

The Kitchen Crisis

Verta Mae Smart-Grosvenor

— Author's Note —

I do not consider myself a writer, i am a rapper.
therefore do not read this piece silently...rap it aloud.

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there is confusion in the kitchen!

we've got to develop kitchen consciousness or we may very well see the end of kitchens as we know them. kitchens are getting smaller. in some apts the closet is bigger than the kitchen. something that I saw the other day leads me to believe that there may well be a subversive plot to take kitchens out of the home and put them in the street. i was sitting in the park knitting my old man a pair of socks for next winter when a tall well dressed man in his mid thirties sat next to me.

i didn't pay him no mind until he went into his act.

he pulled his irish linen hankie from his lapel, spread it on his lap, opened his attaché case, took out a box, popped a pill, drank from his thermos jug, and turned and offered the box to me. thank you no said i. "i never eat with strangers."

that would have been all except that i am curious black and i looked at the label on the box, then i screamed, the box said INSTANT LUNCH PILL: (imitation ham and cheese on rye, with diet cola, and apple pie flavor). i sat frozen while he did his next act. he folded his hankie, put it back in his lapel, packed his thermos jug away, and took out a piece of yellow plastic and blew into it, in less than 3 minutes it had turned into a yellow plastic castro convertible couch.

enough is enough i thought to myself. so i dropped the knitting and ran like hell. last I saw of that dude he was stretched out on the couch reading portnoys complaint.

the kitchens that are still left in the home are so instant they might as well be out to lunch.

instant milk, instant coffee, instant tea, instant potatoes, instant old fashioned oatmeal, everything is preprepared for the unprepared woman in the kitchen. the chicken is precut. the flour is pre measured, the rice is minute, the salt is pre seasoned, and the peas are pre buttered. just goes to show you white folks will do anything for their women. they had to invent instant food because the servant problem got so bad that their women had to get in the kitchen herself with her own two little lily white

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hands. it is no accident that in the old old south where they had slaves that they was eating fried chicken, coated with batter, biscuits so light they could have flown across the mason dixon line if they had wanted to. they was eating pound cake that had to be beat 800 strokes. who do you think was doing this beating?

it sure wasnt missy. missy was beating the upstairs house nigger for not bringin her mint julep quick enough. massa was out beating the field niggers for not hoeing the cotton fast enough. meanwhile up in the north country where they didnt have no slaves to speak of they was eating baked beans and so called new england boiled dinner.

it ain't no big thing to put everything in one pot and let it cook. missy wasn't about to go through changes and whup no pound cake for 800 strokes.

black men and black women have been whipping up fine food for centuries and outside of black bottom pie and nigger toes there is no reference to our contribution and participation in and to the culinary arts.

when..they do mention our food they act like it is some obscure thing that niggers down south made up and don't nobody else in the world eat it.

food aint nothing but food.

food is universal.

everybody eats.

a potato is a patata and not irish as white folks would have you believe.

watermelons is prehistoric and eaten all ober de world.

the russians make a watermelon beer. in the orient they dry and roast and salt the seeds. when old chris got here the indians was eating hominy grits. and before he "discovered" this country the greeks and romans were smacking on collard greens. blackeyed peas aint nothing but dried cow peas whose name in sanskrit traces its lineage back to the days before history was recorded. uh ah excuse me boss, means before you-all was recording history. uh ah i know this is hard for you to believe suh but i got it from one of yo history books and i know you-all wouldn't talk with no forked tongue about history.

the cooking of food is one of the highest of all the human arts. we need to develop food consciousness. so called enlightened people will rap for hours about jean paul sartre, campus unrest, the feminine

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mystique, black power, and tania, but mention food and they say, rather proudly too, "i'm a bad cook." some go so far as to boast "i cant even boil water without burning it."

that is a damn shame.

bad cooks got a bad life style.

food is life.

food changes up into blood, blood into cells, cells into energy, energy changes up into the forces which make up your life style.

so if one takes a creative, imaginative, loving, serious attitude toward life everything one does will reflect one attitude hence when one cooks this attitude will be served at the table. and it will be good.

so bad cooks got a bad life style and i don't mean bad like we (blacks) mean bad i mean bad bad.

come on give a damn. anybody can get it together for vacation. change up and daily walk through kitchen life like you was on an endless holiday. aint no use to save yourself for vacation. it's here now.

make every and each moment count like time was running out. that will cool out that matter of guess who is coming to dinner and make it a fact that DINNER IS SERVED.

