



‘You are what you eat’: food culture & enhancing belonging & engagement in HE

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What will we cover?

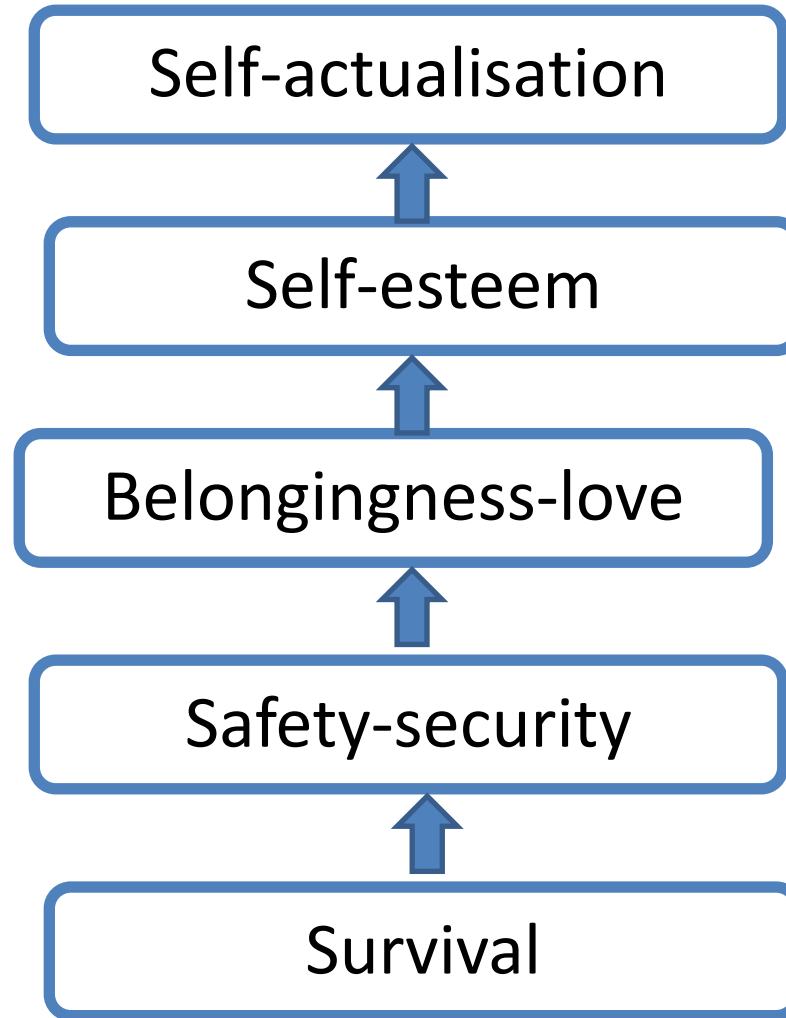
We will consider:

- Belonging in HE
- The Cultural Food Stories project at Kingston University
- Whether & how food may be used to enhance belonging

Context

- Belonging at university helps student attainment and retention (*Hausman et al, 2009; Freeman et al, 2007*)
- Important contributor is establishment of social relationships between students and with staff (*Katanis, 2000; Johnson, 2012; Dwyer, 2017; Read et al, 2018; Meehan & Howells, 2019*)
- The emergency move to online teaching and learning significantly reduced sense of belonging in both staff and students at Kingston University (*Mulrooney & Kelly, 2020; Abu et al, 2021*)
- Food is universal; multiple meanings including personal, cultural, religious & health-related (*Lupton, 1994; Rozin, 2005; Williams et al, 2012*)

Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs



(Webb, 2008)

The Cultural Food Stories project

- Recipe & story-sharing project at KU
- Invitation to participate; recipe template & short demographics questionnaire
- Personal significance of the recipe
- Cultural/ religious significance
- Origin
- What three words/phrases?
- Participation & belonging; 6 statements (*Yorke et al, 2016; Ribera et al, 2017*)
- Did participation in the project affect sense of belonging?

Statements on belonging at KU

Statement	Agree/ strongly agree	Neither	Disagree/strongly disagree
I feel at home ¹	38 (84.4)	6 (13.3)	1 (2.2)
Enriching experience ²	40 (88.9)	5 (11.1)	0 (0.0)
This university respects my ethnicity & culture ³	36 (80.0)	6 (13.3)	3 (6.7)

¹Older (26-30y & >30y) agreed with this significantly more than younger participants (18-21y; p= 0.04 & p= 0.02 respectively)

²Younger participants (18-21y) agreed with this significantly less than older (30+y, p=0.03)

