Food Culture

• Food is a part of urban culture
• It changes over time
• It varies from place to place
• Urbanization changes the diet
• Politics of food very intimate to the politics of the body
COOKING YOUR DOG
Tasty, healthy and safe recipes
Cities

• Need to be fed
  – Human inhabitants
  – Animal inhabitants
  – Food processing

• Cities are great concentrations of nutrients
Cities

- Food consumption generates ‘waste’
  - Sewage, garbage
- Ecological closure suggests sewage, garbage be recycled back into food
  - Nutrients returned to farmers for re-use
A Paradox

• Canadian cities offer
  – concentrations of nutrients
  – good farming soils
  – ready urban markets

• But the Canadian urban soils are usually unproductive for food
But in China

- Cities traditionally produce a lot of their own food
  - Fruits, vegetables, meat and fish
- Most urban Chinese shop daily, eat fresh foods harvested within 10-15 hours
- Ownership of refrigerators relatively low,
  - access to fresh foods essential
- Night soil traditionally plays a strong role in Chinese food production
Toronto

• Toronto’s people once raised some of their own fruits, vegetables, meat
• Backyard gardening
• Backyard raising of chickens, geese, turkeys, rabbits until the 1950s
  – Ate domestic table scraps
• In C19th, pigs, goats, sheep
  – Urban pigs until 1919
  – Large herds of suburban pigs ate city garbage
Toronto

- In C19th, early C20th lots of urban stables
- For horses, cows
  - For dairy and transportation
  - Some dairies had both
- Streetcar system c. 1890 had 1800 horses stabled on Frederick St
- Toronto consumed lots of oats, straw, hay and animal feed
Toronto

• Urban animal farming phased out in the mid C20th
• Argued on “health” grounds, but mostly exaggerated
  – Barnyard smells offend residential nostrils
  – Barnyard sounds offend residential ears
• Some health issues remain:
  – Avian flu would thrive among backyard poultry
Food & Cities

- Food is central to the urban relationship to the rural hinterland
- Cities eat what the countryside produces
- Feeding cities is about agricultural productivity, access to the urban market
  - Issues of locality
Wheat & Meat Food regime

- Europe industrialising, urbanizing in C19th
  - European settlers migrate abroad
- Settler colonies develop an agriculture capable of feeding European market with C19th transportation technology
  - Based around wheat and meat
Wheat & Meat Food regime

- North America equips with railways, farms etc., devoted to Wheat & Meat regime
- Toronto, a rail hub becomes important as a grain port
  - Shipping to the USA
  - Sustaining brewing & distilling in Toronto
Gooderham & Worts

- Toronto’s biggest industrial complex in the 1880s
- The largest distillery in the British Empire
- Owned a bank, operated two railroads
- Grains fed the distillery
- Distillery slops used to operate massive cattle & hog feedlots
Wheat & Meat Diet

- Toronto, a rail hub, also becomes a major centre for livestock trading, shipping, slaughtering and packing
  - Also leather making
- Serves the US market from 1860s
- Exports to Liverpool from 1870s
  - Pork and bacon packing for the Liverpool market
  - Toronto becomes ‘Hogtown’
Genesis Meat Packers Inc.
Wheat & Meat Diet

• Global trading in food falls into the hands of three major food traders
• These get their start in the wheat & meat food regime
  – Bunge
  – Cargill
  – ContiGroup
Wheat & Meat Diet

• Leaves quite a legacy in food culture
• Recipes involving beef, pork, bread still characteristic of the western diet
MEAT IS MURDER
Tasty, tasty murder.
ビーフ天国！ MEGA MAC 上陸。
IT JUST TASTES BETTER

IT’LL BLOW YOUR MIND AWAY

BK SUPER SEVEN INCHER

Fill your desire for something long, juicy and flame-grilled with the NEW BK SUPER SEVEN INCHER. Yum! for more after you taste the mind-blowing burger that comes with a single beef patty, topped with American cheese, crispy onions and the A.1.® Thick & Hearty Steak Sauce.

