



Safer at Home Archive Project

by Ani Boyadjian, CHSC Liaison



The COVID-19 pandemic may have shuttered our libraries and sent staff home mid-March to learn new skills and cope with the new normal, but it didn't stifle our creative spirit. Through Zoom meetings with barking dogs, juggling home and work in the same location, coping with home schooling and sometimes illness, library staff were still thinking of ways to tell stories and amp up our virtual programs and presence.

Library staff recognized--through their own experiences--that everyone is dealing with this pandemic in their own way. The simple act of shopping became a risky proposition. Neighbors began sharing backyard produce in baskets in front of their homes. Children were isolated at home without their classmates and were left to cope with something beyond their understanding. The elderly became even more isolated. Everyone has been forced to live in a new rhythm, and make sense of this new world. Library staff thought, how can we collect stories and record this? How can we serve as an creative outlet for the public, and encourage them to share their stories or images? Could this be cathartic as well as an important endeavor?

And thus, the *Safer at Home Archive Project* was born: an attempt to record, for posterity, Angeleno stories and experiences during this unprecedented pandemic. This project was the brainchild of Kelly Wallace, Librarian III and California Subject Specialist for the History and Genealogy Department at Central Library and Suzanne Im, Acting Manager for Digitization & Special Collections. The aim of the project is to collect, preserve and make accessible materials that demonstrate how Angelenos lived, worked and coped during the pandemic. The project has been accepting digital surrogates of photographs, diary entries, letters and correspondence, poetry, artwork, any creative endeavor that is related to the pandemic. Patrons are encouraged to upload digital files using a form on our website (www.lapl.org/safer-archive) and even provide metadata or description for their items.

These records of times during the crisis will be made available via *Tessa*, the Library's digital records collection (tessa.lapl.org), as not only a reflection of our psyche during this time, but as a sort of time capsule that can benefit researchers and students of this period in the years to come.

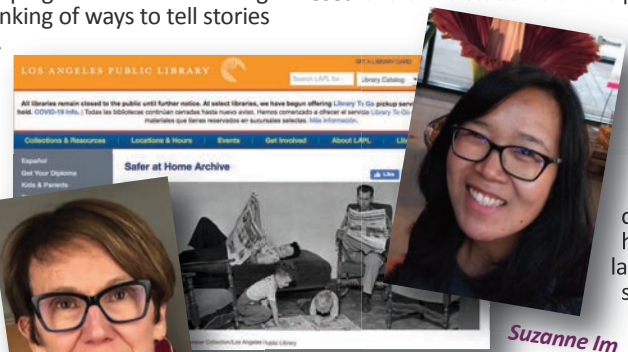
To date, Angelenos have made over 1,500 entries to the Archive, proving that the public has been hungry to share their images and experiences. Teachers from local schools have reached out to see how to engage their students, and even other library systems have contacted us to get more information on how we launched the project in order to launch their own. The LA County Library system launched their own version shortly after ours (without bothering to rebrand it).

The Project has also received wide press: Our staff have been contacted by media outlets across the country. As Suzanne Im so eloquently stated to Madeline Brand for her *Press Play* program on KCRW ("LA Public Library is creating a coronavirus time capsule," June 5), "Historians and researchers and students of the future are going to look back at this time and maybe see this was the point where most of us started telecommuting broadly, or this was the time when people stopped shaking hands with each other... the pandemic has upended our lives in so many ways, and we just want to show all of the ways in which that's happened."

The *Safer at Home Archive Project* represents catharsis, creation, public engagement and historical record.

Do you have a story to share?

Ani Boyadjian is Research and Special Collections Manager for the Los Angeles Public Library. She is also planning on submitting to the Safer at Home Archive Project.



Kelly Wallace

Think you've already seen every great movie made about food? You might've missed a few. Check out "Delicious food movies to inspire your cooking at home" from CNN: <https://rb.gy/dvairp>



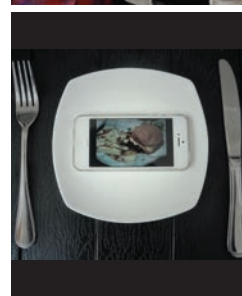
The California Bear-Chef first appeared in the *Pan-Pacific Cook Book*, 1915.



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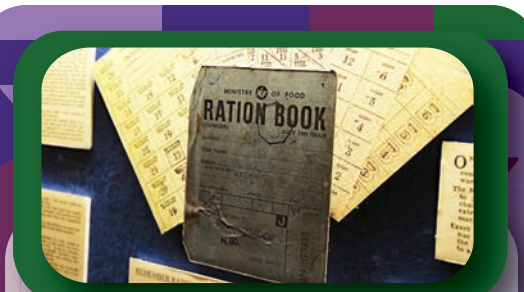
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The Culinary Historians of Southern California



Upcoming Virtual Programs Via Zoom Videoconferencing:

- September 12, 2020**
Anne Willan
"Women In The Kitchen"
- October 10, 2020**
Marc Meltonville
"The King's Chocolate Kitchen at Hampton Court"
- November 14, 2020**
Hae Jung Cho
"Kimjung Kimchi, A Korean Tradition"
- December 12, 2020**
Marcy Carriker Smothers
"The Culinary History of Disneyland and Walt Disney"
- January 9, 2021**
Charles Perry
"That Farm Town, Los Angeles"



