The Making of Macau's Fusion Cuisine

From Family Table to World Stage

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Foreword

I first met Annabel in Hanoi in 1996, when she was researching her Vietnamese cookbook *Street Café Vietnam*. This was an important book, particularly given that it was to be released just as the twenty-five-year American embargo was being lifted. This event was to put Vietnam back on the international map, after the country had been isolated for so many years. It was highly colourful book, with all essential recipes included, and Annabel captured many of the iconic dishes.

As an ethnic mutt (Egyptian Chinese), I have always been curious as to how others like me integrate. I am often asked why I haven't fused Egyptian and Chinese food. For me, they could only do so out of some kind of necessity. I wouldn't wish to mess with two great cuisines and turn them into a four-letter word—and I'm not spelling 'nice' here.

One only needs to visit Portugal to understand and appreciate the extent of the nation's colonial conquest. What they left behind seems so incorporated into other societies that it seems natural and normal, but the dishes are fusions of Africa, the spice trade, parts of India, and more.

This is the sort of book that I yearn for to gain a deep historical and cultural understanding of a place. It's a great reference work that will give you golden nuggets of information, which will leave you wiser and more informed than most.

As a half-Chinese person, it's very hard to imagine that the iconic egg custard tart isn't a Chinese creation but rather a Portuguese invention. It's just as shocking when you think that it was the Portuguese who taught the Japanese how to do tempura . . . that the Portuguese introduced the British to tea . . . and the chilli to Asia.

On these pages are discoveries that are fascinating to any food lover and will reveal the importance of Macanese cuisine. When I think of world cuisine and the fusion of countries that boast a great food culture, what generally comes to mind is Turkish incorporating Persian, Vietnamese, Malaysian/Singaporean, and Indian. But after reading this book, you will recognise the contribution of Portugal and Macau.

Bobby Chinn
April 2019
Restaurateur, chef, TV presenter, cookbook author, and world traveller

Introduction

> Food is a tangible entity that has stood through the test of time amidst the disappearing social norms, ceremonies, and rituals. (Ng and Sharim 2016, 104)

This book is partly based on the findings of a tranche of research undertaken between July 2017 and March 2018, commissioned, with financial support, by the Institute of European Studies, located in Macau. This research was written up as a paper that took as its title 'Memory and Identity: Macanese Cuisine in the Diaspora'. The research was partly born out of the fact that more Macanese live outside Macau than within, and implicit were concerns about the future of facets of Macanese culture, here specifically the cuisine.

Central to the research process were the unpacking of terms such as 'memory', 'identity', and 'cuisine'; and even an investigation of the nature of 'diaspora' itself. These terms are all also explored here. However, what emerged as a central issue to the discussion about the status of the cuisine was the very definition of Macanese cuisine itself. It became clear that this cuisine cannot be seen in isolation, as a unique product of Portuguese colonialism in the south of China, but needs to be placed in the context of a far broader picture embracing that embraces in particular the cooking styles and techniques (and ingredients) of Goa and Malacca. These port cities also served as Portuguese outposts in Asia. Further, it became clear that Macanese cuisine cannot to be seen viewed solely in the context of Portuguese culinary influence, but has to be seen as part of a group of other, possibly hybrid, cuisines within Asia, and as part of various intra-Asian culinary conversations. Lastly, it cannot be assumed that such culinary conversations have taken place chronologically according to the sequence of Portuguese landings. Rather, a dynamic forum across time and geography is suggested.

The place of food in cultural studies

Critics have gone so far as to say that Marcel Proust changed perceptions of the relevance and importance of the sensory world upon publication of *Remembrance of Things Past*. In placing the aroma and taste memories of the

madeleine as a pivotal moment in the search for truth, he seminally privileges the sensory alongside the cerebral; and perhaps even opened the door for food studies. The possible discrepancy in his text between external appearance and corporeal sensory reaction should be stressed. 'Not until he actually tasted the cookie dipped in tea could he fix the gustatory experience and connect it to his life' (Parkhurst Ferguson 2004, 18). On the other hand, to take a couple of examples from poetry, when William Carlos Williams writes of plums in his poem *This Is Just To Say*, they exist as no more than metaphor (of something presumed sexual); and in T. S. Eliot's *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* a life measured out with coffee spoons speaks metaphorically of routine, boredom, and regret, and not a gustatory pleasure upon waking.

Food anthropologist David Sutton argues that the tendency for the field of food studies to have been considered 'scholarship-lite' may be, at least as far as the field of anthropology is concerned, because 'unlike other cultural domains, such as kinship, ritual and religion, exchange or politics, food does not have its own well-developed specialist terminology and tools of analysis' (Sutton 2001, 3). He presented a paper on the subject of food and memory in 1996 at the Department of Anthropology at Oxford, whereupon the response of an Oxford don was: 'Food and memory? Why would anyone want to remember anything they had eaten?' (Sutton 2001, 1). Though, given the compromise of typical food delivery in the United Kingdom, even as recently as the early 1990s, this comment could be taken rather literally.

