



DICTIONARY DINING

A new kind of memory making

A collaborative cookbook by HCMA Artist in Residence Annabelle Choi

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Cookbooks come in many forms and styles. While we pick one up hoping to become better cooks, perhaps the truer reason is for the connections we make with their stories of shared meals, comfort, and memory.

This cookbook is a collaboration between interdisciplinary design firm HCMA, and myself, Annabelle Choi, a multi-layered food designer.

My residency started with the intention of creating deliciously challenging, sensory-specific, and curiosity-invoking experiences that would question our attachments to food.

Through workshops with HCMA staff, we explored how food forms part of our identity, and how it relates to creative practice. But, what emerged was something far more accessible and fundamental.

Tapping into childhood memories — and moments of discovery or hardship — we explored how specific foods and environments triggered different emotions. Through this, I discovered an ever-evolving dictionary of food memories that we all carry, like nostalgia, family, loss, and connection — a collection of experiences formed over a lifetime of using our senses to determine our perception of the world.

Through our own distinct ways of eating, whether by habit or ritual, we either add to our food memory dictionary, evolving and challenging it, or become rooted in our ways. By reflecting on these experiences together, we can better understand issues like addiction, cultural expression, and food security.

With my residency concentrating on people's food discoveries, I'd originally proposed for my final experience to be an edible installation — an experience that would walk people through three vocabularies from my own personal food memory dictionary.

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck — altering how we socialize, live, and eat — physical distancing changed those plans, but opened up the possibility of a different, even broader engagement.

The theme of food memory generated a rich dialogue around the words we discovered in the workshops — Contentment, Family, Loss, Connection, and Love — and the opportunity to create new memories in the form of a collective cookbook.

The recipes contributed by HCMA staff were inspired by those five words, accompanied by short stories, photos or sketches.

As we step forward into an unknown future, an artifact that can be both physical and meditative is an appropriate conclusion to my time with HCMA; one that can help us find balance and solace, as we continue to share with those we love.

Connection



My grandparents on my mother's side, originally from Finland, immigrated to Canada in the 1920s. My nana and grandpa settled in New Westminster, when it was a separate city to Vancouver, and they learned to speak English by listening to CKNW on the radio. Growing up close to my grandparents, we enjoyed a lot of Swedish traditions, one of which was on that Christmas morning we would have rice pudding with fruit soup. My brother and I didn't much care for the fruit soup part as kids (prunes... yuck!) but the rice pudding with butter and cinnamon sugar was pretty good and something we all looked forward to after opening presents.

All these years later, each time I make rice pudding it comes out a little different than the year before because, just like my nana, I don't measure I just go by what looks to be about right.

My nana and grandpa and mom are long passed now, but a year has not gone by without rice pudding and fruit soup in my house on Christmas morning and I think of them, miss them and remember the richness of traditions and connection to family like this one.



RICE PUDDING & FRUIT SOUP by Lynn Curtis

Yields 8 servings

Rice Pudding Recipe

3-4 cups rice
Evaporated milk and whole or 2% milk
Cinnamon, sugar and butter

Cook the rice about half way, until just soft. In a ceramic baking bowl, combine the rice and evaporated milk / whole or 2% milk. Stir until cooled; the consistency should be quite moist such that it won't be dry after baking. Top with cinnamon, sugar and little dobbles of butter.

Bake in the oven at 325°F for about an hour, until it is bubbling on the sides and a lovely buttery/sugary crust on top.

This can be prepared the night before or ahead of time and baked before serving hot.

Fruit Soup Recipe

Dried apricots, prunes, raisins,
plums, apples, figs, dates
1/3 cup sugar
(depending on how much
fruit you are using)
3 tablespoons cornstarch
mixed in cold water

Soak the dried fruit in water for an hour. In large saucepan, cover fruit in water, add sugar and heat; once boiling, thicken with cornstarch and cold water.

Serve at room temperature with rice pudding.



Connection



My parents separated when I was about seven and my brother and I lived with our mom and visited our dad every other weekend. When I was eight we moved out of suburban Mississauga to support a growing Baha'i community in a rural township on the outskirts of Cambridge, Ontario, but because my mom was still working in the city, my brother and I were quickly put to work in the kitchen to help prepare meals a couple times a week, and thus started my love of cooking and hosting people. Fast forward to when we moved out to BC, and my mom decided we should eat all healthy and stuff (eye roll) and

would regularly try to trick us into thinking tofu was delicious. Fast forward to now, I've been hosting monthly dinner and discussion evenings to create deeper connections and meet new people — all while putting those kitchen skills to use. Thanks, mom. I never know who is going to show up, so typically have to keep the menu vegan and gluten friendly. Which often means tofu (reverse eye roll). The first time I prepared these tofu steaks, they were a huge hit, and I've cooked them a few times since and tweaked it to try to make tofu taste not as boring.



CHILI LIME TOFU STEAKS by Jason Burtwistle

Yields 4 servings

- 2 cups jasmine or Basmati rice
- 1 package extra firm tofu
- 1 carrot
- 1 small or half a large daikon
- handful cilantro
- ½ cup peanuts
- 1 tbsp chili oil
- 2 tbsp sesame oil
- 2 tbsp coconut cream
- 1 lime
- salt and pepper
- ½ cup apple cider vinegar
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ cup water

Pickling: A few hours before cooking, julienne carrot and daikon. In a pot combine vinegar, water and sugar and a pinch of salt. Simmer until sugar is dissolved, then pour over carrot and daikon in a jar. Cool at room temp for a few hours and chill in fridge at least 30 minutes before serving.

Rice: Wash and cook rice in rice cooker or pot.

Tofu: While rice is cooking, slice package of tofu into four steaks. Marinate in chili oil, sesame oil and salt and pepper for about 30 minutes. Heat frying pan with additional sesame oil and fry steaks until crispy on both sides.

Bring it all together: Add coconut milk to rice and scoop rice onto plate. Put tofu on top and garnish with cilantro, pickled carrots and daikon, peanuts and lime. Can add peanut sauce or hot sauce as desired.



