

Corn

When I was twelve I knew a girl called Kelly.
She was ten years older than me.
She was a student in the Japanese course my parents taught.
She was fat, but not that much.

One day I saw Kelly and she was skinny, so I asked her what had happened to her. She told me that she went on a popcorn diet.
She said she ate only popcorn for two weeks.
After that I remember she dated Rick,
who I thought was a pervert.

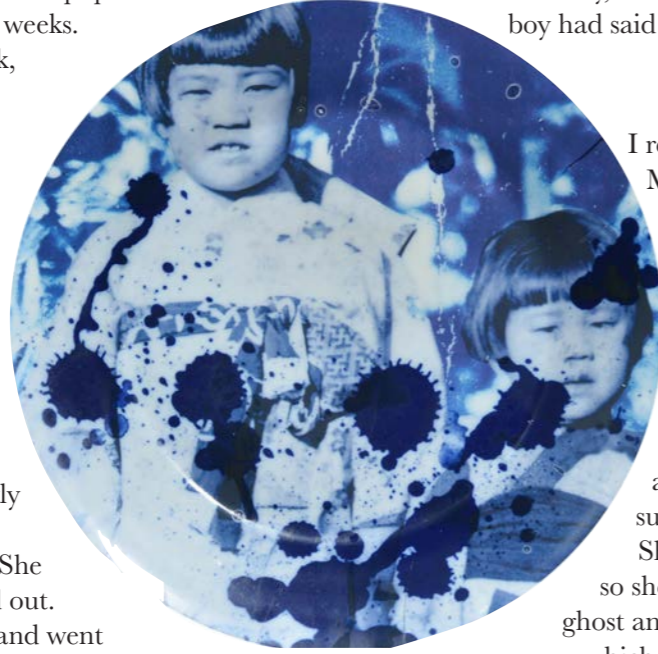
Dorian

I saw the woman's face changing as the King of Fruits slowly entered her mouth. This act of sensuality can easily be enhanced by the strong aroma, or turned into disgust by the words of another, such as "It smells like a fart!"

I know a woman who smuggled Dorian into a five star Hotel, thinking no-one would find out. She just had one piece tightly wrapped in cellophane.

The hotel had at least two hundred rooms. She thought it was impossible for anyone to find out. She passed the lobby without any problem and went back to her room.

The moment she opened the enclosed treasure, the phone rang. It was the manager of the hotel. He told her to immediately open all windows and get rid of the fruit.



Green Pepper

When I was in Elementary School, calling someone a green pepper was an insult. It meant stupid, because a green pepper is empty inside. The name reminds me of an incident on the first day of school. Hikari made the "smart kid" cry on our way home. The next day, teacher scolded me, because the boy had said it was me being mean to him.

Fish

I remember when my sister Miwa stopped eating fish. It was after seeing a documentary on "Minamata Byo" at school. This illness was caused by factories dumping mercury in the river.

My sister was 9 years old. She came back from school and told me about the suffering of the people. She knew I enjoyed eating fish so she wanted to scare me, like the ghost and spirit stories she used to tell which kept me awake nights.

After hearing the story I continued to eat fish anyway, just to show her that I wasn't under her thumb.

Black Cherries

Tomaso and I were once eating black cherries together, waiting for a table in a restaurant. He was a classmate who I got along with. Every Monday he would complain how fed up he was, picking up different women all the time. I wasn't sure that he was as he defined himself, until we were seated. During the dinner he ate, spoke to me, and flirted with four women at the same time, with none of them knowing the others' existence. Once Tomaso asked Brian to take a photograph of him sucking a strawberry, to send it to his girlfriend in Milan. Brian and I were suggesting him all kinds of other fruits he can suck. I vaguely remembered Tomaso didn't like the idea the idea of sucking a cherry. He said it was too obvious. At the end I came to the conclusion that Tomaso should definitely suck a bunch of black cherries for a future photo.



