

The Drink Tank 353
The Drink Tank 353
The Drink Tank 353

THE DRINK TANK 353

CHRISTOPHER J GARCIA

THE PHOTOS IN HERE ARE-
FROM MY RECENT TRIP TO
NEW YORK CITY AND SPECIF-
ICALLY FROM THE MET AND
THE MOMA

Every photo you see is one of the 2K I took on my trip to NYC to interview Graphics pioneer Lillian Schwartz, her son Laurens, and artist Jeff Huang. It was a great trip and after all the work stuff, I had time to hang out in the Met and the MoMA! Meg Totusek and Will Frank will so kind as to put me up! That was the kindest kindness anyone in NYC has ever done for me!

SO, I did an experiment. I asked on Twitter and FaceBook for people to give me a sentence about food. Simple, clean, easy. I wanted to get an issue done that would be comprised of little pic-



es where I looked at food and I was just going to use them as partial prompts. See, simple?

I got a lot of folks who gave me quotes that are famous, some who were smartasses, others who simply said something they love about food.

Now, I haven't created essays for all of 'em, and some that were tied-together I wrote only one essay for, but I wrote a bunch. Maybe this is how Chris Garcia is meant to create: with snatches of ideas from elsewhere and a whole lot of them. Maybe the combination will dazzle, or perhaps confuse, or moreover simply fill my pages.

I've spent some time lately in the company of Bill Wright. He's the DUFF winner this year and it was wonderful to get to meet him. I've read his zine, *Interstellar Ramjet Scoop*, for years and he's a really nice guy! I showed him around the Museum and then he treated me to a wonderful Turkish lunch. I had the Iskander, one of my favorite meals, and then took him to BASFA and introduced him around.

He also gave me an early copy of his WOOF contribution, but I didn't bring it on the plane with me.

Oh yeah, I'm writing this portion from some 30+ feet on a United AB320!

Genevieve Collonge - I ate too much.

Now, before I came home and set up this little challenge for myself, I was at the home of Gen and Evelyn. Evelyn, you'll remember, is the girl I've been babysitting for almost a decade. Gen is her mother and my ex-girlfriend. They live about ten minutes away, and since Evelyn's older now, I only see her a couple of days a week, and I hadn't actually seen Gen in the flesh save for a very brief in-car passing, all summer. So, I went over on the night before High School started for Evelyn!

Now, I usually make Evelyn dinner when I watch her. So this time I was put in charge of cooking the side dish, as the main course was pretty simple: boneless Hawaiian Kabli Ribs. Those are those great marinated ribs that are Korean in nature, but Trader Joe's calls 'em Hawaiian, so there you have it.

I made the Pineapple Fried Rice!

We started off with frozen Fried Rice, then added pineapple and some garlic and ginger and a bit of green onion. I'm not a great cook from scratch. I don't do well with actual ingredients, but starting from pre-processed things, I can make things of beauty happen! This was no exception! IT was very tasty, the pineapple, which I drained well, cooked up very nice, and added a nice note to the saltier than I expected rice. The onions were great too! The Ribs were very tasty, and while we were eating, Gen and Evelyn introduced me to a new cartoon series called Gravity Falls. It was about a pair of young twins who live in a Twin Peak-esque town with their Great-Uncle who runs an Amusement Park. It's really funny, features an adorable Pig named Waddles, and most importantly it has some awesome Science Fiction elements. There's a great episode about Time Travel that plays with the concept in a way that's as exciting as any exploration I've seen in ages. It will likely dominate my Hugo ballot for the foreseeable future.

It was a lovely night, really just a couple of hours since I'd spent the day podcasting with JC, Chuck, Ric Bretschneider, and a bunch of others at 7 Stars for the Nerdvana Podcast's First Anniversary. We talked movies and we talked the show's evolution and we did an edition of Leaf and Let Die, my tea-themed podcast. It was a great day all around, and I'm glad I've still got Gen and Evelyn in my life. That is something I would not say of just about ANY other Ex I've had, and certainly none of their daughters!

See, not that wasn't so bad now, was it?





Kate Kligman - *Pizza is Life*

Lou Antinelli - *When the going gets tough, the tough get pizza.*

Eric Larson - *The blood level in my Pizza system is getting dangerously high.*

It's not my favorite food, but it's top five for sure. Chicken Wings, Burgers, Ribs, Poutine, and then Pizza. See, I can make lists! It does top Steak, Chili, Stew, Meat Pies, Fish 'n Chips, Risotto, they're all in that same realm. I love Pizza though. I grew up in the second generation of Americas who don't really view pizza as an ethnic food anymore.

