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Effects of Indonesian Cuisine on the Dutch Kitchen and Culture Post World War II

by
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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Food and Agriculture Studies
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Indeed food is not always eaten because of its taste or because one likes it, or even just to satisfy one's hunger; but...there can be many more complicated and elaborate reasons behind the food one eats. Thus are the follies of mankind.¹

- Onghokham

¹ Onghokham, *The Thugs, the Curtain Thief, and the Sugar Lord*, 322.

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ABSTRACT

As a colony of the Netherlands, the Dutch East Indies (upon independence named Indonesia) was a prodigious source of economic revenue -- first due to the spice trade and then coffee -- for the Netherlands from around 1610 to 1949. But, despite the long history of Dutch colonization in Southeast Asia, Indonesian cuisine failed to make a large impact on Dutch culture and cuisine until the 1940s. Before World War II, despite the Netherlands primarily deriving its revenue from global trade, both economically, and especially culturally, all areas, except for the economically engaged, Western cities, were extremely insulated. However, due to the cataclysmic and catalytic socio-political, socio-economic, and socio-cultural effects of World War II, socio-cultural movements within the Netherlands, such as urbanization, cosmopolitanism, and societal modernization were expedited, causing the nation to be irrevocably altered. Indonesian cuisine served as an impetus, in and of itself, and a representation of that broader cultural shift. Working in tandem with an expansion of economic prosperity, a globalizing mindset of Dutch-born citizenry as well as the return of hundreds of thousands of individuals from the former Dutch East Indies, Indonesian cuisine was able to not only to affect Dutch eating habits, but also broader cultural mentalities. Initially, Dutch media sources adapted and propagated Indonesian cuisine, creating, both intentionally and unintentionally, what I deem to be ‘Dutch-onesian’ cuisine [a hodgepodge, fusion mix of Indonesian-Dutch cuisines meant to acclimate and sell Indonesian cuisine to the palates of Dutch audiences.] Consumption and representation of Indonesian cuisine occurred in multiple different spheres, such as restaurants, magazines, and cookbooks, each with their own complex agendas, problems, dynamics, reaches, audiences, and care for the subject matter. An increase in personal finances as well as access to authentic

Indonesian foodstuffs and recipes expedited not just a growing interest in Indonesian cuisine, in all of its aspects, but allowed the cuisine to occupy a heralded place within Dutch culture.

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INTRODUCTION

*“Wat de boer niet kent, dat vreet hij niet”*²

For centuries, that adage was the Dutch rule of thumb about their foodstuffs and methods of consumption. As most of the country was quite rural and poor, the Dutch constructed their meals on repetition and regularity, governed by the limitation of the seasons.^{3,4} Eating was essentially meant to be two things: robustly nutritious yet filling and straightforwardly, economically conscious. Dutch cuisine “has shown great continuity since medieval times to the present, as befits people who can count conservatism among their numerous virtues.”⁵ Conventional Dutch food, therefore, prided itself on its locality, simplicity, frugality, and homespunness⁶ – values extended to its regimented consumption. For most of Dutch history, the quotidian eating schedule for non-nobility (which accounted for almost all of the populus) centered around the hot meal.⁷ People consumed the hot meal during lunchtime as, for most of Dutch history, the country was largely agrarian, and so people ate the midday hot meal as a much needed reprieve from grueling, back-breaking, hunger-inducing agricultural labor. Typically high in fat and carbohydrates and low in spices or added flavorings,⁸ Dutch meals typically consisted of some variation or combination of either oatmeal, cheese, bread, wine/beer, meat, fish, potatoes, and/or vegetables.⁹ Before the social and cultural changes of industrialization in the late

² This famous, national *spreekwoord* (saying) effectively translates to “what the farmer does not know, he does not eat.”

³ Meerman, *Geschiedenis*, XI.

⁴ Schama, *Embarrassment of Riches*, 168.

⁵ Brewin, “Dutch Recipes.”

⁶ Schama, *Embarrassment of Riches*, 165.

⁷ Voorspel, *Lage Landen*, 18.

⁸ Schama, *Embarrassment of Riches*, 168.

⁹ Rose, *Life and Art*, 2.

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there was little interruption in the variety of foodstuffs consumed by everyday peoples. Moreover, before the early nineteenth century, there are no recipes for what poor people ate. It is very difficult to write about what the lower-class people ate with certainty because, as one Dutch culinary historian wrote in a typical Dutch, blunt manner, “nobody cared about what the poor ate and they could not write it down themselves, so we know very little about that.”¹⁰ That being said, while almost all specific recipes were lost with time, eating schedules remained consistent throughout the centuries until World War II.

In addition to the lunch-time hot meal, a variety of *hapjes* (small snacks) were also consumed throughout the day. The most ubiquitous Dutch snack across all time periods, geographic regions, and socio-economic classes, is the bread and cheese sandwich. A very simple concoction, this meal consists solely of bread, cheese, and occasionally butter. This snack became a Dutch staple for a couple of different reasons. First and foremost, it was easy to make, transport, and consume. Moreover, it was very cost effective as it only required two ingredients: cheese and bread. In addition, later on in the 19th and 20th centuries, as recreational beverages became more readily available to the public, it served as a great compliment to the newly consumed tea and coffee. Both tea and coffee, but especially coffee as it was voraciously grown by the Netherlands in Java¹¹, grew to be frequent meal companions amongst most social classes.¹² Thus, Dutch gastronomic consumption would be fundamentally altered during a period known as the *Gouden Eeuw* (Golden Age).

The Dutch Golden Age was one of the most remarkable developments in culture, art and economics in recorded human history. Stretching from around 1588 to 1672, the gargantuanly profitable spice trade, running predominantly out of the colonies in the Dutch East Indies,

¹⁰ Voorspel, *Lage Landen*, 28.

¹¹ Protschky, *Colonial Table*, 347.

¹² *Ibid*, 347.

financed a luxurious lifestyle for the elite and merchant classes.¹³ After numerous, pecuniarily successful expeditions to lucrative spice-rich areas, a collection of merchants banded together to create an organization that changed both Dutch culinary history as well as that of the whole world. In 1602, the Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC or “United East Indies Company”¹⁴) was established.¹⁵ Not only did its economic policies originate the foundations of modern capitalism,¹⁶ but, at its peak, it was the largest recorded company in human history.¹⁷ For most of the seventeenth century, the VOC brought previously unimaginable, ineffable wealth to the Dutch upper classes and, at least for a period of time, completely altered wealthy eating culture. As a result of the VOCs contributions, the upper classes consumed spices and foreign foodstuffs at grossly indulgent quantities - chief amongst them spices.¹⁸ Stately homes and estates, now built by merchants instead of the nobility or clergy, were outfitted with ornament-rich dining rooms, complete with staff to serve and cook. Such splendor contrasted sharply with the simple farms where large families and animals would share one space for all activities. In their modest abodes, the diet of the average Dutch person did not change in the slightest. However, with the decline of VOC power, influence, and money, coupled with a growth in population, namely changes in society, especially gastronomic ones, much of the traditional cheap and nutritious food staples grew in agricultural growth and reach; while the already isolated ‘exotic’ foods (such as spices and fruits) mostly failed to filter down to the common man. The one exception to that was *Sinterklaaskoekjes* (or Sinterklaas¹⁹ Cookies) which

¹³ Boxer, Dutch Seaborne Empire, 18.

¹⁴ In English, however, the VOC is commonly translated as the Dutch East-India Company.

¹⁵ Israel, Centrum van de Wereldhandel, 32.

¹⁶ Schama, Embarrassment of Riches, 4.

¹⁷ Unoki, A Seafaring Empire, 39.

¹⁸ Schama, Embarrassment of Riches, 167.

¹⁹ Sinterklaas was the precursor to Christmas and was a nationwide holiday that everyone, regardless of region or economic status, partook in.

often contained an absolute cacophony of spices, including but not limited to any combination of, white and black pepper, mace, cloves, cinnamon, nutmeg, cardamom, and ginger. They would be eaten around *Sinterklaas* time (typically December 5th) and although a majority of the cookies were just in the hands of the nobility, commoners could also purchase or get them, usually from monasteries or convents.

The beginning of the nineteenth century brought innumerable changes to Dutch society and diet. After observing the massive and explosive economic success of the Dutch, other European countries, such as England, France, Portugal, and Spain, barged into the spice trade. Through mass distribution, they collapsed the price of spices - effectively bringing down the once-indomitable VOC with them.²⁰ Very soon after, the VOC went bankrupt and was absorbed into the Dutch state along with all their territories.²¹ That meant that for the first time, the Kingdom of the Netherlands was now a colonial empire. Concurrently, with the gradual ebb of the gilded magnificence of the Golden Age, came a new return to 'normalcy' in all facets of life, particularly in regards to governmental and religious matters.

The early decades of the nineteenth century were a politically, socially and economically turbulent time. In response, the government advocated for a continuance of frugality and tradition in all manners of life, including the kitchen. Coupled with the loss of income from the VOC, Calvinist critics gained popularity amongst lower classes. They substantially advocated against the pompous opulence and indulgent, unbridled material and financial grandiosity of the Golden Age.²² Critics of the Golden Age virulently wanted the Netherlands to return to a more austere, healthy, frugal, and run-of-the-(wind)mill state of existence. People in positions of

²⁰ Voorspel, Lage Landen, 26.

²¹ De Vries and van der Woude, Nederland 1500-1815, 32.

²² Otterloo, Chinese and Indonesian Restaurants, 162.

power advocated for averageness and unremarkability²³ as virtuous morals and ideals. Such qualities were also extended to food culture.^{24,25}

Another factor in the change of food culture was a combination of agriculture challenges, including a rise in cow disease, food shortages and the country-wide dearth of grain.²⁶ As a result, arguably the most important development in the history of Dutch cooking occurred: the nation-wide proliferation of the potato. Dutch farmers have been growing the potato since the seventeenth century, but never on a nationwide scale.²⁷ However, during the agricultural crises of the nineteenth century, most of Europe overcame its fear of the potato - that quickly made the famous tuber a perfect addition to the healthy, rustic, homey nature of Dutch cuisine. It was championed by politicians at the time as a cheap source of calories and nutrients.²⁸ During this time, the potato quickly “became the most important foodstuff of the poor person’s diet”²⁹ as well as one of the few national foodstuffs consumed in large quantities by rich and poor people alike.³⁰ Once adopted, the potato swiftly became a permanently, intrinsic aspect of Dutch cultural and gastronomic identities, growing to not only be a symbol of agrarian might, but also a representation of this ‘return to traditional’ Dutch eating culture (a little ironic considering that potatoes were non-native).³¹

²³ Important note: this does mean ‘unremarkable’ in the English sense denoting a negative connotation. Instead, it refers to a social and cultural desire to not stand out and not grossly draw too much attention to oneself. Being average *was* the exceptional method by which to live because that meant a broader sense of cultural and national unity and equality amongst everybody. Everyone should strive to be hardworking, down-to-earth, kind and not ostentatious or braggadocious about it.

²⁴ Ornelas, Cambridge World History of Food, 1218.

²⁵ Fernández-Armesto, *Near A Thousand Tables*, 364.

²⁶ Ornelas, Cambridge World History of Food, 1215.

²⁷ Katz, Encyclopedia, 393.

²⁸ Tannahill, *Food Supply Revolution*, 389.

