

Decolonizing Foodways Symposium at the 2016 SAEA National Conference Friday, July 29, 2016, 6:00–9:00 pm

University of California, Santa Cruz
Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems



Photo by Jonathan Fong

Food has always been central to the Sustainable Agriculture Education Association (SAEA) Conferences, with meals sourced from local, organic farms. Decolonizing Foodways aims to take our engagement with food beyond procurement to delve into the cultural, political, and economic history of food, understanding food itself as a site for colonial/decolonial struggles. Through the pedagogical medium of cooking, eating, and storytelling, participants will grapple with what it means to liberate our diets from colonial relationships of production and consumption both in theory and in practice.

Building off the work of scholar/activists Luz Calvo and Catriona Esquibel, authors of “Decolonize Your Diet: A Manifesto,” we’ll explore and question what the process of decolonizing foodways means. We may ask, for example: How do we increase the vitality of oppressed and indigenous peoples, maintain the integrity of our ancestral traditions, and embrace food and ways of cooking/eating that resist subjugation and instead nourish our palates, bodies, and lives? How do we make sense of the different realities of lived

food experiences across time and space, taking into account the influences of power and privilege? How might we think through the intersections of diaspora, colonialism, assimilation, generational differences, and food gentrification/cultural appropriation? Utilizing an intersectional, audience-participatory, and multi-sensory approach, this dinner-learning symposium will include a panel of activists and scholars and a freshly-prepared meal by local chefs who cook up decolonizing possibilities.

We credit the inspiration for this symposium to the Decolonizing Foodways event hosted by the Berkeley Food Institute in Fall of 2015. In spirit and practice, our symposium will carry forward the goals of that workshop and will reinforce SAEA Conference objectives in multiple ways: through interactive participant engagement, through critical interrogation of food histories and cultures, and through mobilizing cooking and eating as public pedagogy. By breaking bread together we’ll approach eating as a subversive act, and food as medium for hands-on education.

Decolonizing Foodways Symposium will be held at UC Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, CA, as part of the 2016 National SAEA Conference – July 29-31, 2016

Friday, July 29 Program:

6:10 pm

Introduction to Decolonial Theory [10-15 min]

Catriona Rueda Esquibel, Associate Professor of Race and Resistance Studies, San Francisco State University; co-author of *Decolonize Your Diet: Plant-Based Mexican-American Recipes for Health and Healing*

6:25 pm

Decolonizing Foodways [60 min, including 30 min discussion/Q&A]

Panelists:

- Catriona Rueda Esquibel, moderator
- Ron Reed, Co-Founder, Karuk-UC Berkeley Collaborative; Cultural Biologist, Karuk Tribe (invited)
- Gail Myers, Agri-Cultural Anthropologist and Co-Founder of non-profit Farms to Grow, Inc.

7:30 pm

A Sensory Experience in Two Courses [60 min]

Each chef will introduce their course and its relation to the topic of decolonizing foodways, and participants will discuss a set of framing questions with each course.

Chefs:

- Aileen Suzara, Sustainable and Cultural Foods Consultant; Program Coordinator and Chef Educator, Ceres Community Project; and Food and Agriculture Editor, Hyphen Magazine
- Saqib Keval, Founder, People's Kitchen, Oakland

8:30 pm

Reporting Back and Closing [30 min]

Report back on learning experiences and actionable ideas/methods (contingent on group energy)

KEYNOTE AND PANELISTS

Catriona Rueda Esquibel is Associate Professor in Race and Resistance Studies at San Francisco State University. Her family is from northern New Mexico, from Los Angeles, and from Sonora, Mexico. Dr. Esquibel lives in Oakland with her partner Luz Calvo, and together they have written *Decolonize Your Diet: Plant-based Mexican-American Recipes for Health and Healing*, as well as several articles on queer Chicano cultural studies and reclaiming heritage foods.

Ron Reed is a Karuk Tribal member, spiritual leader, and traditional Karuk dipnet fisherman. He works for the Karuk Tribe of California's Department of Natural Resources as their Cultural Biologist. In his role, Ron develops plans for eco-cultural revitalization, leads youth cultural education camps, and fosters collaborative research at the nexus of traditional ecological knowledge and Western science. Ron plays a critical role in increasing public awareness about the impacts of colonization on the spiritual and physical health of his people and on the ecological integrity of the Karuk ancestral lands. In this capacity, he co-founded the Karuk-UC Berkeley Collaborative, and currently serves on the USDA's Forestry Resources Advisory Board. His work has been featured in numerous news outlets including National Geographic.

Gail Myers is an Agri-Cultural Anthropologist. For the last 18 years she has researched, lectured, taught, wrote about, and recently filmed 30 stories of African American farmers, sharecroppers, gardeners, and a basket weaver. Dr. Myers received her BA from Florida State University, MA from Georgia State University, and PhD from The Ohio State University. She has taught for The Ohio State University, San Francisco Art Institute, Morehouse School of Medicine's MPH Program, Morehouse College, and Denison College. In 2004, Dr. Myers co-founded the non-profit Farms to Grow, Inc., which assists Black farmers to maintain and grow their farms. In 2013, Farms to Grow, Inc. initiated the Freedom Farmers Market in Oakland. Dr. Myers has authored several articles including "Decolonizing a Food System: The Freedom Farmers Market as Resistance and Analysis" in the *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*.

CHEFS

Aileen Suzara is a land-based educator, writer, and passionate cook. First sparked by the environmental justice movement, Suzara links land and culture to rebuild community health. An alumna of UC Berkeley's Master's in Public Health Nutrition and the UC Santa Cruz Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems farm program, Suzara explores the potential of Filipino food culture to prevent chronic disease and restore ecological relationships. Ongoing projects include the Bahay Kubo garden project and Sariwa, a storytelling and popup dinner. When not in the kitchen or garden, Suzara is a lover of the written word. She currently serves as Hyphen Magazine's food and agriculture co-editor and blogs at Kitchen Kwento.

Saqib Keval created the People's Kitchen in Oakland in order to imagine and support new food systems focused on social justice movement building, political education, and accessible community dining. Under his direction, the People's Kitchen has flourished for 8 years as a sustainable grassroots restaurant model with the belief that good food should be accessible to everyone. Keval believes that cooking and eating together are revolutionary acts and powerful tools for decolonization. He was a program director at People's Grocery and the national COLORS director for Restaurant Opportunities Center. He spent his childhood learning how to cook from his family and learned the importance of cooking with love from his grandmother's hands. He draws both from the diasporic foods of his people and his culinary training in the south of France. Keval has helped open and manage restaurants in California, Detroit, and New York City.