Food historians say that innovation tends to emerge during times of crisis. What do today's culinary historians have to say about our current situation and what it holds for the future? Read about it in Los Angeles' writer Shirley Li's article for *The Atlantic*, "In 1950, Americans Had Aspic. Now We Have Dalgona Coffee; Unlike Food Innovations From Crises Past, Coronavirus-Inspired Recipes are More About Stress Relief than Survival." <https://rb.gy/nf9189>

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Dedicated to pursuing food history and supporting culinary collections at the Los Angeles Public Library



Charles Perry
CHSC President

Before Cookbooks Stalked the Earth

We -- not just we CHSC members but most Americans -- find it hard to imagine a time when cookbooks didn't exist. In fact, they're a late development in world literature. In most places around the world there were no cookbooks at all until the late 19th or even the 20th century. Probably some people started writing recipes down not terribly long after writing was invented, but they never thought of collecting them in a reference book, because most people have always learned to cook by apprenticeship, at their mothers' knees. It's an effective way of teaching; it just limits your repertoire.

So in China, that most food-oriented country; there are individual recipes scattered in its vast literature, but the first Chinese cookbook was not compiled until the 14th century, and then it was at the cosmopolitan court of the Mongol emperors. *The Yin-Shan Cheng-Yao* records Middle Eastern and Central Asian as well as Chinese dishes.

In India the closest to a cookbook was the recipes that appear in the *Mānasollāsa*, an encyclopedia of life in the 12th-century court of the Chalukya kingdom. (You don't know the Chalukyas? Take my word, they were mega in the day.) These were less recipes than *characterizations* of dishes, which had to fit the poetic meter in which the book is written. In the 16th century an even less adequate collection of non-recipes appears in the *Ain-i Akbari*, a

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Nancy Zaslavsky
CHSC Vice President,
Programs

Program Notes

What a year. 2020 is one for history books and we are only half way through. Continuing to plod through COVID-19 by wearing masks and social distancing is not what anyone could possibly call fun times. No Hollywood Bowl. No Dodger games. No family reunions. No beach parties. No CHSC programs at the Central Library.

As culinary historians sequestering at home we now have the luxury of time to peruse scanned antiquarian American cookbooks and try historic dishes in our kitchens. CHSC's LAPL liaison, Librarian Stella Mittelbach recommends these classics with on-line sources:

Los Angeles Times Cook Book No.2 (1905)
<https://archive.org/details/timescookbookno200losa>

The Landmarks Club Cook Book
A California collection of the choicest recipes from everywhere, compiled by the Landmarks Club including a chapter of old Californian and Mexican dishes by Chas. F. Lummis.
https://archive.org/details/landmarksclubcoo00land_0

World's Fair Menu and Recipe Book: A Collection of the Most Famous Menus Exhibited at the Panama Pacific International Exposition
<https://archive.org/details/worldsfairenure00lehn>

Pan-Pacific Cook Book
(Note: where CHSC bear illustrations are found)
<https://archive.org/details/pan-pacific-cook-book-1915>

American Cookery
Amelia Simmons (on Project Gutenberg)
<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/12815>

Collection of Early American Cookbooks
(on the Hathi Trust website)
<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/mb?a=listis&c=1934413200>

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Members Remember



Our CHSC members have a lot of great ideas, deep insights, fun memories and of course, a passion for food. Let's ask a probing question and see what they think.

Favorite family or historic recipe?



Jim Bezell and Gwen Morgan-Bezell: Maya crepes. Filled with Huitlacoche. We served this in our home to Gabriela Ortiz, the composer of "Camelia la Tejana," and the Soprano of the opera, prior to its debut with the Long Beach Opera.

Suzanne Dunaway: Oh, so many, but my favorite is **Spaghetti alle Vongole** from la cucina romana. Never tarted up and the best made with only five ingredients, as, for me, most brilliant recipes are! Everyone wants more and focaccia for the juices.



Alyson Cook: My favorite historical recipe is **Coronation Chicken**. The recipe "Poulet Reine Elizabeth" now widely known as Coronation Chicken was created by Le Cordon Bleu London to be served at Her Majesty Elizabeth The Queen's Coronation Luncheon in 1953. This is the extraordinary story of the recipe and of one of the most significant moments of Le Cordon Bleu London. I always heard that it was designed to be driven across town to the reception site, hence it was a cold dish, and an easily transportable dish. I myself went to the Cordon Bleu School in London, and I learnt to make this dish while in school. I was also lucky enough to work for the Queen Mother as a cook many, many moons ago.



Sheila Anderzunus: A family favorite has always been **Galumpki**. We are Polish and Lithuanian. My grandmother made this dish all the time, taught it to my dad, who taught it to me. Stuffed cabbage leaves with ground beef, onion and steamed rice. The cabbage leaves are then simmered in a tomato sauce spiked with a hint of vinegar.

