

NIGHT MARKET X DINING TABLE

OCEAN & SOIL 季節小饌

kombu custard parfait w/ shacha (沙茶) granola
Phyllo pastry tart / herby fermented tofu cream (豆腐乳)/spiced-shiitake jam / mushroom jelly
Kale & Seaweed / homemade “oyster” dressing

RIBBONS 線念

Silken tofu / roasted scallion sesame gazpacho / homemade seeded chili oil / crispy shallots / crackling rice noodles

FLAME-TOSSED 敬三杯

3-cup (三杯) spring veg / homemade doban (豆瓣) hummus / “popcorn chicken” dukkha / fried Thai basil / pickled radishes

BUDDHA RESTS 佛守牆

~ Inspired by Buddha Jumps Over the Wall (佛跳牆) ~

Dochi (豆豉) & fermented radish (菜脯) cabbage roll / fried tofu & yams / oyster mushrooms / jujube / smoky black garlic broth

NIGHT MARKET IN TAIWAN 夜市

Roasted beetroot coconut shaved ice / coriander jelly / sesame fennel crepe / shallot candied peanut streusel / ginger soy brown sugar syrup

APRIL 28. 2024

BY PHOEBE

@HERBAN.OMNIVORE

Flavors from home

MUSHROOMS



豆腐乳
FERMENTED TOFU



嫩豆腐
SILKEN TOFU



紅棗
JUJUBE



豆鼓
DOCHI



CHINESE DATES

FERMENTED BLACK SOY



沙茶
SHACHA



spotlighted seasonal produce

peashoots



herbs



cabbage



radishes



BEETS



Peanut Ice Cream Roll (花生捲

冰淇淋) is a Taiwanese

street food commonly seen in night markets. It is a sweet twist on the savory Yuen Bing (潤餅) typically consumed on Tomb Sweeping Day. (清明節)

Despite having different fillings, both of these rolls are made with an eggless crepe and served with shaved peanuts and cilantro.

Inspired by Traditions

BUDDHA JUMPS

佛跳牆

"OVER THE WALL"



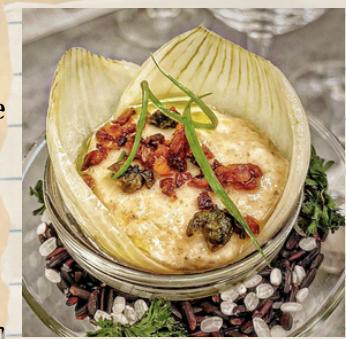
A Fujianese woman needed to cook for her husband's family as a post-marriage ritual. However, she knew nothing about cooking. Under stress, she grabbed all the expensive ingredients she had (chicken, pork knuckles, abalone, scallops...) and threw them in a giant pot then escaped. The stew simmered till the next day, producing such unique and intense aromas that even the monks from the temple across couldn't resist. They claimed that the flavor was so appealing that "even Buddha himself would jump over the wall to try it." This dish later became a banquet and special occasion classic that spotlights luxurious ingredients. While traditionally using large quantities of animal parts, I attempted to recreate the same sweet, earthy, and umami flavors with plants, using ingredients like smoked onions, fresh fruits, black garlic, mushrooms, and jujube.



Night Market meets Dining Table. Fast meets Slow. Tradition meets Reinterpretation.

Reinterpretation and elevation are both words chefs use when describing ethnic dishes crafted through the lens of Haute cuisine. However, one more explicitly underscores the interplay between cultural power dynamics and the standardized perception of sophistication than the other.

Regardless, I am oftentimes guilty of reinforcing the hierachal narrative myself. As a self-taught cook, the majority of my preliminary knowledge came directly from cooking reality shows and other forms of modern culinary media that are heavily centered upon Western culture. (Most cooking competitions in Taiwan follow a similar Western framework too). As I continued exposing myself to more globally recognized gastronomical standards, I began equating artistry to sartorial European fine dining. The first thing I forced myself to master was a piece of steak (ironic given that many Taiwanese families don't even eat beef). In my past 2 years at Berkeley, I've been blessed to witness many insightfully nuanced conversations about reclaiming food identities. Upon inspiration, I began my own journey of integration, shifting my goal from coining flashy French terms to my dishes without clear intentions, to reconciling novel experiences with the ones I subconsciously neglected in the past.