$6.25 MEAL
Sorry About the Food Poisoning
Happy Birthday Anyway!
Green Revolution

• After 1945, agriculture in the Third World commercialises

• Efforts to boost production with science & technology
  – High yield crop varieties
  – Artificial fertiliser, pesticides, machinery, agribusiness

• Changes in transportation:
  – Fast ships, continental refrigerated trucking, swift air cargo
A new Food Regime

- Western diet alters to include “fresh” tropical fruits and vegetables
- Distant places provide out-of-season fruits and vegetables year round
- Emergence of a new Fruit & Vegetable Food Regime
Fruit & Vegetable Regime

- Rapidly develops after 1945
- Connected to the rise of mass consumption, suburban supermarkets
  - Refrigerators get larger, universal
  - People add freezers
  - Canadian women abandon the canning season
  - Urban food becomes very cheap
- Food trade becomes heavily corporatized, dominated by multinationals
Fruit & Vegetable Regime

- The key zones for the wheat & meat regime face decline
- Niagara fruit belt, Holland Marsh forced to compete with California, Chile, Costa Rica, China
  - Niagara fruit canneries cease operation
  - Local production damaged by cheap imports
Fruit & Vegetable Regime

• Industrial production intensifies in the urban food chain
  – Questionable use of chemical additives, addictive substances

• Marketing erodes and the sense of place in food
  – Food is imagineered, given new (false) place attributes
Fruit & Vegetable Regime

• All predicated on cheap (largely oil-based) methods of production and transportation
  – Depends on cheap oil
  – Contributes to global warming

• Chemicals, land and water exploitation make the regime unsustainable
Alternatives

• Begins with sensing the problems:
  – Small farmers locally, worldwide struggling in an agribusiness-dominated economy
  – Issues of environmental sustainability (soils, water, oil, greenhouse gases)
  – Issues of food purity, wholesomeness (chemicals, additives, adulteration)
  – Issues of food justice
“More than a terrific movie—it’s an important movie.”
—Owen Gleiberman, Entertainment Weekly

YOU’LL NEVER LOOK AT DINNER
THE SAME WAY AGAIN

FOOD, INC.
A ROBERT KENNER FILM
OBESITY IS SUICIDE

It doesn't have to end this way. Find out how bariatric surgery can help.

Alternatives

• Geography plays an interesting role in many responses
• An effort being made to recover locality in food
  – locavores/Eat Local
• Efforts to restore food purity
  – Organic, “no artificial ingredients”

Some initiatives meet multiple objectives:
  Local, organic to reduce CO2, improve purity, trade with local farmers
Locality & Food

- There seem to be three senses in which locality matters to food culture:
  - (1) locavorism: eating local: produce raised or grown within a restricted geographical area
  - (2) A strong sense of place attached to a food commodity
  - (3) A distinctive food culture associated with a place
(3) Local Food Culture

• Some places seem to have distinct cuisines
  – New Orleans LA
  – St John’s NF
• Others don’t
  – Toronto ON?
Quebec

• Has a geographically distinct cuisine
  – From elite food down to truck-driver food
• Maple syrup is made at a sucreie
The Night they invented Poutine

• Bowser & Blue
(2) Food with Locality

- France has regional wines and cheeses
- Scotland has regional single-malt whiskeys
- Ontario has local wines, breweries, Niagara peaches
- But Toronto’s food culture does not recognize the region’s foods as local specialties
The Pomegranate Restaurant
Alberta’s other Natural Resource
Kensington Market
Toronto Region

• Is trying some locality marketing
  – VQA wines
  – Craft and cask brewing
• But there is massive potential to do more
Ontario Cask Ale

WHAT'S BREWING
Cask ale catching on in Ontario

Bars, brewers, festivals — even a fan club — are embracing traditional English tipple

JOSH RUBIN
DEMi REPORTER

Cask ale, the traditional mainstay of pubs in England, has made huge inroads in Ontario in just a few short years.

