

SUNNY SIDE UP:  
THE STORIED PAST OF AMERICA'S MOST IMPORTANT MEAL OF THE  
DAY

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## ABSTRACT

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This thesis explores the role of breakfast as a reflection of American culture and history as it pertains to social perspectives of morality, war, gender, race, immigration, sexuality and popular media. This project critiques conventional explanations of political, economic and social history regarding the cultural manifestation of breakfast over the last 150 years in the United States. It attempts to answer how intersections of time and space, race and class, society and culture, explain the not always clear meaning of food. The intersectionality of the research within this project is representative of the depths of human character and identity that can be found when the influences of breakfast are examined. By exploring new dimensions of the past that have previously been overlooked, entire facets of breakfast history and American culture are uncovered, leading to emergent connections and interpretations of our collective past.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would not have found success in writing this thesis were it not for the wisdom, intelligence, compassion, and support of many incredible individuals. First among these are my parents. Thank you, Mom and Dad, for showing me that the world can be navigated and understood through food, whether it be shrimp dumplings for breakfast at Dim Sum or the “Eggnog Gravy Incident” of Christmas brunch 2012. Dad, thank you for all the Saturday morning Bisquik pancakes, shirtless bacon grease burns and bowls of Cinnamon Toast Crunch we shared as I grew up. Mom, thank you for being the type of mother who would rather have leftover Tex-Mex than soggy scrambled eggs, you’ve shown me that breakfast can be anything. I hope this thesis acts as a reminder of everything you’ve helped me to accomplish during my time in Plan II at the University of Texas.

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Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Melanie Haupt, who served as my second reader for this project. Dr. Haupt’s readiness to work with me and take on this ambitious project will be something I am forever grateful for. Thank you for reigning me in when my ideas spiraled out of scope and for pushing me to think critically about breakfast in context. Her confidence as a scholar and editor has helped me overcome any discouragement I’ve faced during my writing process.

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## INTRODUCTION

“There has never been a sadness that can’t be cured with breakfast food.”

– Ron Swanson, NBC’s *Parks and Recreation*

If we are willing to admit that our Google searches are a reflection of who we are, then breakfast and its variations are currently at the forefront of American food culture. Aggregated search statistics show a steady increase over the last 5 years in terms such as “breakfast”, “breakfast near me” and “best brunch” across the United States, with sub-regional interest peaking in Hawaii, Colorado, Nevada and Washington, D.C.<sup>1</sup> Yet, before 2010, upscale and casual full-service restaurants offering weekday breakfast options were largely unheard of. Breakfast magnates such as IHOP and Waffle House located across the country have been serving up pancakes and egg dishes since the 1950’s,<sup>2</sup> but after the 2008 recession and an increase in freelance/nontraditional job markets, the breakfast industry has become the new frontier for creative and innovative niche restaurants.

The first meal of the day, when eaten away from the home, used to be confined to traditional staples like eggs or pancakes, but in recent years there has been growing demand for options like ethnically inspired grain bowls, avocado toast, and as consumer spending consultant Technomic found, 38 percent of diners between the ages of 18 and 34 “enjoy eating breakfast foods that are often associated with lunch or dinner, like pizza, burgers or grilled chicken sandwiches that have breakfast ingredients added”<sup>3</sup>. Food industry research firm Datassential, says that even kale salad, which is

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<sup>1</sup> “Breakfast Search Interest by Time, Location and Popularity on Google Trends.” Google Trends, Google, 19 Mar. 2018.

<sup>2</sup> “History - Welcome to IHOP.” [www.ihop.com/en/about-ihop/history](http://www.ihop.com/en/about-ihop/history).

<sup>3</sup> Sedacca, Matthew. “Why You’re Seeing Breakfast Freaking Everywhere.” *Eater*, 30 May 2017.

more traditionally associated with lunch, is one of the fastest growing breakfast items. It appeared on menus 400 percent more often in 2017 compared to 2012<sup>4</sup>.

During the 2008 recession when people had less disposable income to go out to dinner, frequenting breakfast eateries during the daytime became the affordable way to dine out and not break the bank. Even in the years after the recession, quick-service restaurants of all types turned to breakfast as a way to bolster sagging lunch and dinner sales. Eggs, for example, are one of the cheapest ingredients available for chefs to utilize during breakfast, and they know they can up-charge customers sometimes up to \$15 per dish, leading to profits for restaurants, but allowing the customer to pay less than they would for a comparably filling meal at dinner time.

Economics are not the only factor influencing breakfast culture in the United States. Based on demographics alone, a more diverse, global cuisine is inevitable in the United States. Generation Z, born 1997 or later, comprises only 20% of the U.S. population today, but will account for 40% by 2020.<sup>5</sup> Not only is Gen Z more multicultural and multiethnic itself, but their culinary interests mirror that diversity. These young people are comparatively more interested in south Asian cuisines like Korean, Vietnamese and Indian forcing restaurants to incorporate global foods into their general menu strategy while zeroing in on specific foods and flavors. Breakfast menus across the U.S are serving dishes like masala crepes, kimchi fried rice topped with a runny egg, maple congee, and ginger marinated pork omelets with Vietnamese iced coffee.

Breakfast's future will undoubtedly be shaped by America's changing culture, but the historical perspectives that have brought this meal to popular attention cannot be ignored. This thesis attempts to intersect time and space, race and class, society and culture, all with the aim of explaining and

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<sup>4</sup> Mann, Jana. "4 Macro Trends That Will Redefine the Industry." FoodBytes 2016, Datassential, Dec. 2015

<sup>5</sup> Fry, Richard. "Millennials Projected to Overtake Baby Boomers as America's Largest Generation." *Pew Research Center*, Pew Research Center, 1 Mar. 2018, [www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/03/01/millennials-overtake-baby-boomers/](http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/03/01/millennials-overtake-baby-boomers/).

interpreting the not always clear history of food. As the old adage says, breakfast is the most important meal of the day, and yet written record of this daily ritual that spans the globe has been curiously inadequate. Breakfast is reflective of American culture as a whole and illustrates how perspective lenses of morality, war, race, ethnicity, immigration, sexuality and popular media uniquely influence the production, consumption and sharing of these foods over time.

## CHAPTER 1: MORALITY

Morality rests upon the principles concerning the distinction between right and wrong or good and bad behavior. This dichotomy is not reserved solely for “good” nutritious content or “bad” sustainability practices but can be present in the culture of food choices and the outside judgment surrounding them. The consumption of food in our time has become something of a moral matter, at times involving self-righteousness and even coercion. But who sets these ideas in the United States? Government legislation? Religious text? Science? Celebrities? Or possibly as local as our peers and neighbors? Today’s message about moral eating behavior, wherever it comes from, is a somewhat muddled one, composed of equal parts food accessibility, self-expression, physical and spiritual self-control, and civic-mindedness. The power of moral proclamation, especially combined with pseudo-science and fanaticism, has created ideologically driven food movements that have changed the way we eat in the United States. Breakfast, from Kellogg to Whole30, has permanently influenced American culture as its connection to the morality of food consumption.

### **Kellogg:** They’re More than Good, They’re Great....ly Entrenched in Religious Fanaticism

The Seventh Day Adventist church was established in 1863 in Battle Creek, Michigan by a collective of individuals who were the remnants of the Millerite movement, founded in 1803 by William Miller who believed in the imminent second coming of Christ, hence the “Adventist” in Seventh Day Adventists.<sup>6</sup> John Harvey Kellogg grew up as a member of the Seventh Day Adventists, and after completing medical school in 1873, he returned to Michigan and took over

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<sup>6</sup> “Adventist.org.” *The Official Site of the Seventh-Day Adventist World Church*, 28 Feb. 2018, [www.adventist.org/en/](http://www.adventist.org/en/).

operations of the Western Health Reform Institute in Battle Creek.<sup>7</sup> As superintendent, he began implementing many treatments that were considered radical for the time. These treatments included a range of practices, from promoting a low-fat, high-fiber, vegetarian diet to the aggressive use of yogurt enemas. He renamed the Western Health Reform Institute the Battle Creek Sanitarium and described his health-centered utopia as “a composite physiologic method comprising hydrotherapy, phototherapy, thermotherapy, electrotherapy, mechanotherapy, dietetics, physical culture, cold-air cure, and health training.”<sup>8</sup> The rich and famous flocked to the health resort for daily exercise classes, lessons in proper breathing, lectures on nutrition and wellness and to learn about the Seventh-Day Adventist health message. Patients included President Warren G. Harding (whose family would convert to Seventh-Day Adventism), Amelia Earhart, Henry Ford, Mary Todd Lincoln and C.W. Post, the founder of Post Cereals.

Kellogg’s most famous contribution to the Clean-Living Movement<sup>9</sup> occurred on May 31, 1895, when the patent for “Flaked Cereals and Process of Preparing Same” was filed with the U.S. Patent Office stating:

My invention relates to an improved alimentary product and to the process of making it; and the object of the improvement is to provide a food product which is in a proper condition to be readily digested without any preliminary cooking or heating operation,

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<sup>7</sup> “The Battle Creek Idea.” *Welcome to Heritage Battle Creek*, 2009,

[www.heritagebattlecreek.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=95&Itemid=73](http://www.heritagebattlecreek.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=95&Itemid=73).

<sup>8</sup> Kellogg, John Harvey. *The Battle Creek Sanitarium System; History, Organization, Methods*. Gage Printing Co., Ltd., 1909. Pg. 21.

<sup>9</sup> A Jacksonian-era surge of health-reform crusades, many with moral overtones, erupted into the popular consciousness of Americans between 1830 and 1860. During this era a focus on exercise, non-use of tobacco, and the elimination of coffee, tea, sugar, meat and spices from the diet was promoted by newly formed religious groups such as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Seventh-Day Adventists.

and which is highly nutritive and of an agreeable taste, thus affording a food product particularly well adapted for sick and convalescent persons.<sup>10</sup>

Eighteenth-century books like the anonymously authored *Ononia: Or the Heinous Sin of Self-Pollution, and all its Frightful Consequences* and Samuel Tissot's *Treatise on the Diseases Produced by Onanism*<sup>11</sup> laid the groundwork for Kellogg to medicalize “the solitary vice.” Soon, masturbation was no longer just a moral failing, but also a physical and mental ailment that required treatment and cures. The flakes, which the Kellogg called granose<sup>12</sup>, were immensely popular with the patients. John Harvey Kellogg even believed consuming them would help deter chronic masturbation, the heart of many chronic illnesses. He believed that bland wholesome foods would keep the passions subdued and prevent people from indulging in their baser instincts. Kellogg was particularly against masturbation because of its assumed propensity to fuel other sins of sexuality. “If illicit commerce of the sexes is a heinous sin,” Kellogg wrote, “self-pollution [masturbation] is a crime doubly abominable.” In *Plain Facts for Old and Young: Embracing the Natural History and Hygiene of Organic Life*, Kellogg cataloged 39 different symptoms of a person plagued by masturbation, including general infirmity, defective development, mood swings, fickleness, bashfulness, boldness, bad posture, stiff joints, fondness for spicy foods, acne, palpitations, and epilepsy,<sup>13</sup> all of which could be treated by consuming his bland, non-stimulating flakes.

Kellogg’s concern for the moral fortitude of American citizens was the driving factor in his invention of the corn flake, the simplest of meals to heal one’s righteous failings. His fears

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<sup>10</sup> “US558393A - Flaked Cereals and Process of Preparing Same.” *Google Patents*, Google, [patents.google.com/patent/US558393A/en](https://patents.google.com/patent/US558393A/en).

<sup>11</sup> Antiquated word for masturbation.

<sup>12</sup> A variation of Sylvester Graham’s granula, which would later become granola.

<sup>13</sup> Kellogg, John Harvey. *Plain Facts for Old and Young Embracing the Natural History and Hygiene of Organic Life*. University of Virginia Library, 1995. Pg. 217.

that the youth of the United States would succumb to the allure of “sexually aggressive foods” like tea, coffee, peppermint, candies, spices, cinnamon, cloves, and all strong essences, which had the power to excite the genital organs.<sup>14</sup> Today, the morality driven history of Kellogg’s cornflakes is largely forgotten, but his influence on American culture remains as a reminder of the power of persuasion, manipulation and ingenuity.

### **The Butter Wars**

The crusade on morality did not end with Kellogg and his corn flakes; as early as 1870, America was in the clutches of an ideological war.... between butter and margarine. Margarine, also called oleomargarine, or oleo, was first created in 1869 by a French chemist named Hippolyte Mège-Mouriès. His original recipe relied on beef tallow and was intended to be a cheaper and less perishable option to traditional butter. This cost-effective spread was brought to the United States in 1871 when Henry W. Bradley of Binghamton, New York received U.S. Patent 110,626<sup>15</sup> for his process of creating margarine that combined cottonseed oil with animal fats. The popularity of margarine, or as Bradley called it “vegetable butter,” began to grow and once the dairy industry caught on, the war was imminent.

To stave off action in its export markets, the dairy industry lobbied heavily for legislative controls on domestic margarine producers. The first interventions came when New York and Maryland enacted labeling laws in 1877. Within the next few years, several more states acted. The laws required that “oleomargarine sold at wholesale or retail . . . be marked, stamped, and

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<sup>14</sup> Kellogg, John Harvey. *Plain Facts for Old and Young Embracing the Natural History and Hygiene of Organic Life*. University of Virginia Library, 1995. Pg. 397.

