Home-Grown Cuisines or Naturalized Cuisines? The History of Food in Hawaii and Hawaii’s Place in Food History

Rachel Laudan
Senior Research Fellow, Institute for Historical Studies, University of Texas at Austin

Abstract

When I arrived in Hawaii in the mid 1980s, the home-grown model of culinary evolution was widely, if tacitly, accepted. It assumes that cuisines develop in place, evolving from simple peasant cooking of local ingredients to refined high cuisine in cities. Hawaii, where successive waves of migrants had introduced and naturalized cuisines from distant places, was a striking exception to the model. The alternative naturalized model provided the key to writing a global food history, which, in turn, shed new light on Hawaii’s place in food history.

Keywords

Hawaii; historiography of food; foodways; cuisine; fusion cuisine; local food; culinary diffusion; Asian cuisine; Anglo cuisine; monarchical cuisine; republican cuisine

Prologue
Islands, particularly isolated islands that are not mere appendages to continental masses, are ideal places to observe changes in species, in societies, in languages, and not least, in cuisines (styles of preparing and consuming food). Largely cut off from all but episodic outside influences, the changes can be dated and delineated much more easily than in the more fluid circumstances found on continental landmasses. I had no idea this was so when I arrived in the Hawaiian Islands to teach at the University of Hawaii in the mid 1980s. I was sure the charms of this self-described paradise--sun, sand, coconut palms, and luauas--would pale within days, leaving me twiddling my thumbs. Instead I found a diverse, evolving environment, a perplexing multi-ethnic society with its own developing creole language (Hawaii Creole English, locally known as pidgin), and the most baffling food I had ever encountered.

“Local Food,” the principle public food, was not local in the usual senses. It was neither biologically local (prepared from foodstuffs indigenous to the place) nor agriculturally local (prepared from foodstuffs grown in the place). Rather it was culturally local, a cuisine that could only have been created by the specific combination of cultural groups that had settled in Hawaii. In the first part of this essay, I describe how I moved from open-mouthed bewilderment at Local Food to writing The Food of Paradise: Exploring Hawaii’s Culinary Heritage (1996), a series of essays that described Local Food and how it had come about.¹

Hawaii’s culinary heritage suggested that the “homegrown” model of culinary evolution that I had always accepted without thinking was badly flawed. According to the homegrown theory (a name I am offering for the first time in this paper), food systems are shaped by the local natural bounty, created in the countryside, and
gradually refined to a high cuisine in the cities. Yet not one of the cuisines in Hawaii was homegrown. Local Food was an invented cuisine that patched together elements from the cuisines of three successive diasporas that had settled the Islands: the Hawaiian from the South Pacific, the Anglo from Britain and the United States, and the Asian, mainly from China, Japan, and Korea. Each group imported and adapted their entire food system (cuisine). This package included ideas about what food was good, techniques and implements for making that food, and the plants and animals preferred as raw materials. Thus Hawaii’s culinary history consisted of three periods of rapid change when a new food system was introduced and “naturalized,” longer periods of slow evolution in between, and then in the mid twentieth century, the rapid creation of Local Food.

For understanding the global history of food, I thought that the naturalized model of cuisines, which had been carried over long distances by migrants, naturalized in places far from their origin, and often layered on older, established cuisines seemed to me to offer promise. It seemed to fit the food history of many parts of the world better than the homegrown model, which assumed that distinct cuisines evolved in parallel in different regions, with occasional intrusions of plants, techniques, or dishes from elsewhere. In the second part of this article I describe how Hawaii inspired me to write a global history, *Cuisine and Empire: Cooking in World History* (2013).² In writing it, I had to expand the ideas I had come up with in Hawaii in a number of ways, particularly in order to emphasize how important ideas were in shaping cuisines, particularly ideas about the social and economic, the moral and religious, and the health and environmental goals of eating.
My more considered understanding of culinary history shed new light on where Hawaii’s cuisines fitted into world food history. In part three, I outline Hawaii’s culinary history in terms of broad global forces and naturalized and invented cuisines. A brief epilogue offers some thoughts about what the future holds for the cuisines of Hawaii.

Creating Hawaii’s Local Food

To say that I did not want to move to Hawaii would be an understatement. Being so far from the U.S. mainland might well be death to my academic career, a foreboding heightened by my colleagues’ chortles as they predicted that I’d idle away my time on the beach. Having already published quite a bit in history and philosophy of science and technology, I worried whether I would be able to complete my research on the history of ideas of scientific and technological progress. The University of Hawaii offered jobs, however, and since jobs for academic couples were few and far between in the days before spousal hires, my husband and I accepted

I was as ignorant as I was unenthusiastic. If, in the rush of organizing a move from the East Coast to the middle of the Pacific, I thought about it at all, I assumed that as on the mainland most of my students would be white, in this case with an admixture of Native Hawaiians. It immediately became clear that they were neither white nor Native Hawaiian. My confusion compounded my fear of “rock fever” on an island 30 miles by 50 miles, our struggle to cope with the astronomical cost of living, and the shock of discovering mainlanders were not welcome, notwithstanding the
famed “aloha spirit” or attitude of friendly acceptance. I was not the only new faculty member who wondered how to come to terms with the Islands.

As it happened, as soon as the semester started, the answer was, quite literally, handed to me on a plate. “Try these,” said Barbara Hoshida, the department secretary, offering golf-ball sized deep fried objects, adding “they’re Okinawan andagi, just like Portuguese malasadas,” as if that made everything clear. Shortly after, Barbara led the cross-questioning of one of the student helpers who had been to an academic award ceremony downtown. The all-important question in these Islands where I was coming to understand that food spoke volumes, was “What had been served for lunch?” “Oh, it was Hawaiian food,” replied the student. “Ah,” said all the listeners as if that explained something. It didn’t explain anything to me. Wasn’t all food in Hawaii Hawaiian food, just as food in California was Californian food? Apparently not. As an adjective, Hawaiian always referred to Native Hawaiian, so Hawaiian food meant specifically the food of the Native Hawaiians.

Day after day, Barbara, the student helpers and the students in class brought in food to share, not for my benefit, but because that was the custom. Day after day, they explained the different combinations of rice, seaweed, fresh and dried fish, canned meat, and salty dried fruit to an ignorant mainlander more familiar with sandwiches, cake, cookies, potato chips, and candies. I prided myself on my knowledge of food garnered from a farming childhood and years poring over cookbooks and working in the kitchen. As Barbara had spotted, I was not nearly as knowledgeable as I thought. “You don’t know much about food, do you?” said Barbara. “Well, we’ll just have to teach you.”
Barbara and my students, I gradually learned, were drawn from one of the three main demographic groups in the Islands: the group of largely Asian descent. Asians, already present in the Islands from the early nineteenth century, had begun arriving in force from the 1870s on, when the Hawaiian royalty and the plantation owners embarked on a search for contract workers for the cane (and later) pineapple fields. Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Okinawan, and Filipinos (as well as a scattering of others such as Portuguese from the Azores and Puerto Ricans) fleeing hunger and political turmoil in their homelands had entered the Islands in overlapping sequence. Many intended to return once their contracts were up. In fact, a high proportion stayed, setting up small farms or seeking a living in Honolulu and smaller cities. As time went on, they intermarried amongst themselves and to some extent with Native Hawaiians and whites as well.

