions around food

Food evolves, but tradition around food and family is extremely important to many of the people I spoke with. Almost every person I interviewed went on at length about cultural and familial traditions of eating, cooking, and daily home life. Many had important traditions that were central to how many dishes were prepared. Solmaz talks about the knowledge of hot and cold food: "I don't know if you're familiar with it but in India, I know that there are foods that have cold quality and foods that have hot quality. In Iran, it is the same. **My mother's generation, some of my generation as well, we know what is hot and what is cold**… When you make the stew, you just let it simmer because **it has to come of age**. This is literally what they say, it has to come of age. When you let the stew simmer for a long time everything meshes together and there's one taste, I would say." These bits of cultural knowledge are commonly

known throughout Iran. Hot and cold foods guide how most people cook in Iran. This knowledge is portable, so Solmaz took it with her to Canada and the U.S. and continues to make sure all of her stews come of age. I see these cooking traditions almost as folklore that have existed for a long time and are passed from one generation to the next.

Mike too understands the traditional folklore surrounding daily life in Colombian culture. He said that at home in Washington, "The cups were gendered; the plates were gendered. Everything was very, very specific. She [mom] would say things like, 'Oh no no. That's not your plate, get up and pick that [other plate] up.' And that's also a thing in Colombia. Because people have a plate. People have a plate, if there are four people in the house, there are four plates. **It's part of a collective culture**." Mike touches on a very interesting idea, small-scale, specific traditions often tie back into the feeling and identity of an entire culture. Because there are only four plates for the four people living in a house this household is influenced by the collective nature of Colombia. A culture where people share and are always together.

A food or dish is often significant to a culture. Through these interviews, I found that this dish is tied to the location of a culture. For instance, Jordan talks about how important Salmon is to First Nation Tribes based in the Pacific North West. Salmon is plentiful in the PNW and is extremely nutritious: "If you go to any potlatch ever, you get salmon. It's all you get. It's salmon, all the time." He even jokes about getting sick of salmon often. However, this food, salmon, is traditionally and culturally significant to Jordan, and it will always mean family and tribal unity.

Recipes: A Story

The recipes that the participants shared helped to tell their stories. Each recipe features family anecdotes and memories, cultural traditions and practices, and oftentimes ingredients that

were place specific. The experience of gathering recipes for the interviewees and myself was an educational and uplifting one. Often, participants asked their family members for various recipes and stories, which spurred conversations and familial bonding. Emily talked about how her dad loves to cook and experiment, so she naturally asked him for one of her favorite recipes he cooks from. They had a long back and forth about the recipe for "Beef Chow Fun," and he even tested the recipe to make sure it worked. He also was thrilled about the creation of the cookbook and wanted to look through it with her. Madeline emailed her grandma, GranMary, who lives in Cincinnati for the recipe for the German-American breakfast, Goetta. GranMary sent a note along with the recipe, expressing her excitement that Madeline wanted to cook a family recipe: "I would like to prepare the goetta with you some da Madeline, so **I can show you all of the little tricks** to make it easy, and, also if you would like, or need, to prepare a much smaller amount of goetta. Love, GranMary." Her grandma then sent Madeline a package full of ingredients for the goetta.

Mike reached out to his mom for a recipe. This time, he was with her when he asked, and she dictated the short and sweet recipe, "Get a whole chicken and take out the insides and wash it. Rub salt thyme and rosemary all over it. **Treat it lovingly, like a baby.** Heat the oven to 400 f and put it in for two hours checking it every now and then." It covers everything a novice to chicken roasting may need to know; simple and direct. Her comment about how to treat the bird opens up a door into how she cares for food and for her children. She fed her children growing up and knows how to make good food. Since then, she and Mike have been talking at length about what food and cooking has meant to her: her memories, cooking ethos, and experience immigrating from Colombia to the States. Mike is cooking more on his own, too.

Nic, Alice, Solmaz, Rae, Rheame, Jordan, and Bhavya all reach out to various family members for recipes. Each held positive and enlightening conversations with their uncles, aunts, moms, or grandmas. I then got a chance to cook with many of the participants. They shared stories surrounding the food. We had a chance to cook through something they may have never cooked before because their family had always cooked it for them. When Alice and I cooked an eggplant, pasta and cheese dish we had a fun yet difficult time finding the right Italian cheese needed to top the casserole.

Like the traditions people talked about, the recipes were an important outlet for people to talk about how their culture cooks and passes down recipes. Dishes featured in this cookbook are passed down through a variety of different methods: recipes and cookbooks, orally, proximity to those who can cook the dish, through an expandable formula, showing and learning, and the internet/google. Solmaz, for example, expands upon the cooking culture of Iran:

> "The way that you teach or you learn how to cook is **through experience**, basically. You taste it. You taste the texture. You scoop the rice out, and you put it between your fingers. That's how you can tell that it's ready or not. In every Iranian recipe, it says, "Salt and Pepper as much as needed." **Iranian Culture is a highly oral tradition**. Whether there are recipes that have survived from our history, I don't really know. There are so many different variants to everything that you do."

Cooking is a reflection of big picture cultural beliefs and customs. Iran is a highly oral culture, so the recipes are learned through touch and are cooked in numerous ways. There is no one right way to cook a dish. Solmaz learned to cook this way as well. She would call up an aunt or neighbor to help her cook a dish. That is how things are done in Iran. The recipe she shared also reflects how she knows to cook it. She wrote the recipe down just for this cookbook, so you can hear her voice in each step. She shares anecdotes and advice given to her by her mother. Solmaz expresses her Iranian heritage and identity through the recipe for Tah-chin.

Access to foods

Certain recipes in the cookbook contain ingredients that are difficult to find in Seattle. This is but a fragment of the experience many people I talked with go through to find foods their family is used to cooking with. Immigrants must seek out the one specialty store in Seattle to get that one spice needed to make their favorite dish. Bhavya knows the one place to find a spice needed to make her favorite curry, and Madeline and her mom cannot even properly make the famous Yucatan dish properly because the spice is not imported to the States. Often immigrants or first/second generation families will adjust recipes to fit American ingredients. Alice coined the fitting term in her interview: "Americanize." Mike's mom Americanized Arroz con Pollo: "My mom would always make this meal called Arroz con Pollo. It is rice and olives and it traditionally has capers but my mom didn't put capers in it, and chicken. You mix in tomato sauce too. For a while, it was Ketchup." Bhavya's mom also Americanizes her recipe for Samosa's by using corn tortillas in place of the samosa dough. She loves how much time it saves, and it allows her to make hundreds for big family gatherings.

Many people also expressed difficulty with adjusting to the food system that is in place in the U.S. Zihao shared a story of when his parents first came to visit him in Seattle from China- he is on exchange for school. Zihao tried taking his parents out for various meals at Chinese restaurants throughout Seattle the first day. After that, his dad asked him where the nearest Asian grocery store was because they would only be cooking at home for the rest of the trip. His parents did not like the Americanized Chinese restaurant cuisine and preferred their own cooking instead. Zihao talked extensively about fresh food in China, and U.S. stores do not have the same

kind of freshness he and his family were accustomed to. Alice sums up her immigrant experience with American food:

> "When we moved to America... we had to start **working with a totally different set of ingredients**. We were **used to a very local food chain**- where you go to a small market down the street. All of the food is coming from relatively nearby. You eat seasonally. A lot of freshly hunted game, a lot of cured meats (that's what the area is known for). Suddenly we were shopping in these massive grocery stores—**it was much more highly processed and packaged**…
>
> I, honestly, **actively reject American culinary influence in my life**. And not just culinary, but the relationship that Americans have with food, with dieting, it's almost forced and uncomfortable. While in Italy, food is just the most fundamental and wonderful thing… because food has to be complete, especially with the social aspect of food. **I just remember thinking so much more about that fact that I went home for dinner every day, and some of my friends didn't**."

Alice went from a food chain that was local, small, and fresh to a system that was huge, globally sourced, and processed and packaged. It was a sudden shift for Alice and her family, and they could only do their best to maintain a similar food situation.

Learning to cook/ Habits passed down

Every person I talked with ran through how they learned to cook. Often, when they learned to cook, they also retained eating and daily habits from their family and the greater community. Many of the people I feature are college students who have just learned to cook, so the stories are fresh and often they learned to cook because they moved away from home. Others shared specific stories in which a family member would take the time teach them how to cook as a way to spend time with them, and others learned through a slow seeping of knowledge. Their parents cooked often, and cookbook participants would help out with various tasks at a young

age or just pass by the kitchen often enough that they learned how to do certain steps. A few also simply learned to cook on their own, but do say their cooking style is directly inherited from their family's.

Yuka talks about helping her mom because she just wanted to talk, and how she now uses what she learned to cook for herself in college:

> "Whenever she made food or she was cooking I used to bother her in the kitchen to talk to her because I like to talk to people lots. But at the same time, **I also wanted to help her make food**. And I really like cutting things so chopping up fresh vegetables was something that I liked to do a lot. I just helped out once in a while and then from doing that I know how to do certain things. But it's not like I did the whole thing by myself so I don't really know how to make it on my own. So it was good to have that knowledge so when I'm making my own food now, I can think, 'Oh yeah **I guess she was doing that before** so I can do something similar for this dish.'"

Yuka's experiences encompass many of the experiences other interviewees shared with me. Solmaz too shares, "**I was just seeing things**. I would **remember** how she did some of the cooking, some of the preparations, how she cut things, how long she would simmer…" Yuka and Solmaz were in an environment where their mothers cooked often. There was something exciting about the kitchen when they were young, and both were drawn to it. These habits, of cooking a certain way were passed down almost subconsciously for Yuka and Solmaz.

Jordan touched on an interesting idea- that learning to cook is a shared experience amongst many people coming of age. Everyone I talked to learn to cook, and that learning to cook signified a period of growth. Jordan remembers, "The first thing I ever learned how to make was just pancakes, **a lot of people start with pancakes**." A lot of people learn to cook by way of pancakes. Even if that's not true, Jordan remembers that moment within the larger context of the human experience.

Brady, along with a few others, remembers when his family asked him to help cook. Emily and Alice for instance cooked with their dads as a way to spend time with them. That is how they both learned to cook, and in return developed strong relationships with their fathers. Brady learned an important lesson from his Japanese grandma who loved to cook. Sh asked him to help her fan sushi rice in preparation for a family New Year's feast.

> "I would have to be the person that would **fan the rice to cool it down fast**. You have to blow it pretty quickly so it doesn't get sticky or gummy. And you do it by fanning. You know when you were a kid it was like 'I'm doing this for like hours!' But it was probably 20 minutes. 'My arms are tired!' She was like 'stay there you're not done!' **Like very tough on me**. Like 'if you're going to do this you're going to do it.' And 'you need to learn the toil of it.' 'This is what it means to serve people.' I didn't realize that at the time, but as an adult looking back that was what she was teaching me. **If you wanna serve people, this is what it looks like**."

In this story, Brady learned how to prepare sushi, but his grandma taught him an even more important lesson through cooking. He learned how much work it is to properly share food with others and cook. It takes time, and it takes a bit of energy. Cooking was the means in which Brady (and other participants) learned family and cultural values. Nic also sees that cooking as his family does is a necessary way to preserve family spirit and traditions. He says,

> "If I'm being honest, the recipes that they make aren't super complex, but to me, it's **important to kind of continue on that tradition**. Because the ingredients and the process aren't super complex, but **you gotta do it the right way**. Otherwise it's just not going to taste the same. My grandma and aunt cooked in a traditional way, stuck to the script, following a recipe always. My understanding of cooking has come from tossing shit together and seeing how it turns out. **The way I view food—as like a "you do this for people" has really informed my cooking**."

Nic, like Brady, took away a bigger theme from his family recipes. Cooking is something people do for other people.

How often parents cook, what families cook, and how they eat are all passed down habits. Bhavya articulated this point, "If I had the time I'd cook every single day **cause my mom makes fresh food every single day**." She would cook every day like her mom if she could. She was raised eating fresh food, and knows the benefits and is comforted by the memories. Her reality does not allow her to maintain her original environment. Alice, though, speaks to how she did her best to imitate her home life when she moved away to college:

> "And then **coming to college essentially just forced me to cook**. And that's when I realized how much I'd **absorbed** by watching and eating (and I essentially knew how to do a bunch of stuff that I hadn't practiced much… I could just do it). I think that came from a place of **wanting to recreate** what I had at home in a new environment, living with a bunch of boys, I would cook. Also, **I build relationships through food**. **As a good Italian woman I need to be able to feed people, that's in my blood**. I don't think my life would've felt right if I wasn't eating good food in the home, if I wasn't sharing food. I think the foundation of my cooking approach is Italian, but because I don't have Italians around for reference I kind of **Americanize** things."

Alice covers a number of themes important to this cookbook. When she moved out she wanted to recreate the positive home environment she grew up in. In that time, she realized how much she had "absorbed." She felt connected to her Italian heritage through cooking and needed to feed people as a method of self-expression. Essentially, Alice felt cooking was a core part of her identity, and even more so, sharing food and feeding people was "in her blood." She learned these habits from her time in Italy, but also from her Italian family unit. Every person featured learned about food from their families, and as they grew they had space and the ability to develop their own cooking and food culture.

Sharing Food

Alice, Nic, Brady, and many others in the cookbook felt that the central tenant to cooking and eating was sharing food either with other family members or friends. Food is a way to connect with other people; a time to sit together at the metaphorical or literal dinner table and talk empathetically. Many interviewees talked about average nights, sitting around in the dining or living room with their families rehashing their days over leftovers, a fresh meal or feast, or takeout. Sometimes it wasn't even necessary to say much, it was just a time for the family unit, no matter the size (some had family dinners of two people while others had dinners with ten people).

Emily and Bhavya painted this picture for me. Emily said, "Like a normal night we would probably just hang around and we would all have dinner together... **we always had family dinners which was really nice**. I'm learning that **that's not the norm**. People don't eat together anymore. My mom likes to take things slow when we're eating and cooking. It's mindfulness. Which is really cool. When my friends come over they're like, 'Oh my gosh, I want to eat here every night, I wish my family did this!' **It's caring about eating**. My mom created an incredibly **mindful and positive environment** when it came to eating." Emily felt extremely positively about food and family because her family frequently took the time to sit down together and eat. Now that Bhavya's in college, the family dinners she knew have slightly changed. She does make time to visit home: "When I go home, all of us will eat together, and just like talk about what happened **cause I miss a lot**. We might have a movie going on in the background or TV, but we kinda just chat. **I think food is important because it brings people together**." Bhavya is able to remain in closely connected to her family because of the dinners they continue to have. She sees food as an important tool that brings people together, which is something she and her family value.

For the many college students, like Alice or Zihao, cooking or eating together was a to "increase your friendship" as Zihao put it. Meeting people can be difficult, but delicious food is one sure-fire way people can bond and have fun together. On a deeper level, food is extremely supportive for some of the people I spoke with. Brady recalls a time in which he and his immediate family were going through a really tough time, and when his aunt and uncle invited them over and fed them, he understood the power food holds to lift people up:

> "A really significant memory for me was when I moved back home, my mom, my brothers and I moved back with my grandparents because we had to. My entire family was going through a hard time. I remember going over to my aunt and uncle's house and we would have these backyard barbecue/luaus, **and it was just to bring us together and to have a good time**. **Forget about the hardships**... And just be and enjoy and celebrate and eat. And that was when I realized the power of commensality. The power of my aunt inviting us all over to her house, being like look this is our space but it's your space, and we are going to cook and we are going to eat and we are going to drink. And it's going to be so much fun, and **we're going to love on each other**."

