

(0:00) Okay, hi. I just wanted to check with you if you consent to this interview being voice-recorded.

(0:09) Yeah.

(0:09) I'll just let you know that your voice recording will be deleted after the conclusion of this study and no one else but the team members of this research project will have access to your voice message. (0:22) So with that, is it okay if we begin the interview? (0:25) Yeah, sure.

(0:27) Okay, thank you. So can you briefly introduce yourself? Where are you from? What are you studying? Where are you studying? And so on.

(0:35) Yeah, so I'm Elizabeth. I am from Singapore but I'm studying a fourth year at Monash University. So in Melbourne.

(0:46) Yeah, nice. Can you also tell me a bit more about your living situation right now?

(0:52) Yeah, so I currently live with three other Singaporeans who are studying in the same course as me. We share a house. We're renting a house together.

(1:07) Are you satisfied with your current living arrangement? Do you like living with your housemates?

(1:16) That's pros and cons.

(1:19) Okay, would you like to expand a little on that?

(1:24) Yeah, sure. Pros is there's company, the people around me understand me because we're all from Singapore. Sometimes we do things together but then the cons are everyone has very different expectations of the house or different cleanliness levels, how to keep things neat, the way the kitchen is organised.

(1:53) Right. Okay, thank you. So I'm going to ask you a bit about your cooking habits. So how often would you say you cook at home usually in a week?

(2:08) Quite a bit. I cook a meal prep on Sunday for at least five lunches, like Monday to Friday lunches because food here is expensive. And then dinner is hard to say but maybe dinner will be two to four times a week.

(2:31) That's quite a fair bit. And what do you usually like to cook? Singaporean food? Western food?

(2:39) Oh yeah, majority of the time Singaporean food, Asian food, just craving Singapore food. Sometimes you miss home food. And then yeah, once in a while Western but not as much.

(2:54) Do you ever face any challenges when deciding what to cook?

(3:00) Oh yeah, for sure. Sometimes you run out of inspiration, you know.

(3:06) Yeah. And what happens when you do that? You just go back and cook the same things that you usually do?

(3:16) For meal prep, yeah, there are a few standard ones that I'll go to.

(3:20) But for the single meals, like dinners, I'll search TikTok for inspo or see what I'm craving.

(3:29) Interesting. Do you ever get bored with what you cook?

(3:34) Oh yeah, definitely.

(3:35) Yeah, okay. How do you feel about cooking with others or sharing a kitchen?

(3:44) Cooking with others, definitely don't mind. It's very fun. And then you eat the food after and it's faster as well. Sharing kitchen, I don't mind but I have my own ways of how I want to keep it clean.

(4:06) Yeah, got it. And do you often feel you tend to avoid the kitchen when others are in there?

(4:16) In my house, sometimes, yeah, for sure because they use certain pots and pans that I want to use or it's dirty and they haven't cleaned up. I don't like to overlap too much because I want them to clean up first then I do my own thing.

(4:36) Okay, I'm going to ask you a couple of questions about your social interactions. (4:43) How often do you participate in social activities and how important is it to you?

(4:50) You mean like outside, excluding my housemates?

(4:54) Yeah.

(5:03) Like social activity, usually I'll just go out and eat with friends. Maybe like twice a week or less, depending how busy. But yeah, it's definitely important, especially because like no family here. Like sometimes it gets lonely and sometimes like I want to cook with friends but like my housemates don't want to cook. So either it's like I'll go to my other friend's house and cook with them.

(5:29) Do you think food is a catalyst for social interactions.

(5:35) Oh, for sure. Like especially as an international student, like the number one catalyst is either cooking together or eating out together. Especially with other Singaporeans.

(5:50) Oh yeah, for sure. Yes, like the locals don't understand our love for food as much.

(5:58) Yeah, definitely. (6:01) With that statement in mind, actually do you feel like your Australian friends have ever expressed interest in cooking with you or eating with you or learning how to cook Singaporean food?

(6:16) Actually, yeah, no, I post my food quite often. Then when I bump into them in the hospital, cause like I study med right, I'll see them at faculty events. Like yeah, one of the things that comes up is like, oh my god, when are you going to cook for me? Or like, let's go eat good food together soon, like that kind of thing.

(6:40) Yeah, would you say you would be interested in, you know, teaching them or like showing them Singaporean food or Asian cuisine?

(6:50) Yeah, of course. I don't mind. They're interested for sure.

(6:54) Cool. Okay, I'm going to ask a bit more questions about foodways because we're also trying to design something that helps to tackle foodways. So I want to know, how often do you find yourself throwing away food and how do you feel when you have to throw out food?

(7:13) I feel like in Singapore, I didn't really waste much food. But like, yeah, here now, like quite a bit. Cause when I meal prep, I won't like purposely go away, get out or like stuff. But then sometimes I get bored by my 4th, 5th meal and I'm like, you know what, I don't want to eat it anymore. And then it's a bit sus to like offer it to my friends, but then it's a bit too late by day 4 to offer the extra portion to them. So yeah, I end up throwing that away. And then my housemates, for a while, we used to cook like, try to cook together once a week and then we'll always end up overestimating. And then I don't know why, somehow like there's one portion left and it gets chucked in the fridge. And then the next time we cook, we're like, why is this portion still in the fridge? And then we have to throw it out as well.

(8:11) Do you try, like, are there any strategies you try to reduce food waste?