²⁹ Katz, Encyclopedia, 393.

³⁰ Burema, *Voeding in Nederland*, 89.

³¹ Katz, Encyclopedia, 393.

A perfect illustration of Dutch attitudes towards food during this era can be found in *Aaltje, die volmaakte en zuinige keukenmeid*, (*Aaltje, The Perfect and Frugal Kitchen Maid*), the most popular cookbook of the eighteenth century. With its first edition published in 1803 and thirteen editions published since, *Aaltje* set a culinary tone for the century ahead.³² In the preface, ‘the author’³³ writes that while previous cookbooks only gave recipes for “expensive dishes, suitable [only] for people of wealth and distinction”³⁴, this cookbook ensured that *everyone* could make not only sensible and shrewd dishes, but *zuinige* (economical) ones.³⁵ Recipe makers largely omitted previously adored and revered spices and flavorings from their recipes, deeming them expensive and frivolous excesses.³⁶ Instead, they placed an emphasis on cheap, simple, filling and nutritious dishes, which caused a ripple effect to kitchens all over the Netherlands. The piquancy and vitality brought to the rich and middle class Dutch kitchens during the Golden Age was abandoned and forgotten. Many traditional recipes were lost and/or re-written and, in a move that mirrored the nationalistic formation of cuisines by other European nations during the nineteenth century,³⁷ many colloquial dishes were standardized and regimented.³⁸ Modeled off of cultural ideologies and examples of other European nations, mid-century European gastro-nationalism begat a Dutch national cuisine, one with distinctly and ethnically *Dutch* foodstuffs, recipes, and dishes. This new cuisine was soundly solidified and codified within *huishoudscholen* (domestic science schools).

At the turn of the twentieth century, young, usually poor, Dutch girls were sent to *huishoudscholen* to train in the ‘art’ of domestic caretaking. These schools used the *Kookboek*

³² Bijzondere Collecties RU, “De Aaltje.”

³³ It was written anonymously and so no one knows the identity of the real *Aaltje*.

³⁴ *Aaltje*, XI.

³⁵ Kleyn, "Groene soep à la Aaltje."

³⁶ Verriet, *Culturele Mentaliteiten*, 39.

³⁷ Tannahill, *Food Supply Revolution*, 389.

³⁸ Romein and Romein, *Lage Landen*, 16.

van de Amsterdamse Huishoudschool written by Madam C.J. Wannée in 1910 to instruct their pupils in basic cooking techniques. This book also went on to serve as their cookbooks in their future houses. Through such education, women were expected to completely run Dutch households and prepare each meal for their working husbands and children³⁹ as well as prepare them to possibly be housekeepers for more well-to-do families. They were the arbiters of this new social and political consciousness. In the mind of many at the time, “a better-fed worker could produce more work”⁴⁰ and for a financially-struggling country, this emphasis made the most straightforward and logical sense. While food was meant to be a method of keeping energy levels high and immune systems healthy, *huishoudscholen* drilled that meals should barely infringe on the finances of the family. For that reason, women almost solely cooked at home and families rarely ate out at restaurants.⁴¹ Moreover, dishes or ingredients of foreign origin were rarely consumed either inside or outside of the house - almost every foodstuff consumed was native to the Netherlands. A dish that was established out of and exemplifies these social trends is *stamppot*.

Below is a famous example of classic Dutch cuisine that comes out of C. J. Wannée’s *huishoudschool* cookbook from 1947⁴²:

³⁹ Fenoulhet, *Discord and Consensus*, 205.

⁴⁰ Katz, *Encyclopedia*, 405.

⁴¹ Otterloo, *Changing Position*, 178.

⁴² Wannée, *Kookboek*, 265.

Boerenkoolstamppot met rookworst (Kale Stamppot with Sausage)

1.5 kilogram of fresh kale or 600 gram pre-sliced kale

salt

1.5 kilogram potatoes, peeled and sliced

400 gram rookworst (smoked sausage)

Strip the kale. Wash the leaves a few times in plenty of cold water and cut them. Slice the vegetables into strips. Bring the kale to boil in a little water with salt for 10 minutes until they are half-way cooked. Take them out of the water and let them dry. Put the potatoes in a pan half-covered with water. Put the kale and the sausage on top. Let softly boil for 30 minutes until done and nearly dry. Take the sausage out and mash the kale and potatoes. Place sausage back on top and serve.

The recipe above is incredibly gastronomically emblematic of the time period because of the ingredients used and simplicity and preciseness of the measurements. The ingredients incorporated are very to the Dutch kitchen and pragmatically representative of not only what Dutch audiences could afford but also realistically find at their grocery stores. This is perfectly representative of the three Dutch staples: a meat, a vegetable and a potato element. The simplicity of the steps and limited amount and types of ingredients were also two common trends from this time. On the whole, this wonderfully innocuous culinary addition highlights the parochially, conventional outlook of the society.

That cultural insulation was not solely a gastronomic one, but emblematic of a broader, cultural one. Except for the port cities, most of the country was incredibly insular, homogenous, and provincially myopic. According to Johnny van Schaik, who grew up in many rural cities

including Hengelo and Zaltbommel in the 1960s and 1970s, up to the late 1970s, people typically kept to themselves and often barely knew what was happening in the *dorpje* (small village) next to theirs.⁴³ There was a fear, dislike for new things, judgment and fear of the unknown. While especially concentrated in rural areas, starting in the beginning of the Twentieth century, there was an urban sentiment to globalize and culturally open up the country. This urban cultural outlook is perfectly captured by nutritionist Martine Winnop Koning, who carefully admonished her audience in 1917, “*begin niet met een lelijk gezicht te trekken*,”⁴⁴ if you hear something strange...conquer your fear of the new.”⁴⁵ Coupled with few comestible options and an emphasis on prudence, homogeneity, and congruence, national gastronomic consumption followed that socially anchored insulated regularity. This national identity stood in great contrast not only to their role as a colonial empire, but also to Indo-Dutch identities being formed and solidified within the Dutch East Indies. The history and methodology behind Dutch colonization greatly impacted both colonial and mainland-Dutch food cultures.

Dutch colonization in the Dutch East Indies in the 1610s began solely as a method by which to quickly transport spices and exotic goods. However, as the Dutch government faced economic competition and political intimidation from other European nations, Dutch colonial forces began expanding their power. Soon after, their few, semi-permanent trading posts on a select few islands transformed, multiplying into whole cities and networks spanning thousands of islands and miles. By the start of the 1800s, the Netherlands controlled much of modern-day Indonesia.⁴⁶ While Dutch colonization was primarily a desire for riches, wealth and success, it

⁴³ Schaik, Personal Interview.

⁴⁴ Translation Note: the idiomatic phrase “*begin niet met een lelijk gezicht te trekken*” literally translates to “do not pull an ugly face at the start.” I kept it in not only to show the idiomatic and blunt nature of the Dutch language, but also wanted to preserve the original meaning and intent and not misconstrue it.

⁴⁵ Otterloo, *Nieuwe Producten*, 258.

⁴⁶ Protschky, *Colonial Table*, 347.

also delved into an exploration of the new and the foreign. Dutch colonizers encountered sights and landscapes with strange and beautiful animals, met people who looked nothing like themselves, heard languages with phonemes that they had never heard before, ate uncommon foods; all these experiences simultaneously influencing their notions of the exotic. Specifically within Indonesia, the Dutch had a complicated relationship with native culture - one effectively shown through their relationship with Indonesian food culture.

Indonesian food culture initially beguiled Dutch people. Its flavors were unlike anything that they had previously ever smelled or tasted.⁴⁷ As a whole, Indonesian cuisine balances a complex myriad of taste modalities - sour, sweet, fatty, salty, bitter, spicy, to name a few- in intentional, involuted and interlacing ways. Indonesian cuisine derives influence from Indian, Middle Eastern, and Chinese cooking, with a smaller, more modern, influence stemming from European kitchens.⁴⁸ Some important Indonesian dishes are: *nasi goreng*,⁴⁹ *gado-gado*,⁵⁰ *satay*,⁵¹ *lumpia/loempia goreng*,⁵² *pisang goreng*,⁵³ and *bami goreng*.⁵⁴ While this is just a small sampling of Indonesian cuisine, it is important to note them as these were the incredibly distinct and unique flavors and dishes that Dutch colonials first encountered.

⁴⁷ It is crucial that I note this before continuing, but, when discussing Indonesian cuisine it is difficult to capture the veritably terrific nuance of all regions as modern-day Indonesia comprises around 17,508 islands and regional specificities in dishes and cuisine is rampant. Each region has invariably been influenced by countless sources and so it is impossible to explain and tangibly reduce that nuance easily.

⁴⁸ Otterloo, *Chinese and Indonesian Restaurants*, 160.

⁴⁹ 'Nasi Goreng' translates to Fried (goreng) Rice (nasi) and is Indonesia's most ubiquitous and widely and routinely consumed dish. Traditionally made with leftover rice, it is cooked with a variety of ingredients and ketjap/kecap manis (sweet soy sauce) in a wok.

⁵⁰ 'Gado gado' is a mixed-vegetable dish served with some combination of rice, a fried egg, peanut sauce or crumbled *kroepoek* (prawn crackers).

⁵¹ 'Satay' is traditionally a stick of skewered grilled meat typically served with peanut sauce.

⁵² Also spelled lumpia, loempia, or ngohyong - it is essentially just the Indonesian version of a spring roll.

⁵³ Dish of fried bananas - traditionally wasn't a dessert, but has transitioned into more dessert territory due to Dutch colonial influence.

⁵⁴ Also known as 'mei or mi goreng', 'bami goreng' is a stir-fry noodle dish.

The Dutch were blown away and completely transfixed by the rich Indonesian flavor palette. And what is painfully ironic is that despite their horrific, brutal and inhumane treatment of the native Malay populations and despite their pillaging, destruction, and unabashed exploitation of the land and its natural resources, almost all Dutch colonists adopted Indonesian cuisine as their own and much preferred it over the bland, drab, repetitive nature of their homeland.⁵⁵ In the centuries preceding colonization, it was rare to find any Dutch people consuming Dutch food. To only add to the irony, while most colonial Dutch people were taking in this new food as their own, concurrently in the Netherlands, there were movements to demonize all foreign things, especially nonnative cuisine. That being said, for many Dutch people, their introduction and maintained connection to Indonesian cuisine came in the form of *kokkies*.

These *kokkies* were poor, live-in Indonesian women hired to cook for wealthy and middle class, predominantly white families.⁵⁶ In the homes of *Nederlanders*, *kokkies* were instrumental in running the house, taking care of the children, and preparing (and cleaning up) the food. For white families, these *kokkies* were their gustatory introduction to Indonesian culture and cuisine.⁵⁷ They would almost exclusively prepare and serve traditional Indonesian cuisine, although many were also known to cook traditionally European fare with Indonesian gastronomic inflections. An example of colonial fusion cuisine is Indonesian spiced steak with potatoes and vegetables.⁵⁸ While all *kokkies* were talented and experienced Indonesian chefs, *Kokkie Bitja* provided new recipes from a variety of Indonesian provinces as well as different methods and ingredients to prepare the recipes that they already knew how to make.

⁵⁵ Protschky, *Colonial Table*, 349.

⁵⁶ Gouda, *Dutch Culture Overseas*, 12.

