our foodscapes

reflections on university food systems in Berkeley, CA
April 2023


Editor: Francesca Soo Hodges

UC Berkeley, Edible Education 101

With special thanks to:
Alice Waters, Cari Borja, the Chez Panisse staff, The Edible Schoolyard Project, Will Rosenzweig.

This zine was made and printed on the territory of Huichin, the ancestral and unceded land of the Chochenyo speaking Ohlone people, the successors of the historic and sovereign Verona Band of Alameda County.

We acknowledge the Ohlone people as the rightful stewards of the land we are on, and encourage readers to support organizations like Sogorea Te Land Trust to translate this acknowledgement into action.

The acknowledgement has been adapted from the Native American Student Development Center, who wrote the living document in partnership with the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe.

Copyright on all recipes and design belongs to the respective contributors.

All Rights Reserved.

statement of purpose:
In this semester of Edible Education, our students posed the question of how they may eat like our Course Creator, Alice Waters, with limited financial and food resources. The teaching team encouraged the students to enact a process to prove (or disprove) the feasibility of eating like Alice Waters, as university students. We hoped that the group would have greater interaction with their peers and wider community, research opportunities, and a deeper understanding of the food systems that affect us personally and politically.
both approach student dining from different scopes and positionalities, they both agree that there must be strong student demand for healthier food options and plant-based dishes for university leadership to initiate the food revolution in the dining halls and campus eateries that they wish for.

Despite awareness of the challenges that confront her, Waters retains an unwavering passion for advocating for nourishing food for Berkeley's students. While Waters enchants with her descriptions of her weekly bean braise or simple salads showcasing local fare, we did raise the question of how we could translate her food values to our university lives, with tight budgets and packed schedules. As college students, we may not have the resources to access the formality of the Chez Panisse dining room, where everything down to the smell is curated — Waters admitted to us that she wafts burned rosemary by the restaurant's doorway to welcome in guests. But Waters wishes to share a perspective with others inspired by her Montessori teaching career, where the senses are engaged to increase personal connection to food. Waters spoke with a glint of whimsy in her eye as she recalled specific strawberries she tried at a French marchée, or a green tomato she tried in the peak of an Italian summer. While her picturing of culinary destinations drew our imaginations to foreign places, she encouraged us to practice mindful connection to the produce we encounter, even at our local grocery stores or dining halls. For Waters, she stresses that her food values are found not at the white-linen clad tables of Chez Panisse, but rather at the farmers market, an oven, plots of herbs and small plants, undulating walkways, and a flock of lively chickens. Right beside the garden, you can step into the trailer that hosts the school's kitchen. Inside, we witnessed children making macaroni and cheese from scratch, working together on the meal while learning about ingredient sourcing and budgeting in grocery stores. The tables were covered in red plaid tablecloths for the students to enjoy their meal, and the small trailer hosted a bustling environment in comparison to the peace just outside in the garden.

In conversation with Program Coordinator Griselda Cooney, Director of Development and Communications Kirsten Strobel, and Founding Kitchen teacher Esther Cook, we learned more regarding Alice's refusal to carefully scale the project elsewhere. Instead of implanting other Edible Schoolyard sites in cities anywhere and everywhere, Alice wants each community to be inspired by Edible Schoolyard's values and strategies and make it serve local needs.

Instead of focusing on expansion, Edible Schoolyard hosts a summer camp dedicated to learning about the project. All sorts of people participate. It hopes to plant seeds in its participants, to give them tools and inspiration to carry home. The only other official Edible Schoolyard Project location is that in Stockton, which takes a largely different approach for its community, turning its focus to food insecurity and community gardening.
Over the course of this project, we talked to our peers about awareness of and access to food resources on Berkeley's campus. We visited the Basic Needs Center, met Cal Fresh advisors, and chatted with Cal Dining nutrition specialists, food systems professors, farmers market vendors, public school garden facilitators, and many other members of the UC Berkeley food system, students especially. In our class, Edible Education 101, we asked 150 students to reflect on Alice Waters's class session at the beginning of the semester and to consider their greatest barrier to “eating like Alice.” Our findings were that students struggled to access: time (47.9%), money (33.6%), cooking skills (9.3%), access to food (6.4%), and finding recipes (2.9%).

