

BEYOND THE PLATE WORKBOOK

2022



PREPARED BY MARY BALOG, RDN



PART 3

embrace food culture



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Congratulations on completing Part 3 of the "Beyond the Plate" workshop series! In this third presentation, we discussed the role of food culture, and how embracing cultural foods can promote physical and mental health & wellbeing. We also highlighted examples of how Diet Culture shapes aspects of U.S. food culture, access to cultural foods, and eating behaviors or attitudes about our body. Rejecting the Diet Mentality is an ongoing practice, and through this presentation, we reinforced aspects of this principle.

This workbook will give you space to reflect and work through some of these topics. (Questions were adapted from the Intuitive Eating Workbook, by Evelyn Tribole & Elyse Resch.)

I. We'll begin by exploring your "food story". Consider the components of Food Culture below. Spend some time reflecting on the people, places, and moments that have shaped your Food Story. Everyone's story looks different- we all learn about food in different ways! Whether it's from our family, from our own research, from friends or neighbors, and so on- it all contributes to our relationship to food and cultural food practices. Review the following questions and write down what comes to mind, and what you feel like contributes to your own cultural food practices.



EXPLORING YOUR "FOOD STORY"

1. Social environment: close relationships, extended influencers; social norms
What is your earliest memory of food? Who have you learned from? Where did you get your ideas about food from? Who do you like to eat food with? What kinds of family or neighborhood celebrations or traditions do you partake in? Consider other aspects related to your social environment.

2. Place: physical settings within the home, workplace, neighbourhood where we engage with and eat food.
Where did you grow up? Where have you lived since then? Have you traveled anywhere? How do you get your food? Where do you get your food from? Where do you often eat your food at? Are there other ways you interact with food in your community? Consider other aspects related to your place.

3. Guidelines: rules, expectations and instructions within a society that guide people around food-related behavior.
What's important to you when it comes to food? Where did you learn what is important? Who or what else has shaped your ideas about food or food traditions? Do you organize any traditional meals or food practices? How did you learn to do that? Consider other aspects related to your learned food rules & guidelines.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

4. Food literacy: cultivated and transmitted food literacy across generations, influenced by cultural practices, economic resources, and habitual behaviors linked to global and traditional changes to food procurement, selection, preparation and consumption.

How confident do you feel about your kitchen skills? What kinds of kitchen or other food skills do you have (such as hunting, foraging, fishing, or gardening)? Who taught you how to work with food? What other sources did you learn from? Consider other aspects of your food skills and knowledge.

5. Food systems: the activities that encompass farm to plate to disposal practices, shaped by policy, economics, and health, ethical and sustainability concerns.

What kinds of foods are available to you? What kind of food grows where you live? How is food produced and distributed in your community? Who produces the food that you eat? How does it get disposed of? Do you have opportunities to learn about the food system? How do you learn about it or interact with food growers, distributors, policymakers, and so on. Consider other aspects of your food system.

7. What kinds of specific foods you consider to be part of your food culture? Which foods hold special meaning or are a part of your traditions? Which foods remind you of special people? Which foods do you consider to be your "comfort food"?

8. Reflecting on all of these factors, consider, which components of your "food story" feel most authentic to you. Are there certain aspects that really connect to your sense of self and identity?



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

II. Our relationship to favorite foods or cultural foods and staples can be impacted by influences from Diet Culture or material circumstances, such as financial, time, or environmental limitations (such as limited neighborhood grocery store options). Reflect on your relationship to some of the foods listed above in Question 6. Review the following chart, and write down any foods from your list that have been restricted or "off-limits" in the past or present, for any reason. Complete the questions below to further explore this. *Note: Critical and judgmental thoughts or concerns may come up as restricted foods are brought back into the picture. If you find that you have an especially difficult time with this, find a professional for support.*



RESTRICTED FOOD INVENTORY

Category	Food
Grains	
Fruits	
Sweets & Desserts	
Fatty or Fried Foods	
Sweetened Drinks	

9. Why are have these foods been off-limits? Is it related to diet rules or beliefs that you have learned about these foods? Were you instructed to avoid these foods? Or have you experienced any financial constraints that limit food availability? Or is it difficult for you to get these foods or to prepare these foods?