To Brady and many others, love and care are expressed through food. Opening up your house, spending time and energy to create something delicious and nourishing, and then sitting down and eating together is almost a religious experience for Brady and others in the cookbook.

Another way people share food is through the collective cultural experience. Knowing people in your community or greater culture can also relate to food habits or family quirks is a powerful shared experience for a few people I interviewed. Jordan talked at length about how many people in the Quilieute have similar eating and family habits, and often joke about them. Zooming further out, Jordan mentions make Native Americans throughout the country hold similar pieces of cultural knowledge:

> "I feel like cooking is really important. The **Native American side of my family definitely has a lot of social events based on food and cooking**. Whenever you have a

big family event, everyone pitches in in the kitchen. **Whenever you meet a native American, you can always talk about fry bread**. You can get into arguments about whether you use yeast or baking powder. There's a whole bunch of different arguments out there about what makes better fry bread. I feel a little disconnected from the culture now, ya. I've gone from my family, just being surrounded by that culture. We have Native American art everywhere, we have baskets made by my great grandmother all over the place and stuff. Then go from that, to this harsh, almost non-existent native culture. Whenever I invite people over to have food, I just cook everything myself. I think it's maybe partially because when we have a potlatch it's pretty typical what the menu would be. **Everyone there knows, this is how you cook this or this is how you cook that**. I can't be like, 'oh you! Come make this fry bread.' More recently I've been cooking a lot more potlatch food. I think I'm trying to have more native American food nowadays. To perpetuate or to continue cooking culture natives and just sort of share it with people to."

vii. Conclusion and Reflections

This project is far from over. Short-term, I still need to give out the 60 free cookbooks I printed out to everyone who participated and contributed. I then plan to continue advertisement for the free pdf and $9 hard-copy. The whole point of the cookbook's creation is the spread the power of a good story and a good recipe to connect people to each other, so a central part of this project is spreading around the book. I have long-term goals for this project within the next few years. I hope to add about 15-20 more participants of more varied backgrounds. Seattle is diverse, and I do not believe the current cookbook properly captures that diversity. I need to reach out beyond my own social circle and interview people who have immigrated here, are older and are in more varied socio-economic groups. I also plan on adjusting the design of the book to look even cleaner and professional via InDesign. With these changes, I will then submit

the book to be professionally published. I believe the idea is strong enough to be published as a marketable cookbook, it just needs more content and higher quality design.

Food touches almost every aspect of being a person alive on this planet. We would literally not survive without it. Because of that, this project took on an enormous size that I did not initially anticipate. In understanding the intersections of identity and culture and food/cooking, I needed to academically break down each topic. Food intersects identity and culture in a number of ways; in almost every way. Foods are a reflection of cultures- from a nation's culture to a city's culture, to an ethnic culture, to a community's culture, to a family's culture, to a personal own cultivated culture. They are all intimately intertwined.

Simply put, I could never have written an academic paper to explore these ideas. Every person holds a collection of memories of experiences that shape who they grow up to be. Every dish holds a serious of unique and personal memories. The only way to explore such a personal topic was to create a platform for people to tell their stories. Each story, each memory feeds into a larger book of human experience. A dish that Bhavya remembers cooking with her mom, may also be the same dish that her mom remembers cooking with her mom and so on. So while each memory is important in its own individuality, I believe it's an even more powerful experience to tap into the idea that every memory of every dish is a part of the entire human experience. That food is something we can all connect over.

It is of utmost importance that people work to spend more time with their food. Food has the power to teach we humans a huge amount about ourselves because food is a mirror of the human experience. If we take a good long look at what we put into our bodies and how we put it into our bodies, we take a good long look at our own selves. You really are what you eat. Throughout the creation of this cookbook, I have learned time and time again that any amount of

spending time with food, sharing food, and remembering food is humanly precious time. It is when the interviewees were often at their most human.

This project was extremely touching for me. On a basic cooking level, I learned about so many new techniques and ingredients, which is important to my professional development as a cook. This project forced me out of my own cooking comfort zone, and gave me the opportunity to fully explore a dish and cuisine, as I took the time to cook each dish. Personally, I do believe that I needed to learn about various food cultures. Before this project, I would often look up a recipe online, and cook it without thinking about where it came from or connecting to anyone I may already know. Now, that is precisely what I think about.

I had the ability to sit down for intimate conversations with 15 completely different people to discuss their own growth and change and delicious food. It is both uplifting and taxing to lend a truly open and empathic ear to that many people in such a short period of time (3 months). I did feel re-invigorated in the food I cooked, and in my role as a cook. The interview process, hearing how meaningful cooking and food is to every person, just confirmed that I am on the right path.

Appendices

Appendix 1

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Appendix 2

Example Interview Questions (Appendix Four)

Note: *These are initial interview questions to begin a conversation. As an interviewee opens up with a specific idea or story, I will ask follow-up questions related to what they talk about.*

What do you major in? OR What do you do? What do you like to do for fun?
Where are you from? ... if not from here, why did you end up in Seattle?
What cultural or ethnic groups do you identify with?
What is your favorite food to eat and why?
Do any of your family members cook? Can you elaborate on that?
Did they teach you how to cook?
Do you have a favorite thing to cook? Why?
Could you share with me a favorite memory surrounding cooking or eating a dish with family or friends?
What was special about it?
Do you think food plays a special role in your own or your family's identity?

Appendix 3

Full Transcriptions of Interviews

Emily Sun

In my town where I came from outside of Chicago ...was full of very upper middle class white families that were under the rug conservative. Nobody came out and said it but they definitely were. You knew they were. A lot of them probably voted for Trump. We just knew it. I identify as mostly American, but definitely I'm half Chinese and my dad's side of the family- it's kind of interesting because my dad's sisters are obviously Chinese 100% but all of my cousins are half Chinese and half white. Same as me.

My dad was really impatient with the Chinese schools that he put us in and didn't think they were good teachers so I didn't ever learn to speak Chinese. While some of my cousins on my dad's side, like one of my older cousins she was really interested in it and she lived in China for a year. My grandma is an author and has published 25 novels in Chinese but I just can't read them. Which is sad but also my dad said that he can't even read them because they're so complex because she's very poetic writer. She is such a character. She's like four feet tall and just so funny, so loud… Literary acclaimed. She's a little entitled to life. She's kind of snobby about education sometimes. She's like 'this person's not educated and they don't speak good English.' Nainai I call her. For grandma, if it's your dad's mom. If it's your mom's mom it's Bobo.

I would say honestly the most I knew about Chinese was probably the food that I grew up with because of my dad's cooking. My grandma's a really great cook and my dad is a great cook as well. My grandma and grandpa were both born in China. She came here to study at UCLA for University. My grandpa passed away a few years ago. My grandma lives in Washington DC. She remarried a long time ago and my step grandpa passed away pretty recently but I remember growing up with him. My parents are divorced. My mom's remarried. My dad's not. I'm pretty close with both of my parents now. I used to be not as close with my mom in high school but I was the classic bratty high school daughter. Sometimes I was a little bit spiteful about her remarrying my stepdad but I've always been pretty close with my dad. My older brother and I were always really close. We were only a year and a half apart. My little brother, we used to bully him a little bit but that was back in the day. Now, I'm really close with my little brother too. He's fifteen.
Like a normal night we would probably just hang around and we would all have dinner together... we always had family dinners which was really nice. I'm learning that that's not the norm. People don't eat together anymore. Dinner was always family time My mom cooked a couple things and she has her signature dishes. She makes a really good salmon. She knows pastas. My mom's a really good cook and a good baker. She makes lemon bars and all of these recipes that are my great grandma's on her side. My mom likes to take things slow when we're eating and cooking. It's mindfulness. Which is really cool. When my friends come over they're like, ‘Oh my gosh, I want to eat here every night, I wish my family did this!' It's caring about eating. My mom created an incredibly mindful and positive environment when it came to eating.

Whenever we eat out, my dad will be like ‘I can make that!’ And then the next night he'll try to recreate it. And usually it isn't the same but he really enjoys eating and tasting something and then trying to figure out how to make it himself. Which is cool. In the town I lived in there were no good Chinese restaurants and really, it's really hard to find like authentic Chinese food. So he cooked a lot. When I was in high school he would always be like ‘do you want to cook with me?’ ‘No, not really.’ But then, especially after, I would say my last year of high school I cooked a lot with him. It's a fun bonding activity for my dad and I. It's something-- I mean he loves food. He's kind of a foodie, so it's so fun.

And then especially when I came to school and went back for the first time, I was like ‘teach me how to cook all these things!’ We do a lot of soups, noodle soups Kind of like udon style, which is fun. My dad makes, - I haven't learned how to do this yet but it's so cool. You know how tofu comes in all forms. There are these sheets you can get that are like big circles and then he makes this Soya sauce sesame oil and just brushes it on and then layers this thing and boils it. It's soft and it feels like soft tofu but it's so good. We would make a big Chinese meal whenever one of us leaves and then all sit around and watch a movie together and have completely family style meal, you know.

Ryan Xiong

I like to hang out with friends and listen to music and cook. Yes, that's a true story. I cook maybe, six or seven times a week. Basically every day. I'm from China, specifically the south part. Jiangxi province, Nanchang city. The main reason I came to Seattle is because of the study. The experience, study in a different culture. Different education system, and I heard the American college is one of the best educational systems in the world. My parents, they encourage me to come here. I'm pretty close with them, especially with my mom. I'm the only one child, but I got a few cousins.

Both my mom and my father are very good cooks. My father specializes-- he cooks fish and tofu, fried tofu. It is spicy but not very spicy, like when my father cook's fish, he focuses on the fresh. It is fresh. The interesting thing, I see the difference between the supermarket here and China. In China, we sell fresh. What do we mean by fresh? It’s the one that is alive. Like we sell a chicken that can move around. Fish, they move around. Yes, and after we bought that fresh though, we just, it’s so brutal… We kill them. We kill them by ourselves at home. My dad and my grandpa. They kill the chicken. When they kill the chicken, I see blood everywhere in the—when I went to the bathroom or kitchen.

My mom is good at cooking everything but especially I love the chicken and tomato and eggs mom cooks. Some dishes that are very easy to cook because they’re typical homemade dishes. They always wanted me to cook but I was like ‘No, I'm not interested,’ but during the summer break of my freshman year I cooked with my friends at their house and I was so jealous like ‘Oh why he can make such delicious food’ then when I come back to China I asked my mom ‘Oh I need to learn cook.’ She taught me the basics. The basic skills that are called the universal rule, but that's the rule taught by my mom. So my mom said, ‘You just need to learn

like one dish and you can make other dishes.' It's like you are doing math. You know one plus one is two and then you know two minus one is one so that's the basic logic.

I cook very simple, so maybe like the fried rice and also brown rice and maybe one or two dishes. The dishes might be tomato and the eggs. And chicken, I like chicken more than pork, more than beef. The typical way I cook the chicken is fry, stir fry and add soy, and add some water, and wait 20 minutes, and put some peppers in because I eat spicy. But some people in China, they don't eat spicy, especially, this north part. They eat very sweetly.

I want to make friends with someone, cooking together is the way to increase your friendship. I think there are two main reasons for this. One reason is they want to be social. They want to interact with friends, with people, they just want the connection. The second and- and you can see food as a medium to help them to be social, make friends-- and the second reason is food is delicious. Everyone loves food. Everyone just loves food.

Nanchang Noodle

My memories, like my favorite dishes is one of the famous food called the Jiangxi noodle. Oh no, it's Nanchang noodle! That's specific to my city. It's hard to explain. It's basically like noodle, but it's not noodle [laughs]. I love to show my food from my culture to others. It tastes spicy, because people living in the south, especially the south-east like the spicy. They eat super spicy, but they are not the only ones that eat spicy. There are many kinds of way to cook the noodle. You can fry, and also you can just boil it… And the stuff on top, there are peppers, I cannot find the peppers here. I can only find in China though. I don't know, because they're homemade. These ones are homemade.

So in China, we have restaurant that only sells breakfast. They start their business in, like, an alley. If you want to go China and eat some delicious food, the place you want to take a look, it's not the place that we over advertise, it's the place, it's the alley. My favorite restaurant would be the one that downstairs -- just next to my house. And I ask similar questions to my friends too like where you always eat Nanchang noodles or what do you think was the best Nanchang noodles in Nanchang and they just answer is that, it's the one next to my house. Even though I bring them to the restaurants next to my house. They still say it's not that delicious compared to mine. I think it is about the childhood experience. I ate at that restaurant since I was in first grade. A memory- when I was a child when I was studying in primary school. My grandpa who is the father of my mother-- since I got up very late often and I needed to catch the bus-- he just went downstairs and buy this for me. And I take it and I eat when I was on the way to the school.

No, no you can't find it everywhere in China. I thought every city at least the big cities in China they have done the soup -- but until, I know some people from the other cities like when I was in twelfth grade and I know some guy from the other cities, and they don't know that dish. It only served in Nanchang.

I know here in United States; we have so many places that offer hotpot but they are not like authentic to the remaining. I think the reason maybe because there are different vegetables or onions or like I said the peppers, like because of the weather conditions or maybe whatever the

reasons, they just cannot get those peppers. Some foods here in the United States are being advertised as traditional Chinese dishes. You know I learned the concept quite before it's called the cultural appropriation. I think -- I think it's really bad. Although for my taste I think they taste not too bad.

Mike Gebhart

I play music and I teach music ...yes, drums and piano. Mostly Jazz music. I lived in Cali, Colombia about a month, right after I was born, and for the first 5 years or so of my life. I have this memory-- one of my first memories is of my grandfather- thinking my grandfather was my father. We eventually moved to a place called Lewiston, Idaho with my mom and dad- that didn't work out. They weren't really- yeah… it didn't really work out for them. Full disclosure, my mom has schizophrenia, my dad is an American white man who grew up pretty poor and my mom's from Colombia raised quite rich. They are very different people.

I remember, we didn't have a whole lot of great meals early on. I remember we would all go to the store and pick stuff out. That was always a big deal. It was like we'd go to the store on Sunday nights and then we would come back bringing the groceries altogether. There were some games each night where after washing the dishes after dinner, my dad would take the wash tubs and he'd roll up the wet towel that we used to dry stuff off, and we would play basketball and he is a really tall man and he would roll it up, throw it into the thing, yes. It was always the same way. It was like, my sister and I were sort of obsessed with who won and he would always sort of rig the game so we always tied in terms of the score and then if it wasn't a score, if it was based on judgement, he would always say, 'Well, on the boy's category Mike won and on the girl's category Mary Anne won.' We both hated that, we just screamed, 'No, there has to be one winner!!'

