

Confit celeriac,  
cimi sauce, salsa verde,  
celeriac crumb. — 14

Cod, confit potatoes,  
salsa verde — 19.5

Potato & Comte pie, green  
mustard sauce — 19.5

Beef burger, gorgonzola & green  
chilli rarebit, spinach — 12

Chicken, confit garlic, rocket — 20

Salmon, crab bisque, breadcrumbs — 21

Cider braised pork cheeks,  
chicharrones — 18

Steak tartare, chips,  
gem salad — 25

Fried polenta, wild mushroom,  
bean broth, white truffle oil — 16.5

Bistrotheque fish & chips — 21

*oyster, lovage, thai shallot*

*sourdough, brown butter*

—

*mussel, radish, kimchi*

—

*goat's cheese, onion, umeboshi*

—

*pork, eel, celeriac*

—

*pork, walnut, apple*

—

*blood orange, hazelnut, pink peppercorn*

—

*carrot, ras el hanout, black sesame*

—

*elderflower, strawberry, rum*

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# EDITORIAL

*Recipe*, in Latin, was the introductory, imperative formula of medical prescriptions: *take*. This normative origin remained when the recipe migrated into the realm of food: a set of how-to instructions meant to standardise the contingency of cooking into formula normally blind to the histories and socio-material practices from which the recipe derives. Both in traditional cookbooks and in today's ubiquitous cooking shows and video tutorials, the act of selecting, preparing, and tasting food is crystallised into a private and inconsequential matter of measuring, performing and repeating, in which the complex relation between food and the politics and logistics of its production, distribution and consumption is often minimised or erased altogether.

While examples abound, one may mention Pellegrino Artusi's famous *The Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well*, a 1891 cookbook which was instrumental in producing an Italian national consciousness, crafting a series of recipes in which 'the politico-economical system, the social structure of his society, and the myth of bourgeois order' were carefully and paternalistically translated, along marked geographical, socio-economic and gender lines (Camporese, 1980: 117, our translation).

When joined by the adjective 'urban', either in merely rhetorical discourses (as in 'recipes for a better society', economy, and the likes), or in specific projects at the intersection between grassroots initiatives and artistic practice, the recipe maintains this prescriptive and instrumental connotation, usually assumed as small-scale pragmatic – or, one may polemically add, technocratic – solutions supposedly able to bypass the social and political meaning of a recipe's cultural history and/or collective social practice.<sup>1</sup> However, the relation between

cooking, city and the recipe may be articulated differently. As for instance Emanuele Coccia (2020) points out:

Considering the house and the city as if they were great kitchens means overturning the patriarchal and patriarchal relationship into a space of care and not just under the form of nourishment. The act of cooking is just the basic form of the act of care: the form in which it is impossible to separate the care of oneself from that of others.

This issue of *lo Squaderno* aims to move beyond both prescriptive and metaphorical uses of the notion of recipe, proposing instead to unpack its relation with geo-political and historical urban trajectories, as well as with embodied and sensorial practices of producing, making, and tasting of food in the city – something that is all the more topical today, as 'food' has arguably become a key driver of urban planning, regeneration, gentrification and, indeed, foodification. We believe that the important causal connections that run between cultural and political life should be included within a mappable urban sphere and that the place of 'sense' and 'care' within the fabric of the urban should be better understood. We have therefore invited contributors to reclaim food-making and food-tasting as a sensorial way to explore, know and engage with the visible and invisible constitution of the city. This issue sets out to reconfigure the recipe itself into a sort of speculative map able to chart and disclose critical, sensory and social dimensions of the relation between food and the city in particular contexts.

We begin with a pencil drawing by Sharon Kiv-

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See for instance Raaderum's 'urban recipes' project, which challenges contemporary art in the 'attempt to make better cities using building on [sic] the citizen creative power'. [<http://www.raaderum.com/english/about/urban-recipes/>]. A different case is that of *Recetas Urbanas*, a project of a project by architect Santiago Cirugeda, which proposes extremely cunning 'subversive strategies of urban occupation' negotiating with the spatio-legal materiality of the city, and its loopholes.

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1 This is the risk of other similar notions such as Mike Lydon's Tactical Urbanism or Renzo Piano's Urban Mending.

land which forms part of a series of works titled *Étoile*. These somewhat shaking descriptions of sophisticated Michelin starred urban cuisine – *pollack poached in seaweed butter and shellfish vinaigrette* 25 – are taken from restaurants in Hackney (London) and surreptitiously laid out through the pages of the journal. In *Waiters*, Sean Ashton reminds us of the unacknowledged triviality that surrounds our routines, and the barely noticed human infrastructure that holds it together. Ben Hope's satirical account of a not so improbable near future draws on the current obsession with the relation between health, food and culture by describing a café where the idea of reducing eating to the bare need for nutrition becomes the norm. Looking through the windows of the *Sole Nutrition Café*, we reflect on whether this tasteless and aphagic future could tell us something about today's urban obsession with food. Anke Schwarz provides other potential imaginaries to come by engaging with recipes and cities through the lens of Science Fiction. From Asimov to Okorafor, Schwarz identifies recurrent patterns in the ways we imagine future relations between food, technology and the city. Similarly futuristic and yet firmly placed in the present is the 'smog meringue' recipe proposed by the Center for Genomic Gastronomy & CoClimate, a creative way to taste the *aeroir* of a given place by attuning to the culinary quality and pollution of urban atmosphere. 'Harvesting the air', that is, as an engagement with the common air we breathe, is particularly relevant in these times of increasingly toxic atmosphere and airborne diseases. The next recipe is by Andrea Cetrulo, John Bingham-Hall and Elabe Karimnia which explores the urban sensorium as an infrastructure that imperceptibly holds together the urban. Here 'the recipe, rather than a prescriptive form, becomes support for a kind of improvisation that allows the immigrant to reconfigure the unfamiliar materials of the host country into an embodiment of home'. This capacity of recipes to provide an 'illusion of stability . . . against

the catastrophic background of universal chaos' [Robinson, quoted in Schwartz] also emerges in the text narrated by Richard Mohr & Patricia Branco, where an Italian recipe in Australia and a Portuguese recipe in Italy appear as tools to develop strategies of coping, mapping and adaptation within the socio-spatial topology of an unfamiliar city, while (re)producing immigrant life-worlds abroad. The relation between roots and routes is also explored, along a temporal axis, by the Pil and Galia Kollektiv who trace the history of *fish and chips* at the convergence of different geopolitical, religious, and technological trajectories. This history shows us that fish and chips might not be the most obvious landmark of British cuisine and representative of a preposterously 'pure' British identity.

Our uncertain ecological future is the inspiration of Nora Silva's recipe, which engages with the relation between food, climate disaster and guilt. Silva's text encompasses the 'paradox' of urban eating: 'We need to eat, yet eating kills the planet and consequently kills us'. What we need, she speculates, is a recipe that is paradoxically *not* about eating. While Ben Hope's *Sole Nutrition Café* suggests a possible answer in the future, we also explore how solidarity and cooperation may provide other recipes for coping in the present. Such is the focus of Viola Mari and Maria Vasile's text which explores the *Fa Bene* project in Turin, Italy, where the recipe becomes an assemblage of solidarity care and improvisation in the food marked of the working class neighbourhood of *Barriera di Milano*, a way of coping with the withering away of the welfare state and Turin's longstanding de-industrialisation. Subsequently, Foodification Democracy provide us with the other face of *Barriera di Milano*, through a narra

tion that intersects the preposterous and yet addictive aesthetics of the pre-covid gastro-nomic boom and gourmet gentrification of a city dubbed the 'Capital of Taste', and the aseptic present of urban food culture in the age of social distancing and disinfection.

We conclude with two different takes on the urban-food relation in which urban eating emerges, to paraphrase Deleuze, as 'one flow among others, with no special place in relation to the others, that comes into relations of current, countercurrent, and eddy with other flows — flows of shit, sperm, words, action, eroticism, money, politics' (Deleuze, 1995: 8-9). Anaïs Hazo proposes a recipe for a sock cheese in which the routine of urban living and some of its multiple and fermenting forms of life intersect and produce novel organisms. As she writes, 'nothing is sterile. Even from dirt, dust and concrete, tiny-grand miracles arise'. This is echoed by Victoria Brooks in whose hands 'the recipe bursts itself open to its own concealed complex

construction; instead of closing off to its own functionality, it reveals its stories and also the shared tastes, leaks and orifices of organic bodies and the body of the city'. Challenging the recipe's prescriptive structure, Brooks turns it into an assemblage of mutually ingesting bodies, where eating, desire, and urban life overlap.

J. J-L & A. P.

#### References

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# Waiters

**Sean Ashton**

A certain sulphurous charm pervades these basement premises, the burgundy perfectly uterine, the brûlée ensconced in its ramekin, a toilet that will only flush if handled just so, a Polaroid of Le Pen flapping in the window, arm draped over the smiling patronne, whose teenage son was destined to wait on our table, stationed in the alcove there like Kafka's lugubrious gatekeeper. Already thinking of the tip – whether the dotted line can take the strain of our inner gratuity, our secret urge to send him off on some Moroccan vacation – we seem to forget that we too begin from a losing position, barely able to pay our share, still less finance Tangier; and after coffee, when we are through and the alpha male calls for the check, we kill our conversation as he brings the chip-and-pin, respecting his transactional rites, fumbling euros into the salver, wondering who came up short.

Sean Ashton writes fiction, art criticism and poetry. His novel *Living in a Land* (Ma Bibliothèque 2017) is a fictional memoir written mainly in sentences constructed in the negative. 'Waiters' is from his forthcoming book *Sampler* (Valley Press, 2020), a selection of excerpts from an imaginary encyclopaedia written entirely by poets.

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Soused Mackerel	8.5
Raw Beef Salad	9
Young Leeks with Fresh Cheese	9
Wild Rabbit, Blood Sausage & Beans	9.5
Monkfish with Winter Tomatoes	11.5
Hake Kokoxtas	10
Cockle & Seaweed Porridge	14.5
Grilled Sweetbread	12.5 / 24.5

Brill with Green Sauce	19
Lemon Sole	21 / 26
Roast Duck	22
Mutton Chop	25
Fallow Deer Saddle	25
Beef Sirloin	38 / 48

Whole Turbot	85 / 95
Beef Rib	70 / 75 / 90

Bread & Onion Butter	3.5
Smoked Potatoes	4.5
Roasted Greens	5
Bitter Leaf Salad	6 / 10
Grilled Red Peppers	6.7



# Sole Nutrition Café

**Ben Hope**

The denizens of Sole Nutrition are visionaries, each with his or her own epiphany. To call Sole Nutrition a café is to misrepresent: it is an anti café. It is a sealed aseptic facility with a communal nutrient delivery space. It has standards of cleanliness, and worker welfare, which would have the late Anthony Bourdain rapturous. Not a devil's kitchen. A sorcerer's laboratory.

The location is, to use a phrase that is due for revision, not yet gentrified. Not yet, because anywhere within five kilometres of a London terminus is at risk of gentrification. It is at the nexus of city visualized and city realised. Approaching from any direction, the final kilometre of your journey will take you past a place of worship, a medical centre, a deliberately far flung art gallery. Interspersed are unironic food offerings: kebab, chicken, pizza. A realm that is somewhere, but that is also peripheral.

Sole Nutrition occupies a former bioenterprise hub on the campus of a major teaching hospital. The building has late Victorian solidity and seriousness, with retrofitted tech unicorn architectural features: polished concrete floor; logoed sliding doors; zipwire across atrium. Here and there they position themselves – customers, clients, patients? Sipping white fluid, or connected to pumps by tubes running towards their chests. A devotee of three years, Joshua Anthracite, explains what drew him in.

“I was one of the covid-19 victims who suffered a systemically mild illness, but whose sense of smell was eradicated. Totally gone. As everyone now knows, where smell goes, taste follows.”

He converses in the semi ambulant modern way, migrating from standing desk to pixellated picture window, not a chair in sight.

“When you can't taste food and drink a whole dimension of pleasure goes. Before the virus I would have accepted a description of myself as a foodie: a sourdough pilgrim, an espresso evangelist. But when your sense of food is reduced to texture, the interest in variety and quality fades quickly. Does wine have a bouquet? Who cares. You start to see food more as fuel, as something which prevents hunger or maintains health.”

Anthracite wears close fitting athbusiness garments, hues of black and grey, presumably derived from bamboo. He is clean shaven with notable scleral and dermatological clarity. He looks as though he would happily, if circumstances allowed, manoeuvre himself into an advanced yoga position.

“In the global, connected way of these things, you soon find you are not alone. Lots of people out there are trying to get beyond mere diet fads, and apex predator rapacity. Of course I had done paleo, FODMAPS, ketogenic. But this was different – I just wanted out of food. I started replacing meals with Huel, and was amazed how much time I was saving. Instead of grocery faff there was new space for genuine creativity.

Ben Hope is a paediatric gastroenterologist at King's College Hospital, London. He studied English at Trinity College Dublin, Semiotics at Bologna University and Medicine at University College London. He is a contributor to the British Medical Journal and has written for a diverse range of arts based publications. Hope's fiction is often set in the future and draws from medical research to explore the causal connection between health, culture and urbanism.

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## The Feed You Need

“At Sole Nutrition, as their slogan has it, I can get ‘The Feed I Need’. Bespoke complete enteral formula. Calories adjusted to my fitbit data so no chance of laying down unwanted fat stores. Mineral and electrolyte content to match seasonal fluctuations in losses. Less work for the kidneys. Homeostasis without the massive physiological commitment of processing complex foodstuffs. The mind and body free to roam.”

We are joined by the head nutritionist, Susan Greenwood. She has Anthracite’s data on a tablet. His formula for the next three days is composed of the following.

1. *Carbohydrates.*

-Maltodextrins (energy to blood via small intestine).

-Cellulose and lignins (substrate for colonic bacteria, stool bulk).

2. *Protein.*

-Soy isolate (energy via small intestine) 50g/L.

-Nitrogen ratio 150:1 kcal/g N.

3. *Lipids.*

-Organic safflower oil (long chain triglycerides and essential fatty acids e.g.  $\omega$ -3,  $\omega$ -6).

-Organic hemp seed oil.

4. *Electrolytes and micronutrients.*

-Sodium, potassium, calcium, chloride, phosphorus, selenium, iron, zinc, tocopherol, niacinimide, pyridoxine, phytonadione, cyanocobalamin, copper, iodine, fluoride, manganese, magnesium, chromium.

5. *Immune regulatory compounds.*

-Glutamine, arginine, branched chain amino acids (anti-inflammatory endothelial activity).

6. *Psychoactive substances.*

-Caffeine, psilocybin.

Total volume is 2 litres per day. Osmolality is 490 mOsm/kg H<sub>2</sub>O.

“Joshua prefers a more concentrated formula as he still enjoys drinking water.”

Her accent is midatlantic. Does she belong anywhere? Her lab coat is unbuttoned, her T-shirt bears a legend.

## What is patriotism but the love of the food one ate as a child?

“However we see to it that within the 2 litres will be the constituents of an ideal diet, free from contamination, and physiologically available with a minimum of digestive blood draw.”

Anthracite can contain himself no longer and drops into a textbook downward dog.

“Susan is a genius! A very modest one though. . . She hasn’t told you the half of it. She identified and corrected my unique metabolic deficiencies by adding extra nonessential amino acids to my formula. My ultramarathon times have come down to the elite range. I can meditate for 6 hours continuously. While I was on a DIY Huel and oatmeal diet, I would get distracted by bodily functions after a matter of minutes. I call it the amino acid trip.”

Does he know about the psilocybin?

It is time to meet the owner of Sole Nutrition, Oluwale Akintoye. His background is a potent combination of microbiology and industrial aseptic compounding. As he puts it, he knows how to put the good microbes into the gut, and keep the bad ones out of the bloodstream. While I wait I look at the café decor, a signed copy of The Fine Young Cannibals triple platinum album *The Raw and The Cooked* (“To Oluwale, you freed me from the carbo cult, always gratefully, Roland”), a Violaesque neon declaring.

## Food will eat itself

“What struck me in the early decades of the 21st century was the sheer laboriousness of food production and delivery. Nor was I enamoured of the vastly overrated social aspect of eating. I found it easy to assume that the human bonding which supposedly occurs during eating, would be replaced by something much more interesting.

“I could not ignore the discrepancy between the simplicity of our nutritional requirements, and the unsustainable cost of our urge to feed ourselves. I realised that, in many if not most cases, urban food outlets were degrading rather than enhancing the built environment. Claims of using local produce were usually bogus. Food – often degraded, nutrient poor food – was the final common pathway of corrupt globalisation.”

*What is patriotism but the love of the food one ate as a child?*

Akintoye’s face is inscrutable, his age could be anything from mid thirties to mid fifties. He is a languid radical. He has a tattoo on the ventral aspect of his forearm.

## I am chemical

Anthrax is into his sixth minute of a motionless side plank, alternating nostrils for breathing.

“I realised it was time to bring the concept of essential nutrition into the mainstream, out of the pathological shadows. The technology of non food nutrition – in its simplest form a liquid for oral consumption, at its most advanced a fluid administered through a permanent central venous catheter – had been available for decades. But it was only offered to sick people. I recruited to a trial, healthy volunteers. People who had better things to do than select recipes, buy ingredients, peel and chop, season and stir, masticate and swallow, produce gastric hydrochloric acid, empty their gallbladders, cleave sugar, bundle lipids, belch and fart”.

Behind him is a great glass panel through which aseptic processing can be observed. Solutions and emulsions mixed and sealed into biodegradable bags. A place of total sterility in which nutritional molecules must remain apart from microorganisms. Full of the building blocks of life, yet separate from life itself.

“The trial was a success. Most participants just drank the specified amount of formula, like Joshua. Those who liked the physiological benefits but disliked the taste of the formula could chose inoculation with attenuated covid-19 – to ablate their olfactory receptors. Or they could use a nasogastric tube intermittently, or have a gastrostomy fashioned”.