2022 winter family dinner.
"Come join us Phoebe!" But I was busy behind the glass door, piping chicken mousse into my roulade, tweezering microgreens, and forgetting to look up towards the distant dining table. (I still do this quite frankly.)



The concept of small-bite palate excitors at the start of the meal exists across the globe. Yet, the French word "Amuse Bouche" is the universally recognized term that somehow conjures more artistic integrity and finesse. Today, I decided to name my starters by what they encapsulate in flavor and symbolize in nature, not by a remote scheme I attempted to replicate in the past.

Eurocentrism in food has been a subject of discourse among many chefs and epicureans, but its implications extend beyond the realm of gastronomy. Many Slow Food notions--despite being well-grounded in theory--overlook numerous sociocultural dimensions. Regarding locality, how do we quantify and compare the impact between a loaf of baguette made with locally milled flour with something that potentially traveled a longer way to reach its culturally appropriate community? Meanwhile, is the process of fermenting Chinese mustard greens any less upstanding than freshly harvested artichokes displayed in sun-soaked artisanal marketplaces? Not to mention that these normative pillars of conscious eating entail socioeconomic and cognitive barriers that naturally excludes many diasporic communities and underprivileged individuals. Hyper-glorifying "freshness" (which is an ambiguous term itself) not only disengages with the role preservation plays in fueling individuals throughout historical times of warfare and ongoing difficulties, but also denies its rich nutritional and gastronomical properties. Fermentation plays a huge role in Taiwanese cuisine; today's menu is a play on plants at various stages of maturity--featuring seasonal produce as well as flavors and techniques from the typical Taiwanese dinner table.

Interestingly, the high demand for “wholesomeness” in modern food contexts encompasses a narrative of nutritional primitivism--the romanticization of ancestral foodways that are theoretically more in-tune with nature. Given the extent to which the lofty concept of nature has been materialized, how much have these nourishments deviated from the biosphere and communities that cultivated them? In the bread aisle, loaves of bread labeled “keto” contain 3 times the ingredients in regular bread. And among the many criticisms of the “superfood” trend, Goji Berry particularly resonates with me as my mom practically puts it in



Taiwanese Cold Noodles (涼麵) is a naturally vegan lunch dish. While it's traditionally prepared with yellow noodles and served with a hearty sauce, I created a lighter, protein-packed version today with tofu and a gazpacho-like sesame broth.

every soup. They are \$5.99 in Ranch 99, but \$20 on Amazon with a superfood label and artisanal packaging. While calling this exoticization may be a stretch, the global dispersion of foodways--despite being a source of fascinating integration and storytelling--inevitably leads to many cultural conundrums.

Conundrums, however, are oftentimes my motivation for craft. Today's menu is entirely plant-based with an emphasis on soy--a staple in many East Asian cultures for thousands of years. The recent entrance of soy to the Western hemisphere as a profitable agricultural commodity has been accompanied by discourses surrounding monoculture, biodiversity loss, and hormonal imbalances. The irony is that soy today in the U.S. is more likely to appear as a ghost ingredient in steak dinners than as tofu or tempeh. Yet, the wary of

A typical vegan bento box in Taiwan, featuring a fried tofu skin roll filled with fresh and fermented veggies.



In Taiwan, (and many other cultures), religion plays a huge role in plant-based eating. Parallel to the Buddhist emphasis on naturality, dishes are delicately prepared to capture the innate taste of ingredients...

soy is more commonly projected towards products that have been consumed for centuries prior to the escalation of industrial agriculture. We could unpack the multifaceted political origins of this systemic paradox. Yet, I think celebrating ways to make informed, genuine, and pleasurable choices under our imperfect system is arguably more meaningful. This menu is my attempt in honoring the versatility, nutritional properties, and remarkable taste of soy. At the end of the day, food inspires us to embrace both the connections and dissonances across different cultures; meanwhile, individuals and communities will constantly learn and disseminate what the forever-evolving world has to offer.



One of my go-to lunch spots in Taipei: a Buddhist-owned vegan restaurant located in Tianmu District. Assorted plant-based dishes are displayed on a long table, which are then charged by weight on a plate or in a bento box. Customers are encouraged to remain silent during the selection process, not only for hygienic purposes but also to elicit contemplation and gratitude.