My students all described themselves as Locals. A Local was someone born and raised in the Islands and usually of color. Native Hawaiians also counted as Local, while whites, known as “haoles” were in an ambiguous position, even if born in the Islands. Together these three groups made up almost equal parts of the population although distinctions blurred, everyone delighting in reeling off complicated ancestries that included all three groups. Since as a general rule few local haoles or Native Hawaiians attended the University of Hawaii, my students as well as the University staff were descended from that subset of Locals who had come to work the plantations.

The University provided Local Asian students and staff their first extended dealings with mainland haoles since the military were tucked away on their bases
and the tourists on Waikiki or resort beaches. Locals had good reason to fear that mainland haoles might condescend to them for speaking their first language, pidgin (Hawaii Creole English) and for enjoying Local Food, including the highly regarded Local treat, SPAM. As the importance of Local Food became evident, it occurred to me that one way to break through our mutual lack of understanding and suspicion would be to take my students’ Local Food seriously instead of dismissing it as a joke. What were these dishes called butter mochi, bitsu-bitsu, fried fish bones, kau yuk, and kulolo? Why was the plate lunch ubiquitous? Which dishes came from which ethnic group? Why had some entered the canon of Local Food and others not? And why did it matter so much to Locals to eat Local Food?

On weekends I drove out to the center and south west of Oahu to plantation villages of small frame houses surrounded by red dirt and pineapples stretching off to the horizon. In the mornings I walked the length of Liliha Street, a prime hunting ground for mom and pop stores, shave ice stands, crack seed shops, and “plate lunch” places. Saturday mornings saw me at the farmers’ markets that popped up for an hour or so in a local park, sold greens and squashes I had never seen, and then just as quickly shut down and moved on to the next location. Saturday nights my husband and I rode his scooter through the warm scented air to Zippy’s, a popular local fast food chain owned by Okinawans. The signature meal, the Zip Pac, comprised teriyaki beef, Spam, mahimahi, and fried chicken on rice with furikake and daikon. And Sunday mornings I strolled through the empty streets to the bustle of Chinatown to eat noodle soup with skewers of duck. Under the spreading trees in the courtyard of the State Library, surely one of the most beautiful places to read in
the United States, I worked my way through histories of the different ethnic groups in the Islands, home economics texts on island diets, and botanical works on foodstuffs such as breadfruit, taro, marungay, and seaweed. I pored over spiral-bound cookbooks published by the Maui Home Demonstration Council, the Hawaii Electric Industries, Japanese Women’s Associations, and Buddhist temples. Their authors took for granted that Local readers would be able to follow the sketchy recipes and understand their context. As an outsider, I began by trying to map the recipes on to Japanese or Chinese recipes in cookbooks published on the mainland. This failed dismally. Those who had come to work the plantations ate very differently from those authors who came from much wealthier circumstances and who used their books to show off the most glamorous aspects of their cuisines.

To my effort to understand Local Food, I also brought a background in history of technology, which addressed the transfer of people, organisms, and things from one place to another. History of technology, which I saw as part of the wider project of history and philosophy of science, was directly applicable because cooking, and processing more generally were the technologies that turned raw materials into food. I taught a course in food history as part of the history of technology, thanks to special permission from the Dean of Natural Sciences since food history was not yet a respectable academic subject. Armed with an electric wok and a food processor, my students and I tried out basic culinary techniques in different cultures: the grinding, cooking, curdling, and fermenting of beans in East Asia; the churning, fermenting, and evaporating of milk in South Asia; the threshing, grinding, and fermenting of wheat and barley in the Middle East and Europe, for
example. We talked about relations between the techniques, the available plant resources, the society’s religious, political, and nutritional goals, and how techniques were diffused beyond the region of origin.

Food processing, we concluded, was part and parcel of a wider system of dealing with the world, understanding of the world just like other technologies, bearing out the truism of historians of technology that technology was more than just “nuts and bolts.” Individual discoveries and inventions were embedded in systems that included goals, know how, and artifacts. Just as the light bulb was part of a system for providing light with the resources of generating stations, electrical wires, and switches, so soy sauce was part of a system for creating taste with readily available and inexpensive soybeans. Sometimes these systems could change dramatically as when electrical systems replaced gas lighting or soy condiments replaced simple salt. Transferring technological systems from one place to another was never straightforward but were eased when an individual familiar with the system was at hand to help. Adopting and adapting systems from elsewhere stimulated the economy and enriched lives. In short, when Asian immigrants brought their methods of processing to Hawaii, they created new businesses and wider culinary choices.

Also invaluable to my project were conversations with my colleagues at the University. Stimulated by the multicultural society they found themselves in, my colleagues also deemed contact between cultures, variously characterized as encounters or exchanges, central to the evolution of societies. Sociologists pondered the Islands as a laboratory for race relations. Linguists studied “pidgin” as an
incipient Creole language. Philosophers and religion professors traced the expansion of Buddhism, Confucianism and Shintoism. Area studies professors teased out the intertwined histories and cultures of China, Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asia. Above all, the History Department pioneered courses in world history.

Of less help were academics specializing in food culture. Although there were more of them than retrospective accounts might lead one to believe, they were still few and far between whether in Hawaii or on the mainland. Anthropologists formed the largest group, most of them concentrating on food in simple societies. Although K.C. Chang’s anthology Food in Chinese Culture, with contributions from leading Asianists, had appeared in 1977, E.N. (Gene) Anderson’s The Food of China was not published until 1988. Historians focused on the history of diet and nutrition, pioneered by the French Annales School and were further fueled by the-then very active research in social history. Studies of the cultural history of food were rare. When, in the early 1990s, I asked Natalie Zemon Davis, then Director of the Davis Center for Historical Research at Princeton where I held a visiting appointment, if she knew of any academic historians working in this area, she replied that the only name that came to mind was Barbara Wheaton, author of Savoring the Past: The French Kitchen and Table from 1300-1789 (1983), and herself an independent scholar.