It is perhaps the everydayness of food and eating—everyone has to eat, across cultures, across continents (though basic access to sufficient food is here assumed)—which has tended to send it 'back-of-house', as it were. Yet the other two great cultural indicators of culture, religion and language, similarly inform the everyday. As Sutton further argues regarding food, 'this obviousness can be deceptive as well, because food can hide powerful meanings and structures under the cloak of the mundane and the quotidian' (Sutton 2001, 3).

Food studies within the social sciences and history take many forms, of course. Food studies is 'an intrinsically multi-dimensional subject—with social, psychological, physiological, symbolic dimensions, to name merely a few' (Holtzman 2006, 362). We can begin with hunters and gatherers, and how the discovery of fire transformed lifestyles, as well as diets. Industrialisation, as well as the Agricultural Revolution, changed the way we perceive food, and had significant impacts on diet/s. Food taboos, food security, food safety, food sustainability, and food ethics are all powerful markers. Also for important consideration are the social (or other) notions of eating, since eating is almost universally regarded as a sharing process. We can ask apparently simple questions about what we eat and why, whom we eat with,

at what time, and investigate the 'grammar' of a meal and meal time, and yet in the process emerge with powerful cultural indicators.

Background

Portuguese cooking is embodied on the South China coast in the cuisine of the Macanese. For almost 500 years Portuguese practices and philosophies around food have been in dynamic dialogue with those of Asian cultures. Some intra-Asian culinary conversations have been noted, such as the Nyonya-and-Baba cooking of Malacca (essentially a conversation between Fukien-Chinese and indigenous Malaccan foodways), but the interaction of Portugal with foodways in, particularly, Goa and Malacca, resulted in the creation of a unique cuisine in a third space: Macau. This cuisine is the Macanese cuisine, the food of the Macanese people, who are descendants of the Portuguese, and who consider themselves the 'sons' of the land of Macau.

Who Are the Macanese?

I once asked Macau restaurateur Isabel Eusebio what the Macanese 'look like' and her reply was: '*We* know who we are.' I know she wasn't being dismissive, as she was the first Macanese to urge me, in the early 1990s when I was working as a freelance journalist, to begin to record Macanese culture and in particular the recipes. But it was an answer tinged, I think, with ambivalence.

Yet the first challenge in doing research about an aspect of Macanese culture is to define what it is, and what it means, to be Macanese. We explore in these pages the history of the Macanese people, and the examination of the cuisine helps to piece that history together. There are many questions. To be Macanese do you need to have a male ancestor who would have identified as Portuguese and thereafter various female ancestors from different Asian ethnic groups? If you are the adoptive child of Macanese parents but don't have Macanese blood as such, are you Macanese? Here we are being mindful of those who identify as Macanese—and there may be some (technically) Macanese who don't identify as Macanese. We could also identify a second wave of Macanese, the neo-Macanese, who are the Macau-born progeny of a Portuguese father and a Chinese mother, say, who might well identify as Macanese. There is much to suggest that the Macanese themselves have shifted their identities across time; see, for example, the work of João de Pina-Cabral in *Between China and Europe: Person, Culture and Emotion in Macao* (2002).

There is no government census in Macau to give a definitive answer to the question as to how many Macanese live in Macau—figures such as 10,000 are bandied about—but it is broadly accepted or assumed that those in the Macanese diaspora outnumber those who live in Macau. We have nuanced categories here, too, such as those who were born in the diaspora but have taken up residence in Macau. It could also be noted here

that the (ethnically) Portuguese community itself is never deemed to have comprised more than about 7,000, in a territory which now has a population of about 650,000, almost all of which is ethnically Chinese.[1]

Macau and the Macanese

In recent decades, political upheavals and social and cultural changes have led to the perception of an unstable Macau, and identities have become undermined. As sociologist Stuart Hall points out, quoting cultural critic Kobena Mercer, 'identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty' (Hall 1992, 275).

Such uncertainty became particularly evident in the years leading up to the return of Macau to China in 1999, when many Macanese left Macau. Over a number of decades the diaspora had been moving to Portugal and Portuguese-speaking Brazil, but this newer wave was targeting English-language speaking countries: the United States, Canada, and Australia. Many Portuguese also left prior to or at the moment of the handover, their absence creating additional social and societal change. Recent years, however, in response, have seen a resurgence in the number of young Portuguese arriving in Macau (as well as settling in Hong Kong) to work in the private sector—in response to various European economic crises and Asian opportunities. Their attitude, however, tends to be Eurocentric in approach as opposed to assuming the China/Macau-global identities of the Macanese.

The Macanese Diaspora

When more of a people live outside their community than within, as is the case for the Macanese, what kind of impact might this have on their cuisine, either literally and figuratively, or both? An important element of the research deployed in the preparation for this book was the examination of the relationship that members of the Diaspora have with their own cuisine. It was research that began in 2012, in preparation for a paper that I was to present at a conference on intangible cultural heritage, co-organised by the Chinese University of Hong Kong in January 2013.[2] Or perhaps it had begun before that, when I was researching my 2003 culture-cookbook *Taste of Macau: Portuguese Cuisine on the China Coast*, having first begun to publish on Macau culinary culture with my first book in 1994, entitled, appropriately enough, *Macau on a Plate*.

Macanese Food: At Home in Macau?