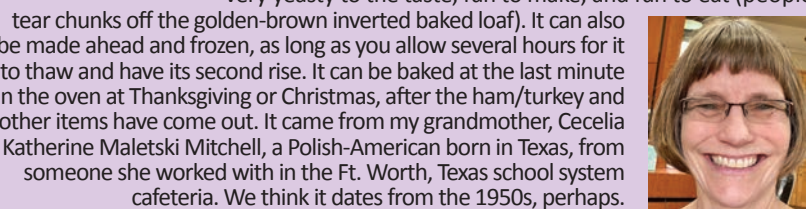
Joanna Erdos: Hungarian Linzer Torte. This recipe was handed down to me by my father from his mother Rose, who had passed away before my parents met. In addition to using her recipe, I use the same turquoise Bauer bowl she used, from the set she bought in 1934 when the family came to California from Hungary. I also use the same Mouli grater she used, and a wooden spoon like the ones she had. When I make this dessert, I feel a real connection to Rose. I don't use any modern equipment so it takes almost a day to prepare, but it is worth it.



Elisa Callow: Date pie - a very delicious and interesting recipe. My reasons for loving it are myriad. It is a part of my family history and ritual as it was introduced to us by my stepmother, Margie, and was served every year as part of our Thanksgiving feast. Its main ingredient, dates, references the very special desert towns and early experiences of my youth when my family would take the ubiquitous station wagon out to JoshuaTree. Last, but not least, the original version was actually published by one of the many late, great date shops in the area.



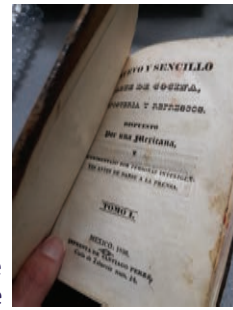
Jill Hoskins: My favorite family recipe is **Monkey Bread**, a kind of yeast roll cooked en masse in a tube or Bundt pan. It's very yeasty to the taste, fun to make, and fun to eat (people tear chunks off the golden-brown inverted baked loaf). It can also be made ahead and frozen, as long as you allow several hours for it to thaw and have its second rise. It can be baked at the last minute in the oven at Thanksgiving or Christmas, after the ham/turkey and other items have come out. It came from my grandmother, Cecelia Katherine Maletski Mitchell, a Polish-American born in Texas, from someone she worked with in the Ft. Worth, Texas school system cafeteria. We think it dates from the 1950s, perhaps.



To download the recipes mentioned above, please visit by 9/25/20: <https://docdro.id/joUc36a>

Antiquarian Acquisition by Stella Mittelbach, CHSC Liaison

In February 2020, the CHSC purchased a copy of the first printed cookbook by a female author in Mexico for the Los Angeles Public Library. *Nuevo y Sencillo Arte de Cocina: Reposteria y Refrescos, Dispuesto por una Mexicana y Esperimentado por Personas Intelegentes Antes de Darse a la Prensa* by Antonia Carrillo was published in 1836 in Mexico City and includes hundreds of recipes for traditional dishes, desserts and drinks.



According to the U.C. Davis Library's Department of Special Collections, which also owns it, "This book is a rare example illustrating early 'new world' food and wine types written by a female author during an era when female authors are not common."

The leather-bound item, containing volumes I and II, is now shelved in the Rare Books Department at Central Library. To view a full text version, go to the Hathi Trust website: <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/api/volumes/oclc/183216418.html>

Nancy Zaslavsky, Program Notes, Continued from Page 1

CHSC is awaiting word from the Central Library as to when we can get back to our normally scheduled Saturday morning programs. Until then we are gearing up to offer virtual programs to view online in the safety of your home starting in September with Zoom programs. Zoom is easy to master as a participant and before you know it you will be conversing with guest speakers.

We are thrilled Anne Willan will be the first Zoom speaker September 12th at 10:30AM via her home in London on "Women in the Kitchen" from her latest book of the same title. Another of our favorite Brits, Marc Meltonville, will treat us October 10th to "The King's Chocolate Kitchen at Hampton Court" about reconstructing the original palace space. Hae Jung Cho is speaking November 14th on "Kimjang Kimchi, a Korean Tradition." Marcy Carriker Smothers talks December 12th on "The Culinary History of Disneyland and Walt Disney." Hold onto your hats! Charles Perry Zooms into your home January 9, 2021 with "That Farm Town, Los Angeles" about the days when our economy was based on agriculture. Of course, if the Taper Auditorium is open Charles will be behind the podium—and very much live. Hope to see you there!

The Culinary Historians of Southern California www.chsocal.org

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In Memoriam: Board Member Marilyn Beaudry-Corbett passed away peacefully at home on July 14, 2020. Her husband Don was with her.



By Richard Foss, CHSC Board Member

City seafood restaurant that offered all-you-can-eat seafood. One gets the sense that his nostalgia was less about the family table than for any place serving a good dinner.

Sailors in the tall ship days had their own art form, the shanty or chantey, work songs that had a particular cadence depending on the task to be accomplished while they were sung. There are endless variations on these, some of which complain about the monotony and low quality of the food at least in passing. The most pointed is an extended insult to the pickled beef carried in barrels in the hold of almost every ship. This was very heavily brined to retard spoilage and was notoriously tough, and was generally referred to as "salt junk." Some sailors suspected that it wasn't beef at all, but meat from old worn-out horses passed off as beef by unscrupulous purveyors. This resulted in the song, "Salt Horse," sometimes called "The Sailor's Grace." This was sometimes performed with great theatricality when a sailor would pull some chunk of slimy salted meat from the barrel and proclaim,

*"Salt horse, salt horse, we'd have you know
 That to the galley you must go;
 The cook without a sign of grief
 Will boil you down, and call you beef.
 And, we poor sailors standing near,
 Must eat you though you look so queer;
 Salt horse, salt horse, what brought you here?"*

It should be noted that this complaint might not have been hyperbole. One of the advantages of selling inferior provisions to a ship's crew is that by the time they discover the quality of the merchandise, they will be very far away and not likely to immediately come back and demand a refund, or even worse, revenge.



