

Folk 267: Food and Culture

**JANUARY 20: “CULINARY  
TOURISM: A FOLKLORISTIC  
PERSPECTIVE ON EATING  
AND OTHERNESS”**

# But first...

- ⦿ Refer you again to <http://tinyurl.com/folk267>
- ⦿ Has the syllabus/course outline
- ⦿ Has all the PowerPoint slides as PDFs
- ⦿ Remember: also provides links to the three readings for the first two weeks after reading week
- ⦿ Don't say I never (a) embraced technology or (b) loved you

Back to Long's "Culinary Tourism"

# What is Culinary Tourism?

# Remembering the key concepts of tourism

- Tourism is a *quality* of experiencing, not a particular behaviour
- The focus is on *otherness*
- The intensity of that experience is correlated to its *authenticity*
- “Authenticity,” the idea of what is “genuine,” is itself a construct, a judgment by the experiand
- *Simultaneously*, as an industry, tourism cultivates/constructs/anticipates the tourist’s expectations of “authenticity”

# Effects on local culture

- ⦿ The presentation and cultivation of one's culture as inherently different from others.
- ⦿ The accentuation of difference and the ambiguity of commonality
- ⦿ Economic dependence on a performance of otherness
- ⦿ The distinction between the leisured, spending tourist and working, earning local
- ⦿ *But also* development, injection of money into a community, spillover into other cultural products, etc.

# Folklore

- ① The elements of *conservatism* and *dynamism* are evidenced in food and culinary tourism
- ① There is a process of *negotiation* by the experiand (the tourist, the audience, etc.) on the *authenticity* of the experience
- ① What is authentic, and why do we / should we care?

# Culinary tourism

- a) Taste is non-communicable (or awkwardly so), so the act of eating is a plunge into something we are only loosely prepared for
- b) We don't have to travel somewhere for us to directly experience culinary otherness (unlike directly experiencing landscape)

# Culinary tourism is about

- Food as a subject and medium, destination and vehicle, for tourism
- Individuals exploring foods new to them as well as using food to explore new cultures and ways of being
- Groups using food to “sell” their histories and to construct marketable and publicly attractive identities



(cont.)

- Individuals satisfying curiosity
- The experiencing of food in a mode that is out of the ordinary, that steps outside the normal routine to notice difference and the power of food to represent and negotiate that difference

# Exploratory and adventurous eating

- Contextual: depends on the perspective/motivations of the eater
- Anticipates a change in the foodways experience for the sake of experiencing that change
- “Tourist gaze” extended to cover all senses (sight, sound, smell, touch, taste)
- Perspectival: see Long’s discussion of “dog-fried rice” in Burma (p. 22)

# Dimensions of otherness

- ◎ Culture
- ◎ Region
- ◎ Time
- ◎ Ethos/religion
- ◎ Socioeconomic class
  - Also: gender; age
- ◎ Many of these realms overlap

# Realms of culinary experience

- ⦿ Exotic ← → familiar
- ⦿ Edible ← → inedible
- ⦿ Palatable ← → unpalatable

# Shifts in food realm

- ◎ Foods once thought palatable and edible become less so through changes in health concerns
  - Green beans and lard; headcheese
- ◎ Some foods once thought exotic become familiar
  - “Chinese food”; zucchini

# Strategies of negotiation (by food providers)

- Framing
- Naming or translation
- Explication
- Menu selection
- Recipe adaptation

# Go away now.

- For next class: Molz's "Tasting an Imagined Thailand"