Egg

A mountain of hot steamed white rice with raw egg and a hint of soy sauce made my mother happy as a child. This was just after the Second World War. She would sit and tell me this story each time she prepared it, like a broken tape recorder.

Summer Orange

One cloudy day in an unlit room, Soyoko's mom was peeling a summer orange for us. Her sweater and just below the knees skirt matched her straight grey shoulder length hair. This was the first time I had eaten summer orange in my life. Bitter sweet. Three of us sat on the floor near the big window, talking like flowing water. Soyoko was my best friend in elementary school. I dreamt of a couple of nights ago. She was sitting in a humid narrow alley. She was mumbling to herself and playing with pebbles on the floor. I called her name. She didn't react.

She had not changed, although her hair had turned grey like her mom's. I put my hand on her shoulder and called her name again. I told her that it was me. She neither heard me nor felt my hand. She was in her own world. At that moment, I felt the loneliness she may have felt, or perhaps still feels. I woke up and realised I hadn't dreamt of her in thirteen years.



To cook is to nourish oneself and others.

and unhappy cooking, I knew it could be an act of love. enjoyable, and can be fast. Even with my mother's precise Over the years, I came to learn that cooking was simple and through my body I was reconnecting to my mother. the lunchbox she used to prepare for me. I was in tears, and boyfriended had cooked, I felt again my lien to my mother - She is from a different generation."

He told me: "Yes, she did. In her own way. "Do you think Grandma loved me?" In pain, I asked my son:

My earliest memory of my mother cooking was of her cutting her finger with a knife. She didn't enjoy cooking. So, for me it was difficult and complicated. My relationship with my mother became complex after I left home age fifteen. By 2018, I could hardly remember our link, our lien, and my only memories became her cruelty, as my childhood best friend described.



When I was young, I thought cooking was difficult.

A-l-i-e-n C-u-i-s-i-n-e 10 recipes + 10 stories by Miki Nitadori limited edition of 100

Food is the Alien we allow into our bodies. The moment we are alive, before we come alive, we feed. The first exchanges we have with other people are being fed, feeding then cooking - this continues all our lives. I enjoy cooking. It is a way to show my love for my family and friends. I also love to eat other people's food to receive their consideration and care. Food for me is not just about survival, but sharing pleasures of taste and company. It provokes memories of others, and what I have shared with them. Eleven years ago, I made 'Eat', a collection of short stories, my memories of people and food. I included some in this book, to pass on to you. My inspiration to write a recipe booklet came from a gift: "Recipes to comfort the Buddhist soul: Puname-Kakaku Jodo Mission Centennial Celebration". Initially I was going to make a booklet based on these, but I thought it would be nicer to share a simple meal with friends and make that into a booklet. Thank you to my friend Celine, who has collaborated with me on my last two projects through her photography. Also her husband Jean Herve and their daughter Candice who made great Banana Lumpia! Andy, who fixed the organisation and design of this booklet, has been a great support. Last but not least, to Pia & Eric who came to share. Mahalo to all my dearest friends.

When I saw Sandra sculpting a carrot flower, it made me think of my parents. They ate carrots every day for a couple of years, after my mom heard that carrot was a factor of a long life. This was based upon a dietitian observing two villages in Japan for a period of time. One village included carrots in their daily diet, whilst the other one didn't. Living a long life has been important for my family. My grandmother stayed in her room, as if she was in exile, for her last twenty years. It wasn't that she couldn't walk any longer, nor had she lost her mind. She was in good health. Every time she said she wanted to go out, my aunt would say: "If you want to live a long life, you shouldn't". My dad used to take her out for a drive, but my uncle asked him to stop. I knew a woman who lived to be 107 years old. I don't think intended to live a long life. She was losing her mind when I met her. She wasn't eating carrots every day, nor was she an exile in her room. She had been in Hiroshima when the bomb dropped. She was in the house and her husband was outside gardening. She just lived.