Harper's Weekly, August 2, 1862

Probably the most poignant of the sea chanties from the era of sail was "Leave Her, Johnny," which was traditionally the last song sung at the end of a long voyage. It is a rhyming catalog of grievances against everyone and everything aboard, sung as a way to blow off steam before parting company. There are many verses recorded, some of which insult the cook, the quality of the provisions, and accuse the officers of providing short rations. One couplet is poetic but succinct:

*"Goodbye to the skipper, the cook and the crew,
 Leave her, Johnny, leave her.
 We're tired of the food, and we're tired of you,
 And it's time for us to leave her."*

The lives of sailors and soldiers in the nineteenth century were dangerous and monotonous, and they were forced to live on irregular portions of dismal food. It is a measure of the creative human spirit that they were able to find ways not merely to survive, but to laugh and celebrate with songs that would be shared around the fire long after the guns were silent and the sails were set.

****This article is an excerpt from a project about food songs in America, and is copyright Richard Foss 2020. Distribution or reprint without written permission is prohibited.****

Thank you to our generous Angels, Benefactors & Patrons

The Culinary Historians of Southern California acknowledges the generosity of members who have joined or renewed at the Angel, Benefactor and Patron levels. Your gift allows our organization to enhance member services and increase our support of the culinary collections of The Central Library.

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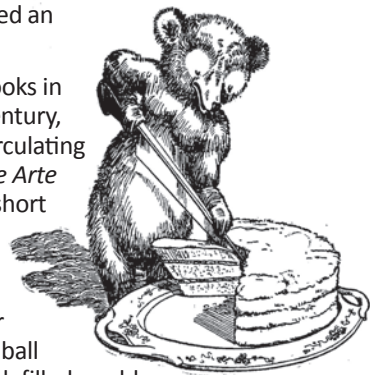
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Charles Perry, Before Cookbooks Stalked the Earth, Continued from Page 1

similar encyclopedia covering the court of the Mughal emperor Akbar. The "recipes" don't describe how to make the dishes at all -- they're just shopping lists for the ingredients. (News flash: The Mughals were very big eaters.) One factor here might be the traditional Indian distrust of the written word. In principle, teaching is always supposed to be oral. Even when you're studying a text, it's supposed to be explained to you by a guru.

In Greece and Rome, there was a flourishing trade in real cookbooks, focusing on recipes of the two enduring areas of interest, health foods and special-occasion dishes. The 2nd century cookbook ascribed to the gourmet Apicius, *De Re Coquinaria*, was clearly compiled by combining at least two such books. Presumably the gastronomic dishes served the usual social-climbing function of haute cuisine. It was social climbing that led to the explosion of cookbooks in Arabic in the later centuries; gentlemen of the court in Baghdad had to know how to whip something up in case the Caliph organized a cooking contest, so they compiled little personal recipe collections. In the 10th century, the prince of Aleppo asked a scribe to find out for him what the cool kids in Baghdad were eating, and this created an explosion of cookbooks.

As it happens, the writing of cookbooks in Arabic petered out after the 13th century, but by that time they had started circulating in Europe, beginning with *Libellus de Arte Coquinaria*, a collection of 31 ultra-short recipes -- one to four sentences -- for cutting edge stuff like chicken with dumplings and roast fish in vinaigrette (called "hunter style," for some reason). Europe ran with that ball and eventually made this a cookbook-filled world.



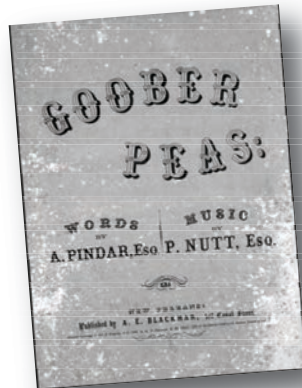


Put Down Your Guns, Pick Up Your Forks, And Sing!

Songs about food in the military and at sea in the 19th century

Singing has always been a way of lifting the spirits of a group, and throughout history the military and marine professions have created distinctive music. The people in these dangerous trades were separated from normal society and formed a tight brotherhood with its own slang. They shared something else: a long tradition of complaining, in music, about the quality of their food.

We might suspect this tradition would go back to Roman soldiers versifying on the culinary deficiencies of Germania and Gaul, but as none of those ditties have survived, I will concentrate on examples from America in the 1800's. For the military, this was of course the era of the American Civil War. That conflict was less than a year old when a soldier named Fowler of the First Iowa Infantry produced the first great food song of the war, a parody of Stephen Foster's 1854 hit, "Hard Times Come Again No More." The subject was the famously indigestible crackers called hardtack that were a staple at every meal:



**"Let us close our game of poker, take our tin cups in our hand
As we all stand by the cook's tent door
As dried mummies of hard crackers are handed to each man.
O hard crackers, come again no more!
Tis the song, the sigh of the hungry:
"Hard crackers, hard crackers, come again no more."
Many days have you lingered upon our stomachs sore.
O, hard crackers, come again no more!"ⁱ**

Fowler's rank and even his first name are unknown - most sources give his name as Josiah, some as James, but officers and men alike shared his opinion of hardtack. No one has ever been recorded as actually liking these flinty, flavorless, tooth-breaking biscuits. Their only virtue was that age could not make them much worse than they were immediately after they left the factory. A more positive look at the military diet arrived in 1863, when some unknown poet wrote "The Army Bean," a song that became popular on both sides of the battle lines.