<sup>15</sup> “Improvement in Compounds for Culinary Use”. *Google Patents*, Google, <https://patents.google.com/patent/US110626>.

branded as such, under penalty of \$100, and imprisonment for thirty days.”<sup>16</sup> A spokesman for the margarine producers responded to the implementation of these labeling laws saying, “Of course, [the labeling laws] had for a time its effect upon the sale of the product; but as oleomargarine is a pure and wholesome article of food, possessing all the qualities of good dairy butter, the people have overlooked the name and have decided to eat it.”

Enforcement of the label laws was vague, so the dairy industry lobbied for state inspectors, who, as it happened, would be from the dairy associations. Many states already had dairy associations ready to be pressed into the Butter War, and in 1882 a national association was formed to destroy by stealth the margarine market: The National Association for the Prevention of Adulteration of Butter.<sup>17</sup> In 1886, passionate lobbying from the dairy industry led to the federal Margarine Act, which slapped a restrictive tax on margarine and demanded that margarine manufacturers pay prohibitive licensing fees. Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Ohio went a step further and banned margarine outright.

Margarine, its foes proclaimed, threatened the family farm, the American way of life, and the moral order. Impassioned speeches were made in defense of “sweet and wholesome” butter. Governor Lucius Hubbard of Minnesota lamented the fact that “the ingenuity of depraved human genius has culminated in the production of oleomargarine and its kindred abominations.” Senator Joseph Quarles of Wisconsin (the Dairy State) thundered that butter should come from the dairy, not the slaughterhouse. “I want butter that has the natural aroma of life and health. I decline to accept as a substitute caul fat, matured under the chill of death, blended with vegetable oils and flavored by chemical tricks.”

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<sup>16</sup> Bergoffen, Celia, "Margarine Wars," *Audacity*, 1995. Pg. 52-61.

<sup>17</sup> Rupp, R. "The Butter Wars: When Margarine Was Pink". *The Plate: National Geographic*. August 13, 2014.



The dairy industry association newspapers published lurid tales of margarine production designed to incite and horrify the public. Margarine was described as “the slag of the butcher shop . . . a compound of diseased hogs and dead dogs.” Reports claimed margarine produced insanity and even “contained the germs of cancer.”

Not only was the dairy industry concerned with the contents, true or rumored, but the color was a point of conflict as well. Concerned that naïve, wholesome Americans would be lured to think that artificially yellow colored margarine was butter, 32 states banded together to impose color constraints on margarine beginning in 1902. Vermont, New Hampshire, and South Dakota all passed laws demanding that margarine must be dyed an off-putting pink; other states proposed it should be colored red, brown, or black. The “pink laws” were overturned by the Supreme Court, (claiming it’s illegal to enforce the adulteration of food) but the ban on yellow margarine remained.



From 2009 to 2012 the National Archives presented an exhibition entitled, “What’s Cooking, Uncle Sam?” which included the story of felons convicted of violating sections of the Oleomargarine Act and sent to the Federal Penitentiary in Leavenworth, Kansas. Some of the men tried to pass the margarine off as butter using illegal yellow dyes; others tried to evade the tax by reusing expired tax stamps. Featured amongst the prisoners were brothers Joseph and Toney Wirth (1911), John L. McMonigle (1913) and Charles Wille (1915). All men were convicted on charges of “illegal oleomargarine commerce” and “crimes against butter.”



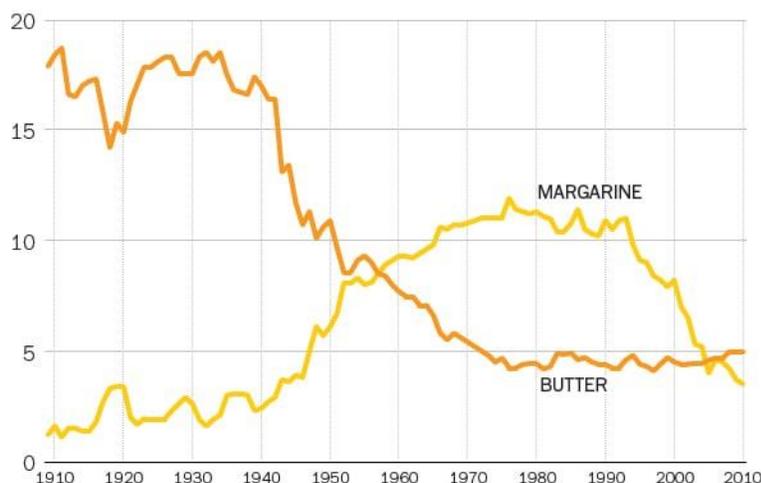
In 1911, the average American ate almost 19 pounds of butter per year, the most ever, according to the USDA. Meanwhile, margarine consumption barely broke a single pound per person per year.<sup>18</sup> Everything changed for margarine with the onset of economic instability caused by the Depression, and World War I. Consumers sought out the cheapest substitutes, and the moral issues surrounding margarine seemed to disappear for the next eight decades. By 1950 margarine was the “the talk of the country” and President Truman put an end to the oppression of margarine, in part because the National Association of Margarine Manufacturers had begun to

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<sup>18</sup> Ferdman, Roberto A. “The Generational Battle of Butter vs. Margarine.” *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 17 June 2014, [www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2014/06/17/the-generational-battle-of-butter-vs-margarine/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2014/06/17/the-generational-battle-of-butter-vs-margarine/).

## 101 years of butter and margarine

Per-capita consumption of butter and margarine in pounds per year, 1909 - 2010



SOURCE: USDA  
GRAPHIC: The Washington Post. Published June 17, 2014

build enough power to compete with the dairy associations. By 1957, sales of margarine exceeded those of butter.<sup>19</sup>

In 1959, former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt was seen on a television commercial by Ogilvy & Mather promoting margarine, enthusiastically pitching, “Years

ago, most people never dreamed of eating margarine, but times have changed. Nowadays you can get a margarine like new Good Luck, which really tastes delicious. That’s what I’ve spread on my toast. Good Luck, I thoroughly enjoy it.” Soon after, the deep voice of an advertiser comes in over the video and states, “The margarine Mrs. Roosevelt has just recommended is new Good Luck, the light margarine. Good Luck is light in flavor, light on your tongue and leaves no oily aftertaste.”<sup>20</sup>

Margarine enjoyed popularity for decades before research emerged in the 1990s about the harms of trans fats. Many manufacturers have since reformulated their spreads sold in tubs to remove trans fats, but the bad health associations have persisted. Per capita consumption of butter surpassed margarine in 2005 and has inched up since, according to data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The moral argument against margarine that persisted throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and into the 20<sup>th</sup>, transformed from a battle against the destruction of the

<sup>19</sup> United States Department of Agriculture

<sup>20</sup> “Eleanor Roosevelt’s Margarine Commercial (1959).” *Leftovers*, [www.leftovershistory.com/eleanor-roosevelt-margarine-commercial](http://www.leftovershistory.com/eleanor-roosevelt-margarine-commercial).

American way of life into an argument for the moral obligation to consider factors beyond the spreads' constitution.<sup>21</sup> Butter and margarine may not be the stars of breakfast but they are vitally important to the creation of almost every baked good, pancake or waffle, and their iconic pats grace the top of every diner short stack and piece of toast. The fight over cream or vegetable oil is no longer being used as a plea to save U.S. dairy farms, but as a multifaceted discussion on the noble pursuit of creating foods that supports all aspects of American livelihood.

### **Whole30 is a Religion**

Dietary restrictions accompany most of the world's leading organized religions. Jews keep kosher, Jains follow vegetarianism, Mormons refrain from caffeine. But what do you call it when dietary restrictions form the **basis** of a shared community? With "sacred" books, strict lists of "compliant" and "non-compliant" foods, and active online community forums, modern diet movements closely mirror religious communities in more ways than one.

Whole30 diet creators Melissa and Dallas Hartwig promote their program with the tagline, "Let us change your life." Paleo and Whole30 bloggers, like @ThePaleoMama, offer endorsements of the diet plans' transformative powers. "I want to encourage those who are Christian that eating Paleo can complement a Christian lifestyle. Paleo changed my life. Christ has changed my life." The zeal surrounding contemporary diets like Paleo and Whole30 blurs the line between a secular community and a religion. When we stop to analyze the language ascribed in our conversations about these diets, it's apparent that we use a highly moral-driven vocabulary. Words like guilt, sinful, decadence, and "cheat" days are used to designate foods as "good" or "bad" for you, physically and spiritually. "The enthusiasm some people have for the

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<sup>21</sup> MacMillan, Amanda. "Better: Butter-substitute sprays". *Health Magazine*. April 2, 2014.

way they eat can sometimes seem a lot like religious fervor, complete with heartfelt conversion stories and earnest attempts at proselytizing,” said *Science of Us* senior editor Melissa Dahl.

So, what's off-limits for congregants of Whole30? Sugars, grains, dairy, alcohol, anything processed, and—the tricky part—anything that resembles those foods. Online forums bemoan that breakfast tends to be the toughest meal on the program. Yogurt, cereal, milk, bagels, peanut butter, croissants, toast, and oatmeal, as well as alternative recipes like Paleo pancakes and gluten-free oats, are just some of the morning-time staples that are off the table during the 30-day restrictive diet.<sup>22</sup> The Whole30-approved breakfast recipes found online provide insight into the pseudoscientific cultural obsession over food avoidance within these diets. Asparagus stalks replace English muffins in a variation of Eggs Benedict (hollandaise not included). “Porridge” made with ground nuts. Sweet potato “crust” beneath a cheese-less egg quiche. So many versions of the same sad “breakfast salad.” While some recipes do provide nutrient-dense, unprocessed options, others seem to be just as unhealthy as eating a bowl of cereal, if not worse.

The arbitrary restrictions set by Whole30 for foods that are either good or bad can be more appropriately categorized as a purity boundary line. The physical food plays no significance in the larger social context of eating. Followers of these restrictive fad diets wear their “accomplishments” like a badge of honor, chastising those who breaks the rules and looking down up people who don’t do the diet in the first place. “Nowadays, people don’t want to assert moral superiority over other people, so instead they assert physical superiority. But I think also that’s a proxy for asserting their moral superiority,” Alan Levinovitz, author of *The*

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<sup>22</sup> “The Official Whole30 Program Rules.” *The Whole30 Program*, whole30.com/.

*Gluten Lie*, told Religion Dispatches. “Saying that I’m living a healthier life is the only courteous way left of saying I’m living a better life.”<sup>23</sup>

What each of these cultural moments in American breakfast history show us is that efforts to demonize certain foods are really about being able to divide up the world into more easily understood categories—which things are morally pure, and which things are morally impure. The American crusade against masturbation, margarine and now, pretty much anything with dairy, sugar, or grains, is a symbolic system that divides between the righteous and unrighteous, the in-group and the outsiders. The foods and trends that have been born from these systems of separation have influenced a uniquely American way of thinking about breakfast, identity, and morality.

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<sup>23</sup> Schulson, Michael. “Confront Death by Avoiding Fritos: The Gluten Lie, Fad Diets, & Foodie Faith.” *Religion Dispatches*, 30 Apr. 2015, [religiondispatches.org/confront-death-by-avoiding-fritos-the-gluten-lie-fad-diets-foodie-faith/](http://religiondispatches.org/confront-death-by-avoiding-fritos-the-gluten-lie-fad-diets-foodie-faith/).

## CHAPTER 2: WAR

War has cocooned the American experience. Our country emerged from a revolutionary birth and has been actively at war during 225 of its 242 years as a country.<sup>24</sup> American identity has historically been connected to our foundation on the principles of freedom and independence, yet some battles and wars have been fought amongst our own, dividing the country and creating new definitions of what it means to be American. The effects of war penetrate all aspects of American life, from economics to agriculture, but that is not to say it is done equally. American identity varies vastly depending on social class, the color of one's skin, and the opportunities afforded during one's lifetime. War by no means touches all Americans in the same way, but it does have a history of uniting communities through voluntary spirit and collective action. The production and consumption of food during wartime is no different. American ingenuity can be seen in the creations of recipes using nonstandard ingredients and the dedication of women on the front who toiled amidst gunfire to provide America's front line with fresh donuts. Breakfasts like bran muffins and molasses sweetened rye toast illustrate the physical impact of wartime rationing on American food consumption, while the history of the Salvation Army donut girls shows the power of patriotic volunteerism present within American culture during this time. Both on the front and at home, war encompasses the influence of patriotism, ingenuity and sacrifice on the way Americans eat breakfast and how those meals reflect the culture of an entire nation.

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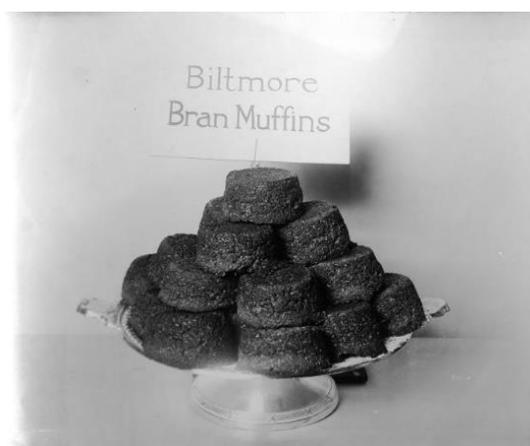
<sup>24</sup> "Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research." *HIIC*, 2018, [hiik.de/](http://hiik.de/). This number was calculated by counting any year in U.S history, beginning in 1775, that had at least one day of active war. This is not a calculation of the total days of war that the U.S has been involved in. It is important to note that many of these wars being counted were fought on U.S. soil against Native American tribes in efforts to remove their indigenous lands from them. Some of these wars, like the Apache Wars within the Texas-Indian Wars lasted for 49 years and contribute to the high final number.