one of the best meals i was ever served was at my friend bella's. bella served an elegant meal in her two room cold water tub in the kitchen six story walk up flat. she had a round oak table with carved legs, covered with a floor length off white shaker lace tablecloth. in the center was a carved african gourd filled with peanuts, persimmons, lemons and limes. to start off we had fresh squeezed tangerine juice in chilled champagne glasses. then scrambled eggs, sliced red onions marinated in lemon juice and pickapeppa sauce, fried green tomatoes, on cobalt blue china plates. hot buttermilk biscuits with homemade apple jelly on limoges saucers (bella got them from goodwill for 10 cent a piece) and fresh ground bustelo coffee served in mugs that bella made in pottery class at the neighborhood anti poverty pro community cultural workshop for people in low socio economic ethnic groups.

you are what you eat.

i was saying that a long time before the movie came out but it doesn't bother me that they stole my line. white folks are always stealing and borrowing and discovering and making myths, you take terrapins,

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diamondback terrapins. the so called goremays squeal with epicurean delight at the very mention of the word. there is a mystique surrounding the word. diamondback terrapins.

are you ready for the demystification of diamondback terrapins???????

they aint nothing but salt water turtles.

slaves on the eastern shores used to eat them all the time. the slaves was eating so many that a law was passed to making it a crime to feed slaves terrapins more than 3 times a week.

white folks discovered terrapins, ate them all up and now they are all but extinct (terrapins).

oh there are a few left on terrapin reservations but the chances of seeing one in your neighborhood is not likely.

in my old neighborhood (fairfax s.c.) we always talk about how folks in new york will give you something to drink but nothing to eat. after having lived for several years in fun city i understand how the natives got into this.

with the cost of living as high as it is here i understand how you can become paranoid and weird about your food.

i understand where they are coming from but i thank the creator that there is still a cultural gap between me and the natives. on the other hand you cant be no fool about it. it don't make sense to take food out your childrens mouths to give to the last lower east side poet who knocks on your door but you can give a margarine sandwich and a glass of water. cant you? eating is a very personal thing.

some people will sit down and eat anybody.

that is very uncool. you cant eat with everybody.

you got to have the right vibrations.

if you don't get good vibrations from someone, cancel them out for eating. (other things too.)

that is the only way to keep bad kitchen vibes at a minimum. tell those kind of folks that you will meet them in a luncheonette or a bar.

even at the risk of static from family and friends PROTECT YO KITCH'N.

it's hard though. sometimes look like in spite of all you do and as careful as you try to be a rascalion will slip right in your kitchen. i cant stand rascalions. Among other things they are insensitive. you ask them "may I offer you something" "some coffee teas juice water milk juice or maybe an alcoholic beverage."

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they always answer “nah nutin for me” or else they say “i’ll have tea if you got tea bags” or “coffee if it is instant out! talking about not going to any trouble. hell they already in your house and that is trouble and personal. what the rapscallions are really saying is don’t go to any trouble for me cause i wouldn’t go to none for you. rapscallions don’t mind taking the alcoholic drink because it is impersonal. nothing of you is in that. all you got to do is pour from a bottle. they don’t feel that you have extended yourself for them so they wont have to do no trouble for you in return. in most other cultures when you enter a persons home you and the host share a moment together by partaking of something. rapscallions love to talk about culture but their actions prove they aint got none. they dont understand that it is about more than the coffee tea or drink of water. it’s about extending yourself. so watch out for rapscallions. they’ll mess up your kitchen vibes. PROTECT YOUR KITCHEN

Smart-Grosvenor, Verta Mae. (1970). Kitchen Crisis, in Bambara, Toni Cade. (ed). The Black woman: An anthology. New York: New American Library, p119-123.

We would like to thank:

Juanita Anderson, Anthony Barboza, Rachel Watanabe Batton, Elliot Jerome Brown Jr., Chandra Smart Weinland Brown, Vinie Burrows, Julie Dash, David Henderson, Leroy Henderson, Tonya Hopkins, Joe Neel, Sue Goodwin and the NPR Archives, Adam Parker & The Charleston Post and Courier, The Southern Foodways Alliance, Margaret Troupe and the Harlem Literary Salon, Michele Y. Washington, and Maketa Dorothy White.

The Verta Mae, Always Already booklet was produced by Scott Barton and Myron Beasley, PhD

Photo credits: Banner photo credit: Verta Mae banner, Leroy Henderon
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