**"There's a spot that the soldiers all love,
The mess tent's the place that we mean,
And the dish we like best to see there
Is the old-fashioned white army bean...**

**Now the bean in its primitive state,
Is a plant that we often have met,
And when cooked in the old army style,
It has charms we can never forget..."ⁱⁱ**

Beans took a lot of time to cook and were the food of troops in camps rather than on the march, so soldiers that were eating beans were more comfortable than those that weren't. As such it is hard to discern that sarcasm level of lyrics extolling the joys of eating beans day after day. It is possible that the song was originally intended sincerely but sung ironically later.

ⁱ This song was sometimes sung as "Hardtack, come again no more," which scans better than the original. The same rations were called hard crackers in the Western theater of the war, hard crackers in the Army of the Potomac.
ⁱⁱ I have had several different recreations of hardtack and they were all horrible, and I suspect that anything that wasn't horrible, wasn't really hardtack.

There is no question about the intention behind a ditty praising dried boiled peanuts, which were almost the only food available to some Southern regiments late in the war. The song "Eating Goober Peas" was probably written in 1863, and one of the earliest records of the lyrics comes from Confederate internees in an Ohio prison camp in 1864. The verses include complaints about soldiers wearing out their teeth eating these unpalatable rations, and one verse evokes the noise of an entire regiment eating crunchy dried peanuts at the same time:

**"Just before the battle, the General hears a row
He says "The Yanks are coming, I hear their rifles now."
He turns around in wonder, and what d'ya think he sees?
The 15th Alabama, eating goober peas."**

The song was popular in the South well after the war, and the sheet music credited authors "A. Pindar & P. Nutt, Esquire."ⁱⁱⁱ "Eating Goober Peas" is still remembered in some quarters of the military, and Alan Alda as Hawkeye Pierce of M.A.S.H. sings it in a 1977 TV episode. Filmmakers sometimes do this kind of thing to signal to veterans watching the show that the screenwriters have done their homework.



Some songs about food in the military are about escaping it. An example first recorded in 1866 is brilliant considering the original context of the tune. "Dear Mother, I've Come Home to Die" was a tearjerker from 1863 about a soldier making one last visit home before facing certain death. A musical genius named John C. Cross transformed this lament into "Dear Mother, I've Come Home to Eat," in which a soldier is furloughed home due to a severe case of indigestion caused by bad army food. On being greeted by his tearful mother, his only thoughts are on the meals he is going to have while in New York.

**"When lying stretched out in my tent,
Wounded with a codfish-ball
I often heard the bugle sound,
And thought it was the dinner-call;
Then visions of the past came back,
Of Boston-chowder and pig's-feet.
O Mother dear! Don't weep for me:
Dear Mother, I've come home to eat!"^{iv}**

It is notable that the soldier's longings were not limited to home cooking. He mentions spending an hour at Meschutt's, a New York

ⁱⁱⁱ For those who missed the wordplay, that name "Pindar" is derived from the Kongo Bantu word mpinda, which was introduced into Carolinas Gullah dialect by slaves. It is sometimes spelled "pinder."
^{iv} John C. Cross evidently had some anti-war sentiment, as he wrote two songs promoting McClellan's 1864 campaign for President against Abraham Lincoln. It isn't clear whether or when Cross served in the military, but his songs were popular with troops.
^v Stan Hugill includes two versions of this song in his definitive book "Shanties of the Seven Seas, but there were many other versions.

I've been baking (and eating!) enthusiastically during this pandemic-cookies, cakes and a ton of bread. I find bread the most satisfying to make because it takes some time and a bit of effort, it's comforting, and every loaf has its own unique personality. During this crisis, I notice a lot of my social media feed includes photos and recipes for bubbly sourdough starters and beautiful crusty loaves created by home and professional bakers...Why?

I decided to research this California classic. Sourdough has been around "for most of human history" and global variations and techniques are as diverse as the world's people themselves. Within California, San Francisco is the city best known for this tangy bread. These loaves' interesting history dates back to the California Gold Rush of 1849. The legend is that miners would wear the "mother" dough (the original recipe) in pouches around their necks to keep it at the perfect temperature for fermentation. In the Bay area, Boudin Bakery was the first bakery specializing in sourdough and still operates today with a starter that began more than 150 years ago. *Sunset* magazine first published a recipe for sourdough bread in 1933 and after 40 years of modifying it, finally landed on the perfect combo of ingredients for a tangy and chewy result (the secret is yogurt in the starter). The bacteria that develops in this region's sourdough starter was so unique it was given its own name in the 1970's: *L. sanfranciscensis*.