This research has been set against the backdrop of a dynamic Macau landscape. It has investigated the status of Macanese food in contemporary Macau; its representation,

Italy. However, basil-infused water forms part of the Greek bread-making process. A Greek student studying in London, on seeing a pot of basil, wistfully reported how '[i]t really smells like Greece.' Such a statement is suggestive of 'the importance of the sensory in reconnecting and remembering experiences and places one has left behind'. Further, the process of basil being newly, and individually, taken as a national symbol of Greece, 'suggests that objects can shift levels of identity when experienced in new contexts' (Sutton 2001, 74).

This research introduces an additional element, as compared with Sutton's work in *Remembrance of Repasts*, and that is the state of Macanese food in contemporary Macau, and how cross-generational memories of, and attitudes to, Macanese cuisine at home might vary as compared to those of the diaspora. This research also examines how the very status of Macanese food within Macau may have changed over time. It addresses the idea that a cuisine is not fixed in time; but nor is it contained within a single history: the cuisine may have seen transformations not only among the diaspora, but at home too.

Cuisine or Cooking?

Implicit in this research the attempt to discover when and if Macanese food became a 'cuisine' rather than simply being what Macanese cooked and consumed on a daily (or more or less daily) basis. Is there even such a thing as a cuisine on a national level? A historical distinction between the cooking of the elite and the food of the other is noted—the haute cuisine of the French, for example, and Imperial cuisine in a China context. There is, however, a further and important distinction that can be made—which concerns on the one hand the habitual,[4] and on the other performance.

This leads to the discourse about what a cuisine is, who is awarded the privilege of defining a cuisine, and what purpose that cuisine might serve. That Macanese cuisine will have an entry (written by this author) in the *Berkshire Encyclopedia of Chinese Cuisines*, a five-volume work to be published in cooperation with Oxford University Press (2020) indicates that 'history' has recognised it as a legitimate culinary contribution in the Chinese context. But is it recognised, and to what extent, within Macau? Ergo, should it perhaps have a palpable presence on the pages of, for example, Portuguese cookbooks?

The definition of cuisine, in a dictionary sense, would probably run something like this: A style or method of cooking, especially as characteristic of a particular country, region, or establishment; or food cooked in a certain way. To this we might add provisions such as a requirement for there to be a coherent group of dishes that together form a cuisine.

In his research paper 'Food and the Counterculture', Warren Belasco sets about defining cuisine, and does it thus: as a 'set of socially situated food behaviours with these components: a limited number of edible foods (selectivity), a preference for a particular way of preparing foods (technique); a distinctive set of flavour, textural and

visual characteristics (aesthetics); a set of rules for consuming food (infrastructure). Embedded in these components are a set of ideas, images, and values (ideology) that can be "read" just like any other cultural "text"' (Belasco 2005, 219–20).

Ideas contained here, such as 'limited number'; 'particular way of preparing', and 'set of flavour . . . characteristics' do not immediately appear to apply to Macanese food, given its extraordinary breadth in terms of food stuffs, preparation methods, and its refusal to be confined to the 'sweet-salty' or 'salty-sour' type of dialectic. Does Macanese cuisine have its own unique set or parameters? Does something 'thrown together' in the domestic kitchen—as Macanese cooking is often represented—constitute a cuisine in the rigid definitional sense?

The food moniker 'fusion' did little to progress the study of the nature of cuisine.[5] Macanese cooking has sometimes been labelled the world's first fusion cooking, and that assertion may contain some truth in the sense that it juxtaposed ingredients that had likely never seen each other: soy sauce and bay leaf, for example. But fusion implies that you're fusing something concrete to something concrete, which is not the case with Macanese food. Portuguese cuisine may have originally been the foundation of Macanese cuisine—though represented in a third space, many miles from the motherland—but here we have the cooking styles, ingredients, and traditions of multiple cultures coming together to create something entirely new.[6] This process is distinct from hybridity, which refers to a process that results in the changing of culinary traditions and habits within a single culture. Fusion food, as represented in the public domain, is an entirely conscious creative act of (re)production; it is something performed.

Are these distinctions between fusion, creolisation, hybridity, and cuisine in a 'pure' sense important within culinary discourse? Certainly they can help us to explore cuisines that are neither linear nor geographically delimited, and may not fit neatly into a class- or status-driven matrix of high and low cooking.

Is Macanese cooking a cuisine? In response to the latter question, Zhang Yang and Pang Ching Lin argue that, in terms of the drawing of a distinction between its place of origin and its reinvention, 'Macanese cuisine has become . . . a full-fledged cuisine, evolving from home food enjoyed at home to a home food cuisine offered in restaurants' (Zhang and Pang 2012, 935). But further distinctions are required here, the first of which is concerned with the significant gap between the daily, domestic culinary practices of the Macanese and those practices that enter the public arena by way of clubs and restaurants; or the inclusion of a few Macanese dishes on pan-Asian, all-day-dining restaurant menus. Cuisines can be, and are, 'used' as part of the tourism package, wherein a fight for authenticity emerges. The removal of pork from dishes on menus in Chinese and Nyonya restaurants in Malaysia is one example; the appropriation of Macanese dishes in Cantonese restaurants in Macau is another. Both these practices will be explored further within these pages.

