

How has Cuisine Identity Sustained the Fancy Food Markets Throughout the worlds Food Distribution Systems?

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Abstract

Despite some rough years, specialty food sales are strong According to the National Association for the Specialty Food Trade (NASFT) “2011 State of the Specialty Food Industry” report; retail sales increased 7.4 percent in 2010 over the previous year, well above the rate of inflation. Total sales of specialty foods were at \$70.32 billion with \$55.92 billion sales at retail, notes the study, the collaboration with market researchers Mintel International and SPINS. This research will examine how cuisine identity has continued to support and grow this multi-billion dollar business throughout the world food markets. By identifying multiple cuisines the argument can be made that the distribution markets themselves are able to sustain these styles of food through the lens of the cuisine and the distribution systems that support them. By researching the fancy food markets or specialty food offerings your average consumer and retailer can determine the overall importance of the cuisine identity as a starting point and sustaining effort in this multi-billion dollar a year food enterprise.

Keywords: Cuisine Identity, Cajun Food History, Fancy Food, Sustainability and Food Offerings.

Defining Cuisine Identity

A cuisine’s identity is certain set of cooking traditions, techniques, and specific ingredients associated with a cultural history within multiple geographical areas. Throughout the world, the diversity of cuisines is a direct reflection of the multi-cultural differences derived from many factors that are particular to a specific cultural area. For example geography, immigration, economics, trade, politics, religion and ethnicity all play some role in the development of a particular cuisine. All of these subjects act collectively to affect ingredients, traditions, and

styles, which in turn affect our eating habits, flavor preferences, recipes, and dining etiquette. They are the primary determinants that sustain the fancy food markets and distinction of a particular cuisine that is embedded cultural identity and food consumption patterns. Currently cuisine and cookery has in some form been modernized to create what is known world cuisine and fusion cuisine. These new identities are quite different from classical cuisine. These two new styles do not have defined geographical boundaries they both derive their identity through food that is rooted in the creation of ingredients and techniques that utilize styles and cuisines from multiple locations around the world. The term fusion cuisine is the major reason that new cuisines have even been developed. Considering the numerous factors that influence cuisine and its identity, learning about a particular cuisine requires nothing more than a glossary of ingredients and recipes from traditional dishes. What a person eats is usually examined within a cultural context by combining some form history, ingredient availability, and heritage of its people. Take for example Cajun Cuisine. It fuses together or combines a multicultural perspective by incorporating a history of food eating habits and ingredients from the French-speaking Acadian or “Cajun” immigrants deported by the British from Acadia in Canada to Louisiana in the United States. It is also noted to be a rustic cuisine do to its simplicity in preparation. This identity or cultural component holds true in the development of many cuisines and their basic cultural structure. Locally available ingredients that are predominate to the region with simple technique and preparation. An authentic Cajun meal is usually a three-pot affair, with one pot dedicated tot the main dish, one dedicated to steamed rice, special made sausages, or some other seafood dish, and the third containing whatever vegetable is plentiful or available. With blends of roughly diced onions, carrots and celery the incorporation of or French style of vegetable blends traditionally called mire poix are fused in to create a multicultural cuisine.

Food and Identity:

Brillat-Savarin’s aphorism, which everyone's sites: “tell me what you eat and I'll tell you who you are.” This quote is used quite often because like other antonyms, the truth is in the quote. We understand food and identity in many different way, m and has a mostly it has to do with the individual. Many of us have raised children knowing that probably at a certain point in their lives, they will announce “I’m not going to eat that, I'm a vegetarian”is probably one of the first assumptions of individual identity or indicates that the parents are vegetarians and the kids say “I'm not going to eat meat”. It's a way of differentiating yourself. You're a vegetarian, you're the, your free grain, your raw foodist. However you differentiate yourself is a bad hit you where some time he can be quite private but I believe that in America society, is quite public.(13) many Americans sedum cells as being immersed in a giant stewpot, coming out is potluck, and all of these different dishes coming to the American restaurant and home. Now there are other rigid concepts that have to do less with cooking and more with the ingredients: where there come from, where there gathered and what they mean: who grew them: are they organic or genetically modified in any way etc... And then all of a sudden we place ourselves in a situation where we

can all sit down at the same table and eat together anymore, everyone returned to their roots and unfortunately each group has its own garden. How do we make it so that we can serve that basically good meal for everyone without the option of vegetarian, or Hindu bar or kosher, macrobiotico or Moslem. What we need to do is say we are a community, we'll all eat together, maybe we're not going to partake of foods but were going to release sit down together and not identify ourselves to the marketplace that we choose, this seems to be the only logical reasonable conclusion.(14)

Sustainable Agriculture:

Before the recent surge in food prices, three of the largest providers of food products in the world, Nestle, Danone and Unilever, realized that sustainability is critical to secure a constant, growing, and save quantity of agricultural raw materials. The companies came together in 2002 to form thus sustainability agriculture initiative, a nonprofit organization dedicated to actively supporting the development of sustainability on a global agricultural front, participators included stakeholders of all of the food supply chain.

