

***Eating Venice: Lagoon Legumes, Ceremony and Heritage***  
**(Script)**

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**1. Introduction before lunch with some of our questions**

**A:**EAT-  
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**R:**CONSUME-  
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**K:** DEVOUR-  
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**A:** DRINK-  
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**R:** INGEST-  
W  
O  
R  
**K:** TAKE-  
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**A:** FEED-

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E

**R:** CONTRIBUTE-

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R

**K:** SAMPLE-

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**A:** SAVOUR-

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E

**R:** TASTE-

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R

**K:** TAKE PART-

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**A:** SHARE-

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. . .

**A:** Do you enjoy trying new tastes?

How sensitive to texture are you?

Are some foods non foods?

**K:** When were you last charmed by a meal?

**K:** Do you have time for frivolous food?  
What is an efficient food?

**R:** Do you forage?  
Do you hunt?  
What does gleaning mean to you?

**A:** What are your luxury ingredients?  
What ruins a meal?  
Are fingers better than plastic cutlery?

**K:** Does climate change limit your choice of ingredients?  
Have you ever been close to dying from eating something?  
Have you ever been sick from not eating something?

**R:** Is there a wrong colour for food?  
Do you think eating on a first date is a bad idea?  
Do you think labradors taste like chicken?

**A:** The practice of eating is inherently complex.

**K:** Social and cultural norms are both conveyed and violated through food.

**R:** Over the next two days Afterworks invites you to consider the practice and ceremony of eating. All welcome!

## **2. Welcome piece-introduction + context**

### **SERVE FOOD**

**A:** We would like to welcome you to partake in *Eating Venice: Lagoon Legumes, Ceremony and Heritage*.

**R:** When did you last share a plate?

**K:** Are you hospitable?

**R:** What does care mean to you?

**K:** How do you welcome someone?

**A:** Do you enjoy participation?!

**R:** What are your food rules?

**K:** We would like to share some thoughts to accompany your food.

**A: This evening we offer you dinner. For our main dish we have chosen Corn polenta, Black beans with a side of Fennel Carpaccio and Semi-dried tomatoes.**

**K:** Corn is a cultigen of the Americas. A cultigen is a plant that has been deliberately altered or selected by humans; it's the result of artificial selection. Corn traveled from Central America to Europe aboard 15th century Spanish imperial ships. Originally considered vastly inferior to other grains, by the 16th century corn had been domesticated in Spain, Italy, West Africa and been consumed widely throughout Europe. Like maize or corn, beans were also a staple of the indigenous diet in pre-contact 'America'.

**R:** We have made this polenta with Biancoperla Corn Flour, a special corn flour that is purported to be ground in an old water mill, with a particular fineness as required by local traditions.

**R:** What does tradition enable?

**K:** Or prevent?

**R:** What does it mean to be authentic? To be of undisputed origin?

**K:** How important is provenance for you?

**R:** My apron is dyed with black beans like the ones we're all eating at the moment. Black beans make the most beautiful purple colour.

**A: The side dish we offer this evening is a fennel and almond Carpaccio.**

**R:** Did you know that the Carpaccio is said to be invented here in a local venetian restaurant? It's traditionally a thinly sliced beef dressed and consumed raw.

**K:** In Mesoamerica, the "meats" and leathers that were consumed or utilized came from wild game, and it's believed that there were no animals exploited for labour, with the exception of dogs, who were at times used for hauling.

**A:** the consumption of "meat", which now makes up a major part of modern Latin American diets, can be traced back to the conquest and the process of colonization, as is the cultural, social, and even gendered significance attached to such consumption.

**K:** 16th century Europeans believed that food shaped and maintained the superior colonial body. There was a fear that by consuming "inferior" Indigenous food, Spaniards (and Portuguese) would eventually become "like them". Therefore only "right foods" would be able to protect colonizers from the challenges posed by the "new world" and its unfamiliar environments.

**A:** Are some foods off your menu? Why?

**R:** Do you have a dish or a special ingredient that tells a story?

**K:** Is cooking fun for you?

**A:** Are you fast at chopping?

**R:** 16th century Spanish and Portuguese "exclusive" foods were considered to be wheat, wine and meat. Barley, oats, rye, and vegetable stew were consumed by the poor. Vegetables were classified based on social status; root vegetables were not considered suitable for elite consumption because they grew underground. The elite preferred to consume food that came from trees, elevated from the filth of the common world.

