

# *ESL EXCHANGES*

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Nima Feizi

### Lady in Black

At the age of nine I met her. The first seconds that I visited her, I realized that it [was] real “love at first sight.” She was standing right there, elegant and contemptuous. The whole world was frozen and stopped when I looked at her. With a dark green dress that allured me with just one glance, I found my love. Those adorable lustrous shiny stars on her body absorbed me. I cannot imagine touching her and feeling all that softness under my fingers. I encouraged myself and took a closer look at her. What a wonderful creature! She was near me, nearer than ever. I looked at my father, who was standing some steps far away in his new garden. With his nice smile I got the confirmation to touch that amazing beauty. I raised my hand with a little sacredness and touched her. It was exactly the same that I had imagined. Nice and soft. We made our first kiss and all my lips were colored with her natural lipstick. This was my first time that I experienced her wonderful taste. I did it; it was my first *blackberry* that I tasted in my father’s new garden that he bought for our vacation. Her bushes grow there between two orange trees like a queen between her two soldiers. Behind her I could see the sea on the horizon. Her not very tall bushes were as tall as me and I could easily pick her mature berries. My father’s garden had lots of fruits, but the taste of blackberry was really something to me. I confess to this love.

Now I find those dark green bushes with lustrous shiny berries that are hanging on them everywhere in the garden. We are still in love with a reputable fidelity. I see her in the markets and I just pick her again and put her nicely in the trolley and take her home. We have[a] great time together. She is sweet in [my] mouth and her color is not artificial like the other girls. She is hearty, and keeps

me young. Sometimes I put her in the basket on the coffee table and look at her eyes to renew our love again. Anytime that I eat blackberries, I just remember those days and my father's voice when he yelled at me:

*Be careful about your stomach son, you are killing yourself.*

If I found one of the bushes with berries on it, I grabbed her and picked all of them and sometimes it made problems. My mother always had to wash my clothes with strong detergent but my lovers' colors were never erased.



Eric Chen

### Beef and Me

I lived in a small village when I was very young. The life in a village is quite different from the life in modern cities. So, I have a lot of unique memories there. Now, I am going to share one of my unique experiences.

It was a story about the cow which was owned by my family. At that time, a cow was the most important living force for every farm family. Most families would treat the cow they have as one of their family members. My family had a black cow . . . . I liked to stay with that cow when I was young even though he released some bad smell. The cow was good and gentle. No matter what I did on his back, he would not be angry. Sometimes, I would try to talk with the cow. I was only 4 years old. Children at that age like to do stupid things. Something interesting was that the cow would yell back when I was talking to him like he understood. . . .

One day that year in summer, I got bad news from my grandmother that our two families decided to kill the old cow because we bought a new one. Although the cow is important, if you have more than two cows things will go differently. Feeding a cow every day was a huge expense for a farmer family. So, when we got a better one, we would kill the old one and make it food. It was banned to let a child see how [an] adult kill[ed] a cow because it was so bloody and horrible. On that day, children were locked in the room but I was so curious about it, so I hid behind the window and watched. I saw the whole process. I did not have a clear view about death and killing,

so I could not explain how I felt when I saw the adults killing the cow. The only thing I knew is that I felt so bad. I started to understand why we were banned to see it.

After that, we shared the beef with the neighbor. At that time, beef must be the most luxurious food. Everybody enjoyed it except for me. I puked all the beef out after I ate it. My mother thought I was sick, but the truth was different. I glanced at the place where the cow used to be and I found it was empty. I suddenly felt like two snakes were dancing in my stomach then I started to puke.

That was the first time I ate beef, but after that, I did not eat any beef for 4 years. The experience on that day became a shadow in my memory.

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Onur Cokar

### Deserved Food

Cappadocia means the land of the beautiful horses, but if you go there it will be very hard for you to see even one horse. However, there are more important things rather than observing horses. The nature is totally different from the region where I grew up. I could hear the sounds of the steppe which tells that we are not the real proprietors of the world. Besides, I had another reason to travel. I was meeting my father's best friend who owned a tourist restaurant in Cappadocia.

During my holiday, I rented a bike to travel around Cappadocia. Every day I was traveling thirty kilometers to observe the region. At the end of the day I would go to my father's friend restaurant to eat. One day he said that I must work for my food by working on his farm. I directly said yes and would be ready for the next day. After sleeping a few hours, I woke up at five o'clock and put on a shorts and a t-shirt as I did every day.

We traveled twenty kilometers to arrive at the farm. During the day I cleaned, carried stones for the walls of the farm, and did more work that I ever faced in my city life. I could not understand why he was asking me to do work under difficult conditions. There were scorpions, snakes, and prickles all around. When I saw them, I understood that my clothes were wrong for this region.

For lunch he asked me to hand pick tomatoes, eggplants, cucumbers and onions. Moreover, he brought bulgur and sheep meat. He prepared a salad by adding olive oil and salt. However, before eating this meal I disliked bulgur.

When I returned, he was waiting for me. There were only two wooden spoons on the table. It was a comedown for me because I was not expecting this. However, I could not show my feelings because I did not wanted to displease him. When we started to eat, all my feelings changed.

The food that I hated became the best food that I had ever eaten. During lunch, he explained the history of Cappadocia. His information was not only about the history of ancient Cappadocia but also about the living styles. All my opinions about working on the farm changed. The place which seemed like hell was heaven for me. This modest meal changed all of my feelings. After lunch I learned the taste of fresh foods. Thanks to his conversation I also learned that everything does not have to be perfect. These things that I learned were not the visible part of the iceberg. He taught me that I must work and study hard to obtain something. Food that I deserve is much more delicious than the food I ate in luxury restaurants.

I have eaten much more delicious food in my life but the food I ate in Cappadocia will always be with me. The food was good, but the lessons I learned were even more delicious. Regretfully, he died six months later. It is very sad that I do not have a chance to learn more from him. Though, every time I work hard and receive benefits, I remember him which makes him immortal.



Hye Jeong Yook

### Grandmother's Rice Soup

“Grandmaaa... I cannot walk out of my bedddd...”, “I feeeeel really sick.” These were my first two sentences that I told my grandmother who came to my bed to wake me up. The day before, I had a huge portion of ice-cream as cold as a limp of ice. I soon realized that I have [sic] a cold because of huge portion of ice-cream I had last night. I repented at heart that I ate that much ice-cream at night during the winter vacation. My grandmother looked at me very poorly and said, “I told you that you do not want to eat that huge portion of ice cream this winter night.” “I knew you are getting cold. I told you so and you did not listen to me.” Yes, right! My grandmother warned me that I would get a cold if I eat that ice-cream.

I felt terrible. I could not even move my body to the other [sic] position. My back was clammy with sweat. I could not even go back to sleep because of the pain in my stomach. I tried to move out of the bed and I failed to do it. My grandmother gave me cold medicine and made me fallen [sic] back to sleep. . . . A few hours later I woke up because I was so hungry. I did not eat anything since morning. I was shouting out to my grandmother. “Grandma, I am so hungry that I cannot go back to sleep.” My grandmother ran up to me ask me. “What do you want to eat? But you are sick so you cannot have what you want. You better have my rice soup . . .

My grandmother's rice soup was best [sic] among other people's rice soup . . . .The taste of grandma's rice soup is a very light taste that I could not explain . . . . My grandmother's rice soup had fresh taste . . . . It cannot be compared . . . . I am lost in old memories . . . . I miss my grandma's rice soup.

Ki Soo Kim

### Food Fight

On October 14, 2010, my two friends Yvonne “Burger” and Bermany “Soda” were going to eat lunch. Burger texted me to ask me if I wanted to eat with them. Both Burger and Soda are from New York City and are Dominican. Burger and I have an interesting friendship. We get into a lot of arguments because of our differences, strong personalities, and miscommunications. That whole day I had been mad at Burger, but I didn’t want to eat alone. So I met up with Burger and Soda at Hasbrouck.