Summation of Chapters

Chapters 1, 2, and 3 deal directly with the SurveyMonkey findings, relating to cultural identity around food among the diaspora and at home in Macau, and all the time in the context of a changing Macau.

Chapter 1 specifically seeks to explore the relationship between the act of cooking Macanese food, the act of consuming Macanese food, the frequency of such consumption, and its importance in terms of being Macanese. Explored in detail are the shared views of the Macanese community in Hong Kong, in contrast to the rest of the diaspora, for there may emerge some significant differences, with regard to community, beyond Macau, and beyond even family. The symbolism of eating Macanese food, as a way of relating to Macau the place, as opposed to simply eating Macanese food, is also investigated.

Chapter 2 looks at the history of the restaurant scene in Macau, which, it is argued, has probably only existed since the 1980s except for a few higher-end hotel restaurants; though definitely of importance were clubs and the dining rooms at, for example, police headquarters. Explored thereafter is the question of the visibility of Macanese food within Macau, and whether it is by definition a food of the home, rather than one of the foodways in the public domain. The impact of tourism in Macau on traditional foodways is also explored. The difficulties of defining Macanese cuisine within the dominant Cantonese food offering, and the historic Portuguese definitions, also relate to how Macanese food is perceived in the broader population.

Chapter 3 addresses head on the idea that it is asserted that Macanese cuisine is disappearing, but places this assertion in the context that this phenomena of loss might relate to the cultural habits of the Macanese themselves. The importance of family, and beyond that generations of ancestors, is explored. Examined is the nature of the cookbook, and the meaning of the preservation of the recipe in the first place.

Chapter 4 sets the scene for the importance of considering Macanese cuisine not only as a unique cultural artefact, but as a cuisine that must be considered within the broader context of Portuguese culinary influence in Asia. This relates significantly to both the Columbian Exchange and the spice trade, which also had global connotations in terms of changing agricultural practices and eating habits. It also relates to the specific culinary conversations into which the Portuguese entered in Asia, and how those Occidental–Oriental conversations might relate to intra-Asian culinary conversations. This might even take the shape of a single ingredient, such as a fermented or preserved fish sauce. The central role of religion in culinary practice, as well as conversation, is also considered.

Chapter 5 relates, against the ephemeral backdrop of the significant lack of recorded history, specifically how Macanese cuisine might have evolved in the kitchen and how it might thus be defined in a broad cultural arena. It takes specific dishes as examples (Minchi, African Chicken, the condiment Balichão) and also compares Macanese dishes to, for example, Kristang dishes—the foodways of Portuguese

descendants in Malacca. It also explores how the cuisine might have interacted with the Chinese community, most particularly regarding the so-called Merenda Man, but also in the politicised, linguistic arena in contemporary Macau, officially part of China since 1999.

Conclusion

> My chutneys and kassundies are, after all, connected to my nocturnal scribblings—by day, amongst the pickle vats, by night within these sheets, I spend my time at the great work of preserving. Memory, as well as fruit, is being saved from the corruption of the clocks.
>
> —Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*

Barely mid-morning, under a streaming sun and, close to the city's tram line, long queues have already formed outside a café in Lisboa, famous for the Portuguese pastry, pastéis de nata. Here we are in the shadows of the Jerónimus Monastery in the district of Belém, at Pastéis de Belém.[1] The venue was purportedly established in 1837—and it is here and then that the famous egg tart, surely Portugal's most famous culinary export, was born; known here not as pastéis de nata but rather grandly as pastéis de Belém. This sweet, creamy, and eggy pastry tart was said to be created by a monk from the monastery—from whence so many Portuguese desserts and sweetmeats emanated—seeking to make a living. Its popularity spread.

The daily thousandfold sprinkling of ground cinnamon on the top of each pastel de nata has reached such quotidian proportions that it might be forgotten that cinnamon is not a part of traditional Portuguese cooking mores.[2] It is not cultivated in Portugal. Rather, it was introduced, from Sri Lanka (then referred to by colonial powers as Ceylon) via the spice trade, in which Portugal played an important part, and was embraced, along with other spices such as nutmeg and clove, by European cooks. Spices, costly and exotic, were used as markers of wealth and prestige, incorporated

Figure 6.1: Pastel de nata.

perhaps with flaked almonds in a Venetian risotto; or alongside dried fruit in an English pulled pie of chopped beef with carrot. Warm spices were then part of the savoury canon, utilised not only in the sweet sections of the pastry kitchen.

Culinary narratives among colonising nations have traditionally assessed the culinary influences of, broadly speaking, the coloniser on the colonised. The Vindaloo of Goa, for example, was of direct Portuguese genesis, and comprised a European (marinating) technique interacting with local produce, including spices. Secondary narratives have concerned themselves with the acculturation of a dish. The British found the Indian kebab of egg cased in spicy ground mutton appealing, but felt they were profoundly improving upon it by replacing mutton with pork and the spices with green herbs such as sage from the kitchen garden.

