

# *Cultural Appropriation & Our Approaches to Food Work*

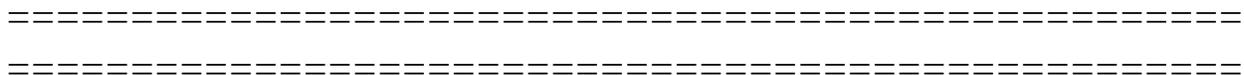
*A Self-Assessment of K is for Kitchen & West Philly's  
Community Supported Kitchen*



**By Acorn Swiggum & Frances Rose Subbiondo  
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### In a Nutshell

We understand that by publicly & professionally cooking foods of cultures & geographies not our own, we risk causing harms associated with cultural appropriation. We try here, now, and always to hold nuance & contradiction, as we discover what is a rightful path in this work & in our lives, following the leadership of historically-marginalized & resilient peoples, while cultivating our own informed analysis & thoughtful decision-making processes. Additionally, we endeavor to provide greater context & grounding to our work by sharing our personal stories & professional goals around food. Our intentions remain to uplift the inherent sacredness of food, and to find & share common ground upon this Earth, and around meal tables, eating together -- while supporting people to establish & maintain diets that feel vital, and consist of affordable, culturally-resonant foods that may be sourced ethically & responsibly. Meanwhile, we are currently implementing practices that address the potential for cultural appropriation in our work, and actively cultivating improved reparations & solidarity practices.

## Context

Greetings, friends!

Around Imbolc-tide, we received some important feedback from a friend & peer in Philly's radical food scene. They drew our attention to ways in which our work with food can be experienced as culturally appropriative and harmful, particularly our professional cooking of foodways from cultures with which we have no clear or known ancestral connection.

Receiving this feedback moved us to conduct a deep self-assessment of our food work, with the aim of coming into ever greater alignment with our fundamental goal of serving all Life, as well as the many nested goals that flow from there. Our process included self-reflection, reading & listening to additional resources about cultural appropriation & food, and consulting with colleagues & friends.

This document is the public & open-source result of this self-assessment. We seek here to evaluate & share our approaches to our food work as a whole, which includes a wide range of services (holistic diet consultations, ancestral foodways consultations, the *Family Table* dinner series, personal chef-ing, catering, the CSK subscription menu, CSK Cook Days, and more). For more details about our offerings, please visit [KisforKitchen.com](http://KisforKitchen.com) and [culturalengine.strikingly.com](http://culturalengine.strikingly.com).

We hope that sharing this piece of our journey with you will offer greater context to our overall vision for, and choices regarding, West Philly's *Community Supported Kitchen* (CSK) and the worker owned cooperative that grew out of it, *K is for Kitchen*.

Thank you for your witness, time, and energy.

With Love & Gratitude,

Frances Rose & Acorn

Of West Philly's *Community Supported Kitchen* & *K is for Kitchen*

## Acknowledgements

We share thanks!

We offer gratitude **to this beautiful land** called *Chingsessing*, near the *Tulpehanna* river in the wider region of *Lenapehoking*. This place nourishes our spirits & grows so much of the food we eat & share. We give thanks to the original & ongoing stewards of this land, **the Lenni Lenape peoples**. We also give thanks to the many other peoples & communities who lovingly tend (and have tended) this place, also called *Kingsessing*, *Southwest Philadelphia*.

We offer thanks **to the many friends & colleagues** who witnessed us processing this feedback about cultural appropriation, who listened to our fears & our heart's yearnings, who shared their own perspectives & journeys, and who asked us challenging questions that needed to be asked.

We offer thanks **to our ancestors**, without whom we would not be possible.

**Acorn:** I give thanks to my maternal lineages, hailing primarily from the British Isles. I give thanks to my paternal lineages, hailing from the British Isles & from Norway. I give thanks for all of my ancestors from northwestern Europe and beyond, known & unknown to me. I give thanks for the more recent generations of my ancestors who have been born here on *Turtle Island*, on stolen land across the region often called Canada.

