

# Best Practices for Culturally Appropriate Recipe Development

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Presented by:

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for Chef Culinary Conference

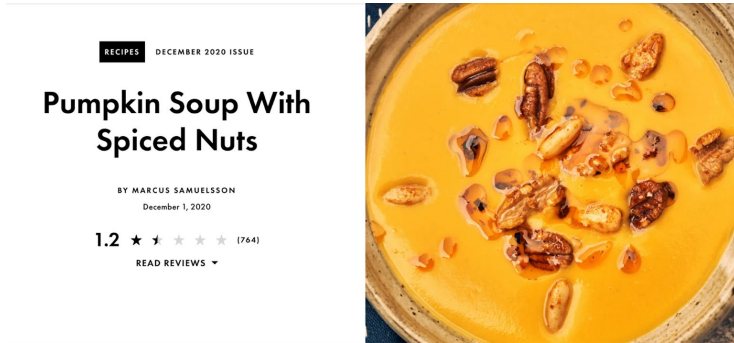


# Breana Lai Killeen, MPH, RD



- Culinary nutritionist, recipe developer, marketing specialist
- Senior Food Editor for Food & Wine
- 10 years as a food editor and Test Kitchen manager at *EatingWell* magazine
- MPH from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- Le Cordon Bleu London
- Wine Spirit & Education Trust trained sommelier
- Registered dietitian
- Social Media Chair for the Food & Culinary Dietetic Practice Group for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
- Mom of 4
- Farmer

# Why are we here?



## Padma Lakshmi says disparaging Indian food isn't funny. It's ugly.

Perspective by Padma Lakshmi  
August 25, 2021 at 6:18 p.m. EDT



## After Another White Food Blogger Whitewashed An Asian American Dish, People Want More Than Just Damage Control

Tieghan Gerard of Half Baked Harvest has since changed the recipe name, but Vietnamese Americans don't believe she's internalized why the appropriation was hurtful.



Posted on February 22, 2021, 8:15 pm



# Soup Joumou

Original Recipe Title as  
Listed by Bon Appetit  
Dec 1, 2020



# Soup Joumou

"This recipe is a disgrace...It really takes a special level of arrogance to take a dish, not just any dish but one of deep cultural significance to the people that cook it, and decide that the original recipe, ingredients, traditional seasonings, cooking techniques, and flavor profile are not palatable, not worth showcasing, or simply not "good" enough for your white fanbase."

-STEPHAN L

## Traditional Ingredients Missing

- Beef
- Potatoes
- Carrots
- Cabbage
- Celery
- Leek
- Turnips
- Scotch Bonnet Pepper
- Pasta (Rigatoni)

## Non- Traditional Ingredients Added

- Coconut Milk
  - Berbere
- Maple Syrup
- Almonds
- Nutmeg
- Allspice
- Cinnamon





# Pumpkin Soup with Spiced Nuts

*"Editor's note: We've updated the name and byline of this dish, and changed the headnote to match the excerpted recipe, which is chef Marcus Samuelsson's take on Haitian soup joumou, from Samuelsson's cookbook 'The Rise.' We apologize for misrepresenting this recipe.*

Haitians often commemorate Independence Day on January 1 by eating soup joumou. While rebellion was ongoing throughout slavery, the Revolution began in 1791 and by 1804, Haitians had wrested control from the French. Black people in Haiti had been forbidden from eating soup joumou during enslavement, as the dish was a delicacy. Upon independence, the dish became a symbol for Black Haitians' freedom. This is my take on it.

# What is cultural appropriation?

**Cultural appropriation** is the unacknowledged adoption of customs, practices and ideas of one people or society,

often for the dominant group's entertainment or profit, and resulting in the propagation of stereotypes.



