

## Here's to 25 years of culinary historical merrymaking!

Looking at past activities of the CHSC from the weblink below, we have a lot to be proud of in the wide ranging, fascinating and informative free lectures (and accompanying tastes) presented nearly every month at the Los Angeles Public Library. Our members also have lectured on historic culinary topics at other libraries. In addition, our members visited local ethnic restaurants together where we sampled special menus tailored to us explained by the chef.

The varied themes and delicious menus of annual members' parties and picnics in historic and other unique venues in Southern California have created memories and a camaraderie I treasure. I've had the opportunity to develop themes, menus and recipes for the last 8 or so parties, and have had a blast. I've been a member for over 20 years and the CHSC still continues to add significantly to my life.

Here's to a great future for the CHSC!

Janet Fahey, CHSC Board Member



### A sample of CHSC programs over the years:

- 1996** The Beginnings of Wine-making in Southern California: The Mission Era with Dr. Thomas Pinney
- 1999** Mediterranean Grains and Greens with Paula Wolfert
- 2007** When So Cal Went Ag: Past and Present Stories of Farming & Farmers' Markets in So Cal with Amelia Saltsman, Molly Iwamoto Gean, Laura Avery
- 2010** The Jemima Code: A Cook's View Into the Heart, Soul and Recipe Box of California's Wise Servants with Toni Tipton-Martin
- 2013** What's Not to Like About Modern Industrially Processed Foods? An Historical Perspective with Rachel Laudan
- 2016** Aphrodisiac Foods Through History with Amy Reiley
- 2019** Surrealism, Cubism, Modernism, and Food with Carolyn Tillie

Curious to see more? View the complete list here:  
<https://docdro.id/B1veUIZ>

## "Dining with the Persian Emperor" – June 5, 2021 by Nancy Zaslavsky

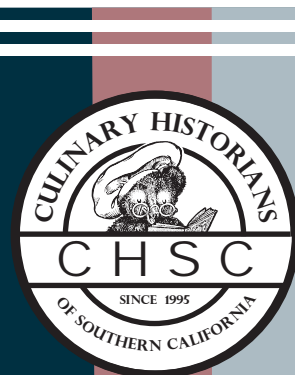
Another epic historic dinner cooked by Charles Perry at Don Corbett's home for the Culinary Historians of Southern California auction winners. So glad to be in on the win!

Dinner was "Dining with the Persian Emperor" a meal based on the description of imperial banquets in the 6th c. combined with Persian recipes from a 10th c. cookbook. Charles began the evening with his homemade "medieval perfumes" (incense). We had quite a selection of Shiraz/Rhone wines, including some older vintages, for our drinking enjoyment. Crisp-crunchy candied walnuts; Candied myrobalans (a.k.a. Indian gooseberry); Roasted chicken breast with vinegar-mustard-soy-dill-garlic sauce ("chicken standing in for barren female gazelle" as only Charles can deadpan), served with carrots, fried onions and grape molasses; Canapé of lamb, pistachios, herbs, and pickled lemons; Sikbâg, our main dish of lamb in saffron-flavored aspic; ending with honey-pistachio turnovers and candied ginger.

Thanks so much for your generosity, Charles Perry and Don Corbett.



Pictured (top row): Charles Perry, Don Corbett, Nancy & Morris Zaslavsky, Eric Boardman. Pictured (bottom row): Harriet Brown, Elizabeth Kahn, Lamb in Aspic, Honey-Pistachio Turnovers and Candied Ginger



## Upcoming Virtual Programs via Zoom Videoconferencing:

**August 14, 2021**

**Eric C. Rath**

**"Sushi Before Sushi, Umami Before Umami: The Hidden (Fermented) History of Japanese Food"**

**September 11, 2021**

**Barbara Haber**

**"Community Cookbooks: Overlooked Gems on Library Shelves"**

**October 9, 2021**

**Pamela Cooley**

**"Searching for Amelia: My Quest for the Author of the First American Cookbook"**

**November 13, 2021**

**Robert Wemischner**

**"Baking 101: My Roundabout Route to a Career"**

**December 11, 2021**

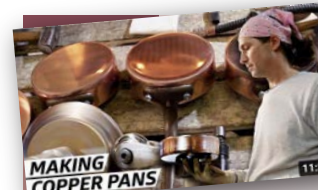
**Genevieve Bardwell**

**"The Appalachian Tradition and Culture of Salt Rising Bread"**

**January 8, 2022**

**Charles Perry**

**"I Visited Yemen for the Food. Yes, the Food"**



We came across this video. It's interesting on different levels:

- A former rocket scientist is making artisan copper pots
- A vintage stock pot purchased during a vacation in France inspired him to restore historic cookware
- There's a lot of skill needed to create quality copper pots
- His interesting business name derives from the annals of American food history
- Makes you wonder what foods were cooked, how they were prepared and the stories behind these old pans
- His specialized business exists because of people who also love culinary history and craftsmanship

Check it out: <https://youtu.be/mTztlpAcips>

# THE FOOD JOURNAL

Summer 2021

Vol. 20 • No. 1

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



**Charles Perry**  
CHSC President

## The Triumph of the Eggplant

The eggplant started out in Southeast Asia with one advantage -- it grows prodigiously well in warm climates (it just about took over our back yard when I was growing up) -- and two disadvantages. The first is that raw eggplant flesh is creepy, all grayish and spongy, and people could tell it was related to the deadly plant nightshade, so as it spread from India through the Mediterranean, doctors gravely warned people against eating it.

The other is that its richest flavor is produced by frying, but this concentrates its bitterness (not so much today, with the development of milder varieties), and for a long time that made fried eggplant . . . problematic. That is, until the practice of salting it to remove the bitterness was discovered in the 9th century and people began to defy their doctors' warnings. In present-day Cairo, the cry of the eggplant peddler is *'arus el-qaleyya*, more or less "the queen of fried foods."

As eggplant spread, it continued to fight its bad rep. In Italy, it was at first treated like the potentially dangerous mushroom, boiled and dressed with oil and vinegar. In France, the prejudice remained much longer. As late as 1776, a dictionary declared that eggplant was only used to make soothing poultices for treating burns, hemorrhoids and cancers --

*Continued on page 7*



**Nancy Zaslavsky**  
CHSC Vice President,  
Programs

## Program Notes

As Covid creeps through California with its variants we're staying put, taking advantage of Zoom and our local library's curbside service while simultaneously becoming Netflix addicts. Like me, have you become a homebody cooking a lot more? Did you sneak through the sourdough marathon without gaining ten pounds? How many summer stone fruit tarts, pies, crumbles, bettys, buckles, grunts, crisps, and cobblers have you pulled from your oven during these sweltering days? Oh, right, there are those two quarts and four pints of ice cream in the freezer. You're cool.

"2021 Year of Zoom" (as if you need to be reminded) started off in January with the annual Charles Perry president's lecture. "That Farm Town, Los Angeles" brought us back to days prior to freeways and downtown towers when our landscape was cattle grazing land, wheatfields, and orange groves. Per Charles: "Los Angeles is a city that has grown so fast it scarcely has a memory of itself." February continued with virtual programs when The Reverend Sharon Sheffield spoke on "Our Daily Bread" as she discussed myths in the nooks and crannies of religious and social culinary history. Our own Flo Selfman, the CHSC Media Relations Chair, spoke in March on "Someone's in the Kitchen with Dinah (Shore)" about her years working with the popular television star. Richard Foss, our Special Events Chair, entertained us in April with "The Strangest Cooking Methods in the World" in a light-hearted history of culinary innovation from prehistory to the present day. May brought Ronald W. Tobin's fascinating talk on "Booking the Cooks: Literature and Gastronomy" where he noted, "The poet and the cook are both supreme creators of metamorphosis and illusion." Ken Albala's lively Zoom talk in June "Japanese Luxury Ingredients and Their Transmission to the West" highlighted traditional

*Continued on page 6*

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



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The Culinary Historians of Southern California

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<https://www.chsocal.org/become-a-member/>



## 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.

What's the greatest kitchen tool or appliance ever invented?

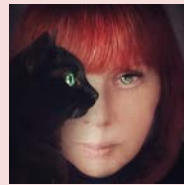


**Andrew Choate:** The salad spinner is my favorite kitchen tool - the one I use at least once a day. A leaf or two here, a handful of herbs there - rinse, and spin, spin, spin, baby!



**Darien Morea:** While I can't say that my tool was the greatest invented, I thought about the tool that gives me the most pleasure. And it's simply my wooden toaster tongs. With them, I never have to unplug the toaster before digging out my stuck bagels, which is daily. The thought of getting electrocuted by sticking in a knife, which was definitely pressed upon me by my mother, is never a thought that is far away.

**Linda Zimmerman:** The Cuisinart food processor. I had a cheesecake business and it cut my prep time down considerably. I still use my original DLC 7 almost daily that was made in Japan. I bought it at Geary's in Beverly Hills on a promotion in the late 1970s!