The cost of living in Berkeley is 77% higher than the national average and Berkeley has grocery prices that are 30% higher than the national average [Alameda County Community Food Bank]. The economic crisis that impedes the health and flourishing of our food systems goes beyond our individual choices of what goes on our plates, where we shop, and what classes we take and hold these conversations in. We hope that the pages to come do not serve as a final answer about how to engage with the food values and choices of Alice Waters, but instead, examine the current landscape of our university food system, and look at alternative imaginings of what could be.

"Even though we have access to the dorm kitchen, there's nothing in there for us to use and to buy those items cost so much. Imagine having to supply your own pots, pans, spices, ingredients but not having enough storage for them or risking them getting used and stolen by others. It's not clean, and we're so tired that we don't have the energy to cook a whole meal and have to share it with our roommates.”  — Tennley Desatoff, dorm resident.

"Dining Hall breakfast is 7AM - 10AM, and lunch from 11AM - 3PM, and yet during the day I always go to GBC [Golden Bear Cafe] because I don’t have the time to pick up food between classes. It’s good in a pinch, but there’s no variety … Sometimes the only time I get food is from the Bear Market. This convenience is nice, but then I’m spending flex dollars which I don’t have much of.” — Tennley Desatoff, dorm resident.

"I remember when we only bought one bag of groceries for two days worth of meals, and the total was already over $50. Since we have EBT, the cost of food isn’t felt as much, but I can’t imagine how much grocery-shopping must hurt others with all the high prices.”

"Now that we’re in our second year, our schedules have gotten a lot more busy and we can only eat when we can. Sometimes this means skipping meals since we get home late.” — Joseph Chen, off-campus housing resident.

"Most of our meals consist of quick frozen rice or dumplings from Trader Joes, Yoshinoya packets we can heat up with rice and peas/corn, and other microwave meals.”

"Buying all our basic cooking equipment was a huge upfront cost when we first moved in. I think we were hundreds of dollars more broke trying to buy pots and pans that would last us for at least the rest of our college. We made the mistake of buying some cheap pans that warped and became sticky after a month or so of using it.”
### OUR FOODSCAPES

#### Berkeley Student Cooperatives

The extensive Berkeley Student Cooperative (BSC) network includes 17 houses and 3 apartment complexes near campus. For over 90 years, BSC has offered an affordable housing option for UC Berkeley students and community members. The complex food system varies from house to house, semester to semester, as responsibility is shared between changing residents — which ranges in number from around 15 to over 150. For instance at Hoyt Hall, each night there are 2 cook shift workers who provide a hot, healthy, produce-driven dinner 6 nights of the week for their 60ish housemates. We spoke with former and current kitchen managers, food coordinators, and cookshift workers who contribute to the wellbeing of their peers and the coop food system.

"It's more affordable, living in a co-op, as doing a work shift decreases the price... It's nice to also not worry about cooking at the end of the day. As Berkeley students, we're all very busy and stressed and getting to come home on the days that I don't cook and have a fresh and oftentimes really healthy meal is super important." — Jojo WB.

"There's something unifying about [sharing a meal], it's a good way of connecting with others. Sitting around a table, it's an opportunity to share discussions and food ... There's a reason that across culture, special times or holidays are celebrated by a shared meal. There's something spiritually nourishing about eating food that's been prepared for you." — Lily M.

"Before cookshift I never cooked, I could hardly cook for myself ... now I'm really good at tofu for 60..." — Jess N.

"On cooking for 140+ people: "It's hard to set a dynamic and facilitate a meal that you want, but that's good for teaching acceptance, and meeting the moment where it's at." — Lily M.