I've had some great pizzas of all different styles. I went to Chicago last year, had a Giordano's pizza which was spectacular. Thick, flaky crust that held a brick of cheese embedded with pieces of sausage and love. Just the perfect amount of grease. There's an Armenia form that's very similar dish in Armenia (and most likely is the seed that spread to Italy with early Christian missionaries) called Lamejun. It's so tasty, and formed one of the highlights of my trip to Toronto. I mentioned that I had fallen in love with Lamejun when I was dating a girl just after college, but hadn't had it since. Diane Lacey then went out and got me some, delivered it to the Closing Ceremonies and I GOBBLED IT DOWN!!!! It was amazing. I love that so much.

I have a go-to place in Santa Clara. New York style pizza, great topping, but it's not ideal as thin-crust needs to be really special to make me desire it fortnightly.

I do have a dream pizza.

It's Chicago-style, deep-dish. That's the starting point. From there, it goes a bit off the rails. First, a layer of the cheese, then a handful of ground venison that's been simmering with spices and wine. Drain it well, sprinkle it on, then more cheese. On top of that, sliced sausage. Sausage, easy right? Well, I'd go for an Elk/Lamb Italian-style sausage. It's delicious, and I know a guy, I can get it. So then, a final player of cheese, then the tomato sauce on the top, though I'd like a bit extra garlic and basil in the sauce. That adds a touch. Garlic is a form of religious metaphor for sin, you know? It is ultimate pleasure, wonderful and powerful, and it leaves its mark upon you, driving those around you away. Makes you think! Also, I'd like a habanero simmered with the same to add a bit of heat.

The key to it, though, is right before it comes to the table, let it sit for about 7 minutes to coalesce, and toss a fair pinch of fresh oregano, thyme, spinach (in fine ribbons, it's a wonderful garnish) and a touch of mace. That would be the dream!

Grub Ubbadub - She was flying on shrooms when she leaned close and whispered in his ear, " your dying words will be Totinos Party Pizza."

I don't care what I have to do, I will publish a novel with these as the first words!



Tara O'Shea - I could exist on nothing but sushi.

DO I love sushi? No. I'm the guy who goes with the crew to Japanese at the Sushi Boat place and orders the Bento Box with the Chicken Katsu and gyoza. I've never been much of a such eater, not at all.

Except in Boston.

On Friday nights, there was a tradition. I'd get out of class around three, I'd go to the bank with the check from Student Work-Study, I'd deposit it and take myowndamnself to the Japanese restaurant on Boylston, plop myself down at the high bar where the sushi chef was preparing stuff fresh. He'd smile when he saw me walk in, and the greeter, a woman who may have been the thinnest human I've ever actually met, would go and get the video tapes. She sneak behind the bar, reach underneath and start the first of the short stack of videos she had.

The first one was always Sumo.

Apparently, long before I had started showing up, this place had catered to a crowd that enjoyed Japanese Sports. When I first went, I think I was a Freshman at Emerson at the time, I'd wander in around 6 or so, and I'd just catch the end of the Sumo, at the time the biggest names were guys like Akebono and Konishiki, who were my faves. I started getting there earlier and earlier until I got to be known. There were a few younger Japanese guys, a Russian woman and her boyfriend, and couple of older business types who were usually there. They were Sumo lovers from long back, and there was a divide that I served as. On my left, and around the corner, were the Akebono lovers. On my right towards the door were the Takanohana fans. I went both ways.

These folks would order HUGE platters of sushi. The chef would make tons of roles, and I don't err remember anyone ordering. He'd cut up tuna and mackerel and squid and octopus and on and on and on. He would just start and keep going, putting the sushi on wooden planks that would start on one side, and then the next round would start on the other. Usually these had 5 or 6 pieces on them, so by the time it arrived at me, there was only one, which was OK because I've never been a big fan of sushi. I'd just pass the planks on if there was anything and later I'd order a Katsu or something.

The Sushi chef noticed this after a while and leaned over.

"Don't like sushi?" he asked.

"Not too many things." I answered.

“OK.” He said and went to work on several different pieces, arranging them on one plank, ignoring others, letting the younger sushi guy do the bulk of the work for a while. After about ten minutes, I had a sampler in front of me of eight completely different sushi pieces in all sorts of different kinds of preparations. There was what I now know is Otoro, HIGH CLASS TUNA!, and an egg one that was actually decent. There were slimy ones, one that had no nori, but was surrounded in this strange rice-like paper. There were only two I really enjoyed: the Giant Clam, Margai, and Tako, octopus. He noticed, and every time after that, he would make a small tray of two Tako and two Margai for me, without me even asking!

The amazing thing was we'd eat and eat and eat, watch Sumo and drink. It was fun. After the Sumo, there was a general sports show that talked about baseball or soccer if they were in season, and after that was always a Talk Show like thing. It only lasted like half an hour, but I always stayed.

