Folklore 3830: Foodways

TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE

Foodways as a term embraces a variety of traditions which focus on dietary practices as well as the preparation and allocation of food. As an introduction to foodways, the course will begin by looking at a variety of regional foods. In addition, both historical and contemporary approaches to the supply, storage, preparation and serving of food will be considered. In fact, we will be looking, from both practical and theoretical perspectives, at the whole range of cookery and food habits—from the acquisition of raw materials to the allocation of potions.

Text


Course Outline

Weeks 1-2 (St John’s campus)

Class 1: Introduction to Foodways
What are foodways and how are they studied? What are the key concepts?

Reading

Class 2: Class, Gender and Ethnicity
What are foodways’ intersections with class, gender, and ethnicity?

Reading


Class 3: Terroir
How do foodways express a sense of place?
Class 4: Tradition and Revival
How do the concepts of tradition and revival apply to foodways? What meanings are expressed in the revival of earlier foodways?

Reading


Class 5: Culinary Tourism
What is culinary tourism? How are foodways marketed?

Reading


Weeks 3-6 (Harlow Campus)
Fieldtrips

Day 1 Harlow to Mersea Island (approx. 74.5 km; 1 h 13 min)
We will spend a day on Mersea Island, the most easterly inhabited island in the United Kingdom, located just off the coast of Essex. Oysters that have been gathered there for generations, were famously dubbed by the Romans as “the only good thing to come out of Britain.”
We will spend some time with an oyster harvester learning about traditional oyster harvesting methods. Some, like Richard Haward, come from families that have been cultivating oysters since the 1700s.

Cost: Honarium £100
Time for visit: 1 h 30 min

Lunch: The Company Shed, Island of West Mersea (at own expense)
Cost: At own expense
Time for visit: 1 hr

We will have lunch at one of the island’s most famous oyster sheds (at own expense).

Mersea Island Museum
http://www.merseamuseum.org.uk/

We will visit this independent museum devoted to aspects of traditional local activities including fishing, oystering, wild fowling and boat building.

Cost: £1 per person
Time for visit: 1 h

**Day 2 Harlow to London approx. 35-40 min by train**

Our tour of London food establishments will include a wide range of food experiences such as ..... 

**Manzes Pie & Mash**
87 Tower Bridge Road SE1 4TW

http://www.manze.co.uk/

Meat pies are quintessential English working people’s food. Established in 1902 by Michele Manze, the present owner’s grandfather, Manzes advertises that they “serve traditional Pie & Mash and Eels (jellied or stewed), in authentic surroundings. At Manzes, we still use the same recipes today for the pies and liquor as were used in 1902, the only changes made have been to improve quality and to meet the higher food standards of today.”

Cost: At own expense but horarium £50
Time for Visit: 1 h
Fortnum and Mason's advertisement boasts a commitment to bringing the world’s best food to Piccadilly for three centuries.

Admission: Free
Time for Visit: 1 h

Harrod’s Food Hall,
87-135 Brompton Road
London SW1X 7XL

http://www.harrods.com/food-and-wine

Encompassing seven floors of “exquisite collections” across 4.5 acres, Harrod’s is a London “institution” that serves has over 15 million customers each year. Their Food Halls offer a wide selection of luxury food items.

Admission: Free
Time for Visit: 1 h

Afternoon Tea at the Tea Rooms
155 Stoke Newington Church Street, London, N16 0UH.
http://www.thetearooms.org/

The Tea Rooms’ website boasts of “serving luxury afternoon teas since 2007, celebrating the traditional art of British cake making. Everything is free-range, home-made and locally sourced, with an emphasis on quality and taste and using our favourite family recipes.”

Cost: £15 per person
Time for Visit: 1 h 30 min

Brunswick Street Market, Soho
http://www.berwickstreetlondon.co.uk/market

Berwick Street Market is one of the London’s oldest markets. Street trading in probably started there in the late 1770s and the area was recognized as a market in 1892.

