

A CULINARY HISTORY OF THE
PORTUGUESE EURASIANS:
THE ORIGINS OF LUSO-ASIAN
CUISINE IN THE SIXTEENTH AND
SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

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ABSTRACT

The Portuguese Eurasians are a cultural group who trace their ancestry to the fifteenth and sixteenth century Portuguese voyages of exploration that inaugurated the era of European colonization in Asia. The Portuguese established a maritime route to the Far East and built an empire based on spice trade with Europe and inter-Asia trade in a variety of commodities. Portuguese merchants and adventurers travelled throughout the region, married indigenous women and gave rise to Luso-Asian communities in most of the region's trading centres, while peripatetic Portuguese missionaries established Christian communities and introduced Iberian social values to many areas in the Far East. The Luso-Asian creole societies that developed as a result of these encounters were ethnically diverse but ideologically unified by a tenacious allegiance to Catholicism and a common Portuguese cultural heritage.

This study explores the culinary heritage of the Portuguese Eurasians and the historical development of their distinctive, hybridized cuisine, which blends the culinary traditions of Southern Europe with those of indigenous Asia. It establishes the origins of Luso-Asian cuisine in the gastronomy of Early Modern Portugal and examines how Portuguese colonial policy and social formation influenced the development of a

creolized cuisine. Key ingredients and foodways that signify Iberian cultural influence are identified and documentary evidence for their transition to Asia is examined. The evolution of Luso-Asian cuisine is traced, from the challenges of food security in the early Portuguese settlements to the emergence of elite colonial societies with an elaborate dining culture. The study argues that the adaptability of the Portuguese and their openness to inter-cultural exchange distinguished them from other European colonists and encouraged the adoption of indigenous culinary elements. At the same time, the desire to retain a Portuguese identity and commitment to the Catholic faith promoted the survival of Iberian cultural traits.

This study is the first academic enquiry into the gastronomy of the Portuguese empire and makes an original contribution to the fields of Portuguese history, food history, and colonial studies. More significantly, it begins the work of documenting the foodways of a marginal community whose cultural heritage is rapidly dissipating.

THESIS DECLARATION

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being available for loan and photocopying, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

Janet Boileau

31 August, 2010

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INTRODUCTION

“Portugal and its empire are one of the great enigmas of history.” J.H.

Plumb.¹

“No single nation can rival the Portuguese for having altered, and improved, the diet of so many people.” A.J.R. Russell-Wood ²

“The *marinheiros*, albeit unintentionally, were at the work of gods.” Alfred Crosby ³

The Portuguese voyages of exploration at the dawn of the sixteenth century led to their monopoly of the European spice trade and the establishment of administrative bases along their maritime trading routes in Asia. The principal bases, which became Portuguese colonies, were Goa, on the western coast of India, Malacca, on the western coast of present-day Malaysia, and Macao, a coastal enclave in southeastern China. Subsidiary colonies were formed in East Timor and at Damão and Diu in what is now the Indian state of Gujerat. Cultural and culinary creolization was a hallmark of the societies that evolved in these distant outposts and each of the colonies gave rise to a unique cuisine and

¹ J.H. Plumb, introduction to *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire 1415–1825*, by Charles R. Boxer (London: Hutchison, 1969), xx.

² A.J.R. Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire, 1415-1808: A World on the Move* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1998), 219.

³ Alfred W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 131.

gastronomic heritage.⁴ Iberian culinary influences also extended to the many smaller Portuguese enclaves that arose on the fringes of the trading empire.

Much has been written about the political and economic history of the Portuguese empire in Asia but far less about its social aspects and almost nothing of a scholarly nature about its culinary heritage, despite the fact that Iberian culinary influence was felt throughout the Portuguese trading arena in Asia, from the western coast of India to Japan. It has been estimated that a Portuguese Quarter existed in nearly every maritime trading state in the region during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁵ Mixed marriages between Roman Catholic Portuguese men and indigenous women from Malacca, Indonesia, the Philippines, India, Africa, Japan, China and other nations gave rise to a richly multicultural Roman Catholic Eurasian community with a unique culinary culture. Portuguese Eurasian communities, some of them tiny, are found all over Asia. Portuguese Creoles are spoken in fifteen locations from Diu to Hong Kong.⁶ Even in areas where no identifiable Portuguese

4 Rachel Laudan defines creole foods as those “eaten by descendants of parents from very different culinary traditions.” More than just a mixture of contributory cuisines, true creole cuisine develops an identity of its own, in the same way that creole languages develop new grammars and vocabularies that set them apart from their parent languages. (Rachel Laudan, “Creole Food,” in *The Penguin Companion to Food*, ed. Alan Davidson (London: Penguin, 2002), 272-273.

5 G. B. Souza, *The Survival of Empire: Portuguese Trade and Society in China and the South China Seas 1630-1754* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 14.

6 Darrell T. Tyron, Peter Mühlhäusler and Stephen A. Wurm, “English-derived Contact Languages in the Pacific in the 19th Century (excluding Australia),” in *Atlas of Languages of Intercultural Communication in the Pacific, Asia, and the Americas*, eds Stephen A. Wurm, Peter Mühlhäusler and Darrell T. Tyron (Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1996), 489.

language groups remain, culinary artifacts attest to an earlier Iberian presence.

The Portuguese exploratory voyages established new connections between existing trading networks and linked together all the inhabited continents of the world. Along these new maritime pathways travelled the ingredients, people, tools, technologies and ideas that facilitated the creation of a new cuisine that fused the cooking and culinary traditions of late medieval Iberia with the great culinary cultures of Asia. The introduction of European ingredients and foodways and novel food plants from the Americas had a significant impact on the indigenous cuisines of the region. The impact was felt to varying degrees wherever the Portuguese made extended or repeated landfall. Where the Portuguese solidified their presence through the political act of colonization, or attempted a large-scale program of religious conversion, a matrix of social, economic and historical forces fostered a two-way process of adaptation that brought about significant changes in the dietary habits of both the Iberians and the indigenous peoples they encountered.

Portuguese culinary expertise that evolved out of the monastic traditions of late medieval Europe, for example, in viticulture, bread-baking and the confectionery arts, was exported to the colonies and other territories in Asia as a corollary of the Portuguese missionary efforts that accompanied

their economic initiatives. Portuguese clerics were responsible for the Christianization of a sizeable population in Asia and the dietary precepts of Catholicism exerted a considerable influence on the eating habits of Christian converts. Some aspects of Iberian culinary culture were also absorbed by wider, secular communities. There is evidence, for example, that sweet making traditions in the Indian state of Bengal have Portuguese roots, that *tempura*, and other foods now considered Japanese culinary classics may have Portuguese origins, and that the ritual and vernacular cuisines of Thailand were influenced by the Portuguese presence within the Siamese royal court. There are correspondences, as yet little explored, between the culinary traditions of the Portuguese-Malays of Malacca and those of the Peranakans (Straits Chinese). Similar culinary linkages exist with the Eurasian communities of Singapore and with isolated groups of people with a distant Portuguese heritage scattered throughout the Indonesian archipelago, Sri Lanka, the Bay of Bengal and other parts of Asia with a history of Lusitanian contact.

The Portuguese were the sixteenth century's leading botanists. Portuguese experts, many of whom belonged to the Jesuit Order, played a critical role in the dissemination of food plants and agricultural technologies and were primary agents in the introduction of Native American ingredients to the Far East. The Portuguese brought Asia the

chili pepper, which infiltrated local cuisines to such a degree that it is hard to imagine Asian curries and condiments without its characteristic heat. Other New World plant introductions drastically reduced the regions' susceptibility to famine.

The era of Portuguese colonial supremacy in Asia was brief, lasting for only a hundred and fifty years, after which Dutch, French and British regimes dominated Asia's colonial history until the advent of global decolonization in the twentieth century. These more enduring colonial relationships obscured to a great extent the achievements of the Portuguese in the earlier period of European contact.

This Study

It has taken many scholars to write the history of the Portuguese empire and it will require the effort of many more to fully elucidate its culinary history. My Master's dissertation (2007) documented the evolution of the cuisines of the principal Portuguese colonies in Asia: Goa, Malacca and Macao and located them within the wider context of the Portuguese-Eurasians' cultural heritage. This doctoral thesis seeks to expand this exploration, in the first place by examining the early roots of Luso-Asian cuisine in sixteenth century Portuguese gastronomy, and secondly by exploring the spread of Iberian culinary influence from the colonial bases to other areas of Portuguese contact in Asia. Thirdly, it seeks to identify

the common threads of Iberian influence, as elaborated through the ingredients, cooking styles and aspects of dining culture that constitute the hallmarks of Luso-Asian gastronomy.

The specific research aims of the study are to explain how Portuguese colonial policy and society influenced the development of a creolized cuisine; to identify Iberian culinary legacies found in Asia and explore the reasons for the breadth of their distribution; and to link the signature markers of Iberian culinary influence to their origins in the Portuguese homeland.

The thesis argues that a) the principal markers of Iberian culinary influence originated in the gastronomy of sixteenth century Portugal and carried a cultural significance for the Iberians; b) the mobility of the Portuguese colonial and ex-officio populations, the high incidence of miscegenation and the expansiveness of their maritime trading network contributed to the spread of Iberian culinary influence throughout the region; c) that the Portuguese commitment to Catholicism and the activities of Catholic missionaries in the region promoted the spread of Iberian culinary influence; d) the adaptability of the Portuguese and their openness to cultural exchange distinguished them from other colonial Europeans. It concludes that these factors led to the development of a distinctive, identifiable cuisine characterized by a high degree of cross-

cultural synthesis.

The study is divided into five parts. Part One explores the foundations of Luso-Asian cuisine in the gastronomy of sixteenth century Portugal, with particular reference to the foods, culinary techniques and foodways that were transmitted to Asia. It demonstrates that the principal Iberian influences upon the culinary culture of Asia originated in the culinary traditions of late medieval Europe, Portugal in particular. The influence of the Catholic Church on Portuguese gastronomy, and the traditions of monastic cooking and conventual confectionery are examined. Ships' provisioning, cooking technologies and strategies of supply are investigated and a picture of living conditions and victualing on board Portuguese vessels is drawn from a review of contemporary travellers' accounts.

Part Two explores the establishment of the Portuguese settlements in Asia, examining the social and historical factors that led to the development of highly creolized Luso-Asian societies and contributed to the extraordinarily broad spread of Iberian cultural contact in the region.

Part Three discusses the development of Luso-Asian gastronomy. The Portuguese role in the Colombian Exchange, their agency in the dispersal of New World foods and the transfer of horticultural knowledge, and the

involvement of the Jesuit Order in these are explored. The historical record is examined in order to reach an understanding of the early gastronomic life of the Portuguese settlements. The nature of food supplies and means of procurement are elaborated and the processes of adaptation to local culinary environments are explored. Specific Iberian culinary markers, including ingredients such as pork, wine, vinegar, sugar and eggs; techniques such as vinegar marination, pickling and preserving, bread making, cake baking and confectionery making; European table ways and cooking methods, are identified.

Part Four builds on the findings of the previous chapters, exploring in more detail the social, religious and economic factors that influenced the evolution of Luso-Asian culinary culture and helped to define it. The relationship between colonizers and colonized, class structures, religious practices, social mobility, gender roles, and the influence of servants and slaves on the development of Luso-Asian foodways are discussed.

Conclusions are presented in Part Five to complete the work.

Methodology

The geographical focus of the study is the region encompassing South Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia. Reference is also made to Portuguese supply stations in Africa and the Gulf of Oman. The time frame focuses

on the formative period of the Luso-Asian societies, from their beginnings at the dawn of the sixteenth century to the period in the mid-seventeenth century generally regarded by historians as the end of the Portuguese empire as an influential political and economic entity. Since the study focuses on the seminal phase in the development of Luso-Asian cuisine, it excludes Lusophone communities in places such as Penang, Singapore, Hawaii and Australia, which were largely the result of nineteenth and twentieth century migration patterns.⁷

The research is framed within the discipline of history but is intended as a study in gastronomy, a field of enquiry that involves a variety of contributory subjects. It is approached from a multi-disciplinary viewpoint, taking into account relevant methods and sources from the fields of colonial and commodity studies, sociology, religion, gender studies, gastronomic literature and the natural sciences, among others.

The study relies on a mixture of primary and secondary sources. Given the study's broad scope and transnational coverage, primary documentation exists in a variety of original languages. The study focuses principally on sources in the English language, re-examining the early travel narratives from a gastronomic point of view and

⁷ Alan Baxter, "Portuguese and Creole Portuguese in the Pacific and Western Pacific Rim," in *Atlas of Languages of Intercultural Communication in the Pacific, Asia, and the Americas*, Vol. 2, Part 1, eds. Stephen A. Wurm, Peter Mühlhäusler and Darrell T. Tyrone (Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1996), 309.

reinterpreting secondary literature generated by scholars of the Portuguese empire pursuing other avenues of enquiry. Where necessary, I have supplemented this English-language material with my own translations of Portuguese documentary sources.

To establish the geographical and historical context of the study, the research offers a summary of Portuguese activities in Asia during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, drawing on the well-established body of scholarly, historical literature covering the Portuguese endeavour during this period. The research focuses on those aspects of the historical record that have relevance to a gastronomic study.

To establish the primary gastronomic points of reference for the study, the research summarizes the ingredients and ingredient combinations, cooking techniques, consumption patterns and ritual food practices that distinguish Portuguese cuisine and identifies the traits that serve as indicative markers of Portuguese culinary influence in the Asian territories. An examination of first-hand accounts by early European travellers provides the evidence for the introduction of these influences during the initial, Portuguese-dominated, period of European contact with the region. A review of the gastronomy of sixteenth century Portugal establishes their origins in the culinary culture of early modern Iberia.

The study is not intended as a comprehensive gastronomic history of Portuguese Asia. The aim of the study is to establish a theoretical and contextual framework within which more detailed, single country studies may find wider points of reference. It is intended as the starting point for and justification of a focused and detailed study of Luso-Asian culinary history, ideally involving the collaborative effort of multiple scholars drawing on source materials in a variety of languages.

Contribution to the Discipline

The official Portuguese presence in Asia endured for almost 500 years, with the last Luso-Asian territory, Macao, passing out of Portuguese control in 1999. The remaining Luso-Asian communities in the region are rapidly dwindling and the majority of Portuguese-Eurasians are now dispersed throughout the world, where they are exposed to the inevitable forces of acculturation and globalization. The unique culinary and cultural traditions of the Portuguese in Asia are in urgent need of documentation if they are not to be lost. With the passage of time, gaps in source materials will inevitably widen, making it even more difficult to capture this history and to preserve it for future generations.

To date, there has been no attempt at an integrated, academic study of Portuguese culinary interactions with Asia. Available source materials

and their limitations are addressed in the literature review. There is very little existing literature on the cuisines of Portugal's former Asian colonies and even less has been written about the culinary impact of Portuguese contact with other Asian territories. The few books that have been published on Luso-Asian cuisine are recipe collections, not academic works.⁸ A key aim of this research is to establish the common origins of Luso-Asian cuisine in the gastronomy of late medieval and early modern Europe. While this portion of the study is indebted to the scholarship of others, notably Antonio Marques, and Luis de Albuquerque and Alberto Vieira, writing in English, and Otilia Fontoura, and Alfredo Saramago and Manuel Fialho,⁹ in Portuguese, it is to my knowledge the first time that this material has been brought together and, as a result of my translation of the Portuguese works, made available in English.

In recognition of the importance of preserving the cultural heritage of the Macanese, in November 2007 delegates at the *Encontro das Comunidades*

⁸ For an introduction to the principal branches of Luso-Asian cuisine, see Cherie Y. Hamilton, *Cuisines of Portuguese Encounters* (New York: Hippocrene, 2008); Wendy Hutton, *The Food of Love* (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish, 2007); Maria Teresa Menezes, *The Essential Goa Cookbook* (London: Penguin, 2000); Gilda Mendonsa, *The Best of Goan Cooking* (New York: Hippocrene, 1997); Maria Fernanda Noronha da Costa e Sousa, *Cozinha Indo-Portuguesa: Receitas da Bisavó* (Lisboa: Assirio and Alvim, 1998); Maria Fernanda Noronha da Costa e Sousa and Inês Gonçalves, *Sabor de Goa: Cozinha Indo-Portuguesa* (Lisbon: Assirio and Alvim, 2004); Annabel Jackson, *Taste of Macau* (New York: Hippocrene, 2004); Cecilia Jorge, *Macanese Cooking: A Journey Across Generations*, trans. Carole Garton and Raquel Magalhães (Macau: Associação Promotora da Instrução dos Macaenses, 2004); João António Ferreira Lamas, *A Culinária dos Macaenses* (Porto: Lello Editores, 1997); Celine Marbeck, *Cuzinhia Cristang: A Malacca-Portuguese Cookbook* (Malaysia: Tropical Press, 1998); Natália Carrascalão, *Vamos Jantar à Timor* (Macau: Tipographia Chan Heng, 1998).

⁹ Antonio Henrique R. De Oliveira Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal in the Late Middle Ages* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1971); Alfredo Saramago and Manuel Fialho, *Doçaria dos Conventos de Portugal* (Lisboa: Assirio and Alvim, 1997); Otilia Rodrigues Fontoura, *As Clarissas na Madeira: Uma Presença de 500 Anos* (Funchal: Centro de Estudos de História do Atlântico Secretaria Regional do Turismo e Cultura, 2000); Luis de Albuquerque and Alberto Vieira, *The Archipelago of Madeira in the 15th Century*, trans. Martin A. Kayman and M. Filomena Mesquita (Funchal: Secretaria Regional do Turismo e Cultura Centro de Estudos de História do Atlântico, 1988).

Macaenses cultural conference in Macao initiated an application to the United Nations for the inclusion of Macanese gastronomy in the UNESCO Universal Patrimony program, which seeks to preserve and give recognition to the cultural heritage of minority peoples around the world.¹⁰ Macao's return to Chinese political control in 1999 has inevitably led to increasing Sinification of Macanese culture but etiolation of Luso-Asian cultural heritage is also taking place in post-colonial Malaysia, Goa, East Timor, and Luso-Asian enclaves throughout the region as Iberian heritage is subsumed by larger cultural entities. It is hoped that this study will contribute to and stimulate interest in a wider effort to record and preserve the gastronomic heritage of the entire Portuguese Eurasian community, and to document the Portuguese contribution to the gastronomy of a region that is home to more than half of the world's population.

Literature Review

A Note on Place Names and Spelling

I have used the historical Portuguese names for places mentioned in the text, with their modern names in parentheses at first mention, except when referring to them in the present. I have used diacriticals where they

¹⁰ The *UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* states that "The common heritage of humanity [is] as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature and makes its defence an ethical imperative indissociable from respect for the dignity of the individual." (*UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, A Document for the World Summit on Sustainable Development* (Johannesburg, 26 August – 4 September, 2002), 3).

occur in Portuguese words as they are always included when writing Portuguese. Diacriticals have been omitted from words in languages where their use is conventionally considered optional. The spelling of quotations is as given in the source material.

Primary Sources

There is a shortage of primary documentation concerning daily life in Luso-Asia during the early sixteenth century. Portuguese knowledge of a direct sea route to the Spice Islands was extraordinarily profitable and jealously guarded. Writing about the Portuguese settlement of Japan, historian Diego Pacheco identifies “an inexplicable dearth of letters written about the time.”¹¹ Leonard Andaya, citing Lisbon's official policy of censorship reinforced by capital punishment as the cause of Portuguese secretiveness, observes that “not a single book on the new information being collected on Asia by the Portuguese is known to have been published during the first fifty years of the sixteenth century.”¹² This concealing of information, combined with the logistical challenges of long-distance communication in the pre-modern world, has resulted in a paucity of documentation concerning the earliest years of Portuguese contact in Asia.

¹¹ Diego Pacheco, “The Founding of the Port of Nagasaki and its Cession to the Society of Jesus,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 25, no. 3/4 (1970), 304.

¹² Leonard Andaya, “Interactions with the Outside World and Adaptation in Southeast Asian Society, 1500-1800,” in *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia, Vol. 1, Part 2: From c. 1500 to c. 1800*, ed. Nicholas Tarling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 10.

A fortunate result of this documentary shortfall, however, is that the primary sources that do exist for the period have been studied by many historians and much of the literature is available in English translation. The principal European work describing the Luso-Asian world in the sixteenth century is the *Suma Oriental of Tome Pires*.¹³ The writings of Pires, an apothecary who travelled throughout the region during the earliest days of Portuguese exploration, are a touchstone for every historian interested in the period.

Fernão Mendes Pinto¹⁴ and Duarte Barbosa¹⁵ are also oft-cited sources of material concerning the earliest Portuguese encounters in the East. While historians question the authenticity of Pinto's purportedly autobiographical work, they are in agreement that it is an historically accurate portrayal of the sixteenth century Asian world.¹⁶ Barbosa, a government agent and writer, also travelled extensively in the region, documenting his encounters.

13 Tome Pires, *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires: An account of the East, from the Red Sea to China, written in Malacca and India in 1512-1515...*, ed. Armando Cortesao (1944; repr., New Delhi, Chennai: Asian Education Services, 2005).

14 Fernão Mendes Pinto, *The Travels of Mendes Pinto*, trans. Rebecca D. Catz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

15 Duarte Barbosa, *A Description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar in the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century*, trans. Henry E. J. Stanley (London: Hakluyt Society, 1866).

16 See Rebecca D Catz, introduction to Pinto, *The Travels of Mendes Pinto*, xv-xlvi.

The journal of Jan Huygen van Linschoten,¹⁷ a Dutchman in service of the Archbishop of Goa, is a valuable source of information about the quotidian life of sixteenth century Asia. Both Vasco da Gama and Afonso Albuquerque left journals that have been translated into English¹⁸ but Portuguese captains were concerned primarily with navigation, military defence and commerce. Food was of little significance beyond its obvious function of keeping soldiers and sailors alive. Provisioning stops on voyages and the logistics of keeping settlements supplied with food are mentioned in the historical record, and bills of lading tell us what was carried on board ships, but descriptions are sparse. Linschoten was a keen observer who recorded the small details that help to construct a gastronomic picture of the region in the period. Other early European travellers who took note of meals at sea and dining customs in new lands include, (among others listed in the bibliography), the Jesuit Luis Frois, Frenchmen Jean Baptiste Tavernier, François Pyrard and François Bernier; Spaniard Martín Fernández de Figueroa, Italians Cesare Federici, Ludovico di Varthema, Christoforo Borri and Pietro della Valle; the German Albrecht Mandelslo and Englishmen Peter Mundy, Ralph Fitch, John Fryer, John Jourdan, Edward Terry, and Thomas Stevens.¹⁹

¹⁷ Jan Huygen van Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, eds. Arthur Coke Burnell and P.A. Tiele. 2 vols (1885; repr., Boston: Adamant Media Corporation, 2005).

¹⁸ Alvaro Velho, *A Journal of the First Voyage of Vasco da Gama, 1497-1499*, trans. and ed. E.G. Ravenstein (London: Hakluyt Society, 1898); Gaspar Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama, and His Viceroyalty: From the Legendas da India of Gaspar Corrêa*, trans. Henry E. J. Stanley (London: Hakluyt Society, 1869).

¹⁹ Because of the length of these historical titles, full bibliographic information is provided at first mention in the main text.

Secondary Sources

The History of the Portuguese Empire in Asia

Once established, the colonies generated a great deal of documentary material. Catholic missionaries in Asia sent regular letters to ecclesiastical authorities in Lisbon and Rome and captains submitted official reports of their military and commercial undertakings. Much of this material was lost when Lisbon's archives were destroyed in the great fire that razed the city after a devastating earthquake in 1755.²⁰ Many of the Imperial documents held in the empire's Asian capital, Old Goa, also were lost when that city fell to ruin. Despite these calamities, a considerable body of primary documentation remained, giving rise to an extensive secondary literature examining the Portuguese empire from numerous angles, including its political and economic structures, its geography, botany, sociology and religious history. A reinterpretation of this literature from a gastronomic point of view provides the historical framework for this study.

By far the most prolific and authoritative secondary source on the history of the Portuguese empire is the late Charles Ralph Boxer. In *The*

²⁰ William D. Phillips and Carla Rahn Phillips, "Back to the Sources for Christopher Columbus," in *Discovery in the Archives of Spain and Portugal: Quincentenary Essays, 1492-1992*, ed, Lawrence J. McCrank (Binghamton: Haworth Press, 1993), 139.

Portuguese Seaborne Empire, Boxer concentrates primarily on the political and economic aspects of the Portuguese empire but in works such as *Race Relations in the Portuguese Colonial Empire, 1415-1825* and *Mary and Misogyny*,²¹ he also provides insight into sociological aspects of Portuguese colonialism. His studies of miscegenation and gender roles help to shed light on the domestic arrangements that characterized the Portuguese overseas settlements. Following in Boxer's footsteps as leading historians of the Portuguese empire are Sanjay Subrahmanyam, author of *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500-1700*²² and Anthony Disney whose two-volume *History of Portugal and the Portuguese Empire* was published in 2009.²³

A.J.R. Russell-Wood's *The Portuguese Empire 1415-1808* is a thematically organized discussion that stresses the inter-connectedness of the Portuguese trading empire and offers a useful overview of the transfer of plants along the maritime trade routes.²⁴ M.N. Pearson, in a variety of works, has closely examined Portuguese activities in India and the Indian Ocean arena, as well as providing an excellent bibliographic

²¹ Charles R. Boxer, *Mary and Misogyny: Women in Iberian Expansion Overseas, 1415-1815: Some Facts, Fancies and Personalities* (London: Duckworth, 1975); Charles R. Boxer, *Race Relations in the Portuguese Colonial Empire, 1415-1825* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963). Other works by Charles Boxer are cited at first mention in the main text.

²² Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500-1700: A Political and Economic History* (London: Longman, 1993).

²³ Anthony R. Disney, *A History of Portugal and the Portuguese Empire*, 2 vols (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

²⁴ Cited above.

essay on the Indo-Portuguese historical literature.²⁵ Linguist Alan Baxter has documented the remaining Luso-Asian creole language groups in the Pacific and Western Pacific Rim.²⁶ George Winius, Malyn Newitt, Sanjay Subrahmanyam, Geoffrey Scammell, Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya, and many other scholars have contributed specialized studies on various aspects of the Portuguese empire, including the spice trade and the economy of the empire, the role of the Catholic Church, gender issues, and the political and cultural ramifications of colonization. A representative selection of this literature is listed in the bibliography.

A great deal more primary material in Latin and Portuguese awaits scholarly attention, translation into English, or both. This documentation has been extensively reviewed by Boxer, M.N. Pearson and more recently by Timothy J. Coates.²⁷ Their labour in identifying source materials has been of enormous benefit to this study.

Cultural Background

Manohar Malgonkar and Mario Cabrale e Sá offer evocative portraits of Goa during the colonial era, while Richard Burton's *Goa and the Blue*

²⁵ M.N. Pearson, *The Portuguese in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

²⁶ Baxter, "Portuguese and Creole Portuguese in the Pacific."

²⁷ Timothy J. Coates, "Sources in Portuguese and Goan (India) Archives and Libraries (1500-1755): A Guide and Commentary," published simultaneously in *Primary Sources and Original Works*, 2: 3-4 (1993) and in *Discovery in the Archives of Spain and Portugal: Quincentenary Essays, 1492-1992*, ed. Lawrence J. McCrank (Binghamton: The Haworth Press, 1993).

Mountains chronicles its decline.²⁸ *Essays in Goan History* edited by Teotonio R. de Souza²⁹ and *The First Portuguese Colonial Empire* edited by Malyn Newitt³⁰ provide more specific insights into various aspects of the Goan colonial experience. M.N. Pearson's *The Portuguese in India* is a comprehensive review of the Portuguese presence in the subcontinent and a source of background material concerning Indo-Portuguese society.

Manuel Teixeira's three-volume work *The Portuguese Missions in Malacca and Singapore*³¹ is an invaluable reference for establishing the historical contexts in which Cristang cuisine evolved. *Sejarah Melayu* (The Malay Annals),³² which are quoted by many European historians, provide an indigenous account of the fifteenth and sixteenth century Malay Sultanate.

Jonathan Porter and Philippe Pons are particularly helpful in constructing a portrait of the enigmatic enclave of Macao.³³ E.N.

28 Manohar Malgonkar, *Inside Goa* (Panaji: Directorate of Information and Publicity, Govt. of Goa, Daman, and Diu, 1982); Mario Cabral e Sá, *Goa: Pearl of the East* (New Delhi: Luster, 1996); Mario Cabral e Sá, "Goapuri and Velha Goa: A Tale of Two cities – Walking the Labyrinths of History." https://goa.gov.in/portalweb/login/Departments/Tourism/Tale%20of%202%20Cities/Taleof2Cities_TourismDept.pdf

29 Teotonio R. de Souza, ed., *Essays in Goan History* (New Delhi: Concept, 1989).

30 Malyn Newitt, ed., *The First Portuguese Colonial Empire* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1986).

31 Manuel Teixeira, *The Portuguese Missions in Malacca and Singapore (1511–1958)*, 3 vols (Macau: Instituto Cultural de Macau, 1987).

32 John Leyden, trans., *Malay Annals* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1821).

33 Jonathan Porter, *Macau: The Imaginary City* (Boulder: Westview, 2000); Philippe Pons, *Macau*, trans. Sarah Adams (London: Reaktion, 2002).

Anderson, Calvin B.T. Lee and Audrey Evans Lee are informed references for the food and customs of the Cantonese, Teo Chew and Hakka ethnic groups who inhabit the Chinese mainland adjacent to the former Portuguese colony.³⁴

An awareness of the extent and pervasiveness of the ex-officio Portuguese presence in Asia is a key to understanding the ways in which Portuguese culinary influence achieved widespread transmission beyond the boundaries of its administrative empire. Maurice Collis provides a vivid picture of early Portuguese military and missionary efforts in Burma, while Geoffrey Scammell and George Winus shed light on the activities of the many Portuguese soldiers of fortune, traders and brigands who existed throughout the region, outside the official network of Portuguese possessions.³⁵

Theoretical Considerations

Gastronomy is a new field of academic enquiry and the theory of culinary creolization is not yet well developed. There are however, a number of scholars who have made notable contributions to this emerging field, helping to illuminate the multiple forces that exert an impact on the

34 E.N. Anderson, *The Food of China* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988); Calvin B.T. Lee and Audrey Evans Lee, *The Gourmet Regional Chinese Cookbook* (New Jersey: Castle Books, 1976).

35 Maurice Collis, *The Grand Peregrination* (London: Faber and Faber, 1949); Maurice Collis, *The Land of the Great Image* (New York: New Directions, 1985).

development of hybridized gastronomic traditions.

Jeffrey Pilcher has explored the processes of culinary adaptation in Spanish America.³⁶ Jessica B. Harris, in a number of works, has profiled the development of African-American creole cuisines in a variety of locales, adding to the body of work created by the American scholars Charles Joyner, in reference to slave populations of the American South, Richard Wilk, in reference to Belize, and Jeremy McMaster Rich, in reference to Gabon.³⁷ Alfred Crosby has explored the biogeographical dimensions of European colonial expansion and the Columbian Exchange.³⁸ In *The Foods of Paradise*, historian Rachel Laudan discusses the development of a distinctive Hawaiian creole cuisine, which includes some Portuguese elements.³⁹ Although immigration in Hawaii took place in a later historical context, the processes of culinary change parallel in many respects the experience of the Portuguese colonies, particularly in regard to the role of food in maintaining cultural identity and links to culinary homelands. These studies help to illuminate the multiple forces

36 Jeffrey M. Pilcher, *Que Viva Los Tamales! Food and the Making of Mexican Identity* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998).

37 Charles Joyner, *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1985); Charles Joyner, *Shared Traditions: Southern History and Folk Culture* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1999); Richard Wilk, *Home Cooking in the Global Village: Caribbean Food from Buccaneers to Ecotourists* (Oxford; New York: Berg, 2006); Richard Wilk, *A Workman is Worthy of His Meat: Food and Colonialism in the Gabon Estuary* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2007); Jessica B. Harris, *The Africa Cookbook* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998); Jessica B. Harris, *Iron Pots & Wooden Spoons: Africa's Gifts to New World Cooking* (New York: Fireside, 1999); Jessica B. Harris, *Tasting Brazil* (New York: Macmillan, 1992).

38 Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism*; Alfred W. Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1972).

39 Rachel Laudan, *The Food of Paradise: Exploring Hawaii's Culinary Heritage* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996).

that exert an impact on the development of hybridized gastronomic traditions.

Sidney C.H. Cheung's edited collection, *Food and Foodways in Asia* examines the development of Asian cuisine from a variety of angles and includes two chapters that discuss Luso-Asian cuisine.⁴⁰ Arjun Appadurai's various studies of the emergence of a national cuisine in India shed light on the non-culinary forces that shape the way people think about food and their identity.⁴¹ In *Curry*, British historian Lizzie Collingham discusses the development of Anglo-Indian cuisine and the effect of British colonialism in the process of culinary synthesis.⁴² The British colonial experience, in India and elsewhere, differed in many significant respects from that of the Portuguese but there are parallels in the way in which the meeting of cultures may be expressed at the dinner table.

Gastronomic Literature

In 1833, in response to the overwhelming power of the Jesuits in national affairs and their deep involvement in the economic and political business of the Portuguese empire, the male religious orders were

40 Alexander Mamak, "In Search of a Macanese Cookbook,"; Jean Duruz, "From Malacca to Adelaide...: Fragments Towards a Biography of Cooking, Yearning and *Laksa*," both in *Food and Foodways in Asia*, ed. Sidney C.H. Cheung (New York: Routledge, 2007).

41 Arjun Appadurai, "How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30 (1988).

42 Lizzie Collingham, *Curry: A Tale of Cooks and Conquerors* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

banned by royal decree. The female orders were allowed to remain until the last nun died, but were forbidden from taking in new novitiates. This period brought about a fundamental change in the foodways of Portugal as the culinary arts, along with their practitioners, moved from the religious institutions to the secular domain. Many recipes were lost during this transition as the monasteries fell into disrepair and their contents were destroyed or sold. Cooking retreated to the domestic kitchen and recipes were preserved as an oral tradition, to be handed down within families and because of the sense of suspicion and rivalry that is part of the Portuguese psyche, often surrounded with secrecy. It is only in the modern era that Portugal's cooking has been recorded in the form of written recipe collections.

The numerous early European ethnographic and natural history studies of Asian countries provide information about the culinary cultures of Asia prior to European arrival. These have been summarized effectively in many secondary works. Those consulted are listed in the bibliography.

The literature of Luso-Asian cuisine, in any language, is sparse. In the countries covered in this study, culinary culture was not traditionally documented in written format. In both India and China, early texts concerning food existed prior to the sixteenth century, but these are concerned primarily with dietetic matters and the cuisine of courts. The

techniques, manners and recipes associated with popular cuisine were codified by oral tradition and through the mechanisms of apprenticeship. Women were the primary practitioners of the culinary arts in the Portuguese overseas territories and over time became the principal custodians of culinary culture. Regrettably, however, as Russell-Wood has noted, there is an overwhelming absence of narratives by women among the anecdotal records of the Portuguese empire.⁴³ While the Spanish gastronomic experience in the New World mirrored that of the Portuguese in many respects, Pilcher notes a similar lack of documentary evidence for the development of Latin American colonial cuisine.⁴⁴

As Barbara Santich points out, cookbooks can be valuable sources of information about food and eating habits.⁴⁵ The cookbooks used in this study are relatively recent publications that record the recipes used by modern Portuguese Eurasian and native cooks in the various countries under discussion. They contain both traditional recipes and others that reflect changes in kitchen technology, ingredient availability, women's lifestyles and attitudes towards food and nutrition. Some also contain information pertaining to the genealogy of dishes but as few of the cookbooks used in this study are academic works, this material is often

⁴³ Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, 20.

⁴⁴ Pilcher, *Que Vivan Los Tamales!*, 26.

⁴⁵ Barbara Santich, ed., *In the Land of the Magic Pudding: A Gastronomic Miscellany* (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 2000), xi-xii.

anecdotal and therefore useful only as an indicator of possible gastronomic origin or culinary influence.

1. PORTUGUESE GASTRONOMY: HISTORICAL BEGINNINGS

This chapter explores the culinary history of Portugal, identifying key ingredients and foodways that Portuguese explorers and colonists carried with them to Asia. It explains the crucial role of the Catholic Church in Portuguese cultural life and the influence of the monasteries and convents on the development of Portuguese gastronomy. The logistics of ships' provisioning and living conditions on long-haul voyages to the East are analyzed in order to establish the parameters within which an off-shore Portuguese cuisine began to evolve. It concludes that durability and portability of foods, and the cultural significance of certain foods and foodways were primary factors influencing their transmission to the Portuguese colonies.

Portuguese Cuisine¹

Early Influences

The traditional cuisine of mainland Portugal is rustic, regional and based on local ingredients. Separated geographically from Spain and the

¹ I cannot improve upon Warren Belasco's insightful definition of "cuisine" as: "a set of socially situated food behaviours with these components: a limited number of "edible" foods (selectivity); a preference for particular ways of preparing food (technique); a distinctive set of flavour, textural and visual characteristics (aesthetics); a set of roles for consuming food (ritual); and an organized system of producing and distributing the food (infrastructure). Embedded in these components are a set of ideas, images, and values (ideology) that can be "read" just like any other cultural "text." Warren Belasco, "Food and Counter Culture: A Story of Bread and Politics," in *The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating: A Reader*, eds. James L. Watson and Melissa L. Caldwell (Malden: Blackwell, 2005), 219-220.

Mediterranean countries by the Sierra da Estrela mountain range and politically estranged from the Spanish House of Castile since 1385,² Portugal developed an independent culinary tradition that relied on farming, livestock rearing and seafood harvested from its long Atlantic coastline. Woodlands and forest provided a habitat for wild game and the pasture lands in the south have been used as for grazing and agriculture since antiquity. A temperate climate, cooler and wetter in the mountainous north, drier and warmer in the south, allowed the cultivation of plants naturalized in habitats extending from Northern Europe to Africa.

Portugal's favourable biogeography and strategic location between Europe and Africa attracted foreign settlers. The early Iberians herded sheep and cultivated wheat. Phoenician visitors planted the first vineyards. The Greeks introduced wheat, olives and apiculture.³ Contact between the indigenous hunting and gathering tribes of the Tagus River region and Celtic peoples in the north encouraged the prolific use of onions and cabbage and established pig husbandry as a primary source of protein and the basis of a tradition of ham and sausage making. Although pork was eaten throughout Europe, the Portuguese were

² David Birmingham, *A Concise History of Portugal* (Cambridge, New York and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 22.

³ For an overview of Portuguese cuisine, see Joyce Goldstein, *Savoring Spain and Portugal* (San Francisco: Weldon Owen, 2000), 14; Elisabeth Lambert Ortiz, *The Food of Spain and Portugal: The Complete Iberian Cuisine* (New York: Macmillan, 1989), 2-3; Edite Vieira, *The Taste of Portugal: A Voyage of Gastronomic Discovery Combined with Recipes, History and Folklore* (London: Grubb Street, 2000), 1-2; Pilcher, *Que Vivan los Tamales!*, 27.

particularly fond of it. Swine were Portugal's principal livestock, pork flesh filled butchers' shops and pork fat was universally used as a culinary seasoning.⁴ An Italian cookbook from 1560 lists suckling pig on a spit as a Portuguese dish.⁵

The Arab Contribution

The long period of Moorish domination beginning in the eighth century profoundly influenced the culture and cuisine of southern Iberia. Portuguese in the south preferred to sit on Arab carpets and cushions in place of European chests and benches. In Muslim fashion, they whitewashed their houses and decorated them with coloured tiles. They also practised frequent hand-washing, particularly before meals.⁶ Of the thousand-odd words in the modern Portuguese language that have Arabic etyma, those describing food, plants and agriculture are among the most common.⁷ Arab innovations in horticulture and irrigation expanded agricultural production. New cooking methods and ingredients were introduced, and *horta*, kitchen gardens planted with eggplants, spinach, artichokes and other Mediterranean vegetables, became a feature of Portuguese households. The Arabs introduced rice cultivation

⁴ Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 24.

⁵ Ken Albala, *The Banquet: Dining in the Great Courts of Late Renaissance Europe* (Champaign: University of Illinois, 2007), 134.

⁶ Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 138.

⁷ Disney, *A History of Portugal and the Portuguese Empire*, 1:62.

to southern Portugal and brought new crops such as oranges, peaches, saffron, dates, sugarcane and cotton.⁸ They planted citrus, fig and almond groves, and passed on to the Portuguese a penchant for sweet and savoury combinations, pastries and creamy, egg-based sweets. Nut-thickened sauces and the almond paste that forms the basis of many Portuguese sweets and cakes are Arab legacies, as are candied fruits, marzipan and nougat, and the use of spices such as black pepper, nutmeg, cumin and saffron. Another Arab introduction was the distinctive clam-shaped cooking vessel known to the Portuguese as a *cataplana*.⁹

The Arabic legacy, particularly the horticultural heritage, techniques of vinegar marination and love of sweets, travelled with the Portuguese to the Far East. Kitchen gardens, adapted where necessary to local climatic conditions and new plant species, were a distinguishing feature of the Luso-Asian settlements, as they were in Spanish America.¹⁰ The presence of Arab traders in the region, which predated the Portuguese incursion by many centuries, ensured supply of many of the ingredients that the Moors had also introduced to Iberia. When the Portuguese took

⁸ James M. Anderson, *The History of Portugal* (Wesport: Greenwood Press, 2000), 23.

⁹ For Muslim influences on the cuisine of Europe, see Massimo Montanari, "Food Models and Cultural Identity," in *Food: A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present*, eds. Jean-Louis Flandrin, Massimo Montanari, and Albert Sonnenfeld, 189-193 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); C. Anne Wilson, "The Saracen Connection: Arab Cuisine and the Medieval West, Part 1." *Petits Propos Culinaires* 7 (1981), 13-22; Penelope Casas, *The Foods and Wines of Spain* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982).

¹⁰ Kenneth R. Mills and William B. Taylor, *Colonial Spanish America: A Documentary History* (Oxford: SR Books, 2006), 170-172.

control of Arab trading bases such as Hormuz, they gained direct access to the traditional sources of Arab-influenced foods.

Judaic Influences

Medieval Portugal was home to a sizeable, economically powerful Jewish population. Jewish merchants imported foods from the Mediterranean such as olive oil, chickpeas, fava beans, lentils, dates, grapes and pomegranates, and introduced ways of preparing them.¹¹ It is thought that *escabeche*, a technique for using vinegar to preserve cooked foods, especially fish, and the culturing of cheese with thistle bloom, a practice still carried out by Portuguese producers of artisanal cheese, were also Jewish innovations.¹² Other Hebraic foods adopted by the Portuguese were unleavened breads and cakes, almond tortes, sponge cakes and egg custards. The Sephardic Jews' sojourn in Arab lands is reflected in some of these dishes.¹³ Milk was not often drunk as a beverage in sixteenth century Portugal but desserts made from cooked dairy products were considered delicacies. A variety of puddings, custards, turnovers and cakes are among the milk-based desserts contained in the sixteenth

¹¹ Joan Nathan, *Jewish Cooking in America* (New York: Knopf, 1998), 10.

¹² Nathan, *Jewish Cooking in America*, 10; Rosa Tovar, "Spanish Thistle-Bloom Cheese," *Gastronomica*, Spring (2002), 78.

¹³ Joyce Goldstein, *Sephardic Flavors: Jewish Cooking of the Mediterranean* (San Francisco: Chronicle, 2000), 8.

century Portuguese *Treatise on Cooking*.¹⁴

Many Jews expelled from Spain in 1492 as a result of the Inquisition found refuge in Portugal where official attitudes were initially more tolerant. When Jews in Portugal were compelled to convert to Christianity, many Jewish culinary practices went underground, or were modified to incorporate hitherto forbidden ingredients, such as pork and shellfish. In Portugal the Inquisition was concerned primarily with confirming the sincerity of Jewish conversions to Christianity.¹⁵ Adherence to deeply ingrained Jewish dietary customs was considered clear evidence of apostasy, despite the fact that over generations these customs had become cultural as well as religious norms. The consumption of pork, for example, remained anathema to many *conversos*, even among those who willingly embraced Catholic theology. Among those accused of crypto-Judaism, pork eating was regarded as a powerful testament of faith.¹⁶

The exiled Iberian *conversos* became known as *marranos*, from the Andalusian term *maharrana* meaning fresh lard.¹⁷ (The same Arab root word, *moharrama*, gave rise to the Muslim term for forbidden foods,

¹⁴ Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 24.

¹⁵ Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire*, 267.

¹⁶ Claudine Fabre-Vassas and Carol Volk, *The Singular Beast* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 121, 290.

¹⁷ Fabre-Vassas and Volk, *The Singular Beast*, 123.

haram.) According to tradition, *chouriço de marrano*, which resembles pork sausage but contains no pig products, and *botifarro de marrano*, coloured red to approximate blood sausage, were developed by Jews during the Inquisition and displayed conspicuously in their houses.¹⁸ *Alheiras*, sausages made from game birds in place of pork, and dishes such as *porco alentejano* (pork and clams), and *cozido* (a stew based on the Jewish one-pot meal cooked for the Sabbath) also rose from the crypto-Judaic culinary tradition.

Many of the Jews and conversos fleeing persecution in Iberia made new homes in Portuguese Asia, carrying Hebraic culinary culture with them. Together with Jewish communities already long established in the region, the Sephardic Jews contributed a strand to the multicultural fabric of Luso-Asian cuisine.

Foods from the New World

The sixteenth century voyages of exploration initiated a new culinary era in Portugal and elsewhere in Europe, with the arrival of novel ingredients from the New World and a ready supply of spices from India and the Far East.¹⁹ Among the ingredients brought from the Americas, tomatoes,

¹⁸ Fabre-Vassas and Volk, *The Singular Beast*, 121, 290.

¹⁹ See Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange*; Nelson Foster and Linda S. Cordell, eds. *Chilies to Chocolate: Food the Americas Gave the World* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1992).

potatoes and capsicums were to become so important to Portuguese cooking that today they help to define it. Dishes cooked 'Portuguese style' or with a 'Portuguese Sauce' invariably include tomatoes, onions, olive oil and garlic. Maize was quickly naturalized and breads made from cornmeal became Portuguese staples. The Portuguese also adopted hot varieties of the capsicum family with an enthusiasm unmatched elsewhere in Europe, where the milder forms of paprika gained greater popularity. *Piri-piri* sauce, made from the incendiary malagueta pepper, is used liberally as a marinade, cooking ingredient and table sauce in Portugal. Red pepper flakes and *massa de pimentão*, a paste made from chili peppers, olive oil and garlic, are key ingredients of many dishes.

Iberian Cuisine, Hispanic Links

An analysis of Iberian culinary influences in Asia must take into account the presence of the Spanish in the region. Spain and Portugal, which together constitute the Iberian Peninsula, have similar topography, climate, agricultural practices and ingredients. From a purely regional perspective, there is little demarcation between Spanish and Portuguese cuisine. The Iberian diet, established during the Roman period when the region was united as Lusitania, survived its twelfth century separation into two political entities. Both countries inherited the Arab fondness for

sweets and developed elaborate confectionery traditions featuring egg-rich desserts, pastries, sweetmeats and fruit preserves. Both were pioneers in the introduction of New World foods to Europe and agents in the global spread of Iberian culinary culture. While there are significant distinctions between Portuguese and Spanish cuisine,²⁰ the similarities make it difficult to identify Iberian influences upon the cooking of other cultures as either specifically Spanish or Portuguese. Many dishes and cooking methods belong to a shared Iberian culinary heritage and in many instances, it is difficult to determine if a dish originated in Spain and travelled to Portugal, or vice versa. However, the Portuguese and Spanish colonial experiences did not coincide in Asia. From 1580-1640, Spain and Portugal were briefly united again under the Spanish crown in a short-lived and uneasy alliance. Their rivalry extended to the colonial endeavour in the East as Spanish and Portuguese explorers contested claims to newly discovered lands. The issue was resolved by the Treaty of Tordesillas of 1494,²¹ which gave Portugal the right to all lands east of a north-south line west of the Cape Verde islands and Spain the right to all lands west. With the exception of the Philippines, upon whose culinary life they had a marked influence, the Spaniards had little cultural contact with the peoples of the region. The Spanish galleon trade

20 While Spain was intimately linked with the Mediterranean countries, Portugal faced the Atlantic and distant lands. Portuguese cuisine is adventurous and incorporates more exotic ingredients, such as spices and chilies, than does Spanish, which is much less piquant and reflects a Mediterranean sensibility. During the colonial era, the ingredients and culinary traditions of the Caribbean and Mesoamerica influenced Spanish cuisine, while Portuguese cuisine developed more affinities with the cooking of Africa, Brazil and the Far East.

21 Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire*, 64.

between Acapulco and Manila played a significant role in the transportation of New World food plants to Asia but Manila marked the outer limit of the Spanish activity in the East. The onward distribution of trade goods and food plants from Manila to other parts of Asia, and the spread of Iberian culinary and cultural influence in that part of the world, were overwhelmingly due to the Portuguese.²²

Portuguese Cuisine in the Age of Discovery

The cuisines of the Portuguese colonies were rooted in the gastronomy of late medieval mainland Portugal. An overview of the gastronomy of this period, which was profoundly influenced by the precepts of Catholicism, the preeminence of the monastic Orders and the hierarchical nature of Portuguese society, provides historical background for the development of Portuguese colonial cuisine, whether Luso-Asian, Luso-African or Luso-American. Certain components of the pre-modern Portuguese diet made the transition to Asia and became signifiers of Lusitanian influence upon indigenous cuisines. Many of these elements were transmitted because of their usefulness to seafarers and cultural importance to the Iberians.

²² See Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, 137-138.

Signature Foods and Beverages

Pork

The Iberian pig is an ancient breed that survives today as the pedigree black pig of the Alentejo region of Portugal and the Extremadura region of Spain.²³ It is the source of the prized Portuguese ham, *presunto* and the Spanish *jamon iberico*. In Portugal, historically one of the poorest countries in Europe, the pig has been a fundamental food source for centuries. Rural families in Iberian Portugal traditionally kept one or two pigs, relying on them to supply their own table and to produce a small surplus to be sold. The pigs were raised as semi-feral animals, penned at night and watched over by a swineherd by day as they foraged in forests and open woodlands. When the approach of winter reduced their food supply, pigs were slaughtered and their meat provided essential provisions to carry the household through the lean season.²⁴

Very little animal flesh was eaten in early modern Portugal, in part because of the high number of fasting days but primarily because the economy at this time was extremely backward.²⁵ In robustly Catholic

²³ Alan Davidson, *The Penguin Companion to Food* (London: Penguin, 2002), 725.

²⁴ Vieira, *The Taste of Portugal*, 100; Nancy Harmon Jenkins, *The Essential Mediterranean* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003), 298-300.

²⁵ Gilberto Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves: A Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), 240.

Iberia, rich foods and flesh foods were reserved for religious feast days and associated with accumulated wealth and social status. Meat eating in general, and pork in particular, took on added significance to the Iberians after the *Reconquista* as it distanced the Catholic Christians from their former Muslim overlords.²⁶

In the medieval kitchen, no food was wasted, especially meat. Cooks used the whole animal, including the whole head or muzzle of larger animals, brains, tongue, cock's comb, gizzard, sweetbreads, lungs, organs and entrails, including stomach, liver, kidneys and bladder, intestines, mesentery, marrow, udder, testicles, feet and tail. Many traditional dishes included blood as an ingredient.²⁷

A stew made from pork, salt, vinegar and blood, known as black broth, was a staple dish of the Spartans.²⁸ But taboos against the consumption of blood have a long history. Concerns about the cleanliness of blood, which spoils very quickly unless it is cooked, led to blood sausage being outlawed as 'a dangerous meat' in the statutes regulating the French Cooks' Guilds issued in 1268 by the Grand Provost of Paris, Etienne

²⁶ Rachel Laudan and Jeffrey M. Pilcher, "Chiles, Chocolate, and Race in New Spain: Glancing Backward to Spain or Looking Forward to Mexico?" *Eighteenth-Century Life* 23, no.2 (1999), 62.

²⁷ Terence Scully, *The Art of Cookery in the Middle Ages: Studies in Anglo-Saxon History* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1997), 78.

²⁸ Robert Flacelière, *Daily Life in Greece at the Time of Pericles* (London: Phoenix Press, 2002), 209.

Boileau.²⁹ In the Jewish tradition, blood was regarded as representing an animal's soul and was reserved for god. It was also regarded as unclean food by Muslims. The medieval Portuguese, however, had no qualms about cooking with blood. *Morçela* (blood sausage) was (and still is) considered a delicacy.

Salt and Salted Foods

Salt production was medieval Portugal's only industry.³⁰ Portugal has produced salt since early times and has historically been a major exporter of salt to northern Europe.³¹ The climate, especially around the seaside town of Setúbal on the southern coast, was particularly suited to salt production. The salt made in this region by flooding low areas with sea water and allowing them to evaporate, was said to be the best in Europe for curing fish or cheeses.³² Holland, Denmark, Poland and the Baltic countries all purchased large quantities of Portuguese salt.³³ During the fourteenth century, salt was traded to the English who used it to salt fish which were then traded back to the Portuguese.³⁴

²⁹ Scully, *The Art of Cookery in the Middle Ages*, 236.

³⁰ Charles Wilson and Geoffrey Parker, *An Introduction to the Sources of European Economic History 1500-1800: Western Europe* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 1980), 65.

³¹ Disney, *A History of Portugal and the Portuguese Empire*, 1:100.

³² Mark Kurlansky, *Salt: A World History* (New York: Penguin, 2003), 121.

³³ Kurlansky, *Salt*, 172.

³⁴ Maite Manjón, *The Gastronomy of Spain and Portugal* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1990), 260.

The Celts, who taught the Romans about salting hams, sausages and pork products, also brought these skills to Portugal when they settled in the north. The Portuguese became specialists in producing salted meats and charcuterie, particularly from pork. With their access to the Atlantic, they were also able to develop a fish preserving industry that supplemented domestic food supplies and generated export income. The demand for salted fish in Europe was enormous. Preserved herring and cod were mainstays of the Lenten diet and by the fourteenth century most of northern Europe relied on huge stockpiles of salted fish and meat to feed their armies and see them through times of war.³⁵ The traffic in salted fish was so heavy that in parts of Europe, the storage of salted sardines, anchovies, herrings and other smelly fish in warehouses was prohibited.³⁶

An indication of the importance of salt in Medieval Portugal is the segregation of the salt trade by gender. Trades were strictly divided between the sexes and although women could be licensed as fish vendors, bakers and a variety of other food-related professions, the registered measurers of salt were all male.³⁷

³⁵ Kurlansky, *Salt*, 120-127.

³⁶ Sue Shephard, *Pickled, Potted and Canned: How the Art of Food Preserving Changed the World* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 2000), 82.

³⁷ Darlene Abreu-Ferreira, "From Mere Survival to Near Success: Women's Economic Strategies in Early Modern Portugal," *Journal of Women's History* 13, no. 2 (2001), 63.

Bread

The cuisine of the Roman empire, based on bread, cheese, olive oil, olives, vegetables and a little meat, established the foundation of the modern Portuguese diet during the first two centuries BCE.³⁸ The Romans planted cereals, olive groves and vineyards, improved agricultural methods, transportation and irrigation systems and introduced the manufacture of the fish sauce called *garum*. During the Roman stewardship of the region they called Lusitania, baking ovens were introduced and breads made from wheat and other grains replaced earlier griddle breads made from chestnuts and other wild nuts.³⁹

Pliny the Elder wrote in the first century that the bread made in Iberia was incomparable.⁴⁰ His praise of Portuguese bread was due to its lightness, achieved by the use of leavens harvested from the foam that rose to the top of the mash used in beer making.⁴¹

Bread was so important in Early Modern Portugal that in times of grain

38 Rafael Chabran, "Medieval Spain," in *Regional Cuisines of Medieval Europe: A Book of Essays*, ed. Melitta Weiss Adamson (New York: Routledge, 2002), 128-129.

39 Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 26-27; Massimo Montanari, "Production Structures and Food Systems in the Early Middle Ages," in Flandrin, et al., *Food: A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present*, 173-174.

40 Bernard Poitrenaud, "Baker's Yeast," in *Handbook of Food and Beverage Fermentation Technology*, eds. Y.H. Hui et al. (New York: Marcel Dekker Inc, 2004), 695.

41 Poitrenaud, "Baker's Yeast," 695.

shortages, broad beans were imported from France and England to be ground into flour, as were locally grown chestnuts.⁴² Rye, barley, millet and oats were also made into bread and after the discovery of America, bakers began to include cornmeal. The term *broa* was introduced in the fifteenth century to describe bread made with millet⁴³ but today it mostly refers to bread made with the New World grain. In Portuguese households a basket of bread appears on the table at mealtimes, as a matter of course. Traditionally, bread was baked twice a week and as it staled, it was put to other uses, crumbled for a kind of bread stuffing called *migas* or used to thicken the soups called *açordas*, which were introduced by the Moors.⁴⁴ In lean times, bread moistened with water and a little olive oil might constitute a whole meal.

In the sixteenth century the Portuguese were still using thick slices of bread as trenchers for serving wet dishes. A recipe from the *Treatise on Cooking* for minced beef simmered in a sauce of vinegar, olive oil and spices, advises that the dish should be cooked until dry, “or if not done in this way, [...] it may instead be done by placing slices of bread under the meat to absorb the liquid.”⁴⁵ A recipe for rabbit concludes with the instruction, “Lay some slices of bread on a plate and top with the rabbit

⁴² Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 22.

⁴³ Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 27.

⁴⁴ Ana Patuleia Ortins, *Portuguese Homestyle Cooking* (New York: Interlink, 2001), 43.

⁴⁵ Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 18.

pieces.”⁴⁶ Dishes served on bread in the monastic dining halls were brought to the table first, perhaps so the juices had time to soak into the bread and soften it if it were stale.⁴⁷

Bread was also used to clean the hands after they had been used for eating. The Rules of Conduct for Cistercian monks, which governed behaviour in the religious houses throughout Europe, admonished the Brothers not to clean their hands on the tablecloth unless they had first wiped them down with bread. Returning a chewed piece of bread to the serving bowl constituted a sin.⁴⁸

In rural areas, breads were usually made in communal village ovens and still are in some of the more remote regions of Portugal. In urban communities, since medieval times, Portuguese women have also made bread and sold it from their homes. In Portugal, unlike the rest of Europe where men dominated the baking guilds, most bread makers and sellers were women.⁴⁹ In Porto in 1483, civic records show that all 24 of the city’s bakers were women. Female bakers (*padeiras*) were still outnumbering men in Portugal two centuries later. In 1686 the town council of Ponte de Lima appointed 13 bakers to provide the town’s bread

⁴⁶ Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 23.

⁴⁷ Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 30.

⁴⁸ Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 209.

⁴⁹ Abreu-Ferreira, “From Mere Survival to Near Success,” 62-63.

for a year. All of them were women.⁵⁰

In medieval times, Iberia's 'Land of Bread' was the wheat-growing region in the kingdom of Castile-Leon which is now in Spain but once ruled by Portugal.⁵¹ Three types of loaf were traditionally produced in Castile, two long forms and the circular *Pan Candéal*.⁵² It is thought that the Portuguese enriched this 'Bread of Castile' with eggs and Iberian Jews lofted it with whisked whites, to create a sponge cake called *Pan d'España*, (the bread of Spain), or *Pão de Lo* in Portugal.⁵³

Bread's religious function as a simulacrum for the Body of Jesus lent it a powerful symbolism, further reinforcing its central role in the lives of the Iberian Portuguese. The taking of communion and receiving of the Host had been obligatory for Portuguese Catholics since the early thirteenth century.⁵⁴ The making of communion wafers was a specialized branch of bakery, traditionally entrusted to the bakers in the convents and monasteries. Since the eleventh century, church doctrine had specified that only wheat bread qualified in this role.⁵⁵ Bread's other religious

50 Abreu-Ferreira, "From Mere Survival to Near Success," 62-63.

51 Casas, *The Foods and Wines of Spain*, 325.

52 Marion Trutter, ed., *Culinaria Spain* (Cologne: Könemann Verlagsgesellschaft, 1998), 261.

53 Nathan, *Jewish Cooking in America*, 411. See also Clifford A. Wright, *A Mediterranean Feast: The Story of the Birth of the Celebrated Cuisines of the Mediterranean from the Merchants of Venice to the Barbary Corsairs* (New York: William Morrow, 1999), 676.

54 Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 208.

55 Laudan and Pilcher, "Chiles, Chocolate, and Race in New Spain," 62.

function was as the food of penance. One day spent fasting on bread and water was equivalent to reciting 40 psalms on one's knees, or 70 standing, plus an act of charity by providing food to the poor. Two days of bread and water mitigated the sin of bathing naked with a woman, even one's own wife.⁵⁶

Sugar

Sugarcane is a native of Southeast Asia. The fundamental processes of sugar production were developed in Persia and India and the Arabs carried the techniques to Iberia.⁵⁷ At the end of the thirteenth century, the royal pantry of Portugal's King Dinis included various types of very costly sugar, including rose coloured sugar and Alexandrine sugar.⁵⁸ In Portugal, as in the rest of Europe, sweet *confits* were presented to women to conclude the meal at a banquet, while men received gifts of spices. Merchants as well as the nobility aspired to impress their guests by serving elaborate and showy sugar confections.⁵⁹

The preservative properties of sugar were written about in Europe in the thirteenth century and were probably known even earlier. Fruit syrups,

⁵⁶ Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 209.

⁵⁷ Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Penguin, 1985), 24.

⁵⁸ Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 23.

⁵⁹ Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, 90, 124.

candied fruits and preserves have been made in Persia since at least the ninth century.⁶⁰ In the Arabic dietary tradition, they were regarded as having medical properties, as they were also, initially, in Europe. Dried fruits were very important commercial items in sixteenth century Portugal, both in the domestic market and as exports.⁶¹ Sale of dried figs, raisins and almonds grown in the Algarve contributed significantly to Portugal's export revenues. Glacéed fruit, made by repeatedly coating the fruit with boiling sugar syrup over a period of up to two weeks,⁶² were another Portuguese specialty.

The queen of Portuguese sweet preserves was marmalade. The Portuguese term for quince, *marmelo*, comes from the Mozarabic *malmâlo* for quince conserve.⁶³ According to Anne Wilson, author of *The Book of Marmalade*, the Portuguese were the first to make a solid quince conserve, which they called *marmelada*, from sugar instead of honey and credits their liking for the sweet preserve to the influence of the Moors.⁶⁴ *Marmelada*, minus Arabic flavourings such as rosewater and musk, is still made in the traditional manner in Portugal. Molded in a pudding basin, it is turned out onto a plate when set, cut in pieces to be served

⁶⁰ Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, 123.

⁶¹ Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 25.

⁶² Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 26.

⁶³ C. Anne Wilson, *The Book of Marmalade* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 22.

⁶⁴ Wilson, *The Book of Marmalade*, 24.

after dinner with cheese and a glass of port.⁶⁵ The Portuguese also made a marmalade from the bitter oranges that had been known in Portugal since Arab times and were used like lemons.

After the departure of the Moors, the Portuguese continued to produce a small amount of sugar but it was not until the fifteenth century and the development of sugar plantations in Madeira that it became a significant crop.