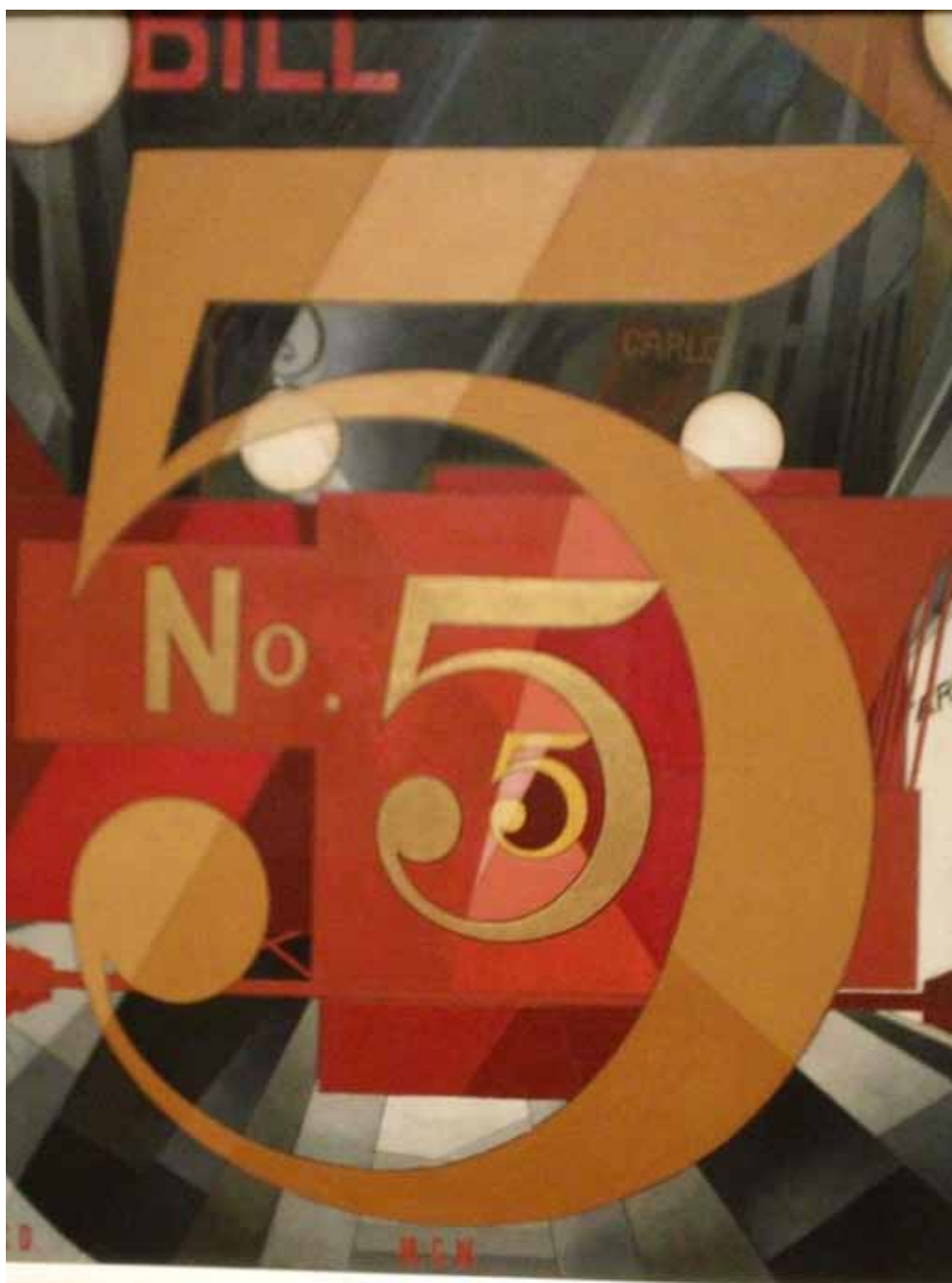
After that was wrestling.

Usually they'd start with the half-hour All Japan shows. I saw so many of the great All Japan main events. I first saw Kobashi vs. Misawa in that restaurant. I watched the Championship Carnival finals. Most of the others would leave after the sports show, but I'd always stay, and the Russian woman and her boyfriend. After All Japan, it would be New Japan, and sometimes they'd through on a woman's tape, All Japan Women's or JWP. As my Senior year was winding down, and I was far more broke then than I've ever been, they got to like me, and sometimes they'd do me a niceness. They got the New Japan January 4th show and showed it in its entirety one night. I was in there for something like 9 hours, nursing a glass of water and enjoying the small plates the chef would periodically put in front of me.

The funny thing is one of the others was obviously covering the Sushi, but no one ever asked me to pitch in, and while I'd get the bill for my Katsu and if I had a drink or tea or something, there'd always be a bill for me, but it never had sushi on it.