Another customer who prefers not to give her name, is on hand to show her gastrostomy, just to the right of her abdominal midline, below the ribs. It is a simple hole in her skin, a short tunnel though to her stomach, held open by a hollow platinum stud.

“I connect the stud to a pump at night. I get all the nutrition I need while I’m asleep. They have adjusted my microbiome towards a non depressive genome mix and I have been able to stop taking SSRIs. I wake up, I’m not hungry. I don’t have to force down breakfast either. I’m ready to work, to exercise. I study. I don’t miss grinding food in my mouth and heartburn and brushing my teeth. I don’t really feel hungry during the day. If I do, I drink banisteriosis tea. I don’t own a saucepan, cutlery.”

## **Food schmoed**

Akintoye has more to say.

“Food fetishism is a historical cul de sac. An enduring one, I’ll give you that. But not inevitable, any more than it was inevitable that humans would only be able to communicate by standing within earshot of one another.

“The future is not just gluten free or vegan, it is aphagic. The cows and the chickens can go where they will: they will be free. Let bovines be bovine. We can get our protein, our fat and our carbohydrate without them. We will be in energy balance. There will be no obesity, no caries, no monoculture. The palate fetish is obsolete. The only hunger will be for evolution and knowledge. We have prana and manna right here. Sole Nutrition is not just the beginning, it is the destination.”

Later, outside, night is near and the street odours have become more intrusive. The non digestive enterprises close, conceding to the density and functionality of the almost limitless food outlets. The mind yields, as it always does, to the flesh. Yes, there is more to the city than eating. But just how much more?

## *Glossary*

**Paleo:** a diet which addresses the discordance hypothesis that homo sapiens are genetically more suited to a pre-agricultural diet. Think food you could forage in the wild: seeds, nuts, roots, meat from wild animals.

**FODMAPS:** acronym for fermentable oligosaccharides, disaccharides, monosaccharides, and polyols. In this diet, carbohydrates which appear in common foods and which are poorly absorbed are identified and avoided. Examples are apples, onions, lentils, corn syrup.

**Ketogenic:** intake of carbohydrate rich food is reduced and replaced by fat and protein. The body is forced to utilize ketones for metabolism, rather than glycolysis. There is scientific evidence that it can be effective for controlling refractory seizures, but other health benefits have been claimed.

**Huel:** an early provider of nutritionally complete liquid nutrition sold direct to the consumer. Intended for convenience and potential benefits to health and environment, rather than as a way of providing nutrition in disease.

**Banisteriopsis:** banisteriopsis caapi, a giant vine native to South America named after a 17th century clergyman and botanist, John Banister. Long history of ingestion by native populations and more recently, international psychonauts. It nourishes something, but not the body.

# The essential vat

## Geographies of food in Science Fiction

**Anke Schwarz**

In Isaac Asimov's classic seven-volume *Foundation* novels, hardly anyone ever seems to eat.<sup>1</sup> So when in *Prelude to Foundation*, main character Hari Seldon bites into a sandwich, we are rushed to the very heart of gastronomy in late 20th century Science Fiction novels: Vat-filled labs and mechanized cooking. Unpleasant taste in mouth, Seldon is reassured by his host: "If you can stomach that sandwich, you'll be able to eat anywhere on Trantor" (Asimov 1989: 61). From Asimov's yeasty microfood to Proust's totemic madeleine, food has long been used as a vehicle to evoke certain atmospheres, emotional states, and locales in fiction. In this paper, I explore ways in which urban futures are channelled through the geographies of food in Science Fiction writing. SF is, in Ben Anderson's words, an anticipatory action, a "way of making futures present" (2010: 784). As this paper will demonstrate, SF literature showcases recipes for crafting urbanity via food and eating practices, thus speaking to the relation between past, present and future of place and belonging. Lab food and cooking robots are the cornerstones of food writing in SF, both intrinsically linked to urban life. *Prelude to Foundation's* horrible sandwich is a product of the high-tech urban environment of Trantor, an entirely dome-enclosed, urbanized planet counting 40 billion inhabitants, as Seldon's host explains:

No space settlement can match us in our microfoods. We have yeast vats, fungal mats, and algae ponds vast beyond the imagination. And we are strong on artificial flavoring, added with no light hand. (Asimov 1991: 62)

SF futures collapse into the present when such highly processed foods stemming from hydroponic cultivation and fungal fermentation materialize in 21<sup>st</sup> century supermarket shelves in the form of mycoproteins (Finnigan 2011), vat-grown meat and the like. Mechanized household chores – the other cornerstone of SF menus – equally speak to the present and future of (urban) food production. In *Foundation*, items such as "collapsible stoves that will roast the toughest meats to the desired tenderness in two minutes" (Asimov 1991: 233) serve as markers of socio-technological supremacy and even tools of political bargaining. We will return to this aspect later. Beyond labs and robots, the present paper traces the ways in which urban futures are fabricated via food-related practices in SF novels. Three main courses for urban SF cuisine are laid out in the books I analyzed: Food as a local marker, taste as a matter of distinction, and eating as a communal practice.

### **Food as a local marker**

In Ursula K. Le Guin's 1969 *The Left Hand of Darkness*, dried fish cakes, porridge with batter-fried eggs, and hot beer are means of survival, providing much-needed energy to the inhabitants of a

Anke Schwarz is a postdoctoral researcher and lecturer at TU Dresden's Institute of Geography. An urban geographer, her research has focused on international urbanization, infrastructures, and everyday practices. She is the author of *Demanding water. A sociospatial approach to domestic water use in Mexico City* (Steiner, 2017). Among her present projects, she is conducting research on authoritarian territorializations in Italy and Germany, and on future geographies in Science Fiction.

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<sup>1</sup> This corresponds with a certain shallowness of protagonist's personalities in all of Asimov's novels, and a dearth of non-male characters beyond the mere ornamental.

harsh world appropriately called Winter. The grand dame of SF wrote about food in the nine-volume *Hainish Cycle* to such detail that others were inspired to recreate recipes in her honor upon her passing (Strivers 2018). In contrast to such fictional foods, specific dishes and local(ized) cuisines are frequently employed in SF (as elsewhere in fiction) as a vehicle of authenticity, providing locally rooted flavor. Copious amounts of jollof rice – a dish popular throughout West Africa, and as is often the case, disputed as a ‘national dish’ between Nigeria, Senegal and Ghana – is consumed alongside egusi (melon seed) soup in Nnedi Okorafor’s 2014 *Lagoon*. Further rooting the story in Lagos, the novel’s alien main character enjoys the bitterness of raw garden eggs, a locally grown vegetable from the Solanaceae family. In Marge Piercy’s 1991 *Body of Glass*, there is pot roast chicken with carrots and onions, and schav (sorrel) soup, marking the Ashkenazi roots of its cuisine. Inevitably, such placing turns somewhat sour at times, when food

*SF literature showcases recipes for crafting urbanity via food and eating practices, thus speaking to the relation between past, present and future of place and belonging*

is harnessed in the service of marking the Other. That line is more than blurry, of course. (How) is such Othering operating in the “meal of basted lamb and dill-flavored yogurt, delicious and exotic” (Robinson 1992: 270) that is offered to a protagonist by Martian Arab nomads? Drafting food as a localized cultural marker by collapsing place and identity (Joassart-Marcelli/Bosco 2017) is a particularly powerful form of territorialization. Sharon Zukin famously plays on this in her definition of urban authenticity as “a cultural form of power over space” (2009: xiii). In the field of food geographies, such “un-reflexive localisms” (DuPuis/Goodman 2005: 360) are subject to critical debate.

Pizza, served everywhere and on Mars (Robinson 1992: 503), is paradigmatic for a reversal (and thus confirmation) of that logic. Rendered neither authentic nor exotic, the dish appears as timeless in North American SF writing as it is ubiquitous in today’s (Western) food cultures. In true fashion, such pizza is neither homemade collectively nor eaten out: future pizza is delivery pizza. In its 1999 *A Fish Full of Dollars* episode, TV series *Futurama* features a 31st century cheese pizza topped with extinct anchovies, styled after Panucci’s pizzeria in Old New York (“Do not tip delivery boy”). In similar fashion, precarity rules throughout present and future food delivery. With a view on today’s gig economy workers, the notorious high-speed pizza delivery in the city-states of future Southern California, as envisioned in Neal Stephenson’s 1992 *Snow Crash*, seems uncannily realistic. At CosaNostraPizza, any pizza is to be shipped within half an hour by its army of ‘deliverators’. Pizza boxes are fitted with a count-down LED display to that end. Costumers in the Burbclaves, corporate suburban gated communities in the wider Los Angeles area, are guaranteed “your pie in thirty minutes or you can have it free, shoot the driver, take his car, file a class-action lawsuit” (Stephenson 1992: 3). If it were not for such stereotyping of Italian gastronomy, SF pizza could represent the most globalized dish of all.

### **A question of taste**

The precarity flaring up in SF writing about gastronomic services and the food industries is closely related to the concept of eating, and indeed, taste, as a practice of social distinction (Bourdieu 1987). Returning to Asimov’s sandwich, this distinction through taste also operates on Trantor, where the visitor and the immigrant is expected to succumb to local sensory inclination:

This is a wayside dinner, my friend. Cheap, fast, and not very good. The food’s homegrown and has an infusion of rather sharp yeast. Trantorian palates are used to it . . . Don’t give anyone the impression that you’re used to better. There are places on Trantor where being identified as an aristocrat is worse than being identified as an Outworlder. (Asimov 1989: 61)

Elsewhere, the divide comes down to fresh fruits and vegetables vs. lab-grown fast food, classed and distributed unequally across future urban space. Inhabitants of the Glob, “the Megalopolis that

stretched south from what had been Boston to what had been Atlanta” (Piercy 1991: 8) in *Body of Glass* rely on “vat-grown foods made of algae . . . artificially flavoured, dyed and textured stuff” (ibid: 207) for subsistence. In the domed urban enclaves of this dystopian future, where middle-class heroine Shira Shipman “managed to buy three real eggs” (ibid: 17), fresh produce is an exception. After extensive floods and droughts, “earth-grown food . . . [is] a luxury” (ibid: 207) chiefly available in semi-rural areas with local cultivations. On (fictional) Mars, the same dichotomy is presented as an issue of class and belonging. In Kim Stanley Robinson’s *Red Mars* (1992), food and food-production transform the red planet from an alien world into something of a home. The radiation-hardened domed cities and tent towns of early Martian urbanization feature extended green-house areas, and dishes from various cuisines are produced from fresh crops. Yet this is not what newcomers to Mars – hired labor with temporary, fixed-term contracts in mining camps and other transnational corporations’ Mars operations – feed on:

Frank glared into a kitchen. “What do you eat?” he demanded. Fish, vegetables, rice, tofu. It all came in bulk packages. They had no complaints, they thought it was good. Americans, the most degraded palates in history. Somebody gimme a cheeseburger! (Robinson 1992: 425)

The way in which Frank, a scientist and part of the first group to arrive at Mars (and himself a U.S. citizen), draws a line between himself and those stevedores is a text-book example of Bourdieuan distinction via cultural capital. These men have no complaints about the cuisine, thus marking them as working class Martians, part of the precariat. They are “human muscle” (ibid: 424), mere temporary migrant workers from planet Earth.

Social status is also essential to another aspect of SF food preparation: the robot (m)aid. Undoubtedly, Asimov’s utopian collapsible stoves have been around for a bit, in the shape of the Thermomix, or Bimby. These ‘robot chefs’ not only chop, stir, and bake, they also require specific skills for operation (Truninger 2011) and seem to serve as tools of distinction for middle-class women in particular (Ascione 2014). As such, their use is classed and gendered – the question remains as to who produces, manages, maintains, cleans and charges these devices. In 1990s SF in particular, similar mechanized or collectivized household chores – including those related to food preparation – are often presented as liberating techniques. At times, this is comically reminiscent of 1960s advertisement campaigns on the benefits of electric household devices. Take *Body of Glass*:

The cleaning robot cleaned, the house took care of itself, meals could be picked up at the Commons, and dirty clothes were dropped at the laundry. Cooking was purely recreational. (1991: 210)

Yet even in Piercy’s widely acclaimed feminist novel, this appears to be the realm of the better-off residents. It is those who, like Shira Shipman, escaped the domed corporate cities to dwell in independent semi-rural communities such as the free town of Tivka on the Massachusetts coast. Indeed, their privileges bridge both aspects of SF food in a telling manner: Not only are their homes fully automated and ‘take care of themselves’ – Shira and her neighbors are also provided with fresh locally produced food, such as “chicken wings, corn bread and cucumber salad” (ibid.: 207), thus avoiding the algae-based highly processed dishes of Piercy’s cities. Such a pitting of cheeseburgers against zero-kilometer organic greens is a recurrent topic under today’s conditions of globalized food production, continuing food poverty, and the climate crisis. The automation of reproductive tasks in the domestic sphere adds another layer of complexity, with an apparent tendency to deepen existing divisions along status lines.

## **Eating as a communal practice**

One of the most stunning SF accounts of eating as a communal practice is drawn towards the end of Robinson’s *Red Mars*. As a group of survivors of a counter-revolutionary crackdown are fleeing across Valles Marineris amidst a cataclysmic flood, geologist Ann Clayborne begins to recover from a severe

depression when eating after a 40-hour drive in a rover:

Ann looked around curiously at her companions, suddenly awed by the spectacle of human adaptability. Here they were eating their dinner . . . in a perfect illusion of dining-room conviviality; it might have been anywhere anytime, and their tired faces bright with some collective success, or merely with the pleasure of eating together – while just outside their chamber the broken world roared, and rockfall could annihilate them at any instant. And it came to her that the pleasure and stability of dining rooms had always occurred . . . against the catastrophic background of universal chaos; such moments of calm were things as fragile and transitory as soap bubbles . . . Groups of friends, rooms, streets, years, none of them would last. The illusion of stability was created by a concerted effort to ignore the chaos they were imbedded in. (ibid: 532)

Communal eating thus feeds into that essential ignorance, serving as a caring practice and a means of survival in both a physical and psychological sense. While the ingredients of this microwaved meal remain unmentioned, this is a recipe for coping with the transitory experience of human existence and society itself. Resonating with the materiality and performativity of relational space, such (re-)forming of human bonds could be described as perhaps the most 'urban' of social practices.

The imagination of urban futures through food and eating is, as this paper has shown, an intrinsic part of Science Fiction writing. These future urbanities act as imaginations, and, more commonly, as mere extrapolations or reproductions, of current recipes and eating practices through time. Not only are some of the lab-grown sandwich fillings served in tomorrow's 'smart' food parlors fleshed out. At its best, SF illuminates the social and spatial distortions in access to healthy, sufficient and palatable provisions that characterize present and future food geographies in the Anthropocene. Get ready for Trantor.

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# Smog Tasting

## Recipes, Methods & Locations

**The Center for  
Genomic Gastronomy  
& CoClimate**

### Introduction

Every location on the planet has aéroir: a unique atmospheric taste of place. Smog and air pollution can be detected by humans through smell and taste and are key contributors to the aéroir of a place. Since 2011 members of the Center for Genomic Gastronomy / CoClimate (a group of artists, designers and scientists) have been conducting smog tastings in cities throughout the world in order to:

1. Tune into the culinary qualities of air;
2. Analyze air pollution;
3. Evaluate aéroir.

In this article we will summarize the methods and recipes that we have developed for collecting, analyzing, synthesizing and tasting smog. We compare various smog typologies from locations around the world and imagine how the atmospheric flavor of cities might change in the future.

### What is smog?

Smog is a kind of air pollution that is both intense and visible. Smog in the atmosphere is produced when different pollutants mix, for example from automobiles, coal plants and animal manure. The exact composition of a local smog depends on the unique chemical mix and geographic conditions present, however most smogs can be grouped into one of a few typologies. Example typologies include: Photochemical Smog – found in 1950s Los Angeles, which contains NOx and Hydrocarbons cooked under UV light – or Central Valley Agricultural Smog which contains amines, ammonia, and NOx, which is characterized by its sour odor and a chemical smell caused by pesticides mixed with manure and other organic matter. For the last two centuries smog has been spreading unevenly – but steadily – across the planet as a result of increased fossil fuel use and industrialization. In recent decades, some cities have implemented policies that have reduced, or displaced, the smog impacting their local population, but the global trend has been towards increased smog.

### Smog Tasting (*En Plein Air*)

Smog Tasting, a body of ongoing creative research, began in 2011, when two members of the Center for Genomic Gastronomy / CoClimate were teaching a workshop with art and design students in Bengaluru, India. The initial plan for the workshop was to build a real-time air quality sensor and install it somewhere in the city. Around that time, there was a growing discourse about smart cities and pollution. This included citizen-led initiatives – but also commercial proposals – for building and installing sensor networks throughout cities and publishing the data online.<sup>1</sup>

The Center for Genomic Gastronomy is an artist-led think tank launched in 2010 that examines the biotechnologies and biodiversity of human food systems. Our mission is to map food controversies, prototype alternative culinary futures and imagine a more just, biodiverse and beautiful food system.

[info@genomicgastronomy.com](mailto:info@genomicgastronomy.com)

CoClimate (Cathrine Kramer, Emma Conley, Zackery Denfeld, Conor Courtney & Laura Allcorn) studies the ways that humans relate to the environment and each other in the era of global climate change. We aim to explore and understand climate change from many perspectives—imaging and prototyping new connections between people, technology, and the environment.