Carrots

Dashi water

Water in which you have cooked vegetables, starches, fish and meat, can be used for broth (dashi) and be the basis of Miso soup, either alone or by adding dried kelp and shaved dried smoked skipjack tuna (boil them for at least five minutes). You can also boil shrimp shells from cold water to

make dashi fish stock, which can be stored in the fridge up to 24 hours. Dashi makes all soups and sauce dishes tasty. You can keep the water refrigerated for up to three days.



Miso soup

Ingredients (serves 4):

½ block of tofu
2 pinch of salt
600ml of dashi stock with dashi water: vegetable, pasta, fish, shrimp and meat boiled water. If the dashi water is already tasty just simply use this.

Add Kombu (dried kelp) Katsuo-bushi (Shaved dried, fermented, smoked skipjack tuna) for more flavor.

Or simply add water, katsuo bushi and 2 tablespoons of miso. 2 teaspoon of dried wakame (seaweed)

Instructions:

1. soak your tofu in salted lukewarm water for a few minutes
2. put your dashi water or plain water on to heat
3. add ingredients to make the dashi stock
4. bring to medium heat
5. add dried seaweed, vegetables of your choice (optional)
6. add miso, let it completely dissolve
7. add the diced tofu (2 cm is an easy size to eat)
8. heat until boiling, take it off the heat, leave 5 to 10 mins)

The basic rule is, if your dashi stock is tasty, your miso soup will most likely be good!

Tofu salad

Ingredients

(serves 4):
½ block of tofu
2 pinch of salt
2 to 3 ripe tomatoes
1 long/ 2 small cucumber

Instructions:

1. Put tofu in salted lukewarm water for 5 mins
2. Take it out, dry the surface with paper towels
3. Dice tofu (2cm is an easy size to eat)
4. Cut the cucumber, tomatoes to your preference
5. Mix tofu, cucumber, tomato together



Japanese-style salad dressing

Ingredients (easy quantity):

1 table spoon of hulled roasted sesame seeds (optional)
2 table spoon vinegar (of your choice)
2 table spoon sugar
4 table spoon shoyu
1 table spoon sesame oil

Instructions:

Mix all ingredients.
Adjust to taste and serve with Tofu Salad!

Rice, Japanese-style

Ingredients for 6 people:

3 to 4 cups of rice
water

Instructions:

1. wash your rice until the water becomes transparent
2. allow 2cm water above the top of the rice.
3. Cook it in a rice cooker or in a pot
4. If in a pot, cover with aluminium foil under the lid on a medium high heat for 12 mins.
5. Bring pan to boil for 3mins, then low heat for 2 mins
6. Turn off the heat and let it steam out the excess water. (3 min)

Shrimp curry

Ingredients (serves 6):

6 to 8 mushrooms
1 zucchini
700 ml of water
4 cloves garlic
1 onion
1 large carrot (2 medium size carrots)
1 medium red pepper
30 + frozen or fresh shrimps with shells (5+ per person)
2 large potatoes (optional)
1 Japanese curry block of choice (mild, hot, medium)

Instructions:

1. peel the shrimp, put the shells in water to boil (10 mins)
2. strain the shrimp shell and keep the dashi broth.
3. wash and prepare your shrimp (cutting the back of the shrimp or changing water until it is clear can be enough.)
4. Cut all the vegetables to a size that's easy to eat
5. Stirfry each ingredient separately on high heat to keep them crunchy.
6. Add the curry in 2 pieces, stir until it dissolves completely.
7. Add all ingredients and bring to boil for 5 -10 mins

You can make a meat or veggie version - all veg work in a curry! You can quickly stir fry all ingredients together in a pot on high heat, for up to five minutes. Fry the most solid ingredients first, such as meat and carrot, and fry last the watery ingredients like mushroom and zucchini. If you choose a curry block that is too hot, you can add apples or banana to soften the taste.



