**Reflective Journal: Week 11**

My comprehension of Chinese food in North America has been much enhanced by this week's content, which has illuminated its complex history and cultural relevance. The readings and documentary demonstrated how Chinese cuisine is not just a delectable treat but is intricately linked to the lives of Chinese immigrants, their assimilation into American culture, and their tenacity in the face of hardship (Hui, 2020). This reflection will explore my responses, new perspectives, and the material's personal meaning.

At first, the cultural context of Chinese food's development in America really got my attention. It was fascinating to learn about the Chinese Exclusion Act and how it affected Chinese immigration (Liu, 2015). Chop suey and General Tso's chicken are examples of Chinese restaurant fare that was modified to suit American palates by Chinese restaurateurs in response to racial prejudice and exclusion legislation (Liu, 2015). This tactical adjustment served as a means of both survival and establishing a professional niche in the face of discrimination. It was unexpected how politics, racism, and economic hardship influenced Chinese cuisine in North America and brought attention to the tenacity and inventiveness of Chinese immigrants (Hui, 2020).

Reflecting on the concepts from the course, such as cultural adaptation and identity, I realized how these themes were evident in the documentary. The idea of "Chop Suey Nation" as a uniquely North American phenomenon exemplifies how food can be a cultural bridge and a site of racial and social tension (Hui, 2020). The transformation of Chinese cuisine to fit American palates while maintaining its cultural roots illustrates the dynamic nature of cultural identity and adaptation (Liu, 2015).

My understanding of the cultural relevance of Chinese food in America has grown significantly as a result of the content. It caused me to reconsider the frequently written off as "Americanized" Chinese cuisine and acknowledge it as a reflection of the experiences of immigrants (Hui, 2020). This newfound understanding that Chinese food is a result of historical context and cultural adaption, it will change the way I perceive and enjoy Chinese food.

=The guilt feeling that comes with eating Chinese food in North America was one of the things that really stuck out to me. This sentiment is a result of the meals' apparent lack of authenticity when compared to traditional Chinese food. I have felt guilty about eating foods like General Tso's chicken because I believe that doing so somehow violates traditional Chinese cooking customs (Liu, 2015). The content for this week, however, refuted this idea, arguing that these modified recipes are genuine in and of themselves, capturing the distinct cultural fusion and background of Chinese immigrants in America (Hui, 2020). Personally, the documentary resonated with my experiences of eating Chinese food growing up. As someone who enjoys both traditional and Americanized Chinese dishes, understanding the history behind these foods gave me a deeper appreciation for them. It also made me reflect on my own cultural identity and how food plays a crucial role in it (Liu, 2015).

To sum up, this week's content has drastically changed my perception of Chinese cuisine in North America. A deeper understanding of Chinese food has been facilitated by the history of Chinese eateries, the difficulties encountered by Chinese immigrants, and their innovative adaption techniques. I've been able to reconcile my pleasure in both traditional and Americanized Chinese foods by seeing them as parts of a greater cultural story thanks to the discussions on guilt and authenticity. This has been an eye-opening event that will definitely affect my future interactions with Chinese food and its cultural significance.

**References:**

* Hui, A. (2020). Chop Suey Nation: The Legion Cafe and Other Stories from Canada's Chinese Restaurants.
* Liu, H. (2015). From Canton Restaurant to Panda Express: A History of Chinese Food in the United States. Rutgers University Press.