Yet as the example of a sprinkle of cinnamon shows, influences have gone in multiple directions. The spice mix Vadouvan—usually comprising cumin seeds, mustard seeds, and fenugreek with shallots and garlic—is a French derivation of an Indian masala from Puducherry. The iconic Lea & Perrins Worcestershire Sauce represented the commercialisation by two chemists in 1830s England of a condiment discovered in Bengal by a lord. Loaded onto British ships due for the colonies, it went on to become a component part of both Kristang and Macanese cooking.

People, Produce, and Practice

In any study concerning the Portuguese of culinary practices—and indeed agricultural practices—it is necessary to go back yet further to the Columbian Exchange, and thereafter to the spice trade. These two massive global movements represented extraordinary global communication that would change exactly what was grown where, and subsequently what was cooked where.

The spice trade opened up global economic relations and illuminated existing cross-cultural exchanges and affiliations being enacted along the Spice Route. In addition, as alluded to above, it changed European cooking habits, at least for those who occupied the elite stratifications. The effects of the Columbian Exchange, delivered by the Portuguese (and the Spanish) were perhaps more profound in that they transformed not only agricultural practice and introduced new agricultural products, but they also transformed diets—and life expectancy. The humble chilli pepper, for example, delivered high levels of Vitamin C, a vital nutrient, but could also bring life to a humble bowl of steamed rice, topped perhaps with a sliver of chicken or some torn leafy greens. Alternative starch sources such as potatoes and sweet potato also became available.

To follow this introduction of new produce were processes, in the hands of the Portuguese, of entirely new ways to prepare such produce and cook such produce. Culinary conversations were already taking place in Goa, notably in the creation of the world's most famous 'curry': Vindaloo. The term has nothing to do with the Indian term for potato—aloo—but is rather a corruption and conflation of two Portuguese

words, *vinho* (wine) and *alho* (garlic). This dish reflects a tradition on the island of Madeira to marinade pork in wine (or vinegar; or, in the case of Goa, coconut vinegar), and this cooking technique was introduced to India. All pork-based dishes in Goa are of Portuguese origin. Next, the Portuguese established a trading base in Malacca, much closer geographically to Macau. Here, their colonial strategy continued to involve marrying into local families, the descendants of these families becoming known as a mixed-race community called the Kristang. From these 'hybrid' kitchens emerged specific cooking styles and flavours, and many of these dishes have much in common with the cooking of the Macanese, as well as with Malay cooking.

What Is Macanese Cuisine?

The colonial situation was to be different when the Portuguese arrived in Macau, on the Pearl River Delta, and this tiny territory became a semi-official part of Portugal's Asian empire. There was no indigenous population—just a few fishing families who lived on their boats—thus no women to convert to Christianity and then marry. Significantly, then, there was no Chinese 'culture' as such and certainly no indigenous cuisine. There might not be, then, any local Chinese influences on the resultant Macanese cuisine.

The Portuguese, faced with these new conditions, brought along wives and servants from Goa, from Malacca, and from countries such as Japan and the Philippines with which they were enjoying trading relations. These women brought with them intangible cultural skills, and knowledge of a variety of Asian cuisines and ingredients that were not native to southern China. Spices with which they were familiar—cinnamon, cloves, coriander seeds, nutmeg—were available in Macau because of the spice trade, via the Portuguese ships.

Further, the Pearl River Delta was, or had become partly thanks to the Columbian Exchange, agriculturally rich. The stapes of the Portuguese diet, then, on which Macanese cuisine would centre—fish and seafood, pork and chicken; potatoes and onions; and eggs—were all in plentiful supply. To a Portuguese dish of fried chicken were added coconut milk and chilli. Pork and onion stew went in a completely different direction with the richness of belachan and the sweetness of jaggery. Ginger and cumin ameliorated the aromas of tripe; and steamed shrimp was elevated with papaya flowers and chopped red chilli. The emergence of a subsequent Macanese cuisine can be traced back through a variety of strands, including personal and family; sense of community; and indeed a sense of competitiveness within that community as to who could best prepare, say, curried crab.

And, thus, a unique cuisine was born. Or was it—unique?

Intra-Asia Culinary Conversations

It has perhaps been assumed, given that the Portuguese settled first in Goa, thereafter in Malacca, and only after that in Macau, that any culinary conversations that may

have come about would have started in Goa, subsequently moved to Malacca by way of culinary influence, and thereafter from Malacca into Macau.

To start with, implicit here is the assumption that there was such a thing as a Goan 'cuisine', when in fact it had already encountered Arab influence, for example. In the same way, the suggestion of a distinctive Malaysian foodway is upset by the forces of conquerors and colonialism; and in Peranakan cooking we might see foodways that need to be defined within the cultural domain and quite beyond ethnicity. In other words, a dish deemed to be Chinese could have been appropriated by another community based not on the recipe, but on assumed meaning and use of that dish. If we can see that Macanese cuisine was influenced by the cooking of Malacca, it is no longer possible to argue that there was no Chinese influence on the cuisine, even if it may be possible to say that this influence did not come from the China territory of Macau, but via Chinese immigrants to Malacca and its environs.