**Frances Rose :** To my maternal lineage, i offer acknowledgement & gratitude -- *Ashkenazim* -- peoples of the Eastern Mediterranean, with almost 2 millenia in diaspora across Southern & Eastern Europe in between. To my paternal lineage, i offer acknowledgement & gratitude -- *Napolitano e Sicilianu* -- peoples of Southern Italy & Sicily. I celebrate also, and offer gratitude to the countless ancestors of my ancestors whose stories, lands & peoples are not reflected by the above named places & times. I name & acknowledge also New York City, which has offered a home to all of my families-of-origin for most of the recent century.

Together, we give thanks **to all the peoples of this Earth, their cultures, their arts, and their foodways**. We honor the immense labors of countless generations of plant-gatherers, hunters, fisherpeople, agriculturalists, cooks, gardeners, composters, storytellers, ritualists, makers of cooking vessels, cultural producers of all kinds, and on and on ... every person & every group who has contributed to the delicious & nourishing traditions we enjoy today, and steward for our descendents. We acknowledge the complex journeys of these traditions and the peoples who cultivate them -- how these traditions have been gifted, how they have been stolen, cross-pollinated naturally, violently imposed, used for survival, lost, recovered, 're-discovered', and fiercely protected.

Not actually last, and certainly not least, we give thanks **to this living Earth**, who continues to give herself in love, service, and body to all Life.

## **Introduction**

In our many conversations with friends & colleagues about cultural appropriation & food work, we heard again and again the importance of context & story. Context & story are the dwelling places of *relationship*, and *relationship* is the dwelling place of the *sacred*. When food & food work are commodified & mass-produced, they can be -- or simply are -- separated from the fundamental sacredness of the fruits of the Earth -- as well as from the people whose cultures identified & developed these ingredients into complex cuisines.

Relatedly, when our own work is presented with inadequate context & story, people may miss the relationship & the sacred -- and instead may see only the very common, uninspiring, and appropriative image of two white people making money & reputation off of foods 'not their own'. Regardless of our intentions or practices, we recognize that this image causes harm, both to people from the source culture -- who may feel that our work is degrading to their cuisine & perpetuates unfair wealth gaps -- and to people not from the source culture -- who may get the idea that other people's

foodways are simply fun toys to be picked up, played with, and discarded when the next food trend emerges.

For this reason, we share here our own personal food stories & ancestral journeys. We hope that by revealing more about ourselves in this way that we might grow closer to those interested in our food work, and that we may offer some context as to why we prepare foods as we do, from foodways the world over. We recognize that in the past, we have leaned towards highlighting the source cultures while minimizing ourselves. This tendency reflected a desire to center the foodways & lifeforms of the places, and de-center ourselves. We didn't want a starring role -- aware both of the optics of *self-centering* in the context of provocative work, and also wanting the peoples, places & tastes that we share to be *reverently featured*. We are coming to understand, though, that it is the stories of our own paths that offer essential context to our relationships with world cuisines.

In further support of this working, we share also in this document ::

- The goals/intentions of *K is for Kitchen* and West Philly's *Community Supported Kitchen*. We hope that this specificity of what we are trying to achieve helps provide a perceptible shape to the container of our overall work.
- Next we detail our approach to money, capital, and exchange. We understand that our relationship to profit & to professional service is connected to the potential for cultural appropriation, and wish to share more about the unique ways that money & other forms of capital flow through our work.
- Finally, we detail some of the ways that we are already working to address cultural appropriation, and ways we intend to improve our practices going forward.

We hope that this sharing offers greater clarity to our connected communities about who we are & why we do what we do. We also hope that this act of transparent accountability, while surely imperfect, serves as a model of one way to respond to, and to learn from important feedback. We thank you for reading, and welcome your questions, comments, & concerns at [eat@kisforkitchen.com](mailto:eat@kisforkitchen.com) and 732-306-8400.

## Who are Acorn & Frances Rose?

We identify as **beings striving to serve Life and Earth** -- including all the countless beings who call her Home. We are **queer & magical** in our persons and in our politics -- finding our hearts' calling in the fertile spaces between & beyond dominant paradigms. We are **the descendents of our ancestors**, who in the more distant past led land- & sea-connected lives in Northwestern Europe (Acorn) and all around the Mediterranean (Frances Rose).

We are also **white-encultured people** whose ancestors settled on *Turtle Island*, and whose families' wealth emerged as a result of both our ancestors' strivings to give their descendents better lives, *and* the genocidal systems that favored the labor of our ancestors over others, and that allowed our ancestors to benefit from stolen land & stolen labor. We see how both **our access to class & race privilege** has offered us countless opportunities to live lives of our choosing and to have our work valued.

