

How migrant cooking has revolutionised westernised food

By [Georgia East](#)

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What is the new definition of westernised food in a world as ethnically interwoven as ours? No longer solely the space for butter and *bouquet garni*, the concept of westernised food in a modern world goes beyond borders, embracing previously unknown flavours and intermarrying them with conventional dishes to create an entirely conceptual way of cooking.



That being said, the new westernised way is not one of fine dining. Devoid of frippery and flavoured foams, these recipes are unpretentious without being plain, enticing without intimidating and succeed in introducing the diner to a new world of taste. The new westernised way of cooking is about food that tells a story – about where the chef (or mother, brother, street vendor, home cook, writer or hungry person) learned to make the dish, and what inspired each original tweak.

A sense of generational identity

Deeply personal, migrant or new westernised cooking is about the people that make the food more so than the food itself. The sense of identity that comes from cooking a dish passed down from your grandparents to your parents to you – and acknowledging that while they may have made it using the tradition of the generations before them, the diaspora that brought you to this new place, this foreign country, these strange flavours, have all contributed in giving the dish its own reinvented identity.

Paying homage to the past is still a strong factor, with traditional ingredients play a vital role. Perhaps it is the method that has changed; or perhaps the way of eating – generally, the flavour is the soul of the dish. Generations of preparation, education and skill go into each recipe, some of which are later customised by family members wanting to add their own twist.

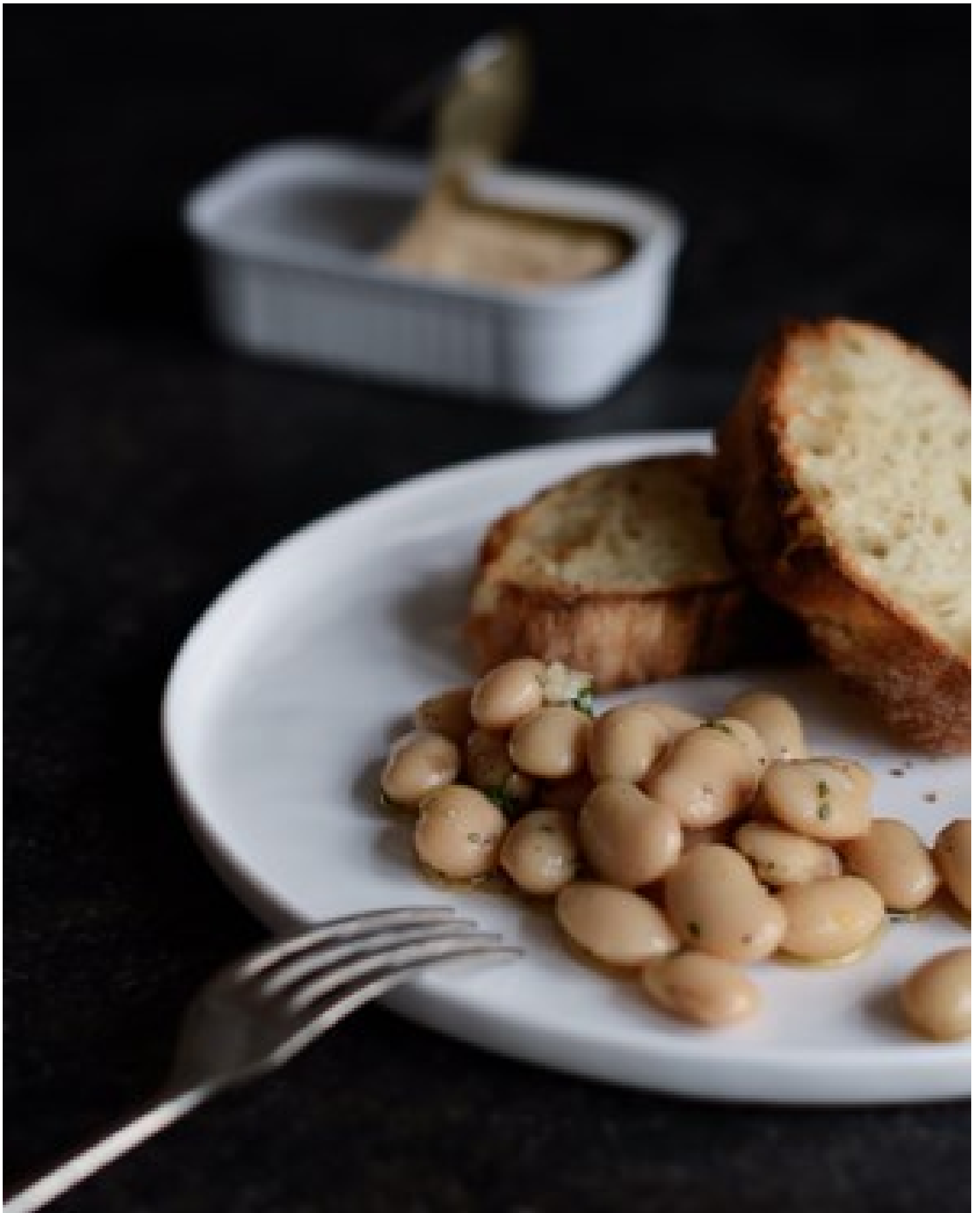


Image by Georgia East



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Comfort food takes precedence, often with recipes developing from the simple desire to eat something quick and easy that tastes of home.