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

10. Describe your thoughts and eating behaviors when you decide to, and are able to, eat an "off-limits" or restricted food.

11. While you are eating an "off-limits" or restricted food, are you connected to the taste and your body sensations of emerging fullness? Or would you describe the eating as disconnected, or even urgent?

12. If you experience any guilt, shame, or a sense of urgency related to these foods- What would need to change in order for you to enjoy some of these foods? Do you need help challenging food rules, managing a health condition, time management, more knowledge and kitchen skills, additional financial resources or neighborhood stores? Reach out to find support if you need additional information or guidance!

DISCOVER THE SATISFACTION FACTOR



III. If you don't have a medical need, allergy, or other serious reason to avoid these particular foods, you may decide to explore "Making Peace" with previously restricted foods. Give yourself permission to choose more of your favorite cultural staples, as able. Practice redirecting your focus- explore how it feels to embrace the sensory components of your favorite foods versus only focusing on nutrition.

First, get to know the sensory characteristics of food! *(More details on page 6)*

- Taste
- Texture
- Aromas
- Temperature
- Appearance
- Volume or Sustaining Factor





REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What **TASTE** sounds appealing? Consider these taste qualities: savory, sweet, salty, buttery, rich, bitter, tart, smoky, hot, spicy, bland, or mild.



What **TEXTURE** sounds interesting? Consider these textures which a food or meal offers: smooth, creamy, crunchy, chewy, crispy, crumbly, hard, soft, flaky, gooey, mushy, sticky, greasy, dry, moist, thick, thin, heavy, light, or lumpy.

What distinct **AROMAS** are appealing? Consider the following aromas: roasted garlic or onions, sizzling bacon, grilled steak, pizza in the oven, hot coffee, spicy cinnamon, vanilla, buttery popcorn, fresh-baked bread, stinky cheese, fishy salmon, smoky brisket, or lemony citrus.

What **TEMPERATURE** of food is enticing? Imagine being inside while it's raining or cold outside. You may be sitting on the couch when your hunger signals emerge. Does a bowl of steaming soup seem right? What about if you are outside on a hot summer day? Would you prefer a cold milkshake or cool bowl of fresh fruit instead?

What about the **APPEARANCE** of food? When you think of an appetizing meal or snack, how does it look? Is it colorful? Is it piled high? Full of many colors and textures? Are there more neutral colors? Is it all arranged on one plate? Is it spread across small plates? Notice the factors that make your food appetizing just based on looking at it.

Consider the **VOLUME** or **SUSTAINING FACTOR** of the food: This sensual quality will be experienced in your stomach rather than through your senses. Imagine the difference you may feel after eating a heart bean chili vs. a big salad or steamed vegetables. When you're choosing a meal or snack, ask yourself if you want something heavy and hearty that will fill you up and that will sustain you for a long time, or do you want something airy, light, or small, which might not fill your stomach or hold you over for very long.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

IV. Give yourself permission to enjoy one of your favorite foods. Let go of diet "rules" and practice noticing how food tastes, smells, and feels in your body. If you feel comfortable with this, sit in a distraction-free environment. Use the following prompts to anchor yourself into the meal and practice raising your awareness about how you feel at different points in the meal.

MINDFUL EATING EXERCISE



1. Check in with yourself before the meal

- "Am I excited about this meal?"
- "Am I nervous?"
- "Do I really want this?"
- "How will I feel after I eat this?"
- "Am I hungry?"
- "Where is the craving coming from?"

2. Check in with yourself during the meal.

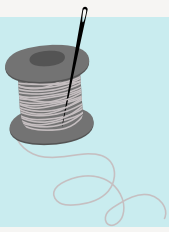
- "What aromas do I smell?"
- "Does this food bring up any memories? Does it remind me of anyone special?"
- "What does the texture feel like?"
- "How does the food look?"
- "Is the meal meeting my expectations so far?"