While the two of us share our work intimately, we also arrive to it with our own personal & family stories that we hope will offer some context around our chosen paths.

### Acorn

My ancestors hail predominantly from Northwestern Europe, with most coming from Britain, and others from Scotland, Ireland, Norway, Germany, and France. For reasons that I, for the most part, only can guess at (separation from land? poverty? opportunism?), they all migrated from their ancestral homelands to *Turtle Island*, settling first or eventually in the place now called Canada.

As a child, my ancestral cultures seemed like distant memories -- novelties to be asked after casually to add color to the otherwise bland (but highly privileged) label of being 'white' or 'Canadian.' Many of the foods of my childhood seemed to me at the time to be similarly divorced from place & culture. Looking back, I see that my diet featured a mash-up of what are commonly called 'American foods,' as well as 'health foods' -- both of which are comprised of the muddled comings-together of the countless

peoples now on Turtle Island, with influence from the products of industrial food systems and ‘better living through chemistry.’

Regardless of the unclear lineages from which my family’s foodways emerged, I must honor the love, care, & creativity with which my parents cook, as well as my own fond memories of nourishment. My mom made fresh bread every day (specifically, [Red River Cereal](#) bread), as well as pasta dishes & one-pot meals to satisfy her very picky vegetarian child (that’s me). My dad offered the ritual of weekend breakfasts -- pancakes one day, french toast the next, maple syrup both days -- as well as playing with more elaborate and ‘gourmet’ recipes. Both of my parents welcomed me into the kitchen, and I took a special pride in my first independently prepared meals (microwaved scrambled eggs, peanut butter & jelly sandwiches) and in making treats for the whole family (often chocolate chip cookies). The one dish prepared in my family that is most clearly ancestral is [Christmas/Yule pudding](#), a recipe passed down from my maternal great grandmother, Flossie Goodall, which my mother still prepares annually with great ceremony.

I eventually grew a love for a greater diversity of foodways as I became old enough to explore the restaurants of Toronto, Canada on my own & with friends. We took great pleasure in Japanese bento boxes, Lebanese falafel platters, Thai noodles, and so much more ... as well as in ‘vegetarian cuisine’, which tended to draw from & modify a vast palette of foodways. After I left home to go to college, and simultaneously went from vegetarian to vegan, I began an expansive & joyful practice of cooking as many vegan recipes as I could.

It was, however, not until I met Frances Rose and she showed me the realm of gardening that my relationship with food began to truly transform into what it is today. With my hands in the Earth, I experienced some of my deepest communions with the plant beings who give their lives to feed me. It became so clear to me that these plants were as ensouled as any animal. From there, more questions about my vegan ethics emerged ... Is it really wrong to kill in order to eat? What kinds of relationships do I want to have with the beings who die to nourish me? How are my ingredients sourced? How far do they have to travel? Who labors, and in what conditions, to get them to me? Are there more ethical ways to raise animals than

factory farming? It is my ever-evolving answers to these questions that continue to inform my sourcing practices today, through which I aim to uplift local food systems, small businesses, regenerative farming practices, fair-trade agreements, and pasture-raised animal products.

In addition to adding nuance to my ingredients sourcing, Frances Rose and the food work we grew together invited me to more seriously consider the gravity of my food's cultural origins. One of the first recipes I remember femm teaching me was how to make faer Sicilian/Southern Italian grandmother's *marinara* sauce. It was a thrill to learn how to prepare a food that I'd always loved, to connect to my mate's family history, and to more clearly see the connection between this delicious sauce and its context in the world.

Regardless of what we cooked together, we grew our practice of learning about the hxstories, geographies, peoples, & cultures from which the food we prepared emerged. This welcomed us into a deeper appreciation for the complex journeys of these traditions and the peoples who cultivate them -- of how they have cross-pollinated with one another, been stolen, been violently imposed, been gifted, been used for survival, been lost, been rediscovered, and been fiercely protected. This leads us to name & honor the creators of a dish (thank you, Italian peoples, for *marinara* sauce!), while also acknowledging that the lineages that lead to a foodway are rarely straightforward. For example, we must acknowledge that the very concept of 'Italy' as a unified nation state, and 'Italians' as a unified people, is relatively new and comes as a result of conquest, war, & bids for power. Meanwhile, tomatoes only arrived to Europe in the last few hundred years, as part of the vast movements of people, plants, and animals that erupted during the colonization of Turtle Island (Thank you, peoples of the Americas, for domesticating tomatoes <3). And so, we attempt in our work to feature the relationships that underlie any given scene, seeing through reductive modern boundaries to some of the blurred & interwoven stories beyond. We return to the cross-cultural love of the tomato & celebrate its adoption & adaptation by so many peoples of the world -- including the 'Italians,' who sure make a good sauce.