⁵⁷ Locher-Scholten, *Women and the Colonial State*, 91.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 103.

There were efforts within the colony to begin to inscribe Indonesian food and new, burgeoning Dutch gastronomical influence. In the former capital of the Dutch East Indies, Batavia, in the province of Malay, *Kokkie Bitja* was published. Kokkie Bitja was a monumental testament to and proud documentary of ancestral, ethnic Malay cuisine. It is the first recorded Indonesian cookbook and was the first ever cookbook published in Malay (with only a couple of Dutch words sprinkled in). It was a relatively small book, with only 100 pages and 212 recipes, and had Indonesian, Dutch and Chinese recipes in it.⁵⁹ While this ground-breaking accomplishment did not change much of the Dutch mainland eating culture, at least within the colonies, it was used frequently amongst *kokkies* to make *Indisch* cuisine.

Throughout this thesis, the term *Indisch/Indische* will be used and not translated so as to preserve and maintain the varied and complicated etymological, epistemological, and ideological history of the word. Due to its previous usages and connotations in both colonial and non-colonial spaces, its employment in this paper functions as a method to avoid incorrect or anachronistic usages. Broadly, the term was used to describe anything and everything derived from ‘native Indonesia’ such as language, ideas, vestments, food, etc. In his examining of the cultural importance of the *rijsttafel*, historian and anthropologist Matthijs Kuipers writes about the term *Indisch* as such:

In colonial times, from a metropolitan viewpoint, the word delineated everything that pertained to the colony of the Dutch East Indies, including Javanese people, Dutch colonials, and Indisch-Dutch or Eurasians. For the colonials themselves, ‘Indisch’ ordinarily would have had the same meaning, except that at times it could also imply ‘native,’ as opposed to Dutch, to make a distinction between colonizer and colonized. Nowadays in Dutch society, the word refers...to Indisch-Dutch people, the group of

⁵⁹ Dhien, "Kokki Bitja."

Eurasians that migrated in large numbers to the Netherlands after Indonesia's independence in 1945.⁶⁰

While the effects of acculturation were certainly present in the colonial period and had a much stronger impact on those living in the Dutch East Indies, its reach was felt on the mainland as well. During the beginning of the 1900s, there certainly was a small, yet active community of *Indisch* people living in Den Haag.⁶¹ They had a thriving, yet insular community with many of their own grocery stores and pharmacies for Indonesian-specific items.

Over the course of the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century, a remarkable, complicated, delicate, messy, and delicious intermingling of socio-political/socio-economic and gastronomic exchanges were completed - forever changing the course of Dutch culture and cuisine. This cultural exchange resulted in a new cuisine that combined elements of Indonesian and Dutch taste modalities in order to appeal to the broad Dutch populus. For the purposes of this paper, I refer to this gastronomic acculturation as Dutch-onesian cuisine. Dutch-onesian cuisine is the de-ethnicization and re-indigenization of Indonesian cuisine through the adoption of Dutch ingredients and cooking methods into Indonesian recipes during the 1940s to the 1970s by various media sources, such as magazines, advertisements, and cookbooks, for the purposes of acclimating Dutch palates to not only Indonesian cuisine but also foreign dishes in general.

The catalyst for such a cuisine came in a three part form: a growth in the amassing of personal finances, a globalizing mindset of Dutch-born citizenry, and the repatriation of hundreds of thousands of individuals from the former Dutch East Indies. This effectively revolutionized

⁶⁰ Kulpers, *Makanlah Nasi! (Eat Rice!)*, 16.

⁶¹ Cottaar, *Oosterse Stad*, 267.

not only centuries of Dutch eating habits but it also fundamentally altered national mentalities regarding non native cultures.

WORLD WAR II & REPATRIATION

250,000. According to the National Committee 4 and 5 May, a national committee within the Netherlands devoted to accumulating the names and identities of those who lost their lives due to the Second World War (both military and civilian), around 250,000 Dutch citizens died.⁶² Invaded in May of 1940 and occupied until May of 1945, most of the Netherlands sat under five years of crippling tyranny from Nazi occupation, fundamentally altering almost everything within the country. During the war, life resembled a fraction of what it did pre-occupation. Food, especially, was used both by the Dutch people as a method of resistance and by the Nazi regime as an instrument of war. In a disastrous combination of poor crop yield, tyrannical occupation, imposed isolation, and intentional food deprivation by the Nazi, everyone, regardless of geographic location, socio-economic status, or ethnicity suffered from the emotionally and physically tolling tax of constant food rations.⁶³ Food was particularly used as a tool of war during the winter of 1944-1945 when Nazi-occupied regions in the West suffered horrific famine due to German blockade of food supplies as well as general food scarcity.⁶⁴ However, its impact rippled out to every person within the country, rich and poor alike.⁶⁵ In a study conducted by the *Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine*, roughly one-third of people in the sample population “explicitly described [experiencing] extreme hunger during the war.”⁶⁶ While exact

⁶² Krimp, *De Doden Tellen*, 85.

⁶³ Stein, Susser, Saenger, & Marolla, *Famine and human development*, 21.

⁶⁴ Trienekens, *Voedselvoorziening*, 406.

⁶⁵ Roseboom, Meulen, Osmond, Barker, Ravelli, & Bleker, *Dutch Famine*, 224.

⁶⁶ Turner, *Gift from the Past*, 21.

mortuary numbers are a matter of debate, Leo de Jong, a Dutch historian specializing in the Netherlands during the World War, estimated that over 22,000 people died of famine during this *hongerwinter* (hungerwinter) -- mostly oldmen.⁶⁷ World War II was a time that distinctly and acutely scarred everyone that survived. Leaving a permanent, ineffable imprint on Dutch psychology, the *hongerwinter* was the epitome of both Nazi cruelty and Dutch physical and mental fortitude.

Once the Netherlands finally became liberated, the nation entered a free, confused, wistful, pragmatically optimistic period of time. A dazed and traumatized yet determined populus tried, by whatever means they could, to recreate the lives that they had been so egregiously stripped of. Following intense periods of starvation and famine, the Dutch people tried in particular to return to their consistent pre-war eating habits.. With this in mind, for a country in need of cheap, high-calorie, low-effort meals, Dutch cuisine became a marker of ethnic, economic and gastronomic stability. As reported on by social scientist and cultural food historian, Anneke van Otterloo:

After the severest post-war scarcities were over, the Dutch returned to their former rather dull and monomorphous eating habits... The daily warm meal consisted of potatoes, boiled vegetables and gravy, sometimes accompanied by a small serving of meat or lard. The whole affair was austere, frugally spiced and repetitive. The ritual of eating represented something viewed more as a necessity than as a pleasure.⁶⁸

The utter destruction of the war left most of the population quite poor and desperate. That being said, the marvelous frugality and providence of the Dutch cuisine appealingly allowed the country to transition back into a period of comfortable gastronomic stability. This resumption of

⁶⁷ de Jong, *Hongersnood*. p. 219.

⁶⁸ Otterloo, *Chinese and Indonesian Restaurants*, 157.

Dutch food represented both an act of cultural reclamation as well as an attempt to re-establish the routines and practices of their pre-war lives. Gastronomic repetition was comfortingly bland and uneventful, a powerfully familiar and predictable ameliorant re-established to assuage and succor a deeply traumatized and struggling population.⁶⁹ Some people did not know what else to do. Some simply wanted to return to what they had once had. Most importantly, most did not have any other option but to resume eating Dutch food.

Moreover, after the horrific carnage and brutality that befell the country, the country needed to remain frugal and conscientious about their spending for the good of the collective nation. The war left a majority of people extraordinarily poor and without housing. By the time that the Nazi occupation had concluded, 95,000 homes were obliterated from shelling and over 600,000 were intensely damaged.⁷⁰ In addition, right as the war ended, the government nationalized the banks in an effort to industrialize and expand the economy. Together, the entire country was attempting to revitalize itself. The only requirement from food was to sustain the population and provide them enough energy to continue rebuilding. However, many people, especially young people, did not just want to return to the same social stagnation as before. They saw the disruption of the war as an opportunity to improve and change the elements of their own society that they wanted to fix. That being said, before then, the country had to rebuild itself. And, in order to do so, food, in particular, could, and would not, be changed for another decade or so. Additionally, while the Netherlands itself was attempting to reconstruct itself, another calamitous series of events was occurring in the colony of the Dutch East Indies.

While the Nazis occupied swaths of Europe, the Japanese Empire, its Axis ally, was rampaging across the other side of the world in the Pacific. In January 1942, the Japanese

⁶⁹ Verriet, *Ongevaarlijk Avontuur*, 179.

⁷⁰ Zanden and Griffiths, *Economische Geschiedenis*, 24.

military reached the Dutch East Indies, and by March 9th, they completely occupied the territory.⁷¹ An elated Indonesian populus celebrated Japanese liberation as it meant that for the first time in centuries, for some islands since before 1500, many islands were finally liberated of their colonial oppressors.⁷² One of the first actions taken by the Japanese army was to remove the Dutch gubernatorial administrators and install an Indonesian government. While the whole country was still ruled by the Japanese, for the first time in centuries, native Indonesians were in independent positions of power and were making concrete gubernatorial and legislative decisions.⁷³ In order to punish their colonial overlords, all Dutch citizens, regardless of their ethnicity, within Indonesia were placed into internment camps. In total, over 100,000 Dutch people were interned over the course of three years.⁷⁴ At the camps, thousands of Dutch men, women, and children were brutally killed.⁷⁵ Once Japan surrendered on August 15th, 1945, the Dutch East Indies was turned over to the British to re-establish order and control, who then turned it over to over back to the Dutch, much to the horror and dismay of the previously emancipated Indonesian populus.

Brewing during Japanese occupation and exploding once the Japanese were repelled and the old Dutch government was reinstated, the clash for Indonesian independence dominated the fledgling nation for the next four years. In an effort to defend their colonial possessions, squash demonstrations for independence, and suppress the entire independence movement as a whole, the Dutch government sent over soldiers and other military personnel to protest hotspots.⁷⁶

However, Indonesian nationals prevailed on December 27th, 1949⁷⁷, guaranteeing unified

⁷¹ de Jong, *Koninkrijk*, 522.

⁷² Trivellato, *Corvée Capitalism*, 918.

⁷³ Buchheim, Satrio, Steijlen, and Welvaart, *Meniti Arti*, 202.

⁷⁴ Captain, *Smaak van Verlangen*, 19.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 20.

⁷⁶ Otterloo, *Chinese and Indonesian Restaurants*, 157.

⁷⁷ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*, 140.

self-governance for the first time in centuries.⁷⁸ Tensions between the two nations remained extraordinarily high for the next couple of decades, leading to many socio-political complications.

When Indonesia became independent in 1949, two of the parties that had brought about independence, the US and the UN, wanted to give Dutch-Indos an opportunity to immigrate to the Netherlands. Although most Dutch-Indos had never visited the Netherlands, the Dutch government named the arrangement, ‘repatriation’ as it was only accessible to Dutch citizens.⁷⁹ Whilst all inhabitants of the former colony were considered Dutch subjects, only those with registration documentation were classified as Dutch citizens.⁸⁰ That difference proved to be crucial in determining who would be returning to the Netherlands. So, for the next decade, three major waves of immigration to the Netherlands occurred.⁸¹ “The [first] two major immigration waves occurred directly after the de-colonisation of Indonesia in 1949 between 1949-1951 and between 1952-1957.”⁸² After the first two waves, the third wave was by far the most politically complicated and pressured.