---

#### Clocking In + Out with Berkeley Students

- **Deborah Tan**
  - 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM: Class
  - 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM: Meeting
  - 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM: Class
  - 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM: Class
  - 12:30 PM - 1:00 PM: Cooking
  - 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM: Class
  - 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM: Cook or Run
  - 7:30 PM - 9:30 PM: Babysitting
  - 10:45 PM - 12:30 AM: Studying

- **Catie Duy**
  - 6:30 AM - 9:30 AM: Workout
  - 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM: Class
  - 11:00 AM - 5:00 PM: Lab
  - 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM: Class

- **Viana Pham**
  - 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM: Class
  - 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM: Work Shift
  - 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM: Class
  - 3:30 PM - 5:00 PM: Class
  - 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM: Study Session

- **Ella Diamond**
  - 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM: Class
  - 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM: Lab (Data8 UGSI Section)
  - 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM: "Project Party" (Data8 UGSI Responsibility)
  - 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM: GSI Check-in
  - 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM: Cardio Kickboxing
  - 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM: Project Work
  - 9:00 PM - 10:00 PM: IM Game

- **Nicole Park**
  - 9:00 AM - 9:30 AM: Breakfast
  - 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM: Lab (Data8 UGSI)
  - 12:00 PM - 12:30 PM: Lunch
  - 12:30 PM - 2:00 PM: Class
  - 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM: "Project Party"
  - 3:00 PM - 3:15 PM: GSI Check-in
  - 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM: Cardio Kickboxing
  - 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM: Project Work
  - 9:00 PM - 10:00 PM: IM Game

- **Simone Nguyen**
  - 7:30 AM - 9:00 PM: Gym
  - 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM: Class
  - 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM: Class
  - 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM: Coaching

- **Margot Lavitt**
  - 9:00 AM - 9:30 AM: Studying
  - 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM: Lecture
  - 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM: Lunch
  - 12:30 PM - 1:00 PM: Class
  - 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM: Tutoring
  - 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM: Tutoring Meeting
  - 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM: Lecture
  - 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM: Dinner
  - 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM: Studying

- **Diego Wong**
  - 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM: Breakfast, School Work, Lunch
  - 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM: Class
  - 4:30 PM - 7:30 PM: Job
  - 12:00 AM: Cook + Sleep

- **Ourselves**
  - 7:45 AM - 8:45 AM: Figure Skate
  - 9:15 AM - 10:00 AM: Shower/Prep for Lab, Breakfast
  - 10:00 AM - 10:30 AM: Lab
  - 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM: Lab, Snack, Lab
  - 2:30 PM - 4:00 PM: Lab

Photos courtesy of Jess Nathan, Collette Keating, Kaya Wooley
OUR FOODSCAPES

farmers markets

Downtown Berkeley Farmers Market:
Center Street x MLK Jr Way
Saturdays 10AM - 3PM

Temescal Farmers Market:
North Oakland DMV Claremont Ave
Sundays 9AM - 1PM

South Berkeley Farmers Market:
Adeline St x 63rd St
Tuesdays 2PM - 6:30PM

North Berkeley Farmers Market:
Shattuck Avenue x Vine Street
Thursdays 3PM - 7PM

Alameda Farmers Market:
710 Haight Ave, Alameda
Tuesdays/Saturdays 9AM - 1PM

"At the farmers market, it's more than just getting healthy food for yourself. It's learning from the farmers. And they always have something to give you, like 'have you had my curly crested kale?' It's a partnership that begins to develop, and it's inspiring to connect with them." — Alice Waters

on bartering

"The barter system of the farmers market is unlike any system I've been a part of. It truly is the purest sense of kindness and generosity shared between the employees of every booth. It feels like an inside joke, a secret that we all keep together. The reality of the farmers market is that if you work there, you're making very little money — especially in the Winter and early Spring. The barter system between vendors is a kind of reassurance that although we're not leaving our jobs at the end of market with very much money, at least we're leaving it with lunch and dinner for the next few days because we traded a bushel of kale for a bag of brown rice, three avocados and an onion for a loaf of bread, and some radishes for a bag of fancy mushrooms. In the act of trading we create unique and diverse friendships, commiserating with each other about the flooding at our farms, learning about each other's pasts and presents, and cracking jokes about market happenings." — Leilani Randa (she/her), Conservation Resource Studies