# Writing Culturally Appropriate Recipes - A ROAD MAP



- Recipe Titles
- Recipe Headnotes
- Recipe Adaptations
- Recipe Development
- Photography
- Words to Avoid
- Examples
- Resources
- Questions

# Recipe Titles – Classic

- Siu Mai (燒賣, Shumai, Cantonese Shrimp & Pork Dumplings)
- Fideuà (Fideo Noodle Paella)
- Keftedes (Greek Meatballs)



# Recipe Titles – Classics Reimagined

- Siu Mai with Cabbage  
\_\_\_\_\_ (燒賣, Shumai, Cantonese  
Shrimp & Pork Dumpling)
- Fideuà with Lobster  
(Fideo Noodle Paella)
- Turkey Keftedes  
(Greek Meatballs)



# Recipe Titles – Inspired by Classics

- Tofu, Mushroom & Cauliflower Steamed Dumplings
- Crispy Pasta Bake with Andouille & Crab
- Turkey, Sun-Dried Tomatoes & Chickpea Meatballs





# Avoid Describing a Dish by a Continent

- Asian
- Asian-Spiced
- Asian Dressing
- Asian Salad
- Asian Noodles



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Use Asian-Inspired



TURKEY

GEORGIA

ARMENIA

AZERBAIJAN

CYPRUS  
LEBANON  
PALESTINE

SYRIA

IRAQ

JORDAN

ISRAEL

QATAR

SAUDI ARABIA

YEMEN

KUWAIT

IRAN

AFGHANISTAN

PAKISTAN

INDIA

NEPAL

BHUTAN

BANGLADESH

SRI LANKA

MALDIVES

KAZAKHSTAN

UZBEKISTAN

KYRZYSTAN

TURKMENISTAN

TAJIKISTAN

MONGOLIA

CHINA

MYANMAR

LAOS

THAILAND

CAMBOIA

VIETNAM

BRUNEI

MALASYA

SINGAPORE

INDONESIA

EAST TIMOR

NORTH KOREA

SOUTH KOREA

JAPAN

TAIWAN

PHILLIPINES



## Crispy Smashed Brussels Sprouts

Brussels sprouts get crispy and flavorful in the oven when they're "smashed" and seasoned with Parmesan cheese and everything bagel spice.

[READ MORE](#) →

Inotes



# Recipe Headnotes



## Chicken Cutlets with Sun-Dried Tomato Cream Sauce

★★★★★<sup>40</sup>

Though a chicken cutlet may be a chicken breast cut in half, this recipe shows how to make chicken cutlets with double the deliciousness. A jar of sun-dried tomatoes does double duty for this healthy dinner recipe.

[READ MORE](#) →







## Recipe Headnotes

- Brief description below the recipe title that qualifies anything significant the reader should know about the recipe or gives the reader additional information.
- Serving suggestions, inspiration for the recipe or deviations from the classic.
- **This is where you honor or give context to your classic, reimagined recipe or the cultural influence.**



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- Serving suggestions, inspiration for the recipe or deviations from the classic.
- This is where you honor or give context to your classic, reimagined recipe or the cultural influence.
- **AVOID SAYING THAT YOU'VE MADE IT BETTER THAN THE CLASSIC OR THAT THE ORIGINAL WAS BAD.**

# Recipe Development

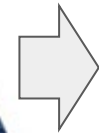
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# Recipe Development

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Do your homework.



# Recipe Development

- How do you develop a recipe when you are not of that specific culture or ethnicity?

➡ Do your homework.

➡ Give credit.



# Recipe Development

List traditional ingredients first, then the substitution(s).

➔ 1 Tbsp. dark soy sauce

OR

➔ 2½ tsp. light soy sauce  
+ ½ tsp. molasses  
+ 1/8 tsp. sugar

# Recipe Development

- If there isn't a good substitute, describe why in the headnote.
  - Example: palm oil.  
The substitutes are coconut oil or ghee, but these are very different and will change the dish.



# Recipe Development

- Do not italicize ingredients in other languages. This automatically signals “other” (nonwhite) foods.







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- Do not italicize ingredients in other languages. This automatically signals “other” (nonwhite) foods.
- Never describe an ingredient as exotic, newly discovered or trendy, as this is generally when white audiences are discovering something for the first time.

