

Foodways Interview #4

Researcher's name: Lacy Johnson

Participant's alias: Jamie Smith

Interview date: October 27, 2017

Interview setting's alias: University Dining Hall

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)?

- Favorite foods: Quesadilla because it “is good and easy to make”. She uses flour tortillas. Her favorite meat is chicken. *Before answering, she momentarily looks to the right as she is thinking.* Other foods she enjoys are tortilla, rice, pepper, onions, chicken (she repeated it again), cheese. She likes them all because they’re versatile ingredients. *As she listed them off, her hands were just resting on the table like a sphinx, but they were also crossed. She also lifts her eyebrows as she explains her food choices.*
- She expands on her favorite foods and said, “You need flavor to be good.” She explains that she mainly uses salt and sazón to flavor her food; however, she is currently experimenting with flavor as she is learning to cook. She also guesses that the reason people add so many sauces to foods at her job (she works at a local café) is because there isn’t enough flavor in certain foods. “Maybe that’s why people add so many condiments to their food.”
- She then goes back to listing her favorite foods *lifting eyebrows, but is starting to look down at the paper as Lacy is writing on instead of looking behind Lacy.*
 - She makes fries a lot in her apartment, but she likes grilled cheese, pizza, and lattes. Although, she only eats them when she goes to eat out.

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)?

- She repeats the question before answering it, “What won’t I eat?” *Looks to the right to think.* She is trying to eat more vegetables for health reasons. She already loves peppers and onions, but ONLY if they are prepared a certain way. She likes them chopped small. *Makes indexical gesture with her hand as though her hand is a knife and she is chopping something. Her hand lightly bangs against the table as she does it.* She doesn’t like eggs or things that taste like eggs (no explanation as to why).
- The egg comment somehow spurs a thought and she goes back to the previous question “Oh and I like pancakes and bacon.” *Her posture becomes more straight for a split second as her head jerks back and her back becomes straight. It goes back to normal after that.*
- After that comment, she goes back to answering this question. She is trying to eat more fruit, but she doesn’t like when they seem soggy or have too many seeds, like clementines. *She rubs her ear and touches the baseball cap on her head as she*

explains what she doesn't like. She also keeps glancing at the paper as Lacy writes. Lacy feels as though Lacy is making Jamie nervous.

- She repeats the same comment from before and said that she only likes stuff with flavor.
- She elaborates that she is reluctant to try new foods if she did not like it the first time, but she will try- Anything. At least. Once. *She claps her hand after each word for emphasis. BUT she won't eat bugs. "Maybe scorpions." But "definitely not maggots or grub"*
 - "I'm not Timon and Pumba. This is not Lion King. You can go find Pride Rock somewhere else." *This is a real quote that she said when explaining her distaste for bugs; it is a cultural reference to a Disney movie. Both Lacy and Jamie began laughing really hard.*
 - *After the laughing died down, Lacy was staring at Jamie a bit to see any further reaction. Jamie was playing with her hoodie string and lightheartedly said "Stop looking at me." Lacy moved on to the next question.*

2) Food procurement

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

- "Does going to the grocery store count?" *She then did a small laugh. "That's a no"*

3) Food preparation

a & b & c) Do you usually buy fully prepared meals (e.g., take-out from restaurants)? Explain what, how, and why. Do you buy food that is almost fully prepared (e.g., that only requires microwaving or mixing with water)? Explain what, how, and why. Do you prepare meals using some processed and some raw ingredients? Explain what, how, and why?

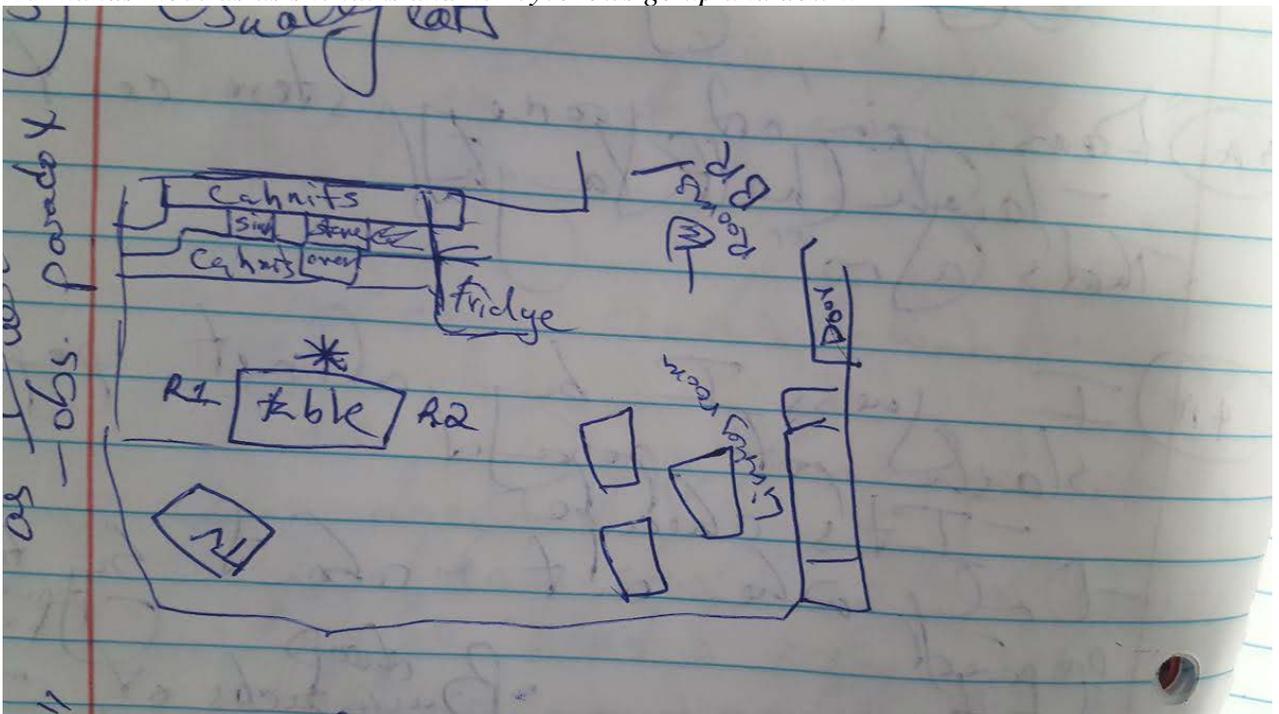
- *The entire time she is answering this question she leans over the table and watches Lacy write. Her eyebrows move up when she says certain things and she adjusts her baseball cap every now and then.*
- "I guess I buy almost prepared slash not prepared." She then explained that by purchasing food in this way it is cheaper. It is only when she is "out and about" that she buys fully prepared meals. Generally, the fully prepared meals she consumes are from either an Asian or a Mexican restaurant downtown.
- For unprepared food, she usually purchases packs of meat and then separates them into Ziploc bags by portion sizes in order to put them in the freezer. That way, when it is time to season the food and cook a meal, she will only take what she needs.
- She then shifts into explaining where she buys the meat packs. "Normally I go to [this specific supermarket] because of the student discount." When she is there, she spends between "\$10 or \$13 [up] to \$17" She does not generally go to popular superstores or dollar stores, but her friends drive her there sometimes. She explained that she recently bought tortillas from a dollar store but they kept breaking when she tried to make quesadillas, so she would not recommend them.
- She explains that she has been cooking almost all of her meals this year. The first couple of times she tried, "it was a mess," but after a few weeks she learned how to do it.