3. When the food is halfway gone, check in with your fullness.

- Notice how the food feels in your mouth and tastes.
- After swallowing, notice how your body feels.
- Before taking the next bite of food, ask yourself: "Is it possible that this next bite is the last bite for me?" If your gut sense is yes, plan to stop at that point.
- If you're still hungry, keep eating! And check-in as you start to feel more full and satisfied. Go for seconds if you still feel hungry. Try to find that point of pleasant, comfortable fullness (Refer to the above hunger/fullness scale).
- Notice how you feel. It may be important to remind yourself that you can still eat the rest of this particular food or meal again. You can always save the leftovers for another time, or make the meal again soon if you feel like it.

3. Check in with yourself after the meal.

- How was the overall experience?
- "Was the meal as good as I expected?"
- "How does my body feel right now? Am I energized? Do I feel a sugar rush? Am I feeling sluggish?"
- "If I could choose anything, would I eat this again?"



THREADS TO FOLLOW

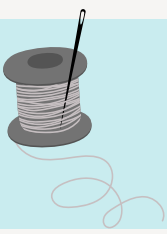
IV. Culturally sensitive care is key to receiving equitable health care . The following organizations and individuals will provide additional information, contacts, articles, and more, to help explore and connect with culturally diverse health professionals. It's tough to represent everyone in one list, so if you don't identify with the cultures represented here, consider these as threads to follow that may lead you to what you're looking for. These resources can also help you learn about other cultures, cultural foods, and traditions. The following lists include healthcare organizations, directories, dietitians, and cookbooks to help expand your relationship to health and food.

ORGANIZATIONS & WEBSITES

- Diversify Dietetics:
 - Dietitians of Color Directory: <https://www.diversifydietetics.org/rd-of-color-directory>
- Health in Her Hue:
 - Medical Provider Directory for Black women and Women of Color: <https://healthinherhue.com/directory/providers>
- Hued
 - Culturally Competent Medical Provider Directory: <https://app.huedco.com>
- BEAM: Black Emotional and Mental Health Collective
 - Find a Virtual Black therapist, doula, yoga teacher, mediator and much more: <https://beam.community>
- BIPOC eating disorders conference (already happened this year, but stay tuned for upcoming conferences!)
 - <https://balancedtx.com/free-support-groups-webinars/bipoc-eating-disorders-conference>
- Eatwellxchange: Nutrition Education with a Focus on Culture
 - <https://www.eatwellexchange.org>
- Association of American Indian Physicians: <https://www.aaip.org>
- National Council of Asian Pacific Islanders Physician: <http://www.ncapip.org>
- National Hispanic Medical Association: <https://www.nhmamd.org>
- Ayana Therapy: Therapy for Marginalized and Intersectional Communities: <https://www.ayanatherapy.com>

Bookmark these!



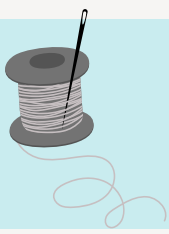


THREADS TO FOLLOW

NUTRITION & HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

- Dalina Soto @your.latina.nutritionist
- Krista Linares @latina.dietitian
- Marina Chaparro (@nutrichicos)
- Dr. Hortencia Jimenéz (@drhortenciajimenez)
- Dr. Kera Nyemb-Diop @black.nutritionist
- Deanna Belleney Lewish (@deanna.rdn)
- Whitney Trotter (@whitneytrotter.rd)
- Tamara Melton (@tamarameltonrdn)
- Shana Minei Spence (@thenutritiontea)
- Leatta Byrd
- Dr. Fiona B. Lewis (@drfionabe)
- Sade Meeks (@grits_inc)
- Ashley Carter & Jasmine Westbrooks (@eatwellexchange)
- Maya Feller (@mayafellerrd)
- Adante Hart (@hartoflife_)
- Rosie Mensah (@rosiemensah)
- Amber Charles (@theculturaldietitian)
- Clara @yourdietitianbff
- Laura Iu @Laura.iu
- Cara Harbstreet @streetsmart.rd
- Cindy Chou (@thesoundofcooking)
- Alvina Beğay
- Cynthia Wilson
- Sharon Swampy @indigenousnutritionist
- Tatyana @the.indigenous.nutritionist
- Deneé Bex @tumbleweed_nutrition
- Ke-alohi Naipo @kealohi.nutritoinist
- Sarika Shah @indian.nutritionist
- Samina Qureshi (Pakistani)
- Dua Aldasouqi (@amuslimdietitian)
- Grab Kaur (@nutrikaur)
- Rabiya (@rabiyaowerrd)
- Evita Basillo (@evitabasillonutrition)
- Thevaki Kulendran (@south_asian_dietitian)
- Fatema Jivanjee-Shakir (@yoursouthasiantherapist)





