SWEET AND SALTY
A Conversation with Asian American Women Chefs
Tuesday, September 1, 2020, at 5 p.m. PT
Live via Zoom
University of Southern California

ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

- **Cecilia Leung** grew up in a Cantonese restaurant family, but was banished from the kitchen by her chef father. Yet she watched, taught herself how to bake and cook, and became an executive chef, formerly at Little Flower Café and Lincoln, both in Pasadena.

- **Isa Fabro** is a critically acclaimed L.A.-based chef known for her pop-ups and Filipino-inspired dishes that have helped create a dialogue in the Filipino food movement. Her company IsaMADE showcases a varied repertoire of projects with creative industries, allowing for a cultural and gastronomic exchange of ideas.

- **Sonoko Sakai** has worked as a film buyer and producer and a freelance food writer. In 2009, she went back to Japan to study noodle making as a way to restore her energy and fell in love with soba. She is the author of *Japanese Home Cooking: Simple Meals, Authentic Flavors*.

- **Jean Trinh** (moderator) is an award-winning journalist who writes about L.A.’s food scene, culture, and history for outlets like *VICE*, *Los Angeles magazine*, *Eater LA*, KCRW’s *Good Food*, and *LAist*.

“Every cook has an opportunity to express themselves through food. It is a form of art, and it’s such a beautiful thing.”—Sonoko Sakai in the *New York Times*
ARE WE THERE YET?

“Hopefully soon, people won’t automatically think of the ‘chef’ as a big burly white guy.”—chef Niki Nakayama, who owns the L.A. restaurant n/naka, on NPR in 2014

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

Sonoko Sakai has said, “Home cooking is the most essential cooking.” Do you agree? What does this mean to you?

Who does most of the cooking in your home?

Why do you think there is such a gender discrepancy between who is the main cook in most households and who is the head chef in most restaurants?

Do you feel connected to any cooking traditions? If so, how does this play out in your life? If not, why do you think that is?

IF YOU LIKED THIS EVENT, YOU MIGHT WANT TO CHECK OUT:

- Little Flower Café and Bakery in Pasadena littleflowercandyco.com
- Lincoln lincolnpasadena.com
- Webinars and cooking videos by Sonoko Sakai sonokosakai.com
- Isa Fabro online isafabro.com
- Women Chefs and Restaurateurs womenchefs.org
- Rasa Malaysia and Maangchi maangchi.com/blog/gapshida-malaysia
- Flavorful Origins netflix.com/title/80991060
- Gwan-im gwanim.com
- Jia! The Food of Swatow and the Teochew Diaspora jacookbook.com
WONTONS
For Cooking Demonstration During Event
Makes about 36 wontons

INGREDIENTS

1 package wonton wrappers, square
8 oz. ground pork
8 oz. raw shrimp, peeled, deveined
1 tbsp ginger, finely chopped
2 tbsp minced shallots
2 tbsp minced green onion
1 tbsp minced garlic
1 tbsp soy sauce
2 tbsp Shaoxing wine
2 tbsp sesame oil
½ tsp white pepper
1 tsp salt
2 tbsp Oil (for pan frying method)
1 ¼ cup Water (for pan frying method)
1 ½ qt. Vegetable stock (for boiling method)

EQUIPMENT/TOOLS

Food processor or meat cleaver
Mixing Bowl
Dinner spoon
Plastic wrap
Spider strainer (for boiling method)
Sauté pan or cast iron skillet
Sauté pan lid
Spatula

ASSEMBLING

1. Use food processor or meat cleaver to chop up shrimp into ¼-inch chunks.
2. Place ground pork, shrimp, ginger, shallots, green onion, and garlic in a bowl.
3. Drizzle soy sauce, cooking wine, and sesame oil on top of ingredients. Mix until combined.
4. Season with salt and white pepper. Mix well. Filling should be slightly sticky.
5. Place wonton wrapper in center of one hand. With the back handle of dinner spoon, portion 1 tbsp filling into center of the wrapper. Fold wrapper over and gather the edges together to rid of any air pockets in filling. Flatten and seal so that the edges form a fish tail.
6. Place assembled wonton onto a plate. Cover with plastic wrap.
7. Cook immediately or refrigerate up to 3 days until ready to cook. Assembled wontons can be frozen in a sealed container for up to 2 weeks.

COOKING

Boiling method:

1. Bring 1 qt. of vegetable stock to a boil.
2. Add wontons 8–10 at a time to boil for about 5–8 minutes or until wontons float up to the surface.
3. Use spider to remove wontons and place into bowls.
4. Ladle 8 oz. of hot vegetable stock over wontons. Garnish with sautéed vegetables, such as gai lan or bok choy. Serve.

Pan frying method:

1. Heat sauté pan or cast iron skillet over medium heat.
2. Add 2 tbsp oil into pan. Swirl to coat pan.
3. Place 9–10 wontons in pan in 3 rows.
4. Cook over medium heat until wontons are golden, about 3–5 minutes.
5. Pour ½ cup water over wontons and place lid on top of pan to steam for 5 minutes.
6. Serve on plate with plum sauce.
KELSEY VUKIC of the USC Libraries selected the following resources to help you learn more about today’s event. These are all electronic resources, which you can access through the search bar on the USC Libraries homepage at libraries.usc.edu.

**BOOKS**

**DATABASES**
- Academic OneFile
- Food and Drink in History

**JOURNALS**
- *Food, Culture, & Society*. Baltimore: Association for the Study of Food and Society.
- *Journal for the Study of Food and Society*. Tucson: Association for the Study of Food and Society.

**STREAMING VIDEOS**