A Toronto event called Cask Days has expanded into a province-wide festival with events scattered throughout October. In Toronto alone, 16 pubs and bars regularly serve cask ale. There are three local cask ale festivals, a group devoted to spreading the cask ale gospel to Ontario drinkers (CASIK), and dozens of Ontario brewers regularly brewing cask ale.

All this for a style of beer that harkens back to brewing's earliest days. Cask-conditioned ale is a term for unfiltered, unpasteurized, naturally carbonated beer that undergoes secondary fermentation. Once tapped, cask ale (aka real ale), must be consumed within a few days.

At Bar Volo last weekend, owner Ralph Morana hosted his sixth annual Cask Days festival, with 55 cask beers (and one cask cider) from 37 Ontario and Quebec breweries.

For the first time, Cask Days expanded to include events at several pubs and breweries around the province throughout October. For Morana, though, the surest sign of the growth of cask ale wasn’t the packed house, or the sheer number of ales on offer.

Instead, it was the fact the brewers had the right kind of equipment. “This year, they all had their own casks,” says Morana. “The first time I did this festival, I had to go and buy a bunch of casks and send them out to the breweries so they could actually supply something.”

Casks differ in shape and sometimes size from draft kegs. That the brewers had their own casks suggests they’re making cask ale regularly.

“The first year I did this festival, there were maybe four breweries in Ontario who made cask ale regularly,” notes Morana. “Now, there are about 20.”

When Ontario drinkers got their first modern taste of traditional English beer, they weren’t particularly impressed. In 1985, Guelph Wellington Brewery was founded with the intention of selling only traditional English cask ales (also known as real ale).

“They didn’t last too long,” chuckles Michael Stirrup, who joined Wellington in 1987 and is now part owner and brewmaster.

Most Ontario drinkers weren’t sure what to make of the beer, which can sometimes be a little cloudy because it still contains live yeast. It’s also served less chilled than standard draft beer, and is less fizzy because it’s carbonated by ongoing fermentation in the cask, rather than CO2 pumped through draft lines.

“There weren’t enough people interested in drinking it that way, and bar owners would complain because it couldn’t keep as long because it’s not filtered or pasteurized,” says Stirrup, who calls cask ale “beer in its purest form.”

Before Stirrup even joined the company, Wellington had already decided to offer standard draft and bottled beer, with cask ale as a small sideline.

Pete Brown, 2009 British Beer Writer of the Year, was impressed by the bitter, India Pale Ales (IPAs), Imperial Stouts and other brews he sampled last weekend at Volo. He was also impressed by the cask ale celebration.

“I expected to find a pint of cask ale at a pub or two here,” says Brown, “but I certainly didn’t expect to find a whole festival devoted to it.”

While cask ale is today a niche product even in its homeland, Brown says it’s a niche that has been growing by leaps and bounds, in tandem with the growth in popularity of small-scale, high-quality food. And because cask ale is more perishable than keg beer, it’s far more likely to be produced and consumed locally, which fits with another foodie trend. “People are more interested in locally sourced produce, artisanal breads and cheeses — and cask ale fits right in with that,” says Brown.

While the cask scene in Toronto continues to grow, we won’t likely see the day when cask ale is found in every bar, says Victory Café owner Max Breerton, a native of Manchester, England, and co-founder of CASIK.

Breerton, who hosts two cask festivals (one winter; one summer) at Victory, doesn’t think cask ale has peaked yet.

“T’d be delighted if we could get a critical mass so that one day you’ll be able to go into any neighborhood bar in Toronto and be able to find at least one place serving cask ale.”

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Pine River Cheese

• Ontario dairy farmers building a big-time cheese brand

Pine River Cheese rises from ashes

Rural co-op rebounds from devastating fire that struck as it was launching push into Toronto

JOHN SPEARS
BUSINESS REPORTER

PINE RIVER, ONT.— Paul Harris was in his milking parlour the evening of Sept. 7 when one of his teenage sons got a heart-stopping text message: the Pine River cheese factor was on fire.