I graduated, and then I moved back and the ritual was on again, and then I moved back to California for good and as I understand it, they closed shortly after that for good. It happens. A new place opened, it's been open all this time.

Well, at least until the Bombers of the Boston Marathon planted their bomb right in front of what once had been my Japanese Restaurant Friday Night Tradition.



Joseph Ashwood - 'tis but a pithy pittance for sustenance.

Shakespeare. Actually, this isn't Shakespeare. I don't know who it was, but it weren't him, or at least not when I searched for it in his work. It sounds like The Bard, no?



Wendy Wagner - Scrambled eggs and toast cure the blues.

So, once upon a time, I was kinda a dad.

This is an Evelyn story. She was 5 or so, and her Beta fish had leaped from the bowl, drown in the air. She had named it Daniel. This was her first brush with the idea of death.

And her Mom was at the Toy Show in LA.

Now, I was living with Gen and Evelyn at the time, and I was watching her for the two days, and this was the first day. I knew it had died, and while I did consider going sitcom and buying her a new one and hoping she wouldn't notice, instead I decided that I'd tell her the truth.

I picked her up and I was very quite. I put on her favorite CD of that period: The Dresden Dolls. She sang along and we got back to the apartment, and I told her to go to the living room and sit on the couch.

"I wanna see Daniel." she said.

"Sit on the couch." I said.

She did.

"Now, Evelyn, I came home today for lunch, and I noticed that Daniel's bowl was empty. He jumped out, landed on the floor and died."

Have you ever seen a child's world fall apart? I have, a few times, and while might revel in such things, I did not. She let her lip quiver a while, and then she started to cry. The world that had existed for Evelyn prior to that day did not include death. Her world had ended. I wrapped her in my arms and squeezed her for a bit. She got snot all over me, but it was OK, she needed some comfort and i was happy to be the one providing it, even at the cost of a bit of nose syrup on my shirt.

"DO you want dinner?" I asked, myself starving.

"Can we have eggs and toast," she said, "and watch Rachel Ray."

At that point, she loved Rachel Ray's cooking show, so I put it on and went and made her Scrambled eggs and wheat toast.

When I walked in with her plate, she was on the second half of the second episode, and Rachel had made Sunny-side up eggs. I set Evelyn's eggs down in front of her and she looked up at me.

"Chris, she forgot to scramble the eggs!" she said, that kid sparkle back in her eyes.

Sometimes, it's the little things that remind you of how wonderful things were before the world ended...

Tom Galloway - Spam, glorious Spam.

When I was a kid, I loved Spam. It's spiced ham, how cold I not. I'm not nearly as a big a fan of it now, though I'll use it in a few dishes and really enjoy it.

Because that's what Spam is for! Too many folks cook Spam and serve it like ham. NO! Wrong! Bad! It's an ingredient, something you use to add protein and a dash of flavor to a dish. As an example, I propose the following dish!

Spam Pekora Fried rice

1 can of spam, cut into 1/2 inch cube-ish pieces.

2 cups of Chickpea flour

1 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper

1 1/2 teaspoon Ground White Pepper

1 Cup water

1 green or red chili, pretty small, and sliced (or you can liquify it and add it to the water if you like spicy)

Ghee, and lots of it!

Take the flour, salt, pepper, baking powder and stuff and mix with the water. It should be pretty thick, and you won't have to mix for more than a few seconds. Dip the pieces of Spam into the batter, then put them into the heated ghee. The ghee should be at 360 or so. Put about 4 pieces in at a time. After a few minutes, remove them, set them on paper towels to drain.

Now, the Fried rice. Take peanut oil, put it in a wok and get it nice and hot. Scramble up an egg with a splash of milk, so it's fully mixed, add it to the pan and basically make scrambled eggs, but make sure the pieces are very small. Next, add old cooked rice to the wok and keep it moving. keep it moving and then, after about a minute, add snow peas, green peas, baby corn, onions (diced small) and diced carrots. You can add a lot more too, but those are my faves. Then, toss in some garlic, minced, and ginger, minced, and perhaps a touch of lemongrass. After you've mixed those in, toss in the pekora and keep it all moving for about 30 seconds to a minute. Serve it onto a platter and WHAMMY! you've done it!

See, Spam's good for something!



Ashley Searby - Life is too short to eat bad food.

Cynthia Geno - Life is too short to eat bad food.

Johan Anglemark - Human Civilisation is counter from the day Man first ate because it is a joy and not just to survive.

Let's talk about the idea that there is good/bad food. Not at all true. I know, you can tell me stories about how you once had a dish where the chef had the lid fall off the salt and served it anyways (and how many times do I have to apologize for that?) or some sublime experience at a white table cloth restaurant where the soup was seventeen dollars. There are those among you who can and will tell me the health effects of a single Big Mac is equal to a lifetime of smoking unfiltered Camels. People can do those things.