In 1957, in response to repeated Dutch governmental decrees demanding continually insisting that all Indos and other Indonesians move to Papua New Guinea, the Indonesian state finally had enough. They forcibly expelled everyone with Dutch citizenship - labeling them as ‘undesirable aliens’⁸³ - meaning that almost every Dutch civil and military figure along with their families were now forced to come back.⁸⁴ Between 1958-63 close to 71,000 people, including

⁷⁸ Ornelas, Cambridge World History of Food, 1213.

⁷⁹ Ellemers, and Vaillant, *Indische Nederlanders*, 41.

⁸⁰ Wall Memorial, “Indo Dutch Food Culture.”

⁸¹ Meijer, "Burgerlijke Stand en Familieonderzoek."

⁸² Zorlu and Hartog, *Migration and Immigrants*, 26.

⁸³ Rijkschroeff, *Etnisch Ondernemerschap*, 67.

⁸⁴ Ellemers, J.E. and R.E.F. Vaillant, *Indische Nederlanders*, 41.

more than 12,000 Dutch people from New Guinea, immigrated to the Netherlands.⁸⁵ In total, around 160,000 military personnel returned from Southeast Asia⁸⁶ and around 300,000 people were repatriated to Indonesia.⁸⁷ Later on, a fair majority of the repatriated individuals chose to immigrate to other countries - mainly the United States and the United Kingdom.⁸⁸ For those who chose to reside in the Netherlands, the majority settled in the Western region of the country - where most of the ports/port cities reside.⁸⁹

Figure 1.1 below shows the rates of immigration and emigration to and from Indonesia to the Netherlands. As previously stated, this graph points to all three major waves and spikes on migration. In addition, this graph exhibits the lack of immigration post 1963-1964 due to improved political relations between the two nations along with the lack of financial or social motive by either social group:

⁸⁵ Rijkschroeff, *Etnisch Ondernemerschap*, 65.

⁸⁶ Verriet, *Culturele Mentaliteiten*, 35.

⁸⁷ Bakker, *Food and Memory*, 319.

⁸⁸ Enrico, "The Indo Project."

⁸⁹ Salzman, *Origins of the Restaurant*, 11.

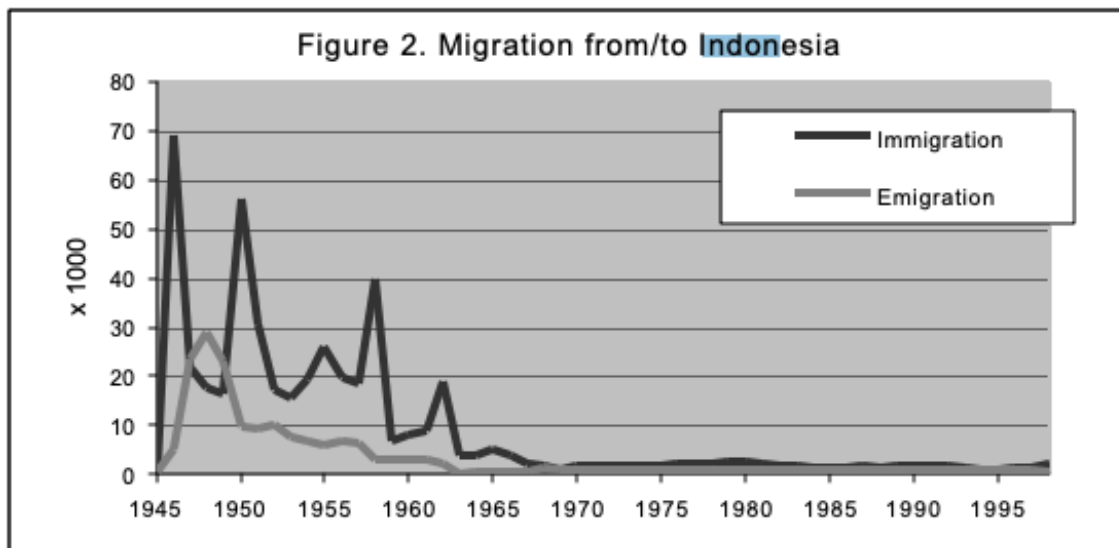


Figure 1.1: It demonstrates the immigration and emigration to and from Indonesia and the Netherlands in the thousands from the years 1945-1995.⁹⁰ Source: CBS Statline (2001)

Each wave coming from Indonesia had people and families from a multitude of heritages, socio-economic statuses, and professions; they were, by no means, a homogeneous conglomeration of individuals. Specifically, there was a lot of correlative complexity within the Dutch-Indo identities as it was a very disparate group of various ethnicities, socio-economic statuses, geographies, and temporal durations within Indonesia. “The origins, education, profession, income and outward appearance of the members of this group were not homogenous.”⁹¹ There was a combination of solely ethnic *Nederlanders*, Indos (people with both Indonesian and Dutch ancestry)⁹², solely ethnic Indonesians, Indo-Chinese peoples, and solely ethnic Chinese peoples.⁹³ That being said, the *one* thing that they thought united them was their identity as Dutch, or Dutch-adjacent, citizens. However, they arrived in the Netherlands to a much more sobering and surprising reality.

⁹⁰ Zorlu and Hartog, *Migration and Immigrants*, 29.

⁹¹ Otterloo, *Chinese and Indonesian Restaurants*, 157.

⁹² Bakker, *Food and Memory*, 319.

⁹³ De Vos, Meijers, and Evert, *Population, Diversity, and Restaurants*, 237.

To many newcomers who arrived from the Netherlands East Indies, from a country which de facto no longer existed, coming to the Netherlands was also discovering that until their arrival, they had not belonged to the nation of which they thought they were part.⁹⁴

Whereas repatriated individuals were Dutch when they were back in the Dutch East Indies, in the Netherlands, they were closer to foreigners than anything else. According to Dutch-born people, these ‘new’ people spoke funny, wore strange clothes, had darker skin, and ate exotic food. Put simply, they stood out; they had been “verindisched.”^{95,96} And in a country where blending in and homogeneity is the norm, that makes any difference that much stronger and painfully pertinent. Moreover, these repatriated individuals inadvertently represented difference - specifically a colonially-rooted one set up to racially and culturally ostracize, hierarchize, and otherize anything that was not Dutch, or at least European. They were not returning to a very socially friendly nor open-minded place.

Up until this point, the overwhelming majority of the Netherlands not only barely had contact with non-Dutch culture, but also sought to socially and politically isolate themselves. Despite its own gloriously rich and historical trade network, the Netherlands had lost much of its trading might. What trade it still had was concentrated primarily in Western cities in the hands of a selective cultural elite - the effects of which, both physical and ideological - remained very much concentrated within that elite. Moreover, as traders, while Dutch people were happy and interested in trading goods, and therefore ideas, from one place to another, they would not internalize these ideas themselves. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, the rural sections

⁹⁴ Legêne, *Multiculturalism*, 38.

⁹⁵ A Dutch term meaning “turned Indisch.”

⁹⁶ Protschky, *Colonial Table*, 355.

of the country had been culturally and socially buttressing and detaching itself from the rest of the world. In doing so, the nation had only further fortified its own idiosyncratic national character and proud ethnic self-identity.⁹⁷ That national character often manifested itself in the intentional and unintentional cultural isolation of a great number of Dutch individuals.

First and foremost, most Dutch people did not travel very far and, especially in the more rural regions (which at this point embodied the experience of most people within the country), mostly stayed within their own *dorpje*. Withal, there was great pride and confidence in this cultural homogeneity - foreign items and notions were deemed strange, bizarre, unpredictable, and perilous.⁹⁸ Non-Dutch things, both physical and ideological, were ostracized, criticized, ridiculed, and, unless it conformed to a pre-existing Dutch norm or custom, not commonly consumed.⁹⁹ That especially went for food. People ubiquitously mainly consumed some variation of meat, potatoes, and vegetables - Dutch food was predominantly just grown within the country,¹⁰⁰ oftentimes in people's own backyards.¹⁰¹ Anything else was just deemed peculiar or dangerous. For example, in 1950, the magazine *Voedsel* conducted a survey regarding Dutch gastronomic tastes. In their analysis of the collected responses, they wrote that:

On the whole, people seemed to ascribe to the slogan, 'don't eat what you don't know.' In rural areas that notion clung even harder (for example, ladies in pastoral regions did not appreciate a dish of macaroni with ham and cheese¹⁰² in their cooking classes)...In

⁹⁷ Schama, *Embarrassment of Riches*, 167.

⁹⁸ Verriet, *Ongevaarlijk Avontuur*, 177.

⁹⁹ Otterloo, *Chinese and Indonesian Restaurants*, 155.

¹⁰⁰ Otterloo, *Changing Position*, 178.

¹⁰¹ Schaik, Personal Interview.

¹⁰² While this might strike a current reader, especially an American one, as curious considering macaroni's modern day global ubiquity and assimilation within many cuisines and grocery stores as well as its indifferent, inoffensive nature, this quote really represents the insular extremity of most Dutch families especially rural ones. Despite the geographic proximity of the Netherlands to Italy, even up until the 1970s for many families, the idea of macaroni was considered to be

different groups, a healthy restraint in respect to spices was observed.¹⁰³

Whereas ‘repatriated’ individuals had been exposed to a myriad of gastronomic worlds, the Dutch world remained intensely stagnated. For that reason, across the country, both within the private and public spheres, the arrival of *Indische* food was not accepted unanimously or ubiquitous by any means. Indonesian food was treated with a mix of xenophobic, adjudicating, and negative ideas - often tinged with racism.¹⁰⁴ “The image of the food mingled with the (often racist) ideas that people had about Indonesian people themselves: strange, exotic, encircled by peculiar smells.”¹⁰⁵ These attitudes were perfectly captured by historian and anthropologist Annemarie Cottaar and social historian Wim Willems. In their book, *Indische Nederlanders: Een Onderzoek naar Beeldvorming*,¹⁰⁶ they elaborate on common Dutch sentiments towards *Indische* food (and therefore foreignness):

We know that a part of the (Dutch) population in the 1950s wasn't very fond of the Indonesian meals on offer because it was so very different. ‘Those funny meals with [their] pointy spices.’ Also:

quite foreign as there was not that much Italian influence present within a lot of the country. Moreover, while there certainly are Italian dishes of pasta with cheese and pork, an underlying implication made is that the ham and cheese are both of Dutch origin. That is once more emblematic of the desire on the part of Dutch recipe makers to include and incorporate Dutch ingredients in an effort to make foreign dishes less scary and more appealing and appetizing to Dutch gastronomic palates.

¹⁰³ Burema, van Schaik, & Woonink, B. *Enquête*, 295.

¹⁰⁴ Kulpers, *Makanlah Nasi! (Eat Rice!)*, 17.

¹⁰⁵ Verriet, *Culturele Mentaliteiten*, 37.

¹⁰⁶ Translator’s Note: The title of the book literally translates as: *Indische Dutch People: An Examination of Image-Building*. I decided to keep the full title for a couple of reasons. The first is that I think it is a great, small example of how straightforward the Dutch language is as well as how the language forms and constructs not just their words, but also their ideas. Moreover, there is no direct English translation for the word *Beeldvorming*. Essentially, “*beeldvorming*” means ‘image-building’ or how the complex intersection between how one sees themselves as well as how they are perceived by others in society and together how those two factors create the perceptible ‘image’ of the subject in question.