<http://www.foodphreaking.com/>

[info@coclimate.com](mailto:info@coclimate.com)

<sup>1</sup> For a more recent description of this tendency see “Smart cities air quality sensing – can technology match the hype?” by

Before launching into the hands-on portion of the workshop (building a pollution sensor) we debated issues of accessibility and impact with the workshop members. Was collecting quantitative data about air quality and making digital visualizations the best direction to take? The workshop members grew increasingly skeptical about the sensor project. It was decided that people living in Bengaluru already knew that air pollution was a problem, they didn't need 'smart' sensors to tell them. We still wanted to focus on human and environmental health, so we turned our attention away from air quality and towards the topic of food. We began by reading excerpts from *On Food and Cooking: An Encyclopedia of Kitchen Science, History and Culture* by Harold McGee. A chapter about eggs in this food compendium caught us by surprise and unexpectedly brought our attention back to smog and air quality. McGee writes:

Thanks to eggs we are able to harvest the air . . . at the 'stiff peak' stage . . . [egg] foam is approaching 90% air.

The poetic turn of phrase "harvest the air" inspired us to think about how we might harvest and taste the smog of Bengaluru that enveloped us every day. We realized that meringue cookies are basically a simple tool for trapping the ambient air of a given location. With this unexpected collision of pollution and cookery, we created *Smog Tasting*, a project that utilizes egg foams to harvest, taste and compare air pollution from different locations. With our students, we travelled around the city of Bengaluru whipping meringues in various locations, and returning to the school kitchen to bake them. We created a video documenting our journey, and served the meringues to willing beta-tasters to eat.<sup>2</sup> When you offer someone a meringue made from the air of a given location within the city, you find out pretty quickly what their perception of the air quality in that location is. As we ironically stated: "The Tragedy of the Commons Never Tasted So Good".

Initially, the project utilized egg foams to harvest and taste air, but it has since grown to include a range of methods for sensing, analyzing and evaluating the unique atmospheric taste of place. How does smog become a meringue?

#### SMOG MERINGUE RECIPE

Makes ~100, 2cm (1 inch) in diameter cookies

##### *Ingredients:*

[] 3/4 cup fine sugar

[] 3 egg whites

[] 1 lemon

##### *Tools:*

[] A hand or electric whisk

[] Medium sized bowl (glass or metal)

[] Piping bag

[] Baking paper

##### *Instructions:*

1. Locate a smoggy place near your home. Good options might include industrial areas or streets with traffic congestion. The location should be no farther than 10-15 minutes from your kitchen.
2. Clean bowl and whisk with soap and hot water.

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Carl Beck. At <https://www.aeroqual.com/smart-cities-air-quality>

<sup>2</sup> We define Beta-Tasters as people who sample, recombine and assess novel combinations of organisms, ingredients and flavors. They hone their olfactory, gustatory and digestive systems in order to document and disseminate their gastronomic experiences.

3. Cut the lemon into quarters and use one to wipe down the bowls and whisk. Dry them well. (Any oil left on the bowl or whisk will destroy your meringues!)
4. Separate the room temperature egg yolks from egg whites. Make sure NONE of the egg yolk ends up in your egg whites (this will destroy your meringues!). Discard the yolk.
5. Squeeze the juice from one lemon wedge into the eggs.
6. Measure out the sugar in a separate bowl or tupperware.
7. Bring the sugar, bowl of egg whites, and clean whisk to your smoggy site.
8. Beat the egg whites in a smoggy location until they form soft peaks.
9. Add the sugar gradually and continue whisking until the batter forms stiff, glossy peaks.
10. Return to your kitchen to bake the cookies.
11. Place baking paper on baking sheets and preheat oven to 100°C (212°F).
12. Scoop batter into a piping bag and pipe the cookies onto the baking paper.
13. Bake for 2-3 hours until cookies are crispy.
14. Take the meringues out of the oven and let them cool in a dry location for 10 mins. Cookies can be stored in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks.

*As climate change forces us to look skyward towards something that is hard to pinpoint, Smog Tasting aims to contribute to a conversation about how to inhabit our planet, and its atmosphere, with more care*

We are often asked if these meringues are safe to eat. Our scientific interlocutors told us that the digestive system is much better equipped to deal with these toxins than our respiratory system. Additionally, this is the air many humans breathe every day, so tasting a meringue would have negligible health effects in the scheme of things. By transforming the largely unconscious process of breathing to the conscious act of eating, Smog Tasting creates a visceral, thought-provoking interaction with the air all around us.

## **Open Source Smog Tasting**

Utilizing egg foams to harvest and taste the air offers a low resolution, embodied and theatrical method for capturing air quality information. Because this activity does not require very sophisticated technology or tools, and seems to have a strong poetic and pedagogical impact, we have shared our methods and experience online – and in exhibitions and conversations around the world – so that others could utilize and build on our Smog Tasting techniques. As a workshop, students or community groups can harvest air in egg foams from different parts of the city, test the results, map the cookies for comparison, and send the remainder of the meringues as gifts to interested parties or political leaders. Some of the places that Smog Tasting activities have been initiated by individuals or groups are: Pittsburgh (USA), New Deli (India) and Bogota (Columbia).

## **Modes, Methods & Recipes**

Every Smog Tasting method incorporates a combination of the following actions and elements:

1. Tune into the culinary qualities of air: Produce and organize our artifacts, media and environmental conditions in order to prepare for the experience. Set the scene and mentally prepare ourselves. Slow down and pay attention to our breathing, our nose and our mouth. Smell and taste with intention.
2. Analyze air pollution: Attempt to separate, isolate and identify each of the smells and tastes we are experiencing. Use language to describe these various smells and tastes. Use secondary research to identify the major contributors to local air pollution, and the typically associated smells and tastes. Write down and collate our tasting notes.

3. Evaluate aeroir: Compare current tastes and smells with smells and tastes we have experienced in previous locations. Compare the aeroir we experience to what we have read about in our secondary research. Reflect on our experiences and the emotions or reactions they elicited. Imagine and describe what we think the aeroir in this place smelled or tasted like in the past or what it might be like in the future. Publish our findings using text, image, audio, video, etc.

## **Synthesizing Smog**

After refining the initial Smog Tasting method, we've developed a range of subsequent methods for conducting smog tastings. These include a novel smog synthesizer machine, guided smog tasting experiences and meditations, and an international network of smog harvesters who share their samples through the postal system.

In 2015, the journalist Nicola Twilley began collaborating with the Center for Genomic Gastronomy / CoClimate to research the history and technology of smog and flavor science. Building on the existing food system concepts of "terroir" and "merroir", Nicola developed the term "aeroir" to describe the geographically unique tastes of atmosphere. She visited the atmospheric process chambers at the Bourns College of Engineering at the University of California, Riverside, where she discovered how scientists create synthetic smog in the lab to study the relationship between emissions and atmospheric chemistry. This inspired a new arm of the Smog Tasting project: a Smog Synthesizer that would function as an experimental food cart for generating the smell and flavor of air pollution from various places and times.

Different precursor chemicals and weather conditions produce different kinds of smog, each with distinct chemical characteristics—and a unique flavor. In the lab, researchers inject concentrated precursor chemicals into a Teflon chamber, where the chemicals are cooked under UV lights in order to study different kinds of smog.

With a similar technique, we realized we could conduct Smog Tastings from different locations and even different eras — a form of edible time travel. Working with advice from professors at UC Riverside, we designed and fabricated a scaled-down —but functioning — DIY version of the smog synthesizer and developed a range of synthetic smog recipes that could be produced in its chamber. We created the precursor ingredients of smog using household chemicals and off-the-shelf products and began using our DIY Smog Synthesiser to create a tasting menu of different smog typologies from several epochs and locations.

## **Smog Synth & Smog Take Out**

For New Museum's IDEAS CITY festival in New York City in 2015 we presented four different smog meringues to diners on the street: a classic London pea-souper, the atmosphere of Los Angeles in the 1950s, a present-day Atlanta air-quality-warning event, and a contemporary Central Valley agricultural smog. These four places and times showcased four classic "types" that atmospheric scientists use to characterize smogs: London Pea-Soup is a sulfur and particulate-heavy fog, whereas 1950s Los Angeles is a photochemical smog created by the reactions between sunlight, NO<sub>x</sub>, and partially combusted hydrocarbons. At its worst, Atlanta's smog is similar in composition to that of Los Angeles, but with the addition of biogenic emissions (an estimated 10% of emissions in Atlanta are from a class of chemicals known as terpenes, coming from organic sources such as pine trees and decaying green matter). Finally, the Central Valley iteration incorporates the ammonia and amines that accompany feedlot agriculture, resulting in a distinctive alkaline smog. The Smog Synthesizer was set up between two food stalls that served juice and sandwiches. Visitors were introduced to the concept, signed a release form saying they understood what they were consuming and chose which aeroirs they wished to taste and compare in meringue form.

The Smog Synth continued to travel around the world to different sites, serving smog meringues to national ministers of health at the World Health Organization in Geneva and during the COP-21 events in Paris in 2015. In the next iteration of Smog Tasting we aimed to bring together an international network of human smog harvesters in order to capture and share the aéroir of multiple geographies at once, without requiring smog synthesis or too much physical infrastructure. *Smog Tasting: Take Out*, thus invites participants from around the world to capture their city's smog in the batter of meringue cookies using a kit and set of instructions. They then mail their samples to a central location where all the samples be tasted and compared. With *Smog Tasting: Take Out* we are able to start a conversation about the interconnectedness of our local airsheds and the global atmosphere.<sup>3</sup>

## Conclusion

The question of a cleaner air future was addressed during the swift international reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020. Many causes of air pollution dropped dramatically due to the implementation of social distancing and lock-down measures. This unique moment in history may give us a preview of what the atmospheric taste of place could look and smell like if we travel down the other side of peak air pollution.

As the air quality and smell of cities changed overnight, The Center for Genomic Gastronomy / CoClimate created a Guided Smog Smelling series to activate our bodies, lungs and sense of smell (over the internet, into the homes of our participants) and to experience with intent, the unique atmospheric event we were all living through.

Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, regions like the US, Western Europe, and Mexico have seen a decrease in PM 2.5 pollution. At the same time, others like India and Northern Africa have increased significantly. Is this because some countries are “cleaning up”, installing alternative energy systems, reducing waste, and minimizing pollution with better technologies? Or is it because some of us are outsourcing our pollution to neighbors nearby or across the world? Who controls the means of pollution production anyway?

As climate change forces us to look skyward towards something that is hard to pinpoint, Smog Tasting aims to contribute to a conversation about how to inhabit our planet, and its atmosphere, with more care. It is one method for independent researchers around the world to connect, taste and smell with intentionality—imagining and working towards an aéroir that is healthier and more just for future generations.

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<sup>3</sup> *Smog Tasting: Take Out* was first created for the Fuller Symposium in partnership with the World Wildlife Fund at the National Geographic Hall in Washington DC, 2017. Members of our network whipped up meringues in London, Perth, Beijing, Barcelona, Washington DC, Porto and Mumbai.

# VIBRANT AND REFINED



*ETOILE is a series of ten graphite pencil drawings derived from the menus of ten Michelin-starred restaurants in Hackney, one of the most recently and aggressively gentrified boroughs of London. The borough's average house price has risen by more than 68 per cent between 2012 and 2017, according to Land Registry data. To these are added four Indian ink drawings, which include the Michelin star.*

*The diner may expect to experience:*

- Vibrant and refined cooking in a relaxed but lively environment.*
- Celebrate seafood from British waters and the best seasonal produce.*
- A more instinctual and primal style of cooking.*
- Food that is thoughtful but not showy and a wine list that ranges from the classics to the crazy.*
- Micro-seasonal, showcasing what is best on any given day.*
- A weekly changing set menu of modern European food.*

## INSTINCTUAL AND PRIMAL



- *Creative little plates with Middle Eastern and Moorish influences.*
- *Large arched windows, high stone ceilings, and elegant interiors.*
- *A relaxed setting delivering a unique and exceptional experience.*
- *A cashless business, accepting electronic payment only.*

*Sharon Kivland is an artist and writer. Her work considers what is put at stake by art, politics, and psychoanalysis. Recently she has been called a poet, much to her surprise. She is currently working on the natural form. She is also an editor and publisher, the latter under the imprint MA BIBLIOTHÈQUE.*

Fried olives, tabne, dukkah 6

Panisse chips, violeta artichokes, sheep ricotta 6.5

Roast datterino and nduja bruschetta 4.5

Pò polo rosemary focaccia, sourdough 3

Charred cauliflower, romesco sauce, hazelnuts 8.5

Black risotto, cuttlefish 15

Sicilian red prawns 16.5

Grilled octopus, baba gannoush, za'atar 15

Carrot tahini, spiced lamb, pane carasau, pine nuts 14.5

Grilled bavette, cavolo nero, celeriac 16.5

Agnolotti, pork cheek, porcini butter 14.5

Taglierini, clams, agretti, bottarga 14.5

Delica squash ravioli, sage, olive oil 11.5

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# The sensorial as infrastructure Making pandebono

**Andrea Cetrulo,  
John Bingham-Hall  
& Elahe Karimnia**

During one of our visits to Oscar and Valeria at La Caleñita, the café they've been running for nine years in one of the adapted railway arches at Elephant and Castle in South London, we were greeted with a coffee accompanied by a soft, warm, cloudy savoury sphere-like bread, known in their native Colombia as *pandebono*.<sup>1</sup> It was meant to be accepted as an act of generosity and hospitality in the vein of Marcel Mauss' idea of the gift, a form of exchange underpinning the formation of alliances and solidarity beyond self-interest (Mauss, 2002[1954]). It is through these dynamics of altruistic reciprocal relationships that La Caleñita operates on a daily basis.

## Recipe as knowledge infrastructure

The etymology of the bread in question is something of a mystery, yet the most commonly accepted version is that it derives from the Spanish word *pan* (bread) *de* (of) *bono* (from *buono*, Italian for good), attributed to an Italian baker who used to sell the pastry on the streets of Cali chanting "Pan del bueno!". Another version is that it was named after the Finca del Bono, an 18th century rural stately home in the small-town Valle del Cauca, in Cali, where the bread originated and was sold.

The mythology and folklore surrounding its origins encompass a sort of syncretism that is reflected in the ingredients themselves: blending yuca – or cassava – and corn, both autochthonous to South America; cheese and butter made with cow's milk, introduced to the Americas by European colonizers; and the artisanry of the Italian immigrants of Cali who allegedly initiated its production. Pandebono is often accompanied by *dulce de guayaba* and a cup of hot chocolate, both tropical fruits that, as Gabriel García Márquez (Mendoza and García Márquez, 1996 [1983]) wrote in *El Olor de la Guayaba*, evoke memories of his childhood and permeate the imagination through their very smell. Smell as memory. Texture as memory. Vivid, tangible, yet somehow intangible in the imagination. A glutinous dough that agglutinates individuals from diverse Latin American countries in a faraway city, and acts as an infrastructure for sustaining everyday life. The amulet of the nomad, embodying both displacement and persistence at the same time.

When Valeria was prompted to share her recipe, she smiled and said 'pan de bono is something that I relate to that time of the day in the afternoon before late dinner. I always had it at my home after school'.

Andrea Cetrulo is Associate in Programme and Content Curation at Theatrum Mundi. Prior to this, she worked as a researcher in global cultural policy organisations. She also holds an MSc in Urban Studies from University College London, with a focus on the configuration of public space through music and sounds in the urban context.

Dr John Bingham-Hall is Director of Theatrum Mundi. His ongoing research interest is in the ways urban design shapes the public lives of cities, linking technology, performance, cultural organising, media, and infrastructuring – as topics and as methodologies. He has held research and teaching posts at LSE, UCL, and CSM and studied both music (BMus, Goldsmiths) and architectural theory (MSc & PhD, UCL).

Elahe Karimnia is the Urban Research and Spatial Practice Associate in Theatrum Mundi. She is a practiced architect and urban designer and has a Ph.D. in Urban Studies with a focus on 'Producing Publicness', from KTH Stockholm. Elahe has been engaged in research and teaching at the intersection of urban design and critical theory.

<http://theatrum-mundi.org/>

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<sup>1</sup> *Acknowledgment.* This text is part of Theatrum Mundi's research project Urban Backstages, investigating the conditions of cultural production in Paris, Marseille, Glasgow, and London with support from the Ax:son Johnson Foundation. The research is conducted by John Bingham-Hall, Andrea Cetrulo, Cecily Chua, Elahe Karimnia, Fani Kostourou and Justinien Tribillon.

Pandebono ingredients:

Almidón de yuca  
Harina de maíz  
Huevos  
Queso costeño  
Mantequilla  
Levadura

Valeria describes her process:

'Mix all the ingredients  
grate the cheese finely  
knead  
form bollos in your hands  
make a hole  
preheat the oven to 190 degrees  
leave it in for 15 minutes (or so) until. . . you know...'  
Tacit knowledge reigns. When it's ready, you should 'feel' it. Don't overthink it.  
Bake until golden.

The way the recipe is enunciated is in the manner of an oral culture. Or alternately, a manual or embodied culture, that of the craftswoman who performs the task with mastery, yet also with an overfamiliarity with the object at hand that makes it hard for her to rationalize and put it into words. Richard Sennett writes: '[it is] a process essential to all skills, the conversion of information and practices into tacit knowledge', and 'what you know may be so familiar to you that you might take for granted its touchstone references, assuming that others have identical touchstones' (Sennett, 2008: 50, 183). ([See Picture 1](#))

### **Improvised adaptations**

Although this recipe travels with its makers as a kind of cultural heritage – already stabilised in form – it becomes the basis for improvisation when relocated from Cali to London. Necessarily so, in Oscar's words: 'you don't find all the necessary ingredients here. . . everything here tastes very different!' Like other restaurants forming the Latin American cultural hub nested in the railway arches of Maldonado Walk, a walkway hugging the rail line south of Elephant and Castle station, Oscar and Valeria source many of their goods from the neighbouring shop La Chatica, which specializes in importing regional products. But they must also resort to stand-in ingredients from the British supermarket chain TESCO – like the ersatz *queso costeño* (a soft salty cow's milk cheese originating from the Caribbean coast of Colombia, and a key ingredient in pandebono), mimicked by the more readily-available feta cheese. Or indeed, 'Greek-style salad cheese' – a simulacrum of one immigrant food, masquerading as another.