“It gave me a kind of sick feeling inside,” recalls Harris, who chairs the board of the 30-member farmer cooperative that owns the factory. There’s never a good time for a fire. But it’s hard to imagine a worse one for the venerable Pine River Cheese and Butter Co-operative, which dates back to 1885 — and already survived a fire that burned the former plant to the ground in 1981.

Pine River Cheese was on the cusp of what Harris and his board had hoped would be a re-launch of the co-op on a new trajectory. Its financial performance for the past five years had been discouraging, bumping along around break-even, with sales of about $8 million a year.

“Then the recession hit and it was a little tougher, but we squirmed our way through,” said Harris. “We just felt we needed to broaden our horizons, and we thought bringing in another guy with some sales and marketing background would help us along the way.”

The board decided to hire a corporate headhunting firm. The headhunters brought them Vijay Kumar. Kumar is not of traditional Bruce County stock — mostly Scots who migrated to Canada a century and a half ago. He was born in Madras India and carved out a career with Kraft Foods, which moved him to the Middle East, then to Canada.

Paul Harris worries about market share loss since the September disaster.
Eating Toronto

• The peameal bacon sandwich
• Known as ‘Canadian Bacon’ in the USA
(1) The locavore Diet

• Claims to save the environment, improve food purity, build economic justice with local farmers
  – Scientific evidence for this is frankly weak
  – The diet is difficult and expensive

• Various possibilities for development
• Bendale BTI in Scarborough begins urban agriculture

• Acres of Swiss chard

An edible education

Scarborough high school’s garden supplies cafeteria, inspires students and feeds community

JENNIFER BAIN
Toro star

Let’s have the Swiss chard tell the story of Toronto’s most ambitious school garden. Until this week, the chard has been growing in front of Bendale Business and Technical Institute, a Scarborough high school. In raised beds gardens built, planted and cared for by students.

Anton Crawford is one of the learners who has been harvesting the red and yellow chard for his landscaping and gardening class.

The daily salads have been carried to the kitchen classroom where Steve Taylor’s culinary arts students transform them into salads, stuffed with rice and red for the teacher’s cafeteria and polished into wraps for the student cafeteria. Until yesterday some of the chard has been bound for the Tuesday market stand where students sell the school’s bounty at any price they can prise.

Back in the garden, the chard and other crops have been visited by English student discussing how to use woodchips and business students learning budgeting through farm finance.

This is the cutting edge of edible education. What Bendale has is one step beyond a simple school garden but not quite an urban farm. It’s believed to be Canada’s first school-based market garden. It proves the educational value of food and all the ways it can be worked into the curriculum. And, if all goes as planned, Bendale will serve as a model for schools across the country.

“There are so many schools that could be turning their lawns into fields of food,” says garden co-ordinator Ian Hopkinson. A community food facilitator with FoodShare.

FoodShare is a non-profit group that tackles food and hunger issues through grassroots projects. It has helped 26 Toronto schools create food gardens and is working with five more on indoor/outdoor projects. Most are modest affairs cared for by staff, students and volunteers. Many English over the summer.

Bendale continues in E7
Max’s Meats, Kensington Market

- West Grey Farms
  - Flank Steak: $5.99/lb
  - Beef Tenderloin: $15.49/lb

- West Grey Farms
  - Prime Rib Roast: $7.88/lb

- West Grey Farms
  - Top Sirloin Steak: $7.97/lb
  - Rump Roast: $6.77/lb
  - Top Sirloin: $5.99/lb

- Ontario Harvest Limousin Beef Rib Eye: $14.97/lb

- Beef Striploin: $11.99/lb
• Wychwood farmer’s market before it moved into the barns
• Beehives at Field-to-Table’s old Eastern Ave Location
(1) The locavore Diet