Vinegar

The use of vinegar in culinary applications was commonplace in sixteenth century European kitchens. The insecurity and seasonality of food supplies meant that preservation techniques were important, particularly for protein sources such as fish and meat. Vinegar's antiseptic properties had been known since the time of Hippocrates and it had been used since medieval times in medicines and in a variety of ways in the kitchen. It was a safer cooking liquid than water and was appreciated for its diversity of flavours and tangy taste. It was used as a base for sauces, in place of water or meat stocks, as well as a seasoning for cooked dishes.⁶⁶

65 C. Anne Wilson, "Marmalade in New Found Lands," *Petits Propos Culinaires* 18 (1984), 38.

66 See Scully, *The Art of Cookery in the Middle Ages*, 111.

The Portuguese had an abundance of vinegar due to their grape cultivation and were particularly fond of vinegar-based marinades for meats. *Vinho d'alhos*, a marinade of wine, vinegar and plenty of garlic, has become a classic of the Portuguese kitchen. The *Treatise on Cooking* contains recipes for chicken, rabbit, beef and lamprey eel, all seasoned with vinegar.⁶⁷ The technique was sufficiently commonplace that it gave rise to a medieval Portuguese quip. King Pedro I (1357-67), whose mistress had been executed by a gentleman named Coelho (Portuguese for rabbit), ordered that he be seasoned with onion, vinegar and olive oil before he too was put to death.⁶⁸

The Arabs had been marinating meats in vinegar since time immemorial⁶⁹ and their methods of using vinegar as a preservative and seasoning were adopted in Portugal during the Moorish period. From Northern Portugal came the Germanic tradition of fermented cabbage pickles. Jewish merchants in the southern port cities imported a variety of pickled vegetables, such as gherkins and cucumbers, and preserves from the Eastern Mediterranean and introduced the art of preserving capers, truffles, figs and lemons by vinegaring and salting. Portugal's Jewish population probably also introduced the *escabeche* method of

⁶⁷ Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 19-23.

⁶⁸ Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 23.

⁶⁹ Bernard Rosenberger, "Arab Cuisine and Its Contribution to European Culture," in Flandrin, et al., *Food: A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present*, 213-214.

soaking fish and other foods in a vinegary mixture after cooking.⁷⁰

Fishermen used the technique to preserve their catch, frying the fish on the beach, smothering them with vinegar and oil and packing them into barrels.⁷¹ They could then be transported or stored without spoiling.

Wine and other Alcoholic Drinks

Wine is a central element of Portuguese gastronomy. The Iberian temperament celebrates conviviality and the pleasures of the table and alcoholic beverages, particularly wine, brandies and liqueurs, are popular social lubricants.

Vineyards and wine making spread throughout Iberia during the Roman period. Wine was essential to performing the rites of the Catholic church but the primary reason for grape growing was to provide table wines for the monasteries.⁷² The grapes that produce the country's signature port wines were planted in the Douro during the twelfth century by Prince Henry of Burgundy when the region was under his dominion. It was not until the early eighteenth century, however, that these wines were fortified in order to extend their keeping qualities.⁷³

70 Claudia Roden, *The Book of Jewish Food: An Odyssey from Samarkand to New York* (New York: Knopf, 1996), 330.

71 Giovanni Rebori, *Culture of the Fork: A Brief History of Food in Europe*, trans. Albert Sonnenfeld (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 80.

72 Tom Standage, *A History of the World in 6 Glasses* (New York: Walker and Co., 2005), 86.

73 Fede Falces, "Portugal," in *Culinaria: European Specialties*, eds. Joachim Römer and Michael Ditter (Cologne: Könemann, 1995), 512.

Malvasia grapevines from Crete had been planted on Madeira by 1420, soon after its settlement by the Portuguese.⁷⁴ Because of their high sugar content, which reduced spoilage, Madeira wines were of particular value as ships' stores.

The Portuguese developed the art of beer brewing during the Celtic period.⁷⁵ The Moors introduced the science of distillation, which produced stronger grain-based beverages. Distilled wine, called *aqua vitae*, was initially used for medicinal purposes but by the fifteenth century 'burned wine' or brandy, which could be made in volume using the Arabian still, was being enjoyed all over Europe as an intoxicant.⁷⁶ The Portuguese refined the Arab alembic, giving it a distinctive rounded onion shape that was more efficient in collecting the distillate and produced a variety of regional *aguardentes*. One of the earliest was *bagaceira*, made from the seeds and skins left behind after crushing grapes for wine. The sugar plantations on Madeira and in Brazil produced another type of *aguardente* from sugarcane. Rum was not made from molasses until early in the seventeenth century but the rough cane spirit, called *cachaça* in Brazil, was being made there as early as

⁷⁴ Melitta Weiss Adamson, *Food in Medieval Times* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004), xiii.

⁷⁵ Max Nelson, *The Barbarian's Beverage: A History of Beer in Ancient Europe* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), 54.

⁷⁶ Standage, *A History of the World in 6 Glasses*, 100.

1530.⁷⁷ The colonial Portuguese in Brazil disdained *cachaça* as the drink of cane field workers but they used it to barter for slaves.⁷⁸ The Madeirans were less snobbish about cane spirit and it is still enjoyed by people of all classes, especially in the mixed drink called *ponche*.⁷⁹

Cooking Methods

The medieval Portuguese kitchen was equipped with a fireplace fitted with a rack and pinion to raise and lower pots and cauldrons, spits for cooking meat, and footed grills.⁸⁰ Oven baking was traditionally carried out in communal village ovens. In the south, a Moorish-influenced stove was used, consisting of a stone bench with a fire beneath and a row of holes in which pots could be suspended over the coals.⁸¹ Kitchen utensils included iron kettles, spoons and soup ladles, a mortar and pestle, cleavers, copper pans and bowls, frying pans, earthenware jugs and various pottery vessels generically called *olas*.⁸² Milk puddings and egg custards could be given a brown caramelized finish with a

⁷⁷ Morgan, Brian. *Brazilian Cachaça*. American University. Trade and Environment Database. Case Study #721. <http://www1.american.edu/te/cachaca.htm>

⁷⁸ Milton Miszputen, "Simply Cachaca, Simply Brazil," *Gastronomica* 7, no. 2 (2007), 90.

⁷⁹ *Ponche* (punch) is widely believed to have been developed in India. It is thought that the name derives from *panch*, the Hindi word for five, because it contained five ingredients: sugar, water, lime juice, spices and *arak*. (Henry Yule and A. C. Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson: The Anglo-Indian Dictionary* (1886; repr., Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 1996), 737).

⁸⁰ Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 131.

⁸¹ Jo Ann Parvin, "Andalusian Poyos," *Petits Propos Culinaires* 21 (1985), 41-44. These stoves are still used in Southern Iberia and in parts of Asia.

⁸² Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 131.

salamander – a special branding iron heated in the fire.⁸³

Spit-roasting (*assado*) was the most common method of cooking meat. Other popular techniques were boiling (*cozido*), stewing (*estofado*) and chopping into hash.⁸⁴ One-pot meals called *cozidos* were cooked in a stew pan or in a style known as *na pucara* (“in a jug”), which employed a more upright vessel. Earthenware pots which retained heat and required less fuel than metal pots were the common choice for long-cooked dishes.

In medieval Portugal, a variety of fats were used in cooking, including butter, olive oil, lard, beef shortening and bacon grease. Along with wheat and grapes, olives, the fruit of *Olea europaea*, were the farmers’ main crop. The enormous number of pigs reared meant that pig fat was also a very important cooking and seasoning agent but olive oil was the most widely used culinary fat. Casks of olive oil formed part of the tithe paid by farmers to their landlords. Olive oil was also burned in *candeias* (oil lamps) to provide lighting and mixed with ashes to make soap. It was also an essential ingredient of various medicinal potions and for the consecrated anointing oils used in Christian rites.⁸⁵

⁸³ Parvin, “Andalusian Poyos,” 41.

⁸⁴ Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 17.

⁸⁵ Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 24, 134, 138.

A royal housekeeping notebook from 1474 lists only olive oil, parsley, vinegar and bitter oranges as seasonings used in the kitchen.⁸⁶ A recipe for *Minced, Dry-Cooked Beef* in the *Treatise on Cooking*, shows that Portuguese cooks were particular about the quality of their olive oil. After mincing a tender piece of beef and mixing it with herbs and finely chopped onions, the cook is instructed, “In place of butter, add very good olive oil without any rancidity.”⁸⁷

The aroma of onions and garlic slowly caramelizing in olive oil has been described as “the defining scent of the Portuguese kitchen”.⁸⁸ In sixteenth century Portugal onions were the most common vegetables.⁸⁹ Many of the savoury dishes described in the *Treatise on Cooking* are seasoned with finely chopped onion. They were enormously important to Christian Iberian cooks.⁹⁰ Garlic was not used so much for flavouring – it was considered food for peasants, but was appreciated for its medicinal properties.⁹¹

Refogado is a technique particular to Portuguese cooks. Sliced onions

⁸⁶ Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 21.

⁸⁷ Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 18.

⁸⁸ Ana Patuleia Ortins, *Portuguese Homestyle Cooking* (New York: Interlink, 2001), 10.

⁸⁹ Clifford A. Wright, *Mediterranean Vegetables* (Boston: Harvard Common Press, 2001), 244.

⁹⁰ Scully, *The Art of Cookery in the Middle Ages*, 231.

⁹¹ Wright, *Mediterranean Vegetables*, 167. Linschoten also noted that Portuguese seamen held garlic in low regard. (Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:14).

and garlic are very slowly stewed in olive oil until they are deeply browned and flavourful and have a jammy consistency. It is the first step in the preparation of many Portuguese recipes and is a technique that has been used in Portugal since the Middle Ages.⁹²

Another technique peculiar to the Portuguese kitchen involves frying meat after it has been braised, a reverse of the technique of frying before boiling, which the Arabs are thought to have introduced to Portugal.⁹³ Deep frying was probably another Moorish introduction and the technique became firmly embedded in the Arab-influenced southern regions of Iberia where hot weather and a lack of firewood encouraged stove top cooking. In Spain, Andalusia is known as the *zona de fritos* (fried food zone). Deep frying is also the most popular form of cooking in southern Portugal.⁹⁴ Deep fried yeasted dough fritters have been made in Europe since medieval times.⁹⁵ In the Algarve, sweets were traditionally divided into two main categories, the fried and the baked. Fritters and other cakes of Arab origin appear in a recipe book belonging to a granddaughter of Dom Manuel I. The most popular and widely consumed deep fried sweets were fritters and *almojavenas*, spherical cakes baked

⁹² Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 23.

⁹³ Scully, *The Art of Cookery in the Middle Ages*, 230. Luso-Asian cooks also use this method and may have passed it along to Asian cooks. It is employed, for example, in making the Indonesian dish, *rendang*.

⁹⁴ Parvin, "Andalusian Poyos," 41; Manjón, *The Gastronomy of Spain and Portugal*, 146.

⁹⁵ Wright, *A Mediterranean Feast*, 113.

and dipped in sugar syrup.⁹⁶

Elite and Popular Cuisines

In Late Medieval Portugal, as elsewhere in Europe, cuisine was governed by dietetics, religious faith and socio-economic status. Those with the means to do so ate well, while the poorer classes subsisted on a diet high in starches and low in animal protein.⁹⁷

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the majority of the Portuguese population was economically deprived. Diet was generally poor, often consisting of little more than bread, onions, cabbages and sardines. Religious feast days were celebrated with food among the wealthier classes but even their everyday meals were very basic.⁹⁸ The economy was localized and was supported by subsistence and commercial agriculture, and by trade. Wheat and other grains imported from Northern Europe supplemented domestic food supplies. Portugal's few domestically produced exports included wines, salt, soap, cork, olive oil, fruits, quince marmalade and sumac.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Saramago and Fialho, *Doçaria dos Conventos de Portugal*, 9.

⁹⁷ For the cuisine of medieval and early modern Europe, see Scully, *The Art of Cookery in the Middle Ages*; Jean-Louis Flandrin, Massimo Montanari, and Albert Sonnenfeld, eds. *Food: A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999). For Portugal in the same period, see Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*.

⁹⁸ See also Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, 240-244.

⁹⁹ Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, 125-126.

Upper class dining tables were laid with gold and silver utensils. Food was brought in tureens or basins by a procession of servants bearing torches. Dishes were served onto round bread trenchers which were distributed to the poor or fed to the dogs when the meal was over.

Wooden plates and platters were also used. Soup plates made from wood or silver (*escudelas*) and pottery (*tigelas*) were used for both liquid dishes and solid foods. Diners ate with their hands or with spoons and usually carried their own knives, which they cleaned on the tablecloth after use. Forks were not used as table implements but small silver ones were presented for the eating of sweet preserves.¹⁰⁰

In the fifteenth century, dining tables, often imported from Germany and Flanders, became increasingly fashionable in Portugal, replacing earlier medieval trestle tables that were set up at meal times. In wealthy homes, tableware was displayed on sideboards and buffets. Tablecloths were considered *de rigueur* on upper class Portuguese tables as early as the fifteenth century. In 1451, a Portuguese noble, Lopo de Almeida, visited Germany and was surprised that parts of the dining table were left bare. (He was also amazed that there were no cushions on the benches.) Portuguese tables were first covered with an under cloth then completely

¹⁰⁰ Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 31; Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, 130.

covered with another.¹⁰¹

The Portuguese were scrupulous about washing their hands before they ate, a habit they probably acquired from the Moors. The penchant for cleanliness is evidenced by the existence in medieval Portugal of factories producing soap made from olive oil and ashes. In the late Middle Ages it was customary in wealthy Portuguese houses for servants to carry pitchers of water and basins which the diners held their hands over while water was poured over them. After washing, guests dried their hands on small towels or napkins which were supplied for that purpose.¹⁰² The importance attached to this dining custom is evidenced by the fact (discussed below) that ewers and basins were considered appropriate gifts for foreign dignitaries.

In wealthy houses, cooking was undertaken by professionals who learned their craft through apprenticeship. The more complex culinary operations, such as bread baking, wine making and distilling were undertaken by specialists who were either members of guilds or attached to monasteries. Dietary choices, among those who could afford them, were guided by humoral theory and the precepts of a religious calendar that allocated much of the year to either fast days or feast days.

¹⁰¹ Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 28-29, 129, 138-39.

¹⁰² Marques *Daily Life in Portugal*, 29, 138-39.

The bulk of the population, however, prepared their own meals or purchased food from street sellers and could afford little more than a subsistence diet. Fresh meat, sugary, fatty and rich foods, spices and other rare ingredients were costly luxuries, reserved for celebratory meals.¹⁰³

Seafood has always been a mainstay of the Portuguese diet. In pre-modern times, the poorer classes depended on it and the nobility and clergy ate it on the numerous fasting days dictated by the Catholic ritual calendar. At the royal table of Afonso V (1438-81), fish was eaten almost every day.¹⁰⁴ The fishmongers were usually women; documentation from the period indicates that whiting was the principal fish they sold.¹⁰⁵ Sardines, conger and lamprey eels, shad and surmullet were also popular. All kinds of fish were eaten, including whale and porpoise. Shellfish were also a significant food source, particularly the oysters that grew abundantly in the Tagus River.¹⁰⁶

The Portuguese exploratory voyages were prompted as much by a need for new sources of food as by religious and political aspirations. Newly discovered lands, such as Madeira, the Cape Verde islands and the

¹⁰³ See Scully, *The Art of Cookery in the Middle Ages*; Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*.

¹⁰⁴ Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 21.

¹⁰⁵ Abreu-Ferreira, "From Mere Survival to Near Success," 62-63; Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 21.

¹⁰⁶ Maguelonne Toussaint-Samat, *History of Food*, trans. Anthea Bell (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2003), 398.

Azores, were quickly utilized for animal husbandry and agriculture and their output funnelled back to Lisbon. On these Atlantic islands, the Portuguese pioneered the plantation system of cultivation, including the use of slave labour, a practice that they later exploited on a much larger scale in Brazil.¹⁰⁷

A great volume of trade goods passed through Lisbon. As Portugal's overseas possessions expanded, revenue was generated by the transshipment of goods such as oranges and marmalades, tobacco, spices and gold and by a very profitable trade in slaves. By the fifteenth century, the majority of Portugal's population had migrated to the coastal regions.¹⁰⁸ An increasingly wealthy class of merchants and other citizens with disposable income emerged in the port cities and market towns, creating a demand for fresh produce, manufactured foods and imported luxuries.

The Portuguese explorer-captains and officers of the *Estado* originated in the upper echelons of Portuguese society.¹⁰⁹ While those lower class sailors and soldiers who failed to better their circumstances in the colonies were forced to adapt to local diets, the social mores and culinary

¹⁰⁷ See Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, 40-41.

¹⁰⁸ Malyn Newitt, *A History of Portuguese Overseas Expansion 1400-1668* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 9.

¹⁰⁹ Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, 64. The term *Estado* is short for *Estado da Índia*, the name given to the Asian section of the Portuguese empire. See p. 124 below.

culture of the Portuguese elite were carried east by the *Estado's* founders, providing a model that would be perpetuated within Luso-Asian society.

Monastic Cooking

Regardless of social standing, the Roman Catholic calendar of regular fast days and feast days laid the framework of the Portuguese diet. Fasting, either total or partial abstention from meat and rich foods, was associated with spiritual purity and undertaken to some degree by most of the European population.¹¹⁰ At the basic level, this took the form of abstention from meat on Fridays and the eve of feast days, restrained eating during the week and a celebratory, more indulgent meal taken on Sundays in the context of ritual worship. Important religious celebrations, such as Christmas and Easter, were preceded by lengthier periods of fasting.

The traditions of monastic cooking were well established throughout Europe by the late Middle Ages. The kitchen economies of the religious houses, which were supported by noble patronage and tithes collected from tenant farmers, were much healthier than those of the peasant population. Many monasteries were known for their gastronomic

¹¹⁰ Scully, *The Art of Cookery in the Middle Ages*, 61.

expertise in viticulture, cheese making and confectionery. Their medicinal gardens and herbal liqueurs were well known. Their olive groves produced the olive oil used in cooking and church rituals. The female Orders in particular developed a tradition of sweet making and pastry arts. As places of learning, monasteries also functioned as libraries, holding recipes and culinary instruction manuals along with ecclesiastical literature.¹¹¹

In Portugal, particularly after the *Reconquista*, the monasteries were an important and integral part of the social fabric, involved not only in spiritual matters but also in many aspects of secular life. A symbiotic relationship between the monasteries and the nobility was a fundamental component of the social structure. Noblemen supported the monasteries not only because they provided for the spiritual welfare of the noble families but also because they functioned as administrative satellites that helped control the local population and uphold territorial claims to the land. After the *Reconquista*, the convents and monasteries that had supported the King's military struggle against Muslim domination were endowed with large tracts of land in return for their aid in re-establishing Christian rule. To show their loyalty to the king and support for his policies, noble families also bequeathed large sums of money to the

¹¹¹ Much of the material concerning monastic cooking and the social significance of the religious houses in medieval Portugal is taken from Alfredo Saramago and Manuel Fialho, *Doçaria dos Conventos de Portugal* (Lisboa: Assirio and Alvim, 1997), my translation. See also Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, Ch. 7; Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, 237-240.

religious houses.

The monasteries and convents were primary organizational units of society, controlling much of the land and its agricultural output. Their number and size continued to increase throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Some of the larger houses managed huge estates. The *Real Monsteiro da Conceição de Beja*, which was affiliated with the House of Bragança, possessed over 200 large farms in the Alentejo region and was one of Portugal's richest institutions.¹¹² The smaller, but very well known *Convento Santa Clara* in Evora, operated more than 60 farms.¹¹³ Attached to the monasteries and convents was an entire population composed of those who worked within the cloisters, such as the ecclesiastical staff, medical staff (including doctors, apothecaries, nurses and bleeders) and those who ran the kitchens and maintained the gardens. Outside the cloisters, the agricultural workers, donkey cart drivers, artisans and tradespeople all owed their livelihoods to the monastery or convent. All those living within the convent walls, as well as many outside who serviced the institution, had their meals provided by the convent.

The convents had access to all the ingredients necessary to create a good

¹¹² Saramago and Fialho, *Doçaria dos Conventos de Portugal*, 27.

¹¹³ Saramago and Fialho, *Doçaria dos Conventos de Portugal*, 27.

table and the wealth to acquire them. They received gifts of grain and operated their own flour mills and bread ovens. They grew vegetables and fruit, kept bees, raised chickens, ducks and other fowl and produced eggs. They had their own vineyards and made wine for use in Communion and for the table. Some operated their own teams of *almocreves*, the professional donkey cart drivers who carried the convent produce to market, fetched fish from the coast and ferried back vegetables from the interior. Many religious houses became centres of gastronomic development. The nuns of the *Monsteiro da Conceição de Beja*, for example, had extensive, well-managed vegetable gardens and were known for their fine produce. They also managed large herds of cattle and their butchers supplied high quality cuts to other convents.¹¹⁴

The religious climate of the times helped boost the importance of the monasteries. The newly promulgated notion of Purgatory as an opportunity to redeem sins through prayer before the Final Judgement spawned a huge industry in the saying of masses for the departed, as well as for the living who wished to build a store of religious credit in order to ensure ahead of time their safe passage through Purgatory.¹¹⁵ Nobles requested that family chapels and altars be established and maintained by the convent personnel and paid for them with money,

¹¹⁴ Saramago and Fialho, *Doçaria dos Conventos de Portugal*, 29.

¹¹⁵ Saramago and Fialho, *Doçaria dos Conventos de Portugal*, 24; Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 209-210.

bequests, and gifts in kind such as salt, fish, olive oil, preserved vegetables, and costly commodities such as sugar, spices and almonds. It was essential for noblemen to ensure their spiritual welfare, and in an era of high infant mortality, the continuation of their lineage, by supporting the monasteries and paying for their intercession with God.¹¹⁶ The monasteries provided a whole range of spiritual services, officiating on religious feast days, arranging burials, delivering sacraments, maintaining private chapels and altars, and reciting masses. In 1690 for example, Dona Isabel Luisa Josefa, a daughter of Dom Pedro II, ordered that 12,000 masses be said for her at the cost of one million two hundred *reis*, a small fortune at the time.¹¹⁷ When the Pope authorized the selling of indulgences, the convents and monasteries gained another lucrative source of income.

During this period of high religious fervour, the convents and monasteries competed for the favour of wealthy patrons. One way in which they demonstrated their worthiness was through the elegance and fineness of their dining tables. In addition to providing humble shelter for wayfarers, the religious houses functioned as inns for the nobility, providing lodging and meals for wealthy landholders who travelled frequently, with their retinues, in order to keep control of their estates.

¹¹⁶ Saramago and Fialho, *Doçaria dos Conventos de Portugal*, 20.

¹¹⁷ Saramago and Fialho, *Doçaria dos Conventos de Portugal*, 24.

These guests had demanding palates and convents eager to win their ongoing patronage vied with each other to demonstrate excellence in the gastronomic arts. The scale of meals offered in the monasteries became enormous. Specialist cooks were recruited and no effort was spared to impress. The culinary arts in Portugal arose from peasant traditions but were developed and refined in its religious institutions. As a result of Portuguese missionary activity in Asia, Church personnel, including clerics and lay brethren, were also deeply involved in the production and preparation of food in the Portuguese colonies.

Conventual Sweets¹¹⁸

In Portugal, sweets have been made in monasteries and convents since the Middle Ages. Cakes were made in the Roman period to celebrate auspicious occasions and later, the Moorish occupation popularized the consumption of sugar and introduced the Middle Eastern tradition of making sweets from dried fruits and nuts, particularly almonds. The Moors planted cane fields in the Alentejo and Algarve regions and introduced the Jordanian almond trees that still grace the dry southern part of Portugal. Their refineries produced a coarse, dark sugar with a strong taste, which was fed to animals or used as a medicine, and a more

¹¹⁸ This history of Portuguese conventual sweets draws primarily on Saramago and Fialho, *Doçaria dos Conventos de Portugal*, my translation. See also Fontoura, *As Clarissas na Madeira*; and Impala Editores, *Doces Conventuais* (Sintra: Impala Editores, 2005). Recipes for many traditional conventual sweets can be found in Maria de Lourdes Modesto, *Traditional Portuguese Cooking*, trans. Fernanda Naylor and George Dykes (Lisbon: Editorial Verbo, 2001).

refined product that was used in the kitchen.¹¹⁹ From the Arabs, the Portuguese learned to make all manner of sweets and confections that in the dietetic traditions of the time, were considered vital to good health.

In Portugal, especially in the agricultural south where the ingredients were more readily available, the tradition of sweet making by nuns reached its apogee as an Iberian art form, even more so than in Spain where a similar tradition evolved out of the Moorish occupation. The primary reasons for this were twofold; a climate of competition that developed among the Portuguese convents, and from the sixteenth century forward, access to ample supplies of sugar grown in Portugal's newly acquired overseas territories.

Portuguese cooks in the southern regions of the country had access to sugar grown in Arab cane fields during the Muslim period, and to the sweet making expertise of their Moorish overlords. After the *Reconquista*, however, the traditions of Moorish confectionery and cake making disappeared from the wider culinary scene. Some Arab cane fields remained and were taken over by Portuguese farmers but with the loss of access to the Arab refineries in Spain, processed sugar was no longer widely available. Sweetmeats became costly to produce and hard to come by and their consumption was limited primarily to court and the

¹¹⁹ Saramago and Fialho, *Doçaria dos Conventos de Portugal*, 12.

monasteries, where Portuguese nuns kept alive the techniques of Moorish sweet making.¹²⁰

This situation did not change until the fifteenth century when Portugal settled Madeira. At the instigation of Prince Henrique, sugarcane, sugar production machinery and experts in its operation were taken to Madeira from Sicily, where cane fields had been developed by the Greeks.¹²¹ The Portuguese began the settlement of the Madeiran archipelago in 1425.¹²² Sugar refining began in 1430.¹²³ In 1452, the island produced around 6000 *arrobas* of sugar¹²⁴ and within ten years output had increased to the point that Portugal became the principal supplier to Western Europe.¹²⁵ Before the start of Portuguese production in Madeira, the Venetians had controlled the sugar trade in Europe, shipping molasses from Sicily. The flood of sugar and sugar revenue into Portugal increased when the sugar industry was relocated to Brazil later in the sixteenth century and production on an even larger scale was made possible on plantations operating with African slaves.

¹²⁰ See note 119 above.

¹²¹ Solomon H. Katz, ed., *Encyclopedia of Food and Culture* (New York: Scribner, 2002), 232; Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, 84.

¹²² Luis de Albuquerque and Alberto Vieira, *The Archipelago of Madeira in the 15th Century*, trans. Martin A. Kayman and M. Filomena Mesquita (Funchal: Secretaria Regional do Turismo e Cultura Centro de Estudos de História do Atlântico, 1988), 31.

¹²³ Adamson, *Food in Medieval Times*, xiii.

¹²⁴ Approximately 192,000 lbs. (Leslie Bethell, *Colonial Brazil* (Cambridge, New York and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1987), viii).

¹²⁵ Saramago and Fialho, *Doçaria dos Conventos de Portugal*, 14.

The sudden abundance of sugar stimulated a new wave of creativity among the conventual sweet makers. The wealth it generated boosted the Portuguese economy and created a new market for the commercial sale of sweets. As sugar became less expensive and more readily available, sweets began to be considered as indulgences rather than medicinal foods.¹²⁶In the climate of the times, many of the Portuguese nobles and merchants made wealthy by the spice trade worried about committing the sin of avarice and sought to mitigate their accumulation of riches by making large donations to the church and its institutions.¹²⁷ In return for this largesse, nuns made sweets for their benefactors. They also made sweets to show respect for visiting nobles and high church officials and to honour other friends of the convent. The sweets were also sold to raise money for the convent's upkeep.

Sugary creations varied greatly in accordance with the tastes and fashions of the times. Some sweets, such as *Pasteis de Santa Clara*, were named after the convent which created them or made them famous. Others were named after saints or given names with other religious connotations. Sweets with names such as *nun's bellies*, *angel's wings*, *sighs*, *dreams*, *ears of the Pope*, *bacon from heaven*, *paradise cake* and so

¹²⁶ Saramago and Fialho, *Doçaria dos Conventos de Portugal*, 14.

¹²⁷ Isabel Dos Guimaraes Sá, "Between Spiritual and Material Culture: Devotional, Domestic, and Institutional Objects in Sixteenth-Century Portugal," Conference paper. *Domestic and Institutional Interiors in Early Modern Europe* (Victoria and Albert Museum, London 19-20 November, 2004).

on, indicate the conflicted mix of piety and indulgence that accompanied of the consumption of sweets. Sweetness was associated with divinity and white sugar with purity.¹²⁸ But at the same time, indulgence in the pleasures of the table, particularly rich or sweet foods, was seen as a sin of the flesh. The theological debate as to whether sugar was an acceptable Lenten food – Thomas Aquinas proposed that it could be used for medical purposes, while others thought it should be proscribed¹²⁹ – swung back and forth all over Europe but was particularly important to staunchly Catholic Portugal. In Portugal, the sweet tooth ruled and indulgence won out resoundingly over abstinence.

Portugal's early development of sugarcane agriculture gave them access to sugar when it was a rare and expensive commodity for the rest of Europe. The abundance of available sugar and the growing demand for sweets outweighed moral considerations and encouraged conventual cooks to exercise free reign in the creation of desserts, cakes, puddings and confectionery. Some nuns relieved the tedium of prayer by developing and perfecting dessert recipes. Sweet making was an outlet for the exuberance denied by the austerity of their daily regimen, which was focused, theoretically at least, on divine contemplation and the pious

¹²⁸ Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, 96.

¹²⁹ Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, 99.

restraint of earthly desires.¹³⁰

Fierce competition developed between the monasteries for supremacy in sweet making. Particularly noted for their skill were the Franciscan nuns of the Clarissan Order, founded in the early thirteenth century by a female disciple of Francis of Assisi. The Order was established in Portugal with the building of the *Mosteiro de Santa Maria e de Santa Clara* in Lamego in 1258.¹³¹ After the settlement of Madeira, at the request of its first Governor, Zarco, who had a teenage daughter to be taken care of, the Clarissans established a convent on the island.

The confections and preserves made by the 'Poor Clares' on Madeira were particularly fine. The sixteenth century Portuguese preserved a variety of fruits including citrons, peaches, lemons, pears, squash, quince and oranges.¹³² They candied pears and citrus rinds and even glacéed lettuce stalks.¹³³ The best known of these early preserves was *marmela*. The Portuguese exported it and marmalade made from bitter oranges to other countries in Europe, where the confections received high praise. The discovery of the sea route to Asia opened up a whole new market for Portugal's signature sweet preserves, which were presented to potential

¹³⁰ Impala Editores, *Doces Conventuais*, 6.

¹³¹ Fontoura, *As Clarissas na Madeira*, 35-36.

¹³² Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 25.

¹³³ Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 26.

customers with great ceremony on silver dishes, accompanied by fine napery. After their discovery of the sweet orange in China and its delivery to Lisbon by Vasco da Gama, Portuguese marmalade reached new heights of popularity.

The Sisters in Madeira kept bees and produced honey, made their own butter and wine, and maintained their own orchards and wheat fields.¹³⁴ Grown in the island's rich volcanic soil and temperate climate, these ingredients were of high quality and contributed to the excellence of their sweets and cakes. The nuns had a plentiful supply of flour, sugar and molasses, spices, colouring agents and nuts from which they made a wide variety of cakes and sweets. Among those mentioned in the historical literature are *bolos de mel* (honey cakes),¹³⁵ *talhadas de amêndoa* (almond slices), *queijadas* (tarts), *rosquilhas* (ring-shaped pastries), *coscoroes* ('sheets'), *bolos de cevada* (barley cakes) and *sonhos* ('sighs').¹³⁶

The Madeiran nuns' sweets were so well regarded that the Order was able to open a shop in Flanders where their goods were billed as 'Pearls

¹³⁴ Fontoura, *As Clarissas na Madeira*, 97.

¹³⁵ Molasses is the principal flavouring of *Bolo de Mel*. Madeiran sugar workers called sugarcane juice, boiled down to the consistency of honey, *mel de cana* (honey of the cane).

¹³⁶ Fontoura, *As Clarissas na Madeira*, 93.

of the Atlantic.’¹³⁷ Although the conventual sweet industry in Portugal did not develop on a large scale until the seventeenth century, the confectionery made by the Clarissan nuns in Funchal in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was already internationally famous. When the vessel carrying the Italian mathematician Filippo Pigafetta stopped to provision at Madeira in 1578, wine and sweetmeats were taken on board.¹³⁸ The confections, made in great quantity on the island, Pigafetta reported, were of “excellent quality.”¹³⁹ Another enthusiastic consumer was the artist Albrecht Dürer. He recorded in his diary his enjoyment of the sweets given to him by a Portuguese trader living in Belgium, who had ordered pounds of the Madeiran nuns’ sweet fruit compotes and almond conserves to serve at his parties.¹⁴⁰

During the seventeenth century, confectionery making in Portugal developed into a national industry.¹⁴¹ After the dissolution of the male religious orders and the associated suppression of the female orders in the early nineteenth century, many sweet recipes moved into the public domain and were subsequently made by commercial manufacturers who

137 Fontoura, *As Clarissas na Madeira*, 93.

138 Filippo Pigafetta, *A Report of the Kingdom of Congo: And of the Surrounding Countries; Drawn Out of the Writings and Discourses of the Portuguese, Duarte Lopez...*, trans. Margarite Hutchinson (London: John Murray, 1881), 5.

139 Pigafetta, *A Report of the Kingdom of Congo*, 5.

140 Fontoura, *As Clarissas na Madeira*, 93.

141 Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 26.

have continued their production until the present day. Among the most famous of these is *pasteis de nata de Belem*, a custard tart that was initially made by nuns of the Jeronimo monastery in the Belem district of Lisbon and is now made by a commercial bakery-restaurant in the same suburb.¹⁴² Throughout the country, an innumerable variety of sweets are made from different combinations of pastry, eggs, nuts and sugar. Most Portuguese towns have local specialties and some convents still make and sell sweets as a commercial enterprise. The conventual sweet tradition remains very much alive in Portugal.

Many cakes and sweets are closely associated with religious occasions, such as Easter, Christmas, baptisms and saint's days. Some take elaborate shapes or are formed to represent religious objects, such as the bones of a saint or the crown of Jesus. Two pastries still made throughout the Lusophone world, *coscurão* (sheets) and *fartes* (pillows), represent the bed linen of the Holy Infant. Macanese cooks refer to *aluwa*, their version of Indian *halwah*, as his mattress.¹⁴³

Marzipan¹⁴⁴ (*macapão*) is a sweet that has been associated with the

¹⁴² David Leite, "Pastéis de Belém: Hot on the trail of a legend." *Leite's Culinary*. <http://www.leitesculinaria.com/writings/features/belem.html>

¹⁴³ Cecília Jorge, *Macanese Cooking: A Journey Across Generations*, trans. Carole Garton and Raquel Magalhães (Macau: Associação Promotora da Instrução dos Macaenses, 2004), 122.

¹⁴⁴ There are various theories about the etymology of the word marzipan. Recently it has been suggested that *marzipan* may be a corruption of *martavan*, the name of the ceramic jars in which preserved fruits, sweets and other foodstuffs were shipped all over the Indian ocean. (Peter Gilliver, "Some Recent OED Releases: A Tale of Two Treats," *Oxford English Dictionary March 2001 Newsletter*.)

Luso-Asians since the sixteenth century and with the Iberian Portuguese since even earlier. Made from sugar and almond or pistachio paste, marzipans originated with Jews and Arabs in the Middle East and had spread to Europe by the thirteenth century.¹⁴⁵ They became particularly popular in the southern regions of Portugal and Spain that had been occupied by the Moors. By the sixteenth century, the Portuguese were already renowned for their *maçapão* and for marzipan fancies, called *morgados* or *morgadinhos*, which were shaped as fruit and animals. Robert May, in a British cookbook written the mid-seventeenth century, describes ‘marzipan tarts’ as a Portuguese recipe.¹⁴⁶

Because of the cost of the materials, marzipans were highly prized among Europeans and were originally consumed only by kings, nobility and the church.¹⁴⁷ They were formed into elaborate shapes called subtleties. These were initially intended to be decorative but over time also acquired symbolic meanings. They were used to demonstrate wealth and influence and were given as gifts to convey status and to create or mitigate obligations. Their shapes might indicate the giver's power or convey a

<http://dictionary.oed.com/newsletters/2001-03/releases.html>. In Europe, marzipan also initially shared the name of its container, a wooden box called a *marzapane*. (Rebora, *Culture of the Fork*, 177).

¹⁴⁵ Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, 88; Nathan, *Jewish Cooking in America*, 412; C. Anne Wilson, “The Saracen Connection: Arab Cuisine and the Medieval West Part 1,” *Petits Propos Culinaires* 7, (1981), 18.

¹⁴⁶ Albala, *The Banquet*, 134.

¹⁴⁷ Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, 89.

message.¹⁴⁸

In Iberia, marzipan was very closely associated with religion.¹⁴⁹ In the convents, marzipans were molded into shapes with religious significance, such as doves, roses, crosses, eggs and even the relics of saints. They were served at wedding feasts and baptisms and honoured the saints on their name-days. Marzipan models of body parts might be offered to a favourite saint in hope of a cure for an affliction.

Egg Sweets

Confections made from egg yolks and sugar, known as ‘egg sweets’, are synonymous with Portuguese cuisine. These rich concoctions, which many non-Portuguese find exceedingly sweet and cloying, are a sort of hybrid between dessert and confectionery and form the foundation of the conventual sweet tradition. Although similar sweets are also made in Spain, particularly in the Castilian region which shares much of its culinary heritage with Portugal, it is the Portuguese who elevated the egg sweet to iconic status, developing an extraordinarily extensive repertoire of recipes.

Eggs enjoyed a high status in Christian Europe during the Middle Ages.

¹⁴⁸ Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, 96.

¹⁴⁹ Manjón, *The Gastronomy of Spain and Portugal*, 191.

Classed in the same category as meat, they were reserved for feast days, and because of their symbolic association with the Resurrection, were especially prized at Easter.¹⁵⁰ Although elsewhere in Europe eggs were avoided for more than half the year because of religious considerations, in Portugal, they were not proscribed and were consumed in prodigious amounts.¹⁵¹ The Portuguese raised a large number of geese, ducks, chickens, pigeons and other birds for the table, resulting in a plentiful supply of eggs. The Convent of Santa Clara, for example, produced more than 180 dozen a month.¹⁵² Nuns raised their own chickens and received gifts of poultry from wealthy landholders. According to popular myth, they used the egg whites to starch their habits. Egg whites were also commonly used in medieval Europe as an ingredient in the temper applied to walls in preparation for the painting of frescoes. Monasteries and convents, with their multitudes of chapels, must have had a large demand for egg tempera. Egg whites were also used in the baking of communion wafers and for clarifying jellies.¹⁵³

According to medieval physicians, the consumption of egg whites could be harmful.¹⁵⁴ Their primary use in Spain and Portugal was probably in

¹⁵⁰ Adamson, *Food in Medieval Times*, 47.

¹⁵¹ Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 25.

¹⁵² Saramago and Fialho, *Doçaria dos Conventos de Portugal*, 29.

¹⁵³ Elisabeth Luard, *The Food of Spain and Portugal* (London: Kyle Books, 2005), 181; Adamson, *Food in Medieval Times*, 47.

¹⁵⁴ Adamson, *Food in Medieval Times*, 47.

the clarifying of wine. Traditional production methods required around eight eggs per barrel.¹⁵⁵ The wine making *quintas* (estates) sent the nuns the leftover egg yolks, a practice said to have been initiated by Philip III of Spain who licensed the founding of the Clarissan Order.¹⁵⁶ A belief still exists in Spanish folklore that a gift of eggs to the Clarissans will help to guarantee good weather for a party.¹⁵⁷ Whatever the reason for the excess of egg yolks, one effective method of preserving the abundance was to cook the yolks with a lot of sugar.

The development of Portuguese egg sweets is almost universally attributed to the Moorish occupation. Charles Perry questions this assertion, however, observing that the Arabs make sweets with whole eggs but never just the yolks.¹⁵⁸ He suggests that the Arab association may have come about because they introduced cane sugar to Portugal, which replaced honey as a sweetener in traditional desserts that were already being made from egg yolks.

The most basic form of the egg sweet is a sweet, thick sauce of cooked egg yolks and sugar called *ovos moles* (soft eggs) that is used as a

¹⁵⁵ Casas, *The Foods and Wines of Spain*, 341.

¹⁵⁶ Marimar Torres, *The Spanish Table: The Cuisines and Wines of Spain* (New York: Doubleday, 1986), 213.

¹⁵⁷ Torres, *The Spanish Table*, 214.

¹⁵⁸ Charles Perry, "Egg-yolks and Arabs," *Petits Propos Culinaires* 29 (1988), 61.

custardy filling for tarts and cakes, a dessert sauce or topping, or a filling for marzipan sweets. It is traditionally sold in shell-shaped containers or small wooden barrels and is said to have originated in Aveiro, a coastal city occupied by the Moors until the eleventh century.¹⁵⁹ Marques identifies an egg sweet called *ovos de laços* (cream eggs) that was made in medieval Portugal¹⁶⁰ but the origin of *ovos moles* remains obscure, with the Spanish also claiming credit for the invention of similar egg confections. *Fios de ovos*, sweet ‘threads’ made by drizzling egg yolks through a sieve into boiling sugar syrup, is another basic preparation used in many different ways, on its own or as a component of, or decoration for, other desserts.

Food on Ships

The initial development of Luso-Asian cuisine was closely linked to the gastronomy of the Portuguese seafarers. A study of the provisions carried on vessels and the comments of captains and passengers on the inescapable topic of food illuminates the problems of nutrition and health the *marinheiros* faced and the adaptive behaviour that enabled them to overcome these obstacles.

Until Portuguese shipbuilders invented the ocean-going caravel and their

¹⁵⁹ Elisabeth Lambert Ortiz, *The Food of Spain and Portugal: The Complete Iberian Cuisine* (New York: Macmillan, 1989), 271.

¹⁶⁰ Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 26.

navigators pushed the boundaries of the known world, voyages of exploration were undertaken in small, open coastal vessels powered by sail and oarsmen. Little was carried on board other than trade goods and provisioning, with varying degrees of success, took place during regular landfalls. Many expeditions eventually turned for home simply because there was nothing for the sailors to eat.¹⁶¹

Portuguese caravels were designed for exploration, not the carriage of cargo. They were highly maneuverable but small, with space to carry provisions for a crew of only around 20 men.¹⁶² Bartholomeu Dias, who famously rounded the Cape of Good Hope in 1487, realized that provisioning was key to the success of long distance voyaging and was the first to add a supply ship to his fleet.¹⁶³ He also assisted in designing the ships that were built for the next long-range expedition, commanded by Vasco da Gama.¹⁶⁴ The fleet consisted of three ships and a 200-ton supply vessel.¹⁶⁵ According to the description of da Gama's fleet left by the historian Fernão Lopes de Castanheda, whose *Historia do Descobrimento e Conquista da India* was published in 1551,¹⁶⁶ stores on

161 Luc Cuyvers, *Into the Rising Sun: Vasco da Gama and the Search for the Sea Route to the East* (New York: TV Books, 1999), 66.

162 Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Discoverers* (New York: First Vintage Books, 1985), 164.

163 Alan Villiers, *Men, Ships, and the Sea* (Washington: National Geographic Society, 1962), 84.

164 Edgar Prestage, "The Fourth Centenary of Vasco da Gama's Voyage to India," *The Geographical Journal* 12, no. 1 (1898), 12.

165 Prestage, "The Fourth Centenary of Vasco da Gama's Voyage to India," 12.

166 Velho, *A Journal of the First Voyage of Vasco da Gama*, xxiv.

Gama's flagship, *S. Gabriel*, were designed to last for 3 years. Daily rations for each man on board were 1 ½ pounds of biscuit, 1 pound of beef or half a pound of pork, 2 ½ pints of water, 1 ¼ pints of wine, 1/3 gill of vinegar and 1/6 gill of oil. The French traveller, François Pyrard reported that the oil was "a most wholesome thing at sea, and at all times very useful for sauces and seasonings".¹⁶⁷ On fast days, half a pound of rice, codfish or cheese took the place of meat. Provisions also included flour, lentils, sardines, plums, almonds, onions, garlic, mustard, salt, sugar and honey.¹⁶⁸ Linschoten said that onions and garlic were eaten quickly at the beginning of the voyage and that the seamen didn't put much store by these provisions.¹⁶⁹ Shipboard stores were supplemented with fish, fowl, turtles, sheep, goats, cattle and other 'stores of opportunity', when the vessels made landfall.¹⁷⁰

Spanish documents describing the lading of another caravel, the *Nina*, which weighed anchor five years earlier than the *S. Gabriel* under the command of Christoforo Colombo, list a similar inventory. Stores included wheat, flour, salted flour, seven tons of ship's biscuit, salted pork and fish, sardines, more than a ton of cheese, and baskets of pork

¹⁶⁷ Pyrard, *The Voyage of François Pyrard to the East Indies, the Maldives, the Moluccas and Brazil*, Vol 2, trans. Albert Gray (London: Hakluyt Society, 1890), 2:389.

¹⁶⁸ Velho, *A Journal of the First Voyage of Vasco da Gama*, 166.

¹⁶⁹ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:14.

¹⁷⁰ A.H.H. de Oliveira Marques, "Travelling with the Fifteenth-century Discoverers: Their Daily Life," in *Vasco da Gama and the Linking of Europe and Asia*, eds. Anthony Disney and Emily Booth (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000), 33.

fatback that had been treated with lye and coated with a mixture of red clay and bran as a preservative.¹⁷¹ Peas, lentils and beans, garlic, honey, almonds, raisins and barrels of oil, wine, water and vinegar were also on board.¹⁷²

Vinegar would last up to a year in a cask.¹⁷³ Its durability was a boon on long-haul voyages. It was stowed on board in 'pipes', each barrel containing two hogsheads, or approximately 105 gallons.¹⁷⁴ According to humoral theory, vinegar was a cool and dry food, recommended for consumption in warm regions.¹⁷⁵ It was dispensed to seamen and to Portuguese soldiers in service of the *Estado*, as part of their monthly rations.¹⁷⁶ The list of provisions for an outward-bound Indiaman in around 1600 included 13 pipes of vinegar, or just over three and a half gallons per man.¹⁷⁷ Vinegar was also used to disinfect ships' holds that routinely became fouled by contaminated bilge water.¹⁷⁸

171 John Noble Wilford, "Translated Documents Capture Ambience and Aroma of the Nina," *New York Times*, October 14, 1986.

172 Filson Young, *Christopher Columbus and the New World of his Discovery: A Narrative*, Vol. 4, Chapter 5 (Project Gutenberg, December 5, 2004), n.pag. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/4111/4111.txt>

173 Scully, *The Art of Cookery in the Middle Ages*, 11.

174 Lesley Brown, ed., *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* Vol. 2: N-Z (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 2221.

175 Adamson, *Food in Medieval Times*, 28.

176 P.F. Pieris, *Ceylon and Portugal: Part I Kings and Christians 1536-1552* (Leipzig, Verlag Der Asia Major, 1927), 311.

177 Charles R. Boxer, *The Tragic History of the Sea, 1589-1622: Narratives of the Shipwrecks of the Portuguese East Indiamen...* (Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1959), 276.

178 Samuel Eliot Morison, *The European Discovery of America: The Northern Voyages A.D. 500-1600* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 135.

Salted foods were invaluable to seafarers, especially nutritionally dense salt cod.¹⁷⁹ Along with ship's biscuit, salted fish and meat provided the bulk of the sailor's diet. When salted and dried, fish are lightweight and will last for six months or more without losing their nutritional value. High water-content white fish such as cod, haddock, hake, whiting and halibut were preserved using dry methods, while oilier fish such as salmon, mackerel, pilchards and herring were pickled or wet salted.¹⁸⁰ Salted eels were packed into barrels. Tuna was preserved by layering pieces of fish in salt and packing them into stoneware jars. Olives, cheeses, fruits, eggs and all manner of foods could be made to last if they were prepared with or packed in salt. The process did not always improve the food. François Pyrard complained, "The worst of the victuals on board is that they are all salted in order to keep better, and that changes their quality in such sort that full often I durst not eat at all."¹⁸¹

In addition to salt-cured foods, ships' stores included barrels of salt.

Lading records show that an Indiaman carrying around 350 passengers carried almost 2,000 litres of salt.¹⁸² It could be used to preserve fish or

¹⁷⁹ Jean Anderson, "Salt Cod, A Portuguese Obsession," in *Food on the Move: Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery 1996*, ed. Harlan Walker (Devon: Prospect Books, 1997), 323.

¹⁸⁰ Shephard, *Pickled, Potted and Canned*, 78.

¹⁸¹ Pyrard, *The Voyage of François Pyrard*, 2:286.

¹⁸² Boxer, *The Tragic History of the Sea*, 276.

other foods encountered en route. Filippo Pigafetta described the ingenious method used by the Portuguese to conserve salt by exposing foods to sea spray in coastal caves in order to preserve them.¹⁸³ On ships fish could be hung from the rigging. Sometimes, however, larger quantities needed to be put away. Just off Mozambique Vasco da Gama's sailors caught sufficient quantities of fish to feed the whole ship for fifteen days. In Africa, they bartered their shirts for a huge number of game birds that they also preserved.¹⁸⁴

Dried and preserved fish, and fresh fish caught during the voyage were staples of the seaman's diet. The location of good fishing grounds was noted in captains' logs and the information passed to other mariners. The English captain John Jourdain reported that turtle meat from the Seychelles was as good as fresh beef.¹⁸⁵ His countryman Edward Terry likened turtle to buttered veal, praised dolphin meat and tuna but advised that porpoises were better to look at than to taste.¹⁸⁶

After rounding the Cape, Vasco da Gama's men caught great quantities of anchovies, seals and penguins near Mozambique, which the seamen

¹⁸³ Pigafetta, *A Report of the Kingdom of Congo*, 8.

¹⁸⁴ Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, 70-71.

¹⁸⁵ John Jourdain, *The Journal of John Jourdain, 1608-1617, Describing his Experiences in Arabia, India, and the Malay Archipelago*, ed. William Foster (1905; repr., New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1992), 47.

¹⁸⁶ Terry, *A Voyage to East India*, 9.

salted for the voyage.¹⁸⁷ The rich fishing ground, called *Ponta da Pescaria* (Fishing Point), became a regular stopping point on subsequent voyages.¹⁸⁸ Warnings were given about fishing for *tabarão* (sharks). “Whenever they find men in the sea they devour them,” wrote Antonio Pigafetta.¹⁸⁹ A gigantic fish that reportedly attached itself to a Portuguese vessel and towed it backwards for 14 days was the subject of a painting hung in the Viceroy’s palace in Goa.¹⁹⁰

Foods preserved with sugar were durable and transportable, making them a valued, and valuable, addition to ships’ stores. Many of the Portuguese seamen who shipped out to Asia with nothing more than the shirt on their back, brought along a jar of marmalade.¹⁹¹ Vasco da Gama carried marmalade on his landmark voyage to India and served it to bemused natives on the coast of Africa, who had to be shown how to spread it on bread.¹⁹² Linschoten wrote that sweets and preserved fruits carried on his vessel were reserved for the sick and for the captain but the captain and officers ate the lot.¹⁹³ When the *S. Thome* was holed after

187 Velho, *A Journal of the First Voyage of Vasco da Gama*, 92.

188 Velho, *A Journal of the First Voyage of Vasco da Gama*, 195.

189 Pigafetta, *The First Voyage Around the World*, 7.

190 Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 2:15.

191 Pyrard, *The Voyage of François Pyrard*, 2:194.

192 Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, 70.

193 Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:14.

leaving India in 1589, Diogo do Couto noted in his journal that the Padres went about the boat dispensing biscuits, preserves and water to strengthen the passengers and crew who were struggling to pump the vessel of water.¹⁹⁴ The survivors of another Portuguese shipwreck in 1593, one of whom was the royal cosmographer, João Baptista Lavanha, who later wrote about the ordeal, avoided starvation by virtue of a large quantity of preserves that had washed up on the beach.¹⁹⁵

On fifteenth century English ships the cooking was carried out on deck in a hooded box lined with sand to hold the fire. For transatlantic crossings, the cook-box was moved below deck to protect it from the weather.¹⁹⁶ According to Pyrard, Portuguese carracks had two large kitchens, one on either side of the mainmast. The fires were lit at eight or nine o'clock and to avoid any hazard to the wooden vessel, each was guarded by two soldiers.¹⁹⁷ Provisions were stored below decks at the ship's stern, their equitable distribution entrusted to the purser.¹⁹⁸

It is apparent from the accounts of da Gama's voyages and other early records that the captain and officers on Portuguese vessels carried with

¹⁹⁴ Boxer, *The Tragic History of the Sea*, 56.

¹⁹⁵ Boxer, *The Tragic History of the Sea*, 108.

¹⁹⁶ Morison, *The European Discovery of America*, 131.

¹⁹⁷ Pyrard, *The Voyage of François Pyrard*, 2:192.

¹⁹⁸ Marques, "Travelling with the Fifteenth-century Discoverers," 34, 37.

them the dining accoutrements appropriate to a noble Portuguese house of the period. Da Gama's meals began with his napkin-bearer bringing him a ewer of water for hand washing. Another came at the conclusion of a meal.¹⁹⁹ Salt cellars and spoons are depicted in fifteenth century ivories from Africa that record the earliest encounter with Portuguese on that continent.²⁰⁰ Mendes Pinto reported that a pirate junk captured in CochinChina by the pirate Antonio de Faria was carrying stolen Portuguese chests containing, among other things, a silver basin with matching jug and saltcellar, 22 spoons, three candlesticks and five gilded goblets.²⁰¹ When da Gama entertained the King of Malindi on board his ship, a formal dining table was set up on the quarter-deck, complete with embroidered napkins, silver dishes, silver cups, gilt vessels for wine and gilt glasses for water.²⁰² Da Gama personally brought "a rich hand basin, chased and gilt, and a ewer to match" to the King and offered to pour water over his hands when he had finished eating.²⁰³ The ewer and basin, which were so heavy each had to be carried with two hands, were then emptied and presented to the King. "For which the King thanked him very much, saying that no king in India had got such things."²⁰⁴

199 Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, 381.

200 Suzanne Preston Blier, "Imaging Otherness in Ivory: African Portrayals of the Portuguese ca. 1492," *The Art Bulletin* 75, no. 3 (1993), 376-377.

201 Pinto, *The Travels of Mendes Pinto*, 78.

202 Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, 130, 136.

203 Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, 136.

204 Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, 136.

Even when the captive Portuguese captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada hosted a dinner for his gaolers in the confines of an enemy ship, victuals were served to the company by Portuguese waiters with napkins on their shoulders and wine flasks in their hands.²⁰⁵ Filippo Pigafetta considered Madeiran wines “perhaps the best in the world”.²⁰⁶ Edmund Barker, whose British vessel seized a Portuguese caravel near the Cape Verde islands, said the wine they captured was “better to us than gold”. Even Pyrard, a Frenchman, opined that only Iberian wines should be carried on ships to the East, as French wines would spoil. Portuguese wines too could be “a trifle sour” by the time they got to Goa.²⁰⁷ The *Book of the Consulate* of 1494 established the Customs of the Sea for the countries of southern Europe. It stipulated that mariners should receive meat and wine on three days of the week, porridge every day and bread, porridge and wine every evening. The bread should be accompanied by cheese, onions, sardines or other fish. Moreover, the food was to be prepared for the crew by servants.²⁰⁸

205 Charles R. Boxer, *Commentaries of Ruy Freyre de Andrada* (Abingdon: Routledge Curzon, 2005), 176. Many early guests of the Portuguese mention the provision of water and cloths for hand washing. Mandelslo commented on a pillar in the dining hall at the Jesuit College in Goa “out of which issued a spout of water for the washing of their hands”. Pyrard noted that the Portuguese in Goa imported black and white soap from China. The Portuguese word for towel (*toalha*) entered the Konkani, Gujerati, Hindi, Bengali, Malay and Sinhalese languages and is used to describe a napkin in Hindustani. Their word for soap, *sabão*, also entered many regional languages. (Commissariat, *Mandelslo's Travels In Western India*, 63; Pyrard, *The Voyage of François Pyrard*, 2:247; Sebastião Rodolfo Dalgado, *Portuguese Vocables in Asiatic Languages*, trans. A.X. Soares (Madras: Asian Educational Services, 1988), 345; Jayasuriya, *The Portuguese in the East*, 7).

206 Pigafetta, *A Report of the Kingdom of Congo*, 5.

207 Pyrard, *The Voyage of François Pyrard*, 2:388-389, 73.

208 Paul S. Taylor, “Spanish Seamen in the New World During the Colonial Period,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 5, no. 4 (1922), 632-634.

Conditions on board often fell far short of this ideal. Portugal was a poor country and there was rarely enough in the Royal Exchequer to finance the proper provisioning of a voyage.²⁰⁹ Moreover, unlike the French and Dutch, the Portuguese did not employ a ship's cook for the crew and each man had to fend for himself. Pyrard reported that cooking pots were put on the fire in shifts of 80 to 100 at a time.²¹⁰ An Italian Jesuit who sailed on a Portuguese vessel to Goa in the 1500s reported that many men went on board carrying only a jar of marmalade, some bread and a wheel of cheese.²¹¹ Martín Fernández de Figueroa, a Spaniard who sailed with the Portuguese fleet of 1505, reported that “desperately famished” mariners and passengers gorged themselves on flying fish that rained down on them as they rounded the Cape.²¹²

When voyages were extended for months on end and rations ran out, biscuit was often the only thing left to eat. Ship's biscuit, known to the land-based travellers who carried it from the thirteenth century onwards as *panis africanus*, was made from semolina flour and double baked to

²⁰⁹ Charles R. Boxer, *Portuguese India in the Mid-Seventeenth Century* (London: Oxford University Press, 1980), 24.

²¹⁰ Pyrard, *The Voyage of François Pyrard*, 2:194.

²¹¹ Cuyvers, *Into the Rising Sun*, 119.

²¹² James B. McKenna, *A Spaniard in the Indies: The Narrative of Martín Fernández de Figueroa* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), 23.

produce a durable cracker.²¹³ Baked four times, the rock hard slabs would last a year.²¹⁴ With the advent of long distance sea travel in the fifteenth century, specialist bakeries were established in European port cities to provide biscuit, by far the largest item on the victualling list of sailing ships. The quantities needed to provision a long voyage by a fleet of several vessels were so prodigious that in some cities, local resources were severely strained.²¹⁵ Biscuit production in Portugal warranted its own government department, the *Almoxirifado do Biscoito* (Royal Biscuit Office).²¹⁶ Even badly deteriorated biscuit was considered fit to eat. Leftover biscuit was recycled and one report refers to it being issued after 40 years in storage.²¹⁷ Antonio Pigafetta, sailing with Magellan, reported that after three months and 20 days without taking on any fresh food supplies, “We ate biscuit, which was no longer biscuit but fistfuls of powder swarming with worms, for they had eaten the better part (it stank strongly of rat urine).”²¹⁸ Some sailors on Colombos’ voyage preferred to eat after dark so that they wouldn’t see the maggots in their biscuit porridge.²¹⁹

²¹³ Wright, *A Mediterranean Feast*, 676.

²¹⁴ Davidson, *The Penguin Companion to Food*, 861.

²¹⁵ Layinka Swinburne, “Dancing with the Mermaids: Ship’s Biscuit and Portable Soup,” in Walker, *Food on the Move*, 312.

²¹⁶ Marques, “Travelling with the Fifteenth-century Discoverers,” 31.

²¹⁷ Swinburne, “Dancing with the Mermaids”, 312.

²¹⁸ Antonio Pigafetta, *The First Voyage Around the World, 1519-1522: An Account of Magellan’s Expedition*, ed. Theodore J. Cachey Jr (Toronto, Buffalo, London: Toronto University Press, 2007), 24.

²¹⁹ Morison, *The European Discovery of America*, 131.

The Curse of the Mouth

It is thought that the *S. Gabriel* carried 70 men and one cook, who presumably took care of the officers.²²⁰ Other ships in da Gama's fleet were similarly manned. Despite the fact that the store ship was the largest vessel in the fleet,²²¹ food supplies were inadequate. After leaving the Cape Verde islands, the fleet did not sight land again for 93 days.²²² When the ships made landfall at St Helena Bay on the southern tip of Africa, they made a meal of the abundant local lobsters.²²³ Five months later, after a grueling battle with the elements, they rounded the Cape and put in at the Copper River.²²⁴ Within a short time, many of the crew were ill with scurvy.

The chronicles of da Gama's voyage offer what is probably the first mention of scurvy at sea.²²⁵ The Portuguese called the disease *amalati de*

²²⁰ Velho, *A Journal of the First Voyage of Vasco da Gama*, 174.

²²¹ Edgar Prestage, *The Portuguese Pioneers* (London: A. and C. Black Ltd, 1933), 250.

²²² George D. Winius. "Vasco da Gama: A Speculative Reconstruction of a Voyage and its Antecedents," in *Studies on Portuguese Asia, 1495-1689*, by George D. Winius (Burlington: Ashgate, 2001), 17.

²²³ Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, 46.

²²⁴ For the chronology of da Gama's voyage, see Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, lxxix-lxxx.

²²⁵ Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, 71n.

la boccha, “the curse of the mouth”.²²⁶ There were serious outbreaks on both the outbound and homeward voyages.²²⁷ The Portuguese realized that the sickness was connected to the sailors’ diet, believing it was caused by eating salted meat and fish and “biscuit spoiled by long time”.²²⁸ Vasco da Gama’s brother, Paulo, who captained the second vessel of the fleet, offered up his own private stores of food in order to help the ailing crew members.²²⁹

Pyrard listed a whole range of suspected causes, among them the length of the voyage, lack of sanitation, lack of fresh water and food, washing in seawater without rinsing with fresh, and sleeping in night dews.²³⁰ To counter the dangers of the latter, he reported, the Portuguese slept with a quilted band stuffed with heavily scented cotton wrapped around their midribs.²³¹

The medicines available to the Iberian mariners at the close of the fifteenth century can be gleaned from the list of pharmaceuticals provided to Colombo’s fleet, which included a prune laxative, quince

226 Kenneth J. Carpenter, *The History of Scurvy and Vitamin C* (Cambridge, New York and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 3.

227 Prestage, “The Fourth Centenary of Vasco da Gama’s Voyage to India,” 12.

228 Stanley in Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, 71n.

229 Prestage, “The Fourth Centenary of Vasco da Gama’s Voyage to India,” 13.

230 Pyrard, *The Voyage of François Pyrard*, 2:390.

231 Pyrard, *The Voyage of François Pyrard*, 2:390.

juice, violet conserve, rum, lard, rose water, lemon juice, lily root, arsenic, dragon tree resin, and a compound of honey and opium.²³² Among the known remedies for scurvy were a pottage of garlic and green vegetables,²³³ which would at least have supplied some Vitamin C, and drinking one's own urine. Da Gama ordered his men to effect this remedy when they fell ill in Africa.²³⁴ The mariners survived, as did a French surgeon who described his self-treatment and the difficulty of eating with an infected mouth:

“I lanced also my gums, which were black and blue and surmounting my teeth, going every day out upon the side of the ship holding by the cordage, with a little looking glass in my hand to see where to cut: when I had cut away this dead flesh, and drawn away abundance of black blood, I washed my mouth and teeth with my urine, but next morning there was as much; and my ill fortune was that I could not eat, having more mind to swallow than to chew, upon account of the great pains which the disease causes.”²³⁵

The connection between vitamin C and scurvy was not known and it

²³² Wilford, "Translated Documents Capture Ambience and Aroma of the Nina," n.pag.

²³³ Katy Holder and Gail Duff, *A Clove of Garlic* (Edison: Chartwell, 1996), 28.

²³⁴ Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, 72.

²³⁵ Quoted in John Hoyt Williams, "From Madeira to Macao: The First Seaborne Empire," *Oceans* (Sept-Oct 1984), n.pag.

remained a serious problem for seamen well into the nineteenth century.²³⁶ Even Captain Cook thought that the grease that floated to the top of stew made from salted meat caused scurvy, and had it skimmed off.²³⁷ The British eventually discovered that citrus juice could cure the disease but some scholars hypothesize that the Portuguese may have known about this remedy several centuries earlier.²³⁸ A Portuguese vessel in the Caribbean picked up some sailors left on an island by Colombo because they were suffering from scurvy. The men had recovered by eating fruit, a marvel that the Portuguese marked by naming the island Curaçao (cure).²³⁹ In Mombasa, where da Gama landed with a sick crew, he watched his men recover rapidly after eating the citrons, lemons and “fine oranges, better than those of Portugal,” sent by the local ruler.²⁴⁰ When he next landed in Malindi, he again asked for oranges. In Ceylon, the (unidentified) authors of the native chronicle *Rajavaliya* noted that the Portuguese would give a gold coin for a lime.²⁴¹ Almost two centuries later, the British surgeon John Fryer, arriving in Johannesburg on a vessel with sick men on board, marveled

²³⁶ Arthur Coke Burnell in Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:23n.