I got myself some chicken parmesan, french-fries, a slice of pepperoni pizza, and Pepsi. After getting our food, the three of us sat down to eat. When Soda got up to get something, I was texting my friend Alex to ask her if she wanted to join the three of us for lunch. While I was texting, Burger repeatedly asked “Is she coming?” While she asked me that question, she kept on shoving her hand in front of my phone. I said, “No she is not.” Burger thought that I was mad at her; I probably sounded like I was yelling at her, but I wasn’t. I got madder than I was before I came to Hasbrouck because she kept asking the question when she could have waited for me to finish texting. I also did not like how she kept throwing her hand in front of my phone even though I asked her to stop. Soda returned as Burger said, “Jeesh, you don’t have to get mad at me. All I did was asked you a question.” I looked up and I grabbed my fork and said, “Would you like it if I did this to you while you were texting?” I swung the fork back and forth really hard because

I was mad at her. A glob of greasy mozzarella cheese from the chicken parmesan flew off of my fork on to Burger's hair.

Burger said, "I can't believe you just did that!" She was so mad that she didn't know what else to say to me. Burger who wasn't finished eating got up, grabbed her plates and her cup, and left.

Soda asked me, "What happened?" and I explained everything to her. Valita "Fries" is another friend of mine that I met at New Paltz. Fries is tall and is good at mediating, so Soda and I went to her room to talk. Soda and Fries suggested that I should talk to Burger because I went over the line.

I texted Burger and asked her if we could talk about what had caused us to argue. At 11 P.M., we discussed for an hour what we could do to our improve friendship. Burger and I decided to make changes so we do not have to get mad at each other. Even though we made some changes, we still argue due to our miscommunication.

When I was back home my family and I would discuss our days and what was on our minds while we ate. Since I am in college, I can't have these discussions with my family. I do have the dinnertime discussions with my friends which bring us closer with every meal.

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Sumire Tsutamune

### Mother's Taste

I remember dinner that my grandmother cooked for me when I was a child. After playing with my friends and then when I got to home, I say "Tadaima" which means I am home, and then my grandmother responded, "Okaeri" which means welcome back home. Usually, she cooked traditional Japanese foods. I ran up to my grandmother and then asked her *what's for dinner today?*

Her specialty was Chikuzenni which is made with boiled carrot, shiitake mushroom, bamboo, lotus root with soy source, sugar, and sake. It is my favorite food because it is delicious. My grandmother cooked it when I looked sad. I do not know how she knew when I was sad, and if I was sad on the next day, she cooked the food for dinner.

While she was listening to what I was talking about, she was smiling and nodding sweetly. It made me feel warm and comfortable. Once, I did not have school lunch because I disliked what was on the menu. When I went back home, I thought my grandmother was waiting for me but she was not. My grandfather was home to wait for me, and he told me she went to the hospital. I somehow felt let down because I was so hungry and I thought she did not cook dinner. I got angry and told my grandfather I hated her because of this. Suddenly, my grandfather scolded me and he said, "You do not know how much she thinks about you." Then he showed me the Chikuzenni. I cried while I ate it. Chikuzenni also made me comfortable like my grandmother because the taste reminded me of her and I felt as if her warm hands were touching me.

I do not know what a mother's taste is because my mother does not cook at all, but I know my grandmother's taste is a mother's taste for me. Recently, young mothers prefer to cook western foods because children love it more than Japanese foods. Moreover, people usually go to a western restaurant and they prefer to have western foods. I think traditional foods of each country should

be mother's taste because that has been supporting the country's culture and people's life until today.

Everyone has his/her mother's taste, and it is basically each country's traditional foods. However, because of globalization, foods people eat are changing and also mother's taste is changing, too. For me, my grandmother's taste is mother's taste, which is Chikuzenni. When I eat Chikuzenni, I still remember my childhood, memories with my grandmother, and her voice, warm hands, and eyes. These make me feel warm, happy, and comfortable. People should not forget country's traditional foods and mother's taste even though time passes.



Hamza Bentebbaa

### Couscous Is Calling

Couscous is a special traditional dish for Moroccan people that they have on Friday for lunch. Now, it become international dish [sic] that you can eat in N.Y City, Tokyo, Paris,... people from all over the world love it but they don't get the real feeling toward the dish as Moroccans do.

Since I was a child I have always eaten Couscous every Friday after coming back from the mosque. In fact, since leave the mosque [sic], my stomach starts talking and making sounds like if it were happy and waiting for Couscous. Unfortunately, I have to walk for a while to get home with my stomach hurting me and pushing me to run. When I get near to the apartment a hundred meters away, the smell of couscous grabs my attention and keeps my stomach hurting more and more. In fact, I lose my passion and I run up the stairs. All the family gets together around the table and waits for my mother to bring Couscous, which is served in a traditional brown plate made of clay in a circular shape. Typically, the boiled wheat, with the smoke of boiling vegetables, is at the bottom and vegetables with chickpeas are on the top of it with a sauce in which they have been cooked. The meat, beef or chicken, takes place in the center in between the wheat and vegetables. The hotness of the meal doesn't let me taste and feel the softness of carrots, radishes, pumpkin, and the well-cooked meat. In fact, it keeps me anxious to eat more and more.

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Mahmoud Jawharji

### The Family Day

Every time food is the topic of a discussion, a particular memory comes to my mind and flashes by my eyes, when I used to live with my whole family back in Saudi Arabia. My family lived all together in one big house of two stories and four apartments; each story has two apartments toward each other. Each of my father and two uncles has an apartment, and that leaves one more apartment that goes to my Grandmother. My father and uncles decided for the whole family to get together once a week to have lunch, and they chose Friday to be the family day. Every Friday, we all got together and shared one big meal that we did not usually have on any other day of the week. We have had a lot of different foods since, but no matter how delicious they were, I will never forget the day when I had the best meal.

It was the day when my father and my uncles wanted to try a new meal that a lot of people have never tried it or even think of doing it. The idea of the meal came from one of the famous traditional Saudi Arabian foods that called Haneez, which is usually served in a large round dish that is filled with rice and has been cooked the Saudi Arabian way. On the top of the middle of the rice big pieces of lamb and the edges of the dish are covered with Spaghetti. However, the new meal had the same idea but replaced the lamb meat with a big grouper, shrimp, squid, and crab.

I still remember when my oldest cousin and I woke up early on that Friday morning to take the fresh sea food that we bought the day before to a professional chef. The chef owned a restaurant about half an hour away from our house. I drove with my cousin and it was only nine o'clock in the morning. We gave the chef the fresh sea food and we asked him to get it ready by one o'clock afternoon.

When we returned with the food, my other cousins and brothers helped us to take the food inside, and then we divided it into two parts; one went to the males' table and the other to the females'. After we finished eating, we all went to the living room to drink tea, which is an old tradition in my family, especially after lunch. However, after the tea was ready, all the talk kept going until the evening, when everybody started to leave to get ready for work for the next day.

I do not see a lot of people who live in a huge house with their families, and some do not know how it feels to be a part of a huge family. Some think that to be a part of big family is a headache or it will not be as good as if they live by themselves. Well, sometimes it is, but no matter how good our life will be if we live by ourselves or with our own family, it will not be full of happiness like when all the family are get together, talk, laugh, help each other, and especially, when we eat together.