Outside the universities, I found friends among the loosely knit circles of intellectuals interested in food history that began forming in the 1980s. Some seized on the new technology of word processing to publish newsletters. Others found
intellectual companionship in groups of culinary historians. For publication, the chief outlet was the small journal *Petits Propos Culinaires* founded in 1979 by a retired British diplomat, Alan Davidson, to which the more scholarly cookbook writers such as Elizabeth David and Richard Olney contributed. When Alan Davidson with French historian Theodore Zeldin founded the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery in the early 1980s, it drew food historians from around the world. In the United States, the International Association of Culinary Professionals welcomed food historians in those years.

Yet among these interlinked groups of intellectuals, the homegrown theory of culinary change reigned supreme. Food evolved from the bounty of the land (or terroir) developing from simple peasant cuisines to high cuisines refined in the courts and city restaurants. In its place of origin, the cuisine was at its finest; the further from that place, the more compromised and abased it became. Thus in spite of massive migration from Italy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, historians of Italian cuisine did not even mention how it evolved it places such as the United States and Argentina. Similarly, the authors of the flood of cookbooks that appeared in the 1970s instructing Americans how to prepare Italian, Chinese, Mexican, Indian, Thai, Vietnamese and Japanese food described the cuisines as those of a territory, ignoring people who had migrated beyond that territory. The “authenticity” of “ethnic” restaurants, which proliferated after immigration to the United States eased with the passing of the Hart-Cellar Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 was judged by how closely they reproduced what Americans
understood from cookbooks to be the cuisine of the homeland. When it began publication in 1994, Saveur took as its slogan “Savor a World of Authentic Cuisine.”

The United States, with its “melting pot” of dishes from different cultures, scored poorly among those who subscribed to the homegrown model. At one conference after another, anxious panelists discussed “Is there such a thing as American cuisine?” a question further confounded by the conflation of cuisine and high cuisine. If foodies doubted that you could talk about the cuisine of the United States, they were convinced that the Local Food of Hawaii was so debased as to be unworthy of study, inauthentic and thus déclassé. During my first visit to the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery, a fellow symposiast commiserated. “Poor you, interested in food and having to live in Hawaii: no peasant cuisine, no authentic food, just international hotel food.” By that time, I was beginning to doubt the homegrown theory so I retorted that in few places in the world was the construction of a cuisine, surely of interest to historians of food, so open to study.

By now, my confusion about what my students were eating had crystallized into a precise question about how Local Food was created from three major diasporic cuisines. I did not call them naturalized at the time, but I like the name, which echoes the other meanings of a migrant who has attained citizenship and a plant that has become established. I drafted a manuscript using two recent well-researched books as inspiration. *Pickles and Pretzels*, historically informed essays about Pennsylvania’s foods, had been published in 1980 by Virginia Bartlett, the wife of a former colleague in the History Department at Carnegie-Mellon
University. On Persephone’s Isle, a culinary history of Sicily in light of its conquests and politics, by Mary Taylor Simeti had appeared in 1986.

My manuscript, after an introductory overview of Hawaii’s culinary history, stressing the coherence of culinary philosophy, methods of cooking, ingredients, and dishes of each diaspora, consisted of essays that began with one or another of the puzzling ingredients, dishes, meals, farming, markets, and food stores in Hawaii as a prologue to a historical explanation.

Part One, Local Food, dealt with how Local Food, like pidgin was a way to bridge cultural differences. It was necessarily public food because it was in public, not in the home, that the different cultural groups in the Islands met. The plate lunch was the signature meal, rice, SPAM, and seaweed (limu) common ingredients, saimin (noodle soup), manapua (steamed pork bun), musubi (nori-wrapped rice), crackers, and raw fish (poke) popular snacks; and crack seed (Chinese dried, salted “plums”); mochi (sweet rice “cakes”); and malasadas and andagi (donuts) beloved nibbles. Ingredients, such as rice, fish, and seaweed that appealed to many different ethnic groups, were central to Local Food. Home economists from the mainland had laid the groundwork for Local Food by training a generation of cooks in shared techniques.

Part Two, Ethnic Food, turned to the cuisines of the last group of settlers to arrive in the Islands, largely, but not entirely, Asians who came to work on the plantations. I based my essays on the festivals such as Chinese Ching Ming, Japanese New Year, and Okinawan village celebrations and on retail outlets such as Portuguese bakeries and Filipino vegetable markets where I had caught glimpses of
these cuisines on my jaunts around town and my collection of spiral-bound cookbooks. I ended with the way Anglo canned goods had penetrated the plantation diet and Chinatown.

Part Three, Kamaaina Food, dealt with the cuisine of “kamaainas” (literally children of the land) the white or haole inhabitants of the Islands who had been there since the nineteenth century. It depended largely on library research since I had almost no contact with this rather enclosed community. Essays explored why Hawaii has so many botanic gardens and such a large cattle ranch, how missionary wives fed their families, the surprising lack of fruits, the sugar and pineapple industries, the gracious poi supper of the kamaaina elite, and the conflicting visions of contemporary tourists seeking paradise and Locals struggling to make ends meet in remote Islands that offered little employment.

Part Four, Hawaiian Food, described the first settlers’ struggle with a dearth of indigenous edible plants, particularly carbohydrates, the introduced plants taro, coconut, arrowroot, candlenuts, the use of fish and seaweeds, and the life-sustaining miracle of fresh water in the middle of an ocean of salt water. I concluded with a paean to the courage of the waves of migrants who had turned a food desert into a culinary paradise. My initial befuddlement had changed to affection and to admiration for what the successive settlers of Hawaii had achieved.

Surely, I thought, the visitors relaxing on Waikiki beach would find the real Hawaii more interesting than the tourist fable, the food in the offices, on the street, and in the mom and pop stores tastier than the watery mai tais and chicken long rice of tourist luaus. In 1994 I sent query letters to New York editors, regional American
food being very much in vogue in the 1990s. A couple asked for the proposal, only to reject it because it did not update the how-to-do-a-luau cookbooks of the 1960s.

It was time to pluck up my courage and see what people in Hawaii thought. Until then, I had not dared divulge to colleagues and students that I, an outsider, a mainland haole, had the temerity to write about their cuisines, nor did I anticipate that my wide-eyed newcomer’s perspective would add anything to what Locals already knew. Diffidently I showed the manuscript to Charlene (Charlie) Sato, local Japanese and Associate Professor in Second Language Studies where she specialized in pidgin, and to Wanda Adams, local Portuguese and food editor at the Honolulu Advertiser. I asked Doreen Fernandez, drama critic, leading chronicler of Filipino food, and friend of Alan Davidson, to read the Filipino chapter on one of her regular visits to UH from the Philippines. All the readers said “go ahead,” and Wanda even said “You’ve written my book.”