At some point, they started to make home-made pizza which was always like a nice treat. Around the same time, we had this Charlie Brown cook book. But then my mom said, 'Oh yes, you guys can make a cake.' We just made a cake and she'd just let us do it on our own. This is who she is and how she is. So my sister had just turned five and I'm maybe six and a half almost seven. We just took all the ingredients we saw on the list. We couldn't really read the instructions. Or I could read the instructions but I just thought that, 'You just take all the things that are in the list, you mix it in a bowl, and you just put them in bowl.' So we put them in a bowl and then put them in a tin, we didn't really mix anything at all and we just-- It was really bad.

I remember my mom made an advent calendar Where we'd get certain things, for doing tasks like chores. But I really remember she was like, 'If you do all the multiples of five or just various number in multiples,' let say seven, or something like that, 'then I'll buy you the Spiderman cap. Then if you can do multiples of eight, I'll make you these donuts.' And I had never, I'd had donuts before but she was making them for me and they were just like, a lot of oil, so amazing, and she made them. do not know if I actually appreciated that for what it was. I was so young. There's a lot of things that she did for us.

I owe a lot to my dad too ...about being able to deal with some tough male ego. From learning how to be around him. He'll scream about how he felt so embarrassed, how could he have a son that did this or that. And sort of being around my mom and her needing care and needing a lot of sensitivity. It made me sensitive to people and made me very-- always conscious of if people are comfortable or not. A lot of my childhood, I was just trying to learn the rules. I'm just trying to learn the rules from one person to the next. Both my sister and I had a lot to try and figure out. Good thing for us is that we were at some point, we became a team. We'd talk at night about, 'Why do you think he got mad about that?'

The more I've learned about culture and about how that plays out in music ...and how that plays out all in life, I see myself as Colombian-American. I'd say Colombian first because I was born there and because I'm much closer with that side of my family than the American side. American side, it's not because I'm not close with them, it's just because Colombian people just share more, and there is just much more order and there's much more collective society. There's no actual perfect Colombian or American or white person or bi-person or Asian person or lesbian, gay men or trans person, there's no, those are all theoretical constructs that exists outside of reality. Because I don't play soccer. I don't, I can salsa dance enough but I'm not like wonderfully suave or anything. There's certain ways where I don't fit into the mold and also if you look at it like that, the line between archetype and stereotype becomes pretty blurred. For some it would be like, "Oh yes, that's a pretty Colombian thing you said there." And that has nothing to do with it.

My mom would always make this meal called Arroz con Pollo. It is rice and olives and it traditionally has capers but my mom didn't put capers in it, and chicken. You mix in tomato sauce too. For a while, it was Ketchup. We would have that a lot. It was a big deal when my dad was like, 'I hate Arroz con Pollo, I've hated it my whole life.' The thing is, Colombian food is very neutral in flavor. It has a lot of rice, a lot of meat, but kind of unseasoned, if it is seasoned, it is salt and pepper but very light on that. The strongest flavor in Colombian food is a sour cheese known as Suero. You take-- what you do is you take a bottle of whole bottle of country milk and you put it in the sun or in the kitchen and you just poke a hole on top of it, and in the top bottle, and you let it puff up, and you pour out the watery stuff- -after about two days, and then you have the A lot of my mom's food is all that background stuff, but she'll also make American meals. One meal that always stood out was meatloaf with corn and then a baked potato. That was probably the most balanced meal type. Let's see breakfast-dinner was pancakes, eggs, and bacon. It was always Sunday, Sunday after we go to this tiny little church. I always felt, it was always like-- yes there were certain things to this day like the peanut butter sandwich made by her is still just the most comforting thing. It's like so perfect, yes. And there are these things that just meant a lot… The cups were gendered; the plates were gendered. Everything was very, very specific. She would do things like, 'Oh no no. That's not your plate, get up and pick that up.' And that's also a thing in Colombia. Because people have a plate. People have a plate, if there are four people in the house, there are four plates. It's part of a collective culture.

Chris Canlis

Being married takes a lot of time ...so I spend a lot of time talking to Alice. Some days just listening, you know, engaging in our family, conversations with three kids and eight grand kids. Alice and I were married in 1971. She is very adventurous. She loves change and new things.

She's very full of life! For our 20th anniversary we went to Greece, and one day, we rented a little boat. We drove out to this lovely island which you can visit… and we took off all our clothes, and we went skinning dipping.

I was born elsewhere ...but I finally came to Seattle when I was about six, then I grew up here. I went away for the normal things, college and the military. But then I came back, and have been here the last 40 years. I love Seattle. Being adopted isn't any different than anything else. I grew up with a set of parents, they just didn't happen to be birth parents. But my adopting father was Hispanic. And then he was killed when I was four in the Korean war. Mom traipsed around for a while, in fact we lived in Mexico City with my crazy grandma on the other side who is a camel cigarette smoking, poker playing, liquor store owner, who -- you know. We all went to Mexico because it was a land of opportunity. I remember a lady who was making tortillas right outside of our house on the sidewalk. She had two big bricks and a little fire in between and a piece of metal. And that was her stove. My mom used to send me out to get half a dozen hot tortillas. So good. Then my mother re-married, and my next adopting father was Greek, and with him came a Lebanese grandma. So I think, ethnically, Spain and the Middle East… I have always felt a part of. I looked the part, coincidentally, and I love the foods. So I grew up being influenced by my dad and my grandma. My mom was Germanic... a little cold compared to my Greek father and grandmother. She's keen on rules and regulations being Germanic. She was keen on education. The main memory I have with my mom is reading to us. She would read to us every night on lots of things, and she would take us to plays. All of the senses part of growing up, I got from Dad's side of the family. All the functional no-fun parts I got from my mom.

My grandmother would always get up very early and that's when she would want to cook ...so I would cook with her. She taught me how to prepare things like lamb stew. We began with a leg of lamb or a shoulder of lamb and she taught me how to do it. She had a dish called lamb kibbeh, which is raw lamb. I guess I learned to enjoy the preparation of the thing as much as the result of it. One of the things that I try to tell people is that generosity, giving away stuff, is a journey. It's not just giving away, it's thinking about it, and anticipating it, letting go of something. Maybe denying yourself something. Not spending it on you because you can avoid it and you spend it somebody else. All of that to me is like cooking. It's not just the eating part of it, it's the whole thing-- the shopping. Going with my grandmother to the Pike Place Market when I was a kid, she would handle everything. Fruit, she'd pick it up, stick it right in her giant Lebanese nose. I would say, 'Grandma!' First of all, she ignored everybody. Her English wasn't very good, and she could get away with anything. She taught me that that's what you do. She wasn't really somebody that-- she had no pretense about her. She just was herself. She was a key person growing up for me. We called her sito. Just to be around her, to be loved by her, to be taught by her, it was a real privilege and I always thought of it that way. I think what she taught me was the pleasure of preparation You hear people say, 'Enjoy the journey.' To me that means engage in that whole process. The idea of buying food already prepared just never occurred to our family because the journey of figuring out what to cook and going and buying this stuff, and breaking it down, and then eventually cooking it, and then eating it, that mattered. When you do that, you tend not to wolf it down because you value every morsel, because it took a while to get it on that plate. Ethnicities and food are all pretty and intricately connected for me ...being in a restaurant business, and having both a dad who cooks all the time, and a grandmother who cooked all the rest of the time. We'd make dolmas. So they were stuffed grape leaves. Grandma would make

those. But true to form, she would take us around. We could drive; she couldn't. So now I'm a teenager, and she would be looking for somebody who had grapes in their yard. When she found a house with grapes growing, she would go, she had me knock on the door, and say, 'Would you mind if my grandmother picks some of the leaves off of your grapevine?' Then she would take lamb bones that Dad would bring home from the restaurant, put it in a big pot, add water and steam stuffed artichokes and grape leaves in the lamb infused water.

Canlis Restaurant
He had the restaurant in Hawaii since 1947. He built the Seattle restaurant in 1950. And then mom and he were married in '54. So with Peter Canlis, arrived in my life, a restaurant.
Oh, it was so exciting It was. There was the ice cream freezer that always had ice creams. There were all these Japanese waitresses who had just, immediately adopted us. There are these customers, I mean, it was all so interesting and exciting. You can't think of a better place to grow up. But it was kind of like having a palace. We had a house. But when you enter the restaurant, it was like everything was neat and in order, with white table cloths, and everything was shined, the copper. So as a little boy, I was like, "Now, this is life." I was eight when my parents were married. And I just remember every part of it because it was all new, a new life. It was a new father. It was a new business. It was a new home. It was a new city. And he was very loving and demonstrative parent. And the Greeks did lots of hugging, lots of kissing, lots of telling you he loves you, lots of feeding your little face all of the time. And if he didn't, then grandma was, I mean, so food was a part of the medium of conversation. I remember that.

Alice and I also had our own sons in the restaurant So in the same way that I grew up in the restaurant, our boys grew up in restaurant. I mean, my dad died about the same age. When I first met Peter Canlis, my kids were about that same age when he died. So it was sort of like, a repeat of the way I grew up. A young father… And sons, three instead of two. Alice just made a commitment to have her kids in the restaurant as much as possible. So it was not acceptable that I would go off to work in the morning and not see my kids because they were at school and I was at work. So she contrived some way to make sure that almost every day, I had time with the kids. Now, to have my sons owning the restaurant like my dad did, and like I do, with them owning it. And seeing them bringing their children in… So I'm seeing go on when I remember and what I did and now I'm observing, it's just fascinating. I'm kind of sorry that my dad died so young because he would've loved to have seen his kids and his grandkids run the restaurant. From the day I first walked into the house, 'Oh, two sons. Great, you'll love running a restaurant!' I'm serious. Everything he ever did was preparing us to run this place. Because that was his thing to look forward to. But as a youngster growing up in it, I love learning everything about food. He was a good teacher. I have strong memories about how to use a knife, and how not to throw things in the garbage, not to waste things, how to label everything. A huge amount of the way that I am was stuff that he stored in me as I was in and around the restaurant. He loved food. He loved the business. He loved the people. So that's contagious too.

Yuka Asanuma

human-centered design and engineering

lately, because I'm part of JSA, any time that I'm not doing that school related stuff, I feel like I'm doing something for JSA. And so, in the past, I've made posters and just like doing more graphic design kind of things, and then spending time with my friends.
I'm from North Bend, Washington. I have two sisters, older sisters.

And do they both live in Washington or are they-?

One of them does, the other, lives around Washington, D.C. Last time I checked. I haven't talked to her in a while. She had a lot going on. She does a whole bunch of different things and I feel like she is everywhere and I just don't- I can't keep track.

You identify as Japanese?

Yes. I mean American, too. It's like a weird mix between the two.
Because in terms of-- A lot of the people that I hang out with because I hang out with a lot of JSA people, but they are not all Japanese people because they come from different backgrounds and they might be half Japanese or not even Japanese at all. They might have been born here or they might have been we're in Japan so it's like a weird like mix of everything so it's not like being with like people just from Japan or anything like that, but I guess there's just like references that we could make and we would get each other I guess, in that sense.
I guess a lot of like any entertainment related things like TV or like music or anything like that, like usually would be Japanese, and but at the same time it's like I'm here so then it's not like I'm going to be completely like away from**…**
usually I go to the Kansai area so then.
My mom side is from Osaka, so that's why we go to Osaka, and then my dad's from Mie

Is that also in Kansai area? How do you spell where your dad is from?

M-I-E They moved here I think it's like 28 years or something

For my dad's work. So I think they were supposed to stay here temporarily, but my dad ended up winning a green card, so that's why they just ended up living here.
They feel like there were a lot of things that were cultural shock, is that what it is? I guess they experience, I can't remember off the top of my head right now exactly what kind of stuff they went through, but I guess just like the language barriers. They took like English like they learn they had English lesson and stuff in the beginning, but because my mom was like taking care of us, she's kind of couldn't find the time to go take any more lessons, so yes they just kind of gave up on them, I guess.

Currently, do your parents still face a sort of language barrier?

I definitely do think so. So my dad since he works here he has to communicate with people in English so I think has a better understanding of English than my mom does. I am not entirely sure but it's still pretty okay and I mean he definitely does have a hard time saying what he wants to say but I feel like he knows it well enough that people can get the idea what you trying to say. That's the part I feel I know I'd say it would be English, just because I've been like going to school like all English feel like we're comfortable speaking English, but in terms of how well I can speak English I definitely have like a lot of vocabulary issues. I feel like both languages are just kind of very mediocre level. Just because I was never fully into one of them, I guess. But, at home, I speak Japanese, so yes. . If I speak Japanese with my family, it came out pretty naturally, but that's also because I just had that assumption that they don't really care if what I'm saying doesn't come out correctly or whatever, as long as they get the point kind of thing. But when it comes to speaking to other Japanese people and my friends, it's a little bit harder because there's that confidence issue.

It was also surprising that people are bilingual in high school. If people, they found out that I know how to speak Japanese maybe they "wow."
First is, if you're here, it's kind of, you know it's not that surprising like a lot of people, there's a lot more people so it's not a surprising I guess but - so I guess there's like nobody that I really connected to that much in high school because I don't think anybody really in the same kind of background as I did. But I think, it definitely would have been nice to have if we will similar to me like growing up at the same time.
I feel it was good to be in that kind of environment because I know you're that it will help me like developing in here…being able to like to see from different perspective of stuff like that, so-

My mom does all the cooking. **:** Yes. I did. Like whatever - Now that I'm here, and I don't eat that much of my mom's food and always wish that I could eat it. , I think it was pretty normal thing for us to all get together and eat. It's definitely a thing for my sister started working then definitely we all eat together. Sometimes she comes home late. Sometimes it would just be me, my parents eating together. And then it's eating first I guess and then my sister would come home later and then she'd join in or something like that, or we just wait until she comes. So what we usually do is we also watch Japanese TV together while we eat. It's a good way to spend time. It's even after we stop eating, we'd still continue watching TV together. I guess that's how we turned out we should get together because any other time we're all kind of in our own separate places and we don't socialize an awful lot with each other I guess. Everybody's doing their own thing. But I feel like around dinner time it's when we all come together so that's nice now that I think about it. [laughter]

how often do you guys cook non-Japanese foods?
I'd say I feel like it would probably happen maybe once a week I think. I can't really remember what kind of stuff that wasn't Japanese or what kind of dishes my mom made that weren't Japanese but I feel like spaghetti and stuff that would be one of the main things that we make that's not Japanese.
that I don't really like raw fish that much. But sushi is a major thing nowadays, or seafood in general, is something people eat a lot over there but I don't really prefer it that much, so I'd say eating sushi would be easier here than over in Japan. Because Japan is usually all just sashimi or-

While I was on dorm, I got a bunch of dorm food so that was okay. I feel like I always went through phases, so there'd be one-quarter where I'm just eating salad every single day. And then I also have a bagel phase. Just eating bagels all the time. But I think it was mostly just eating at the A for the most part.
I just remember going down there and going to every single place and being like, "Aw, nothing sounds good." You're just so tired of the food.
Whenever she made food or she was cooking-- I like to talk to people so I used to bother her in the kitchen to talk to her and stuff like that. But at the same time, I also wanted to help her make food. And I really like cutting things so chopping up fresh vegetables was something that I liked to do a lot. But I just helped out once in a while and then from doing that I know how to do certain things. But it's not like I did the whole thing by myself so I don't really know how to make it on my own. So it was good to have that knowledge so when I'm out there making my

own food I'm kind of like, "Oh yeah I guess she was doing that before so I can do something similar for this dish or whatever". I guess she'd give me advice on some things. It was never like, "Here I'm going to teach you how to do this kind of thing." It wasn't like an actual lesson or anything but--

And did your mom cook from recipes when she cooked?