berkeley student farms

Photos courtesy of Biruk Tewodros
The Berkeley Student Farms (BSF) is a coalition connecting UC Berkeley students and community members to seven student-run garden spaces. BSF grounds its work in anti-oppression and student basic needs, practicing ecological land management, experimental education, and food justice. Biruk Tewodros, a senior studying Conservation Resource Studies, helps tend two BSF spaces: Oxford Tract beds that the Black Student Center and Oakland's People's Progams are stewarding and "The Garden," a space near the Fannie Lou Hamer Black Resource Center. Tewodros began farming with BSF three years ago, and engages with community-oriented events like cooking demos and art sessions during their time connecting with other students on the land.

"What I’ll forever remember is the strength of the community that I’ve gained from the spaces. This is the most like revolutionary community at Cal that I’ve been exposed to. I’m grateful for how my worldview has been shifted, because of the things I’ve learned from the land and from the people who I farm with." — Biruk

"There’s so much transformative power in these spaces, and I hope that more students, more Black students, can connect to it." — Biruk
### Oats

**Ingredients**
- 1 inch piece of ginger
- 1 tsp. warm spices (turmeric, cardamom, cinnamon, chai spice mix, etc.)
- 1 tablespoon of butter, margarine, coconut oil, olive oil, grapeseed oil
- ½ cup of oats (quick or rolled)
- ½ cup of water or milk (oat, cow, soy, almond, you name it)
- 1 tablespoon of nut butter (peanut, almond, you name it)
- Drizzle of honey
- Granola, crunchy toppings (sesame seeds)
- Fruit of choice (frozen or fresh blueberries, bananas, apple)

**On the stovetop:**
*If you have a tad of time:*
In a small pot, add in a teaspoon of fat (oil or butter), before adding in a knob of minced ginger on low-heat and sautéing until golden. Add in spices of your choice, and toast until fragrant. Next up are the oats, and toast again until they've turned a shade darker. Pour in liquid (water or milk) and turn up the heat. Bring the oats to a boil, then turn down the heat and cook for about 10 minutes.

*In a rush:*
In the oats go with the liquid and add some spices if you wish. Cook on medium-low heat until oats are softened.

*Night before:*
In a mug or jar or bowl (as long as it can be covered), add in your oats and flavorings and liquid.

**Diff. kinds of oats**
- Rolled oats ratio (single serving): ½ cup oats : 1 cup liquid
- Steel-cut oats ratio (single serving): ⅓ cup oats : ¾ cup liquid

**Variation ideas:**
- Go nuts: Pecans, hazelnuts, walnuts, peanuts, sunflower seeds, flax, hemp, chia.
- Dried fruit: cherries, cranberries, chopped dates, coconut flakes
- A tablespoon of peanut/almond butter
- Chocolate, chocolate, chocolate!
- Sub the honey for maple syrup, date syrup, agave
- Fresh rosemary, lavender, or sage

**cast iron granola how to:**
1. Heat up the pan to medium/low and add the oil and nuts. Let those toast for a moment until fragrant. Add the oats and spices/herbs, stir together and let those toast until golden and fragrant. About 1-3 mins.
2. Turn off the heat and add your dried fruit, sweetener of choice, and finishing salt. If you're adding nut butters add here.
3. Give it a good stir and transfer to a plate to cool. If you're adding chocolate, allow for the granola to cool first.
4. Serve! Top a yogurt bowl. Add to a bowl with fresh fruit and warm milk. Simply snack as is. Once you start making granola, you'll never stop.

**Tips:**
- This recipe is increasingly forgiving. Add as much/as little as you like.
- Buy in bulk my friend. This will save you plenty in the future if you stock a good pantry.
- Take advantage of the package-free section at markets. The quality of the fruit/nut is usually far better and it'll save you money! Win win.