²³⁷ Swinburne, “Dancing with Mermaids,” 312.

²³⁸ Eric Martini, “How did Vasco da Gama Sail for 16 Weeks without Developing Scurvy?” *The Lancet* 361 (2003), 1480. See also Carpenter, *The History of Scurvy and Vitamin C*.

²³⁹ Peter Farb and George Armelagos. *Consuming Passions: The Anthropology of Eating* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1980), 29.

²⁴⁰ E.G. Ravenstein, trans., “The Route to India: A Journal of the First Voyage of Vasco da Gama in 1497-9”, in *The Portuguese Voyages 1498-1663*, ed. Charles David Ley (London: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd, 1947), 20.

²⁴¹ Ruwan Rajapakse, *Concise Mahavamsa: History of Buddhism in Sri Lanka* (Sri Lanka, 2003), 121.
<http://www.sinhalanet.com/concisemahavamsaweb.pdf>

at their similarly rapid recovery. "It is incredible to relate how strangely they revived in so short a time, by feeding on oranges and fresh limes," he declared.²⁴²

Victuals at Sea

Official provisioning lists for the outward bound Portuguese Indiamen from the 1600s show that some rations were allocated according to rank. Seamen, for example, received more biscuit and twice as much sugar and honey than soldiers.²⁴³ According to Jan Huygen van Linschoten, who sailed from Lisbon to Goa in 1583, each man on board his vessel, regardless of rank, received a pound and three quarters of biscuit a day with half a can of wine and a can of water, an arroba of salted meat per month and some dried fish.²⁴⁴ The salted meat ration, issued once a month, quickly began to smell in the tropical heat.

On account of the capricious monsoons, a round trip between Lisbon and the Far East could take from 18 months to five years.²⁴⁵ According to an Italian passenger whose voyage from Lisbon to Goa in 1547 took 394 days, "The food was uneatable, with the meat choked with salt and the

²⁴² John Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia, Being Nine Years' Travels, 1672-1681* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1992), 16.

²⁴³ Boxer, *The Tragic History of the Sea*, 276.

²⁴⁴ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:14.

²⁴⁵ Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, 38.

water brackish and sour... the cooking pots and eating plates were never washed... the stench and foulness of shipboard living begged a description."²⁴⁶ François Pyrard reported that stink bugs infested the food and water.²⁴⁷ Linschoten describes water so vile-smelling that men had to hold their noses in order to drink it.²⁴⁸ Others resorted to drinking it through the cloth of their shirts. The warm tropical rain encountered off the coast of Africa, reported Thomas Stevens, was "so unwholesome, that if the water stand a little while, all is full of wormes, and falling on the meat which is hanged up, it maketh it straight full of wormes."²⁴⁹ The death rate from malnutrition, disease and starvation on ships was high. Portuguese and Spanish ships were especially disease-prone and filthy as the crew, François Pyrard reported, often did not bother to go up on deck for toilet duties.²⁵⁰ Rats infested the vessels, gnawing at the faces and feet of the passengers and crew as they slept.²⁵¹ Moustaches and other hairy parts of the body teemed with lice.²⁵²

According to Linschoten, sugar, honey, raisins, prunes and rice were

²⁴⁶ Cited in Manohar Malgonkar, *Inside Goa* (Panaji: Directorate of Information and Publicity, Govt. of Goa, Daman, and Diu, 1982), 43.

²⁴⁷ Pyrard, *The Voyage of François Pyrard*, 2:286.

²⁴⁸ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:15.

²⁴⁹ Thomas Stevens, "A Letter written from Goa, the principall City of all the East Indies...," in *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation*. Vol. 11, by Richard Hakluyt, ed. Edmund Goldsmid (Project Gutenberg, 2004), 142.
<http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/12693>

²⁵⁰ Pyrard, *The Voyage of François Pyrard*, 2:96.

²⁵¹ Michael Cooper, *Rodrigues the Interpreter: An Early Jesuit in Japan and China* (New York, Weatherhill, 1974), 29.

²⁵² Marques, "Travelling with the Fifteenth-century Discoverers," 37.

ostensibly reserved for the sick but were hoarded by the officers.²⁵³ When food ran out, as it often did, hunger led men to eat whatever was available. Those who had food sold it at exorbitant prices to those without. Some of the more enterprising bought a chicken and resold the water it was cooked in as a 'bouillon'.²⁵⁴ Stevens complained that after seven months on board, "we had neither meat nor almost anything else to eat".²⁵⁵ During Fernão de Magalhães' epic round-the-world voyage under the Spanish flag, the crew ate rats, sawdust and cooked leather.²⁵⁶ Caesar Federici complained of being unable to find food on the coast of Pegu. He and his Portuguese companions rowed for nine days with only enough rice for a single meal. They tried unsuccessfully to eat leaves that were too tough to chew and were only saved by finding a nest of turtle eggs.²⁵⁷ According to João de Barros, João de Bobra and nine other Portuguese sailors survived nine days at sea off Sumatra on a single kernel of opium.²⁵⁸

There were no certain supply points for the first Portuguese ships to enter the Indian Ocean. Vasco da Gama made landfall whenever water

²⁵³ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:14.

²⁵⁴ Pyrard, *The Voyage of François Pyrard*, 2:195.

²⁵⁵ Stevens, "A Letter Written from Goa," 144.

²⁵⁶ Antonio Pigafetta, *The First Voyage Around the World, 1519-1522: An account of Magellan's Expedition*, ed. Theodore J. Cachey Jr (Toronto, Buffalo, London: Toronto University Press, 2007), 24.

²⁵⁷ Federici, "The Voyage and Trauell of M. Cæsar Fredericke," 133.

²⁵⁸ Quoted in Mark Dion, "Sumatra through Portuguese Eyes: Excerpts from João de Barros' 'Decades da Asia'," *Indonesia* 9 (1970), 157.

supplies were critically low or ships were in need of repairs, and sent his men to seek out local sources of food. It was a two-way process of discovery. In the Bay of St Helena, da Gama invited one of the hunter-gatherer indigenes he encountered to dine at his table. The African ate everything that was offered. In return, one of da Gama's men, Fernão Velloso, was taken to the African's village and treated to a meal of roasted seal and wild tubers.²⁵⁹

In Natal, da Gama gave the natives he encountered biscuit, cake and bread spread with marmalade, then had to show them how to eat it. Later they returned, bringing unidentifiable fowls and yellow fruits, which da Gama's men in turn refused to eat. Seeing this, the natives ate the fruit first, after which the Portuguese happily followed suit. A wild fowl was killed and eaten, and much enjoyed by the Portuguese seamen, who thought it tasted like chicken. The natives then went off and returned with lots of the birds, which they wanted to trade for white cloth. The Portuguese sailors promptly tore their shirts into scraps and used them to buy so many of the birds that a surplus was dried in the sun and preserved.²⁶⁰

In Malindi, after inviting the local King to partake in a shipboard buffet of

²⁵⁹ David Northrup, "Vasco da Gama and Africa: An Era of Mutual Discovery, 1497-1800," *Journal of World History* (Fall 1998), 192.

²⁶⁰ Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, 70-71.

various conserves and confectionery, preserved almonds, olives, marmalade and wine, served on gilt platters with gold embroidered Flemish napkins, the ruler responded by sending a boat “laden with large copper kettles and cauldrons of boiled rice, and very fat sheep roasted whole, and boiled, and much good butter, and thin cakes of wheat and rice flour, and many fowls boiled and roast, stuffed with rice inside; also much vegetables and figs, cocoa-nuts, and sugar canes”, in sufficient quantity to feed the entire crew. To demonstrate his confidence in the King, da Gama consumed the food without first testing it for poison. When the ships departed Malindi for India, the King not only sent rice, butter, coconuts, “sheep salted whole like salt meat”, vegetables, live poultry, and sacks of sugar, but used his personal supply of wheat to have ships’ biscuit made for the Portuguese.²⁶¹

Shipboard meals were not uniformly awful. When supplies were at hand, officers and honoured guests aboard official vessels ate well. The Jesuit Luis Lopes described a meal taken on board a Portuguese vessel in Bahia after a voyage of 76 days from the Azores. The seven-course “moderate dinner” included chicken and lamb, roast and boiled, hams, sausages, cheese, fruit, cakes, biscuits and wine.²⁶² When the Portuguese captain Ruy Freyre de Andrada was being held captive on board the British

²⁶¹ Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, 130, 136, 143.

²⁶² Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, 213.

vessel *Lion*, he was provided with a menu of “tasty dishes” laboriously created in his honour by ship’s cook Thomas Winterbourne.²⁶³ During his voyage around Southeast Asia with pirate/captain Antonio de Faria, Mendes Pinto reported that the Portuguese were able to catch “endless quantities of sea bream and croakers” in the region’s rivers and were able to obtain “abundant supplies of everything that was necessary” in local villages.²⁶⁴ The captain himself slept on top of a hen coop situated on the quarterdeck.²⁶⁵

When the riches of the East were discovered, a much larger Portuguese vessel, the *nāo*, was developed to carry the spoils of the *Estado* to Lisbon. The *nāos* varied in size; the largest, used for the Japan trade, each carried upwards of 1,000 men.²⁶⁶ On the outward voyage, barrels of olives, casks of wine, olive oil and honey, sacks of flour and grain and other foodstuffs provided ballast as well as supplying commodities that could be exchanged for textiles, silver and other trade goods en route to the East, which in turn were traded for spices. The lading list for a 350 ton *nāo* carrying 362 men to the East circa 1600, included 137,472 pounds of biscuit, 34,752 pounds of meat, 4,256 pounds of sardines,

²⁶³ Charles R. Boxer, “Anglo-Portuguese Rivalry in the Persian Gulf, 1615-1635,” in *Portuguese Conquest and Commerce in Southern Asia, 1500-1750*, by Charles R. Boxer (London: Valerium Reprints, 1985), 83.

²⁶⁴ Pinto, *The Travels of Mendes Pinto*, 69.

²⁶⁵ Pinto, *The Travels of Mendes Pinto*, 70.

²⁶⁶ Samuel Hugh Moffett, *History of Christianity in Asia* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2005), 2:82.

almost 24,000 gallons of water and half that amount of wine, 1,274 gallons of vinegar, 150 dozen dried fish, and smaller quantities of olive oil, salt, grains, almonds, prunes, lentils, mustard, garlic, onions, sugar and honey.²⁶⁷ In the Macao Museum, a cutaway model of a *não*'s hold shows the ship's provisions carefully packaged and stowed amid straw and sacking on rows of wooden shelving. Additional protection was provided by stuffing gaps between jars and crates with vine twigs and olive wood which could be used as kindling and firewood. One missionary complained that he had to share his quarters below deck with 10,000 live chickens.²⁶⁸

One of the peculiarities of the *não*, in contrast to other European ships of the period, was the absence of communal cooking.²⁶⁹ Crewmen were treated like the peasants or criminals that many of them were, and expected to subsist on little more than ship's biscuit. Passengers travelling to the colonies in the service of the crown were supplied with rations for the voyage but had to prepare their own meals on board.²⁷⁰ If a man could not gain access to the galley or find a place for his cooking pot among those already crowding the fire, he was left with biscuit dunked in water, or whatever else could be eaten cold. In order to

²⁶⁷ Boxer, *The Tragic History of the Sea*, 276.

²⁶⁸ Moffet, *History of Christianity in Asia*, 2:82.

²⁶⁹ Cooper, *Rodrigues the Interpreter*, 29.

²⁷⁰ Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire*, 297.

discourage people from returning from the East, passengers travelling from Goa to Lisbon were supplied with only ship's biscuit and water and otherwise had to fend for themselves.²⁷¹ Another reason for the scarcity of rations on the homeward voyage was lack of space, the decks and holds being crammed to the brim with cargo, with the excess suspended on ropes over the ship's side.²⁷² François Pyrard complained that his food was stolen at night because there was no place to stow it.²⁷³ Long before they set food in foreign lands, the Portuguese had learned that survival meant making the best of what food they had, whenever and wherever it was found.

Supply Stations

The Portuguese established supply stations in places where food and water could be reliably sourced on the long journey to the East. One of the first was on the Atlantic island of San Tome, which the Portuguese had colonized by 1493.²⁷⁴ The vessel carrying Filippo Pigafetta called there in 1578. Pigafetta described the arrangements made for the provisioning of ships; although there was no permanent settlement on the island, it was planted with vines, herbs, vegetables and fruit which

²⁷¹ Burnell in Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:14n.

²⁷² Charles R. Boxer, *From Lisbon to Goa, 1500-1750: Studies in Portuguese Maritime Enterprise* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1984), 52.

²⁷³ Pyrard, *The Voyage of François Pyrard*, 2:286.

²⁷⁴ Marc Ferro, *Colonization: A Global History* (London: Routledge, 1997), 36.

were left to run wild. Pigafetta reported that cauliflowers, parsley, lettuce, pumpkins, peas, beans and various pulses were flourishing on San Tome, along with wild radishes “as large as a man’s leg”.²⁷⁵ Groves of oranges, citrons, lemons, figs and “a peculiar kind of apple” surrounded a cluster of sailor’s inns and a church was furnished with vestments and paraphernalia for visiting priests to celebrate Mass when their ship was in port. Wild goats, pigs, and birds, including partridge, wild fowl and doves, had been trapped and killed then stored in natural sea caves where salt spray preserved the meat. The sea provided an abundant supply of fish and the island was well provided with fresh water, as well as ebony wood for ships’ repairs.

Pigafetta describes a supply station that could maintain itself without need of permanent personnel. The Portuguese were perpetually short of the manpower and resources needed to operate their expanding empire and avoided the expense of building settlements whenever they could. The establishment of self-supporting supply stations was typical of Portuguese ingenuity in addressing the problems of food security.

Mozambique

Beyond the Cape, after da Gama's 1497-1499 voyage, the Portuguese

²⁷⁵ Pigafetta, *A Report of the Kingdom of Congo*, 8-9.

took control of Arab trading stations at Sofala, Mombasa and Hormuz and established a permanent, fortified supply station on the Island of Mozambique. Vessels sailing from Lisbon that managed to round the Cape in July called at Mozambique to take on water and food while waiting for the winds that would carry them across the Indian Ocean to Goa. If the Cape was rounded any later, the ships were forced to sail straight on in order to catch the monsoon winds, often with those on board “sicke of swollen legges, sore bellies, and other diseases”.²⁷⁶ The sourcing of fresh supplies was matter of great urgency. The authors of the *Rajavaliya* were astounded that the Portuguese in Ceylon would give a gold coin for a fish.²⁷⁷

In order to ensure that a stable population was on hand to maintain the supply station, Lisbon did not allow unmarried men to settle in Mozambique.²⁷⁸ At the time of Linschoten’s visit in 1583, the fortress was manned by around 40-50 *casados* (married men). Linschoten describes the island as “barren and unwholesome,” with not much growing other than coconut palms, plantains and a few orange, lemon and citron trees scattered around a cluster of native grass huts.²⁷⁹ Sweet water was scarce and the fortress maintained large cisterns for holding a year’s

²⁷⁶ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:20.

²⁷⁷ Rajapakse, *Concise Mahavamsa*, 121.

²⁷⁸ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:33.

²⁷⁹ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:24-25.

supply, as well as water stored in Martaban jars, presumably for loading onto ships.

The Burmese port of Martaban was famous as the source of these large ceramic storage jars, which were used to transport food and water all along the Indian Ocean trade routes. These Rubbermaid containers of the ancient world, called *gusi* in India, were originally produced by Chinese potters and shipped down the Irrawaddy River to Martaban, where they were loaded onto vessels from Malacca, Borneo, India and even further afield. Jars dating from the year 1000 have been found in Java. Specimens unearthed in the Philippines attest to trading activities between the archipelago and the lands in the Bay of Bengal as early as the Tang Dynasty (618-907). In 1350, the Arab traveller Ibn Batuta mentions seeing in India “Martabans or huge jars, filled with pepper, citron, and mango, all prepared with salt, as for a sea voyage”.²⁸⁰

The larger jars, some holding upwards of 100 gallons, were used for water, salted fish and sago pellets and the smaller ones for medicines, cosmetics and oils. They were sealed with cloth or covers made from pigs' bladders.²⁸¹ The glazed jars, which were later also made in Burma itself and in Vietnam, became trade items in themselves. Nipa palm *arak* was

²⁸⁰ Ibn Batuta, *Travels in Asia and Africa, 1325-1354*, trans. H.A.R. Gibb (1929; repr., Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), 280.

²⁸¹ Pamela Gutman, "The Martaban Trade: An Examination of the Literature from the Seventh Century until the Eighteenth Century," *Asian Perspectives* 40, no. 1 (2001), 110.

made in Burma and shipped to India in Martaban jars. In Borneo the jars were used to brew *tuak*. From Malacca the Portuguese shipped the jars along their trading routes, even as far as Lisbon where they were filled with oil, water and wine for the long sea journey back to the East.²⁸² The empty jars were also in great demand in India and elsewhere as household storage vessels, particularly for water.

Stocks of rice and grains imported from India were available in Mozambique, along with a plentiful supply of meat and fowl, including fat-tailed sheep and black-skinned chickens, which could be purchased inexpensively.²⁸³ Pork was more costly but was, according to Linschoten, of very good quality and particularly valued as nourishment for the sick.

Most of the food stored at the Mozambique *feitoria* (“factory”), which supplied not only passing ships but also the Portuguese settlements at Oman, Hormuz and Sofala, had to be imported from the African mainland and other islands.²⁸⁴ The supply station could only handle one or two visiting Indiamen at a time and if a ship was forced to stay too long on account of the weather or the need for substantial repairs, food

²⁸² Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:101.

²⁸³ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:24-25.

²⁸⁴ Malyn Newitt, “Mozambique Island: The Rise and Decline of a Colonial Port City,” in *Portuguese Colonial Cities in the Early Modern World*, ed. Liam Matthew Brockey (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), 114.

shortages ensued.²⁸⁵ In 1548, for example, Francisco Barreto arrived with his fleet, requiring victuals for 1,000 men.²⁸⁶ His 1569 expedition, involving 800 men, was sustained for six years by the Mozambique supply station.²⁸⁷

The arrivals, both ships and men, were often in very poor shape. The royal hospital on Mozambique received an influx of patients from every passing vessel.²⁸⁸ The ship that left from Lisbon in 1591 carrying Englishman Thomas Stevens arrived at the Mozambique way station with 150 of those on board sick with scurvy.²⁸⁹ Tropical disease was endemic on the island and men cured of one disease might easily succumb to another.²⁹⁰

Mozambique also provided refuge for storm-battered and overloaded vessels that got into trouble on the return trip from Goa to Lisbon. Between 1580 and 1640, 70 of the 400 vessels making the homeward journey foundered in the seas on the southwestern coast of Africa.²⁹¹ The

²⁸⁵ Boxer, *From Lisbon to Goa*, 57.

²⁸⁶ Malyn Newitt, *A History of Mozambique* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), 28.

²⁸⁷ Newitt, *A History of Mozambique*, 28.

²⁸⁸ Newitt, *A History of Mozambique*, 28.

²⁸⁹ Stevens, "A Letter written from Goa", 144.

²⁹⁰ Boxer, *From Lisbon to Goa*, 111.

²⁹¹ Pier M. Larson, "Colonies Lost: God, Hunger, and Conflict in Anosy (Madagascar) to 1674," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 27, no. 2 (2007), 350.

survivors of the *Santo Alberto*, which went down in 1593, trekked for 100 days along the African coast to reach Mozambique.²⁹² Among them was the cosmographer, Lavanha, who reported that they were sustained initially by two bags of rice, a hogshead of meat, two hogsheads of wine, four jars of bread, some olive oil and the preserves that had washed up on the beach.²⁹³

Despite its shortcomings, the Mozambique supply station functioned for the duration of the shipping trade between Lisbon and the East, known as the *Carreira da India*. A list of products available from the African mainland compiled by the secretary of the Mozambique government in 1758, included millet, vegetables, cattle, goats, fish, hens, honey, butter and various types of oil.²⁹⁴ Portuguese vessels also came to rely on Mozambique's teeming fishing grounds, which became a regular stopping point on the way to India. Thomas Stevens reported that the crew of his vessel landed enough fish in a day to feed everyone on board, with enough left over for the next day's lunch.²⁹⁵

²⁹² Boxer, *The Tragic History of the Sea*, 129.

²⁹³ Boxer, *The Tragic History of the Sea*, 129.

²⁹⁴ Newitt, *A History of Mozambique*, 164-5.

²⁹⁵ Stevens, "A Letter Written from Goa," 144.

Hormuz

The Portuguese built fortified trading posts at various points in the Gulf of Oman but the most important was at Hormuz, an island enclave near the Arabian port of Muscat. In 1507, on his way to India to assume the governorship of Goa, Afonso Albuquerque sacked Muscat. In 1514 he attacked again and made the ruler of Hormuz a Portuguese vassal. An impressive fortress and prison were built at Muscat and an even more impressive fortress at Hormuz.

“If the world were an egg, Ormus would be the yolk,” wrote François Pyrard.²⁹⁶ The city was part of an ancient trading network and control of this busy port at the mouth of the Persian Gulf enabled the Portuguese to disrupt the flow of spices traditionally carried by Arab traders to Europe. As the main Portuguese naval base in the region, Hormuz also played an important role in maintaining the military strength of the *Estado*.

Consisting of a coastal settlement and a rocky island ringed by cliffs, Hormuz produced nothing of its own except salt²⁹⁷ but its bustling marketplace was one of the richest in Asia, connecting Indian traders

²⁹⁶ Pyrard, *The Voyage of François Pyrard*, 2:240.

²⁹⁷ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:48.

with overland camel caravans that brought goods from Persia, Arabia and Turkey to the coast, as well as merchandise from the Far East that had travelled to central Asia along the Silk Road. Much of its revenue came from taxing the trade in horses and slaves supplied to the armies of India. The extraordinary wealth of trade goods available at Hormuz, as described by Duarte Barbosa, included Arabian and Persian horses, rubies, sapphires, emeralds and other precious stones, pearls, porcelain, beeswax, iron, quicksilver and vermilion, cotton cloth, taffetas, scarlet woolens, brocades and skeins of silk. The spice and drug vendors offered pepper, ginger, cinnamon, cloves, mace, nutmeg, long pepper, aloes wood, sandalwood, brazil wood, balsam, Indian saffron, sulphur, benzoin, musk and rhubarb. Food merchants sold tamarinds, sugar, rice, coconuts, rose water, salt, dates, and raisins.²⁹⁸ Water for the Hormuz fortress was obtained from seawater, by sinking a special device four or five fathoms beneath the surface, where fresh water could be extracted. A number of travellers described this Portuguese technological innovation.²⁹⁹

Hormuz was an important source of supplies for Goa and the string of Portuguese towns stretching along the Indian coast to the north and south of the *Estado's* capital at Goa. The *feitoria* was well supplied by the

²⁹⁸ Barbosa, *A Description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar*, 42.

²⁹⁹ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:52.

merchant trade with foodstuffs from the Middle East, including dates and other dried fruits, marmalades, *halwachs* and other sweetmeats.

Duarte Barbosa praised the wealth of foods that could be acquired:

“Very good meats, very well cooked, wheaten breade, and very good rice, and many other dishes very well prepared, and many kinds of conserves, and preserved fruits, and others fresh: that is to say apples, pomegranates, peaches, apricots, figs, almond, melons, radishes, salads, and all the other things which there are in Spain: dates of many kinds, and other eatables and fruits not used in our parts.”³⁰⁰

According to Ruy Andrada, who loaded his vessels with biscuit, rice, salted fish, melons and other stores at Muscat in 1621, Hormuz's shops had enough corn, rice, butter and other provisions to last many men for ten years.³⁰¹ Pedro Teixeira, a Portuguese crypto-Jew who lived in Hormuz from 1593 to 1597, reported that the whole of India was supplied with wine, raisins, dried plums and almonds from Hormuz.³⁰² The imported goods were expensive. “Everything is very dear because it is brought by sea from the towns of Arabia and Persia,” Barbosa

³⁰⁰ Barbosa, *A Description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar*, 43.

³⁰¹ Boxer, *Commentaries of Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, 114.

³⁰² Pedro Teixeira, *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira, with his "Kings of Harmuz" and Extracts from his "Kings of Persia,"* trans. William F. Sinclair (London: Hakluyt Society, 1902), 267.

complained.³⁰³

Unfortunately, corruption and mismanagement on the part of its Portuguese administrators weakened the fortress and in 1622 Hormuz fell to British forces in service of the Persian Shah Abbas I.³⁰⁴ Muscat was lost in 1650³⁰⁵ and the price of imported foods in Goa rose so sharply that henceforth only the wealthy could afford such luxuries as almonds and dried fruits.

Summary

The preceding survey of historical Portuguese gastronomy identifies the culinary resources available to fifteenth and sixteenth century Portuguese explorers and establishes the roots of Luso-Asian cuisine in a set of durable and transportable foods used as ships' provisions. In addition to logistics, the social aspects of consumption in medieval Iberia influenced the dining culture that noble-born officers of the *Estado* carried to their new fiefdoms in the East. The deep involvement of the monasteries and convents in the gastronomic life of the Portuguese was a relationship that would be repeated in the colonies and spread throughout the region by virtue of Portuguese missionary activity. The

303 Barbosa, *A Description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar*, 43.

304 Roger Savor, *Iran Under the Safavids* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 116-117.

305 Michael Dumper, ed., *Cities of the Middle East and North Africa* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO Inc., 2007), 262.

establishment of supply stations demonstrates the kind of logistical expertise that the Portuguese would also apply to solving the problems of food security in the Asian settlements.

2. THE LUSO-ASIAN WORLD

This section gives a brief background to the Portuguese exploration of maritime Asia, describes the establishment of the first settlements and examines the principal forces that helped to shape Luso-Asian society and its distinctive cuisine, and the factors contributing to the widespread dispersal of Iberian culinary influence throughout the region. It argues that despite their strong commitment to the Catholic faith, the Portuguese pursued a policy of cultural flexibility, reinforced by frequent miscegenation, which contributed to culinary cross-fertilization, while the large number of Portuguese operating beyond the official borders of the *Estado* facilitated the broad dispersal of Iberian cultural traits within the region.

The Portuguese Age of Exploration¹

The nation of Portugal was established in 1143 with the recognition of Afonso I, Prince of Portugal, as King of a region previously under the control of the Spanish House of Castile and Leon. Its rise as a European power began in 1249, when the Arabs, who had occupied southern Iberia since 700 AD, were expelled.² The first Portuguese dynasty, the House of

¹ This period of Portuguese history has been well documented. A recent and comprehensive overview is provided in Disney, *A History of Portugal and the Portuguese Empire*.

² Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire*, 4.

Avis, was established with the coronation of João I in 1385.³

A strategic alliance with England through the marriage of João I to Philippa of Lancaster, granddaughter of Edward III, ensured Portuguese political stability. At the dawn of the fifteenth century, Portugal's agriculture-based economy was weak. Trade was the only other significant source of revenue and merchants enjoyed a privileged position, supported by the Crown.⁴ Traders from Italy, Spain and France were also encouraged to settle in Lisbon and to take advantage of its position as a “wharf between two seas”,⁵ with access to the markets of northern Europe and the Mediterranean. By end of the fourteenth century, Portugal was an emerging mercantile power, with 400-500 ships loading annually at the Lisbon docks.⁶ The resources were at hand to undertake exploration.

The impetus for the Portuguese voyages of discovery was three-fold, motivated by the need for food, the search for spices and by Catholic evangelism. Portugal was never able to produce enough food to meet its own needs and the search for more productive land was one of the

³ Ian Roberston, *A Traveller's History of Portugal* (New York and Northampton: Interlink Books, 2002), 42, 59-60.

⁴ See Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire*, 1-14.

⁵ Leonard Y. Andaya, “Interactions with the Outside World and Adaptation in Southeast Asian Society, 1500-1800,” in *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, ed. Nicholas Tarling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1:10.

⁶ Thomas E. Skidmore. *Brazil: Five Centuries of Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 7.

primary reasons for exploratory voyages by sea. Anthropologist and historian of colonial Brazil, Gilberto Freyre, described the Portuguese colonizers as “a nation of the undernourished”.⁷

The fall of Constantinople, hub of overland trade with the East, to the Turks in 1453 gave impetus to a European quest for a sea route to Asia.⁸ King João’s third son, Henrique, known to history as Henry the Navigator, became the principal instigator of the voyages that took Portuguese navigator-captains initially to Ceuta in North Africa, then down the west African coast and, eventually, around its southernmost tip into the Indian Ocean. Henrique’s endeavours were driven by a thirst for knowledge but they were encouraged by a royal court hungry for spices and the revenue that could be won by wresting control of the spice trade from Catholic Portugal's theological opponents, the Muslim Arabs.⁹

Prince Henrique’s 1415 voyage to crush a Muslim force at Ceuta initiated Portugal's foray into Africa. The final act of the Catholic *Reconquista*, when Muslim Spain surrendered to Ferdinand and Isabella, occurred just five years before da Gama's landmark voyage to India. The resurgent Catholic Church in Europe launched an aggressive campaign for Christian souls, charging Portuguese explorers and missionaries with the

⁷ Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, 240.

⁸ Robertson, *A Traveller's History of Portugal*, 65.

⁹ See Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire*, 1-14.

holy task of claiming converts among the heathens of the East.

In 1488, Bartolomeo Dias succeeded in rounding the southern tip of Africa and in 1497 Vasco da Gama crossed the Indian Ocean and landed on the southwestern coast of India. On his next voyage he reached Malacca in 1511, and a year later Antonio de Abreu sailed from Malacca and reached the legendary Spice Islands in the Indonesian archipelago. From Malacca the Portuguese also pushed north to the Philippines, China and finally Japan, the easternmost point of their exploration, which they reached in 1543.¹⁰

The capture of Malacca was a strategic conquest that severed the Arab trade route to Europe and enabled the Portuguese to take a major part in the traditional trading activities of the region. Through a combination of belligerence and diplomacy, within a decade of reaching India the Portuguese had muscled in on the Indian trading networks that had previously been controlled by Arabs, Gujeratis and Tamils, had overtaken Javanese and Malay merchants in the Indonesian archipelago, and moved into the traditional Chinese trading routes to the north.¹¹ They called this theatre of operations, which extended from Mozambique to China and was headquartered in Goa, the deep water port captured by

¹⁰ A concise chronology of the Portuguese voyages of discovery is given in Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, 9-11.

¹¹ Baxter, "Portuguese and Creole Portuguese in the Pacific", 299.

the Portuguese soon after their arrival on the Konkan coast, *Estado da India*, the State of India.

For the next one and a half centuries, Portuguese merchants enjoyed a pre-eminent position in the European spice trade and grew fabulously wealthy as other European powers tried to make their own inroads into Asia. The creaking holds of the Portuguese Indiamen returning to Lisbon were filled with gold, precious stones, porcelain, scented woods, silks, drugs, pepper, nutmeg, cloves, cinnamon and other spices. Meanwhile, crossing the Atlantic, the Portuguese had discovered Brazil and were reaping great profits from sugar plantations and trade in American silver, while Portuguese in African territories generated significant revenues from the slave trade. The profits of empire enabled Lisbon to overtake Venice as the centre of European commerce.¹²

The *Estado* consisted of a network of trading posts that had either a negotiated, or a militarily defended presence in states that remained under local governance, and territories over which the Portuguese had political control. The latter became the colonies at Damão and Diu, Goa, Malacca, Macao and East Timor. Many smaller Portuguese enclaves also arose on the fringes of the trading empire.

¹² See Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, 124-126.

During the glory days of the *Estado* in the sixteenth century, the colonial territories became wealthy outposts of the empire, rivalling in architectural splendour and luxuriant lifestyle the finest cities of Europe. Distanced by vast oceans from Lisbon and characterized by a high degree of miscegenation, Luso-Asian societies were made up of multi-racial populations united by Catholicism and an allegiance, either imposed or voluntary, to Portuguese cultural ideals. As Jeffrey Pilcher has noted in his study of Spanish Creole cuisine in the New World, food played an important role in defining social groups and status relationships in ethnically mixed colonial populations.¹³ But while the Spanish (and the British in India) sought to distance themselves from indigenous society, the Portuguese in Asia demonstrated a high degree of assimilation into local communities. After several generations, Luso-Asian households were so racially mixed that skin colour and ethnicity no longer served as a reliable indication of social status. In this scenario, foods, ceremonies and cultural expressions that connoted Catholicism and 'Iberianness' were often the only means of demonstrating an affinity with the Lisbon Portuguese and European civilization.

Portuguese missionary efforts were twinned with her mercantile activities. Parallel to and often coincident with the administration of the *Estado* was the administrative network of the Catholic Church, called the

¹³ Pilcher, *Que Vivan Los Tamales!*, 40.

Padroado. The *Padroado* controlled the movements and activities of ecclesiastical personnel within the entire Portuguese empire. Its principal agents were the Jesuits, whose presence in Asia was a seminal influence in the development of Luso-Asian colonial society.

Eventually competition from the Dutch and British, as well as the indigenous opponents of the Portuguese in Asia, combined to break the Portuguese trade hegemony. In the first quarter of the seventeenth century, Dutch and British merchants with an established foothold in Batavia successfully expelled the Portuguese from Indonesia, with the exception of Timor and some other small enclaves in the east. The Portuguese now referred to the clove as “an apple of discord” on account of the bloody battles waged by Europeans over its possession.¹⁴

Portuguese mismanagement and corruption within its own administrative ranks had also seriously weakened the empire and in the mid-seventeenth century the *Estado da India*'s star burned out as spectacularly as it had once blazed.¹⁵

After losing the Spice Islands, the Portuguese learned that there was as much profit to be made trading within Asia as in sending spices to

¹⁴ Steven Drakeley, *The History of Indonesia* (Westport, Connecticut, and London: Greenwood Press, 2005), 27.

¹⁵ See George D. Winius, “The Origin and Rhythm of Dutch Aggression against the Estado da India, 1601–1661,” in Winius, *Studies on Portuguese Asia*, 73.

Europe.¹⁶ By 1828 Asia accounted for only 1 percent of Portugal's trade.¹⁷ Of the centuries after 1600, writes the historian G.V. Scammell, "Nowhere was the picture more depressing than in Asia [...]. Trade was at a standstill; war was ubiquitous; food was at the mercy of enemies; manpower was inadequate; the funds inevitably exhausted."¹⁸ Portugal gradually lost all of her Asian trading bases but managed to hold on to the colonies at Goa, Damão and Diu, Macao and East Timor, which became increasingly isolated with the loss of the trading routes. In 1662, the incoming Viceroy of Goa, Antonio de Mello de Castro, had to sail there on an English vessel.¹⁹

In the late nineteenth century, the British historian Sir William Hunter lamented the lost majesty of the *Estado's* once-magnificent capital at Goa: "now a city of empty convents and monasteries; mounds of broken bricks, once palaces, buried under rank grass, and streets overgrown with cocoa-nut trees and jungle. The churches rise mournfully amid the desolation."²⁰

16 John Villiers, "Silk and Silver: Macau, Manila and Trade in the China Seas in the Sixteenth Century." Paper presented at the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (Hong Kong, June 10, 1980), 68.

17 W. G. Clarence-Smith, *The Third Portuguese Empire, 1825-1975: A Study in Economic Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), 25.

18 G.V. Scammell, "The Pillars of Empire: Indigenous Assistance and the Survival of the 'Estado da India' c. 1600-1700," *Modern Asian Studies* 22, no. 3 (1988), 473.

19 John Correia-Afonso, "Postscript to an Odyssey: More Light on Manuel Godinho," *Modern Asian Studies* 22, no. 3 (1988), 493.

20 Sir William Hunter, *History of British India* (London: Longmans, 1899-1900), 1:154-55.

The golden age of the Portuguese empire receded into the increasingly distant past. But the collapse of the *Estado* did not result in the wholesale destruction of the Portuguese communities in Asia. The colonies remained Portuguese possessions until the twentieth century and in many other places around the region, where there is no other evidence remaining of the days of Portuguese prosperity, sturdily built, whitewashed churches maintained by communities of Catholics, remain as symbols of five centuries of cultural continuity.²¹

The Portuguese Settlements

Once they had rounded the southernmost tip of Africa, the Portuguese worked their way up the east African coast and across the Gulf of Oman to India, establishing a network of fortified supply points and capturing or negotiating a license to trade in marketplaces that had been frequented for centuries by the region's native traders.²²

Portuguese explorer-captains marked their arrival in new territories by erecting a stone pillar, called a *padrão*, carved with the royal arms of

21 The Lusophone countries and areas of the world are Portugal (including the Azores and Madeira), Brazil, Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe, Mozambique, Timor Leste, Macau, Goa, Damão, and Diu. Portuguese-based Creoles are spoken in the Americas, Lusophone Africa, India, Sri Lanka, Malacca, Singapore, Thailand, and Indonesia. (Loro Horta, "China's Portuguese Connection: China Grooms a Strategic Relationship with the Community of Portuguese Language Countries," *YaleGlobal* Online, June 22, 2006. n.pag. <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/china%E2%80%99s-portuguese-connection>; Joseph Clancy Clements, "The Indo-Portuguese Creoles: Languages in Transition," *Hispania* 74, no. 3 (1991), 637.

22 For a discussion of Portuguese activities in Southeast Asia in the context of indigenous trade, see Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450-1680* (New Haven: Yale University, 1993).

Portugal and topped by a cross. These were loaded on ships in Lisbon, ready to be deployed to mark heathen lands as belonging to Portugal and God and, theoretically, to claim monopoly rights to all navigation, trade, and fishing in that locale.²³ Where this was not immediately achievable, or deemed impossible, the *padrão* at least indicated that good relations had been established.²⁴ In many places, these standing stones are the only remaining trace of a Portuguese settlement whose history has otherwise been forgotten.

Sometimes a small posse of men was left behind at the landfall site. These might be missionaries who would attempt to found a Christian colony, soldiers charged with securing food supplies for subsequent ships, or if trading prospects looked promising, one or two men who were expected to learn the local language and customs, to pave the way for future Portuguese merchants.²⁵

The hardships faced by these early Portuguese pioneers were often extraordinary. Native peoples sometimes reacted to Portuguese appropriation of their land by killing the priests and soldiers left behind to establish a settlement. When Pedro Álvares Cabral arrived in Calicut

²³ John Hoyt Williams, "From Madeira to Macao 'The First Seaborne Empire'," *Oceans* Sept-Oct (1984), n.pag.

²⁴ Dion, "Sumatra through Portuguese Eyes," 134.

²⁵ Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, 109.

two years after Vasco da Gama, he found that the men left behind by da Gama to establish a trading post had angered local traders and been murdered.²⁶ A similar fate is thought to have befallen the first Portuguese settlers in Madagascar.²⁷

In addition to threats by hostile natives, would-be settlers also faced difficulties in finding food. The Franciscan historian Frei Fernando de Soledade, who visited Madeira soon after it was colonized in 1420, reported that the friars charged with building a Christian community there “went unshod, their habit was the skins of sea wolves, and their food the same as these beasts”.²⁸ Several attempts at establishing missions in Africa failed due to the prevalence of tropical diseases and the inhospitable climate.²⁹ A group of sailors rescued from the African coast in 1505 were so emaciated they were said to have looked embalmed.³⁰ They had survived on crabs, grass and grains of millet, which they obtained by dancing until they dropped to entertain the Africans and ate raw in the manner of birds.³¹

²⁶ McKenna, *A Spaniard in the Indies*, 29.

²⁷ Larson, “Colonies Lost,” 351.

²⁸ George C. A. Boehrer, “The Franciscans and Portuguese Colonization in Africa and the Atlantic Islands, 1415-1499,” *The Americas* 11, no. 3 (1955), 391.

²⁹ Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism*, 137-139.

³⁰ McKenna, *A Spaniard in the Indies*, 37.

³¹ McKenna, *A Spaniard in the Indies*, 37.

In other instances, native peoples provided the Portuguese with welcome aid and a valuable education about local foods and ways of utilizing them. The innumerable uses of the coconut, which the Portuguese christened ‘noggin’ (*coco*) on account of its hairy head and anthropomorphic ‘face’,³² gave rise to much admiring commentary. “From it can be made wine, vinegar, oil, honey, planks, and even garments for destitute people,” wrote Martín de Figueroa.³³

Successful settlements, once established, took one of three forms, all based initially on the fortified trading post. The prototypes established on the west coast of Africa at Arguim in 1445 and Elmina in 1482 were replicated all over the Portuguese empire.³⁴ The *feitoria* was designed as a stronghold that could be manned by only a handful of personnel – the *feitor* or official trading agent of the crown, plus a few soldiers and perhaps a bailiff and a missionary priest. *Feitorias* without permanent clergy were visited by itinerant priests dispatched by the *Padroado*.

The *feitoria* served as a safe stopping over point and supply depot for Portuguese vessels and as a place where ‘items of interest’ such as gold, spices, or slaves could be brought for shipping back to Lisbon or to

³² McKenna, *A Spaniard in the Indies*, 170; Edward Grey in Pietro della Valle, *The Travels of Pietro della Valle in India*, Vol. 1, ed. Edward Grey (1892; repr., New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 181n.

³³ McKenna, *A Spaniard in the Indies*, 39.

³⁴ Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 19; Williams, “From Madeira to Macao,” n.pag.

another point in the Portuguese trading network.³⁵ As supply stations for naval and military personnel, and hostelrys for travellers, the *feitorias* were the initial loci for the development of a Luso-Asian cuisine.

Sometimes the initial *feitoria* consisted of temporary wooden buildings that would be replaced with stone structures when the builders and supplies could be rounded up. After an attack on the Calicut *feitoria* in 1500, the Portuguese settlements throughout Asia were fortified.³⁶ The fortresses, like castles in Portugal, were designed as defensive bulwarks, not residences. There were living quarters for the captain of the fortress and his men, and areas to store military equipment and food supplies. A surviving example of a military commander's house attached to a fortress of the period in Portugal consisted of a two storey dwelling, with store rooms on the ground floor for firewood, wine, haystacks, stables and the water cistern.³⁷ On the second level was the kitchen, a large reception and dining hall, and three smaller rooms for sleeping and dressing. Food and household utensils were kept in a single downstairs room with a beaten earth floor covered in straw, where the servants also slept. Other servants lived in an annex. This was a comparatively large establishment; many of the military commanders lived, ate and slept in a

³⁵ Williams, "From Madeira to Macao," n.pag.

³⁶ Disney, *A History of Portugal and the Portuguese Empire*, 2:147.

³⁷ Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 117.

single hall.³⁸

The populations of the *feitorias* varied greatly in size. In some settlements, the entire Portuguese community was housed inside the fortress. At the Hormuz fortress, the population consisted of the Captain, with his 50 personal retainers and 30 guards, the principal officers – *alcaide-mor* (governor), *ouvidor* (judge) and *xabandar* (local liaison) – each with four servants, plus the *feitor* (factor) and his eight staff and two secretaries. The *almoxarife* (storekeeper) manned the magazine with the help of his clerk and two servants, and the *meirinho* (bailiff) with his eight workmen. The *sobrerollda* (constable) kept everyone in order. The *ribeira* (master of the dockyard) headed a team that included the *mocadão* and his eight ship guards, a rope maker, a sawyer, three carpenters, a blacksmith, an interpreter, an armourer, the *mestre de tanoarya* (master cooper) and the *meirinho da fazendão* (treasury bailiff). In addition were the crew of the Captain's vessel – 30 lascars, a pilot, a master mariner and his deputy, two seamen, a constable and two gunners. The *feitoria's* military personnel included 15 gunners, 400 soldiers, eight corporals, a sergeant and a lieutenant. In the customs house were the *aguazil*, an interpreter and a clerk plus two assistants, the *juiz de peso* (weighing supervisor), a gatekeeper, two *saquadores* (tax collectors), plus the *xabandar* for the mainland and his clerk. Rounding out the list, the

³⁸ Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 117.

church had a priest and four other clergy, a treasurer, an organist and two choir boys.³⁹ Linschoten reported that in summer the island fortress was so unbearably hot that its occupants, both male and female, slept naked in the water cisterns with only their heads sticking out.⁴⁰ There was a price to pay for the comfort – the water harboured tropical worms that burrowed beneath the skin of the legs and had to be carefully wound out with a pin.

In smaller establishments, one man might fill several roles but the roll call was similarly extensive in most of the larger *feitorias*. All these people had to be fed. The *almoxarife* was responsible for securing and accounting for the settlement's food supplies. When the Hormuz fortress was under construction and threatened by hostile Persians, Ruy Andrada reported, nobody stopped to eat.⁴¹ Once the fortress was completed, meals were taken at the governor's table. Food for the soldiers stationed outside the walls was delivered by way of special tunnels.

In some of the more prosperous settlements, a Portuguese quarter grew up around the *feitoria* and was enclosed to become a walled town, called

³⁹ Newitt, *A History of Portuguese Overseas Expansion*, 142; Villiers, "The Estado da India in Southeast Asia," 164.

⁴⁰ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:51.

⁴¹ Boxer, *Commentaries of Ruy Frey Andrada*, 71.

a *fortaleza*.⁴² A larger fortified stronghold, the *fortaleza* not only functioned as a barracks for soldiers and a store place for food and ammunition, but also provided protected living quarters for *casados* and their families, and a chapel or church. The population of the *feitorias* and *fortalezas* changed with the season. Soldiers required to live in barracks during times of warfare were allowed to take lodging elsewhere in peacetime.⁴³ If a fleet of trading vessels was in port waiting out the monsoon, the population of the Portuguese quarter could be swollen by several hundredfold.

The largest type of settlement was the walled town (*cidade*), which might house thousands of people, along with all the civic and ecclesiastical buildings, such as schools, churches, and hospitals, normally found within a Portuguese urban settlement. The fort at Damão, for example, enclosed palaces, the secretariat and official buildings, as well as a Dominican monastery and a church. Houses for the Portuguese gentry and their families were also built within the fortress walls.⁴⁴ With wide streets and handsome stone buildings, the city drew admiring comments from European travellers.⁴⁵ Although there were Portuguese settlements

⁴² Baxter, "Portuguese and Creole Portuguese in the Pacific", 300.

⁴³ Charles E. Nowell, *A History of Portugal* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1952), 89.

⁴⁴ Sá, "Goapuri & Velha Goa," 65.

⁴⁵ Glenn J. Ames, "The Province of the North: Continuity and Change in an Age of Decline and Rebirth, ca. 1571-1680," in Brockey, *Portuguese Colonial Cities in the Early Modern World*, 135-136.

of considerable size in a number of places in Asia, the only real Portuguese cities, which existed outside the control of local rulers, were the colonial capitals at Goa, Malacca, and Macao.

At its height as the hub of Indian Ocean and Pacific trade in the sixteenth century, Malacca supported a "massive and opulent" *fortaleza*.⁴⁶ Macao, which became the headquarters of the Jesuit missions in Asia, boasted St Paul's Church, the largest Christian edifice in Asia. João Ribeiro, who sailed from Lisbon in 1640 and spent 18 years in Ceylon, described the Portuguese walled Catholic city of Colombo:

"There were in the city nine hundred families of noble settlers and more than one thousand five hundred of various handicraftsmen and tradesmen, all within the walls; two parishes, [...]; five convents of the religious orders, [...]; the house of Santa Misericordia, and a Royal Hospital, with seven parishes outside the walls."⁴⁷

But grandest of all was Goa, headquarters of the *Estado* and hub of the Portuguese empire, the ecclesiastical capital of Catholic Asia and the richest trading emporium in the East. Built with Hindu labour and

⁴⁶ Williams, "From Madeira to Macao," n.pag.

⁴⁷ Marco Ramerini, "The Portuguese in Ceylon: The History of the First European Power in Ceylon," <http://www.colonialvoyage.com/Ribeiro.html>

beautified by Hindu stonemasons, the walled city known as *Goa Dourada* (Golden Goa) rivaled in wealth and magnificence the finest cities of Europe, earning it the sobriquet ‘Rome of the East.’⁴⁸

It has been estimated that in this largest of the Portuguese settlements, between 600 and 800 people were eating twice a day at the governor’s expense.⁴⁹ At the opposite end of the spectrum, in the very small *feitoria* at Dabull, the *feitor* was a jack of all trades, who sold meat and drink and fruit and vegetables from his own garden. He was “no better than the host of an alehouse,” jibed the British captain John Jourdain, adding that the *feitor* was embarrassed by his hand-to-mouth existence.⁵⁰

Luso-Asian Society

The physical factors influencing the development of Luso-Asian cuisine are discussed further in Part Three. But an elucidation of Luso-Asian culinary culture also requires an understanding of the social context in which it evolved. As a society, the Luso-Asians were never a coherent entity but a heterogeneous and ethnically diverse group scattered across the region but united by common threads of culture, of which religion

⁴⁸ Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, 156.

⁴⁹ Ines G. Županov, *Missionary Tropics: The Catholic Frontier in India (16th-17th centuries)* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 120; Pearson, *The Portuguese in India*, 98.

⁵⁰ Jourdain, *The Journal of John Jourdain*, 198-199.

and foodways were some of the most enduring. The *Estado's* women played a central role in the transmission of culinary culture.

The *Estado* was the political entity of the Portuguese empire in Asia. It controlled, theoretically at least, the naval and military commanders, who, in many cases, were also licensees of the official trading voyages. Working alongside, and sponsored by, the state administration was the *Padroado*. These two bodies were responsible for the recruitment and welfare of all the people needed to support the secular and spiritual machinery of the Portuguese empire.

In the places that they managed to conquer, the Portuguese had a strategic interest in creating communities of loyal subjects who would help defend their trading bases. Given the small population of Late Medieval Portugal, the logistical challenges of shipping personnel from Lisbon and the high attrition rate during those multi-year voyages, it was more efficient to recruit local labour and breed a defense force in situ. This approach differed both from the VOC attempt to defend their interests in Indonesia with Dutch colonists and slave labour⁵¹ and the Spanish strategy of sending married couples to colonize the Americas.

Goa's second Viceroy, Afonso Albuquerque, introduced the *Politica dos*

51 M.C. Ricklefs, *History of Modern Indonesia since c.1200* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), 26-27.

Casamentos (mixed marriage policy) in Portuguese India to encourage Portuguese men to marry local women and become householders (*casados*). The policy provided incentives, including discharge from the army, a grant of land and tax waivers that enhanced the *casados*' ability to make a living as merchants, in return for marriage to any woman prepared to convert to Christianity. This was a radical departure from prevailing Portuguese attitudes that upheld racial purity as a core precept of Lusitanian identity and in contrast to, for example, the colonial policy of the Dutch in Indonesia which discouraged formal marriage between European men and Javanese women.⁵² But Albuquerque's argument that the *Estado* desperately needed more bodies persuaded Lisbon to prioritize expediency over ethnogenesis.⁵³ Albuquerque's conviction that Portuguese trade in Asia could best be secured by domestic family units as an adjunct to naval power was a fundamental notion around which Luso-Asian society and culture would coalesce.

The Luso-Asian colonial societies that evolved as a result of Albuquerque's policies consisted of four main occupational classes: the *Estado* officials, (including naval and military officers and some *casados* who held administrative posts), clerics, soldiers and *casados*. Most of the

⁵² Frances Gouda, *Dutch Culture Overseas: Colonial Practice in the Netherlands Indies 1900-1942* (Singapore: Equinox, 2008), 112.

⁵³ Fátima da Silva Gracias, *Kaleidoscope of Women in Goa, 1510-1961* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing, 1996), 32.

Estado officers and clerics were born in Portugal and were known as *reinois* (King's people). *Casados* and *soldados* might be Iberian, part Iberian, or native Christian converts, particularly in India where the Portuguese had their greatest evangelical successes. All citizens of the *Estado* supplemented their income by trading,⁵⁴ an activity that fostered cultural exchange and aided the dispersal of Portuguese ingredients and culinary culture while increasing the Iberians' exposure to new ingredients and foodways.

Population figures for the *Estado* settlements in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are not known with much certainty but *casado* populations were typically very small. These little Catholic communities of Portuguese traders and their local wives grew to include in-laws, servants, slaves, native converts and everyone's children. Over time, some settlements became quite large. The exodus from the walled Portuguese town at Cochin, captured by the Dutch in 1663, reportedly involved some 4,000 people.⁵⁵

Miscegenation

Two fundamental characteristics of Luso-Asian cuisine are the breadth of

54 M.N. Pearson, *The New Cambridge History of India: The Portuguese in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 81.

55 Marco Ramerini, *The Portuguese in Cochin*. <http://www.colonialvoyage.com/cochin.html>

its ingredient base and the diversity of its contributory culinary cultures, the latter resulting in large measure from the ubiquity of marriage or cohabitation between Iberian men and indigenous women.

The Portuguese voyages were male dominated. The seafaring life was extremely hard and not considered women's work. Attitudes did not change with the advent of colonization. Unlike the Spanish, who encouraged their colonists to take their wives with them to the New World,⁵⁶ and the British, who designed their cantonments in India to accommodate nuclear families and welcomed a 'fishing fleet' of marriageable English girls every year,⁵⁷ Lisbon did not encourage Portuguese women to go to the East, considering the sea journey and the frontier conditions in the settlements too arduous for ladies. Moreover, in the early days of the Portuguese colonies, few men could afford to send their families on a lengthy sea voyage.⁵⁸ Charles Boxer estimates that only between five and 15 women, mostly orphan girls sent by the Crown, left Lisbon for the colonies each year.⁵⁹

The itinerant trading environment into which the Portuguese inserted themselves in Asia was also a male-dominated affair. Although women in

⁵⁶ Boxer, *Mary and Misogyny*, 66.

⁵⁷ Jennifer Brennan, *Curries and Bugles: A Memoir and a Cookbook of the British Raj* (New York: Harper Collins, 1990), 11, 105.

⁵⁸ Boxer, *Mary and Misogyny*, 65.

⁵⁹ Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire*, 129.

some Asian countries were involved in bartering and other commercial exchanges within their own communities, the travelling merchants were, as far as is known, exclusively male.⁶⁰ Muslim traders traditionally travelled with their wives but the Portuguese had to fend for themselves or make arrangements within the local community for whatever comforts they needed when they reached port. In order to facilitate their trading activities, Portuguese captains deposited men in distant ports with instructions to marry local women and become integrated into local communities, so that they could act as brokers for future Portuguese trading missions.⁶¹

It has been estimated that at the height of the Portuguese empire around 4,000 people left Lisbon each year, bound for ports in the East.⁶² An outward bound Portuguese ship carried around 800 men, and at most a handful of women.⁶³ There was an attempt to export female orphans and reformed prostitutes from Portugal to Macao and Goa but few made the journey. Those that did sometimes came to an unfortunate end. The English chaplain Edward Terry, who travelled to the East in 1616, described the fate of ten 'Portugal virgins,' clad in beautiful silks, who were on board a vessel seized by the Dutch on its way to Angola. The

60 M. N. Pearson, "Brokers in Western Indian Port Cities: Their Role in Servicing Foreign Merchants," *Modern Asian Studies* 22, no. 3 (1988), 458.

61 Pearson, "Brokers in Western Indian Port Cities," 460.

62 Boxer, *Mary and Misogyny*, 67.

63 Boxer, *Mary and Misogyny*, 67.

maidens were stripped of their belongings and cast adrift with a little food and water in a leaky, unarmed and ill-manned ship.⁶⁴

In 1636, after more than 80 years of European occupation, there was only one Portuguese woman in Macao and none in the Portuguese settlements in the Moluccas.⁶⁵ The appearance of a Portuguese woman in Goa was such an unusual event that the arrival of the beautiful sixteen-year-old Catarina-a-Piró from Lisbon in 1518 is immortalized in Goan legend.⁶⁶ The first *órfãs d'el-Rei* (King's orphans) did not arrive until 1545.⁶⁷ When the Marchioness of Tavora wanted to accompany her husband to Goa in 1750, the idea was considered preposterous and she had to fight to get Royal permission to do so.⁶⁸

It was believed that indigenous women were more successful at breeding in the tropics than European women. In 1687, the Jesuit Fernão de Queiroz lamented that nearly all the pregnancies of Portuguese women in Goa ended in the death of both mother and child.⁶⁹ The daughters of the

⁶⁴ Edward Terry, *A Voyage to East-India: wherein some things are taken notice of, in our passage thither, but many more in our abode there, within that ... empire of the Great Mogul* (1655; repr., Salisbury: W. Cater; S. Hayes; J. Wilkie; and E. Easton, 1777), 12-13.

⁶⁵ Boxer, *Mary and Misogyny*, 68.

⁶⁶ Mario Cabrale e Sá, *Goa: Pearl of the East* (New Delhi: Luster, 1996), 21.

⁶⁷ Timothy Coates, "Female Colonization in the Estado da India" in *Sinners and Saints: The Successors of Vasco da Gama*, ed. Sanjay Subrahmanyam (Delhi; New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 43.

⁶⁸ Boxer, *Mary and Misogyny*, 65.

⁶⁹ Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire*, 129.

few *reinois* in the *Estado* were a valuable commodity in short supply and since most Portuguese settlements lacked a convent to take care of their welfare, they were quickly married off. John Fryer reported meeting one John de Mendos, a *fidalgo* from Goa, who was making preparations for the marriage of his daughter to the Admiral of Baçaim. She was twelve years old.⁷⁰ Some of the Portuguese women dying in childbirth were children themselves.

The *Politica dos Casamentos* did result in a number of church-sanctioned marriages but many more Portuguese traders and soldiers chose to cohabit with local women while avoiding the responsibilities and restrictions, such as monogamy, that accompanied an official union. Sixteenth century Portugal was a sexually conservative society with a high value placed on the institution of marriage and relatively few children born out of wedlock.⁷¹ In Asia, however, this morality was largely abandoned and a lot of children resulted from unofficial unions. The Italian traveller Pietro della Valle was unimpressed when the Portuguese in Goa would not allow his adopted daughter to lodge in the same house as him, despite what he described as their own lack of restraint in such matters.⁷² The morals of the upper classes in Goa,

⁷⁰ Fryer, *A New Account of East-India and Persia*, 73.

⁷¹ Anthony Reid, "Female Roles in Pre-Colonial Southeast Asia," *Modern Asian Studies* 22, no. 3 (1988), 631.

⁷² Valle, *The Travels of Pietro della Valle in India*, 1:161.

claimed the historian José Nicolau da Fonseca in 1878, were “hopelessly corrupt and depraved.”⁷³

The Europeans initially viewed the sexual mores of the Asians, which allowed for temporary marriages and concubinage without stigma, as being very lax. Tome Pires noted that polygamy and concubinage were common in Malacca. “Each man has one or two wives, and as many concubines as he likes,” he reported, feeling obliged to add that “they live together peaceably.”⁷⁴

It was not difficult for Portuguese men to find women with whom to cohabit, and many such liaisons were viewed as business arrangements, with household duties and food preparation forming part of the contract. The system, as practiced in the Siamese port of Pattani was described in the 1604 journal of the Dutch commander Jacob van Neck.

“When foreigners come there from other lands to do their business ... men come and ask them whether they do not desire a woman; these young women and girls themselves also come and present themselves, from whom they may choose the one most agreeable to them, provided they agree what he shall pay for certain months.

⁷³ José Nicolau da Fonseca, *Historical and Archaeological Sketch of the City of Goa*. 2nd edition (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1986), 162.

⁷⁴ Pires, *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires*, 2:268.

Once they agree about the money (which does not amount to much for so great a convenience), she comes to his house, and serves him by day as his maidservant and by night as his wedded wife. He is then not able to consort with other women or he will be in grave trouble with his wife, while she is similarly wholly forbidden to converse with other men, but the marriage lasts as long as he keeps his residence there, in good peace and unity. When he wants to depart he gives her whatever is promised, and so they leave each other in friendship, and she may then look for another man as she wishes, in all propriety, without scandal.”⁷⁵

These arrangements, which legitimized a scenario in which indigenous women cooked for Portuguese men, were instrumental in the two-way transmission of culinary culture between the Iberians and their host communities.

A Florentine traveller, Francesco Carletti, observed that the Portuguese merchants in Nagasaki formed temporary relationships with Japanese ‘women for hire’.⁷⁶ Similar arrangements were reported in Vietnam, Cambodia, Siam, Indonesia and Burma.⁷⁷ In order to accommodate

⁷⁵ This excerpt from Van Neck's journal is translated from the Dutch in Anthony Reid, “Female Roles in Pre-Colonial Southeast Asia,” 632.

⁷⁶ J.S.A. Elisonas, “Nagasaki: The Early Years of an Early Modern Japanese City,” in Brockey, *Portuguese Colonial Cities in the Early Modern World*, 77.

⁷⁷ Reid, “Female Roles in Pre-Colonial Southeast Asia,” 632.

Portuguese merchants, Linschoten reported, the Burmese provided female companions for the duration of their stay. The selected woman would accompany the trader to his lodging and serve him “like his slave or his wife.” The man who hired the woman was expected not to consort with any other women and when the period of service ended, recompense was paid to the woman's family. The women engaged in this fashion were not looked down upon by the Burmese and even a married woman might alternate between her husband and a trader if he should request her again during another visit.⁷⁸

Slave women were also purchased and might be traded between men, or sold when the foreigner left the country. Outright prostitution was less common than concubinage but started to increase in the late sixteenth century.⁷⁹ Although the Portuguese upheld a view that exalted racial purity, it has been suggested that the long period of Moorish domination inculcated in Portuguese men a fantasy of dark skinned women as sexual partners and that this, combined with a tradition of de facto polygamy practiced by Iberian males of the upper classes, contributed to their willingness to engage in cross-cultural liaisons.⁸⁰ It has also been noted that in Portugal, adherence to traditional sexual mores was less

⁷⁸ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:98.

⁷⁹ Reid, “Female Roles in Pre-Colonial Southeast Asia,” 633.

⁸⁰ Joseph A. Page, *The Brazilians* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1995), 42; Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, 13-14.

stringent among men of the lower classes, who made up the bulk of the *Estado's* Portuguese-born citizenry. Many Portuguese men in Asia, including the *casados*, slept with 'droves' of women; one lusty hombre in Malacca reportedly kept a racially diverse harem of 24.⁸¹

The result of all these mixed unions was a colonial society characterized by an extraordinary degree of ethnic and cultural diversity, which in the course of time resulted in the development of a highly syncretic culinary culture. The Portuguese were markedly more receptive to gastronomic adaptation than other European colonists. Of the British in India, Jennifer Brennan writes: "During their long association with India, the British Raj must have sampled many of the diverse and fascinating local dishes, but the culinary legacy they took from India and thrust upon an unsuspecting world was... curry powder!"⁸² "We do seem to be possessed of an unhappy capacity to absorb the worst aspects of any given cooking tradition," groaned Elizabeth David in reference to the same ingredient.⁸³ Although the British were very familiar with Oriental spices that had arrived in England for centuries via Arabia and Southern Europe, in India they only adopted local foods that could be adapted to Anglo-Saxon tastes and even then, it took a long time for Anglo-Indian pickles,

⁸¹ Boxer, *Race Relations in the Portuguese Colonial Empire*, 61.

⁸² Brennan, *Curries and Bugles*, 23.

⁸³ Elizabeth David, *Spices, Salt and Aromatics in the English Kitchen* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970), 31.

chutneys and curries to be assimilated into British national cuisine.⁸⁴ In British India, David concludes, “Wherever the mem-sahib’s place may have been, it was certainly not in the kitchen.”⁸⁵ Despite the fact that quite a lot of Dutchmen in service of the VOC ignored official disapproval of the practice and took Indonesian wives or concubines,⁸⁶ the Dutch in Indonesia were also largely unadventurous when it came to local food. The only notable addition to their culinary repertoire was *Rijsttafel* (‘rice table’). Indonesian culinary authority, Sri Owen, describes this amalgam of traditional feasting dishes as a “pathetic show of ostentation” by colonial cooks who made little or no attempt to understand native dining customs.⁸⁷ Scorn for native foods such as the tortilla was also a feature of Spanish colonial life in the Americas.⁸⁸ The Portuguese, on the other hand, schooled by hunger and inherently adaptive, occasionally raised an eyebrow when confronted with native foods but rarely refused to eat them.

⁸⁴ Jeremy MacClancy, *Consuming Culture: Why You Eat What You Eat* (New York: Henry Holt, 1992), 129; David, *Spices, Salt and Aromatics in the English Kitchen*, 159.