A recent, quick Google search for "sourdough" yielded 56,200,000 results! That's a ton of dough! I've read many recipes for sourdough starter made from whole rye, but also made from apples, grapes, and pineapple juice. I've learned about generational sourdough starters, tried recipes that incorporate sourdough starter into other baked goods (like pancakes), and I've seen firsthand the many ways baking and sharing food help communities come together, especially in times of crisis.

I contacted L.A. native and local bread baker Roosevelt (Rosey) Larks Jr., owner of Breadbeast, for his thoughts about this current food movement. Breadbeast sells on-line only <https://www.breadbeast.com> and delivers fresh homemade breads, such as classic sourdough and

olive sourdough, to customers around Los Angeles. They also donate bread to local charities.

Breadbeast is a garage business that started up in earnest around the second week of this past March. Rosey explained, "As the reports started coming out on the pandemic and my work stoppage (I work in TV production), I started purchasing bags of flour. I really didn't want to start a business it just kinda happened. My wife Dev made a Facebook post and we were off and running."

"I bake in my home. I have a double oven setup. I use the Dutch oven method of baking sourdough bread. I am the only baker at Breadbeast. There are not a lot of bread bakers in this area of town making sourdough like this, so I'm a novelty." His sourdough country loaf is inspired By Chad Robertson, the author of the book *Tartine* and owner of the namesake bakery in San Francisco.

As I've discovered during the pandemic, creating a sourdough starter is delicate, tricky, frustrating, and hard to master. "I do use a starter," Rosey said. "Her name is Snow White. She sleeps in the fridge until I need to bake, then I give her a "kiss" of fresh water and flour and she's ready to go. I made her last year from scratch and she's very robust and active. I don't necessarily feed her every day. Only if my baking needs call for it. When I do feed her I leave her on my counter at room temp for at least 5 hours, and only after I see active bubbles do I put her back in the fridge for the next bake."

By the time this article is published, I'm sure there will be many sourdough starters named "Stay at Home 2020" and many interesting stories to go along with it.



Carole Rosner is a native Angelino who enjoys cheesy comfort food, beautifully decorated desserts, secret neighborhood eateries, and easy to follow dinner recipes. Her lemon coconut squares are always a hit, the oldest cookbook she owns is from 1937, and she's a fan of competitive cooking shows.

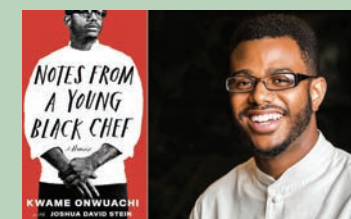
Across the country and amidst COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, the movement to demand racial justice, embodied by the Black Lives Matter protests, is inspiring calls to action and opportunities to listen and to learn. To support these discussions, particularly in the context of black culinary history, we've compiled some timely articles to explore:

How Black Culinary Historians Are Rewriting the History of American Food by Ruth Terry, *Yes Magazine*, <https://rb.gy/hcyfaj>

This Juneteenth, I don't feel like celebrating. Instead, I'm cooking barbecue in memory of Black lives lost by Lazarus Lynch, *Washington Post*, <https://rb.gy/b79y8i>

Hunger Is A Form Of Violence We Must Address by Michael Twitty, *Huffington Post*, <https://rb.gy/r1096k>

Change Is Uncomfortable, but Change Leads to Growth by Kwame Onwuachi, *Powells Books*, <https://rb.gy/f9wwhr>



Kwame Onwuachi: "If real change begins with awareness and a deep understanding of the issues at hand, I hope that my personal journey will shed new light and add a human dimension to ongoing national conversations about race and restaurant culture."

16 Black Chefs Changing Food in America by John Eligon and Julia Moskin, *New York Times*, <https://rb.gy/eobgfd>

Every Southern Food Enthusiast Worth Their Salt Needs These 8 Books By African-American Chefs and Authors by Ryan Shepard, *southernkitchen.com*, <https://rb.gy/ua5zzx>

Black Communities Have Always Used Food as Protest by Amethyst Ganaway, *Food and Wine*, <https://rb.gy/wm8xuq>

For the Culture: a forthcoming magazine celebrating Black women in food and wine by Kerensa Cadenas, *The Cut*, <https://rb.gy/nstpj0>

How a James Beard Rising Star Brought the Bake Sale Back to Its Political Roots: With Bakers Against Racism, Paola Velez is serving up pastries with a side of sweet, sweet justice by Stephanie Gravelese, *Inside Hook*, <https://rb.gy/4j8ygm>

Have you ever wondered why beer and salted peanuts go so well together? Scientists know the answer: Salty tastes inhibit bitter ones, so the nuts tame the beer's bite and allow some of its other flavors to step forward. Once you know this principle, you can apply it in many other ways. Serve the nuts (or pretzels) with gin and tonic. Add a little extra salt if tonight's broccoli is especially bitter. Put a pinch of salt on your morning grapefruit.

The science of flavor is full of insights like that, but hardly anyone knows about them. That's because flavor barely registers in the screenplay of our daily lives. We rarely examine the flavors we experience, and as a result we don't know how to talk about them or think about them. Here's a thought experiment to prove it: Take a moment and bring to mind one of your favorite pieces of music. Is it the subtle use of the saxophone in the bridge section? The way the first violin and cello trade the theme back and forth? The moment of breath-holding suspense just before the vocals start? Chances are, you can put your finger on several specific elements that make that music sing for you.