### Savory oats (2 servings):
- 1 cup oats [can also use leftover rice]
- 2 cups liquid [stock (veg or meat), water]
- 2 inches of ginger rough chopped (can use powder- 2 tsp)
- Dried mushroom (optional)
- Pinch of salt

Cook oats in liquid + aromatics (ginger, mushroom, other spices)
Can stir in frozen veg, as the oats cook (peas, carrots, spinach, etc.) — good way to use veg. that's going bad

Some things you can top with:
- Egg (fried, soft boiled, hard boiled, poached)
- Kimchi/ anything pickle-y
- Green onion or cilantro
- Chili oil/ Sriracha/ hot sauce

A hearty green (spinach, kale, swiss chard)
Mushrooms
Furikake/ sesame seeds/ chili flakes

Illustrations by Ellie Gorelick
**OUR FOODSCAPES**

**waste management**

**Takeaways from a conversation with Shannen Casey, UC Berkeley Food Literacy Coordinator**

Current measures to approach food waste at UC Berkeley:

Leftover food gets stored in a food bank and donated to the Basic Needs Center (BNC) through utilizing a lean pad: a scale chefs use to weigh the food to donate to the BNC and collecting data analytics to track waste. The lean pad contributed to the “Weigh the Waste,” an experiment conducted by UC Berkeley’s Housing and Dining Sustainability Advocates (HADSA) to show students how much uneaten food amounted to during a typical day in a UC Berkeley dining hall.

Why is there so much waste?

Waste happens when there aren’t many options, as students with dietary restrictions overestimate the amount of one particular food they might want, according to Casey. Additionally, self-service increases the tendency for students to serve themselves more food than they need, and menu inaccuracy impedes students from making informed decisions about their food choices.

Next steps:

Casey and the HADSA Food Literacy Coordinators hope to enact action steps to follow the “Weigh the Waste” challenge, and implement educational materials in the dining halls to help students make informed decisions about their consumption and contribution to the overall campus food waste.

---

**Vegetable scrap stock broth**

**Ingredients**

- vegetable scraps
- water
- salt or other seasonings

**Directions**

1. throw scraps into a large pot
2. add water until vegetables are just covered
3. add seasoning to your liking
4. simmer for 30 minutes
5. strain out the scraps (compost scraps if possible)
6. voilà! you’ve got broth!

> *any vegetable scraps work!*
> *best stored in the freezer*

> **Ideas include:**
> - tops and ends of carrots, zucchini, potatoes
> - leafy green stems
> - garlic, onion, shallot peels
> - any produce on the cusp of going bad -> put in the freezer!

> ~ Danielle Lavitt

---

**How to revitalize leftovers:**

**Add some acid:**

Adding pickled things, squeeze of lemon, lemon zest, dash of brine

**Freshen things up:**

Chopping up parsley, dill, cilantro, whatever’s on hand, and sprinkling on top

**Put the thing on some toast:**

Especially if the thing is stewy... beans on toast.
community dinner #08

Plates piled high with vermicelli noodles doused in peanut sauce, cups filled with carrot juice. Crusty rolls stuffed with tofu and jalepeños, pickled cucumber ribbons, and butter lettuce. A feast for the masses, with strangers sitting around a table — four plastic fold-ups pushed together and covered with a paper tablecloth. No guest would know that the seared salmon and ginger soy marinated tofu came from an air fryer, a hot plate, and the remnants of Cal Dining’s lunch menu, or could believe that the steaming serving trays came from a small, but mighty, team of five volunteers from the Basic Needs Center and Cal Fresh.

At the helm of this dinner, running around with aprons donning the Food Pantry logo, students Catherine de la Peña and Cierra Cardenas dreamed up the menu and oversaw all operations. The two made to-go boxes for building staffers and students on the run, while still engaging with diners who contributed to the sketchpad-esque tablecloth, answering questions from laminated cards about campus food access.

De la Peña and Cardenas started the community dinner series almost a year ago, wanting to extend the services of the Food Pantry at the Basic Needs Center through providing a fresh cooked meal for students and members of the public. Now on their ninth dinner, the two have formed strong connections to Cal Dining and the food waste program, and have fallen into a comfortable rhythm of executing dishes on the fly — all dependent on what produce and products the Food Pantry will have that day, from donations or recovered dining hall food waste.