## Muffins: Flour and Molasses

Meatless Mondays. Local is best. Eat less wheat. These sound like food fads plucked from millennial blog headlines but are in fact from decades past. Each was a campaign from the U.S. Food Administration during World War I, and the food propaganda it represented was as crucial to the war effort as Uncle Sam's "I want YOU for the U.S. Army." As young men fought in the trenches of Europe, housewives across America were called upon to do their duty by minding the pantry and keeping down food waste. Unsung and nearly forgotten, the food calls to action from World War I paint a vivid picture of conservation and volunteerism, early nutritional science, and the birth of advertising.

After the United States joined the Allies in World War I in April 1917, tightened food regulations altered the pantries, recipes, and diets of people on the home front. To help manage wartime supply, distribution, and transportation of food, the government created the U.S. Food Administration, helmed by future president Herbert Hoover.<sup>25</sup> Part of the department's role was to invent dishes—and reinvent favorite ones—to help Americans integrate alternative ingredients into their meals.

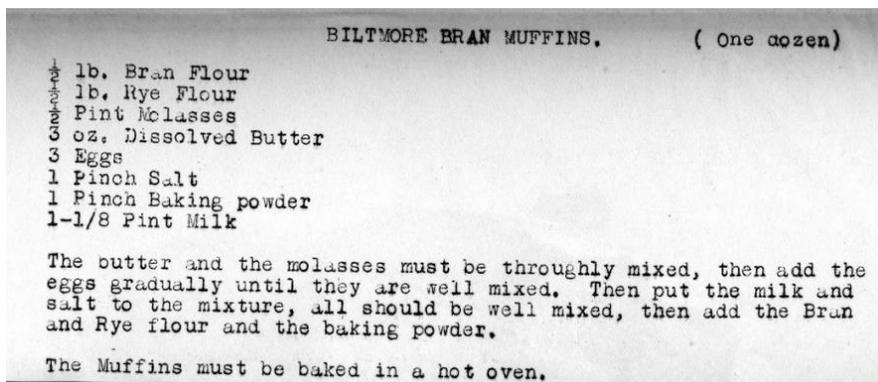
The beloved muffin, a quick and easy breakfast staple, was first up to get a wartime makeover. Traditional ingredients of wheat, milk, sugar, and butter were limited, forcing home cooks to find creative alternatives for their favorite meals. The National Archives provided an insight into the



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<sup>25</sup> "Records of the United States Food Administration | Series List." *National Archives and Records Administration*, National Archives and Records Administration, [www.archives.gov/fort-worth/finding-aids/rg004-food-administration.html](http://www.archives.gov/fort-worth/finding-aids/rg004-food-administration.html).

early recipe for these dense, hockey pucks of bran. On the one hand, bread was symbolically important: It conjured up ideas of comfort that were especially welcome during a time of fear and turmoil. The act of sharing a loaf — literally breaking bread together — carried psychological weight on both sides of the ocean. “If you had bread, you were OK,” says Joanne



Lamb Hayes, author of the book *Grandma's Wartime Kitchen*.<sup>26</sup> While Allied forces called on the U.S. to donate some of its wheat crops to feed troops

and civilians overseas, the federal Food Administration encouraged families at home to substitute ground oats, cornmeal, rice, barley, potato, buckwheat, rye and bran in place of wheat flour.

In Oregon, for instance, local loaves called “war bread” contained 40 percent wheat substitutes, such as corn, barley, or rice flour; another type, known as “victory bread,” contained 25 percent substitutes. Those who munched on war bread, readers of the Oregon Evening Herald were told, were “15 percent more patriotic than the one who eats victory bread.” The rhetoric of patriotism used in news commentary and poster campaigns implored all Americans to produce their own food and prevent waste, with the consequence that those who failed would essentially be traitors to their country and helping the enemy by taking food from soldiers abroad. One wheatless meal per family per day, the *Herald* estimated, “would mean a saving of 90,000,000

<sup>26</sup> Hayes, Joanne Lamb. *Grandmas Wartime Kitchen: World War II and the Way We Cooked*. St. Martins Press, 2000, Pg. 34-35.

bushels of wheat, which totals 5,400,000,000 lbs.”<sup>27</sup> American home bakers were also encouraged to mash up potatoes in their bread, because, as Joanne Hayes explains, “people could grow some sort of potato in their victory garden.” Whereas “with wheat, you really needed a farm.” Some newspapers, like the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, even ran daily potato recipes, such as one for mashed potato biscuits.<sup>28</sup>

“Voluntary rationing” promoted by the U.S. Food Administration through broad propaganda campaigns ultimately reduced national consumption of wheat and meat by 15% during World War I.<sup>29</sup> Sugar also took a hit during the wartime restrictions and imported cane sugar was replaced by domestic honey, maple syrup, and in the case of the Biltmore bran muffin recipe, molasses. The increased production and import of molasses was not only being used as a



replacement for sugar in breakfast baked goods but was fueling the war effort by way of industrial ethanol produced from fermented molasses. On January 15, 1919, a crowded section of Boston was rocked by a massive tidal wave—not of water, but of molasses. The bizarre deluge came after a molasses holding tank

burst and sent 2.3 million gallons of the dark-brown syrup swirling through the streets of

<sup>27</sup> “U.S. Must Cut Use of Wheat by One-Half.” *The Oregon Evening Herald*. Klamath Falls, Oregon. May 27, 1918.

<sup>28</sup> Hayes, Joanne Lamb. *Grandmas Wartime Kitchen: World War II and the Way We Cooked*. St. Martins Press, 2000, Pg. 34-35.

<sup>29</sup> “U.S. Food Administrator”. Biographical Sketch of Herbert Hoover, 1874-1964. *Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum, National Archives and Records Administration*. June 20, 2001.

Boston's North End. The 15-foot surge leveled buildings, crushed horses, and vehicles and destroyed part of a nearby elevated train platform. Twenty-one people were killed and more than 150 were injured in the disaster. So why was there so much molasses being used in Boston in the first place? The sugary sweet culprit of the flood was the property of United States Industrial Alcohol, which took regular shipments of molasses from the Caribbean and used them to produce alcohol for liquor and munitions manufacturing. The company had built the tank in 1915 when World War I had increased demand for industrial ethanol, but the construction process had been rushed and haphazard, leaving the tanks to groan and swell for four years before ultimately exploding. More than 300 workers had converged on the scene in the days after the disaster to remove wreckage and debris, and firefighters later used brooms, saws and saltwater pumps to strip away the last of the syrupy residue. Even then, the sweet scent of molasses still hung over the North End for several weeks, and the waters of Boston Harbor remained stained brown until the summer.<sup>30</sup>

## Donuts

In September 1917, a group of women, all members of the evangelical Christian organization, The Salvation Army, traveled to the camp of the 1st Ammunition Train, 1st Division, mere miles from the trenches of eastern France. Initially, they'd provided the same wholesome activities they'd provided stateside: religious services, music played on a Victrola and snacks



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<sup>30</sup> "12 Killed When Tank of Molasses Explodes". *The New York Times*. January 15, 1919.

like hot cocoa and fudge. Then two of the women hit on a novel idea: what if they made donuts to remind the men of home? And so, Margaret Sheldon and Helen Purviance (pictured above) collected excess rations for the dough and shell casings and wine bottles for makeshift rolling pins. They filled a soldier's helmet with lard to fry the braided crullers and when the soldiers later asked, "Can't you make a donut with a hole in it?" Helen had an elderly French blacksmith improvise a donut cutter by fastening the top of a condensed milk can and camphor-ice tube to a wooden block.<sup>31</sup> Later, all sorts of other inventions were employed, such as the lid from a baking powder can or a lamp chimney to cut the donut, with the top of a coffee percolator to make the hole.

The treats were an immediate hit and cemented the Armed Forces' relationship with donuts, and the girls that served them.<sup>32</sup> According to one report from the *New York Times*, Helen Purviance cooked no fewer than 1,000,000 donuts for the United States fighting forces in France during the World War, all in less than ideal situations. The women



sometimes even fried up the donuts in soldier's helmets and were occasionally forced to wear gas masks because they were so close to the frontlines. Helen Purviance recalled, "I was literally on my knees when those first donuts were fried, seven at a time, in a small frypan. There was

<sup>31</sup> Edge, John T. *Donuts: an American Passion*. G.P. Putnams Sons, 2006, Pg. 75-81.

<sup>32</sup> Boissoneault, Lorraine. "The Women Who Fried Donuts and Dodged Bombs on the Front Lines of WWI." *Smithsonian.com*, Smithsonian Institution, 12 Apr. 2017, [www.smithsonianmag.com/history/donut-girls-wwi-helped-fill-soldiers-bellies-and-get-women-vote-180962864/#CfwqCVtu2bdLQcr4.99](http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/donut-girls-wwi-helped-fill-soldiers-bellies-and-get-women-vote-180962864/#CfwqCVtu2bdLQcr4.99).

also a prayer in my heart that somehow this home touch would do more for those who ate the donuts than satisfy physical hunger.”<sup>33</sup>

When the soldiers returned home to the States, the love of donuts stuck. During the Depression, donuts were the everyman’s food. When waves of immigrants arrived at Ellis Island, they were greeted by Salvation Army with a blanket and a donut.<sup>34</sup> It was, quite literally, their first taste of America. The Salvation Army once again capitalized on the



popularity of donuts and their history. The first National Donut Day was celebrated in 1938 in Chicago as a fundraiser, “to help particularly WWI veterans and their families their families who were suffering as a result of the Great Depression,” explained Colonel Busroe.<sup>35</sup><sup>36</sup> Now, in 2018, National Donut Day is celebrated through promotional offers from local and national donut retailers, like Dunkin Donuts and Krispy Kreme. The day no longer exclusively celebrates the contribution of the Salvation Army’s “Donut Lassies”, but it does still honor the donut’s beloved position within American cultural history.

<sup>33</sup> “Doing the Most Good® The Salvation Army Fort Wayne.” *The Salvation Army Fort Wayne*, [corps.salvationarmyindiana.org/fortwayne/about-us/history-2/history-of-the-donut-girls/](http://corps.salvationarmyindiana.org/fortwayne/about-us/history-2/history-of-the-donut-girls/).

<sup>34</sup> “Feed Me a Story at Ellis Island.” *Feed Me a Story*, [www.feedmeastory.com/about/](http://www.feedmeastory.com/about/).

<sup>35</sup> Lt. Col. Ron Busroe is the national community relations and development secretary for The Salvation Army, serving as the public spokesperson for the organization to raise awareness of Salvation Army social service programs and volunteer opportunities throughout the United States.

<sup>36</sup> Salvation Army. “The Salvation Army Celebrates 100 Years of the ‘Donut Lassies.’” *PR Newswire: News Distribution, Targeting and Monitoring*, 2 June 2017, [www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/the-salvation-army-celebrates-100-years-of-the-donut-lassies-300467637.html](http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/the-salvation-army-celebrates-100-years-of-the-donut-lassies-300467637.html).

## IHOP, Denny's and the American Diner

Twenty-four-hour diners began to sprout up alongside wartime manufacturing plants beginning at the onset of the Second World War. Dubbed in a 1943 issue of *American Restaurant*, these “new war babies” were built to serve those who worked long hours over the daily three shifts. Diners and cafeterias of the time especially targeted the workers of the “graveyard shift,” which arose to keep America’s war machine well oiled, day and night.

<sup>37</sup>Grocery stores began to also operate on 24-hour schedules to accommodate the wives of the few men who manned the factories (swing shift wives), as well as the large numbers of women who were assuming factory work shifts themselves.

After the war ended, these factories continued to run as men returned home from the front, continuing to fuel the need for diners and cafeterias. As the economy returned to civilian production and the suburbs boomed, diners were an attractive small business opportunity. During this period, diners spread beyond their original Northeastern, urban and small-town markets to highway strips in the suburbs, even reaching the Midwest, with manufacturers such as Valentine.<sup>38</sup> In the 1950s, the American pancake and waffle eateries, of which many are still popular today, were born. 1953 introduced Denny’s and the Original Pancake House,<sup>39</sup> International House of Pancakes (IHOP) in 1958<sup>40</sup> and Bob Evans expanded into a chain, though a successful breakfast-only diner had already been in operation since 1940.<sup>41</sup> Post-war, middle-class consumerism allowed for breakfast-only diners to thrive in an otherwise competitive restaurant marketplace.

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<sup>37</sup> “On the Night Shift.” *Popular Mechanics*, November 1942, pg. 57-59.

<sup>38</sup> Lane, Megan. “Why the Diner Is the Ultimate Symbol of America.” *BBC News*, BBC, 29 Nov. 2011, [www.bbc.com/news/magazine-15792186](http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-15792186).