We are the only species that seasons its food, deliberately altering it with the highly flavored plant parts we called herbs and spices.

Now try to describe your favorite apple variety in the same detail. Why do you like, say, Fujis better than any other? Most likely, you'll stammer out a few generalities about crispness or sweetness or "more flavor." But unless you're a trained apple taster (and such people do exist), you probably won't be able to manage much more than that. You certainly won't be able to name the apple's flavor elements as nimbly as you named the instruments in your favorite music, and you probably won't have much to say about how the flavor profile of each bite builds and ebbs.

And our imprecision is not confined to just apples. Can you describe how the flavor of halibut differs from red snapper? Or how Brie cheese differs from Cheddar? The fact is that for most of us, flavor remains a vague, undeveloped concept. We say "dinner tasted good," or "I like those peaches," but we never dip beneath the surface of those superficial responses. It's not that we're blind to flavor. If you can recognize that a Fuji apple differs from a Spartan, or that Brie differs from Cheddar – and almost all of us can – you have the basic perceptual tools to explore the world of flavor in greater depth.

Paying attention to flavor makes life not just richer but deeper, because flavor appreciation may be a uniquely human gift. The biology of our species – the fact that we live in social groups, inhabit essentially every environment on Earth, and eat a diverse, omnivorous diet – means that our ancestors had to become very good at certain skills. They had to recognize faces to tell friend from foe, neighbor from relative, and honest dealer from cheater. This recognition skill is special and unique to faces. It's not just a consequence of sharp perception and attention to detail – we have nowhere near the same ability to recognize people by their hands, for example.

Flavor recognition is another of humans' special skills. As omnivores, our ancestors had to judge what they could eat and what they couldn't, and flavor is how they made that decision. Those skills are now part of our evolutionary heritage. "All humans are flavor experts in the same sense that we're face experts," says Paul Breslin, a leading psychologist who studies flavor perception. "It is literally a life-or-death matter. If you eat the wrong things, you're dead." We recognize the flavor of a strawberry or a pineapple or a green bean in a flash, even if we can't put a name to it without prompting.

In fact, our flavor sense may have played a large role in making humans into the species we are. Anthropologist Richard Wrangham argues that we could never have evolved our huge, expensive brains without the easy calories made available by cooking. Raw food simply don't yield

enough calories to get our modern, big-brained bodies through the day. Our cousins the chimps spend hours each day laboriously chewing their raw foods to extract the calories – time and energy that humans can put to better use. And people who follow a raw-food diet typically lose significant weight, even with blenders and juicers to take the place of constant chewing. Cooking breaks down indigestible tissues into smaller, more digestible fragments, and thus helps us get more from our meals for less effort. And in the process, it creates a whole host of delicious new flavors.

We are also the only species that seasons its food, deliberately altering it with the highly flavored plant parts we called herbs and spices. It's quite possible that our taste for spices has an evolutionary root, too. Many spices have antibacterial properties – in fact, common seasonings such as garlic, onion, and oregano inhibit the growth of almost every bacterium tested. And the cultures that make the heaviest use of spices – think of the garlic and black pepper of Thai food, the ginger and coriander of India, the chili peppers of Mexico – come from warmer climates, where bacterial spoilage is a bigger issue. In contrast, the most lightly spiced cuisines – those of Scandinavia and northern Europe – hail from cooler climates. Once again, our uniquely human attention to flavor, in this case the flavor of spices, turns out to have arisen as a matter of life and death.

Our unusual anatomy cooperated in making humans connoisseurs of flavor. Our upright posture and oddly shaped head (compared with other mammals) helps our noses focus less on smells coming from the outside world and more on the flavors wafting up from the food in our mouths. When you enjoy a delicious piece of cheese, or a glass of wine, or a cookie, you're engaging more brain systems than for any other behavior. Flavor taps into sensory systems for taste, smell, texture, sound, and sight. It involves motor systems for coordinating the muscles that allow you to chew and swallow. It activates the unconscious linkages that regulate appetite, hunger, and satiety. And, not least, it fires up the higher-level thought processes that help you identify, evaluate, remember, and react to what you're eating. That's a big bundle of brain activity from a simple bite of food.

Flavor pulls on our brains in subtle but powerful ways. When odor information – the most important component of flavor – enters the brain, it goes directly to the ancient parts of the brain responsible for emotion and memory. It doesn't reach the conscious, logical part of the cerebral cortex until several stops later. That's the neuroscientific basis for flavor's remarkable ability to move us: A taste of a favorite food can transport us back to our childhood more powerfully than a song or a photo ever could. That emotional pull may also explain why immigrants hold on to the flavors of their native country long after they've adopted new languages, new modes of dress – even, sometimes, new religions. Food binds ethnic groups together across generations and across oceans and national boundaries. We so often use flavors as ethnic markers, with the treasures of one culture being seen (at least initially) as disgusting by others. The French have their stinky cheeses, the Americans their peanut butter, the Australians Vegemite, and the Japanese the mucilaginous fermented soybeans known as *natto*.

The roots of flavor, it seems, run deep into the human condition. But flavor also spices our daily lives. All of us have to eat every day, and most of us seek out tastier foods when we have the choice. Grocery

shoppers consistently report that flavor is their main guide in deciding what to buy each week, trumping considerations of health, price, and environmental impact. And people rate the pleasure of a fine meal higher than sports, hobbies, reading, or entertainment. Only holidays, sex, and family time ranked higher. And when asked why that fine meal is so pleasurable, more people cite flavor than any other reason.