Connection



My dad is one of those cooks who intuitively knows which flavours to combine, thus most of my childhood meal recipes aren't written down and changed a little each time he made them. His sauces are to-die-for and impossible to replicate (I've tried) and his propensity for seasoning will forever escape me. Of all the culinary delights he nourished us with, nothing says Rainy Weekend Lunch quite like The Works.

The simplest four ingredients of all time, zero prep required, and one pot clean up screams: "Remember me when you go away to college." And that we did. This remains a favourite of both my brother's and mine and there's always a family text message announcing when somebody makes the coveted dish. In the words of my big brother, "nobody understands until they try it."



THE WORKS by Vanessa Konn

Yields 4 servings

1 pkg Kraft Dinner
1 can Campbell's Mushroom Soup
1 can flaked tuna
¾ cup frozen peas
Course-ground black pepper to taste

Set aside Kraft Dinner powdered cheese and pour noodles into boiling water. While noodles are cooking, drain water off tuna (and give it to your cat). Once al dente, strain the noodles and put back into pot on a low-heat burner.

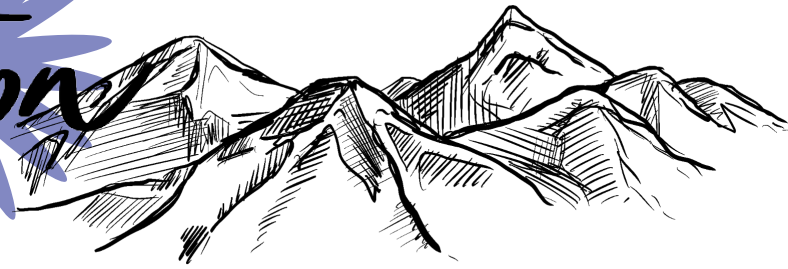
Immediately add powdered cheese, canned mushroom soup (do not mix with water or milk), frozen peas, and drained tuna. Stir well to mix and evenly heat all ingredients.

Feeling fancy (maybe a first date or pretentious in-laws)? Add ¾ cup grated sharp cheddar, as expensive and aged as you'd like.

Serve into bowls, generously season with course-ground black pepper. Eat with a fork (the real way to eat KD).



Connection



This is the ultimate meal-saving recipe. Every Italian household has these ingredients stored in the cupboard at all times. My dad always cooked this dish when we would come back home from a long day-trip or from the annual summer vacation in the Alps. And us kids cheered and respected the tradition (also my dad was a really good cook, he could make wonder with a semi-empty fridge with ingredients no one would give any consideration).

For the Italian university students this is the go-to meal after a long night of partying, when you get home very late (or very early in the morning) and you feel like eating something before crushing the bed.

Comforting, tasty, and simple. I now treat my friends and myself with a bowl of Spaghetti Aglio Olio e Peperoncino everytime I want to time-space travel to my childhood and youth growing up in Italy.



SPAGHETTI AGLIO OLIO E PEPERONCINO by Lidia Pasini

Yields 4 servings

40 gr kosher salt
320-400gr spaghetti no.5
3 whole garlic cloves
 $\frac{2}{3}$ whole fresh peperoncini or dried red chilies
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup extra virgin oil of olive
1 cup bread crumbs (optional)

First of all boil your water, the sauce will only take approx 5 minutes. When the water boils add coarse salt (Italian chefs recommend 10gr of salt for 1L of water every 100gr of pasta) and after a minute the spaghetti.

Meanwhile peel the garlic, slices the peperoncino. Put the oil, garlic and peperoncino in a large deep pan, and cook until the garlic is golden.

Cook the pasta until al dente. Drain, and reserve 1 cup of the cooking liquid.

Add the pasta to the sauce pan, and stir vigorously as it continues to cook over medium-high heat. If too dry add some of the cooking water (a bit at a time).

If you feel like going pro, season with a drop of oil and salt a cup of bread crumbs. On a separate pan, toast the bread crumbs until brown and sprinkle above the spaghetti on each separate serving.

The garlic clove is for the brave.



Family



The smell of bubbling, bubbling juicy red berries permeates everything in the family cabin. It's absorbed into the worn plywood wall panels; it's in all of our clothes (especially Irene's apron); it's in the tea towels, even the upholstery on the living room couch smells faintly of sweet bubbly goo combined with prairie earth, dry heat, and mosquito repellent. We guard the jars of the precious fruit all year. After they are filled, we line up all their different shapes and sizes, with mismatched labels some re-written many times over, on the shelf in the back room. They live above the deep freeze, beside the boiler until it is time to go back to school in the fall.



STRAWBERRY JAM by Ali Kenyon

Yield varies

strawberries (about 3 cups)
lemon (juice of one)
sugar (lots, about 1 cup)

Clean berries and remove tops. Let dry. Place berries in a saucepan over medium heat. Add juice of one lemon. Stir regularly as pan heats up and berry juice releases. Squish berries if desired (personally I prefer having big berry pieces). Add sugar. Add more sugar. Let boil until pink foam appears on top.

Test thickness of jam on the back of a spoon by dunking the spoon and watching how sticky the jam runs off the spoon surface. If a thicker jam is desired add more sugar and keep boiling until desired consistency is achieved.

Let cool. Clean jars and lids by boiling. Fill jars with sticky red goo while keeping $\frac{1}{4}$ inch at top. Fill $\frac{1}{4}$ inch with vodka to keep top layer nice.

Freeze if not fully preserving/jarring. Serve on toast, yogurt, ice cream, or by spoonful.



Family



This is a dinner recipe that my family used to make up until my tweens. Others may read more into the recipe, but I can offer that this dish seems very much of its period: a remnant of postwar parsimony, the rise of processed food and convenience, symptomatic of basic times.

For our family, dinner recipes were on a rotation. There were perhaps ten dishes that were regularly cycled through. This recipe is one of the simpler ones, although it was fancier than splitting a can of Campbell's Chicken with Rice soup four ways.

The memories associated with the dish are as elemental as the recipe. Eating quietly together in an unadorned space at the side of the kitchen.



MUSHROOM SNACKS by Craig Lane

Yields 4 servings

1 can of Campbell's Condensed
Cream of Mushroom soup
10 to 12 slices of white bread

Cut the crusts off the bread slices and place them on the countertop (it may be helpful to squish the slices a little to make them denser).