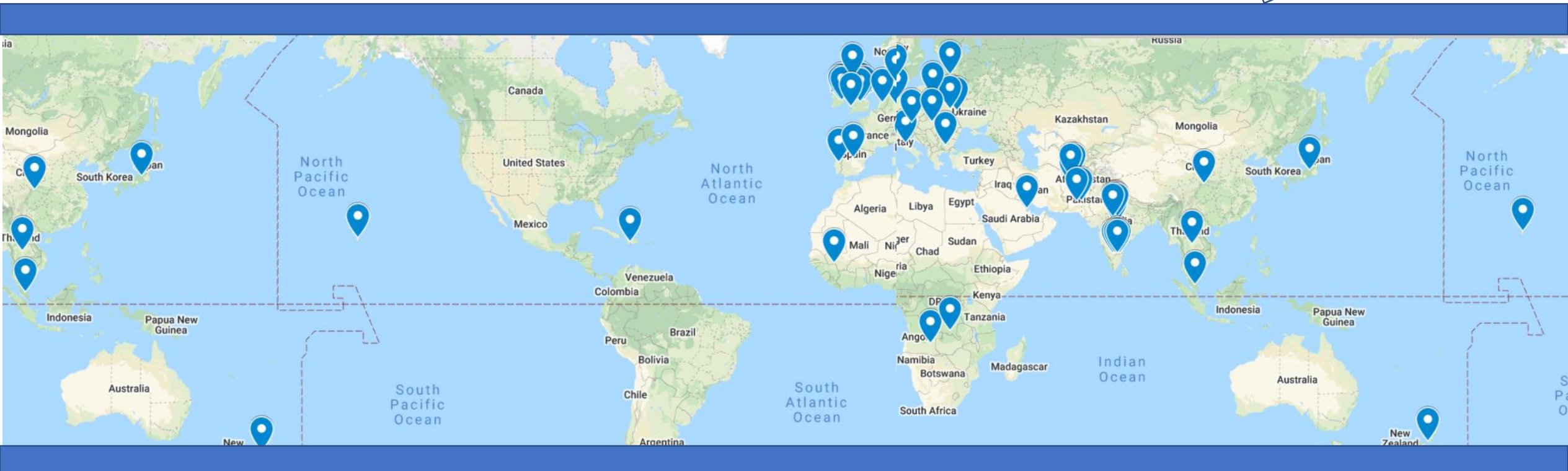
³Female participants agreed with this significantly more than male participants (p=0.03)

Where are you from? (n=21)



Where is your recipe from? (n=34)

Grandmother X 4
Grandfather x 1



Book x 1

Mother x 1



Thinking about the many functions of food in our lives...