The University of Hawaii Press editors, Iris Wiley, Patricia Crosby, and Bill Hamilton had long wanted a book on Hawaii’s culinary history. They sent the manuscript on to the Editorial Board. Its members, all professors at the University, thought that a book on Hawaii’s Local Food by mainland haole would set a political hornet’s nest buzzing. They forwarded it to the distinguished marine botanist, Isabella Abbott, then at the University of Hawaii, emeritus professor at Stanford, Hawaiian-Chinese, and the first woman of Hawaiian ancestry to receive a science Ph.D. in science, an unassailable authority. She approved.

I titled the book *The Food of Paradise* as an ironic commentary on the contrast between the tourist hype about tropical bounty and the effort that had gone
into creating the Island’s cuisines, so costly in terms of transport, labor, and processing. The subtitle carried none of the political or intellectual baggage that it now would because the food heritage industry was then barely underway. Some reviewers suggested I should have called it simply Local Food. I added sidebars with illustrative life stories, recipes that I labored to construct from the sketchy instructions in local cookbooks, and photographs, some that I had taken, some from the Hawaii State Archives, but all in black and white to get away from the paradise myth.

Both the University of Hawaii Press and I were intensely relieved that The Food of Paradise did not provoke the feared political uproar. On the contrary, Island reviewers expressed appreciation that one outsider had not condescended but had taken their food seriously. Several declared it the “definitive” study of Island culinary history. On the mainland, reviewers for the LA Times and Gourmet, for example, thought it might “light up some possible futures of American food more penetratingly than a dozen style-chasers’ panels.”21 It was awarded the Julia Child/Jane Grigson Prize for research of the International Association of Culinary Professionals.

**Hawaii as a Model for Global Culinary Change**

Far from being marginal and debased, I had decided that Hawaii’s cuisines offered the key to a new way of writing global food history. For the next couple of decades, as I struggled to pull such a history together, Food Studies inched into respectability and then hurtled into trendiness. Steven Kaplan, expert on bread in French history,
launched the journal *Food and Foodways* in 1985. The first meeting of the Association for the Study of Food and Society was held in 1987 and its now flourishing journal, *Food, Culture and Society* began publication in 1996 as *The Journal of Food and Society*. Departments were founded at Boston University and New York University and smaller programs sprang up in many universities. Heartening as it was to see interest in food as a subject of study, much of the research focused on the United States, and took as its problems the creation of identity and the reformation of the food system, neither of them directly useful for my project.

On the other hand, I had been given a flying start in world history during my time in Hawaii. Most years leaders in the field spent a semester at the University of Hawaii. All were interested in long distance contacts, encounters, or exchanges. William McNeill, who had pioneered contemporary world history with *A World History* (1967) showed in *Plagues and Peoples* (1976) and *The Pursuit of Power* (1982) the power of following infectious disease or firearms across national boundaries in illuminating world history.\textsuperscript{22} Alfred Crosby in *The Columbian Exchange* (1972) had famously traced the ecological consequences of exchanges between formerly isolated populations.\textsuperscript{23} Philip Curtin, famous for the first quantitative study of *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (1969), had argued for a non-European-centric analysis in *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History* asserting that “external stimulation . . . has been the most important single source of change and development in art, science, and technology.” Continuing, he said, “cross-cultural trade and communication pose special problems. People with a different way of life
are strangers by definition; their ways seem unpredictable, and the unpredictable is probably dangerous as well.”

When I asked William McNeill whether he thought food might provide as much insight into world history as plagues or firearms, he was encouraging. Listening to Alfred Crosby made me think that a natural next step from his work was to explore in more detail what was involved in “exchange.” Conversations with Philip Curtin allowed me to draw on his vast experience to put the cross-cultural problems of Hawaii in the context of other parts of the world. My colleague, Jerry Bentley’s questions about how religions gained converts in Old World Encounters: Cross-Cultural Traditions and Exchanges in Pre-Modern Times were directly relevant to how new cuisines gain purchase. As Jerry founded the Journal of World History and co-wrote a major world history text, Traditions and Encounters, I was lucky enough to discuss how to go about writing a world history when we had a working lunch every couple of months at what he called “a very haolified Japanese restaurant.”

My first question in writing a world history of food was what was food history about? What had been transferred to Hawaii were not the individual plants and animals of the Columbian Exchange. They were not the commodities of the increasingly popular commodity histories. They were entire systems including beliefs about appropriate eating, meal patterns, techniques for preparing ingredients and dishes, plants and animals, and the ways of farming them. What should such a system be called? One possibility is “foodways,” a term anthropologists and folklorists use to describe the culture, history, and economy of
regional foods, or, as defined in the masthead of the journal Food and Foodways, “the history and culture of human nourishment.” I found the term too folkloric, not suggestive enough of system (though perfectly acceptable for the miscellaneous foodways of a region as in “Texas foodways,”) and too suggestive of the homegrown model.

I opted for cuisine. This choice deserves a whole essay, but in brief my position is the following. Although when equated with high cuisine, the term reeks of elitism, its original sense of “style of cooking” reflects my opinion that processing and cooking techniques are central to food systems. Already in common use in cookbook titles, ‘cuisine’ had been adopted both by anthropologists such as Peter Farb and George Armelagos and by thoughtful food writers such as Elizabeth Rozin. I differed from them in including ideas and beliefs (culinary philosophy) since in my opinion culinary philosophy, not agricultural resources, is the glue that holds a cuisine together. Each culinary philosophy specified relations between cuisine and the divine or the moral, the social world, and the environment, including human bodies. All elements of the cuisine came together in an archetypal meal, not necessarily eaten every day, but like Thanksgiving dinner exemplifying the values and resources of the society.

The second question had to do with culinary diffusion. In Hawaii, whole groups moved taking their cuisine with them. It seemed clear that this was not always the case. Quite small numbers of culinary agents—missionaries, military, and merchants in particular—could transfer a cuisine from one region to another provided certain conditions were met. Those conditions were usually political.
Cuisines perceived as successful were more likely to be accepted than those that were not. Success was indicated by the power of the state (or region) which had developed or adopted the cuisine. Since empires were the most powerful states through most of history, they served as centers of culinary dissemination, with lesser empires and states emulating their cuisines. In any state prior to the last hundred years of so, the ruling class enjoyed a high cuisine, rich in meat, sweets, and sauces that distinguished them from their subjects who consumed a humble cuisine largely composed of a carbohydrate staple.