No matter the origins of the food we're preparing, we never make any claims to the food being 'authentic.' Not only does the concept itself blur when scrutinized closely, but we also understand that we simply cannot claim ownership over foods, especially those with which our personal & family relationships are weak or nonexistent. Even when the connections are stronger, labels of 'authentic' can seem dubious when any food is taken out of the contexts from which they grew (for example -- I don't claim that my English ancestry makes my English-inspired food preparations any more decidedly 'authentic' than any other foods I prepare). In addition, our sourcing ethics, and desire to prepare foods accessible to a variety of dietary needs, tend to lead us to modify many foods out of their more traditional forms. For example, we usually use apple cider vinegar instead of lemon juice in our *hummus* because the former can be produced locally. And we have ever made gluten free hoagies & mushroom filling in a quest to make a vegan, gluten-free Philly cheesesteak sandwich.

Meanwhile, on my personal journey with food, I have been excited to connect more deeply with the foodways of my ancestors! My research has validated the deep comfort I find in dairy & wheat particularly (ingredients that have remained staples in my family, even if rarely in recognizably ancestral dishes). It has been exciting for me to share what I can of my ancestral foods with others (and I get to dispel the frustrating myth that British food is by definition bland and undelicious! ... not when it comes out of our kitchen ;). I now have a growing love for dishes such as shepherd's pie & Yorkshire pudding (British) and *purresuppe* (leek soup) & *Rommegøt* (cream porridge) (Norwegian). More & more, I feel beets, dill, horseradish, and rutabagas calling my name ...

I see my own ancestral foodways as a few threads in the vast tapestry of the world's cuisines. Sometimes the threads can be clearly followed, and sometimes they seem to split or disappear and then to reemerge in unexpected places, tracing the countless convergences & divergences of humxn cultures & foodways. I lean into them as a solid homebase, while continuing to follow my tastebuds, my heart, & my mind to connect with & share a variety of cuisines & cooking practices, each of which can be thoughtfully produced to aid in our survival, our resistance, and our celebrations in

the here & now (as cooks the world over have been doing creatively for countless generations).

And now I have yet another consideration to inform my life with food -- the truth that for many people, particularly folks of color, there is harm in seeing a white person such as myself visibly & professionally cooking the foods of cultures not my own. I take very seriously this concern, and hope that the explorations & intentions shared in the rest of this document offer pathways to deeper dialogue, understanding and continuing self-examination.

### Frances Rose

When i was born in Brooklyn, it was with the 3rd generations of New York-born folks in both my extended families (Jewish & Italian/Sicilian), who immigrated there in the early 1900's. Near the entirety of our collected family memories -- as i heard them at least -- consisted of the families living & working in New York City.

My families believed in a *mythic New York* -- all-welcoming, anything possible, overflowing potential, and as delicious as the world is wide -- because '*the whole world is right here.*' (\*Note to acknowledge that i understand & challenge my family's relatively shallow eco-social analysis about New York & more.) i did though, grow up with a strong family culture around food especially -- and its adherent appreciations.

Though rarely actually spoken, the family mantra went something like *food is love*. Religion was de-centered -- thanks in large part to fierce & wise grandmothers on both sides, who said 'no' to normal. *Food & family* therefore became the slightly less-stable *two-legged table* of our shared mode of living & being together. i support a theory that, in my family, this led to the remaining legs of our table growing extra wide, to compensate. My family, almost infamously, would talk about the next meal before we even finished eating the one before. i share these stories to convey some roots of the reverent, soft, and global lens with which i (and my family) have approached food over the course of my lifetime.