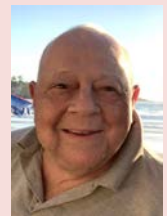
**Nancy Zaslavsky:** My favorite kitchen tool is an old carbon steel French chef's knife. In thanks to my husband Morris's diligence, it's kept super sharp and at the ready (to cook him dinner).



**Kathleen Thompson Hill:** Egg beaters = Kitchen Revolution. Through most of the 19th century frothy foods were considered a status symbol because it showed you had servants whose life purpose was to spend hours hand-whipping eggs and other foods. The labor saving egg beater began the kitchen evolution, revolution, and democratization.



By the 1890s, 692 separate patents were issued for newfangled eggbeaters.



**Don Corbett:** The wooden spoon is useful for adding and mixing ingredients and can be used for eating when necessary.

## A Letter from the Editor

The Food Timeline's legacy has been saved! You may have already heard about the passing of New Jersey Librarian Lynne Olver who created and curated the free, open-access culinary history website, Food Timeline. This accessible and expansive website reached over 35 million readers and is hailed as one of the most valuable resources for students, teachers and researchers of culinary history. Most fondly remembered because of Olver's commitment to the project and her personal responses to thousands of inquiries over the years. Her family set the food world abuzz by asking the public for help with stewarding the website and preserving her legacy.



After a period of little interest, the situation changed as the media continued to cover the story last summer. 87 organizations and individuals expressed serious interest, including celebrity chefs, fiction writers, food fanatics and library science programs. Who was selected? The Special Collections and University Archives department of Virginia Tech University. Their proposal aligned with the Food Timeline's mission, the website would continue without online ads, they could provide the time and technical expertise, and they were open to different departments and faculty contributing to the project. Also, Olver's collection of books are being catalogued into the History of Food & Drink library which would make it accessible to the public. The project is in transition, but the team will be able to answer reference questions in the near future.

<https://www.eater.com/22224776/food-timeline-lynn-olver-virginia-tech-university>  
<https://foodtimeline.org/>

*Sharon*

## What the great ate: Maria Callas



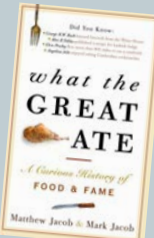
Maria Callas found a natural method of losing weight: the tapeworm.

Callas, a Greek soprano who was the most famous opera star of the post-World War II era, was often overweight when she was young. Even while living in Nazi-occupied Athens, her weight soared as she supplemented war rations with black-market food, stuffing herself with dried figs, nuts, and ersatz sausage. One critic ridiculed her physical appearance in the opera Aida, complaining that "it was difficult to discern Callas's ankles from those of the elephant in the scene."

The soprano's transformation into an international beauty began in 1953 after she saw Audrey Hepburn in the film *Roman Holiday* and resolved to become slim. And indeed she did, dropping nearly seventy pounds. Her method was a matter of controversy and rumor. Officially, a no-pasta, no-bread, raw-meat diet was credited. When an Italian food company called Pantanella Mills advertised that its "dietetic" pasta made the soprano svelte, Callas sued. Pantanella Mills was run by the nephew of Pope Pius XII, and the pope himself appealed for Callas to drop the lawsuit. She refused and won.

It was eventually discovered that the cause of Callas's weight loss was neither pasta nor the lack of it. In fact, she had swallowed a tapeworm. Callas explained that she must have consumed the worm in either a salad or raw meat, but friends later said it was no accident. On friend, Giulietta Simionato, said Callas told her, "Look, there are many stories about this, but it's true that I ingested a tapeworm. I took it voluntarily and that's how I lost thirty kilos."

Jacob, M. [Matthew] & Jacob, M. [Mark]. (2010). *What the great ate: a curious history of food and fame*. New York, NY: Three Rivers Press/Random House.



## The Culinary Historians of Southern California

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



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## 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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## Charles Perry, The Triumph of the Eggplant: Continued from Page 1

ironically, since medieval doctors specifically warned that eggplant caused cancer (and leprosy). Really, though, this was only true in Paris, where eggplant would not be launched on the market until 1825. In the south of France, people had blithely been eating ratatouille for a long time.

The Arabic name for the eggplant, *badhinjan*, eventually spread to every European language from Portuguese (*beringela*) to Russian (*baklazhan*) except for American English. We happen to preserve the name the British gave to the first eggplants they saw, the Southeast Asian varieties that bear small white fruits which do look like eggs. When the plant reached the American South in the early 19th century, it managed to preserve the name eggplant, possibly the earliest recipe being the one in *The Virginia Housewife, or Methodical Cook* (1824): slice it an inch thick, bread it and fry. "They are very delicious, tasting much like soft crabs," Mary Randolph assured her readers. Judge for yourself, say I. Also, I'd say an inch is maybe a bit too thick.