The import of certain Latin American animal products has been banned due to health and safety regulations in the United Kingdom.<sup>2</sup> As a remedy, La Chatica (registered as La Casa de Jack Ltd.) sells its own line of products which resembles the 'real thing'. Other delicacies such as *dulce de guayaba* are imported directly from Colombia in big batches, and then repackaged in small quantities for sale in shops across Europe. Ingredients which are not produced in London, are distributed and exported from Spain, an important Latin American migration node in the past three decades. The Spain-United Kingdom connection has been reinforced since the 2008 crisis when migrants relocated from Southern European countries to London, perceived as a better place for economic prosperity.

In London, one of the most popular food brands amongst Latin immigrants is Sol Andino, a Peruvian-owned shop with an online and high street presence at Old Kent Road in South London, a spot

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<sup>2</sup> See '[Importing live animals or animal products from non-EU countries: general licences and authorisations](#)'

where Latin migrants live and gather. Sol Andino is one of the biggest distributors, catering to several shops and restaurants in the city. These kinds of networks of specialist food supply and consumption produce and reproduce this area of South London, stretching from Kennington to the Old Kent Road via Elephant and Castle, as a zone of Latin American culture. Unlike the specialist coffee joints of the aspirational middle classes (which no-one knows exactly how to define but everyone can instantly recognise) this particular entanglement of food, culture, and socio-economics is focused around resources intersecting specifically in this area, rather than aesthetics which can be reproduced anywhere. Resources that are multi-modal, evoking AbdouMaliq Simone's reading of infrastructures as a 'process of conjunction', which generates social composition from "heterogeneous activities, modes of production, and institutional forms constitutes highly mobile and provisional possibilities for how people live and make things" (Simone, 2004: 410). People, space, ingredients, knowledge: "these conjunctions become an infrastructure – a platform providing for and reproducing life in the city" (Simone, 2004: 407–408). In this case, reproducing Latin American life in south London.

*The act of cooking in all its diversity of expressions is as much, if not more, the location of culture as is the dish that results*

As well as being sourced in the local area, *queso costeño* is also made in-house by Oscar and Valeria themselves, which allows them to cut costs compared to buying it ready made. 'The *queso* that you find here doesn't even come close to the one from Colombia'. In their café, this improvisation is also evident in the construction of the space itself. A railway arch, emblem of a very Victorian, very British kind of progress, is reconfigured as a small ecosystem of Latin businesses, from money transfer to making clothing and *pandebono*. A lead tenant renting directly from the landlord – once the public Network Rail but now the private 'Arch Company' – has created sub-lettable units through simple plywood partitions, which have in turn been adapted by their own tenants for a multitude of uses.

What makes this place 'Latin American', or in La Caleñita's case, Colombian? Language, smells, tastes, sounds from the TV. Things that cannot be made through architecture, but which emerge from usage. Beyond the sensorial atmosphere that becomes a cultural product of this place, the way the infrastructure itself is made, the process of adaptation and making do together also embodies a culture. Coming back one last time to the recipe metaphor – the act of cooking in all its diversity of expressions is as much, if not more, the location of culture as is the dish that results. Cultural infrastructures are important not just for the cultural forms whose production and sharing they support, but for the forms of life bound up in the ways they are built and maintained.

Take a blank railway arch  
 provide cheap rent  
 adapt the space for basic needs and desires with simple materials  
 allow basic sub-divisions to be made without requiring permissions  
 allow subtenants to add the finishing touches

### **A recipe for coping**

Informality and self-reliance have travelled in the bodies of people like Oscar and Valeria, another unwritten recipe allowing local spatial ingredients to be recooked into something distinct and culturally enriching. As a Caleñita habitué puts it, 'it [*pandebono*] brings memories of driving to the outskirts of Bogotá to have it on Sundays with my family when I was a child. It's like you need to know it, visually it's not appealing; you need to feel it. I personally love the warmth and elasticity of it.' Another customer from Chile, new to the place, inquires about the different baked goods displayed on the counter at La Caleñita, unsure of which one to pick: 'I am Chilean, but there are so many commonalities between Latin Americans anyways, it feels like home'. These often unspoken, shared codes are

held together by what Benedict Anderson (2006[1983]) coined as 'imagined communities', the idea of a Pan Latin American community based on affinity, brought by the peculiar needs of relocation and infrastructures of coping.

In Oscar's words: 'This place acts as a social hub, not only a restaurant. When a new migrant [from Latin America] arrives with just a suitcase and nowhere to go, we provide them with food and shelter. This pays back as they always return once their situation gets better'. Pandebono fulfils a social function, and enhances the power of imaginations through the sensorial, acting as a pillar for coping with the vicissitudes of instability. When it's consumed it elicits memories of place bringing to mind that 'all really inhabited space bears the essence of the notion of home' (Bachelard, 1994[1958]: 5). ([See Picture 2](#))

Coping is a creative act, an improvisational activity, an attitude towards the world of uncertainties, focussing on opportunities, and forging solidarity. Migrants' way of coping with structured inequalities in everyday life is highlighted in their creative and experimental performance, as they go; no matter that Oscar and Valeria can't get the same ingredients for Pandebono in London, they are confident in themselves and their community for finding alternative resources and mutual support.

Pandebono cannot be simply reduced to a recipe of ingredients, like those attempted at formulating context-free suggestions for the problems our cities deal with. The recipe, rather than a prescriptive form, becomes support for a kind of improvisation that allows the immigrant to reconfigure the unfamiliar materials of the host country into an embodiment of home. It is an organising framework that allows unrelated elements – Greek-style salad cheese, yucca, British eggs – to participate in the construction of something not constituted by any one of them individually but by their relationships.

## **Cooking and infrastructuring**

What do we learn from pandebono, then, about culture and its infrastructure, the conditions that enable those without institutional or political power to make and remake the city? Like recipes, infrastructures can be used to enable or to constrain. If they fix a set of pre-defined elements so rigidly that the malfunctioning or unavailability of one of them invalidates the whole structure, they bring about situations of control and redundancy. We can think of 'recipes' for cultural regeneration in the Bilbao model, built around a 'flagship' museum, pre-conceived from building to programme. If the museum does not work, having been designed to be manageable only by a large institution, itself and its surrounding 'cultural district' can become deserted wastelands, unable to be rethought and adapted from the bottom up. Like the proverbial soufflé in which one failure renders the whole thing useless, such masterplanning is what Sennett calls 'closed' or 'complete' form' (2019). Alternately, recipes can be 'open forms' – organising frameworks choreographing a set of relationships between interchangeable elements, a way of passing on ideas and methods for making form with the materials to hand. This points to a different kind of cultural planning, in which infrastructural conditions rather than finished forms allow individuals and small collectivities to make their own cultural spaces, that then become infrastructures for other things like sensing and coping.

For Oscar and Valeria, and other members of their community, improvisation is essential when working with this lack of overarching plan or institutional structure – in a state of 'unincorporation' (Bingham-Hall et al., 2019) – and without the imposition of a 'design' that predetermines the aesthetic end-point. This is evident in the social support structures that have emerged around the informally adapted infrastructure of the arches on Maldonado Walk. Improvisation is helping to find last minute accommodation for newcomers, or covering shifts with short notice, or assisting each other with moving houses, or setting up an impromptu shelter in the kitchen for anyone who needs it. Improvisation is plastering the wall of a dim, austere cave-like structure under a railway line with the picture of a tropical beach, feeding not only the stomachs but also the imaginations of those who

gather in here. But improvisation does not happen in a vacuum. As scores can provide a shared basis on top of which performers improvise with sound and movement (Bingham-Hall, 2019), infrastructural recipes made of knowledge, space, material, and planning policy are the solid ground that enables immigrant makers to improvise with and gain agency over urban form.

Despite the undeniable power that comes with the migrant's ability to reconstruct, remodel and reshape new microcosms for herself and others around her, recent regeneration strategies for the area, which include the imminent sale of the railway arches to private investors, threaten the continuity of these accessible spaces for the production of goods and immaterial affective support structures. Where there is a strong reliance on the space of place, can a place like this be swept away in its materiality without dragging with it the lifeworld of those who inhabit it?

Music recommendation: *Cali Aji* song by Grupo Niche. Listen [here](#).

Cornish mackerel tartare  
oyster cream, apple, shiso  
19.00

Cured hamachi  
wasabi cream, pickled cucumber, To kyo turnips  
18.00

Raw Orkney scallop  
blood orange, citrus yogurt, Greek basil  
21.50

Roast octopus  
black olive caramel, sea urchin taramasalata, crispy chipirones  
20.00

Dessert crab  
Hass avocado, wasabi, pink pome'lo  
22.00

# A gastrogeography of mobility

## Urban reorientation through food

**Patrícia Branco &  
Richard Mohr**

*Some people may have roots and others may have routes . . .*  
*Talja Blokland (2017: 1)*

In planning food for a daily meal or a dinner party, time and space, roots and routes come undeniably together. This time-space relation has to do with how the meal is assembled (appetizers, first and second courses, dessert), the ingredients needed, and where to buy these, which implies not only a particular store, but also the location of it within the urban fabric and how long it takes to get there – which also connects to the time of preparation required for each of the meal components.

Underlying this quotidian mobility – simply going out to do the shopping – there are long term demographic trends and biographical narratives. The mass migrations of the twentieth century, from Europe to the Americas or Australia, have given way to the mass tourism of the twenty-first, across Europe and the world. The Italian coming from a rural area to work in an Australian factory may have been the typical migrant of two or three generations ago. Now, in addition to the waves of tourists flooding the historic centres of Europe, there is an international class of educated professionals, who make their home in Berlin or New York, but only until their next job opportunity takes them to another city (those whom Blokland describes as having ‘routes’ rather than roots). These great movements of people, together with immigration into Europe from a formerly imagined ‘periphery’, have well-known impacts on cities. These impacts are condensed into an array of neologisms – gentrification, ghettoization, touristification – that sound uglier than the reality.

Here we explore an aspect of that reality in the fine-grained experiences of intercultural travel and migration through the urban pathways we cover in search of food. We will see how these urban routes can speak to us about our cities and ourselves. Debord’s *dérives* in Paris, like Benjamin’s ‘marauding walks’ in Berlin, were focused inward, to an esoteric experience of self, through a contrived disorientation.

Not to find one’s way in a city may well be uninteresting and banal. It requires ignorance – nothing more.  
But to lose oneself in a city – as one loses oneself in a forest – that calls for quite a different schooling.  
(Benjamin 1986: 8)

Our focus is strictly on the banal: how to buy food for dinner. The only schoolings required are hunger, ignorance and nostalgia for familiar food. Yet these pathways can tell us about the history of migration and cut purposefully across the well worn wanderings of tourists. When we step outside ourselves to question what propels us down this street, or onto that bus, we might find that our compulsive orientation is towards rediscovering roots, the familiar, the homely, in a strange city. We

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find it in a recipe. The recipe might be written down, on a sauce stained piece of paper, in a favourite recipe book, or on the Internet. Or it may be as ingrained in our upbringing and way of living as any other habitus, as an 'internalized disposition' or 'set of practices' (Bourdieu 2010: 166). Here we risk slipping from one to the other by transposing lived recipes to written ones.

By presenting two recipes – *Pasta col sugo finto alla Nonna Flora* and *(Portuguese) fried pork neck chops and carrot rice* – our account will deal with the issues of migration (of humans but also of ingredients, preparations, and taste) and translation (linguistic, practical and sensorial), food and the

psycho geography of urban place and displacement. From this exploration it will be seen that recipes for the preparation of a meal jostle with urban recipes, of community and place, and biographical recipes of identity.

*The immigrant's map of their new city is shaped by the shops that sell their food. In turn, they reshape the maps of those cities where mass migration has led to the establishment of whole communities from one country.*

## The recipes

### *Pasta col sugo finto alla Nonna Flora*

In a terra cotta pot sauté slowly in olive oil until softened: half a carrot; half a stick of celery; a handful of parsley; a clove of garlic (crushed with the side of a knife).

Add a can of good quality peeled tomatoes from Campania, and a quarter to half a jar of passata<sup>1</sup> (more of either depending on quantity of pasta) and salt to taste. Cook slowly for at least half an hour, or as long as possible.

In a large saucepan or pasta pot bring plenty of water to the boil. Add salt (sale marino grosso). Put in 100 grams or more per person of De Cecco or any good, preferably Abruzzese pasta (spaghetti or penne). Time according to taste, or the cooking time on the label, and then drain. Add sauce and fresh basil and serve with Parmigiano Reggiano.

### *(Portuguese) fried pork neck chops and carrot rice*

#### A. Fried chops

4 pork chops (1/per person); 2 garlic cloves; 1 bay leaf; olive oil, salt, pepper and the juice of half a lemon.

#### B. Carrot rice

1 and 1/2 cups of Carolino rice (or Arborio); 1 medium carrot chopped into small pieces; 1 small onion finely chopped; olive oil, salt and water (double the rice cups).

Start by preparing the carrot rice: put a drizzle of oil in the rice pot and sauté the onion and carrot in the olive oil. When the onion is translucent, add the rice and stir; add the water and stir, season with salt, cover and simmer for about 15/20 minutes.

Season the pork chops with salt, pepper and the lemon juice. Then put a drizzle of oil in the frying pan and the 2 whole (or chopped, if you prefer) garlic cloves and bay leaf. Then, place the chops in the frying pan and fry until golden brown on both sides. Remove from the heat and serve immediately. Accompany it with a green salad if you like.

## Migration and food: readjusting recipes and maps

In Australia since the 1980s, pasta with a tomato-based sauce and a mixed green salad has become the simple, crowd-pleasing meal for busy families and budget conscious share-households. It has come to be seen as a quintessentially Australian meal, as well as one of the most fundamental neces-

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<sup>1</sup> Already we've betrayed the spirit of the lived recipe, as cooked by Nonna Flora in Pescara or Rome. She would use fresh ripe sauce tomatoes in season; passata if someone had given her some they had made. The parsley, carrot etc. would depend on what the *fruttivendolo* at the market gave her, gratis, as a handful of *odori*.



sities.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, fried pork chops and carrot rice is one of those recipes one will cook on a day-to-day basis in any Portuguese household, because of the price (low), simplicity (undemanding cooking skills) and reduced time of preparation.

Yet when we start to conjugate these straightforward recipes, it quickly becomes more complicated. As they travel round the world from their origins, tastes vary and ingredients are altered, or hard to source. This leads to an exploration of the urban landscape in search of the perfect, or merely acceptable, ingredients. Today some semblance of a pasta col sugo can be made in Australia going no further than the shelves of the local supermarket:<sup>3</sup> an Australian pasta (or Barilla will probably be available), a jar of 'pasta sauce' (or maybe an imported passata), some grated 'parmesan': too easy! as they say in Australia.

But immigrants (and gourmards) have to be more resourceful if they want to enjoy their pasta. Or pork chops with rice. Matters of linguistic translation immediately are felt. Immigrants coming to Australia from Italy, or from Portugal (new/old world relation), quickly find the networks that connect them with the shops that sell their familiar fare, usually in their own language. The problems arise when Portugal meets Italy (old/old world relation): How does one ask for pork neck chops (*costeletas do cachaço*) in Italian? In the readjustment of recipes, maps and tastes we see the intimate, ongoing interplay between recipes and maps, tastes and identities, cities and cultures.

The immigrant's map of their new city is shaped by the shops that sell their food. In turn, they reshape the maps of those cities where mass migration has led to the establishment of whole communities from one country. People choosing to live among compatriots so they can source their own foods, in their own language, has led to food shaping the urban fabric to the extent that precincts come to be known as 'Little Italy' or 'Little Portugal!'<sup>4</sup>

This is a well-known phenomenon in the new world, as in Sydney, where immigrants can arrange to live near those places where their familiar ingredients are sold. This quickly re-establishes a workable mental shopping map. Further from these particular communities, or for immigrants from a small and under-represented group, the area of a large city like Sydney is so vast that the access map could become very complicated. And even in a smaller city, like Wollongong, NSW, or Victoria, BC, the shop selling *sale grosso* and Parmigiano Reggiano will be located where the Italians settled 50 or 60 years ago. That may well be in a nondescript suburb 20 minutes by bus from the CBD.

Cities change as the older migrants die, or their neighbourhoods gentrify. Many of the specialty shops survive a generation or two longer, as the next generation comes back for familiar foods, or as the gentrifiers take up the ethnic foods of the neighbourhood to which they have moved.<sup>5</sup> None of the old world habits can last forever as they are threatened by changing demographics and mass consumption supermarkets. Yet this is not simply a process of cultural destruction, but one of accommodation and adaptation at work on the city, the community and the cuisine.

These processes of map-making and map-shaping by mass migration to the new world can be

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2 In the panic buying as the covid-19 pandemic led to restrictions on movement, pasta was the next item to be stripped from the shelves of Australian supermarkets, after toilet paper.

3 See <https://www.goodfood.com.au/eat-out/news/from-adobo-to-zaatar-australian-supermarkets-increase-international-food-offerings-20200207-h1lnb7>

4 The Inner West Council in Sydney resolved in August 2019 to refer to Petersham as 'Little Portugal', and in February 2020 to refer to central Leichhardt as Little Italy. This follows widespread community recognition of these precincts that were established by an earlier generation, who have in many cases moved on. See <https://www.innerwest.nsw.gov.au/about/news/media-releases/2020-media-releases/leichhardt-to-be-recognised-as-little-italy>

5 Asian and other shops are less likely to survive than those devoted to Italian cuisine, which has been taken up by bourgeois 'foodies'. Italian culinary imperialism in the form of Barilla pasta or Lavazza coffee can be seen on the shelves of many mainstream supermarkets around the world.

contrasted with the position of a migrant from a small minority in an old world city. For a Portuguese immigrant to Naples it is even more difficult to find, in a regular supermarket, most of the familiar ingredients for the flavours of home. In Coimbra, the urban map was familiar, and ingredients were easily found, even at the average supermarket near home (2 minutes walking). In Naples a whole new map had to be learnt. Even if some familiarity with the city had already been acquired, in particular with some of its touristic routes, one had to attune to new routes, motivated by the need to find the ingredients required to cook one's recipes, those brought in our suitcase of memories and those created anew.

