

Asian Pacific American History / Food History Resources



The National Museum of American History's **Food History Team** has assembled the following resources, which speak to and reflect the role of **food** in the migration, work, family, and community experiences of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States. Through objects, oral histories, archival materials and public programs, the museum recognizes and honors the lives of Asian Americans and facilitates conversations on their critical contributions to food production and culinary innovations. For many individuals in the AAPI diaspora, food work has provided an often-tenuous economic toehold in the United States. For many more, food has become a powerful way of connecting with communities and sharing cultural traditions from home with fellow Americans. These two historic threads, and many more themes, are reflected in the gathered resources on this list, shedding light on the resilience of AAPI community members, past and present.

Exhibitions

Stories featuring the experiences of Asian Americans within the context of food history can be found in several exhibitions at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. Here is a selection of highlights:

Exhibition: *FOOD: Transforming the American Table*

TV Chefs: These Asian American chefs are among the TV chefs featured near Julia Child's kitchen in the exhibition:

- [Joyce Chen and Martin Yan](#)
- [David Chang and Ming Tsai](#)

[The Migrant's Table](#): Includes stories of how food connected Asian American migrants to their neighbors and communities in the United States:

- [Dine and Learn](#)
 - Related article: Ashley Rose Young, "[How Food Brought Success to a Chef, a Cookbook Author and a Restaurateur](#)," *Smithsonian Magazine*, 2019.
- [New In Your Shopping Aisle](#)

[Collective and Communal](#): Shares the story of George Ohsawa and the Kushi macrobiotic diet.

Exhibition: *On the Water: Stories from Maritime America*

These stories of food history and Asian Americans can be found within the *On the Water* exhibition:

- [Chinese Workers in fish canneries in Astoria, Oregon](#)
- [Liners to America: Pacific Crossings](#)
- [Factory Processor](#)

Exhibition: *America on the Move*

Asian American farm workers are featured in this section of *America on the Move*:

- [Delivering Goods](#)

Collections

The Smithsonian's National Museum of American History houses collections of artifacts, documents, books, ephemera, and digital materials that reflect and relate to the experiences of AAPI community members and food history, broadly conceived. Here is a sampling of food history collections that reflect and represent the experiences of Asian Americans in the United States.

Objects relating to San Francisco restaurateur Cecilia Chiang.

- [Numerous objects from Cecilia Chiang's restaurant, the Mandarin, including menus, chopsticks, tableware, a uniform, and other culinary ephemera.](#)
- Related tributes to Cecilia Chiang on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Objects relating to New York restaurants owned and operated by Paul and Linda Ma.

- [Paul Ma Papers](#)
- [Several objects from Paul and Linda Ma's restaurants including a teapot, a pair of chopsticks, wall decorations, and tableware](#)
- [Chinese New Year paper lantern](#) from Paul and Linda Ma's restaurants

Objects relating to Oregon-based, Kubla Khan Frozen Food Company owned by Percy Loy and Robert Wong.

- [Kubla Khan Frozen Food Company Papers](#)

Objects relating to twentieth-century Chinese restaurants.

- [Ceramic tableware, including plates and bowls, from Tasty Chop Suey restaurant](#)
- [Tea cake tin and baker's hat from Hong Kong Noodle Company, Inc.](#)
- [Ceramic tableware and souvenir pencil from Leilani Chop Suey restaurant](#)
- [Menu from Mee Sum restaurant](#)

Objects relating to Japanese baking traditions, specifically cast-iron baking molds known as sembei kata.

- [Cast iron baking mold, plain](#)
- [Cast iron baking mold, engraved with "H.M." which stands for Hagiwara Makoto](#)
- [Cast iron baking mold, engraved with Mount Fuji](#)

Oral histories from the Family of Voices project highlighting Asian community members' memories and understandings of food (transcribed sentences in green lettering indicate food-related memories).

