

Foodways interview #1

Researcher's name: __Ricardo__

Participant's alias: __Jeffrey__

Interview date: __10/28/17__

Interview setting's alias: __Jeffrey's house__

1) Favorite foods and food taboos

a) What are some of your favorite foods or dishes, and why do you love these (e.g., a particular taste/smell/texture or because of childhood memories connected with these foods)?

Jeffrey enjoys steak, chicken, burritos, and pizza. He enjoys foods high in protein content. *He was deep in thought, with his eyes looking upward, to think of any other foods or dishes he likes.* He likes spicy food, such as Mexican food. He also enjoys pizza “like any other normal human being.” *He gave me a deep stare, as if pizza being enjoyed by “normal” people is obvious.* Since he likes spicy foods, he puts hot sauce on many food items.

b) What foods or dishes won't you eat, and why won't you (e.g., unpleasant taste/texture/smell, bad memories associated with them, some political, spiritual, or nutritional principles)?

He won't eat peas. This is because when he was young, he ate a plate of peas and threw up. *His facial expression morphed to an expression that symbolized disgust while he described the peas.* Since then, he has avoided peas. He also does not eat veal, despite his affinity for high-protein foods. This is because he does not like how the calves are raised to produce veal. *At this point, Jeffrey is lost in thought and moves his eyes to the ceiling, presumably to think of other foods he dislikes.* Jeffrey then mentioned that he also dislikes soup in general, because he dislikes its texture. He said he couldn't explain what exactly about the texture he disliked. *At this point, Jeffrey smiled, representing how uncomfortable he was because he couldn't figure out why the texture of soup bothered him.*

2) Food procurement

a) Do you hunt, fish, or forage for any of your food? If so, please explain when, where, and how.

Jeffrey does not hunt, fish, or forage for food.

b) Do you grow or raise any of it yourself? If so, please explain when, where, and how.

His parents grow tomatoes and peppers at his childhood home. *He scratches his head at this point, presumably to think of anything further to add.* Jeffrey said his parents grow these foods every so often – for most summers, but not all.

c) Do you buy it? If so, please explain where and how?

Jeffrey buys most of his food, both at home and at college. He buys it from the supermarket. At home, he buys from Shop-Rite and Wegman's, while at college he buys it from Shop-Rite and Stop&Shop. *He blinked repeatedly when describing this to me. Maybe the blinking was illustrating how he was thinking while mentioning these facts to me.* He usually plans in advance to decide what foods to buy. However, if he sees something he likes in-person at the supermarket, he will get the food on the spot. *While I was writing notes down, he bounced his arm on his leg repeatedly, showing a bit of boredom as he waited for me to finish.* He pays with a credit card.

d) Does someone else provide you with some or all of your food? If so, who and how do they get it?

While Jeffrey buys food from the supermarket, his parents generally cover the expenses via their credit cards. However, if Jeffrey eats at a restaurant, Jeffrey pays with his own credit card. This arrangement occurs both at his childhood home as well as at college. *He then looked up, thinking about what else to say.* He mentioned how his parents sometimes cook for him at home, and sometimes send food with him to college. However, usually he prepares his own food at home and at college, using materials he obtained from the supermarket as well as those in his house. *He gave a quick nod to me while describing this, indicating how he usually prepares his food on his own.*

3) Food preparation

a) Do you usually buy fully prepared meals (e.g., take-out from restaurants)? Explain what, how, and why.

Jeffrey goes to lots of restaurants and dining locations, such as Chipotle and the college dining halls. He both eats at the restaurant/dining location and also brings home food to eat. *When I asked him how he does this, he rolled his eyes. When I asked him why he does this, he said "because I'm hungry?" while smiling. The body language in both situations indicated his feelings that "isn't this obvious?"*

b) Do you buy food that is almost fully prepared (e.g., that only requires microwaving or mixing with water)? Explain what, how, and why.

He does not usually buy food that is almost fully prepared. Exceptions to this are toaster strudels and Eggo waffles – two foods he eats often for breakfast. He usually buys foods like this for breakfast because he needs to be fast in the morning, and almost-fully-prepared foods allow him to save time in the morning.

c) Do you prepare meals using some processed and some raw ingredients? Explain what, how, and why?