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Jessica Jiang

### Dumplings Have One Special Meaning For Me

Nowadays, there are thousands of foods all over the world. Today, I would like to introduce one of the traditional foods in China which are dumplings. As everyone knows, dumplings are one of the most popular foods in China; a dumpling means together, lucky, happiness. However, it has another special meaning for me, which means my grandmother's love and gave to me a wonderful memory until now.

When I was very young, I did not like to eat dumplings a lot. In contrast, when I visited my grandmother, she always wanted me to eat some dumplings. As for her, she thought it was healthy. Every time she made dumpling by herself, she asked me to eat; I did not understand her and refused her to eat all the time, even I felt uncomfortable when she did that [sic] . . . . However, before I came to the USA, I visited her and my grandfather one more time. As usual, she was making dumplings when I came in to her house, but the difference from any other time which was she made dumplings used different shapes [sic]. Some of them were square, some of them were round. When I saw that, I was shocked at that moment, and then I knew the special meaning of all these different shapes of dumplings. It all means her love. Because she knew I did not like dumplings, and she tried to make some different shapes that I may like . . . . I cried at that time, and I really ate a lot of dumplings one time, just one time.

After I came to the USA, I always thought about that moment and that day. Dumplings mean a lot to every Chinese person, but it means more to me than others, which allowed me the great love of my grandmother. It became one of the special foods for me.

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Moses Lee

### Miss Your Food, Mom!

“Yuck!” It was my roommate, Sam’s immediate response for my first food, after I started to live by myself. Now, my hands have become a pretty good cook. But, the first time I cooked were disasters of the world of food.

When I lived with my family, I always complained to my mom about food, even though my neighbors always admired my mom’s great, fantastic food skills. Unlike other family’s mom, most of the time, my mother cooked vegetables. But when I was young, I was crazy in meat. When I complained about that, my mom made amazing food with a very little amount of meat. She had such magic hands. Also my mother considered our health a lot. That was why we always ate vegetables.

When I went to college, I started to live in a house near the college. So I had a mission that I had to feed myself or I would die of hunger. My mom was really worried about my food because she knew I had no knowledge of cooking.

The first day in the morning, I woke up and went to school. I had no idea how to make any food, so I just left home and bought some food from the school cafeteria. A week passed. Little by little, I started to recall my home food. I mean Korean food. My roommate and I decided to make Korean food (fortunately, my roommate was a Korea). After a great discussion, for this holy mission (since my roommate did not have any experience either), I bravely came forward. In front of the range, I just put everything that my mother gave me.

Salt, soybean paste, red pepper paste, onion, potatoes, and soy sauce were the ingredients that I put like minnows in a track. But still I believed that it was a mom's way of cooking.

Around 2 hours later, the food had been [sic] completed. My roommate and I were having a period of starving incredibly [sic], so we jumped up to [sic] the food. And then, what happened? I will just leave the result to you.

As I said before, I am a pretty good cook now. I can cook many kinds of food. But I still miss my mom's food since no matter what I try, I can never follow her cooking skills. Whenever I fail cooking, I really yearn for my mom's food so much.

*. . . . my mom made amazing food with a very little amount of meat. She had such magic hands. Also my mother considered our health a lot. That was why we always ate vegetables.*

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Guoguang Ying

### The Best Pork Cuisine

Chinese people like pork and everyone eats a lot of pork. There are more than ten basic methods to cook a delicious pork dish. I also have eaten a lot of dishes, but no one had left me some special memories except the pork I had had in Hangzhou. That dish is referred to as Don Po Pork.

I ate that food in Lou Wai Lou, which is the most famous restaurant in Hanzhou, established in 1848. Before I visited there, I had long heard of the fame of the restaurant and some excellent dishes there, especially the West Lake Vinegar Fish and Don Po Pork. That time we traveled to Hangzhou and planned on having a meal in the restaurant Lou Wai Lou.

It was a beautiful night when we visited the restaurant. We were seated in a small square table by the window. Walking through [sic] the long aisle, I saw many interesting photos on the wall, most of which were about political celebrities, like our beloved Prime Chow Enlai. Then, I felt very excited that I would have a meal in the same restaurant where our great leaders had been. After a short introduction from a waitress, we started to order. Most of the dishes we ordered have been totally forgotten except two, one was West Lake Vinegar Fish, and the other was Don Po Pork.

The food was served very fast. Although then I had been very hungry for the whole day walking, I still did not eat a lot at first. I decided to leave my stomach for the most important dishes West Lake Vinegar Fish and Don Po Pork. The West Lake Vinegar Fish was served first after four looked very fresh. The West Lake Vinegar Fish was served first after four to five other fishes. I quickly held up my chopsticks and grabbed one slice onto my plate and slowly chewed it.

Disappointing to me [sic], for it was not as delicious as I thought before. Although the fish tasted too fishy, I thought it probably was a result that the main material fish was from the West Lake, which is blocked water. Later, the Don Po Pork was served on the table also. I observed the Don Po Pork, which was a big chunk of red pork and seemed very fatty; about two thirds was while fat, I could easily identify that from the various color of the meat. I felt kind of disappointed again, because I did not like fatty food. But I still tried it for the fame of the dish and the inviting color and smell from the meat. The pork was very soft. I almost had no time to chew and it had melted like Tofu in my mouth. The meat also tasted a little sweet. I thought they must add some sugar. Everybody in sight could not help to discuss how it could taste so delicious. One of my friends said this pork was added [sic] with more than twenty herbal ingredients and stewed in a sealed pot over five hours. I felt that's really amazing.

After I returned home from Hangzhou, my friends asked me what impressed me the most, and I would tell them the Don Pork in the Lou Wai Lou without hesitation. That's the most excellent food in my mind.

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Son Phan

### The Delicious Noodle

A dish sometimes I eat here in New Paltz is a kind of noodle. I buy it in Stop & Shop, in the aisle of cooked food. In a forest of food, I have a good impression about it because of its special style although it has no name outside its box. I think it is a combination between Eastern & Western food.

Specifically, it has the taste of Italian spaghetti and Vietnamese noodle. The thin yellow strings of noodle are mixed in white cream that is a little sour and there is no fat taste at all. To reduce bright colors in the dish, they put some green cauliflower and cabbage around the dish. After putting the box into the microwave for some minutes, I just mix them together so the noodle is overwhelmed with cream. The main ingredient is grilled chicken. They soak the chicken in a kind of sauce before grilling, so after warming it up, the chicken has a sweet smell that made my mouth overflowing of water [sic]. I often eat this dish along with orange juice. Even though the cream is not fat, the noodle itself is making me full quickly. To reduce this, I often squeeze a lemon around the noodle to gain the sour taste and excite my hungry feeling. Unlike other types of noodle, this type is not quite dried or wet. Most kinds of Eastern noodles are sunk in bouillon and people drink rather than eat them. The noodle I eat here is smooth in cream and easy to swallow.

Finally, I realized that after eating this dish, the most suitable thing to finish the meal is ice cream. It brings an opposite taste to the dish. One is hot and a little bit wet and one is cold and dry. The ice cream is to cut the full feeling because this box of noodles is a little too much for me for a meal.

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Kajia Chen

### The Long Life Noodle

“Happy Birthday!” This is my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday and I have been studied [sic] in the United States for two years. In these two years, I ate the sandwich, pizza and sub everyday and totally have an American style diet. Today, I hope my mother will be here and cook the Chinese food for me, because I want to eat a special dish that Chinese people usually have on their birthday. We call it Long Life noodle which has a good meaning to live happily and healthily.

In China, it is a custom to eat the long life noodle, especially children and old people. It is not only to hope live longer [sic], also contains the best wishes from our families. There are two ways to cook it. One is to boil it with the chicken soup and mix with vegetables and eggs. The other one is to sauté it with a green vegetable which Americans call “Mushe”. I love the second one, because it is tastier than boiled noodle. My mother would like to put many octopuses in it, and cook with the golden sauce. On my birthday party, I could not stop eating it, even if there were many dishes in front of me. The Peking duck, the sweet and sour fish and the seafood delight, all of them were not enough to change my mind about it.