⁸⁵ David, *Spices, Salt and Aromatics in the English Kitchen*, 159.

⁸⁶ Email from Roger Knight, Historian, University of Adelaide, 14 June, 2010.

⁸⁷ Sri Owen, “Misunderstanding Food Traditions or, Rijsttafel to Go,” *Sri Owen’s Webpage*. <http://www.sriowen.com/rijsttafel-to-go/> My own observation, after living in Indonesia for many years, was that the Dutch tended to adopt relatively simple Indonesian dishes, such as *satay* (kebabs), *babi ketjap* (pork braised in sweet soy sauce) and *mie goreng* (fried noodles), leaving the more complex and spicy dishes found in the archipelago’s diverse regional cuisines largely unexplored. In the tourism industry, I frequently heard food and beverage managers defend the presence of similarly unadventurous Indonesian dishes on hotel restaurant menus with the comment that international guests wouldn’t want to eat “real” Indonesian food.

⁸⁸ See Pilcher, *Que Viva Los Tamales!*

The Shadow Empire

The gastronomic legacy of the Portuguese in Asia is not limited to their former colonies but spreads across the entire region. The culinary history of almost every country in South, East and Southeast Asia includes some measure of Portuguese influence. The extent of Portuguese cultural contact and Iberian influences in local foodways is explained in part by the expansiveness of the *Estado* itself but these were carried beyond the official borders of the empire by the many independent Portuguese agents operating in the region.

Professor George D. Winius coined the evocative term 'Shadow Empire' to describe the ex-officio Portuguese population of the *Estado da India*, which was large and widely dispersed across the region.⁸⁹ Adaptability, mobility and resiliency were the characteristic traits of this community, which existed well into the eighteenth century and whose descendants are still found scattered all over Asia.⁹⁰ The introduction of Iberian culinary influences to the region was concentrated in the colonial centres but by virtue of the Shadow Empire they achieved an extremely broad dispersal.

⁸⁹ George D. Winius, "Portugal's 'Shadow Empire' in the Bay of Bengal," in Winius, *Studies on Portuguese Asia*, 273.

⁹⁰ Radin Fernando, "Metamorphosis of the Luso-Asian Diaspora in the Malay Archipelago," in *Iberians in the Singapore-Melaka Area and Adjacent Regions (16th to 18th century)*, ed. Peter Borschberg (Lisboa: Fundação Oriente, 2004), 173.

In order to defend its trading routes from competing European powers, the *Estado* had great need of soldiers, sailors and naval gunners. Young boys were sent out to serve as pages to Portuguese *fidalgos* (genuine or self-declared nobles) until they were old enough to join the army. Other recruits were drafted from Lisbon's *Limoeiro* prison or rounded up in the dockyards of Lisbon and Brazil. The *Estado* also employed a whole range of artisans and skilled men, including carpenters, sculptors, metalworkers and cannoneers, attracted by the opportunities opening up in this new Portuguese world.⁹¹

Many of the people who made their way to the East under the auspices of the *Estado* merely to escape miserable conditions in Portugal disappeared from the official roll call of the *Estado* and fanned out across Asia in a variety of independent roles.⁹² Others worked a passage to Goa and then hired themselves out as servants, tradesmen or laborers to any master looking for men. In his journal Albuquerque noted that Portuguese were moving about freely all over India.⁹³

Many of the Portuguese adventurers were unskilled refugees from a peasant existence in Portugal, who were happy to work for a meal and a

⁹¹ Jean Gelman Taylor, *Indonesia: Peoples and Histories* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 118.

⁹² Portuguese adventurers also accounted for an estimated 10-15% of the white population of the Spanish Caribbean. Henry H. Keith, "New World Interlopers: The Portuguese in the Spanish West Indies, from the Discovery to 1640," *The Americas* 25, no. 4 (1969), 370.

⁹³ Quoted in Pearson, *The New Cambridge History of India*, 82.

place to sleep. A significant number made their living as pirates and smugglers. Others brought considerable expertise that commanded, according to Mendes Pinto, “pensions, graces, benefits, favours, and honours” bestowed by native rulers.⁹⁴

By the time of Prince Henriques' death in 1460, the Portuguese were Europe's leading navigators and users of nautical instruments.⁹⁵

Christoforo Colombo, Hernando de Soto and Fernão Magalhães all sailed with the Portuguese before making their historically significant voyages under the Spanish flag. The Portuguese designed caravel was the model for the vessels used in the Spanish expeditions to the New World and was also copied by British shipwrights. Portuguese seamanship, and particularly their experience in long distance voyaging, was valued highly by Asian potentates who had an economic interest in expanding their trading networks, or political motives that could be furthered by enhancing their sea power. The incidence of foreigners occupying important positions in Asian states was not uncommon during the seventeenth century.⁹⁶

Portuguese soldiers, whose reputation as formidable fighters was earned

⁹⁴ Pinto, *The Travels of Mendes Pinto*, 399.

⁹⁵ Nowell, *A History of Portugal*, 117.

⁹⁶ William D. Wray, “The 17th-Century Japanese Diaspora: Questions of Boundary and Policy,” Conference paper, Thirteenth International Economic History Congress (Buenos Aires, 2002), 17.

during the bloody conquests that accompanied the Portuguese quest to dominate the spice trade, found a profitable niche as mercenaries in Asia. As early as 1521, Portuguese were being employed in Bengal as soldiers.⁹⁷ They were in particular demand in Southeast Asia, which during the first half of the sixteenth century was being contested by a variety of rival warlords.⁹⁸

The Portuguese knowledge of firearms and canon, and their seamanship, was superior to that of local armies and in the climate of Muslim attempts to dominate the region's trading activities, they were recruited in sometimes very significant numbers.⁹⁹ “We must remark that in this century the Portuguese scattered over the Indies sold their lives to the service of any King who would pay them well enough,” wrote the French historian François Turpin in 1771.¹⁰⁰ Portuguese soldiers fought on both sides in the repeated wars between Burma and Ayutthaya during the sixteenth century.¹⁰¹ Reportedly, there were 1,000 Portuguese soldiers in Pegu in 1545, 100 in the Burmese army in 1549 and 700 residing in

97 Geoffrey Scammell, *The First Imperial Age: European Overseas Expansion c.1400–1715* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 642.

98 Anthony Reid, “Early Southeast Asian Categorizations of Europeans,” in *Implicit Understandings: Observing, Reporting, and Reflecting on the Encounters between Europeans and Other peoples in the Early Modern Era*, ed. Stuart B. Schwartz (Cambridge, New York and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 279-280.

99 Collis, *The Land of the Great Image*, 109.

100 François Henri Turpin, *History of the Kingdom of Siam and of the Revolutions that Have Caused the Overthrow of the Empire, up to A.D. 1770*, trans. B.O. Cartwright (Bangkok: American Presby. Mission Press, 1908), 18.

101 G.E. Harvey, *History of Burma* (1925; repr., New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 2000), 155.

Martaban.¹⁰² For one battle in defence of Martaban, the mercenary Captain Diego Suarez commanded a Portuguese force of 2,000 men.¹⁰³ The Kingdoms of Arakan and Ayutthaya also employed Portuguese soldiers.

When John Fryer visited the British fort in Bombay in the 1670's he reported that there were 300 British occupants and 400 *Topazes or Portugal Firemen* and that the militia was composed of 500 Portuguese soldiers under British commanders.¹⁰⁴ In 1659, the Captain of Bacaim reported that a Portuguese mercenary by the name of Ruy Leitão Viegas had offered the services of some 340 Portuguese and *Topasses* fighters to a flotilla of Maratha war vessels. The Captain was able to persuade him to join a Lusitanian cause instead.¹⁰⁵

The Portuguese, pragmatic opportunists, provided “gunners to the Mughals, pilots for the Chinese, galley commanders for the ruler of Arakan and constructed men-of-war for the Sultan of Atjeh,” writes Geoffrey Scammell.¹⁰⁶ It has been estimated that over 1,000 Luso-Asian

102 Baxter, “Portuguese and Creole Portuguese in the Pacific”, 321.

103 Turpin, *History of the Kingdom of Siam*, 18.

104 Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, 66.

105 Scammell, “The Pillars of Empire”, 485.

106 Geoffrey Scammell, “European Exiles, Renegades and Outlaws and the Maritime Economy of Asia c.1500–1750,” *Modern Asian Studies* 26, no. 4 (1992), 642.

‘political adventurers’ were employed by Asian kingdoms and sultanates in Southeast Asia, around the Bay of Bengal and along the Coromandel Coast.¹⁰⁷ Some became so powerful that they set themselves up as princelings in the eastern reaches of the Bay of Bengal, ruling over populations of Catholic mestiços. While soldiers in the pay of the Estado were unmarried, many of the mercenaries who made a career in Asia married or cohabited with local women and gave rise to unofficial Portuguese-Eurasian populations. These Portuguese adventurers, who lived among the local populations, were called *lançados* (launched, jettisoned or thrown).¹⁰⁸ As result of the Portuguese presence in the region, most cooks in Dhaka and coastal Bangladesh are familiar with vindaloo, egg custards and guava jelly.¹⁰⁹

The unofficial Portuguese settlements were known as *bandeis*, meaning a quarter near the harbour occupied by people of one race. A suburb of modern Calcutta, where a community of Catholic Eurasians resides, is still known by the singular form, *bandel*.¹¹⁰ In the late 1500s there were some 100 Portuguese families in the Cambaia (Gujarat) *bandel* and an estimated 2,000 Portuguese living in numerous *bandeis* dotted around

107 Geoffrey C. Gunn, *First Globalization: The Eurasian Exchange, 1500 to 1800* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), 256.

108 Baxter, “Portuguese and Creole Portuguese in the Pacific”, 331.

109 Niaz Zaman, “Foodways, Bangladesh,” in *South Asian Folklore: An Encyclopaedia*, eds. Peter J. Claus, Sarah Diamond, and Margaret Ann Mills (New York: Routledge, 2003), 228.

110 Dalgado, *Portuguese Vocables in Asiatic Languages*, 377.

the Bay of Bengal.¹¹¹ There were Portuguese settlements at Pattani, Tenasserim and Junk Ceylon (Phuket) in Thailand, as well as in Pegu.

The populations of the *bandeis* were increased by the immigration of native Christian converts from other parts of the region who sought the protection of a Portuguese settlement. Because of the vast ocean distances separating the Asian outposts, it was not possible for Goa to exert effective control over the Portuguese colonies, let alone the de facto Portuguese settlements.¹¹² The *bandel* societies developed as idiosyncratic enclaves of Iberianism influenced by widely divergent local cultures.

Despite the fact that they existed without the support of the state apparatus, some of these spontaneous colonies became sizeable, wealthy communities. They survived by making alliances with local Hindu and Muslim traders, or by seeking the protection of local potentates who welcomed their presence for a variety of reasons. The São Tomé de Meliapore *bandel*, established in 1521 on the Coromandel Coast of India, was described in 1600 as being a place of “riches, pride and luxury.”¹¹³ The profits of trade allowed the Portuguese to dine handsomely. The

¹¹¹ Pearson, *The New Cambridge History of India*, 83.

¹¹² Geoffrey Scammell, “After Da Gama: Europe and Asia since 1498,” *Modern Asian Studies*, 34, no. 3 (2000), 518.

¹¹³ Kenneth McPherson, “Staying On: Reflections on the Survival of Portuguese Enterprise,” in Borschberg, *Iberians in the Singapore–Melaka Area*, 75.

French jewel trader, Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, described an abundance of delicacies such as sausages, hams and ox tongue and reported that in São Tomé, even prisoners of the Inquisition could order whatever they wanted to eat each day and it would be served.¹¹⁴

Many of the Portuguese merchants in the East were New Christians fleeing the horrors of the Inquisition. One of their number, a *converso* named James de Pavia, controlled a sizeable portion of India's diamond trade.¹¹⁵ It has been estimated that by 1600, *conversos* were handling 70 to 90 percent of the private *Carreira da India* trade.¹¹⁶ The influence of Judaism on Luso-Asian cuisine can be explained in part by the fact that many of the *conversos* reverted to Judaic practices when they were sufficiently far away from Goa and Catholic orthodoxy.¹¹⁷

The Portuguese were followed into the region by the Dutch and the English, who routed them from all their strongholds, except for Macao and Goa and the small enclaves at Timor, Damão and Diu. Over time, however, Portuguese merchants and businessmen had become deeply entrenched in the economic life of the region. They acted as middle-men

114 Jean Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India*, trans. V. Ball (London and New York: Macmillan, 1889), 231.

115 McPherson, "Staying On," 87.

116 McPherson, "Staying On," 85.

117 Mordechai Arbell, "The Portuguese Jewish Community of Madras, India, in the Seventeenth Century," *Los Muestrros* 41 (2000), n.pag.; Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:285-286.

and suppliers of foodstuffs and day-to-day necessities to the Portuguese settlements, as well as other port cities, and as provisioners and suppliers of trade goods for the long-haul shipping trade between Lisbon and China. While the Portuguese military and ecclesiastical personnel were forced to leave when rival European powers entered the region, these merchants provided a valuable service to the new colonizers and were able to continue to do business. Their ongoing presence in the region contributed to the continuity of Portuguese influence on local cuisines.

In 1669, 20 years after the Dutch took control of Malacca, they were outnumbered in their colony by the 2,000 Catholic Eurasians who were still living in the city.¹¹⁸ The Dutch relied heavily on them as interpreters and intermediaries and many took Portuguese Eurasian wives.¹¹⁹ During the second half of the seventeenth century, as Chinese and Malay traders gradually edged them out, many of the Portuguese merchants gravitated to the colonies in Goa and Macao but others stayed on, conducting business alongside indigenous traders well into the mid-eighteenth century.¹²⁰ The official language of Thai diplomacy was Portuguese until

118 Timothy Barnard, "Mestizos as Middlemen: Tomas Dias and his Travels in Eastern Sumatra," in Borschberg, *Iberians in the Singapore-Melaka Area*, 150.

119 Ronald Daus, *Portuguese Eurasian Communities in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1989), 8.

120 Fernando, "Metamorphosis of the Luso-Asian Diaspora in the Malay Archipelago," 173.

1833.¹²¹ In 1822, two British envoys to the court of Prince Chromachit were met by Portuguese interpreters. When the Englishmen were unable to understand Portuguese, they were addressed in Latin.¹²² In Dutch-controlled Ceylon, Portuguese *mestiços* outnumbered the Hollanders by over 400 percent and left an indelible stamp on Sri Lankan culture.¹²³ The importance of the Portuguese to the economic life of Madras was such that when the British drew up the constitution for the city in 1687, one of its principal framers, Sir Josiah Child, advised that the three of the city's 12 Aldermen should be Portuguese and that "the Town Clerk must always be an Englishman that can speak Portuguese."¹²⁴

By the end of the seventeenth century, the takeover by other European powers extinguished the Portuguese administration of the *Estado da India*, but did not result in the wholesale destruction of the Portuguese communities in the region. Those who could not afford to relocate to the remaining Portuguese territories, or who had married locally and did not wish to leave, stayed behind and were assimilated, with varying degrees of success, into the mixed-race colonial European societies. Portuguese

121 Baxter, "Portuguese and Creole Portuguese in the Pacific", 321.

122 John Bowring, *The Kingdom and People of Siam: With a Narrative of the Mission to that Country in 1855* (London: J. W. Parker and Son, 1857), 151.

123 Dennis B. McGilvray, "Dutch Burghers and Portuguese Mechanics: Eurasian Ethnicity in Sri Lanka," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 24, no. 2 (1982), 235-263, 242.

124 Madras Tercentenary Celebration Committee, *The Madras Tercentenary Commemoration Volume* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1994), 183.

Jewish traders, for example, were used by the British as envoys in their efforts to expand trading relationships in the region and continued to enjoy a prosperous existence.¹²⁵ Wealthy Portuguese remaining in the region had continuing access to European ingredients and in as much as local conditions allowed, continued to follow traditional Iberian foodways. For the majority of the Luso-Asians in Madras, Bengal, Thailand, Burma, Malacca, Ceylon and elsewhere in the region however, life in the *bandeis* after the collapse of the *Estado* was “a story of adaptation and survival”¹²⁶ that affected dietary practice and encouraged the incorporation of indigenous foodways. The Cristang in Malacca, for example, struggling to make do with whatever meagre resources could be fished, foraged or bartered for in the local market, became expert manufacturers of the indigenous fermented shrimp paste, *belacan*, earning it the nickname ‘Portuguese cheesecake’.¹²⁷ In Portuguese settlements all over the region fish displaced meat in traditional Iberian stews and braises. Baked goods were adapted to make use of regional ingredients such as coconut milk and rice flour.

Inevitably, these Luso-Asian societies were exposed, over extended periods of time, to the forces of assimilation. In many instances, it was in

¹²⁵ Mordechai Arbell, “The Portuguese Jewish Community of Madras, India, in the Seventeenth Century,” *Los Muestras* 41 (2000), n.pag.

¹²⁶ McPherson, “Staying On,” 61.

¹²⁷ George Alcatra, *The Malacca Malaysian Portuguese Heritage* (Melaka: Malacca Portuguese Development Centre, 1992), 11.

the *mestiços* interest to blend into the societies in which they made their living. The Eurasian population of Singapore, for example, includes many of Portuguese descent who, like the Peranakan Chinese, moved there from Malacca in search of new economic opportunities. Without declaring themselves as members of a distinct ethnic group, many Portuguese *mestiços* achieved prominence in the economic and political life of Singapore. This pattern was repeated in many places that had at one time or another attracted the interest of the Portuguese. By the eighteenth century, in many parts of Asia, the Portuguese had become part of indigenous society, adopting local dress, customs and cuisine, sometimes even converting to Islam.¹²⁸ Other Luso-Asians integrated themselves into the economic life and social fabric of their host communities, while maintaining their own cultural practices and culinary traditions.¹²⁹

In some parts of the former *Estado*, the *bandeis* became ghettos, inhabited by poor 'black Portuguese' (the darker skinned *mestiços*), who spoke a Portuguese Creole known as 'twisted language or ragged tongue'.¹³⁰ They eked out an existence in whichever way they could. In India, their status was only a little higher than that of the lowest Hindu

¹²⁸ McPherson, "Staying On," 90.

¹²⁹ Barnard, "Mestizos as Middlemen," 148.

¹³⁰ Hugo C. Cardoso, "Diu Indo-Portuguese at Present," *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages* 21, no. 2 (2006), 359.

castes. In 1813, the British diarist Maria Callcott Graham noted that most of the female servants employed in British households in Madras were Portuguese, as were the gunners and quartermasters of her ship.¹³¹ After complaining that colonial dinner parties in Bombay were “the most dull and uncomfortable meetings one can imagine,” she disparaged the Portuguese kitchen hands who toiled to provide a surfeit of food left largely untouched by the bored Britishers still full after a large mid-afternoon tiffin:

“On leaving the eating-room, one generally sees or hears, in some place near the door, the cleaning of dishes, and the squabbling of cooks for their perquisites ... If they are within sight, one perceives a couple of dirty Portuguese (black men who eat pork and wear britches) directing the operations of half a dozen still dirtier Pariahs, who are scraping dishes and plates with their hands, and then, with same unwashen paws, putting aside the next day’s tiffin for their master’s table.”¹³²

Summary

The Portuguese voyages of exploration were undertaken by a small, economically challenged nation filled with Catholic missionary zeal

¹³¹ Maria Graham, *Journal of a Residence in India* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1813), 128.

¹³² Graham, *Journal of a Residence in India*, 30.

inspired by its liberation from centuries of Muslim rule. Discovery of India and the Spice Islands generated the profits that allowed a wealthy colonial society with an elaborate dining culture to develop, while a large *mestiço* underclass embraced indigenous foodways in order to survive. The challenges encountered by the first settlers, instead of limiting their culinary horizons, fostered an adventurous spirit and a willingness to experiment with new foods, while the high degree of racial mixing in the Portuguese towns and the existence of a widely dispersed Shadow Empire promoted cultural assimilation and led to an accelerated process of culinary creolization.

3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF LUSO-ASIAN GASTRONOMY

This section discusses the development of Luso-Asian gastronomy. It examines the Portuguese role in the Columbian Exchange and the significance of New World plant transfers to Asia, discusses the challenges involved in food procurement for the Portuguese settlements, and explores the adaptation of Iberian foodways to local culinary environments.

The Columbian Exchange

The movement of edible plants and foodstuffs between the Old and New Worlds that followed European discovery of the Americas wrought significant changes in the diet of peoples the world over. The global dispersal of New World foods and their importance in indigenous diets is the subject of a considerable body of secondary literature. American foods came to Asia in two waves, the first, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the second in the twentieth century.¹ Although the process is commonly referred to as The Columbian Exchange, implying predominantly Spanish involvement, some scholars note that the Portuguese had greater overall responsibility for the global dissemination of foodstuffs and agricultural science during the sixteenth

¹ Mazumdar, "The Impact of New World Food Crops," 59.

century.² Although new foods also travelled to Asia along traditional plant dispersal routes, the Portuguese played a more direct role in this dissemination as the long reach of their vessels enabled them to travel over greater distances than local traders.

After Colombo's landmark voyage, competition between Spain and Portugal for possession of new lands intensified. To resolve the dispute, they agreed to divide the world in two. The Treaty of Tordesillas (1494) gave Portugal the right to all lands east of a north-south line west of the Cape Verde islands and Spain the right to all lands west. Consequently, more New World foods originating in South America, Mesoamerica and the Caribbean, such as potatoes, tomatoes, capsicums and chocolate, were dispersed by the Spanish, while the Portuguese trade routes linking Africa, Brazil, and the Far East helped to disperse commodities such as spices, peanuts, coffee and malagueta peppers.³

There was little direct shipping traffic between Brazil and Asia.⁴ Brazilian plants were mostly transmitted first to Lisbon or Africa and then to Asia. Many American plants also reached Asia via the much shorter Spanish route between Acapulco and Manila. However, the terms

² Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, 148.

³ For a detailed analysis of the Portuguese role in the global transfer of flora and fauna, see Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, 148-182.

⁴ Peter Haggett, "The Bahia-Goa Route in the Dispersal of Brazilian Plants to Asia," *American Antiquity* 25, no. 2 (1959), 267.

of Tordesillas prevented the Spanish from sailing or trading west of Manila, so the onward dispersal into Asia of foods from Spanish America was carried out by local traders and the Portuguese. Most of the European and American food introductions in Asia happened in coastal areas occupied by the Portuguese: Goa, Surat and Cochin in India, the port cities around the Bay of Bengal, and the Guandong and Fujian provinces in China.⁵

Despite the considerable research undertaken by food commodity scholars on the topic, it has not been possible in many cases to identify the Portuguese as the sole, or even first, carriers of particular foods. As A.J.R. Russell-Wood points out, however, primacy was not the most significant factor in this exchange.⁶ More important to the spread of food plants around the world was the mobility of the Portuguese and their interest in horticultural experimentation. “No single nation can rival the Portuguese for having altered, and improved, the diet of so many people by the transplantation of food crops and movement of agricultural products,” he writes.⁷

⁵ Sucheta Mazumdar, “The Impact of New World Food Crops on the Diet and Economy of China and India, ca. 1600-1900,” in *Food in Global History*, ed. Raymond Grew (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999), 60.

⁶ See Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, Ch 5.

⁷ Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, 219.

Portuguese Botanists

Portuguese botanists studied and catalogued the unfamiliar flora they encountered on their travels in Asia, adding greatly to human knowledge of plant types and their properties.⁸ The *converso* physician Garcia de Orta was considered the foremost naturalist of the sixteenth century and a pioneer of tropical medicine. He travelled to India in 1534. A keen amateur botanist, Orta established a garden in Goa where he grew medicinal plants and studied specimens he collected on journeys in India and Ceylon. He gathered information about plants and their uses from Indian physicians, yogis and traders and studied the role of traditional cultivators and orchardists.⁹ He compiled his knowledge in a treatise called *Colóquios dos Simples e Drogas he Cousas Medicinai da Índia*. The first edition, printed in India in 1563, helped to clear up much of the confusion that had previously surrounded many of the commodities carried in the spice trade. He noted, for example, that galangal was propagated from rhizomes, and that cloves could be grown from cuttings. He also commented on the effects of local intoxicants, including marijuana (*Cannabis sativa*), which he said rendered the user's speech unintelligible and induced bouts of tears or laughter, and datura (*Datura*

⁸ Richard H. Grove, "Indigenous Knowledge and the Significance of South-West India for Portuguese and Dutch Constructions of Tropical Nature," in *Nature and the Orient*, eds. Richard H. Grove, Vinita Damodaran and Satpal Sangwan, 187-209 (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), 531.

⁹ Richard H. Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens and the Origins of Environmentalism 1600-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 83.

fatuosa), which caused one to lose his head.¹⁰

Another significant botanical work was produced by Christoforas Acosta, who was born in Mozambique in 1515, obtained a medical degree in Lisbon and after studying in Goa, published *Tractado de las Drogas y Medecinas da India*. Containing illustrations of 46 plants and descriptions of 69, including some not mentioned by Orta, it became one of the Western world's classic pharmacological manuals.¹¹

Scholars are still debating whether the Portuguese introduced the science of grafting to India or if they merely improved upon existing Indian methods, but they were the first to graft mangoes and were responsible for developing many new varieties.¹² Mangoes hold a special place in the Luso-Asian kitchen, particularly in Goa. Leafy mango trees provided important shade in the coconut groves, helping to maintain soil humidity and the fruit are a source of income. The plant has many ritual uses in traditional Hindu culture. Brides pray for a happy marriage before an image of a mango tree. The fire god Agni is invoked with a fire of mango wood, which is also used for funeral pyres. Mango leaves are used to purify pregnant Hindu women and decorate a child's cradle. The leaves also act as plates for ceremonial foods and garland houses on

¹⁰ R.N. Kapil and A.K. Bhatnagar, "Portuguese Contributions to Indian Botany," *Isis* 67, no. 3 (1976), 451.

¹¹ Kapil and Bhatnagar, "Portuguese Contributions to Indian Botany," 451.

¹² K.T. Achaya, *A Historical Dictionary of Indian Food*, (New Delhi: Oxford India, 1998), 140.

festive occasions.¹³ Instead of rejecting the pagan fruit, the Jesuits in Goa devoted themselves to selecting the finest varieties of mango and grafting them to produce new cultivars. There are many regional varieties of mango but the Goan Afonso (or Alphonso) is generally agreed to be among the finest.

Iberian colonizers transported olive saplings to their new territories. The Spanish carried them to the Americas in the sixteenth century¹⁴ and the Portuguese took them to Asia, where they were largely unknown. An Indian olive, *Olea ferruginea*, grew in the Himalayas but the fruit was not widely consumed.¹⁵ Although Gaspar Corea reported that the Africans were more pleased with olives than any other Portuguese gifts,¹⁶ there was little enthusiasm for the olive oil that the Portuguese offered as a trading commodity.¹⁷ “The Chinians know not so much as the name of an olive tree,” wrote Duarte de Sande from China in 1590.¹⁸ Nine years later, Father Diogo de Mesquita, Rector of St Paul’s College in Nagasaki, wrote to Father Juan de Ribera, Rector in Manila, “The olive trees, which

13 Fernando do Rego, *Mangoes... The Goan Inheritance*. http://www.colaco.net/1/FdeR_GoaMango4.htm; Sen, *Food Culture in India*, 63; Amarnath Tewary, “Cow Dung Cremations Catch on in Bihar,” *BBC NEWS*, 27 September 2009. http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/south_asia/8269289.stm

14 Toussaint-Samat, *History of Food*, 207.

15 Achaya, *A Historical Dictionary of Indian Food*, 172.

16 Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, 136.

17 Velho, *A Journal of the First Voyage of Vasco da Gama*, 166.

18 Duarte de Sande, “An Excellent Treatise of the Kingdom of China (1590),” in *The Principal Navigations*, Vol. 4, by Richard Hakluyt (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1907), 216.

were sent to us here in past years are doing very well, and one of them has borne fruit this year already.”¹⁹

A treatise on coconut growing, *Arte da Agricultura Palmarica*, written by a lay Jesuit brother from Salsette, was published in Lisbon in 1855. In the region around Cochin, Portuguese botanists introduced scientific methods of cultivation to increase yields of spices and coconuts and began the growing of cashew nuts, tobacco, custard apples, guavas and papayas.²⁰ They reintroduced cotton to Japan, where it had been grown in small amounts in earlier times and subsequently became a major crop.²¹

The Portuguese encountered a new type of sweet orange in China. A species of sweet orange also grew in the Mediterranean but the fruit had little taste.²² The China orange, called the *Portingall* in Europe, was semi-sweet and flavourful. The Portuguese planted them at home and in the Azores, where they flourished, eventually giving rise to the most important modern variety, *Valencia*.²³ The Portuguese turned the fruits

¹⁹ Pedro Lage Reis Correia, "Father Diogo de Mesquita (1551–1614) and the Cultivation of Western Plants in Japan," *Bulletin of Portuguese/Japanese Studies* 7 (2003), 83.

²⁰ K.M. George, *Western Influence on Malayalam Language and Literature* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1998), 2.

²¹ R.H.P. Mason, and J.G. Cagier. *A History of Japan* (Hong Kong: Charles E. Tuttle, 1997), 188.

²² Wilson, *The Book of Marmalade*, 46.

²³ Davidson, *The Penguin Companion to Food*, 667.

into marmalade and the flowers into a fine orange blossom water called *flor de laranja*, which was used as a culinary seasoning and a perfume.²⁴

Thomas Webster summed up the virtues of the fruit in 1855:

“The agreeable sub-acid of the orange renders it one of the most agreeable, cooling and wholesome of fruits; and the essential oil in the rind is serviceable to the cook in giving flavour to many dishes, fresh in every region of the world, and at almost every season of the year. The aromatic oil and the rind preserve it from the effects both of heat and cold; and the acidity of the former renders it proof against the attacks of insects.”²⁵

He noted that the oil and rind helped protect the fruit from the effects of heat and cold and that the aromatic oil repelled insects. The best oranges, he claimed, were Portuguese oranges from the Azores.²⁶ The Portuguese actively encouraged a process of agricultural globalization, experimenting with horticulture in their colonies and overseas territories and training local people in new farming methods. Filippo Pigafetta, who called at the Portuguese settlement on São Tomé in 1578, reported that

²⁴ Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 25.

²⁵ Thomas Webster and Mrs Parkes, *An Encyclopædia of Domestic Economy: Comprising Subjects Connected with the Interests of Every Individual...*, ed. D.M. Reese (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1855), 504-505.

²⁶ Webster and Parkes, *An Encyclopædia of Domestic Economy*, 505.

“nearly every kind of food” was being grown on the Atlantic island.²⁷

Much of this interest in agricultural experimentation stemmed from the desire to augment the limited food supplies available in pre-modern Portugal. It was also a reflection of the long exposure of Southern Iberia to Arab scholarship and horticultural knowledge. The Portuguese were careful custodians of their overseas land. Tavernier commented that in contrast to the Dutch, who were very destructive, the Portuguese endeavoured to improve the land for those who came after them.²⁸

The problem of food shortages plagued most of the Portuguese settlements in Asia at one time or another, lending urgency to the Portuguese experiments with growing various crops brought back to Europe from the New World. One of these was maize, which within a short time of its introduction to Portugal, was helping to feed the country’s expanding population.²⁹ In the long term, maize and the other New World starch crops introduced to Asia by the Portuguese helped greatly to reduce the problem of famine in this part of the world.

In Asia, the introduction of American food plants revolutionized agricultural practices and dietary patterns in several countries and

²⁷ Pigafetta, *A Report on the Kingdom of Congo*, 11.

²⁸ Tavernier, *Six Voyages into Persia and the East Indies*, trans. J. Phillips (London: Printed by William Godbid for Robert Littlebury and Moses Pitt, 1677), 310-311. This was not always the case. Grove notes that Portuguese sugar cultivation in the Caribbean contributed to deforestation. (Grove, *Green Imperialism*, 68).

²⁹ Disney, *A History of Portugal and the Portuguese Empire*, 1:146.

brought new flavour profiles to the region. The most significant shift was a reduction of single crop dependency due to the arrival of new starchy staples such as maize, cassava and sweet potatoes. These high calorie staples afforded relief from periodic but devastating famines and allowed for unprecedented population growth, particularly in China and Japan.³⁰ The arrival of American crops also had a political dimension in China, allowing small farmers to produce surpluses for market and reducing their subjugation by wealthier landholders.³¹ The new starches also became tremendously important foods in the more arid regions of India and Indonesia.³²

The Portuguese carried many other plants from the Americas to Asia, including tobacco, papayas, guavas, cashew nuts, pineapples, jicamas, squashes, peanuts, custard apples, avocados, passionfruit, sapodillas, tomatoes and capsicums.³³ All were eventually naturalized in Asia and enhanced local diets but arguably the most significant in determining the character of several of the Asian sub-cuisines was the introduction of the chili pepper.³⁴ Arriving first in Goa and Malacca, the fiery capsicum was

30 Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange*, 197, 201.

31 Mazumdar, "The Impact of New World Food Crops," 70.

32 Mazumdar, "The Impact of New World Food Crops," 72; Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange*, 195.

33 For a detailed analysis of the evidence pertaining to Portuguese dissemination of New World plants, see Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, 148-182.

34 See Jean Andrews, "The Peripatetic Chili Pepper: Diffusion of the Domesticated Capsicums since Columbus," in *Chilies to Chocolate: Food the Americas Gave the World*, eds. Nelson Foster and Linda S. Cordell, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1992).

enthusiastically adopted in Southeast Asia and India and was so well assimilated into local diets that it is now an integral element of these regional cuisines.

The Jesuit network played an important role in the dissemination of plants in Asia, not only because of the brothers' expertise in horticulture but also because they operated outside the geographical boundaries of the Treaty of Tordesillas. Most of the Western plants introduced by the Portuguese into Japan, for example, were carried first to Manila by the Spanish, often at the request of Portuguese Jesuits.³⁵ From South America, Jesuits brought pineapples, potatoes, guavas and custard apples to India.³⁶

Local Adoption of Novel Foods

The significance of the Columbian Exchange depended not only on the movement of plants from one place to another but on the willingness of local populations to adopt them into their diet. Many of the new vegetables brought to India by Europeans, for example, were largely ignored until they were adapted to indigenous cooking methods.³⁷ In

³⁵ Correia, "Father Diogo de Mesquita," 81.

³⁶ Charles J. Borges, *The Economics of the Goa Jesuits, 1542-1759: An Explanation of their Rise and Fall* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1994), 35.

³⁷ Collingham, *Curry*, 166.

Andhra Pradesh, for example, tomatoes were used in place of tamarind.³⁸ Potatoes were not adopted in India as a British-style boiled vegetable but became hugely popular when adapted as a *bhaji* (fritter) or a vegetarian filling for *dosai* (rice flour crepes).³⁹ In Korea, the chili pepper, which helped to preserve and flavour traditional *kimchee*, was adopted but the tomato was not.⁴⁰

Chilies were adopted where indigenous palates already had a preference for strong tastes. They were embraced with great enthusiasm in India and Southeast Asia where pepper and ginger were traditionally used to impart pungency and heat and in China only took hold in the cooler inland regions of Hunan and Szechwan where heating spices were integral to local cooking.⁴¹ Chilies were less popular in Japan where bland tastes and purity of ingredients were preferred over more potent flavours.⁴²

Foods were more readily adopted when they filled a nutritional gap.

Maize became a staple in areas of China that endured rice famines but

³⁸ Colleen Taylor Sen, *Food Culture in India* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004), 123.

³⁹ Achaya, *A Historical Dictionary of Indian Food*, 194.

⁴⁰ Copeland Marks, *The Korean Kitchen: Classic Recipes from the Land of the Morning Calm* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1993), 4.

⁴¹ Andrews, "The Peripatetic Chili Pepper," 89; Fuschia Dunlop, *Sichuan Cookery* (London: Michael Joseph, 2001), xiv; Fuschia Dunlop, *Revolutionary Chinese Cookbook: Recipes from Hunan Province* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 2007), 12.

⁴² Hiroko Shimbo, *The Japanese Kitchen: 250 Recipes in a Traditional Spirit* (Boston: Harvard Common Press, 2000), 53.

typically only a snack food in regions with year-round rice productivity, such as Java and the south of India.⁴³ Cassava became a staple starch in the arid Lesser Sundas but was treated as a vegetable in more fertile areas of Indonesia. Because of its nutritional value and adaptability to varying climates, the sweet potato acquired a critical economic and dietary importance in the region.⁴⁴

The diffusion of novel plants was helped in many cases because they had medicinal qualities.⁴⁵ The Portuguese in Asia initially valued commodities such as sugar, tea, tobacco, rhubarb and most spices for their curative properties. Sixteenth century European apothecaries recognized that areca and betel from India strengthened the stomach.⁴⁶ Linschoten listed the many medical uses of nutmeg and noted that the leaves were good for headaches.⁴⁷ He reported that the Portuguese were pleased to discover the pharmaceutical uses of tamarind in India as it was a more affordable medicine than costly rhubarb from China.⁴⁸ Chilies were valued for their ability to induce sweating and cool the body and for their

43 Davidson, *The Penguin Companion to Food*, 563; Toussaint-Samat, *History of Food*, 173; Alfred Russel Wallace, *The Malay Archipelago* (1890; repr., Singapore: Periplus, 2000), 231.

44 Jennifer A. Woolfe, *Sweet Potato: An Untapped Food Resource* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 19.

45 Andrew M. Watson, "The Arab Agricultural Revolution and Its Diffusion, 700–1100," *Journal of Economic History* 34, no. 1 (1974), 24.

46 Linda L. Barnes, *Needles, Herbs, Gods, and Ghosts: China, Healing, and the West to 1848* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005), 51.

47 Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 2:85, 86.

48 Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 2:120.

preservative and antimicrobial properties. Pietro della Valle noted that cashews were considered good for the digestion.⁴⁹ In Southeast Asia, the leaves and flowers of the papaya plant introduced by the Portuguese were used by indigenous healers to treat malaria.⁵⁰

The Portuguese played a key role in the dissemination of tobacco throughout Asia and it has remained one of their most enduring legacies. “Be it chewed, snuffed, or smoked in a pipe, Brazilian tobacco created addicts among indigenous peoples wherever the Portuguese travelled or traded,” writes Russell-Wood.⁵¹ Tobacco spread rapidly throughout the Portuguese empire and was adopted by Europeans and Asians with a similar fervour, initially because it was believed to have health-giving properties. It did not take long, however, for it to become a recreational drug wherever it was introduced.⁵² For the colonial Luso-Asians, a post-prandial cigar was regarded as the fitting end to a meal.

Local social formations and economic factors also determine the outcome of new food introductions.⁵³ Sugar revenues financed Portuguese colonial

49 Valle, *The Travels of Pietro della Valle in India*, 1:136. The juice of the cashew apple is still used as a folk remedy for stomach trouble in Goa.

50 Sri Owen, *The Indonesian Kitchen* (Northampton, MA: Interlink, 2009), 21.

51 Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, 190.

52 See Sander L. Gilman and Xun Zhou, eds. *Smoke: A Global History of Smoking* (London: Reaktion, 2004); Iain Gately, *Tobacco: A Cultural History of how an Exotic Plant Seduced Civilisation* (New York: Grove Press, 2001); Jordan Goodman, *Tobacco in History: The Cultures of Dependence* (London: Routledge, 1993).

53 Mazumdar, “The Impact of New World Food Crops,” 74.

development in Brazil but the Asian colonies relied on trade rather than agriculture. The economic impact of new food crops had greater significance within indigenous communities. In China, for example, the large number of peasant farmers with small plots of land in need of higher productivity encouraged the spread of the sweet potato. By the end of the twentieth century, China was growing 80 percent of the world's supply.⁵⁴ Peanuts, grown in rotation with sugarcane, rice and wheat, also became a very significant crop. In India, where there was enough land for food production in all but the most arid regions, there was less incentive for the adoption of new foods. Commercial growing of cashews was one of the few economic supports available to cash-strapped post-colonial Goa but of all the New World food crops introduced to India, only maize had become widespread before the nineteenth century.⁵⁵

Food in the Settlements

On the far side of the world, the Portuguese encountered landscapes, climates, flora and fauna very different from that of their homeland. They arrived in the East with little in the way of supplies and a set of culinary skills ill-suited to the local environment. Their first culinary encounter in India did not bode well.

⁵⁴ Kiple, *A Movable Feast*, 146-147.

⁵⁵ Mazumdar, "The Impact of New World Food Crops," 71.

When Vasco da Gama made landfall at the port of Calicut, he was greeted by local fishermen who offered him sardine-like fish, bananas and coconuts.⁵⁶ When word of the strangers' arrival reached the local Hindu ruler, he sent them a boat loaded with fowls, bananas and coconuts.⁵⁷ Da Gama sent a scout, João Nuz, ashore to see what the local people ate and what they had for sale.⁵⁸ Calicut was home to a community of influential Muslim traders from Gujarat and the Deccan, the Red Sea, Persia, Cairo, and as far away as China. One of them, who was a fellow Castilian, took Nuz home and gave him a fine supper.⁵⁹ The next man ashore, Nicolas Coelho, spent the night with a well-to-do Hindu, who fed him boiled rice with boiled and roasted fowl, served on a banana leaf "as broad as a sheet of paper," and bananas.⁶⁰

Da Gama and some companions then paid a courtesy call upon the Hindu ruler. They found the Zamorin reclining on a cushioned couch, helping himself to betel from a large gold basin. Pleasantries were exchanged and the Zamorin gave permission for the Portuguese to trade.

⁵⁶ Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, 150.

⁵⁷ Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, 154.

⁵⁸ Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, 159.

⁵⁹ Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, 163.

⁶⁰ Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, 177. Linschoten marveled at the multitude of uses of the banana leaf. Cleverly folded leaves were used to contain butter, oil or liquids. They were made into tablecloths, napkins and sewn together to make a *potraval* or serving plate. (Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:225).

In return they presented him with gifts of cloth, richly upholstered furniture and tasseled Portuguese caps, 50 of the finest Flanders knives and a hand basin, ewer and mirror chased in gilt. The Zamorin was unimpressed by the gifts and when conniving Muslim merchants convinced him that the Portuguese were robbers, da Gama was imprisoned.⁶¹

Da Gama was eventually released by an apologetic Zamorin but exacted his revenge by capturing two Muslim ships and 16 small boats that were ferrying rice, butter and other goods along the coast. He cut off the hands, ears and noses of the boatmen and strung them into a necklace which he sent to the Zamorin with the suggestion that he make a curry. In a nod to local culinary sensibilities, he included a palm leaf on which it could be served.⁶²

Da Gama's gruesome gesture was rewarded with a letter from the Zamorin giving permission for the Portuguese to join the trading community. Da Gama continued his journey, leaving a few men behind to start a trading post. In a gesture typical of Portuguese pragmatism, the *feitor*, Aires Correa, engaged the Gujarati Muslim landlord of his

⁶¹ This account of da Gama's activities in Calicut is as told by Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, 173, 193-220.

⁶² Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, 331. Cannibalism as a motif of "otherness" was employed not only by Europeans in reference to the "uncivilized" peoples they encountered in distant lands but also by some non-Caucasian people who viewed white men as uncouth barbarians.

lodgings to teach him the local customs and manner of doing business.⁶³

Unlike Cristoforo Colombo, whose first culinary encounter in the Americas was with the natives of Hispaniola who subsisted on cassava, fish and Caribbean foods unfamiliar to Iberians,⁶⁴ the Portuguese in Asia landed in one of India's most fertile regions. Many of the local foods were recognizable, having been carried to Europe by earlier Arab traders.

From Calicut, da Gama sailed to Cannanore where the Kolattiri Rajah, a rival of the Zamorin, sent him boats loaded with water and wood, figs, fowls and coconuts, dried fish, butter, and coconut oil.⁶⁵ He gave permission for da Gama to build a stockade, which eventually became the still standing Sant Angelo *feitoria*. As da Gama prepared to return to Lisbon, his factor was able to lay in stores of rice, sugar, honey, butter, oil, coconuts and dried fish for the fort and to provision the fleet for the journey back to Portugal.⁶⁶ Six years later, in 1503, a nine vessel fleet commanded by Lopo Soares sailed for Lisbon with a cargo of pepper, ginger, cinnamon and cardamom.⁶⁷

The Portuguese commercial agent, Duarte Barbosa, lived in Cochin and

⁶³ Pearson, "Brokers in Western Indian Port Cities," 466.

⁶⁴ Christopher Columbus, *The Journal of Christopher Columbus*, trans. Cecil Jane (New York: Bonanza Books, 1989), 96.

⁶⁵ Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, 226.

⁶⁶ Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, 325.

⁶⁷ Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia*, 63.

Cannanore between 1500 and 1515.⁶⁸ According to Barbosa, there were many Arab merchants in Cochin who made huge profits from the spice trade and lived very well. “They had fine houses with many servants. They were luxurious in eating, drinking and sleeping,” he reported.⁶⁹ The wealthier Indians also enjoyed an indulgent lifestyle and elaborate banquets. Some nobles even employed special cooks to prepare meals of rice, chickpeas and vegetables for their prized elephants and horses.⁷⁰ Life was far less salubrious for the Indian commoners, who were so poor that they stole ship's biscuit from the Portuguese who were working on the beach mending sails.⁷¹ Once they discovered that the Portuguese ships carried food, hungry throngs swarmed aboard and hung around until nightfall.⁷²

The Portuguese continued, through conquest or negotiation, to cement their presence in the region during the sixteenth century, ending up with a string of some 50 fortified settlements on the Konkan and Malabar coasts of India and elsewhere around the Indian Ocean littoral.⁷³ The responsibility of feeding the settlements fell to their Governors.

68 Stephen F. Dale, “Communal Relations in Pre-Modern India: 16th Century Kerala,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 16, no. 2/3 (1973), 319.

69 Barbosa, *A Description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar*, 148.

70 Barbosa, *A Description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar*, 90.

71 Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Career and Legend of Vasco da Gama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 142.

72 Velho, *A Journal of the First Voyage of Vasco da Gama*, 69.

73 Pearson, *The Portuguese in India*, 31.

The system by which Portuguese kings administered their overseas territories was to delegate authority to trusted people, such as relatives, fellow nobles and ships' captains. The recipients were known as *donataries* in the Atlantic arena and *governors* in the Indian and Asian arena.⁷⁴ In situations where a ship's captain could not be trusted, a member of the clergy might serve as chief administrator of a settlement.

The Governor was responsible for the settlement and administration of the land and if he could make it economically viable, was entitled to share in any profits generated. His first duty was to transport able-bodied workers to the territory, initiate agricultural activities and establish structures for religious observance and the administration of justice.⁷⁵

The system worked well in Portugal's first overseas settlement on Madeira. The first donatory deeds for the island were handed to Tristão Vaz Teixeira in 1440, Bartolomeu Perestrelo in 1444, and João Goncalves Zarco in 1450.⁷⁶ The fact that Teixeira's deed gave him rights over the sugar mills, bread ovens and salt in his area indicates that food

⁷⁴ Albuquerque and Vieira, *The Archipelago of Madeira in the 15th Century*, 29.

⁷⁵ Albuquerque and Vieira, *The Archipelago of Madeira in the 15th Century*, 30.

⁷⁶ Albuquerque and Vieira, *The Archipelago of Madeira in the 15th Century*, 32.

production was already well established by this time. In 1514, the island supported a population of 5,000.⁷⁷ The Portuguese towns were surrounded by vineyards, vegetable gardens, orchards and fields of barley, rye, sugarcane and wheat.⁷⁸ Sugar, grain, wine and timber were all produced in quantities sufficient for export.

While agrarian societies were the foundation of the Portuguese colonization of Brazil,⁷⁹ trade, not agricultural production, was the reason for establishing the settlements in Asia. The large plantation households in colonial Brazil and the bucolic town-and-country scene that is still to be witnessed on Madeira were replaced in the East by a frontier society in which food security was a perpetual concern.

Governorships were granted for a period of three years. This system encouraged governors to make as much money as possible as quickly as possible from their own trading voyages, the issuance of *cartazes* (compulsory licenses required for traders operating in Portuguese controlled waters) and import/export taxes levied through the ports, in what economist William Bernstein describes as “a thirty-six month frenzy of self-dealing.”⁸⁰ The system also discouraged governors from investing in long term strategies for food production. Unscrupulous captains even

⁷⁷ Albuquerque and Vieira, *The Archipelago of Madeira in the 15th Century*, 57.

⁷⁸ Albuquerque and Vieira, *The Archipelago of Madeira in the 15th Century*, 32.

⁷⁹ Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, 3.

⁸⁰ William J. Bernstein, *A Splendid Exchange: How Trade Shaped the World* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2008), 196.

invented threats of imminent attack in order to procure great quantities of supplies from the *Estado*, which were then embezzled and sold.⁸¹

Francis Xavier thought that the Portuguese in India were so corrupt they should be “deleted from the book of life.”⁸²

Thus, all the colonies in the *Estado* relied to a significant degree on imported food, the bulk of it locally sourced. The soldiers and sailors’ dining halls seated hundreds and might hold close to 1,000 in a single sitting.⁸³ The quantities required to feed the garrisons and shipping fleets were enormous. It was impossible for Lisbon, financially or logistically, to supply the foods of home so the naval and military apparatus, demonstrating their adaptive flexibility, embraced indigenous ingredients. Between 1513 and 1514, for example, the Sofala *feitoria* bought 287,000 litres of African sorghum, as well as rice, kaffir corn, meat, salt, oil, chickpeas and sugar.⁸⁴ When Nuno da Cunha raised an army to attack Damão, he was alarmed when the head count, which included soldiers, sailors, musketeers, fighting slaves, servants, wives, girlfriends and hangers on, came to 30,000. His captains assured him that every person in the fleet had enough food to last for five months.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Boxer, *Portuguese India in the Mid-Seventeenth Century*, 47.

⁸² Županov, *Missionary Tropics*, 128.

⁸³ M.N. Pearson, *Coastal Western India: Studies from the Portuguese Records* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing, 1981), 45-47.

⁸⁴ Newitt, *A History of Mozambique*, 28.

⁸⁵ Joseph Gerson da Cunha, *The Origin of Bombay* (Madras: Asian Educational Services, 1993) 86.

Despite the fact that Goa supported the *Estado's* largest Portuguese community and possessed the most productive land, little effort was made to exploit the colony's agricultural potential. The revenue generated by trade and the sale of *cartazes* enabled the Portuguese to buy food instead of growing it. But this strategy exposed them to the vagaries of local supply chains. "Goa abounds in rice, other foodstuffs, cattle and tasty, clean, fresh water," reported Martín de Figueroa,⁸⁶ but according to Linschoten, the Portuguese towns at Goa and Cochin were short of food. "Goa and Cochin have neither butter, onyons, garlicke, pease, oyle nor graine, [...] beanes, wheat or any seede, they must all bee brought from other places thether," he reported.⁸⁷ Goa relied heavily on foods brought in from other parts of India and the Portuguese international trading depot at Diu. Linschoten reported that nearly all of Goa's food was brought in via the river.⁸⁸ All the Portuguese settlements on the western India coast, as well as the Ceylon colony, received shipments of rice from the *bandeis* located on the fertile Coromandel Coast, one of India's premier rice-growing regions. The difficulty of obtaining enough rice for the Portuguese colony in Ceylon led to various schemes, such as trying to attract *casados* from São Tomé to work the land, and when that plan

⁸⁶ McKenna, *A Spaniard in the Indies*, 127.

⁸⁷ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:59.

⁸⁸ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:182.

failed, importing members of Goa's kunbi caste (traditional agriculturalists) from Goa.⁸⁹

Fryer reported that in India food supplies for the Portuguese settlements were moved under naval escort. He encountered a convoy of local supply boats moving along the coast in the company of a Portuguese armada.⁹⁰ Two or three such voyages of 100 or more supply boats were undertaken each year.⁹¹ The food convoys were the lifeblood of the Portuguese settlements. In 1569, customs duties in Goa were raised 1 percent by the city administration in order to generate extra revenue for their protection.⁹²

Southeast Asia was also a region of abundant food resources. Portuguese traders sailed to various Cambodian ports to buy supplies, including rice, meat, fish, vegetables, wine and 'butter',⁹³ to supply the colony at Malacca. Tome Pires, arriving in Cambodia in the first quarter of the sixteenth century, reported that the land "produces quantities of rice and good meat, fish and wines of its own kind" as well as dried fish and

⁸⁹ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *From the Tagus to the Ganges* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005), 65.

⁹⁰ Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, 162.

⁹¹ M.N. Pearson, *Coastal Western India: Studies from the Portuguese Records* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing, 1981), 107.

⁹² Pearson, *Coastal Western India*, 54.

⁹³ Probably ghee or coconut oil.

rice.⁹⁴ A letter written from the Jesuit College in Macao in 1617 also described Cambodia as being “rich in food and wood.”⁹⁵ In Champa (Vietnam) Pires reported that “a great deal of rice, meat and other foodstuffs” were available.⁹⁶ Dried fish and rice were procured in Vietnam in exchange for areca nut, nutmeg, cloves and cashews.⁹⁷

João de Barros, a Portuguese historian who chronicled the discoveries of his countrymen, described their entry into the Indonesian archipelago. The island of Sumatra, edged with salt marshes, rivers and shallows, had so many animals and insects that even the locals were unable to name them all.⁹⁸ The indigenous diet consisted of rice and millet, fish, nuts and wild fruits, flavoured with pepper, long pepper, ginger and cinnamon. “There are fruit trees, which the common people maintain and others which nature itself has granted to ornament the island,” he reported.⁹⁹ The salted roe of a fish resembling shad, which the Sumatrans mixed with their rice, was a prized local delicacy. The Portuguese also liked it and added it to their inventory of trade goods. Pires, who was aboard one of four Portuguese ships that sailed into the

94 Pires, *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires*, 1:112.

95 Loureiro, “The Jesuits in Cambodia,” 203, 51n .

96 Pires, *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires*, 1:112.

97 Pires, *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires*, 1:113-114.

98 Quoted in Mark Dion, “Sumatra through Portuguese Eyes: Excerpts from João de Barros’ ‘Decades da Asia’,” *Indonesia* 9 (1970): 129-162.

99 Quoted in Dion, “Sumatra through Portuguese Eyes,” 142.

Javanese port of Sunda Kelapa (Jakarta) in 1513, described a land edged with mudflats deep enough to engulf a man to his waist, women so adorned with gold and jewels that they resembled angels,¹⁰⁰ and an abundance of foodstuffs:

“The country is well shaded, with a great deal of rice. [...] It has many kinds of wood, much wine and much fish and good water. It has many tamarinds, much long pepper; and cubebs [...] beef, pork and kid and goat flesh, venison, chickens and countless fruits; the land is plenteous in all these.”¹⁰¹

The Spice Islands themselves did not possess much arable land, most of which was used for the cultivation of spice trees. When Antonio de Abreu first sighted the Banda Islands in 1512, the island known as Gunung Api (fire mountain) was erupting and spewing lava into the sea.¹⁰² The volcanic Banda islands produced almost no crops and were dependent on imported food.¹⁰³ In a letter written to the King of Portugal in 1536, ship’s captain Lionel de Lima reported that “The Moluccas produce very little food themselves [...] and have no supplies or revenues except those

¹⁰⁰ Pires, *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires*, 1:199.

¹⁰¹ Pires, *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires*, 1:191.

¹⁰² John Villiers, “Trade and Society in the Banda Islands in the Sixteenth Century,” *Modern Asian Studies* 15, no. 4 (1981), 743.

¹⁰³ Villiers, “Trade and Society in the Banda Islands,” 740.

they get from Moro (Halmahera), where there is much rice and sago and many swine and chickens.”¹⁰⁴ Francis Xavier also remarked on the paucity of the Moluccan diet, writing, “They do not know what wheat or wine made from grapes are [...] there is no meat or cattle, only very occasionally a few pigs.”¹⁰⁵ The voyage from Malacca to the Moluccas would take about a year, including waiting time for the change of monsoon.¹⁰⁶ With little food available locally, Portuguese traders in the region were dependent on shipments of rice from Malacca and other imported foods that, according to Pyrard, were extremely expensive.¹⁰⁷

The local fish-based diet was supplemented with imported sago bread made from a species of palm tree that flourished in the arid Lesser Sunda Islands in Eastern Indonesia. Unlike perishable root crops, sago bread kept for long periods. When freshly made, it could be “very good and very delicate” said François Pyrard.¹⁰⁸ The naturalist Alfred Russell Wallace described the traditional method of making sago bread, which was baked in a special slotted clay oven that turned out slabs of fresh cake with the texture of cornbread. If not consumed fresh, they were dried in the sun for several days and tied in bundles of 20 slabs. He

¹⁰⁴ John Villiers, “Las Yslas de Esperar en Dios: The Jesuit Mission in Moro 1546-1571,” *Modern Asian Studies* 22, no. 3 (1988), 596.

¹⁰⁵ Francis Xavier, quoted in Villiers, “Las Yslas de Esperar en Dios,” 598.

¹⁰⁶ Villiers, “Trade and Society in the Banda Islands,” 733.

¹⁰⁷ Pyrard, *The Voyage of François Pyrard*, 2:166.

¹⁰⁸ Pyrard, *The Voyage of François Pyrard*, 2:166.

wrote: “If dipped in water and then toasted, they become almost as good as when fresh baked. [...] Soaked and boiled they make a very good pudding or vegetable.”¹⁰⁹ The Portuguese were quick to realize that sago bread was valued both as a food and a form of currency.¹¹⁰ According to the trader Miguel Roxo de Brito, they traded slaves for sago bread in Seram (an island north of Ambon) and then used the bread to buy nutmeg and mace in Banda.¹¹¹

The procurement of food was a major factor influencing Portuguese diplomacy.¹¹² Pires reported that prior to the Portuguese arrival, up to 30 vessels a year arrived in Malacca from Siam, bringing rice, dried salted fish, *arak*, and vegetables.¹¹³ One of the principal reasons for sending an ambassador to Ayutthaya immediately after the capture of Malacca was to secure the continuation of these food supplies.¹¹⁴ With no agricultural base of their own, the only way for the Portuguese to feed their settlements was by tapping into local sources of supply. Albuquerque’s system of land grants for settlers helped to alleviate the Malacca colony’s dependence on imports but the Dutch siege in 1641 resulted in the

¹⁰⁹ Wallace, *The Malay Archipelago*, 291.

¹¹⁰ Taylor, *Indonesia*, 132.

¹¹¹ Taylor, *Indonesia*, 117.

¹¹² Newitt, *A History of Mozambique*, 29.

¹¹³ Pires, *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires*, 1:107-108.

¹¹⁴ Newitt, *A History of Portuguese Overseas Expansion*, 86.

destruction of the *casados'* homesteads, gardens and palm groves and initiated a period of severe famine.¹¹⁵ For the right to fish in Ceylon, the Portuguese negotiated with Sinhalese rulers and paid a tribute in kind.¹¹⁶ The almost constant warfare needed to defend the Portuguese cinnamon trade in Ceylon meant that provisions were often hard to come by and food had to be shipped in from Bengal.¹¹⁷

Many of the Portuguese fortresses were built on islands because they were easier to defend and afforded control of shipping lanes. This strategic advantage, however, meant that *feitorias* were often built in locations that were barren, rocky or sandy and unsuitable for agriculture. The *feitoria's* occupants had to rely on the kinds of food that could be stockpiled in impressive quantities. Linschoten reported seeing quantities of salted meat and fish being dried in the sun at Diu and the stockpiling of salty cheeses.¹¹⁸ When Ruy Andrada asked the Captain of the Daman *feitoria* to send enough food, wine, olive oil and sweets to enable him to host an Easter banquet for his captors, he was expecting 60 guests. Two vessels were needed to carry the “rich wines and victuals”

115 P.P. Shirodkar, “Portugal in the Far East: Trade Strategy in the 17th Century,” in *As Relações entre a Índia Portuguesa, a Ásia do Sueste e o Extremo Oriente*, eds. Artur Teodoro de Matos and Luis Filipe Reis Thomaz (Macau and Lisbon: Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimientos Portugueses, 1993), 357.

116 Horatio John Suckling, *Ceylon: A General Description of the Island, Historical, Physical, Statistical. Containing the Most Recent Information* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1876), 296.

117 Ralph Fitch, “The Voyage of M. Ralph Fitch Marchant of London by the way of Tripolls in Syria, to Ormus, and so to Goa in the East India...,” in *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation* Vol. 10, by Richard Hakluyt, ed. Edmund Goldsmid (Project Gutenberg, 2004), 25. <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/11948>

118 Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:59.

to Hormuz.¹¹⁹

The colony of Macao, even after its expansion to include Taipa and Coloane islands and part of peninsula China, covered only six square miles.¹²⁰ With no arable land of its own, the colony depended on food imported from the Chinese mainland, resulting in a marked Chinese influence on Macanese cuisine. If relations with the Chinese soured, which they did periodically, food supplies dried up. Keeper of the Archives Antonio Bocarro wrote from Macao in 1635, “This city is not so well furnished with food supplies [...]. because we obtain them from the Chinese. When they have any dispute with us, they immediately deprive us of them.”¹²¹ The English colony established at Hong Kong some 200 years later was similarly tiny but the Chinese licensing of the Treaty Ports in 1842 gave the ‘barren rock’ (as the British described the territory) direct access to mainland Chinese food supplies via Canton, with none of the groveling and tribute-paying that was resorted to by the Portuguese.¹²² When Peter Mundy visited Macao in 1637, he reported that the Portuguese were growing beans, mustard seed and other edible

¹¹⁹ Boxer, *Commentaries of Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, 175.

¹²⁰ Edith Jorge de Martini, *The Wind Amongst the Ruins: A Childhood in Macau* (New York, Vantage, 1993), xi.

¹²¹ Antonio Bocarro, *Macao, Three Hundred Years Ago: As Described by Antonio Bocarro in 1635.*, ed. C. R. Boxer (Lisboa: Fundaçãoccheck this o Oriente, 1993), 21.

¹²² Richard Sterling, Elizabeth Chong and Lushan Charles Qin, *World Food Hong Kong* (Footscray: Lonely Planet, 2001), 12; Michael Ingham, *Hong Kong: A Cultural History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), xvii.

plants in pots on the balconies of their homes.¹²³

The fortress at Pacem on the swampy coast of Sumatra was supplied with foodstuffs ferried downriver from the interior, a vulnerability that was exploited on at least one occasion by a Moorish blockade.¹²⁴ At other times, the island *feitoria*'s provisioning strategy worked to its advantage. An attempted Mughal siege of the fortress at Damão failed because the land-based Muslim forces could not prevent the Portuguese from bringing in food supplies by sea.¹²⁵

The Portuguese communities that formed in existing Asian ports, or in hinterland cities that functioned as centres of trade, were better off in terms of food supply. Since the region's commerce was conducted primarily by sea, the Portuguese communities tended to form in coastal regions where seafood played a significant role in local diets. The Malabar and Konkani regions of India were richly supplied with fish, shellfish and crustaceans, harvested from the sea and rivers. Many species were familiar to the Portuguese, who historically relied heavily on the bounty of the Atlantic Ocean and seafood from inland waterways.

“There are fishermen who go a-fishing,” Vasco da Gama wrote from India.

¹²³ Peter Mundy, “Description of Macau in 1637 by Peter Mundy,” in *Seventeenth Century Macau in Contemporary Documents and Illustrations*, ed. Charles R. Boxer (Hong Kong: Heinemann, 1984), 62.

¹²⁴ Dion, “Sumatra through Portuguese Eyes,” 162.

¹²⁵ M.N. Pearson, *Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat: The Response to the Portuguese in the Sixteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 78.

“The fish are of the same kinds as are those of Portugal, namely perch, soles, bream, salmon, mullets, and so of all other kinds.”¹²⁶ He described the native fishing boats that approached the Portuguese vessels with bountiful supplies of fish, which they were very happy to exchange for shirts.¹²⁷ The local method of preparing boiled fish, he said, was “excellent.”¹²⁸

“Fish in India is very plentiful, and some very pleasant and sweet,” Linschoten agreed, going on to describe a seafood curry that was probably flavoured with tamarind: “Most of their fish is eaten with rice, that they seeth in broth which they put upon the rice, and it is somewhat sour, as if it were sodden in gooseberries, or unripe grapes, but it tasteth well, and is called *Carril*.”¹²⁹ There was an abundance of mussels and oysters in India and huge crabs and lobsters that were especially delicious at the time of the new moon. In Malacca, he reported, were shellfish so huge that it took two strong men with a lever to open them.¹³⁰ In Timor, William Dampier encountered cockles the size of a man’s head.¹³¹

126 Velho, *A Journal of the First Voyage of Vasco da Gama*, 133.

127 Velho, *A Journal of the First Voyage of Vasco da Gama*, 80.

128 Velho, *A Journal of the First Voyage of Vasco da Gama*, 52.

129 Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 2:11-12.