Open up the can of condensed soup. Do not add water.

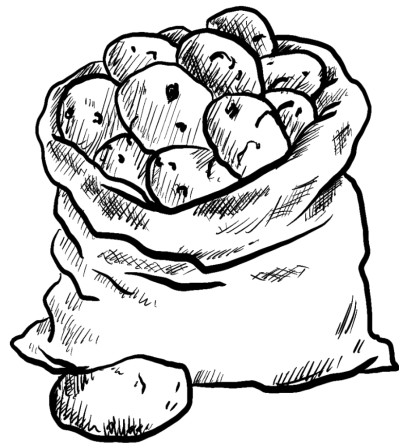
Put a tablespoon or two of condensed soup in the middle of each slice of bread.

Take two opposite corners of each slice and create a tube by pinning the corners over the soup with a toothpick.

Transfer to a cookie sheet. Bake at 425°F or broil lightly in the oven until the tops start to toast.



Family



This strudel recipe has been in my family for at least four generations and originates in Eastern Europe. My Uroma (great grandmother) made it for her family, my Oma for hers, and my mom for us, and now I'm attempting (although in gluten free form) to make it with my husband.

As a child, the best days were the ones we came home to the smell of browning onions, with my mom wearing her strudel apron. The only time that brown flowered apron came out was Strudel Day.

The recipe was passed from my Opa's side of the family and my Uroma taught it to my Oma when she joined the family. As simple farming folk from Germany, this was a great recipe as it's hearty and warm, and feeds a large number of people with simple, economical ingredients.

This always has been, and will always be, a memory I associate with my Oma, the kindest woman I know, who would feed anyone who showed up on her doorstep, and some of the best nights with my family, where we sat around the table for hours, debating over who snuck the most strudels on their soup.



STRUDEL by Jessika MacDonald

Yields 4-8 servings

Strudel
4 cups flour
1 ¼ + 2 tsp hot water
pinch of salt
canola oil (as required)

Soup
5-6 medium russet potatoes
1 medium onion
~ 1 litre beef broth
1 pat of butter

To serve
Dish up the potato soup into a bowl and pile on the strudels!

Mix together the flour, hot water and salt and gently knead. Cover the bowl with a tea towel and set aside for 30 minutes.

While dough is sitting, chop the onion and brown with butter in the bottom of a large stock pot.

Peel and chop the potatoes in to bite size pieces. Add to the stock pot. Add water to the pot to just cover the tops of the potatoes.

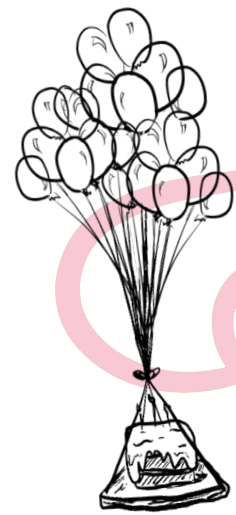
To prepare the strudel, clean a large area of countertop and cover with a thin layer of oil. Place your dough on the counter and with oil on your hands start massaging and stretching (I usually break the dough into three chunks and do this in pieces). Slowly rolling and stretching the dough make it as thin as possible (think tissue paper) while trying to avoid tearing, keep adding oil if the dough begins to tear or dry. The size usually ends up a few feet in diameter. Once stretched pick up one edge of the dough and start folding it into your strudel (think batt insulation detail lines) creating a thin 'pastry' like shape. Once laid on the counter cut into 3 inch - 4 inch lengths (final shape should be ~ 3 inch x 1.5 inch).

When all your strudels are prepared gently transfer them and lay in a single layer (slightly overlapping if required) on top of the potatoes, onions and water. Do not squish them to maintain the fine layers and air bubbles within the layers of dough. Heat the pot to a simmer for 20 minutes sealing the pot (I don't have a sealing pot so I wrap tea towels around the edges and weight/tie down to keep in the heat).

After 20 minutes, remove the lid and transfer the cooked strudels to a plate and keep warm. Add the beef broth to the stock pot and heat.



Family



When I was a child I loved to cook and would bring my parents handwritten breakfast menus to bed occasionally on Saturday mornings. The menus might not have earned a Michelin star, but they consisted of my mum's favourites — Marmite on toast or cornflakes with milk (I was also not such an angelic child on other occasions — I'm remembering through rose-tinted lenses!).

I also liked to make cakes, and my mum, aunties and grandmother baked with me from an early age. Some of my earliest memories are of the taste of icing straight from the bowl sitting in our grandparents' kitchen.

My parents bought me a few books called *Easy Peasy* and *Easy Peasy Sweetie Pie* by Mary Contini. I think I've had them since I was eight or nine, but the cake recipes are still the ones I follow today. This one is an example — and is from memory rather than verbatim, which I think shows how great these books were.

The best birthday cakes are the simplest — and the more sprinkles, icing drips, chocolate on hands and face, the better!



CAN'T GO WRONG CAKE by Chloe van Grieken

Yields 1

Cake
4 eggs
caster sugar
self-raising flour (or regular plain
flour usually works too!)
unsalted butter
2 tsps of baking powder

Preheat oven to 180°C, and grease two 20 cm cake round cake tins

The genius of the Can't Go Wrong Cake is that you weigh the eggs, and then add the same weight in flour, caster sugar and unsalted butter. There are no fancy steps.

Mix these four ingredients together until well combined with an electric whisk or wooden spoon (if you have the muscles) and add the baking powder. The mixture should lighten in colour as you mix it.

Transfer the mixture to the greased cake tins, and gently spread the mixture to the edges. Use a spatula to scrape every last drop out of the bowl.

(My grandmother grew up in wartime when things like sugar were scarce, and she never let us waste a single drop. Baking with her taught me never to take food for granted).

Cook the cake in the oven for about 10–15 minutes or until lightly browned and a fork or a skewer comes out clean. Turn out immediately and cool on a wire rack.

Filling
Your jam of choice — strawberry is classic

For the toppings: Have fun! A thick layer of jam tastes great in the middle, and mix up some white icing for the top. Go crazy with decorations. Smarties were always a favourite of mine.