Now, I was having a birthday with my cousin here, and we ate the chocolate cake. The chocolate cake is my favorite, but I did not eat a lot. Maybe I should learn how to cook the long life noodle, and the next time when I go back home I will cook it for my parents and friends.

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Mengzi Li

### After That

There was a story [that] happened one and one half years ago.

That day was in September, a beautiful sunny day. My mom was driving on the high way, and I was next to her. When the car was running, the sunlight burned my eyes; I was almost going to sleep. At that time, I saw there was a big blue truck in front of us. We were approaching it. Then I saw there was something blowing out of the truck. I was confused. I asked Mom, “Mom, what’s that?” and mom told me they were pigs. I didn’t know what I was thinking about. I asked again, “So where are they going?” “Where can they go?” mom answered. It was silent. I couldn’t hear anything except the wind. They are going to die. I couldn’t stop thinking about it, and I cried. I said to my mom, “I won’t eat any red meat from today.” Mom thought I was kidding so she didn’t answer me. But I really meant it.

After that day, I stopped eating red meat. Mom was worried about me. She tried to let me eat red meat again because she thought I couldn’t get the nutrition I needed to get. It was bad for my health. But I kept doing that, until one day after half of a year from that day. My mom was cooking, and one of the dishes I thought was vegetable. It looked very delicious although there was no meat in it. There were three or four kinds of vegetables in it, and they were in different colors; it was like a colorful painting. I walked to stand by Mom’s side, and the smell was like I was standing in the vegetable garden; I could smell the fresh vegetables mix with my mom’s cooking smell. I was so happy that I could have delicious vegetables cooked by mom. My favorite food was always my

My favorite food was always my mom's cooking, whatever she cooked.

What I didn't know was there were some tiny pieces of meat in it. I put them in my mouth and chewed. I would never forget that day. It felt like I was chewing wood. All of my teeth were shocked and my tongue was burning. I puked and drank some water quickly. Then I got a headache. It was really torture. After I got better, I asked my mom about what she put in it. She realized that she put some meat in it and forgot to tell me. Actually, it wasn't her fault because I was attracted by the food. After that I didn't eat anything . . . I sat there and thought about the animals. I felt so bad.

I still eat chicken and fish now, and I feel guilty about that. But just like what my mom said, I can't stop eating all of them all suddenly. I was a meat eater. I need a process. I'm trying not to eat meat now. I know I will become a full vegetarian one day, and that day is not so far away.

*I couldn't bear anything except the wind. They are going to die. I couldn't stop thinking about it, and I cried. I said to my mom, "I won't eat any red meat from today." Mom thought I was kidding so she didn't answer me. But I really meant it..*

Jifan Zheng

### Gourmet Food

Since my parents have spent a lot of time working in hotel, they had abundant knowledge about gourmet food. For the same reason, I often have the opportunity to try a lot of gourmet food around the world, such as Italian food, Japanese food, Chinese food and so on. The memorable food I had eaten was called “The Buddha Jump over the Wall.” It is a famous Chinese food with an expensive price, which costs more than 1,000 dollars for a jar.

By the time my parents opened a restaurant, I had started to study about gourmet food, especially the Western-style food. I'd like French food and Italian food, but steak is the main ingredient of mine. Although I never traveled the world for the purpose of eating the gourmet steak until I went to the US, I have tried several Italian restaurants in the US. They were not as good as I thought. I also experienced a lot of restaurants around China. Somehow I would have a chance to try the food cooked by famous foreign chefs.

My favorite steak is medium-cook. It should be very fresh and tender with the pink color. The medium cook steak should be easy to cut. When you try to cut a piece off, you can feel the knife moves [sic] smoothly, like as cut a cheese [sic]. At the same time, you can see the juice which comes out of steak, must make you hungry.

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Yao Xie

### The Spring Festival

In China, the most important day in every year is the Spring Festival. On the day, everyone will go home and celebrate the New Year together. When the Spring Festival comes, just one word appears in people's mind, it's "go home", so, you will see the sea that is made by people or cars in the bus station, the train station and the highway. Every year, I will go to my grandmother's home with my parents; my aunts and uncles will come, too. We could share the wonderful time with each other.

The day before the New Year's Day is called "Chuxi" by us. Almost all the people will get home on that day. All the families will have a dinner together. In my grandmother's home, at 3 o'clock, my aunts will begin to prepare the dinner. There are fish, pork, beef, ducks, chickens and other vegetables. My families are very busy. So, it's not very usual to have a dinner together. The round table is necessary. Grandfather, my father, and uncles must take some wine at that time; after dinner, adults will play "mahjong" which is the most popular game in China. But teenagers are not allowed to play it. Young people will watch TV. Every year, the CCTV will have a big evening party celebrating the Chinese New Year's Day. Many super stars will perform in that evening party. It will take almost four and a half hours. We could watch it during the whole night. When midnight comes, everyone will go out to light fireworks, which is the event that children like very much.

Because of study aboard [sic], I haven't celebrated the Spring Festival with my families for two years. When the Spring Festival came, I missed them very much. I would call them and watch the evening party online. But it's very different. In my mind, the importance of the Spring Festival is not what we do; it is that we are together. I miss you, my families.

Shan Yu

### Make Dumplings

There is a habit in my family; we usually make dumplings at least once a month. Dumplings are not hard to make, but they need time to prepare the materials and combine everything together to become a dumpling.

When I was seven, my parents had taught me how to make a dumpling. There are four separate stages in the making progress. I only learned the first step at that time. My parents explained that the first step to me was to make flour water into the firm paste, and take care not to make it too stiff. Then I began my job; I put some water into flour at first and then tried to mix them together. After one or two minutes, I find that nothing was changed. So I decided to add more water, the flour still did not become the firm paste. Then I put more and more water, and the flour had finally become the wet paste. It cannot be used to make dumplings; my parents asked me to add more flour and mixed it again. Then I looked at my parents making the fillings for the dumplings. They added meat, vegetables, salt and soy sauce all together into the firm paste and stirred them evenly.

When the dumplings were made ready, the only step was to put them into boiling water. I still remembered that we needed to boil about ten cups of water in deep pan. After the water started boiling, I dropped dumplings one by one into the water. It was better to put dumplings no more than twenty at a time, and stirred dumplings carefully to prevent them stick [sic] to the bottom of pan. Usually, I always stood by the pan; I could not wait for them. After the dumplings were finished cooking, I often put some soy sauce and red pepper oil in a small bowl. Then I put dumplings in the small bowl. They tasted so spicy and delicious. I could not use words to describe that feeling of the dumplings. All the things we made by ourselves, and they all tasted like our hard work.

Miyoung Park

### The Memory about Pork Cutlet

The Pork Cutlet is made of fried pork with the juicy sauce. When people try to cook it at home the flavor might be different with the restaurant's one. My mother used to cook the Pork Cutlet for us and my brother and I loved her cooking.

It is pretty easy to make. The size of meat as a palm [sic] and it is thinner than a half of steak. If you want to have the smoother quality of chewing, you can hammer the meat; I don't mean the hammer is a tool for nailing. A pinch of salt and pepper is to be sprinkled over the meat; it means you can do the next step. The assembly line is meat, scrambled eggs and bread flakes. Put the seasoned meat into the eggs; it is going to be glue. The yellow worn [sic] meat encounters white bread flake which will make it crispier. Eggs are to make the bread flake stick to the meat. All is done. You can just put it into the pan with hot oil on it and fry it. If the white flake on the pork changes to watering [sic] brown color, you can imagine the sound when you bite a piece of it.