Jeffrey often prepares meals with a mix of processed and raw ingredients. For example, he prepares grilled chicken with two slices of bread, pepper jack cheese, and hot sauce. In

this example, he uses a mix of processed and raw ingredients. He does this because of taste, as he thinks a mix of processed and raw ingredients improves the taste of the dish. However, he emphasized that he generally does not care about whether the ingredients are processed or not. He mainly focuses on taste and obtaining the right amount of macro-nutrients (such as protein) over the course of a day.

d) Do you ever cook entirely from scratch (from all raw ingredients)? Explain what, how, and why?

Usually, Jeffrey doesn't cook entirely from scratch. However, he does eat "dishes" made from all raw ingredients for breakfast – he sometimes eats plums, apples, and peaches for breakfast in class. He does this because it's faster to eat raw fruits than to cook a dish using some raw ingredients and some processed ingredients.

e) Do others in your household do most of the preparation for you and can you report on anything they do to prepare the food? Explain, what, how, and why.

Jeffrey said that there is no mix in terms of who does the preparation for dishes; some dishes he completely prepares, and some dishes his parents completely create. There are no dishes he eats in which he and his parents both contribute to the preparation.

4) Food consumption

a) Where do you eat (e.g., kitchen table, living room couch, car, park bench)?

Jeffrey usually eats at the kitchen table of the house he is in (either his childhood house or his off-campus house close to the college). Sometimes he eats in other settings, such as in class and in his room. He also eats at the restaurant at which he orders food sometimes, depending on a variety of factors (such as available seating, etc.).

b) When do you eat (e.g., do you have regular meal times or graze throughout the day)?

Jeffrey eats randomly throughout the day – he eats whenever he is hungry. He does not have a set schedule in regard to eating. *While answering my question, Jeffrey's eyes opened up and moved his hands in an expression that signified "that's the way it is."*

c) What utensils do you use to serve and eat your food (e.g., take-out boxes, china plates, chopsticks, cloth napkins)?

Jeffrey uses forks, spoons, knives, and napkins to eat his food. He also uses chopsticks while consuming sushi. He uses paper plates to serve food so that he can just throw away the paper plates after eating instead of washing the plates. He mentioned that the utensils he uses are not disposable, however.

d) Do you follow any particular rules of etiquette about eating (e.g., saying grace, hands on the table, proper ways of asking for something)? Explain how and why.

He does not have any formal rules of etiquette about eating. However, Jeffrey follows a light-hearted ritual with his friends in which he prays to a rapper known as “Lil B” or “TheBasedGod” before consuming a meal. He and his friends pray silently to the rapper and then say “swag” aloud before consuming the meal. *When Jeffrey mentioned this, he was smiling and was moving his hands in an attempt to appear serious. While it was fairly clear in context that he didn’t follow this ritual seriously and probably did not do this for every meal, his response was interesting and showed how he integrated food with one of his interests and idols (in this case, rap music and a specific rapper).*

5) Why do you procure, prepare and consume food in the way you do?

a) Do you do it this way out of necessity and practicality (e.g., financial budget, time constraints, or health concerns)? Please explain.

Jeffrey mentioned that in some cases he procures, prepares, and consumes food the way he does due to time constraints. This applies especially for breakfast, in which he does not have much time and thus is forced to often eat raw fruits. In other cases, he does so for building muscle. A third reason why he procures, prepares, and consumes food the way he does is because of taste. He prefers tasty foods, and often prepares his meals with a focus on taste. Health influences his actions in the sense that he tailors his meals in regard to macro-nutrients. For example, he checks to make sure he is hitting the correct number of calories and protein for the day. When eating outside at restaurants, financial concerns become prominent, so he is mindful of the money he spends at restaurants.

b) Do you do it this way because your parents and parents' parents made and ate food in this way -- that is, is it because of your cultural heritage? Please explain.

Jeffrey acknowledged that what his parents gave him to eat as a child influenced his taste preferences for food. However, he mentioned that there were no customs or cultural heritage that influenced the way he ate. *He lay down on his couch at this point with his arms stretched out. He was clearly becoming a bit restless and bored at this point in the interview.*

c) Has your relationship to food been influenced by other culinary traditions you’ve come in contact with and/or by mainstream American culture, media, and advertising? Please explain.