<sup>39</sup> “Our History.” *Denny's*, [www.dennys.com/company/about/](http://www.dennys.com/company/about/).

<sup>40</sup> “International House of Pancakes History.” *History - Welcome to IHOP*, [www.ihop.com/en/about-ihop/history](http://www.ihop.com/en/about-ihop/history).

<sup>41</sup> “Bob Evans | History & Legacy.” *Bob Evans About Us*, [www.bobevans.com/aboutus/our-company/history-and-legacy](http://www.bobevans.com/aboutus/our-company/history-and-legacy).

After the Interstate Highway System was implemented in the U.S. in the 1960s, diners saw a boom in business as mobile travelers would stop for a meal at all hours of the day.<sup>42</sup> Menus began to broaden from simple plates of eggs and toast to hearty meals that could pass for breakfast or dinner: ham and grits, chick-fried steak on top of biscuits smothered in gravy, stuffed omelets, and steak and eggs were featured, alongside regional dishes like Pennsylvania Dutch scrapple<sup>43</sup>, Midwestern Hoppel Poppel<sup>44</sup> and Southwestern breakfast burritos. These regionally influenced menu items are a reflection of the increased mobility that was facilitated by the nation highway systems used by a growing percentage of the American populace after the Second World War. Diners would attract a wide spectrum of the local populations as well as steady streams of travelers. The democratic diner counter presents an opportunity for neighbors of all types to share a meal in proximity. From the mid-twentieth century onwards, breakfast diners remained quintessentially American, reflecting the growing exchange of regional culture and the remnants of a country engaged in an industrial war effort.

### **The Complicated Diplomacy of French Toast**

The Oxford English Dictionary cites 1660 as the year "French toast" first made an appearance, in a book called *The Accomplisht Cook* VI. 162: "French Toasts: Cut French Bread, and toast it in pretty thick toasts on a clean gridiron, and serve them steeped in claret, sack, or any wine, with sugar and juyce of orange." This preparation from the 17<sup>th</sup> century leaves out the

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<sup>42</sup> Witzel, Michael Karl. "The American Diner". *MBI Publishing*, 2006. Pg. 76–78.

<sup>43</sup> Scrapple, also known by the Pennsylvania Dutch name Pannhaas or "pan rabbit", is traditionally a mush of pork scraps and trimmings combined with cornmeal and wheat flour, often buckwheat flour, and spices.

<sup>44</sup> In the Great Lakes tradition, Hoppel Poppel includes: diced boiled potatoes, diced or slice strips of cured salami, diced onions are often added as the ingredients crisp up in the skillet and then eggs are scrambled into the pan and topped with Cheddar cheese.

egg batter (crucial to today's version of French toast) and leaves us to question whether the origin of the 'French' moniker has more to do with the type of bread than with the dish's country of origin. *The Dictionary of American Food and Drink* contends that the first egg-based recipe in print didn't appear until 1870. Similar recipes appeared in U.S. cookbooks throughout the tail end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century under the names "French toast," "Egg toast," and "German toast."

German toast is found in its earliest variation in Fannie Farmer's 1918 *The Boston Cooking-School Cook Book* using the ingredients: 3 eggs, 2 tablespoons sugar, ½ teaspoon salt, 1 cup milk and 6 slices of stale bread.<sup>45</sup> French toast as we know it today was commonly called German toast in the United States until after World War I when the new French label was used to remove unsavory associations with Germans after the war. French toast had a second diplomatic name change in 2003 when the U.S House of Representatives cafeteria renamed French toast, "Freedom Toast" in protest over France's opposition to Gulf War II. Extending an olive branch to France, Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, D-Texas, requested the House cafeteria to go back to listing the original name on the menu.<sup>46</sup>

The changing of names from German toast to French toast and Freedom toast back to French toast represents the powerful influence war and diplomacy have on the way we view and talk about food. The insistence of wiping any trace of alliance with the Germans after World War I extended all the way to a simple breakfast bread dish. The change symbolized broader American attitudes towards respecting alliances and military integrity. The power of protest lies within the naming of French toast, whether it is used in opposition, as is the case with the House cafeteria's Freedom Toast, or in an attempt at peace, like Rep. Lee's reversal.

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<sup>45</sup> Farmer, Fannie Merritt. "Quick Breads: French Toast." *The Boston Cooking-School Cook Book*. 1918. Pg. 545.

<sup>46</sup> Koerner, Brendan. "Is French Toast Really French?" *Slate Magazine*, 16 Sept. 2003, [www.slate.com/articles/news\\_and\\_politics/explainer/2003/09/is\\_french\\_toast\\_really\\_french.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/explainer/2003/09/is_french_toast_really_french.html).

The physical impacts of war on the economy combined with the ideological influence it has on American society create a changing breakfast culture informed by scarcity, ingenuity, and patriotism. Government influence over the American diet is not limited during wartime to mandatory rationing or agricultural scarcity, but through propaganda campaigns as well. The rhetoric of one's patriotic duty implored Americans to grow their own food, find creative substitutions for recipes and cut down on household waste. Away from the home front, the Salvation Army solidified the donut's place in American history as young women worked behind the lines of fire to provide soldiers with a taste of home. Breakfast continues to be used as a tool of protest in U.S diplomacy matters, exemplified by the nominal history of French Toast and its brief foray into the world of foreign policy. Communal engagement in the war effort gave rise to the necessity of 24-hour eating establishments, and the advent of the national highway system solidified the popularity of America's diners.

## CHAPTER 3: RACE

Understanding the history of race relations in America is crucial to understanding the emergence of unique food cultures and traditions within the United States' diverse racial and ethnic demographics. We are a country founded on the systemic exploitation of black labor; one that has continued to use skewed perceptions of racial minorities within the country to propagate stereotypes and caricatures, all used for the marketing of products to white consumers. The United States government has proven, since its inception, that people of color and the problems faced by their communities are not a priority. The misrepresentation and further mistreatment of black Americans has shifted from physical enslavement to economic profit. This is exemplified by the continued exploitation of black mammy imagery as seen on Aunt Jemima breakfast products, Uncle Tom archetypes within historic Cream of Wheat advertisements, and the delayed reaction of government intervention prior to the success of the Black Panther Party's Free Breakfast Program.

Bringing together African American history with food theory can help us to better understand the intertwined effects of farming and harvesting, eating and being eaten, growing and giving, all present in the consumption and sharing of food. Race and food are both controversial subjects within the commercialized political spheres of modern American life. Food must be understood within circulations of power and race must be analyzed with an acute awareness as to what is politically at stake. The white privilege gained from these circulations of power settles into social institutions that cyclically benefit white people and provide discursive pathways to block

attempts to change them. A material-semiotic substance used in the “creation and maintenance of social relationships, food serves both to solidify group membership and to set groups apart.”<sup>47</sup>

Producing and maintaining racial identity depend, in part, on holding onto food habits and tastes, which are themselves imagined as cuisines belonging to racialized groups or nations.<sup>48</sup> Eating and cooking as acts are constitutive of racial identity and its politics. They are at once intimate and public, as well as empowering and complicit. These warring dichotomies include how nonwhite groups are exoticized or demonized and how food histories of marginalized people are ignored, appropriated or maligned by dominant groups. Within the culture of breakfast, perceptions of race change with each tier of production: how a product is grown, the techniques and strategies used to market the same product to different audiences, and finally, the differences in the people who are socially allowed to purchase and consume it.

### **Aunt Jemima and The Black Mammy Archetype**

Mammy (sometimes Mammie) is the most well-known and enduring racial caricature of African American women. The term refers to the Southern archetype for black female slaves who worked as nannies, housekeepers, and cooks in white plantation households. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, it originates as an alteration of the word mamma or mother. From slavery through the Jim Crow era, the mammy image served the political, social, and economic interests of mainstream white America. During slavery, the mammy caricature was posited as proof that blacks, specifically black women, were content, even happy, as slaves.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Slocum, Rachel. *Geographies of Race and Food: Fields, Bodies, Markets*. Routledge, 2016, Pg. 28.

<sup>48</sup> Weismantel, Mary. *The Children Cry for Bread: Hegemony and the Transformation of Consumption. The Social Economy of Consumption, 1989*, Pg. 105-124.

<sup>49</sup> Kowalski, Jennifer. *Stereotypes of History: Reconstructing Truth and the Black Mammy*. University of Albany, 2009. Pg. 4.

The wide grin, hearty laughter, and loyal servitude were offered as evidence of the supposed humanity of the institution of slavery.<sup>50</sup> While originating in the period of slavery, the mammy figure rose to prominence during the Reconstruction Era. In the Southern United States, the mammy played a role in historical revisionism efforts to reinterpret and legitimize their legacy of slavery and racial oppression.

In *Mammy: A Century of Race, Gender, and Southern Memory* (2008), Kimberly Wallace-Sanders argued that the mammy's stereotypical attributes point to the source of her inspiration: “a long-lasting and troubled marriage of racial and gender essentialism, mythology, and southern nostalgia.” The mammy was usually portrayed as an older woman, overweight, and dark-skinned. She was an idealized figure of a caregiver: amiable, loyal, maternal, non-threatening, obedient, and submissive. She was devoted to her owners, and her primary goal in life was to care for their needs. Her caregiving duties would always come first, leading to the mammy being portrayed as a neglectful parent. Melissa Harris-Perry describes the relationship between the mammy and other African Americans: “Mammy was not a protector or defender of black children or communities. She represented a maternal ideal, but not in caring for her own children. Her love, doting, advice, correction, and supervision were reserved exclusively for white women and children.”<sup>51</sup> Black women were subjected to controlling images



<sup>50</sup> Wallace-Sanders, Kimberly. *Mammy: A Century of Race, Gender, and Southern Memory*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008, Pg. 3,6.

<sup>51</sup> Harris-Perry, Melissa V. *Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes, and Black Women in America*. Yale University Press, 2011. Pg. 219-222.

like the mammy, which made it difficult for them to rise past oppressive structures in work, education or other socio-political institutions.<sup>52</sup>

In the early twentieth century, the mammy became immortalized as Aunt Jemima, the spokesperson for a line of ready-mixed breakfast products. The inspiration for Aunt Jemima was Billy Kersands' American-style minstrel song "Old Aunt Jemima," written in 1875. The "Aunt Jemima" character was prominent in minstrel shows in the late 19th century and was later adopted by commercial interests to represent the Aunt Jemima brand in the Reconstruction era South, becoming the symbol of forgiveness and redemption for former Confederates and slave owners.<sup>53</sup> In 1889 Chris L. Rutt, owner of the Pearl Milling Company, attended a minstrel show that featured Kersands' "Old Aunt Jemima" song along with a male vaudevillian performer dressed in blackface, an apron, and a red kerchief. Rutt appropriated this image for their newly created pancake mix, and Aunt Jemima Pancake Flour was born.<sup>54</sup>

Short-lived, the Pearl Milling Company could not be sustained under Rutt and Underwood's guidance, and so it was sold to R.T. Davis Milling Company who hired former slave Nancy Green in 1890 to be the spokesperson for Aunt Jemima. During the 1893 Columbia World's Fair, Green operated a pancake-cooking display as Aunt Jemima, using the mammy stereotype to play up her interactions with Fair guests and outfit her in the now famous, red head wrap and white apron. Along with her stereotyped appearance, the first Aunt Jemima slogan, "I's in town,

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<sup>52</sup> Collins, Patricia Hill. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment.* Routledge, 1991.

<sup>53</sup> Griffin, Johnnie. "Aunt Jemima: Another Image, Another Viewpoint". *Journal of Religious Thought*, 1998. Pg. 75–77.

<sup>54</sup> Manning, M. *Slave in a Box: The Strange Career of Aunt Jemima*. University of Virginia Press, 1998. Pg. 68.

honey!” was a pandering attempt to cloak racism in white Southern nostalgia. Upon Nancy Green’s death in 1923, no one played the Aunt Jemima role for over ten years, even after the Quaker Oat Company bought Davis Milling in 1926.

Just as the recipe has been modified to fit consumer tastes over the past 100 years (switching from Winter Wheat and Corn Flour to Bleached flour), so has the Aunt Jemima image. In the 1960s, the industry took a giant step forward with changes to the Aunt Jemima brand. For years, the



“happy mammy” symbol was used to market Aunt Jemima pancakes and syrup. The advertisement featured a plump Aunt Jemima wearing a bandanna, which continued to



symbolize slavery and discrimination for many African Americans well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Over time, the Quaker Oats Company changed the bandanna to a headband. In 1989, the headband was removed, and Aunt Jemima was given a more modern and professional look. The new Aunt Jemima is slimmer, with styled hair and pearl earrings. While Marilyn

Kern-Foxworth argues in her book *Aunt Jemima, Uncle Ben and Rastus: Blacks in Advertising, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, that the new Aunt Jemima is a “refreshing, politically correct image, resembling a black Betty Crocker,”<sup>55</sup> some opponents believe that the attempt to find balance within the Aunt Jemima image for true black representation was overshot, and we are left with a whitewashed and still stereotyped image of black femininity.

<sup>55</sup> Kern-Foxworth, Marilyn. “From Plantation Kitchen to American Icon: Aunt Jemima.” Public Relations Review. 1990. Pg.59.

