

Comparative Cuisines

Fabio Parasecoli

Adjunct Professor

parasecoli@aol.com

Fall 2007

New York University

Department of Nutrition, Food Studies and Public Health

Graduate Program in Food Studies

Course Description and Objectives

In this class, students will analyze the connection between cuisine, nationality, state-building and identity formation. In particular, students will approach the cuisines of the Caribbean and their influence on late 20th century North American foods, meals and menus. Students will explore these cuisines from the perspective of geography, history, and culture.

Objectives:

Describe and compare the principal elements of the Caribbean cuisines

Examine the geographical, climatic, historical, and cultural bases of the culinary traditions characteristic of the Caribbean.

Identify the principal flavor groupings and components of traditional cuisines.

Identify and evaluate the principal source material for information about international cuisines, particularly those developed from the point of view of the population of origin.

Describe how traditional flavors and ingredients evolved in their countries of origin and migrated to North America.

Describe how food is marketed to consumers in countries throughout the world.

Identify and compare typical "street foods" used throughout the Caribbean and the world.

Methods of Evaluation

Class participation from the students will constitute 20% of the final grade. Students are expected to be constantly prepared for class, having seen the movies that the instructor will indicate, reading the day's assignments, asking questions, responding to questions, etc. Since the course is made of only 10 classes, students are allowed only one absence to get a full A.

30% of the grade will be based on a mid-term paper: Students will research the presence and the development in NYC of one Caribbean cuisine of their choice.

A final 10-15 page paper will constitute the other 50% of the final grade. Students will research a topic we explored in class or an area of personal or academic interest connected with the class subject matter. The topic for the final paper does not necessarily have to be about a Caribbean cuisine, as long as it is about a foreign culinary tradition. The class presentations for the final papers will be brief and informal: just an occasion to discuss with the professor and the other students the topic idea, the angle, and the arguments.

Required Books

Bruce Geddes

World Food Caribbean, Oakland: Lonely Planet, 2001

Cristine Mackie

Life and Food in the Caribbean, London: Zeidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991

Mimi Sheller

Consuming the Caribbean, London: Routledge, 2003

Tracey Skelton

***Introduction to the Pan-Caribbean*, London: Hodder Arnold, 2004**

Steve Striffler and Mark Moberg, editors

Banana Wars. Power, Production and History in the Americas, Durham: Duke University Press, 2003

Richard Wilk

Home Cooking in the Global Village: Caribbean Food from Buccaneers to Ecotourists, Oxford: Berg, 2006

1. Introduction to International Cuisines

Igor Cusack

African Cuisines: Recipes for Nation-Building?

Journal of African Cultural Studies, vol. 13 no. 2, Dec. 2000, 207-225

Arjun Appadurai

How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India

Comparative Studies in Society and History, Vol. 30, No. 1. (Jan., 1988), pp. 3-24

Richard Reed

Household Ethnicity, Household Consumption: Commodities and the Guaraní

Economic Development and Cultural Change, Vol. 44, No. 1. (Oct., 1995), pp. 129-145

A. Arce; T. K. Marsden

The Social Construction of International Food: A New Research Agenda

Economic Geography, Vol. 69, No. 3, Environment and Development, Part 1. (Jul., 1993), pp. 293-311

2. Introduction to the Caribbean

Tracey Skelton

***Introduction to the Pan-Caribbean*, London: Hodder Arnold, 2004**

Sidney W. Mintz

Enduring Substances, Trying Theories: The Caribbean Region as Oikoumene

The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Vol. 2, No. 2. (Jun., 1996), pp. 289-311

3. History of Caribbean Food

Robert McK. Bird

Maize Evolution from 500 B.C. to the Present

Biotropica, vol 12 no. 1 (Mar 1980), 30-41

Judith Carney

African Rice in the Columbian Exchange

The Journal of African History, vol 42. no. 3 (2001) , 377-396

Carl O. Sauer

Indian Food Production in the Caribbean

Geographical Review, Vol. 71, No. 3. (Jul., 1981), pp. 272-280

Rebecca Scott

Defining the Boundaries of Freedom in the World of Cane: Cuba, Louisiana, and Brazil after Emancipation