In my family, there has existed a close(r)-to-the-ground ethos, which valued rustic mother-country traditions. I remember early travel-coaching from my grandmother, when she patiently explained to me, 'Eat where the peasants eat and you will eat well.' My family felt pride & joy in & around New York City, seeing other families like their own -- from lands the world over -- getting together, and sharing both traditions of their ancestral homelands, as well as newly emerging traditions in the rapidly changing city. In my grandma's keen interest to learn & explore her melting pot world, and delight her family, she took Chinese cooking lessons sometime in the 1950's. Until the day he died, Chinese foods were amongst the most dear of world cuisines to my father's palate. There was present in my upbringing a strong, secular family value in trying/tasting world culinary traditions, to better understand & enjoy all creation.

Grandma's cooking was legendary in the family -- truly well-beyond her own self-appraisal of her prowess in the kitchen. Her repertoire was larger than what she made her grandchildren, but the family favorites were numerous enough that they were mostly just in a rotation between visits, punctuated by the holiday specialties that traced our family's path through the seasons. Even these carried a distinctly New York-blend of cultures & flavors. For example, our Easter ham had to come from *Kuronycky Meats* -- a Ukrainian East Village institution, and our Christmas morning fish, always from *Russ & Daughters* -- a 100+ year strong Jewish 'appetizing store' on Houston St. -- and was served with (not at all Sicilian) bagels. My family consciously celebrated these kinds of New York traditions -- believing in transcendence (or at least the chance thereof) from poverty into middle-class success for anyone who brought the gifts of their worlds & cultures with them, and shared them for the benefit of all.

Meanwhile, at a time 'when Brooklyn was the world,' my father & his brother found their first steady jobs, working at a Jewish delicatessen, named *Fred & Murrays*. So, even before my Sicilian & Neapolitan father met or married my Ashkenazi mother, my path to a love of *Kasha Varniskas* & potato *kugel* felt met on at least two sides -- and likely also in between. Meanwhile, my mother tells stories of when she was a girl with her sisters, depending upon an Italian neighbor friend, to send via a clothes-line, two stories up, tasty Italian vittles, that they would never otherwise have tasted at Home.

My mother is a creative cook, who enjoyed ‘putting things together’. She too carried a repertoire of dishes the family loved -- though never quite made enough *Kasha* to satiate the wishes of all. She cultivated a strong practice too in the realm of *home economics* -- for example, buying whole chickens to roast, quarter, and soup -- knowing well the multiple family meals that inevitably flowed from each stage. Indeed, this sense of *thrift* has made an impact too, on the unique lens we offer through our food work.

To zoom out for a moment, i’d like to highlight the diverse-cultural legacies of my ancestors *before* they got to New York -- the Jews in diaspora, and the conquests & Kingdoms of Sicily & Southern Italy. So many peoples -- from so many places -- connecting to still more peoples & more places -- has long characterized my families’ stories, even before the world as we know it ‘globalized’ during the so-called ‘Columbian exchange’. Descriptions of *Palermo*, Sicily, 800 years ago, read a lot like descriptions of New York City 700 years later -- a diverse city of the world, where cultures co-existed, blended & flourished -- (and also like New York, i need to add, built upon the foundations of violent conquest). Adding to the richness, is the island of Sicily itself -- positioned along endless trade routes, in the middle of a sea whose name in many languages translates to ‘between the worlds’ -- whose climate, soils and geography make it possible to grow there: *almost any plant from anywhere*. Meanwhile, Jews in diaspora, by necessity -- as they moved to & through lands that were not the lands of their ancestors -- cultivated a practice of getting to know & adapting and/or adopting outright: customs, crops, and practices of the places into which they moved. This underpinned the fabric of survival & life for my peoples for millenia.

Zooming back in, i found my global horizons broadened further still, as i attended college in Houston, TX, where I relished in that city too new-to-me flavors of a contemporary immigrant hub, and many more varied tastes of Home. Later in that time, i became a vegetarian, and then after college, a vegan. This is when i really learned to cook -- so that i could continue to eat well, and so that i might continue as well to enjoy the flavors i had come to love as tastes of Home from everywhere, within the contexts of ever more regenerative & humane food systems (i.e. local, organic where possible, relationships-centered, fertility enhancing, Earth-healing, etc.).