The very important thing is which sauce will be poured on it. In addition, I believe that the restaurant food and home-made cook use different kinds of sauce. The fact was realized when I was seven years old. My mother used to use ketchup on the Pork Cutlet, which is the most well-known sauce. Or there was purchased sauce for the Pork Cutlet which was brown colored, less sour and more watery than the red tomato ketchup. It seems like Worcestershire sauce for steak. It was still delicious and my mother deserved to be called a chef. Once my family hung out with other neighbors; we went to a Western style restaurant. It was my first experience to eat western food at the restaurant using a fork and knife. We ordered the Pork Cutlet. The luxurious dish made the

food more eatable and the sauce on the meat was glossy. It was totally different with the red ketchup or purchased brown sauce. The sweet and little warm sauce must have come from another world. Everyone enjoyed the mouth watering wonderful art [of] Pork Cutlet.

When everyone was astonished by the flavor and shared their opinions about how much it tasted, I didn't say anything. It was really great as much as I still remember. The reason I didn't say "It is really delicious!" was that I didn't want my mother's cooking to become worse than any other food. I pouted and said, "My mother's is better." My mother might recognize my lie but she seemed touched because of my response.

*The sweet and little warm sauce must  
have come from another world. Everyone  
enjoyed the mouth watering wonderful  
art . . .*

Kelly Zhe Zhu

### A Special and Ordinary Dinner

Last Christmas Eve I was on a flight hurrying back to China. I was heading back to visit my grandfather who raised me for the past 14 years. No matter how fast I tried to hurry, I was late; I could not catch up for his last moment. He died.

I had a special attachment to my grandfather. Out of all his grandchildren, he only brought me candies. He always remembered my birthday, though he forgot about what day it was occasionally. Every time he would cook a feast on my birthday. However, this year, probably he forgot about my birthday and left early. My birthday is in January; it was not even a month after my grandfather left. I was still in deep mourning when I needed to smile at my birthday party for the rest of my family.

In my family, if it was not my grandfather cooking then it was my father. Since this year my grandfather passed away and my father was still taking care of the funeral affairs oversea, the preparation of my birthday feast fell on my mother alone. My mother never cooked any big dinner before. I told my mother not to do anything special because I was not in the mood to celebrate. My mom was stubborn enough; she went out shopping for the groceries and for my cake anyway.

My mother went out before I got up that day; she finally got back home after a few hours with all the ingredients. She put down everything, took a deep breath, and started describing her adventure that she had shopping for groceries for the first time. I stood there in silence and just gazed at her, because words became unessential.

She bought crabs. When I saw them, they were awkward looking, but I could not tell why. She explained she knew that she could not handle living crabs; she gave extra money to the crab seller to lift the shell off the crabs for her. It might be the strangest request that the crab seller had ever had.

Finally, it was all dark outside. I started to set the dining table as usual. When my brother and I sat down, my mother came out of the kitchen with a big bowl of noodle soup. The soup was clear; it had two leaves of vegetables and several shrimp on the top. The color looked good, but I did not have appetite. I still smiled at my mother gratefully, I even forgot how to say “thank you” at this point. I scooped a big chunk of noodles, and I was preparing to receive the first big bite with mixed feelings. The noodles were the same noodles, but they were no longer made by my grandfather.

I had tears in my eyes, as I took the first bite. It actually tasted very good. I realized how much effort my mother put into the dinner, and I ate her meal with appreciation. I kept on eating. I ate a lot more than I usually did. It has only been a month and I already forgot how the noodles tasted, but I know that the noodles were full of love.

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Yoshiyuki Harima

### Satisfy Stomach and Heart

In my opinion, the best spice when we eat food is hunger; eating food when we are hungry gives more satisfaction than any other case. It would be great if we could have some dinner with our friends or family. The latest memory when I went to a restaurant with my family would be the last summer holiday, having dinner at Hanasaka Jisan.

A five minute walk from Shibuya station we will see the Japanese restaurant, Hanasaka Jisan. It is located in Shibuya, which is one of the most popular and crowded cities in Japan; also this is the restaurant where I used to work. All the food in Hanasaka Jisan is very unique and probably we cannot see the same food in other restaurants. My favorite food is Genkotsu; it is a rice ball but different from those we know. When we make a rice ball, we usually wrap a ball of rice with seaweed, but for this Genkotsu, we use fish instead of seaweed. Taste of the fish and rice matches very well and every time when we bite and chew, the taste of three foods creates a harmony.

I used to invite my family to the restaurant where I used to work and we would have dinner. However, I had never invited my family to Hanasaka Jisan because it was too far away from my house and every one of us was too busy with their own work at that time. In fact, it took a long time to match my family's schedule when we decided to go to Hanasaka Jisan; matching six people's schedule was not an easy task.

It was Sunday afternoon in summer when we got to Shibuya; the weather was humid and boiling, typical summer weather in Japan. I worried about whether my family could enjoy the food, but it was nothing to worry about. At last, the food I recommended appeared, Genkotsu. I

I explained to my family how to eat it, and I ate half of the rice ball and dumped half of it in the soup. Enjoying the flavor of the rice, fish, and soup, I ate it without stopping my chopsticks. My parents and brothers also ate it; no one opened their mouths to have a conversation and we all enjoyed and concentrated on eating this Genkotsu.

We left the restaurant at eight, which meant we stayed there for nearly two hours. Usually our family does not stay in the restaurant for more than an hour, so it was quite a surprise. These two hours were the best time I had last year and if possible, I want to go to Hanaka Jisan after I go back to Japan.



Hong Yuan

### Food and Me

“Come back! Finish your lunch!” this is the most common conversation between my grandmother and me. I used to be a girl who was very picky about food. Therefore, that is why I used to spend half an hour on a meal, even more. However, I tried to change the way of eating because my body reacted terribly. I was a fitting example for someone to learn how to eat in healthy.

When I was a girl, my grandmother followed me and wanted to feed me. I was born in a province whose people loved to eat spicy food, but I did not like it. My grandmother cooked a special meal without peppers for me when I lived with her because I was very picky. When my parents found out about this behavior, they blamed me and told me many reasons why I have to eat every kind of food. Nevertheless, it is not easy to change a routine. My mother will not prepare any special meal for me, so I had to spend most of my time picking out the material.

In addition, my body started to have some reactions when I was a little older because I am picky. The skin on my hand started to come off. The color of my lips became a little pale, and my face, too. My mother brought me to the doctor, and the doctor said I just lacked some vitamins and necessary substances. He asked my mother to adjust my diet. After that, I was not as picky as before, but it was still hard for me to try new food.

During middle school, I had to live on campus and eat at the dining hall because the school is far from my home. I brought a lot of instant noodles to the school every week in order to avoid going to the dining hall because of my picky routine. I could not just depend on the food my dad brought on Wednesday. Hunger made me begin to eat at the dining hall, but I spent twice the time

at a meal than other students. Day after day, I spent a shorter time on eating, and started accepting more food.

To this day, there are still some foods I do not eat such ingredients: ginger, shallot, onion, garlic, and so on. My belly always feels painful because I do not eat garlic and shallot. My mother said they can help people digest their food. Every time after I eat too much oily foods, my grandmother asked me to eat ginger because it can help clean my stomach. The routine is hard to change, so I take some medicine instead of these foods to supply the necessary minerals. Because of the benefit of these foods, even if I do not eat them, I still put them in the meal I make.

The bad routine makes me picky about food, but also makes me know how important food is for us. I did not try any new food; as a result I lacked many of the vitamins and mineral substances from certain foods. We should make friends with foods, so it can help us build a healthy body. My story should make us re-think about which foods we need to eat.