Using the concept of cuisine and believing empires to have been the most important centers of culinary diffusion, I distinguished three major overlapping periods in Cuisine and Empire: sacrificial cuisines; theocratic cuisines; and modern cuisine. Sacrificial cuisines appeared in different places around the world as humans mastered the processing and cooking of the major carbohydrates staples, roots and grains. Their culinary philosophies had three planks. Relations with the gods were defined by the sacrificial bargain: the chief, king or priests offered food in sacrifice to the gods hoping to ensure in return food from plentiful harvests, fertile women, and success in war. Social relations were hierarchical, with different cuisines for each step in the hierarchy from the gods through humans to the lowliest creatures. The cuisines of humans were divided into high cuisines rich in meat or fish, fats, and sweets for the ruling class and humble cuisines based on staple carbohydrates for everyone else. Environmental relations were expressed in correspondences between compass directions, seasons, ages, and the heating and cooling effects of food on the body (the culinary cosmos and the humoral theory).
Early sacrificial cuisines were to be found in chiefdoms. Their archetypal meal was the feast on the remains of the sacrifice, a meal that linked, gods, rulers and the people.

Grains, hard, dry, and relatively lightweight permitted the transport and storage of sufficient food to provision the armies and courts so that over the centuries in areas of grain cuisines cities, states and empires were created. The Roman and Chinese empires based on wheat and barley came to dominate Eurasia.

Theocratic cuisines followed from alliances from the new universal religions (sometimes called religions of salvation) that began being created shortly before the birth of Christ and the empires with which they formed alliances. The practice of sacrificing to and feeding the gods declined, replaced with a set of rules governing fast and feast days, permitted foodstuffs, and preferred ways of processing. Sacrificial feasts disappeared, replaced by court banquets for the civil powers and ascetic collations for the religious elites. The new theocratic cuisines were disseminated across wide swaths of the earth’s surface. Between 200 BC and 800 AD Buddhist cuisine swept across the eastern half of Asia in and the related Hindu cuisine across much of South and Southeast Asia. Between 700 AD and 1800 AD Islamic cuisine expanded across the western half. In the fifteenth and sixteenth century Catholic cuisine, formed centuries earlier, with the expansion of the Iberian empires enlarged its territory dramatically to the Americas and the borders of Asia and Africa.

Then in the mid seventeenth century modern cuisines began taking shape as states began to abandon enforcing the rules of universal religions, to replace the
culinary cosmos and the humoral theory with scientific nutritional theory, and to experiment with republican and socialist alternatives to imperial or monarchical hierarchies. Monarchies did not disappear, but the archetypal court banquet was joined by fine restaurant dining, which anyone wealthy enough could enjoy. Republics, such as the seventeenth-century Dutch republic and the early American republic favored a family meal during which children imbibed both physical nourishment and the intellectual elements of citizenship. By the late nineteenth century, middling cuisines, like high cuisines in their abundant meat, sauces, and sweets, unlike them in being available to all citizens, began appearing in the richer countries of the world, reflecting the shift in status of ordinary people from subjects to citizens. *Cuisine and Empire: Cooking in World History* appeared in 2013.

**Rethinking Hawaii’s Culinary History in Light of Cuisine and Empire**

How does Hawaii’s culinary history stand in light of *Cuisine and Empire*? I would divide it into four periods: the sacrificial cuisine of the Hawaiian Chiefdoms; the aristocratic cuisine of the Hawaiian monarchy; the republican cuisine of the plantation oligarchy; and modern cuisine, Local Food, of an American state.

The sacrificial cuisine of the Hawaiian chiefdoms, practiced from several centuries A.D to the beginning of the nineteenth century, was in most respects typical of sacrificial cuisines elsewhere in the world. Chiefs and priests offered their most valued foods, pork, coconuts, bananas, and fine fish to the gods in sacrifice
hoping to assure victory in battle and fertile lands and fertile women, and feasted on the leftovers.  

Hawaiian cuisine, like other sacrificial cuisines, was sharply hierarchical. High cuisines for the gods, chiefs and priests were distinct from the humble cuisines of the much larger numbers of commoners and outcasts. Chiefs and priests enjoyed mullet and other delicate pond fish. The everyday meals of both men and women were poi (pounded taro) and fish, with condiments of salt and seaweed. Gender divisions were just as marked. Women, forbidden to eat pork, coconut, bananas and certain fish, faced death if they dined with men. Of the culinary cosmos and the humoral theory there is little sign, perhaps because it disappeared after contact, perhaps because this is not a universal feature of sacrificial cuisines.

Most striking is just how far Hawaiian sacrificial cuisine had travelled and how ingeniously it was naturalized, supplementing the limited resources of Hawaii. The ancestral cuisine had been shaped in Southeast Asia, whence it had been carried out across the Pacific Islands, as far as Easter Island in the west, Hawaii in the north and last of all New Zealand in the south. After a heroic journey, probably from the Marquesas, the Hawaiians unloaded a small portmanteau of plants and animals from their outriggers, most importantly, taro as their main source of carbohydrate, but also bananas, breadfruit, coconut and other species, as well as pigs, dogs, and chicken, to create an agriculturally, but not biologically, local cuisine.

While waiting for their plants and animals to multiply sufficiently to provide a source of food, the Hawaiians survived on fish and flightless birds, most of which quickly became extinct. Lacking both clay and metal, they cooked in earth ovens,
or with potboilers in calabashes. Drying, salting, grilling, and pounding were other important techniques. Elaborate irrigation systems watered the taro patches and fresh or brackish water fish were farmed in ponds. A sophisticated system of land utilization allowed access to different ecological zones and a division of power within the political system. Given that the staple taro, like other roots, corms and tubers, was too wet and heavy to transport and store for urban provisions, cities never developed, nor did states let alone empires.\textsuperscript{30}

Aristocratic Hawaiian cuisine was created during the nineteenth century, reaching its zenith with King David Kalakaua’s coronation banquet on 12 February 1883. It proceeded from mulligatawny, turtle, Windsor, and à la Reine soups, through fish, and meats such as wild duck, pheasant, fillet of veal, turkey with truffle sauce, beef à la mode, ham, roast goose, and curry followed, served with potatoes, peas, tomatoes, corn, asparagus, spinach and taro. For dessert, guests were offered wine jelly, sponge cake, and strawberries and cream. Sherry hock, claret, champagne, port, liqueurs, tea and coffee were served.\textsuperscript{31} Except for the taro and the local fish, this was a typical Anglo-French modern monarchical banquet.

Hawaii had been re-connected to the global culinary world when Captain Cook’s landed in the Islands in 1778, quickly followed by other westerners, most importantly Congregational missionaries from New England. The Kamehamehas quickly united the Islands under a single rule. The Hawaiians, having been isolated from the theocratic cuisines that had ruled for centuries in most grain-based states, were suddenly confronted with modern cuisine, based in scientific nutritional theory, employing ovens and metal pots, and using wheat, cattle, and grape vines.\textsuperscript{32}
The missionaries challenged the religious system underlying the sacrifice. The sacrificial feast disappeared within decades, and the rules separating the cuisines of men and women, nobility and commoner, were jettisoned in 1819.