Yes, she has a lot of recipe books. But she also looks things up online too. The recipe that I got for the thing that I sent you-- Cookpad is a huge thing that people-- At least my mom uses a lot too because I finally got recipes and stuff to--

Yes, for sure. Another thing about my family is that my parents we're pretty into food for the most part, even if it's not eating food at home. At least when I stayed at home. It'd be on the weekend they'll be like, "Do you want to go to brunch or something like that," or like, "Do you want to go eat out?". Then I feel like my parents, at least my dad- he's super into finding new places and spots. We would go to all these different brunch places. **:** Now that I think about it, because I'm here and I'm on stuff like I hear them saying stuff, whenever I talk on the phone with them they'll be like, "Yes, we just went to this place the other day, that place was really good," or whatever. Then they'll call me and I'm like, "I'm so jealous, I wish I could have gone with you guys." I feel like our food is a good chunk of what we talk about too, even when we go to Japan- one of the things that we were all looking forward to is the food, food is very important [laughs].

I'll try to see if I can find out. Okay, I don't know how to say this in English. Oden is like--. Here, I'll show you a picture. So, it's like this and it's a-- There's some kind of cup hot dish, sort of. There are different things in there like daikon. I don't know what this called. I think daikon is probably the main vegetable. I'd say that's most usually vegetable in there.

And there's like fish, meat, I think maybe like fish balls. Something like I can be in there. I don't - I don't know how to describe all of these things but -

Osaka I think is known for its takoyaki and okonomiyaki. Do you know what those are?

Yes, it's like the savory pancake. So okonomiyaki is the savory pancake and takoyaki- is the octopus balls or whatever people call them-- Those round things.

I prefer ones made at home more.

So when we're in Japan, usually we just go out and eat because it's too much of a hassle to cook there because if we cook it would probably be at my grandma's place, but we don't usually stay there for that long, so we just buy stuff and then just bring it back home and eat it or we just eat out. There's a lot of Katsu places and stuff so.

It's either we eat Katsu or noodles like Ramen, like Soba

Solmaz Shakerifard

I was born and raised in Iran. I was born in a city called Mashhad. It's a city in Northeast of Iran. I was born there but I grew up in Tehran which is the capital. My parents wanted me to become either a doctor or an engineer, I didn't. I wanted to study music, but they kept telling me, "You can't make a living, with music. That's not what you are going to do." I protested, but then I got into the university for Physics. I just continued, and it just happened that the immigration process to go to Canada for music school took so long that I happened to graduate with a Bachelors in Physics. I moved to Canada in 2007. I realized that I want to study the music of my own

country, ethnomusicology, which when I was there, I was not really familiar with. The exchange between western music with the rest of the world is this feeling that, western art music is superior because they have large orchestras, because they have harmony and all these bigger names, it's perfect. This is what's driving my research, where the questions started- I'm looking at the influences of western art music on the music of Iran.

My mom always cooked fresh food. It was very important for her to cook healthy meals. Not a lot of fats, not a lot of salt. Nothing fried. So you have breakfast and then the main meal is lunch. You eat a big lunch and the philosophy behind that is that morning you have to work and then you have the rest of the day ahead of you so you need to give your life the food that it needs to get -- And then we usually eat dinner late. I do this as much as I can still, I don't like eating a large meal during the night. It's harder though in the US than it was in Canada. When they say that life has a faster pace in the US, it's so true. I feel like I'm changing and my boyfriend is changing. We feel like our friends back in Canada are not ambitious enough. It's that the pace of life is just going so fast. I'm always doing something else while eating. Almost always.

Growing up, my mom was very strict about school. She never let me help in the kitchen. Every time I went to the kitchen she was like, 'Get out of my kitchen! Go study!' 'I'm done with my homework.' 'Go practice piano… Get out of the kitchen!" She never taught me how to cook. It wasn't something that occurred to me that that's something that you need to learn. When I was 21, my brother was diagnosed with cancer. As part of his treatment, my mom and my brother had to go to Canada. He got his admission to the hospital. All of a sudden, they left me. My mom when she moved, she was like, 'I'm doing this for my boy,' and she never looked back. She doesn't have any family there, but she was like, 'I'm not going back because if I go back, my son is sick and he's not safe because of his health condition,' She's an awesome woman.

I didn't know how to cook; I didn't know how to do anything around the house because I had never touched anything. So, I started learning. I was alone and so two of my cousins came to stay with me. I think it was during that month that I slowly, slowly learned the basics of cooking well. I would call my aunts and ask questions. I never stood and watched my mom do something, but I was always passing. It feels like some of the information was just-- I was just seeing things. I would remember how she did some of the cooking, some of the preparations, how she cut things, how long she would simmer…

When you immigrate, when you leave your country you will never belong anywhere because a part of you belongs to your own country but, because you have moved out of there and you have lived somewhere else for such a long time, when you go back, you don't belong there because you have changed. You have developed in a different environment, but you don't fully belong to the country where you're living in, because for example, me, I lived in Canada when I was 25. I was an adult. I had a job. I'd gotten my bachelor's degree. I had a network of friends. I had hobbies. I had my network of going to plays, and cinema, and watch movies, concert, and everything. But, when I go back, they have-- for the past 10 years everyone there has moved in a different direction, and I have moved in the different direction, so when I go there, I don't really belong. But at the same time, my past is very different from people here or in Canada, so I don't feel like I fully belong here either. There's that, there's always that, that belonging, who am I. I'm somewhere in the middle. I'm somewhere in between. I know that the Iranian government is not

going anywhere anytime soon. I do not think that with my background, with my family background, with what I'm seeing, I can have a job there, I can have a career there. I don't think that I would be accepted there. A lot of people on my generation, mostly my generation, who moved from Iran, and a lot of my generation moved out of Iran, I don't-- I have 15 cousins in total. Right now, only two of them live in Iran. It takes time, but I am still eating Iranian, mostly Iranian food.

Cooking in Iran

The gender roles are changing in Iran. It used to be just women who cooked, but now it's changing in my lifetime… a lot of my friends, especially girls who are self-identified as feminists or are more forward-looking, they even say that 'I don't know anything about cooking, I don't want to cook. I don't know anything.' Then the other interesting thing is that a lot of them would move outside of their realm. They start getting into cooking in a different way, so experimenting with food, baking bread. Things that middle-class women - their mother's generation wouldn't have thought.

There is a little village close to Mashhad and they have amazing food. I remember that. Yes. They have just amazing food and they have all these things that are completely Iranian, they don't even exist in the west. They have a lot of plums there. They have different kinds of plums and they're really sour, so they dry the plums to some extent but not completely, then, they squish them on a surface and they create this paste. Very thin. At first, it's a paste then they dry that paste under the sun and it comes this really thin layer of this really sour thing. They also have very good meat there. They are really good at making different kinds of grilled meat, kebabs, in Iran, there is this -- this is a concept that exist in a lot of Eastern cultures.

I don't know if you're familiar with it but in India, I know that there are foods that have cold quality and foods that have hot quality. In Iran it is the same. My mother's generation, some of my generation as well, we know what is hot and what is cold. It is just how it is, and whenever you are creating a meal you are supposed to balance that out. So, for example, you have a celery stew. Celery is cold and you make the celery stew with celery and celery leaves and beef, so stew and beef, and then what you add to it is parsley and mint. Mint is warm. So, mint is supposed to neutralize the coldness of the celery, because if you eat that without the mint, you would have gas and you will have stomach aches. Too much celery will give you stomach aches. The mint helps combat that.

Here's the thing, the way that we use them is that we put them in the stew. You cook the stew, you let it simmer for a few hours because that's an Iranian thing. When you make the stew, you just let it simmer because it has to come of age. This is literally what they say, it has to come of age. When you let the stew simmer for a long time everything measures together and there's one taste, I would say.

We have many different kinds of bread, and the breads are not like the Western kinds like loaves. No, we don't have any of that. All of the breads are flatbreads, different kinds of flatbreads. There are different techniques of how to bake them. Yes, so mostly bread and stews and something that we call Āsh, that's something between a soup and a stew. And then there's saffron, it's really important. You add just a little bit of it to every stew.

The way that you teach or you learn how to cook is through experience, basically. You taste it. You taste the texture. You scoop the rice out, and you put it between your fingers. That's how you can tell that it's ready or not. In every Iranian recipe, it says, "Salt and Pepper as much as needed". It never says how many grams, never. Iranian Culture is a highly oral tradition. Whether there are recipes that have survived from our history, I don't really know. There are so many different variants to everything that you do. All of the stews that we make, there are so many varieties from this part of the country to another part of the country. Or, 'In this family tradition, they are used to eating it this way,' and that is completely fine. 'Oh interesting, let me try that. I don't really like it, oh it's okay.'

Jordan Remington

Jordan my other focus is fostering urban Native American communities and three CEP
I'm from Olympia Washington, technically born in Port Angeles. If you want to be an enrolled member of a Native American tribe you have to be born in a certain area or at least for the Quileute's- different tribes have different criteria so I was born in port Angeles and I grew up in my real early childhood was in a little town called in Chimacum (Eastern Olympic peninsula, agricultural) like I remember we had some apple trees a little garden and then I remember behind the house slipped up the hill at the top of the hill there was a fence and on the other side that was cow pastures so every once a while up above the hill some cows would be walking around
So within to be in the Quileute tribe you have to be 1/8 to be able to be registered with the tribe and then you have to be born within a certain area like I said. I think being a biracial person is knowing that you're not really part of either group at any given point in time, like I could see that yesterday when I was with First Nations doing Pow Wow stuff. It's like this is kind of my group but I'm also like no this is a little off, so it was always kinda like that with the tribe. Also me being in urban areas makes it a little complicated… being like the city Indian. I would get called Howqua by some of my family, Howqua is a sort of derogatory term for white people in Quileute language. It's the only word for white people, but with a negative connotation. It was a half joke by my extended family, on my mom's side in La Push.

It's odd balancing my identities because it's sort of like your…Ok I'll give a positive side to it first, I'll definitely pull out the Native American card a lot like when people start talking about 'white people blah blah blah blah,' and I'm like 'whoa whoa I'm not a part of this; I'm an enrolled tribal member!' I don't know it's just this weird… I think a lot of time when people start talking about race and stuff it's really difficult to find out where to fit in, especially if they start talking about privilege. Obviously I'm light-skinned, to an extent I have that privilege- not outwardly looking like that, but in terms of certain things like education and stuff yes I
am outwardly white, but I also have that history that Native American history to my family. My mom went to college but dropped out because she was not academically prepared for it. The first person on my mom's family to get a college education was my cousin back in 2008 and since then my brother got his, and I know I would be the third and the family… and that's including our extended family. When people start talking about that it's like you either have privilege or you don't, but for me I feel like I'm personally somewhere in the middle. I've heard other people, particularly people who move off the reservation to seek a college education, talk about how there's a lot of tension in their family at the fact that they're getting a college education… Almost like they're put down for abandoning the tribe and their culture to come to

the city and get this prestigious education. This is this weird urban, reservation divide, that I don't think should exist, but it does.

My parents both love to cook. My dad -- it's almost very stereotypical, but my dad likes to grill and that kind of stuff. Then, my mom does more stove-cooking, baking, that stuff. When I was a little kid, I was obsessed with shrimp fettuccine. They'd ask you what you'd want for your birthday dinner. That was pretty much what I always chose. I have three cousins that work on fishing and crabbing boats. A lot of times, my Mom will just get crab and fish from them and that just spreads it out to the family. For winter break, she had a giant ice chest full of Dungeness crab… my favorite!

The first thing I ever learned how to make was just pancakes. A lot of people start with pancakes. That was the first one I can remember making, at least on my own. I'd help my mom cook a lot of stuff. My family was very carnivore! When I cook now, I cook vegetarian. Partially for ethical reasons. I think, a lot of it is more, sustainable consistence. My personal opinion is that as a society, we don't need to go full vegetarian, but less meat… we eat way too much meat.

I feel like cooking is really important. The Native American side of my family definitely has a lot of social events based on food and cooking. Whenever you have a big family event, everyone pitches in the kitchen. Whenever you meet a native American, you can always talk about fry bread. You can get into arguments about whether you use yeast or baking powder. There's a whole bunch of different arguments out there about what makes better fry bread.

I feel a little disconnected from the culture now, ya. I've gone from my family, just being surrounded by that culture. We have Native American art everywhere, we have baskets made by my great grandmother all over the place and stuff. Then go from that, to this harsh, almost non-existent native culture. Whenever I invite people over to have food, I just cook everything myself. I think it's maybe partially because when we have a potlatch it's pretty typical what the menu would be. Everyone there knows, this is how you cook this or this is how you cook that. I can't be like, 'oh you! Come make this fry bread.' More recently I've been cooking a lot more potlatch food. I think I'm trying to have more native American food nowadays. To perpetuate or to continue cooking culture natives and just sort of share it with people to.

Quileute Food

There's a lot of food and eating in Quileute identity. The biggest one is seafood and salmon. Pretty much all the coastal tribes fish bakes, which I don't know if you've seen. You take the whole filet of salmon, and then you have fish sticks, which are basically just these sticks that have a slit in them, like a clamp. Then you just weave the salmon through pieces of cedar bark or strips of cedar, that are like clamping sticks. We usually make a lot of those. Then over a fire, you stick it into the ground, and then the fire cooks it. It takes a long time to make. You can't bring it too close, otherwise it will just burn. You have to keep it further away. It takes three hours. We don't have that very often. If you go to any potlatch ever, you get salmon. It's all you get. It's salmon, all the time. There's an event called Tribal Journeys. Basically, all the tribes of the northwest, they'd come together and they paddle from one tribe to another to another, until

they've reached their destination tribe. My grandma did that. She said, she got so sick of salmon by the end of it, because every tribe that hosted them would give them salmon.

Just in general, salmon really, but especially smoked salmon is big. A lot of people like to do too much stuff to it. I think Native-American cooking is very simplistic, and you just let the salmon speak for itself kind of a thing. My grandpa, everyone loves his smoked salmon and all he ever did was salt it. Then, he just had a method of smoking it. My brother learned how to do all of that. Now, he makes really good smoked salmon.

There's Indian fry bread, which is such a pain to make. So good, but such a pain to make. It came out after the reservation systems were in place. The government would supply some food to native Americans to sustain them. Hence, a lot of their traditional foods gathered from home were no longer available to them. They received basics like flour and sugar, and fry bread came out from cooking from those supplies.