The intra-Asia Peranakan community was already well established prior to the arrival of the Portuguese, and this community had created a cuisine that existed outside and beyond the indigenous Malay cuisine. Early Chinese immigrants are assumed to have found that the local dishes did not suit their taste buds, but the ingredients with which they were familiar were unavailable. Thus, they began to reproduce their own cooking by substituting foodstuffs which were available locally.

What is termed Peranakan culture, or Nyonya-Baba, is generally defined in terms of the settling and marrying of Chinese immigrants from the early fifteenth century with local women. It is quite possible that the rules of Islam were then not too strict, and Malaysian women could be acquired as wives and concubines by foreigners (non-Muslims). It is also possible that, for example, baby girl Malaysian orphans were raised by Chinese, and thus became culturally available for marriage among Chinese. However, it has been argued that the Baba are a product of influences that transcend both Chinese and Malay cultures.

So it was into this already vibrant intra-Asian culinary conversation that the Portuguese were introduced. In the process of their marrying into the local community—Christians who may have been of Malay or Chinese descent, or both—they came into contact with a hybrid cuisine. Fermented fish paste—belachan, geographically of both Indonesian and Malaysian extraction—would go on to frame the Portuguese-influenced cooking in the domestic kitchen, as would sophisticated spice mixes (rempah).

The cooking of Portuguese descendants, the so-called Kristang community in Malacca—with their mixed Portuguese and Asian ancestry, in a sense a community reflective of the Macanese people themselves—informs many aspects of Macanese cuisine. Let's take the Macanese dish Porco Balichão Tamarinho, very much influenced by Malay cooking traditions, and the Kristang Kari Porku Tambrinhyu, as one example. The core ingredients—pork, shrimp paste, tamarind—are almost identical, the difference being the addition by the Kristang of Malaysian rempah (spices). As another example, Kristang Debal and Macanese Diabo are both served at Christmas

and both take the name of 'Devil'. While the 'recipes' may not look too similar at a cursory glance, both incorporate the strong and distinctive flavours of vinegar and mustard. As an aside, there are also British influences on both Kristang cuisine and Macanese cuisine in the British period in Malaysia and after the cessation of Hong Kong to the British, respectively.

Yet at the same time as these similarities have been noted, there's evidence that the descendants of the Portuguese in Goa were also cooking similar dishes. There are many examples of dishes that we would consider to be central to the Macanese canon that also appear in cookbooks from Goa, such as Sorpotel, Sarabulho, Galinha Cafreal, and Feijoada (*sic*). It has also been suggested that the Portuguese brought Chinese culinary traditions to Goa from Malacca and Macau. How was such a culinary exchange orchestrated? It is possible that the Church played an important role.

As a result of the Church's outreach, Christians were also emerging from, for example, trading partner Japan. These young men, training for the priesthood, were moving across oceans between Malacca, Goa, Macau, and Portugal. Culinary conversations were almost certainly happening during these tedious and treacherous voyages. These could have been occurring among the culturally and ethnically diverse crew members and with a ship's cooks, as well as with those passengers for whom they prepared the food. Such interactions are highly suggestive of the fact that culinary conversations were not occurring in a single direction, in an Occidental-Oriental binary; and nor they did not happen chronologically in colonial acquisition terms.

There were quite likely Cantonese influences on Macanese cuisine into the twentieth century, or at least adaptations. We have the interesting anomaly of the so-called Merenda Man; the man who sold Macanese snack foods such as Chilicotes to the Macanese community in Hong Kong. It is assumed that the wives of these entrepreneurs had previously worked in Macanese households, and subsequently shared recipes with their husbands. Over time these snacks could become more 'Cantonese' in terms of using cheap local ingredients with which to stuff these little pastries, or even enclosing them in rice flour wrappers, rather than baking them in a wheat-flour based pastry. As an aside, it should be noted that most Cantonese dim sum are steamed, though some have a wheat flour pastry casing and are baked.

Finally, intra-Asian conversations can be defined within the context of a most important single condiment. The fermented fish paste belachan, generally purchased in block or sliced form, is associated with the territories which that we would now call Indonesia and Malaysia. During the Portuguese period in Malacca, a new fermented shrimp sauce was created, known as cincaluk. It seems that the Macanese Balichão is in turn a kind of version of cincaluk; and Balichão also appears in Goa under very similar names: Ballchow or Balchao. In a quite surprising move, Balichão is believed, via Macau, to have been the inspiration for the Cantonese fermented fish condiment [*yulu* 魚露]; and all the while recalling garum, the fish sauce of the Romans, as noted by Pliny the Elder, in *Natural History*, as 'the liquor from putrefaction'.

Macanese Cuisine: Its Perception

So is Macanese actually a unique cuisine, created in Macau, centring on Portuguese staples and locally growing produce, but accented with Asian flavours and Asian sensibilities? An anchor of this book has been to explore the emergence of a unique cuisine created in Macau by the colonial Portuguese and their households.

But why would we now be asking global and contemporary questions about a cuisine created some 450 years ago in a tiny part of China?

Macanese cuisine was perceived to be in danger of dying out in Macau, and a question had to be asked about its fate in the continuing face of diaspora. Additionally, what transformative processes have been taking place against the backdrop of a transforming Macau, emerging from its image as Hong Kong's country cousin to a glitzy gambling destination that is even overtaking Las Vegas in terms of gaming revenues. A survey was thus conducted to explore how Macanese in the diaspora felt about Macanese food, with particular reference to the preservation or otherwise of the cuisine.