- [Jerry Yang and Akiko Yamazaki oral history transcript](#)
- [Li Lu oral history transcript](#)
- [Bill and Mary Kim oral history transcript](#)
- [Ming Hsieh oral history transcript](#)
- [Minaz Abji oral history transcript](#)

Blogposts

Since 2010, staff, interns, and fellows at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History have written blog posts about the intersection of food history and AAPI experiences in the United States. Relevant posts from the museum's blog, O Say Can You See, include:

May 4, 2010. Cedric S. Yeh, "[Sweet & Sour: Memories of a Chinese restaurant.](#)"

July 8, 2010. Cedric S. Yeh and Noriko Sanefuji, "[Origins of a fortune cookie.](#)"

August 10, 2010. Cedric S. Yeh and Noriko Sanefuji, "[Who Will Chop Your Suey When I'm Gone?](#)"

September 23, 2010. Cedric S. Yeh, "[Pu pu platters versus birthday cakes.](#)"

July 1, 2011. Devora Liss, "[Cultre a la Carte: Would you like some Han Dynasty with your meal?](#)"

June 5, 2012. Nina Mei Han Yang, "[General Tso's Chicken: the most popular Hunanese dish in the USA.](#)"

February 20, 2013. David McOwen, "[An aspiring Top Chef talks about 'The French Chef'.](#)" (An interview with Chef Kristen Kish).

April 11, 2013. Cedric S. Yeh, "[What's your favorite Chinese restaurant?](#)"

August 14, 2013. Chrissy Yee Lau, "[The mysterious can of fortune.](#)"

May 1, 2015. NMAH, "[5 big questions behind America sushi.](#)"

May 6, 2015. Cathy Keen, "[From the wok to the frozen food aisle.](#)"

May 21, 2018. Crystal Rie, "[La Choy and Korean cofounder Ilhan New: Negotiating Asian culinary identities in America.](#)"

August 10, 2018. Ashley Rose Young on Chef Edward Lee's "Cooking Up History" program, "[Exploring the South.](#)"

May 31, 2018. Theodore S. Gonzalves and Amanda B. Moniz, "[You're invited to a Bowl of Rice Party.](#)"

Cooking Up History

Monthly, the American Food History Project invites a guest chef to appear on the Coulter Plaza at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History for a live-cooking demonstration program called "Cooking Up History." Since 2015, the museum has hosted over 100 unique programs and shared over 200 recipes representing food cultures from across the United States and the world. Below is a list of past and present programs (and recipes) that represent the diverse foodways and culinary knowledge of the AAPI community in the U.S. and beyond.

Date: May 6, 2016

Title of Program: Cooking Up History: The American Story of Sushi

Speaker: Kevin Lee

Recipes (hyperlinks to PDFs):

- [Sushi Nigiri](#)
- [California Roll](#)
- [Kimbap Roll](#)



Chef Kevin Lee During Cooking Up History. Courtesy of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.

Date: June 30, 2017

Title of Program: Cooking Up History: The Chinese Kitchen Garden in America

Speaker: Wendy Kiang-Spray

Recipes (hyperlinks to PDFs):

- [Crab, Pork, and Napa Cabbage Dumplings](#)
- [Spicy Sichuan Peppercorn-Marinated Cucumbers](#)
- [Stir-Fried Bitter Melon and Tofu with Garlic and Fermented Black Beans](#)



Chef Wendy Kiang-Spray During Cooking Up History. Courtesy of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.

Date: August 11, 2017

Title of Program: Cooking Up History: Julia Child's Kitchen Classroom

Speaker: Lynne Just

Recipe (hyperlink to PDF):

- Madhur Jaffrey's [Shrimp in Spicy Coconut Sauce](#)



Madhur Jaffrey's Shrimp in Spicy Coconut Sauce Made During Cooking Up History. Courtesy of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.

Date: October 28, 2017

Title of Program: Cooking Up History: Many Flavors of Hawai'i (part of Smithsonian Food History Weekend)

Speaker: Sheldon Simeon

Recipe:

- [Chicken Hekka](#)



Chef Sheldon Simeon During Cooking Up History at 2017 Smithsonian Food History Weekend.
Courtesy of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History

Date: October 28, 2017

Title of Program: Cooking Up History: Beyond the Chinese Family Restaurant (part of Smithsonian Food History Weekend)

Speaker: Tim Ma and Paul Ma

Recipe:

- [Ma Family Chicken Agar Salad](#)



Chefs Tim Ma and Paul Ma During Cooking Up History at 2017 Smithsonian Food History Weekend. Courtesy of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.

Date: October 28, 2017

Title of Program: Cooking Up History: Sriracha – One of the Eight Flavors of American Cuisine (part of Smithsonian Food History Weekend)

Speaker: Sarah Lohman

Recipe:

- [Thai Omelet](#)



Chef Sarah Lohman During Cooking Up History at 2017 Smithsonian Food History Weekend.
Courtesy of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.