Meanwhile, my secret / no-so-secret identity is an *Earth-working ox*, descended from lineages of plants (*Roses, Mints, Malvas, and Anacardias*). My view of the plant kingdom is long -- and that of people & plants together is deep. How people have gotten along & grown culture & relationships with the plants & animals of a place, is to me a source of endless interest & fascination. Meanwhile, knowing well how world migrations feed food culture, i find fertile awareness in imagining real stories -- across time & place -- that have fed the global currents as long as humxns, plants, and animals have traveled. Like reading a work of historical fiction, i learn from the experience.

Finally, i'll speak to an ethic & value that has moved me for many years of my food journey. During my vegan days, (perhaps a little naively) i celebrated a vegan table's ability to (dietarily) welcome (almost) everyone around that table. Now, i strive to be able to offer & host tables at which anyone might sit & find tastes they recognize as tastes of Home -- maybe even flavors that whisper of their grandmothers' tables -- knowing well that the world served on that plate needs be thoughtfully & sensitively prepared to have a chance of doing so.

i celebrate food's capacity to transcend politics & disagreement -- even as i know that it also stokes it. For example, the word *hummus* references chickpeas in both *Arabic* & *Hebrew* languages. To me, that means that the chickpea was around before either of them, and disparate people have been gathering with & around them for longer still. What fortunate people!

*Ave vita.* To Life <3

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To conclude these personal stories, we offer intimately, some of our **most treasured lessons from our personal journeys with food ::**

- Eat for nourishment, vitality, and joy! Learn what feels great in your body -- then learn to make it at Home!;
- Humbly acknowledge the unending, miraculous sources of each meal's component parts (what plants/animals/fungi/etc. gave their lives so you could

eat? Who grew and harvested them and brought them to you? Who cooked the food? From which cultures did these foods emerge?);

- Acknowledge also & focus attention on what this nourishment may go on to serve (e.g. your own resilience; your strength to continue struggles for justice; etc.);
- Unique nourishment & feelings of reconnection may be found in one's *own* ancestral foodways;
- Eat together;
- Be principled about your food choices, and, know when to let a boundary be flexible (for example, sometimes we eat industrially-raised animal products, when prepared & offered with great love by dear people);
- Adapt food practices as needed, to suit the needs of the moment -- be they financial, dietary, ethical, or otherwise;
- People have been at this for a long time -- i.e. some people, somewhere, have probably already solved this (whatever challenge), deliciously. Learn from them;
- To whatever extent possible, grow or raise any of the food you/we eat;
- Honor the importance of context & story around foodways; and,
- Uplift, signal-boost, and direct resources towards folks doing amazing food work, especially those who have been marginalized and from whose present & ancestral labors we benefit.

## Goals/Intentions of *K is for Kitchen & the CSK*

- We **connect people with a passion for Life** through delicious, ethically-sourced food experiences.
- We **work for liberation for all beings** in the realms of food & culture.
- We endeavor to **uplift the inherent sacredness of food**, eating together, and Earth-based cuisines (and their connected cultures) the world over.
- We share common forms of connection through food the world-over and across time -- **distilling success patterns around nourishment and taste** -- to address the trauma & pain of separation felt in the modern world.
- We attempt to **bridge & (re)weave world wisdom-traditions**, by helping to bolster & share vital, contemporary foodways that illuminate collective paths forward through late-stage capitalism & the compounding crises of eco-social collapse.
- We **leverage privilege to collective advantage**.
- We ground our food practices in the **intimate study of our own ancestral traditions**.
- We help folks to remove perceived obstacles around their diets, and to **grow the vitality of their *personal foodways***, offering wisdom & knowledge rooted in our own diverse home food practices.
- We encourage & hold space for **conversations about the connections between food, identity, justice, and resilience**.
- We illuminate **pathways for anyone to connect with personally and/or ancestrally significant foodways** in ways that are **mindful of the nuances of ethical sourcing practices** in current local & global contexts.

- We help many people to **experience tastes of Home**, providing familiar, comfortable, and delicious spaces.
- We support people in connecting to **foods that are nourishing, safe, healthful, & digestible** for their bodies, **endeavoring to cook for any dietary need/choice/allergy**.
- We **make our offerings financially accessible and cultivate regenerative economies**.

## **Our approach to money, capital, & exchange**

Within the context of this late-stage, capitalist economy, we understand the importance of accessibility, and strive to **make our offerings financially affordable, and to grow regenerative economies**.