The basic ways of using eggplant, apart from a bitter flavoring as in Southeast Asia, were discovered centuries ago: to enrich stews, to make savory pastes like *baba ghanouj* and the Turkish *begendi*, or to be fried up nice and brown. One serious advance was made in 1970, but so far the world has damnably ignored it. KR Gammatsaev and MS Aminov, two scholars at the University of Dagestan (a republic in the northern Caucasus -- near Chechnya, if that helps), discovered that flavor is improved and shrinkage is reduced if you cook eggplant *in a vacuum*. I look forward to the late-night infomercials for the Eggplant Wonder Cooker.

## Barkies 25c lb.

—the aristocrat of frankfurters. Let the youngsters eat all the Barkies they want. They are pure and healthful, made of as choice meats as you would serve on your table . . . without cereal or artificial coloring.



Detail from Young's Market Company advertisement, July 2, 1927, Los Angeles Times

## Hot Dogs in Southern California Before Pink's

by Tiffney Sanford

Southern California is generally seen as a hamburger mecca thanks in part to its car culture and drive-in restaurants such as Simon's, Roberts Brothers and Bob's Big Boy. But what was our relationship with the hot dog before the beloved Pink's opened in 1939?

Whether called a red hot, wienerwurst, or frankfurter, Los Angeles had a love affair with hot dogs by the 1890s. A September 1894 article in the *Los Angeles Times* noted a high concentration of food carts that could be found near Main and First, thanks in a large part to the proliferation of saloons in the area. The wienerwurst carts competed alongside the popular tamale men and oyster carts.

Hot dogs were perfect holiday fare. Over the 1913 July 4th holiday weekend it was estimated that 150,000 visited Venice, Ocean Park, and Santa Monica. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, famished visitors caused provision houses to run out of supplies and hot dog stands to close down without a way to replenish their precious commodity. One vendor in Venice at Windward Avenue and Trolleyway sold his spot and his kettle for \$400 in 1918 (\$6000ish today). His friends said he earned \$15 to \$25 a day on the spot (\$200-300 today). Popularity and profit margin assured that the hot dog business was profitable.

It was this supply and demand that had stands popping up overnight at popular events throughout the southland. Society pages were filled with fundraising events that served hot dogs, including those of the Ebell Club, the future Motion Picture and Television Home and the Hollywood Bowl. Early twentieth century newspaper coverage of the Rose Parade and auto races mention the price of a "hot dog" was ten cents-- double what it was everywhere else-- and 'nobody kicked' about the inflated rate.



Kids enjoying the Pup Cafe in Venice at 12728 Washington Blvd [c.1920] Security Pacific National Bank Collection/Los Angeles Public Library

In 1923, Young's Market advertised that their store-made weiners [sic] or frankfurters were 18 cents per pound for those that wanted to cook their own at home. By 1927, Young's was selling "Barkies." Marketed as a healthful foodstuff and dubbed "the aristocrat of frankfurters," their price had jumped to 25 cents per pound.

By 1924, the *Los Angeles Times* noted that visitors to Venice (CA) consumed 3.5 tons of hot dogs weekly. Carts had been supplanted by hot dog "palaces," which numbered more than fifty and many seated more than 300 people. The *Times* describes the dogs as cooked on a griddle. They were served with mustard, two slices of pickle, a crisp piece of lettuce, and delivered on a napkin. By the sheer number of establishments and visitors, the popularity of a seaside hot dog available year-round rivaled Coney Island. Hooray for Hollywood hot dogs!



This article has been edited due to space constraints. The original appeared on *Hollywood Gastronomical Haunts*: <http://laheyday.blogspot.com/2016/07/before-pinks-hot-dogs-in-southern.html>

Tiffney Sanford joined the Culinary Historians in 2007 and enjoys researching and traveling to Southern California food spots and libraries. She maintains (to varying degrees of regularity) the blogs *Hollywood Gastronomical Haunts* and *Los Angeles Library Tour*, and contributes to the *Los Angeles Public Library* blog.