Wandering around the Neapolitan historical centre, the gaze was finally directed towards a butcher who could provide pork neck chops. Once matters of translation were overcome, he reflected on this request: 'this type of cut, we used to do it a long time ago. . . Now people prefer a different kind of chop.' Carolino rice proved even more elusive, disclosing its unfamiliar character in an unfamiliar place. With few Portuguese residents,<sup>6</sup> as well as the wide variety of Italian rices,<sup>7</sup> it proved impossible to source. Adaptation to new conditions was a necessary consequence. Research on food and migration has pointed out the concept of dietary acculturation as a form of examining immigrants' food-related experiences (Terragni and Roos, 2018). Arborio came in as an alternative to Carolino, transforming recipes and flavour, and profoundly impacting the relation between the self and the city.

### **The psychogeography of urban recipes: reorientations**

Nonna Flora's map covered the route from her home to the market, like the route to the local supermarket in Coimbra. For someone living in Sydney, or a visitor to some unfamiliar Australian city, maps and routes call for reorientation. Sourcing ingredients such as *sale grosso*, or even Parmigiano Reggiano can cause difficulties to new arrivals, the lost, and the unconnected. Orientation in Naples seems to reveal similar patterns, conferring an *agrodolce* flavour to the interdependence between roots and routes. Pork neck chops can be sourced, but they speak of different places, of a time gone by. The time has passed for some but not others. This extra layer of othering adds time as well as space to the displacement, further accentuating foreignness. Meanwhile, the stealthy processes of assimilation – and the associated risks of loss of culture – invade the taste buds and the alimentary tract, when Arborio replaces Carolino.

New arrivals must be resourceful to find the flavours of home, rapidly inscribing new urban maps into their lived city. Our routes, directed by quotidian needs for food, reveal our roots. Whereas Benjamin talked of losing oneself in a city, our recipes lead us towards reorienting oneself in the city. In such a process, the geography of menu planning intersects with cultural background, biography and identity, leading to the creation of new recipes – culinary, biographical and urban. Each builds on the others, so that we eat what we are, we are where we live, and we live what we eat, in an endless project of urban reorientation and identity re-formation through food.

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6 In January 2019 there were 92 Portuguese individuals living in Naples according to the Italian Statistics Institute (ISTAT).

7 The Riso Italiano website lists 182 Italian varieties of rice: <https://www.risoitaliano.eu/category/le-variete-italiane/>.

Compare the website of Portuguese rice producer and distributor, Novarroz, which lists the principle varieties as 'Carolino and its main varieties, Ariete and Euro, but also Agulha rice'. Twelve varieties listed include the Asian varieties Jasmin and Basmati, at <http://novarroz.pt/pt/variedades-de-arroz>

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Celeriac, yolk, apple, dates, truffle - 15

Lobster bisque, Thai Basil - 10

Retired dairy tartare, sprouts, horseradish - 12

Mac & cheese - 15 (Add truffle - supplement 10)

Cornish cod, yellow curry, cucumber, kaffir lime - 20

Salt aged duck, cabbage, rhubarb, sichuan - 23

Beetroot, elderflower, bull's blood - 15

Tempura, romesco, calcot - 8

Crispy artichoke, sour cream, chive - 8

Bitter leaves salad - 7

Cheese, Beetroot, Szechuan - 10

Coffee, Artichoke, Mandarin - 10

Rhubarb, Gateau Basque, Yoghurt - 10 (allow 20 minutes)

Chefs' menu 60

Paired wine +60

# No Strangers to a Fish Supper

**Pil and Galia  
Kollektiv**

## *Fish and Chips (c. 2070)*

### For the Fish

- two fistfuls dried, ground, foraged grain flour
- two fistfuls of potato starch
- 1 teaspoon potassium bicarbonate (from a dry chemical fire extinguisher) mixed with carbonic acid (from contact lens solution) - optional
- Salt (dried seawater), to taste
- 2/3 cup potato peel beer
- 4 fish fillets (thick, white fish, such as three-eyed Wolf fish or Murasoi of less radioactive cesium than 100 becquerels/kg)

### For the Chips

- 2 pounds potatoes (peeled)
- 1 liter wild city farm pig fat

Start by removing the third eye of the fish (this can be a special chef's treat for later). Clean and wash with estuary water that you have boiled, distilled and filtered till deemed safe and then cooled. Now make your batter: mix your grain flour and potato starch with the chemical compound if you have access to any from a historical shopping site, add salt and stir in the beer, which you will have fermented from your previous batch's potato peelings. Coat your fish filets and fry in a pan over a fire in hot fat, rendered from the rewilded pig you will have caught when out foraging for the grain. For the chips, cut the potatoes into batons and throw in the fat.

## **Past**

The combination of fried fish and chipped potatoes has come to define British food, but as many researchers have noted, the origins of both components are relatively modern and derive from Britain's rich history of migration. Portuguese Marranos, Jewish converts to Christianity, brought the custom of frying their Friday fish in oil to preserve it for the Sabbath, when cooking was not permitted. Unlike lard, which solidifies when cold but was forbidden to the Jews, the oil retained the cold fish's taste and texture.<sup>1</sup> A 1781 cookery book describes flouring the fish and dipping in yolk and breadcrumbs before frying, while an 1854 recipe gives the title of 'Fried Fish, Jewish Style' to a preparation of fish in a thick batter of flour and water. The batter may have originally protected the flesh of the fish in the preservation process.<sup>2</sup> Tempura in Japan, incidentally, comes from the same source – Portuguese traders who arrived in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and brought their batter frying skills with them. The potato seems to have been brought to the UK by Sir Frances Drake in 1586, on a Carribean stopover for provisions. Originally reviled as the 'devil's apple', this mystical new world vegetable that did not appear to

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<sup>1</sup> John Cooper, *Eat and be Satisfied: A Social History of Jewish Food*, Lanham, MD: Jason Aronson, 1993, p. 180.

<sup>2</sup> Panikos Panayi, *Fish and Chips: A History*, London: Reaktion Books, 2014.

grow from seeds nor has mention in the bible was feared to be as poisonous as its leaves. It was only in the 1620s, after Frederik the Great made people eat it on threat of having their nose and ears cut off that the potato started taking hold as a cheap, easy-to-grow staple. France took a less draconian approach, with army pharmacist Antoine-Augustin Parmentier bringing the idea from the Prussian prison in which he was held and making Louis XVI serve it at feasts and Marie Antoinette wear the flowers in her hair.<sup>3</sup> Whether the modern chip has its origins in *pommes de terre à la mode* from France or as a Pennines development of the baked potato trade, possibly introduced by an Irish immigrant to Lancashire, may never be known. There is even more contention about whether the selling of fried fish alongside chips originated in London or Lancashire, but it is known that the fishmongers' leftovers were distributed in this way alongside the wares of chipped potato dealers in the alleys of east London in the mid 19th century, around the time the first fried fish shops were established.<sup>4</sup>

Born of the industrial revolution, the availability of this food relied on the new technologies of fish trawling and the trains by which the fish could be transported. These in turn required ice, which until 1890 could not be produced artificially and had to be taken from sources such as the Thames marshes. Having dismantled older British traditions of food preparation and consumption by rapid urbanization, industrialization created a need for cheap cooked meals that might be eaten outside the home. By the 20<sup>th</sup> century, fish and chip shops were associated with a working class culture antithetical to middle class good housekeeping.<sup>5</sup> This was so much the case that the dish was rejected in Germany where women working outside the home were more heavily stigmatized and the idea of supplanting the family meal was tainted by the whiff of poverty. Today, of course, fish and chips can be found on the most aspirational restaurant menus for hefty prices, alongside descriptions of provenance and discussions of meaningful connections with local produce.

## Present

A favorite of Winston Churchill's, who famously dubbed potato and battered fried fish "the good companions", fish and chips became so synonymous with native British identity that in 2017 UKIP proposed to drop VAT specifically for the dish. Fish and Chips is a nostalgia-tinted national symbol on a par with the queen, double decker buses and red telephone boxes. This national treasure status is not just ironic because of its decidedly un-British Jewish-Portuguese origins – it also serves as a reminder of how arbitrary the relationship is between ideology and the building blocks with which it constructs identities. Any artifact of history is built from tensions, contradictions and movements of objects, peoples and cultural ideas across geographies and centuries but few end up consolidated as ye-olde marker of historical continuity. To adopt Benedict Anderson's anthropological definition of a nation as an 'imagined community', this shared, social, practice of imagining is grounded in daily rituals and must be constantly reinforced.<sup>6</sup> This is the ideological role of the national kitsch market to which fish and chips belongs. Citizens need to be constantly reminded that national forms of identification, despite the fact that they often contradict their everyday experience of identity (for example as subjects speaking another language than the national hegemonic one – e.g. Welsh speaking communities in Snowdonia) are meaningful and real. Perhaps fish and chips fulfill this function well precisely because it is actually not culture specific, because it is an ontologically nomadic dish that originates from no tangible geography or class. The dish is an empty sign, evacuated from its real

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3 Zushe Yosef Blech, *Kosher Food Production*, Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2009, p. 410.

4 John K. Walton, *Fish and Chips, and the British Working Class, 1870-1940*, Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1994, pp. 22–6.

5 Ole Sparenberg, "How the Germans did not appropriate Fish and Chips: the Case of the Fischbratküche in the 1920s and 1930s, in Christian Huck/Stefan Bauernschmidt (Eds) *Travelling Goods, Travelling Moods. Varieties of Cultural Appropriation (1850-1950)*, Frankfurt a. M.: Campus 2012, p. 71.

6 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso, 1983.

historicity, onto which an elastic, thin identity is stretched: it is an urban street food and at the same time a country pub staple, a cute tourist experience and also a Saturday night event to soak up the alcohol in a gritty Yorkshire chippy.

But sometimes a nomadic empty sign enters a specific material situation and becomes comfortably embedded. In London, one can still find fish and chips coated in Matzo meal (a direct link to the Jewish heritage of the dish) consumed happily by lunching cab drivers and Italian tourists on original 1960s Formica counters. There is something very suitably London about fish and chips. Against a city

with poor public seating (there are practically no indoors spaces to shelter street diners from the constant rain) and hardly any outdoors eating culture (even pub gardens are hidden at the back and not street facing like, say, a Viennese café or a Tapas bar in a city square in Valencia), fish

*Having dismantled older British traditions of food preparation and consumption by rapid urbanization, industrialization created a need for cheap cooked meals that might be eaten outside the home*

and chip dinners fall awkwardly between fast food and restaurant service. They are not particularly mobile and cannot be consumed while walking or driving like the triangle sandwich, Turkish doner wrap or even New York Pizza slice and comes with its own unique support technology (cardboard box and a tiny wooden fork, with possibly a plastic cup for mushy peas). Neither are they especially rationalized like McDonalds meals, where different pre-prepared components are assembled in a given order at separate kitchen stations to a uniform consistency. Because of this perhaps, and very much like London, fish and chips remain slightly archaic in their allure. They do not sit contentedly in a contemporary food scene defined by shopping mall 'McDonaldised' ramen bowls, instead steaming up bus windows with their vinegary assault.

## Future

It is all too easy to imagine a future independent London seceding from a collapsing kingdom, because we have had this London described in detail for us by writers from Russell Hoban, in *Riddley Walker*, to Will Self, in *The Book of Dave*. Its origins all but forgotten by the new natives, the national dish, an accumulation of a hodge-podge of historical identities, could easily become a future delicacy, perhaps a festive meal to celebrate the anniversary of the atomic bomb, or the virus, or its future apocalyptic equivalent. In the post catastrophic London of our future, presumably largely submerged once the Thames barrier gives way, ingredients will have to be foraged or somehow traded for something that could be sources from the immediate environment. What ingredients might become too scarce, then, to make fish and chips a historic relic?

To start with, fish could be potentially obtained from the Thames. In 1878, the paddle steamer Princess Alice sank in the Thames following a collision, killing all but 130 of its 900 passengers instantly, bloating their bodies so much that extra large coffins were required, with many more dying later of ingested sewage water.<sup>7</sup> The Thames was declared biologically dead in 1957. Although far cleaner now thanks to a cleanup campaign, with fish safe for human consumption, sewage, refuse and small 'fatbergs' still plague the river. It is conceivable that a devastated future London could find the waters re-wilded, with plenty of fish for the taking. A newly wild hog from the local city farm may well provide the fat but wild rapeseed oil might have to be used instead. Other ingredients could be harder to supplant, notably the carbonated water and baking powder that provide the batter with its light crunch although the original Jewish-Portuguese recipes obviously did not contain these.

Following the trend for foraging, which attained prominence through the media presence of Danish

<sup>7</sup> Lara Maiklem, *Mudlark: In Search of London's Past Along the River Thames*, New York: Liveright, 2019, pp. 274-276.

chef René Redzepi of the restaurant Noma, would future foraging clubs turn feral? There has already been controversy around Redzepi's rejection of non-native ingredients, with Noma's ethos described as "fascism in avant-garde clothing" in the Danish press.<sup>8</sup> Writer Ulla Holm has stated:

it is hardly coincidental that, when last I visited Noma, the waiters were dressed in brown shirts . . . there are some disturbing similarities between fascist ideology and the new Nordic cuisine. There's an emphasis on elements that have remained uncontaminated by outsiders. There's an obsession with purity.<sup>9</sup>

Regardless of Redzepi's politics, the idea of foraging as a means of claiming a connection between a people and the land has been recognized elsewhere, for example in Atsuko Ichijo and Ronald Ranta's description of Palestinian women's use of local wild herbs and plants as a form of national identity construction, "a distinct and conscious desire among Arab-Palestinian women to perform the nation".<sup>10</sup> While this kind of ultra-localism can at times be presented as a tactic of resistance, even supplanting the relationship to Anderson's nation as abstraction with a more immediate connection to a specific location, it still retains the implication of the exclusion of the outsider. Just as the debates around the Brexit referendum involved several calls to leave the EU not in the name of Britishness, but of Scottishness, Welshness or even Cornishness, this infinite regress into ever smaller units of identification does not address the fundamentally global challenges of climate catastrophe, which inevitably leak across boundaries, however defined.

The potato, already a loaded symbol in British history, has recently become a popular culture emblem of the kind of toxic survivalist ideology that underpins the horrors of the present and enables the horrors of the future. In Ridley Scott's 2015 film *The Martian*, based on Andy Weir's novel of the same name, published four years earlier, protagonist Mark Watney survives on an inhospitable Mars in no small part due to his ability to grow potatoes inventively, using Martian soil fertilized with his own and his crew members' faeces. As he bravely struggles to survive on his wits alone, the entire state apparatus rallies to bring him back at huge expense to avoid a PR disaster. Cinema, like literature, is filled with this type of survivalist heroism, a white male archetype, stretching from Robinson Crusoe, through Jack London's "To Build a Fire" to Weir's *Martian*. The current obsession with technological fixes and exit strategies in the face of the climate devastation facing our planet continues directly this line of thinking. From Elon Musk's aspirations for SpaceX as a vehicle for relocating 80,000 people to Mars to Peter Thiel's identification of seasteading, outer space and cyberspace as the best prospects for a libertarian future, today's tech moguls share a vision of a select few mavericks escaping the fate they do not hesitate to concede for the many.<sup>11</sup> Instead of investing their fortunes advocating for the end of this murderous system, they seek new frontiers for capitalism's inexorable march towards the fantasy infinite technological progress equated to limitless economic growth. Both cite authors such as Asimov and Heinlein as unsurprising inspiration in these quests. As Jameson, Žižek, et. al. have famously claimed, it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism, but here it is notably easier to imagine this survival against the odds than the investment of a fraction of the money involved in this rescue mission in saving the lives of the nearly 20,000 people who have drowned in the Mediterranean since 2014.

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8 Ulla Holm, "Noma er fascisme i avantgardistiske klær", in: *Politiken*, 8.5.11. Available at: <https://politiken.dk/debat/kroniken/art5509397/Noma-er-fascisme-i-avantgardistiske-kl%C3%A6r> [accessed 12.3.20]

9 Abend, Lisa, "Top Chef", in: *Time*, 26.3.12. Available at: <http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,2109150-4,00.html> [accessed 12.3.20]

10 Atsuko Ichijo and Ronald Ranta, *Food, National Identity and Nationalism: From Everyday to Global Politics*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, p. 55.

11 Rory Carroll, "Elon Musk's mission to Mars", *The Guardian*, 17.7.13, Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2013/jul/17/elon-musk-mission-mars-spacex> [accessed 11.3.20] Thiel, Peter, "The Education of a Libertarian", 13.4.09. Available at: <https://www.cato-unbound.org/2009/04/13/peter-thiel/education-libertarian> [accessed 11.3.20]



# A Silk Glove for a Burnt Hand or, a recipe for urban eating

**Nora Silva**

1. First of all, don't look. Don't look for it might be disgusting. Rely solely on your taste, your eyes might register some perhaps confusing images.
2. Go to London. This recipe can only be cooked in London.
3. Wash your hands following the latest global pandemic advise.

## Ingredients

- Heme flavoured soy chunks. Heme is the essential molecule found in every living plant and animal which is responsible for the flavour of meat.
- English salad mix from Growing Underground, a hydroponic farm under Clapham in London.
- Organic flour with 9 to 12gr of protein from a bakery with an on-site mill. Make sure the grain is British.
- Olive oil
- Tesco Free From Jalapeno and Chilli Vegan Cheese Alternative
- Cucumbers
- Salt
- Glass jar
- Cheesecloth
- Filtered water
- Guilt

4. Make the lacto fermented cucumbers: sterilise the glass jar by pouring boiling water in it. Slice the cucumbers thin and weight them. Calculate 2% of the cucumbers weight, and add it in salt. Place the salted cucumbers in the jar and fill it up with cold water. Cover with a cheesecloth. Leave it at room temperature for up to a week, then put in the fridge.

