

# Delicious Cultural Lens

Category: Eating

written by Ellen Zhang | December 6, 2021

As a young child, I switched back and forth easily from eating with chopsticks to eating with a fork and knife. In the same vein, my palate ranged from both my favorite dish that my mom made—spicy chicken and potatoes—to a simple peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

When I entered middle school, one of the biggest changes was that our cafeteria now had microwaves. Thus instead of waiting in line and buying lunch, I could now bring in my mom's carefully packed meals: stir-fried dishes, dumplings, even curries.

But that practice stopped not long afterward. I can't remember exactly when, but I vividly recall why. A classmate, one I barely knew but will never forget, called my curry lunch "upchuck" during the entire lunch period. This was the curry for which my mom had carefully diced potatoes and carrots, added in seasoned meat, and mixed evenly with steamed white rice. I wish now that I had fought back, stood up for myself. Yet, at twelve years old, I felt shame and embarrassment. I told my mom that I never wanted to pack my lunch from home again.

Ironically, Asian food is now all the rage—from sushi to bibimbap to hotpot. Today, I don't hesitate to vouch for my favorite cuisine, to bring it to potlucks, or to share it with friends and coworkers.

Food is a part of my culture—something to be proud of and shared!

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