A Sense of Place: Macau

> Two weeks in his homeland after an absence of twenty-four years had hardly been enough. It would have been better if he hadn't come back. But how could a Macanese turn down the chance of seeing his homeland again . . . He had made full use of his stay. He had satisfied his long craving for Macanese and Chinese food, savoured with their own local ingredients.
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> —Henrique de Senna Fernandes, 'Candy'

The SurveyMonkey carried out in 2017 among the Macanese diaspora was partly conceived in response to the fact that there are more Macanese living outside Macau than within. Estimates of how many Macanese live in Macau are no more than guesswork: anecdotal figures mooted in the community vary widely from 3,500 to between 10,000 and 20,000. The Macau population stands at 650,000, with women outnumbering men, but there are no official census figures dividing the population by ethnicity/nationality. It should also be noted that the Portuguese community has probably never numbered above 7,000.

As background, Macanese cuisine only started to become visible in Macau from the late 1980s, when a number of independent Macanese restaurants began to emerge. The first ever Macanese restaurant was Riquexo, which opened in 1978. From the 2000s, Macanese cookbooks began to be published. Macanese cooking was seeing its transformation from something humble, produced in the domestic kitchen, to something that was listed on the menus of restaurants in five-star casino hotels. Macanese food was becoming part of the cultural tourism package. Indeed, government initiatives that are in place require new hotels to offer Portuguese and Macanese food, as well as Portuguese wine. Further, small independent businesses receive a tax break when they do likewise.

The new-found visibility of Macanese food has not come without a cost. There is much culinary confusion around what exactly constitutes Macanese food and what constitutes Portuguese food, or whether there might be any crossover.

One (non-casino) hotel restaurant lists twelve Portuguese and Macanese dishes on its menu, such as Arroz de Pato (Duck Rice) and Galinha Piri Piri, which is translated into English on the menu as African Chicken. Another menu features a 'local' Portuguese and Macanese page, with dishes including Fried Macanese Prawns, Bacalhau a Bras, and Caldo Verde. To briefly analyse the above listings, Galinha Piri Piri and African Chicken are in fact quite separate dishes, though both probably have African origins. Only Fried Macanese Prawns could be considered 'authentically' Macanese; while Duck Rice, Bacalhau a Bras, and Caldo Verde would be considered 'authentic' Portuguese.

Hospitality industry insiders, and indeed Macanese beyond, believe more effort should be made to help communicate the cuisines of Macau. It is certainly questionable as to whether tourists visiting Macau are able to name a Macanese dish.There are queues for pastéis de nata (egg tarts) at Lord Stow's in Coloane Village; for pork chop buns in the old Taipa village; and for gift boxes of almond cookies in various downtown locations. But the former is Portuguese (and in this case the 'secret' recipe is one created by a British pharmacist); and the latter two should technically be defined as 'Macau' food. Some elements of the tourist crowd might be able to name African Chicken, and indeed this is sometimes referred to as the national dish of Macau, but could they or would they place this within the Macanese canon; and indeed would they even know of the existence of distinct Macanese foodways? One mainland Chinese blogger expressed surprise when she was served a kind of curry with steamed rice in what she assumed to be a Portuguese restaurant.

Further, some point to the similarities between Macanese and Cantonese cooking, and many small Cantonese restaurants now offer local/Macanese specialities. Chinese chefs, even those trained in Macanese cooking, are likely to annotate recipes to suit either local palates or the tastes of tourists, mainland Chinese in particular. Such adaptations are regarded, among the Macanese, as a kind of culinary hijacking.

At the foundation of these culinary contestations are indications of the nature of the Macanese themselves, and how their identity has changed over time. At different points in history, Macanese-ness has been viewed as an absolute strength. At other points, the cultural capital of being of Portuguese descent has been emphasised; or of being more broadly of European descent. Being 'local', that is understanding local culture and being able to speak Cantonese (in addition to Portuguese and English), has also been stressed at certain times. Some families, with closer ties to Portugal, have tended to eat more Portuguese and Macanese food at home, while once Macanese marry into Cantonese families their eating habits are similarly affected. We also have the case of the Chinese cook, who would surely have cooked Cantonese food for her Macanese employer; and there is evidence that canny, entrepreneurial Cantonese—known as the

Merenda Men—began to cook Macanese snacks on the street for people who were too busy to make them at home.

Leaving Macau: The Diaspora

There is no single diaspora, and movement out of Macau has occurred for different reasons over time. Some left Macau for a better life, for education, for more opportunities; or during wartime and economic hardship; and in particular prior to Handover in December 1999. At this historic juncture, there was significant anxiety about China taking Macau away from the Macanese who feel themselves to be the indigenous people of Macau.

Neither is there a single diaspora in terms of the relationship maintained with Macau, the motherland. There is a significant and strong Macanese community in Hong Kong, which is just one hour from Macau by ferry, but few in this community visit Macau often or have much of a relationship with it. On the other hand, Macanese who have relocated to Canada, to Australia, to the USA, reveal very strong bonds with Macau.