[The Migrant Kitchen](#), a five part docu-series produced by [Life & Thyme](#), highlights ethnic cuisines that have become part of life in Los Angeles, and how those cooking it and those eating it, have contributed to making the city what it currently is.

Basing the entire series on where the food comes from, what inspired it, and how it relates to American tastes, The Migrant Kitchen explores the notions of soul food, fusing flavours, and what it means to be an immigrant living in the Western world.

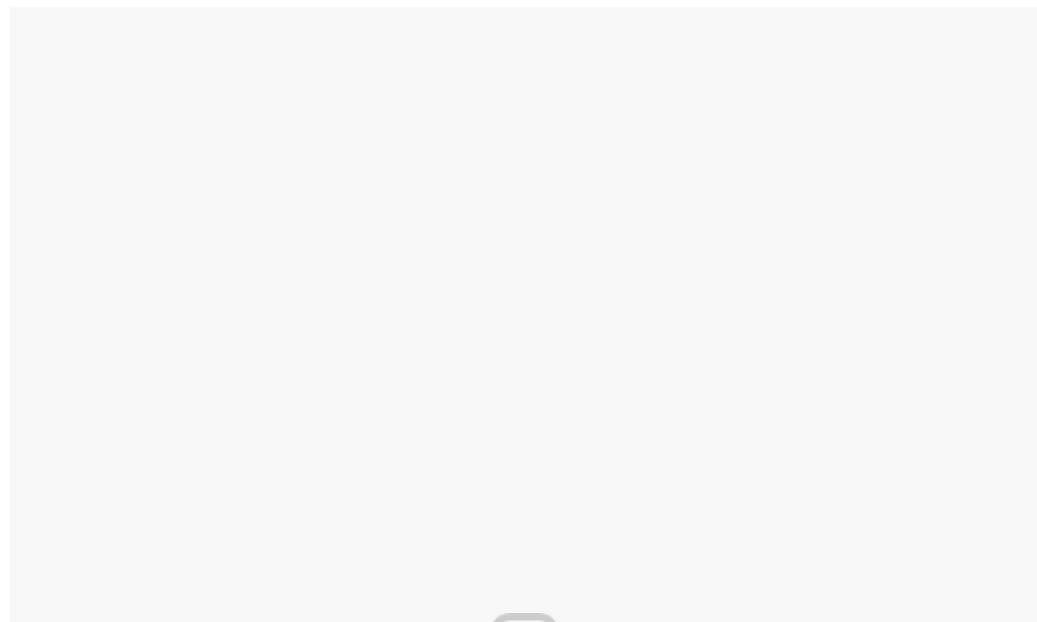
[The Migrant Kitchen - Trailer](#) from [Life & Thyme](#) on [Vimeo](#).

Incorporating age old flavours cuisine

The foods and flavour profiles remembered from childhood have since been seasoned with experience, displacement, homesickness, bittersweet happiness and ultimately, success.

Hong Kong-based blogger Mandy Lee of [Lady & Pups](#) showcases her love of Asian fusion cuisine through her beautifully moody imagery and unbiased food commentary. Expertly aggregating the flavours of East and West, she talks of porchetta from Chinatown, beef short-rib burgers with Harissa tomato sauce, Korean clam chowder and jerked Sriracha pork tacos with kiwi salsa verde. Hers, is a passion both for authenticity and for freshness. Taking in the sights, smells and sounds during her extensive travels, as well as when she is exploring her neighbourhood, Mandy is adept at recognising complimentary flavours and unifying them in one distinctive dish.

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Nothin' better on a November weekend. See you on the other side. . . #f52grams #buzzfeast
#lifeandthyme #feedfeed

A post shared by Mandy Lee (@ladyandpups) on Nov 10, 2017 at 10:21pm PST

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African-American comfort food of [Chicken Shop](#) or the culinary melting pot of Cape Town's Mojo Market or Eastern Food Bazaar. It can be found in the new Ramen restaurants and noodle bars opening all around South Africa, and in the inclusion of items such as sriracha, miso paste, togarishi, berbere, pomelo, burrata, turmeric, tahini, Za'ater and sea urchin on market shelves.

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We're wishing everyone a lovely and happy Heritage Day! Let's celebrate with warm hearts and chook. 💎💎💎💎💎

A post shared by The Chicken Shop (@the.chickenshop) on Sep 24, 2017 at 1:06am PDT

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multifaceted ethnicity and is mindful of the histories and origins of not only each ingredient, but also those that prepare them.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Georgia East is a writer, food stylist and photographer based in Cape Town, South Africa. A self-confessed literary soul, she has a love for food so strong that by rights she may have been better off with the haute cuisine crowd. However as she can do simple far better than complicated, she spends her spare time creating content for her blog [\http://eastafternoon.com/ East After Noon] so as to better document the creations she makes in her kitchen.

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