

LESSON 16

Mga Talang Pangkultura: Pagkain Food

Can you cook Filipino dishes? If so, how did you learn? Do you have Filipino recipe books or do you check out these recipes online?

An interesting discovery I made while doing research on Tagalog women writers in the 1930s were recipes in *Liwayway* magazines published in the 1930s and 1940s, and available only in microfilm format. Apparently, several articles were directed to women, more specifically to homemakers, and among these articles were recipes or tips for the home cook. Among those I found interesting were:

One, a special article focusing on chicken with what seems a general title “*Masasarap na Luto* (Delicious Dishes).”¹ The article laments about chicken’s unaffordability—something surprising to the contemporary reader since chicken is considered today as an inexpensive item when compared to beef, shrimp, and sometimes, even vegetables. According to the article (115):

Ang manok ay isa sa lalong mabuting pagkain ng sino mang nilikha, sapagkat ang manok ay tiyak na masustansiya at masarap. Gayon man, ang pagkaing ito’y hindi makayang bilhin pangkaraniwan ng dukhang mag-anak, kaya’t naging palasak ang kawikaang ang manok ay isang handang pang-araw ng linggo at pista lamang.

(Chicken is one of the better foods for any creature [=anyone], because chicken is certainly nutritious and delicious. However, this food is not usually affordable, so it is usually said that chicken is only for Sundays or for fiestas [town celebrations to honor a Catholic patron saint.]

The article lists recipes such as **pesa** (boiled chicken with cabbage); **putsero** (chicken cooked with cooking bananas and chorizo); **tinola** (chicken ginger soup); **afritada** (chicken with tomatoes and red bell peppers); **sopas na manok** (chicken soup); **luto sa toyo** (chicken cooked in soy sauce); and **tiniim** (chicken cooked with chorizo and wine). It also identifies the secret ingredient—**patis** (fish sauce) and explains that the fish sauce should be used on the chicken as one starts cooking—in the same way that salt is used.

Two, a similarly titled article, “*Masarap na Pagluluto ng Ating Katutubong mga Ulam* (Delicious Cooking of Our Native Dishes)”² which features the following recipes: **sopas na manok** (creamy chicken soup with tapioca, and made even richer

¹ *Liwayway Extra*, March 1937. p 115.

² *Liwayway*, 19 April 1935. p 44.

by two egg yolks); **kroketang itlog** (croquettes); **pikadilyong kalapati** (pigeon cooked with water chestnuts, rice wine and noodles, and served on lettuce leaves); and **kaning Sinangag** (fried rice) (also further described as **Lutong Instsik** [Chinese dish]). I observed several things which may be of interest to language learners. First, recipes in the 1930s used both Spanish and English terms for some ingredients. For example, carrot is also listed as **zanahoria**, and parsley is also called **perejil**. Second, a term used to describe low heat—**atay-atay na apoy**—which is hardly used today.

Moreover, the pigeon recipe called for a broth and a sauce identified as **caldo Chino** (Chinese broth made by simmering chicken and meat [does not specify if this is pork or beef] for two and a half hours over low heat) and **salsa Chino** (made with *caldo Chino*, sugar, soy sauce, and sesame oil, and thickened with cornstarch).

A third article entitled “*Masasarap na Pagkain* (Delicious Food)” prepared by Natividad Policarpio is also worth mentioning because of the way the author chooses to describe ingredients and ingredient amounts—for example, **sisiw** (literally, meaning “chick,” but which at that time, could also mean “chicken,” **10 puso ng mais** (literally, ten hearts of corn; 10 corn cobs); **pinaghugasan ng sinaing** (water from washing rice); **isang dakot na dahon ng ampalaya o dahon ng sili** (a handful of bittermelon or pepper leaves); or **sampung sentimos na baboy na giniling** (ground pork worth ten centavos); and **isang hiwang taba ng baboy o anim na tinapa** (a slice of pork fat or six pieces of smoked fish).

These recipes give us a glimpse of food influences, cooking terms, food cost, language use, and in general, life in the Philippines in the 1930s. Refer to two of the recipes in Lesson 16 and try them in your kitchen!