Bhavya Kumar

I am a biology and biochemistry double major with a minor in Spanish, and I speak it fluently. I also speak Punjabi and Hindi. I love to dance, Giddha. I do love to cook. And I love being around water, so Gasworks and Alki are my favorite places to go. I am from Seattle, but born in India, but I moved here when I was 6 months old. I applied to schools in Seattle; my dad was like OK with me going out, but my mom was like no you're going to stay in Seattle. I was born in Phagwara (of Punjab, India), but I spend my time in Ludhiana because that's where my family is. All my dad's side is from Phagwara, but they all moved to the states, PNW. And all of my mom's side of the family live in Ludhiana. I went back last the summer of my sophomore year for 3 weeks to a month, but before that it had been 10 years. I probably won't go for the next 4-5 years to be honest. It's time-- I can't go in the school year and the summers are just miserably hot. My mom goes back every 2 or 3 years.
My dad's whole family is here, so at one point we were all living in the same house. That was him ad his two brothers, and they each have 3 kids, so there were 15 of us in a house. Which was cool- we did that for a few years, and then we just kind of went our own way. My dad was here first, and then his brothers came a few years later. It was hectic, but it was a good hectic because we'd always have something going on, someone to hang out with, something to do. There were 7 of us cousins, and 3 of them were older, and the other 4 of us were all like 2 or 3 years of each other. I'm the 2nd to last youngest.

I identify as Punjabi. And as an American. The dual identity comes into play a lot. There's actually this quote, I don't know if I could find it, but it's a really good description about what it's like to be an immigrant, it's like: "you're too foreign for home, but you're too foreign for here as well" so it's like you're stuck in between. There are times when you're more Indian, and there are times when you are more American, but I feel like you're never 100% either because your experience doesn't allow you to be. In that sense it's really cool because you get to be both. I actually speak mainly English with my parents, but Punjabi strictly with my grandparents. My dad's parents live with us. I live with my parents and grandparents.
I would say yes, I have a favorite dish. I think there's two though... I don't know if I could choose between the two. So, my mom's veggie enchiladas. Veggie cause I'm a

vegetarian. Aaand Shahi paneer. It's the same gravy as butter chicken but it has paneer. I've been vegetarian my whole life along with my parents. It's religious, so. My whole family is. My dad does not cook at all- my mom does all the cooking. She cooked mainly Indian, with a few days here and there where we would have American food, Mexican food, another ethnicity. My grandma did some cooking sometimes, but it was mainly my mom. She's old now. Her eyesight is not that great, so it's hard for her to see how much she's pouring in and stuff- too much salt. When we lived together my aunts sometimes, but even then, a lot of it was my mom.
It's kinda her persona, and she's known for that within the community. She loves to cook from her mom, yeah her mom. My grandma from my mom's side was probably the best cook that I've ever known. So my grandma had four daughters and one son. And my mom was the youngest, so she spent the most time with my grandmother cause the older ones moved out when they got married and stuff. They used to bond over cooking a whole lot cause back in the day that's primarily what the women did, so that's when she'd bond with her. They'd always find like new things to try, new recipes and stuff. Yeah my mom and I cook together. Whenever I go home for the weekends we cook together. That's what we do.
When thinking about, the first thing that comes to mind very clearly was when I messed something up. So in Indian cooking when they teach you how to cook there's no measurements really- it's kind of like throw some salt in there- but they know, right? So she told me to add the salt, and I was like 'how much' and she was like 'I dunno just add the salt' and so she's watching me do it and she got like really frustrated that I just didn't get the concept of how much would go in. When they grew up they didn't have measurements, they kinda just did it by- a pinch here a pinch there. I didn't add enough, and then afterwards, she was like I told you it needed more salt. Just spices in general- she always said I didn't add enough. I think when I was first learning, probably like 17, I did that. I think I wasn't interested in learning when I was young, like I had been watching her cook when I was like 10. But I didn't do anything till I was like 17. My grandma lived with us when I was in like 4th grade, so I never cooked with her, I was too busy playing kickball outside. I wish I had taken that opportunity when I had it, but I was too young to realize. Definitely all the kids and our grandparents and whoever was home ate together when we all lived together, but all the parents had different work schedules. I have one memory when we were all outside all day, all the kids were outside all day playing around. And we got really dirty, and we were like- we're really hungry, and they were like- no you have to go wash up first. But all of us basically went on strike, and we were like 'no we're not going to wash up, we want food." So instead of eating inside, we ate, like all the kids, ate in the garage. They put down a sheet in the garage on the floor because we refused to clean up. They were like OK fine, if you can't wait to wash up, then you're going to have to eat in the garage. As a kid you definitely feel like you won that one.

Throughout he school year I only cook at home, maybe I'll cook like once a week. I wish I had more time. For the first two years in school I lived in a dorm and didn't even have a kitchen. If I had the time I'd cook every single day cause my mom makes fresh food every single day, from scratch every single day. Relaxing is important, I think, and I view cooking that way. Cause now when I'm home over the weekend we eat all our meals together. When I'm not home my parents and my grandparents will eat. But when I am home, all of us will eat together, and just like talk about what happened because I miss a lot. I'm gone for like 4 days 5 days, so we get to just catch up. We might have a movie going on in the background or TV, but we kinda just chat.

I love cooking enchiladas. I also love making sandwiches! Avocado paninis. I have a panini press. There is a running joke, that if I wasn't going to med school, I would have a sandwich shop because I looove making sandwiches. I don't know what kind of medicine I want to go into.
I think food is important because it brings people together. In terms of expressing an identity through food, I know whenever there are neighborhood potlucks or other potlucks my mom always makes Indian because people always ask her to. So I think she finds it's really cool that people enjoy it so much, so there is a sense of pride that comes into it, but I think the main part is that it just brings people together.

I don't want to say it's pretty uncommon for the males to cook in Punjabi families because there are families where only the males do the cooking, but in my family, in my extended family, there aren't any families that do- ohhh one of my uncles can cook, but I have four. Indian restaurants are good- I think there are a few that I think are good. I think Cedars is good, and I think Saffron Grill in Northgate is good. But in terms of the legitimacy of the food- that food that they cook is catered to gourmet cooking. So it's like really cooking, and daily cooking doesn't involve that much cream, it's a lot more water and broth based. The food that you get in restaurants, even dishes that don't traditionally have cream in them, will have cream in them because it adds flavor and texture. Naan is not something that people eat every day, you eat tortillas everyday. Naans are considered a special occasion. Butter chicken, Shahi paneer all that stuff yes it is a part of cuisine, but it's not something you would eat every day, it's something you'd have for special occasions.

Vegetables are really common, like cauliflower, potatoes, carrots, peas, uhm radishes, but they're not cooking in cream, they're cooking usually in water or broth with a tomato base. I'd say 80% of the lentils or vegetables have a tomato base: tomatoes, onions, garlic, and spices. Ginger and cumin are in every single one (dish). Garam masala goes in a lot, almost every single one as well. There are different spices that go into some dish that don't go into other dishes.
For samosa's do you know what works really well? If you use just store bought tortillas, like the ones used for making burritos. If you cut those in half, and then to make the ends stick just put a little bit of self-rising flour and water, and make like a paste. Self-rising flour is stickier than anything else. It should be like sticky. And then paste it entirely on the half, and then stuff it, and then you just stick it, the paste will help you stick it. My mom taught me that trick. She did it here. Like I said, she's always trying things. It's really- it's easier.

Spice levels depend on the family. So my family is like medium spice level, but my roommates, they eat really spicy food. It really just depends on the family, and the taste of the family. My dad doesn't like spicy food that much. There are some dishes I like spicy and others I don't. When I go back to my family in India that I'm really close to, like my uncle's house that I always go to, that food tastes the same as it does at home. But if we go out and visit other family they try to make it special because we don't go very often. It's different just cause it's special. I know when my parents first moved here there wasn't that big of a Punjabi population here, so they'd have to get spices and lentils from Canada. Since more have immigrated here, now we buy our spices from here. They like the influx of immigrants. They always say that it seems as if there are just too many in Vancouver and Surry, but they like the amount there is here. They like the fact

that it is not overridden with Punjabis because then you just kind of lose the diversity of it. They moved here for a better economic opportunity. And I would have better opportunities.
I think that's really cool- Christmas and thanksgiving we'll always have Indian food. One year we tried to do, we're vegetarians, like a tofu turkey and moshed potatoes like the whole thing, green beans, traditional thanksgiving meal thing, and it didn't work out. Everyone was complaining. We weren't full, we were like no! We don't like this. And we just went back to cooking Indian. One year we did homemade pizzas for Christmas. That was cool. We liked that one. Usually our special occasions or festivals revolve around Indian food. Birthdays turn into a three-course thing. My aunts will always help cook.

Madeline

Sometimes university has been a little overwhelming in terms of wanting to do all of the things. And not being able to do all of the things. Because there is a Latina organization that I wanted to be a part of, but now I'm realizing I can't do all of it. My mom is full Mexican, and I grew up in Los Angeles till I was like 8. My grandma lives right next to east LA, so there is a very, very Mexican population and then there is Chinese and then it's next to Rosemead, which to my understanding is Korean. My more formative years were spent up here in the Seattle area, though, but we'd go down there frequently because family is such an important thing in that type of culture. My mom has super-duper tight bonds with her family. My mom's parents both immigrated to the states from Yucatan, Mexico. Yucatan is different from what's typically thought of as Mexico, it's the east coast peninsula. It's cool because a lot of the food there is island, Jamaican influenced. It's different from just tacos, rice, and beans. A lot of the influences around there are from the Mayan. They have all these cool words there with like all these x's all over the place. My dad is German, and that was also a big part of my growing up, but we were a little bit less close to my dad's side. My grandpa is from Germany, and my grandparents live in Cincinnati which has a huge German population.

It feels a little weird sometimes that I identify as Mexican because my last name is very German, and sometimes when I went to the Latina organization meetings it would be like: Sanchez, Garcia, all this stuff, and this it's like oh, Kramer, like what are you doing here? You're not...? Especially after the elections because so many people in that community were very very affected by it. Whereas for me I didn't feel that as strongly. Sometimes going to that group I'm like I don't know if I should be here or be like in this community. But- I don't know. Experimenting with my Latina roots- I'm wanting to be closer to it now, especially since it's easier to do that now in college than back in my home of Kirkland.

When I grew up when I was little my aunt was always around taking care of us, she was kind of like a second mom. Same with my grandma- when we were little she would cook all the time. But she has Alzheimer's, so she's losing it a little bit. It's cool because she'll cook, and she'll like remember these recipes but that's what she remembers. She still remembers how to cook Cochinita (featured). Now, my mom doesn't really cook a whole lot of Mexican food. She makes this kale soup, and I would always ask her to make it, it would have like potatoes and kale, pretty standard stuff. A lot of the times we didn't have family dinners together because our schedules just didn't overlap very well, which sometimes I wish just didn't happen, but it is what it is.

On cochinita pibil

So you have cochinita pibil which is something that.. is a pretty homey dish, we always try to make it. My cousin Danny, he played for the Dodgers, and I have this memory of him coming up

to Washington and we had it, and he was just like ‘ah! This is so good!’ It's a pretty intensive process because you have to get, not a full pig, but you'd have to take the skin off sometimes. I remember my aunt doing it. And then you have to wrap it in banana leaves, and put all these spices all over it, and sometimes you can only get the spices in Merida, which is where my family is from in Yucatan. And then you have to bake it for 24 hours, it's basically like this pulled pork kinda thing but with tangy spices.

I am interested in something toward the environmental health or the human health. I play ultimate Frisbee at least 4 times a week, so I do that, two hours each, but it’s fun! I’ve been really taking advantage of Facebook, and events that really pop-up all over the place. Sometimes university has been a little overwhelming in terms of wanting to do all of the things. And not being able to do all of the things. Because there is a Latina organization that I wanted to be a part of, but now I'm realizing I can't do all of it.

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We lived down in LA with my mom's family. It's customary for aunts and grandmothers to be babysitters when you're little. When I was a baby I learned Spanish when I learned English. When I moved up here, though, my mom would be the only person who spoke Spanish- my dad didn't really speak it. I can hear Spanish and get what's going on, especially if I'm in a setting where people are speaking it regularly it's better. My mom's parents both immigrated to the states from Yucatan, Mexico. Yucatan is different from what's typically thought of as Mexico, it's the east coast peninsula. It's cool because a lot of the food there is island, Jamaican influenced. It's different from just tacos, rice, and beans. A lot of the influences around there are from the Mayan. They have all these cool words there with like all these x's all over the place.
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So you have cochinita pibil which is something that... is a pretty homey dish, we always try to make it. My cousin Danny, he played for the Dodgers, and I have this memory of him coming up to Washington and we had it, and he was just like ah! This is so good. It's a pretty intensive process because you have to get, not a full pig, but you'd have to take the skin off sometimes. I remember my aunt doing it. And then you have to wrap it in banana leaves, and put all these spices all over it, and sometimes you can only get the spices in Merida, which is where my family is from in Yucatan. And then you have to bake it for 24 hours, it's basically like this pulled pork kinda thing but with tangy spices.

Nic Varela

I'm originally from Tucson, Arizona. I did the Oregon Bach festival in Eugene when I was in high school and I sort of fell in love with the northwest. So I decided I wanted to come to school up here. I had always been singing around the house, my mom would be playing show-tunes, specifically Andrew Lloyd Weber which is funny because now I hate him. I definitely owe him and the greats a debt of gratitude because their music is why I sing. My aunt, my dad's sister, is the one who encouraged me to sing in the Tucson Boys chorus. We are very very close, she's essentially like a second mom. I identify pretty strongly with Mexican, but I mean I never really thought of myself as white until... I don't know… I'm definitely closer with the Mexican side of my family than the white side of my family. It never really like occurred to me because I was so enveloped in the Mexican-American culture. But ya know, I am also white, so. I had a cousin Cami who pointed out a few times that my sister and I were lighter skinned. Or that we had that white culture engrained in us. I gradually realized that I was white. Cause I had never really thought about race much. I think my grandma, who is the matriarch of my dad's family, valued whiteness. My grandma, Irma, was the only grandma I knew for a long time. She is so beautifully stubborn. She knows what she wants, and she wants everything done her way. The fondest memories I have of her are her telling me stories of the good ol' days. I would ask for those stories. Her growing up—super fucking broke. Her parents died when she was 8, both of them, around the same time. She lived with foster mom. She really created her own life for herself. It wasn't a lavish life, she found a guy to marry, he treated her right.
The women in my family shaped me as a feminist because I grew up with such strong women in my family: my grandma, my aunt, even my mom, who I think didn't really grow up in the culture of valued matriarchy, but she was powerful in her own way, and my sister who was just like my idol.

I don't know if it's true for all Mexican culture, but that specific culture that I grew up in just really emphasizes being there for your family no matter what. Even if you hate each other, honestly, you can still be there for them to cook them food or help them clean. So it's really till

the end, till the bitter end. My aunt always jokes now because she's having a health problem: can you just move back, drop out of school, and take care of me? 80% of her is joking but 20% of her is like no I'm your family you need to come help.
I think my sister and I showed a lot of hope in the family. My dad was the only one who went to college, and he went to community college. I think Christa and I were the first ones to go to a four-year university, and I think they really wanted to be a part of that. Be there to say, yeah! I helped raised you. There are so many people in my family that I just don't know. Tucson is only an hour away from the border, so we have a lot of family in Tucson or an hour away at the border.