## Deep Dive Into Cuisine of Philippines

The CHSC recently acquired a trove of Philippine culinary books for the Los Angeles Public Library. Here are some of the highlights:

### **Tikim: Essays on Philippine Food and Culture (Revised and Updated) by Doreen G. Fernandez**

“When one asks today, therefore: What is Philippine food? The answer can be neither brief nor simple.” Celebrated food columnist and culinary historian Fernandez, who passed away in 2002, covers a lot of ground in this groundbreaking work originally published in 1994. From mundane noodles to exotic balut, from the many colonial influences to the indigenous, this book is a crash course in Philippine cuisine and culture.

### **The Governor-General's Kitchen: Philippine Culinary Vignettes and Period Recipes 1521-1935 by Felice Prudente Sta. Maria**

This collection of essays, folklore, menus, and period recipes is chock full of food-related archival documents and photographs of the Philippines. The governor-general in the title refers to the government executive of the Philippines during the colonial period when the Philippines was governed by Spain, the United States, Japan, and briefly Great Britain. This eclectic book provides evidence of the many cultural influences on the country's cuisine and foodways, such as the Chinese, the Malay, and the Catholic Church.

### **Philippine Breads by Gene Gonzalez**

Author Gene Gonzalez explains that tinapay (Filipino for “bread”) reconciles “Western recipes with Asian taste preferences.” The recipes are divided up into five sections: Modern Day Breads, Everyday Breads, Rich Breads, Specialty Breads, and Biscuits, Cookies, and Snacks. A handful of the recipes have unusual ingredients such as annatto seeds, malunggay, cane vinegar, jackfruit (langka), pili nuts, and mango extract. However, most of the recipes use ingredients one can find anywhere.



### **By Stella Mittelbach, CHSC Library Liaison**

### **Also Filipino: 75 Regional Dishes I Never Had Growing Up by Angelo Comsti**

Filipino food writer and chef, Angelo Comsti, traveled to 22 provinces in the Philippines to gather recipes from locals. “Unlike other countries, the Philippines has a distinct penchant for sour flavor,” he asserts which is “born out of the need to prolong” food's shelf life in the time before refrigerators when people relied on vinegar and salt. Comsti includes regional variations on classic dishes such as adobo (meat cooked in a vinegar sauce) and sinigang (a soup), as well as including more unfamiliar dishes using pork lungs and rotten duck eggs.



### **Food Tour: A Culinary Journal by Claude Tayag**

This 2006 publication is a breezy collection of articles written by Tayag for the Philippine Star newspaper about his gastronomic adventures in the Philippines and beyond with his wife. Included are many charming illustrations by the author as well as recipes. Culinary and regional history are woven into the local travel articles and a very necessary glossary of Filipino food terms is included in the back for the uninitiated.

### **In Good Taste (Kusina III) by Doreen G. Fernandez**

This collection of restaurant reviews steeped in culinary knowledge that the author wrote for the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* was published posthumously in 2003. The restaurants reviewed were all in the Philippines and run the gamut from American to Filipino to Vietnamese. In each review Fernandez drops in culinary history of the dishes eaten and the cuisine's place in relation to Pinoy life.

## The Wonder and Wisdom of Edible Botanicals

by Carole Rosner

It's been a stressful time for everyone, so for my pandemic relaxation, I've been known to spend way too much time staring at outlandish floral arrangements and beautifully decorated cakes on Instagram. What I've seen lately when I take my deep dive into social media is the trend of edible flowers covering culinary concoctions.

One of my most recent obsessions appeared on my Instagram feed from California native, Loria Stern. Of course, I'm going to go crazy over her “Flower Key Lime Pie”—it combines real flowers and pie! This treat was only available for Mother's Day and quickly sold out. Baked with organic ingredients and natural food colorants like beet, matcha and turmeric, this pie was completely decorated with pansies, daisies, marigolds, and more.

Apparently, I'm not the only one blown away by Loria's goodies. In addition to over 226,000 Instagram followers (@loriastern), Loria has been featured in *saveur.com*, *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *The New York Times Style Magazine*, and the *Los Angeles Times*, to name a few.

I had the opportunity to ask Loria about her business and gain a little insight into edible flowers and herbs.

Loria describes herself as a “chef, baker, gardener and artist.” With a home garden measuring approximately 350 square feet, I wondered if her garden inspired her or if her recipes inspired what she grows.



“Everyone I know would rather eat a real flower than a heavily processed and handled flower made out of sugar paste and chemical food coloring.”



Loria Stern and some of her culinary creations.