5. Make the sourdough starter. Make sure you harness nature by commodifying whatever is available, in this case, wild yeast and local bacteria. They are all around us, in the air, in our skin. Mix 50g of lukewarm water with 50g of your local flour, and leave it at room temperature for 2 days. Then add the same amounts again, everyday at the same hour for 4 days, discarding 20% of the batter each time.

6. Make the sourdough bun: mix 100gr of starter with 330gr of 32°C water, 25g of olive oil, 450g flour and 10g salt. Fold the dough every 45 minutes for 3 hours. Feel the labour. Divide it and shape it

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and let it prove for an hour. Then bake at 250°C for 25 minutes.

7. Wash the salad mix. One should never trust anything to be clean or sanitised.

8. Mix your soy chunks with whichever spices can be found for years forgotten in a London cupboard. Shape like a disc and fry.

9. Assemble your urban burger: cut your sourdough bun, place the heme meat and vegan cheese on top, and sprinkle with your English salad mix. Don't forget your fermented cucumbers, you will need a sharp element to cut through the 0% fat fatty flavors.

*Urban eating is also covered in guilt. Like a dense jus, or a sticky layer of melted cheese on top, guilt permeates urban eating, strangling us in a paradox*

10. Feel guilt. Food is on your plate thanks to the colonisation history of Western civilisation.

11. Close your eyes, imagine McDonalds or any other utopic burger scenario. Eat up!

Urban eating is efficient, following the human-as-worker energy decrease as a cause, and the human-as-worker productivity boost as an effect. Urban eating needs to irremediably fit into the configuration of reality that Federico Campagna calls the Technic. This urban-eating realism affirms each category as part of series where the individual parts can be infinitely replaced. Even if individual animals die, or if we struggle to breed them quickly enough to feed the human plague, animal meat will be replaced by plant-based meat, genetically reproduced meat, 3D printed meat, or any other link that answers to the category "meat", rendering the latter endless. Meat ceases to be contained in its own skin-covered entity to become a refillable cartridge. Cheese-free cheese and fat-free fat. Their subjectivity is flattened into a container. Limitless productivity is secured.

Urban eating is also covered in guilt. Like a dense jus, or a sticky layer of melted cheese on top, guilt permeates urban eating, strangling us in a paradox. We need to eat, yet eating kills the planet and consequently, us. We need a recipe that isn't, eating but not. The grimmest act, eating, where we draw to our mouths adjectives like greasy, sloppy, dripping. To our mouths, the most direct conduit to our inside, our carefully guarded gate. Urban eating is an act of violence.

Therefore an urban recipe needs to be disguised in the silkiest properties. Needs to teach you to pretend soya is meat, with a face of content. It should push you to forget preconceived ideas of the different categories of food so you can go from pretended joy to actual joy. A recipe that will take you by the hand and urge you to not look under its silk glove.

# From recipe to collective improvisation

An ethnographic vignette about food assistance in Barriera di Milano, Turin

**Viola Mari  
& Maria Vasile**

## Collecting food donations at the market

It is a Wednesday morning mid-November 2019. It has been raining for several weeks now, and it is wet and cold.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, Nadia, the local leader of the 'Fa Bene' project, meets with a few volunteers at the Casa del Quartiere in Via Aglié, the community centre of Barriera di Milano. They are there to collect the material they need – trailer bike, leaflets, grocery bags – to head for the open-air market of Piazza Foroni. The volunteers usually walk around in the middle of the marketplace for hours, waiting for donations until the market's closure. On that day, due to bad weather, the volunteers already knew it would be extremely hard to collect enough food: there are few costumers and, with the end of the month approaching, both customers and vendors are in an economically difficult situation. The volunteers decide to distribute leaflets on which it is written: "friends of Fa Bene. Donate part of your shopping here". Then, they head back to the community centre

Fa Bene (<https://www.fabene.org/>) is a food aid project that emerged in 2014 in the Barriera di Milano neighbourhood (it subsequently extended to several other neighbourhoods in Turin) with the objective of collecting and redistributing unsold food surplus or client's donations at the marketplace. The collected food items are redistributed to families in need, which in turn make their own abilities and knowledge available to volunteer within the local community. Every Wednesday, each of these families receives a package of fresh food, mainly fruit and vegetables, some bread and, more rarely, meat and dairy products. The project was developed by the Organising Committee S-nodi (part of the Italian Caritas) in collaboration with the social cooperative Liberi Tutti and it was funded by the banking foundation Compagnia di San Paolo. In this sense, the project is a telling instance of the way the social sector is evolving in Turin, with an increasing reliance on both private funds and the work of social organisations (Ravazzi, 2016; Bolzoni, 2019). According to the Fa Bene website, the initiative has different goals, including: (i) to promote social inclusion and support for families in need at the local level, and (ii) to develop community-based entertainment and capacity building both in the marketplace and in the neighbourhood community centre (Fa Bene, 2020).

In the middle of the market, among the vendors' stands, the Fa Bene team gathers around Nadia. A woman in her fifties living in precarious working conditions, Nadia has an informal and positive way of doing things and is trusted by market vendors, volunteers, and beneficiaries alike. Knowing the hardships through which she went through, they appreciate her attitude, compassion, respectfulness, and way of caring for others. Nadia always finds a way to collect enough food for the recipients, mostly through well-established relations with several market vendors who donate regularly.

Around noon the volunteers go back to the market to collect donations. As expected, the market is almost

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<sup>1</sup> The authors would like to thank all the people of Fa Bene in Barriera di Milano for welcoming us in the group. The second author worked on this paper as part of her PhD within the ERC Project *Food citizens?* (grant agreement No 724151).

empty, and the vendors are tired and cold. The Fa Bene group was not there for the whole morning and this probably created a feeling of distance among the vendors. The volunteers did not walk through the market, nor did they engage in conversations with the vendors or people passing by, as they usually do. Upon realising how little it had collected, the group decides that those who can should donate money in order to purchase some extra food. 30 euros are raised, which allow them to purchase additional products, some of which are particularly hard to get through food donations. During winter the volunteers often end up with an excess of different kinds of lettuce or other less appreciated vegetables. That Wednesday, having the chance to personally choose how to fill their trailer bike and knowing that seven families were waiting for a crate, they decide to follow another strategy. Thus they buy potatoes, onions, and carrots, cheap but important ingredients that are common to different culinary traditions. They also take bread and eggs; the latter are quite expensive, and very appreciated. Finally, besides other fruits and vegetables, they also decide to get some lemons, for once. During this time of year they usually collect apples, pears, and old bananas – lemons are a real treat. In the end, despite the challenges, the group manages to collect enough food.

### **Preparing food packages at the community centre**

With the trailer bike full of food, the volunteers head back to the Casa del Quartiere, where they have lunch all together, before moving to the next step. Right after lunch, under the careful guidance of Nadia, volunteers start weighing the food to arrange the food packages to be distributed to the families.

The food collected is always categorised under three different labels – (i) clients' donations, (ii) vendors' donations, and (iii) unsold food – and the information collected is then sent to the Fa Bene leaders who map and monitor the weekly developments of the project in the whole city. In *Barriera di Milano*, a working-class and multicultural neighbourhood situated in the north-eastern corner of Turin, the ones who donate most are vendors, with whom Nadia and the volunteers have over time developed relations of trust and solidarity. This is one of the neighbourhoods that suffered the most the economic and occupational crisis that followed the deindustrialisation of Turin (Cingolani, 2018; Salone et al., 2017). Notwithstanding the urban regeneration efforts of the municipality during the last two decades, the neighbourhood's inhabitants often live in precarious conditions and feel that the institutions have left them behind. It is especially in such a precarious context, as one of the market's historical figures, Enzo, observes, that the project may prove to be beneficial for the whole community.

The volunteers move to the inner courtyard to prepare the food boxes. This is a delicate phase. The volunteers have to touch and smell the fresh food, remove anything that is no longer edible, and evenly portion the fruit, vegetables and bread. The number of families coming to collect the boxes is different every week and each family has different needs and personal tastes which, week after week, the volunteers learn to recognise and remember. The challenge is that of making even crates with the same amount of fresh food while, at the same time, trying to satisfy each family's personal taste. Some families have children, some do not. Some are Muslims, some are not. Likes and dislikes. Forbidden food. It is not easy to keep in mind the different details, especially with those items – e.g., fresh pasta, marmalade, sausages – that can hardly be portioned. That Wednesday afternoon the sky finally clears and the volunteers are eventually satisfied with their portioning job. The crates are slightly smaller than usual but are full of colours and include a diverse mix of fresh food, unusual during winter.

In this context, making food packages becomes a collective decision and an imagining process during which the group caters to the tastes and needs of families. This entails using senses such as smell and touch, engaging in moments of discussion and doubt, and developing a general feeling of responsibility for the diet and health of others. Working with and through emotions is an important component of this process, as it is more generally the case with third sector and volunteer work. In fact, among other things, this process speaks to issues of unremunerated care work and to a systemic reliance on the emotions and passion of volunteers which serve to fill the gap left by the neoliberal dismantlement of the welfare state (Busso and Lanunziata, 2016).

### **Giving out and the direct engagement of beneficiaries**

Families slowly join the group in the early afternoon, while boxes are still being prepared. Some people arrive alone, while others join with a friend or children. Volunteers help beneficiaries to collect their food, putting it in bags or directly in the back of the car. Nadia then asks some volunteers to stay and help at the community centre by working on small tasks such as reordering the dining room. Nadia explains that the beneficiaries' direct involvement in relevant tasks is a way to favour inclusion and goes beyond more classical charity projects in which the beneficiary remains passive.

The food distribution to the beneficiaries is a social moment, an encounter among them and the volunteers. The network of volunteers who help Nadia is composed of a diverse group of people:

from local youngsters who are eager to support people in need, to older persons who want to spend time in the company of others. Nadia and her role at the centre seem to be the "special ingredient" which facilitates exchanges between them, the vendors, and the recipients. Nadia

*The portioning step is a very delicate moment: volunteers have to touch and smell fresh food, pick out anything that is no longer edible, and cut and portion fruit, vegetables, and bread*

is a trusted confidant for all the families and successfully navigates beyond any kind of cultural or language barriers. Among the members of Fa Bene, when words are missing, gestures are used to communicate and understand each other. It is easy to understand certain gestures, like the one that a beneficiary uses to ask if a vegetable is bitter, or to express her appreciation for specific products put in the crates. Gestures are also fundamental for volunteers to explain how to prepare some food, especially when dealing with fruit or vegetables that are not always fresh.

## Conclusions

This ethnographic vignette explores the ways in which an urban food assistance project develops in everyday practice in northern Turin. Based on the fieldwork conducted by the two authors and an in-depth observation of the "ingredients" of the project, the authors investigate the functioning of such system, or societal recipe, and its consequences, in terms of context-specific interactions and ways of doing things. At the market of Piazza Foroni, the Fa Bene project takes a specific meaning related to the socio-economic characteristics of the area as well as the project's local leader and other actors. *Barriera di Milano* is often depicted by the media in stigmatising and negative terms (Cingolani, 2012). Many of its inhabitants are quite used to discontinuous support from institutions and see associations as a way to get faster responses or to contribute (in the case of the volunteers) to the well-being of local community members.

This vignette shows how improvisation is an integral part of the Fa Bene project, highlighting the sensorial, material and social dimensions of this specific practice of food assistance. It sheds light on components such as the affect and emotional labour of Nadia and the volunteers, as well as, more generally, the impacts of changing seasons on food availability or market vendors' frustrations linked to moments of economic hardship. Similarly, the time passing by and factors such as the scents and colour of fresh food shape the activity, characterising the market atmosphere and the type of food donated. In the background of this ethnographic account, two spaces of meaningful interaction clearly emerge: (i) the marketplace and (ii) the neighbourhood community centre. Nadia and the volunteers are the social link between these two spaces. With their own ways of doing, they create a relationship of solidarity with the vendors and a one of trust with the families. "We are humble people!": with these words, Nadia, already in one of our first exchanges, expressed her idea of power dynamics and relations between the people of Fa Bene: an equal and balanced involvement. Her ability to be in the position of the facilitator, volunteer and beneficiary, all at once, can be considered one of the "special ingredients" that render the everyday life of Fa Bene in *Barriera di Milano* distinctive.

At the same time, the importance of interpersonal relations and affect in associational life should be analysed in relation to the changing nature of the welfare and to how social work is reorganised in the third sector, especially in relation to the precarity of social workers, the commitment of volunteers, and the end of funding (Busso and Lanunziata, 2016). This is also proved by the recent developments of Fa Bene that see Nadia once again on the front line: the project, whose funding ended at the end of December 2019, is currently being continued autonomously by herself, the volunteers, and the families, with little external support. This seems to indicate a certain adaptability of the network to changing economic and social circumstances, but more importantly serves to highlight the lack of structural and continuous institutional support. The vignette is thus an invitation to reflect on current developments within the social sector characterised by a key role of associations. With the downscaling of the welfare state, associations are left responsible to respond to individuals' primary needs such as food. In this system, food is not being guaranteed as a right for all people in need, but it is transformed into an issue of charitable intervention that is subject to many different variables and political configurations.

In the context of Turin, food is at the centre of the contemporary urban branding of the post-industrial city and at the heart of its economic and urbanistic transformations (Vanolo, 2015). As narrated above, food is a key component of the work of the third sector and the reconfiguration of social assistance, rendering its access subject to volunteer work and improvisation and, sadly, exposed to risk in times of emergency. After the beginning of the Italian lockdown due to the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020, in only a few weeks poverty increased and a wide food insecurity crisis broke out, especially in Barriera di Milano. To face this emergency, the third sector was promptly involved, along with individual citizens' solidarity, to develop thousands of food aid packages, but these efforts still remain insufficient to support all persons in need. It is not the authors' intention to further expand on the dramatic current situation but to highlight how the recent pandemic emergency has rapidly confirmed the serious contradictions of this urban recipe.

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# Foodification Post-Covid

## Un crono-racconto per menù

**Foodification  
Democracy**

### Introduzione

Francesco è al 75° giorno di quarantena, e non ne può più: vorrebbe muoversi, mangiare in trattoria dal suo amico Amerigo o farsi una birretta in piazza con gli altri. E non gli interessa neanche capire in quale *Fase* di gestione della pandemia si trovi la sua città o la sua Regione, o gli orari in cui può bere nel suo locale preferito. Non ci vuole neanche pensare a uscire, tanto meno ora che *uscire* significa un lungo percorso a ostacoli di distanze e mascherine.

Attanagliato dal tedio delle quattro mura domestiche, il Nostro va nella sezione “ricordi” della sua libreria, dove trova le sue Moleskine da viaggio impilate in rigoroso ordine cronologico. Oddio, non semplicemente e non solo da viaggio: i suoi sono autentici percorsi di gusto nei principali centri enogastronomici d’Europa. Ne estrae una a caso dal centro, intitolata “Torino, ‘MENU RIQUALIFICAZIONE!’, 2019”: era stato il claim “#Mmm Torino!”<sup>1</sup> a incuriosirlo e spingerlo verso la appena nominata “Capitale del Gusto” d’Europa. Ricordava ancora il video dell’inaugurazione del *Mercato Centrale* di Umberto Montano, in mezzo al mercato storico di Porta Palazzo, e quel suo mix di banchi di mercatali e “chef di lusso ma a buon prezzo” lo aveva definitivamente convinto.

Porta Palazzo è infatti l’*exemplum* più vivido dei cosiddetti processi di riqualificazione e il nostro eterno studente di sociologia non poteva che andare a visitarlo: mercato esistente dal 1836, il più antico d’Europa, dove convergono migrazioni di ogni epoca e colore che rendono popolare per eccellenza questo spazio. Un “popolare” scambiato per *degrado&criminalità* dalla Giunta in carica, che decide di chiudere questa lunga epoca sfruttando uno edificio abbandonato (dal potere pubblico) in chiave più, diciamo così, moderna. Nasce così il Mercato Centrale ad aprile 2019: un food market dove le parole chiave ridondano, dall’artigianato autentico del cibo agli altisonanti nomi della cucina trasformata in spettacolo dai mass media. Il tradizionale e l’autentico del mondo enogastronomico sono mobilitati per trasformare Porta Palazzo in una pista d’atterraggio per turisti, a discapito di coloro che qui trovano terreno fertile per una spesa settimanale compatibile con la povertà diffusa della città e, in particolare, del quartiere circostante. Dopo 16 mesi di vita, la spericolatezza di questo investimento unita al lockdown della quarantena sembra indicare la via del tramonto a Montano e ai suoi colleghi investitori, con un fuggi-fuggi lento ma inesorabile da parte di molte botteghe.<sup>2</sup>

Ma torniamo a Francesco, così affascinato da quei ricordi che inizia a sfogliare e leggere la sua

Foodification è un progetto nato dall’incontro tra Paolo “Tex” Tessarin e Marco Perucca, ed ispirato dal lavoro e le pubblicazioni di Wolf Bukowski e del Prof. Giovanni Semi. Foodification vuole raccontare le trasformazioni delle nostre città attraverso la lente della gourmet gentrification

[www.foodification.org](http://www.foodification.org)

1 [https://torino.repubblica.it/cronaca/2018/09/22/news/\\_mmm\\_torino\\_un\\_logo\\_per\\_lanciare\\_la\\_capitale\\_del\\_gusto-207068636/](https://torino.repubblica.it/cronaca/2018/09/22/news/_mmm_torino_un_logo_per_lanciare_la_capitale_del_gusto-207068636/)

2 [https://torino.corriere.it/cronaca/20\\_giugno\\_16/mercato-centrale-vanno-via-magorabin-farmacia-cambio-33a5d7f6-af26-11ea-a957-8b87646448cc.shtml](https://torino.corriere.it/cronaca/20_giugno_16/mercato-centrale-vanno-via-magorabin-farmacia-cambio-33a5d7f6-af26-11ea-a957-8b87646448cc.shtml)

Moleskine:

## I - L'antipasto Degrado

Ho deciso di dormire a Barriera Milano, zona di Torino così periferica da essere veramente autentica. Ho trovato un annuncio su Airbnb per una casa di ringhiera molto carina, di fianco a una famiglia marocchina con cui ho condiviso il balcone per tutto il weekend. Ero proprio sul balcone a fumare un beedi sfogliando le experience dell'App Airbnb quando ho scovato questa: "Walkin' down the Street Restaurant" la cui descrizione degli organizzatori è essenziale: "Vivi la tua cena come se fosse una

*Era stato il claim "#Mmm Torino!" a incuriosirlo e spingerlo verso la appena nominata Capitale del Gusto d'Europa*

passaggiata turistica per la città." Ho fatto due passi e sono arrivato a // *Gusto del Degrado*, una trattoria che trae ispirazione in parte dal quartiere in cui è nato e in parte dal *Six Love Hotel*: si tratta, in pratica, di mangiare ogni portata del menù in una "stanza a tema" diversa.

CARRRRRIIIIIINOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!

Ho prenotato dall'App per le ore 20:00 e dopo cinque minuti di passeggiata tra minimarket etnici, Comproro e Kebabbari mi sono ritrovato al tavolo apparecchiato con la classica tovaglia a quadretti rossi e bianchi, tovagliolo di carta e servizio di piatti *Trattoria Toscana La Panzanella*, che mi hanno spiegato essere il locale precedentemente fallito e rilevato da questo franchising nato a Milano e ora sbarcato a Torino, oltre che a Firenze e Bologna. "Ah, guarda, il menu faceva così ridere che mi sono appuntato tutto, ecco perché venne fuori quell'articolo sulla nostra webzine" pensa Francesco mentre continua a scrutare la Moleskine accendendosi un beedi per calarsi completamente in quell'atmosfera di tre anni fa.

\*\*\*PROMEMORIA RACCONTO\*\*\* Praticamente ogni piatto viene consumato in una stanza diversa, "accoppiata" a quel che stai mangiando, ispirato a una zona diversa di Torino, o a una particolare epoca di un determinato quartiere. Per esempio, abbiamo iniziato nella trattoria Sgualfa, con un piatto grezzo a ricordare il quartiere in cui mi trovavo: "ANTIPASTO DEGRADO del territorio" composto da specialità etniche buttate nel piatto a caso: cetriolini rumeni, melanzane pugliesi sott'olio, salse marocchine e birra bangla.

Che poi sarebbe il mix che ho visto passeggiando fin qua, anche se il cameriere Antonio, un po' calato nel ruolo di cameriere-attore di questa messinscena, un po' per raccontarmi quel che realmente accadrà qui in Barriera, mi ha tranquillizzato dicendo che "stanno arrivando gli investitori americani!!" (che poi chissà perché nei racconti da bar gli investitori sono sempre yankee) con un progetto avveniristico: *quarantaduemilametriquadri* di co-working e housing sociale, un enorme hub Amazon super-tecnologico e uno spazio associativo inter-etnico per la riqualificazione artistica del territorio.

"Ah, ora ricordo quel che mi raccontava Manlio, che abitava lì prima di venire a studiare a Bologna" pensa Francesco cominciando a mettere insieme i pezzi. "Barriera Milano è storicamente luogo di migrazioni da ogni dove, ed è anche il quartiere col più alto tasso di richiesta di assistenza sociale. Ora invece vogliono sfruttare l'immenso vuoto lasciato dalla Officina Grandi Motori,<sup>3</sup> fabbrica chiusa da tempo immemore, per fare un investimento *smart* e al passo coi tempi: un bell'ipermercato con relativo magazzino per il *delivery*, accompagnato da strutture ricettive per turisti, che è poi l'unica cosa su cui sta puntando Torino dalle Olimpiadi Invernali del 2006 in poi.

Bah, eppure a me qui sembra tutto così autentico e vero che non ci cambierei nulla . . . anzi, forse

3 <https://www.torinoggi.it/2020/01/30/leggi-notizia/argomenti/attualita-8/articolo/ex-ogm-entro-quattordici-mesi-lapprovazione-del-progetto-definitivo.html>



metterei giusto uno *Student Hotel*<sup>4</sup> in quell'ex ospedale, non sarebbe affatto male! Siamo a tre minuti a piedi da Porta Palazzo e dal Mercato Centrale, ci starebbe proprio bene uno studentato, come quello che c'è a Bologna che *'coniuga ricettività per studenti e turisti a coworking ed eventi. A realizzarlo, lo studio dell'architetto ex-partner di Renzo Piano'*. Pensa che bello poter fare gli aperitivi sul tetto con la piscina e vedere tutta la distesa del mercato popolare sorseggiando uno spritz: *priceless!*" Francesco era fatto così, conosceva tutte le distorsioni che il modello turistico portava con sé, ma allo stesso tempo non riusciva a resistere al richiamo godurioso di una città internazionale dove bere cocktail parlando in tutte le lingue del mondo. Il prossimo passo è ripensare con rammarico a quella borsa di studio mancata proprio alla Scuola Holden, che si trova a metà del percorso a piedi dal ristorante in cui si trova al Mercato Centrale, all'estremo opposto del Balon, lo storico mercato degli straccivendoli, ivi posizionato tutti i sabati dai primi del '900, che proprio a Holden ha recentemente "permesso" di spostare in periferia.<sup>5</sup> L'università privata di Baricco era sempre stata il suo sogno, quell'idea in quel quartiere l'ha sempre fatto sognare. Peccato solo che i diecimila euro di retta annuale fossero completamente fuori dal suo budget.

Forse non sarebbe stato fuori-budget per Francesco dormire nel nuovo Combo,<sup>6</sup> a poche centinaia di metri dal Mercato Centrale. L'ostello, che sorge nell'abbandonata (sempre dal potere pubblico) caserma dei Vigili di Fuoco, ha un *concept* orientato all'arte e ai giovani creativi (nulla di nuovo per chi ha letto Richard Florida vent'anni fa) che, mentre creano, potranno godere di ristorante e cocktail bar al piano terra, ovviamente autentici e innovativi. Anche a Francesco questo sembrava un po' troppo, e poi si sarebbe fatto troppo ingolosire dai cocktail a dieci euro che avrebbero gonfiato oltremodo il costo del suo weekend enogastronomico.

## II - Main Course: Gentrification

"Solo uno studente di sociologia come me poteva prendersi bene per una portata principale del genere, il *Piatto Gentrification*." Ecco come me lo annuncia il nuovo cameriere nella nuova stanza del percorso enogastronomico: arredamento minimal, piccoli tavoli con tovaglietta di carta, un muro restylato finto-antico e il menù abbozzato sulla lavagnetta. Le diverse opzioni me le descrive Pier, che indossa un grembiule di cuoio e stoffa nera ed è ovviamente tatuato: "...si spazia dalla carne di manzo allevato libero nei prati al pesce fresco pescato nei nostri mari, senza dimenticarci la verdura bio come alternativa vegan. La costante che lega le diverse preparazioni è la cottura nella birra artigianale con una chiusura di affumicatura al legno di pallet."

Stavo per scoppiargli a ridere in faccia, e nell'imbarazzo ho detto "manzo, grazie", senza pensarci. Pier (ci teneva che lo chiamassi per nome) ha proseguito: "Chiudiamo la serata con la parentesi equo-solidale di prodotti Slow Food, in promozione a sorpresa solo per questo mese. Il ricavato di questa parte del menu andrà a sostenere un progetto di Emergency in Cambogia." Francesco maschera a fatica il suo entusiasmo, sebbene questa sala corrisponda a circa l'80% dei 18.498 esercizi di somministrazione alimenti e bevande presenti a Torino, con un incremento del 5,6% annuo: e chissà cosa c'è di poco autentico nella proposta di quei tre quarti dei locali del food che, secondo le statistiche, chiuderanno entro cinque anni. E chissà cosa avrà sbagliato quel terzo delle nuove aperture che tirerà giù le serrande entro l'anno: Troppo innovativo per una città provinciale? Un eccesso di confidenza di un ristoratore improvvisato? O forse, più semplicemente, è l'eccesso di ristoranti e attività del *food&beverage* a renderli insostenibili nella città che "vanta" il record di povertà tra le città metropolitane del Nord Italia.

4 <https://www.tribune.com/progettazione/architettura/2020/02/the-student-hotel-a-torino-un-albergo-campus-in-unarea-di-30mila-mq-sulla-dora-nel-2023/>

5 E.g. <https://ilmanifesto.it/al-balon-non-ce-posto-per-i-poveri/>

6 <https://www.tribune.com/arti-visive/arte-contemporanea/2020/01/torino-apre-combo-nuova-ostello-arti/>

Sorseggiando un'ottima *Camden IPA* canticchiavo l'ultimo pezzo degli Strokes in attesa del cibo che lo stesso Pier mi porta in un batter d'occhio: i piatti ora non sono più della Trattoria Panzanella, anzi non sono più piatti, ma lastre di ardesia sulle quali tre pezzi di carne sprofumano un odore di birra sbruciacchiata, o forse sono le bucce di patate di accompagnamento a creare questa sensazione. Il gusto però è buonissimo, non c'è che dire: ci ho messo dodici minuti per quattro bocconi in tutto, ma almeno mi sono ascoltato quasi tutto l'album degli Strokes prima di cambiare nuovamente stanza.

"In effetti è da allora che gli Strokes non fanno un album decente. Mammamia che storia quella cena, quanto mi mancano quei momenti" bofonchia Francesco ormai completamente dentro la sua Moleskine, in preda a un misto di nostalgia, curiosità per il suo stesso racconto e voglia di poter ricominciare a scoprire il mondo attraverso i suoi ristoranti. Nel frattempo, passa al capitolo successivo di quella che è diventata la sua lettura pomeridiana:

### **III - Il Dolce: L' Art Chocolate**

"Però io sono anche goloso, ho voglia di chiudere con un dolce: cosa mi proponete?" Non dovevo pronunciare questa frase, perché Pier in un batter di ciglia mi ha preso e portato, tramite ascensore a specchi, nella stanza al piano superiore, dove sono stato accolto da Malek, maliano adottato, artista contemporaneo e bartender di questo pazzesco locale che mi piace sempre più. "Ciao sono Malek, ti accompagnerò io per questo lungo corridoio *Art&Sound Experience*, che ti permetterà di smaltire la cena prima di passare alla scelta del dolce con il cocktail di accompagnamento." E così mi ritrovo a passeggiare in una via di mezzo tra una mostra contemporanea e un locale molto cool che starebbe certo meglio a Milano che a Torino (effettivamente potrebbe essere identico al primo che hanno fatto i meneghini):

"Synesthesia', un viaggio sperimentale nelle emozioni da rievocare attraverso i suoni della nostra esistenza: quindici artisti da tutto il mondo hanno deciso di dare il loro contributo a questo Sound&Art Tour internazionale, in anteprima per la nostra città."

Io in realtà volevo solo un tiramisù. "Seguimi, ti accompagno nella stanza che mi sembra più adatta a te" mi dice Malek, speriamo sia la stanza dei dolci. E così mi ritrovo in una stanza gigantesca con i muri altissimi, ingranaggi stratosferici per aprire la porta del bagno, scritte proiettate sui muri scrostati che riprendono il ritornello del remix di Apparat sparato a tutto volume per tutto il piano. Mi fanno accomodare su un divano, e a quel punto Malek ha l'ennesima conversione di ruolo: ora è, finalmente, il mio cameriere dei dolci. "Dato il contesto internazionale in cui ci ritroviamo, e dato il tuo piglio esperienziale, ti propongo una pietanza tipicamente autentica torinese: il "Quadrilatero ingolfato di cioccolato fuso con decorazione di panna liquida al profumo di nocciola", accompagnato da un Vermouth preparato secondo l'antica ricetta regionale della Antica Distilleria; il piatto è stato concepito dal nostro *sous-chef* Bastialà e disegnato dall'artista contemporaneo vincitore di Paratissima 2019, un unicum che contraddistingue il nostro locale."

"STOCAZZO!" – No, non l'ho detto, ma chiaramente l'ho pensato, e mentre lo pensavo Malek ha scambiato il mio sguardo attonito per un "Sì, grazie mille" ed è andato a preparare il dolce. Inutile dire che era buonissimo, ma ormai ero stanco e stordito, complice l'antico Vermouth che mi ha fatto ritornare l'antico mal di testa: così ho pagato i 57 euro di conto e ho passeggiato per la medesima strada a ritroso, per gustarmi l'ultimo beedi della giornata sul mio "balcone per un weekend".

### **IV - Oggi Risto-Covid**

Francesco chiude la sua corposa Moleskine, rivelatasi contemporaneamente la miglior compagnia della domenica pomeriggio e il miglior stimolo a ricominciare a mettere il naso fuori di casa, perché in fin dei conti non si può vivere in questa realtà sospesa per sempre (e due soldi durante la quarantena in *smartworking* li ha risparmiati). In realtà non aveva voglia di separazioni al plexiglass, non aveva voglia di indossare la mascherina, non aveva voglia di firmare fogli mentre gli misuravano la febbre

all'ingresso del locale. Aveva voglia di fare due chiacchiere con il cameriere, chiedere informazioni a caso sul secondo piatto e farsi consigliare il vino: e invece si sarebbe ritrovato di fronte a una comunicazione tecnologica e a una prenotazione del cibo tramite QR Code sul cellulare. Tutte queste considerazioni sono crollate di fronte alla notifica che compare sullo smartphone:

Prenota ora la tua cena tramite Foodvision e otterrai subito il 15% di sconto!

Il suo Huawei sembra avergli letto nel pensiero. Francesco clicca sulla notifica e legge, cominciando già a godere del suo recondito piacere nel seguire le indicazioni delle mille app del suo telefono, al 70% riguardanti cibo e viaggi.

Esci dalla quarantena, scegli la tua specialità etnica preferita e goditi la serata insieme a noi!

Francesco non ci pensa neanche un secondo e va alla ricerca delle specialità messicane, ha voglia di bere più birra alla spina possibile e il piccante sudamericano gli sembra il miglior stimolante a riguardo. In un paio di click, ha il tavolo *Sancho Panza* prenotato al *Mi Mexico Querido*, giusto a due quadrati a piedi da casa sua, che è la massima distanza che riesce a percorrere con la mascherina addosso. Arriva all'ingresso del ristorante e si accorge subito della differenza rispetto al pre-quarantena: l'ingresso ora ha una porta scorrevole, una voce elettronica che gli indica il percorso da seguire e un piccolo robot ad attenderlo e accompagnarlo al tavolo dandogli le indicazioni in italiano con un appena percettibile accento messicano. Non era mai stato in un luogo più asettico: il tavolo è gigantesco nonostante lui sia solo, il tavolo più vicino è a una distanza tale che non saprebbe neanche dire se la tipa ivi seduta sia carina o meno. L'isolato stordimento viene interrotto dalla voce proveniente dal tablet che esce di fronte a lui: inevitabile la musica dei *mariachis* come accompagnamento al menu che scorre sullo schermo.

Inserisci il codice sconto ricevuto sull'App del tuo telefono, seleziona le tue portate preferite... e dai inizio alla tua experiencia mexicana

Francesco non ci vuole credere: ha passato il pomeriggio a fantasticare sulle pagine dei suoi racconti di ristoranti strabondanti di parole, di particolari da osservare alle pareti e sul tavolo (forse troppi, anzi certamente troppi, col senno del poi post-lockdown), di menu da accarezzare, da rileggere all'infinito prima che Pier, Malek o lo stesso Antonio arrivino a descriverlo con una minuzia che tanto infastidiva prima quanto ti manca oggi. A Francesco manca anche la donna sovrappeso che passa vicino a te e ti fa cadere la giacca appoggiata alla sedia mentre cerca il bagno, gli mancano le serate in cui ascoltava la tavolata di fianco alla sua. Ma ancor di più ha nostalgia di quelle serate da Amerigo con gli amici, che stasera gli hanno dato buca: troppi fogli da firmare, troppe regole da rispettare, troppa distanza da tenere tra noi, abituati agli abbracci e ai grovigli tipici dei bacchanali da osteria. Francesco torna in sé e scopre che il tablet è al terzo giro di visualizzazione di antipasti secondi e dolci: quasi vorrebbe sorridere della propria distrazione goffa con qualcuno, ma intorno a lui c'è il vuoto. La soluzione è una sola: mette la giacca, fa il percorso mentale seguendo le frecce che vanno dal tavolo all'uscita e prende la decisione più saggia. Corre verso l'uscita, una corsa liberatoria che gli piace. Decide di continuare a correre, l'aria è fresca e la sua sgambata snella: non si ferma più Francesco, se non al citofono del suo amico fraterno Walter. "Ciao Walter, sono Fra: aprimi, e metti su l'acqua della pasta. Stasera si mangia a casa, per la precisione la tua. Compro due birre al bangla e vengo su!"

Loin & Faggot of Highland venison, pumpkin purée, cavolo nero & chestnut	£38.00
Grilled Cornish red mullet, lobster ravioli, Puy lentils & fennel	£34.50
Roast pavé of Icelandic cod, crushed charlotte potatoes, cauliflower & warm raisin dressing	£38.00
Tagine of Bresse pigeon, couscous, confit lemon & harissa sauce	£36.50
Tagliatelle of Périgord truffle, parmesan & gremolata	£42.50
Roast supreme of pheasant, roast salsify, chanterelles, sprout tops & red cabbage purée	£28.50
Roast Scottish beef sirloin & slow cooked beef rib, pommes Anna, chanterelles & confit shallot	£38.50

# Sock-Cheese

**Anaïs Hazo**

Nothing is sterile. Even from dirt, dust and concrete, tiny-grand miracles arise. Any surrounding can be nurturing — here, a how-to for sock-cheese.