‘Those strange smells.’ Tolerance was still hard to find in the 1950s. As is evident from the following quote [from a Dutch newspaper, NRC, published on 2/15/1958] of two aunties who were so kind¹⁰⁷ to house their -- even older -- family members coming back from Indonesia. ‘You know, these people really eat a lot of fried rice, nasi goreng. Even the neighbors smelled the food. In unity, they shook their wise heads.’¹⁰⁸

Interestingly as well, gastronomic differences also divided repatriated individuals. A small minority of repatriated individuals did not fully embrace *Indisch* food as their own. Others did, but did not know how to prepare it as their servants had done so for them back in the colony. Whether or not they assimilated in the Netherlands predominantly hinged on ethnic and class identities.

For example, many white, wealthy and middle-class Dutch people from the Dutch East Indies, brought their Indonesian *kokkies* back to the Netherlands with them so that they could continue to cook for them. Despite them returning to their ‘homeland,’ they still had more of a hankering for the food of their ‘adopted home’ over their ‘original’ one. That is primarily because the majority of them were born in the Dutch East Indies and had never developed a palate for the Dutch kitchen. They grew up with *Indische* food being their mother cuisine. Thus, an interesting dichotomy grew for Indonesian cuisine consumption amongst the wealthy: those from the former Dutch East Indies viewed it as their own cuisine while native *Nederlanders* still regarded it as an exotic aberrance from a far off land.¹⁰⁹ While some wealthy people from the former Indies certainly received petty, snobby judgment for continuing to eat *Indische* food, their wealth and whiteness allowed them the continued ability to eat it whenever they wanted.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ The writer intended for this to be meant as sarcasm.

¹⁰⁸ Cottaar and Willems, *Indische Nederlanders*, 114.

¹⁰⁹ Protschky, *The Colonial Table*, 347.

¹¹⁰ Geyzen, *Smaak van Thuis*, 418.

However, for the average Dutch-born citizen or family, while they might have read or heard a little bit about Indonesian cuisine, they certainly had never tried it.

For example, for his own thesis on the relationship between food and cultural mentality, Dutch scholar and cultural historian Jon Verriet interviewed a white woman born in the Netherlands¹¹¹ about her experiences with the early influx of Indonesian food:

My husband was from Indonesia, where he was put into [a] Japanese internment camp, and by 1947, he had, therefore, already taught me what Indische food was. When the ships came back from Indonesia, there were also Chinese people on them. And then came the first Chinese person to our house; that was really a great wonder [for me]. We couldn't stop looking at them. They acquired a small room in the attic and they then taught us how to cook Indisch food...in the beginning I found that food a little...different from what we ate (we mustn't ever use the word 'dirty'). But, more and more, I slowly learned to appreciate it.¹¹²

This housewife's story reveals quite a bit about both the broader Dutch mentality as well as an initial apprehension and careful curiosity, which eventually resulted in tentative social acceptance. Initially, even though her husband had come from Indonesia and she had a rudimentary knowledge of the cuisine, she had almost no personal experience with anything *Indisch*; she had never even actually tasted the cuisine herself. That experience mirrored that of many Dutch people, especially lower-class individuals in rural areas. Moreover, while many repatriated people, such as her husband, had grown up eating and surrounded by *Indisch* food, they oftentimes personally did not cook the food at their Indonesian houses or had a *kokkie* do it for them. So, when they came to the Netherlands, many not only did not have enough

¹¹¹ In his own footnote about her, he just writes: "Respondent #20. A woman born on 12-1-1926. She lived in Amsterdam and Hilversum during the fifties and sixties."

¹¹² Verriet, *Culturele Mentaliteiten*, 39.

gastronomical epistemology to appropriately prepare it as well as faced much social pressure to eat “normal” Dutch food.

Her tale outlines a fundamental shift in not just Dutch mentality towards foreign foods, but a broader change to outsider/foreign cultures. Initially, there was a lot of apprehension and intentional and unintentional exotification. Many within the Netherlands superciliously regarded the nation as a pure, white, homogenous land - proudly untouched by unclean, foreign influences. According to Johnny van Schaik, many peregrine cultures, especially non-European ones, were routinely deemed exotic, unusual, unsafe, and minacious.¹¹³ As highlighted in the testimony of the woman above, people would commonly use the word *vies* (or dirty) to describe and denigrate the attire, food, and overall cultures of foreign, or different, places. If something was different (as in not keeping with the sense of averageness) then it was deeply frowned upon.¹¹⁴ Another very commonly used word to describe foreign cultures was “*vreemd*” or “strange.” “Strange” embodied connotations of a broader feeling: the fear of the new, the mistrust and judgment of the foreign, and hesitation of a break in everyday routine. And these new, strange people coming back from this new, strange land were the epitome of everything contrary to the ideological institution of Dutch culture. That being said, not every repatriated individual nor family had the same experience upon advent.

The preponderance of repatriated individuals were not privileged like their more wealthy counterparts as “most [repatriated] people were ‘Indo-Dutch’ of Indonesian blood, born in the former Dutch East Indies.”¹¹⁵ But, for many of those who loved the *Chinees-Indisch* food of their old home and were constantly swirling in gustatorial memories, many ‘repatriated’ folks now faced a new environment that did not always embrace their food. Food became one of the

¹¹³ Schaik, Personal Interview.

¹¹⁴ Vuyk, *De Invloed*, 179.

¹¹⁵ Otterloo, *Chinese and Indonesian Restaurant*, 157.

biggest variables towards social acceptance and non-acceptance. Many Indos faced a great pressure, both directly and indirectly, to either continue cooking their own food and face social and societal repercussions or gastronomically, and therefore socially, assimilate to Dutch cuisine and thereby Dutch culture. For example, fair numbers were forced by their government-issued handlers to eat potatoes and were prevented from buying and consuming rice.¹¹⁶ In defiance of their attempts, many repatriated individuals continued to eat their native cuisine.

So, since, disproportionately most Indo peoples refused to neglect their cuisine and continued, predominantly in the comfort of their own, non-judgemental homes, to consume their cuisine. “After arrival, most immigrants did not seek common ground with the former home-colonialists, nor did they seek a confrontation. They did not claim their inclusion in the national institution, nor did they challenge the visible or invisible borders of exclusion.”¹¹⁷ There was a great social stigma still attached to the victuals. So, unfortunately, up until the late 1950s, all consumption of authentic, blatantly *Indisch* cuisine occurred in private spheres or in tucked away public places, such as alleyways and/or small shops called Tokos.¹¹⁸ The Toko was not only a place to buy and consume veritable Indonesian cuisine and products, but also served as a place for community-building and social gathering.¹¹⁹ Together, all of the social features brought in the capacity for Chinese restaurants, and therefore *Indisch* food, to grow. Pre-established Chinese restaurants successfully and admirably inadvertently became the physical and culinary foundations for the gastronomic revolution post-World War II. Without them, there is no doubt that these dramatic culinary changes could have never taken place.

¹¹⁶ Verriet, *Culturele Mentaliteiten*, 44.

¹¹⁷ Kulpers, *Makanlah Nasi! (Eat Rice!)*, 17.

¹¹⁸ Otterloo, *Changing Position*, 179.

¹¹⁹ Otterloo, *Buitenlandse Migranten*, 324.

RESTAURANTS

First arriving in the early twentieth century, Chinese immigrants to the Netherlands came from mainland China, with the highest number being from Guangdong.¹²⁰ The majority of these early immigrants settled in cities, especially in the Western, water-adjacent cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and den Haag (the Hague). While cities, on the average, tended to be more intellectually and politically progressive and had a fair amount of experience with foreign cultures, the process of acclimation and integrating was definitely difficult and strenuous. Similar to much of the racism that many Chinese people faced when they first moved to the United States, many Indos and Chinese peoples were greeted with a sizably acute combination of suspicion, fear, racism, and prejudice from the Dutch *hoi polloi*.^{121,122} That xenophobia, discrimination, and stereotyping got predominantly exhibited in regards to Chinese foods.¹²³ For example, during the Great Depression of the late 1920s through to the early 1930s, as global trade worsened, so did the Dutch trading industry - the strongest backbone of the economy. Most Chinese people lost their jobs working on the docks. So, most were forced to sell *pindakoeckjes* (peanut cookies) as a means of procuring income. That in turn, led to Dutch people referring to these gastronomic peddlers by the derogatory term *pindaman* (peanut man).

However, as time progressed, food flourished into an unexpectedly useful and informative method of not just assimilation, but appreciation into Dutch society.¹²⁴ Most Chinese people founded their own restaurants and structured their lives, and inadvertently as a result their

¹²⁰ Rijkschroeff, *Etnisch Ondernemerschap*, 61.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, 63.

¹²² Li, *Group in Transition*, 174.

¹²³ Rijkschroeff, *Etnisch Ondernemerschap*, 67.

¹²⁴ Groenendijk, *De Rechtspositie*, 94.

cultural identities, around their culinary businesses. While the initial demand of Chinese restaurants was not high and “inconsistent with Dutch foodways,”¹²⁵ a demand had been fostered, especially in the larger cities.¹²⁶ The opening of Chinese restaurants facilitated a lot of people's first introductions with Chinese culture and greatly assisted in ameliorating and building relationships between both groups.¹²⁷ By the start of the war, many Chinese families felt assimilated and interlaced within the Dutch socio-cultural fabric and Chinese communities were financially stable and socially thriving. An interesting and sizable gradation to the Chinese-Dutch community as well as Chinese-Dutch identity was the arrival of the Chinese-Indonesians from the Dutch East Indies.

Before the mass immigration of Chinese-Indonesia, almost every Chinese person inside the Netherlands came from mainland China. Yet, during the undulating waves of “forced exile” Dutch and Indo-Dutch peoples, many Chinese people also left - settling in both predominantly-Chinese and non-Chinese areas.¹²⁸ These Indo-Chinese individuals often established themselves alongside people with their various identifiers (Chinese, Indo-Chinese, ‘repatriated’ folks). For some repatriated individuals, the arrival of many Chinese-Indonesians was a really welcoming sight as many repatriated folks felt as though they had more in common with them than people within the Netherlands, especially gastronomically.¹²⁹ Yet, while they certainly maintained their ethnic Chinese identity, their Indonesian influence definitely left them at odds with many of the Chinese-Dutch people who viewed themselves as the “true Chinese peoples.”¹³⁰ The Chinese-Indonesian individuals only spoke Dutch and predominantly just ate

¹²⁵ Otterloo, *Changing Position*, 178.

¹²⁶ Cottaar, *Oosterse Stad*, 267.

¹²⁷ Salzman, *Origins of the Restaurant*, 11.

¹²⁸ Groenendijk, *De Rechtspositie*, 98.

¹²⁹ Verriet, *Culturele Mentaliteiten*, 37.

¹³⁰ Li, *Group in Transition*, 182.