The American Historical Review, vol. 99. no. 1 (Feb. 1994), pp. 70-122

David Barker, Bakfour Spencer

Afro-Caribbean Agriculture: A Jamaican-Maroon Community in Transition

The Geographical Journal, vol. 154 no. 2 (Jul. 1988), pp.198-208

4. Culinary Traditions

Cristine Mackie

Life and Food in the Caribbean, London: Zeidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991

Brinda J. Mehta

Indo-Trinidadian Fiction: Female Identity and Creative Cooking

Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics, No. 19, (1999), pp. 151-184

5. Foodstuff and Ingredients

Bruce Geddes

Staples & Specialties, Home Cooking & Traditions, Regional Variation

World Food Caribbean, Oakland: Lonely Planet, 2001, pp. 37-176

Kathryn G. Dewey

Nutrition and the Commoditization of Food Systems in Latin American and the Caribbean

Social Science and Medicine, vol. 28, no. 5 (1989) pp. 415-424

Ivette Perfecto; Robert A. Rice; Russell Greenberg; Martha E. van der Voort

Shade Coffee: A Disappearing Refuge for Biodiversity

BioScience, Vol. 46, No. 8. (Sep., 1996), pp. 598-608.

Patricia O'Brien

The Sweet Potato: Its Origin and Dispersal

American Anthropologist, New Series, vol. 74 no. 3 (Jun 1972), pp. 342-365

6. Structure of Production and Exploitation

Steve Striffler and Mark Moberg, editors

Banana Wars. Power, Production and History in the Americas, Durham: Duke University Press, 2003, pp. 1-79; 253-334

Balfour A.B. Spence

Spatio-Evolutionary Model of Jamaican Small Farming

The Geographical Journal, vol. 165, no. 3 (Nov. 1999), 296-305

7. Food, Religions and Celebrations

Jim Perkinson

Ogou's Iron or Jesus' Irony: Who's zooming who in diasporic possession cult activity?

Journal of Religion, vol 81 no 4 (Oct. 2001), 566-594

Robert Voeks

African Medicine and Magic in America

Geographical Review, vol. 83, no. 1 (Jan 1993), pp. 63-78

Robert Voeks

Sacred Leaves of Brazilian Condomblé

Geographical Review, vol. 80, no. 2 (Apr. 2000), pp. 118-131

George Brandon

The Uses of Plants in Healing in an Afro-Cuban religion, Santeria

Journal of Black Studies, vol. 22, no. 1 (Sept. 1991), 55-76

George E. Simpson

Folk Medicine in Trinidad

The Journal of American Folklore, Vol. 75, No. 298. (Oct. - Dec., 1962), pp. 326-340

8. Migrating, Mobile Food

Richard Wilk

Home Cooking in the Global Village: Caribbean Food from Buccaneers to Ecotourists, Oxford: Berg, 2006

Aisha Khan

Juthaa in Trinidad: Food, Pollution, and Hierarchy in a Caribbean Diaspora Community

American Ethnologist, vol. 21 no. 2 (May 1994), pp. 245-269

9. Tourism and the Consumption of the Imaginary

Mimi Sheller

Consuming the Caribbean, London: Routledge, 2003, 13-104; 174-196

Alicia Re Cruz

Milpa As an Ideological Weapon: Tourism and Maya Migration to Cancún

Ethnohistory 50 : 3 (summer 2003), 489-502

10. Caribbean: from Georgia to Bahia?

Roger D. Abraham

Questions of Criolian Contagion

Journal of American Folklore, 116 (459), 2003, pp. 73-87

Josephine A. Beoku-Betts

We Got our Way of Cooking Things: Women, Food, and Preservation of Cultural Identity among the Gullah

Gender and Society, vol. 9 no. 5 (Oct. 1995), pp. 535-555

Judith A. Carney and Robert A. Voeks

Landscape legacies of the African diaspora in Brazil

Progress in Human Geography 27,2 (2003) pp. 139-152