The lack of a history concerning the role of black women in the United States before, during, and after the Civil War, continues the act of oppression well into the twenty-first century. The devaluation of the voices of black women, combined with fictional assumptions concerning their lives, render African American women on the margins of society, deemed less important and in effect less human. More accurate representations of black women are still ignored while fabricated stereotypes, like that of Aunt Jemima, have been carried on for centuries. The image of the Mammy has become part of American consciousness because the past has been manipulated to suit the needs of the privileged class.

### **Cream of Wheat and the Uncle Tom Stereotype**

Before the rise of cereal production, in the mid-1800s, the American breakfast was not all that different from other meals. Middle- and upper-class Americans ate eggs, pastries, and pancakes, but also oysters, boiled chickens, and beef steaks. However, lavish multiple-course breakfasts were a privilege of the wealthy.<sup>56</sup> Lower class whites and slaves (and subsequently freed blacks after the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863) relied on inexpensive, easy to prepare, filling and nutritious meals that would sustain them through a day of labor.

American farming techniques increased farina production, alongside corn, oat, and wheat, and by the late 1800s, several hot cereal options started popping up in America. This newly popular crop gave people more choices when it came to creating a hearty breakfast that would sustain them throughout a day of agricultural labor and physical work. Cream of Wheat was among these hot cereals available for purchase. By 1897, Cream of Wheat was in high demand

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<sup>56</sup> Kimball, Chris. "History of Breakfast" *CBS News*, CBS Interactive, 28 Jan. 2008, [www.cbsnews.com/news/history-of-breakfast-in-america/](http://www.cbsnews.com/news/history-of-breakfast-in-america/).

throughout the Northeast, solving the problem of an affordable, filling breakfast for all classes of people.<sup>57</sup>

The Cream of Wheat Company was started in 1893 near Grand Forks, North Dakota by wheat millers. The product was first debuted at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, Illinois; the same year “Aunt Jemima” would make her first live public appearance at the Fair. The original boxes of Cream of Wheat were handmade and lettered, and wheat miller Emery Mapes designed the packages for the “breakfast porridge” himself, emblazoning the boxes with an image of a jovial African-American chef

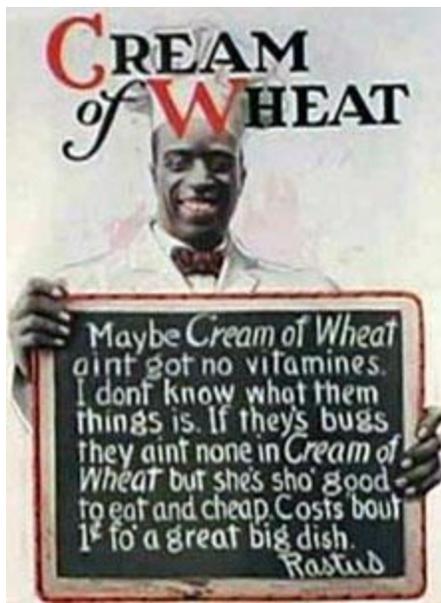


he called “Rastus”, named after author Joel Chandler Harris’ Uncle Remus and Brer Rabbit stories of the 1880s. The image was offensive; like Aunt Jemima, this figure reinforced white stereotypes of happy black servants. But the product was an enormous success, despite the desperate economic conditions of the country in 1893.

Cream of Wheat’s Rastus character exemplifies the Uncle Tom archetype. This caricature portrays black men as faithful, happily submissive servants. The Tom caricature, like the Mammy caricature, was born in antebellum America in defense of slavery. How could slavery be

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<sup>57</sup> “Cream of Wheat: A Look Back.” *Cream of Wheat*, B&G Foods, Inc., 2015, [www.creamofwheat.com/about/](http://www.creamofwheat.com/about/).



wrong, argued its proponents, if black servants, males (Toms) and females (Mammies), were contented and loyal? The Tom is presented as a smiling, wide-eyed, dark-skinned server: fieldworker, cook, butler, porter, or waiter. Similarly, Rastus is portrayed as a dependable worker, eager to serve, docile and non-threatening to whites.

Unlike the recognized biographies behind the various depictions of Aunt Jemima, Rastmus' inspiration, Chef

Frank L. White was forgotten by history. He was buried in

1938 beneath an unmarked gravestone and sat unacknowledged until June 2007 when a family researcher discovered his story and created a campaign to erect a proper monument to his contribution. His former gravestone has been replaced by a marble headstone complete with an etching of his famous photo, taken straight from the Cream of Wheat box.



The Uncle Tom archetype is just one half of a dichotomy that leaves only two images of black men in America: servant or savage. The lack of proper representation for men of color is perpetuated by a history of systematic economic disadvantage and a prevailing anti-black bias in society. The continued use of the Rastus image on Cream of Wheat products reflects a reluctance to provide more balanced perspectives of African-American men, which only serves to worsen cultural divisions among all people.

## The Black Panther Party's Free Breakfast for Children Program

The Black Panther Party's breakfast offering came at a pivotal time for America: 1968 was a turning point in the Civil Rights Movement. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy were both assassinated, and there was a changing of tides within the Black Panther Party (BPP) ideology, from nonviolent protest for equality to summer of riots in black communities all over the country.<sup>58</sup> Leaders within the black community could no longer turn the other cheek on childhood poverty and hunger in black neighborhoods. Born in their Oakland, California headquarters in 1968, the Black Panther Party Free Breakfast for Children program was one of the first organized free school breakfast food programs in the United States. The program was inspired by community service campaigns, or "survival programs," led by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale during the founding of the Black Panther Party.

Many of the children who were helped through this program only received one hot meal a day; the one served to them by the Black Panthers.<sup>59</sup> "We know that youngsters can't learn at school if they are hungry, they rebel against learning and say the hell with school," said Randolph Albury, who was first in charge of the breakfast program.<sup>60</sup> The two founders used contemporary research about the essential role of breakfast for optimal schooling to organize the program in the hopes of revitalizing the youngest members of the black community.

The research the founders used was the Child Nutrition Act of 1966. In its Declaration of Purpose in Section 2 of the Act, Congress stated:

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<sup>58</sup> Collier, Andrea. "The Black Panthers: Revolutionaries, Free Breakfast Pioneers." *The Plate*, 4 Nov. 2015, [theplate.nationalgeographic.com/2015/11/04/the-black-panthers-revolutionaries-free-breakfast-pioneers/](http://theplate.nationalgeographic.com/2015/11/04/the-black-panthers-revolutionaries-free-breakfast-pioneers/).

<sup>59</sup> "Community Survival Programs." *PBS*, Public Broadcasting Service, 2002, [www.pbs.org/hueypnewton/actions/actions\\_survival.html](http://www.pbs.org/hueypnewton/actions/actions_survival.html).

<sup>60</sup> Bloom, Joshua. "Black against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party." University of California Press, 2013. Pg. 315.

In recognition of the demonstrated relationship between food and good nutrition and the capacity of children to develop and learn, based on the years of cumulative successful experience under the National School Lunch Program with its significant contributions in the field of applied nutrition research, it is hereby declared to be the policy of Congress that these efforts shall be extended, expanded, and strengthened under the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture as a measure to safeguard the health and well-being of the Nation's children, and to encourage the domestic consumption of agricultural and other foods, by assisting States, through grants-in-aid and other means, to meet more effectively the nutritional needs of our children.<sup>61</sup>

By the end of 1969, the Black Panthers were serving full free breakfasts (including milk, bacon, eggs, grits, cereal, oranges, toast and hot chocolate) to 20,000 school aged children in 19 cities around the country.<sup>62</sup> To provide these services and meals, the BPP sent out letters to various grocers and producers in the Oakland area asking for food donations to help fund the program. Because of the initial program's success, the Black Panthers required all nationwide



chapters to include a free breakfast location in their given community, allotting seating for at least 50 children and for ten individuals to be working the site.<sup>63</sup> By 1969 the Black Panther

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<sup>61</sup> United States, Congress, "Compilation of the National School Lunch Act and the Child Nutrition Act of 1966: with Related Provisions of Law and Authorities for Commodities Distribution." *Compilation of the National School Lunch Act and the Child Nutrition Act of 1966: with Related Provisions of Law and Authorities for Commodities Distribution*, U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1966.

<sup>62</sup> LeBlanc-Ernest, Angela. *Black Panther Community Programs*, Black Panther Party Research Project, [web.stanford.edu/group/blackpanthers/programs.shtml](http://web.stanford.edu/group/blackpanthers/programs.shtml).

<sup>63</sup> Katsiaficas, George. "Liberation, Imagination and the Black Panther Party: A New Look at Their Legacy." Routledge, 2001. Pg. 87-89.

Party was feeding more children free meals in underserved communities than any program instituted by the U.S. government. The Nixon Administration scrambled to create national pilot programs of a similar nature as the BPP Free Breakfast Program, but the federal School Breakfast Program was not permanently authorized by the government until 1975.

Campaigns by the FBI and the U.S. government to brand the Black Panther Party as a “black nationalist hate group” were prevalent throughout the 1960s and into the early 1970s.



Combatting these ideas, former Black Panther member Melvin Dickson claimed in a 2015 PBS documentary *The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution* that the FBI did not like their efforts (i.e. widespread community programs) because it revealed how the government did not appropriately tackle the issues of poverty in various communities.

The party’s radical antihunger initiatives represented a humanitarian side to the organization, something that continues goes against the dominant white memory of the political organization and a fact that many people are still unaware of. The Black Panther concept of "revolutionary inter-communalism" involved the strategy of building community service programs like Free Breakfast for Children to develop positive institutions within the community to help individuals meet their needs. The efforts and success of this program illuminated the severe lack of support the United States government was providing for communities of color and solidified the communal presence the Black Panther Party programs imparted on the country.

Modern narratives of black identity are built upon the history of exploitation and misrepresentation of African Americans in the United States. The marketing of breakfast foods like Aunt Jemima pancake mix and Cream of Wheat, continues to use stereotyped misrepresentations of people of color in their product imagery to serve the political, social, and economic interests of mainstream white America. Contrary to the demonizing narrative of the Black Panther Party as a hate-group perpetuated by the U.S government, the success of their Free Breakfast for Children program exemplified the concern and engagement that the BPP had within communities of color across the nation. The Free Breakfast program and its omission from the white narrative of the Black Panther Party, reflect an all too common occurrence in U.S history in which communities of color are not supported in the same way their white counterpart communities are.

## CHAPTER 4: IMMIGRATION

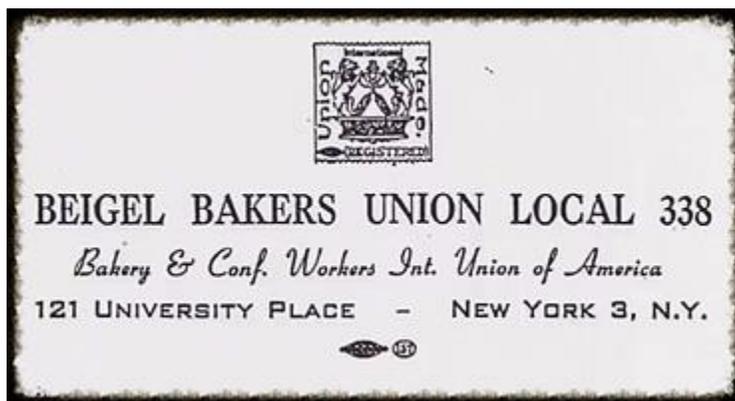
Immigrants cope with the dislocation and disorientation they experience in their new environment by re-creating a sense of place in their domestic sphere around food. As a physical link that connects individuals to their heritage culture and local communities, food provides a socially oriented system of connections. It remains one of the most resilient tools that immigrants claim as central to identity formation and maintenance. Food can therefore be a useful tool to examine the degree to which immigrants are maintaining their cultural identity and connectedness with their community. The forced oscillation between belonging and exclusion placed on immigrants by their established American counterparts, creates a food culture that provides a transformative site of constant iterative foodways that have the power to support the renegotiation of one's identity.

The U.S. breakfast landscape follows a similar identity narrative in which communities of immigrants and the foods they create either assimilate so seamlessly into the American breakfast canon that they become unrecognizably homogenized, as is the case with bagels and 20<sup>th</sup> century Jewish immigrants, or assimilation is bypassed in favor of a declaration of pride, combining global flavors in a way that it establishes a profound impact on a perpetually changed American cuisine. Southeast Asian immigration to America throughout the 1970s and 1980s created a new generation of millennial chefs, eaters and writers that have discarded the dated "fusion" label to declare that this is the way our generation eats, creates and identifies with one another on a global scale.

## BAGELS

The capital of Jewish America at the turn of the century was New York's Lower East Side. This densely packed district of tenements, factories, and docklands spilled out from the waves of Eastern European immigrants arriving through Ellis Island. The earliest Eastern European Jews to settle in New York City had quickly established synagogues, mutual-aid societies, libraries, and stores. Every major institution, from the bank to the grocery store was Jewish-owned or Jewish-run. For a new Jewish immigrant in a strange country, this immersion in a familiar world, around people who shared a common language, faith, and background, could be profoundly reassuring.