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Miki Imai

### The Happy Saturdays

It was so snowy and freezing. I was playing cards with my housemates because we could not hang out in town as usual due to the heavy snow. We had been waiting for my friends to come because the day was going to be a big Japanese pancake party which is called Okonomiyaki. Okonomiyaki means “my favorite pancake” in English. We were excited to make the pancakes and to talk around a big antique table in my house.

First of all, Okonomiyaki is a Japanese food which originally comes from the western part of Japan, Osaka and Hiroshima. Okonomiyaki should be divided in two parts Okonomi and Yaki. Okonomi means that one can put in pancakes anything you want such as meats, vegetables, shrimps or noodles. Yaki means baking or grilling in Japanese, so that he or she can put anything into the pancake mix and just bake it. The difference between Osaka and Hiroshima style Okonomiyaki is whether the pancake includes noodles or not. Basically, Hiroshima style Okonomiyaki includes noodles inside of the pancakes, and Osaka style just includes vegetables, meats.

First step was to prepare the pancake mix which I brought back from Japan. I was back in Japan during the winter vacation. The process is quite easy except cutting a big amount of cabbages for all of us because there were eight people at the party. After cutting them, we put them in the mix with seven eggs and water. Until then, everything was going well; however, my friends started to make such big messes in my kitchen.

While a friend of mine was mixing the pancake mix, the mix was splashing all over my kitchen. Another friend cut his finger when he was cutting cabbages, and the other guy threw away a half of the all shrimp into the water tube while he was washing them. Also, when it came the

the time to bake the pancakes, a friend of mine mistook to flip over the pancake on the pan again. Thus, the pancake was eventually broken in parts and burned out on the pan.

By getting over the many mistakes which we made on the way to complete the pancakes, we could finally get a piece of pancake which included a slice of bacon and several shrimps on it. We put Japanese sauce on it which is called Okonomiyaki sauce. It smells fruity, looks sticky and like soy sauce and tastes a little spicy. We put mayonnaise on it as well and, at last, we put fish flakes and seaweeds flakes on it. The pancake itself is so soft, and we can taste the bacon and shrimp flavor. We continued this exciting cooking time and happy tasting time again and again until the pancake mix was gone.

Lastly, it came time to wash dishes. Before that, we played a little game which was poker. It was the biggest competition of the day to decide who was going to wash the dishes. All of us were so excited not to get the role without cheating. Two of us were chosen to be dish washers, and other people happily continued to play cards while they were teasing the two dish washers

Finally, the day was so wonderful and unforgettable not only for me but for all participants. I had been so lonely and a little sad until the party because I had just started to live off-campus since the beginning of this semester; however, thanks to all of my friends, I had overcome those feelings. It is because we now plan a party on every Saturday at my house. I have already started thinking about the next happy Saturday.

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Francisco Kaiser

### Wings' Night

The first thing I did that night was to meet with the new Spanish guys in New Paltz, Diego and Pablo. We wanted to meet each other and start creating a relationship. When we were all together, I asked the simplest question, but one of the most important questions in terms of social life. "Are you hungry?" Even if they were not starving, the answer would be positive; I looked at them with a smiley face and said. "Ok, let us go to Cuddy's; tonight is wing's night."

Here in New Paltz every Monday night, McGuillicuddy's has the best Hudson Valley wings. My idea was a win-win proposal. We came to the place and sat down at a fancy table near the window. After ordering some beers to open our appetite, we started to think about what we wanted to order. At that point I asserted, "We want some wasabi-Dijon wings. Those are the best." Diego started to laugh and he said, "You are like me, you like spicy food". In those first couple of moments, I could see those guys were good people to hang out with, and share our experiences and future goals.

I continued reading the menu, with all the different salsas, ordered by spiciness. I felt Pablo, who did not have any preferences about sauces, could be a person who needs more time with new people like me. On the other hand, I saw Diego as a really interesting person; we had a lot of the same interests in common. I knew it would be an interesting night getting to know

them. Finally, we ordered forty wings. Apart from wings, I ordered a basket of French fries and onion rings, and another round of Sam Adam's seasonal. Diego is passionate like me about beer. . . He likes to try all different brands and we started a really good conversation about the different types of U.S. microbrews.

The night went on and we wanted to order some more food. Diego and Pablo were starving. They were also eager to order different food. So Diego asked for some advice from the waiter, in order to know what else he could order. The waiter told him to order the "McGillicuddy's Mess", a new meal on the menu. It was fresh grilled turkey with melted Swiss served on open-faced bread. Diego said, "That's awesome. I want to definitely taste it." I encouraged him to do it.

After finishing that delicious and tasty mess, we ended up with our first but not last meeting. That night while we were surrounded by food and good people as we normally were in Spain, three Spaniards started a new and close relationship in the USA..



Guole Shi

### Breakfast

It was a Sunday morning at home during the winter break; my parents did not go to work, and my brother had no school as well. Usually, they were used to getting up late on Sunday. As a surprise, I was going to cook an American style breakfast for them. Absolutely, I was worried about the taste since this was my first time to cook it for my family. I held my breath and told myself, "I am ready to cook now." So, I started to cook.

Firstly, I measured the quantity of oatmeal and poured it in a bowl. Then, I put much more oatmeal in a pot, and put some walnuts and cranberries in it also. "Should I put more sugar inside to make it taste good? I should not because I will put soy milk later and it should contain much sugar," I murmured. Later, I put more soy milk to mix them. The last step for me was to plug it in an outlet to cook it. At the same time, I was going to make a plate of fruit and yogurt salad. I got some berries, two apples, and two bananas from the fruit basket. Actually, I was willing to cut apples into many heart shapes. I realized it did not make sense because I was not able to see the heart shapes when I mixed it with the yogurt and fruits. So I gave up doing this because I preferred to make a good taste rather than a nice decoration. Unfortunately, the soy milk overflowed from the pot because I forgot to count time when I realize something smelled weird while I was making the salad. "Oh my God, I have never seen such a mess on the cooking table." I said to myself in an afraid and surprised voice. So I ran to my parents' room in a hurry and woke up my mom to deal with it.

Finally, the whole pot of oatmeal was dry and some black spots were on the inner surface of the pot when I took off the lid. Fortunately, my mom said that it was fine to eat and asked me to

separate the oatmeal into four bowls and brought the fruit salad to the table. On the table, my mother claimed that this was a unique breakfast for us because this was her daughter's first time cooking for our family. Definitely, I was very happy and enjoyed the breakfast. My mother said that both of them tasted really good. She also told me that I needed practice more and I could prepare breakfast for our family every day. My little brother got her key point and said, "Mom is lazy and does not want to cook any more for us, so she encourage you to cook." We were all laughing. It seems that everyone enjoyed the breakfast from their smiling faces.

This was a special experience for me because I cooked the breakfast and shared it with my family. I like cooking now even though my cooking skills are terrible. However, I believe that every food can be delicious when you cook them from your heart.

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Sebastina Boakye

### The Delicious Taste of Cornbread

Cornbread is a food I really enjoy eating and talking about. This delicious food always grabs my attention whenever I see it no matter where I am. People who normally see me eating it almost every Sunday ask me why I eat cornbread on that day. Apart from my close friends, I don't tell anybody why. I only tell my friends because I want them to know the importance of cornbread in my life. It may sound like cornbread is not a big deal but it is very important to me.

Sunday is the day we make cornbread and add it to our dinner for that night. It's like a traditional thing that has been going on in my family for years. As soon as my family and I get back from church, we start cooking our Sunday dinner and always make sure to make the delicious cornbread. When everything is set and we are ready to eat, we say our prayer. Just the taste of cornbread alone makes me feel like I'm floating in the cloud. During this time, I feel so happy because all of my family is together and I always felt that it is the cornbread that makes my family united. I know there are lots of families who have dinners just like my family does, but I've always felt that ours is special and unique.