(8:19) Recently, I've just been trying to stop like over buying groceries. Like I'll try to think of what I want to cook first, then buy groceries. Cause sometimes when I'm like impulsive, then I think I want to cook this. Like actually just last week, like I thought I wanted to make a cucumber salad. But then like, I just like couldn't, like I just no feels anymore after I went home. And like my friends, like that week I went out to eat a lot. Then it got mouldy and then I had to throw it away.

(8:53) So you didn't eat your cucumber salad in the end?

(8:55) No, I didn't. And I forgot about it.

(9:01) Was that, did that happen to be a TikTok trend?

(9:07) No, not really, but I was craving the, I don't know if Din Tai Fung serves it, but you know the China salad?

(9:13) Yeah, yeah, yeah. I think that's a Din Tai Fung. I was craving that. And it's so expensive here. It's like \$9 for a small bowl like that. In like Melbourne, like \$9, tiny, tiny portion.

(9:26) Right. So with that in mind, what are your thoughts on sharing ingredients with maybe other international students? Students like yourself, to prevent food waste. So maybe would you be open to a system where you can trade or share extra ingredients? You know, if you have to bulk buy something, then there's like a system set up to share that?

(9:46) Yeah, no, like that sounds really good. Like not even kidding, like the day, because I'm addicted to Marketplace now. Other day I was like, oh my God, I wish I could sell my groceries. But like, I don't know if people trust me, you know what I mean?

(10:01) Okay, interesting. Addicted to Marketplace. Okay, have you ever bought ingredients but didn't use them? (10:12) I guess your cucumber, right? That's what you...

(10:14) Yeah, that's the most recent one. And then like, sometimes like overcook like rice, but end up not eating it. And then I don't feel like making fried rice. So I'm like, I'll chuck it.

(10:27) Do you ever want to try and cook new recipes or try cooking food from different cuisines? Maybe, you know, like Indian food or Pakistani food or a specific food from China. But there are just too many ingredients or it's too intimidating. And it's like, especially here, then you have to buy the whole packet and then you only use like one tenth of it. And then you're like, oh, now what?

(10:51) And do you ever hesitate or like you're a bit scared to try new recipes because you're just not sure if you like the result and then you have all the ingredients left?

(11:02) Yeah, and then like if you don't like the dish and then you throw it away, it's like...Yeah, then you just tend to stick to the things that you already have cooked before. Yeah, definitely. Like when you cook with people, you have more motivation to explore like further, like new things.

(11:16) And I know you said you crave food from home, but do you know how to cook it? Or is it just too complicated sometimes and it involves too many ingredients and steps?

(11:29) I know some things, yeah. Some dishes like zi char dishes, like egg tofu, that kind. But like chili crab, definitely crave, but don't know how to cook. Like nasi lemak, like there's too many components, you know. Like I'm always craving that, but there's too many components. Like they sell coconut, like the coconut leaf or whatever in bulk, but it's too much. I don't want that and I don't want to buy it.

(12:06) Yeah. Can I just ask, do you shop at bulk food stores? Like maybe Costco or...

(12:15) Oh yeah, sometimes. At Costco.

(12:17) Yeah, and do you find that sometimes you can't buy the things you want because there's just too many of them or...You know, that sort of thing. Or you end up buying it and then you end up throwing stuff away.

(12:31) Yep, all the time. It's like every time I go Costco, I'll try to ask my friend if they want to split something first. And then I end up like, it's so easy to just spend like more than \$100 there because everything's in bulk.

(12:45) Okay. Thank you. So basically the purpose of this interview is because we are trying to design a platform for international students like yourself to connect over food and to share ingredients so as to minimize food waste. So with that in mind, what do you think could be done to make cooking and socializing easier for students like you? Are there... Okay, maybe it's a bit vague of a question, but are there any specific tools or resources or community efforts that you think would help?

(13:19) Yeah, I mean the app is a good idea. And then I guess like Singaporeans use Telegram. You can do like a Telegram channel.

(13:29) Efforts? Yeah, events like... I guess in Australia, I've gotten used to using Facebook. So like, you know, you always see like people like interested in an event and then they'll get put on your feed and then like the word spreads from there. Like, not a bad idea.

(13:46) Okay. So with regards to an application that would help you find cooking events like this or sharing ingredients, what features would you find helpful?

(14:11) Oh yeah, like maybe like a calendar, like a calendar page that's like a summary of the events or like a different theme, like, you know, like Asian. Like, okay, no, not so broad.

Maybe like Singaporean food night and then like China cooking night, that kind of thing maybe. Yeah, I think that might be helpful as well. Would there be anything that would stop you from going to an event like this or using an application?

(14:43) If it's too far, so I guess like maybe approximate, like filters that you can filter out distance, like how close it is to you. I guess, yeah, I mean, at the back of your head, always like stranger danger. I don't know like if everyone's intentions are pure, so maybe just like, I don't know, like...Verify, verify your profile, that kind of thing, like some security measures.

(15:09) That's definitely a good suggestion. Okay, so that's basically all my questions. But if there's anything else you'd like to share about, you know, your

experience with cooking or budgeting or socializing as an international student, feel free to share.

(15:30) Yeah, no, not really. But yeah, I think like even, yeah, not just like cooking, just like somewhere you can share like about groceries would be really helpful, I think.

(15:42) Okay, thank you. Have a nice evening. Bye-bye.

(15:48) Bye-bye.