Cardenas plans to continue the dinner series after her graduation this Spring. As she extends the conversation around the table, she only hopes to reach more people and draw attention to food scarcity and insecurity that students face.
Here at UC Berkeley, the #1 public university in the country, we love to think about food. We grow food on the land and in our labs; we serve it at dining halls and Michelin-star restaurants; we eat it slowly with friends and scarf it down as we scramble across Sproul to our classes. Food connects us to one another and to ourselves: it is a routine and incredibly intimate connection to our heritage, families, and culture. And yet, 24% of undergraduate students on campus have experienced food insecurity during their time at Berkeley (“Student Basic Needs”). As Berkeley students sitting in lecture halls praising the slow food movement, it’s important to ask ourselves: who are we leaving out of the conversation? Across campus, there are many organizations working to enrich and complicate our understanding of food, and the Basic Needs Center (BNC) is one of them.

The food pantry, a program housed within the BNC, is an emergency food resource available to students, staff, and community members for accessing free groceries up to once a week. It’s open almost every day and made possible by a dedicated team of volunteers. It is a community resource grounded in reciprocity: we hold it and each other together, hands interlaced.

Words by Cierra Cardenas & Catherine de la Peña
Collages by Cierra Cardenas
Beans.

northern, pinto, large lima, yelloweye, garbanzo, baby lima, green split, kidney, cranberry, small white, pink, small red, yellow split, lentil, navy, white kidney, black bean.

There are many types of beans.

To pre-soak or not to pre-soak?

Up to your time allotment and schedule. Soaking dried beans for 2-3 hours will reduce the time in the pot, and not soaking will allow more time for the beans to soak up the add-in flavors. Don’t soak for over 6 hours, otherwise the beans might sprout!

Alice herself swears by beans, greens, & a tortilla to start her day.

Here is our quick bean guide.

**From dry:**

Cost effective grocery store:
Berkeley Bowl [bulk section]

Hands on time: 5-15 minutes
Total time: 2-3 hours

**Ingredients:**

**BEANS**

We recommend for this method for: northern, pinto, lima, garbanzo, kidney, white, kidney

1 cup of dried beans

approximately yields 3 cups of cooked beans.

**LIQUID**

Water, vegetable stock, chicken stock, etc.

**Add-ins (whatever you have!)**

Dried or fresh bundle of herbs
(rosemary, thyme, sage)

Roughly chopped vegetables
(carrots, celery, jalapeños)

Vegetable broth

Miso paste

Soy sauce

Bouillon/stock cube/ramen

seasoning packet

Parmesan rinds

Vegetable scraps

Peppercorns

If you have a tad of time:

In a large, deep pot, add a couple glugs of fat (olive oil, vegetable oil, butter, margarine) and on medium-low heat, sautéé minced/chopped/diced vegetables (carrots, onions, garlic, celery, garlic) until golden brown and softened. Then add in your beans and cooking liquid (chicken stock, vegetable stock, water), covering the beans with 2 inches of water at least and bring to a boil on medium-high heat. Turn down the heat and simmer on a low heat to cook through, about 2 hours depending on bean size. Check occasionally, about every 30 mins or even hour, to see if more liquid should be added so the beans aren’t drying out.

Time is limited! Extremely so.

Throw the beans and water (2 inches covering top) and onion chopped in half (skin on okay) whole bulb of garlic cut horizontally, and item(s) from the add-in list! Bring to a boil, then simmer for a few hours until softened.

From can:

Add a couple glugs of fat (olive oil, vegetable oil, butter, margarine) to a pan and sautéé until softened. Add in some 1 rough tablespoon of tomato or curry paste, or 1-2 teaspoons of spices, salt and pepper, and stir through for 2 minutes to toast/awaken the flavors.