Indisch foods.^{131,132} Due to the preeminence and centrality of restaurant work amongst Chinese-Dutch people, Chinese-Indonesian individuals looked down on them as “restaurant Chinese” and preferred to establish their associations within their own separate communities.¹³³ Chinese-Indonesian qualifications of Chinese-Dutch people as “restaurant Chinese,” while used derogatorily by them, was not completely inaccurate. The majority of Chinese people within the Netherlands were involved with the restaurant trade in some capacity. And, post-war, these Chinese restaurants not only became havens for Indonesian cuisine to flourish, but also spaces for the evolution of Dutch gastronomic and social developments.

By 1945, the last year of World War II, there were around 30 *solely* Chinese restaurants scattered around the Netherland’s largest cities.¹³⁴ And, during the 1950s, Chinese restaurants grew and developed both their cuisine as well as their quantities. Their increase was inspired by a variety of factors such as: changing social ideologies, increased wealth, and gastronomical and labor changes within the restaurants themselves. Together, these factors inspired one of the most important and influential changes in Dutch consumption in history. That being said, this change could not have occurred without the influence of other external factors.

As described earlier, in accordance with much of the rest of the Global North, after the absolutely brutal carnage of the second World War, there was a desire to take collective national grief and channel that energy into newer and more positive things. Many people were unhappy with previous social conventions and wanted to take the country in a new direction. In the Western world, including the United States, France, and Germany, dramatic transformations commenced, primarily in universities, where they aimed to address power dynamics and reliance

¹³¹ Ibid, 179.

¹³² Rijkschroeff, *Etnisch Ondernemerschap*, 68.

¹³³ Li, *Group in Transition*, 180.

¹³⁴ Rijkschroeff, *Etnisch Ondernemerschap*, 59.

on relationships between authority figures and citizens, older and younger generations, various ethnic and racial groups, and genders.¹³⁵ The younger generation, at the forefront of this cultural revolution, transformed institutional practices in different spheres like government, education, work, family life, and leisure.

That broader cultural shift only became possible due to various changes to the economic, political, and physical infrastructure of the country. In the Netherlands, specifically, this change really started to manifest itself as the country became more urban in the post-war period.¹³⁶ More houses were getting built and people started making more money. For example, already in 1953, the government had increased housing construction to over 65,000 houses a year.¹³⁷ Moreover, due to both the nationalization of the banks and economic benefits stemming from the Marshall Plan, not only did the government have an increase in funding for various social handouts, but citizens also had extremely trustworthy, convenient, and effective places to manage their money.¹³⁸ Through these overwhelmingly effective economic programs, middle and low income people were finally able to begin buying homes and not have to worry about many quotidian costs. In addition, because of the relinquishment of the Dutch East Indies, the nation could singularly focus on its own domestic ports of trade and travel. So, modes of living for most socio-economic statuses started improving. That physical and ideological transfiguration allowed the Netherlands to tap into the social and cultural alterations happening at this time such as cosmopolitanism, modernization, industrialization, democratization, etc. This was a new early cultural development that predominantly started in large, metropolitan cities. This fresh, multicultural lens later paved the way for future new, globalized interests and tastes to flourish in

¹³⁵ Zahn, *Regenten, Rebellen en Reformatoren*, 106.

¹³⁶ Nijssen, *Urban Development*, 23.

¹³⁷ Zanden, *Economic History*, 163.

¹³⁸ Zanden, *Geleide Loonpolitiek*, 467.

the country. An example of this push towards globalization and modernization came from the *Tentoonstelling Rotterdam Ahoy 1950* (or the Rotterdam Ahoy-Exhibit of 1950).

During this large and extremely well-attended festival, presentations and exhibitions of many global cultures were executed. A central aspect of this event was the emphasis on the display of Chinese cuisine.¹³⁹ Chinese food was heavily promoted and was the first time that the preponderance of Dutch-born people experienced Asian food before. Different restaurateurs brought their dishes there at the local request of a brewery¹⁴⁰ - a smart move considering how common and constitutionally important breweries were in the constitution of Dutch culture and community. The interest of the Dutch public was certainly considerable; a lot of people wanted to try this new, exotic food, even if it scared them a bit as well.¹⁴¹ This exhibit effectively whetted the appetites of the attendees and introduced them a multiplicity of different foods, paramountly ones with spices and ingredients. Off the backs of this festival as well as broader cultural and social changes, Chinese restaurants not only grew in quantity and popularity, but also became inadvertent hotbeds and incubators of social change themselves.

One of the largest reasons for the growing popularity and demand was because of the new, large influx of mixed Indonesian-Dutch and returned military personnel and their families. The arrival of individuals and families from the former Dutch East Indies posited a new window for Chinese restaurateurs. Not only did Chinese restaurants newly possess a plethora of accessible customers (as many of the repatriated individuals resettled in cities where the majority of Chinese restaurants resided), but many of these new customers were already incredibly familiar and ravenous for food that reminded them of home.¹⁴² Chinese restaurants became oases

¹³⁹ Rijkschroeff, *Etnisch Ondernemerschap*, 67.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 75.

¹⁴¹ Kagie, *Laatste Kolonie*, 125.

¹⁴² Otterloo, *Chinese and Indonesian Restaurants*, 164.

of pseudo-familiarity in a country that otherwise was barely reminiscent of their former homes. The return of so many individuals already familiar with Asiatic cuisine impacted the development of many Chinese restaurants's practices and processes, such as, but not limited to: the mixing of Chinese and Indonesian cuisine, the expansion of a wider Dutch customer base, demographics of culinary workers, and the establishment pattern of future restaurants for not just other Chinese and future Indonesian restaurants, but all other ethnic or *buitenlands* (foreign) restaurants.¹⁴³ Chinese restaurants hired repatriated Indos in their establishments as line and prep cooks, helping to influence the dishes and the recipes served.

For many Indos who arrived in the country, they often struggled to get work due to social racism and laboral segregation. Concurrently, many second and third generation Chinese men were getting properly acclimated into Dutch society and so were getting access to more prestigious, higher paying jobs outside of food service.¹⁴⁴ So, that dearth of workers coupled with the sudden increase in unemployed peoples was a phenomenally fortuitous event for both groups. So, in several establishments, Indonesian cooks were readily hired and were given an equal position in the kitchen right next to the Chinese cooks.¹⁴⁵ This occurred, for example, in the Far East restaurant in The Hague and at Tai Ton in Amsterdam (two of the most famous and prestigious Chinese restaurants at the time).¹⁴⁶ Moreover, the food these establishments began preparing was fundamentally altered by the incorporation of these Indonesian cooks. The combination of a Chinese restaurant with Indonesian and Chinese workers serving a modest, austere Dutch clientele meant that the food became a titillating *mengelmoes* (hodgepodge) of Indonesian-Chinese-Dutch ingredients, flavors, and techniques.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ Salzman, *Continuity and Change*, 12.

¹⁴⁴ Rijkschroeff, *Etnisch Ondernemerschap*, 68.

¹⁴⁵ Etossi, *Eating Cultures*, 56.

¹⁴⁶ Rijkschroeff, *Etnisch Ondernemerschap*, 69.

¹⁴⁷ Otterloo, *Chinese and Indonesian Restaurants*, 157.

So, in accordance with a new surplus of Indonesian influence both in regards to population along with media, plenty of previously-strictly Chinese restaurants expanded their menus with gastronomically experimental and engrossing dishes that subsumed Indonesian national dishes such as *nasi goreng*, *satay*, *gado gado*, and *bami goreng* - dishes that were not found in mainland China.¹⁴⁸ A *bami goreng* would be served with traditionally-made Chinese noodles, a smattering of Indonesian flavourings, and a Dutch-inflected influence of green peas, diced ham, and a well-fried egg on top.¹⁴⁹ Crucially, however, these dishes were incredibly under-spiced, in every regard, compared to their native counterparts. Most pungent flavorings, especially peppery spice, were either watered-down or removed all together. Very soon after, a number of restaurateurs decided to advertise their restaurant as Chinese-Indonesian.¹⁵⁰ Starting first in the cities and then later expanding into the more rural parts of the country, in the later part of the 1950s, and especially into the 1960s, more and more fusion Chinese-Indonesian restaurants opened with the intentionality of serving fusion cuisine specifically.¹⁵¹

At the outset, the primary demographic for this food was Dutch military men, their families, and other Indos.¹⁵² These civil servants came back to the Netherlands craving the victuals that they had eaten back at their Indonesian homes. It was also quite jarring to go from eating hearty, heavily spiced, intricate food to the demure, mild Dutch kitchen. That further gustatorial shift was incredibly overwhelming and difficult. But, that is not to say that everyone in the Netherlands was entirely happy with their food either. While many people certainly loved their classic Dutch dishes, there were a fair number who wanted to explore the gastronomic world and try as many new dishes as they could. For them, Indonesian food was also a great

¹⁴⁸ Schaik, Personal Interview.

¹⁴⁹ Oosten, *Struggle for Culinary Heritage*, 39.

¹⁵⁰ Salzman, *Continuity and Change*, 8.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid*, 9.

¹⁵² Rijkschroeff, *Etnisch Ondernemerschap*, 68.

method by which to do so. Not only were they already slightly actively and passively familiar with Indonesian cuisine, but they simply just had great access to incredible quality. So, while these repatriated people definitely facilitated an early and growing demand, there was absolutely some initial interest yet hesitancy from many Dutch-born peoples.¹⁵³

Before the influx of these cuisines, spurred in a favorable part by Indo-Chinese cuisine, eating out was a rarely performed act. Dutch culture was quite interpersonally insular, pecuniarily ascetic, and proudly prosaic.

Every “stranger” was expected to leave the house by six o'clock, and “eating out” was not generally done, except for by a small elite. In short, for the Dutch, eating fulfilled only a few social functions, of which the strengthening of the bonds among family members was the most important.¹⁵⁴

In addition to improving tight-knit social and familial connections, eating-in also had another enormous appeal and benefit: cost. Eating-in was a surefire way to not only control the cost of one's meals, but also as Dutch culture placed the value of food predominantly as just a source of energy over any sort of real flavor component, consumers required a pretty serious justification for going out to a restaurant.

Moreover, more so pre-war, and even post-war, restaurants had a fancy and wealthy connotation to them. Since the founding of the first restaurants in the Netherlands in the early 1800s, their guests were only the wealthiest, most privileged, elite clientele. Predominantly serving French food, the food presented there used techniques and ingredients that everyday people had never tasted let alone even heard of. Restaurants were symbols of status, of wealth, of leisure, of privilege.¹⁵⁵ Only the richest people would eat at a restaurant. Only for special

¹⁵³ Aken and de la Croix, “De Indische Rijsttafel.”

¹⁵⁴ Otterloo, *Chinese and Indonesian Restaurants*, 158.

¹⁵⁵ Jobse-van Putten, *Eenvoudig Maar Voedzaam*, 22.

occasions would poor or middle class people celebrate by going out to eat.¹⁵⁶ However, around the end of the 1950s and into the dynamic social changes of the 1960s, two important things were occurring concurrently that changed that.

Firstly, as Chinese restaurants had been operating in the Netherlands for a couple of decades, they already knew that fact and so appealed to Dutch consumers and morals through not only their low prices, but also their large portion sizes. Characteristic of the Chinese restaurants was that the customer was served very large portions that remained cheap - “*veel voor weinig*” (a little for a lot).¹⁵⁷ That was an extremely attractive appeal for many, even if they had never had Indonesian food before. In fact, that was the second large factor: changes in social dynamics and economics.