Strawberries

When I was five, a group of adults told me to go and ask in a restaurant if they would kindly wash the strawberries they had bought on the street.

Cheeky parents knew that the Thais adore kids.

When I asked, the woman smiled, washed them, poured some Carnation milk on top and served them in six small green glass bowls.

She invited us to come and eat inside.

Strawberry ice cream with Yuzu

Ingredients:

1 pack (270 g) of Strawberries
150g of whipping cream
80g icing sugar
½ table spoon of yuzu (Japanese citrus juice)
50ml of water (adjust according to amount of strawberries)

Instructions:

1. wash and cut strawberries
2. mix them with 25 ml water in the blender
3. In a chilled metal bowl mix cold whipping cream, yuzu and icing sugar to make a whipped cream with an electric whisk (you can put ice in a bigger bowl around the metal bowl for it to remain cold).
4. When it becomes creamy and soft add to the strawberry mix plus 25ml of water. Mix.
5. Put it in a zip lock or freezer bag and place in the freezer.
6. every hour, take it out and squeeze the bag vigorously to mix the ice cream
7. do this as much as you can for a light fluffy ice cream .

Daikon Pickles

Ingredients :

500g of daikon (white radish)
or any other vegetables
cucumber, carrots etc
Half a jar of a vinegar of your choice (to cover all vegetables)
Half a jar of water
150g sugar (or taste the mix & add gradually)
garlic cloves (optional)
Herbes de Provence (optional)

Instructions :

1. sterilize the glass jar (10 mins boiling, 10 mins cooling)
2. boil vinegar, water and sugar - let it cool.
3. put the vegetables in the jar
4. cover with cooled vinegar, water and sugar
5. It should be ready to eat after 24 hours.
6. keep in fridge up to 4 months.

To keep an extra 2-3 months, boil just vinegar and sugar.

Banana bread

Ingredients:

½ teaspoon of vanilla essence (optional) and/or cinnamon
100 ml oil or 100g melted butter
2 ripe bananas
200g plain flour
100g sugar
10g baking powder
2 eggs

Instructions:

1. Mix the flour, sugar, baking powder, and vanilla essence.
2. In another bowl, mash the banana, add egg, oil/butter.
3. Add the two mixes together and stir well.
4. Put all the ingredients in a rectangular cake mould.
5. Preheat the oven to 180 degrees and cook for 45 mins.
6. When the surface is a little brown cover with foil.
7. Check it is cooked using a fork or bamboo stick, if the ingredients do not stick.
8. Add Orange, Clementine & Citrus sauce while hot!
9. When it has cooled a little, wrap in foil to retain moisture



Orange, Clementine & Citrus sauce

Ingredients :

Squeezed juice of orange, clementine, citrus fruit
Sugar (a fifth of the weight of the juice)

Instructions:

1. Squeeze the fruit of your choice, and weigh it
2. Weigh a fifth of this weight in sugar (half if you want to preserve up to 2 months)
3. Heat them in a small pan to boil
5. Pour the sauce over banana bread or other cakes.

Banana Lumpia

(from 'Recipes to comfort the Buddhist soul')

Ingredients (2 each for 8 people):

4 ripe bananas and 1 apple
Lumpia wrapper (spring roll pastry sheets)
8 teaspoons of brown sugar (1/2 for each wrap)
8 teaspoons of cinnamon (1/2 for each wrap) (optional)
Oil for deep frying

Instructions :

1. cut a banana in two and apple into eight
2. place the wrapper diagonally on a board, and place 1/2 banana and 2 apple pieces horizontally in the centre.
3. sprinkle brown sugar and cinnamon on top
4. fold opposite corners on top of the mix so they overlap, fold up the bottom corner, wet the top corner edges to make them sticky, then roll up into a cylinder.
5. deep fry at 175C until golden brown
6. Serve immediately!

"O no ya?"