They're wrong.

You see, good food is food that makes you happy. Bad food is food that doesn't make you happy.

That's the complete and total sum of what makes something good or bad food. There are times that I want nothing more than a twenty piece Chicken McNuggets. They make me happy when I eat them. There are times when I am happy to be eating a delicious high class meal from a French place where I can't read the menu.

Both of those are good food situations. It's when you're broke and the only money you got will buy you that terrible thin sliced ham and some awful bread that's when food is bad. It doesn't make you happy.

And in the end, that's what matters, no?



Leigh Ann Hildebrand - Fried chicken skin is the bacon of kosher food

Leigh Ann, as she often does, hits the nail on the head in this one. I love nothing more than fried chicken. It's one of the truly great inventions of mankind. We learned that you can use fried chicken skin in a bunch of different ways. I've often used it where others might use crispy bacon. Add it as a topping to a baked potato. Trust me, you'll never go back!

I sometimes, typically when I've got a little bit of money but know that there's a period of extended broke coming, I'll buy a rage bucket of Kentucky Fried Chicken and bring it home, eat it over several days. It's a ritual, really. Sometimes, I'll take the biscuits and place them in the fridge for a day or two and then put them in the blender to make break crumbs, which is tasty, and if you add the skin from one piece of the KFC great meat to it, you've got a great flavor that you can top a Mac 'n Cheese with and be very very happy.



Michele Wilson - food nourishes your body while book nourish your mind.

There are many books and movies that perfectly combine food and science fiction or fantasy. I've learned that you can combine them in ways that make for the best of all stuff!

Michaela Roessner's novel *The Stars Dispose* is a book that's so totally not what I read. I hate historical fantasy, and even though it's not High Fantasy, it's far more subtle than that. Actually, I'd argue that it's straight historical fiction, but there's a fantastic element to it. Magical Realism? Absolutely not. First off, it's in English.

So, the descriptions of the food and the cooking descriptions and the eating and there are di Medicis and all sorts of awesome.

But I want to talk about the cover. It's what sells the food angle better than anything. It's beautiful, it gives the impression of the feast that surrounds and powers the book forward.

In a way *Dune* is a giant food metaphor. Look at the way they treat Melange. It's a drug, they call it 'The Spice Drug', but then Lady Jessica brews from spice cof-

fee, and folks eat it a lot. It's a part of a balanced, super-human diet.

One of the most famous movies of Science Fiction food is *Soylent Green*, which is (spoilers) made of people. Now, this is hardly the first story that used the idea of making people into food to feed the rest of us, it's actually a pretty sensible way to deal with overpopulation and sustain the rest of us.

And notice, no matter who's talking, it's 'The rest of us', as if you'll never be the one who is eaten. You'll always be the one doing the eating. You kind of have to, don't you? You want your body to be respected, but you want to survive. We're going to have to deal with the fact that we'll either going towards a time when there are going to be far less resources than we need, or that we'll be leaving the Earth, and eating our dead is a smart idea.

Of course, I'd rather us eat the rich, because I'd bet their better marbled.

The biggest difference between *Fook and Bood*. I mean *Books and Food*, is that you can go weeks without reading and survive... but it isn't a good life.



Mary Calhoun - Sacred Cows make the tastiest burgers

Ed Beecher - I will gladly pay you Wednesday for a Hamburger today.

This phrase is a much bigger concept than I'm going to make it. I'm going to talk about the philosophy of burgers.

OK, so let's talk about the simplest form of Burger. It's a sandwich. A hot sandwich. The simplest form of Burger is two slices of bread with a formed meat patty in the middle. Simple, and if you've eaten one like that, and I have, you know that it can easily be very satisfying if you've seasoned the meat right (I like to season with Salt, black pepper, a bit of mace, and a touch of garlic salt if I'm being simple), but it can be a bit flat. So what's next? You want to give it a bit of extra flavor and something maybe a bit moistening. The first thought is some sauce with a bunch of flavor, and that's ketchup (or mustard if you're a philistine!) or maybe mayo. You put that on the bun, and it makes things a bit messier, but still delicious.

And then you want something to wrap the meat with that's got a bit more body. Maybe some sort of heartier and more durable bread. The Hamburger bun is good on that measure, as are things like brioche, or sourdough.

And you've got the greasy patty, and the sauce that adds a bit of slipperiness, so you need something that's cool, maybe crisp. LETTUCE! It's a very nice counterpoint, but it doesn't add much in the flavor world, so you might wanna add a slice of onion! That can be a bit over-powering, so you might add a slice of tomato. That all makes sense, everything playing it's role, but you've toned down the meat, so you may want some sort of big flavor component and you add a slice of cheese.