Jeffrey’s relationship to food has not been influenced by other culinary traditions. However, his relationship to food has been influenced by one of his friends, Bob. Bob is an individual who became friends with Jeffrey in their freshman dormitory. Bob is an exercise-science major and is passionate about exercising and eating the right foods to gain muscle. When Bob started his own business to help people gain muscle and become more fit, Jeffrey was one of Bob’s first clients. Bob acts as Jeffrey’s fitness coach; Bob looks over the macro-nutrient levels of the foods Jeffrey is eating and gives him guidelines to follow on how much to eat to obtain the right levels of macronutrients (such as protein, calories, etc.). Jeffrey’s daily food consumption revolves around the

macronutrient guidelines set by Bob. As a result, in this case Jeffrey wasn't influenced by a culture but was influenced by one person to change his food-eating habits.

Jeffrey also mentioned how if he saw any foods on an ad, he may get it. This showed his food habits were influenced occasionally by advertising. *At this point, Jeffrey scratched his head. This showed, along with his eyes moving upward, that he was trying to think of other examples in which his food relationships were influenced by other culinary traditions and/or by mainstream American culture, media, and advertising.*

He mentioned how he joined the power-lifting team at his college last year. The team made him eat sushi for the first time. Since then, he has eaten sushi very frequently, almost on a weekly basis. He considers sushi delicious and financially satisfying, since he goes to an all-you-can-eat restaurant and feels he obtains his money's worth of food. In this case, Jeffrey's exposure to the culinary traditions of the power-lifting team influenced his own food habits (by making him a fan of sushi).

6) Do you talk a lot about food? Please explain: when, where, with whom, about what, why...?

Jeffrey loves food. He talks about it all the time in a variety of ways: he talks to others about foods he liked, he plans with friends about foods to eat at restaurants, and also talks to Bob about foods to eat to obtain the right daily macronutrient levels for himself. Although Bob is his friend, Jeffrey communicates about the macronutrient levels via email, and Bob discusses content such as making sure Jeffrey obtains the right levels of macronutrients and areas for Jeffrey to improve in. As Bob does not care about what specific foods Jeffrey eats, Jeffrey also does not care about what particular foods he eats – he mainly focuses on reaching his predetermined daily macronutrient levels. In addition, Jeffrey discusses food matters with Bob in an informal context (as friends). For example, they discuss ice cream when one of them has tried a new ice cream flavor.

At this point, Jeffrey explicitly asked me "how many questions do you still have?" While his body language previously hinted that he was becoming restless, at this point he became so restless that he explicitly communicated his feelings to me. I told him there was one more question left. Jeffrey also mentioned that he talks often about food because he is a power-lifter who needs to eat a lot to gain muscle and support his body. Thus, he eats a lot of food and talks about it often partly due to his involvement in the college power-lifting team.

8) Do you have any other thoughts, feelings, or experiences connected with food that you would like to share with me, whether negative (e.g., chronic hunger, anorexia, obesity) or positive (e.g., an unforgettable meal, a secret treat, your grandparents' garden)?

Jeffrey mentioned that he used to eat lots of junk food as a child. Until his sophomore year of high school, he was noticeably chubby. After his sophomore year in high school, he cut back on junk food and became very skinny in his senior year of high school and

his freshman year of college. Afterwards, in his sophomore year of college, he gained weight – but this time he gained weight due to working out in a gym and gaining muscle. He enjoyed working out and lifting in the gym so much that in his junior year of college, he joined the powerlifting team.

Ultimately, Jeffrey proclaimed that he consumes food for enjoyment and for usage as a tool to help him reach his goals (such as succeeding on the powerlifting team). *At this point, Jeffrey was noticeably fidgeting, likely waiting for the moment I would say that the interview is over.*

At this time, I told Jeffrey the interview was over, and thanked him for his time.

Overall Experience: *I thought the interview with Jeffrey went well. As his friend, I knew about his passion for powerlifting, but this interview helped me better understand him via his relationship with food and how he interacts with and around it. I also found out some facts about him that I didn't already know, such as that he was a bit chubby in high school and that he started going to the gym for lifting weights in his sophomore year of college. Overall, I thought it was an interesting experience, although I definitely think Jeffrey wished the interview was shorter. A shorter interview may be helpful to prevent the interviewee from becoming fatigued.*