130 Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 2:16.

131 Dampier, *A Continuation of a Voyage to New Holland*, 62.

Visiting merchants and those who put down roots had access to all the foods found in the region's bustling traditional marketplaces. European visitors were invariably struck with the cheapness and abundance of foods in the local markets. Martín de Figueroa was impressed by the bananas he encountered in Sofala, declaring, "There were fig trees with leaves as big as shields, whose marvelous figs turn to butter in your mouth."¹³² Christoforo Borri, an Italian Jesuit who encountered durian in Malacca, described it as a blancmange (*mangiare bianco*) "made by God himself."¹³³

Linschoten reported that "meat of all kinds" was abundant and cheap all over India. "A man may buy the best cow in Goa for five or six pardawes," he marveled, noting that oxen, goats and fat-tailed sheep were also available, along with buffaloes that gave very good milk.¹³⁴ "All sorts of provisions here, as bread, fresh fish, fruite, etts., very cheape," Peter Mundy reported from Macao.¹³⁵ From Ceylon Ludovico Di Varthema wrote, "In this island there grow the best fruits I have ever seen."¹³⁶ The

¹³² McKenna, *A Spaniard in the Indies*, 39.

¹³³ Olga Dror and K.W. Taylor, *Views of Seventeenth-Century Vietnam: Christoforo Borri on Cochinchina and Samuel Baron on Tonkin* (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 2006), 101.

¹³⁴ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:300-301.

¹³⁵ Rogério Miguel Puga, "Images and Representations of Japan and Macao in Peter Mundy's Travels," *Bulletin of Portuguese/Japanese Studies* 1 (2000), 58.

¹³⁶ Ludovico di Varthema, *The Travels of Ludovico di Varthema* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1863), 190.

relative value accorded to foodstuffs and instruments of payment varied with the perceptions of buyer and seller. Galeote Pereira recorded that in China “Two pounds of hen’s flesh, goose, or duck is worth two foi of their money, that is one penny sterling.”¹³⁷ According to Caesar Federici, piles of fruit could be bought for an old shirt or pair of ragged breeches.¹³⁸ On the other hand, when Antonio Pigafetta bought six chickens with a king of diamonds playing card, the vendors thought they had cheated him.¹³⁹

The Portuguese reports from the East breathed life into the earlier medieval European myths of a faraway Land of Cockaigne overflowing with victuals of every imaginable kind. The Portuguese merchant Domingo Paes marveled from southern India:

“They give three fowls in the city for a coin worth a vintem, outside the city they give five fowls for a vintem.¹⁴⁰ In the country there are many ducks. All these birds are very cheap. The sheep they kill every day are countless, one could not count them, for in every street there are men who will sell you mutton so clean and so fat

137 Charles R. Boxer, ed., *South China in the Sixteenth Century, being the Narratives of Galeote Pereira, Fr. Gaspar da Cruz, O.P. [and] Fr. Martin de Rada, O.E.S.A.* (1550 -1575; repr. Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus, 1967), 9.

138 Federici, “The Voyage and Trauell of M. Cæsar Fredericke,” 128.

139 Pigafetta, *The First Voyage Around the World*, 8.

140 Less than a penny. (Alexander Dickson, *The Dickson Manuscripts* Vol.1, eds. John Leslie and Ken Trotman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), xi.

that it looks like beef.”¹⁴¹

All manner of cooked dishes were offered by street vendors. Native cooks in the bazaars, open squares and street corners in Goa served up curries and shellfish dishes with seasonings and sauces.¹⁴² Duarte Barbosa said that the prepared foods offered in the marketplace at Hormuz were so good, clean and attractively displayed, many people who had their own houses ate there instead of cooking at home.¹⁴³ In Canton, Gaspar da Cruz reported, there were victualling houses in almost every street.¹⁴⁴

New foods offered a challenge to many of the first Europeans to visit the East. Gaspero Balbi, a Venetian jeweler who travelled to Pegu in 1583 with the Portuguese, described purchasing salted fish in the insect-infested ‘Land of Flies’.¹⁴⁵ The Englishman Ralph Fitch observed in 1591 that the people of Siam ate “roots, herbs, leaves, dogs, cats, rats, serpents and snakes.”¹⁴⁶ “The Chineans are the greatest eaters in all the

141 Rani Kingman, *A Taste of Madras: A South Indian Cookbook* (New York: Interlink, 1996), 86.

142 Sá, “Goapuri and Velha Goa,” 53-54.

143 Barbosa, *A Description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar*, 44.

144 Boxer, *South China in the Sixteenth Century*, 131-134.

145 Gaspero Balbi, “Voyage to Pegu, and Observations There, Circa 1583,” *SOAS Bulletin of Burma Research* 1, no.2 (2003), 27.

146 Fitch, “A Letter Written from Goa,” 21.

world, they do feed upon all things,” wrote Galeote Pereira from China.¹⁴⁷ Gaspar da Cruz described tubs of live frogs displayed for sale, which would be quickly skinned by the vendor when purchased, and the practice in Chinese markets of force feeding chickens water and sand to increase their sale weight.¹⁴⁸ In Canton, he noted, “they sell dogs cut in quarters, roasted, boiled and raw, with the heads pulled, and with their ears, for they scald them all like pigs.”¹⁴⁹ Barbosa noted that the Chinese ate dog flesh, “which they hold to be good meat.”¹⁵⁰ “I will not praise Japanese food for it is not good,” wrote Bernardo de Avila Girón, who went to Nagasaki in 1594.¹⁵¹ The Japanese ate dogs, cranes, monkeys, dogs, cats, raw algae and uncooked boar, reported the Jesuit Luis Frois.¹⁵² In Burma, Friar Sebastião Manrique advised, dishes of shredded rat, fried snake and fricasseed bat were better avoided.¹⁵³ Martín de Figueroa was awed by the plagues of locusts in Goa but even more surprised that the Moors liked to eat them and preserved them in jars.¹⁵⁴

147 Galeotto Perera, “Certaine reports of the province of China through the Portugals there imprisoned, and chiefly by the relation of Galeotto Perera [...], Done out of Italian into English by Richard Willes” in *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation*, Vol. 11, by Richard Hakluyt, ed. Edmund Goldsmid. (repr., Charleston: BiblioBazaar, 2007), 240.

148 Boxer, *South China in the Sixteenth Century*, 131-132.

149 Boxer, *South China in the Sixteenth Century*, 134.

150 Barbosa, *A Description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar*, 205.

151 Quoted in Donald Keene, *The Pleasures of Japanese Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 17.

152 Luis Frois, *Kulturgegensätze Europa-Japan* (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1955), 175, 179, 183, quoted in Hans Martin Krämer, “Not Befitting Our Divine Country: Eating Meat in Japanese Discourses of Self and Other from the Seventeenth Century to the Present,” *Food and Foodways* 16, no.1 (2008), 38.

153 Collis, *The Land of the Great Image*, 262.

154 McKenna, *A Spaniard in the Indies*, 207.

De Barros noted that the warlike Bataks, who lived in the centre of Sumatra, ate human beings.¹⁵⁵ Duarte Barbosa reported that the Moluccans ate human flesh as if it were pork.¹⁵⁶ Tales of cannibalism were used to justify European conquest of foreign lands and while some reports of anthropophagy may have based in fact, others smacked of scaremongering. Ludovico Di Varthema reported that children and old people were eaten in Java.¹⁵⁷ Despite the fact that the statement was based on hearsay, he and his party left the island hastily in fear that they too might be consumed.¹⁵⁸ Varthema was less alarmed by the mice and dried fish enjoyed by the people of Calicut.¹⁵⁹

Foreigners' Food

Food and notions of identity are very closely linked. In their study of the perception of Indian restaurants in Malaysia, for example, Bharath M. Josiam, Sadiq M. Sohail and Prema A. Monteiro noted that while members of other ethnic groups viewed eating in Indian restaurants as

155 Dion, "Sumatra through Portuguese Eyes," 143.

156 Barbosa, *A Description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar*, 202-203.

157 According to E.N. Anderson, the papal ban on enslaving native peoples unless they were cannibals encouraged fictitious European reports of the practice. (E.N. Anderson, *Everyone Eats: Understanding Food and Culture* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2005), 132.

158 Varthema, *The Travels of Ludovico di Varthema*, 256-257.

159 Varthema, *The Travels of Ludovico di Varthema*, 143.

an exotic cultural experience, South Asians were inclined to view the same dining experience as “an integral part of who they are.”¹⁶⁰ In the initial encounter between the Portuguese and the peoples of Asia, apprehension about the eating habits of ‘foreigners’ was a two-way street. Charges of cannibalism were also leveled at the Portuguese. The dynastic history of the Ming court, the *Mingshi*, stated that the Portuguese seized small children for food.¹⁶¹ The Chinese Censor Ho Ao was also convinced that the *folangi* ate children, declaring:

“The method was to first boil up some soup in a huge iron pan and place the child, who was locked up inside an iron cage, into the pan. After being steamed to sweat, the child was then taken out and his skin peeled with an iron scrubbing brush. The child, still alive, would now be killed, and having being disemboweled, steamed to eat.”¹⁶²

The Japanese thought the consumption of red meat and dairy products by the Portuguese caused them to give off bad odours.¹⁶³ The Sinhalese

160 Bharath M. Josiam, Sadiq M. Sohail and Prema A. Monteiro, “Curry Cuisine: Perceptions of Indian Restaurants in Malaysia,” *Tourismos* 2, no. 2 (2007), 34.

161 Carney T. Fisher, “Portuguese as seen by the Historians of the Qing Court,” in Disney and Booth, *Vasco da Gama and the Linking of Europe and Asia*, 307.

162 Subrahmanyam, *From the Tagus to the Ganges*, 33.

163 Krämer, “Not Befitting Our Divine Country,” 24, 39.

thought that the Portuguese eating bread were consuming stones.¹⁶⁴ The Brahmins who provided food for Diogo de Couto and his party in India were so disgusted by the experience they threw buckets of water over the plates that the Portuguese had used and smeared the verandah where they had eaten with cow dung “as though we were suffering from some contagious disease,” de Couto complained.¹⁶⁵

In time, attitudes on both sides softened, allowing the processes of acculturation and culinary adaptation to begin. Some European foods were adopted by Asians for their nutritional value or taste, others because they signified membership of a privileged colonial class. The exchange worked in both directions. The Portuguese, for example, took up tea drinking in Japan in part because Japanese noblemen drank tea.¹⁶⁶ Portuguese marriages with indigenous women helped demystify and destigmatize local foods while native skill in preparing them increased their palatability.

The Portuguese colonial experience in Asia, with its high degree of racial mixing, differed markedly from that of other European colonizers.

Separatism was a hallmark of British, Dutch, French and German

¹⁶⁴ Chandra Richard de Silva, “Beyond the Cape: The Portuguese Encounter with the Peoples of Asia,” in Schwartz, *Implicit Understandings*, 311.

¹⁶⁵ Diogo de Couto, *Decada V*, Book VI, Chapter IV, 41-42, trans. in Ethel M. Pope, *India in Portuguese Literature* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1989), 91-92.

¹⁶⁶ Laura C. Martin, *Tea: The Drink that Changed the World* (North Clarendon: Tuttle, 2007), 77.

overseas settlements; in South Africa it was institutionalized. The Portuguese were as guilty as other Europeans of racial stereotyping but tempered their prejudice with pragmatism. Gaspar da Cruz reported that beef, pork and buffalo meat sold for less than hen, goose, duck and frog in China.¹⁶⁷ Galeote Pereira in China said that frogs were “good meat”¹⁶⁸ and Maria Graham reported that the Portuguese in Salcete were fond of them.¹⁶⁹ Portuguese cooks throughout the *Estado* made use of what they could find locally. The omnivorousness that early European travellers implied was characteristic of less civilized peoples became the the Luso-Asian norm.

However, the Portuguese were not about to throw caution completely to the wind. Poisoning by an unknown substance, whether deliberate or accidental, was a preoccupation of sixteenth century Europeans and a particular concern for the Portuguese in foreign parts. Linschoten reported that poisoning of Portuguese men by their Indian or *mestiço* wives familiar with the local pharmacopeia was a frequent occurrence in Goa.¹⁷⁰ Military or political rivals, as well as personal enemies, might also seek to do injury by way of cup or plate. Portuguese captains made native suppliers consume food in front of them before they would touch

¹⁶⁷ Boxer, *South China in the Sixteenth Century*, 131-132.

¹⁶⁸ Boxer, *South China in the Sixteenth Century*, 9.

¹⁶⁹ Graham, *Journal of a Residence in India*, 25.

¹⁷⁰ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:211.

it. Food was tested for poison with 'unicorns' horns' (bird beaks and animal horns) fitted with gold or silver handles, or by means of a stick, called a *linguieros*, from which snakes' tongues or precious stones were suspended.¹⁷¹ Captains and officers ate from silver plates and utensils, which they believed would discolour in the presence of poison. This belief was shared by the Chinese.¹⁷² John Fryer reported that British East India company factors ate off plates made of special china that would crack if the food contained poison.¹⁷³

In Asia, the Portuguese used a Persian remedy for poisoning, the ingestion of concretions from a goat or sheep's stomach, known as 'bezar stones'. These were very popular with the Portuguese but were imported and very expensive. With typical opportunism, they developed their own supply at *Insula das Vacas* (Island of Cows), a site near Cambaia where Portuguese vessels traditionally stopped to kill sheep and goats for provisions.¹⁷⁴ In Goa, a blue-green stone called *Pedra Armenia* (Armenian stone) was also favoured, while the Portuguese in Malacca preferred *Pedra do Porco* (pig stone). This concretion, Linschoten informs us, was red and tasted like French soap. Dissolved in water and drunk, it would

¹⁷¹ Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 30.

¹⁷² Fuschia Dunlop, *Shark's Fin and Sichuan Pepper: A Sweet-sour Memoir of Eating in China* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2008), 199.

¹⁷³ Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, 30.

¹⁷⁴ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 2:143-144.

cleanse the body of venom.¹⁷⁵ António Galvão, Governor of Ternate, favoured coconuts from the Maldives, which he said “are very good against all kinde of poison.”¹⁷⁶

It is not certain how efficacious these remedies were. The Spanish Dominican friar Gabriel Quiroga de San Antonio, who made the mistake of lodging with the corrupt *ouvidor* Ribeiro in Malacca, was poisoned, along with five other clerics, by the *casados*, who accused the religious men of siding with the hated official. Five of the six victims died and Fray Gabriel was left “so sick, that I die while living, and I live while dying.”¹⁷⁷ The King of Cambaia was reportedly fed poison from childhood in gradually increasing doses and punished his enemies by dressing them in one of his shirts. As soon as they sweated they died. Less deserving but no more immune were the many women with whom the poisonous ruler slept.¹⁷⁸ A little further south in Bassein, the unfortunate missionary Melchior Gonçalves was fatally poisoned by ‘heathens’ who objected to his proseletizing.¹⁷⁹

175 Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 2:143-144.

176 António Galvão, *The Discoveries of the World, from Their First Original Unto the Year of Our Lord 1555 by Antonio Galvano, Governor of Ternate* (1601, 1862; repr., Boston: Adamant Media Corporation, 2001), 121-122.

177 Gabriel Quiroga de San Antonio, “Manila, Melaka, Mylapore... A Dominican Voyage through the Indies,” in Subrahmanyam, *From the Tagus to the Ganges*, 196.

178 McKenna, *A Spaniard in the Indies*, 101-102.

179 Cunha, *The Origin of Bombay*, 115.

What didn't kill the Portuguese seems to have made them smarter. Ruy Andrada, Captain of the Portuguese settlement in Hormuz, escaped his imprisonment on the *Lion* by lacing his enemies' food with datura, a trick he picked up in India.¹⁸⁰ While his British captors fell into a swoon, he slipped over the stern.¹⁸¹ Della Valle reported that Christmas Eve revelry on a Portuguese ship in Cochin included eating fritters laced with "certain powders which caused giddiness; so that almost all the soldiers that ate of them seem'd drunk."¹⁸²

Commentaries on the dubious victuals encountered in the East are balanced by accounts of fine feasts set before Portuguese who were entertained by wealthy Asian potentates. Sebastião Manrique, a missionary at Arakan from 1629 until 1637,¹⁸³ was presented by a local governor with chickens, deer, bags of scented rice, butter, fruit and sweets.¹⁸⁴ On the occasion of the coronation of the King, Thiri-thudhamma, he attended a lavish banquet. "The food was brought in on trays by a hundred servitors, and was very copious and highly spiced, consisting of every kind of fish and fowl, domestic animal and wild game, with mountains of rice, many relishes, and much fruit," he wrote. The

¹⁸⁰ Boxer, *Commentaries of Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, 75.

¹⁸¹ Boxer, "Anglo-Portuguese Rivalry in the Persian Gulf," 84.

¹⁸² Pietro della Valle, *The Travels of Pietro della Valle in India*, Vol. 2, (1892; repr., New Delhi, Asian Educational Services, 1991), 381.

¹⁸³ Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, 93.

¹⁸⁴ Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, 93.

meal, “an interminable affair,” was followed by exotic dancing that obliged the Catholic friar to look away.¹⁸⁵ The Portuguese were impressed by this opulence and sought to imbue their own banqueting with equal grandeur, decorating their dining rooms with brocades and silks, drinking from Chinese porcelain teacups and serving enormous quantities of food.

While other Europeans struggled to establish societies in hot and humid regions,¹⁸⁶ overall, the Portuguese seemed to have little difficulty adapting to tropical climates. Joseph Page suggests that the reason for this was that the southern regions of Portugal, where many of the Portuguese who populated the *Estado* originated, experienced a climate more African than European.¹⁸⁷ The Portuguese were open-minded pragmatists. For example, in contrast to the British in India, who persisted in wearing layers of unsuitable clothing as a mark of European civility, the Portuguese adjusted their dress in response to local conditions. Fryer remarked that the Jesuits in Goa had given up wearing stockings.¹⁸⁸ Linschoten noted that while Luso-Asian women dressed up in European finery when they went out, at home they wore the

¹⁸⁵ Collis, *The Land of the Great Image*, 262.

¹⁸⁶ Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism*, 141.

¹⁸⁷ Page, *The Brazilians*, 42.

¹⁸⁸ Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, 151.

comfortable Malay *sarong* and *baju*.¹⁸⁹ According to Cesare Federici, Portuguese merchants in the walled city of Vijayanagar slept in the streets or on porches because of the heat.¹⁹⁰

Early agricultural experiments on semi-tropical Atlantic islands gave the Portuguese a head start in adaptive horticulture. The Portuguese were also quick to harness the intellectual and material resources available to them in Asia. They hired interpreters to assist in trade negotiations, pilots to guide them in unfamiliar waters and native seamen whose purpose-built vessels could navigate coastal mangroves and coral reefs. They also hired local cooks and servants and absorbed their knowledge base with similar alacrity. The speed with which they assimilated new culinary information is revealed by the first European reference to Indian curry, which appears in a Portuguese cookbook in 1502.¹⁹¹

A Continuing Iberian Legacy

Luso-Asian cuisine evolved out of the merging of traditional Iberian foodways into Asian culinary cultures, principally Indian, Malay and Chinese. Not all aspects of Portuguese culinary culture made the

¹⁸⁹ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:206.

¹⁹⁰ Cesare Federici, "Cesare Federici," in *Visions of Mughal India: An Anthology of European Travel Writing*, ed. Michael H. Fisher (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 30.

¹⁹¹ Sen, *Food Culture in India*, 25.

transition to the East. Dairy products, for example, were not part of traditional Asian diets, and except in the preserved form of cheese, could not be shipped from Europe. However, typical Iberian foods that could be preserved for shipping and others that could be acquired or manufactured in Asia, continued to play a role in the diet of the Portuguese colonists.

Bread for the *Estado*

Bread, in the exceptionally durable form of ship's biscuit, was the staff of life for seamen. Fresh bread may also have been made on board. Bread rolls were made from salted flour and baked in ashes on Spanish ships of the period. A Spaniard aboard an English vessel in 1527 reported that the vessel also had a bread oven.¹⁹² Evidence from the fifteenth century shows that Portuguese vessels were equipped with kneading troughs.¹⁹³ When Vasco da Gama was unable to find wheat for ship's biscuit in Malindi, he explained its importance to the local ruler who had the grain imported. Martín de Figueroa observed that the Africans cooked their millet bread in kettles instead of ovens.¹⁹⁴ The King ordered his people to bake sackfuls of the bread in the Moorish manner, which he presented to

¹⁹² Morison, *The European Discovery of America*, 130-131.

¹⁹³ Marques, "Travelling with the Fifteenth-century Discoverers," 32.

¹⁹⁴ McKenna, *A Spaniard in the Indies*, 45.

the Portuguese as a gift.¹⁹⁵

In the Portuguese colonies, the need to produce wafers for Holy Communion and to replenish stores of ship's biscuit made it a priority for the settlers to establish bakeries. Wheat was one of the most important crops planted on Madeira after that island's discovery. The fact that Teixeira's captaincy deed gave him rights over the bread ovens in his area indicates that commercial baking was already underway in 1440.¹⁹⁶ Wheat and bread were important export commodities. In 1543, the Clarissan nuns received 50,000 *reis* from a Funchal merchant for their wheat crop.¹⁹⁷ Supplies were sent to Lisbon and sold in Madeira to the shipping trade. Ships of many nations, including Colombo's third New World fleet, called at Madeira to take on supplies of grain, ships biscuit and other victuals.¹⁹⁸

Rice, not wheat, was the staple grain in all of the Asian territories in which the Portuguese landed. The bread and wine diet of the Iberians caused bemusement in Ceylon. According to the *Rajavaliya*, the fair-

¹⁹⁵ Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, 143.

¹⁹⁶ Albuquerque and Vieira, *The Archipelago of Madeira in the 15th Century*, 32.

¹⁹⁷ Fontoura, *As Clarissas na Madeira*, 102.

¹⁹⁸ Washington Irving, *History of the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus*, Vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1841), 356.

skinned visitors ate stones and drank blood.¹⁹⁹ When the Japanese were introduced to Portuguese bread, they did not initially understand its place at the table and ate it between meals as if it were a piece of fruit.²⁰⁰ The Indians were more enthusiastic. When Vasco da Gama arrived in Calicut, throngs of Indian fisher folk swarmed about the Portuguese vessels, exchanging fish for Portuguese bread.²⁰¹

In India, wheat is grown in the northern regions and wheat breads have been made there since the earliest times. But Vedic breads were flat, unleavened and quite different from western-style raised loaves. On the Konkan and Malabar coasts, traditional breads were based on rice flour or ground up pulses. Girolamo Sernigi, a Florentine merchant who sailed to Malacca in 1510 and called at Calicut, observed “their bread is unleavened, resembling small cakes, which are baked daily in the ashes.”²⁰² Fryer described the Indian women singing, chatting and laughing as they ground their grain with a handmill.²⁰³

199 Rajapakse, *Concise Mahavamsa*, 121. A slightly different translation is given in Chandra Richard de Silva, “Islands and Beaches: Indigenous Relations with the Portuguese in Sri Lanka after Vasco da Gama”, in Disney and Booth, *Vasco da Gama and the Linking of Europe and Asia*, 282-283.

200 Naomichi Ishige, *The History and Culture of Japanese Food* (London and New York: Kegan Paul, 2001), 92. A similar phenomenon exists among modern East Asians who regard a hamburger, which doesn't contain rice, as a snack and not a meal. (Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, “McDonald's in Japan: Changing Manners and Etiquette,” in *Golden Arches East: McDonald's in East Asia* 2nd ed., ed. James Watson (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 166.

201 Velho, *A Journal of the First Voyage of Vasco da Gama*, 69.

202 Girolamo Sernigi, “First Letter to a Gentleman at Florence,” in Velho, *A Journal of the First Voyage of Vasco da Gama*, 132.

203 Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, 199.

In Calicut, Vasco da Gama noted in his journal, he and his men were served “wheaten bread and honey” by the Moorish merchants living in the city. John Fryer described the bread of the Muslims, which was made in a *tannur*. “The Moors’ is made of wheat, thicker and oblong, bestuck with seeds to correct wind, and mostly bak’d in a furnace, which they stick to the sides, when dough, as we see cow-turds on a mud-wall.”²⁰⁴ In time, leavened Arab wheat breads (*naan*) spread south along with the Mughal invasion, displacing the indigenous fried and griddled flatbreads. At the time of the Portuguese arrival in India, however, the Mughal empire was newly established and its culinary influence was not yet widespread. The Moors in Calicut were merchants who had resided in the trading port for many centuries.

In Calicut, according to Sernigi, ‘corn’ for bread was readily available and cheap, being imported in quantity by the Moors. The French physician to the Mughal court, François Bernier, noted that wheat was also available in Bengal and that the Portuguese bought ship’s biscuit there.²⁰⁵

François Pyrard said that “a vast quantity of the best wheat in the world” was grown at Cambaia and Surat but if it were not for the Portuguese, none would be grown.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, 199.

²⁰⁵ François Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire A.D. 1656-1668*, trans. Archibald Constable (London: Oxford University Press, 1914), 438.

²⁰⁶ Pyrard, *The Voyage of François Pyrard*, 2:247.

The Portuguese introduced the people of the subcontinent to the technique of leavening bread with palm and cashew toddy. Lizzie Collingham writes that the Portuguese “went to great lengths to make bread in a country where this was very difficult.”²⁰⁷ She suggests that the Portuguese experimented with palm toddy as a leaven because there was no yeast available. But more research into this topic is called for. European breads were not leavened with yeast, which was considered unhealthy, until the seventeenth century.²⁰⁸ The traditional Portuguese *pão caseiro* (home-style bread) is made with a sponge starter leavened by airborne yeasts. The technique of leavening bread with alcoholic beverages, such as beer, had also been used by the Portuguese since medieval times.²⁰⁹ The first Portuguese settlers in India were most likely looking for a substitute for the fermented beverage leavens that they were used to using. The locally produced *arak* would have been an obvious choice. Pedro Teixeira reported in 1587 that the Portuguese were already familiar with the local beverage, adding raisins to it to make it more palatable.²¹⁰

Testament to the presence of bread and bakers in the Indo-Portuguese

²⁰⁷ Collingham, *Curry*, 60.

²⁰⁸ Webster and Parkes, *An Encyclopædia of Domestic Economy*, 733.

²⁰⁹ Trutter, *Culinaria Spain*, 260.

²¹⁰ Pedro Teixeira, quoted in Achaya, *A Historical Dictionary of Indian Food*, 9.

communities is found in many travellers' accounts. The German traveller, Johan Albrecht de Mandelslo, reported that bread was set out on the dining tables in the Jesuit College in Goa.²¹¹ Pyrard noted that patients in the hospital at Goa were given as much bread as they wanted, writing, "The loaves are small; sometimes three or four are brought for a single sick person [...] Much would be lost if the loaves were larger, for a loaf once broken is never served a second time. The bread is very delicate and is made by the bakers of the town by contract."²¹² Linschoten noted that it was available in the *Estado's* capital in abundance.²¹³ More than a century later Richard Burton in Goa wrote: "Leavened bread is much better made here than in any other part of western India."²¹⁴

Bread also served as a symbolic link to the Christian faith of the Luso-Asians. Conversions were confirmed by Baptism and the taking of bread and wine. At Catholic wedding ceremonies, bread and wine were consumed by the bride and groom after the exchange of rings and the blessing of the priest. In the larger Portuguese settlements, bakeries were attached to the kitchens of the Jesuit houses and the monasteries established by other Catholic orders. Baking bread for the sick and the poor was one of the duties that the Brothers were expected to carry out

²¹¹ Commissariat, *Mandelslo's Travels in Western India*, 63.

²¹² Pyrard, *The Voyage of François Pyrard*, 2:8.

²¹³ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:205.

²¹⁴ Richard F. Burton, *Goa, and the Blue Mountains: Or, Six Months of Sick Leave* (London: Richard Bentley, 1851), 104.

in addition to their religious obligations.²¹⁵ In the 1780's, the Brothers of the Order of Saint John in Diu were accused of irregularities because they hired African women, probably slaves from Mozambique, to do their baking for them.²¹⁶ In the wider community and in smaller settlements, the tradition of the *padeiras* (female bakers) continued. The records of the Portuguese settlement at Madras show that in 1729 a Portuguese woman, Signora Estra Gregorio, was fined for making bad bread.²¹⁷ Far more frequently, the Portuguese bakers received praise. Maria Graham said that the white bread made with a toddy ferment in Bombay was "the best I ever tasted"²¹⁸ and noted that it was also very good in Ceylon. The popularity of bread in the *Estado* contrasted dramatically with its rejection in Spanish America, where native people were so opposed to making it that convicts were made to serve their sentences by kneading dough.²¹⁹

In China, wheat was grown in areas of the north and west but true yeast-risen and baked breads were only consumed by ethnic groups in the far western regions that shared the Persian culinary heritage. Elsewhere,

215 John W. O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 171.

216 A. Teodoro de Matos, "A Glimpse of the Hospitallers of Diu in the Late 18th Century," in *Goa and Portugal: History and Development*, eds. Charles J. Borges, Óscar G. Pereira, and Hannes Stubbe (New Delhi: Concept, 2000), 233.

217 Madras Tercentenary Celebration Committee, *The Madras Tercentenary Commemoration Volume*, 126.

218 Graham, *Journal of a Residence in India*, 25, 97.

219 Pilcher, *Que Vivan Los Tamales!*, 37.

wheat flour was made into steamed dumplings or noodles but even these were significant only in the diet of peoples in the north. The coastal regions of southern China abutting the Portuguese enclave at Macao were paddy-based. Here too the Portuguese managed to find a source of grain and set up bakeries. Peter Mundy commented that bread was readily available and cheap in Macao.²²⁰ The Portuguese shared their knowledge with the Chinese. Gaspar da Cruz reported that in neighbouring Guangzhou, “They make good bread which they learnt to make of the Portuguese.”²²¹ While oven-baked bread did not take root in China, it was adopted in areas of Western contact, particularly Hong Kong and Guangzhou.²²²

Given the shortage of Portuguese women throughout the *Estado*, many men must also have become bakers. The profession of baker to the *Estado* could apparently be very lucrative. According to the journal of a British fleet that captured three Portuguese merchant vessels returning to Malacca from Pegu, the trading voyage had been jointly financed by some Jesuit Fathers “and a Portuguese biscuit baker.”²²³

²²⁰ Mundy, “Description of Macau in 1637,” 58.

²²¹ Quoted in Gunn, *First Globalization*, 266.

²²² Anderson, *The Food of China*, 118.

²²³ Richard Hakluyt, “A Voyage with Three Tall Ships, the Penelope Admirall, the Merchant Royal Viceadmirall, and the Edward Bonaventure Rearadmirall, to the East Indies...” in *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation*, Vol 11, by Richard Hakluyt, (Project Gutenberg, 2004), 150. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/12693/12693-8.txt>

Bread in Transition

European-style leavened breads feature strongly in the cuisine of Lusophone communities all over the world. In Brazil, where many Portuguese immigrants opened bakeries, the stereotype of a Portuguese as the owner of a bakery, a legacy of the era still persists.²²⁴ Goans are so fond of bread that Indians from other regions call them *pau wallahs* (bread men).²²⁵

The production of bread has been used as illustrative of social and economic change.²²⁶ Portuguese adaptability and the cultural mixing it fostered were reflected in the manner in which they accommodated their bread baking skills to local conditions. Soft white wheat rolls, called *pão* in Portugal, *pav* in Goa, *pau* or *bau* in Macao, and *pang* in Malacca, along with a variety of other Iberian breads, are constants in Luso-Asian cuisine. In Malaysia and Indonesia, many Portuguese breads and baked goods have been incorporated into the local repertoire. In Macao, Portuguese bakeries continue to flourish in what is now a Chinese territory.

Bread culture in India was greatly broadened by the influence of the

²²⁴ John Michael Francis, *Iberia and the Americas* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2005), 699.

²²⁵ Deepa Suhas Awachat, introduction to *The Goa Portuguesa Cookbook*, by Deepa Suhas Awachat (New Delhi: Popular Prakashan, 2009.), n.pag.

²²⁶ Carole Counihan, *Bread as World Food: Habits and Social Relations in Modernizing Sardinia* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 25.

Portuguese. In Goa, the bread vendor ringing his bell and pushing a bicycle loaded with round crusty rolls and other breads is seen in every village. All over India, in regions once inhabited by Portuguese, wheat rolls (*pão* in Portuguese, *poe* in Konkani, and *pav* in Hindi) accompany both European and Indian dishes. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, bread rolls, a legacy of the Portuguese presence in Madras, were still being served in the city's orphanages, along with the daily meal of rice, curry and pepper water.²²⁷ This enthusiasm for Iberian bread was not demonstrated in Spanish America, where to the Europeans' amazement, not even the native beggars would touch it.²²⁸

The early breads made by the Portuguese in Asia were very different from their modern descendants. The technology for producing refined white flour was not available, even in Europe, until the nineteenth century.²²⁹ Early Iberian breads were mostly large, oven-baked circular loaves that did not rise very much. Smaller, cigar-shaped loaves called *fogaças* were baked in ashes or cinders but rolls were unknown.²³⁰ The popularity of roll-sized breads in Asia probably arose out of the necessity for small batch baking in the absence of large communal ovens that could sustain

227 Lionel Caplan, *Children of Colonialism: Anglo-Indians in a Postcolonial World* (New York: Berg, 2003), 206.

228 Pilcher, *Que Vivan los Tamales!*, 35.

229 Anderson, *The Food of China*, 119.

230 Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 27.

heat long enough to bake bigger loaves.²³¹ Indo-Portuguese bread culture also evolved in response to local adaptations and inspirations. In Goa, *pão* are topped with crumbled and fried *chourissam*, the puffy buns making a perfect base for soaking up the spicy fat rendered from the sausages. *Wada pav*, popular throughout India, is a traditional south Indian vegetable or pulse fritter (*vada*) enclosed in a Portuguese bun (*pav*). This convenient and tasty snack, a kind of vegetarian hamburger, spread from Goa to Mumbai and then throughout the country. *Pav bhaji*, a bread roll stuffed with a spicy vegetable stew, is another popular local adaptation utilizing Portuguese bread.

Portuguese techniques also influenced the making of indigenous breads. The Catholics, who adopted various Hindu vegetarian dishes on fasting days, also adopted the traditional breads that accompanied them, such as *chapatis* and *poyes* (a pita-like wholewheat bread), and the rice breads called *sannas* and *iddlies*. The technique of leavening with an alcoholic liquid was adopted by the Hindu Konkans, who traditionally used fermented rice as a leaven for these rice breads.²³² Toddy was also used

231 Various methods were used to mimic oven baking or to achieve the characteristic browned top produced by a salamander. In Goa, a clay oven with a tray of hot coals on top is used. A similar set-up is used in Malaysia. The Macanese improvised with lid of a biscuit tin holding a lump of charcoal. In Siam, heated gravel was also used to supply the heat from below. To make *bebinca*, the Filipinos developed a specialized apparatus called a *bibingkahan*. Today, in kitchens that have them, broilers or toaster-ovens are used. Throughout the region, street vendors use purpose-built grills to produce various Portuguese-influenced cookies and snacks that are cooked from above and below. (Jorge, *Macanese Cooking*, 116; Amy Besa and Romy Dorotan, *Memories of Philippine Kitchens: Stories and Recipes from Far and Near* (New York: Stewart, Tabori and Chang, 2006), 63).

232 Cruz Urbano do Rego, "Hindu Saraswat Cuisine," unpublished monograph, (Singerim, 2007), n.pag.

to make hoppers in Sri Lanka.²³³ The Cristang in Malacca use a similar technique, employing palm *arak*, and the Japanese, who were taught to make bread by Jesuits in Nagasaki, used *amazake*, a very sweet, low alcohol rice wine.²³⁴ In Nagasaki and Hirado, local bakeries produced the bread required by the Jesuits for the celebration of Mass.²³⁵ Bread was so closely associated with the Portuguese that bread baking was banned when they were expelled from Japan.²³⁶

In Ceylon, bread consumption spread from the Portuguese community to the wider population, leading to the development of small village restaurants called 'bakery hotels.' These ubiquitous establishments produce a range of breads, cakes and pastries that are consumed by Sri Lankans from all cultural groups. Bicycle vendors distribute breads in the street, peddling their wares from wooden pannier cupboards. Bread has become a secondary staple for the Sri Lankans and it is eaten, like rice, as an accompaniment to curries.

Southeast Asians do not traditionally eat bread but throughout the region little breads, buns and baked pastries, which fit into the

233 Heather Jansz Balasuriya and Karin Winegar, *Fire and Spice: The Cuisine of Sri Lanka* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1989), 64.

234 Ishige, *The History and Culture of Japanese Food*, 93.

235 Ishige, *The History and Culture of Japanese Food*, 92.

236 Etchu Tetsuya, "European Influence on the 'Culture of Food' in Nagasaki," trans. Fumiko F. Earns. n.pag. http://www.uwosh.edu/faculty_staff/earns/etchu.html

traditional pattern of eating small snack foods, have been adopted. Like the Malays, the Cristang regard rice as the main component of a meal but they also thicken dishes with breadcrumbs, and serve soup with crusty bread or croutons. *Pang susis*, buns stuffed with meat, are a Cristang specialty that has entered the broader Malaysian repertoire, as have pastry-encased turnovers such as curry puffs and *epuk-epuk*. *Epuk-epuk* and the similar turnovers called *pastel* in Indonesia, *empadas* in Macao, and *empadinhas* in Goa, are probable descendants of the Iberian *empada*, originally a pie encased in bread. *Empada* is also the name given to a signature Macanese dish traditionally served at Christmas time. This exotic, slightly sweet fish pie encased in a rich pastry crust would not be out of place at a medieval Portuguese banquet.

The Chinese use the word *p'an*, from the Turkic *pan* and Persian *nan*, to describe the flattish griddle cakes made before the Portuguese arrival.²³⁷ They use the term *bau*, from the Portuguese *pão*, for the soft and doughy white buns that in Chinese cooking are usually steamed. The Portuguese introduced an oven-baked bun and many kinds of yeasted breads. In colonial era Macao, bread vendors plied the streets in the early morning and again in the afternoon, offering fresh loaves of bread, sweet buns filled with butter cream and sprinkled with coconut, molded cakes called *macazotes* and *pãozinho recheado*, little stuffed buns resembling Cristang

²³⁷ Anderson, *The Food of China*, 117.

pang susis. European baking has become so well assimilated into the local culinary repertoire that despite the 1999 return of Macao to China, bakeries that produce Eurasian breads and cookies still proliferate. Even the Chinese, who eat a traditional breakfast of rice porridge, noodles or dim sum, often eat bread with it as well.²³⁸

Rice: A New Staple

Shortly after Afonso de Albuquerque conquered Malacca in 1511, he sent an ambassador, Ruy Nunez d'Acunha, to the Burmese Kingdom of Pegu, and another to Siam.²³⁹ One of his primary motivations for these embassies was to source food for Malacca and the Portuguese settlements in the Moluccas, without having to depend on Muslim Javanese and Sumatran suppliers who traditionally supplied the Malay port with rice and other foods.²⁴⁰ Tome Pires described Pegu as “the most fertile land of all we have seen and known.”²⁴¹ The Jesuit Andrew Boves spoke of the country’s “infinite fruit-bearing trees.”²⁴² Linschoten likewise

238 Louis Augustin-Jean, “Food Consumption, Food Perception and the Search of a Macanese identity,” in *The Globalization of Chinese Food*, eds. David Y. H. Wu, Sidney C. H. Cheung (Richmond: Curzon Press, 2002), 125n.

239 Arthur Purves Phayre, *History of Burma* (London: Trübner and Co., 1884), 264.

240 Newitt, *A History of Portuguese Overseas Expansion*, 86.

241 Pires, *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires*, 1:97.

242 Andrew Boves, “The Epistle of Andrew Boves,” in “Jesuit Letters on Pegu in the Early Seventeenth Century,” *SOAS Bulletin of Burma Research* 2, no.2 (2004), 183.

praised it as “very rich and fruitfull of all things.”²⁴³ The principal currency of Pegu was silver and gold coinage, Tome Pires wrote, but small items were paid for with cowrie shells. Four to five hundred shells could be exchanged for a chicken.²⁴⁴

Pegu’s surplus rice crop attracted traders from throughout the Indian Ocean region. Gemstones also lured traders but Portuguese ships from Malacca came to Pegu primarily for rice. The initial Portuguese attempt to acquire trading rights there failed but in 1519 Anthony Correa made an agreement with the viceroy of Martaban and a *feitoria* was established in the port city.²⁴⁵ Tome Pires reported that the Portuguese also purchased butter, oil, salt, onions, garlic and mustard in Pegu for the Malay colony.²⁴⁶

Switching from a diet based primarily on meat and European grains to a tropical, rice-based diet represented a fundamental gastronomic shift for the Portuguese in Asia. Rice was not, however, an unfamiliar food. Its cultivation was introduced to southern Iberia by the Moors and while elsewhere in medieval Europe it remained an expensive imported commodity used mainly for medicinal purposes, Portugal was well

²⁴³ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:97.

²⁴⁴ Pires, *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires*, 1:100.

²⁴⁵ Phayre, *History of Burma*, 264.

²⁴⁶ Pires, *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires*, 1:98.

supplied.²⁴⁷ The minimal place of rice in the medieval British diet, for example, is reflected in the household accounts of Alice de Bryene for the year 1412-1413 which record that over the course of 16,500 meals served, 13,000 loaves of bread were consumed and only 3 pounds of rice.²⁴⁸

The swampy areas along Portugal's western coast were ideally suited to rice agriculture and the region became a centre of production.²⁴⁹ Rice did not displace Portugal's staple grains; millet, wheat and rye. It was eaten mostly as a sweet pudding, cooked with sugar and milk, and sometimes eggs. But rice came into its own when the Portuguese set out for the East at the close of the fifteenth century. Rice was a convenient food to carry on ships because, unlike other grains, it could be cooked without having to be soaked or ground beforehand. The men on Vasco da Gama's ships received rice in place of meat on fast days and on the initial voyage, stores sufficient for three years were carried.²⁵⁰ Given the frequency of fasting days at this point in Portugal's history, the men would have become quite accustomed to eating rice by the time they reached India. It is reasonable to assume that a bowl of rice was an early point of culinary agreement between the Portuguese and their neighbours in the Asian

²⁴⁷ Davidson, *The Penguin Companion to Food*, 795.

²⁴⁸ Colin Spencer, *British Food: An Extraordinary Thousand Years of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 79-82.

²⁴⁹ Manjón, *The Gastronomy of Spain and Portugal*, 42.

²⁵⁰ Velho, *A Journal of the First Voyage of Vasco da Gama*, 166.

territories.

Rice is probably indigenous to Southeast Asia and has been the basic staple of the great majority of its people for millennia.²⁵¹ It also formed the basis of the indigenous diet for much of Africa and China and the southern parts of India. When they set foot in Southern India, the Portuguese landed in one of Asia's premier rice growing regions. The heavy, prolonged annual rains that fell on India's western coast, from the Konkan in the north to the Malabar in the far south, allowed three rice crops a year. Along with Bengal, the region served as the granary to all India, as well as to port cities in the Middle East and Southeast Asia.²⁵²

"The king lives on rice, milk and butter," wrote Vasco da Gama after meeting the Zamorin of Calicut.²⁵³ Ludovico Di Varthema, an Italian who arrived in India only a few years after da Gama, described the local method of eating rice:

"The said pagans eat on the ground in a metal basin, and for a spoon make use of the leaf of a tree, and they always eat rice and fish, and spices and fruits. The two classes of peasants eat with

²⁵¹ Sri Owen, *The Rice Book* (New York: St Martin's Griffin, 1996), 60-61.

²⁵² K.N. Chaudhuri, *Asia before Europe: Economy and Civilisation of the Indian Ocean from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 236.

²⁵³ Velho, *A Journal of the First Voyage of Vasco da Gama*, 132.

the hand from a pipkin: and when they take rice from the pipkin, they hold the hand over the said pipkin and make a ball of the rice, and then put it into their mouths.”²⁵⁴

noted that the Asians were much better at cooking rice than the English, “for they boil the grain so as that it is full, plump and tender, but not broken in boiling; they put to it a little green ginger, pepper, and butter, and this is the ordinary way of their dressing it, and so ‘tis very good.”²⁵⁵

Rice was the commodity that kept the *Estado* alive. All of the Portuguese settlements in the western part of the *Estado*, including those in Africa, were sustained by rice shipped from southern India.²⁵⁶ Supplies of rice were ferried by local vessels between the Portuguese towns strung along the western Indian coast. The convoy sighted by Fryer off the coast north of Goa consisted of 200 native craft.²⁵⁷ Shipments from Malabar and the Coromandel Coast were sent to the Portuguese settlements in Ceylon, the Bay of Bengal, Mozambique and even as far away as Malacca when traditional supplies from Burma and Java were low.²⁵⁸ In India, the

²⁵⁴ Varthema, *The Travels of Ludovico di Varthema*, 147.

²⁵⁵ Terry, *A Voyage to East-India*, 194-195.

²⁵⁶ Maria Augusta Lima Cruz, “Notes on Portuguese Relations with Vijayanagara, 1500-1565,” in Subrahmanyam, *Sinners and Saints*, 1998), 32.

²⁵⁷ Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, 162.

²⁵⁸ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “Commerce and Conflict: Two Views of Portuguese Melaka in the 1620s,” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 19 (1988), 70.

Portuguese took payment for locally-issued *cartazes* in shiploads of rice.²⁵⁹ The region of Baticala paid a tithe of 150 loads in return for its *cartaz*.²⁶⁰ Rice was also used as a form of payment for other commodities and was traded throughout the *Estado*.²⁶¹ In 1533, over 30 private Portuguese traders at Nagapattinam were engaged in shipping rice.²⁶²

Both Portugal and Goa had severe rice deficits in the sixteenth century.²⁶³ An Englishman who visited the Portuguese town in Ceylon in 1592 reported that a fleet of ships arrived twice a year from Pegu carrying precious stones and rice. The cargo of rice was more important to the recipients than either diamonds or rubies.²⁶⁴

Although the Portuguese in Asia initially ate rice as a matter of necessity, they came to regard it as a staple and in many instances, to prefer it over bread. The English were less enthusiastic. John Jourdain noted that in Makassar his men preferred to eat roasted or boiled yams to rice²⁶⁵ and John Fryer reported from Chaul that the English were unimpressed by

²⁵⁹ John Keay, *Spice Route: A History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), 174.

²⁶⁰ Keay, *Spice Route*, 174.

²⁶¹ Pearson, *The Portuguese in India*, 25.

²⁶² Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Improvising Empire: Portuguese Trade and Settlement in the Bay of Bengal 1500-1700* (Delhi; New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 71.

²⁶³ Pearson, *The Portuguese in India*, 39.

²⁶⁴ Hakluyt, "A Voyage with Three Tall Ships," 51. A cargo of rice was put to creative use on the vessel *São Thome*, which was holed after leaving Cochin in 1589. Sacks of moistened rice were used as sandbags to plug the leaking hull. (Boxer, *The Tragic History of the Sea*, 54-55).

²⁶⁵ John Jourdain, *The Journal of John Jourdain*, 291.

the local staple of Cutchery (*kitchri*), “a sort of pulse and rice mixed together, and boiled in butter.”²⁶⁶ A party of Jesuits travelling in northern India in the retinue of Jahangir, however, thought *kitchri* (which English traveller Richard Burton called “a villainous compound of boiled rice and split vetches”) perfectly acceptable and ate it daily.²⁶⁷ The Portuguese willingness to adopt native staples was in marked contrast to Spanish conservatism in the Americas. After 200 years of colonization, the vast majority of Europeans living in Mexico City had never eaten a tortilla.²⁶⁸

The experience of Manuel Boavido, a refugee from Timor who went to Australia after the Indonesian invasion in 1975 and found himself bereft of rice, sums up the Luso-Asian sentiment for the grain that became their staff of life:

“Every night we had to go to a cafeteria where we had our meals with the rest of the community. The food in the cafeteria was great but there was no rice and we did not have any kitchen facilities in our rooms. We were really desperate to eat rice. So I bought a clay pot and with the help of my mother’s iron (underneath the pot) I

²⁶⁶ Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, 81.

²⁶⁷ Fernão Guerreiro, *Jahangir and the Jesuits*, trans. Charles Herbert Payne (New York: Routledge, 2004), 47; Burton, *Goa, and the Blue Mountains*, 122.

²⁶⁸ Pilcher, *Que Vivan los Tamales!*, 41.

always had rice with my meals.”²⁶⁹

Rice has assumed such a central cultural significance for the Luso-Asians that a Macanese nativity scene depicts the Infant Jesus eating rice with chopsticks.²⁷⁰

Pork

Pigs were enormously important to the Portuguese explorers and colonizers. Dropped off on islands, they fended for themselves, fed on whatever was available, multiplied easily and provided a larder for provisioning subsequent ships.²⁷¹ They became a vital source of protein in the Asian territories. Pigs reproduced six times faster than cattle and were much more efficient than cows at converting their consumed calories into meat.²⁷² Their flesh was also more succulent. The Englishman Horatio Suckling said the beef available in the Portuguese settlement in Ceylon was so tough it had to be pounded with stones to tenderize it and that pork was the best meat to be had.²⁷³ Beef was not

²⁶⁹ Julie Shiels, ed., *Cooking Stories* (Melbourne: Immigration Museum, 2003), 10.

²⁷⁰ Maria Graciete Besse, “Maria Ondina Braga e a Assimilação do Diverso: A Função Simbólica do Objecto Alimentar no Romance Nocturno em Macau,” *Quadrant* 10 (1993), 193.

²⁷¹ Zvi Dor-Ner, *Columbus and the Age of Discovery* (New York: William Morrow, 1991), 261.

²⁷² Bruce Aidells, *Bruce Aidells's Complete Book of Pork: Recipes from America's Premium Sausage Maker* (New York: William Morrow, 2004), 5; Marvin Harris, “The Abominal Pig,” in *Food and Culture: A Reader*, ed. Carole Counihan (New York: Routledge, 1997), 67.

²⁷³ Suckling, *Ceylon*, 395.

widely available. In India, Vasco da Gama noted “The common people eat meat and fish, but they do not eat oxen or cows, for they hold these animals to be blessed.”²⁷⁴ In Damão and Diu, cattle were never sold for slaughter because most of the population was Hindu. In Goa, even Christians rarely raised cattle for beef and those who wanted to eat it sometimes resorted to smuggling it in from other parts of India.²⁷⁵ Most significant for the Portuguese in Asia, where they did not pursue a policy of land acquisition, pigs required little room in which to graze.

Colombo unloaded Iberian pigs on his second voyage to Hispaniola, along with horses, dogs, cattle, sheep and goats.²⁷⁶ Portuguese vessels carried oxen, sheep, cows, mules, donkeys and horses.²⁷⁷ At some point, the Portuguese introduced pigs to Africa but because of the presence of Arabs on the East Coast, and the preference of the sub-Saharan tribes for cattle, pig husbandry did not become widespread.²⁷⁸ The Portuguese supply station at Mozambique kept supplies of pork for victualling ships. Wild pigs, bush pigs and warthogs were consumed by some African tribal groups and it may have been some form of non-domesticated pig that yielded the sweet-tasting pork that Linschoten encountered in

²⁷⁴ Velho, *A Journal of the First Voyage of Vasco da Gama*, 132.

²⁷⁵ Frederick J. Simoons, *Eat Not This Flesh: Food Avoidances from Prehistory to the Present* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), 116.

²⁷⁶ Kiple, *A Movable Feast*, 156.

²⁷⁷ Marques, “Travelling with the Fifteenth-century Discoverers,” 38.

²⁷⁸ Simoons, *Eat Not This Flesh*, 42.

Mozambique and of which Burnell wrote, “Europeans in India will not eat this unclean flesh; but it is much eaten by the half-castes, who keep up old customs in all matters. It is, with reason, supposed to be exceedingly unwholesome.”²⁷⁹

The pork available in India was very good. Pigs had been domesticated long before the Portuguese arrived and early culinary texts describe many ways of preparing pork.²⁸⁰ The merchant Domingo Paes found the pigs sold in the streets of butcher's houses in India “so black and clean that you could never see better in any country.”²⁸¹ Wild boar was also consumed and appreciated. Sebastien Manrique noted that it was a favourite of the Sikhs and Rajputs.²⁸² Ludovico di Varthema described great quantities of wild boar meat being served in the royal court at Calicut.²⁸³ The Jesuits travelling from Lahor to Agra in the retinue of Shah Jahangir around 1607 were offered as much meat as they wanted from the 15 boar and a number of deer the prince had hunted. Although they had travelled all day without eating, since it was Lent the Jesuits declined the meat and ate only a scanty meal of lentils and rice.²⁸⁴

²⁷⁹ Burnell in Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:26n.

²⁸⁰ Achaya, *A Historical Dictionary of Indian Food*, 187.

²⁸¹ Kingman, *A Taste of Madras*, 86.

²⁸² Achaya, *A Historical Dictionary of Indian Food*, 186.

²⁸³ Varthema, *The Travels of Ludovico di Varthema*, 175.

²⁸⁴ Guerreiro, *Jahangir and the Jesuits*, 47.

The Portuguese adapted quickly to the local diet of rice and fish but meat remained a preferred commodity.²⁸⁵ Although the state of Gujerat has the highest percentage of vegetarians in India, for example, as a result of the Portuguese presence in Damão and Diu, Gujerati Catholics eat beef, pork and goat, as well as fish, poultry and eggs.²⁸⁶ Galeote Pereira reported that the Indians kept hens, beef and pork to supply the Moors and the Portuguese.²⁸⁷ John Fryer reported when visiting Chaul that a local butcher who provided goat meat to the Moorish merchants also supplied Portuguese and British customers.²⁸⁸ The Portuguese merchant Don Pasquales noted in 1587 that mutton was particularly fine in southern India and good pork was also to be found.²⁸⁹ According to François Pyrard, patients in the Jesuit hospital in Goa were served meat twice a day, served with rice at dinner time and made into “excellent soups” for supper.²⁹⁰ Fryer reported that the Portuguese liked their meat “well stew’d, bak’d, or made into Pottage.”²⁹¹ Unlike the English who

285 As a legacy of the Portuguese presence in southern India, Kerala is the only Indian state that allows the slaughter of cows. (Madhur Jaffrey, *A Taste of India* (New York: IDG Books, 1985, 217).

286 Chitrita Banerji, *Eating India: An Odyssey Into the Food and Culture of the Land of Spices* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), 167; Michael Swamy Fernandes, “The Origins of the East Indians”, unpublished research paper, 2009. I am grateful to Michael for making his research available to me prior to the publication of his book *Enduring Flavours In Appreciation Of East Indian Cuisine* (Ahmedabad: Vakils, Feffer and Simmons, 2009).

287 Boxer, *South China in the Sixteenth Century*, 9.

288 Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, 82.

289 Kingman, *A Taste of Madras*, 86.

290 Pyrard, *The Voyage of François Pyrard*, 2:9.

291 Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, 82.

favoured large, roasted cuts of meat, the Portuguese made use of smaller pieces in stews. While this was probably an economic measure, Fryer agreed that it was better for the digestion to eat lightly in the tropics.

Understandably, pork charcuterie was not well developed in India. Pork was a forbidden meat for much of the Indian population, including the Muslims and higher caste Hindus living on the coast at the time the Portuguese arrived.²⁹² “The king of this city of Calicut eats neither of meat nor fish nor anything that has been killed, nor so his barons, courtiers or other persons of quality,” wrote da Gama in his journal.²⁹³ The Portuguese imported hams cured at the *feitoria* in Mozambique and the fine indigenous hams made in China. They began raising their own pigs and making sausages. Bernier observed that the Portuguese in India lived “almost entirely on pork.”²⁹⁴ Maria Graham, writing in the early nineteenth century, said the main feature defining the Catholic villages in Bombay was the immense number of pigs wandering about.²⁹⁵

Sometimes the Portuguese predilection for pork was cause for a faux pas.

²⁹² The presence of Chinese traders in Malacca meant that pork was available to Portuguese cooks even in this predominantly Muslim region. However, a long period of economic deprivation and isolation in a coastal enclave led to a predominance of seafood and vegetables in the Cristang diet.

²⁹³ Velho, *A Journal of the First Voyage of Vasco da Gama*, 132.

²⁹⁴ Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, 438.

²⁹⁵ Maria Graham, *Journal of a Residence in India*, 6. A reminder of the Portuguese presence in Mumbai is a stew of pigs' trotters and chilies that is a specialty of the city's brothel district. *Paya*, or trotters, were thought to have aphrodisiacal properties by the Mughals, who prepared a similar soupy stew from lamb and goat feet. The version using pig's trotters is a specialty of both Goa and Mumbai. (Moraes, *Bombay*, 149; Javed Akbar, “Paya In Shorba and Salan,” *Upper Crust*. <http://www.uppercrustindia.com/11crust/eleven/feature11.htm>)

When the Muslim King of Hormuz was prevented from going ashore for five days by a storm after paying a visit to the vessel of Ruy Andrada, the captain gave up his cabin to the King and made sure a splendid table was always laid for his guest. The King excused himself from attending because he and his retinue could not eat ham or sausages.²⁹⁶ Less civil treatment was experienced in India by Friar Sebastiao Manrique and his party, who were forced to sleep in a dirty and mosquito-infested cowshed because their consumption of cow and pig flesh made them unwelcome in Hindu houses.²⁹⁷

Pork was not as plentiful in Southeast Asia, which has no substantial grasslands or pastoral tradition, and a diet dominated by rice and fish rather than animal proteins.²⁹⁸ Countries that experienced a strong Chinese cultural influence, such as Vietnam, adopted pig husbandry but meat and milk products generally play a smaller part in the culinary life of the region than they do in the West.

The Portuguese settlers in Macao sourced their pork from the Chinese mainland. Meat was considered a high status food in Imperial China. When the Jesuit known as Rodrigues the Interpreter was entertained to

²⁹⁶ Boxer, *Commentaries of Ruy Freyre de Andrada*, 16.

²⁹⁷ Sebastien Manrique, "Friar Sebastien Manrique," in Fisher, *Visions of Mughal India*, 105.

²⁹⁸ Rosemary Brissenden, *Southeast Asian Food* (Singapore: Periplus, 2003), 4.

dinner by a Mandarin in Canton, he was served with 13 courses, most of them meat dishes.²⁹⁹ Galeote Pereira observed that the Chinese liked their pork rich; the fattier, the better.³⁰⁰ Gaspar da Cruz reported that in China “there are infinite swine which is the flesh they love most,” and described beautifully dressed whole roast pigs hanging in the doorways of Chinese shops. He praised the Chinese hams that the Portuguese bought and supplied to their settlements elsewhere in Asia. “They make of the hogs very singular flitches whereof the Portugals carry an infinite number to India.”³⁰¹ Pork must have been an expensive and highly prized commodity for the Portuguese in Japan, where pig husbandry was not practiced. To thank his colleague in Manila for the gift of songbirds and roses to enhance the Jesuit garden in Nagasaki, Father Diogo de Mesquita sent Father Juan de Ribera “a little box with some bits of bacon.”³⁰²

Vinegar

Vinegar’s antimicrobial action was particularly beneficial in the bacterially active tropical regions in which the Portuguese settled. The cold-weather techniques that the Portuguese had traditionally employed

²⁹⁹ Cooper, *Rodrigues the Interpreter*, 292.

³⁰⁰ Boxer, *South China in the Sixteenth Century*, 9.

³⁰¹ Boxer, *South China in the Sixteenth Century*, 131-134.

³⁰² Correia, “Father Diogo de Mesquita,” 84.

to preserve pork and pork charcuterie after the late autumn pig slaughter in Europe were impossible in India. In Goa, cooks resorted to cooking pork, and other meats, in heavily vinegared sauces and boiling the mixture repeatedly over several days. These well-spiced and vinegary dishes had a distinctive tangy taste and would keep for weeks without refrigeration.³⁰³

Vinegar was known and used in Asia before the Portuguese arrived. The Chinese used rice vinegar in small quantities to tenderize meat, mask unpleasant off tastes and adjust the balance of flavours.³⁰⁴ Indians have made vinegar from fermented palm sugar since early times but it was not used by Hindus and among other groups its use was primarily medicinal.³⁰⁵ Despite the Muslim proscription of alcohol traditional Persian uses of wine vinegar, to add piquancy to dishes and as a pickling agent, spread throughout Asia along with Islam.³⁰⁶ But it was the Portuguese who introduced the method of cooking foods, particularly meats, in vinegar.³⁰⁷ *Carne vinho d'alhos* (meat pickled in vinegar and

303 Vinegar-laced dishes that keep well, such as *sorpotel*, are popular fare at Goan wedding feasts and other celebrations that involve feeding many people over several days. Catholic Goan cooks developed *chourrisam*, a pork sausage laced with vinegar, and used vinegar to pickle a whole range of fruits, vegetables and seafood.

304 Lee and Lee, *Gourmet Regional Chinese Cookbook*, 117.

305 Achaya, *A Historical Dictionary of Indian Food*, 111.

306 Margaret Shaida, *The Legendary Cuisine of Persia* (Northampton, MA: Interlink, 2002), 4.

307 Luso-Asian cooks also adopted native souring agents, including palm vinegar, lime or lemon juice, tamarind, green mango and sour fruits such as *amla* (*Emblica officinalis*), *kokum* (*Garcinia indica*) and *blimbi*, (*Averrhoa bilimbi*, known as *belimbing* in Malay) to give their dishes the characteristic tang. Linschoten described how tamarind gave rice and meat “a fine sharp taste” in place of vinegar and said it was also valued by the Portuguese as a purgative and medicine. Malaysian culinary scholars believe that the Straits Chinese, many of whom who employed

garlic), a dish developed in Madeira and thought to be the ancestor of the Goan Catholic's *vindalho* (vindaloo to the British) and other regional meat and vinegar stews, was a classic example.

The importance of vinegar to the Portuguese was demonstrated during the last days of the Malacca fortress. A Spanish Padre arrived from Manila, just before Christmas, on the eve of the fall of Malacca. He found the city, which had been under siege for months, in a state of famine. The Christmas Eve 'feast' that the Portuguese scraped together for him was a "tortilla of a meal, with a little salt and vinegar."³⁰⁸ Vinegar was also used in variety of pickles and preserves. The Portuguese shipped Banda nutmegs to Lisbon in jars of vinegar.³⁰⁹ The pickled nutmegs were enjoyed in Europe as an addition to salads. In Goa, Linschoten reported, vinegar was used to preserve ginger in jars that were then buried in sand.³¹⁰

The Portuguese adapted Indian pickles, known as *achars* in Urdu and Hindi, to their vinegar-preserving techniques. Pickling has a long

Portuguese cooks, inherited their love of pungent tastes from the Portuguese. Many Peranakan dishes are very similar to Cristang ones. The category of Peranakan dishes called *tempura*, for example, which employ caramelized onions, red chilies and meat, fish or chicken marinated in lime juice, are thought to have originated with the Malacca Portuguese. (Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 2:120; Christopher Tan, pers. comm.).

308 Charles.R. Boxer, "Karl Marx and the Last Days of Portuguese Malacca, 1640-1641," in Boxer, *Portuguese Conquest and Commerce*, 125.

309 Villiers, "Trade and Society in the Banda Islands," 726.

310 Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 2:78.

tradition in India and Indian cooks produce a huge repertoire of relishes.³¹¹ No-one is quite sure where *achars* originated. They may have come to India with Mughal invaders and been dispersed elsewhere by Arab traders.³¹² But they were certainly carried, developed and dispersed in Asia by the Portuguese.