For millions of people, the act of cooking a daily meal is a creative, rewarding experience. We read cookbooks, trawl the Internet for interesting new recipes, and gradually build our kitchen repertoires. Yet most home cooks approach flavor haphazardly. We do what the recipe says, or what we've always done. Sometimes we mix things up by following our intuition and tossing in a handful of basil or sprinkling a grating of nutmeg. But we're just following instructions, or intuition, or tradition; we lack the deeper understanding of flavor that could give shape to our efforts. In a way, we're like the self-taught guitarist who can copy riffs by ear but can't read music and has no formal training in harmony. We bumble along pretty well, and occasionally stumble on something that works beautifully. But think how much more we could accomplish with a better understanding of what we're doing.

For an eye-opening (palate-opening?) demonstration of how little most people know about flavor, take what I call the jelly bean test. Get hold of some jelly beans or other candies that come in a mix of flavors. Now close your eyes, pinch your nose, and have a friend hand you one of the candies. Pop it in your mouth – still pinching your nose – and pay attention to the flavor. Not much there, right? You'll get the sweetness of sugar, of course, and maybe a little sourness or saltiness, depending on the candy. But what flavor is the jelly bean? You won't be able to tell.

Now release your nose, and see how the flavor suddenly explodes into your mouth. What was once merely sweet and a bit sour is now suddenly LEMON or CHERRY! What's changed is that you've brought your sense of smell into the game. Even though we refer to the "taste" of the jelly bean, taste itself is the least important part of the equation. Most of the flavor we actually experience is the result of smell, not taste. (For an even more vivid illustration of this point, hold your nose and try to tell the difference between a cube of apple and a cube of onion. It's harder than you think.)

The English language contributes to the confusion. We have separate nouns, "taste" and "flavor," but we use them in greatly overlapping ways. Decades ago, psychologist Paul Rozin found that English speakers generally use taste when they're referring to sweet, sour, salty, and

bitter, which – along with the less widely known umami – form the five basic tastes that our tongue can detect. But we use taste and flavor almost interchangeably to refer to the bigger picture – the whole jelly bean, if you will. And when it comes to verbs, we make no distinction at all, using taste for everything all the time.

We say that dinner tasted good and mean much more than merely that it was properly salted and not too bitter. Indeed, when we have a cold we say we can't taste anything – even though, in fact, taste is all we have left when our nose is plugged. One word, two meanings – that just about guarantees confusion. We also have the verb "savor," but it

FLAVOR
THE SCIENCE OF OUR
MOST NEGLECTED SENSE
BY BOB HOLMES

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doesn't help much. To savor something usually implies that we ate with pleasure. No one would say, "I savored dinner and didn't like it." (Other languages are no better: Rozin polled native speakers of nine other languages and found that most use just a single word to cover both taste [in the strict sense] and flavor. Only two – French and Hungarians – have two different words, and even the French blur the distinction somewhat.)

Within the past few years, however, scientists have made huge strides toward understanding every step of the pathway from food to perception to behavior. It's no exaggeration to say that the science of flavor is one of the fastest-moving and most exciting disciplines around these days. A large proportion of the hundreds of scientific papers I read in the course of research for this book are just a year or two old.

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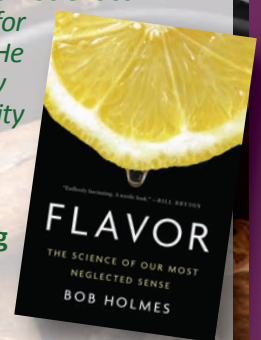
In the early 1990s, biologists Linda Buck and Richard Axel identified the receptors responsible for detecting odor molecules, work that earned them a Nobel Prize in 2004. With receptors finally in hand, and aided by the human genome sequence completed early this century, other researchers are racing to crack the code by which the nose encodes the many different smells – possibly many millions – that compose the flavors of the foods we eat. Others are identifying the chemical receptors that detect a chili pepper's fire and the cool of mint.

As scientists refine our understanding, we're coming to realize that every person on the planet lives in their own unique flavor world defined by their genetic endowment, their upbringing and later food experiences, and the culture in which they live. We're beginning to learn how these unique flavor worlds help define some of our strong likes and dislikes for certain foods. Take for example, former U.S. president George H.W. Bush's famous distaste for broccoli. ("I do not like broccoli," Bush told reporters back in 1990. "And I haven't liked it since I was a little kid and my mother made me eat it. And I'm president of the United States, and I'm not going to eat any more broccoli!") We can't know for sure without testing the former president's genes, but it's a pretty good bet that Bush carries a particular genetic variant of one specific bitter taste receptor, which makes broccoli and other mustard-family vegetables taste especially bitter to him. Your own genes undoubtedly shape your food preferences in similar ways – although genetics is not destiny: not everyone who tastes the bitterness hates it.

From our senses to the kitchen, flavor is a much deeper and more complex subject than most people realize. I'm certainly no virtuoso. I'm just an amateur cook with middling ability and above-average enthusiasm, with a nose of roughly average ability. If I can find my way into a world of high-definition flavor, anyone can.



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