I've always kinda clung to my identity as a white-passing Mexican because I am white. And not a lot of people know unless I tell them, unless they are Mexican themselves—they can tell. So in college I feel like I lost and gained part of my identity because a lot of my ties with my identity was due to the fact that I lived in Arizona. A lot of Mexican culture there obviously because it's so close to Mexico. My family is there. My grandma and my aunt are the ones I would speak Spanish with. My dad never bothered to learn it. So I lost a lot of my Spanish moving up here, and it sucked because I feel like that part of my culture either diminished or whatever. But I also felt the need to kind of cling to my identity even more. So that's actually why I started taking interest in the recipes that my family would make for me. If I'm being honest, the recipes that they make aren't super complex, but to me it's important to kind of continue on that tradition. Because the ingredients and the process aren't super complex, but you gotta do it the right way. Otherwise it's just not going to taste the same. I'm sure that's true for any culture. You gotta do it right, you gotta do it the way grandma does it, or it's not the same. And it never will be the same. Me learning these recipes gives my family a sense of pride: that my food is so good that my children want to make it for their children and so on and so forth. Like I said my family hasn't necessarily accomplished a whole in terms of a career, well that's not true, if you measure it in terms of degrees and corporate jobs and stuff like that, then no. But ya know they've started their own lives, they've built from the ground up. One of the things they have accomplished is food-good food. Being able to food their children. That is so important to them. The fact that they can put good food on the table is their source of accomplishment, their kind of production. It's just what you do—you cook food for your family. You make the big Thanksgiving dinner, you make enough tacos for an army, and no matter what your family is doing that night, they come and go and eat tacos here. If I were to just ask them: how do you feel about this, I think they'd just be like: it's just what I do.

My dad was the cook—he loves to cook. My mom is not a good cook, so when my dad moved out of the house when I was like 6 it was a real rough transition. We would eat mac and cheese, hotdogs, hamburger helper, and that's why I would look forward to going to grandma's because I knew I'd be fed well. He made really good hash browns, pancakes, pasta, sometimes steak. It was always fun watching my dad cook—he would never let me help because he was very particular about the way he did things. We adopted in a sense the way my grandma would do things, she cooked and cleaned as she went, so that she didn't make a mess. And I think my dad always liked doing that, and so he wouldn't let messy kids in the kitchen. My grandma cooked more because she loved her family, I think there's a kernel inside her soul that's like, I love doing this. It's mostly for the family because you love them, make them all chubby.

I loved the tacos and rice, hands down. I was a picky eater as a kid, which sucks. She had like a little grill which she would just like hunch over outdoors and make us steaks. She made cream gizzards over rice, which my sister loved. They're all the fun little extras like liver, from turkeys or chickens. My grandma would host a traditional thanksgiving. My grandma's mashed potatoes were like really good—so smooth and creamy! Dinner was always kind of a big production- they never really cut corners. That makes it really hard to speak to one specific memory. Just a lot of really good food. There was never like a "ok no dinner is ready we are all going to sit down at the table, lemme serve you a plate whatever"-- we would take at the table, but also the TV would be going, and people would be watching TV. It wasn't as intimate as some family dinners are portrayed.
When I found myself almost homeless my aunt was offended I didn't want to live with them, but they had no room for me. I love them, and obviously they were such a huge part of my life, but there's also ya know my sexuality. They knew about it they just didn't talk about it. I needed a safe space where I could live away from them—a safe space where I could just live my life, be who I am. My dad told me when I told him, he told me, "I love you no matter what—I just don't want to talk about it." It was the same for them. I'm essentially living two different lives.

I'm definitely way happier here, getting a little bit of distance has made me appreciate what they've done for me, but I find it's really liberating to live my own life.
I never really thought about it myself until recently, it's just so engrained in our culture—we don't really have the time to stop and thing: "wow! I really like to cook!" I cook because it's what is expected of me- it's what I do. They don't have a lot of money, so they don't necessarily have the options of exploring around other foods, and they are also kind of creatures of habit. I remember one time I told them I ate tofu, and they were horrified.
I would watch them cook like all the time- so I learned by observing. I never really did a lot of cooking myself. It was my ex, who encouraged me to explore cooking, experiment with different flavors, ya know. When I started to live on my own, I took the initiative to explore different dishes and explore recipes. I think the way I cook is a lot of my own. My grandma and aunt cooked in a traditional way, stuck to the script, following a recipe always. My understanding of cooking has come from tossing shit together and seeing how it turns out. I don't think the way I cook now is super informed by Mexican cooking. The way I view food—as like a "you do this for people" has really informed my cooking. I've had such a ball cooking for people, watching them bond over food, sit at the table enjoying it. I love cooking for people. Learning to feed myself I learned from my family, learning to feed myself well, and in a healthy way, I kind had to pick up from myself and my chosen family. Once my sister and I each went away we both developed our own methods for cooking.
I feel very fortunate when I go back to eat the foods that I have for so long, that I haven't eaten in a while. It's special—I can appreciate the work that goes into it because I cook for myself, now. I know now, that feeding us is the way that they show their love. Like, they're not very touchy feely, they're not willing to go to emotional depths to express their feelings to us.
Coming here, I'm realizing how much I love Asian food! Thai, Vietnamese, Japanese food—oh my god! It's so accessible and delicious here. Mexican food will always have a special place in my heart, but I never eat it up here. Food that I like to cook is partially the Mexican food I had growing up, also trying new things like pasta and stuff.

Rae Utterback

I was born in Warsaw, Poland. I moved halfway through ninth grade, I was 14, to Austin, TX. My dad was going to get his MBA at UT, and his older parents lived in Austin, and my sister came to the US for college in Boston. It was important to my parents to keep up together. It was just a good time to make the move. When they told me we were moving, I was happy because I grew up in an international school, so the majority of people that I knew moved around every two years or so. They had all these different experiences and stories form different places. It was like why don't I have. I was excited at first. It sucked to tell everyone, like my grandparents. And then we moved, and I kinda wished we hadn't. The school I went to was largely American. I remember the first few days people were literally pointing at me, saying oh look it's the Polish girl. And I felt like I was on display. I think one girl would talk to me. It was hard, I did not want to be there. My dad is from Texas so he spoke English to us when I was small. English is still my second language. i would speak English with Polish grammar, my dad thought it was funny when I said: "You move here this do" I was trying to say "let's do this over here." My dad went to Warsaw for work, and he went with his client to the only one casino. They played blackjack, and my mom was the dealer. My dad didn't play. He stayed during her 10 minute break, and she agreed to go out with him because he wasn't playing. It was kinda nuts because they didn't speak the same language. They knew each other for a week, and he proposed to her. I don't know what crazier: that he proposed or that she said yes, but they stuck together. She wanted to raise her kids in Poland, and so he moved over. If you ask her she would say that we are 100% Polish; she refuses to acknowledge that our dad is American

I've thought about my identity a lot. I think it totally depends and it totally changes. In a way it's almost not important, it's one of those things that isn't real but it's also real at the same time. When I'm in Poland I feel very American, and when I'm here I feel very Polish. So it's like this in between that's difficult. So it's like I'm always some foreigner a little bit now. When I first moved, I hated telling people I was Polish because I think that some people have this romanticized view of Europe and when I said that they either got jealous or annoyed that I brought it up. It changed the dynamic of the conversation. It became a thing where that was the only thing about me that people thought of me anymore, and I was like I am more than where I am from. It also got really old when people were like, Oh where is Poland? When I transferred to UW, I don't know what about it, but something changed where I was like I don't care anymore, it's something I'm actually very proud of. It feels natural. If there's anyone that doesn't want to talk to me based on where I'm from, then I don't want to talk to those people. I think that you tend to gravitate towards people that are similar to you. So my mom found a Polish society when she first moved to Austin. It was just easier for her to speak Polish, talk with people from the same culture, but I think it was hard for her.

My mom started reading this magazine back in Poland called Farum, which where she got her news and her nutritional information. And then she got really high cholesterol, and she happened upon a doctor who was more forward thinking because he told her, ya know we could give you pills to lower your cholesterol, right that's a thing, but we could also try this method where you eat no animal fats and minimal sugars, for a month. You come back and we'll test your cholesterol. My mom did that, and she came back, and she immediately lower cholesterol. I was a fifth grader when she did that. She immediately stopped eating all meat, and now

she can’t even stand the sight of meat. I eat meat, but it's not like I go out of my way for it. You realize what you have when things change. Like I realized just how important my grandparents were to me.

In Poland, they don’t comprehend that you don’t eat meat. It's like, you tell someone that you don’t eat meat, and they're like OK I'll make chicken because they don’t understand that you eat meat. My grandparents make everything from scratch, they still do. My mom grew up that way, and then we grew up that way. It seemed weird not to do that. And because my mom has that background in being healthy, she will take recipes and just modify them to try to be as healthy as possible. Which I don’t always listen to because every once in a while, I'm like I don’t care I want it to taste better.

Because traditional Polish food is not always necessarily healthy, every once in a while I just want to eat something the way it tasted when I was small. The way my grandma makes it. But that means it's not good for you, but in those scenarios I just don’t care. Christmas is a really really big deal in Poland, but it's the 24 that's the biggest meal. And you make basically a 12 dish meal- I think it's for the apostles, but I don’t really know. It's all related to Catholicism somehow. We had that, and I was like ya know what it's Christmas, I don't care that there's butter in this; I was like, mom don’t look when I'm cooking, but I'm going to make it true. Just this one day of the year! I made a cake that had butter, and white flour, and sure. It was awesome. I think it's even better because you're not used to it. My mom will say not to do it, but then she'll try it. We all, me and my brother and sister, help my mom cook on days like Christmas.

I remember when I was small and we actually had a cook in Poland, which is much more typical in Poland than here. I would love to say that I helped my grandparents, but I didn't because the truth is that they, maybe it's` a generational thing, they get up to cook at like 4 or 5, so by the time I was up everything was done. My grandma worked as a chemist, and for her whole life she had to get up really early.

Poland has a lot of soups. It was typical back then... You have breakfast in the morning, you go to school and have lunch, like a regular lunch, and then we come home and we'd eat soup, always, me my brother and my sister would eat soup, and then 2 hours later we'd have dinner. Soup is a big thing; it doesn’t matter if it's winter or summer. My American grandmother made me my first pancakes, and I remember because she made it out of the bag, and like they were thick and weird, and I was not into them. It was bizarre, so different.

When we were in Poland we did have cooks, a lot of our meals were prepared in our house not by my mom. We moved to the states that wasn't a thing anymore. She did all of the cooking. Because my mom is so focused on being healthy and all of that, it takes longer to cook from scratch, so she had to spend a lot of time cooking. On top of which, I think it's really hard to make food really really good when you're trying to be really healthy, so that takes additional time. I think that was a shift, I don’t know how she felt about it, but I think she liked it.

Whenever we go back to Warsaw, literally a week before we get there, if not further out, my grandmother calls to say: "what do you guys want to eat? What do you want to eat when you land?" And then it progresses to like two or three times a day, she keeps asking this question. Because it's just like-- food is just so important, it's such a thing that people bond over. It's comical now because my mom started that she'll be like what do you want to eat, to my brother before he comes home from California. When I landed, last time, my grandmother had prepared soup zurek, cause I really like it, and you eat that with mashed potatoes, it's like a really dense heavy soup, and you have caramelized onions on the soup. What's really typical for your second

dish, involve beets which are really really popular, is basch. You can have basch the stuff, then it's like a regular soup with the vegetables, or you can have clean basch, which is like clear beet soup, it's like a broth. And you drink it in a cup. It's really sweet, and you add pepper to it. It's messy to make, and it looks like you murdered someone. You know what Pirogi are? They're like little dumplings with mushrooms, like little mini ones, and you put them in the clear soup. I don't like those, so I just drink mine. I don't really know where Pirogi's started, I've thought about googling it for a long time, but I haven't. Because all of those countries I think just have a variation of it. We made my boyfriend a bunch of pirogi's before he left one time because he likes them, and they're just fun to make because you can put pretty much whatever in the filling. You can do mushrooms, cabbage, cheese ones, though they don't have the right kind of cheese, you can do ones with strawberries.

It was sad for my grandparents if they cooked something and my mom to them was like I don't want to eat this. TO them it's sad because they put this effort into making it. I don't think they understood my mom's healthy diet. And you have to understand with Poland, there were times when you just didn't have food. With communism and all the stuff there just wasn't food. My mom remembers having no food. I think this idea of having a full fridge and never wasting food, never throwing away food, is so important. I think it's really comforting for my grandma to be like what do you want to eat when you get here because it's like she has this food. It's kind of a running joke if you meet another Polish person, you can laugh about like oh my god my grandma fed me so much, cause you get like 3 or 4 helpings because they want you to keep eating. Because they know what it's like to not have food. You have this weird food; I guess that's where cultural foods come from. You have this like sour milk that you can drink in Poland. I'm guessing that came from people who had milk left over that was going bad, and they couldn't waste it, so they drank it. Keffer. Culturally Polish food is kind of farm food. Once a year you could have meat for Christmas. My mom remembers her first coke-- she split it with her sister. I don't think a lot of people in the states grew up like that because you had the prepackaged foods. Thanks to my mom, my family is really healthy. I like to cook-- there will be nights when I am cooking or baking for fun. My mom is really really bad at following recipes. It's actually a little bit like a push and pull thing because I like following recipes exactly. It's supposed to be that way, while with her it's like-- ehh I don't like that, or like oh I like that I'm going to add 3X as much. It's great because it keeps things different. My grandma and mom do these recipes so much they stop thinking about it.
If I typically cook something, I'll typically cook a Polish recipe because it's like if I want to want to cook something, I'd like to cook something... Polish, ya know? Plus, I'm trying to teach myself more Polish recipes

Alice Carli

I was born in Milan, when I was 2 I moved outside of Florence (kinda out in the hills), and when I was seven and a half my parents told me and my brother that we were going to move to California… and within in a few months we moved to California (initially for 2 years, but when it was time to move back, the family decided to stay), and I've lived in California until basically I left for college.
On one hand it was very exciting, California had a lot of cultural cache in Italian. California, specifically was probably the one part of the US that I was familiar with because of Baywatch.

So everyone. when I told them I was moving to California, was like ‘Oh my god are you going to be on Baywatch?” I didn’t speak a word of English. I remember that the night my parents told us we were moving, my mom comes into my room with like an introductory English book, and starts going like “star” “moon”

I don’t really remember being nervous. I was excited, I couldn’t wait to tell everyone. I wasn’t like, ya know, I’m leaving so much behind. My brother who’s 2.5 years older had more difficulty because he is a little more established.

I just have one memory of my third grade class, and I was really confused about the word “which” because there are so many different meanings and ways to spell it, and uh, I remember thinking I was making a lot of sense: “how do you know which one or which version to use in a sentence” but clearly I wasn’t speaking English or making any sense at all because she was staring at me the whole class came around and was staring at me like “what is she saying, I don’t know, what is she talking about?” I was frustrated.

My parents had been to the US before and knew English with very heavy accents. It’s possible that I was too young to pick up any assimilation struggles they had.