Topping
icing sugar, water

Family



It's 4:45 pm on Sunday. My mom, dad, two brothers and I scramble to jump into the minivan and drive 10 minutes across Thunder Bay to Nonna and Nonno's house.

When we arrive, I sprint up the front steps, open the door swiftly and take a deep breath of the fresh cooking smells that have resonated through the house throughout the day. I grin as Nonno is sitting there smiling back at me. Nonna, who was cooking immensely in the kitchen, rushes to the door. "My bello!" she says. She squeezes me and then returns to tend to the kitchen.

It's 5:00 pm and Nonna shouts from the kitchen, "Dinner is ready!" Like clockwork we all squeeze around the dining table to defend our usual dinner spots. Bowls of gnocchi are passed around, and hands are reaching to get more fagiolo, lettuce, and other freshly cooked vegetables from the garden.

The table is now quiet. You hear nothing but the forks and knives dancing gracefully on the dinner plates. Nonno pours his glass of wine, raises it high above his head, and begins to sing...

"Il vino è rosso..."

1 chilo patate
un pugno
formaggio
2 di farina



NONNA'S GNOCCHI by Josh Potvin

Yields 4-5 servings

1 kg russet potatoes (about 2 large)
3 egg yolks
1 handful of finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
2 handfuls of flour
your favorite pasta sauce

Place the unpeeled potatoes in a pot of water and boil until soft. Drain potatoes. Once cool to the touch, peel and chop into quarters. Put chopped potatoes through a potato ricer. Reduce the amount of water in the potatoes using the ricer. Let potatoes cool to room temperature for about 20 minutes.

Lightly flour a surface. Once potatoes are cooled, in a large bowl, add 3 egg yolks, 1 handful of Parmigiano-Reggiano, two handfuls of flour and salt for taste to the potatoes. Mix all ingredients together with your hands and fold the ingredients into the potatoes until they clump together.

Keep folding the dough until it has an even consistency and then place on the floured surface. Knead the dough for about 1 to 2 minutes until soft and smooth. Do not over knead the dough.

Cover the dough with a cloth to not dry out. Take handfuls of dough at a time and roll out the dough to about 3/4 inch diameter. Using a sharp knife cut into 3/4 inch pieces of gnocchi and place gnocchi separated on a floured sheet of parchment paper. Add more flour to the gnocchi. Using either the back of a fork or a wooden gnocchi board, roll each gnocchi piece gently over the tool to get the perfect texture.

Boil the gnocchi fresh in a salted pot of water for a few minutes until they rise. Remove gnocchi, add your favourite sauce (I use Nonna's homemade tomato sauce) and top with parmesan cheese.

Buon appetito!



Loss



It always amazed me that, while my childhood memories of family vacations always tended to be of places and buildings, my oldest sister, Joanne, remembered every meal we had had on our journeys. Not only could she recall what she ate but often what everyone else had as well. For her, food and memory were completely linked. She ended up becoming a dietitian and came to understand the science of food as well.

One of my strongest memories of her was a time when my family was visiting hers in Grande Prairie. We arrived just before lunch and she greeted us and gave us a tour of their home and yard. It was amazing to see that within a brief tour of her garden, she collected ingredients and, without having stopped talking, prepared the most amazing soup out of almost nothing. We had only just arrived and were greeted with food, lovingly prepared. That was my sister.

Earlier, when I went off to university she was concerned about my inability to cook and likely thought I would starve to death.

One day a package of hand-written recipe cards arrived with easy to prepare meals that she knew I would eat and be able to prepare. This spaghetti sauce recipe was one of those. I have likely made this three or four hundred times over the past 35 years. I now make it with my kids.

I love her handwritten recipes as they express so much of her personality and sense of humour. My love of cooking for others certainly comes from her. Unfortunately, Joanne died over ten years ago; however to this day, when I read her words, I can still hear her voice.

For me this recipe is about both loss and connection.



MY SISTER JOANNE'S SPAGHETTI SAUCE by Darryl Condon

Yields 4 servings, with some leftovers

- 1-1 1/2 lb. ground beef
- 1/4 tsp pepper
- 1/2 tsp celery salt
- 1 onion (chopped)
- 1 small can tomato paste
- 1 can tomato soup
- 1 can (19 oz) tomatoes
- 1/4 tsp garlic powder
- 1/4 tsp marjoram
- 1/4 tsp oregano
- 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper
- 1/4 tsp paprika
- mushrooms (optional)
- salt to taste

Fry ground beef and drain off fat. Add chopped onion, pepper, and celery salt and fry until the onion is cooked. Then add the rest of the ingredients. Simmer for 20 or 30 minutes. You may find the seasoning fairly timid and I usually double the ratio. Our family food growing up in the prairies lacked spice!



Loss



I think this memory has evolved every time I've had this pasta. The first time was with my then-boyfriend, who basically showed me how to cook. Leading up to most recently making it for my friends and family. It's a super rich (cheeeeeese and cream) comfort food: mac 'n' cheese. It's one of the many good things I got from my last relationship, and something I got to share again after it was over. The first time my then-boyfriend made

it for me, it was the first time he cooked for me. At the time we ate meat, so chorizo was added at the beginning of the recipe, but later in the relationship, a vegetarian version was adapted. It kind of indicates the malleability of the sauce. It's essentially your favourite ingredients sautéed with cream and cheese. Every time I make it, I am reminded of our failed relationship, but I'm also grateful for my ability to share the gift of melted cheese over pasta.



EX-BOYFRIEND'S MAC 'N' CHEESE by Ted Whitley

Yields 2-4 servings

This recipe is based on taste as you go, and eyeing the quantities. Below is a rough approximation of what I used:

- 2 ½ cups of short cut pasta (I used fusilli)
- 1 ½ cups of 33% cream (yes whipped cream)
- 1 cup boursin
- 1 cup cheddar
- ½ white onion
- 5 large cremini mushrooms
- 1 large head of broccoli
- 3 cloves of garlic
- 3 tbsp green onion
- white wine
- butter
- cayenne
- dillweed

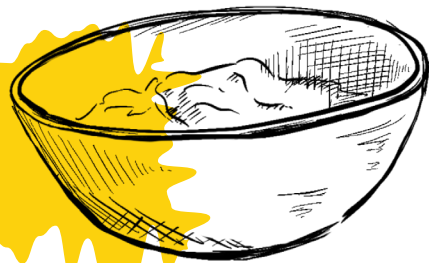
Dice onions, mushrooms and broccoli, and mince garlic. Melt butter in a deep dish sauce pan and add the onion when hot. Sauté the onions till translucent (~5min) season throughout, add salt and pepper.