Date: October 28, 2017

Title of Program: Cooking Up History: Life Saving Dahl (part of Smithsonian Food History Weekend)

Speaker: Simon Majumdar

Recipe:

- [Life Saving Dahl](#)



Simon Majumdar During Cooking Up History at 2017 Smithsonian Food History Weekend.
Courtesy of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.

Date: May 4, 2018

Title of Program: Cooking Up History: Asian Pacific American Foodways

Speaker: Patricia Tanumihardja

Recipes (hyperlinks to PDFs):

- [Herb Salad Nasi Ulam](#)
- [Orak Arik](#)
- [Pickles](#)



Chef Patricia Tanumihardja During Cooking Up History. Courtesy of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.

Date: June 8, 2018

Title of Program: Cooking Up History: Exploring the South

Speaker: Edward Lee

Recipes (hyperlinks to PDFs):

- [Dirty Fried Chicken](#)
- [Hoedduck](#)



Chef Edward Lee During Cooking Up History. Courtesy of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.

Date: November 3, 2018

Title of Program: Cooking Up History: Punjabi Traditions Meet Mexican Flavors in California
(part of Smithsonian Food History Weekend)

Speaker: Maneet Chauhan

Recipes:

- [Gorditas Aloo Parantha with Salsa Verde Chutney](#)
- [Kesar Badam Atole](#)



Chef Maneet Chauhan During Cooking Up History at 2017 Smithsonian Food History Weekend.
Courtesy of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.

Date: February 15, 2019

Title of Program: Cooking Up History: Artisan Chocolate and the “Good Food Movement.”

Speaker: Kathy Phung

Recipes (hyperlinks to PDFs):

- [Chocolate Truffles](#)
- [Rich Chocolate Cake](#)



Chef Kathy Phung During Cooking Up History. Courtesy of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.

Date: May 10, 2019

Title of Program: Cooking Up History: Regional Chinese Cooking Along the Transcontinental Railroad

Speaker: Martin Yan

Recipes (hyperlinks to PDFs):

- [Watercress Soup](#)
- [Basic Chicken Broth](#)
- [Chinese Congee](#)
- [Moo Goo Gai Pan](#)
- [Claypot Chicken & Sausage Rice](#)



Chef Martin Yan During Cooking Up History. Courtesy of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.

Date: July 13, 2019

Title of Program: Cooking Up History: Priya Krishna's "Indian-ish" Recipes

Speaker: Priya Krishna

Recipes (hyperlinks to PDFs):

- [Malaysian Ramen](#)
- [Spinach and Feta Saag Paneer](#)



Chef Priya Krishna During Cooking Up History. Courtesy of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.

Date: October 12, 2019

Title of Program: Cooking Up History: Salsa con Salsa

Speaker: Daniela Hurtado

Recipe (hyperlink to PDF):

- [Lomo Saltado](#)



Preparing Lomo Saltado During Cooking Up History. Courtesy of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.

Date: November 9, 2019

Title of Program: Cooking Up History: Behind-the-Scenes at Bad Saint (part of Smithsonian Food History Weekend)

Speaker: Genevieve Villamora

Recipe (hyperlink to PDF):

- [Ginataang na Hipon](#)



Genevieve Villamora During Cooking Up History at 2019 Smithsonian Food History Weekend.
Courtesy of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.

Date: November 9, 2019

Title of Program: Cooking Up History: Vietnamese Cuisine in Lincoln, Nebraska (part of Smithsonian Food History Weekend)

Speaker: Thuy Nguyen and Khanh Nguyen

Recipe (hyperlink to PDF):

- [Nước Chấm](#)



Thuy Nguyen and Khanh Nguyen During Cooking Up History at 2019 Smithsonian Food History Weekend. Courtesy of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.

Food History Weekend

Since 2015, the American Food History Project has hosted a multi-day festival each fall to explore a key aspect in American history through the lens of food. During Food History Weekend, the museum invites chefs, home cooks, activists, practitioners and the public to come together at Roundtables, Deep-Dish Dialogues, “Cooking Up History” demonstrations, film forums, gallery spaces, and more to share and learn from one another.

For 2020 Food History Weekend, writer Grace Young curated a special virtual gallery for the museum, [Chinatown Stories](#), featuring her video-media work documenting COVID-19's impact on New York's historic Chinatown.

Smithsonian Magazine featured Young's work on Chinatown Stories in the article, [“Culinary Expert Grace Young Is Documenting the Toll of the Pandemic and Anti-Asian Hate on NYC's Chinatown.”](#)