100% Italian. I definitely see a lot of American culture in myself, but I don’t view it in any kind of an ethnic context. We can’t trace our family that far back, but from what we know we’ve been there since the dawn of time. Culturally I would say that, I’m almost, I don’t want to say I’m more American than I am Italian, but they constantly vie for attention depending on where I am or what I’m thinking about. Depending on how recently I went to Italy. When I feel really in touch with that kind of reality. I associate speaking Italian with a younger version of myself.

My relationship with food is 100% influenced by my experience as an Italian. I, honestly, actively reject American culinary influence in my life. And not just culinary, but the relationship that Americans have with food, with dieting, it’s almost forced and uncomfortable. While in Italy, food is just the most fundamental and wonderful thing… because food has to be complete, especially with the social aspect of food.

I think that I am much more Americanized than my parents. My parents have managed to establish a very Italian lifestyle. They weren’t interested in evolving and developing a whole new dynamic. They wish I spoke to them more in Italian… as soon as it becomes more complicated (complexity of the idea), I go straight to English. But I recognize the importance of speaking to the in Italian, so I do try to make an effort.

Food…

I have no memories of like food related things from when I’m in Italy because there it was such a normal part of life to eat meals with my family, to cook every day in the house, none of that was in any way something that would stand out, because everybody lived that way. It’s just so ordinary. There are very different food situations between where my mom comes from and where my dad comes from.

As soon as we moved to the US suddenly all of that was put into a different light for me, and I just remember thinking so much more about that fact that I went home for dinner every day, and some of my friends didn’t. I had to tell my parents if I wasn’t going to be home for dinner because I’m like missing a family event. Paying much more attention to the kinds of food we were eating.

When we moved to America we had to start working with a totally different set of ingredients. We were used to a very local food chain—where you go to a small market down the street. All of the food is coming from relatively nearby. There are no, fucking, tropical fruits. You eat

seasonally. A lot of freshly hunted game, a lot of cured meats (that's what the area is known for). Suddenly we were shopping in these massive grocery stores—it was much more highly processed and packaged. And so my early memories of food in the US were of my dad starting to make bread because you couldn't find freshly baked bread… and so my parents were like if the only bread we can find is pre-sliced loaves. We're going to have to make our own loaves you guys… we can't live like this! They started with a It started with a bread machine. I have a really difficult time with cheese, I can't find any of the cheeses I need.

My dad's mom is an incredible chef, and just like fed the boy to filling every day of his life. He lived at home till he was 28, and was just like spoon fed delicious food—very like Milanese cuisine: rich buttery cheesy things. Because of that he had an exposure to food, but he didn't know how to cook. Then my parents got married, my mom kinda sent my dad off to cooking school, was like you gotta learn how to cook, she knew how to cook, but from a completely different perspective. She was like in a poor area, northern Italy, totally different ingredients—a lot more like soups, reusing day-old bread. She learned to cook out of necessity to help her mom, because that was expected in the house. Once we came to the states, my dad, because we were being forced to work harder at making good food, he started falling in love with it the more work he put into it. I think it started with the bread, but then it spread to all aspects. My early memories of being in the US is just like of food becoming very important.

Food was something we had to work for. As a family event, as a social event, and as a quality experience. It has to have a level of freshness.

Typical foods: So there are three different settings in which I know food. There's grandparents, my mom's parents, up north in the Alps. The food situation whenever I would go visit them is very light, a lot of fresh vegetables from the garden, every meal started with a soup. This was VERY important to her. Just a light soup with a broth with some pasta or some beans in it. Using every scrap of meat that you have, using day old bread to make a milk cake, and like a lot of northern desserts because this area is particularly known for its apples. My dad's parents, they're in Milan. She cooks amazing like rabbit, ragus, lasagnas, veal in a tuna sauce-- fucking delicious, it's to die for, there's a pasta with eggplants, so a lot of these richer heavier foods. There's always lots of bread on the table. And the other food setting was in Florence where I was living with my parents. It was relatively simpler. A lot of pastas, lighter, with cured meats. My mom is kind of (very reflective of her early situation), she doesn't care too much about recipe books, she just kind of works things out, does what seems right, just kind of uses what she's got, which is a very resourceful way to cook. Up north there are barely any cookbooks in the house, I learned from my mom and so on. While my dad is like this is how we're going to do it, this is how the culinary masters do it, and follows the recipe to the T.

I wonder why I have less food memories from my own home than from my grandparents' home. It must just be because it's less novel. Meals at my parents it's much less comprehensive with one plate of pasta. While with my grandparents there are so many courses—they just want to feed their grandchildren.

We've essentially kind of found a fine dining community, and entered fine dining culture on an American level, and that is a much more diverse culture than in Italy. My dad is able to experiment with really high quality recipes that are just of a round he never explored in Italy. In Italy he just learned to make Italian food—the old fashioned food he ate—now suddenly you're in the country where there are all sorts of different people around you, and when you want good food you can find it in the US. It's the variety—he barely makes the same thing twice anymore. He's cooking because he just fucking loves it so much—my parents invite all their friends and

make these giant feasts, and then my mom brings all the leftovers into work with her and is like "oh Massimo cooked again" ya you know? When people ask "oh what are you doing for Christmas" we're always like "ya, we're eating."

Christmas traditions- we have brought some very Italian traditions. A week before Christmas we create a factory line in our Italian friend's kitchen to make tortellini. We produce thousands of tortellini in one afternoon. We have that in a light broth. We then have a bunch of broiled meats, most notably tongue and turkey. And then we eat it with. My mom always makes zelten and we have monte bianco (whipped cream).

In middle school—my parents were like OK, our children need to know how to cook. We need to start kind of casually inviting them, like oh hey do you want to help me with this or watch me do this. And it was like no mom I'm trying to watch TV. At first, zero interest. Then, I kind of developed this thing with my dad, I like to do father daughter things with him, we started baking together. That's when I really started spending time in the kitchen: one of our favorites was the marzipan cake. The fun thing for us was getting down the consistency of the sponge cake, I remember that is took us so many different tries, and we learned that you have to really whip the eggs like a motherfucker. You have to be there for like 15-20 minutes, you work it, whipping by hand. Then I kinda stopped doing that when I got busy in high school, and I was like hanging out with my parents isn't cool. And then coming to college essentially just forced me to cook, and that's when I realized a0 how much Id absorbed by watching and eating (and I essentially knew how to do a bunch of stuff that I hadn't practiced much… I could just do it), and so freshman year I was living with a bunch of boys and we made a deal that if we split groceries, I would cook. I think that came from a place of wanting to recreate what I had at home in a new environment. Also, I build relationships through food. As a good Italian woman I need to be able to feed people, that's in my blood. I don't think my life would've felt right if I wasn't eating good food in the home, if I wasn't sharing food. These boys could've lived off of hot pockets and cereal. I think that we built a family because I tried to replicate my family, and the food was a huge part of it. Now I'm cooking all the time, and I'm actually experimenting. I think the foundation of my cooking approach is Italian, but because I don't have Italians around for reference I kind of Americanize things. I go to google for suggestions. I'm cooking primarily for Americans, I want to make everything concentrated for them, even though I like a lighter, fresher palate.

I cooked a bit with my grandma this last summer. We made a really delicious roasted rabbit, the next day we used the scraps from the rabbit to make a ragu. And I was able to replicate that here, which was great.

Pavel just has all these ideas of, "I don't eat this thing or I don't like this food" which is a very common thing in America and its one of the things my parents hated most when I used to bring home American friends: they'd be like "oh actually I don't eat tomatoes, I don't eat that" and my dad would be like "yes you can, and you're gunna love, like just shut up, just because you ate tomatoes once and didn't like them doesn't mean you can't eat tomatoes" All of the frustrations that I've built up with American food culture I get to take out on Pavel, I love it.

In the US—different approaches to self-limitations of food: and the two main manifestations are diets and vegetarianism/veganism. I experimented a lot with dieting in high school which was an overwhelmingly negative experience. The minute I tried to place controls over my diet beyond just basic moderation, my relationship with food became negative, and racked with guilt. It couldn't be social anymore. Nutritional advice is always like focus on the micronutrients of foods, and to me it robs food of all of its nuance and levels when you break it down to its most

fundamental features. Why, despite the fact that as nutritional experts know high fat diets should be bad for us should increase our rates of heart disease, why Italian communities, which eat these extremely unhealthy diets in terms of traditional nutritional advice, are extremely healthy, don't have any problems with longevity, have less heart disease than the US, and Malcolm Gladwell in Outliers explores the social reality of food and the approach to food that emphasizes moderation and love of food, rather than guilt and rejection of food, and that that has biological effects. That's why you don't have these issues with obesity. And on the other side with vegans and vegetarians I've thought about it a lot, as has my mom. Ya know, I'm in a very liberal city surrounded by vegans and vegetarians and they make very compelling arguments to me about why I should be vegan, and yet, when I see their relationship with food that that results in, and I can't fathom my life in that reality. And I can't express that to people, my social relationships and my identity would be fractured if I tried to control my relationship to food to the point of being actually a vegan/vegetarian.

Brady Williams

I tell people that I cook, I cook professionally at Canlis. I am the head chef. I spend a lot of time thinking about food. I'm pretty good at like resting. It's hard to differentiate between work and fun and play for me. I happen to really love what I do, and I'm decently good at it. My job is something that restores me holistically, so work doesn't often feel like work, even though it is a lot of work, a lot of hard work. When you love something and it's so life giving to you, it's easy to give up your life to it, gladly. I was born in southern California; I have never lived somewhere for more than three consecutive years since I was 6 years old. I've moved something like 17 times in 24 years. When I was 15 I moved away from home on my own for hockey to Detroit Michigan, and that was like a coming of age experience. You grow up a lot when you move away from home for the first time, especially when you're a sophomore in high school. Texas is a place that I identify with if only because I've spent a lot of time there: chunks of three different times. My deepest, strongest community is there: I have a pretty tight inner circle. New York city is also important just because I had wanted to move there for a long time, and once I was there I instantly fell in love with the good and bad of the city. I never thought I would leave, I wanted to live there the rest of my life. I also have a really good ability, this comes from moving around a lot as a child, to instantly embrace wherever I am, almost unhealthily detached from people in cities, places, and things, and just fully invest wherever I'm at. I have this saying, fear of planted roots, is fear of bloom, and I've wasted a lot of time in my life being afraid to plant roots because I was afraid I would pick up and leave, so somewhere along the way, I realized home is where you make it. So I do identify with Seattle as being a home. I've been in Seattle for not even 2 years. I started playing hockey in Seattle. At 15 I was one of the most sought after players, and at 18 I was a nobody after a string of freak injuring the same leg like four times in three years. It is prostitution. As a 15-year-old my coach could've been like you're not good enough go pack your bags. Which is like pretty cutthroat. I burnt out and was pretty bitter.

My parents are divorced- divorced 2 years ago. They separated when I was 17. I had to move back home when my dad left. I had to help my mom raise my brothers. I had to just help steady the ship. I had already had that level of independence from hockey. My parents were just on again off again the next 30 years. My mom lives in Colorado. I think my dad lives in Colorado. I have one brother in Colorado, one brother in Oklahoma, and one brother in LA. I'm really close with my mom and super close with my brothers.

I identify as Japanese. Uh, my mom was born and raised in Japan. My mom is half Japanese, her mother is Japanese, my grandfather on my mother's side is American, but was raised in Japan. So he's culturally Japanese, even though he's white. Although I am actually a ¼ Japanese I identify with it probably more than I should with that culture. I look white. Like a white male, living in the US. But I've always really been drawn to Japan since a young age. We lived with my grandparents for a little bit. I've always been close with my Japanese grandmother. She's like Japanese high society, and married an American. It was very controversial back then; it was post war. Her father disapproved, so it was like a thing, like a decision. Especially like in upper class Japanese society, you honor your family, you respect your heritage. Dishonor and shame is such a tenant of Japanese culture. You know, she challenged it. My grandma's role was very much the caretaker. That's the role of a woman because a husband works. They serve, they're hospitable, they care. It was not that hard for my mom when she moved to the US. She already spoke English, and it wasn't like she had to culturally adjust. Southern California was like a melting pot for cultures.

My grandmother is an incredible cook—she gets a lot of joy in cooking. My mom was a horrible cook for the first 20 years of my life. I think part of that was like cooking was another stress. Ya had 4 boys who all played sports with all different schedules. Putting a meal on the table was important but it needed to be convenient: a lot of frozen lasagnas and casseroles. Once she had more time, she started cooking, and she is a very good cook. She had it in her, it was innate, but

We share a relationship that I don't think any of her grandchildren share. If you ask any of my family they'd be like Brady probably feels the most Japanese... is affected most by our heritage. My mom lived there till she was like 13 or 14 and moved to the US. I don't speak Japanese well, but my mom does. My wife is half Japanese and half Hispanic, but she identifies as Japanese. Good food was a low priority because we were always just a busy household. It was always a treat going to my grandma's house.

It was always traditional Japanese food. Like new years is an incredibly important holiday in Japan. My grandma would spend the week between Christmas and new years preparing for the feast. Like it was a 6-7 hour day a day. I mean we would set up a table that sat like 16 people, and it was just covered in food. And you wouldn't actually sit there, you'd sit at the other dining table. So everything from like rice dishes to cooked fish to soups to pickle plates. And it was just her. It was a one person show. She wanted to be in control and be the chef. It was like the one thing she looked forward to. Even still when I go down to visit her... she asked me what I hadn't had in a while like what I crave. She'll be like Brady do you want Tempura? Or like what are you craving? I'll just say something silly-- I'll make it funny.

That was like my very first cooking memory. Um when we would make rice for new years particularly for sushi. I would have to be the person that would fan the rice to cool it down fast. You have to blow it pretty quickly so it doesn't get sticky or gummy. And you do it by fanning. And she made me fan. You know when you were a kid it was like I'm doing this for like hours! But it was probably 20 minutes. My arms are tired! She was like stay there you're not done! Like very tough on me. Like if you're going to do this you're going to do it. And you need to learn the toil of it. This is what it means to serve people. I didn't realize that at the time, but as an adult looking back that was what she was teaching me. If you want to serve people, this is what it looks like. What is expected of you. And you do it gladly. You don't complain. Otherwise it's not serving. There's a word for what I'm talking about. Omotenashi is the idea that

hospitality is the cornerstone for everything that you can do. Japan in the most other-centered country I've been in the world. There is like a pyramid and there are all these little reasons I love cooking, kitchen culture all that stuff, the craft, creating, but at the top is to be the arbiter of commensality. Commensality is the biblical term for the fellowship that happens around the table. It's the idea of what happens when people share a meal together and break bread. To be able to serve people with food to me is super super powerful and super special. It's the common thread that transcends all cultures. The power of a meal, and getting around a table and gathering is universal. It doesn't matter where you're from where I'm from or where she's from that guy's from.