Add the garlic, mushrooms, and other seasoning. Fry until mushrooms begin to soften (~3 min). Add broccoli and sauté (keep the broccolis a little firm).

Deglaze pan with white wine to help form the sauce. Add in cream, bring to a gentle simmer. Fold in the cheese. Lower the heat, beware of sauce burning to the bottom of the pan. Roll in the pasta into the sauce (make sure it's the right pasta-to-sauce ratio, I never could get it right). Serve in a bowl or plate, add green onion and garlic bread crumbs for garnish.



Loss



Recently my mom gave me a big yellow bowl that belonged to my grandma. The moment I saw it, I recognized it. She used it for lots of things but mostly for letting her bread dough rise.

I was really close with my grandparents growing up. We went to their place for dinner every Sunday. Everything was homemade and straight out of the garden. My grandpa loved to garden; he even helped my mom with her garden. He would shell the peas and

peel potatoes in the backyard and Grandma would be busy inside making bread or dessert — usually lemon meringue pie. All from scratch of course. I remember coming home from school to find a pot in our veranda with a lid on it. Inside: full of shelled peas, just add water and boil. Thanks, Grandpa!

When I heard about this recipe book, it was so easy. I wanted to make homemade buns the way my grandma used to — with her yellow bowl. I searched through my old photos and found this one of my mom and grandma. LOOK! The yellow bowl is on the counter! We're at my mom's house where I grew up — so this bowl truly got around.

(This is not my grandma's recipe as hers was "a little of this, a little of that" so I'm sharing my own bread recipe.)



HOMEMADE BUNS by Jen Sparks

Yields 12 buns

1 package active dry yeast
1 cup warm water
¼ cup white sugar
½ tablespoon salt
1 egg
⅓ cup olive oil
2-3 cups flour
butter for brushing the tops

Dissolve yeast and sugar in warm water until foamy. Add egg, salt, oil and flour. Stir until easy to handle. Turn dough onto a lightly floured board. Knead until smooth and elastic, 8-10 minutes.

Place in a greased bowl (the yellow bowl!) then turn the dough so the bottom, that you've just covered in oil, is facing up. Cover with a clean towel and place somewhere warm to rise for 1 hour. (I usually turn my oven on for 30 seconds to 1 minute then turn it off. I put my dough in there to rise.)

Punch dough down and work for a few moments to get some air bubbles out. Roll into a log and divide in 12 equal portions. Place portions in a standard size muffin tin. Brush the tops with a little oil to prevent them from drying out. Cover and let rise for one hour.

Preheat oven to 375°F. Place muffin tin in middle rack. Bake for about 20 minutes or until the tops become golden brown. Remove to a rack to cool or just flip them out like my grandma used to (see my photo).



Loss



This is the first recipe I ever made and the first I wrote into the personal recipe book that my mom gave me. As a child, I didn't like breakfast foods very much, but I did like pancakes. Perhaps it had something to do with maple syrup? I can still remember sitting around the kitchen table with my dad and three older brothers on a Sunday morning, with my Mom cooking up a batch of these beauties.

In recent years, I've not had the chance to use this recipe much as my partner, Trevor, followed in his dad's footsteps

making the Bowden family pancake recipe. Pancakes came in all shapes and sizes at his house — from letters and numbers, to airplanes, animals, and cars, and from oobliks (misshapen pancakes) to weeweeps (small pancakes for when you don't have room for another elephant or Boeing 747 pancake). Each weekend, his dad lovingly poured out your every whim in pancakes.

Neither my mom nor Trevor's dad are with us any longer but their pancake recipes live on. Try them both with your family and friends, and make your own sweet memories.



PANCAKES — 2 WAYS by Marni Robinson

Yields 12ish

Robinson style
½ cup flour
3 tsp baking powder
½ tsp salt
3 tbsp sugar
1 egg
3 tbsp melted butter
¼ tsp vanilla
1 ½ cups milk

Melt the butter in a small pot. In a measuring cup, add the egg to the milk and beat together. In a bowl, mix together dry ingredients, and make a well. |Slowly pour in the milk and egg mixture, followed by the melted butter and vanilla. Mix together until smooth. Cook in a frying pan (or electric griddle if possible for more even heat) and serve with maple syrup.

Bowden style
1 cup flour
2 ½ large tsp baking powder
½ tsp salt
1 tsp sugar
1 egg
2 tbsp butter
milk (whole)

Mix flour, salt, sugar together. Add one egg and melted butter. Mix, and then add milk until batter is smooth (you can write your name). Fold in baking powder. More milk may be necessary to keep smooth. Pan should be hot (when water drops dance). Pour batter on and cook until air bubbles appear. Flip over. Remove and eat with real maple syrup.



I have so many amazing memories of my paternal grandmother, most of which involve food. Mémé, as we fondly called her (though she always promoted the use of Nonna), had that magic combination of a great sense of humour and a caring and loving presence. No visit to Mémé's place was without either a meal or a few treats, which always had me asking for more and resulted in me looking quite chubby as a youngster.

It was only later in life that I recognized her strength of spirit. Born in the early 20th century, she'd seen so many changes throughout her lifetime. She lived in four countries, immigrating three times, each time having to uproot and restart her life with only the very necessities to support her. She could make do with very little, as long as she had her family by her side and a kitchen from which she could create.

One of my favourite recipes of hers was this French/Middle Eastern version of rice pudding. It's so creamy and tastes wonderful when cold, that I just always craved it. One day after I made multiple requests for another batch of riz au lait, she decided to

show me how to make it. It was super simple and therefore not too overwhelming for a nine-year old to learn. At the end of our lesson, she turned to me and said "There, now it's your recipe and from now on, you make it." I'm sure this was her way of empowering me to take responsibility for my own needs and wants and it certainly instilled the sense that if I wanted something, all I needed to do was create it.



