

**Global Kitchen: Engaging Different Cultures Culinary Workshop**  
**NYCNEN Meeting @ God's Love We Deliver**  
**April 28, 2017**

Food Practices of the World – *Sandra Arevalo, MPH, RDN, CDN, CLC, CDE*

- Father had a job that brought him to different countries, always traveling, was born in Columbia but feels like a gypsy cuz grew up in different countries
- Had the chance to grow in an international
- Didn't grow up with Russian culture, but sister married a Serbian man, so there you go
- Paying attention to other cultures really brings us together
- What is culture?
  - Habits
  - Society
  - Knowledge
  - Beliefs
  - These are abstract words, it's about things you cannot see but that people share together
- What is race?
  - More physical
- Ethnicity – common nationality or shared cultural traditions
  - Start adding to this concept
  - Columbians don't all look alike – some look more “traditionally” Hispanic, but some are Black, some are White.
  - Just because a person looks a certain way does not mean we can put a label on them – it's the ethnicity and the culture that give us the bigger picture
- One size doesn't fit all
  - We don't know enough about different cultures
- Where to seek health: when we get sick, we go to the doctor or hospital, but there are many people who first seek prayer, or botanicals, or a pharmacist. Where we seek help depends on our culture
- How we treat disease – there are some who prefer home remedies, chicken soup, calling grandma, folk medicine
- When we come to the US there is a whole different monster – you may think you're good cuz you know how to speak Spanish, but when you're in the states, you realize you don't speak “Spanish, you speak Colombian or Puerto Rican, or Dominican, or Ecuadorian. When you come to America, you start changing, adopting behaviors from other countries. If you had asked me 20 years ago if I would eat raw fish, I would have said NO! But now I eat sushi, because I learned
- There are some who come here and don't have lots of contact with other cultures, but then on the other side, there are people who come to live the American dream and forget completely about their culture. Then there are people in the middle, the mutts, who may be bilingual, follow the traditions of your original culture, but still celebrate American holidays like thanksgiving, 4<sup>th</sup> of july. You also have to live the culture of the specific place you're in, the south is very different from NYC. You become acculturated, start adopting new cultures and make a hybrid
- There are also people who become assimilated, who create their own new culture because they leave their original culture behind but still don't completely fit the American culture
- Environment: supermarkets in the 100 zip codes will be very different from those in the Bronx

- Men don't eat the same as women, kids don't eat the same as adults, if you're sick or sad, you don't eat the same as when you're well.
- Studies have shown that when you come to the states you start changing your eating habits.
- We don't really know where our food comes from because we just get it at the supermarket, but where it comes from has a lot to do with our food choices
- You can really learn from talking to people who don't share your culture
- Soul food comes from the time of African slaves and reflects a culture of African Americans
- You need to ask a person where they're from within their country of origin to get a sense of the types of foods they eat. The types of foods may be the same, but the preparations vary
- Asking about music, sports, news, allows you to build communication and rapport with your client
- Don't forget about cultural sensitivity – be able to accept that there are people that are different from me, and not just accept, but appreciate and seek it out.
- Each of us is a gypsy in some way because we all carry a background and we all have a different culture as individuals.

#### How to Create Healthier Versions of Typical Latino Dishes – *Jhack Sepulveda*

- Being culturally relevant and becoming culturally competent as a clinician is the key to getting the point across to your clients
- The client most likely understands what the problem is, but how do we relate to them, and present them relevant information specifically to a certain population?
- Being able to present to our clients something they can relate to.
- If you present the Mediterranean diet to a latino, they'll most likely be respectful and nod their head a lot, and meanwhile be thinking "I don't eat this" and then you haven't made a difference. You shouldn't be changing what they eat, just controlling certain foods and preparation methods as well as recommending increases in fruits, vegetables (non-starchy) and whole grains, as well as promoting exercise.
- Are clients realistically going to measure out ½ cup of cooked spinach? Be practical – implement quick ways to help them manage their diets that they are actually likely to use – using hand size estimates like the
- You can really relate all this stuff to any culture.
- By telling a Mexican American to remove tortillas, you are telling them to remove a huge part of their diet, a part of their culture. You're not going to reach them!
- Portion controlling, how can we address that? By reorganizing the plate. Meet people where they're at and just reorganize and not change.
- People from different ethnic backgrounds, your patient, are the experts on their ethnic background, and you can learn from them.
- Eating out tips – share a meal and save money
- The grocery store and nutrition facts label reading is really the next level of education. Maybe you sometimes have a client who wants to know more, but the keys are really to work on small changes to cooking techniques and plate reorganization
- Set realistic goals, make sure this is a team effort as families and communities

## The Importance of Cultural Context and Learning from Home Cooks – Sonya Kharas

- Unique cooking school in NYC where all the instructors are immigrants, have 11 instructors from 11 different countries
- In recent years, NYC has reached the largest influx of immigrants since the turn of the century
- We live in this incredibly diverse city but there is rarely opportunity for meaningful interactions between cultures, and when we do have interactions, it is generally service-based (purchasing foods at a bodega)
- Mostly immersion workshops – 5.5 hours with 4-6 students. Students go to instructor's home, instructor has prepared a meal and they discuss the culture, and then they cook together for 3 ½ hours, then enjoy that meal together.
- Can be awkward, go into a strangers home in a strange neighborhood, alone, etc. but by the time they leave they feel that they have a new family and the relationships extend beyond the course. People continue to connect and build lasting relationships.
- Why does this happen?
  - It happens around food, starts and ends with a meal. All instructors are exceptional home cooks, they grew up learning how to cook, and were responsible for cooking for much of their lives. The actual dishes they're making at home is different than going to a restaurant – the richest form of expression of a cuisine is what happens at home. Food in the home really serves to break down a lot of initial barriers and get people to start talking and communicating
  - It's really important that these relationships are not service-based. People want instructors to come to their homes and cater, which is great that they want to explore new foods, but the dynamic in the workshops is fundamentally different. It's a mutual experience that everyone collaborates in together.
  - The workshops happen in the home. There is a cultural context to eating when you take the food out of the home. There is something important that is part of the traditional experience that you may not get at the restaurant, such as a prayer that is part of the cultural context, or eating with your hands.
  - We are providing meaningful, well-paid work for the instructors – one commonality btwn instructors is talent and skill they have been practicing for their entire lives without being valued or celebrated. It is important to recognize the talent and skill people are bringing to the table. By paying instructors and getting feedback from students, you are showing the instructor that there is a demand for their skills.

## Demonstration and Tasting: Sautéed Greens in Mustard Oil – Rachana Rimal

- Culture is food.
- Nepal means mount Everest, the climate is very good, we don't have much hot climate or very cold climate, it's very nice. My food is based in millet, corn and a lot of mustard oil.
- The classes are great, every time I have such great students, and they love the class – they meet a stranger, and by the time they leave they are crying.
- First menu is regular nepali food, and I also have a lot of things from the royal family so each class has a dish from the royal tradition.