The food anthropologist considers the nature of that bond in terms of Macanese food, which presents as one of the few cultural identifiers remaining within the community, or perhaps the only one. Research for this book began as a research paper entitled 'Memory and Identity: Macanese Cuisine in the Diaspora', with research including a global survey (hosted by SurveyMonkey) disseminated through the Casa movement.

There is little question of how important this movement, together with various other Macanese associations, has been for the preservation and celebration of Macanese culture in the diaspora, and through the regular conferences held in Macau for members of these Casas. One survey respondent even commented that he joined a Casa to pay tribute to, and to feel closer to, his (deceased) parents. The first Casa to be launched was Club Lusitano in Hong Kong, 150 years ago, followed by Club Recreio in 1906. Casa de Macau in Portugal was established in 1967; followed by the co-opting of various Casas and clubs in the USA, Canada, Australia, and Brazil. The most recent to be co-opted was the UK's Macau Home, in 2016. The Council of Macanese Communities (Conselho das Comunidades Macaenses, CCM) was founded in 2004 with a remit to manage all the Macanese associations, which now number nineteen. Of these, thirteen are in the diaspora and six in Macau.

Minchi: An icon

Based on survey results, it is notable how recipes and dishes, and remembrance of dishes, take some members of the Macanese diaspora powerfully back to the physical space of Macau. Some further stressed how their (loving, nostalgic) relationship with Macau should be seen as an important part of their cultural identity. Two respondents

Macanese recipes also evoked strong emotion. Respondents used terms such as 'selfishness' and 'stupidity', or 'disappointed', to describe their attitude to those who have refused to share.

Indeed, Macanese food takes on importance at many levels beyond the spoon and fork. Man shall not live by bread alone? Macanese food goes far beyond calories, nutrients, and sustenance. This comment is instructive: 'I do my best to cook for my grandchildren at every opportunity *so that the tastes will be embedded in them from a young age*' (my emphasis); as is this one: 'Most of us of the Macanese diaspora *cling* to our heritage, like most migrants, via our traditional food' (my italics). The relationship of the Macanese, then, to Macanese food is profoundly complex; and further, occupies multiple spaces—the domestic setting, Macau the place, and within the global diaspora—and then assumes different meanings. 'Food provides a fluid symbolic medium for making statements about identity' (James 1997, 74).

A case for cookbooks

The reaction to questions about Macanese cookbooks yet again evoked strong emotion. One respondent suggested that given the publication of a number of Macanese cookbooks, the risk of loss of recipes and cooking traditions was not high—but he was very much a lone voice on this subject. There is scant enthusiasm, and certainly no praise for Macanese cookbooks, within the broader Macanese community. Perhaps even the reverse is true, based on comments garnered during this research.

Yet survey responses indicated that as many as two-thirds of those surveyed opened a Macanese cookbook at least occasionally—but clearly only rather apologetically, and even disparagingly. Respondents noted that they might refer to the 'one' Macanese cookbook they own; or that they refer to privately distributed informal 'cookbooks', and to records of family recipes preserved in the form of scrapbooks and the like.

This apparent disengagement with cookbooks, even as half of respondents use them regularly, certainly deserves some analysis. The respondent quoted above as seeing the value of cookbooks for recipe preservation, makes an additional comment, however, and I wonder if the key to the disparity lies here: 'Family specific variations are interesting but mostly will die with the family's last members.'

Even while recipes and tips are being shared within families, cookbooks might be perceived to be enhancing and even cementing the sense of loss of Macanese cuisine; or Macanese culture. In moving Macanese cooking away from a simple, everyday practice, and into the global culinary arena, there's almost a sense of alienation from published Macanese recipes. Recipes might deliver reasonably reliable lists of ingredients and even some technical hints—but they don't deliver Mother. The suggestion is that it is not enough to talk about the relationship between food and identity, for the actual recipe serves as a kind of conduit between the two and thus itself becomes an important part of identity, most particularly when it is a family recipe passed down. Based on survey findings, the importance of family, but most particularly the mother or the

grandmother involved in the preparation of food, is central. Dishes and recipes are symbolic of family, and of Mother. It may only be the next generation/s who without any surviving aunt to call for an ingredient tip, will see cookbooks as perhaps something of cultural value. But that's for later research.

Critics argue that a culture—a language, a cuisine—exists only so long as it is useful. Macanese cooking endures, reconfigured again, but it may never have existed in a pure form. Rather, it has continually evolved, through a series of intra-Asia culinary conversations over 450 years. It has moved from domestic kitchen to hotel dining rooms; lost, perhaps, apart from the myriad meanings and memories of Minchi. Yet it has been simultaneously saved from the 'corruption of the clocks' by the chef in the casino.

Plate 1.16: A modern take on Casquinas by Chef Antonieta Manhão in Macau. Photo credit: Carlos Marreiros.

Plate 1.17: African Chicken. Photo credit: Koon Ming Tang.

Plate 1.18: Minchi, almost ready for serving, cooked by Richard Laimbeer. Photo credit: Koon Ming Tang.

Plate 1.19: Chillies at Red Market, Macau Photo credit: Cammy Yiu.