Within this network of Jewish businesses arose the establishment of small bagel bakeries throughout Manhattan's Lower East Side, in which workers labored under difficult conditions for minimal wages. To represent these workers, The International Beigel Bakers Union was established.<sup>64</sup> Local 338 was established by 300 bagel craftsmen who joined together in Manhattan, establishing standards for bagel production by hand and mandating that new spots in the union be handed to sons of existing local members. All of Local 338's members were Jewish, and meetings were conducted in Yiddish. The bagels were delivered to the door fronts of local clients or were sold on street corners stacked on long sticks.



<sup>64</sup> Klagsburn, Francine. "Chewing Over The Bagel's Story", *The Jewish Week*, July 8, 2009. Accessed July 15, 2009.

After the transcontinental railroad started delivering barrels of salted salmon from the Pacific coast to other parts of the country, lox<sup>65</sup> gained popularity in these prominent Jewish communities where Eastern European immigrants had brought with them to this country a love of cured and smoked fish.<sup>66</sup> Gil Marks, author of *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Food*, noted that during the 1930's, many Jews who continued to eat kosher refrained from eating certain breakfast dishes popular among New York Gentiles, such as eggs benedict, which contained ham, so instead they simply substituted lox slices for the ham. Not only was it less expensive, but, like all fish, it was pareve<sup>67</sup>, meaning that, unlike meat, it could be eaten with dairy. Similarly, cream cheese schmear was used in place of the hollandaise, and a bagel for the English muffin.<sup>68</sup> Thus a Jewish-American classic was born, out of the desire amongst Jewish immigrants to assimilate while retaining their religious identity.

The original bagel recipe was held in secret by the Bagel Bakers Local 338 in New York City, who controlled the production and distribution of bagels from 1907 until the development of the machine-made bagel in the 1960s.<sup>69</sup> The first mechanized bagel-making apparatus was invented by California teacher turned inventor Daniel Thompson and could produce 300 dozen bagels in the same time that two men could produce 125 dozen. In an interview with the *New York Times*, author of *Jewish Food: The World Table*, Matthew Goodman said, "There was a kind of schism in bagel-making history: pre-Daniel Thompson and post-Daniel Thompson. What happened with the advent of the automated bagel-making machine was that bagel makers were

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<sup>65</sup> Lox takes its name from laks, the Yiddish word for salmon

<sup>66</sup> Bowen, Dana. "Lox Lessons." *SAVEUR*, 6 May 2008, [www.saveur.com/article/Kitchen/Lox-Lessons](http://www.saveur.com/article/Kitchen/Lox-Lessons).

<sup>67</sup> In kashrut, the dietary laws of Judaism, pareve (from Yiddish פֿאַרעווי for "neutral") is a classification of edible substances that contain neither dairy nor meat ingredients. Food in this category includes all items that grow from the ground, fish, eggs, and salt. Kashrut forbids consuming mixtures of milk and meat. Pareve foods, being neutral, can be consumed with either dairy or meat.

<sup>68</sup> Marks, Gil. *Encyclopedia of Jewish Food*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010. Pg. 166.

<sup>69</sup> Levine, Ed. "Was Life Better When Bagels Were Smaller?", *The New York Times*, December 31, 2003.

capable of producing far more bagels than had ever been imagined.” This schism Goodman is referring to is not limited to sheer volume of production but is bound up in “the story of Jewish assimilation, gastronomic homogenization, the decline of trade unionism and the perennial tension between tradition and innovation.”

For decades these chewy dough rings were eaten solely within the confines of strong Jewish neighborhoods like those in Manhattan, Boston, St. Louis and Chicago. The original bagel from these locales were earthy in taste, elastic in bite and enveloped in a hard gloss from their time spent in the boiling kettles. Mass produced bagels that were introduced in the 1960s by companies like the ubiquitous New Haven’s Murray Lenders were soft and lacked an outer shell; a consequence of the machines only being able to accommodate a looser, more watery dough.



As the bagel spread from urban neighborhoods to the suburbs, they “literally and metaphorically lost their Jewish flavor.”<sup>70</sup> For decades the traditional, pre-mechanized bagel was so unheard of outside of Jewish neighborhoods that *New York Times* journalist Ira Freeman summarily defined the bagel for unfamiliar Gentiles as, “an unsweetened doughnut with rigor mortis.”<sup>71</sup> Yet, the fervor for bagels gained tractions throughout the United States, and in a time

<sup>70</sup> Fox, Margalit. “Daniel Thompson, Whose Bagel Machine Altered the American Diet, Dies at 94.” *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 21 Sept. 2015, [www.nytimes.com/2015/09/22/business/daniel-thompson-whose-bagel-machine-altered-the-american-diet-dies-at-94.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/22/business/daniel-thompson-whose-bagel-machine-altered-the-american-diet-dies-at-94.html).

<sup>71</sup> Freeman, Ira. “About Bagels.” *The New York Times*, 22 May 1960.

when Jewish food was still seen as shameful, the store-bought pedigree of the bagel helped shield it from obscurity, unlike other home-style Jewish foods.

Today the bagel has comfortably made its way into most moderate sized American cities. Outside of the grocery store, Einstein Bros. Bagels dominates all other commercial bagel bakeries in terms of number of restaurants and sales. Their history however provides insight into just how far the bagel has come from its Jewish roots, and begs the question, “Is a bagel even a bagel anymore?” Einstein’s was created by the chain restaurant corporation Boston Market in 1995, as a new way to market breakfast foods. Boston Market originally formed the Einstein Bagel Corporation when it purchased four retail bagel chains, all located in regions of the United States that did not have longstanding bagel traditions. These companies included Offerdahl’s Bagel Gourmet, Incorporated (Fort Lauderdale), Bagel & Bagel, Incorporated (Kansas City), Baltimore Bagel (San Diego), and Brackman Brothers, Incorporated (Salt Lake City). Each found that their stores were similar in that they offered both original and new bagel flavors in rich neighborhoods where the customers had relatively little previous exposure to bagels.

The company has few ties to any recognizable Jewish bakery or deli business, aside from acquiring Noah’s Bagels for \$100 million in 1996. Their credentials run instead with corporate American fast-food chains and products: Krispy Kreme, Stumptown Coffee, Panera Bread, Keurig Green Mountain, Peet’s Coffee, Caribou Coffee and the Dr. Pepper Snapple Group. The lack of Jewish influence behind one of the nation’s largest bagel producers reflects the bagels transition from ethnic heritage food to a highly homogenized flavor bound up in Jewish assimilation.

## ASIAN AMERICANS

For first generation Asian immigrants, food was both a link to the past and an anchor for the future, allowed families to both make a living while also preserving a sense of community. This has powered the emergence of a distinctly Asian American culinary sensibility, where later generations have become disinterested in appeasing the older generation's insistence for authentic tradition or tempering flavors for the mainstream American palate. Instead, menus are crafted so masala crepes, savory kimchi pancakes, and bowls of maple congee are widely accepted as modern breakfast options.

Perhaps an ambivalence toward the food of first-generation immigrant parents was part of a proxy battle waged by second-generation descendants trying to carve out new identities as first and foremost Americans. David Chang, restaurateur of New York's Momofuku and host of Netflix's *Ugly Delicious*, recalls elementary school embarrassment over lunch boxes filled with kimchi that invited derision from his non-Asian peers. Many young Asian Americans, much like David Chang, sought out American fare to sooth assimilation anxieties. Replacing morning rice bowls and funky banchan with Frosted Flakes and Lucky Charms was the easiest way for a young Korean boy in Virginia to create a shared identity with his peers as average, American kids. Chang commented on the diverging view point of his mother, a first-generation Korean immigrant, saying "To you this [traditional Korean dishes for which David was made fun of] was extraordinarily delicious food. That was the cultural shock that was so hard for you and dad to understand." He continues, "And the funny thing is now that same food is super cool."

The National Restaurant Association, a business association and D.C. lobbying group representing the restaurant industry, recently submitted its 2017 year-end "culinary forecast." Based on an online survey of 1,298 professional chefs belonging to the American

Culinary Federation, it declared that items like “ethnic-inspired breakfast items” (on the list since 2011), “African flavors” (as if they could be more reductionist), and for the second year in a row, “authentic ethnic cuisine” would be omnipresent additions to morning menus across the country.<sup>72</sup>

In his 2016 book *The Ethnic Restaurateur*, New York University food studies department chair Krishnendu Ray explains how the term “ethnic” began to be used in the 1950s as a stand-in for “foreign” in food writing. But today, when it comes to cuisines and restaurants, the word more closely implies “non-white” and inexpensive. “When we call a food ethnic we are signifying a difference but also a certain kind of inferiority.”<sup>73</sup> The desire for “authentic ethnic cuisine,” for example, comes with a troubling social assumption that those foods should be cheaper than mainstream American cuisines.

This pervasive thought elevates a privileged consumer rather than those whose labor is the primary contribution to the food’s creation. This is especially true when people from outside an immigrant community profit off monetizing that community’s culture. Data-sentient studies have shown that Millennials and Generation Zs are demographically more multicultural and multiethnic than any other generation in U.S. history, and their culinary interests mirror that diversity.

The divergence between assimilation and assertion of immigrant identity is apparent in the perspectives that developed bagels and pan-Asian breakfast into two very different symbols of the immigrant experience in the United States. What began as a reminder of their eastern European heritage, the bagel transformed from a breakfast food eaten only in Jewish

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<sup>72</sup> “What’s Hot Culinary Forecast.” *National Restaurant Association*, [www.restaurant.org/News-Research/Research/What-s-Hot](http://www.restaurant.org/News-Research/Research/What-s-Hot).

<sup>73</sup> Ray, Krishnendu. *The Ethnic Restaurateur*. Bloomsbury Academic, an Imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing, Plc, 2016.

neighborhoods to a nationally distributed product. The hard, shiny exterior of early bagels gave way to squishy, sweet knock off which served to facilitate the assimilation of Jewish immigrants into new portions of the country but left them with a homogenized and unrecognizable version of their original contribution to breakfast. The creation of pan-Asian breakfast items that combine eastern flavors with western concepts reflect an assertion of identity that, unlike the bagel, result in iterations of foods that are representative of a unique intersection of cultures that haven't been tempered for pleasing the American palate.

## CHAPTER 5: SEXUALITY AND BRUNCH

Gay Brunch, where chairs are pulled up to the edges of the table in a near constant flow of late arriving companions and missing a date would mean future shunning at the next weekend's late-night frivolities. This all-day, conversation packed, alcohol fueled, carb-loading has taken on a persona of its own in America's popular food culture. In one simple word, brunch is a performance. The chosen restaurant, often ostentatious with a preceding reputation, is transformed into a stage on which the dramatic retellings of the past week's events are exposed. Hook ups, make ups and make outs are shared over watered down bottomless mimosas and overpriced egg dishes. Not only must the location be as melodramatic as the stories told, but its patrons take on an equally excessive display of flamboyance. Meticulously overthought outfits are shells for the painfully apparent desire to exude leisure and class.

Diners at this type of brunch, if they can be called that, have little concern for the timelines of others, as seen in the outrageous wait times paired with plate after plate of untouched, cold egg remnants that are kept on the table as a proverbial reservation placard providing no indication of the group's forthcoming departure. Most of the brunches I have endured in my lifetime have been split into two caricatural categories: rare celebratory family gatherings on Easter or Mother's Day and the abovementioned modern excuse to get drunk at 11am on a Sunday. But how did these seemingly dichotomous versions of the same meal develop into the monstrous powerhouse known as brunch?

The origins of brunch in the United States have been debated by scholars and restaurateurs, like many culinary traditions, due to its multicultural history and sparse historical documentation. A portmanteau of breakfast and lunch, the earliest written appearance of the word brunch can be found in an 1895 publication of Britain's *Hunter's Weekly* entitled "Brunch:

A Plea.”<sup>74</sup> The author, Guy Beringer, championed for a meal that would allow British elites to refrain from confronting their hangovers with assaultingly heavy meat pies and sausages upon first wake, and instead enjoy a midmorning compromise of tea pastries and hair-of-the-dog cocktails to nurse their heads and soothe their stomachs. Obvious portmanteaus aside, Beringer’s longest lasting definition of brunch included his belief that, “Brunch is cheerful, sociable and inciting. It is talk-compelling. It makes you satisfied with yourself and your fellow beings.”<sup>75</sup>

Though the first written instance of “brunch” was in 1895 England, New Orleans’ own Tujague’s (pronounced *Two Jacks*) argues that upon its founding in 1856, they were the first restaurant in the United States to serve what we know today as brunch.<sup>76</sup> The restaurant’s namesake, Guillaume Tujague, came to New Orleans from France in 1852 to open a wholesale butcher shop at the French Market. After a move back to France, a marriage, a return to New Orleans and the end of the Civil War in 1865, Guillaume decided to convert his wholesale butcher shop into a retail restaurant and moved to their now famous 811 Decatur Street location. The new location was in the heart of the French Quarter, allowing intimate access to butchers, fish mongers and bakers in the nearby French Market. Additionally, just three doors away was the iconic Begue’s Exchange, where diners would congregate for multi-hour, five-course, booze-filled breakfasts. Madam Begue, the incredibly charismatic and talented French-speaking, German-born chef, could only serve a limited number of breakfast guests in her small dining room. New Orleans had become a burgeoning food city after hosting the 1884 World’s Fair Exposition, and the increasing popularity of Madame Begue’s cooking meant she had to turn

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<sup>74</sup> Brown, Alton. “Episode 232: Beringer’s Brunch.” *Good Eats Podcast*.

