

addition to qualitative methods and writing seminars. The book is at its best when presenting these contradictory ideologies, bifurcated by class and generational differences—pride for Deanwood’s singular Black-owned corner store even though few participants regularly shop there; residents blaming themselves for the subpar produce offered at Safeway; nostalgic imaginaries of a tight-knit self-reliant Black community that young Deanwood residents extol but never actually experienced. These narratives paint a full picture of Deanwood; *Black Food Geographies* is a beautiful example of the complexity, nuance, and vibrancy that ethnography can produce.

It is vital to center BIPOC voices in discussions of food access, community development, and urban inequality. When we do so, we are reminded that questions of food inequity in these communities are inextricable from broader policies and ideologies that inflict violence on Black and brown communities. This is foregrounded powerfully at the end of the text, when Reese discusses the murder of Caylor, one of her research participants. She writes that his life “tottered at the intersections of food justice, economic justice, and racial justice as a formerly incarcerated Black man who was trying to reform his life . . . sometimes unable to meet the needs of his family” (p.136). Food was just one of myriad concerns that shaped his life. Reese asks: “Where do we go when we put food in the context of Black liberation?” (p.137). For food studies scholars, eaters, and local food systems advocates eager to learn about how to walk in allyship with this question, *Black Food Geographies* is a perfect start.

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De los plátanos de Oller a los Food Trucks: Comida, alimentación y cocina puertorriqueña en ensayos y recetas
Cruz Miguel Ortiz Cuadra

San Juan: Isla Negra Editores, 2020
160 pp. \$23.00 (paper)

De los plátanos de Oller a los Food Trucks: Comida, alimentación y cocina puertorriqueña en ensayos y recetas (From Oller’s plantains to food trucks: Food, eating, and Puerto Rican cuisine in essays and recipes) is a collection of essays and a brief historical cookbook that thinks through the place of food in the study of social history, economics, and politics in Puerto Rico. As Cruz Miguel Ortiz Cuadra shows, the Caribbean has been absent from discussions around food sovereignty, race, and identity even though it was the work on sugar cane and the plantation economy—conducted by Sidney Mintz—that paved the way for the field of food studies. As a sugar historian, Ortiz Cuadra documents the history of

food in Puerto Rico in *Eating Puerto Rico: A History of Food, Culture, and Identity*, published in Spanish (2006) and English (2013). This new book continues this journey, with thirteen essays that each follow one dish, food, or cultural text. It privileges a historical, social, and cultural reading exercise that explores eating and cooking practices in Puerto Rico through paintings and cookbooks, political figures and food policy, and food geographies that consist of supermarkets, popular food kiosks, restaurants, and food trucks. The book is in Spanish and all translations for the purpose of this review are my own.

The first essay analyses Francisco Oller’s painting *El velorio* (The Wake) (1893) and studies the positionality of pork, corn, plantain, and rice in the painting to question notions of labor, production, and the civilizing project of the nation through these staple foods. Similarly, essays like “La historia, el cerdo y el ‘cajñe’ puerco” (History, pork, and “pork meat”), “Ínsula grasa” (Fritter isle), and “La pana de pepita y el durián” (Jackfruit and durian) emphasize the historical conditions and the historiography of foods like pork meat, fried foods, and jackfruit, a curiosity that also questions the relation between a past and a present of these foods.

“Cocine a gusto: El recetario de la modernidad” (Puerto Rican dishes: Modernity’s forgotten cookbook) is perhaps the first essay in the study of food in Puerto Rico that focuses on modern cookbooks—it inaugurates the study of the cookbook in Puerto Rico beyond strictly its function as a historic document and brings it into the field of cultural anthropology and cultural studies. In it, Ortiz Cuadra follows the place of the cookbook in the field of food studies and the three main currents in which it is studied: in the scientific realm, as a writing of history, and through the intimacy of the kitchen.

Throughout the book, Ortiz Cuadra reminds us of the influences that make up Puerto Rican cuisine—indigenous Taíno, Iberian, and African cultures—and explores the different results of this blend. This is a common trope when studying food and culture in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. Nonetheless, Ortiz Cuadra is more interested in the place of the African diaspora in our understanding of Puerto Rican cuisine as a mestizo culinary culture. For instance, in the essay “Saber haciendo: La cocina costera en la vitrina” (To know while doing: Coastal cuisine in the shopfront), Ortiz Cuadra sees Puerto Rican cuisine as a diasporic cuisine: “fruto de éxodos constantes, de idas y vueltas de gente y alimentos, de memorias culinarias rehechas en nuevas geografías y nuevas circunstancias sociales, económicas y religiosas” (fruit of constant exodus, roundtrips of peoples and

foods, of culinary memories remade in new geographies and new social, economic, and religious circumstances) (p.85).

