

INTRODUCTION

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Why a cookbook, and why does it matter to a Faculty of Humanities?

Food represents our edible world. It is a concept, an idea and a practice. It is because food is more than a micronutrient and a science. Food represents what Appadurai¹ describes as the social lives of things. It is deeply sociocultural² and fundamentally associative and relational.

Food is about its potentialities and multiple meanings: it is comforting, energising, and restorative. It plays a special role in our personal lives and sense of self-definition and shapes our well-being. Food speaks to the sensorial and the affective: taste, smell, sight and the various pleasures and emotions it induces when combining ingredients, flavours, aromas, tools and techniques. It becomes even more meaningful when it is shared and exchanged. But food also turns our attention to wicked challenges that must matter to us: hunger, starvation, global capitalism and much more. Let us not forget the latter in the visceral and embodied pleasures of eating.

In this cookbook, we are in celebration mode, flavoured with bits of nostalgia and memory-making. If food opens up mediated relationships, then a Faculty of Humanities is possibly also best placed to showcase our engagement with food and its resonance with some other markers of our collective selves: identity, memory, culture, race, class, gender, national origin, community and heritage. Food, in some ways, opens up bonds of mediated intimacies, what Pratt³ labels a 'contact zone' and the entanglement of various things that induce social attachments. Food represents how we share our histories and heritage. It represents how we learn and how we collectively celebrate. This is because food travels in mysterious and circuitous ways. It lacks a distinctive authenticity inasmuch as we may think it does because it takes on new meanings in the associations it opens up.

The gestation of *HumanEATies* may be traced to a food ritual and act of eating in one of our departments in 2019 when the Faculty celebrated its centenary. When the idea was mooted, I thought this was an ideal way to make sense of our 'food selves' in a Faculty deeply dedicated to a liberal arts education. And so began this book's journey. We invited all our staff and some students to submit recipes they wanted to share that had meaning in their lives.

Of course, life happened in 2020 when things came to a grinding halt with lockdowns

and physical, social distancing in a pandemic world. Yet, in our lives, food, cooking and eating were a welcome constant beyond life and work. Food was embraced and became even more comforting with renewed fervour. Our culinary behaviours and habits shifted during the pandemic and we created communities of foodies too! Food and recipe exchanges were rich in variety, opportunities and flavours. As many of us experienced, we might have even flouted healthy eating in favour of comfort

Assembled here is a selection of recipes in a traditional template of a cookbook that challenges Appadurai's⁴ view that cookbooks belong to "the humble literature". Morris⁵ contends that cookbooks contribute significantly to broader national issues, including the formation of national cuisine and identity⁶. I believe *HumanEATies* represents a particular variant of a UP Humanities-specific foodscape that tells "cultural tales"⁷ and some of which have travelled beyond the written word. What we have packaged represents distinctive food cultures from our faculty.

These recipes also provide personal memories of our staff and students. They were also tested repeatedly during the COVID-19 lockdowns to confirm their broader therapeutic and health benefits that stretch beyond the comfort they provide.

We were also delighted when Dr Hennie Fisher and his final-year Hospitality and Consumer Food Sciences students in the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences teamed up with us. This cookbook is a truly transdisciplinary project between the two Faculties, and we are delighted to present you with a feast of flavours and aromas. Of course, my thanks and appreciation go to our incredible staff and students who generously contributed their recipes, my team led by Heather Thuynsma and Danolien van den Berg, Mariki and Lourens Uitenweerde from Eyescape for the elegant photography, and colleagues who kindly endorsed the book.

I hope that these recipes will provide you with joy and pleasure, indeed memorable cooking and eating for you too!

ENDNOTES

- 1 Appadurai, A. 1986. *The Social Lives of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 2 Counihan, C. 1999. *The Anthropology of Food and Body: Gender, Meaning, and Power*. New York and London: Routledge.
- 3 Pratt, M. L. 1991. "Arts of the Contact Zone." *Profession*, 91: 33-40.
- 4 Appadurai, A. 1988. "How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 30(1): 3.
- 5 Morris, C. 2013. "Kai or Kiwi? Māori and 'Kiwi' Cookbooks, and the Struggle for the Field of New Zealand Cuisine." *Journal of Sociology*, 49(2-3): 210-23.
- 6 see also Murcott, A. 1996. "Food as an Expression of Identity." In: *The Future of the National State: Essays on Cultural Pluralism and Political Integration*, edited by S. Gustaffson and L. Lewin, 49-77. Stockholm: Nerenius and Santerus; Ohnuki-Tierney, E. 1993. *Rice as Self: Japanese Identities through Time*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; Parveen, R. 2017. *Recipes and Songs: Analysis of Cultural Practices from South Asia*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- 7 Appadurai, A. 1988. "How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 30(1): 8.