A really significant memory for me was when I moved back home, having to leave hockey. We moved back with my grandparents because we had to. My entire family was going through a hard time. I remember going over to my aunt and uncles house and we would have these backyard barbecue, these backyard luaus, and it was just to bring us together and to have a good time. Forget about the hardship. And just be and enjoy and celebrate and eat. And that was when I realized the power of commensality. The power of my aunt inviting us all over to her house, being like look this is our space but it's your space, and we are going to cook and we are going to eat and we are going to drink. And it's going to be so much fun, and we're going to love on each other. The climax of the night was the meal, we'd go there at like two, and we were all contributing, and all working on this thing, and we'd all eat. We'd just be and just like sit around. That feeling is what ultimately drove me to pursue this as a career. Because I worked in restaurants, actually my grandparents owned a restaurant, and two restaurants in my family. I hated them. My mom has worked in restaurants. I didn't hate it for myself, I felt like my mom who was a housewife, and when my dad left, she had to work for the first time in a long time. So she worked at my grandparent' restaurant. She was burnt out. My grandparents were burning out. I just saw how hard it was, and was like I don't want to do that. But this experience (at my aunt's) made it redemptive. I was able to, at a young age, see the grind over here, and then I see the front door and guests. It was a diner that was only regulars. Everyone knew my mom, my aunt, my grandparents. You knew the name of every guest that came in, and if you didn't, you learned it. You made it feel like home. It was, honestly, like a shitty shitty restaurant. It served mostly people from the biggest retirement center in America.

Omotenashi is why I came to Canlis, and I heard someone say the things I felt in my heart. It's like who I am. I've worked in some of the best restaurants in America, and no one ever talked this way. It was empty. It wasn't why these restaurants existed. I got kind of wrecked when I met these guys from Canlis.

When I went to college, I was like the food here is shit. I lived in a house, and cooked for my roommates. And it was fun for me. Let's get the offcuts for super cheap, and marinate them. We'd save up and all put money in for a house meal, and I would cook it. There was something therapeutic about the act of cooking. I was very curious. If did this dish over again I would do it this way. But I also want to learn how to cook this now! It was never ending. It was the idea of a craft. I was like... this is like a sport. I can practice at this and get better. I was really passionate about cooking at home. My senior year of college I dropped out. I had this sick competitive mentality that I'm behind, and I wasn't really behind, but I was like some kid has a running start on me, and I need to beat him. It's a complex. I'm fully self-aware of it. It's what drove me. I would cut 50 pounds of onions just to work on my knife cuts. I have that feeling of being behind even right now. It sounds a little irrational, but I let it drive me. It's a hard concept for me to wrap my mind around that people look up to me as a 30 year-old. It feels like yesterday

when I was 22. I've gone at such a pace that, I felt like I just blinked and here I am. Somewhere along the way, I grew, and became a leader, and became a better cook.

Taso Lagos

I am a faculty in the Jackson school of International studies, specifically in European studies. I also am the leader of the Greece study program. I began as TA in the year 2000, and then I started teaching my own classes in the year 2004, so I would say the last 13 years as a faculty member. I love to write. I just finished my first sort of major book through an academic publisher about a Greek American movie theater pioneer in the United States. Now I'm starting my 2nd book about the family restaurant, so I'm writing kind of a memoir. I started about 2 weeks ago, and it's going pretty well. I pretty much know how I feel about the situation. It's written from the standpoint of an observer; it is more sort of this recollection of like what was it like working there. What was the purpose of the restaurant? What did it do? I may talk to my family at some point. My father and my mother aren't necessarily talkative about those subjects.

There were three kids in the family. I'm the second child. My relationship toward them is pretty typical to most Greek families. In the sense that we're fairly close and have been close all my life. We communicate fairly well. I see them pretty regularly. I spent the first 9 years of my life in Greece and then we moved to the United States, and I've spent the rest of my life living in the Seattle area. I was born on an island called Evia, it's about two and half hours north-east of Athens by car. It's the second largest Island in Greece after Crete. It's not a very touristy place, mountainous, very beautiful, a lot of beautiful beaches, kind of a resort area.

The transition from Greece to the US was extremely hard. It was not just the new culture and the language, obviously the language was a very big part of the difficulty, but just kind of leaving what was very familiar to me and coming to a new place where I didn't have any friends, and I had to start from zero, I was totally isolated, I wasn't very happy, I didn't like the climate. That was a big factor. Because we were used to seasonal climates, very warm summers, spring was very nice, fall was very wet, winter was sometimes very snowy. And I miss that. Seattle has its own weather; course I've gotten used to that by now. It was a very difficult and even traumatic change.

It took a couple of years to feel comfortable in speaking English. It took about 4 to be able to write it effectively, so I could communicate with people. In terms of getting used to Seattle it took probably I would say a good 10 years, before I could feel comfortable and accept that the US was my home. Ya know, for immigrants, and I don't know how to say this, but you're always kind of a difficult situation. You don't really feel part of the American culture. I'm removed from the Greek culture. So I live in this intermedia, in this in between, sort of no person's land. That's sometimes hard to describe. I mean this is my home, I'll stay here the rest of my life. But there are times when I think about what would've happened had I stayed in Greece. How different my life would've been? We came here like many other immigrants because economic opportunities were greater here. We left a small rural village where we were quite poor. The usual reasons why people come to America, so they could have a better life. I have cousins and aunts and uncles back in Greece, of course. It is kind of bitter sweet in some regard going back to Greece now. In the sense that I'm not really part of the culture anymore so therefor I'm removed from the culture. But also sweet because it's a familiar place, and the climate is quite nice, especially in the winter. I know that it's not going to be my home, we'll take Elizabeth there so she can experience. I don't know if you can see her right now, but anyway, bitter-sweet is the key word here. I know that my mother and father had some transitional issues because they came

over as more or less middle aged. So the language difficulty, their friends, their lifestyle in Greece, they missed that, so they had their adjustment was quite hard. Then my father took over the restaurant in 1974, and then he was then put into a very challenging situation. My mother came to start working a few years later at the restaurant. And my brother also joined. My brother probably had the easiest time of them all in terms of how he assimilated into the culture. My sister was born here, so there was no issue for her. We all had our own kind of battles to deal with. My family is very proud of our accomplishments.

I remember when my father first announced to the family that he was going to buy the restaurant, when I was 14. He had a lot of doubts about doing it because he had never had any experience in working in the restaurant industry. In Greece my father was a coal miner. When we came to the US he was a plumber… I've seen enough plugged toilets in my life. He eventually took the plunge, and he did very well. I was very apprehensive. What does it mean to go into this little place? He asked me to help him on the weekends, and during the summer when I was not in school, and it was frightening. I was very scared. There was the possibility that my father might fail. He had no training in it. It was also very long hours. I would go in at 6 o'clock, and we would drive to the restaurant, and we would come home at 10 o'clock at night. This was 7 days a week. This was very very very long. I had no social life. So my junior, sophomore years were spent at the restaurant in the summers. I remember one time I came back for my senior year, literally, Erica, I was pale. I was white. I didn't see the sun. Everyone else was darker because they had been out doing the usual summer stuff. I was working in a restaurant. It was difficult. I initially resented it. My social life was being demoted and sacrificed for the greater need of people's stomachs.

When I started college I was working the Saturday/Sunday shifts. These were the busiest shifts of the week, breakfast especially. So I'm working 8 in the morning till 5 in the afternoon as a cook. And I'm telling you, it was the most intense work, we were so busy. Literally, just, hundreds of people, every Saturday/Sunday. And this went on for years and years and years. The place is still on the Ave. It's not a Hawaiian BBQ place. If you go up to 47th and U-way, there's a bubble tea place, WOW it's called, and a Starbucks. That was the Continental Restaurant. 45 years. End of June 2013, the restaurant was sold. The next day, the owner took it over and changed it to a Hawaiian BBQ place. My parents at that point, my father was 82/83 and my mother was 75/76, so they'd been working there for close to 40 years. They were just really tired. My brother also was working it, and he was tired. It would've been nice to continue it, but ya know my brother has worked his life for so many years there, and this offer came. And that's what happened. I think they miss it. I know my mother misses it. My father I know misses it. He misses all the friends that they had. I really miss the community of it. It was really kind a little homey place where all the regulars would come in and we would sit down and laugh and cry over the elections and this and that. And, ya, I miss that. A few of the regulars were of Greek heritage, but I think 90% of them were just regular Americans from ya know different walks of life, different ethnicities, different backgrounds. We had the so-called family table. Which is very common in a lot of restaurants, you have a family table where the owners or the family who runs the restaurant will sit down, and then they will be joined by regulars, so we had that. That was a very special place. We've always had it. Even when we changed the alignment of the restaurant, there was always a family table. We would gather there and do crossword puzzles, and talk about gossiping cues, and talk about politics about what was going on. And it was amazing. That's the part I really miss. No I haven't been able to find anything like it since then. I just wrote a chapter about it—it's been on my mind. I don't think anybody really consciously

knew that the restaurant had become this social institution, this neighborhood place that served as a gathering place, the so-called third place where people could come in and just ya know be as, and just shoot the breeze. See a friendly face there. Just have a cup of coffee and stay there for a couple of hours. Not even order any food. I think we realized that later on, and the value of it became more and more special for us. I remember the last day we were there, there were people crying. There were people outside waiting in a big line to experience it one last time. It was a very very sad day. I was crying, my family was crying. Everybody was crying because we knew that it was the end of an era. I have not been able to find it since, and I probably won't. That's life, ya know, whattya gunna do.

I identify myself as an American, I sometimes identify myself as a Greek-American. I'm happy to be born in a different country, but in terms of my attitude, my loyalties, and the place where I spent all of my life is yeah the United States.

My research lately has definitely focused on the history of Greek America, specifically with diaspora studies, immigrant studies. These are all very important to me. It's a way to keep in touch with my past, if you will, but it's also very fascinating to me. So the immigrant experience is something that stays close to my heart. It's had an evolution, I got my PhD in political communications, and my initial research was dealing with digital democracy, social capital, those kinds of developments. My interest in food studies

A food class I'm teach this quarter is different than before, in that I wanted to focus on the topics of race, culture, and food. There is a lot of new research going on around this, so it's something that I could contribute to. So I've thought about how ethnic restaurants are kind of becoming an interest in the academic perspective. I didn't see very much written on Greek restaurants from an academic perspective.

Elizabeth, you want to say hello to Erica. Can you go with mama, so I can do the interview please? I have to do this interview. OK let her just sit. Can you sit and join us? We're going to have a surprise guest.

I began to realize and understand the value, of what I came to call the commons, a way to describe a place like the Continental. It was more than just a restaurant, it was a meeting place, a gathering place, a social place, a third place. So it was from my research that I began to understand much more strong fashion that this was not just a mere restaurant> It had transcended being a restaurant, it became this very special place that would attract customers from all walks of life. We would meet there. We would laugh. We would cry. We would argue sometimes. And it was vital. It kept us going. And having such a place, I didn't really understand the value until I did the research, and afterwards I appreciated it.

The food was, I mean yeah it was good. It was Greek-American. I came up with a dish. It was called Taso's breakfast which was quite popular. The food is one thing, but it was the community gathering place that made it special. It was good food- decent, had a good value. When we went home, we went home to sleep. You're not going to eat there.

The food that we had growing up was very traditional Greek food. Was a lot of soups, lentil soup, one of my favorite dishes is a soup with these big kidney beans and carrots, it's called pasolada. It's incredible. A lot of pastas- we ate a lot of pasta, a lot of rice dishes. We also ate a lot of fish, a little bit of meat and cheese. We made our own bread. We raised our own vegetables, wheat, we had olives, and made our own olive oil. It was all very self-sustaining. It's not the case now because that kind of culture has died out in Greece. It was a very healthy diet. When we came to the US, ya know, we changed. And that was very shocking to me because my system took a long time to get used to it. When we got the restaurant it was nice because we had

to Greek cuisine, again, it was not the same cuisine that I had in the village. It was catered to American taste; it was commercialized Greek food.
My fondest memory is the family cooking and eating together. When we owned the restaurant the only time my mother would cook was during the holidays when the restaurant was closed. My mother is amazing. As a family we sat around and could eat and socialize. That's what really they do in Greece. That's the whole key to the culture there it's very much about sitting around eating and spending hours, I mean it's three or four hours. We don't do that in the US.
I can make commercial omelets and French toast, but in terms of actual cooking I'm a terrible cook. I wish I could learn how to make lentil soup. Cause I learned how to be a line cook, ya know. How to make stuff. 200 dishes a day of these omelets. Now my mom and dad and I eat and just spend time together. My sister is a fantastic cook oh my god! Ya know I should learn more, I'm embarrassed.
Food plays a big role in our family's identity. Food is for me a reminder of the past. It allows me to connect back to my homeland where I was born in Greece, the old homeland. It's also special because I grew up with the ethos that food is not just something that you merely put into your mouth, but it is an act of bringing the family together. It is a very social act. In Greece we had all these different plots of land, we would grow corn here, we would grow wheat over here, we would grow tomatoes and beans, and over here were the walnuts, and there were the olive trees. And I remember after we would thrush the wheat, we would do the old-fashioned way of having a horse stomp on the stocks to separate the wheat from the chaffs, we would have a big party. The idea of food is a celebration. It's very much part of our identity. You rarely ever ate alone. On the weekends we try to eat together.

Rheame Ali

I am in the Peace Corps and as to what I do... I'm trying to figure that out myself. I teach Botswana about their culture, and teach Americans about Botswana culture, and am figuring out how to navigate this country; how to get resources. My primary focus is within HIV/AID clinics, and providing knowledge, resources, and skills. So, my dad is Black American, and my mom is Moroccan, so I identify as Black or Moroccan. When growing up, I felt more Arab than African, ya know the religion is Muslim in Morocco, and most people speak Arabic. Mom spoke Arabic, and I can understand it. Now, though, I identify with being a black American- growing up in a White society you feel more exposed so you try to hide. Now you realize there are a lot of black people. My father is a member of Island, and I was raised Muslim. I don't identify as Muslim; my mom still doesn't believe that I don't believe in god. When asked if I'm close to my parents- it's a hard no. I'm close to my three sisters, though.

My mom really likes to cook; she'll cook for the family a huge mix of food. She mainly cooks Saudi Arabian dishes. Food was not a central thing that brought the family together, my mom was working two jobs. I do remember that as kids, we would sit on these bar stools for dinner. However, for my mom, Moroccan food, was a way for her to express her culture. She shared with neighbors as a way to get to know them. When I think about being Moroccan the first thing I think about is the food. I learned to cook when I got to college- I needed to feed myself. I would call my mom and ask specific questions about recipes at first. Huh, that could be a tool to get closer to my mom.

I associate peanut butter with my childhood- by the end of high school I became vegan, so in college I loved to cook kale and zucchini. Yeah, so vegan. I was vegetarian already for a

while for ethical reasons, and my friend became allergic to everything, so I transitioned to veganism with her. Now though, I think about the meat industry, the planet, and my body. I like the awareness of what I eat. It's to a point where I don't know who I would be without my veganism. I like to convert people to be vegan, by getting them to eat a dish that is vegan; sometimes I can be a little pushy with the veganism... But ya know, people warned me that Botswana is a meat eating country, and yeah it's a cheese and meat heavy diet: donkey, beef; everybody has their own animals. People in Botswana think I'm crazy for being vegan… they think I'm absolutely crazy. They'll laugh about it. Food here in Botswana is not necessarily central, which is surprising. Neighbors will like often cook for each other; it's a collective culture.