Achars are mentioned frequently by early European visitors to the Portuguese territories. Their long keeping qualities made them ideal as ships' provisions and they added piquancy to the seamen's usual bland diet. They were also carried as commercial goods.³¹³

John Fryer reported that the best mango *achar* was made by Portuguese cooks in Goa.³¹⁴ Della Valle, invited to dinner by a *casado* in Cananor, wrote enthusiastically of the "dried Indian figs and many vessels of conserves of the pulp of young Indian cane, or bamboo, (which is very good to eat after this manner) and of green pepper, cucumbers and other fruits wont to be pickled by them in vinegar."³¹⁵ The French traveller Le Sieur de la Boullaye Le Goutz, who sailed on a Portuguese ship in 1653,

311 Pickles are preserved in oil, salt or lemon juice and cured in the sun. The intensely flavoured condiments, combining salty, hot, sweet and sour elements, lend piquancy and nutrition to a rice-based diet. They are such a vital component of Indian cuisine that in some regions, new brides are required to demonstrate their skill in pickle-making to their in-laws. (Yamuna Devi, *Lord Krishna's Cuisine: The Art of Indian Vegetarian Cooking* (New York: Penguin, 1987), 428).

312 Burton, *French Colonial Cookery*, 68.

313 C.R. Boxer, *The Great Ship from Amacon: Annals of Macao and the old Japon Trade* (Lisbon: C.E.H.U., 1959), 195.

314 Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, 156.

315 Valle, *The Travels of Pietro della Valle in India*, 2:383-384.

mentions a pickle made of mangoes preserved with mustard, garlic, vinegar and salt.³¹⁶

Luso-Asian cooks developed a wide range of pickles utilizing vegetables, fruits, meats, seafood and fish and a variety of preservatives. They were known for their skill in preserving with vinegar and fermented palm toddy. These skills travelled with them around the *Estado*. William Dampier reported that very good *achars* were made in Pegu and Siam.³¹⁷ The class of Japanese pickles known as *nanban-zuke* (Southern Barbarian pickles), which employ chilies and vinegar, is thought to have emerged during the Portuguese sojourn in Nagasaki and is regarded as a local development of *escabeche*.³¹⁸

Salt

Salt was also needed for preserving various perishable commodities for shipping to Lisbon. Linschoten reported that the green cloves, nutmeg fruits and tamarind pieces were all preserved in salt and vinegar by the

³¹⁶ Quoted in Yule and Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson*, 3. Colleen Taylor Sen speculates that the sweet and sour chutney that traditionally precedes the dessert course in a Bengali meal began as a Portuguese pickle. (Colleen Taylor Sen, "The Portuguese Influence on Bengali Cuisine," in Walker, *Food on the Move*, 292).

³¹⁷ William Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (Warwick, NY: 1500 Books, 2007), 326.

³¹⁸ Shirley Booth, *Food of Japan* (Northampton, MA: Interlink, 2001), 209. Japanese *acharazuke*, finely chopped pickles flavoured with red pepper, vinegar and salt or soy sauce are another likely descendant of *achar*. (Ishige, *The History and Culture of Japanese Food*, 94).

Portuguese for shipping.³¹⁹ He also praised the salted meats made for the shipping trade by the Portuguese in Diu town. “They make hanged flesh which is very good, and will continue for a whole viage.”³²⁰

Salt was a very important trading commodity in Asia. In India it was heavily taxed, incurring four levies for the seller and two for the buyer.³²¹

Salt trading was big business. Travelling in the Deccan, John Fryer’s party was held up by a caravan of 300 oxen carrying salt, which Fryer wrote, was more valuable in India than bread.³²² Salt was also appreciated as a medicinal substance. Ayurvedic theory recommended the consumption of salty and sour foods during the rainy season.³²³ The Indians regarded rock salt as superior to sea salt in this respect. Hormuz rock salt, according to the British surgeon John Fryer, was the only known remedy for tropical fever.³²⁴ Persian mystics stood on a block of this special salt and placed another block on their head to improve their meditations. In Indian pharmacology, salt was known to stimulate *kapha*, the humour that gave the body form, shape and stability.³²⁵ When Nicolau Manucci fell into a faint after chewing betel in India, he

319 Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 2:83.

320 Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:59.

321 Achaya, *A Historical Dictionary of Indian Food*, 223.

322 Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, 141.

323 Katz, *Encyclopedia of Food and Culture*, 253.

324 Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, 221.

325 Achaya, *A Historical Dictionary of Indian Food*, 223, 116.

was revived by having salt poured into his mouth.³²⁶

The Portuguese knew a good trading opportunity when they saw it. The *feitoria* at Hormuz was built on land composed mostly of rock salt.

Duarte Barbosa reported that Portuguese ships loaded up with blocks of it which served as ballast and could be sold at a great profit elsewhere.³²⁷

The Portuguese dealt in salt all over the region. Even Filipe de Brito, fief of his own little kingdom in Pegu, was a part-time salt trader.³²⁸

To furnish the salt trade and supply their own needs the Portuguese set about manufacturing their own salt in Diu and took over native salt pans in Goa. “They also make a great deal of salt in ponds made in low grounds, where they may convey the water at spring tides,” Alexander Hamilton observed. “It may be bought for a crown the tun, and sometimes cheaper.”³²⁹ The Portuguese also introduced salt production to coastal areas in Ceylon, hiring African labourers to rake the salt pans.³³⁰ The Sinhala term for ‘salt pan’ *levaya*, is thought to be derived

326 Fisher, *Visions of Mughal India*, 119.

327 Barbosa, *A Description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar*, 41.

328 Cayetano J. Socarras, “The Portuguese in Lower Burma: Filipe de Brito de Nicote,” *Luso-Brazilian Review* 3, no. 2 (1966), 4.

329 Alexander Hamilton, “A New Account of the East Indies, giving an exact and copious description [...] of all the countries and islands, which lie between the Cape of Good Hope and the island of Japon...” In *A General Collection of the Best and Most Interesting Voyages and Travels in all Parts of the World*, Vol. 8, by John Pinkerton (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1811), 355.

330 Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya, “The Portuguese Identity of the Afro-Sri-Lankans,” *Lusotopie* 12 (2005), 22.

from the Portuguese *levada*, meaning brook.³³¹ Along with cinnamon and elephants (30 of which were captured and sold each year), a tax on salt and pepper was an important source of revenue for the Portuguese in Ceylon.³³²

Salted foods and condiments were made throughout Luso-Asia as the Portuguese applied their traditional knowledge of salt preserving to local ingredients and indigenous salted foods. The Cristang in Malacca became specialists in making the salted shrimp condiment, *belacan* and the Macanese created the related *balichaung*. The Catholic Goans perfected a delicacy called *mangas retheadas*, mangoes stuffed with green ginger and garlic, preserved in salt, oil and vinegar and *para*, a spicy hot pickle of salted fish traditionally put up before the monsoon. Linschoten reported that they also prepared cashew fruits by slicing them and sprinkling them with salt and wine.³³³ They also used Portuguese methods of preserving meat with salt and vinegar, giving rise to Goan *chourrisam* sausages, *carne de porco salgada* (salted pork) and a salted tongue relish that is a specialty of the Catholic East Indians.

The Portuguese also became acquainted with new varieties of salted

³³¹ Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya, *Tagus to Taprobane: Portuguese Impact on the Socio-culture of Sri Lanka from 1505 AD* (Dehiwala: Tisara Prakasakayo, 2001), 63.

³³² Suckling, *Ceylon*, 296.

³³³ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 2:29.

foods. The King of Malindi supplied Vasco da Gama with sheep “salted whole like salt meat” for his voyage to India.³³⁴ In India, they encountered mangoes preserved in salt and brine, which Linschoten said, tasted a lot like Spanish olives.³³⁵ Portuguese in Malacca adopted *belacan* and the salted soybean condiment called *taucheo* and in Macao developed a taste for Chinese soy sauce and salted beans, Yunan ham, and the salty sweet preserved olives called *lám*.

Portuguese merchants added local varieties of salted fish to their inventory of trade goods. They bought *moxama*, a type of dried tuna, from the Maldives and sold it for a profit in the Indonesian archipelago.³³⁶ In India, they trafficked in the dried fish that was made by indigenous fishermen in the coastal regions around Bom Bahia and Diu. *Harpodon nepereus*, called *bombil* or *bummelo* by the Portuguese and Bombay Duck by the British, could be sun-dried safely without salt, making it much cheaper than salt-cured fish. It was the food of the poor in coastal areas of India, sustaining them throughout the monsoon season. Local tradition credits the Portuguese with introducing superior methods for preserving *bombil* with salt. There is some evidence to support such a claim – Linschoten reported that the Portuguese in Diu

³³⁴ Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, 144.

³³⁵ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 2:26

³³⁶ Dion, “Sumatra through Portuguese Eyes,” 157.

made very good dried fish that tasted very similar to salt cod.³³⁷

Sugar

Sugar was another important article of trade for the Portuguese in Asia. It was already widely used in the region, in India and particularly in China where, as early as the twelfth century, many kinds of sugar, including white, brown, refined and powdered were in use, and a variety of sugar based sweets, cakes and syrups could be purchased in the market.³³⁸ But the Portuguese, who had pioneered sugar plantation agriculture, were experts in sugar production and were able to make a product finer than many of the coarse indigenous sugars. Portuguese expertise also, indirectly, underwrote the establishment of sugar in the Caribbean. Christoforo Colombo, who introduced sugarcane to the Americas, was trained in the Madeira sugar trade. In the 1640's, Portuguese Jewish sugar experts exiled from Brazil revolutionized the sugar industry of Barbados.³³⁹ India and Japan also benefitted from Portuguese sugar expertise.

337 Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:59. Even in places that had their own local varieties of salted fish, the Luso-Asians preferred imported salt cod from Lisbon whenever they could get it. The Malacca Portuguese lost their source of supply when the Dutch took over their colony and *bacalhau* does not play a significant role in Cristang cuisine. The Macanese, however, who had access to Portuguese imports via Hong Kong when the days of the *Carreira da India* were over, use it in many dishes. In India, after Goan independence, Portuguese ingredients in general became hard to find. Local substitutes, such as salted ray and shark made their way into recipes for dishes using *bacalhau*.

338 Sucheta Mazumdar, "China and the Global Atlantic: Sugar from the Age of Columbus to Pepsi-Coke and Ethanol," *Food and Foodways* 16, no. 2 (2008), 140-141.

339 Grove, *Green Imperialism*, 68.

In pre-Portuguese India sugar was made from the palmyra palm and the date palm, as well as from Southeast Asian sugarcane that had been naturalized in some parts of the subcontinent.³⁴⁰ Duarte Barbosa, who observed Indians making sugar in Bengal, noted that the Indians did not know how to compress it into loaves, as was the practice in Europe, and that they packed it in leather sacks in powdered form.³⁴¹ Barbosa called this sugar *xagara* (from the Sanskrit term *sharkara* for sugar), which gave us the term jaggery.³⁴² Ludovico di Varthema described jaggery being made from boiled palm sap in Calicut but said “it is not very good.”³⁴³

It is likely that the Portuguese noted that sugarcane was grown in the fertile region around their settlement at Hugli and introduced their superior production methods and sweet making techniques.³⁴⁴ The environs of Baçaim were another excellent region for sugarcane. The Portuguese processed huge amounts annually which they sold to the

340 Achaya, *A Historical Dictionary of Indian Food*, 110, 240.

341 Barbosa, *A Description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar*, 179. Samuel Baron also noted that plenty of sugarcane was grown in Tonking but the natives lacked the skill to refine it. (Dror and Taylor, *Views of Seventeenth-Century Vietnam*, 209).

342 Achaya, *A Historical Dictionary of Indian Food*, 110.

343 Varthema, *The Travels of Ludovico di Varthema*, 165.

344 The Bengalis are famous among Indians for their love of sweets. In the old days, wealthy landowners were said to have lived exclusively on them. (Sen, “The Portuguese Influence on Bengali Cuisine,” 292).

Turks, English, Gujaratis, Arabs and Banians.³⁴⁵

When the Portuguese began their diplomatic missions abroad, sweets were presented to foreign dignitaries as a means of currying favour and as tokens of respect. They were not petty gifts. Some of the more expensive sugars were worth more than 50 times the price of honey in Portugal.³⁴⁶ In Malindi, da Gama sent a gift of preserved pears to the local king, after demonstrating to the king's servant how to cut them into quarters and eat them with a silver fork.³⁴⁷ When the king was entertained on board da Gama's vessel, the dignitary was conducted to the quarterdeck, where a handsome table had been set out, with gold-embroidered Flemish napkins. He was offered a variety of preserves, confectionery, preserved almonds, olives and marmalade, served in silver dishes and accompanied by wine in gilt vessels.³⁴⁸ Upon his arrival in India, a bale of sugar was among the gifts da Gama presented to the Zamorin of Calicut. In Burma, the Portuguese Augustinian missionary, Sebastião Manrique presented the Comptroller of the Royal Household with a gift of Iberian sweetmeats and cakes.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁵ Cunha, *The Origin of Bombay*, 189.

³⁴⁶ Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 23.

³⁴⁷ Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, 130.

³⁴⁸ Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, 136.

³⁴⁹ Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, 152, 154.

Portuguese *casados* enjoyed many privileges bestowed by the state in order to encourage them to settle in the colonies, including an exemption from the payment of tax on sugar.³⁵⁰ As nearly all *casados* made their living at least in part from trade, it was an important concession.³⁵¹ They sold Brazilian sugar, and the fine preserves made with it, throughout the region. They also soaked the tobacco they traded in sugar syrup to give it a sweet taste and make it harder for competitors to duplicate.³⁵² The refined white sugar used by the Europeans was prized by Asian cooks as it produced a more lustrous syrup than palm sugar and created finer baked goods.

It was not only the *casados* who benefitted from sugar. In the 1780's the rector of the Diu monastery, Friar Estevão de Jesus Maria Josã, was accused of malpractice because he had amassed an excessive quantity of sugar using money intended for the Church.³⁵³

Portuguese traders also trafficked in Asian sugar. From the seventeenth century forward, the growing European demand for sugar also

350 Burnell in Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:34.

351 The exemption from this and other taxes led to the Portuguese *mestizos* being called *Mardjikkers*, 'free men' by the Dutch. (Daus, *Portuguese Eurasian Communities in Southeast Asia*, 29).

352 Allen F. Roberts, "Smoking in Sub-Saharan Africa," in *Smoke: A Global History of Smoking*, eds. Sander L. Gilman and Xun Zhou (London: Reaktion, 2004), 48.

353 Borges, et al., *Goa and Portugal*, 234.

stimulated the growth of the indigenous sugar industry.³⁵⁴ “In the realm of China there is great store of excellent sugar, which is conveyed by the Portugals very plentifully,” wrote the Jesuit Duarte de Sande.³⁵⁵ China was also a significant producer and exporter of sugar in the early seventeenth century but the amount of 10-15 million pounds exported annually in the 1630s was dwarfed by the Portuguese output from Brazil of 45 million pounds per year during same period.³⁵⁶ The Chinese themselves were not big consumers.³⁵⁷ Sugar was dispensed at banquets in accordance with the ranking of a guest. Ironically, the Portuguese, along with other Europeans, were the lowest ranking guests and received only a small amount of white sugar and none of the other treats, such as rock sugar, white honey and ‘eight precious sugar’ that were served to more important guests.³⁵⁸

The Chinese made high quality sweet ginger preserves that the Portuguese purchased.³⁵⁹ Soon after the arrival of the Portuguese, the Chinese began to combine a Portuguese import, the peanut, with sugar to produce the peanut brittle and peanut candies that are still hugely

354 Sucheta Mazumdar, *Sugar and Society in China: Peasants, Technology, and the World Market* (Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Asia Center, 1998), 137.

355 Sande, “An Excellent Treatise of the Kingdom of China,” 216.

356 Mazumdar, *Sugar and Society in China in China*, 2.

357 Mazumdar, *Sugar and Society in China*, 2-3.

358 Mazumdar, *Sugar and Society in China*, 43-44.

359 Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 2:79.

popular in China.³⁶⁰

The Portuguese were also great consumers of their own sugar. “There was no nation in the world so fond of sweetmeats as the Portuguese; they always handed them about on their social visits,” the Dutchman Jacobus Canter Visscher wrote while visiting Goa in the 1750s.³⁶¹ “As for confectionery, they have many kinds, and eat a large quantity,” observed Tavernier, noting that even during the decline of Goa, when food was in short supply and patients in the hospital were surviving on beef tea and rice, “sweets and confectionery are not wanting.” The consumption of so much sugar, the Frenchman added “does not contribute much to the establishment of health.”³⁶² Alexander Hamilton, another visitor to Goa-in-decline, commented on the decay of the magnificent Portuguese houses and the paucity of the *casados*’ diet of seasonal fruit and vegetables, with a little bread and rice. Yet, he said, they ate candied and preserved fruits all year round.³⁶³

³⁶⁰ Mazumdar, *Sugar and Society in China*, 46.

³⁶¹ Jacobus Canter Visscher, *Letters from Malabar, to which is added An Account of Travancore, and Fra Bartolomeo’s Travels in that Country by Major Herber Drury* (Madras: Adelphi Press, 1862), 37.

³⁶² Tavernier, *Travels in India*, 1:187, 198.

³⁶³ Hamilton, “A New Account of the East Indies,” 353.

Sweet Preserves

The Portuguese put their candying and jam making skills to work in their new-found territories. Pedro Teixeira reported that the Portuguese made very good marmalades from pears, peaches, plums, apples, grapes, figs and quinces imported from Persia and supplied these to the whole of India.³⁶⁴ Quinces were believed to stimulate the appetite, aid digestion and cure heartache.³⁶⁵ Patients in the Jesuit hospital at Goa were given preserves for dessert every day.³⁶⁶ A preserve made with ginger, Linschoten reported, made a man “go easily to the stoole” as well as preventing diarrhea, promoting good digestion and brightening the eyes.³⁶⁷ Pyrard also praised the fine “conserves, and comfits, both dried and liquid, of oranges, limes, citrons, and other fruits, chiefly green ginger” that the Portuguese made with Brazilian sugar and sold in India.³⁶⁸

The Portuguese also shipped the ginger preserves made in China to their settlements in India.³⁶⁹ These sweet preserves were a novelty in India.

³⁶⁴ Teixeira, *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*, 266-267.

³⁶⁵ Adamson, *Food in Medieval Times*, 20.

³⁶⁶ Pyrard, *The Voyage of François Pyrard*, 2:9.

³⁶⁷ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 2:80.

³⁶⁸ Pyrard, *The Voyage of François Pyrard*, 2:313.

³⁶⁹ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:79.

Vedic jams and sweet preserves were not designed for long keeping and tended to be spicy and hot like chutneys.³⁷⁰ Fryer noted that the Indians did not know how to candy fruit, writing, “they have not the art to preserve it in sugar, but salt it up.”³⁷¹ In Goa, Portuguese confectioners introduced the Iberian technique for making *marmelada* (quince paste) and invented a *mangada* made from mangoes and a *figada* from bananas. In Macao they made *perada* from pears and *maçãzada* from apples scented with cloves. One of their most popular sweetmeats, according to Linschoten, was a candied version of the vinegared nutmegs they shipped from Banda.³⁷² Linschoten also said that green cloves candied in Malacca were “very pleasant to be eaten.”³⁷³ Foods discovered in the New World provided even more inspiration. A 1771 French cookbook mentions that the Portuguese were making a marmalade out of sweet potatoes.³⁷⁴

370 Devi, *Lord Krishna's Cuisine*, 435. Achaya attributes the origin of Indian chutneys in the tradition of Major Grey's to the Portuguese in Bengal. Chutney, from the Hindi *chatni* meaning a fresh relish, was the name given to these preserves by the British, who followed the Portuguese into Bengal and developed a great liking for the spiced fruit conserves. Achaya believes that the preserves called *morabbas* in India are the probable ancestor of the Major Grey-style of chutney. *Morabbas*, which are fruits boiled in thick sugar syrup, are a specialty of Bengal, and they may have first been made there by the Portuguese. They are regarded as health tonics by some Indians, a view that the sixteenth century Europeans shared. An unattributed Wikipedia entry states that *murabbas* originated in Gurjistan (Republic of Georgia) when the ethnic Gurjaris migrated to the Indian state now called Gujarat and adapted the Georgian *murabba*, which was traditionally made from cherries and other stone fruits, to the mango. Darra Goldstein, an authority on Georgian cuisine, confirms that *morabbas* are a Georgian preserve and that there are links between the North Indian and Georgian culinary traditions, which share a Mughal ancestry. It may be that the Portuguese, who had a considerable presence in Gujarat, encountered Indianized *murabbas* there and brought them to Bengal. (Achaya, *A Historical Dictionary of Indian Food* 73; Darra Goldstein, *Georgian Feast: The Vibrant Culture and Savory Food of the Republic of Georgia* (New York: HarperCollins, 1993) 187; email from Darra Goldstein, 14 October, 2008.

371 Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, 178.

372 Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 2:84.

373 Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 2:83.

374 Philip Hyman and Mary Hyman, “Batatas,” *Petits Propos Culinaires* 4 (1980), 54.

Portuguese traders shipped preserves to Western India, the Middle East and Europe.³⁷⁵ Linschoten noted that they shipped candied tamarind to Lisbon.³⁷⁶ ‘Assorted conserves’ were also listed among the trade goods carried to Japan on the Great Ships that made annual voyages to Nagasaki from Macao.³⁷⁷ Bengal was a central distribution and manufacturing point. Duarte Barbosa observed a great store of preserves there made from ginger, oranges and lemons.³⁷⁸ In 1668, Bernier noted that the Portuguese in Bengal were highly skilled in the making of sweetmeats and that these were an important article of trade. He described a number of the preserves.

“Among other fruits, they preserve large citrons, such as we have in Europe, a certain delicate root about the length of sarsaparilla, that common fruit of the Indias called amba (mango), another called ananas (pineapple), small mirobalans (amla), which are excellent, limes and ginger.”³⁷⁹

375 Subrahmanyam, *Improvising Empire*, 115.

376 Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 2:120.

377 Boxer, *The Great Ship from Amacon*, 195.

378 Barbosa, *A Description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar*, 180.

379 Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, 437-438.

Conventual Sweets in Asia

Cakes, cookies, pastries and desserts with origins in the conventual sweet making traditions of sixteenth and seventeenth century Portugal are found in all the former Portuguese colonies in Asia and other parts of the region with a history of Portuguese visitation. Some of the less perishable kinds of Iberian sweets manufactured in Portugal and Madeira were carried to Asia and traded in the region during the sixteenth century. Marzipans, for example, were carried on Portuguese ships as indulgences for the captain and officers and were also used as enticements to foreign potentates with whom the Portuguese hoped to secure trading agreements or other privileges. In order to win favour with the Governor of Arakan, in addition to the sweets given to the Comptroller of the Royal Household, Sebastião Manrique presented the Burmese ruler's son with a gift of "marzipans in fantastic shapes," which apparently met with his enthusiastic approval.³⁸⁰ Because of the religious connotations of marzipan to the Portuguese, their presentation to foreign dignitaries may also have served to reinforce the Iberians' Christian message.

Arab traders ensured that a supply of almonds was available to the kitchens of the Mughal emperors, where they were used extensively as a

³⁸⁰ Collis, *The Land of the Great Image*, 141.

thickener, a filling for pastries, to garnish rice dishes and as the basis for marzipan-like confections called *barfi*. Despite their availability during the Mughal period, they remained expensive and almond sweetmeats were considered a luxury. In Goa, where the Portuguese-introduced cashews flourished, marzipan could be made using this more readily available nut. Linschoten observed that marchpanes were served to guests at Catholic wedding feasts.³⁸¹ Pedro Teixeira reported that the Portuguese supplied the whole of India with these “delicious dainties.”³⁸²

The development of a sweet making tradition within Luso-Asia was fostered by the entry of Iberian nuns into the region in the early seventeenth century. In India, says Lizzie Collingham, Portuguese sweets made from eggs and sugar were “an entirely new phenomenon.”³⁸³ In Medieval Asia, eggs were generally considered an unclean food.³⁸⁴ They were expensive because there was no mass production and their consumption was thought to be wasteful because of the loss of potential chickens.³⁸⁵ Eggs, when consumed, were used as a source of protein in meals. They were rarely used in sweets, which were traditionally made

³⁸¹ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:197.

³⁸² Teixeira, *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*, 267. *Macapão* remains a signature sweet in Catholic Goan and East Indian kitchens. Almond and cashew varieties are still made by hand in Goa, particularly at Easter. (Menezes, *The Essential Goa Cookbook*, 311).

³⁸³ Collingham, *Curry*, 61.

³⁸⁴ Kenneth F. Kiple, ed., *The Cambridge World History of Food* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 500.

³⁸⁵ Kiple, *The Cambridge World History of Food*, 500.

from boiled down milk or coconut milk,³⁸⁶ sweetened ground pulses, indigenous fruits and rice or rice flour.

Cakes and sweets were much in demand in the devoutly Catholic Luso-Asian societies. The Twelve Days of Christmas were the high point of the Catholic culinary and religious year and brought forth a multitude of marzipans, *halwahs*, breads, cakes and confections with evocative names such as *nun's bellies*, *sighs* and *heavenly bacon*. Yeasted cakes and breads, associated with growth and new arisings, were popular at Easter and at baptisms.³⁸⁷ A round bread decorated with coloured eggs was the culmination of the celebration period lasting from Palm Sunday to Easter. In wealthier households, sweets were purchased from the nuns or made by the ladies of the house as a way of demonstrating piety. A hand-made cake was an indicator of the effort made to honour guests. Baking also provided an opportunity to demonstrate a lady's devotion to the Catholic faith and win favour with the clergy who presided over churches, hospitals and schools and wielded significant social power. In poorer households, when resources were scarce, a special effort was made to produce traditional sweets, sometimes with the help of

³⁸⁶ Dairying of cows is not an Asian tradition. Desserts and custards made from milk, cream and eggs in Luso-Asia are mostly of Iberian or European origin. Some have been adapted to make use of coconut milk, and in the twentieth century, evaporated and condensed milk. Others have gradually evolved into more Asianized desserts.

³⁸⁷ Fabre-Vassas and Volk, *The Singular Beast*, 205. Because of their ritual associations, many sweets have survived the centuries with very little change.

neighbours enlisted to round up the necessary ingredients.³⁸⁸

Alcoholic Beverages

Wine was an important element of Portuguese gastronomy and essential for the performance of Catholic ritual. Casks of wine served as ballast on outbound voyages.³⁸⁹ Alcoholic beverages were also popular trade goods. They were concentrated, took up little space, and were durable.³⁹⁰ They were also very easy to barter or sell. In the 1450s, Diogo Gomez entertained appreciative African chiefs in Mali with meat and chicken cooked in Portuguese style, accompanied by red and white wines.³⁹¹ Of the various goods exchanged by the Portuguese for slaves in Africa during the fifteenth century, alcoholic drinks were the most in demand.³⁹²

When he lay dying in his bunk off the coast of Goa in 1515, the last thing

388 Cakes such as *bolu*, *molho*, *koku* and *Portugal* (or *putugal*) appear in all the former Asian colonies, along with versions of classic Portuguese sweets, such as *fartes* (filled cookies), *genetes* (cornstarch cookies) *coscurão* ("sheets"), *filhozes* (fritters) and the stamped wafers known as *rosquilhas* or *love letters* by the Portuguese-Eurasians and *kuih semprong* in Indonesia. *Rosquilhas* originated in Portugal as a ring-shaped cookie. The Asian versions are either rolled into a cigar shape or folded into quarters. *Queijadas* (small tarts traditionally filled with fresh cheese (*queijo*) in Portugal) appear as coconut and pineapple tarts in Asia. *Pasteis de nata*, little custard tarts made famous in Lisbon and enjoyed by Luso-Asians everywhere, are thought to have inspired the Chinese *dim sum* known as *taan tarts* or *egg tarts*, from which the dairy element that the Chinese find unappealing has been removed.

389 Boxer, *From Lisbon to Goa*, 52.

390 Standage, *A History of the World in 6 Glasses*, 97.

391 Newitt, *The First Portuguese Colonial Empire*, 31.

392 Standage, *A History of the World in 6 Glasses*, 104.

that Albuquerque asked for was a glass of red wine from Portugal.³⁹³ The Portuguese experimented with viticulture in Asia in order to make wine for Communion and to supply their own tables. They managed to grow grapes but the quality was poor. Vines grew eight times faster in the tropics than in Europe and produced fruit seven times in two years, François Leguat reported from Java, but the fruit never reached maturity and was useless for making wine.³⁹⁴

In Japan, Richard Willes noted “The use of vines they know not, their drinke they make of rice.”³⁹⁵ The Jesuits planted grape vines in Nagasaki but in 1599, Father Diogo de Mesquita wrote to the Rector of the Jesuit College in Manila, complaining that the grapes were no good and that it was impossible to make decent wine from them.³⁹⁶ Thomas Stevens noted that in Goa “all the wines are brought out of Portugall.”³⁹⁷

The Chinese, who had no religious aversion to alcohol, produced their own grain-based *chiu*, but used it primarily as a seasoning or a medicine.

The technique of viticulture was known in the north but European

393 Afonso Dalboquerque, *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque, Second Viceroy of India*, ed. Walter de Gray Birch (London: Hakluyt Society, 1884), 4:196.

394 François Leguat, *The Voyage of François Leguat of Bresse, to Rodriguez, Mauritius, Java, and the Cape of Good Hope*, Vol 2, ed. Pasfield Oliver (1891: repr., Boston: Adamant Media, 2005), 228.

395 Willes, “Of the Iland Japan,” 192.

396 Correia, “Father Diogo de Mesquita,” 82.

397 Stevens, “A Letter Written from Goa,” 145.

visitors to the southern coast reported that it was unknown there. “The Chinians know not [...] the name of a vine,” wrote Duarte de Sande.³⁹⁸

Wine was one of the official supplies sent to the Jesuit missions abroad.³⁹⁹ John Fryer reported in 1672 that he had been served “very good wine” by the Jesuit Fathers on the island of Canorein (near Bom Bahia) and had received some casks as a gift for his journey.⁴⁰⁰ Forty-eight bottles of “the very best European wine” were sent as a gift from the Macao senate to a Chinese mandarin in 1719. Albrecht Mandelso, entertained to dinner by the Jesuits in Goa in 1638, reported being served the best Madeira of his life.⁴⁰¹ Peter Mundy described a dinner he attended in a *fidalgo*’s mansion in Macao, where each guest was attended by a servant who stood by his elbow, topping up his goblet “with excellent good Portugall wyne.”⁴⁰²

The Japanese were introduced wine when the Catholic church was built in Yokoseura.⁴⁰³ The people of Nagasaki developed a taste for it and were

398 Sande, “An Excellent Treatise of the Kingdom of China,” 216.

399 Charles J. Borges, “The Jesuits of the Estado da India and their China Links,” in *As Relações entre a Índia Portuguesa, a Ásia do Sueste e o Extremo Oriente: Actas do VI Seminário Internacional de História Indo-Portuguesa*, eds. Artur Teodoro de Matos and Luis Filipe Reis Thomaz, 111-124. (Macao and Lisbon, Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimientos Portugueses), 115.

400 Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, 71.

401 Commissariat, *Mandelso's Travels In Western India*, 69.

402 Mundy, “Description of Macau in 1637,” 59.

403 Tetsuya, “European Influence on the ‘Culture of Food’ in Nagasaki,” n.pag.

the first Japanese to use glasses to drink.⁴⁰⁴ Luis Frois noted that even the women in Japan “sometimes indulge to the point of drunkenness.”⁴⁰⁵ In Pegu, King Tabinshwehti found the wine and honey-sweetened spirits supplied by the Portuguese so much to his liking that he abandoned his duties, declaring to his Commander in Chief: “I have made friends with drink. Brother, do thou manage the affairs of state. Bring me no petitions. Leave me to my jollity.”⁴⁰⁶ The high mortality among the British in Bombay was attributed to their consumption of meat and strong Portuguese wines, while wearing tight clothes.⁴⁰⁷

While they had little success with viticulture in the East, the Portuguese developed some very good alternative alcoholic beverages. To save the expense of shipping their favourite spirit, *aguardente*, from Lisbon they experimented with native ingredients, creating an improved version of the Asian palm wine, *arak*, and by distilling it further, some highly potent local brandies. Della Valle sampled palm toddy and found it “whitish and a little troubled, of taste somewhat sourish and sweet too, not unpleasing to the palate, almost like our poignant or Brisk-wine.”⁴⁰⁸

404 Tetsuya, “European Influence on the ‘Culture of Food’ in Nagasaki,” n.pag.

405 Luis Frois, quoted in William Theodore de Bary, Carol Gluck and Arthur E. Tiedemann, *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, 2nd edition. Vol. 2 abridged. Part 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 144.

406 Harvey, *History of Burma*, 160-161.

407 Cunha, *The Origin of Bombay*, 319.

408 Valle, *The Travels of Pietro della Valle in India*, 1:62.

Edward Terry said that fresh toddy was a very wholesome drink that promoted excessive urination and helped cure kidney stones but if left too long in the sun would turn a man's brains.⁴⁰⁹

Toddy can be made from several species of palm tree. John Fryer said the best of the "heady liquor" came from the 'Brabb' tree, which had fan-shaped leaves, fruit filled with 'gelly' and a topknot that was cut off and cooked like a cauliflower.⁴¹⁰ Terry described the inflorescence as akin to a giant artichoke.⁴¹¹ In Southeast Asia, the Portuguese sold very good *arak* made from the Nipa palm. Edmund Barker, lieutenant on a British ship, described Nipa wine as "very strong, and very hot in taste like unto Aqua Vitae."⁴¹² Ceasar Federici claimed it was a very effective cure for syphilis.⁴¹³

Portuguese monks are credited with teaching Goans the art of double distilling that produced *feni*, a more potent form of the local brew and another version made from cashew apples. Ludovico di Varthema commented that *feni* "will affect a man's head by merely smelling it, to

409 Terry, *A Voyage to East India*, 93.

410 Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, 7; 76.

411 Terry, *A Voyage to East India*, 62.

412 Hakluyt, "A Voyage with Three Tall Ships," 253.

413 Federici, "The Voyage and Trauell of M. Cæsar Fredericke," 132.

say nothing of drinking it.”⁴¹⁴ Native toddy tappers in Asia had discovered that fresh toddy soured easily and could not be stored unless it was distilled into *arak*. Portuguese techniques, particularly their distinctively shaped alembic and the process of double distillation, produced a much more effective intoxicant. Ralph Fitch witnessed the production of palm *feni* in Goa:

“The wine doth issue out of the top of the tree. They cut a branch of a bough and bind it hard and hang an earthen pot upon it, which they empty every morning and every evening and still it and put in certain dried raisins, and it becometh very strong wine in short time.”⁴¹⁵

Feni was consumed with enthusiasm by just about everyone in Goan society, including lower caste Hindus. It was also highly sought after by the British in India, who thought it made the best punch.⁴¹⁶ According to Alexander Hamilton, the English were the Portuguese *arak* merchants’ best customers.⁴¹⁷

The Portuguese controlled the supply of these beverages and had a

⁴¹⁴ Varthema, *The Travels of Ludovico di Varthema*, 165.

⁴¹⁵ Fitch, “A Letter from Goa,” 13.

⁴¹⁶ Achaya, *A Historical Dictionary of Indian Food*, 83.

⁴¹⁷ Hamilton, “A New Account of the East Indies,” 355.

monopoly on their sale. According to Linschoten, they shipped them in great quantity to Bengal, Malacca, China and elsewhere.⁴¹⁸ The only way to acquire raisin wine or *arak* in Dabull, Jourdain reported, was by bribing the Portuguese factor.⁴¹⁹ A Portuguese ship seized by the British near Sumatra in 1591 was carrying Madeira, palm wine and raisin wine.⁴²⁰ The latter, Linschoten said, was made by boiling raisins in *arak* and was as red as Portuguese wine and tasted almost as good, being both sweeter and stronger.⁴²¹ Jourdain reported that when they called at Portuguese-held Surat, the crew went on a bender fuelled by *arak* and raisin wine. They behaved like beasts, cavorted with lewd women, fought among themselves and threw up. One of them cut off a calf's tail, greatly upsetting the Hindu merchants living in the Portuguese settlement.⁴²²

Luis Frois pointed out that “in Europe, it is considered disgraceful for a woman to drink wine.”⁴²³ But the Portuguese *mestiças* happily flouted such convention. The British doctor, John Fryer, thought that *mestiço* children were weaker than native children in India, because Portuguese

418 Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 2:49.

419 Jourdain, *The Journal of John Jourdain*, 198.

420 Hakluyt, "A Voyage with Three Tall Ships," 251.

421 Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 2:49.

422 Jourdain, *The Journal of John Jourdain*, 132.

423 Frois, quoted in Bary et al., *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, 165.

mothers drank too much and it ruined their milk.⁴²⁴

Muslims and most Hindu groups refrained from drinking alcohol. Vasco da Gama noted in his journal that a gift of sugar, olives and wine presented to a Moorish trader was received with grace but the Moor declined to drink the wine.⁴²⁵ But according to Duarte Barbosa, the Moors were secret imbibers.⁴²⁶ Albuquerque paid his Moorish navigators in Hormuz forty *xerafins* and a good supply of wine, which, he said pleased them more than the money did.⁴²⁷ According to della Valle, the Hindu King of Calicut was also very fond of wine and was known to join Portuguese drinking sessions.⁴²⁸

In the frontier societies of the *Estado*, where social constraints were often lacking, drinking became an almost universal pastime. Drunkenness was already a fairly common vice among Indian natives at the time the Portuguese arrived.⁴²⁹ The Catholic Goans, however, became infamous for their unrestrained consumption of alcohol. Linschoten said that they

⁴²⁴ Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, 69.

⁴²⁵ Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, 77.

⁴²⁶ Barbosa, *A Description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar*, 43.

⁴²⁷ Dalboquerque, *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, 4:192.

⁴²⁸ Valle, *The Travels of Pietro della Valle in India* 2:376.

⁴²⁹ Burnell in Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:110n.

drank their potent raisin wine as if it were water.⁴³⁰ The Portuguese on the north coast invented their own *desi daru* (country liquor) and made whiskey out of jaggery, grapes and flowers. Even the Thomas Christians, who settled in the Malabar region centuries before the Portuguese, thought the hard drinking Iberians were uncouth.⁴³¹ The Portuguese all over the *Estado* developed their own recipes for *ponche*. The Ceylon version, known as ‘the Gloria’, fuelled rambunctious parties called *chicottis*, in which the participants declaimed insulting poetry at one another and when, as the colonial essayist who wrote under the name of Rip van Winkle put it, ‘Gloria’ reached ‘excelsis’, fell into a melee with bottles, glasses and broken chair legs.⁴³² The colonial Macanese were also copious drinkers.⁴³³

Throughout the *Estado* a reputation for drunkenness plagued the lower class *mestiços*. Complaints about their drinking habits pepper the colonial accounts of the Dutch and British.⁴³⁴ The Portuguese esteemed spring water for drinking, said Alexander Hamilton “except when they can get wine or spirits cost-free, and then they’ll drink to excess.”⁴³⁵

430 Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 2:49.

431 Robert Eric Frykenberg, *Christianity in India: From Beginnings to the Present* (Oxford University Press, 2008), 131.

432 Rip van Winkle, “An Afterword on “Some Exquisite Nonsense,” *Journal of the Dutch Burgher Union of Ceylon* 18 no. 1 (1929), 186.

433 The descendants of the *mestiço topasses* in Indonesia still boast of their ability to drink hard liquor, regarding it as a sign of machismo. Daus, *Portuguese Eurasian Communities in Southeast Asia*, 37.

434 McGilvray, “Dutch Burghers and Portuguese Mechanics”, 244.

435 Hamilton, “A New Account of the East Indies,” 352.

Reverend Patrick Warner, Chaplain at Fort St George wrote in 1676 to the East India Company directors, complaining of the bad influence that Portuguese in Madras were having on British men. Many company men, most of whom were married to Portuguese women, were habitually drunk, he reported. On one occasion, a group of them held a party in a nearby garden, leaving behind 36 empty wine bottles. Sometimes they partied in the fort itself and would “sing and carouse at very unseasonable hours.”⁴³⁶

Drunkenness was not confined to the lower classes. In the 1780’s, the Catholic Brothers of the monastery in Diu were chastised by the Archbishop for excessive use of alcoholic beverages, including brandy, rum and wine. The use of alcohol was henceforth forbidden, except for medicinal purposes or when served in the refectory on festive occasions.⁴³⁷ On another occasion, the British at Fort St George gave a 600 dish banquet for Daud Khan, the new Nawab of the Carnatic. After the feast, they escorted him to his lodgings in the Portuguese settlement at São Tomé. The following morning the Nawab was invited to breakfast on a British ship but he had passed out from drinking in a Portuguese

436 J. Talboys Wheeler, *A History of The English Settlements in India: As Told in the Government Records [...] from the Earliest Period Down of the Rise of British Power in India* (1878; repr., New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1996), 68. A similar incident occurred in 2008, when a group of Goan immigrants in Houston, USA, were rounded up by the police for disturbing the peace with their late night drinking and singing of Goan songs. When they explained that such behaviour was a part of their cultural inheritance, they were released without charges. (Armstrong Augusto Vaz, “Goans in America: Seeking the American Dream,” Goanet Reader. March 11, 2009. <http://www.goanet.org/index.php?name=News&file=article&sid=924>).

437 Artur Teodoro de Matos, “A Glimpse of the Hospitallers of Diu in the late 18th Century,” in Borges, *Goa and Portugal*, 234.

church.⁴³⁸ The enterprising British sent his victuals to him. We can only wonder if he had the stomach for a full English breakfast after a night of carousing with Portuguese clergy.

Summary

The Portuguese empire in Asia was founded upon a maritime trading network that facilitated the movement of foods and foodways along sea routes linking Europe with Asia and the Old World with the New. Portuguese interest and expertise in horticulture further enhanced the global distribution of food plants during the sixteenth century. In addressing the problems of food security for their Asian colonies and enclaves, the Portuguese found ways to adapt to local political, economic and biogeographical exigencies, while retaining many of their traditional foods and foodways.

⁴³⁸ Talboys, *A History of The English Settlements in India*, 106.

4. THE EMERGENCE OF A CREOLE CUISINE

As Donna Gabaccia observes in relation to the development of creole cuisines in colonial America, the process of culinary adaptation begins with survival.¹ But as she also observes, the ways in which colonists respond to native ingredients is culturally determined and influenced by the culinary traditions of colonizers' homelands.² Luso-Asian creole cuisine evolved out of a necessary accommodation to local gastronomic realities in Asia, combined with an adherence to Iberian cultural and culinary traditions. This section discusses the development of Luso-Asian foodways and explores how they were influenced by many social factors, including the relationship between colonizers and colonized, class structures, religious practices, social mobility, gender roles, and the involvement of servants and slaves in culinary matters.

Colonial Diet

Local agriculture supplied the bulk of the food consumed in the Portuguese empire in Asia.³ Soldiers were fed by the captains or traders who employed them. The *mantimento* (official food ration) for a *soldado* in India in 1525 was one *arratel* (459 grams) of meat and one of biscuit per

¹ Donna R. Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1998), 13.

² Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat*, 13.

³ Scammell, "The Pillars of Empire," 477.

day, with two *medidas* (measures) of rice. He received in addition a monthly allowance of a *canada* (1.4 litres) of *manteiga* (butter) or ghee, an *arratel* of sugar and a *quartilho* (one quarter of a *canada*) each of olive oil and vinegar, and 16 dried fish.⁴ In peacetime the soldiers in Goa lived in lodgings in the Portuguese town. Ten or 12 often shared a house, with a few slaves or servants to take care of them. Their meager diet was described by Linschoten. “Their meat is rice sodden with water, with some salt fish or some other thing of small value (without breade) and cleare fountaine water for their drinke,” he wrote. The omission of the bread that always graced Iberian tables is an indication of how destitute the soldiers were. Alexander Hamilton also commented on the paucity of the Portuguese soldiers’ diet. “This fine spare diet never loads them with superabundant flesh on their bones, without the church, it is rare to find a corpulent man among them,” he wrote.⁵ Out of work *soldados* faced great hardships. There are many reports from Goa of hungry soldiers begging on the roadside during the rainy season when sea patrols were impossible. The lack of decent food has been blamed for the high number of soldiers deserting their posts, joining foreign armies or hiring themselves out to *fidalgos*.⁶ In 1548, the dining room in which the Governor of Goa provided free meals for 800 indigent soldiers twice a day

⁴ P. F. Pieris, *Ceylon and Portugal: Part I. Kings and Christians 1536 -1552* (Leipzig: Verlag Der Asia Major, 1927), 311.

⁵ Hamilton, “A New Account of the East Indies,” 353.

⁶ Burnell in Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:200n.

erupted into a riot of brawling and shouting.⁷ In order to combat the problems of the undernourished and unruly military, Francisco Rodrigues de Silveira, nicknamed ‘*soldado práctico*’ (the practical soldier), proposed that soldiers’ quarterly pay be docked to pay for victuals.⁸ This scheme might have worked but, unfortunately, the soldiers’ pay was rarely received.⁹

Soldiers serving in the private guard of a *fidalgo*, or on a merchant captain’s ship, usually fared better. One means of ensuring a soldier’s loyalty was to provide good food. Linschoten reported that captains opened their own purses to buy “much victuailes and other things” for the men. In *fidalgo* households, groups of 30 to 100 all sat together at one great table to take their meals.¹⁰

Some ordinary Portuguese seamen made the journey to the east with little more in the way of possessions than the shirts on their backs,¹¹ others kept a few belongings in a chest. When they arrived in the East, they either ate at Iberian tables under the auspices of the *Estado*, the

7 Pearson, *Coastal Western India*, 45-47.

8 George D. Winius, “Francisco Rodrigues de Silveira, the Forgotten Soldado Prático,” in Winius, *Studies on Portuguese Asia*, 75.

9 Charles R. Boxer, *Jan Compagnie in Japan, 1600-1850: An Essay on the Cultural, Artistic and Scientific Influence Exercised by the Hollanders in Japan from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Centuries* (The Hague, Nijhoff, 1950), 25.

10 Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:190.

11 Pyrard, *The Voyage of François Pyrard*, 2:194.

Church, or a wealthy *fidalgo*, or adapted to native dining customs. Linschoten notes that the simple traditional Indian meal served to unmarried soldiers who took lodgings in Goa was prepared for them by native cooks.¹² In Calicut, Martín de Figueroa reported, the Indians poked fun at the Portuguese soldiers for eating with both hands, presumably because they lacked utensils.¹³ In time, necessity gave way to preference. Linschoten reported that the old Asia hands on Portuguese ships sailing to the East threw their spoons overboard when they passed the Cape. He also noted that Luso-Asian women in Goa laughed at anyone who used a spoon.¹⁴

Albuquerque believed that settlements were as important as naval power in securing the future of the *Estado*. He intended the *casados* to be self-sufficient and to help feed the settlements. They were given tax incentives that enhanced their ability to make a living from trade, and plots of land that they were expected to make agriculturally productive. Some deserving widows and orphans were given *aldeias* (farm villages) as

¹² Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:200.

¹³ McKenna, *A Spaniard in the Indies*, 125.

¹⁴ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:207-208. While Portuguese sailors from the lower classes were not in the habit of using cutlery, the *fidalgos* came from a different cultural background. Their use of 'swords' (knives) at the dining table was one of the reasons why the Chinese, who had invented a more civilized implement, the chopstick, labeled the Portuguese barbarians. European eating utensils have been excavated in Nagasaki. Although dinner forks were not used in Europe until the eighteenth century, small forks had been used for sweetmeats since the Byzantine era. When Vasco da Gama presented the King of Melindi with a gift of preserved pears, he included a silver fork and demonstrated its use to the King's servant. Luis Frois observed that the Japanese were also using them. (Farb and Armelagos, *Consuming Passions*, 201; McKenna, *A Spaniard in the Indies*, 147; Tetsuya, "European Influence on the 'Culture of Food' in Nagasaki," n.pag; Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, 130; Luis Frois, "Of the Ilande of Giapan, 1565" in Richard Willems, *The History of Travayle in the West and East Indies* (London, 1577), 253-258, repr. in Peter C. Mancall, *Travel Narratives from the Age of Discovery: An Anthology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 159.)

dowries.¹⁵ The Portuguese adopted the Arab practice of small-scale household horticulture during the Moorish occupation.¹⁶ In the sixteenth century subsistence farming on lands provided by noble patrons supported most rural families. Albuquerque applied these traditional patterns in order to ensure food security for the Portuguese colonies. The first *casado* community was established in Cochin.¹⁷ Others followed in Kerala and on the Kanara coast, at Goa and the coast to its north. The *casados* living in the Onor (now Honavar) *feitoria* in south India had flourishing vegetable gardens, coconut trees and grape vines.¹⁸ The *aldeias* on the stretch of coast between Goa and Damão known as *Província do Norte* (Province of the North) nestled among rice paddies and cane fields. John Fryer reported that the kitchen gardens belonging to the *feitoria* at Baçaim produced onions “as sweet, and as well tasted as an apple” and even supplied them to Goa.¹⁹ Linschoten also commented on the onions and garlic available in Diu.²⁰ Caesar Federici, visiting São Tomé, commented on the neat rows of Portuguese houses with their

¹⁵ Boxer, *Mary and Misogyny*, 75.

¹⁶ John Horton Ryley, *Ralph Fitch, England's Pioneer to India and Burma: His Companions and Contemporaries, with his Remarkable Narrative told in his own Words* (1899; repr., New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1998), 127.

¹⁷ Disney, *A History of Portugal and the Portuguese Empire*, 2:147.

¹⁸ Anthony Disney, *Twilight of the Pepper Empire: Portuguese Trade in Southwest India in the Early Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 4.

¹⁹ Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, 73.

²⁰ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:59.

walled gardens.²¹ *Casados* in Malacca kept garden plots in the countryside upriver from the walled town.

In Goa, some *casados* grew wealthy and became farmer-landlords, leasing their fields and coconut and cashew groves to indigenous cultivators. The Jesuits took control of extensive tracts of land traditionally worked by Hindu villagers. But in most of the *Estado* agricultural landholdings were small. The bourgeois Portuguese were notoriously averse to manual labour. Pietro della Valle reported that *fidalgos* would rather go out and secretly beg at night than take on a lowly job.²² A little kitchen garden that could be maintained by household staff, however, was a traditional touch that completed a Portuguese gentleman's residence. The residential quarters in the city of Goa were dotted with gardens and orchards planted behind and between the two-storey houses.²³ Even where land was in short supply, the kitchen garden remained a feature of Portuguese domestic life. Peter Mundy described the houses of the Macanese with their galleries and terraces covered with plants and small trees growing in flower pots of different shapes and sizes and planters filled with stones and water.²⁴

²¹ Federici, "The Voyage and Trauell of M. Cæsar Fredericke," 127.

²² Valle, *The Travels of Pietro Della Valle in India*, 1:157.

²³ Sá, "Goapuri and Velha Goa," 53-54.

²⁴ Puga, "Images and Representations of Japan and Macao in Peter Mundy's Travels," 57.

Feast and Famine

The Portuguese settlements were subject to fluctuations in supply of both local and imported ingredients caused by natural disasters and human agency. The need to withstand interruption of traditional food supply chains encouraged the Portuguese to broaden their ingredient base through horticultural experimentation.

Like the indigenous peoples of Asia, the Portuguese had to tailor their diet to the dictates of the monsoon. The season of torrential rains and violent winds lasted in Goa from June to September. Supply ships could not enter the Mandovi River and no fishing boats went out to sea. The indigenous Goans ate dried fish with their rice. Unable to go to sea and earn their pay, gangs of hungry sailors and soldiers roamed in the flooded streets and alleyways of the Portuguese towns.²⁵

Periodic shortages were a regular part of the seasonal food cycle in the settlements but famines were also endemic in parts of India, China and Southeast Asia. Caesar Federici reported that when he visited Cambaia, food was so scarce that the local people offered their children for sale to the Portuguese.²⁶ In 1646, when a disastrous famine struck São Tomé,

²⁵ Collingham, *Curry*, 57; Sá, "Goapuri and Velha Goa," 53-54.

²⁶ Federici, "The Voyage and Trauell of M. Cæsar Fredericke," 117.

15,000 people in the town died in less than six months.²⁷ Others sold themselves into slavery rather than starve. A Portuguese vessel arriving in Acheen (Acheh) in that year carried 400 refugees from São Tomé so starved that they were barely able to crawl ashore. The refugees reported that there had been famine in São Tomé for 13 months.²⁸ In the neighbouring British fortress, where many Portuguese also lived, rice and water were the only foods available. Four thousand in the Fort St George community died.²⁹

When Tavernier paid a call on the Governor of São Tomé just five years after this devastating famine, he was presented with “hams, ox-tongues, sausages, fish, water melons, and other fruits of the country” in such quantity that ten men were needed to carry the gifts.³⁰ But the recovery was temporary. The Coromandel Coast settlements experienced several more severe food crises in the following century.

Goa and the spice coast settlements also experienced periods of acute food shortage. Goa suffered devastating famines in 1630 and 1631.³¹

²⁷ Madras Tercentenary Celebration Committee, *The Madras Tercentenary Commemoration Volume* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1994), 73.

²⁸ Madras Tercentenary Celebration Committee, *The Madras Tercentenary Commemoration Volume*, 248.

²⁹ Madras Tercentenary Celebration Committee, *The Madras Tercentenary Commemoration Volume*, 92.

³⁰ Tavernier, *Travels in India*, 1:269.

³¹ Disney, "Goa in the Seventeenth Century," in *The First Portuguese Colonial Empire*, ed. Malyn Newitt (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1986), 95.

When famine struck, Portuguese soldiers, some so destitute that they lacked even clothing, were reduced to begging in the streets.³² John Fryer reported that hunger was so widespread that men walked the streets at night with their swords drawn and slept with guns under their pillows to defend themselves against marauding soldiers and starving natives.³³ Similar reports of soldiers begging for alms in the streets came from Malacca in the early seventeenth century.³⁴ The Bishop of Malacca, D. Gonçalo da Silva, in his report to Lisbon in 1626, said the city was in a state of financial crisis and that the Muslims enjoyed the sight of the hungry and humiliated Portuguese.³⁵ When food supplies ran out, the famished soldiers at the Colombo *feitoria* kept their strength up by reciting stanzas from Portuguese poet Camões' great verse epic, *The Lusiards*.³⁶

Famines were caused not only by the forces of nature but also by war. Many of the Portuguese settlements were under constant threat from hostile neighbours and had to endure sieges, some lasting for several years. Caesar Federici, stuck in Goa during a siege, complained that everything was scarce and even a no-good chicken cost six shillings or

³² Bernstein, *A Splendid Exchange*, 197.

³³ Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, 151.

³⁴ Subrahmanyam, *Improvising Empire*, 176.

³⁵ Subrahmanyam, *Improvising Empire*, 176.

³⁶ Cunha, *The Origin of Bombay*, 85.

more.³⁷ The fortress in Malacca was repeatedly attacked by Muslim and Dutch forces. During a siege by the Sultan of Johor initiated in 1586, a great many people, sometimes 100 a day, died from starvation.³⁸ The survivors ate cats, dogs and wild foods harvested from the jungle. The Dutch, aided by the Johor Muslims, cut down the *casados*' coconut and fruit trees and uprooted their vegetable gardens. When Peter Mundy called at Malacca in 1638, he reported that only *arak* and fruit were affordable and many people wanted to join his vessel to escape the hardships of the hungry settlement.³⁹

High and Low Cuisine

Anthropologist Emilio Willems identified class as the most basic social division affecting family life in Portugal.⁴⁰ "Self image has always been a preoccupation of the Portuguese," writes Iberian man of letters Alexandre O'Neill.⁴¹ In sixteenth century Portugal, a relatively straightforward binary division existed between a primarily hereditary, landed upper class and a proletariat of peasant farmers.⁴² The nobility went to great

37 Federici, "The Voyage and Trauell of M. Caesar Fredericke," 143.

38 Bernard Sta Maria, *My People, My Country* (Malacca: Malacca Portuguese Development Centre, 1982), 49.

39 Quoted in Sta Maria, *My People, My Country*. 50.

40 See E. Willems, "On Portuguese Family Structure," *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 3, no. 1 (1962), 65-79.

41 Alexandre O'Neill, "A Little Place To Be Born in; The Whole Earth To Die In," in Wohl and Wohl, *Portugal*, 15.

42 Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, 241.

lengths to protect their social position and to affirm their status with displays of largesse and conspicuous consumption, even if they could ill afford to do so. This concern with style over substance prompted the Spanish Renaissance professor Nicolaus Clenardus to refer to the Lusitanian gentry as “pompous radish eaters.”⁴³ (Vegetables were not highly regarded by the Iberian nobility but the common Portuguese ate a great quantity of cabbages, radishes, turnips and other vegetables.)⁴⁴

Iberian class consciousness was exported to the overseas territories and there too became a defining element of social life and community. In the colonies, to be Portuguese was to have high social standing and the cultural practices that signaled membership of the Portuguese community were adopted by all Catholics who could afford to do so. Among the lower classes, adopting the culture of the colonial power improved one's chances of acquiring language skills, education, employment and thus social and economic advancement. For the upper classes of indigenous society, adopting Portuguese culture and foodways equated with aligning oneself with the elite.⁴⁵

Notions of class divisions in the colonies were complicated by the

⁴³ Translated by Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, 245.

⁴⁴ Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 22; Katz, *Encyclopedia of Food and Culture*, 232.

⁴⁵ Porter, *Macau*, 157.

overwhelming prevalence of mixed marriages. An ideological tug-of-war played out between the politics of necessity and sixteenth century ideals that ennobled the concept of racial purity.⁴⁶ The Portuguese in India referred to Indians as ‘niggers’ and regarded Africans as ‘*peessoas de sangue infecto* (people with infected blood)’.⁴⁷ They were not alone in their prejudice. The notion that dark skinned people were inferior was shared by much of sixteenth century Europe and racist attitudes were to accompany colonialism throughout its history in Asia. Attitudes towards *mestiços* varied in different colonial settings. When the Dutch took Cochin from the Portuguese in 1662, they appointed a former ship’s cook as the settlement’s new Commander. He in turn invested a new indigenous King. “This crowning of a miserable Malabri by the hands of a man who had more frequently brandished a pot ladle than a sword, was without doubt a brilliant spectacle,” scoffed Tavernier.⁴⁸ The British were even more condescending. A regimental Captain complaining in 1780 that the offspring of British men and “Portuguese wenches” would “degenerate the race, and give a sallow tinge to the complexion of Britons,”⁴⁹ was voicing a contempt typical of the British attitude toward the sizeable population of Portuguese *mestiços* in India. It has been argued that this racist view of the Luso-Asians stemmed from British fear

⁴⁶ Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire*, 3.

⁴⁷ Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire*, 166.

⁴⁸ Tavernier, *Travels in India*, 242.

⁴⁹ Quoted in Caplan, *Children of Colonialism*, 61.

of a possible uprising by a multi-ethnic coalition of peoples dispossessed by British imperialism.⁵⁰ But it is also indicative of racist notions so sweeping and deeply ingrained in British thought that as late as 1915 Ellsworth Huntington could write:

“Whatever may be the cause, it is generally agreed that the native races within the tropics are dull in thought and slow in action. This is true not only of the African negroes, the South American Indians, and the people of the East Indies, but of the inhabitants of southern India and the Malay peninsula.”⁵¹

In Luso-Asian society, gradations of skin colour were a fairly good indicator of social acceptance. People with the darkest skin made up the lowest class, fairer skin the highest. With their highly mixed ancestry, the Luso-Asians came in every shade in between. Male Portuguese *mestiços* were almost universally stigmatized but among some Europeans, the *mestiças*, especially those with lighter skin, were objects of desire. Mandelslo, commented on the beauty of the serving girls from Malacca who waited upon him in Goa.⁵² “I never saw a rose in its soft bunch of leaves, that seemed more beautiful to my eyes,” swooned the

50 Sumit Sarkar, “The Relevance of the Language of Race in South Asian Conflicts,” in *Racism in Metropolitan Areas*, eds. Rik Pinxten and Ellen Preckler (Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), 77.

51 Ellsworth Huntington, *Civilisation and Climate* (1915; repr., Los Angeles: Huntington Press, 2007), 56.

52 M.S. Commissariat, *Mandelslo's Travels in Western India (1638-1639)* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1995), 62.

Portuguese poet Camões over 'Barbara the Slave', a daughter of India.⁵³ Francesco Carletti, an Italian navigator who visited Japan, Macao and Goa, considered the tall and statuesque *mestiças* from Bengal, whose "round limbs seemed to have been polished on a lathe" were the "most perfect" of the Eurasian women.⁵⁴ Some of these women, including the Javanese-Portuguese wife of the mercenary captain Philip de Brito, became legendary beauties in European eyes.⁵⁵

Adding to the complexity of social divisions was the fact that, unlike in Portugal, where membership of the upper class was achieved almost exclusively by way of family lineage, in the Asian territories, nobility could be achieved through mercantile endeavour. State policy encouraged *Estado* personnel at all levels of society to become traders. The ability of anyone, from cabin boy or soldier to farmer or doctor, to amass sufficient wealth to buy into the lifestyle of the nobility, led to the Luso-Asian merchant being called a *fidalgo*, a "son of someone." Linschoten noted that upward social mobility among the Portuguese in Goa was so common that even cook boys were becoming knights.⁵⁶ These early steps toward a more modern class structure were reflected in the evolution of Luso-Asian foodways. In many Luso-Asian households, the

⁵³ Luis de Camões, "Endechas a Barbara Escra trans. in Pope, *India in Portuguese Literature*, 39-40.

⁵⁴ Quoted in Sá, "Goapuri and Velha Goa," 36.

⁵⁵ Socarras, "The Portuguese in Lower Burma," 12.

⁵⁶ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:189.

division between 'high' and 'low' status foods was porous, the poor man's dish of fish curry and rice being served alongside luxurious raised pies and roast meats.

The *fidalgos* wanted everyone to acknowledge their lofty status. "The rich made an ostentatious display of their wealth when they stirred abroad," wrote the historian José Nicolau da Fonseca.

"They were borne in palanquins, or rode on horseback, attended by a large number of lackeys in gay and fanciful liveries, some holding large umbrellas over them, others bearing arms, and some carrying their cloaks, gilt chairs and soft cushions, when they went to church. The same pomp and display attended them when they happened to pass through the streets on foot. The most attractive portion of this pageantry were the gold and silver trappings of the steeds on which the *fidalgos* were mounted. The saddle was covered with a rich embroidered cloth, the reins were studded with precious stones with jingling silver bells attached to them, and the stirrups were of gilt silver."⁵⁷

The obsession with self-image extended throughout Catholic Goan society. Linschoten commented on the *soldados'* habit of taking turns to

⁵⁷ Fonseca, *Historical and Archaeological Sketch of the City of Goa*, 164.

strut about in a jointly owned single set of fine clothes.⁵⁸ Della Valle reported that in fashion conscious Goa, even mechanics dressed in silk.⁵⁹ The acquisition of Portuguese family names such as Gomes, De Mello, De Souza, Rodrigues and so on, often came about not because of blood relation but because a conversion required the taking of a Catholic name. Many indigenous converts named themselves or their children after the Portuguese priest who baptized them, or after the Portuguese settlers who filled the requisite role of godfathers during this ceremony. Being able to demonstrate that one was a *reinois* (Portugal born) was one way of distancing oneself from pretenders. To this day, gossip among the Luso-Asians is likely to include the question “*quem sa filho?*” whose son is he?⁶⁰

Further complicating the matter of social differentiation were traditional systems of social division in host societies, such as the grouping by inherited vocation among Hindus in India. The Portuguese were largely responsible for the notion of *casta*, which has connotations of race, hereditary social class, ethnicity and profession, being applied to traditional Indian kinship groups in India.⁶¹ In Japan, they made the

⁵⁸ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:200.

⁵⁹ Valle, *The Travels of Pietro Della Valle in India*, 1:158.

⁶⁰ George Remedios, “Maquista Alphabet Book,” first pub. *Lusitano Bulletin* 15 (2005), repr. in *Casa de Macau no Canada (Toronto) Newsletter* (2 June, 2005), 7.