Now, the Cheeseburger is the pinnacle of the Hamburger. It's got all the elements to form the perfectly profiled burger. I'm off cheeseburgers of late, but I still have to say that the philosophy of a cheeseburger is truth inarguable.

Now, Take the Burger concept and break it into the five component parts - Meat, Bread, Sauce, Veg, Cheese/Other, or if you wanna get all general about it, Body, Container, Liquid Flavor, Cooler, Flavorators.

OK, so for my ULTIMATE BURGER, I'd say that you have to start with the bread. The perfect bread as far as I'm concerned is crusty sourdough. It's got structure, it's got bite, it is spongy enough to soak up 100% of the drippings and sauces. Cut it just short of half. You want the bottom to be slightly thicker than



the top. t needs to be able to soak it all up, and gravity only works downwards, no? You should toast it on one side each half. The side towards the middle, for it adds a nice hint of flavor and makes it stand up a bit more.

Now, meat. 1/2 ground Beef (20% fat), 1/4 ground pork, 1/4 ground Bison (of Beefalo) meat. Add salt, pepper, fine minced garlic, small diced onions, a touch of mace, some cayenne and Red Pepper Flake. Some say to add a bit of tomato paste, but I'm not on that trip any more. Form a patty that is a bit oblong, as as to fit the bun. Cook it in bit of olive oil (not even Virgin Olive oil) and maybe a touch of butter in it. fry the burger for a couple of minutes on each side. I like mine in the medium-rare realm and it works, usually.

OK, not the Cheese/Other. For cheese, I like Mozzarella, a single, kinda thick slice, and put it on top of a couple of strips of crispy bacon. when you've turned the burger onto the second side, but the bacon on, then the cheese on top. It'll melt nice.

Now, prep the bun. Laying it open with the toasted sides up, on the top, place a thin layer of Mayo and a touch of ketchup. make it thin. Then, take the burger and place it on the bottom bun. Top it with a little spinach, washed but not cooked, a slice of tomato (sprinkle it with a touch of salt), and a bit of shredded cabbage that is tossed with a bit of Red Wine vinegar, salt, pepper, and lemon. put it on top and close up the burger.

Serve it with a Coke. IT's the perfect beverage for a burger.

James Murray - Garlic is assumed.

The great Les Blank died in 2013. That makes me sad. He was a nice guy, but he was also probably the best documentarian working in the US over the last twenty years. That's a big statement. His films were great, and the one that has moved me the most lately is on the National Film Registry - *Garlic as Good as Ten Mothers*.

Les spent a lot of time documenting the rise of Garlic in the US in the 1960s and 70s. Here, from the folks who do the Gilroy Garlic Festival, to stores of how garlic helped to sustain the Spanish people during the Franco years. There are stories of people elevating their cooking with Garlic, people who hate garlic talking about why. There are lots and lots of long takes of people cooking with garlic, my favorite of which is Alice Waters cooking a chicken in a dough casing full of garlic. It looks amazing. There's a lot of talk about what garlic means to cooking, which is the important thing. Yeah, for centuries it was used as a medicine, but when it was discovered as a food element, the world changed!

Also, why do people older than 70 call it pasta with gravy when it's tomato sauce?

The way Les Blank looks at Garlic, and this will sound odd, is a lot like the way I wish I could approach themes in my zines. You look at a topic, you attack it from every angle, whether or not it seems directly applicable and you find the connections. Blanks goes and ties these things together by the way he presents the material. People talk, they say things, and he doesn't turn away from it. That is the sign of a good documentarian, and I am always trying to get that. With *Journey Planet*, we dissect a theme, to a degree, by just getting as much material as we can from everywhere we can. It's the same theory, but Les is so good because he gets the idea that people talking about the things they love is far better than building a structure around found footage and such. He made a lot of great movies using the idea that if you took long takes and found the right people to talk to, you'd get what you needed to work with.

And in *Garlic as Good as Ten Mothers*, he was absolutely right.

Bob Hole - Beef jerky and beer can sustain a man.

I used to order custom beef jerky from a friend. She made excellent stuff, and while it was a bit stringier than the store-bought stuff, but the flavor was much fuller. I liked the chili lime the best, or course. It was tasty tasty tasty.

Seca is a classic form of jerky still done with relative power by the good folks of the American Southwest. It's tasty and makes me happy when I see it on a menu. Sadly, it's rare (well-done in preparation, but still, you get it!)

Beer and I don't get along. I've never found a beer I could drink often. Boddington's is a nice thing once in a long while, and Guinness, of course, but mostly, I don't go in for beer. One of my favorite things using beer is Beer Cheese Soup. The concept was enough to make me try it and it really moved me.

Now, what do they have in common? You can use one to use the other.