“My culinary journey started growing up in Ojai with a Mom who was a talented cook. I recall helping my Mom in the kitchen as early as three years old. Baking was always my greatest joy. I started combining botanicals and baking in 2012 when I was working as a pastry chef at a fancy hotel. I was enrolled in an adult education class entitled “Medicinal and Edible Plants.” I was mastering French culinary techniques during the week, while learning about these types of wild plants on the weekend. The first batch of botanical shortbread cookies I made was in 2014 and once I started posting photos of them on my Instagram, I found myself running a quickly growing cookie business. That was when my garden came in—I had some potted herbs and indoor plants, but when dozens of cookies orders were consistently coming in, I decided I needed a larger garden to create bounty for my cookie orders. Buying edible flowers is an option, but there is nothing like growing, harvesting, and baking with the flowers you grow yourself -- I find that most rewarding.”

Loria comes up with lots of imaginative products using flowers and herbs--tamales, spring rolls, hot cross buns and even pasta, so I wondered how a recipe gets developed and if sometimes creations just don't work out. “That's a good question. I guess my recipes get developed by inspiration from the season or when a customer orders a dish and then I put my own spin on it. Before making a recipe I've never made before, I usually research several different recipes, watch YouTube videos for the more labor intensive or technique driven dish, and create my own recipe based on healthy ingredients and what I see what's growing in my backyard.”

One of the surprises about Loria's creations is the brightness that remains on the blooms after they are baked. I asked Loria if there is a secret to keeping the flowers so vibrant when exposed to heat. “There absolutely is, which I share in online cooking classes and in my forthcoming cookbook!”

Besides the beauty of the food, Loria's products have to taste as good as they look. Most people have never tasted a pansy, carnation, or hibiscus. “Each flower has a



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.

very different flavor-- pansies have a mild fresh flavor with notes of wintergreen, depending on the variety and how much you eat. Carnations have a peppery flavor profile, almost on the verge of spicy without going all the way there. The miniature versions of carnations, called dianthus, taste like cloves or nutmeg. Hibiscus tastes tart, like a bright lemony flavor. Generally, a whole flower tastes stronger than eating a few petals alone. Please remember to only eat flowers that are grown organically, without chemical pesticides, which rules out almost everything from florists to garden centers and nurseries.”

I know many professional and home cooks use edible flowers in their bakes and I wondered why this has become so popular. “I think there are several things going on in our culture that makes edible botanical baked goods so popular right now-- first, our culture is definitely health minded and using all natural, non-processed and non-chemical laden ingredients, is always best. Everyone I know would rather eat a real flower than a heavily processed and handled flower made out of sugar paste and chemical food coloring. Secondly, Instagram and sharing photos on social media is the way we communicate these days, and edible flowers on baked goods are always photogenic and an interesting addition to the tablescape.”

Loria has many exiting things on the horizon including a brick and mortar bakery and a TV show. Seems like everything's coming up roses for Loria!

Visit Loria's online store at: <https://loriastern.com>

## Traveling abroad this year? Not until COVID-19 case rates are better?

Courtesy of Atlas Obscura, if you're looking for interesting places around the world to visit, here's some that may whet your appetite - when the time is right.

### **Entrepreneur of the Year:**

A chef's curiosity brought him to the Pacaya Volcano in Guatemala where he now cooks pizza over hot lava rocks for visitors: <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/pizza-pacaya>



Photo credit: David Garcia Mansilla

### **Try the tasty 50 year old soup:**

You can enjoy a bowl of beef stew, called *neua tune*, that has been perpetually simmering since the Bangkok restaurant owner was a child, over four decades ago. The soup is revived and flavor balanced with seasonings every day. <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/neua-tune-45-year-soup-wattana-panich>



Photo credit: ALEXVQJ

### **A wedding cake that outlasted many marriages:**

An elaborate, four-tiered, uncut wedding cake was made in 1898 by C.H. Philpott's Bakery in Basingstoke, England. After decades on display in the store window, it's still moist and on view at the local Willis Museum. <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/oldest-wedding-cake>



Photo credit: ADOYO

### **Eat and drink at an old urinal:**

Is this the best idea or the worst idea ever? Enjoy a warm espresso downstairs at a reimagined cafe in London which houses ornate historical urinals from the 1890s. <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/the-attendant-fitzrovia>



Photo credit: JESSEMIERS

### **But you've never seen a submerged restaurant:**

There's a large and spectacular architecturally designed restaurant that partially resides 16 feet underwater at the southern tip of Norway. <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/worlds-largest-under-water-restaurant-norway>



Photo credit: ADVENTUROUSMEE

## Nancy Zaslavsky, Program Notes: Continued from Page 1

food ingredients discovered by early Portuguese, Dutch, and Italian merchants with later discoveries and then re-discoveries. Continuing virtually, June Hersch spoke on “Yogurt, the World's Oldest Food Fad” in July when she took us on a fascinating yogurt adventure starting thousands of years back to a world of similar products on today's supermarket shelves.