The Kamehamehas opted to make the Islands a kingdom on the English model introduced by Captain Cook, not a republic of the kind the New England missionaries came from. This enabled them to assert their place in the modern world while retaining hierarchy, albeit not as fierce a hierarchy as earlier. Adaptations of Anglo-French cuisine demonstrated to dignitaries and foreign governments that theirs was a cosmopolitan kingdom that played on the world stage, an aspect of what is now called ‘soft power.’ They established fine restaurant dining, imported ice, as Hiʻilei Hobart shows in this volume, to show their modernity, and restricted ice and alcohol to the ruling class. Hence the apparent paradox of the Hawaiian ruling class naturalizing a cuisine from the other side of the world can be resolved by recognized that Anglo-French high cuisine had been naturalized as culturally local, at least for ceremonial occasions, by states from Chile to Japan, from Thailand to the Ottoman Empire as a sign that they were modern.

Hawaii’s cuisines ceased to be agriculturally local. Taro was joined and then surpassed by wheat and rice as staples of the diet. By the 1850s, wheat was being grown on Maui and milled in Honolulu. By the late 1860s, wheat was being imported from California. Western implements and ingredients entered the cuisine of ordinary Hawaiians. They found metal pots handier than underground ovens for cooking taro for poi. Hard tack was good for a quick snack, and when condensed milk became available toward the end of the century, it could be added to make a
dessert. Beef, often as curry or stew, made a tasty meal. Salt salmon became a favorite.

At the end of the nineteenth century, King David Kalakaua continued earlier Hawaiian monarchs’ practice of establishing credentials by adopting Western diplomatic protocol, including the use of Anglo-French high cuisine for formal dining. He hired architects and builders to construct a palace in his capital Honolulu, which, now provisioned by grains, reached a population of 23,000 by 1890 and almost 40,000 a decade later.³⁴ He ordered oak Gothic Revival furniture from the Davenport Company in Boston, and sent to Paris for blue-bordered porcelain with the Hawaiian coat-of-arms. On a world tour in 1881, Kalakaua visited, among others, the Emperor of Japan, the Queen of England, President Chester Arthur of the United States, and the King of Siam, who had very successfully adopted western goods, including diplomatic dinners, to put his monarchy on an equal footing with Western powers and ward off colonization.³⁵ Together Kalakaua’s palace, dining paraphernalia, and a coronation in 1883 cost over $360,000 when total annual exports from the Island were valued at about $5 million.

The plantation owners and factors, the dominant faction among the resident foreigners, preferred middle class thrift to princely magnificence, the meals of prosperous merchants to the banquets of kings, plain New England cooking to high cuisine.³⁶ Their everyday meals featured chowder, salmon ring prepared with canned salmon, spaghetti with meat sauce, curried dishes, devil’s food cake, and brownies, taro as a substitute for potatoes, green mango sauce for applesauce, and taro leaves for spinach. In their view, a republic was a better model for a modern
state than a monarchy. In 1893, a year after Kalakaua’s coronation, a group of Hawaii-born men of European ancestry overthrew the monarchy, and established an independent republic, which, in turn was annexed to the United States in 1898. Although it would be disingenuous to suggest that a coronation dinner alone led to the downfall of the Hawaiian monarchy, it did throw political differences between haoles and the Hawaiian royalty into high relief.

Kamaaina Cuisine, with the gracious poi supper as its signature meal, was the cuisine of the political elite during the sixty years from 1898 to 1957 when Hawaii was a Territory of the United States. On special occasions, the elite abandoned their plain New England dining and gathered for a festive poi supper. Dressed in tuxedos and holokus (long dresses with trains), they sat around a table covered with ti leaves, strewn with flowers, and set with crystal for wine, polished coconut bowls for poi, and fingerbowls. To the dishes of laulau, kalua pig, chicken luau, and mullet baked in ti leaves that they delicately ate with their fingers, they added relishes of inamona (toasted ground nuts), red salt, green onions, and seaweed. Ample but not extravagant, formal but distinct from Anglo-French manners, the meal expressed their complex loyalties.

From the republican New England tradition came the rejection of monarchical grandeur and the term ‘supper’ not ‘dinner.’ From a still-to-be researched international plantation tradition came the formal dress, the crystal wine glasses, and a liking for curried dishes acquired as owners and managers went back and from Lousiana to Fiji, Mauritius to Indonesia, and to the Caribbean. From the Hawaiian tradition came the poi, the lomi lomi salmon, the relishes, and the use
of fingers. The poi supper clearly proclaimed that although the Hawaiian monarchy had been overthrown, the Island’s leaders identified as much with the Hawaii as with the United States.

During the period of kamaaina cuisine, two other kinds of cuisine appeared in the Islands. One cuisine was “luau” cuisine was an exotic but unthreatening cuisine created for wealthy mainland vacationers who arrived on Matson steamers to stay in the Royal Hawaiian Hotel on Waikiki Beach. Supposedly Hawaiian, in fact the cuisine was patched together of different elements in just the same way that provincial French cuisine was being put together to suit the tastes of wealthy motorist. In Hawaii, hoteliers served readily acceptable kalua pork with long rice (Chinese rice noodles) and lomi lomi salmon, reducing the less popular poi to a small side offering. Similarly, in France, restaurateurs added more meat to regional dishes, replaced lard with butter, and eliminated strong flavorings such as garlic. In Hawaii, waitresses were expected to wear invented “traditional” dress such as sarongs as they offered food and exotic cocktails in coconut bowls to provide an ‘authentic’ exotic experience. In France, waitresses were expected to don regional dress as they handed out regional pottery in dining rooms furnished with regional furniture, both pottery and furniture turned out in newly-founded factories established for the purpose. In both cases, the aim was to present the tourists with an appealing meal that could be presented as homegrown.