THREADS TO FOLLOW

COOKBOOKS TO EXPLORE

- Lemon, Love, and Olive Oil by Mina Stone
- Afro-Vegan by Bryant Terry
- Cook Korean! by Robin Ha
- In Bibi's Kitchen by Hawa Hassan
- The Palestinian Table by Reem Kassis
- Chinese Soul Food by Hsiao-Ching Chou
- Solo by Anita Lo
- The Korean Vegan Cookbook by Joanne Lee Molinaro
- Red Hot Kitchen by Diana Kuan
- Dosa Kitchen: Recipes for India's Favorite Street Food by Nash Patel and Leda Scheintaub
- We are La Cocina by La Cocina
- The Sioux Chef's Indigenous Kitchen by Sean Sherman
- To Asia, With Love by Hetty McKinnon
- The Essential Indian Instant Pot Cookbook by Archana Mundhe
- Aloha Kitchen by Alana Kysar
- Jubilee by Toni Tipton-Martin
- Indian Cookery by Sameen Rushdie
- Supra: A Feast of Georgian Cooking by Tiko Tuskadze
- Cook Real Hawai'i by Sheldon Simeon and Garrett Snyder
- Korean American by Eric Kim
- Madhur Jaffrey's Instantly Indian Cookbook by Madhur Jaffrey
- Vietnamese Food Any Day by Andrea Nguyen
- Koshersoul: The Faith and Food Journey of an African American Jew by Michael Twitty
- Mister Jiu's in Chinatown by Brandon Jew and Tienlon Ho
- Arabiyya: Recipes from the Life of an Arab in Diaspora by Reem Assil
- Diasporican: A Puerto Rican Cookbook by Illyanna Maisonet
- Cuba: The Cookbook by Madelaine Vazquez Galvez and Imogene Tondre
- Colombiana: A Rediscovery of Recipes and Rituals from the Soul of Colombia by Mariana Velásquez
- My America: Recipes from a Young Black Chef: A Cookbook by Kwame Onwuachi
- The Rise: Black Cooks and the Soul of American Food by Marcus Samuelsson
- Everyone's Table: Global Recipes for Modern Health by Gregory Gourdet
- The Africa Cookbook: Tastes of a Continent by Dr. Jessica B. Harris
- Ghetto Gastro Presents Black Power Kitchen by Lester Walker, Pierre Serrao, Jon Gray
- Gullah Geechee Home Cooking: Recipes from the Matriarch of Edisto Island by Emily Megett
- Pasta Grannies by Vicky Bennison
- EAST by Meera Sodha
- Ripe Figs: Recipes and Stories from Turkey, Greece, and Cyprus by Yasmin Khan
- Feast: Food of the Islamic World by Anissa Hello
- The Kitchen without Borders: Recipes and Stories from Refugee and Immigrant Chefs by The Eat Offbeat Chefs
- Mi Cocina: Recipes and Rapture from My Kitchen in Mexico by Rick Martínez



until next week!

“What that comes back down to is an honoring of origins, an honoring of what I call intimate immensities. A seed is so big and so small at the same time.”

-Rowen White
Reseeding the Food System Interview