My grandmother always had a song she sings whenever she's making the cornbread. She always tells me that I don't understand the meaning of the words, but eventually I will understand what the lyrics mean. Sometimes when I'm in the kitchen helping her to prepare meals, she tries to teach me the lyrics to the song. I never paid attention to any of the words because I'm only

thinking about the cornbread.

One night, my family and I were talking about how to be cautious when preparing food and I remember my cousins making fun of me because I got burned in the kitchen earlier on that day. Then one of my aunt's husbands began telling us a story about how an old lady's clothes caught on fire while she was preparing lunch for her grandchildren. She died as a result. All the adults had their own stories and experiences of fire, and I was very young so I believed the stories and became very scared of fire. Although I began to fear fire or anything that has to do with fire, I never lost my love for cornbread and will always be in the kitchen with my grandmother whenever she's making it.

Sometimes everything changes because I'm now here and miss my family a lot, but because my education is so important, I have to leave everything behind and concentrate on school. I'm getting used to not having cornbread on Sundays anymore. At times I wish I could go back home and bake a very big one with my grandmother and bring it to school with me. But I know sooner or later, I will be done with school and will go back home to continue with the family Sunday tradition of cornbread.



Soojin Uhm

### Doenjang Soup

Doenjang soup is a bean paste soup which is popular in Korea. It is like a chicken noodle soup in America. Usually we make clear soup with bean paste, and then we add tofu, zucchini, clam and other vegetables. Koreans eat it as an ordinary food, almost daily food.

One day, my mother was sick. At that time I was only 9 years old and I didn't know how to help her. She suffered from a stomachache. She was in the bed all day long. She kept vomiting and she couldn't eat anything. I was scared. I thought she was going to die. I desperately wanted to save her. Then I remembered Doenjang Soup. When I was sick, she made Doenjang soup. She poured one spoon of soup and tofu on the rice. She mashed the tofu and rice together. She added kimchi on them and fed it to me. She said Doenjang Soup is healthy food and helps us digest well. So I started to make Doenjang Soup. Actually I didn't know the recipe. The only thing I had cooked before was only ramen. But I just went for it as trying to remember all steps my mother did. I succeeded to make a clear soup. I also added all ingredients I knew. Fortunately, I made something that people can eat although it was not the actual Doenjang Soup. I wanted to feed it to my mom like she did to me. However her stomachache was so serious that she couldn't even drink a glass of water. I cried a lot with fear and concern.

The day after, when I woke up, the bowl of Doenjang soup was empty. Plus, my mother looked just [the] same as usual. She hugged me and said that she ate all of it that morning. Even though I already knew that it was not delicious, she said it was the best food she had ever eaten. I was so happy like in heaven [sic] not only because she liked my food but because she recovered.

Takayuki Nagase

### Eat in Moderation

In a packed restaurant, there are two men. One man says “Every time I confront BBQ, it reminds me of the nightmare”. The other man agrees “You are absolutely right, man”. Both men begin reflecting about the BBQ memory. Scorching hot summer days in August was when we experienced the nightmare. . Since the summer break, our team went camp training. Around the time that our physical and mental fatigue had reached its peak, the nightmare was waiting for us: BBQ. The only time we could enjoy these foods was when we went back home or at special events. It happened only one week a year. So, we were so excited to have BBQ. However, the situation we were in made the food an enemy.

At the time we were about to kick off this BBQ, large amounts of meat and vegetables were piled on tables and we realized this was not an enjoyable meal but rather a harsh battle against two enemies: myself and senior teammates. The first ten minutes or so was relaxing. Every single piece of meat could make us satisfied. However, our relaxing time did not last so long. (After a while, heaven time changed into hell time.) Every time we tried to eat something, the smell of food drove us to feel nauseous even though the food was nice. Once we put food in our mouths, every organ from kidney to stomach rejected swallowing any kind of object except water. We had learned one saying from this experience: If you eat too much, even delicious food, tastes awful. That was the moment we truly understood the meaning of this saying.

To make things worse, there was another enemy: senior teammates. They kept passing meat to us. We replied, “Sir, it is impossible to eat more. My stomach is screaming. If I put in

more food I will puke.” No matter what and how we begged, they did not care. We amazingly managed to continue pushing food into our stomach. Yet, with the passing of the time, our limit was coming and real hell was about to begin. Although overwhelming amounts of food were gone inside our bodies, some of the food was still waiting for us, looking endless. Toward the end of the battle, our bellies were expanding like a balloon, clearly showing over limit. At last, we managed to win this war, finishing up all foods that were offered. After putting a period to this battle, we felt relieved, satisfied and nauseous. Thus, we learned that moderation is the essence of the world. We should not go to an extreme.

As you probably know, one of the people who reflected on the memory and experienced the meal is me. Many would say a greatest memory they have in life is something good and pleasurable such as New Year, Christmas, etc. Yet, it does not apply to me. The strongest memory I have regarding food is what I suffered. Thanks to this battle, I acquired a strange confidence to conquer difficulties regarding food.



Ying Tien Lee

### My Favorite Childhood Food

My most favorite food as a child is Ang Ku Kueh, a kind of dessert eaten during the traditional Chinese festive season. Ang Ku Kueh is an oval shaped cake with soft sticky skin wrapped with sweet filling in the center. The oval shaped cake has a beautiful print on top that resembles a tortoise. It comes in different attractive colors like red, green, purple and yellow. I remembered how as a child, me and my sibling would fight for our favorite color. At that time, we used to think that the Ang Ku Kueh tasted better when we ate our favorite color.

The outer layer of the cake is made from glutinous rice flour with mashed sweet potato. The filling inside comes in a wide variety of flavors that includes crushed roasted peanut filling, yellow or red bean paste filling, shredded coconut with sweetening syrup filling or durian paste filling. The cake is normally steamed or boiled. I loved the smell of the steamed glutinous rice that lingered in the air. I would peep through the kitchen, eagerly waiting to try the fresh cake from the steamer.

After steaming, the texture of the cake is soft and sticky to the touch. Sometimes we used a spoon to cut the cake to avoid it sticking on our hand. As you bite into it, you can feel the chewy and elastic texture that holds the generous filling inside. I love the salty green bean filling. First, you get to taste the slight saltiness of the bean, and then the sweetness of it overpowers the saltiness. It tastes awesome. I can eat a few without getting tired of it.

Kyum Kim

### My Introduction to Hamburger

It was snowing one Monday morning in Seoul, Korea. My mom was nagging at me and my younger brother to change clothes as soon as possible since she was about to be late for her appointment. Since my aunt was not coming to take care of us, my mom had to take us with her.

The place that my mom had an appointment was at a department store that she often went to shop. It usually only takes 20 minutes via car to get there, but that day, it took us more than the 20 minutes. This was obvious from the way my mom was talking to her friend on the phone and sharing with her how terrible the traffic was. Together with other cars, our car literally completely stopped for a long while, as if time stopped. An hour later, we arrived at a café to meet our mom's friend. Before I go any further, I have to say that my mom was very strict about the food we ate that we never had the chance to buy anything that other children usually eat after school. After we met my mom's friend . . . , suddenly my mom's friend asked us if we ever tried eating hamburger. Both my brother and I did not understand. Before we were able to answer her question, she already started dragging us to McDonald's. The waiting line in McDonald's was long. Considering it was our first time to taste a hamburger, my brother and I were extremely excited, that waiting in line was not a big deal. Although our mom kept quiet the entire time, which signified her disapproval of us eating such unhealthy food, we were still very happy.