The other new kind of cuisine was “ethnic” cuisine. As new diseases reduced the native population to around 60,000, the workers who came from many parts of the world to labor on the sugar and pineapple plantations brought their cuisines
with them. Belatedly, variants of two theocratic cuisines were naturalized in the Islands: the largely Buddhist humble cuisine brought by the Asians; and the humble Catholic cuisine brought by the Filipinos, Portuguese, and Puerto Ricans. To process their food, the immigrants set up rice mills, sake factories, noodle shops, and bakeries. They bought their groceries from plantation stores carrying American processed goods or from the farmers, importers, peddlers, merchants, food processors and shopkeepers of their own ethnic group. Briefly these ethnic cuisines were agriculturally local as immigrants planted their staple, rice, in abandoned taro paddies, grew vegetables, and caught fish inside the reef. By the end of the century, though, rice was shipped in from Japan, Texas, Louisiana, and California.39

Although the different ethnic groups became aware of one another’s cuisines when they shared lunch pails, the cuisines remained distinct. In the plantation camps, the housing was ethnically separated, deliberately maintaining, rather than breaking down ethnic identity.40 Indeed different ethnic groups can live in proximity for decades or centuries, coming to share certain foodstuffs and culinary practices over time without creating a new fusion cuisine. India, for example, had many long standing ethnically or religiously distinct cuisines prior to, and continuing long after, it became a nation. When in 1947 the University of Hawaii home economist Katherine Bazore described the culinary scene in *Hawaiian and Pacific Foods*, she treated Hawaiian, Samoan, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Filipino, and Haole quite separately.41

Local Food, the food of a modern American state, was created when political conditions changed to make it desirable to have a statewide cuisine. This occurred
following 1959, when Hawaii was granted Statehood and the kamaaina Republicans were voted out, and in short order the plantation workers voted Democrat as a bloc. The change in Island politics from an oligarchy to a democracy, from a colony to a state posed three challenges to the Asian-dominated Democrats. They had to unify different “ethnic” groups, which, except for a couple of generations in Hawaii, had nothing in common (and often long standing differences in their regions of origin). They had to find a democratic alternative to earlier hierarchical cuisines, a way of asserting island identity that while not native Hawaiian did not exclude Native Hawaiians. They had to create a state identity different from the distant and somewhat threatening mainland.

   Local Food, invented quickly by patching together elements of three layers of naturalized cuisines, the ethnic, the kamaaina, and the Hawaiian, neatly helped achieve all these goals. In terming the patchwork cuisine Local, the people of Hawaii were inverting the word’s negative meaning as a name for the brown-skinned people of Hawaii, whether Hawaiian or Asian. Before World War II, although some island residents as well as mainland sociologists thought the mixed population to be a model for the future, powerful groups in the Islands disagreed. In 1931 and 1932 in the widely publicized Massie trials, a white naval officer’s wife claimed she had been raped by young men, one of whom was later severely beaten and another murdered when her family took the law into their own hands. “Local” was the word the press used to refer to the presumed perpetrators of the rape. Kamaaina cuisine faded away as had Hawaiian monarchical cuisine earlier, luau cuisine was produced for thousands as airlines brought in tourists in ever-larger numbers, and ethnic
cuisines continued to flourish in homes and in the festivals of different cultural groups.

The public cuisine of the state, though, was now Local Food. The plate lunch, the beach picnic, the garage party and the open-to-all buffets politicians offered at the start of the legislative session displaced the gracious poi supper as the archetypal meals. Politicians, such as Governor Waihee who referred to himself as “a Spam-and-rice kind of guy,” took good care to identify with Local Food.44

Inexpensive and available to all from lunch wagons, Local Food became a secret code, something Locals knew about and mainlanders didn’t. It was the springboard for comedians’ jokes, lovingly described in cartoon cookbooks that contrasted it to tasteless mainland food, while “it musubi your birthday” cards also played on the Local identity invisible to mainlanders.45 And Local Food enabled locals to set to one side mainland stereotypes: a haven for military rest and recreation; home of canned pineapple; a tropical paradise enjoyed by Elvis Presley in Blue Hawaii in 1961, and in Paradise Hawaiian Style in 1966; a place where square-jawed Americans were supported by those of indeterminate other races in the popular television series Hawaii 5-0 that ran from 1968 to 1979; inspiration for the exotic food in Trader Vics restaurants; and beaches where girls in sarongs and coconut shell bras danced while diners drank blue cocktails decorated with little paper umbrellas as they attended ‘authentic’ Hawaiian luaus. Historians and sociologists use the term “banal” or “everyday” nationalism to describe the ordinary things, such as flags, anthems, and cuisine that make people feel part of a nation.46 Local Food was a triumphant expression of everyday Statehood.
Epilogue: Hawaii’s Culinary Future

What does the future hold for the cuisines of Hawaii? As Local Food reached its peak popularity in the 1980s and 1990s, the economics, politics, and demography of the Islands shifted. The plantations, the Islands’ economic base for a century, had begun closing in the 1970s and vanished by 2000, unable to compete against cheaper land and labor in other parts of the world. Young Locals whether part-Hawaiian, kamaaina, or Asian found it near impossible to get professional jobs. By 2000, a third of those born in the Islands were leaving for the mainland. They were replaced as new, often wealthy settlers arrived from the mainland, Japan, and China. In addition, tourism continued to increase to seven million visitors a year. It is indicative of these changes that Linda Lingle, the governor elected in 2002, was neither a member of the old Republican oligarchy nor a Local, but a migrant from California.

New alliances were struck, new economic strategies tried, and history rethought. Hawaii felt the effects of a global indigenous rights movement. For native Hawaiians, 1978 had been a crystallizing moment. Following a vigorous renaissance of Hawaiian culture, including the foundation of the Polynesian Voyaging Society soon to recreate the original Pacific migration, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs was created by the Hawaii State Constitutional Convention. In 1993, Bill Clinton apologized for annexation. Many Hawaiian and academic activists rejected the story of an upwardly mobile racially mixed society, symbolized by Local Food, in favor of one of oppressive Asian settler colonialism.
Unaware of these local conflicts, many new residents who had come in search of a tropical paradise, as well as some longer-established ones, wanted a sustainable agriculture that made the Islands more self-sufficient in food. Hawaiian activists, as detailed elsewhere in this volume, claimed land to grow taro and other traditional crops. Both groups clashed with corporations who wanted to take advantage of a climate that allowed three crops a year to establish plant-breeding (including GMO) programs and with Locals growing GMO papaya for export to the mainland.

In response to these political changes, Hawaii’s cuisines began shifting once again. The tastes of Locals, new residents, and tourists were no longer satisfied solely with the egalitarian, but rough and ready, plate lunches or with commercial luaus at which a thousand people were served. Already in 1992, a group of chefs had formed to promote a new high cuisine, Hawaii Regional Cuisine. Some, such as Alan Wong, Roy Yamaguchi, and Sam Choy were Local. Others were mainlanders working in the hotels and restaurants of the hospitality industry. What Hawaii Regional Cuisine meant was fluid. Alan Wong and Roy Yamaguchi took the Local tradition of combining foods of different ethnic groups upmarket. Others turned to local ingredients in the sense of ingredients brought to the Islands by the first settlers. “Canoe foods” were introduced to restaurants. “Pa’i’ai [fresh, hand pounded poi] has been taken to a new level by frying in butter to attain a crispy caramelization. Ulu (breadfruit) is now mainstream when in season,” explained Lori Wong on the culinary staff of Windward Community College. Yet others used local fruits and vegetables grown in the Islands, local cuisine in the mainland sense of local. New farmers’ markets ones that sold tomatoes and lettuce ran in parallel with
the rotating farmers’ markets that supplied “ethnic” ingredients. While the menus of, say, Alan Wong, Sam Choy and Roy Yamaguchi reflect island history as well as newly-locally-grown foods, other chefs offer a cuisine attuned to mainland tastes with Hawaiian, Asian and tropical touches. As the population becomes more typical of the mainland United States, it seems likely that a mainland-oriented cuisine will overtake and displace Local Food.