MÉMÉ'S RIZ AU LAIT by Rinat De Picciotto

Yields 5-6 servings

- 5 cups milk*
- 4 tablespoons rice flour
- 6 tablespoons sugar**
- 3 tablespoons orange-blossom water***
- ground cinnamon (for serving)

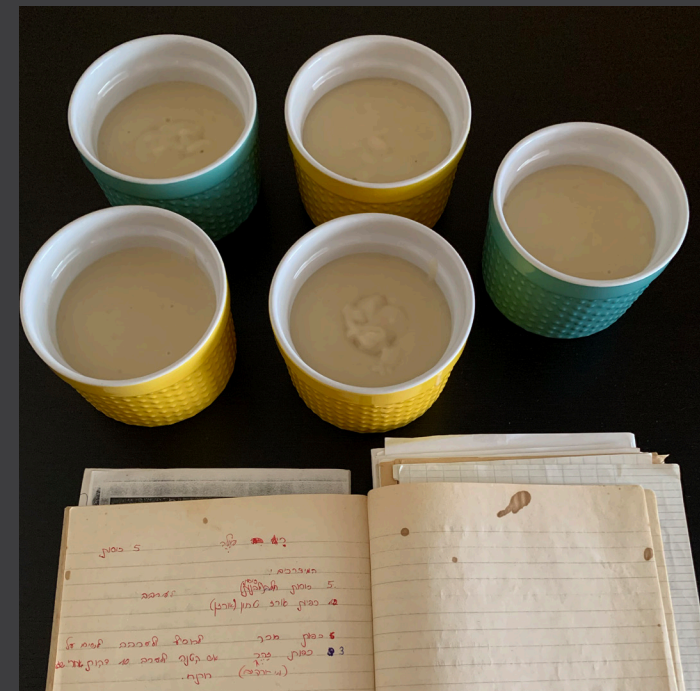
*you may use regular or alternative milk
**white or brown
***can be found in many Middle Eastern grocers/shops

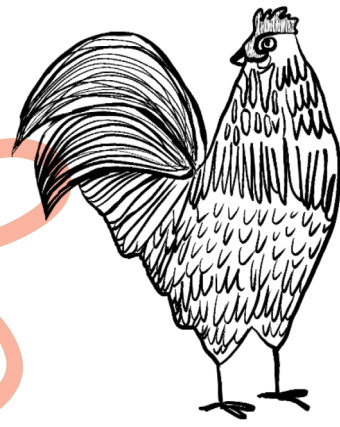
Place the milk in a large pot and add the rice flour. Mix well so that any lumps are dissolved before applying heat. Once the milk appears smooth, place on low to medium heat. Stir consistently in order to avoid build up on the bottom of the pot.

Add the sugar and the orange-blossom water and continue to stir. The mixture will start to thicken as it heats up. Continue to stir for 10 minutes past boiling so that consistency is smooth and thick.

Transfer mixture into small bowls immediately after cooking and let cool. Once at room temperature transfer to fridge to continue to cool overnight.

Serving suggestion: sprinkle cinnamon on top.





The first thing I ever remember cooking was actually by mistake. It was congee. I was in charge of cooking rice before my mum would come home from work. But this time I added too much water and ended up making congee. This recipe has changed over the years to my liking but the ingredients remain the same.

But the reason this dish feels so important to me was every time my siblings and I would get sick, my mum would make this for us. It was kind of our version of chicken noodle soup. Since moving out and being on my own, every time I am feeling under the weather, I make this dish and feel the warmth of my mother's hug.



MOTHER'S HUG (CHICKEN CONGEE) by Lila Nguyen

Yields 2 servings

- ½ cup of dried rice
- 2 cups of water
- 1 chicken thigh
(or any other part of chicken)
- 1 tsp of minced ginger
- 1 tbsp of chicken bouillon
- 1 eschalot (chopped)
- 1 tsp black pepper

Optional: Soak the dry rice in some water overnight (I found it cooks faster and is more soft).

Make sure to have all your ingredients cut as everything will be going in one pot.

Put your all your ingredients into the pot and leave on high heat for 15 minutes.

As it comes to a boil, lower to medium heat and put on the lid. Make sure to stir consistently as we don't want the rice to stick to the pot.

After 30 minutes, I take out the chicken and shred it to put back into the pot.

*If you want it to have a soup-like consistency take it off the stove after shredding the chicken. I like mine a little thicker so I cook it for an additional 30 minutes on low heat.

Prep: 5 minutes

Total Cook Time: 30 minutes-1 hour





In our family there is one person who can't eat sugar. Since family gatherings focus around sharing meals, and there are always desserts involved in celebrations, we made a 'one for all and all for one' pact many years ago. This has become a fun challenge over the years — finding the most decadent dessert that fits the bill with no sugar.

There have been some really great desserts, but with reward comes risk, and with risk comes a back-up plan... and this is it. We call these Backup Bars. These have made a consistent and appreciated 'accompaniment' to the main show for many years.

BACK UP BARS **by Susan Ockwell**

Yields 16 servings

1 teaspoon vanilla
1 teaspoon honey (optional)
½ cup peanut butter
5 pitted dates
½ cup each of: almonds,
walnuts, pecans, cashews

Put ingredients into a food processor.

Process until the consistency of coarse sand.

Add ¼ cup each of: shredded coconut and sunflower seeds and blend a tad more.

Flatten mixture into an 8 inch by 8 inch pan.

Melt some 100% dark chocolate (or 80% or whatever you like if you can eat sugar) and pour over top.

Let it set and score the cut lines

Refrigerate until eating





It was 2008, and I had just met someone *fantastic*. Weeks of a steady diet of rock shows, films, city walks, dinners, drinks, gelato... well, God bless the early days of a budding romance — it's paradise.

But, eventually, you just want a night in.