Have you had a chance to check out the new CHSC Cookbook Club? Meetings are free and open to members the first Monday of the month from 4 to 6pm. It's not the type of club where you have to buy a book each month, but more a bevy of pals who enjoy researching interesting topics in culinary history from their own collections and online resources. For information please e-mail one of the co-chairs, Cathy Behrens or Chelley Maple—their contacts are in the membership directory.

CHSC programs are recorded and you can find them on the CHSC website, [chscocal.org](https://chscocal.org). On the Home page click on Events and then Past Events to find a talk you may have missed or want to view again. If you're not a member please consider joining. On the Home page click Join Today, and then click Become a Member to fill out the Membership form, click Sign Up Now and finally click Checkout. You're all set, and thank you!



# The Pirate Who Penned the First English-Language Guacamole Recipe

William Dampier's food-writing firsts included the use of the words "barbecue" and "chopsticks."

By Luke Fater



A 1697 oil painting of Dampier holding a book. National Portrait Gallery.

For all the perceived glamour of piracy, its practitioners lived poorly and ate worse. Skirting death, mutiny, and capture left little room for comfort or transformative culinary experience. The greatest names in piracy, wealthy by the day's standards, ate as one today might on a poorly provisioned camping trip: dried beef, bread, and warm beer. Those of lesser fame were subject to cannibalism and scurvy. The seas were no place for an adventurous appetite. But when one gifted pirate permitted himself a curiosity for food, he played a pioneering role in spreading ingredients and cuisines. He gave us the words "tortilla," "soy sauce," and "breadfruit," while unknowingly recording the first ever recipe for guacamole. And who better to expose the Western world to the far corners of our planet's culinary bounty than someone who by necessity made them his hiding places?

British-born William Dampier began a life of piracy in 1679 in Mexico's Bay of Campeche. Orphaned in his late teens, Dampier set sail for the Caribbean and fell into a twentysomething job scramble. Seeing no future in logging or sugar plantations, he was

sucked into the burgeoning realm of New World raiding, beginning what would be the first of his record-breaking three circumnavigations. A prolific diarist, Dampier kept a journal wrapped in a wax-sealed bamboo tube throughout his journeys. During a year-long prison sentence in Spain in 1694, Dampier would convert these notes into a novel that became a bestseller and seminal travelogue.

Parts of *A New Voyage Around the World* read like a 17th-century episode of *No Reservations*, with Dampier playing a high-stakes version of Anthony Bourdain. Aside from writing groundbreaking observations on previously un-researched subjects in meteorology, maritime navigation, and zoology, food was a constant throughout his work. He ate with the locals, observing and employing their practices not only to feed himself and his crew but to amass a body of knowledge that would expand European understanding of non-Western cuisine. In Panama, Dampier traveled with men of the Miskito tribe, hunting and eating manatee. "Their flesh is ... [extraordinarily] sweet, wholesome meat," he wrote. "The tail of a young cow is most esteemed. A calf that sucks is the most delicate meat." His crew took to roasting filleted bellies over open flames.

Dampier was later smitten, on the island of Cape Verde, by the taste of flamingo. "The flesh of both young and old is lean and black, yet very good meat, tasting neither fishy [nor] any way unsavoury," he wrote. "Their tongues are large, having a large knob of fat at the root, which is an excellent bit: a dish of flamingo's tongue [is] fit for a prince's table." Of Galapagos penguins, Dampier found "their flesh ordinary, but their eggs [to be] good meat." He also became a connoisseur of sea turtles, having developed a preference for grass-fed specimens of the West Indies: "They are the best of that sort, both for largeness and sweetness."

While you won't find flamingos, penguins, or turtles on too many contemporary menus, several contributions from *A New Voyage* reshaped our modern English food vocabulary. In the Bay of Panama, Dampier wrote of a fruit "as big as a large lemon ... [with] skin [like] black bark, and pretty smooth." Lacking distinct flavor, he wrote, the ripened fruit was "mixed with sugar and lime juice and beaten [on] a plate." This was likely the English language's very first recipe for guacamole. Later, in the Philippines, Dampier noted of young mangoes that locals "cut them in two pieces and pickled them with salt and vinegar, in which they put some cloves of garlic." This was the English language's first recipe for mango chutney. His use of the terms "chopsticks," "barbecue," "cashew," "kumquat," "tortilla," and "soy sauce" were also the first of their kind.