- Expand intra-urban food production
  - Urban and backyard farming
  - Urban gleaning (Not far from the tree)
- But movement is strongest among inner city creatives
  - With limited growing space and contaminated soils
DUNDAS & MANNING COMMUNITY GARDEN

A drought-tolerant, organic garden
planted by residents September 2000
Not Far From the Tree
(1) The Locavore Diet

- Food culture works best if you can taste the difference
- A locavore diet based on moral satisfaction won’t motivate most people
- Locavorism is expensive
  - Despite activist dreams, it remains inaccessible to the poor
(1) The Locavore Diet

- Most of Toronto’s farmer’s markets with locavore/organic profiles
  - Charge high prices ($4/lb for potatoes)
  - Require vehicle access for producers and customers
  - Those within walking distance only found in affluent areas
(1) The Locavore Diet

- Global population is 7 billion, will peak at 9 billion
- 5 billion urban people by 2030
- Chinese and Cuban-style local-urban food production may well help to feed such populations
- But present-day Toronto-style locavorism won’t
Food Justice

• In most societies, especially capitalist ones, urban access to food is determined socially and economically.

• There are ethnic differences of food culture.

• There are major differences of access based on wealth, social status.
  – The rich and well-connected get privileged access.
Food Justice

• Eating well is more important than eating a lot
• Sometimes the wealthy eat less well than the poor
  – Early C19th English workers felt that eating bread conveyed higher status than eating potatoes
  – Nutritionally better to eat potatoes
Food Justice

• But the wealthy and middle-class tend to eat a better quality of food, have better access
  – Have good-quality grocery stores nearby
  – Are able to afford good food
Food Deserts

• Urban districts in deep social need often lack the market potential to attract quality grocery stores
• Grocery retailing rearranges to serve the wealthier areas
  – Requires auto access
• “Food deserts’ appear in under-served low-income neighbourhoods
**Toronto’s Food Deserts**

FOOD DESERTS refers to a lack of food in an area and an individual's access to it. Basic access to quality and affordable food remains a challenge for a growing number of communities. Neighbourhoods that do not have access to good quality and affordable food are labeled as “Food Deserts.” Often these neighbourhoods are socially distressed characterized by low average household incomes. This map has overlaid areas of income in Toronto along with where one can find grocery stores, and markets for healthy choices, and also where one can find fast food restaurants. It shows the correlation between poverty and food desert locations.

**Income based on a census average**
- Very high: more than 40% above
- High: more than 20% above
- Middle income: 20% above or below
- Low: 20% to 40% below
- Very low: less than 40%

**Fast Food**
- McDonald's
- Burger King
- Wendy's
- Starbucks
- KFC
- Harvey’s
- Tim Hortons

**Grocery Stores/Markets**
- Metro
- Loblaw
- Sobeys
- T&T Supermarkets
- Food Basics
- Sherk’s Foods
- Rabba Fine Foods
- Longo’s
- Other Small Markets

Most people living in a food desert don’t own a car or may not be able to afford public transportation. The cut off for walking to a grocery store is 1km, which is a 10 to 15 minute walk.
Food Deserts

• Often the low-income neighbourhoods have high rates of disease, illness due to inadequate diet
  – Diabetes, heart disease, rickets (historically)
• While lacking access to quality grocery stores
• Poor folk often forced to eat junk food and from convenience stores
  – Both expensive
Food Deserts

- Most of the Toronto’s alternative food culture
  - Urban gleaning, farmers markets
- Focuses on the gentrified inner city
  - And are too expensive for the poor
- Alternative food systems which deliver to areas of deep social need are limited
  - Foodshare has tried
Food Swamps

• A recently-coined term
• Areas within the city where it is easier to get poor-quality fast foods than good quality foods
Urban Food

• An area with huge research and policy potential
• Limited scholarly exploration
• Huge gaps between needs and existing policy
• Alternatives to conventional food policy have interesting potential
  – But remain very problematic