

Food Presentation adapted for Elementary

Three actors plus supporting chorus. Chorus is off to one side. Center stage is a table in a restaurant with Roland sitting studying the menu. A waiter lingers nearby. Mike is off stage. The chorus starts the show singing a modified verse of Food Glorious Food from the play Oliver.

Chorus

Food Glorious food
Boil, bake it or fry it
Three banquets a day
Our favorite diet
Just picture a great big steak
Fried, roasted, or stewed
Oh food! wonderful food! marvelous
food! glorious food!

Mike enters stage and is greeted by the waiter.

Waitor: Good evening sir. May I show you to a table.

Roland: Mike over here. Glad you made it.

(Mike ignores the waiter and joins Roland at the table.)

Mike: Thanks for inviting me. I hear this restaurant has everything!

(The waiter comes in and hands Mike a menu.)

Waiter: Welcome to the World of Food. Would you like to hear the specials?

Mike, Roland and Chorus: Yes.

Waiter: Ok, we have Bun

M: Borsht

R: Beans

Waiter: Mole

M: Tacos

R: Grits

Waiter: Sushi

R: Kim Chi

M: Jerk

Waiter: I beg your pardon!

M: No not you. I was referring to the famous Jamaican food.

Waiter: Yes, of course.

R:Nimchow

M:Doufu

Waiter: Larp

Roland and chorus:Wait! Wait! Don't you have anything America?

M:Like hamburger?

Waiter: From Germany

R: Mac n cheese?

Waiter: Italy (sighs in disbelief)

M: French Fries

Waiter: (Speechless):

M: Okay, okay, I'm starting to see what American food is about. It comes from the outside, from immigrants. How did this happen?

Chorus: 1984

R: A movement began among popular American chefs to showcase America's ethnic foods began. One of the earliest was Paul Prudhomme, who explored the 200 year history of Creole and Cajun cooking. Prudhomme's success quickly inspired other chefs especially in California. Have you eaten at Alice Water's restaurant Chez Panisse in Berkeley? Bring your credit card, because you can't carry enough money to eat there. Wolfgang Puck, a former cook at the restaurant, said . "This country is, after all, a huge melting pot. Why should its cooking not illustrate the American transformation of diversity into unity?"

M: Wow. Waiter, do you recommend?

Waiter: Fajitas

M: Paella

R:Bim Bim Bop

Waiter: Scungelli

M: Adobo

R: Stop! Stop! Stop! I got it.

M: So what'll it be?

R: Italian?

Chorus: 1962

M: Love it! **Ahh...pizza. My father remembers his first bite. It was 1962 when pizza came to his small town. He says his first bite was bliss. Imagine, he was 12 and had never had pizza. But that wasn't uncommon then. Unless you lived in a large city, you would not have been exposed to it. It was the WWII**

invasion of Italy that introduced Americans to pizza in a big way. When they came back home they wanted more. And they got it big time.

Chorus: 1967

R: My parents take me to the Moon Palace, a Chinese restaurant in NYC, 95th and Broadway. Mom loved Jiao zi.

M: Huh?

R: Dumplings, When I was little I hated anything green, so I'd leave the filling and eat the white dough skin. I also liked their chix and abalone. White as snow!

M: So how did Chinese food get here?

Chorus: 1850's

R: From Canton, the Chinese came seeking a share of the Gum Sham, the Mountain of Gold.

Chorus: 1865

R: More Chinese came to work for the Central Pacific Railroad. Contractor Charles Crocker needed hundreds of workers. Railroad work was rough and many workers ran off chasing gold. The Central Pacific management didn't think the Chinese could not do the work because they were smaller. Desperation led them to hire a few Chinese crews. They turned out to be excellent workers who outperformed most of their Irish crews. Besides, they were more exploitable.

M: Exploitable? What does that mean?

R: That means they could be taken advantage of.

M: So tell me about the Chinese influence on what Americans eat?

Waiter: Oh I can help you with that. The Chinese invented noodles in 2000 BC. Fish farms in 1500 BC. And there's Chop Suey, something the Chinese perfected here in the US. Do you know that Chop Suey means "odds and ends"?

R And then there was the Vietnamese immigration. They brought us Pho and Bun. Have you tried their Spring Rolls?

Chorus: 1975

R: The Vietnam war left 2,000,000 Vietnamese and 58,000 American soldiers dead. In April, 1975, the South collapsed. In the next 20 years about 800,000 Vietnamese fled to the United State.

M: War does make you want to get up and move?

R: Vietnam wasn't the the last time war brought people to the US. Since 2007, we've admitted 84,902 Iraqis. OMG – they have Hadgi Badah! It is so good!

M: What the heck is Hadgi Badah?

R: Iraqi cardamom cookies. You must save room for them!

Chorus: 1914

M: And the Mexican revolution of 1914. Hundreds of thousands of Mexicans came to the US and brought their recipes with them. About 9% of the 438,000 restaurants in the US serve Mexican food. Though a visitor from Mexico may not recognize it as Mexican food, since in the US we tend to change things a bit.

R: Don't forget Cuba.

Waiter: 1898-1902. 1.1 million live here – that's 2.8% of the total US immigrant population.

R: Jeez, have you had a real Cuban sandwich?

M: With pork!

R: Pickles!

M: and Mustard!

R: What a place the US is. You can get anything you want! This menu is a living document of how this country was made.

M: Yikes! So this menu is always changing. So what do you think will be the next alteration?

R: Next?

Waiter: You can see there's space for more.

M: Maybe Dawood Basha.

R: Right, and Ardi Shoki Blahmi.

Waiter: Yes, Syrian food. I see it coming as Syrian refugees find their way to the US.

M: Okay, okay, I think I'm ready to order.

R: Me too.

M: I want some Italy!

R: I want some Vietnam!

M: China, don't forget China!

R: The Philippines!

M: The Dominican Republic!

R: Cuba!

M: Mexico!

R: Russia!

M: Is there any Jewish food?

Waiter: Oye ve!

R: and Japan!

M: India!

R: I'm so glad to live in the US were immigrants from all over world share their food and culture. Heck – bring it all!

Music