

East Asian Foodways across Borders
USC US-China Institute
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Jennifer Jung-Kim (she/her), jungkim@ucla.edu

Synchronous Zoom meetings at 4 pm on Tuesdays, March 12-April 16



Image: rice at harvest and cooked rice

Course Description

Foodways can be defined as culinary practices and eating habits, or described as what we eat, why we eat it, and what it means. In our five-week workshop, we will assess how foodways in East Asia have changed continuously through interactions among people across cultures and over time. In addition to required and recommended readings, you will each complete an individual research project on an aspect of East Asian foodways that pertains to your specific personal and academic interests.

Learning Objectives

- Analyze the migration of people, culture, and practices by focusing on food and foodways within Asia as well as across the Pacific.
- Develop teaching materials and lesson plans incorporating food for use in your classroom (or someone else's).
- Bridge cultures to promote diversity and inclusion and foster multicultural respect.
- Build a learning community through the Forum to share thoughts and information.

Course Schedule

Please view the video presentation and complete the required readings before each class.

Week 1, 3/12 Evolution of Foodways in East Asia

How did foodways evolve through cross-border exchanges within East Asia and beyond?

- View Video 1
- Sidney Mintz, "Asia's Contributions to World Cuisine," *The Asia-Pacific Journal Japan Focus* vol. 7 issue 18 no. 2 (May 1, 2009), <https://apjif.org/-SidneyMintz/3135/article.html>.
- James Farrer, "Globalizing Asian Cuisines: From Eating for Strength to Culinary Cosmopolitanism--A Long History of Culinary Globalization," *Education about Asia* 16 no. 3 (Winter 2011): 33-37. <https://apjif.org/-SidneyMintz/3135/article.html>.
- Q. Edward Wang, "Surprising Facts About the History of Chopsticks," *Fifteen Eighty Four*, March 12, 2015, <https://www.cambridgeblog.org/2015/03/surprising-facts-about-the-history-of-chopsticks/>.
- Marc Jason Gilbert, "Chinese Tea in World History," *Education About Asia* 13 no. 2 (Fall 2008): 8-14, <https://www.asianstudies.org/publications/ea/archives/chinese-tea-in-world-history/>.

Week 2, 3/19 Food, Consumption, and Commerce in 20th-century East Asia How did the consumption of food become commercialized in modern East Asia? •

View Video 2

Select either Dikötter or Cwiertka if you are limited on time

- Frank Dikötter, *Exotic Commodities: Modern Objects and Everyday Life in China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 219-239.
- Katarzyna J. Cwiertka, "Dining Out in the Land of Desire: Colonial Seoul and the Korean Culture of Consumption," in *Consuming Korean Tradition in Early and Late Modernity: Commodification, Tourism, and Performance*, ed. Laurel Kendall (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2010), 19-38.
- Jordan Sand, "A Short History of MSG: Good Science, Bad Science and Taste Cultures," *Gastronomica* (November 2005): 38-49.
- Robert Ji-Song Ku, "SPAM," in *Dubious Gastronomy: The Cultural Politics of Eating Asian in the USA* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014), 190-223.

Week 3, 4/2 Popularization of East Asian Food in America

How did Asian food become popular and cosmopolitan in the US?

- View Video 3
- Eric C. Rath, "The Global Spread of Sushi," in *Oishii: The History of Sushi* (London: Reaktion Books, 2021), 137-175.

- Tony Tai-Taing Liu, “General Tso’s Chicken, Panda Express, and the Identity Politics of Chinese Food and Restaurants in America,” in *Chop Suey and Sushi from Sea to Shining Sea*, ed. Bruce Makoto Arnold, Tanfer Emin Tunç, and Raymond Douglas Chong (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2018), 43- 51.
- Ligaya Mishan, “When a Country’s Cuisine Becomes a Cultural Export,” *The New York Times* (October 12, 2022), <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/12/t-magazine/korean-food-national-royal-cuisine.html>.

Week 4, 4/9 Fast Foods across the Pacific

How did fast foods such as ramen, instant noodles, and Western-style chain restaurants transform fast food in Asia and America?

- View Video 4
- George Solt, *The Untold History of Ramen: How Political Crisis in Japan Spawned a Global Food Craze* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 162-177.
- “EAA Interview with James Watson on Golden Arches East: McDonald’s in East Asia,” *Education About Asia* 8 no 1, (Spring 2003): 7-9, <https://www.asianstudies.org/publications/eaarchives/ea-interview-with-james-l-watson-on-golden-arches-east-mcdonalds-in-east-asia/>.
- Cecilia Hae-Jin Lee, “Love at First Sip: A History of Coffee in Korea,” *Specialty Coffee* 25 no 16 (December 8, 2021), <https://sca.coffee/sca-news/25/issue-16/love-at-first-sip-a-history-of-coffee-in-korea>.

Week 5, 4/16 Food in Literature and Media

How are East Asian foods depicted in literature and media?

- View Video 5
- Michelle Zauner, “Crying in H Mart,” *The New Yorker* (August 20, 2018), <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/crying-in-h-mart>.
- Grace Cho, *Tastes Like War: A Memoir* (New York: Feminist Press, 2021), 1-7, 88-104.

Individual research project to be posted to the Forum. Please prepare teaching materials and/or a lesson plan on an aspect of East Asian foodways that pertains to your specific personal and academic interests. Suggestions include data on East Asian restaurants in your city, comparison of representations of East Asian food culture in programs made for Asian vs American audiences, short interview with a local restaurant owner, chef, or other worker, or review of another East Asian film or drama that has a food focus.

If you’ve read all the way to the end of this syllabus, please visit the Forum and introduce yourself, if you have not already done so. Please also check the forum for discussion questions to help us think about foodways.