According to the Brunswick Street market website: “French Huguenots, Greeks and Italians populated the Berwick Street area, a cosmopolitan but modest district. By the 1890s many had opened eating houses serving their native cuisines. As the
market traders attempted to supply the ingredients, Berwick Street Market earned a reputation for selling a bewildering variety of fruit and vegetables. In 1880 tomatoes first appeared in London at Berwick Street Market, grapefruit followed in 1890.

In the 1950s when the only place to buy olive oil in England was a chemist - not for eating but for softening ear wax - famous TV cooks such as Fanny Cradock and food writers such as Elizabeth David bought exotic ingredients from Berwick Street Market.

Walking down Berwick Street in the 1990s, you could expect to hear the Soho street traders’ cry, 'Fill yer boots with bananas, 19p a pound.'

Berwick Street Market has recently become a foodie destination with traders such as the Pizza Pilgrims serving Napoli style pizzas from the back of a converted Piaggio van to artisan cheeses from The Dark Knights of Cholesterol and various world cuisine.

Cost: free
Time for visit: 1 hr

**The Medieval Banquet, London Tower**
http://www.medievalbanquet.com/

Culinary tourism depends on selection and recreation. We will visit this long running medieval feast to discover how a tourist operator socially constructs medieval foodways for a tourist audience.

Cost: 50 per person
Time for visit: 3 h

**Day 3 Harlow to ???.**

**A) Half Day: Food Festival**

Food festivals are a growing phenomenon. We will visit a festival featuring "traditional" food to reflect on the presentation of food and construction of its meanings.

Cost: ?
Time for visit: 2 h

**B) Half Day**
Harlow to Faversham approx. 1 hr. 13 min.

Shepherd Neame Brewery

A guided tour of Shepherd Neame, Britain’s oldest brewer. The tour shows visitors the traditional mash tuns and allows them to taste natural mineral water from the brewery’s well. They try some malted barley, smell locally-grown Kentish hops and see bygone delivery vehicles and step into a recreated cooper’s workshop. The tour ends with a tutored tasting of the brewery’s ales and speciality lagers.

Cost: 12.50 per person
Time for visit: 2 h

Course Assignment—What is traditional food?

Drawing on the relevant readings, complete a critical analysis of one of the field sites we visit. How is “traditional” understood in this context? How is it constructed? To what ends?

Document as much of the process as you are able through fieldnotes, photography, possibly talking to those present etc.

Anticipated length: 5-7 pages double spaces, exclusive of photos and bibliography.

It might be helpful to consider:

Physical context: What is the physical setting? Who is present?

Social context:
  a) Social base: What kind of people are involved? How does this food event fit into a social network?
  b) Individual context: How does the food event fit into an individual’s life? Does it have particular meaning(s) for an individual that may be different, or even in opposition, to the meaning shared by other group members?
  c) Context of situation: How useful is it to the social situation? What social work does it accomplish?

Cultural context:
  d) Context of meaning: What meanings are conveyed by the food event? What information and knowledge are needed to understand the content, meaning, the “point” of the food event as the participants themselves understand it?
  e) Institutional context: Where does it fit within the culture? Hoe does it relate ways in which cultural institutions (familial, economic, religion, educations, political) influence behavior, belief systems etc?
f) Context of communicative system: How does it relate to other kinds of food events? You might think about the emic categories (native categories or divisions) and ways of organizing the world that are evident in this food event.

If you decide to conduct an interview, you must submit a completed consent form with your assignment.

Selected Bibliography

General


**Foodways and Region**


**Foodways and Class**


**Foodways and Gender**


**Foodways and Ethnicity**


**Culinary Tourism**


**Selected Video Resources**

BBC. Our Food-Kent. 50 min. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L40tJ5S8BfQ

BBC. Journey to India: Britain’s Love with Curry. 59 min.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pk2doEQeF3I
The Melting Pot: Cincinnati Chili. 7.29 min.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yE0Hr8FudwQ