## **Participants**

MILK, any volume, depending on one's free-room and own reasons. — Best is best: raw and fresh, from any animal that is being ethically cared for, which is a complex thing to determine. A product of lower quality also works, although less pleasurable and certainly less healthy.

VESSEL of any kind. A jar is preferred, a bowl is fine too, as long as some other object can top it as a lid. Creativity and make-do are encouraged.

LIVE CULTURES, kefir or the like; even maybe spooned off a good yogurt. Amounting about 10% of the milk weight, but really, who knows. It's a genuine experiment.

TIME, upon availability.

SOFT, THIN CLOTH, long enough to be tied closed and hanged somewhere.

## **Proceedings:**

1. Nighttime in a big city. MILK is picked from a cold metal shelf, at the SuperDudeMarket, on the way to a little flat. The weather is weird for the season. Better walk fast, rush between the drops; what else to do?

2. Home. Soaked shoes are thrown in a corner. The MILK looks dead. Also, it tastes too sweet. Could be fun to make it alive again. First, let's pour it in a VESSEL. So it can feel at ease.

3. Now — plo! Let's add some curd in there: a scoop of LIVE CULTURES from an old jar. A protective lid on top of that, a rag will do. Cool. Let's leave it here on the counter, yes? It's fine, who cares — except you? It's late. The day was draining. Let's go to bed.

4. TIME passes. It's a big metropolis out there, that alternately swallows and spits people, in and out. Things happen around the VESSEL with the MILK and the CULTURES inside. For a whole twenty-four hours, no-one is around. At one point, two lovers suddenly rush into the little flat and make a big mess. One leaves at dawn, walking on tip toes. Later, a pair of distorted eyes are observing the VESSEL from close, very close. They smile before leaving the apartment, in a hurry again. 'No-things' get overlooked surprisingly fast. It's very easy to stop caring for some modest stuff, left on some poorly-lit, little kitchen counter.

But within the turmoil of one's busy life, nature is left to do its thing.

Anaïs Hazo is a French artist, designer and researcher. She studied fine-arts, and then worked as a fashion stylist. Her current transdisciplinary practice uses food, photography, language and open educational forms, to question the cultural concepts of tastes, daily life, agency, nurture and interconnectedness in contemporary times.

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5. It's been a little more, or less, than three to five days. Some crucial news has arrived: the refrigerator finally broke. There is no TIME to fix it at the moment. Waiting for a late repairer to come tickle that piece of junk? No thanks. There is plenty of takeaway all around town, it will be fine. What else is there to do anyway?

6. Nighttime again. Next to a pile of plastic bags and cling wraps, on the counter, the mixture in its VESSEL seems immobile. It has been growing nonetheless. The refrigerator tragedy prevented it from ending up in the cold. This would have slowed down its development.

*Nothing is sterile. Even from dirt, dust and concrete, tiny-grand miracles arise. Any surrounding can be nurturing*

It has grown. A lot. Especially so, since the weather is outlandish, and the rain, warmer than it ever was before, behind the flat's single window. The flat, with its broken fridge, feels like a steam oven.

7. Eyes are back. Getting close to the mix, accompanied by hands, lifting the lid. A nose too, followed by a disdainful pout:

"Oh! Ew! Errr! What did *that* become?!"

8. Under the action of CULTURES and TIME, MILK has separated into distinct layers of curd and whey. Did it go all the way from dead to alive? Now it looks rotten from the outside. Pew! *That* is going straight to the drain! Back in the gutter with the hot rain, to dissolve in the wide ocean.

9. But wait.

10. Let's have a taste of the monstrous un-shape. After so many days sharing the flat, the no-thing has turned into a companion. As a pet, it deserves a fair trial. Its prime material was pricey, after all.

11. It has become so rare to take a micro risk. Would be inconvenient to get sick. Hesitation.

12. Sssslurpp... A tiny. Slimy. Bite.

13. Is it? Could it be?

The expensive industrial MILK has expanded. It tastes of a very young cheese.

14. Plllbbb. In a frenzy, the fresh cheese is transferred from VESSEL to hands. The liquid whey spills directly into the sink, the solids that remain in the curve of the feverish palms are wet, dense, heavy, fragile, almost beating. They cry for a gentle support, in order to continue their course in the world. The sensation of this new material against the skin is exhilarating.

15. A sock is laying there; perhaps left behind the lovers' mess. Not so neat, not so clean. How many streets, how much spittle on it? In which sneakers has it been? Well . . .

16. Slip! The curds heart is dropped into the sock. Luckily, it's a silk sock, a SOFT, THIN CLOTH.

17. Through the pores of the SOFT, THIN CLOTH, the milky heart is free to sweat off its remaining liquid. The living universe inside the sock starts colonizing the newcomer. In this teeming ecosystem, feet and cheese are considered quite the same.

18. The sock is very easy to hang. To the faucet over the sink, or elsewhere, perhaps outside the one window; what do you think? Wherever it swings and ages, life inside the sock takes a peculiar, specific taste. A complex blend of its inside and outside environments. A sheer cloth makes such a thin barrier. Only the small flat's walls might be slimmer.

19. After a few-to-several-more days, more lovers and more nights alone, through the tests of more eyes and curious senses, soon enough the moment comes to harvest from the footwear. A mature

sock-cheese emerges from the shricing cast. It is similar to a plaster figurine, suffused with the manifold cultures and tastes of the bodies it has met, the variations it has encountered, the stories it has seen. It is a honest product of its environment. It tastes and speaks of its mothercity; more grand and more intimate than one could describe.

20. The rain has stopped; the one window is wide open, to chase molds away. The off-white now-aged cheese gets crumbled by hungry fingers over a modest plate. Then it is eaten, all in one meal. While looking at a square of clouds, far, above, like a pale blue screen, framed by the buildings' canopy.

## pasta

gnocchetti & pork sausage campidanese 14

tagliatelle & chicken offal ragu 14

## vegetables

chicory salad & red wine bagna cauda 7

ratte potatoes, sorrel & lemon koshö vinaigrette 7.5

steamed leeks & brown butter hollandaise 7

## fish / meat

pollack poached in seaweed butter & shellfish vinaigrette 25

steamed chalk stream trout & condiments 28 / 32

grilled pork chop, celery, roasting juices & lovage 28

## cheese

twenty-four month comte 7



# A recipe for shocking the urban body

Victoria Brooks

## Preparation

This recipe is designed to shock the eating-body. The recipe deterritorializes its own form, and expands towards multiple material lines of urban desire and consumption. Instead of remaining a normative artefact, this recipe bursts itself open to its own concealed complex construction; instead of closing off to its own functionality, it reveals its stories and also the shared tastes, leaks and orifices of organic bodies and the body of the city. The burst takes the form of stories, which are told here (they can be read/added to the mix in any order). Through the process of reading, we learn of a desiring body's urban experience as ingredients to a recipe and understand how we might capture and express the whole of the body that eats. Capturing the whole body means collapsing the membrane between usually distinct bodies, and learning of their mutual queer desires, for food and for sex, and for one another. This fleshy recipe collapses the boundaries of what (and which bodies and parts of bodies) can be considered edible, desirable and necessary to the 'urban eating experience.' It overturns logics of desirability and consumption by allowing full cross-contamination between the organic body and the body of the city.

## Ingredients

100g of pig's liver, slightly burnt on the outside, creamy and pink in the middle.

*It should cost you very little. It should not cost you anywhere near what a rib-eye steak costs. As your mouth is filled with warmth, you will be reminded of warm cotton bedsheets, worn to softness by sweat and the juices of fucking lovers. The light will be soft and orange and as you and your lover both take a bite from a plate made for sharing, you will both feel something that cannot be spoken. Love will burst from your stomach, but it won't be romance and roses. This sensation will take you away from everything. The cruel strikes your body has endured will temporarily disappear in its wake; she, your lover, will shine brightly before you as the sweet hard crust of the liver is crushed by your teeth and it mixes with the cotton of its insides. Sour and bitter, sweet and enveloping, it is like your tongue is being swallowed by her for the first time. The sour and sweet textures of the liver's taste is as duck butter, in a clitoral crease.*

200g of Tarragon.

*This amount may not be enough. You will have to try, and taste as you go. There are not enough brightly coloured china bowls that you have bought from a market stall on a summer's afternoon in which to contain it, but that is alright, since the overspill can be rubbed across your body, whenever you need to feel close to your lover who has left you behind. By the time the night has arrived, your cells will be saturated, and you will be smelling of it anyway, which is what you should aim for. It will mix well*

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*with the smut of the tube from your journey and will help you avoid the straight path of Chanel No.5.*

A perfectly mixed Corpse Reviver #2.

*The taste and the smell of the absinthe and the sharp pang of citrus will sing perfectly in tune with the tarragon smell that has attached itself to your cells. It will be so intense that you might come without being touched, since desire will be strong and dancing across your dermis, which is pulled taut by the absinthe. You will look down at his hands holding yours at the tiny table. You will look into her eyes and take a sip, and your hands will slightly tremble. As will your body, as it recognises before you do, that you are connected for an eternity, but also separated, by that feeling you shared when you bit down on the pig livers.*

A London Tube Line (Central or Victoria if possible).

*You will need to select the particularly fast kind, like the Central or Victoria Line; the lines that feel as though they fly. Their speed causes your breath to spike while the wheels clatter and screech. You must not wear headphones and you must stand by the window which will be to your right as you enter the carriage. If it is closed, you must open it and you must let the tepid yet fierce black gusts fly into your face. The air will be fast and disgusting and it may force your eyes to close. When you lick your lips later, you will taste the smut. From the tube and from your mind. As the tube takes off, at the moment where the tracks contort and the wheels scratch, a gasp will emerge from hell, just beneath your feet. It will feel ecstatic. When you feel the breath of the tube in your face, your heart will soar and your flesh will feel like it will leap outside of you, such will be your excitement. The night to come almost does not matter.*

*You will catch the eyes of strangers, some of whom will feel this moment, too. It is a refuge when it hurts, as well as a place to revel in your joy. If you are not alone, you will stand close to your lover, but you will not speak.*

The smell of my lover's vulva.

*It could be your own. Underpinning the tarragon with a sour note and a robust musk, the scent will cause the air and atmosphere to shift register from playful sensuality between bodies, to a dramatic intergalactic pulse that threatens to tear apart their skins. You sit opposite one another, both wearing trousers, covered in tarragon, covered in the tube, feeling the effect of the Corpse Reviver #2 which has made your kneecaps feel like they are trying to escape you. You each have your legs apart, you can smell one another's vulvas, which face one another under the table. The tip of your tongue twitches for her spread legs. You want her nipples against your skin. The smell surrounds you both, like you are a pair of little salty capers enveloped by peppery olive oil.*

A purple carrot.

*Bound for life, a pattern of the everyday, more precious than the matter of the space between the stars. The darkest purple parts are a tiny trace of that which exists between you both, binding you together. The hue is the building blocks of that which makes a wedding band that he will place upon your finger. You will wear it lightly, because you will feel free. The carrot will be your everyday; the glee with which you wash and cook the vegetables he grows, and you eat, his gentle snoring, and the sound of him walking in the door for the thousandth time. Your child, your dog, and your years, every sense that wraps and envelops you into your home together, is bound by that which shines the purple carrot's skin and populates the watery galaxy of its flesh. Your home will be a light that shines, a chest on which you can rest, that lifts and heals your body, from a lifetime of wounds. Healing now, you wonder how so many purple carrots can exist at once.*

A large bunch of dill.

*Do not chop it. Preserve the bunch it comes in, and how it was presented in the small Arabic shop in which you bought it. Maybe press some of its feathers, firmly, while rubbing a little. This will release a scent into the air, which will cause you to remember that dill works so well with purple carrots. It is a pleasant thought. Dill is easily as intimate and as sexual a smell and taste as tarragon. The feel of the feathers makes you want her to take hold of the bunch and run it lightly all over your body, without touching you with her hands.*

La Stoppa Agena 2015.

*You let him choose it because he always does. He chooses well. Evoking nectarines, blushing bright and sweating, swollen, stinking, rotting, fermented waterfalls and nectar of*

*Urban eating is an experience of collapsing into other bodies, and of slippage and reconfiguration of seemingly settled desire lines*

*orgasmic bees combined. Inside is a stir of fertile cervical mucus to give it clouds. Within these bottles are microscopic bodies that fuck. They have literally managed to bottle an orgy in smooth glistening bottles, of different kinds and colours. The orgy is not made of perfumed bodies on an exotic beach, but of sweating smelly bodies, licking the tarragon from one another, overturning what we thought we knew.*

Gristle/tissue/piping.

*Often found in meat and discarded, it will be a blessing if these appear. The most likely case is that you have been eating a lamb's heart, or kidney, or your pig's liver, or perhaps a ham hock, that melts in the mouth, and you sense something you have been trained to think is foreign. You must not swallow it, and you don't want to chew it, since the sensation is unfamiliar, twangy, elastic, inhuman, rubbery. If this has taken place mid-mouthful, you may discretely reach towards your lips; where waiting will be the offending morsel, which you have delicately manipulated towards your front teeth with your tongue. Meanwhile, you will have missed his conversation, temporarily checked-out of the orgasmic sensations and be worrying about how you appear. The extent of the worry will determine how good your fucking will be. The less you worry, the better the fuck. It is a kind of law, which makes these meaty parts an essential and auspicious addition.*

Shit.

*Never eaten, the ultimate waste, and yet the destination for what you consume, shit will not likely feature in your vision for your recipe, but it must. The ritual and space of the shit you take will be a crucial ingredient, since it will determine the fate of the bodies that have combined throughout this recipe. Maybe you are careful of the sounds you make and how long you take and how you appear. Like with the gristle/piping, your first instinct will be to be discreet, but you must resist since once again, you will find a portal to the stars here, if you navigate it well. A lack of decorum when it comes to shit, will overturn the order of sexuality.*

A crust of sperm.

*If it leaks from my vagina, during the meal, I have found it pleasing. Already it is a treat, for the smell you get is like no other; basically, it is the smell of a fuck, and those sheets which we found within the pig livers. It may dry on my underwear; there is something about that which makes me proud. More likely though, it is a small crust, or stain, on his flies. It may be a trace from the hurried fuck before dinner, with me or someone else, or it could be from his own hands. Either way, the sight of it fills my nose with its smell and makes me salivate, like the sight of an oyster, and the smell of her vulva. It can*

*be a painful trace since it does not speak, nor is it kind, nor does it apologise. It is so strange to find it so frightening, perhaps if you think more about what it makes you feel, rather than what it means, this acquired taste might become a staple.*

London Dust.

*This combines into the fur balls that gather in the creases of the steps leading to the tube platform. Galaxies of it form, combining urban micro-bodies: hairs, clothing fibres, skin particles, dead molecules, and no doubt microscopic pieces of genitals, or indeed microscopic genitals of microscopic organisms.*

*These are all traces that combine here; they are the remnants of stories, the residue, the evidence of everything. It is all there before us. All the loves, the fucks, the painful evidence of the unseen truths that are invisible yet played out on our bodies and the bodies of our lovers. Animal hairs, dead insects, air plankton, particles that might have changed the course of a life are all there, to be sniffed at by dogs, noticed by toddlers, whose fascination gives these clusters the weight they deserve. God's fingerprints rest there, delicious with stories, they are kept away from food. Surprisingly though, I have noticed that when making my best urban sauce, it is best to do so with grimy hands fresh from adventures within these urban orifices and passages.*

*The flavour is enhanced.*

## **Method**

Through this recipe, we see how striking the right note for the urban eating experience is less about fancy light bulbs, expensive wines, stark interiors and expensive dishes; rather it is about bodies colliding fully into one another: it is all in the mixing. This experience and assemblage of bodies overturns and queers desire, pulling it away from its set course, and causing it to fly and burst from its hetero-chains. Through these tales, or descriptions of necessary ingredients, we find that urban eating is an experience of collapsing into other bodies, and of slippage and reconfiguration of seemingly settled desire lines. Through the collapsing of the human/inhuman membrane, the eating-body is not only shocked, but revealed as co-created. The recipe's scenes of out-bursting desire from normative constraints show that both human and non-human bodies are powerful actors, playing unexpected parts at unexpected times in an unexpected unfolding of the story. Human bodies both desire and become non-human bodies, overturning logics of lust, hunger, consumption and disgust. Bodies and parts conventionally considered insignificant, obscene, or as useless waste either from humans or non-humans, become not only visible, but central to the experience of urban eating, and central to desire within urban life.

DINNER

Calçots, Egg Yolk & Wild Garlic Vinaigrette

Sardines, Terna Artichoke & Fennel

Guinea Fowl, Grumolo & Walnut

Baked Cream & Harbinger Rhubarb

£59

Neal's Yard Cheese: Whin Yeats, St Jude & Honey #12

# UNIQUE AND EXCEPTIONAL



**lo Squaderno 56**  
***Urban Recipes***

**edited by // Jaspar Joseph-Lester and Andrea Pavoni**

**Guest Artist // Sharon Kivland**

THOUGHTFUL BUT NOT SHOWY



*lo Squaderno* is a project by Andrea Mubi Brighenti and Cristina Mattiucci, coedited with Andrea Pavoni.

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Steak tartare on toast 13

Chicory salad with walnut dressing 7

Calcots with duck egg gribiche 12

Snails with Alsace bacon, shallot and frisée salad 9.5

Charred Italian greens, yoghurt, toasted almond and lemon 11

Mussels with ham broth, parsley and garlic 7.3

Smoked eel, January King chestnut, buckwheat crêpe 15

'Christian Parra' boudin noir, parsley root and charred radicchio 17

Hake with waxy potatoes, monks beard, saffron and white wine sauce 25

Roasted Challans duck breast, pearl barley, chanterelle mushrooms and carrot 29

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Fear the City

squade