⁶¹ Arjun Guneratne, “Caste and State, India and Nepal,” in *South Asian Folklore*, by Peter J. Claus, Sarah Diamond, and Margaret Ann Mills (New York: Routledge, 2003), 96.

mistake of aligning themselves with the Buddhist monks, whom they assumed enjoyed high status as holy men but were in fact demeaned by the Japanese as beggars. In Malacca, even though they assumed political power as conquerors, the Portuguese simply inserted themselves into social divisions already in place under the Muslim Sultanate.

As a result of these confluent forces, Luso-Asian societies became characterized by a multi-tiered class system that attempted to incorporate a person's occupation as well as variables of skin colour, religion, family lineage, birth country and a whole range of indefinables that constituted a person's "degree of Portugueseness." These were more important social indicators than profession, since everyone, including the clergy, the military and officers of the state, was a trader to some degree or another.⁶²

Food habits and social status are closely linked.⁶³ In Goa, Malacca and Macao, disparities in income were reflected in significant distinctions between the foodways of the wealthy Portuguese Eurasians and the less affluent. In all three colonies, Portuguese culinary and cultural influences were more pronounced among the upper classes, who could afford to buy imported foods and acquire the furniture, table linens and

⁶² Pearson, *The Portuguese in India*, 94-95.

⁶³ MacClancy, *Consuming Culture*, 1-2.

tableware that recreated the style of elite dining rooms in Europe. Conversely, the influence of indigenous gastronomic culture was more apparent in less affluent Luso-Asian households. The Cristang of Malacca, for example, who were economically deprived for much of their history, developed a more frugal dining style and adopted many elements of Malay culture and foodways.

In response to shifting criteria within the various colonial contexts, the Portuguese Eurasians were at some points in their history members of the privileged class, and marginalized at others. In the early colonial period they were mostly engaged in occupations that afforded them freedom of movement and quality of life but as the colonial power shifted to the Dutch and British, they were excluded from some occupations, such as military and government posts in India. Competition for jobs by indigenous people, fostered by Nationalist movements, contributed further to the marginalization of many Luso-Asians.⁶⁴

Over time Luso-Asian society developed a fairly sharp class divide between rich and poor that cut across territorial boundaries. Richard Burton noted the disparity between the poorer classes of Catholic Goans, who he described as “decidedly the lowest in the scale of civilized humanity we have yet seen” and the wealthy, whose elaborate meals,

⁶⁴ Caplan, *Children of Colonialism*, 51.

accompanied by fine Portuguese ports and wines, were served in the French manner at tables set with Italian style.⁶⁵

In wealthier houses in Goa and Macao, Portuguese culinary influence predominated, with expensive ingredients, meat-rich dishes, imported foods and wines appearing regularly alongside local dishes that appealed to the Eurasian palate. Kitchen staff with diverse ethnic backgrounds produced elaborate dishes and brought a high degree of complexity to aristocratic Eurasian cuisine. In humbler households, Portuguese culinary influence might amount to no more than a piece of bread to dip in a bowl of curry, and a very occasional feast day repast featuring a roast suckling pig.

Dining in A Gilded Age

The proud *fidalgo* strutting in his European finery and trailing an entourage of minions is an indelible image of the *Estado da India*. When Vasco da Gama returned to India as Viceroy in 1524, he brought with him servants and furnishings fit for royalty.⁶⁶ A personal guard of 200 men wore his livery. For the dining hall in the Viceregal palace he had “rich vessels of silver, and rich tapestry of Flanders, and for the table at

⁶⁵ Burton, *Goa, and the Blue Mountains*, 104.

⁶⁶ Prestage, “The Fourth Centenary of Vasco da Gama’s Voyage to India,” 4.

which he sate, brocade cloths.”⁶⁷ His meals were served in regal fashion. Said Gaspar Corea, “They brought him at table large dishes, as if to the King.”

During the halcyon days of the Portuguese empire in the second half of the sixteenth century, the *Estado*'s executive officers could amass great fortunes from their own trading activities and levies on the trade of others. The Catholic Church officials also had enormous revenues at their disposal. A few powerful Luso-Asian families, who forged links with trading magnates from all over the region, headed the Portuguese merchant communities. This elite group of clerics, administrators and traders formed the core of a glamorous colonial society that the majority of Luso-Asians who originated in the lower classes aspired to be part of. At the top of the social and political hierarchy was the Viceroy. Vasco da Gama, returning to India as the second occupant of the Viceregal palace, set the standard for entertaining. “He kept a splendid table; all the gentlemen and honourable persons ate with him,” Wrote Gaspar Corêa.⁶⁸

The genuinely wealthy Eurasian kept a fine mansion, distinguished by thick plastered walls, spacious shaded balconies, high ceilings and tall windows with jalousies that allowed the ladies of the house to discreetly

⁶⁷ Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, 136.

⁶⁸ Corrêa, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, 381.

watch the world go by. Sailing down the coast from Bom Bahia to Goa, John Fryer sighted the “delicate country mansions” of *fidalgos* John de Melos and Martin Alphonso. Casa de Melos was surrounded by terraces, walks and gardens reaching down to the sea, where a spacious banqueting house had been built over the water. Martin Alphonso’s hilltop abode was the size of a small town, with a mansion, fort and church “of as stately architecture as India can afford.”⁶⁹ The French traveller, Vincent Le Blanc, reported that the Portuguese in Cambay, which Ibn Batuta described as a beautiful city with wonderful mosques and fine houses, were relaxed and enjoying themselves in their “large and pleasant” homes.⁷⁰

Each year before the monsoon, native labourers were instructed to give the buildings in the Portuguese settlements a fresh coat of whitewash, a practice introduced to southern Portugal by the Moors. Whitewash was new to India⁷¹ and the houses plastered in red, ochre, green, blue or white gave a distinctive Mediterranean air to the Portuguese towns. The balconies of the Portuguese houses in Macao were decorated with wrought ironwork and lined with ceramic pots spilling with bright flowers. Their tiled roofs were capped with ornaments of Chinese dragons

⁶⁹ Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, 74.

⁷⁰ Batuta, *Travels in Asia and Africa*, 229; Vincent Le Blanc, *The World Surveyed* (London: John Starkey, 1660), 47.

⁷¹ Mario Cabrale e Sá, “Thresholds of Leisure: Manors, Mansions, Villas,” in *Goa, Cultural Patterns*, ed. Saryu Doshi (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1983), 104.

and mythical birds. Houses in Goa were fronted by shady porches with built-in benches where householders could recline on pillows and sip a glass of tea or *feni*.

The richest *palacios* overflowed with fabulous furnishings – crystal chandeliers from Europe, carved rosewood chairs from Burma, Javanese teakwood armoires inlaid with mother of pearl, beautiful brocades and tapestries and the finest Chinese porcelains. Barefoot servants waited behind painted lacquerwork screens or padded about with silver flasks of cool drinking water. Children ran about dressed in fancy silk costumes imported expensively from Japan.⁷²

The Luso-Asians tended to marry within their own community and in the European fashion, lived in nuclear family groups.⁷³ Catholic families were typically large and their houses, built to accommodate a dozen or so children, servants and perhaps a couple of aunts and a grandmother, were grand. Preparation of food and meals occupied a significant portion of the day for the household staff, the majority of whom were non-Europeans. Some *fidalgos* were gentleman farmers who leased land to indigenous cultivators but most Portuguese traders had little interest in

⁷² Porter, *Macau*, 136-137; Mundy, "Description of Macau in 1637," 62.

⁷³ Kumar Suresh Singh and B. R. Solanki, *People of India: Daman and Diu* (Mumbai: Popular Prakashan, 1992), 51.

agriculture and relied on the local marketplace for food and produce.⁷⁴ Much of the arable land within the Portuguese quarter in Goa was used for pleasure gardens in place of the kitchen gardens that traditionally surrounded Portuguese houses.⁷⁵ Most Luso-Asian households could afford to hire domestic help and the grander houses maintained a considerable staff of slaves, cooks, maids, *amahs*, gardeners and houseboys, who dealt with the daily tasks of purchasing food and cooking.

Mario Cabral e Sa describes the *Bazaar Grande* at Goa, which was open every day of the year.

“There was a road full of shops selling silks, cottons, Portuguese velvets and Chinese porcelains. There were booths dealing in ready-made shirts and other clothes at prices within the means of poor people and even slaves. In another street there were shops of ladies’ dresses and ornaments; yet another was pre-empted by Banyas, trafficking in piece-goods from Cambay, and also in precious stones; elsewhere there was a highway with furniture stores, where beds, chairs, and tables might be had; in another quarter of town were the goldsmiths; those who collected rents and

74 Fatima Gracias, "Quality of Life in Colonial Goa: Its Hygienic Expression (19th–20th Centuries)," in Souza, *Essays in Goan History*, 183.

75 Sá, "Thresholds of Leisure," 104.

acted as brokers had their own particular pitch, as did the chemists and druggists, the saddlers, the shoemakers, the ironmongers, and the blacksmiths.”⁷⁶

Friar Gaspar da Cruz described a similar scene in Canton: “It is a very pleasing thing to see the entrances of the city gates, the clamour of those who enter and leave, some carrying dogs, others sucking-pigs, others vegetables, others with divers things, each one crying for to give him room.”⁷⁷

These descriptions of busy local markets, which are echoed in many of the early European travel narratives, indicate that for Europeans who were prepared to adapt, Asia was a land of plenty.

In addition to the wide variety of ingredients available in local markets, Luso-Asian larders were stocked with the riches of the Portuguese global emporium. In the sixteenth century the annual supply fleet from Lisbon arrived in Goa around September or October, bringing wine, oil, vinegar, olives, figs, saffron, jams and fruits. In November and December, ships from the Strait of Hormuz arrived with cargoes of dried fruit, nuts, almonds, plums, conserves, marmalade, saffron, rosewater and dates. In

⁷⁶ Sá, “Goapuri and Velha Goa,” 53.

⁷⁷ Boxer, *South China in the Sixteenth Century*, 134.

April and May, ships from Malacca brought spices, sandalwood, Chinese porcelains, lacquer work, tea, rhubarb and silks from the East.⁷⁸

For the *Estado's* wealthy families, culinary ostentation was the norm. Great emphasis was placed on setting a fine table and entertaining with style. "The rich fidalgos always kept a luxurious table," wrote Fonseca. "They treated their guests to a sumptuous repast, consisting of the richest wines and choicest delicacies served on glittering plate: the table literally groaned under the weight of the numerous viands, which were prepared by experts in the culinary art to satisfy their fastidious taste."⁷⁹

The use of dining tables has been a feature of Portuguese households in Asia since the earliest days of the *Estado*.⁸⁰ Linschoten reported that even the soldiers in Goa who had adopted rice and curry ate it sitting on stools at a table. The houses provided for Portuguese traders by Gujeratis in Cambay came equipped with a table and chairs. Manrique observed that the Chinese "eat on high tables like ourselves"⁸¹ but elsewhere in Asia, meals were typically eaten on low platforms or on carpets or mats spread on the floor. Friar Manrique described a banquet

78 Joseph Velinkar, *India and the West, the First Encounters: A Study of the Early Indo-Portuguese Cultural Encounters in Goa* (Mumbai: Heras Institute, 1998), 110.

79 Fonseca, *Historical and Archaeological Sketch of the City of Goa*, 168.

80 The Portuguese word for table, *mesa*, is used in a number of regional languages, including Sinhala (*mesa*), Malay (*meja*) and Swahili (*meza*). (Dalgado, *Portuguese Vocables in Asiatic Languages*, 1, xlviij).

81 Fisher, *Visions of Mughal India*, 105.

he attended in Arakan. The guests were seated on carpets at individual low tables set with porcelain dishes. The Indian Rajaka of Kozhikode ate at a low wooden table. In Ceylon, tables were unknown.⁸² "Many of the people own their houses, but possess no tables, benches, basins, or buckets" wrote Chou Ta-kuan from Angkor in Cambodia.⁸³ Domestic scenes appearing on *nanban* screens (decorative room dividers produced during the sixteenth century depicting the Japanese encounter with Europeans) show that the Portuguese were apparently quite at ease seated on the floor eating at low Japanese tables. However, "proper" dining tables were so closely associated with Portugueseness that Father Francisco Cabral, one of Francis Xavier's successors in Japan, ordered people in the Jesuit residence to eat European foods at high tables. He also mandated the use of tablecloths and napkins.⁸⁴

Meals were served on tables laid with individual place settings in the European style, lace tablecloths from Madeira, fine crystal from Lisbon, elegant British porcelains and Chinese teacups.⁸⁵ The most attractive of the serving girls from India, Africa, Java, Timor and China attended to

82 Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya, *The Portuguese in the East: A Cultural History of a Maritime Trading Empire* (London, New York: Taurus Academic Studies, 2008), 109.

83 Nusara Thaitawat, *The Cuisine of Cambodia* (Bangkok: Nusara and Friends, 2000) 37.

84 Takao Abé, "What Determined the Content of Missionary Reports? The Jesuit Relations Compared with the Iberian Jesuit Accounts," *French Colonial History* 3 (2003), 73.

85 Lace-making, an outgrowth of the craft of making and mending fishing nets, originated in coastal villages as a way for women to pass the time when fishing yields were low. Madeira became famous for a particular style of cutwork embroidery and regional styles also developed in the Azores. Madeiran-style embroidery is still used on the traditional Malay *kebaya* (jacket-blouse, from the Portuguese *cabaia*).

guests. At such a dinner, given in 1639 by a *fidalgo* in Goa who was celebrating his appointment as governor of Mozambique, the food was served by four beautiful girls from Malacca.⁸⁶ Mandelslo, who attended the dinner, marveled:

"Every course consisted only of four dishes of meat, but they were so often changed, and the meat so excellently well dressed, that I may truly say I never was at the like. For with the meat there was brought such variety of excellent fruits, that by the continual change and intermixture of both, the appetite was sharpened and renewed."⁸⁷ In 1637 Peter Mundy was entertained by the city fathers of Macao in a house richly furnished with fine furniture, silver plate, wall hangings and eight-panel folding screens decorated in gold with birds, beasts, fishes, flowers, forests and fruit. Music was provided by voice, harp and guitar. Dinner, consisting of a succession of different meat dishes, was served to each man on silver plates. New dishes arrived before the previous one was finished. Servants stood at every man's side, ready to refill his silver goblet with the best imported wine.⁸⁸

A sampling of the many Portuguese words relating to dining and dining

⁸⁶ Fonseca, *Historical and Archaeological Sketch of the City of Goa*, 163.

⁸⁷ Commissariat, *Mandelslo's Travels in Western India*, 61.

⁸⁸ Mundy, "Description of Macau in 1637," 50, 59.

paraphernalia that have entered regional languages is instructive. These include the words for breakfast, cupboard, tureen, bowl, cup, stew-pan, teacup or wineglass, earthenware jug, baker's oven, cork, dinner plate, jar, fork, spoon, table, chair, soap, napkin, towel, bench and cask.⁸⁹

In stark contrast to the atmosphere of refined elegance within the Portuguese mansions, conditions were far less salubrious in the underbelly of the Portuguese towns. European cities were no different in this respect but the heat and humidity of the tropics amplified the unsanitary aspects of urban life. In Goa, the stink from riverbanks used as a latrine and garbage thrown into the streets permeated the air.⁹⁰ The marshes and swamps surrounding the city were a breeding ground for mosquitoes. During the monsoon the city became a bog. Linschoten noted that in Goa the crows were so bold they flew in through open windows to steal food.⁹¹ Ants and insects were such a problem that food was kept in cupboards standing in a stone or wooden trough of water in the centre of a room away from the walls. A loaf of bread could be demolished by ants in the blink of an eye. Flies were so thick on the dining tables, reported John Fryer, they had to be brushed away with

⁸⁹ Dalgado, *Portuguese Vocables in Asiatic Languages*, 303, 338, 345, 367, 375; George, *Western Influence on Malayalam Language and Literature*, 249; Baxter, "Portuguese and Creole Portuguese in the Pacific", 305; Franca, *Portuguese Influence in Indonesia*, 60-61.

⁹⁰ Sá, "Goapuri and Velha Goa," 66.

⁹¹ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:302-303.

fans made of peacock tails.⁹² Martín de Figueroa said the locust plagues were so dense in Goa, he could barely see the sun or sky.⁹³ Water was drawn from wells in clay or copper buckets, suspended on dirty ropes.⁹⁴ Hygiene was so poor and disease so rampant that the citizens petitioned the city fathers to organize the importation of extra slaves to empty chamber pots. Epidemics in 1543 and 1570 claimed more than half the city's residents.⁹⁵ In 1600 Viceroy Aryes de Saldanha issued an edict on waste disposal and appointed an inspector of cleanliness, apparently to no avail.⁹⁶ Eventually, the city became so unhealthy that it was abandoned and a new capital was established at Panjim.

Despite their reputation as excellent cooks, by the height of the colonial era wealthy Luso-Asian women in Goa and Macao had acquired a reputation for indolence, pride and laziness.⁹⁷ Manual labour was disdained. If the lady of the house did turn her hand to culinary tasks, it was usually to produce the sweets, pastries, cakes and biscuits that were served to guests or at church social events. An army of domestic staff, commanded by the *dona de casa*, was charged with keeping the

92 Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, 30.

93 McKenna, *A Spaniard in the Indies*, 207.

94 Gracias, "Quality of Life in Colonial Goa," 189.

95 David Abram, *The Rough Guide to Goa* (New York, London and Delhi: Rough Guides, 2007), 94.

96 Sá, "Goapuri and Velha Goa," 66.

97 Boxer, *Mary and Misogyny*, 86.

household supplied with meals. While these characterizations, promulgated by male European travellers and subsequent historians, invite charges of misogyny,⁹⁸ Luso-Asian men came under similar fire. “The Portingales and Mesticos in India never worke,” Linschoten wrote, “when they go in the streets they steppe very slowly forwards, with a great pride and vaigneglorious majestie.”⁹⁹

The Portuguese were supremely status conscious but were not snobs. The surfeit of food with which the wealthy Luso-Asians confirmed their place in society was never wasted. The Portuguese tradition of hospitality was ingrained and everyone in or around a Luso-Asian household was fed. The rich *fidalgos* were generous in inviting their less fortunate countrymen to the table.¹⁰⁰ The French traveller Jean Mocquet reported that 20 or 30 soldiers commonly ate at a Portuguese noble’s table.¹⁰¹ Leftovers were divided among the servants or distributed to the poor. Many dishes evolved out of the custom of bringing a large impressive piece of meat to the table and after serving some of it to guests, returning the rest to the kitchen to be made into other dishes.

⁹⁸ Dutch women in Indonesia were similarly described as lazy by male critics, despite the fact that many of them held paying jobs. (Gouda, *Dutch Culture Overseas*, 157).

⁹⁹ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:187; 193.

¹⁰⁰ Fonseca, *Historical and Archaeological Sketch of the City of Goa*, 162.

¹⁰¹ Pearson, *Coastal Western India*, 47.

It has been suggested that the tradition of surfeit at Luso-Asian tables was influenced by the grand banquets served in the households of Asian potentates, which surpassed in splendour even the “groaning boards” of the European nobility. Sebastião Manrique, invited to a midday meal by the Comptroller of the Royal Household in Burma, was offered “some hundreds of dishes.”¹⁰² Rodrigues the Interpreter, entertained to dinner by a Mandarin in Canton in 1615, was served with 13 courses, most of them meat dishes, followed by rice and 25 different kinds of dried fruit.¹⁰³ Fryer described the Catholic Goans’ manner of serving a great array of foods, which they set out as a buffet in the Asian fashion, “consisting of Supoes, Pottages, and varieties of Stews, in little China Dishes or Plates, which they shift before you are cloy’d, and at a common Entertainment alter half a dozen Modes.” The lady of the house would be “much offended if you taste not of everything they cook.”¹⁰⁴

The era of great, baroque banqueting passed with the fading fortunes of the *Estado* in the second half of the sixteenth century but upper middle class Luso-Asian families continued to dine in elegant style. The main meal for these families was a leisurely multi-course affair, taken in the evening. In a Goan household, the soup course might be served in the

¹⁰² Pearson, *Coastal Western India*, 152, 154.

¹⁰³ Cooper, *Rodrigues the Interpreter*, 292.

¹⁰⁴ Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, 156-157.

parlour, along with crusty bread, *feni*, cocktails or sangria, cashews and other snacks such as codfish balls or shrimp rissoles, while the guests played cards or discussed the latest news. Later, they moved to the dining room for an extravagant banquet that might include grilled tiger prawns, a pork dish flavoured with the spicy prawn pickle *balchāon*, prawn and kingfish curries, roasted pomfret stuffed with chili paste, Goan *chourissam* sausages fried with potatoes and onions, European breads and Indian chapattis, boiled rice and an elaborate pilaf, salads, vegetable dishes and an array of pickles and condiments. The repast would be washed down with *tinto* (red), *branco* (white), and Muscatel wines, followed by *digestifs*, Port and desserts such as pudding, flan or *bebinca* (a Goan specialty made from multiple layers of reduced coconut milk and jaggery), accompanied by fresh fruit.¹⁰⁵

In Macao, where the climate was more temperate, the principal meal was taken around noon. It was planned by the lady of the house and executed by her Chinese or perhaps African cooks. Consisting of three or four courses, it was a cosmopolitan meal drawing on the culinary heritage of many nations. Some dishes were eaten with chopsticks, others with a knife and fork. The meal was always focused on the health of the diners and the freshest seasonal ingredients. Peter Mundy

¹⁰⁵ This hypothetical meal is a composite of descriptions given in Malgongkar, *Inside Goa*; Menezes, *The Essential Goa Cookbook* and Mendonsa, *The Best of Goan Cooking*.

marveled at the lychees served at the Jesuits' refectory in Macao. Just then in season, they had a skin like a raspberry or mulberry and tasted like Muscadine grapes. "To speak my own mind," he wrote, "it is the prettiest and pleasantest fruit that ever I saw or tasted."¹⁰⁶

Cha Gordo

In the grand houses of colonial-era Macao, a tradition known as *Cha Gordo* ('Fat Tea') evolved. Its origins are obscure but the meal is a hybrid, combining elements of Iberian *merenda* (a mid-morning or afternoon snack), Chinese *Yam Ch'a*, British High Tea, Anglo-Indian tiffin and the *Tok Panjang* (Long Table) of Malacca's Peranakan community. Over time *Cha Gordo* has established itself as the signature celebratory meal of the Macanese, a repast that has been as "the supreme celebration of Macao's European and Asian ethnic cultural integration."¹⁰⁷

Hospitality is a time-honoured tradition among the Portuguese, born of their history of economic hardship, large social families and sense of responsibility for the less fortunate. Visitors to a Portuguese home, whether invited or unexpected, are plied with food and drink. In humble households, whatever the host has, even if it means the entire contents of the larder, is willingly and joyfully shared with guests.

¹⁰⁶ Mundy, "Description of Macau in 1637," 41.

¹⁰⁷ Jorge Morbey, "Macau Culture," *Macau Magazine*, 1998. n.pag. <http://www.loriente.com/rmi98m.html>

In well-to-do Portuguese-Eurasian society, the frugal generosity of a peasant culture blossomed into a tradition of lavish entertaining that reached its apogee in *Cha Gordo*. Served after sunset, a traditional *Cha Gordo* involved a copious array of sweet and savoury dishes, including English roast meats, pates and pies, poultry, Dutch meatballs, hot Portuguese soups and salt cod dishes, cakes, and puddings, and exotica such as curried crab with quails' eggs, duck cooked in its blood and pig's ear with papaya salad. Dishes with names such as *turnip and yam bebinca*, *arroz bacalhau* (rice with salt cod), *caril peixe* (Goan fish curry), *batatada* (potato cake), *cheese-broas de Macau* (Macanese cheese breads), *chilicotes frito* (fried turnovers), *torta de coco* (chocolate cake), *porco balichão tamarinho* (pork with prawn pickle and tamarind), *chamusas* (samosas) and *onde-onde* (Javanese-inspired sweets), attest to the eccentric, multinational nature of the *Cha Gordo* menu. This multicultural repast, frequently including as many as 20 or more dishes, was accompanied by fragrant Chinese jasmine tea, stronger Indian teas, and English favourites such as Earl Grey and Lapsang Souchong, served in the European fashion with milk, or Chinese-style, without.¹⁰⁸ Port, brandy, wines and a variety of potent tropical punches and cocktails helped to ensure the buoyant mood of conspicuous, exuberant and convivial consumption.

¹⁰⁸ Morbey, "Macau Culture," n.pag; Porter, *Macau*, 140-141.

In the houses of Macao's great families, with their battalions of household servants and kitchen staff, the range and complexity of the *Cha Gordo* menu was limited only by the imagination of the lady of the house or that of her cooks.

Cha Gordo exemplified the processes of culinary creolization that lay at the heart of Luso-Asian cuisine. Although everyday meals in Macanese houses were served in the European style with places set for each person at the table, the Chinese belief that partaking of individual servings is a 'cold' way of eating with friends, dictated that *Cha Gordo* be served as a buffet.¹⁰⁹ Dishes were arrayed on a long European table, rather than the round one used in Chinese homes. After giving a nod to the Kitchen God to ensure the auspiciousness of the occasion, the Macanese hostess announced the beginning of *Cha Gordo* with Catholic grace and an invitation to eat.

The Peranakan *Tok Panjang* was a highly formal affair. Diners ate in shifts (according to their rank as honoured guests), savoring each dish separately in recognition of the hostesses' culinary skills. The Macanese had none of the Chinese formality or Malay reserve, and *Cha Gordo* was a

¹⁰⁹ Horatio Ozorio, "Macaenses Share this Tradition?" *A Diaspora Macaense na America*. n.pag.
<http://www.diasporamacaense.org/Culture%20&%20Tradition.htm>

cultural mayhem. Guests crowded around the table, helping themselves to *umchinho* ('a little bit') of this and *umchinho* of that.¹¹⁰ Rice might be eaten with a fork, a steak with chopsticks and some little foods like *apabicos* and *chamuças* with the fingers of the right hand. In the Chinese fashion, guests placed the tastiest morsels on the plates of their social superiors before taking some themselves. The meal wasn't over until everyone was full.

Every Macanese is familiar with this celebratory meal. In Macao it was regularly served until the mid-twentieth century.¹¹¹ In all the Portuguese Asian colonies, however, at different times and in different circumstances, the era of large households ended, and with it went the grand repast that was *Cha Gordo*. The colonial 'upstairs/downstairs' approach to food preparation and service declined and a more egalitarian, vernacular cuisine emerged. In the Macanese diaspora today, *Cha Gordo* is rarely served in private homes but survives as a feast meal served at weddings and birthdays, the conclusion of meetings, agreement signings and other business and community events. The work of preparing the many dishes is typically divided among participating households as the age of domestic staff has passed and few commercial caterers are familiar with traditional Macanese cooking.

¹¹⁰ Remedios, "Maquista Alphabet Book," 8.

¹¹¹ Porter, *Macau*, 140.

History, geography, cooking and ritual come together in this eccentric and exotic meal. A Luso-Asian smorgasbord that draws on a kaleidoscope of culinary influences, *Cha Gordo* has no equivalent in Portugal or anywhere else. It is unique to Macao and is uniquely Macanese, celebrating the Iberian tradition of hospitality in a style that encapsulates all the pomp and peculiarity of the Portuguese empire. If meal is viewed as metaphor, *Cha Gordo* is a perfect representation of the processes of culinary creolization that lie at the heart of Luso-Asian gastronomic culture and cuisine.

Slavery

The involvement of the Portuguese in international slave trading introduced another layer of culinary cross-fertilization, while the presence of large numbers of slaves from many nations in Luso-Asian households fostered the development of an elaborate and culturally complex cuisine.

The Portuguese were early and active participants in the slave trade. Initially, captives from the forays into Africa during the mid-fifteenth century were brought back to Lisbon to serve as household servants and labourers. During the Moorish period, the Arabs used slave labour in

their Iberian cane fields and when the Portuguese established their own sugar plantations in Madeira and later on in Brazil, they adopted the same practice. Between 1450 and 1500, 3,000 slaves a year were brought to Lisbon.¹¹² Half that number was employed in Madeira's sugar industry.¹¹³ By 1530, the number was 10,000¹¹⁴ and when the discovery of Brazil provided huge additional acreages for growing sugar, tobacco and cacao, the slave trade grew to massive proportions. An estimated 3.5 to 5 million African slaves were shipped to Brazil over the course of 320 years.¹¹⁵

The huge influx of Africans into Brazil profoundly influenced the development of that country's cuisine. *Feijoada*, Brazil's 'national dish', exemplifies the marriage of the African bean-based cuisines and Lusitanian pork cookery. But in Asia, slavery involved the servitude of people drawn from a variety of countries, racial groups and cultures. As a result, slaves in Luso-Asia did not form a homogeneous group with a shared heritage of African ancestry and bondage or a common culinary tradition.

African influences are, however, one of the constituent threads of Luso-

¹¹² Wilson and Parker, *An Introduction to the Sources of European Economic History*, 64.

¹¹³ Standage, *A History of the World in 6 Glasses*, 103.

¹¹⁴ Wilson and Parker, *An Introduction to the Sources of European Economic History*, 64.

¹¹⁵ Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, 114.

Asian cuisine. Hired hands, travellers, traders and seekers of fortune from the Portuguese settlements on the East African coast permeated the Portuguese territories in Asia. Afro-Portuguese cooking also travelled to Asia with slaves and sailors via Brazil and Portugal's West African colonies. *Nanban* screens created in Japan after the Portuguese arrival show the Iberian merchants being assisted by black porters.¹¹⁶ There were 2,000 “blacks of many nations” in Malacca in the early 1600s, most of them soldiers.¹¹⁷ Africans were brought to Ceylon in significant numbers by the Portuguese to serve as paid labourers, such as salt pan rakers and palanquin carriers, and in domestic households as nannies, cooks and servants. Despite their historic disdain of dark skinned people, the colonial Portuguese admired the Africans’ dedication, intelligence and adaptability. “The ability to be creative and produce new variations on old themes is the heart and soul of African culture and cooking,” writes historian of African foodways, Diane M. Spivey.¹¹⁸ African cooks were particularly appreciated by the Portuguese and were employed in Lisbon and in Portuguese households throughout the Lusophone empire. In colonial Macao, it was fashionable to employ Chinese maids and Negro housemen.¹¹⁹

116 Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, 218.

117 Scammell, “The Pillars of Empire,” 485.

118 Diane M. Spivey, *The Peppers, Cracklings, and Knots of Wool Cookbook: The Global Migration of African Cuisine* (Albany: State University of New York, 1999), 5.

119 Porter, *Macao*, 131-132.

The *raison d'être* of the Portuguese empire in Asia was trade, not agricultural production, and although slavery was part and parcel of the Portuguese colonial presence in the region until it was eventually prohibited, it was not carried out on anywhere near as large a scale as in Brazil, nor was it institutionalized. The Portuguese were, however, heavily involved in slave raiding in the Bay of Bengal during the seventeenth century.¹²⁰ They also bought slaves in India, Madagascar, Ceylon and China and sold them elsewhere.¹²¹ They supplied Indian slaves to the Spanish colony in Manila, as well as to their own settlements.¹²² Mainland China provided a ready supply of coolie labour for the Portuguese colonies. The trade in Chinese and African slaves and indentured workers was a highly lucrative business that only ceased when Lisbon outlawed it in 1873.¹²³

Although there was no large-scale employment of agricultural slave labour in Portuguese Asia, slaves were widely used in private households. In Macao, on average, there were six slaves for every *casado* during the sixteenth century.¹²⁴ Goa's slave population was huge. A

120 Scammel, "After Da Gama," 522.

121 Baxter, "Portuguese and Creole Portuguese in the Pacific," 306.

122 Baxter, "Portuguese and Creole Portuguese in the Pacific," 306.

123 Pons, *Macao*, 86.

124 Baxter, "Portuguese and Creole Portuguese in the Pacific," 323.

typical member of the Municipal Council had 85 slaves, a typical lawyer over 60. A rich woman might have several hundred. Even Portuguese soldiers who could barely afford bread kept large complements of slave girls.¹²⁵ A letter written by a Dutch Factor in Hirado in 1610 describes the Portuguese merchants from Macao disembarking in Nagasaki with retinues of servants and slaves.¹²⁶ A Dutch census taken in Malacca in 1678, when the Portuguese empire was in its declining years, revealed that even in this period of economic hardship, the 1,469 Portuguese residents of the city owned 551 slaves.¹²⁷

Many of the wealthy Portuguese took their household servants with them when they moved around the *Estado* and their cooks must have become adept at working with whatever ingredients were at hand. Arriving in a strange city, one of the first tasks of a servant or domestic slave would be to visit the local marketplace to buy food, if they were lucky accompanied by the servant of another Portuguese household recruited to show them around. If not, in the tradition of marketplaces the world over, tips on buying and preparing food would be quickly gathered. The Portuguese made an active effort to adjust to local diets. As we have already seen, Vasco da Gama's instruction to João Nuz to investigate local foodways

¹²⁵ Pearson, *The New Cambridge History of India*, 95; Boxer, *Mary and Misogyny*, 68; Charles R. Boxer, *Portuguese Society in the Tropics: The Municipal Councils of Goa, Macao, Bahia, and Luanda, 1501-1800* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965), 39.

¹²⁶ Boxer, *The Great Ship from Amacon*, 15.

¹²⁷ Baxter, "Portuguese and Creole Portuguese in the Pacific", 306.

was one of his first actions in the subcontinent.

The trial documents of Jácomé de Olivares, a wealthy *converso* merchant from Cochin, who, along with his wife Maria Nunes, was subjected to trial by the Inquisition, showed that the couple's female slaves were responsible for the cooking and provisioning of both the household and the trader's ship. The slaves, some of whom were children, bought meat at the city slaughterhouse, killed pigs, made sausages and delivered supplies to the vessel.¹²⁸ The male slaves attended to domestic matters outside the house.

The presence and ubiquity of slave labour fostered the development of an elaborate colonial cuisine. The Macanese novelist Henrique de Senna Fernandis recalls that his childhood home employed a girl whose sole job was to whisk the eggs for the typical Portuguese cakes and desserts that called for eggs by the dozen.¹²⁹ It also encouraged culinary creolization as slaves of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds mingled under the roofs and in the kitchens of their Iberian masters. Linschoten reported that the female slaves in Goa produced a whole range of Portuguese-style conserves and jams made from Indian fruits, which their masters

¹²⁸ José Alberto Rodrigues da Silva Tavim, "From Setúbal to the Sublime Porte: The Wanderings of Jácomé de Olivares, New Christian and Merchant of Cochin (1540-1571)," in Subrahmanyam, *Sinners and Saints*, 110.

¹²⁹ Quoted in Annabel Jackson, "Tastes of Macau," in *World Food Hong Kong*, by Richard Sterling, Elizabeth Chong and Lushan Charles Qin, (Footscray, Lonely Planet, 2001), 189.

encouraged them to sell, along with their very fine needlework, in the streets.¹³⁰ Slave women from Malacca are thought to have introduced the use of wet spice pastes (*rempahs* in Malay) to southern India and curries made with coconut milk instead of the grated coconut traditionally used in Indian curries. In the case of the Chinese *mui-tsai*, who were often raised as family members in Portuguese households, and the many native women who became concubines, the transference between cultures was rapid and quickly cemented by the birth of children who were raised in dual culinary traditions.

Diversity and Mobility

Asia is a vast region that encompasses a number of distinct sub-cultures and cuisines. Religious and cultural differences and geographical isolation helped to preserve the regionality of Asian gastronomy. While cross-fertilization between cuisines occurred in border territories and centres of trade, the Portuguese introduced the region to a new, intensified phase of culinary creolization, fostered by the superior range of Portuguese ships, an economic imperative that encouraged cross-cultural communication, and a high degree of miscegenation.

In the space of one or two generations of mixed marriages, the Luso-Asians became a group of people with a wide range of ethnic

¹³⁰ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:186.

backgrounds and culinary traditions. Many of the coastal trading ports and traditional marketplaces in which they settled were already places of great cultural mixing where merchants from all over Asia gathered to do business. According to Tome Pires, the trading community in Malacca included:

“Moors from Cairo, Mecca, Aden, Abyssinians, men of Kilwa, Malindi, Ormuz, Parsees, Rumes, Turks, Turkomans, Christian Armenians, Gujaratees, men of Chaul, Dabhol, Goa, of the kingdom of Deccan, Malabars and Klings, merchants from Orissa, Ceylon, Bengal, Arakan, Pegu, Siamese, men of Kedah, Malays, men of Pahang, Patani, Cambodia, Champa, Cochin China, Chinese, Lequeos, men of Brunei, Luçoes, men of Tamjompura, Laue, Banka, Linga [...], Moluccas, Banda. Bima, Timor, Madura, Java, Sunda, Palembang, Jambi, Tongkal, Indragiri, Kappatta, Menangkabau, Siak, Arqua, Aru, Bata, country of the Tomjano, Pase, Pedir, Maldives.”¹³¹

Each of the chief nationalities – Chinese, Javanese, Gujeratis and Bengalis – were represented by their own Captain of the Port.¹³²

The Hormuz settlement not only received traders by sea but also camel

¹³¹ Pires, *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires*, 2:268.

¹³² Ryley, *Ralph Fitch*, 125.

caravans travelling the Silk Road from central Asia as well as the hundreds of European merchants who arrived every year by way of the Levant.¹³³ John Fryer described the marketplace in Hormuz stretching more than a mile along the shore, the vendors' stalls crowded together in narrow streets and covered with colourful awnings.¹³⁴ Linschoten noted that the Portuguese settlement at Diu was similarly cosmopolitan, "full of strange nations, as Turks, Persians, Arabians, Armenians, and other countrie people."¹³⁵

The Portuguese were interested in doing business with merchants of every stripe. Until Catholic attitudes in Europe began to harden in the second half of the sixteenth century, they paid little attention to the religious affiliations of their business partners. In fact, they had deliberately planned to use indigenous agents, including Muslims, to build their empire.¹³⁶ They made a point of learning foreign languages and acquainting themselves with cultures other than their own. Until the Portuguese arrived on the scene, business transactions between merchants in India were conducted by means of hand signals concealed

133 R. J. Barendse, "Trade and State in the Arabian Seas: A Survey from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century," *Journal of World History* 11, no. 2 (2000), 187.

134 Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, 222.

135 Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:58.

136 Scammell, "The Pillars of Empire," 145.

by a cloth.¹³⁷ Throughout Asia, goods were exchanged in a bartering system or by the use of local financial instruments such as cowrie shells. The Portuguese unified the region's trading practices by introducing the silver coin as a mode of payment and instituted a simplified version of their mother tongue as the universal trading language.¹³⁸ These open lines of communication and trading vessels engaged in region-wide commerce fostered culinary exchange through the transmission of cooks, ingredients and culinary knowledge between the various Portuguese ports of call.

Because of the small numbers of Portuguese citizens living in the *Estado*, it was heavily dependant on non-Portuguese manpower. Indigenous people, either enslaved or hired hands, crewed ships for the Portuguese, erected their buildings and defended their possessions. Indigenous expertise was also brought to bear in pilotage, trade negotiations and diplomacy. In Goa, much of the Portuguese merchant trade was entrusted to the indigenous professional traders, the *Vanias* (also called *Banians*), who also extended loans to the Portuguese.¹³⁹ All the Portuguese *cartazes* issued in Surat in the 1690s were signed by Rustamji Manockji, a wealthy Parsee who also supplied the influential

137 Varthema, *The Travels of Ludovico di Varthema*, 168-169.

138 Jacques Gernet, *A History of Chinese Civilization*, trans. J.R. Foster and Charles Hartman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 460.

139 Scammell, "The Pillars of Empire," 478-479.

officers of the *Estado* with luxury goods such as ivory, diamonds and Chinese artifacts.¹⁴⁰

The people from the local community who provided the goods and services that supported a *casado* household might be Muslim, Hindu, Malay, Chinese or any other variety of non-European. In Cambaia, local Gujarati agents provided the Portuguese with houses, took care of their needs, supplying both food and women, and acted as middle-men in their business dealings.¹⁴¹ A *casado*'s trading partners might be Parsi, Arab, Turkish or Jew. His complement of slaves might include Indians, Sinhalese, Africans, Javanese, Timorese, Chinese, Japanese, Siamese and/or Malays.¹⁴² Any of these same ethnic groups may have provided him with a wife. His neighbours in the Portuguese Quarter could be Catholics from Japan, Macau, Manila, Malay states, the Moluccas, Solor, Timor or elsewhere.¹⁴³ These international communities were focal points of culinary and cultural exchange. When João Ribeiro arrived in Ceylon in the mid-seventeenth century, he described the great multi-ethnic fair lasting 50 days that was held in Ceylon, with its rows of shops selling merchandise from around the world. All manner of comestibles were also on offer. "From the surroundings is brought every variety of food and

¹⁴⁰ Scammell, "The Pillars of Empire," 479.

¹⁴¹ Pearson, *The Portuguese in India*, 83.

¹⁴² Baxter, "Portuguese and Creole Portuguese in the Pacific," 320; Boxer, *Mary and Mysogygy*, 68; Scammell, *After Da Gama*, 522.

¹⁴³ Baxter, "Portuguese and Creole Portuguese in the Pacific," 320.

though the people are numerous and of various races and religions - Christians, Jews, Moors and Gentiles - they can all obtain the food to which they are accustomed," he marveled.¹⁴⁴

Many Luso-Asians were perpetually on the move. A common feature of Luso-Asian communities was the number of people who set up house temporarily. Officers of the state and fleet commanders were usually Portuguese nobles awarded temporary commissions by the Portuguese crown and "shifted about by the colonial administration in Lisbon like pieces on a backgammon board."¹⁴⁵ They moved around the empire, rarely becoming permanent residents of any colony.¹⁴⁶ Portuguese soldiers travelled with their captains. Mercenaries and other Portuguese-for-hire went to wherever there was work and adventurers went wherever fortune led them. Traders followed shifting markets, often relocating according to seasonal cycles. Ecclesiastics serviced a region-wide diocese and many moved from one colony to the next at the bidding of the *Padroado*. While the itinerant Portuguese did not always enjoy local cooking, the need to eat, coupled with a lack of food taboos, made them willing to experiment and turned them into culinary magpies.

¹⁴⁴ João Ribeiro, "The Travels and Adventures of João Ribeiro (1641-1659)," in *Ceylon of the Early Travellers*, by H. A. J. Hulugalle, n.pag. <http://www.lankalibrary.com/geo/portu/João.htm>

¹⁴⁵ Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, 11.

¹⁴⁶ Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, 64.

Gilberto Freyre, the pre-eminent analyst of Portuguese creole society in Brazil, describes the Portuguese as “cosmopolitan and plastic-minded.”¹⁴⁷ Their all-embracing approach to matters of diet did not endear the Portuguese to other, more conservative Europeans. The British traveller Richard Burton marveled at the gustatory eclecticism (and audacity) of one Gaetano de Gama, a descendant of the great Vasco, who invited himself to join Burton and a companion at breakfast:

“Thereupon he sat down, and proceeded to make himself comfortable. He pulled a cigar out of our box, called for a glass of water, but preferred sherry, ate at least a dozen plantains, and washed down the sherry with a coffee-cup full of milk. He then downed a plate of fish, a dish of curry, a curd cheese, a water melon and half-a-dozen cups of café au lait. Then after settling the heterogeneous mass with a glass of our anisette, he reapplied himself to his cheroot.”¹⁴⁸

Freyre notes that the Portuguese were more realistic and adaptive colonizers of Latin America than the ‘hard and angular’ Spanish and suggests that they were predisposed to successful functioning in hybrid society by their cultural heritage as a people “existing indeterminately

¹⁴⁷ Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, 3.

¹⁴⁸ Burton, *Goa, and the Blue Mountains*, 27.

between Europe and Africa.¹⁴⁹ In Asia, where, in contrast to Brazil, the Portuguese did not have the benefit of an imported and 'owned' slave labour force, the influence of indigenous cultures within the Portuguese settlements was reinforced by the Portuguese need of native skills. The order to expel Hindus from Goa was given in 1563 but excused from the edict were land-owning farmers, artisans such as carpenters and blacksmiths, and doctors.¹⁵⁰ Many Portuguese preferred to consult native doctors rather than their own physicians, who John Fryer reported, were excessively fond of bleeding.¹⁵¹ Linschoten noted that Catholic women in Goa ate with the right hand like the Hindus and chewed cloves to sweeten the breath like the Indian women.¹⁵² The men followed the Hindu custom of drinking without letting their lips touch the vessel.¹⁵³ They also took part in some Hindu ceremonies as well as their own Catholic ones, prompting the Dominican Duarte Nunes to write a letter of complaint to the authorities in Lisbon.¹⁵⁴

Although Goa pursued a 'Christians only' policy, most of the Portuguese towns were cosmopolitan and inclusive settlements. In Cochin, Cesare

149 Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves*, 4-6.

150 Scammell, "The Pillars of Empire," 477.

151 Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, 151.

152 Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:207-208, 2:83.

153 Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:212.

154 Cruz, "Notes on Portuguese Relations with Vijayanagara," 30.

Federici reported, Italian, French and German traders were encouraged to live in the Portuguese city “and all they that marrie in Cochin doe get an Office according to the Trade he is of.”¹⁵⁵ According to seventeenth century French sources, the Portuguese town on the banks of the Chao Praya River near Ayuthaya was home to Portuguese, Indians, Chinese, Vietnamese, Laotians and Cambodians.¹⁵⁶ As its cuisine reflects, Macao was the most ethnically diverse of the Portuguese colonies. Until Canton was opened to foreign commerce in the nineteenth century, Macao served as a base for traders of all nationalities seeking to access the Chinese and Japanese markets.

Merchants of all stripes also travelled on Portuguese vessels, which were able to carry more cargo and cross greater ocean distances than traditional sailing craft. Linschoten reported that Vania and Gujerati middle-men often accompanied the Portuguese on their ships.¹⁵⁷ The Portuguese ferried other Europeans around the East and also hired out space on their vessels to Asian traders. Portuguese vessels also carried cosmopolitan crews. In the Bay of Bengal they hired the Buddhist Moghs who traditionally crewed for the Arab merchants.¹⁵⁸ Ships plying the Malacca-Spice Islands route used Filipinos. By the seventeenth century,

¹⁵⁵ Federici, “The Voyage and Trauell of M. Cæsar Fredericke,” 124.

¹⁵⁶ Chawanakriengkrai Pirak, “The Role of the Portuguese in Siam,” *Sinlapakorn* 33, no.1 (1989), 54.

¹⁵⁷ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:255.

¹⁵⁸ Collingham, *Curry*, 61.

nearly all Portuguese vessels were crewed by Muslims, whose wives and families were also on board.¹⁵⁹ Cooks prepared one meal for the pork-loving Iberians and another *halal* one for themselves. Linschoten reported that the Gujerati and Banian merchants who sailed with the Portuguese carried their own rations and if they ran out, would rather starve than touch the Christians' food.¹⁶⁰ Through their use of Islamic crewmen and trafficking through Arab ports, the Portuguese helped to spread Muslim culinary influence throughout the region, and, ironically, the religion of their former oppressors. In return, the Portuguese transferred religiously acceptable Iberian culinary arts, such as baking, to their crews.¹⁶¹ Despite the official anti-Islamic stance of Lisbon, many Portuguese integrated successfully into Muslim societies in Asia.¹⁶²

Private traders had an even closer relationship with indigenous societies than the Portuguese living under the auspices of the *Estado*. Many of them preferred to operate from ports that were not under Portuguese control in order to avoid paying Portuguese taxes.¹⁶³ For the wealthiest traders, the economic advantages of living the beyond the official

¹⁵⁹ Scammell, "The Pillars of Empire," 487.

¹⁶⁰ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:255.

¹⁶¹ Collingham, *Curry*, 61.

¹⁶² Dejanirah Silva Couto, "Some Observations on Portuguese Renegades in Asia in the Sixteenth Century," in Disney and Booth, *Vasco da Gama and the Linking of Europe and Asia*, 201.

¹⁶³ Winius, *Foundations of the Portuguese Empire*, 419.

boundaries of the empire were significant. By the seventeenth century most of the private traders had become largely estranged from Lisbon and were more deeply engaged with foreign cultures than with their own.¹⁶⁴

The complexity and diversity of Luso-Asian cuisine resulted in large part from the mobility and diversity of the pluralistic Luso-Asian communities, combined with an adaptability that allowed for the incorporation of influences drawn from many culinary cultures. The heavy reliance of the Portuguese settlements on indigenous labour and expertise and a trading environment that fostered cultural exchange promoted the integration of Iberian and non-Iberian foodways.

Mestiças: The Agents of Culinary Change

Women played a central role in the development and preservation of Luso-Asian cuisine, culture and culinary traditions. In the absence of Portuguese women, indigenous and Luso-Asian women in the Portuguese settlements filled the roles of servants, wives, concubines, mothers, and in the Portuguese tradition, food vendors and tradeswomen. Over time, their lowly status evolved into positions of power, so much so that Luso-Asian women became the de facto heads of households with influence

¹⁶⁴ Disney, *A History of Portugal and the Portuguese Empire*, 2:187.

that extended well beyond the domestic sphere. Pride in self and an inherited tradition of generous Iberian hospitality encouraged the development and refinement of culinary skills that have been passed on, surviving, remarkably, for more than five centuries.

Although not unique to this historical and cultural context, and due in part to common factors such as illiteracy and the lack of interest in documenting quotidian events and domestic habits, the almost complete absence of narratives by women living in the *Estado* has been described by Russell-Wood as a “blatant lacuna.”¹⁶⁵ The worldly deeds of men in fields of religion, economics and politics have attracted the interest of the majority of the *Estado*’s historians, while the achievements of women have been largely ignored.¹⁶⁶

The Lusitanian *mestiças* provided an essential framework for the *Estado*, giving birth to and raising its citizens, running its households and supporting the men who controlled its political and economic fortunes. And yet, as Paramita Abdurachman writes: “These women have become people without faces, known only in documents as ‘mulheres’.”¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, 20.

¹⁶⁶ Notable exceptions to this generalization include Boxer, *Mary and Mysogyny* and Fátima da Silva Gracias, *Kaleidoscope of Women in Goa*.

¹⁶⁷ Paramita R. Abdurachman, “Niachile Pokaraga’ A Sad Story of a Moluccan Queen,” *Modern Asian Studies* 22, no. 3 (1988), 571. *Mulheres* is the Portuguese equivalent of ‘women’ or ‘females.’

Life for many of those in servitude was miserable. In the Portuguese slave markets in India, a man could buy ten female slaves for less than the price of a horse.¹⁶⁸ Many of these women had highly developed skills, as musicians, dancers or confectionery makers. They were paraded naked and sold as chattels.¹⁶⁹

Life was often not much better for free women. In some parts of Asia, a Portuguese *mestiça* was regarded as little better than a paid slave. The institutions purportedly established to ensure female welfare were themselves guilty of abuses. In 1681, one Dona Paula arrived at the Convent of Our Lady of Remedies in Damão with a sick daughter. In return for her recovery, the daughter was given to the convent, who promptly sold her as a slave. Several similar transactions were entered into the convent's accounts.¹⁷⁰ The 100 nuns of the Santa Monica convent in Goa kept their 120 slaves, a number they regarded as "totally insufficient," in dungeons.¹⁷¹

Many Luso-Asian women also found themselves transported to distant lands as a result of military conquests. When the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan attacked the Portuguese settlement at Hughli and took 4,000

¹⁶⁸ Pearson, *The New Cambridge History of India*, 96.

¹⁶⁹ Pearson, *The New Cambridge History of India*, 96.

¹⁷⁰ Indrani Chatterjee and Richard Maxwell Eaton, *Slavery and South Asian History* (Indiana University Press, 2006), 165.

¹⁷¹ Boxer, *Portuguese Society in the Tropics*, 42.

prisoners, he distributed the most beautiful of the Portuguese women among the harems of his nobles.¹⁷² A similar fate befell the female population of the Portuguese town in Pegu when it was attacked by forces from Arakan. Their value as chattels at least spared these women their lives; when the Dutch siege of Malacca in 1606 brought the walled Portuguese town to the point of starvation, reported the Dutch chronicler Valentijn, the women in the Malacca fortress were cast out by their own menfolk.¹⁷³

One of the ways in which Luso-Asian women could support themselves was by cooking. The preparation of food was a traditional role for Iberian women. The Jesuit Luis Frois was surprised to learn that in Japan, cooking was a predominantly male occupation: “In Europe, the women ordinarily prepare meals; in Japan the men do that, and even knights consider it an elegant accomplishment to know how to cook.”¹⁷⁴ The resourcefulness of the *mestiças* was remarked upon repeatedly by European travellers. The cartographer, Pedro Barreto de Resende, who visited Malacca in 1634, wrote:

“One thing may be said of the married women of the land, which is

¹⁷² Hunter, *History of British India*, 96.

¹⁷³ Sta Maria, *My People, My Country*, 54.

¹⁷⁴ Luis Frois, quoted in William Theodore de Bary, Carol Gluck and Arthur E. Tiedemann, *Sources of Japanese Tradition*. 2nd ed., Vol. 2 abridged. Part 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 144.

greatly to their credit and that is that there is not one who would ask of any help from their husband towards the expenses of the home, which really is their support; for they themselves supply the household money by making eatables which are easily sold in the streets.”¹⁷⁵

Portuguese women had supplemented their income by cooking food for sale since early times.¹⁷⁶ In Asia, said Resende, Portuguese women “are brought up from childhood to the same custom.”¹⁷⁷ John Fryer also noted that the Portuguese were excellent cooks, declaring, “I prefer their ordinary way of ordering Victuals before any others.”¹⁷⁸ One *mestiça* in Ceylon, with the help of 20 Bengali slaves, provided meals for an officer of the VOC.¹⁷⁹ Another baked bread for the British settlement in Madras.¹⁸⁰

There is evidence that commercial quantities of sweets were also being made by enterprising Luso-Asian women in their own homes. François Bernier noted that wherever the Portuguese were, good sweets and

175 Quoted in Sta Maria, *My People, My Country*, 215-216.

176 Marques, *Daily Life in Portugal*, 27.

177 Quoted in Sta Maria, *My People, My Country*, 215-216.

178 Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, 157.

179 McGilvray, “Dutch Burghers and Portuguese Mechanics”, 241.

180 Madras Tercentenary Celebration Committee, *The Madras Tercentenary Commemoration Volume*, 126.

confits were to be found and that the Portuguese in Bengal had a flourishing business selling them.¹⁸¹ He praised the dexterity of the Portuguese *confit* makers. John Fryer observed that the Christian women of Goa made very good confectionery.¹⁸² Even the female slaves sold in the marketplace there were able to make sweetmeats and preserves, a skill that added to their desirability as household servants.¹⁸³

Mestiças were also in demand as domestic servants for the Dutch and British who followed the Portuguese into Asia. Dutch women in seventeenth century Batavia entrusted them to raise their children. Addressed in Dutch, the children would reply *noke save* ('don't know') in Portuguese.¹⁸⁴ In seventeenth century Ceylon, nearly every Dutch household employed one or more *misthesas* and Dutch children conversed among themselves in Portuguese.¹⁸⁵ When Maria Graham visited Madras in the early nineteenth century, she reported that most of the female servants employed in British households were Portuguese.¹⁸⁶ The continued presence of Portuguese women in the households of other Europeans throughout the colonial era in Asia contributed to the

181 Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, 437-438

182 Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, 156.

183 Sá, "Goapuri and Velha Goa," 47.

184 Winkle, "An Afterword on "Some Exquisite Nonsense," 185.

185 Winkle, "An Afterword on "Some Exquisite Nonsense," 185.

186 Maria Graham, *Journal of a Residence in India*, 128.

perpetuation and diffusion of the Iberian culinary arts throughout the region.

Gender relations in Luso-Asia did not always and only involve the subjugation of women. There were various advantages for the indigenous women who entered into relationships with Portuguese men. In many instances, conversion liberated them from restrictive orthodoxies and taboos.¹⁸⁷ In traditional Hindu society, for example, women were accorded low social status and were largely confined to their joint family household, often under the domination of their mother-in-law. Women prepared meals and served food to the males of the family, waiting until they were finished before making their own meal of leftovers.¹⁸⁸ In traditional Chinese society women also existed in order to support male family members.¹⁸⁹ A true Catholic marriage (*casamento verdadeiro*) established the monogamous nuclear family relationship as the basic structural element of the Luso-Asian household.¹⁹⁰ The church officially recognized women as the equal of men, a radical departure from the norm in many indigenous Asian communities. Wives of the Portuguese were encouraged to become literate by their husbands so they could read

187 Malgonkar, *Inside Goa*, 41.

188 Bento Graciano D'Souza, *Goan Society in Transition: A Study in Social Change* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1975), 73.

189 Reiko Atsumi, "Basic Social Structures and Family Systems," in *Eastern Asia: An Introductory History*, ed. Colin Mackerras (Frenchs Forest: Longman, 2000), 38.

190 Ines G. Županov, "Lust, Marriage and Free Will; Jesuit Critique of Paganism in South India (17th century)," monograph, 16.
<http://www.ineszupanov.com/publications/zupanov%20studies%20in%20history%202000.pdf>

the Scriptures. Marriage to a Portuguese often represented a significant economic advantage and improvement in quality of life. “To get a soldier some women were prepared to house him, feed him, pay for his clothes, see to his washing, and provide him with pocket-money,” writes the Goan man of letters, Mario Cabral e Sa.¹⁹¹ In Ceylon, many women who were already married to local fishermen and tradespeople went to live with wealthier Portuguese men.¹⁹²

Control of the flow of food into the family has been identified as a key determinant in the acquisition of domestic power by women.¹⁹³ Within Luso-Asian society indigenous or *mestiço* males were generally restricted by the traditions of inherited vocation but a female who married well could better her position, sometimes dramatically. A serving girl or maid who caught the eye of her employer might become, through marriage, the *dona da casa* of a wealthy household, in charge of all the provisioning and in possession of a sizeable staff to prepare meals. The evidence from India suggests that this transformation was not uncommon and that it came about rapidly. When the settlement at Diu was attacked in 1546, only 35 years after the Portuguese set foot on the subcontinent, the women of Goa and the north coast settlements were sufficiently wealthy

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Sá, “Goapuri and Velha Goa,” 41.

192 Suckling, *Ceylon*, 290.

193 See Wm. Alex McIntosh and Mary Zey, “Women as Gatekeepers of Food Consumption: A Sociological Critique,” in *Food and Gender: Identity and Power*, eds. Carole M. Counihan and Stephen L. Kaplan (Amsterdam: Overseas Publishers Association, 1998), 125-144.

that pawning their jewelery raised enough money to finance ten years of warfare.¹⁹⁴

Well-to-do Luso-Asian women exerted greater influence than their counterparts in chauvinistic sixteenth century Portugal. Among the upper classes in Portugal, women were traditionally sequestered in order to restrict their opportunities for a disadvantageous marriage.¹⁹⁵ This severely limited the social exposure of women and their power to influence affairs outside the domestic sphere. The tradition of sequestering wives was carried over to the colonies. John Fryer reported that Catholic women in Goa were highly reclusive, spending all of their time in their devotions and care of the house.¹⁹⁶ Mandelslo observed that they did not appear at mealtimes.¹⁹⁷ In Goa and Macao Portuguese women were rarely seen in public, preferring to watch the world from behind half-shuttered windows or in curtained palanquins.¹⁹⁸

But sequestration in the colonies was often just a ploy to be seen as a proper Portuguese *dona* and a member of the upper class. A *gestora familiar* (family manager) enjoyed power and privilege. In Goa, the

194 Coates, "Female Colonization in the Estado da India," 51.

195 Willems, "On Portuguese Family Structure," 66.

196 Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, 156.

197 Commissariat, *Mandelslo's Travels in Western India*, 61-62.

198 Porter, *Macau*, 135; Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:205.

Catholic women were infamous for flaunting the deeply entrenched mores of the caste system and the constraints imposed by traditional Iberian chauvinism. In Macao, where in the Chinese tradition, Luso-Asian women were usually involved in the family's financial affairs, they became an influential force in society.¹⁹⁹ Marriage to a Luso-Chinese woman greatly improved the business prospects of Portuguese men in the colony.²⁰⁰ It has been suggested that one of the reasons for the success of the Portuguese traders in Japan was that so many of them had Japanese wives.²⁰¹

Portuguese *mestiças* had a pervasive influence on the cooking of the entire region. Because of their ability to move between indigenous and foreign cultures, the Portuguese *mestiças* were sought after by European men. In India, most of the non-indigenous women living with European men of any nationality were Portuguese *mestiças*.²⁰² Marriage to Asian women enabled European men to integrate with indigenous society. Their offspring, who usually learned their mother's tongue before their father's, were able to move even more smoothly between cultures. The register of St Thomas Church in Bombay for most of the eighteenth century shows

¹⁹⁹ Taylor, *Indonesia*, 17.

²⁰⁰ Isabel dos Guimarães Sá, "Charity, Ritual and Business at the Edge of Empire: The Misericórdia of Macau," in Brockey *Portuguese Colonial Cities in the early Modern World*, 165.

²⁰¹ Anthony Reid, "Female Roles in Pre-Colonial Southeast Asia," *Modern Asian Studies* 22, no. 3 (1988), 636.

²⁰² Caplan, *Children of Colonialism*, 4.

that the majority of marriages involved a British man marrying a woman with a Portuguese name.²⁰³

Some women in positions of power were particularly influential agents in the dissemination of Portuguese culinary culture. Marie Guimar, for example, has been credited with teaching the Thais to make conventual sweets. She and her Greek husband, Constantin Phaulkon, were one of the most influential couples in Siam. After Phaulkon's death, Guimar supervised a staff estimated at more than 2,000 when she served as housekeeper to the Royal Court.²⁰⁴ The wife of the Portuguese hunting companion of Pegu's King Tabinshwehti also cooked European dishes for the royal table.²⁰⁵ The captain of Tabinshwehti's personal bodyguard, Diogo Suarez de Mello, and his Burmese wife were another influential and wealthy couple with extensive estates in Burma, who could afford to live in European style.²⁰⁶ Their eating habits have not been recorded but it is safe to assume that they enjoyed Iberian foods, especially those traditionally associated with their Catholic faith. The same can be said of Dona Luisa de Saldanha, the Luso-Javanese niece of Goa's viceroy and wife of soldier of fortune Philip de Brito, who reigned as de facto Queen of

²⁰³ Caplan, *Children of Colonialism*, 53.

²⁰⁴ See Su-Mei Yu, "Thai Egg-Based Sweets: The Legend of Thao Tong Keap-Ma," *Gastronomica* 3 no. 3 (2003) and Robert Bruce, "Phaulkon, The Greek Dictator of Siam," *History Today* 32, no. 2 (1982), 36-42.

²⁰⁵ Harvey, *History of Burma*, 160.

²⁰⁶ Collis, *The Land of the Great Image*, 216.

Pegu for 13 years, or Dona Jacinta da Costa and Dona Catarina de Noronha, sisters of the Sultan of Makassar, both of whom converted to Catholicism and married the Portuguese merchant Francisco Vieira Figueiredo, then the most influential man in the city.²⁰⁷

Although the Portuguese *mestiças* contributed significantly to the culinary heritage of the region, cooking was by no means their only skill. The traditional role of women in Asia, particularly in China and Southeast Asia, included the management of commercial affairs.²⁰⁸ Many sources mention women as interpreters, bookkeepers, traders, brokers, and moneylenders.²⁰⁹ Some wives of Portuguese men were also their business partners, serving as intermediaries between cultures and facilitating trading arrangements. Women also served as envoys and diplomats. A Portuguese-speaking Vietnamese woman, wife of the Japanese Christian Wada Rizaemon, served as an interpreter at the Court of CochinChina.²¹⁰ Even the humble *mestiça* who cooked meals for a VOC officer in Ceylon spoke four languages.²¹¹ The adaptability of Luso-Asian women and their affinity for self-empowerment contributed to

207 António Pinto da Franca, *Portuguese Influence in Indonesia* (Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1985), 11; See also Socarras, "The Portuguese in Lower Burma."

208 Reid, "Female Roles in Pre-Colonial Southeast Asia," 634.

209 William D. Wray, "The 17th-Century Japanese Diaspora: Questions of Boundary and Policy," Conference Paper. XIII Economic History Congress (Buenos Aires, 22-26 July 2002), 25.