**A:** What foods are only for special occasions?

**K:** Are you comfortable eating alone in public?

**R:** Does food taste better when someone else makes it?

**A:** Have you inherited foods?

**K:** Have you invented any dish before?

**R:** Have you offered? Do you practice ritual?

**K:** In the aforementioned colonial period, the Portuguese identified the palate as the entrance gate for Christian civilization often supporting ceremonies for the natives.

**R:** Sugar, salt, distilled drinks - all elements of social hierarchy.

**A:** For dessert we offer *Mugunzá*, *Jambuzada de Suchetta*, followed by a Thyme & Chocolate sorbet.

**K:** While looking up for Brazilian classic desserts I was reminded of my wife's deceased grandmother Vó Lau. She served me *Mungunzá* when I met her in Recife, Brazil, for both the first and last time in 2015. I thought of making this dessert again to rediscover the taste, possibly bringing memories of that encounter.

Written registers were found pointing mungunzá as a ritual dish served in funerals for the dead in Angola. From Kimbundo language *mukunza* means 'cooked corn'. Its origin has been vastly disputed: Portuguese, Indian, Indigenous, African? This white corn is traditionally cooked with water, sugar, coconut milk, cinammon and cloves.

**R:** Do you eat ancient food? Do you learn new recipes? Have you ever sacrificed?

**K:** Brazilian cuisine is often remembered through *feijoada*, the black bean stew with meat leftovers, believed to be developed by slaves using French technique. A symbolic national dish of pacifying effect, partly erasing resistance narratives.

While collectively gathering in domestic settings to celebrate their different gods, Afro-Brazilians started to remember and share ritual recipes also assimilating local sourced and domesticated ingredients. Further acknowledging this contribution, mugunzá should be added to the list.

**A:** Food choices are influenced and constrained by cultural values, and are an important part of the construction and maintenance of social identity. In that sense, food

has never merely been about the simple act of pleasurable consumption—food is history, food is culturally transmitted, food is identity. Food is power.

**R:** Living Water encounter.

We are staying in an air bnb on Lido. Our hosts accidentally overcharged our tourist tax and apologised by leaving us the gift of a bottle of Prosecco hanging from our door.

**A:** Later that evening in the dark, myself and a jellyfish ended up in each other's personal space. I experienced electrical cracking sounds whilst I was in contact with the medusa.

**K:** In Brazil, jellyfish are given a more poetic name, *Água Viva* (living water). We are using Cachaça made with Jambu, the electric flower to help conjure the living water buzz. Jambu is an old indigenous medicinal remedy from the Amazon, now commercialized as an anti-aging serum and often referred to as nature's own Botox.

**R:** When did a dinner last make you sad?

**K:** Why don't you usually like something?

**A:** How do you eat?

**R:** When do foods become native?

**K:** What makes food dangerous for you?

**A:** Is food too cheap? Genuine and counterfeit foods!

**R:** We read in the Guardian newspaper the Venetian lagoon is "stealthily being invaded by another competitive far Eastern import". An article published in the bulletin of Venice's natural history museum, states algae from the waters off China, Japan and Korea has become the dominant species in the lagoon, replacing the dark green kelp that has traditionally blighted romantic views from canal bridges.

**K:** We have brought green kelp from the island of Galterö in the southern archipelago outside of Gothenburg in Sweden. It was picked from a small saltwater basin formed in the warm cliffs on the 27th of July at around 1.30 pm.

**A: Jambuzada de Suchetta.**

The little yellow plums that we have soaked in Jambu infused Cachaca is called 'succhetta', and arrived in Venice due to the maritime trade from Western Asia. In 1966, there was an unprecedented flood due to high tides, rain-swollen rivers and severe winds which caused the canals to rise to a height of 194 cm (in comparison the 2018 tides raised the water level to 156cm). This 1966 flood destroyed many plum orchards, and drastically reduced crop production.

**K:** One would hope the corrupt and costly flood protection project, MOSE (Modulo Sperimentale Elettromeccanico) will not only help secure the safety of the city of Venice, but the safety of continued generations of these sweet little yellow plums in the lagoon.

Tomorrow you can expect a series of small dishes to be enjoyed during the day.

**A:** Afterworks would like to acknowledge the following sources in the making of this work.

**R:** Thank you so much for listening.

20 August 2019, Venice, IT.  
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The script is based on the following sources:

*The Food Empowerment Project* and the text "Colonization, Food, and the Practice of Eating", by Dr. Linda Alvarez.

*Formação Da Culinária Brasileira* (The Formation of Brazilian Cuisine), by Carlos Alberto Dória, 2014.

*The Perfect Scoop*, by David Lebovitz, 2007.

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