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CALL FOR PAPERS

FOODWAYS: DIASPORIC DINERS, TRANSNATIONAL TABLES AND CULINARY CONNECTIONS

Centre for Diaspora and Transnational Studies, University of Toronto

Please join us for the 2012 Annual Conference of the Centre for Diaspora and Transnational Studies,
University of Toronto

Thursday October 4 – Sunday, October 7, 2012

Abstracts due: Mar. 16

More information on the conference can be found on the [Diasporic Foodways blog](#).

Click here for [online submission of abstracts and registration](#). (see below for instructions)



Description:

This conference seeks to address questions surrounding the dynamics of the food ‘we’ eat, the ways in which ‘we’ eat, the meaning ‘we’ give to eating, and the effect of eating in a transnational world. Recognizing that culinary culture is central to diasporic identifications, the focus is on the place of food in the enduring habits, rituals, and everyday practices that are collectively used to produce and sustain shared senses of cultural identity. Yet even as it does this work, food and the practices of production, preparation and consumption that revolve around it, cannot help but be drawn into wider cultures and cultural politics of consumption increasingly grounded in the pursuit of qualities of difference, acts of distinction and questions of justice. This focus on food, cooking, and eating in diaspora and its role in connecting and changing peoples, places, tastes, and sensibilities around the world yields insight not only to substances that people consider essential to the maintenance of identity, but to the production of new cultural political formations in a transnational world and to the role of cultural (re)production in the expansion of consumption under contemporary capitalism. A focus on food also reveals the dynamic role of historical pathways in understanding cultural formations as they have existed through time, and in positioning the present as a moment in a continuing process of structured mobility that directs the movement of people, what they eat, and how they understand themselves and the world around them. It also yields insight into the multiple places and ways in which food assumes value and how that value is often reliant upon the continued reproduction of ties that bind people, place, and practice across space and time. A great deal of academic work explores this interplay of food, practice, identity and subject formation, much of it bound together by a commitment that through a fuller understanding of those relations, we better understand

ourselves, our pasts, and the complexities of the spaces and lives we inhabit and enact in a transnational world. This conference seeks to enhance that understanding.

Contact and More Information:

Please address organizational questions to rebecca.oneill@utoronto.ca with the subject line “Food Conference”

More information on the [Centre for Diaspora and Transnational Studies](#)

Submitting abstracts:

We welcome contributions from scholars, activists, artists, advocates, government staff and food and agriculture practitioners and expect the meeting to have wide appeal across the Humanities and Social Sciences. Suggestions for papers, panel proposals, roundtables, posters and workshops should speak directly to the theme of the conference and can align with, but are not limited to, the examples of potential panels provided below.

To access the submissions page, you need to register for an account. Click on ‘Log In’ in the menu bar. This will prompt you to create an account. After you create an account you will be able to log in, submit abstracts, register (beginning late April), view accepted abstracts, and access the conference program. Abstracts will be reviewed and notifications of acceptance sent out by mid-April.

a.) Paper Panels: Panel proposals should consist of four papers addressing a common theme. Panel abstracts should include title and a 250 word (max) description, the names and affiliations of presenters, titles and abstracts of papers in the panel. Individual panelists are also required to submit their abstracts separately. They should indicate in a supplementary statement that the paper is attached to a panel and the title of the panel.

b.) Papers: Abstracts should be 250 words (max). If the paper is part of an organized panel, please indicate that and include the name of the panel in a brief (50 word max) statement. Each paper is allowed 20 minutes for presentation and discussion.

c.) Round Table Panels: We welcome proposals for round table discussions with a maximum of five participants. These should be oriented around a common theme and may include substantive audience dialogue. Abstracts (350 word max) should describe the theme of the session, the names and affiliations of participants and the format of the panel.

d.) Posters and Visual Exhibitions: Sessions should consist of visual material (posters, art, photography) displayed for viewing with opportunities for individual discussion with the authors/artists. Abstracts (250 word max) should include a description of the work and its relevance to the theme of the conference.

e.) Workshops: proposals (400 words max) should describe the theme of the workshop, its relevance to the theme of the conference, the intended duration (90 minutes or 180 minutes) and equipment/space requirements.

f.) Films: Abstracts (250 words max) should describe the film, its relevance to the theme of the conference, include the film length, and identify any special screening requirements.

g.) Other: This category is for types of presentations that are not covered by the above. Please submit a 250 word description of what you envision under the category “Other”.