So, let's say you've made a tray full of Soy Ginger Beef Jerky (and for an even better experience, make it with Venison or Elk!) and it's been around for a while. You wanna use it, but your jaw has been hurting, so the chewing isn't going to work for you. Here's the first step: find a good beer. Any beer, I like to use something like Boddington's, Bass or maybe a Summer Ale. Either way place the beer into a saucepan and warm it for a while. After that, add the beef jerky, and don't let it get real hot, but keep it warm. basically, you're steeping it, right?

Take it out after an hour or so, maybe two and two things will have happened. First, you'll have flavored the beer with the soy ginger and beef essence. That's good! You'll also have softened the meat. take the meat out and cut it into small strips while you reduce the beer for a while. Add some chicken or beef stock and a bit of cream. make a roux, add some milk, then the beer. add in the meat, then one pound of grated cheddar, Irish works bet, a bit at a time.

Simmer for a while and it's delicious!

Cooking with Jerky is what they did back in the Before Times, where they wasn't all this strive and carryin' on! It was, and still is, a tasty idea.



Catherine Crockett - I ate Uzbek food last week and you didn't.

That is a cruel, cruel statement.

I have a thing for the cuisine of the Middle East and the 'stans. I've eaten several of them over the years, almost always home made as we don't have too many restaurants where you can find Uzbek, Turkmenistani, or my favorite of all, Ukrainian food. It makes me sad. Still, I love it when I can get it.

The kind of Uzbek food I've had is drives from the Jewish cuisine of the area. While most Uzbeki cuisine uses mutton as the primary meat (and I do love mutton!), it's the chicken and beef combination that is most widely used in Uzbeki Jewish cooking. The classic dish, which I've been treated to three times now, is a form of Pilaf (I think it's called palov in Uzbek). It's got beef and chicken and it's delicious beyond words. The spicing is marvelous, and you can see why it is often eaten as a Shabbat lunch. It's just that good! The whole 'Food cooked in a bag' thing was perfected in Uzbekistan, I think. I had a wonderful sort of chicken-beef-rice thing with dried currants (or maybe it was the thing they call barberry) and it was amazing, especially with the theatrical opening of the bag.

They also love their tea. All Russians do! OK, I know, I know, they're not Russians, but to be honest, the tea gene seems to come from those lands that were once a part of the Soviet Union. Black tea, heavy and smelling strong, is what I've always been served, but this may be because folks seem to know that's what I like to drink. The Teas that are popular in among the Uzbeki community tend to be very tasty, and the Russians are very fond of Uzbek teas as well.

I've got to remember to ask Catherine what she had, because I need to know what to order next time.



Ira Emsig - Fish are Friends. Not food.

I'm a historian of Computer Graphics, so it must seem strange that I don't go to see all the computer-animated films. I see some, but I don't make it a habit. The last film I made a point of seeing from the good people at Pixar was Brave, but before that, the last one was Finding Nemo.

And it was awesome!

You see, Sharks are mean, but there's a support group in Finding Nemo that is teaching them to view other fish as friends, not food.

Let me expand this metaphor to see exactly how subversive this is. You see, it is in the nature of the shark to behave in such a way that they eat fish, they survive on converting protein to provide energy. It's what they're programmed to do at an absolutely molecular level.

Now, there's a therapy group with the goal of turning sharks, fish-eating animals that they are, into vegetarians. Really? Through the use of group therapy, these Sharks are begin trained to go against their nature, to not eat fish, to compromise their evolution and eat nothing but veg. Think about that and in how many ways and directions it's subversive. First, there's the simple "Nature vs. Nature" argument. This would seem to indicate that there's nothing to nature, and it is all Nature, and therefore simply by 'talking it out' you can overcome any natural inclination. There's also the idea that you can, through the use of therapy, bring about changes in psychology that lead to changes in physiology. That is a theory that has been tried over and over, and there are sometimes miracle changes, but they are rare, and often limited.

Then you can see this whole concept as subversive on another level. Since the sharks keep falling off the wagon, off wrong sniff and they're blood-lusting maniacs going through everything they can to eat fishy flesh, it's showing how futile the whole idea of trying to 'reprogram' one's self using therapy is. That sort of thing is very obvious, no?

So, Pixar has made a film that is potentially trying to subvert the world of psychotherapy, which I guess proves that Steve Jobs was really a Scientologist...

Also, if you watch it solely for the enjoyment of it, it's pretty freakin awesome! I mean, there's a laid-back turtle that rides the jetstream, how could you get better than that?



Howeird - *If it isn't chocolate, it isn't dessert.*
L. Romanyx Adams - *Hand over the chocolate and no one gets hurt.*
Sandy Cannady - *I've inadvertently run out of chocolate...*

Chocolate is OK. It's not my have, to be honest, even for dessert. I like cream-based sweet desserts, or raspberry flavors. My favorite dessert is from a place called Luna in Concord. It's a Creme Anglaise with raspberry and passionfruit sauces. It's also got a little bit of a chocolate sauce, it's amazing.

