

After I went to university, I come into realization of how important and significant food could represent one's culture and the feeling of home and belonging. Although I am an international students from China, I personally think that I am quick to adapt to new environment, these includes climates, foods, and culture. Yet, although I could “adapt” to the food here, there is an special attachment, which I have become increasing aware of longer I stay here, to the food in my hometown and especially the food made by my parents. This attachment I think is partially due to the “physical property” of the food, the taste, smell, and looks, the touch and sensical stimulus as it interacts with my tongue and teeth inside my mouth, the warmth it could bring to my stomach and my body as a whole. Northern Chinese cuisine, as far as I know, have this sour and salty taste, and sometimes spicy. Since as I am writing this during the coldest period in Champaign, I am also aware of the fact that a lot of food is “soup-based” , which could warm your stomach, and spread it to your body. High carbohydrate appearance in the food (usually in the form of noodles) also gives you sense of “full”. I think that is the distinctive features that I am increasing aware of, after I have tasted the food here (American food, Indian food, Japanese food, Korean food, etc). The different food from different culture here makes me recognize the “difference”, which make me appreciate the special kind of taste of my hometown food. Another attachment I could feel is more of psychological, or social. The complex process of preparing the food and the memories of my parents preparing food for me, gives me sense of nostalgia. When I moved out from university's apartment in second year, I started to prepare meal myself, and realize the complicated process. A lot of Chinese cuisine that involves stir fry requires preparation, you need to wash and cut each ingredients, which usually takes more than 1 hour, while the actual stir fry process only take like less than 10 minutes. Preparing this meal makes me recall the childhood memories when my mom cooked food for me, and that some ordinary meals actually takes a lot longer than expected, and its tastes, which objectively tastes “ordinary” and “mediocre”, leaves a strong memory in my mind. I guess it is called “mom's taste” in my memory that I could only approximate but never achieve. That memory I have is also why I have this attachment.