TO
LIVE AND DINE
IN L.A.

Menus from the Collection of
the Los Angeles Public Library

Getty Gallery, Central Library
June 13–November 13, 2015

An exhibition of
The Library Foundation of Los Angeles
The Los Angeles Public Library
The menu collection of the Los Angeles Public Library is a living repository of meals past, an archive of urban eating that tells us about the changing historical role of food in the city. This exhibition treats menus as vibrant urban texts that allow us to see the city through the lens of dishes and courses, illustrations and typefaces, prices and wine lists. By visiting the food past, menus help us reflect on the food present and the food future in a global city where we eat—and who eats—tells us so much about who we are.

**PLEASE SEAT YOURSELF AT THE WELCOME TABLE**

**WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO REFUSE SERVICE TO NO ONE**

Restaurant Menus and Ephemera

The central piece of the exhibition is one long shape-shifting dining table that transforms as you move around it from a lavish banquet dinner to a humble lunch served on a Lazy Susan. The goal is for you to seat yourself at the table section of your choice, interacting and "rubbing elbows" with the strangers you're sitting next to. At each table section you will find select pieces at the Library's menu collection on display, all grouped by theme.

1. Feasts, Balls & Banquets
   Menus for the Upper Sets
2. A Cafeateria For All
   "Pay What You Wish—Dine Treeless Unleashed"
3. A Lazy Susan City
   Race, Ethnicity, and Menus
4. The Lunch Counter
   Where the City Grabs a Bite
5. Dinner in Jail
   The Theme Menu
6. The Menu as Map
   Culinary Cartographies
7. Fantasy & Farm
   Experiments in Design
8. Lights, Camera, Menus!
   Special Menus for a Speciale Town
9. Lord Printing Company
   A Daily Menu Press

**THE CHEF'S TABLE**

Short Films

We asked three contemporary chefs working in different parts of the city to reflect on their own relationships with food, and with all the stories that food helps them tell. In the spirit of this exhibition, they were also asked to comment on food inequities in the city and to roost to select vintage menus from the Library's collection.

Cynthia Hawkins, Hawkins House of Burgers, Watts
Micael Wester, Welexer's Deli, Grand Central Market
Bricia Lopez, Guatialegua, Koreatown

Producer/Director: Michael Bodie
Cinematographer: Jonathan Schwartz, Mia Loe
Sound Mixers/Boom Operators: Jason Meadows, Brandon Per

**FRENCH AND FOOD SCARCITY IN THE MODERN CITY**

Library Action Steps

One goal of this exhibition and the larger “To Live and Dine in L.A.” project is to raise awareness about the stagnating divides between our celebrated dining pasts, presents, and futures, and the too-often ignored presents, pasts, and futures of our city’s hunger crises. L.A. County was recently ranked the #1 county in the nation for the food insecurity of young people, and it is estimated that nearly 2 in 10 families live in food insecure homes. The USDA named Los Angeles “the epicenter of hunger.”

Throughout the summer of 2015 more than ten branch libraries from Watts to Pico Union to Canoga Park will be offering free hot summer lunches to children. Other branch will be hosting exciting dynamic public food programs that include local food history sessions, organic gardening workshops, nutrition book displays, diabetes instruction sessions, and much more.

Karlia Diaz, Prison Gourmet, 2010-2015
Haruko Tanaka, Invisible Kitchen, 2015
Fallen Fruit (David Burns & Austin Young), Public Fruit Maps, Lemondnade Stand, Lemon Wallaper, Urban Fruit Trails, 2004-2015

**HUNGER AND FOOD SCARCITY IN THE MODERN CITY**

Crowdsourced Installation

Don’t forget to visit the MyLibrary menu section of the gallery to leave your mark on the exhibition. Fill in a blank menu with your own ultimate L.A. meal. What dishes sum up your L.A. experience? When you’re finished, just drop it in the collection box and soon your menu will become part of the exhibit wall display.

Menu Donations

The Library’s menu collection is always growing. If you have menus that you’d like to donate, please drop them into the donation box in the gallery.

Our Website

Make sure to visit L.A.Food.org and dine for more exhibitation resources, more menus, and more essays on L.A. food history and food politics.

**To Live and Dine in L.A.: Menus and the Making of the Modern City (Angel City Press) by Josh Kun, featuring artists from the exhibition: Jonathan Gold, Nancy Silverman, Josefina Sotelo, and many more is now available downstairs in The Library Store, where sales benefit the Library.

Wall Mural Photos

Displayed on the walls around you is a collage of archival photographs from the Library’s collection that highlights different aspects of dining history and restaurant labor in Los Angeles.

South Wall


North Wall


**#MyALMenu**

Please visit LAPL.org for a full listing of summer programs.

Cynthia Hawkins, Hawkins House of Burgers, Watts
Micael Wester, Welexer’s Deli, Grand Central Market
Bricia Lopez, Guatialegua, Koreatown

Producer/Director: Michael Bodie
Cinematographer: Jonathan Schwartz, Mia Loe
Sound Mixers/Boom Operators: Jason Meadows, Brandon Per
John F. Szabo
City Librarian

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to Ken Brecher and Rebecca Shehee of the Library Foundation of Los Angeles, and to all of the generous Foundation donors for making this dream come true. Librarians Ani Boyadjian and Kim Creighton, along with Stacy McKenna, menu archivist, were the special collections and digitization heroes who always came through against all odds, and Librarian Jacque Welsh was the engine that kept the exhibition going. Thank you also to the Foundation’s communications director Katie Dunham and to USC doctoral student Perry Johnson, who was invaluable as a researcher and project assistant. Special gratitude goes to Paul Abram for his donation of the Lord Printing Company collection, to Dave Friedman for his loan from the Hollywood Canteen, and to a very generous anonymous donor for various works displayed here.

CREDITS

Curator: Josh Kun
Exhibition Design: wHY and Kulapat Yantrasast
Exhibition Project Manager: Ann Marshall
Graphic Design: Shar Huston
Production: Cinnabar and Primary Color
Curatorial Project Manager: Perry Johnson
LFLA Project Manager: Jacque Welsh