Submitting Papers: We anticipate that a number of publications will arise from the conference in the form of an edited volume and special journal issues. Following the review of abstracts, participants interested in having papers considered for inclusion in conference related volumes will be asked to submit full papers online, before Sept. 16 at: <http://ocs.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/CDTS/foodways/>.

Registration: Please note that online registration will begin in late April, following the review of abstracts.

Possible Topics and Areas of Interest:

- ***The Transnational Kitchen:*** the role of food ‘professionals’ as transnational agents in shaping new foods, sourcing new ingredients, identifying and incorporating new ingredients and trends in preparation.
- ***The Syncretic Pot: Cooking in Transnational Spaces.*** The dynamics of foodpreparation in transnational spaces and the place of cooking in negotiating shared senses of diasporic identity.
- ***Transnational Food Spaces:*** A consideration of the kitchen, the dining room, the grocery store, the garden, the café, the restaurant, the school and the workplace as sites of transculturation, spaces in which disparate representations of ‘the other’ (and ‘other foods’) are encountered, and the reconfigurations of food, eating and identity that result from these encounters.
- ***The Diasporic Garden:*** explorations of the various modes and mechanisms of production and distribution required to supply the products integral to the social and commercial production of foodstuffs for diasporic communities; including the often-invisible spaces of backyard gardens, community farms, ethnic markets, etc.
- ***Am I What I Eat? Transnational Flows, Food and Constructs of Authenticity:*** Questioning the role of authenticity in sanctioning foodstuffs and how constructs and conceptions of ‘the authentic self’ change as people strive (and often fail) to reproduce ‘authentic’ cuisines.
- ***Affective Bodies at the Transnational Table:*** Considerations of the relations between the senses, affect, food, manners and etiquette and the disciplining effect of eating in embodying and performing the qualities integral to diasporic identifications.
- ***Culinary Foodways:*** Charting the adaptation, substitution, and indigenization of ingredients, foodstuffs, and methods of preparation across time and space.
- ***Food Memories:*** Considering the work performed by food in the reproduction of sociality, myth and ritual and practice that are core to maintaining the boundaries of diasporic communities and constructs of ‘home’, ‘away’, and ‘return’.
- ***The Food Dialogues:*** Exploration of the various channels (e. g., personal correspondence, popular culture, media, professional associations, social movements) through which the transformation of diet becomes a spatially iterative process.
- ***Enclave Eating and Cosmo-Multiculturalism:*** questions of the degree to which the ready availability of diasporic foodstuffs encourages or permits a ‘lazy’ engagement with multi-culturalism in which eating ‘the foreign’ or ‘the exotic’ is focused on the production of a distinctive self and displaces other more substantive or productive forms of engagement with difference.
- ***Fixing Food*** –In what ways are diasporic foods essentialized and does the necessity of maintaining “exotic” or “authentic” foodscapes produce a distinct diasporic burden, acting to fix migrant culinary cultures – with what outcomes and effects for foods and the creativity of their makers?

• *A Doner Kebab with 'the Works'* - identifying why and through what historical processes food becomes a mediator of ethnic identities produced in diasporic contexts.

• *Where's Little India?* – a consideration of the role of food in the development of distinct “ethnic quarters”, the historical conditions in which such enclaves are produced and with what consequences for peoples working and living in those enclaves?

Local Arrangements and Organizing Committee (University of Toronto)

Ken MacDonald, Chair (Geography, CDTS)

Antonela Arhin (CDTS)

Dan Bender (History)

Ben Liu (Centre for Community Partnerships; Geography)

Alexandra Guerson (History)

Rebecca O'Neill (History)

Kevin O'Neill (Religious Studies; CDTS)

Ato Quayson (English; CDTS)

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Advisory Committee

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Minelle Mahtani (Geography and Program in Journalism, Toronto)

Sidney Mintz (Anthropology, Johns Hopkins)

Jeffrey Pilcher (History, Minnesota)

Krishnendu Ray (Food Studies, NYU)

Eleanor Sterling (Director, Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation, American Museum of Natural History; Columbia University)

Penny Van Esterik (Anthropology, York)

Rick Wilk (Anthropology, Indiana)