With a slow rise in economic prosperity and a newfound, although slow building, multicultural worldgaze, eating-out had the financial and social backing to balloon and grow. So, and this cannot be overstated enough, but for the first time in Dutch history, middle class and even lower-class people could afford to eat out. Some Dutch-born folks were really open and excited to create and consume more than just *pap* (oatmeal), *stamppot*, and bread and cheese. For most people, their conservative tastes were unused to either spiced or full-flavored dishes.¹⁵⁸ For a country that prided itself on rustic, simple cuisine, much of this new, exotic food was seen as very cosmopolitan.¹⁵⁹ Spurred on by these social and economic shifts happening in the 1950s and 60s, eating out became *an event* in and of itself. While outings were not frequent for the average family, going out to restaurants became special occurrences that families took together. Families could go together to these places and bond over the foreign novelty of both eating out and at a

¹⁵⁶ Schaik, Personal Interview.

¹⁵⁷ Verriet, *Een Ongevaarlijk Avontuur*, 179.

¹⁵⁸ Jobse-van Putten, *Eenvoudig Maar Voedzaam*, 22.

¹⁵⁹ Ornelas, *Cambridge World History of Food*, 1216.

Chinese-Indonesian restaurant itself. So, much of the allure of the experience was the very *experience* itself.

Yet, these restaurants had to thread a difficult tightrope of the familiar and the exotic. On one hand, they had to provide their Dutch audience an exciting, novel, genuinely flavorful experience that justified the need to spend money on a restaurant. Be that as it may, they also needed to beguilingly familiar - “exotically recognizable.” The “*vreemd*” could only be *so* “*vreemd*”; the food still needed to have some trace elements, predominantly in the form of ingredients, that were recognizable to Dutch palates and minds.¹⁶⁰ At least in the cities where people already had a fair amount of exposure to Chinese and/or *Indisch* cuisine, Indonesian elements became very useful in the marketing. The average urban Dutch person could not name nor recognize any native Chinese dishes, but they certainly could, at least, recognize *nasi goreng* or *bami goreng*.¹⁶¹ So, they could still be in an other-worldly environment, but eat food that they at least semi-recognized.

However, a fascinating facet of this fusion was the subtle method by which Indonesian food was able to enter Dutch palates and stomachs, but not always Dutch consciousnesses. “The signboards outside these restaurants clearly identify them as ‘Chinese-Indonesian.’ Everyday speech, on the other hand, [was] not so precise. When people talk[ed] about a ‘Chinese restaurant’, they almost invariably mean[t] a Chinese-Indonesian one.”¹⁶² So, even though many native Dutch people, especially poor people, enjoyed the flavor and cheap price of the food that they were consuming, they did not always know the ethnic differences between the culinary offerings. For example, many Dutch people not only did not know that *nasi goreng* was not a native Chinese dish but an Indonesian one, they also would not have known that many of the

¹⁶⁰ Salzman, *Continuity and Change*, 10.

¹⁶¹ Verriet, *Ongevaarlijk Avontuur*, 187.

¹⁶² Salzman, *Continuity and Change*, 12.

techniques, ingredients and flavors were also not traditional to classic Indonesian dishes.¹⁶³ This ignorance was not purposeful, but rather due to the quick and seamless incorporation of Indonesian ingredients and dishes into many Chinese restaurants.

For most families in the 1950s and 1960s, especially for young children, the bright red, Asian designs on the walls of these Chinese-Indonesian restaurants were their first restaurant walls they had ever seen - their first ever culinary or multicultural escapade.¹⁶⁴ In manners that their parents never had the privilege of having, they were effectively the first multicultural generation in Dutch history; Chinese and Indonesian cultures and cuisine playing that crucial multicultural, ambassadorial role.

Moreover, as the social changes of the 1960s hit, a great wave of economic prosperity for the country meant that people were not only excited and interested in trying new cuisines, but more and more families could actually afford to do so. And so, with exuberant alacrity, the cuisine's urban popularity and appeal spread out across the country. From just around thirty in 1945, by 1960, the Netherlands already had 225 Chinese-Indonesian restaurants,¹⁶⁵ with forty-four of them just being in Amsterdam alone.¹⁶⁶ By the end of the decade, there were 393 Chinese, Chinese-Indo, and Indonesian restaurants.¹⁶⁷ Over the next twelve years, from 1970-1982, 1,298 restaurants were opened.¹⁶⁸ With so many new places opening, that finally meant that people in more rural areas could also engage in these novel, disparate modes and realms of consumption.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶³ Schaik, Personal Interview.

¹⁶⁴ Verriet, *Ongevaarlijk Avontuur*, 179.

¹⁶⁵ Rijkschroeff, *Etnisch Ondernemerschap*, 72.

¹⁶⁶ Verriet, *Culturele Mentaliteiten*, 25.

¹⁶⁷ Wilke, *Cultuurgeschiedenis*, 91-92.

¹⁶⁸ Nell and Rath. *Ethnic Amsterdam*, 49.

¹⁶⁹ Otterloo, *Chinese and Indonesian Restaurants*, 159.

Below, Figure 1.2 describes the number of households consuming Chinese-Indonesian cuisine in restaurants versus in restaurants of other foreign cuisines. The data from this survey was conducted in 1980 by NIAM (*Nederlands Instituut voor Agrarisch Marktonderzoek*)¹⁷⁰ for the purposes of gathering information about Dutch consumption patterns. These were the findings of their research:

TABLE 3
Households Eating in Chinese-Indonesian or other Foreign Restaurants,
by Region of Country, in per cent

	Total	3 Largest Cities and Their Suburbs	Rest of West	North	East	South
Chinese-Indonesian	55	60	56	49	57	53
Other Foreign	21	30	20	14	23	16

Figure 1.2: It represents the percentage of households that ate in either a Chinese-Indonesia or foreign restaurant in 1980.¹⁷¹

First and foremost, the most significant and striking point is just *how* popular and widely-consumed Chinese-Indonesian cuisine actually was. On average, 55% of respondents from across the country said that they consumed restaurant cuisine at least once a month. There are also a couple telling things about this table. Primarily, it is telling how the “3 Largest Cities and Their Suburbs” get their own section because of just how popular and common foreign restaurants were in those cities in relation to the rest of the country. More specifically, it is especially telling that despite all three cities¹⁷² being located in the Western part of the country,

¹⁷⁰ In English, that translates to the Dutch Institute for Agrarian Market Research.

¹⁷¹ Salzman, *Continuity and Change*, 12.

¹⁷² Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Den Haag.

the “Rest of West” was marked as its own section. Consumption of Chinese-Indonesian cuisine in the three cities, due to their more progressive, multicultural values (also largely due to their comparatively higher incomes), was, unsurprisingly, the highest with 60%. Moreover, consumption of “Other Foreign” cuisines was also the highest with 30%. The rate of Chinese-Indonesian consumption nationwide was another excitingly telling and societally informative point of fact.

Secondly, the table shows just how quickly and popular Chinese-Restaurants became throughout the country. First and foremost, it was already incredibly telling of the success and popularity of Chinese-Indonesian cuisine that *it was the subject and bedrock* by which all other foreign restaurant cuisines were compared. It also shows how wide-spread these gastronomic establishments were. Regions such as the East and the South (which are more agrarian, rural landscapes) posted rates of consumption that were almost as high as those in the big, urban cities with 57% and 53% respectively. Moreover, the rates of consumption for Chinese-Indonesian cuisine versus Other Foreign cuisine is representative of not only how singularly important and incredibly popular Chinese-Indonesian restaurants were, but also how much they facilitated the growth, acceptance, and development of other cuisines. Without the initial success of Chinese-Indonesian restaurants, other cuisines could have never reached the same stature that they did.

Moreover, another very important reason for the sudden increase in the popularity of all foreign restaurants, but especially Chinese-Indonesian, were the social connotations that still came with eating at a restaurant. According to Johnny van Schaik, it wasn't until the 1980s when restaurants lost their lustrous positions as status symbols.¹⁷³ Eating out, even if it was at a relatively ‘cheap’ Indo-Chinese eatery, was still a huge cultural flex. Not only could one brandish

¹⁷³ Schaik, Personal Interview.

their own familial socio-economic status but also have a veritable, personal experiences with the exotic. Starting in the 1960s and especially in the 1970s, engaging with other cultures was now seen as chic, exciting, different, cultured.¹⁷⁴ And so, one could now flex their impressive cosmopolitanism, and therefore accrue and accumulate social capital, through an expanded global gastronomic consumption. As philosopher Lisa Heldke framed this behavioral ideology, these people were “food adventurers...for whom eating is an expedition into the unknown, a pursuit of the strange.” According to her, they are, “motivated by a deep desire to have contact with, and to somehow own an experience of, an Exotic Other, as a way of making [themselves] more interesting.”¹⁷⁵

So, from 1960 to 1980 the percentage of Dutch who said that they rarely or never ate in a restaurant dropped from 84 to 26%.¹⁷⁶ Moreover, in 1960, while less than 16% of the Dutch population ate out, in 1978 it was around 56%. For a predominantly insular country at the beginning of the 1960s, that is no small feat. The popularity of Chinese-Indonesian consumption outlined by Figure 1.2 only continued to increase throughout the 1980s. While nation-wide Chinese-Indonesian consumption was 55%, throughout the 1980s, it climbed to 60% - 30% of whom doing so at least once a month.¹⁷⁷

This revolution was just as much about the novel consumption of the foreign food as it was about the changing social aspects of the meal. Before the proliferation of Chinese-Indonesian restaurants, conceptually, restaurants were thought to be expensive, out-of-reach status symbols with foreign, intimidating foodstuffs inside. However, for the first time in history, restaurants were now not only more economically attainable, but the times and

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Heldke, *Exotic Appetites*, 16.

¹⁷⁶ Nell and Rath. *Ethnic Amsterdam*, 47.

¹⁷⁷ Rijkschroeff, *Etnisch Ondernemerschap*, 65.

the act of eating, itself, was revolutionized. In a large part, due to both the industrial work day but also the proliferation of restaurants, the daily hot meal was pushed back from lunch to dinner. Moreover, the average monetary increase of most Dutch people transformed eating out into a realistic, viable option that people could routinely do. The proliferation of these restaurants was just one important example of varying consumer material choices and economic opportunity, especially in regards to foreign foods.

People could eat what they liked because they actually liked it, not just because it kept them alive and/or gave them enough calories for the day. They were not just eating because they *had to*, but because they *wanted to*; eaters became *consumers*. Eating became more of a genuine pleasure, a worthy treat to the hard working middle and lower classes. Increased financial means allowed varied consumer choices. People could finally decide what they wanted to eat instead of eating what was available out of necessity. So, people were finally able to appreciate food for more than just a source of nourishment, but as an invigorating, pleasurable, gustorial, inviting, personal expression of enjoyment. Indonesian-Chinese dishes blossomed Dutch modalities of consumption and were the beating “heart of this fundamental evolution of the taste of the Dutch.”¹⁷⁸

This change in the eating habits and patterns of Dutch people spread to outside of the house as well as inside the home. While much of the initial consumption of Indonesian food came in the form of Indonesian-Chinese restaurants, food preparations at home became just as essential methods and providers of consumption.

¹⁷⁸ Otterloo, *Chinese and Indonesian Restaurants*, 161.