# Culturally Sensitive Food Photography

- Match the ingredients and techniques with the photo.
- Use props that are authentic to the region or culture:
  - No chopsticks with Thai food unless it's a noodle-based dish.
  - No chopsticks at all with Filipino food.
  - Difference in Chinese, Japanese and Korean chopsticks. (Japanese chopsticks are thinner at the point. Korean chopsticks are heavier, metal and flat.)
  - Chopsticks should not point toward the person or be sticking out of the food. Both are considered rude.
- Show authentic garnishes and props, not just something because it's pretty or adds color.
  - Do not add Chinese red envelopes to the background just to signal it's a Chinese dish.





## Words to Avoid

- EXOTIC
- WEIRD
- ORIENTAL
- KAFFIR LIME -> MAKRUT LIME
- MANLY/GIRLY
- WHITE TRASH
  
- GUILT/GUILTY
- SINFUL
- SKINNY
- BINGE-WORTHY
- CLEAN



## **Words to Use Cautiously**

- ETHNIC
- CHEAP/CHEAP EATS
- ALL-AMERICAN
- HEALTHY

# Pad Kee Mao (Drunken Noodles)

Recipe from [Hong Thaimee](#)

Adapted by [Julia Moskin](#)

**YIELD** 2 to 3 servings

**TIME** 1 hour

The taste of a good pad kee mao relies on fresh garlic, basil and chiles — and a lot of each. (“Kee mao” means, roughly, “drunk-style,” and dishes with that label are associated with late-night cravings and hangover prevention.) The finished dish should be fragrant, pungent and whatever means “hot” to you: Deploy your chiles accordingly. Hong Thaimee, a chef in New York who grew up in Bangkok, employs a heavy Dutch oven, instead of a wok. (She said she was surprised to find that it worked better than a wok for Thai stir-fries on her tiny apartment stovetop, as its wide, flat bottom has more contact with the flame and holds onto more heat.) Fresh lime leaves are a popular addition; they are easy to buy online, along with fragrant Thai basil and, sometimes, holy basil. But in a pinch, Ms. Thaimee said, Italian basil and a garnish of lime zest are fine. —**Julia Moskin**

[Save to Recipe Box](#)



Johnny Miller for The New York Times. Food Stylist: Rebecca Jurkevich.

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describes  
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# Fusion Recipes

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- Use Asian-inspired or Italian-inspired, etc.
- Describe predominant flavors instead of cultures.
- Give credit to the inspiration and/or state that it's a fusion recipe.
- Use neutral, appropriate props in photos.

Fluffy Asian-inspired bao buns are filled with crispy buttermilk fried chicken and creamed corn in this fusion recipe. Serve with your favorite hot sauce and lots of napkins.

## Southern-Fried Chicken Bao with Creamed Corn and Hot Sauce



# 5 Best Practices for Culturally Appropriate Recipes

1. **Do your homework.** Research the authentic name, ingredients, method and heritage of a recipe.
2. **Give credit.** Develop your spin on the recipe but give credit to the origins.
3. **List authentic ingredients first** if adding substitutions.
4. **Use appropriate garnishes and props,** and list any toppings in the ingredient list.
5. Let Google Trends and keywords guide your development, but **don't sacrifice cultural competency for a keyword.** Get creative with how to work in what people are searching for.

# Best Practices for Culturally Sensitive Recipe Development Resources

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## When It Comes to a Recipe, What's in a Name?

<https://www.vice.com/en/article/889vvv/when-it-comes-to-a-recipe-whats-in-a-name>

## Words you'll never see me use in restaurant reviews

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/restaurants/article/Words-you-ll-never-see-me-use-in-restaurant-13652564.php>

## Our Secret List of Banned Words

<https://www.serious-eats.com/our-secret-list-of-banned-words>



<https://www.studioatao.org>

# Thank you!



**Breana Lai Killeen, MPH, RD**

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