<sup>75</sup> “The Genius Who Invented Brunch.” *Mental Floss*, 20 Oct. 2013, [mentalfloss.com/article/30181/genius-who-invented-brunch](http://mentalfloss.com/article/30181/genius-who-invented-brunch).

<sup>76</sup> Tooker, Poppy. *Tujagues Cookbook: Creole Recipes and Lore in the New Orleans Grand Tradition*. Pelican Publishing Company, 2015.

crowds of people away from her small, but popular eatery. Ever resourceful, Guillaume began to serve a “butcher’s breakfast,” named after the mid-day meal served to butchers and fisherman hungry after completing their early morning shifts, to accommodate the spillover from Madam Begue’s restaurant, and just like that brunch was born in New Orleans.

From its origins as a worker’s meal, brunch began its journey out of New Orleans and followed the path laid forth by the expansion of America’s transnational railroad system. Trains carrying wealthy passengers from California to New York over multi-night treks would stop in the Windy City of Chicago. Passengers consisting of actors like John Barrymore, Helen Hayes and Clark Gable would depart from the station and make their way to Sunday brunch at the famed Pump Room at the Ambassador Hotel.<sup>77</sup> From there the phenomenon spread and post-Depression New York City became the hotspot for Sunday morning brunch. In the early 1930s Hotel Lombardy chef Werner Haechler began to offer a buffet from noon until 4pm for the cost of \$1.25. What was served up at these early brunches? According to a 1939 *New York Times* article: sautéed veal, kidneys, fried flounder, codfish cakes, chicken hash in cream, and Boston baked beans.<sup>78</sup>

Other restaurants soon began whipping up their own brunch, serving buckwheat cakes with sausages and scrambled eggs with bacon, reported the *Times*. A proposed brunch menu in a 1940 syndicated column called “Household

## For Gourmets and Others: Sunday Morning ‘Brunch’

The Word May Not Be Elegant, but It Can Mean  
Good Food, at Home or in the Restaurants  
That Specialize in Breakfast-Luncheon

<sup>77</sup> Ferdman, Roberto A., and Christopher Ingraham. “How Brunch Became the Most Delicious, and Divisive, Meal in America.” *Chicagotribune.com*, 12 Apr. 2015, [www.chicagotribune.com/dining/chi-brunch-20150411-story.html](http://www.chicagotribune.com/dining/chi-brunch-20150411-story.html).

<sup>78</sup> Smith, Andrew F. *Savoring Gotham: A Food Lover’s Companion to New York City*. Oxford University Press, 2016.

Needs and Timely Suggestions by Sallie” proposed a Sunday brunch of figs and cream, followed by hot oatmeal, popovers, crisp bacon, and coffee.... not a far cry from the menus of today.

As for the alcohol, New York’s liquor laws meant that brunch-goers who wanted to drink had to arrive after 1 p.m. A whiskey sour was a popular starter, along with a “‘velvet,’ a concoction of port and champagne” stated the *Times*. By 1940 the queen of morning-time cocktails, the Bloody Mary, had migrated from its birthplace at Harry’s New York Bar in Paris, to actual Manhattan bars and hotels. Liquor-starved Americans were enamored by this vodka and tomato juice combination during their time as ex-pats in France throughout Prohibition, and their love did not waver when Prohibition was lifted in 1933. That same year, Vincent Astor brought over the inventor of this cocktail, Ferdinand Petiot, to man the King Cole Bar at the St. Régis Hotel in New York City. The drink caught on—particularly as a supposed cure for hangovers—but under the less sanguine name “Red Snapper,” which is what it’s still called at the recently restored King Cole Bar.<sup>79</sup>

The frivolities of the post-Prohibition 1930s gave way to the Second World War, sending men overseas and women into the workforce in large numbers. According to the Smithsonian, after World War II, large numbers of American married women entered the workforce for the first time. Married women needed a relief on Sunday, too, thus the rise in popularity of Sunday brunch eaten out.”<sup>80</sup> But the desire for a chance to mingle and relax wasn’t the only thing

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<sup>79</sup> It was not until September of 2016, nearly 83 years later, that liquor laws in New York changed to accommodate brunch-goers voracious desire to imbibe on Sunday mornings. New York Governor Andrew Cuomo signed the legislation, commonly known as the “Brunch Bill,” permitting bars and restaurants across the Empire State to begin selling alcohol at 10:00 AM on Sundays.

<sup>80</sup> Rhodes, Jesse. “The Birth of Brunch: Where Did This Meal Come from Anyway?” *Smithsonian.com*, Smithsonian Institution, 6 May 2011, [www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/the-birth-of-brunch-where-did-this-meal-come-from-anyway-164187758/#vuvBsp94bs41JCwR.99](http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/the-birth-of-brunch-where-did-this-meal-come-from-anyway-164187758/#vuvBsp94bs41JCwR.99).

pushing Americans towards brunch; organized religion had begun to lose its footholds as the Sunday morning monopoly as more and more Americans began to answer “none” to their religious preference.

Currently largest segment of the population that claims no religious affiliation are young people under 30 years of age (32%), with the next-least-affiliated group those between 30 and 49 (21%). Closer analysis of these trends reveals that the majority of the “nones” are interested in spirituality, and many are still drawn toward certain religious practices. But regardless of how this development is described or measured, the upshot is that people are going to religious services less frequently than in previous generations, and our traditional definitions of religion and religious institutions are mattering less in the daily lives of younger Americans.<sup>81</sup>

## **BRUNCH IS THE NEW CHURCH**

Brunch provides a communal experience to gather in a public declaration of shared identity. Conversations over mimosas mimic sacred fellowship, carrying with them the context of meaningful work on behalf of the community as a whole. When mainstream religion failed to provide space and inclusion for queer Americans, new congregations were formed. First in the smoky darkness of underground clubs, and eventually into the light of the morning table.

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<sup>81</sup> Flory, Richard, et al. “The Tidal Wave of Indifference: I Don’t Church, I Brunch.” *The Center for Religion and Civic Culture*, [crcc.usc.edu/the-tidal-wave-of-indifference-i-dont-church-i-brunch/](http://crcc.usc.edu/the-tidal-wave-of-indifference-i-dont-church-i-brunch/).

A 2013 survey from the Pew Research Center found that LGBT people are much less religious than the broader American population. About half — 48 percent — say they don't have any religion, more than double the percentage of the general public that says the same.<sup>82</sup> Nearly all of those surveyed said they saw at least one of the six religious institutions as “unfriendly” to LGBT people, the highest response being Catholicism, Islam and Mormonism. And 30% added that they have been made to feel unwelcome at a place of worship or religious organization in the past. So demographic data shows us that young, queer adults are not spending their weekend mornings in places of worship, but rather gathering amongst themselves in new ways of spiritual congregation.

### Religious Affiliation

% of LGBT adults/all adults, by religious affiliation

	<b>LGBT</b>	<b>General public</b>
Christian	42	73
Protestant	27	49
<i>White evang. Prot.</i>	6	19
<i>White mainline Prot.</i>	12	15
<i>Hispanic, black, other or mixed race Protestant</i>	9	14
Catholic	14	22
Mormon	1	2
Orthodox	*	1
Jewish	2	2
Other faith	8	4
Unaffiliated	48	20
<i>Atheist/Agnostic</i>	17	6
<i>Nothing in particular</i>	31	14
Don't know	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
	100	100
N	1,197	31,062

The term “secular church” comes from Alana Conner, Ph.D., a cultural scientist at Stanford University who directs a center called Social Psychological Answers to Real-World Questions, or SPARQ. Dr. Conner explains that in parts of the United States where people aren't as religious, the brunch gathering is the closest substitute for the experience of churchgoing: getting out of the house, marking the turn of the calendar, breaking bread together. Secular

<sup>82</sup> Kaleem, Jaweed. “Survey Sheds Light on LGBT Views Of Religion.” *The Huffington Post*, TheHuffingtonPost.com, 7 Dec. 2017, [www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/06/14/religious-views-lesbian-gay-survey\\_n\\_3442858.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/06/14/religious-views-lesbian-gay-survey_n_3442858.html).

church is about affirming community. Brunch does exactly that: providing a space for an act that is soulful and restorative.<sup>83</sup>

### **Sexuality and Brunch: A Performance**

Drag brunch, in particular, is a mid-morning event where queens, dressed extravagantly in glitter-adorned outfits and heels, dismantle social norms about gender and sexuality with humor while performing Broadway-worthy numbers and serving up cocktails. “Through drag performance, we want people to enjoy brunch and escape their stressful lives,” said Holly Box-Springs, a NYC-based drag queen in an interview with drag historian and New York University professor, Joe E. Jeffreys.<sup>84</sup> Exposing drag to crowds that don’t frequent LGBTQ bars or clubs can open them up to the notion that gender isn’t fixed and is something that everyone expresses differently, Jeffreys explained. “[People] are able to sit at drag brunch and have a lovely spinach frittata and Bloody Mary while learning this lesson through observation. They start to understand that gender and drag aren’t these scary things,” he said. “It’s fun and festive like brunch can be.”

### **Drag Brunch and Activism**

Drag queens have always been leading the LGBTQ rights movement and fighting for marginalized communities. Trans activists and drag queens Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera risked their lives to be in the front lines of LGBTQ activism. In 1969, when New York City police officers frequently harassed and criminalized LGBTQ people, Johnson and Rivera were at the forefront of the Stonewall uprising. When the AIDS epidemic swept the nation drag queens

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<sup>83</sup> Egan, Sophie. “Secular Church: Will Brunch Save Your Soul?” *Edible San Francisco*, 1 May 2017, [ediblesanfrancisco.ediblecommunities.com/secular-church-will-brunch-save-your-soul](http://ediblesanfrancisco.ediblecommunities.com/secular-church-will-brunch-save-your-soul).

<sup>84</sup> Patillo, Natalie. “The Importance of Drag Brunch in NYC.” *Food & Wine*, [www.foodandwine.com/news/drag-brunch-history-nyc](http://www.foodandwine.com/news/drag-brunch-history-nyc).

lead the conversation to get HIV awareness into social consciousness. “In the '80s, the only people talking about AIDS were drag queens and Elizabeth Taylor. When people need to raise money for an organization today, who they go to? Drag queens,” said Marti Gould Cummings, an NYC drag queen and founder of Hell’s Kitchen Democratic Club. “Because they know that we will be loud, and we'll get people to reach into their purse and donate.”

As part of Tujague’s 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary fundraising celebration, the oldest brunch restaurant in the country joined forces with the New Orleans AIDS Task Force to host a Drag Brunch in the French Quarter. The proceeds went to a meal delivery program that has served people living with AIDS since 1992. According to Tujague’s owner Mark Latter, “The Drag Queen Brunch is a fun way to pay tribute to our history and to serve the New Orleans community.”

## **Conclusion**

Since its invention as a term in 1895 brunch has come to mean different things to different people. A meal that was once humbly served to fishermen and butchers in the streets of New Orleans traveled by train across the United States becoming newly shaped by the social class and status of Hollywood celebrities who enjoyed it in Chicago and New York. The Great Depression and Prohibition did not thwart brunch’s success, but rather led to new variations of dishes and drinks that remain popular today, 85 years later. As a meal that was traditionally eaten after church on Sundays, the declining religiosity of the American people gave new strength to brunch-going as a replacement for weekend worship. During the Second World War families began to brunch at home as a way to relax and enjoy each other’s company after a long week toiling for the war effort. As brunch approached the new millennium, the LBGT community took refuge in the welcoming environment of brunch and proved that just as sexuality is a performance, so is the act of sharing brunch within your community.

## CHAPTER 6: BREAKFAST IN POPULAR CULTURE

Writers, filmmakers and television directors have penchants for placing critical scenes at the breakfast table. A character's affection (or obsession) for breakfast can reveal their principles and values, especially through shared food in integral moments of character and plot development. Food within the books, films, and shows of American media can influence not only the characters who act within those stories but expand out into real spheres of popular culture in American society. Movie-inspired restaurant menus, show-specific themed merchandise and widespread cultural awareness of the power of breakfast within specific anecdotes from these works all function as influences on a broader definition of American culture and the institution of popular media.

### Literature

In J. R. R. Tolkien's novel *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien mentions in the preface that hobbits prefer to eat six meals a day: Breakfast, Second Breakfast, Elevesens, Luncheon, Afternoon Tea, and Dinner.<sup>85</sup> Tolkien's intimate knowledge of early Germanic folklore influenced not only the physical depictions of his hobbit characters but also the way they ate. Second breakfast, or *Zweites Frühstück* in German, consisted of coffee, pastries, and white sausages. The sausages, served with pretzels, sweet mustard, and wheat beer, were prepared during the first breakfast meal to serve during the second only a few hours later. The meal is roughly similar in concept to the British Elevesens, of which hobbits also partake-in as a morning-time version of afternoon tea.