210 Barbara N. Ramusack, *Women in Asia: Restoring Women to History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 124.

211 McGilvray, "Dutch Burghers and Portuguese Mechanics," 241.

their effectiveness as agents of cultural exchange.

Educational opportunities for women were all but non-existent in the early period in the *Estado* – Macao’s first school for girls was not established until 1718²¹² – but the lack of formal education did not prevent women from achieving positions of power. The high mortality rate of Portuguese men in Asia, due to warfare, disease and what Charles Boxer refers to as ‘sexual over-indulgence’ meant that many of these women were left in possession of valuable property and estates.²¹³ While the power of many Portuguese men in Asia faded with the collapse of the *Estado*, the position of women as arbiters of society proved to be more enduring.

The shift in power relationship between Portuguese men and their indigenous wives was summed up eloquently by George Remedios, when he described the Macanese man, who in the glory days of the *Estado* “did business, wheeled and dealed, and fought pirates,” was reduced to a figure useful only for bringing home the “*pão e manteiga, arroz e balichão*” (bread and butter, rice and shrimp paste).²¹⁴ Meanwhile, the Macanese wife had become:

²¹² Baxter, “Portuguese and Creole Portuguese in the Pacific,” 324.

²¹³ Boxer, *Mary and Misogyny*, 77.

²¹⁴ Remedios, “Maquista Alphabet Book,” 8.

“the preserver of Macanese culture, the arbiter of refinement, the mediator of good taste, the intercessor of *maneira* (manners) and *boa educação* (good education), the exterminator of *asneira* (stupidity), the terminator of *boborisa* (foolishness), the *cozinheira* (cook) of Macanese food and the advocate of all things Macanese.”²¹⁵

The poverty that afflicted many of the Luso-Asian communities in the twilight of the *Estado* forced many women into the workforce.²¹⁶ In more recent times, many women have made this transition voluntarily. As the role of women changes, the traditional patterns that have ensured the safekeeping and transfer of Luso-Asian gastronomic knowledge for centuries are rapidly disappearing. Few modern women have the time or inclination for the labour intensive cooking of their mothers and grandmothers.

The largely unsung role of women in the survival of the Luso-Asian communities has been acknowledged by Paramita Abdurachman, who concludes:

²¹⁵ Remedios, “Maquista Alphabet Book,” 5.

²¹⁶ Caplan, *Children of Colonialism*, 51.

“They must have been the nucleus of the mixed community [...]. Their contribution to the acceptance of Portuguese habits, customs and mores especially in the day-to-day life has been very apparent. And the perpetuation of these communities until far into the twentieth century owed much to them.”²¹⁷

The Catholic Church

Religion “is among the most central avenues of transnational identification and connection,” writes sociologist Steven Gold.²¹⁸ The strength of the Portuguese commitment to Catholicism had a fundamental effect on the evolution of Luso-Asian foodways. “Whether for Muslims, Jews, Americans, Hindus or Gypsies, culinary dos and don'ts designate the cultural boundaries between insiders and outsiders,” writes British anthropologist Jeremy MacClancy.²¹⁹

Roman Catholicism was and remains a fundamental tenet of Portuguese life. Religious doctrine and ceremonial uses of food were powerful forces that shaped the eating habits of the Portuguese people. In Asia, the Portuguese demonstrated an unusual degree of accommodation to local

²¹⁷ Abdurachman, “Niachile Pokaraga,” 571.

²¹⁸ Steven J. Gold, “From Nationality to Peoplehood: Adaptation and Identity Formation in the Israeli Diaspora,” *Diaspora* 13 (2004), 333.

²¹⁹ MacClancy, *Consuming Culture*, 42.

cultural practices but they were unwavering in the matter of religion. As a result, Catholic ceremony and dietary customs provided a common matrix around which the different regional expressions of Luso-Asian cuisines coalesced.

In contrast to the Dutch colonial initiatives in Asia, which were overwhelmingly driven by the pursuit of exploitative economic policies,²²⁰ the quest for Christian converts was a consistent adjunct to Portuguese mercantile endeavours in the region. Even those captains who were not sympathetic to the Crown's evangelistic efforts were mindful of their own spiritual obligations and their responsibility for the moral welfare of their men. Priests accompanied the voyages to see to the spiritual needs of the sailors and to establish places of worship in newly settled lands.

Conversion was a principal vehicle of acculturation in the Iberian colonization of Latin America. Although bringing the light of Christianity to the dark lands of the heathens was part of the official manifesto of the eastern arm of the *Estado*, its early administrators approached the evangelistic mission pragmatically. If religious tolerance was required to form strategic alliances or secure trading privileges, conversion was not pursued with any vigour. Catholicism was imposed upon the inhabitants

²²⁰ Soma Hewa, *Colonialism, Tropical Disease, and Imperial Medicine: Rockefeller Philanthropy in Sri Lanka* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1995), 22.

of the Portuguese Asian territories with varying degrees of enthusiasm and success. In Goa, the Portuguese made a concerted effort to expunge Hindu culture but adopted a totally contrary, *laissez faire* approach to cultural relations in Malacca, where Catholicism never took hold and Islam remained the most powerful social conditioner. In Macao, where God and Mammon wrestled with Catholicism for possession of the Macanese soul, commerce won the day and the accommodative tenets of Confucianism encouraged a blending of Catholicism with traditional Chinese spiritualism.

The meeting of religions in the colonies resulted in conflict, coercion, confusion and compromise as religious cultures collided at some points and coexisted or fused at others. But the Luso-Asians have clung resolutely to their faith, and it is Catholicism, far more than a percentile of Portuguese blood, that is the principal unifying factor of a community that includes people from many different lands, ethnic groups and cultural traditions.

It was in Goa, headquarters of the Catholic Church in Asia for over 500 years, that Christianity had the greatest influence on the culture and cuisine of the local population. Francis Xavier baptized Indians en masse, in one village converting 10,000 people in a single month.²²¹

²²¹ Pearson, *The Portuguese in India*, 118.

Many of these were nominal conversions, accepted as a means of avoiding harassment, or bought with incentives. "A small premium is given at the church for every child who is baptized, consequently a number of Hindoo women present their offspring for that purpose, who never think farther of Christianity" Maria Graham complained of the Portuguese church in Bombay.²²² The Portuguese missionaries' greatest success was among the lower castes in India.²²³ Most of these 'conversions of convenience' brought about little change in the lives of the villagers, who continued in their traditional patterns of food preparation, adding in many of the ritual observances associated with the Catholic faith, such as those marking saint's days and other feast days.

However, the adoption of Catholic foodways became a matter of coercion when the Inquisition gathered momentum in Europe and spread its tentacles to India. Although Albuquerque had attempted to create a mixed-race *Estado* society in an atmosphere of religious tolerance, subsequent Portuguese administrators, encouraged by growing support of the Inquisition in Lisbon, resorted to forcible conversion. Malacca and Macao were too far away to be effectively controlled but in Goa the

²²² Graham, *Journal of a Residence in India*, 9.

²²³ Winius, "Millenarianism and Empire: Portuguese Asian Decline and the *Crise de Conscience* of the Missionaries," in Winius, *Studies on Portuguese Asia*, 41.

Inquisition was prosecuted as thoroughly as the Inquisition in Europe. The Inquisition in Goa was primarily concerned with rooting out insincere New Christians but in the atmosphere of religious intolerance, Hindus and Muslims who would not convert were exiled from the Portuguese enclave. Portuguese authorities issued a series of edicts prohibiting residents from engaging in various Hindu cultural practices, including some that affected foodways. Traditional Hindu cooking methods, such as cooking rice in unsalted water, were banned, along with many customs associated with food preparation and consumption, such as ritual bathing before cooking, removing footwear before serving and even distributing food to the poor. The use of ritual foods such as ghee and holy basil was prohibited. Even the traditional method of salting rice after cooking, rather than before as the Portuguese did, was taken as evidence of lingering adherence to Hinduism.²²⁴

Pork, which anthropologist Claudine Fabre-Vassas calls “a Christian flesh, endowed with a soul of blood,”²²⁵ had symbolic significance for the Portuguese. It was the centrepiece of meals celebrating important Catholic festivals such as Easter and Christmas. The consumption of pork was an affirmation of their Christianity and a demonstration of their difference from the heathens around them. In Goa and Portugal, Catholic

²²⁴ Anant Kakba Priolkar, *The Goa Inquisition: Being a Quatercentenary Study of the Inquisition in India* (Bombay: Bombay University Press, 1961), 98-105.

²²⁵ Fabre-Vassas and Volk, *The Singular Beast*, 325.

converts, especially those suspected of lingering Judaism, were required to eat pork as a demonstration of devotion to Christianity and those who refused were tortured.²²⁶

For many, however, conversion resulted in a genuine and enduring commitment to Catholicism. The initial motive for adopting Christianity was not necessarily a spiritual one. In the Spice Islands Holy water was believed to cure illness and act as an antidote against poisoning by one's enemies.²²⁷ The Jesuits used church ritual to attract converts, staging elaborate processions on church high-days and holidays, which provided food and entertainment for all classes of society.²²⁸ Access to Jesuit schools was another reason for conversion. Many Portuguese women whose sexual partners were men of other faiths also chose to cohabit rather than enter a marriage that would deny their children a Catholic education.²²⁹

The process of religious acculturation was not a one-way process. There is a deep interconnection between religious observance and social and gastronomic behaviour. To Muslims, for example, sharing food honours

²²⁶ Fabre-Vassas and Volk, *The Singular Beast*, 125, 290.

²²⁷ John Villiers. "Las Yslas de Esperar en Dios: The Jesuit Mission in Moro 1546-1571," *Modern Asian Studies* 22, no. 3 (1988), 602.

²²⁸ Boxer, *Portuguese Society in the Tropics*, 39.

²²⁹ Caplan, *Children of Colonialism*, 22.

the Prophet's commandment to eat together.²³⁰ To the Chinese, dining with guests is not a religious requirement but a matter of honour. In Hindu culture, eating with those of lower caste, or eating foods traditionally forbidden to a caste, may result in exile from one's own community. The degree to which Portuguese culinary customs influenced the cooking of the East Indians, for example, depended to a great extent on traditional caste groupings. The Koli fishermen retained much of their traditional culture and although Catholic, did not eat pork or beef. The rural Kshatrias, traditionally agriculturalists, also refrain from eating beef.²³¹

Although the Portuguese Eurasians are defined as a group by their Catholicism, some indigenous religious foodways have been incorporated into Luso-Asian culture. Among the Sino-Portuguese Catholics, for example, Chinese New Year, the Dragon Boat Festival and Mid-Autumn Festival with its popular mooncakes, are celebrated.²³² Catholic Goans join their Hindu neighbours in celebrating the Spring festival, Shigmo and enjoy its associated ritual foods.²³³

²³⁰ Claudia Roden, *Arabesque: A Taste of Morocco, Turkey and Lebanon* (London: Penguin, 2005), 149.

²³¹ Fernandes, "The Origins of the East Indians," n.pag.

²³² Cecilia Jorge, *Macanese Cooking: A Journey Across Generations*, trans. Carole Garton and Raquel Magalhães (Macau: Associação Promotora da Instrução dos Macaenses, 2004), 16.

²³³ Menezes, *The Essential Goa Cookbook*, 30.

Even in Goa, where Catholicism was forcibly imposed, some Hindu practices that were too deeply entrenched in the indigenous social fabric to be expunged were eventually adopted by the Portuguese. Diogo de Couto reported that even after converting to Christianity, some former Hindu men refused to eat with their wives.²³⁴ Linschoten noted that the Catholic Goans drank without letting the drinking vessel touch their lips in the Hindu fashion and that the women removed their shoes before cooking.²³⁵

Despite their minority position and their persecution by the Calvinist Dutch, the Cristang community in Malacca clung resolutely to their faith and, as far as their marginalization allowed, to Catholic dietary practices. Muslim taboos against pork and alcohol, plus economic hardship, greatly reduced the Cristang's access to their traditional foods but they were highly adaptable, reinventing their rituals and celebrating their faith with whatever foods were available.²³⁶

The Jesuits: Culinary Clerics

While Portuguese explorers and military leaders erected forts and

²³⁴ Diogo de Couto, *Decada V*, Book VI, 46-47, trans. in Pope, *India in Portuguese Literature*, 92.

²³⁵ Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 1:256, 261-262.

²³⁶ See Marbeck, *Cuzinhia Cristang*, 7-13.

secured trading rights, religious Orders established the infrastructures of the empire, building churches, schools and seminaries, agricultural holdings and residential compounds. In the far-flung corners of the world, priests and their converts planted vegetable gardens and vineyards, sowed and reaped crops, built kitchens and bakeries and created a unique culinary culture based on medieval European cookery transplanted to the Far East.

The Franciscans were initially the Order most closely associated with the Portuguese Voyages of Discovery and both they and the Dominican Orders were active in Portuguese Asia, but the Jesuits were the most deeply involved in the Christianizing effort and had the greatest influence in the region.²³⁷ Their interests were commercial as well as spiritual. “It would be difficult to find some branch of economic activity in Portuguese Asia in which the Jesuits were not directly or indirectly involved,” writes Boxer.²³⁸

The creation of the Jesuit Order by Saint Ignatius of Loyola in 1543 came just after the establishment of the Inquisition in Portugal (in 1536) and coincided with the Portuguese foray into Asia. The Pope charged the newly formed Jesuit brotherhood with the duty of saving the souls of

²³⁷ Albuquerque and Vieira, *The Archipelago of Madeira in the 15th Century*, 65.

²³⁸ Boxer, *Portuguese India in the Mid-Seventeenth Century*, 49.

heathens in the newly discovered lands. Saint Ignatius commanded the Jesuits to live as a community, in which all aspects of life, including food, apparel and lodging, were governed by the Society's rules and shared by all. Self-sufficiency was a fundamental tenet of Jesuitism and novices were required to go on pilgrimage for a month without money so that they would grow accustomed to lack of food and comforts.²³⁹

Although the vow of poverty was flouted spectacularly at an institutional level as the Society became a powerful economic force both in Portugal and the empire, the monks and lay brothers continued to be closely involved in the production of food and the advancement of the agricultural sciences.

Saint Ignatius taught that spirituality was inherent in simple everyday activities, a tenet that underscored the specialization of some brothers as bakers, cooks, cheese makers and other culinary artisans. The Jesuit brothers were expected to live as members of the community, sharing in the labour of building, agriculture, food preparation and other tasks of daily living. Bread making, in particular, has been a Jesuit tradition since the Order's foundation.²⁴⁰

In an impressive demonstration of commitment, the Order's first

²³⁹ William A. Barry and Robert G. Doherty, *Contemplatives in Action: The Jesuit Way* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2002), 21.

²⁴⁰ Rick Curry, *The Secrets of Jesuit Breadmaking* (New York: William Morrow Cookbooks, 1995), 1.

missionary, Francis Xavier, managed within ten years (1542 to 1552) to reach India, Ceylon, Malacca, the Moluccas, China and Japan, preaching, making thousands of converts and establishing missions.²⁴¹ These formed the nuclei of Christian communities, many of which have endured until the present day. Churches dedicated to this patron saint of the Luso-Asians are dotted all over Asia, reminders of the extraordinary geographical reach of the Portuguese during the sixteenth century. The restored Basilica of Bom Jesus in Old Goa houses Xavier's mummified body and attracts a steady flow of pilgrims and enthusiastic crowds on feast days.

The Jesuit missions in Asia were headquartered in the Portuguese colonies but their activities extended beyond the political bounds of the *Estado*. Roman Catholic communities of varying sizes and durability, made up of local converts and/or members of the Shadow Empire, were left behind wherever the Portuguese set foot. The presence of even a small group of Christians obligated the Church to send ordained priests who could perform Communion rites.

The early years of the mission settlements were often times of great hardship. More than 50 years after Malacca was colonized, its Jesuit

²⁴¹ See Jean Lacouture, *Jesuits: A Multibiography*, trans. Jeremy Leggatt (Washington: Counterpoint, 1995), 98-135.

college was still tiny.²⁴² In Japan, Francis Xavier endured near starvation as he travelled the country penniless during winter. The struggling mission in Vietnam had to be sent gifts of food from Macao.²⁴³ Many of the missionaries travelling in remote parts of Asia perished before they could even begin their work.²⁴⁴

While the priests took a vow of poverty and were expected to be able to live on whatever nourishment they could find in the course of their travels, the Jesuits were also tasked with taking care of the poor and the sick and feeding these people required the organized production of food. The first order of business in a new territory, after the military had seen to the construction of a fortress and a church, was for the missionaries to build a school and a hospital. If the mission grew to include a seminary and an orphanage, the personnel staffing these institutions also had to be fed. New converts were put to work and trained in the skills necessary to sustain the nucleus of the Catholic community.

In 1498, Queen Leonor of Portugal founded the *Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa*, a congregation of laymen whose mission was to help the destitute and the sick. Brotherhoods were established

²⁴² Pierre-Yves Manguin, "Of Fortresses and Galleys: The 1568 Acehnese Siege of Melaka, after a Contemporary Bird's-Eye View," *Modern Asian Studies* 22, no. 3 (1988), 615.

²⁴³ Cooper, *Rodrigues the Interpreter*, 42.

²⁴⁴ Kristine Lee Callis, "The History of Plant Use in Laos: Analysis of European Accounts of Plant Use for Primarily Religious and Medicinal Purposes," Raleigh NC: North Carolina State University, (MSc dissertation) 2005.

throughout Portugal and in the overseas Portuguese territories where priests were often thin on the ground and able to visit Christian communities only periodically.²⁴⁵ The Brothers attended to the daily life of the Jesuit missions and operated the Houses of Mercy. With the assistance of recruits from among the local converts, the lay Brothers prepared food and supplied it to the needy. Even those who were not baptized came under the influence of these Portuguese Brothers and ate food prepared by them.

The *misericórdias* were established soon after the initial missions and played a significant role in the social life of the Asian territories. In Japan, for example, the Portuguese founded the town of Nagasaki in 1570 and the *Misericórdia* was functioning by 1583.²⁴⁶ This was followed by the establishment of hospitals (Japan's first) in Sakai in 1591 and Osaka in 1592.²⁴⁷ The Nagasaki *Misericórdia* became a powerful and influential institution well funded by donations from Christian converts and subsidies from the Church. In contrast to Africa, America and elsewhere in Asia, where there were almost no native clergy,²⁴⁸ by the end of the sixteenth century Japanese Jesuits made up 50 percent of the

245 João Paulo Oliveira e Costa, "Misericórdias Among Japanese Christian Communities," *Bulletin of Portuguese/Japanese Studies* 5 (2003), 67-68.

246 Costa, "Misericórdias Among Japanese Christian Communities," 74.

247 Costa, "Misericórdias Among Japanese Christian Communities," 73.

248 Isabel Pina, "The Jesuit Missions in Japan and China: Two Distinct Realities: Cultural Adaptation and the Assimilation of Natives," *Bulletin of Portuguese/Japanese Studies* 2 (2001), 68.

Catholic mission in Japan.²⁴⁹ Japanese lay Brothers, called *kanbō*, were also recruited to assist with the day-to-day operations of the mission. In addition, the charitable work of the *Misericordia* in rural areas was carried out by Japanese secular associates called *jhiyakusha*. In this way, European social practices and foodways were spread beyond the confines of the mission itself.²⁵⁰

The desire to communicate religious teachings motivated the Jesuits to immerse themselves in local cultures. Indigenous belief systems were studied so that Christian theology could be explained in a way that made sense within existing metaphysical frameworks. Jesuit missionaries learned local languages and translated religious texts. Before these lexical aids had been composed, and in areas where literacy was lacking altogether, the Jesuits used drama to convey their spiritual message, staging plays and acting out passages of the Bible and key parts of the scriptures.²⁵¹ In some remote areas of Eastern Indonesia, these medieval passion plays, accompanied by snatches of Latin and archaic Portuguese, still form part of Catholic religious ceremonies.²⁵²

249 Mihoko Oka, "A Memorandum by Tçuzu Rodrigues: The Office of Procurador and Trade by the Jesuits in Japan," *Bulletin of Portuguese/Japanese Studies* 13 (2002), 69.

250 Costa, "Misericórdias Among Japanese Christian Communities," 70.

251 For the history of the Jesuit Order, see Lacouture, *Jesuits* and Jonathan Wright, *God's Soldiers* (New York: Doubleday, 2004).

252 Franca, *Portuguese Influence in Indonesia*, 42.

The Jesuits' primary activity, after evangelism, was education, and their teaching covered both theological and secular subjects. Jesuit knowledge of sciences such as astronomy, cartography and mathematics was a passport to the royal courts of Asia, as was the military prowess of the Portuguese captains. This knowledge extended to botany and natural history, horticulture and viticulture, and culinary arts such as distillation, preserving and baking.

As the Jesuits solidified their presence in Asia and grew wealthy from donations and their own trading activities, their lifestyle evolved from one of austerity to one of luxury. The German traveller, Johann Albrecht von Mandelslo, who accompanied the English superintendent of the Surat settlement to Goa, dined at the Jesuit New College of St Paul in Goa in 1639 and commented on the fineness of both the buildings and the repast:

“They brought us into a fair arched hall, as big as an ordinary church, which was beset with tables placed all along the walls. The cloth was laid with the trenchers, the drinking cups and earthen pots, and they had brought in bread and fruit. {...} In the midst of the entry to this hall there was a pillar, out of which issued a spout of water for the washing of their hands. Then they carried us up to the third story to another hall, which was not as large as that

below, but so richly furnished as might become the apartment of a very noble house, as well in point of tapestry, as other things. The table prepared for us was very large, and placed in the midst of the hall, covered with a noble cloth, beset with fruit and bread and china dishes. {...} The meat was brought in little dishes of porcelain, to every man his own dish, and this for several courses both of flesh and fish all excellently well dressed.”²⁵³

Jesuit gourmandize extended even to their hospitals. The door of St Paul’s ground floor refectory, where novices took their meals, opened onto the college kitchen and its gardens. A separate kitchen served the infirmary.²⁵⁴ The hospital kitchen, said Mandelslo, was one of its finest areas.²⁵⁵ Twice a day, according to François Pyrard, a clerk from the kitchen visited each patient and noted down what he wanted to eat.²⁵⁶ The food was served on Ming porcelain dishes.²⁵⁷ A visitor to the hospital in around 1650, after commenting that the bedsteads were gilded, described the mealtime routine:

²⁵³ Commissariat, *Mandelslo’s Travels in Western India*, 63-64.

²⁵⁴ Joseph Velinkar, “Jesuit Educational Style in Sixteenth Century Goa,” *Divyadaan* 13 (2002), 61.

²⁵⁵ Commissariat, *Mandelslo’s Travels in Western India*, 70.

²⁵⁶ Pyrard, *The Voyage of François Pyrard*, 2:9.

²⁵⁷ Sá, “Goapuri and Velha Goa,” 40. In the early seventeenth century, there were 17 porcelain traders in Lisbon. The blue and white *kraak*-ware (the term is derived from *carrack*, the English term for *caravel*) made to order for the Portuguese in China combining Western forms such as lidded jars, candlesticks and beer mugs with Portuguese coats of arms and oriental motifs, were highly sought after in Europe and inspired the later Dutch craze for Delft ware. After the marriage of Catherine of Braganca, Portuguese tablewares began to be influenced by British taste, introducing another layer of complexity to their design. (Gunn, *First Globalization* 265; E. Alfred Jones, “Old Portuguese Silver Spoons,” *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 35 (1919), 261).

“At seven o'clock bread and some other light food were served to each patient on a table kept near his bedstead. At ten dinner was served on china porcelain dishes, and sometimes {...} on silver plates: and it consisted of roasted or boiled fowl and other meat, bread and rice, and sweets for dessert. The sick were allowed to invite their friends who came to visit them, to partake of these viands.”²⁵⁸

Another meal, supper, was served at five o'clock. In stark contrast to this opulence, when Tavernier visited the hospital after the collapse of the *Estado*, the patients were surviving on beef tea and rice and had to bribe the orderlies for a drink of water.²⁵⁹ In 1759, by order from Lisbon, the Jesuit premises in Asia were ransacked and their fine furniture and tablewares sold off for a pittance.²⁶⁰

There was a close association between captains, merchants and priests. Priests hitched rides on trading vessels in order to convey their missionary business around the empire. In Japan, the Jesuits traded silk

²⁵⁸ Fonseca, *Historical and Archaeological Sketch of the City of Goa*, 233.

²⁵⁹ Tavernier, *Travels in India*, 198.

²⁶⁰ Dauril Alden, “The Suppression of the Society of Jesus in the Portuguese Assistancy in Asia: the Fate of Survivors, 1760-77,” in Disney and Booth, *Vasco da Gama and the Linking of Europe and Asia*, 365.

for passage on merchant ships.²⁶¹ At their bidding, ship's captains ferried plant specimens and seeds, livestock and foodstuffs from one country to another, acting as agents in the dispersal of food crops and ingredients that would change the culinary landscape of many Asian peoples.

At the height of their power during the sixteenth century, the Portuguese controlled a fertile strip of coastline north and south of Bom Bahia. In the 1580s, the *Província do Norte* generated more revenue than Goa,²⁶² much of it coming from the agricultural output of Jesuit-owned farms. The sale of rice, sugarcane and fruits produced on Jesuit land by poor Hindu, Muslim and Christian labourers, helped to finance the Portuguese missions in India, Japan and China.²⁶³ The Chinese Jesuits had their own properties in Goa and *Província do Norte*.²⁶⁴

Even in the second half of the seventeenth century, when the people of Goa and other Portuguese settlements were barely subsisting, citizens of *el Norte* lived very well.²⁶⁵ While visiting the Rector of the Portuguese college in Damão, della Valle was served with an exotic array of local and imported fruits, including pineapple, which he found somewhat 'uncouth'

²⁶¹ Oka, "A Memorandum by Tçuzu Rodrigues," 82.

²⁶² Newitt, *The First Portuguese Colonial Empire*, 143.

²⁶³ Borges, "The Jesuits of the Estado da India and their China Links," 117.

²⁶⁴ Borges, "The Jesuits of the Estado da India and their China Links," 111.

²⁶⁵ Boxer, *Mary and Misogyny*, 75.

(unusual) but pleasantly sweet, and papaya, which he considered to be even better than melon.²⁶⁶

According to William A. Barry and Robert G. Doherty, the Society of Jesus “was of fundamental importance for the world-wide circulation of different plants and fruit trees.”²⁶⁷ The Portuguese in Asia extended existing local systems of plant transfer and established ‘acclimatization gardens’ to encourage naturalization of plant species.²⁶⁸ Peter Mundy was amazed that the Jesuits in Macao had managed to turn a rocky little island into a profitable orchard.²⁶⁹ They sent to his ship a gift of figs, pears and very good ripe grapes.²⁷⁰ The Jesuits pioneered mango grafting techniques in India and produced new cultivars, among them the highly acclaimed Afonso. “The Goa mango is reckoned the largest and most delicious to the taste of any in the world, and, I may add, the wholesomest and best tasted of any fruit in the world,” wrote Alexander Hamilton.²⁷¹ The garden attached to their mission in Nagasaki contained experimental plantings of fruit trees, including cherries and pears.²⁷²

²⁶⁶ Valle, *The Travels of Pietro della Valle in India*, 1:135.

²⁶⁷ Barry and Doherty, *Contemplatives in Action*, 75.

²⁶⁸ Grove, *Green Imperialism*, 1995), 83-84.

²⁶⁹ Mundy, “Description of Macau in 1637,” 58.

²⁷⁰ Mundy, “Description of Macau in 1637,” 47.

²⁷¹ Hamilton, “A New Account of the East Indies,” 355.

²⁷² Correia, “Father Diogo de Mesquita,” 86.

Jesuits were instrumental in the global dissemination of oranges and jackfruit.²⁷³ The cultivation of cocoa and cinnamon in Brazil was also the result of Jesuit initiative.²⁷⁴

Father Diogo de Mesquita, *reitor* (Rector) of St Paul's College in Nagasaki from 1598 until 1611, was instrumental in the introduction of western food plants to Japan. Portuguese trading vessels brought him plants from Lisbon, Goa and Macao. Through his contact with Jesuit colleagues in Manila, he also obtained botanical specimens from the Spanish Americas. The plants had a better chance of surviving this short journey than the long haul from Europe, during which they might be exposed to the elements or trampled on by sailors. In the garden of the Jesuit residence, Mesquita planted figs, morello cherries, apples, peaches, pears, quinces and grapes. The brigesote figs from Lisbon did particularly well and Mesquita was very pleased that his olive trees were also flourishing.²⁷⁵

The Jesuits' agricultural holdings financed their missionary efforts in both Africa and Brazil.²⁷⁶ David Livingstone encountered a Jesuit garden in Africa in 1856. It was shaded by a deep grove of mangoes and irrigated

²⁷³ Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, 155.

²⁷⁴ Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire*, 155.

²⁷⁵ See Correia, "Father Diogo de Mesquita."

²⁷⁶ Boxer, *Portuguese India in the Mid-Seventeenth Century*, 50

with mineral water held in tanks. Livingstone marveled at the Jesuit's ability to grow vegetables in the dry season.²⁷⁷

The benefit of Jesuit learning was felt far beyond the political boundaries of the *Estado*. The Portuguese did not colonize Vietnam, for example, but the Portuguese Jesuits Gaspar d'Amiral and Antonio Barboza compiled the country's first romanized dictionaries. Another Portuguese Jesuit, João Rodríguez (1561-1634), compiled the first romanized Japanese grammar, while Matteo Ricci, an Italian Jesuit working under the aegis of the *Padroado*, did the same for Chinese. The Jesuits introduced printing presses to Japan and India in order to make the Christian texts available to local converts. While the motivation for these efforts was evangelical, the linguistic achievements and technological innovations had a much broader application and significance. Jesuit libraries, containing manuals on farming and horticulture, and books on botany, medicine and pharmacology, were established wherever they travelled.

The Jesuits pursued a deliberate policy of cooperating with local political leaders, reasoning, in places such as Japan and Ceylon correctly, that a conversion at the elite level of society would have a trickle-down effect and make converting the larger population easier.²⁷⁸ Even when local

²⁷⁷ Boxer, *Portuguese India in the Mid-Seventeenth Century*, 51.

²⁷⁸ Abé, "What Determined the Content of Missionary Reports?," 74.

rulers did not wish to convert, the Jesuits used their learning as an inducement to be allowed to preach the gospel.²⁷⁹ They were welcome at the court of the Indian prince Jahangir because they gave him better gifts than the English and he liked images of the Virgin Mary and Christ as decorative items.²⁸⁰ Competing *daimyo* in Japan welcomed Christianity in order to attract Portuguese traders, who presented themselves as rich and noble lords.²⁸¹ Mastery of local languages and customs was another fundamental strategy in the evangelist effort. Edward Terry wrote admiringly of the Jesuit at the court of Akbar in 1596 who explained the doctrine of Christianity to the Sultan in his own language.²⁸²

Because they lived in local communities, often for long periods of time, learned the languages of their subjects and depended on them for the necessities of life, the Jesuits developed an understanding of local culture and formed a bridge between the Portuguese and their subject peoples. The Portuguese church in Kyoto was styled after a Japanese temple and the Jesuits dressed in the costume of Zen priests.²⁸³

²⁷⁹ Lacouture, *Jesuits*, 98-135.

²⁸⁰ Ellison Banks Findly, *Nur Jahan, Empress of Mughal India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 147

²⁸¹ Charles D. Sheldon, "Fuedal Japan: Politics and Society from the Eighth Century to 1868," in *Half the World*, ed. Arnold Joseph Toynbee (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973), 221; Alexandra Curvelo, "Nagasaki: An European Artistic City in Early Modern Japan," *Bulletin of Portuguese/Japanese Studies* 2 (2001), 33.

²⁸² Terry, *A Voyage to East-India*, 419.

²⁸³ Warren I. Cohen, *East Asia at the Center: Four Thousand Years of Engagement with the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 289.

Although João Rodrigues described the Japanese expenditure on utensils for the tea ceremony as “madness and barbarity,”²⁸⁴ in the spirit of mutual accommodation, the Jesuits installed hearths for making tea in their churches.²⁸⁵ In return, the Japanese overcame their early distaste for the eating habits of the Portuguese ‘barbarians’. Although they used the derogatory slang *wakaran*, meaning “I don't understand,” to describe Dutch, Chinese and other foreign traders, the Japanese excluded the Portuguese, who were seen to be engaged in more spiritual matters, from this epithet.²⁸⁶ The culinary tastes of the Christian Fathers, which according to Padre Matheus de Couras, included such things as sirloin steak, chicken and pears preserved in sugar,²⁸⁷ were emulated by Japanese Christian converts. The eating of meat, especially beef, gained popularity throughout the country.²⁸⁸

The Jesuits’ trans-national network linked communities around the world, overcoming Luso-Spanish rivalries and other political impediments to the free movement of people and foodstuffs. Despite the fact that the Spanish could not establish direct trading links with China

284 Quoted in Michael Cooper, *They Came to Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), 265.

285 Pina, “The Jesuit Missions in Japan and China,” 62.

286 Elizabeth Andoh, pers. comm.

287 Tetsuya, “European Influence on the ‘Culture of Food’ in Nagasaki,” n.pag.

288 Tetsuya, “European Influence on the ‘Culture of Food’ in Nagasaki,” n.pag.

or Japan, for example, the transportation of plants from Spanish America between Manila and Nagasaki by the Jesuits was reportedly a routine occurrence.²⁸⁹ While culinary exchange was not a deliberate goal of the Jesuit incursion into Asia, they were instrumental agents of this process. The religious personnel were highly mobile and individuals served throughout Portuguese Asia. St Gonsalo Garcia, for example, the only Indian saint, grew up in the Portuguese fortress at Baçaim, served in the Japanese mission and often travelled to Manila.²⁹⁰ The Jesuit headquarters in Macao coordinated the movements of the missionaries, moving them from place to place in response to the needs of the Catholic communities.

The Jesuits initial role in Portugal had been to tend to the poor and sick but they developed both an intellectual and financial ascendancy.²⁹¹ In 1761, largely in response to the Jesuits' overly powerful influence over the economic and political life of Portugal and the management of her empire, the Order was formally banned from Portugal and the Society of Jesus was dissolved by Pope Clement XIV in 1773. The Jesuits were also expelled from the overseas territories, resulting in huge losses of Catholic

²⁸⁹ Correia, "Father Diogo de Mesquita," 76.

²⁹⁰ "Bassein" *Catholic Encyclopedia*, n.pag <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02343a.htm>

²⁹¹ Nowell, *A History of Portugal*, 105.

missionaries.²⁹² When the Order was reinstated, in 1814, the artisanal aspects of the monastic life were emphasized, leading to a resurgent pursuit of temporal professions, including the culinary arts.²⁹³

The Clarissan Nuns

Unlike other European monastic groups who founded sister Orders, the Jesuits resisted the formation of a female branch of the Society. They consented only with some reluctance to the establishment of Dominican and Franciscan convents in Asia after complaints that the spiritual welfare of young girls in the *Estado* was being neglected.²⁹⁴

The Convent of Santa Monica in Goa, built between 1606 and 1627, was the first institution in the *Estado* devoted to the welfare of women, and the first Christian convent in the East. It was established by the Clarissan Order under the auspices of the Convent of Santa Monica in Lisbon and staffed initially by white Portuguese nuns. There were 37 sisters in 1609.²⁹⁵ Their number increased with the admission of Portuguese girls from the colonies as well as some native converts. By

²⁹² Velinkar, *India and the West*, 179.

²⁹³ Curry, *The Secrets of Jesuit Breadmaking*, 1.

²⁹⁴ See Lacouture, *Jesuits and Wright, God's Soldiers*.

²⁹⁵ Maria de Jesus dos Mártires Lopes, "The Sisters of Santa Monica in the 18th Century," in Borges et al., *Goa and Portugal*, 239; Pearson, *The Portuguese in India*, 118.

1624 there were over 100 members of the convent, excluding the girls being educated there.²⁹⁶ A sister institution, the Convent of Santa Clara, was established in Macao in 1634.²⁹⁷ Its first abbess was a Spanish nun from Manila.²⁹⁸

The Clarissans were Portugal's master sweet-makers. The products of their first overseas house in Madeira were already world famous when the *Padroado*, which was headquartered in Madeira,²⁹⁹ agreed to the Order's presence in India. The Convent of Santa Monica was established alongside the Jesuit college and hospital in Old Goa and the nuns busied themselves with needlework, attending the hospital wards and cooking for the refectory.³⁰⁰ Like their sisters in Madeira, the nuns of the Convent of Santa Monica in Goa became renowned for their sweets, pastries and cakes. With the powerful support of the Jesuits, the Santa Monica Convent became the largest nunnery in Asia and one of the *Estado's* wealthiest institutions. Almost every Portuguese settlement in Asia sent girls to be trained by the Santa Monica nuns, a process that helped to disperse knowledge of conventual baking arts across the region.³⁰¹

296 Lopes, "The Sisters of Santa Monica in the 18th Century," 118.

297 J. Dyer Ball, *Macao. The Holy City: The Gem of the Orient Earth* (Canton: The China Baptist Publication Society, 1905), 37.

298 Luciano P. R. Santiago, *To Love and Suffer: The Development of the Religious Congregations for Women in the Spanish Philippines, 1565-1898* (Quezon City: ADMU Press, 2005), 69.

299 Albuquerque and Vieira, *The Archipelago of Madeira in the 15th Century*, 68.

300 Lopes, "The Sisters of Santa Monica in the 18th Century," 239; Pearson, *The Portuguese in India*, 118.

301 Coates, "Female Colonization in the Estado da India," 46.

The Sisters made extra special efforts for the celebration of Christmas, Easter and Saints' days, especially those of their patron saints, St Augustine and Sta Monica (Clare).³⁰² With generous funding provided by the Catholics of the Asian diocese, the Santa Monica nuns could afford to spend lavishly on their ingredients. Linschoten reported that at Christmas time and Lent, great quantities of very expensive raisins were imported into Goa.³⁰³ Almonds were available from the Arab merchants supplying the new Mughal court at Hyderabad. Gifts of sugar were donated by Iberian traders who funneled the output of Portugal's Brazilian plantations to Asia. In 1638, Albert Mandelslo enthused over the tarts, Florentines, egg sweets, perfumed marzipans, fruit syrups and conserves served in the dining hall of the Jesuit College in Goa.³⁰⁴

François Pyrard, in Goa at Christmas time, wrote:

“All along the streets, throughout the squares and wards, are tables laid with fine white napery, and covered with all manner of sugar-plums, dry comfits, marchpanes, which they call Rousquillos, fashioned in a thousand ways; whereof everyone buys

302 Lopes, “The Sisters of Santa Monica in the 18th Century,” 241.

303 Linschoten, *The Voyage to the East Indies*, 2:36.

304 Commissariat, *Mandelslo's Travels in Western India*, 64.

to give away in presents.”³⁰⁵

The Portuguese eventually established a considerable number of convents and monasteries in Asia but for many years the Santa Monica Convent in India was the only female institution.³⁰⁶

When the Jesuits fell from favour in Europe and the Portuguese monasteries were closed, the Santa Monica Convent’s fortunes faded. The Franciscan missionaries operating in the colonies were allowed to continue their activities but the Santa Monica nuns were forbidden from recruiting new novices and were allowed to operate the Convent only until the last nun died. Despite the loss of funding from the *Padroado*, the nuns were able to support themselves and their servants on the proceeds of sale of their jams, pickles and confections.³⁰⁷

As recently as one generation ago, sweet making was still in the curriculum for the education of Catholic girls in India. When I was researching this paper in Goa, I was invited to tea by Maria de Lourdes Figueiredo de Albuquerque, doyenne of an aristocratic Indo-Portuguese family, in her antique-filled *palacio* in Loutolim. Dona Lourdes served *bolo-de-carne*, a sweet cake that in medieval Iberian style, was studded

³⁰⁵ Pyrard, *The Voyage of François Pyrard*, 2:98.

³⁰⁶ Pearson, *The Portuguese in India*, 118.

³⁰⁷ Sá, “Goapuri and Velha Goa,” 66.

with bacon. Doña Lourdes told me that like all Catholic girls, she had been taught to bake by the nuns at her boarding school.

Summary

The great distance separating the Portuguese settlements in Asia from Lisbon meant that they relied heavily on indigenous sources of food, while the location of the settlements in or near centres of trade exposed the Luso-Asians to a wide variety of culinary influences. With a fluctuating food supply, Portuguese adaptability was a survival skill required by all, regardless of social standing. With little else of their Iberian cultural inheritance available to them, the Luso-Asians adhered to Catholicism and its associated foodways as a bulwark against the loss of their spiritual and cultural identity, while the ubiquity of Asian and part-Asian women serving as providers of food within Luso-Asian households fostered the merging of indigenous and Iberian foodways.

5. Conclusion

At the dawn of the sixteenth century the nation of Portugal was barely 300 years old, with a multi-ethnic population composed of “races of the utmost vigour”¹ who knew that their survival depended on hardiness, adaptability and a willingness to take risks. At the vanguard of Europe’s colonial expansion and at the urging of a resurgent Catholic Church, Portuguese soldiers, merchants, administrators and missionaries sailed into an unknown world with an unflinching commitment fired by a potent mixture of economic opportunism and religious zeal. By 1512, less than a decade after rounding the tip of Africa, the Portuguese had made landfall from Brazil in the west to Japan in the east, forging new global linkages and extending traditional trading routes. While history has seized upon Colombo’s voyage to the Americas under the Spanish flag as the icon of the Age, the Portuguese, whose maritime skill and nautical innovations made possible the colonizing efforts of all the European powers, were the period’s true pathfinders.²

At the most fundamental level, the survival of Portuguese explorers and colonizers depended on the acquisition of food. Portuguese explorer-captains inaugurated Europe’s Age of Exploration by solving the nautical

¹ John Train, “Land of Navigators,” in *Portugal*, by Helmut Wohl and Alice Wohl, (New York: Scala, 1983), 17.

² A.J.R. Russell-Wood, “For God, King and Mammon: The Portuguese Outside of Empire, 1480-1580,” in Disney and Booth, *Vasco da Gama and the Linking of Europe and Asia*, 268.

challenge of sailing into the wind and by battling their way, with a combination of outstanding seamanship and extraordinary courage, around the previously impassable southern tip of Africa. But it was Bartholomeo Dias' simple but brilliant innovation of the supply ship that made these momentous feats possible.

While other European powers pursued separatist colonial policies, the Portuguese viewed cultural integration in Asia as a survival strategy serving their religious, political and economic ends. Their successful enlisting of indigenous pilots to guide them along traditional trade routes was rewarded by a century of monopoly in the exceptionally lucrative European spice trade. Following in the footsteps of an almost implausibly peripatetic Jesuit, Francis Xavier, Portuguese missionaries were responsible for the Christianization of Asia and the introduction of the printing press. Portuguese scholars attending Oriental courts brokered the exchange of knowledge between great civilizations of West and East, while Portuguese merchants traded clocks and gunpowder for porcelains and silk. But these encounters, and every other landmark in the history of Portuguese settlement in Asia, rested on a fundamental platform – the procurement of food.

Part One of this paper examined the culinary resources – ingredients and technical knowledge – available to fifteenth and sixteenth century

Iberians attempting to colonize a distant world. It identified Iberian heritage foods, such as vinegar, bread, pork, wine, sugar and eggs, that made the transition to Asia and which, woven through the history of Portuguese activity in the region, emerge centuries later as hallmarks of Luso-Asian cuisine. It has been argued that transplanted to the fecundity of the tropics and combined with indigenous skills and novel local ingredients, Iberian foodways underwent a metamorphosis, resulting in the emergence of a complex and colourful creolized cuisine.

A preference for pork is a defining cultural trait of the Lusitanians, along with the consumption of offal. To be a true Macanese, writes George Remedios, one must eat *all* the ingredients in the mixed offal stew called *tacho*.³ Like the Iberian Christian elite in Majorca, who express their purity of blood by consuming *butifarra* (blood sausage), the consumption of offal is regarded by Portuguese Eurasians as a means of authenticating identity.⁴ Unlike many of the indigenous people around them, the Portuguese lacked any religious taboos concerning the type of animal flesh they consumed. Although pork was the favourite meat of the Catholics, they became experts in the preparation of all kinds of local meat, game, fish and fowl and developed a reputation as masters of meat cookery. John Fryer reported that the Portuguese women in Goa cooked

³ Remedios, "Maquista Alphabet Book," 8.

⁴ Fabre-Vassas and Volk, *The Singular Beast*, 124-125.

meat “exquisitely.”⁵ Mandelslo also commented that the meat he was served in the home of a *fidalgo* was “excellently well dressed.”⁶

The abundant use of vinegar and a liking of strong, tangy tastes is another primary hallmark of Luso-Asian cuisine. Initially valued by the colonizers as a preservative for ships’ provisions, it became increasingly useful in extending the life of foods produced in the tropics and as a key ingredient of the pickles and preserves that the Portuguese traded throughout the region, as has been shown.

The consumption of alcohol was a significant cultural marker that distinguished the colonial Portuguese from their host communities. The Portuguese presence in the region altered the traditional role of alcohol in Asian culture by making stronger versions of local intoxicants available and by promoting drinking as a socially acceptable practice.

The Portuguese penchant for sweet foods and their expertise in making them is a repeated theme in the literature of their sojourn in Asia.

Portugal's early development of sugarcane agriculture led to superior methods of sugar processing and an abundant supply for the colonies.

The transmission to Asia of the Iberian nuns’ traditional sweet making

⁵ Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia*, 157.

⁶ Commissariat, *Mandelslo's Travels in Western India*, 64.

skills was a byproduct of the missionary endeavour.

Many of the culinary elements carried to Asia by the Portuguese had already reached the region with Arab traders but the absence in Portuguese culture of the restrictive food taboos that limited cross-fertilization of indigenous Asian foodways gave the Portuguese Eurasians full license to experiment. Creative cooks, the great majority of them Portuguese *mestiças* with widely divergent cultural backgrounds, made innovative use of a culinary cornucopia resulting from the gastronomical collision of East and West, the Old World and the New. Many Luso-Asian dishes are characterized by a layering of ingredients and a complex blending of both flavourings and techniques.

The Portuguese brought with them to Asia techniques for viticulture, distillation, oven-baking and yeasted doughs, sugarcane processing and sweet making. They also introduced Iberian cooking methods such as deep-frying, roasting (*assado*), stuffing (*recheado*), stewing (*guisado*) and steaming (*bafado*). The use of European tableware and napery has remained a distinguishing characteristic of Luso-Asian dining culture. The Portuguese term for dinner plate, *bacia* or *bacio*, for example, is used all over the Indian Ocean region.⁷ Here too creolizing forces were at work. Porcelains commissioned by the Portuguese in China combined oriental

⁷ Dalgado, *Portuguese Vocables in Asiatic Languages*, 30.

and European styles. Artistic influences from the East resulted in the development of uniquely beautiful designs in the textiles used to decorate Portuguese dining rooms. Silk damasks and tapestries from Macao combined cursive European patterns with Chinese motifs such as bamboo and vases.⁸ An Indo-Portuguese embroidery from the seventeenth century in the style of a Moghul miniature, depicting a woman in Portuguese dress holding a parrot who is pecking at a sprig of fruit, surrounded by dense borders of trees, flowers and animals,⁹ captures the richness of cultural mixing that lies at the heart of Luso-Asian cuisine.

The Portuguese adapted easily to hot, humid climates and demonstrated an affinity for settlement in tropical zones. The challenges they faced in securing food supplies – lack of arable land, a shortage of personnel, unfamiliar biogeography, dependency on indigenous food sources, to name but a few, were met with ingenuity and flexibility. A chain of fortified supply stations served the settlements and provisioned the empire's naval and military apparatus. Adopting rice as the staple food of the *Estado da India* solved the impossible equation of feeding the settlements with cargoes from Lisbon. Multilingual Portuguese merchants infiltrated local markets and brokered deals that through a

8 G. F. Wingfield Digby, "Some Silks Woven under Portuguese Influence in the Far East," *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 77, no. 449 (1940), 52.

9 Cyril G. E. Bunt, "An Indo-Portuguese Embroidery in the Bargello," *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 81, no. 476 (1942), 278.

shifting pattern of commodity exchanges – slaves for sago, sago for cloves, cloves for silver, silver for tea and rhubarb, and so on – ensured the continuance of the Portuguese settlements long after the colonial hegemony was lost to rival European powers.

Although bread was supplanted by rice as the staple starch of the Luso-Asians, it continued to have a cultural significance. Bread is so closely aligned with Iberian identity that Spanish gentlemen who had no bread in the New World would brush imaginary crumbs from their collars as a demonstration of their civility.¹⁰ Bread's transition to Asia can be seen as a metaphor of the encounter between the Portuguese and the peoples of the East. As Elizabeth Engelhardt has observed, the 'meaning' of bread as a concept shifts over time.¹¹ In the course of Portuguese colonial history in Asia, European bread was transformed from novel food of strangers to a familiar household staple. In contrast to Spanish America, where bread became a symbol of distance between Iberians and native peoples, in Portuguese Asia it signified cultural mixing. In India, said Richard Burton, bread "is eaten by all those who can afford it."¹²

In comparing the Portuguese colonial experience with that of other

¹⁰ Pilcher, *Que Viva Los Tamales!*, 42.

¹¹ See Elizabeth S.D. Engelhardt, "Beating the Biscuits in Appalachia: Race, Class, and Gender Politics of Women Baking Bread," in *Cooking Lessons: The Politics of Gender and Food*, ed. Sherrie A. Inness (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), 151-168.

¹² Burton, *Goa, and the Blue Mountains*, 104.

European powers, it is not my intention to portray the Portuguese as 'better' or 'worse' colonists. Their slave trading activities in Africa and plantation and mining operations in Brazil were as exploitative as any other European imperial exercise. In Asia, they infiltrated indigenous trading networks by force of arms and in Goa coercively imposed their religious doctrine upon Hindu society. Evidence strongly suggests, however, that the Portuguese were more adaptive than most Europeans and this quality significantly enhanced the process of culinary creolization within their overseas territories.

With the exception of Goa during the latter half of the seventeenth century when the Inquisition was in full force, indigenous foodways were actively suppressed and Catholic culture imposed, culinary creolization resulted for the most part from a generally benign, two-way cultural exchange as has been demonstrated. With the notable exception of Catholicism, which was forced upon the people of Goa, the Portuguese did not attempt to impose Iberian cultural models upon their Asian territories. Distanced geographically from Lisbon and driven by an ethos that prioritized the establishment of trading relationships, the Portuguese in Asia regarded integration with local communities as a beneficial exercise. In order to capitalize on the revenues already being generated in the regional trading hub at Malacca, the Portuguese left in place the existing political structure that afforded of each of the major

ethnic groups a share in the administration of the community. To facilitate trade in Nagasaki, Portuguese traders took the trouble to study and comply with Japanese customs.¹³ Anthropologists Judith Goode and Jo Anne Schneider suggest that immigrants are more likely to be welcomed by host societies if they try and ‘learn the rules’.¹⁴ Portuguese colonial policy advocated taking over indigenous trading routes by force of arms but when this approach failed, Portuguese assimilation into local cultures was pursued with deliberation. Portuguese anthropologists have gone as far as declaring the Luso-Tropical *mestiço* ‘the man of the future’ and a gift to the human gene pool.¹⁵

In contrast to the Spanish colonists in America, who “set about creating in the New World a diet that duplicated the one that they knew at home” with the same foods, kitchen equipment, tableware and cookbooks,¹⁶ the Portuguese threw their spoons overboard when they rounded the Cape, ignored policy directives from Lisbon, and in a spirit of independence and innovation, cobbled together a new diet that combined the familiar foods of home with anything else that was on offer and tasted good. Unlike the

13 Charles R. Boxer, "When the Twain First Met: European Conceptions and Misconceptions of Japan, Sixteenth–Eighteenth Centuries," *Modern Asian Studies* 18, no. 4 (1984), 534.

14 Judith Goode and Jo Anne Schneider, *Reshaping Ethnic and Racial Relations in Philadelphia: Immigrants in a Divided City* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 113.

15 Miguel Vale de Almeida, "Longing for Oneself: Hybridism and Miscegenation in Colonial and Postcolonial Portugal," *Etnográfica* 6 (2002), 191.

16 Rachel Laudan and Jeffrey M. Pilcher, "Chiles, Chocolate, and Race in New Spain: Glancing Backward to Spain or Looking Forward to Mexico?" *Eighteenth-Century Life* 23 no. 2 (1999), 62.

colonial Spanish, who despite the early Conquistadors' enthusiastic praise of indigenous American ingredients and cooking, despised native foods,¹⁷ the Portuguese in Asia embraced them. While other Europeans in Asia rejected indigenous foods out of hand, among them the Venetian, Gasparo Balbi, who reported that he would "sooner smell a dead dog, to say nothing of eating" the fermented prawn paste *belacan*,¹⁸ the Portuguese used local ingredients to enhance their own cuisine.

The miscibility of the Portuguese set them apart from other European colonizers who frowned upon inter-ethnic sexual unions and discouraged mixed marriages, while the Portuguese not only legitimized, but actively encouraged such liaisons. The twinning of social and economic policies that encouraged cross-cultural interaction and the large number of traders and other persons of differing nationalities inhabiting Portuguese towns resulted in colonial societies of kaleidoscopic ethnic variation and cultural influence. If conversion was the primary vehicle of acculturation in the Iberian colonization of Latin America,¹⁹ in the Asian region it was miscegenation. The pluralistic nature of Luso-Asian communities profoundly influenced the development of a unique family of creolized cuisines, each strongly marked by regionality yet linked by the common

¹⁷ Laudan and Pilcher, "Chiles, Chocolate, and Race in New Spain," 60.

¹⁸ Gaspero Balbi, quoted in Yule and Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson*, 51.

¹⁹ Mark A. Burkholder and Lyman L. Johnson, *Colonial Latin America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 96.

threads of Catholicism and Iberian heritage.²⁰ For the great majority of Luso-Asians who would never set foot in Portugal, consumption of Iberian foods linked them to a conceptual homeland that served as an anchor and expression of their European identity. In a study of minorities in Southeast Asia, anthropologist E. Allard noted that although the Dutch were the dominant group in Malaysia for 154 years and arrived 130 years later than the Portuguese, they left almost no trace of their culture in the region, while the Portuguese cultural imprint is still recognizable after more than 500 years.²¹

The spread of Portuguese culinary influence throughout Asia was facilitated by the expansiveness of the Portuguese maritime network and mobility of its clerics, state employees, merchants, soldiers of fortune and adventurers. The appearance of Iberian culinary artifacts in distant locations, such as egg sweets in Siamese temple cuisine, star-shaped candies in Shogunate Japan, a Portuguese 'pirate soup' in the Moluccas, and bread rolls across the region, would not have occurred without the agency of the Shadow Empire. Luso-Asians in a variety of roles moved between the far-flung Portuguese settlements and infiltrated indigenous societies, facilitating the transmission of cultures, foodstuffs and

²⁰ Anthropologist Ruth DeSouza, who studied the role of food in the cultural transition of Goan migrants in New Zealand, found that the preparation and sharing of traditional dishes, both in private and for occasions of public consumption, was one of the most significant factors mitigating the migrant's feelings of separation from family and culture. See Ruth DeSouza, "Women, Portuguese Culture and Diaspora: Women from Goa in New Zealand and Cultural Adaptation," *Campus Social* 3 / 4 (2007), 103-118.

²¹ See E. Allard, "Social Organisation of Eurasians in the Malaya Federation," *Current Anthropology* 5 (1964).

culinary customs.

Portugal's own heritage as a trading nation was matched in the mercantile hubs of Asia, which had long histories as cultural crossroads. Unlike other colonists who isolated themselves in cantonments designed to replicate European living conditions and social relationships, where native peoples were excluded unless in the role of servants, the Portuguese, especially those who operated in remote parts of the empire, lived among indigenous people and treated many of them as equals. As Rosemary Brissenden has observed, cuisine is more likely to be adaptive and experimental in coastal trading societies than in more isolated inland communities.²² Sea-ling Cheng notes that openness to other cuisines increases with the frequency of contact with people of other ethnic groups.²³ "The Portuguese brought to their colonies a fundamentally different attitude from that of France and the other European powers – a willingness to learn all they could from indigenous cultures, despite their determination to remain forever Portuguese," writes gastronomer David Burton.²⁴ Contact with people of other ethnicities was not just a byproduct of Portuguese colonialism, it was a *modus operandum* of the *Estado*.

²² Rosemary Brissenden, *Asia's Undiscovered Cuisine: Recipes from Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia* (New York: Random House, 1970), 42.

²³ Cheng, Sea-ling, "Food and Distinction in Hong Kong Families," Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong, (M.Phil dissertation) 1996.

²⁴ David Burton, *French Colonial Cookery: A Cook's Tour of the French-Speaking World* (London: Faber and Faber, 2000), 234.

Many analysts of the European colonial experience have observed that food plays a significant role in the power relationship between colonizer and colonized.²⁵ The French in Indochina not only refused to eat Vietnamese food but were horrified when the Vietnamese began to appropriate French foods, equating cross-cultural consumption with a blurring of the line between dominant and subaltern cultures.²⁶ Social status was also a defining factor in the development of Luso-Asian cuisine but social divisions were notably more porous than in other European colonial societies. Willems observed that the lower classes within traditional Portuguese society were less concerned with the preservation of moral codes than the upper classes.²⁷ Cultural flexibility and social mobility were characteristics of Luso-Asian society. While a very small elite of *fidalgos* and clerics made a point of practising foodways appropriate to a noble Iberian household, Luso-Asian cuisine owes its vibrancy and eclecticism to a much larger, lower class *mestiço* population who embraced indigenous foodways and developed a highly adaptive gastronomic culture in which traditional Iberian foodways were not abandoned but employed as elements of a new cuisine. At the lowest level of the Luso-Asian social hierarchy, slaves acquired in a multitude of

25 See, for example, Pilcher, *Que Viva Los Tamales!*; Wilk, *A Workman is Worthy of His Meat*; Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat*; Appadurai, "How to Make a National Cuisine."

26 Erica J. Peters, "Culinary Crossings and Disruptive Identities: Contesting Colonial Categories in Everyday Life," in *Of Vietnam: Identities in Dialogue*, eds. Jane Bradley Winston and Leakthina Chan-Pech Ollier (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 25.

27 Willems, "On Portuguese Family Structure," 70.

different countries contributed another layer of cultural influence and indigenous culinary skill to this process of assimilation and reinterpretation.

Luso-Asian cuisine is heterogeneous, highly syncretic and confident. Bold, exotic dishes such as Malaccan *debal* and Goan *vindalho* reflect the inventiveness of the Portuguese Eurasians as clearly as kedgeree, a stodgy dish of kippers and rice flavoured with 'curry powder', reflects the conservatism and limited culinary imagination of the British Raj, and the formulaic *rijstaffel* reflects the Dutch need to 'organize' the course-less indigenous Indonesian meal. Raymond Sokolov writes that "the ideal mode of transmission of traditional food knowledge is from an expert cook to an apprentice, in the same household, in a culturally and agriculturally stable situation."²⁸ In opposition to this paradigm, Luso-Asian cuisine evolved in a society at ease with cultural chaos. Gaetano da Gama, whose omnivorousness and alimentary gusto so offended Victorian Englishman, Richard Burton, is a fine exemplar of Portuguese Eurasian everyman. The spirit of adventure and determination that led Francis Xavier, equipped with little more than a bible and a pair of sandals, on a maritime hitchhike across half the world, and took Portuguese *lançados* to lands where people ate pickled cockroaches and fricasseed bats, inspired a pragmatic approach to eating and an

²⁸ Raymond Sokolov, *The Cook's Canon* (New York: Harper Collins, 2003), 112.

openness to dietary experimentation. Donna Gabaccia theorizes that culinary creolization arises within a tension between curiosity and fear.²⁹ As the example of British colonists at Jamestown, who chose to starve rather than eat oysters,³⁰ demonstrates, necessity is a powerful incentive for culinary creolization but not a guarantor. The genius of Luso-Asian cooks was to regard the destabilization of their world as a stimulus to the culinary imagination instead of a limitation.

The strength of the Portuguese commitment to Catholicism had a fundamental effect on the evolution of Luso-Asian foodways. In colonies such as Goa, where Christianization was vigorously pursued, the process of cultural change and adoption of Portuguese foodways were accelerated. Religious aspects of culture are among the most enduring and the foods associated with religious festivals and observances are often the last to be abandoned when a community undergoes acculturation or assimilation. Aspects of local culinary culture that were linked to religion were therefore more likely to be retained in the Portuguese colonies, either overtly or covertly. Religious associations, including those that have now acquired a more secular symbolism, also influence the way in which colonial cuisines adapt to a post-colonial context. Many of the more elaborate Luso-Asian dishes that are now

²⁹ Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat*, 225.

³⁰ Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat*, 19.

rarely made because they are time consuming or impractical are still made for religious occasions, while other more prosaic dishes have been abandoned.

As post-colonial theorists such as Edward Said and Frantz Fanon have observed, the effects of colonialism outlast the formal end of colonial rule and decolonization in many areas, including language, food, genetic mixing, religious and social customs.³¹ After the collapse of the *Estado da India* in the latter part of the seventeenth century, the ongoing presence of Portuguese and their descendants in a multitude of ex-officio roles throughout Asia was responsible for the continuation of Iberian cultural influence in the region. This durability was bolstered by the tenacity with which Catholicism embedded itself in indigenous communities, some tiny, others significant, scattered all over Asia. In the 1960s, Allard identified religion as the defining factor of Portuguese Eurasian identity.³² When the Dutch and British regimes ended, many of the non-Portuguese Eurasians remaining in the region with no cohesive societies of their own, were assimilated into the Luso-Asian community.³³ The Portuguese pursuit of missionary goals as a fundamental part of the imperial endeavour distinguished them from other colonial powers operating in Asia. The conflation between food and faith led to the

31 See Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993) and Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove, 1965).

32 Allard, "Social Organisation of Eurasians in the Malaya Federation," 422.

33 Fernandis, "Papua, Relijang e Tradisang," 265.

promulgation of Iberian foodways even in lands that had known no Portuguese political involvement and among people with no Lusitanian heritage. The unwavering commitment to Catholicism, and the foodways associated with it, protected the Iberian hallmarks of Luso-Asian cuisine from the erosion that would have occurred had the Portuguese become fully assimilated into other cultures. The gastronomic implications of Catholic evangelism were amplified by the outreach activities of the *misericordias*, the Jesuit's involvement in plant transfer, horticulture and the culinary arts, and the Clarissan nuns' traditional expertise in sweet-making.

While of secondary importance to this study, which is concerned primarily with the integration of Iberian culinary elements into Asian cuisine, the Portuguese role as agents in the dispersal of New World foods was of critical importance to the region, contributing to its biodiversity, expanding nutritional bases and facilitating population growth. To a large extent, the spread of new plants and horticultural knowledge throughout Asia in the sixteenth century was a by-product of Jesuit missionary activity and the Order's specialized knowledge of and interest in agriculture and gastronomy. The superior range of Portuguese ships and the extensiveness of their maritime trading network were also important factors aiding the global dispersal of plants and food commodities, as has been shown.

My goal in researching and writing this thesis was to lay a foundation that would serve as the first chapter of a much broader history of Luso-Asian cuisine, establishing its roots in the gastronomy of late medieval Portugal and tracing its development as an outgrowth of the Portuguese colonial endeavour in Asia. It is a story that belongs to a distant past. The Portuguese empire came into being almost 500 years ago and flourished for only about a century and a half. Sturdy Portuguese forts and whitewashed churches are all that remain in many of the regions once inhabited by bustling communities of merchants, soldiers, priests and their Catholic congregations. But while the *Estado da India* has long since vanished, its descendants have not. People of Luso-Asian ancestry live in enclaves throughout Asia and in diaspora communities all over the world. The unique culinary heritage of the Luso-Asians is a fundamental component of their identity and a symbol of community solidarity. The Portuguese imperial endeavour in Asia left an indelible culinary footprint in the cuisines of many countries. To date the culinary history of the Luso-Asians has received little scholarly attention. I hope that my research will serve as a platform for a much broader and more detailed investigation of the modern world's first global fusion cuisine and one of its most intriguing gastronomic stories.

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