We ordered a Big Mac. Several minutes passed and our orders were finally served. My brother and I were excited that we rushed to find ourselves seats. My mother and her friend could not stop laughing at our behavior. When I brought out my burger, I didn't taste the burger yet but

looking at the burger just made my day. The first bite was undeniably delicious but at the same time, somehow weird, since for a hamburger, it is composed of different types of foods combined together to create one type of food. As an Asian kid, growing up, I was accustomed to eating rice as the main dish while having separate side dishes as well. Hence, my amusement for the way hamburgers were made and eaten.

Eating a hamburger meant more to me than just eating a western food. At that time, I felt like I was connecting Asia and the West together. After I finished eating, on the way home, I felt very triumphant and felt all the people around me were looking at me with respect.

As I recall my first introduction to hamburgers, I feel ashamed and regretful of my behavior that time. However, as an 8 year old Asian child, finally consuming a hamburger made me feel as if I was above everyone else and that I had something over other Asian children. For some, a hamburger may have just been another regular food that can be bought anywhere, but for me it was more valuable than a Nobel Prize Award. That is why whenever I eat a hamburger, I recall that specific moment and I become very humble while eating.



Hee Soo Kim

### Kimchi

We all have our unique memories. These result from people growing up in different environments with different people. I have many childhood memories such as going on trips, and studying abroad. However, the most unforgettable childhood memory is about the food that my mom made for me. My family liked eating my mom's food rather than eating restaurant food. Also, I liked to help my mom make food with my younger brother. One of the most memorable foods that we made together was Kimchi, a famous traditional Korean food.

Nearly everyone in Korea eats Kimchi every day. Kimchi is pretty difficult to make; it takes almost a day. So in some households, people buy Kimchi from the market, but we made Kimchi by ourselves because my father loved my mom's Kimchi. I believe that one of the foods I spent a lot of time cooking during my childhood was making Kimchi. Now I cannot remember everything about making kimchi, but it does not mean that I forgot everything about it. So I will tell you how I made kimchi with my mom and my younger brother.

In order to make Kimchi, we need the Napa cabbages and other ingredients. I remember that my mom and I went to a Korean traditional market to buy Napa cabbages instead of buying them in a big market. She believed that the quality of the food in a traditional market was much better than in big markets. We also bought many other ingredients such as radish, fish sauce, hot pepper flakes and sweet rice flour. These materials were to make the porridge and the kimchi paste.

After we bought all the ingredients, we went back home and prepared to make kimchi. Before I made food I always cleaned the space and made sure that my hands were clean. Then, I put cold water and salt into a large bowl. While I did this, my mom washed and chopped the Napa cabbages. When she finished cutting, my brother and I put the cabbages into the salt water. We left the Napa cabbages at this stage for four to five hours. During this waiting time we started to make the kimchi paste, which is sauce for Napa cabbages. I can remember that my mom told me that “to make kimchi paste is the most important part of making kimchi, because depending on the paste the taste of kimchi is different.”

To make the porridge is really easy and it only takes 10 minutes to make it. After I made the porridge, my mom started to make the kimchi paste. First she put the pepper flakes and fish sauce in the porridge. Then she mixed it well. The second step was to put in slices of radish, and Asian chives. She mixed it again. Then we finished making the kimchi paste. After four or five hours, I took out the cabbages and washed it with cold water and then I put it in another large bowl. We started to mixed the cabbage with the kimchi paste. It is the last step of making kimchi. When we finished making the kimchi my mom always said, “It is going to be yummy after a few days.”

When I finished making kimchi with my mom I realized how hard making kimchi was. Since I graduated middle school, we started buying kimchi from the market, so sometimes I really miss her kimchi and the day we made kimchi together.

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Aika Taguchi

### Japanese Foods and Foreign Friends

One day, I had a chance to cook Japanese food at a farewell party for some of my foreign friends who were going to leave. The party was held in my house at the end of the fall semester, 2010. At that time, I was happy because we had a good moment and I was sad because they were leaving. In this way, I felt very gloomy, though; I just wanted my friends to have a special night before they left. I decided to make foods for them.

Actually, I am very poor at making food. However, I had planned to make traditional Japanese foods for the party to make them happy and I chose nikujaga and sushi, but I did not know how to make them. I researched and found information about these recipes online. I wanted my friends to eat my delicious dishes and to have a great time at the party no matter what. The most important purpose was to create some good memories.

First of all, I focused on making nikujaga, which is a traditional Japanese food. I prepared two white potatoes, two onions, four carrots, some green beans, and beef. I peeled and cut all of them a little larger because they are stewed for a long time and I didn't want to make them lose their shapes. After cutting them, I fried potatoes and carrots to soften. After that, the beef was put in the same pan with some onions and green beans. While the nikujaga was stewing, I seasoned it with dashi soup, sugar, mirin and soy sauce. This dish needed a lot of time to stew so I tried to make the sushi next. I prepared sushi rice, nori, two avocados, three eggs and two crab meat sticks.

While cooking sushi rice, I cut avocados and the crab meat to roll up easily and I made a large omelet which was cut vertically and needed to be the same shape as the other vegetables. After I finished preparing, I began to roll all materials with sushi rice and nori prudently. Since I've never made a sushi roll, the first one of the three sushi rolls was a mess. However, the other two were successful, so I was very glad.

After cooking, I prepared to eat, cleaned the table, set the dishes and chopsticks, and poured beverages into cups. At that time, I was nervous because I wanted my friends to enjoy the party. When I put them on the table, everyone asked about the two dishes with curiosity. Since my friends took an interest in my dishes, I was relieved even though they hadn't started eating. After a few minutes, we finally began to eat. I was nervous when I looked at them eating but I did not eat anything. They enjoyed my dishes along with other dishes my housemate cooked. Happily, the sushi was the first one that was finished. Nikujaga was also very preferred by my friends too. After eating dinner and during conversation, I received praise for my dishes, and my friends said to me that they had a great time.

Although my dishes were not very good, I was happy because they enjoyed their last time in New Paltz. In addition, there was one last important thing for me; I learned I could take pleasure in cooking food for my friends. I had a chance to change my thoughts that cooking was troublesome.



Alwin Davis

### Seven Cup Cake

Holidays are always a time for learning something new for me. I always learn to do something new before I return to school after each holiday season. First it was swimming that I got to learn and it is time for another holiday season. I don't have any plans to do anything specific this time. I just sit on my sofa and keep pressing the program button on the remote control of my TV, without even caring the programs. This is one of my favorite leisure time activities. Soon I stop at one channel.

It is a cookery show and the chef is getting ready to prepare a kind of food that is called "seven cup cake". The ingredients you need are three cups of sugar and one cup of flour, butter, chocolate, milk. So it is easy to remember all of the ingredients. All I have to do is mix all the ingredients into a pan, cook it for a few minutes and bake it; the cake will be ready in twenty minutes. When I first see the program, I don't think to make it. But a moment . . ., I felt like I saw all those ingredients out there. I wondered "why not give it a try?" I jump from my sofa and ran to my kitchen with the excitement of making a cake for the first time in my life. I got all the ingredients ready . . . exactly the same way the chef arranged it on the show.

I began to mix all of it into a pan and cook it for some time and then I baked it. While it was in the oven I already started to imagine how it was going to taste with all those [sic] butter, sugar, and milk. The smell that came out of the oven was also mouth watering. While I took the cake out from the oven, I made sure not even a bit of cake was wasted and my extra care made my cake slip away from hands [sic] to the floor and it scattered all over. That soon became the lunch for my cat. I was so disappointed with my carelessness. Even though I managed to make it several times after that, I still miss the taste of my first seven cup cake.