4) Food consumption

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

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

- When Lacy asks her this question, she asks if she can use Lacy's notebook to draw her kitchen rather than just explain it. Lacy gives her the notebook and she begins drawing. She continues to draw throughout her answer. Jamie explains that there is very little room in her kitchen. It opens to the living room, but there is no island. At the dinner table, if they are all seated together, they all sit in the same place every time. She points to where her roommates sit. Where she sits, she draws an asterisk. In-between drawing, she looks up and explains verbally what she is drawing while moving her hands indexically as though she is in the room pointing at furniture.
- Every Sunday, all of the roommates in her apartment have dinner together, except for one new roommate who does not participate. They convinced the new roommate to join them once, but she no longer comes to participate. For their Sunday dinners, they alternate each week between making dinner together and eating out. "Last week we made breakfast for dinner." She expands and says that she made home fries, while one roommate made pancakes and the other roommate made eggs. Jamie said she didn't eat the eggs because she doesn't like eggs. However, it "worked out" because the roommate who made the eggs didn't like the sweet potato home fries Jamie made.
- The mention of not liking eggs brought Jamie back to question 1a and she said "I really like Peanut Butter also." She went into an explanation of how she now makes her own tortilla chips because they are cheaper and she has become really good at it. Her hands move as as she talks and her eyebrows go up and down.



The map of her kitchen she drew. R1 and R2 are where her roommates usually sit when they all eat together. The asterisk is where she sits. Various other items are labelled, such as the cabinets and television.

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.

- “Out of necessity” and “because I am hungry” are her first two responses. She elaborated that she also eats out of boredom but is “trying to curb the habit” or at least replace snacks with healthier food. For example, she wants to eat “fruit, not goldfish” (She is referring to goldfish shaped crackers.) *As she explains her hands are crossed in front of her and she is leaning forward as I write.*
- Throughout this answer she also referred to her roommates a lot
 - Spoke about how they all try to eat together at night and every Sunday
 - How they prepare meals together
 - Roommate 1 does not like sweet potatoes
 - *When discussing her roommates, she pauses to think occasionally, presumably as she remembers relevant memories to add to her explanation.*

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

- Mostly in her apartment they talk about food. They discuss with one another what they are making, how they are making, when, etc. because the kitchen is a little small.
- Outside of her apartment, she does not discuss food much unless she is talking with a friend about where to find free food
- *She is still staring at Lacy’s paper, leaning forward. However, she surveys the room behind Lacy occasionally.*

7) 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)?

- She has struggled with her weight since she “was younger:” Making food for herself these past few months has made her realize how hard it is to budget and eat right.
- Her siblings and her father “have OCD and refuse to eat” if she makes the food.
 - *She pulls out a small bottle of lotion and begins to play with it in her hands as she discusses her family. Maybe she is feeling nervous.*
- She then explains how she recently took a trip to Mexico. “In Mexico, I ate one new thing a day.” However, she refused to eat shark fins because it would be bad for the environment and she did not know how they were procured. She worried that it could have been an endangered species of shark being eaten. *She scrunched her face and nose in disapproval and made an odd clicking noise with her tongue.*
- She continues talking about Mexico and says that beef, cheese and corn tortillas are common in Mexico. *She is still playing with the lotion bottle and begins to place small dots on her fingers and rubs them in.*

- She then mentions a recent trip to Italy and Greece. She didn't like meatballs before going to Greece. She also did not like vegetable soup from the United States, but it tasted better in Italy and Greece.
- Another trip was to the United Nations in New York. She mentioned that the salad there was great but the coffee was not very good *Her hands are tucked underneath her chest and pressed against the side of the table.*

Jamie Smith gave a lot of extra detail and expanded on a lot of concepts without Lacy needing to ask. She also jumped around a bit. It is intriguing that for Question 8 about additional details, both interviewees mentioned their travels.