Meanwhile, Local Food has migrated to the mainland and beyond as Locals have left the Islands. Roy Yamaguchi opened a score of restaurants across the mainland. L & L Hawaiian Barbecue, a small plate lunch place on Liliha Avenue when I was in the Islands, now has dozens of franchises from California to New York. Mainlanders, who understandably have no idea of the complex culinary politics of Hawaii, call this Local Food ‘Hawaiian Cuisine.’ Although the distinctions between homegrown, naturalized, and invented cuisines, and the tripartite meanings of local may be a little over-schematic, they do make clear why, from the Local point of view, this is as way off mark as calling the barbeque, chili, and chicken fried steak of Texas “Comanche Cuisine.”

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Hi’ilei Hobart for inviting me to reflect on how I came to write *The Food of Paradise*, for her patience as I struggled to reconstruct the state of food studies in the 1980s, and for her careful editing.

Author Biography
After a first intellectual career as a historian and philosopher of science and technology, Rachel Laudan's experience in Hawaii led to abandon academia by choice and embark on a second career as a culinary historian. She is author of many articles on food history and two prize-winning books, *The Food of Paradise: Exploring Hawaii's Culinary Heritage* (2006) and *Cuisine and Empire: Cooking in World History* (2013). She is currently Senior Research Fellow in the Institute for Historical Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. 4828 Calhoun Canyon Loop, Austin, Texas 78735. (rachel@rachellaudan.com).

---

1 Rachel Laudan, *The Food of Paradise: Exploring Hawaii's Culinary Heritage* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996). Neither in my book nor in this article have I chosen to insert diacriticals on Hawaiian words. My reason is that I want to make the text as easy as possible for readers to understand. Few readers of either have any knowledge of the Hawaiian language and adding diacriticals makes words already familiar in English seem strange and distant. So for these readers I use Hawaii, not Hawai'i, just as I would use Mexico, not México. If I were writing for native speakers or those learning the language, then I would consider the use of diacriticals essential.


4 Chinese migrants from Guangdong had introduced rice, may have run the first sugar mills, and practiced as bakers using skills they had learned in the Treaty Ports. Susan Kim, ed., *We Go Eat a Mixed Plate from Hawaii's Food Culture* (Honolulu, Hawaii: Hawaii Council for the Humanities, 2008).


The state of anthropology and history of food at the time is usefully summarized in Jack Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine, and Class: A Study in Comparative Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), chap. 2.


In *Simple Cooking* (1983--9) John Thorne undercut the idea of the authentic recipe and was sympathetic to cookbooks that deviated from the authentic-cuisine-of-the homeland model, praising Nancy Verde Barr’s, *We Called It Macaroni: An American Heritage of Southern Italian Cooking*, 1st edition (New York: Knopf, 1990). Jackie Newman’s *Flavor and Fortune* (1994 on) was a wealth of information about Chinese traditions little known in the U.S. I was delighted to be able to contribute a short piece on crack seed, a Hawaiian dried, salted fruit snack of Chinese origin. R.W. (Bob) Lucky’s *Asian Foodbookery* (1996 on), with its historical extracts and personal observations, made it quite clear that distinct, unchanging national cuisines were no more than a myth. Other important newsletters were Ed Behr’s *Art of Eating* (1986--), which concentrated on fine dining and Sandy Oliver’s *Food History News* (1989 on), which concentrated on the mainland U.S.

The Boston Culinary Historians was founded in 1980 in Boston by Barbara Wheaton and Joyce Toomre, who was to publish *Classic Russian Cooking: Elena Molokhovets’ A Gift to Young Housewives* in 1992. It was followed in 1983 by the Ann Arbor group, at the instigation of the antiquarian cookbook dealer and historian of American community cookbooks, Jan Longone, and the New York Culinary Historians in 1985. A talk to the latter group gave me a chance to try out my ideas about three diasporas and fusion foods, as well as treating them to Spam musubi and other local delicacies. There I met a kindred spirit in Cara de Silva, then pioneering writing on immigrant foods of New York in *New York Newsday*. When I was at the Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Historical Studies at the University of Princeton and the Princeton Institute for Advanced Studies in 1994-5, I noticed that Betty Fussell’s recently published book *The Story of Corn* (1993), mentioned that she done her Ph.D. at the University. With this tenuous connection, I ventured to write to her to ask if anyone else in the New York area was working on food history. A week later I was sitting in her book-lined apartment in Greenwich Village. She
introduced me to Elizabeth Andoh, *An American Taste of Japan* (New York: William Morrow, 1985) and Raymond Sokolov.


13 Wall Street Journal Leisure editor, cookbook author, and food historian, Ray Sokolov, had already been thinking along similar lines. He put me to the test by taking me to a then still-exotic-on-the-mainland Korean restaurant but after nearly a decade in Hawaii, it was a breeze. Raymond A Sokolov, *Why We Eat What We Eat: How the Encounter between the New World and the Old Changed the Way Everyone on the Planet Eats* (New York, N.Y.: Summit Books, 1991).


17 I am aware of the problems of the term “ethnic.” However this was common usage at the time. Besides, a satisfactory alternative to the storefront restaurants and small shops of recent immigrants has yet to be found.


Multidisciplinary Research 11, no. 2 (June 1, 2008), 4–7; Laudan, Cuisine and Empire, 43–47, for the philosophy and practice of culinary feasts.


Others came too, such as Mexicans from California, then still part of Mexico, imported plants such as mangoes and avocados increased the range of fruits and vegetables.


Laudan, Cuisine and Empire, 2013, 289–90;


For the complex history of the luau, see O’Connor, “The Hawaiian Luau,” op. cit., 149–72.


Shelley Sang-Hee Lee and Rick Baldoz, “A Fascinating Interracial Experiment Station': Remapping the Orient-Occident Divide in Hawai‘i,” American Studies 49, no.


48 For a review of these developments, Paul Lyons, “‘They Will Eat Us Up’: Remembering Hawai‘i,” *American Literary History* 16, no. 3 (2004): 543–57.


50 Personal communication, Lori Wong, Food Business Feasibility Planner, Windward Community College, November 11, 2014.