One entry, however, would have dire consequences for the Crown and one unfortunate crew in the South Pacific. Dampier wrote passionately of a Tahitian fruit: "When [it] is ripe it is yellow and soft;

and the taste is delicious ... The inside is soft, tender, and white, like the crumb of a pennyloaf." He and his men dubbed it breadfruit. For British sugar planters of the West Indies, who struggled to feed their enslaved laborers on small plots of land, these broad-branched, fast-growing, nutritious fruits, which required little cultivation and stood up to hurricane winds, rang of an ideal solution. Dampier unknowingly sold the British on breadfruit, which served as the impetus for a British mission to bring a thousand potted breadfruit trees from the South Pacific around the Horn of Africa to the West Indies. With the ship retrofitted to shelter the saplings, the miserably crammed and mistreated crew mutinied, leading to the fiasco, book, and film that came to be known as the *Mutiny on the Bounty*.

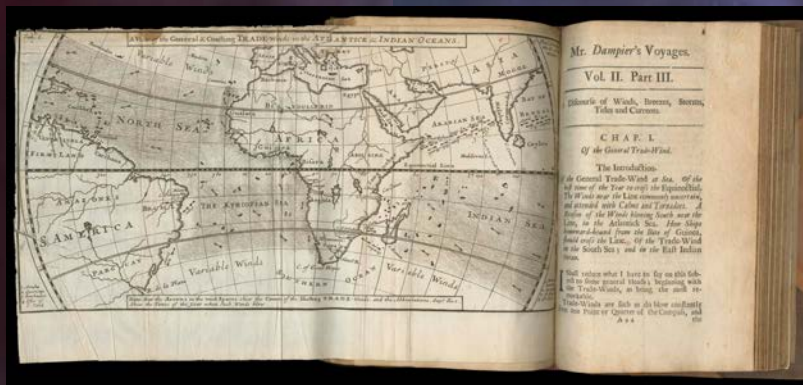
In the years following its publication, *A New Voyage* became an international bestseller, skyrocketing Dampier to wealth and fame. The first of its kind, the work generated a hunger among European audiences for travel writing, serving as an inspiration for Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. Charles Darwin brought a copy of *A New Voyage* with him aboard the *Beagle's* voyage to South America, having cited the book as a "mine of information." Noting his keen eye for wind and current mapping, the British Royal Navy consulted him on best practices, later extending him captainship of the *HMS Roebuck*, on which he was commissioned for an in-depth exploration of South Africa, Australia, and Indonesia.

Despite the popular excusal of his pirating days, Dampier eluded long-term renown due to one entry from *A New Voyage*. His observations on the aboriginals of Australia were employed, decades after its publication, as justification for the colonization of Oceania and the subsequent genocide of its original inhabitants. In 1697, he wrote that "the inhabitants of this country are the miserabest people in the world. They differ but little from brutes." And indeed, viewing the aboriginals on a scientific expedition in 1770, Sir Joseph Banks, president of the British Royal Society and advisor to King George III, wrote, "So far did the prejudices which we had built on Dampier's account influence us that we fancied we could see their color when we could scarce distinguish whether or not they were men." The later publication of a full transcript of Dampier's journals does indicate an up-close and far more favorable analysis of the aboriginals, yet by then the Crown's campaign to colonize was well underway, and his reputation as a bigot was sown. For generations, Dampier was taught throughout much of the Commonwealth as, first and only, a piratical figure.

Other negative testimony accumulated against him in court-martials later on as well: He lost the *Roebuck* to a leak and was accused of mistreating and even marooning subordinates—par for the course in the life of a pirate. Disgraced and indebted by court fines, Dampier died penniless, and his exploits became mere footnotes between the nary-criminal lives of Sir Walter Raleigh and James Cook. Nevertheless, each time you order avocado toast, call some friends over for a barbecue, or ask for a pair of chopsticks, you are living Dampier's legacy.



Dampier's legacy sparked the infamous Mutiny on the Bounty. National Maritime Museum.



Pages from *A New Voyage*. State Library of South Australia.



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**Luke Fater** is a freelance writer and photographer covering food and travel. Upon earning a history degree from Ursinus College, he spent several years pursuing work in ESL, refugee resettlement, and back-of-house restaurant work before moving to Brooklyn to take on food writing full-time. He enjoys long bike rides to the far edges of NYC, tending his hoard of houseplants, and is eagerly looking forward to the return of live music. His work has appeared in *Atlas Obscura*, *Gastro Obscura*, and *Counter Service*.