The SAI platform today includes 23 corporate members with estimated sales of \$340 billion; they actively work to promote sustainable agriculture as a productive, competitive and efficient way of producing agricultural products, while at the same time protecting and improving the natural environment and social economic conditions of regional and local communities. SAI members are organized in crop/issue specific working groups including: coffee, dairy, fruit, potatoes vegetables-cereals, and water and agriculture. Working group members meet on a regular basis to share information and knowledge on sustainable agriculture practices. Each member company carries out in-house pilot projects on certain crops are populated issues in their supply chain. After completion of a pilot project a cost benefit analysis is carried out in order to assess the sustainability performance, and the results are widely disseminated. (17)

Sustainable Seafood Cooking Class:

Fine dining sustainable seafood where, when and how are questions being asked by chefs across the country. In California Chef Jenn Felmtty offers a three-part sustainable seafood cooking class at the sea rocket Bristol in San Diego. He instructs students on where to, when to buy and how to buy sustainable products. He focuses on what is available locally and in season these classes provide the student fulfillment on his environmental, and foodie sides. Sustainable seafood classes teach students how to entertain themselves friends and guests with a showcase of sustainable seafood dinners. Students prepare served and consumed a menu of truly local flavors, pure curing food directly from regional farmers, fishermen and ranchers. They focus on sustainable harvest seafood organic produce and pastured meats, local beers and local wines, providing the student with a sustainable fine dining experience (Voice). The United States is at the forefront of sustainable seafood with farms across the country providing consumers with a variety of fish and crustaceans, salmon, trout and oysters, clams, mussels etc.

The Monterey aquarium is an organization that is providing a tool to help and guide people in the search for sustainable seafood. The aquarium website contains “Seafood Watch”, a program that provides the public with one of the best sources of national information on sustainable seafood. The website for Seafood Watch contains a pocket guide which is printable charts that discuss sustainable seafood that consumers can utilize in their area of the country. The guides are organized by regions Pennsylvania is in the southern region. Each region is categorized and charted so that the consumer can make a judgment as to alternatives for choices to avoid or dine on. The guides are changed and updated twice annually, so it is necessary to constantly monitor and reprint them. The guide provides consumers with recommendations for seafood to buy or avoid, helping businesses and consumer to become advocates for ocean friendly seafood. The website provides other information such as recipes, information about restaurants that utilize sustainable practices and iPod applications. An example of the guide is shown below:

Select a Seafood Watch Pocket Guide

 [Learn more about our January 2012 updates](#)

- [Want to order a large quantity of pocket guides?](#)
- [Download Adobe Acrobat Reader](#)

Carry the pocket guide that's right for your region to help you choose ocean-friendly seafood wherever you live or travel. **Click on your state on the map below** to determine the pocket guide that's right for you. If you live near a boundary between two regions, we suggest that you look at both pocket guides and pick the one that lists the seafood items commonly found where you live.



The general public tends to think of sustainable seafood, as fish that is farmed only. Farm raised fish however, does not appear on the unsustainable fish of Seafood Watch, because farm raised fish can actually harm the seas. Although while fish are not killed or captured in theory by farms, many of the byproducts of fish farms actually can be just as or more than harmful to sea creatures and commercial fishing. For one thing the fish produce a lot of waste. The waste may sit in pens and dirty ocean water. Food and animal waste to collect and seriously damage the surrounding habitat. Also other fish and sea creatures can become trapped in nets and other fishing tools used to safeguard the farm fish. Many see farmers are however attempting to be more eco-conscious and fish farming may then often be an excellent way to be eco-friendly (McCammon).

Farmside Fine Dining

Farmside Fine Dining adds an unexpected element to sustainability. The increasing popularity of dining farm side is bringing the best and freshest products to the dining table. For a unique experience the Colorado for Meadows, larks farm dinners offers a unique experience. Larks farm offers a partnership with local and regional farmers and creative ways. They evaluate the type of crops being grown at each farm and then create full meals out of these crops. Many farmers are happy to serve as the host or server, and proud to see their crops transformed into meals enjoyed by patrons from all over the world. This unique partnerships: rates and environment of community and sustainability that make sustainability special. An example of this experience can be found at BlackBerry farm utilize on site restaurants providing patrons with meals utilizing local products influenced by the Smokey Mountains as well as fine dining trends. They provide the consumer with comfort food as well as haute food. The farm has something for everyone, all created from seasonal crops grown at the farm (Stewart)..

There are many benefits to farm size dining, and one of them is the ability to incorporate community involvement and inclusion. In many cases resident and regional chefs will volunteer to create fine dining experiences at farm dining advance. This type of community involvement allows a relationship between sustainable farmers, the restaurant industry, customers and local and regional purveyors. This type of activity provides a conduit for continued community involvement and promotes organizations within the community to host farm dinners on participating farms. Sustainable fine dining is more than reducing the use of endangered products but involves farmers, local communities and the region. Farm side dining allows harmony between these competing units.

Conclusion:

Triple Michelin Starred Pierre Gagnaire, his approach to fine cuisine has it made him one of the world's most respected culinary practitioners today and that is why people are listening when he is waging an unusual campaign. He's trying to warn the consumer of fine dining that the environment cannot sustain the demands of worldwide audience for truly natural food products. Among his warnings: while fish will disappear in the next 5 to 10 years, what will remain will be farmed fish. Demand for certain species of fish will soon make them extinct. The list includes many species of shark and bluefin tuna. Exotic and in demand fruits and vegetables are becoming impossible to find there are dangers that restaurants without the best and most solid suppliers may have to close due to lack of ingredients. His bottom line is that suppliers just can't cope with the demands of good fine dining restaurants. He predicts large numbers of closing in the years to come along with prices that may double triple and quadruple for today's top level menu prices.(Burns)