

## **Foodways Journal Entry by Michelle Montenegro**

Sept. 19, 2017

Every morning I try to finish at least one water bottle before leaving the house. Every time I see my water bottle, I challenge myself to take five big gulps. Unintentionally, I left it on the windowsill overnight. When I had my first five gulps and the water came in contact with my teeth, immediately I cringed. I knew to fix my top lip over my teeth and to avoid overfilling my mouth to avert discomfort. The water bottles we buy are very thin in plastic so in my hands it is always bending and creaking. I positioned my fingers between the bottles ruffled grooves and tossed it on top of my backpack to make sure I didn't forget to finish the rest.

8:15am - I got myself and my daughter ready for school. I realized I only had ten minutes to prepare myself a lunch or some snacks during my stay on campus. I remembered I left an iced caramel macchiato from McDonalds in the fridge overnight. It was bitter, I could taste whatever syrup they used when making it and, when I mixed it with my straw to try it again, I realized it is time I reevaluate the mismanaging of my money. It was displeasing, if I must say. So instead I grabbed some bananas that we bought from the supermarket and placed in inside my back packs largest pocket, but any more than two and they get squished.

Today I decided to wear fingertip-less gloves on my commute to class. And as I ate a banana, I began to feel a rather usual discomfort. Sometime after high school I finally confronted my need for braces and was in the financial position to invest in straightening my teeth for the next two years. It took a lot of adjustment, so much that it changed my technique for eating a number of things, bananas being one of them. It always ended up between my teeth and the brackets from my braces, so I quit biting into them and instead began bending them off with my fingertips. So while walking, I felt the wetness of a banana turning into slime and drying from the cold air on my fingertips and beneath my nails. It was between a matter of tolerating the leftover banana remnants on my fingertips or withdrawal from using my hands and return to biting it. Most of the time I was alone while walking, with the exception of some passersby. I spent the rest of my commute washing it down with my cucumber-lemon-infused, room-temperature water. But to be honest, I kind of wished it was cold now because warm water just doesn't subdue the warm sour aftertaste of a banana.

10:48am - I ate a fourth of a carrot. When I got to my next class, I remembered I packed it in pieces and place it in a Ziploc bag. The carrots were also store bought and kept in the fridge. I cut them in quarters before leaving the house so that they fit in my small Ziploc bag. They were raw and skinned with a peeler from home. There were about nine other students and the professor in class with me. About two other classmates were eating or drinking with me and five others had at least something to eat or drink on their desktops. I used one hand to hold and raise

the piece of carrot to my mouth and with my bottom teeth, I would bite into and around the carrot to weaken its core and finally crack it off. With my other hand I was digging through my backpack in search for a pen. Lecture had begun, and I wasn't moving fast enough so I shoved the carrot piece in my mouth and begun to chew. The piece felt very large and tough to bite and I instantly regretted it. By this point I was feeling pretty hungry, the carrots wouldn't do it.

By 12:15pm I could count seven carrots left. And by the end of my following class I had only eaten two more. I grew tired of the grain-like feeling of a carrot once it's properly chewed. And by 2pm I was on my commute home and wished I could have anything else to eat but a carrot.

By 2:30pm I was entirely finished with my water and about ten minutes away from home. When I reached home, I didn't want to have to wait to freshly prepare meal so I looked through the leftovers. I found spaghetti, white rice and beans from yesterday evening as a good fit for now. My brother was in the kitchen eating, he'd gotten home from work about ten minutes before I reached home. I microwaved the contents together, and ran to the couch in the living room to eat. My spoon wasn't big enough to get a little of each food on every spoonful so I mixed my whole bowl together. Though slimy usually sounds unappealing, in this context I found it so appetizing. I was real hungry. By the end of the second bowl I realized I may have overdone it. I was eating very fast, and the hunger got the best of me because for the rest of the day I had no more appetite. I also realize this eating pattern is pretty awful. But at least I remembered to drink water periodically.