Now, that's not to say there aren't chocolate things that I'm not a giant fan of. The first has to be Chocolate Chip Peanut Butter Cookies. This is a riff on the traditional Hershey's Kiss cookie that I love at Christmas. You basically make a Peanut Butter Cookie batter, then add chocolate chips. It's a flavor sensation! There's a wonderful chocolate cake that I enjoy. You take chocolate cake mix, add in a fair splash of Grand Mariner, then a fair add of Cayenne pepper. It's amazing!

The one thing about chocolate is that it works so well with so many different things. Chocolate and Bacon work well together, but really only if the bacon is thick but and crispy. Chocolate and wine, of course, but my favorite pairing is with little cheddar goldfish.

That's right, the sea-bred form of Cheez-its goes so wonderfully with chocolate. This is something that I've discovered from years of attending Con parties. I will always check for Goldfish, and take 1/2 a handful, and then look for M&Ms, taking another 1/2 handful. Then, put them in your mouth together. It is a flavor perfection! I love it so, and it's the singular taste that comes to mind when I think of Cons.

Jennifer Wiley - *Bacon*

Ah yes, Bacon. It has risen and now there is the Bacon Fever gripping the world! I like bacon a lot, the crispier the better! The problem with Bacon is that it's not Kosher, and if eaten in sufficient quantities will kill you. The same thing could be said about arsenic, though.

Perhas the finest thing about Bacon is how it improves lesser meats. Take a simple hotdog, right out of the package, and you'll eat it and it'll be fine. Wrap that hot dog in bacon and it's a flavor sensation to rival the greatest things ever done! Or, perhaps you've got a piece of lean beef, cheap, cheap, cheap. Cut pieces of bacon and small incisions into the meat, stuff 'em in there and it's golden! Bacon improves meat.

And there are so many types of bacon. Canadian Bacon! Irish Bacon! English Bacon! Pancetta! That kind of bacon where it's round! It's all bacon!

My dream project, and I'm hoping I can make it happen, starts with Pork Belly. The fattiest and most wonderful portion of the Pig. It's probably the best thing evolution has brought us! So, you start with Pork Belly and you cure it in Salt Water, perhaps with a bit of brown sugar, some mustard seed and peppercorns in the solution. Then you soak it for a few days. Probably 2, maybe 3. Then remove it and smoke the hell out of it. Cold smoking's the way to go, gives the smoke a lot of penetration, but it takes FOREVER! Still, best way to go. Cold smoke for somethign liek 72 hours. I was once told that the best time and place for cold smoking is in your backyard in a metal shed in the middle of January in the Midwest. I may have to test this theory!



Heather Urbanski - Food is the best part of travel

This, to close my little endeavor, is the best truth I have read in ages. I love eating, and the only thing better than eating is eating in places that aren't where you eat all the time. I've often hosted... well, pulled together, a WorldCon Food shamble. We'll grab a bunch of people, usually Brits and Americans, and we'll find a place and dine and chat and generally be weird together. The most famous of these was our table at Au Pied de Cochon in Montreal. It was an amazing time and I am so glad we all got to try it together.

I think Heather was with us at our Giordano's trip in Chicago, and I know I was there! Not sure what's gonna happen in San Antonio. It's always a crap-shoot!

I'm in New York right now. I love New York, and I hate New York. It's a city that is hustle and bustle, but there are some truly magnificent places for contemplation. The people are hard, cold, but I've had some wonderful conversations on the Subway, including meeting a wonderfully kind Whovian who NEEDED a photo of my Dr. Who vans. It was a lovely moment.

I've eaten well. Well, I've eaten and it's been good, but I'm too poor right now to ACTUALLY eat well.

There have been some firsts. The big one - Australian Food. Now, I know a little about Australia, including the fact that you can get amazing Meat Pies at Footy games, but I'd never had any. I'd been reading about an English Chef who is taking Australian Aboriginal ingredients and making hip modernist cuisine, but I'd never eaten it... unless you count Violet Crumble!

So, The Thirsty Koala had a nice little menu, there was Kangaroo on it, but they had these Lamb Lollies. Long-time readers may remember my love of Akili's, a Greek place in Los Angeles. They have the best lamb I've ever eaten. This place was a close second, as it was perfectly Medium Rare and the bones held just enough extra meat to make gnawing at them a pleasurable experience! The Caramelized Pumpkin was also extraordinary. I loved it.

Other than that, I stuck with Food I knew, but that was enough of a wonderful time that I made the trip to Astoria, Queens TWICE!

Now that is a reason to travel!