Ms. Fantastic also had an equally fantastic apartment — a large two-bedroom unit in a three-storey walkup in South Granville. I was living in a tiny room in a shared house on Dunbar that had a mossy roof and a lot of doilies adorning heavy, wood furniture.

Do you like anchovies? Yes, your place.

The dish I had in mind evolved from a classic pasta treatment that my mom used to make on weekends — *aglio e olio* is literally garlic and oil, but in hers, the key ingredient was always tinned anchovies.

Over the years I had gradually added red and yellow peppers, red onion, a splash of white wine, and the key to the maximal stupidity of this dish: toasted bread crumbs.

When my wife tells this story, she always says I showed up at her apartment carrying in hand, curiously, only a red pepper and a can of anchovies. (I am sure I also brought a box of De Cecco penne — what if all she had in the pantry was an expired bag of *Catelli*?)

The next morning her roommate was rooting through the fridge, looking in vain for something to eat.

“You could have some of the leftovers from the meal Steve made me....”

To which her roommate retorts, in equal parts mockery and delight, “Oh, *please*... I'm not going to eat your *love pasta*.”

LOVE PASTA by Steve DiPasquale

Yields 5-6 servings

Pasta Dish

- 1 500 g package of rigatoncini, tortiglioni, or penne
- 2 tins anchovies finely chopped, oil reserved in a bowl
- 1 red onion thinly sliced
- 2 cloves garlic thinly sliced
- 2 red peppers sliced
- 1 yellow pepper sliced
- dried basil
- dried thyme
- dried oregano
- extra virgin olive oil
- dry white wine
- handful of chopped parsley

On one element, get a large pot of water boiling for pasta. On another, bring a large saucepan up to medium heat. Add some of the oil from the tins of anchovies—enough to coat the bottom of the pan when you swirl it around. Add the onion, garlic, and peppers. Do not stir anything until you can smell that the mixture is beginning to brown. At this point, stir thoroughly and lower the heat to between low and medium. Add a pinch of basil, oregano, and thyme and continue cooking until the peppers and onions are quite soft, and are beginning to smell a little like caramel. Add the anchovies and stir to distribute evenly. Add more oil and splashes of white wine as required to keep everything from sticking to the pan. Continue cooking until it looks and smells right to you.

Before draining your pasta, reserve some of the starchy water. Add your cooked pasta to the pan, kill the heat, and mix well, adding more oil if you like. If the pasta looks a little tight, add some of that starchy water; if a little loose, crank the heat back up and cook some of the liquid off. Hit it with a handful of parsley and stir it through. Scoop into a nice bowl, top with the toasted bread crumbs, and serve.

Toasted Bread Crumbs

- extra virgin olive oil
- 3 - 4 slices rustic Italian bread
- handful of chopped Italian parsley

Coarsely chop the bread, then pulse in a food processor until you get a medium crumb — not too fine. Now bring a large saucepan to medium heat. Add some olive oil, and swirl it around to coat the bottom of the pan. Add bread crumbs and chopped parsley to the pan, stir the mixture around, and lower the heat to between low and medium. Add salt and freshly ground black pepper, and continue to flip the mixture in the pan until golden brown.



Contentment



All my childhood memories that evoke a sense of contentment, are the ones when my family and I would be adventuring outside together. On those few occasions, my mom, who never enjoyed the act of cooking but who happened to be a great cook, would wake up early before the rest of us and pack multiple Tupperwares of 'Kimbap.' They'd always be accompanied by an equal presence of kimchi, as my parents enjoyed it like candy, and a few small side dishes, as is custom for any Korean meal.

Filled with the traditional blanched spinach, pickled radish, marinated burdock root, thinly sliced carrots, and fluffy egg omelet, my mom always added a bit of something extra, which was usually a leftover meat dish that magically transformed into just the right addition, hidden away in the Kimbap. After a healthy dose of running and skinning our knees, my sister and I would join my parents in the car, at the picnic bench, or on a blanket, and tuck-in until we were content.



CAMPING KIMBAP by Chef Annabelle Choi

Yields 4 rolls

4 sheets nori seaweed
2 cups warm cooked short-grain white rice
1/2 tsp salt
1/2 tsp sugar
4 tsp rice vinegar
1 thin egg omelet (use 4 eggs), sliced into ribbons
1/2 cup blanched spinach
1 large carrot, cut into matchsticks
4 strips of pickled daikon*
4 strips of marinated burdock root*

*additions can change based on available ingredients

Lay one piece of seaweed on sushi rolling mat or on a large piece of plastic wrap. I like to lightly toast my seaweed on the stove top, to add flavour. Mix the rice with the salt, sugar and vinegar, and spread one quarter of it in a thin layer over two thirds of seaweed (I like to have a bowl of water nearby to keep hands wet, which helps with the sticky rice). Arrange a couple strips of egg, spinach, carrot, burdock and pickled daikon over rice. Again, kimbap can be filled with whatever you have in your fridge that will go well with rice: leftover fish, asparagus, avocado, etc.

Use the mat to help you roll the kimbap into a tight cylinder. Repeat the process with the remaining ingredients to make three more rolls. I like to gently wipe toasted sesame oil onto each roll with my hand, and along the sides of a sharp knife to slice the rolls in sushi-like pieces. You can also just dip the blade in water before each cut.

Hot tip: wrap up leftovers or seal in tupperware in fridge. Next morning dip each piece into an egg batter and fry on a pan with some oil until toasted brown. Best morning treat/breakfast!



Contentment



We talk a lot about comfort food. Top of my list has to be custard, or more specifically custard skin. The skin on custard is something that polarizes families and mine was no different. I know some who love it and others find it sickening, but you never found someone who was lukewarm on the subject.

When I was growing up in the UK, my mother made custard often, but ahead of time, so a skin would form on the top. It was always an unwritten rule in our house that my dad had the skin. He always grabbed the jug first as soon as it hit the table.

I loved it too, but I was well down the pecking order.

The skin is consistent with a lot of other things I like, the crust on bread, the crispy end slice to a roast, chicken skin, pork crackling, or the rind on cheese. Turns out that the outside of food is very often the interesting bit. Beauty (and taste) is literally skin deep!