Open and add in the canned beans (of your choice!) and cook until heated through, about 5-7 minutes on medium heat. Season to taste with salt, pepper, more spices if you’d like, and serve with bread, rice, over pasta, with an egg.

Pickled jar of things:

1/2 pound of carrots and radishes

1/2 cup white vinegar, white wine, red wine, rice wine, apple cider.

1/2 cup white sugar

1/4 cup water

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon mustard seeds, peppercorns,

Handful of dill

2 cloves of garlic

1) Using the mandolin side of a grater, or just a knife, thinly slice the carrots and radishes and add to a glass jar.

2) On the stove, heat up the vinegar, water, sugar, salt, and mustard seeds and bring to a boil. Turn off the heat and spoon into the jar.

3) Seal the jar and leave to cool for an hour before refrigerating for around half a day before eating.

Quick pickle

1 tsp flaky sea salt

1 tbsp white wine vinegar

1 tbsp caster sugar

1) Stir together the salt, vinegar, and sugar together in a bowl and add in thinly sliced onions, cucumbers, shaved carrots, etc.

2) Let sit for 15ish minutes while you prep a meal and eat!
translating food values

Words and photos by Phoebe Wu

Methylcellulose. Zinc sulfate...I read, not from my chemistry notes — but, from the ingredients list of “seitan chicken” served in our Berkeley dining halls. Weeks later, I returned home, entering a different community of food. Recalling the taste of synthesized extracts and stanches, I took a bite of 豆腐皮 (vegan “drumstick roll”) inside a Buddhist-owned restaurant in Taipei, Taiwan. Despite its vague name, I could identify everything with my naked eye—a fried piece of crisp golden tofu skin filled with mushrooms and pickled vegetables, and glazed with a glossy, savory sauce.

The taste brought me back to Alice Waters’ pursuit of: “let[ting] things taste of what they are.” Taiwan’s large monk population inspired a long history of vegan dining. Parallel to the Buddhist emphasis on naturalism, vegan food is made to authentically capture the true taste of ingredients. Contrarily, my past mornings usually started at the dining hall with processed Beyond sausages. Though plant-forward eating is a global movement, different communities approach it differently. Given that food has different roles and values in different cultures, how can Waters’ values be reshaped within different food systems?

Thousands of miles from California, Taiwan houses a distinct geological history and climate, forming unique culinary cultures and economies. Under these conditional differences, can we still witness Alice Waters’ ideal food practices? Perhaps not, but maybe we don’t have to, because vibrant, healthy food systems take diverse forms.

Throughout my time in Berkeley and Taiwan, everyone I’ve met views food differently attributed to the unique decisions we make in our distinct circumstances. In our classes, we become familiar with guests and ideas that castaside “fast food values” — uniformity, convenience, and de-personalization. While we might criticize corporate values “uniformity, convenience, and de-personalization.”

I once again grabbed the drumstick roll, savoring the soy aroma and natural crunch from the vegetables. Nonetheless, Alice’s tenets of “letting things taste what they are” and “eating seasonal and fresh” are guidelines, not prescriptions. I doubt that the filling inside these rolls are 100% in-season, or that these tofu skins magically grow out of the soil. However, this is when “context” comes into play. Pickling expands shelf-life and enhances flavor; turning soybeans into tofu—an important practice in many cuisines—extends their versatility. After all, the more flexible and open-minded we are, the more easily we can apply ideals to reality.

Between my time in Berkeley and Taiwan, I’ve witnessed how Alice’s values are reflected through different practices and cultural means. Developing a network of local and organic supply chains, Waters is credited with sparking the farmers’ market movement. Farmers’ markets hold great significance in Taiwan too! The word “market” may conjure images of a crowded space with various vendors. In Taiwan, however, “markets” are oftentimes mobile. For example, I regularly buy sweet potatoes from a small truck that stops by my brother’s school every week, for 50 NTD ($1.5) per big bag. As farm-to-table products become universalized across a community, we become involved in accessible and affordable spaces for agricultural interactions.

Of course, there are physical markets that gather farmers in Taiwan too. As I walked through each stall, I noticed how bargaining is a common prac-