**Through the *Community Supported Kitchen*, we offer goods & services that are grounded in the gift economy.** We offer the *CSK* because it is a joy for us to do so -- and because we carry a sense of knowing that this kind of healing is both essential and often in short supply. The events we hosted (before the pandemic), ran by donation only, with a NOTAFLOF (No One Turned Away for Lack of Funds) guarantee. Yet, because stocking our pantry well costs money in the world, we offer our [subscription menu](#) on a sliding-scale donation basis, with a NOTAFLOF section added this spring. We also remain fueled by gratitude, and by generous flows of non-financial capital (including gifts of produce, professional services, supplies & equipment, etc.).

**Through *K is for Kitchen*, we offer professional food education & food production services that range in cost, from set price, to sliding-scale, to free or NOTAFLOF.** This has allowed us to offer more resource-intensive and customized services to folks who are able to support our work financially, while still designing in flexibility & accessibility. This provided us enough money to continue our work and

to nourish ourselves. We have set up *K is for Kitchen* to be run as a **worker-owned cooperative**, and hope to eventually welcome in additional worker-owners to grow the work and to benefit from the many gifts of sharing it together.

We recognize that an element of the concern about our work being culturally appropriative is that **we are making money by cooking the foods of other peoples**. We understand that when we cook diverse foodways -- beyond those of our own cultures/ancestries -- we benefit immensely from the wisdom (gained and/or maintained through much suffering) of indigenous, enslaved, colonized, and otherwise oppressed peoples the world over -- who, often, cannot reap the same benefits even when they make enterprise of their ancestral foodways.

While we have not actually yet turned a profit doing this work, (when factoring in the cost of our own labor), we see how **money flowing in sustains our work and sustains us personally**. We see too how, if & when our food work becomes profitable, we will want to have considered in advance **what it means to make money in this way and how to equitably share whatever wealth we have access to with those peoples whose ancestral & present foodways have made our work possible**.

## **Present Practices & Areas of Growth**

Here are ways that we have already been working to address the potential for cultural appropriation in our work ::

- We **donate our food services and host fundraisers** to support peoples with whom we wish to work in solidarity.
- As a form of reparations, we **offer our *ancestral foodways consultation service for free to self-identified Black & Indigenous People of Color***.
- We **endeavor to share stories & hystories of the food we're cooking** -- offering due credit to the peoples, cultures, plants, animals, & circumstances from which the food emerged, with as much respect & nuance as we can.

Inevitably, our knowledge (of both our own & other people's ancestral foodways) is incomplete and meaning can be lost. We do not claim that our offerings are perfect representations of original practices. Rather, we offer contemporary expressions that are deeply inspired by, and drawn from, the world's foodways, while making them with local & sustainably-sourced ingredients as much as possible -- and with our own culinary intuitions applied.

- We recognize particularly the potential for our work with world cuisines to **help white-encultured people reconnect to their own place-based heritages** -- to access tastes of who their peoples were before being assimilated into whiteness. In this way, we hope to help white folks engage with all cultures from a place of greater personal wholeness & real relationship -- rather than from a place of consumption, romanticization, and appropriation.
- In our overall quest to do 'meaningful' work -- that is reverent towards the sacred -- we feel beauty & richness in **weaving together diverse wisdom traditions of the world, and highlighting their pattern-similarities -- commonalities that indicate that they may already be deeply interwoven.** We hope that our work is meaningful for all people, and that any extant hunger for connection, might be at least somewhat fed through it. Meanwhile, we hope to encourage anyone who finds delight in our work to be inspired to connect with their own ancestral foodways -- and also to see & feel the humanity of those not their own, and perhaps too the less-visible connections in between.
- Specifically on cooking ancestral foodways of black people & people of color, our work emerges from desires to: **offer delicious & inspiring foods that are culturally relevant to those requesting our services; support folks of color in (re-)connecting to their ancestral cuisines through the lens of a local food system; and otherwise, help to grow cultural familiarity (our own & others) with the neighborhood in which we live & work.** While we by no means promise that our offerings are 'authentic' or 'complete,' we offer services based in deep care, thoughtful research, and an attention to sourcing ethics & dietary needs that is sometimes difficult to find elsewhere. (We do want to acknowledge & uplift that there are many amazing black cooks & cooks of

color doing similar work -- our services are by no means the only route to this kind of connection).