There is a simple comfort in custard — in the way it looks, pours and tastes — not to mention what it's normally poured on! That's true contentment.



SILKY CREAM CUSTARD by Stuart Rothnie

Yields a jug full

200 ml double cream
700 ml whole milk
4 large egg yolks
3 tbsp cornflour
100 g caster sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract

Put the cream and milk into a large pan and gently bring to just below boiling point. Meanwhile, in a large bowl, whisk the yolks, cornflour, sugar and vanilla. Gradually pour the hot milk mixture onto the sugar mixture, whisking constantly.

Wipe out the saucepan and pour the mixture back into it. Heat gently, stirring with a wooden spoon until the custard is thickened, but before any lumps form. Eat hot or cold.



Contentment



When I first started university I found it difficult to shop for one and maintain a relatively healthy diet. I have a killer sweet tooth and started making frequent trips to buy ice cream pints at the nearby convenience store. This proved to be an issue since a) I am lactose sensitive and b) it was not very cost-effective. I also simultaneously had the issue of finishing bananas before they went bad. My roommate suggested freezing them to make banana bread, however my class assignments left me with little time or patience for baking.

Luckily, we inherited blenders from our families and one day I decided to make a banana smoothie. The result turned out more like a milkshake. I accidentally killed two birds with one stone by finding a use for my excess bananas and a fix for my sweet tooth. Ever since, this vegan milkshake has been a fan favourite with both me, my family and university friends — it even made its debut in a close friend's cookbook.



JULIANA BANANA VEGAN MILKSHAKE by Juliana Yip-Ono

Yields 1-2 servings

- 1-3 squares dark chocolate
- ¼ cup rolled oats
- 1 tbsp peanut butter (powder or regular)
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 large or 2 small frozen bananas
- ½ cup non-dairy milk

optional

- 2 tbsps chocolate syrup
- 2 tbsps whipped cream

Peel and break banana(s) into 1 inch pieces. Freeze for at least 3 hours.

If using a traditional blender, add in ingredients in the reverse order listed. If using a “bullet” style blender, add in ingredients in order listed.

Add in a few squares of dark chocolate (it should be farthest from the blender). Add in all other ingredients, making sure to keep ingredients below the max fill line. If using a “bullet” style blender, make sure bananas are touching the blades to ensure even consistency. Drip chocolate sauce in cup of choice, pour or scoop blended mixture into cup and add whipped cream on top.

Enjoy!



Contentment



There are a few recipes and flavour combinations that can take me right back to my family visits to Genoa, Italy. These cherished visits have always been centered around quality time with cousins, aunts and uncles, scenic places, and delicious food!

During my initial days on any visit there are a few dishes that are usually first on the menu; one favorite is Focaccia al Formaggio. Unlike typical focaccia that is bready, this is more like a thin cheese pie. It originates from a small town on the Italian Riviera called Recco. According to EU regulation,

this dish is an IGP (Indication of Geographic Protection) product which is protected and linked to a specific geographical area. If this dish has a designation, you know it's good!

This is a very simple recipe with few ingredients. The cheese that is typically used is Crescenza or Stracchino. This is a soft, creamy cheese that has a mild tangy flavour. Sadly, this cheese is very difficult to import because of the short shelf life. My family recipe uses mozzarella and plain yogurt to best emulate the flavour. Buon Appetito!

FOCACCIA AL FORMAGGIO by Federica Piccone

Yields 2 pies (4-6 servings)

Dough

2 cups white flour (00 is preferable)
½ cup water
2tbs extra virgin olive oil
½ tsp salt

Filling

200 gr mozzarella (fresh tastes best)
½ cup plain yogurt
milk drizzle
olive oil drizzle

Mix flour and salt in a large bowl. Create a well in the middle and pour water and olive oil in the well. With your fingertips, start to incorporate the flour into the water from the edges of the well. Continue until you have created a very smooth ball of dough. If you have excess flour, add a sprinkle of water until you have a fully incorporated dough that is smooth, but not sticky.

Once the dough has combined, start kneading the dough to develop the gluten in the flour for about 5 minutes. This will make the dough very elastic. If it sticks to your hands, dust the work surface with some flour and continue kneading.

To view a step-by-step instructional video of this recipe, visit tinyurl.com/yyxar4qc

Set aside dough, cover with cooking wrap or a humid cloth and leave at room temperature for 30 mins.

Preheat your oven to 450°F.

Grease two rectangular cake tins (25 x 35 cm) or round tins.

Divide dough into 4. Take one dough ball for rolling and cover the rest. Roll dough until you achieved 1mm thickness. You can also use your hands to gently stretch the dough even further.

Tip: Roll and turn the dough continuously rather than rolling the dough in one spot. This prevents the dough from sticking to your working surface.

Once you have a rectangle wide enough for your pan, cover the tin with the dough overlapping the edges.

Cut the mozzarella into thin slices (3-5 mm) and evenly disperse on the bottom layer of dough. It's ok to have some space between the slices.



FOCACCIA AL FORMAGGIO by Federica Piccone

Yields 2 pies (4-6 servings)

Add a good drizzle of plain yogurt over the cheese topping.

Roll out another dough ball (see step 6 + 7).

Cover the bottom layer and cheese topping with the second sheet of dough. Cut the excess dough from the border of the pan. Easiest way to do this is by rolling over the edge of the pan with the rolling pin and sealing the two layers of dough together.

Tip: Try to avoid overlapping the dough to make a 'crust'. This pie tastes the best when it is three thin layers; dough, cheese, dough.

Repeat step 6-11 with the remaining two dough balls.
Tip: You can reuse the excess dough that you cut away. Knead the dough into a ball and let it rest for 20 minutes before rolling out again. You can make a mini pie with the left overs.

Make small holes every few inches on the top layer of dough to allow for air to escape during the baking process.

Drizzle olive oil, milk and sprinkle some sea salt on top.

Bake for about 6-8 minutes until the dough is golden and crispy.

Serve hot as an appetizer or with a nice side salad.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

Dictionary Dining is a collaborative cookbook produced while in isolation due to Covid-19, during the Spring of 2020. It is the culmination of a several-months-long residency with Annabelle Choi — chef, baker, and artist.

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