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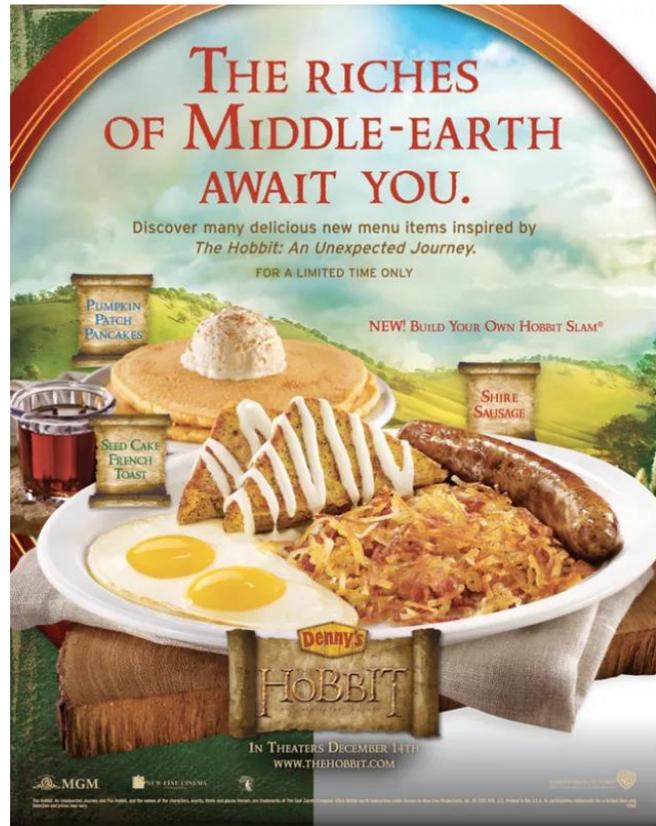
<sup>85</sup> Tolkien, J. R. R. "*The Lord of the Rings*." Allen and Unwin, 1966.

Breakfast in the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy acts to better understand the lives of the Hobbits and how uniquely out-of-their-element they are as they join Frodo Baggins in his quest to destroy the One Ring. In Tolkien's 1937 inaugural *The Hobbit*, Bilbo Baggins sits down to his second breakfast when Gandalf the Grey, a wizard, barges into Bilbo's hobbit hole, scolding, "and here you are having breakfast, or whatever you call it, at half past ten!"<sup>86</sup> Much of the narrative in both *The Hobbit* and *The Fellowship of the Ring* is interrupted by the displeasure of the hobbit members of the group as to the unfairness in the lack of sufficient breakfasts. The juxtaposition of these small, jovial humanoid creatures and their concern for breakfast is placed against the stark backdrop of their march to possible death. Though the hobbits are not fully unjustified in their demand for a hearty morning meal (or two), First and second breakfast was also a common custom in traditional farm areas of the United States in much of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. Farmers who needed to rise early to tend to animals or perform other chores would eat a small "first breakfast," such as toast and coffee, just after rising, followed by a heartier second breakfast after the first round of chores is done. So perhaps a quick sausage and pastry after a demanding morning schedule of defeating Sauron and destroying the ring aren't too much for Frodo and his gang to ask.

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<sup>86</sup> Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Hobbit; Or, There and Back Again.* New York Random House Publishing, 1997. Pg. 29.

In a truly fascinating movie tie-in marketing scheme, Denny's released a *Hobbit*-themed "Second Breakfast" promotional menu for the release of the 2012 feature film *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*. The menu included options like Radagast's Red Velvet Pancakes, Bilbo's Berry Smoothie, Gandalf's Gobble Melt, "The Ring" Burger, Shire Sausages and Frodo's Pot Roast. The appeal of promotional movie tie-in foods, like Denny's Second Breakfast, is their ability to place customers in an immersive world of movie fantasy and (sometimes questionable) authenticity.



## Film

The 1961 romantic comedy *Breakfast at Tiffany's* turned Audrey Hepburn into an American icon after her breakout scene where she gazed longingly into the window of a New York City Tiffany & Co. jewelry store while wearing the previous night's Givenchy gown and enjoying a coffee and Danish. At the time *Breakfast at Tiffany's* premiered on screens across the country, Hepburn's Holly Golightly was the first of a new breed of screen personality. Her sexuality fell in the perfect middle ground between prim and proper Doris Day and too sultry Elizabeth Taylor. The icon breakfast scene told American women that being single, having sex

and wearing provocative little black dresses were the signs of a girl growing into womanhood and discovering her place in the big city.

In November of 2017, Tiffany & Co. opened a breakfast cafe at its famed flagship location just 56 years after Audrey Hepburn made eating a pastry in front of its store windows look like one of the most glamorous activities New York City had to offer. For years before the opening of the store tourists, young and old, mainly female, would mark a trip to New York City by photographing themselves in front of that same storefront window holding their Anthora<sup>87</sup> “We are happy to serve you” coffee cup and an overpriced croissant from Magnolia bakery, convincing themselves they are experiencing New York the way Audrey Hepburn did six decades ago.

If breakfast is a tool through which women like Holly Golightly can assert their independence, then no breakfast scene exemplifies that sentiment better than 1996’s *Matilda*, based on the Roald Dahl book of the same name. As the Rusted Roots’ “Send Me on My Way” plays through the scene, we see four-year-old genius Matilda alone in the kitchen, away from her inept and routinely absent parents. The montage that follows of her whisking eggs, measuring flour and flipping pancakes shows a capable and self-reliant girl finally participating in the small joys of life: making fluffy warm pancakes and sitting down at the breakfast table with a glass of orange juice and the day’s newspaper.

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<sup>87</sup> The Anthora is a paper coffee cup design that has become iconic of New York City daily life. Its name is a play on the word amphora. The cup was originally designed by Leslie Buck of the Sherri Cup Co. in 1963, to appeal to Greek-owned coffee shops in New York City, and was later much copied by other companies.

## Television

NBC's *Parks and Recreation* is the ultimate breakfast show. From Leslie and the staff of the Pawnee Parks and Recreation department fighting to save their beloved J.J.'s Diner, to Ron Swanson's breakfast buffets and brunette women, and Leslie's sweet moment with Ben when she says, "It's so nice to be able to sit here in public and have breakfast with you," the first meal of the day is a cornerstone of the Parks and Rec world.

Each breakfast food item plays a specific role in character development, plot and relationships within the show. Bacon makes an appearance on the show every time Ron Swanson orders food from J.J.'s Diner. Bacon defines Ron every bit as much as woodworking and his distaste for the government. On his self-made Ron Swanson Pyramid of Greatness™ "Pig Protein" is ranked on par with "Romantic Love" and "Greatness Itself." In Season 3 Episode 10 when a grocery store offers him a vegan bacon sample, in an effort to save the world from fake meat, he accepts it and immediately discards it into the garbage, then proclaims: "Another." Though bacon is certainly emblematic of Ron's character, he does not discriminate amongst other breakfast foods. His diner orders range from: "I'm gonna get 12 eggs and part of a dead animal," to one of his most quoted lines: "Just give me all the bacon and eggs you have. Wait, wait. I'm worried what you just heard was, 'Give me a lot of bacon and eggs.' What I said was, 'Give me all the bacon and eggs you have.' Do you understand?"

For Leslie Knope, the fearless female leader of Pawnee, no breakfast is complete without waffles. J.J. tells Leslie that she is his favorite customer because she spent "\$1,000 last year on waffles alone" and when Leslie orders "the usual," the waitress brings her waffles topped with whipped cream. When Leslie announces she is running for city council, the entire office eats take-out waffles out of plastic tins. During the 19<sup>th</sup> episode of season 5, Ann Perkins and Ben

Wyatt start an online bidding war to win a waffle maker from JJ's Diner that they each want to give to Leslie; Ann's occasion is "Breakfast Day," while Ben's is "Waffle Day."

Waffles play a versatile role in Leslie's life, acting as both a comfort from the chaos of her job as well as a distraction at times. When asked how he calms Leslie during certain stressful moments, Ron Swanson replies, "If you were particularly amped up about a project. I'd take you to J.J.'s and distract you with waffles." Shocked, Leslie replied, "Those were distraction waffles?? I thought they were friendship waffles!" to which Ron astutely comments, "Breakfast food can serve many purposes." Even in the series finale, fictionally set in 2025, the original Parks gang and their children are seen eating waffles as everyone gathers for a final reunion. Ron and Leslie's love of breakfast food is not only used to illustrate their personal characteristics but to signify the honest, American values of dedication and teamwork that unify the department in the same way breakfast unifies us around the morning table for a simple shared meal.

## CONCLUSION

Breakfast, when critically analyzed, reflects the complex intersectionality of American culture. Race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, morality and geography create a multitude of identity combinations that influence the ways in which we understand food. Eating Viet-Cajun crawfish beignets in Houston is an entirely different culinary experience than an Amish pancake buffet in southern Pennsylvania or a crab cake Eggs Benedict in Baltimore, but what each of these meals share, despite their origins, is the unifying designation of being American.

From our earliest days as a nation, the ability to divide up the world into moral categories was a mechanism for achieving success in the United States. This division created a symbolic system that differentiates between the righteous and unrighteous, the in-group and the outsiders, the American and un-American. The foods and trends that have been born from these systems of separation have influenced a uniquely American way of thinking about breakfast and morality. The invention of the corn flake reflected a growing movement within American culture that aimed to characterize others by their connection to sin. Kellogg's moral crusade was facilitated through the promotion of his corn flakes amongst influential Americans who engaged in the larger cultural trend of early clean-living movements. These movements, which continue today in the form of restrictive diets like Whole30, serve as a symbol of physical and spiritual superiority for those who partake in them.

The physical impacts of war on the economy combined with the ideological influence it has on American society create a changing breakfast culture informed by scarcity, ingenuity, and patriotism. Government influence over the American diet is not limited during wartime to mandatory rationing or agricultural scarcity, but through propaganda campaigns as well. The rhetoric of one's patriotic duty to the United States is seen in posters and recipes of World War I

and World War II, imploring Americans to grow their own food, find creative substitutions for recipes and cut down on household waste. Archival records provided a wealth of breakfast recipes, like the Biltmore Bran muffin, that illustrates the widespread restrictions of wheat flour, butter and sugar during the war, and the prevailing replacement ingredients like molasses. Molasses served a vital role in the war effort outside of the home as well. Not only was it a replacement for cane sugar for American kitchens, but the United States Industrial Alcohol Company was manufacturing munitions from the syrupy sweet substance. Away from the home front, the Salvation Army solidified the donut's place in American history as young women worked behind the lines of fire to provide soldiers with a taste of home. Breakfast continues to be used as a tool of protest in U.S diplomacy matters, exemplified by the nominal history of French Toast and its brief foray into the world of foreign policy and military engagement. This chapter began to expose the inequality that exists in our nation and the ways in which certain communities are affected differently by war.

Modern narratives of black identity are built upon the history of exploitation and misrepresentation of African Americans in the United States. The marketing of breakfast foods like Aunt Jemima pancake mix and Cream of Wheat, continues to use stereotyped misrepresentations of black men and women in their product imagery. Beginning just one decade after the end of the Civil War, these companies used archetypical figures like the Mammy and Uncle Tom to serve the political, social, and economic interests of mainstream white America. Misrepresentative images propagated by the United States government extended to the demonization of the Black Panther Party in the 1960s and 1970s. Contrary to the narrative created by the government to turn popular sentiment against the Black Panthers, the success of their Free Breakfast for Children program and other community survival programs fought

directly against that mentality. The Black Panther party provided support in the form of breakfast for more than 20,000 children across the country when the government wouldn't. The Free Breakfast program and its omission from the white narrative of the Black Panther Party, reflects an all too common occurrence in U.S history in which communities of color are neglected by their own nation's supposed leaders.

In our globally connected world, cultural and ethnic boundaries are increasingly becoming more permeable. Second and third generation immigrants in America continue to infuse breakfast with an exchange of culinary traditions creating dishes that are constantly reimaged and reinvented. Creative iterations of classic American breakfast dishes operate as one of the key cultural signs that structure people's identities and their connections to others.

The continuously developing food culture in the United States is producing a generation of highly food literate individuals. Millennials are demographically more diverse and more connected than ever before, and their knowledge and tastes in food reflect that. Gone are the days of the "ethnic" food aisle with a smorgasbord of Italian, Indian and Mexican ingredients labeled under one, vague moniker. Young Americans now demand multicultural influences in their daily meals and their culinary interests incorporate specific foods and flavors, like Korean, Vietnamese and Chinese breakfast options.

The development of brunch as a meal in American over the last two hundred years has culminated in a performative declaration of queer identity and a celebration of community. It's humble origins as a worker's meal in New Orleans gave way to high society gatherings of celebrities across the East Coast. Fluctuations in the national economy, the onset of prohibition and the decline of religion in the United States produced a unique environment for brunch to flourish in post-war America. LGTBQ American, who had long been ostracized from organized

religion used brunch as a secular church, a place to break bread, congregate and share conversation. The performance of queens at drag brunch mimics the performance of sexuality and the cultural complexities of its acceptance into popular American culture.

Breakfast is used in American popular media to signify character development, broader social trends and national identity. From works of literature, film, and television, breakfast is presented as a symbol of pleasure and joy. Movie-inspired restaurant menus, show-specific themed merchandise, immersive viewing experiences and audience awareness of the power of breakfast functions as an influence on a broader definition of American culture and the institution of popular media.

These six perspectives are by no means exhaustive in the scope of possible perspective lens through which to analyze breakfast culture and its multifaceted connections to American identity. A closer examination of the roles gender, health, family, youth culture, class, and consumerism could all provide further insight into America's intersectional composition and how it is reflected in breakfast culture.

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