Go to www.menti.com
Enter the code you will be given



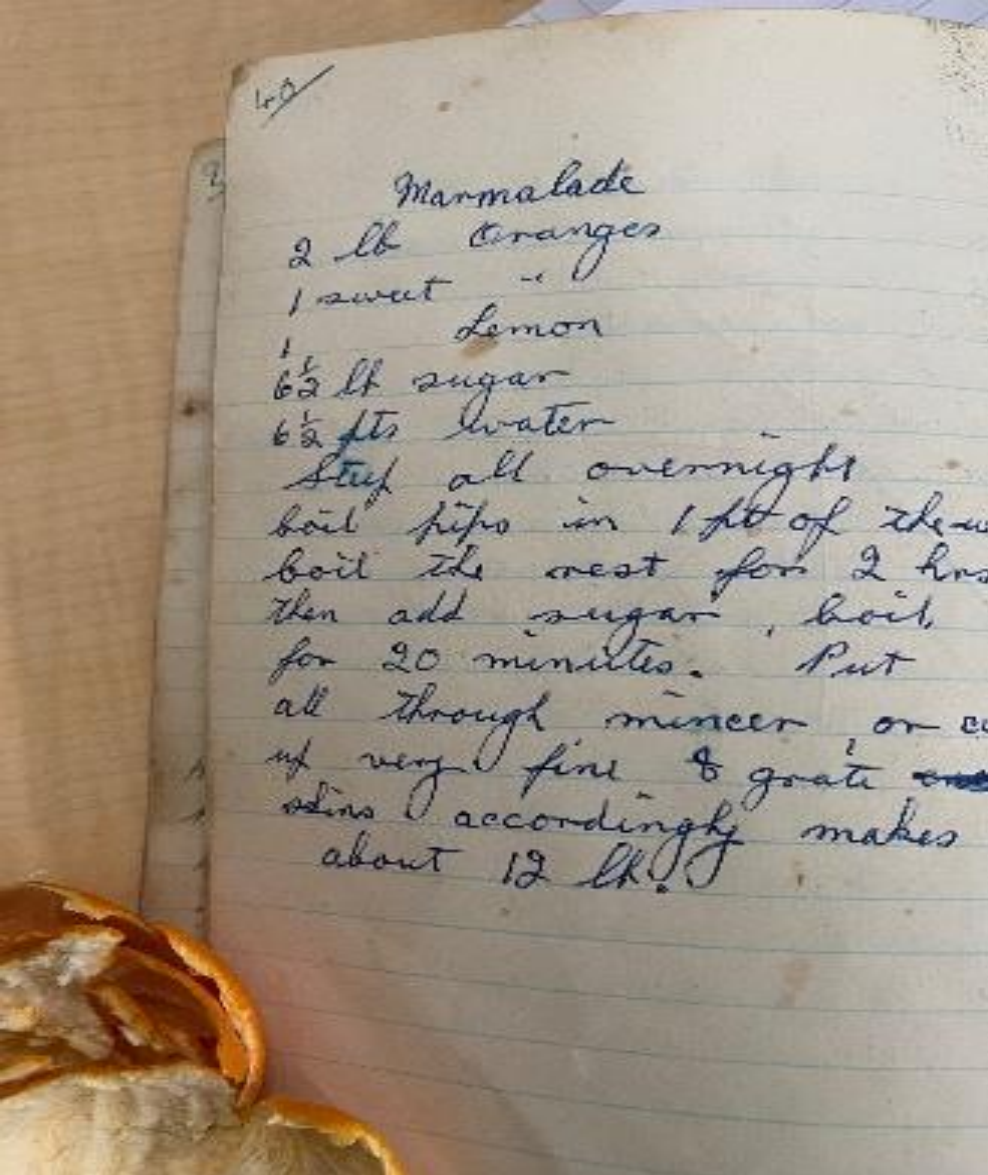
Interviews

(n=12)

- Agreed food plays a role in belonging; even more so since Covid-19

- Multiple roles of food; 'multi-layered thing'

'Home'



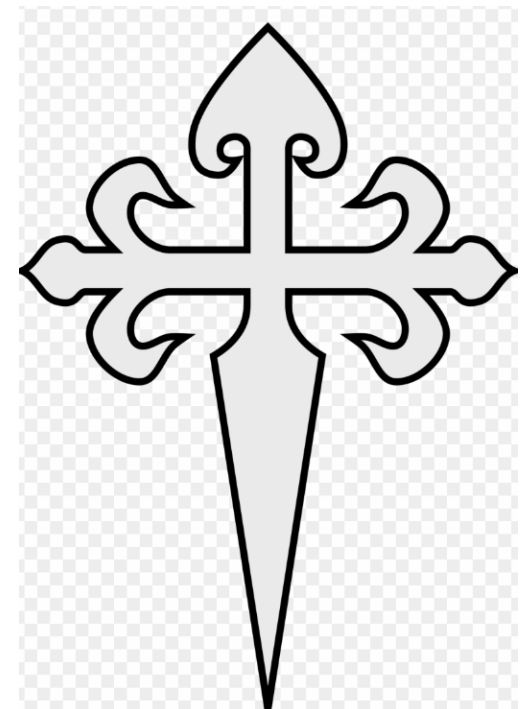
From: Seville orange marmalade

'When I was a little girl, I remember my grandmother buying fresh chicken for the recipe from a traditional butchers in the East End of London and the vegetables from Roman Road market'.

From: My Grandmother's Haimische chicken

'My mother didn't learn how to cook because she grew up in an orphanage but she liked to make this dish, which is fool proof, on special occasions which we all enjoyed'.

From: Pork Casserole



From: Tarta de Santiago



Thinking about how food makes us feel...

Go back to www.menti.com

What three words/phrases?

Themes:

Flavours

Places

People

Events

Emotions

Nostalgia



Food in the time of Covid

*'...Food in my culture,
feel like you belong to that group & this joy,
those I cannot see at this time,
.....reminds me of her'*

A.M.

Impact of the project on sense of belonging

	More like I belong	Less like I belong	Made no difference
Taking part in this project made me feel*	31 (73.8)	0 (0.0)	11 (26.2)

*3 respondents did not answer this question

No impact of gender ($p=0.47$), age ($p=0.71$), ethnicity ($p=0.27$), staff or student status ($p=0.41$) or length of time at KU ($p=0.84$)

Food is a big thing where I come from and it is always nice to share something that reminds me of home

What is your Food Image?

NEON group link:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=nALvyc8YFkCG05PPjpT_IDEevXSCEONLbjzMTNpLLZUN0JLTFA1RDNPVU1CRjZUWDI3VkY3MIVPTC4u

If there is any difficulty uploading your food-related image, please upload it to the Zoom chat or email it to hilda.mulrooney@kingston.ac.uk

Conclusions & next steps

- Well received; fits well with university ethos
- No time limit; can build over time (embedded within nutrition modules)
- Increased sense of belonging in majority of participants

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