- Finally, while we understand that the racial binary of white/POC is a *deeply impactful* one in our societies, we remember too that it is socially constructed. Any individual person, regardless of racial affiliation or identification, may have ancestors from anywhere in the world. In our work, **we seek to find a *spiracular* (a middle place that transcends binaries) between care with the racial implications of our cooking, and helping to reconnect all peoples to cultures of Home, to one another, and to this Earth we share.**

### Areas of Growth ~ Changes we are making to further improve our practices ::

- **Share publicly this document.** Link to it on our websites and when posting on social media -- to offer additional depth & context to folks seeing Instagram-sized snapshots of our work.
- **Invite people from source cultures to participate as guest cooks at *Faemily Table* dinners, compensated with an honorarium.**
  - \*note\* --- it can feel challenging to include guest cooks frequently, because our programs are not usually profitable enough to compensate them fairly, hence the honorarium.
- When cooking *Faemily Table* dinners and other events, **more consistently share relevant books/articles/websites to help participants learn about the source culture and to think critically about issues the source culture is facing & the grassroots movements that have emerged, as well as to point participants to ways they can promote & benefit the source culture (e.g. people/groups to whom to donate, businesses to support).**

- **Consider our business model, and how resources can be creatively shared with source communities as our business becomes profitable.**
- **Design a protocol for when & how we refer work out to people from source cultures** rather than accepting the work ourselves.
- **Up our game about land acknowledgements** -- both for the original inhabitants of the land we live on and for the original creators of the foods we are sharing.
- **Cultivate more & deeper relationships with fellow local cooks of diverse backgrounds**, so that we may refer clients to them, collaborate, offer signal boosting, and generally help grow an ever-more supportive & connected local food scene.

## **Conclusion & Invitation for Feedback**

*Share a deep breath with us?\* Thank you! <3*

**Thank you for taking this journey with us.** We are so incredibly grateful for all of the amazing individuals and communities who have supported & nurtured us (and our food work!). We are so grateful for all who have been real with us, offered us essential feedback, and helped us come to places of deepening integrity.

This document represents where we are at right now, and emerges from a great deal of personal reflection, self-education, and conversations of depth. Nonetheless, **we trust that it is imperfect and represents only this moment on our journey, and that further evolution is always needed.** So, we share this imperfect working with you, vulnerably, in furtherance of a collective effort to de-spell *perfectionism* within the same culture of white supremacy that has made cultural appropriation the scourge that it is -- and motivated this investigation.

**We enthusiastically invite you to please share with us any feedback, comments, or concerns** that came up for you while reading this. To do so, you may write to us at [eat@kisforkitchen.com](mailto:eat@kisforkitchen.com) or call 732-306-8400.

## **A Bittersweet Recipe**

We would like to conclude with a recipe born in a former Home kitchen of ours (at the *Starship Lollipop* in Southwest Philadelphia), and composed of ingredients from many different origin points in the world -- each sacred & nourishing to so many the world over. We hope that *Glacial Chocolate Fantasy* can help to remind us all that through the often bitter struggles of trying to make sense of just pathways through the world right now, that there may also be tastes of sweetness:

### **Glacial Chocolate Fantasy**

A deliciously rich dessert with a thick chocolate-bar crust and an underlayer of liquid maple chocolate goodness.

#### **Ingredients**

- ¼ cup coconut oil (melted)
- Just under ¼ cup maple syrup
- 1- 2 tablespoons cacao powder (to your taste)
- Optional additions:
  - Vanilla, other extracts, and/or mint oil
  - Sea salt
  - Cacao nibs
  - Dried fruit (e.g. gojis, raisins, currents)
  - Chopped nuts or seeds

## Method

Combine all ingredients. This tends to be easiest to do in a small saucepan over low heat, unless your coconut oil and room temperature are quite warm already.

Pour mixture into a short, wide-mouthed jar and refrigerate. Within a few hours, there should be a solid layer overtop a liquid layer.

To enjoy, gently break apart the solid layer with a butter knife (be careful not to break through the bottom of the jar!) and eat the pieces.

*Nut Fudge Variation:* For a sumptuous fudgey version of GCF (that does not separate into solid & liquid layers), add 1-2 tablespoons of nut butter.