A recurring theme in the book is the politics of food in Puerto Rico. The two essays dedicated to the Luis Muñoz Marín era—characterized among many events by the establishment of the *estado libre asociado* or the commonwealth status and the drafting of the constitution of Puerto Rico—look at the development of Puerto Rican foodways from the 1950s. In them Ortiz Cuadra explores instances that defined public and private lives and spaces; case studies include the first lady, educator, and writer Inés María Mendoza’s experience as a cookbook writer, as well as the development of the *muñocista* supermarket and its relation to the current discontent with the food system. The closing essays highlight the contemporary Puerto Rican foodscape, from the fast-food industry in the archipelago, to a critique of the current state of the restaurant business, to the trend of food trucks in the San Juan metropolitan area.

The book concludes with a selection of historical recipes that range from a nineteenth-century recipe, *Majarete criollo* (Sweet cream of corn), to a 2019 recipe for *Gnocchi de batata* (Sweet potato gnocchi) that provides a commentary on such recipes from the author’s primary sources and emphasizes their historical affective economy.

With this book Cruz Miguel Ortiz Cuadra continues to pave the way for the study of food in Puerto Rico and invites scholars, home cooks, chefs, writers, and farmworkers to think about the historical, economic, and political conditions through which food appears at our table. A shortcoming in this book is the absence of other geopolitical spaces of the Caribbean. By centering Puerto Rico, Ortiz Cuadra reproduces the ideas of cultural ownership and national cuisines that contribute to the idea of Caribbean isolation instead of an archipelagic approach. Nonetheless, this absence indicates the much-needed work to be done and dialogues to be had on the place of the Caribbean within the field of food studies, a discussion that can contribute much to understanding colonialism, neocolonialism, race, subjecthood, and capital.

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When Banana Ruled

Mathilde Damoiseil, director

Icarus Films, 2017. Released 2018

52 mins. DVD; streaming on Docuseekz

When Banana Ruled recounts the story of the United Fruit Company (UFC) as the birth of the modern multinational corporation. The film (perhaps more aptly, “When Banana Men Ruled”) centers on the figures of Minor Cooper Keith of UFC, Samuel Zemurray of Cuyamel Fruit Company, and PR propagandist Edward Bernays, who at the turn of the twentieth century, through their industrial ambitions and marketing schemes, guided the company’s various exploits in Central America and the Caribbean. Following their careers, viewers come to understand how the banana’s transformation into the ubiquitous and beloved commodity it is today was made possible only through histories of land eviction, tax evasion, labor rights suppression, racial and ethnic divisions, and support from authoritarian regimes. By the end of the documentary, the banana is forever recast in the eyes of viewers as “a simple fruit that was capable of conquering an empire,” a trope in commodity histories that is overused precisely because it is effective (Robbins 2005). Audiences will likely come away thinking that they will never look at bananas in the same way again. That they will nevertheless continue consuming the popular yellow fruit attests to the complexities of global consumerism that are at the film’s core.

UFC’s voluminous archives have inspired food scholarship for decades, and the robust literature on bananas in the Americas makes it difficult for a historical film such as this one to provide an original contribution. That said, for well-versed food scholars and public audiences alike, it will be gratifying to see the colorful montage of visuals—from archival footage and photography, telegrams, and letters, to vintage advertisements, film clips, and television cartoons—presented in chronological fashion and guided by accessible narration. Mathilde Damoiseil stitches these materials together with intentionality, often alternating scenes of overflowing grocery stores and glitzy dance hall routines in the United States with footage of railways and dirt roads lined with barefoot laborers in the Central Americas. A giddy, rhythmic soundtrack of son Cubano, “mambo blanco” pastiche, and 1940s swing brings images of economic and political strife into even starker relief. The contrasts are jarring in the way that they should be. Interviews with a business historian, an economist, and a business philosopher add conceptual depth to the narrative, but come at the expense of