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Easily, the most impactful and dominant change to Dutch consumption convention was in the change of the daily hot meal. For centuries, the hot meal was at the cornerstone of the Dutch kitchen. It was the anchor to the day and instituted a daily rhythm of consumption.¹⁷⁹ However, that cadence was built around a largely agrarian mode of living that would get disrupted after World War II when the Netherlands began a new move to modernize and industrialize. At the same time that restaurants began to spring up and spread all across the country, Indonesian cuisine began making increased media appearances, especially within magazines targeting wives and homemakers. Two critically influential and wide-circulated *damesbladen* (women's magazines) were *Margriet* and *Libelle*. While both were extremely popular and influential, of the two, *Margriet* definitely reached higher circulation and possessed more cultural force.

Founded in 1938 as a magazine for housewives, *Margriet* quickly became a formidable and catalyzing cultural cornerstone in not only the lives, patterns, and expectations of housewives as well as all Dutch women but also as a mediator for social consciousness and attitude shifts. Until the 1980s, Dutch women were almost entirely responsible for all domestic matters, cooking chief amongst them.¹⁸⁰ Its mission was to impart and guide social expectations for housewives. These 'narratives of normality'¹⁸¹ were both the largest incitements and inadvertent documentarians of social changes taking place within homes all over the country.¹⁸² In addition to being a highly effective and routine method of cultural matters and attitudes, it also

¹⁷⁹ Jobse-van Putten, *Eenvoudig Maar Voedzaam*, 22.

¹⁸⁰ Etossi, *Eating Cultures*, 63.

¹⁸¹ Schirato and Yell, *Communication & Culture*, 96.

¹⁸² Verriet, *Een Ongevaarlijk Avontuur*, 184.

helped many Dutch women to learn about the rest of the world for the first time (although through a very Dutch lens and so not very accurately nor - quickly ascending to an incredibly important and highly essential aspect of Dutch female culture. With adroit alacrity they became “the vanguard of social change, encouraging their readers to discard traditional taboos while at the same time making their ideas acceptable to as large a proportion of the population as possible ... The same can be said of *Margriet*’s culinary advice.”¹⁸³ After World War II, *Margriet* and *Libelle* co-adopted the crucial role as both beacons and instigators of social trends, chief amongst which was to grow and modernize Dutch homelife through domestic advice. The magazines would concentrate on various topics ranging from what clothing was in mode; marital and friendship advice; new, exciting domestic implements; etc.¹⁸⁴ Soon after the war, both magazines increasingly brought nonnative cultures into various aspects of their content - primary of which being a culinary objective.

Soon after its founding in 1938, *Margriet* launched the ‘*Culinairrubriek*’ (culinary column), which mainly focused on recipes, culinary advice, and food-related *verhaaltjes* (little stories).¹⁸⁵ At first, the recipes were basic and required minimal effort and creativity. They were entirely rooted in Dutch flavors, culinary traditions, and techniques. But, after the Second World War, they gradually became more elaborate, diverse, and nonnative. Continuing the slow opening of the reserved Dutch culture, beginning at its founding with a rare smattering of ethnic or outside recipes, in the late 1940s, and properly beginning in the 1950s, *Margriet* began to publish more than just Dutch recipes.¹⁸⁶ It endeavored to incorporate a large quantity of new dishes from cuisines considered, at that time, ‘just exotic enough.’ That being said, the dishes and recipes

¹⁸³ Salzman, *Continuity and Change*, 2.

¹⁸⁴ Otterloo, *Changing Position*, 178.

¹⁸⁵ Salzman, *Continuity and Change*, 3.

¹⁸⁶ Verriet, *Een Ongevaarlijk Avontuur*, 185.

printed rarely authentically represented what the actual food of any country actually tasted like for a couple of different reasons.

The large reason was that ingredient substitutions were rampant across many dishes and recipes and were incredibly common. There were two major reasons why that was done. The first one was that Dutch palates were not accustomed to the new flavors, textures, and techniques used in other cuisines. They wanted to market these items to Dutch audiences (specifically housewives) who might be either scared to cook new dishes from a different culture for the time in their life or just wanted to take baby steps into new culinary worlds and realms. So, not wanting to overwhelm or push Dutch tastes too far, they substituted “scarier” or “strange”¹⁸⁷ ingredients for ones that were more comforting and recognizable.

Moreover, for many Dutch housewives making these dishes was difficult and time-consuming. For women who had been eating and making the same victuals all their lives, making something new was an extremely daunting task. As previously said, while some Dutch families knew some basic facts about Indonesian cuisine, almost no one knew how to make them. Historically, that meant that lower class folks tended to only cook Dutch staples. So, when foreign recipes, including Indisch ones, were initially getting introduced, Indonesian dishes were not often made by middle and lower class families due to the amount of time preparation they took and also the daunting naivety about the final taste and appearances.¹⁸⁸ In accordance with that bias, many non-native recipes were presented as opportunities to serve festive meals for

¹⁸⁷ It is also important to note that many of the substituted-for ingredients, especially in the 1950s, were hard to find and, if found, expensive. For example, Dutch groceries did not just casually carry bamboo shoots or coconut milk in the 1950s and so many of these substitutions were also out of necessity.

¹⁸⁸ Aken and de la Croix, “Eetcultuur: De Indische Rijsttafel”.

special occasions.¹⁸⁹ In that way, these meals became not only more unassuming, but also more of an exciting, flamboyance

In addition, Dutch grocery stores were still quite austere and did not have a lot of options, especially for specialty items from Asiatic, Middle Eastern, and/or Mediterranean cuisines. So, even if Dutch audiences wanted to authentically make these dishes, chances were that they would not have even been able to locate the ingredients.¹⁹⁰ Culinary editors at these publications morphed foreign recipes into “Dutch-ified” versions of what they traditionally were - meaning they were gustatorily diluted, technically simplified, and often gastronomically barely recognizable to their more complicated and often tastier original.

For example, in 1950, *Margriet* published their first set of Chinese-Indonesian recipes: *bami* and *loempia*. The recipe that *Margriet* published in 1950 is a perfect representation of a Dutch-onesian recipe:

The loempia also illustrates the combination of Chinese, Indonesian and Dutch elements in Chinese-Indonesian food. The loempia was a Chinese import to Indonesia. When it was brought from Indonesia to the Netherlands, it grew to somewhat enormous dimensions, usually about 20 centimeters by 8 centimeters. The recipe in *Margriet* called for sautéed cabbage, leeks, celery, pork and shrimps (no bean sprouts or other eastern vegetables, or bean curd), wrapped in a crêpe and then deep-fried. The result is a rather heavy concoction, bearing only a passing resemblance to anything Chinese, or to anything Indonesian for that matter.¹⁹¹

This recipe is extraordinarily striking for various reasons and breaking it down into its minutiae can allow one to see just how fundamentally different both the Indonesian and Dutch-onesian version *truly* is. First and foremost is the striking difference between a traditional

¹⁸⁹ Etossi, *Eating Cultures*, 12.

¹⁹⁰ Otterloo, *Changing Position*, 179.

¹⁹¹ Salzman, *Continuity and Change*, 7.

Indonesian *loempia* and its heinous Dutch-onesian substitute. For one, almost all of the ingredients included are a viciously salient example of early substitution of familiar, comforting Dutch ingredients for more traditional Indonesian ones. A traditional *loempia*, more commonly referred to as *loempia semarang* in Indonesia, is a combination of a primarily bamboo shoots and shrimp filling, with a smattering of other add-ins, wrapped in rice paper and then almost always deep fried.¹⁹² The Dutch version fundamentally altered the core ingredients of the original Indonesian one. While versions of cabbages are certainly used in Indonesian cuisine, it is not placed inside a *loempia semarang*. Moreover, leeks and celery, both native to the Mediterranean and the Middle East, were not used as well because they were non-native to Indonesia. In fact, as highlighted by the passage, virtually no traditional Indonesian ingredients or flavorings (either spices or liquid forms) were used in the filling. In addition, possibly the most egregious addition was that of pork.

Pigs have been raised and consumed within the Netherlands for centuries. They are one of the most popularly and importantly consumed proteins. Pork lends itself quite favorably to Dutch cuisine as it perfectly fits into their economical and practical outlook on life. Not only is it super delicious¹⁹³ and high on calories, but it is also a great two for one: meat and oil. So, it makes a great deal of sense why pork was added. That being said, pork is *rarely* cooked in Indonesia as it was a Muslim majority country¹⁹⁴ and pork is not halal. The inclusion of pork within any traditional Indonesian dish would be completely blasphemous and unthinkable to

¹⁹² Luthfiyyah, “Resep Lumpia Semarang.”

¹⁹³ That being said, taste is, of course, highly subjective - it is meant in this context for Dutch palates

¹⁹⁴ Interestingly, according to the Pew Research Center, Indonesia is currently the highest-Muslim majority country in the whole world with over 88% of the population being Muslim, accounting for nearly 13% of all practicing Muslims worldwide.

most Indonesians.¹⁹⁵ So, it is clear that pork was added in order to appeal to pre-existing Dutch flavors and palates.

Finally, the wrapping proposed by *Margriet* is so completely different from anything that resembles conventionally Indonesian culinary techniques. Traditionally, rice paper is used as it is not only extremely light and durable for wrapping, holding the filling, and stays together magnificently under frying, but also beautifully maintains its shape quite nicely once it is fried as well as crisps to an impossibly crunchy, yet airy texture. The traditional final form of the dish is meant to possess a crunchy exterior encasing a luxurious, tender marriage of meat and vegetable inside. This delicate, dichotomous marriage derives its character off of an unexpected, delightful contrast and separation of textures and flavors. So, to cover a *loempia* in wheat-based, crêpe dough is completely antithetical to the core of the dish. When fried in the manner described by the recipe, the crêpe inevitably becomes extremely oil-logged as it absorbs the oil of the fryer, instead of becoming crispy. So, not only does the final product run contrary to the essence of the original, but also just create quite a greasy, unappetizing, frankly inaccurate representation of traditional Indonesian cuisine.

Finally, the compliment to any good *loempia* is a sauce that not only does not overwhelm the flavors of the filling, but perfectly complements them. Traditionally, one serves *loempia semarangs* alongside either sweet and sour sauce or peanut sauce. However, *Margriet's* recipe offered not one dipping sauce for their *loempias*, therefore implying that traditional *loempia* do not require the accompaniment of at least some sort of dipping accoutrement. It cannot be understated how utterly and completely different almost every aspect of *Margriet's* recipe ended up being. However, that extreme difference was quite common in a multitude of Dutch-onesian recipes.

¹⁹⁵ Vuyk, *Groot Indonesisch Kookboek*, Preface.

In the Netherlands, while the altering of traditional dishes of various ethnicities (especially French, Italian, and American (although it's arguably debatable whether American food can be classified as its *own* ethnic cuisine)) was ubiquitously rampant throughout the 1950s through to the 1980s across various written medias, it was especially so in magazines. So, while magazines, especially *damesbladen*, began publishing foreign recipes, many only had a vague resemblance to the original list of ingredients and way of preparation. It was not totally the result of the inexperienced Dutch palate. The reality was, at times, simple: the ingredients called for in those original, Indonesian recipes were not available in the Netherlands.¹⁹⁶ Thus, despite the inaccuracy and exploitative nature of Dutch-onesian cuisine, there was some benefit from its creation. These dishes allowed Dutch women and their families to actually engage with other cultures. Central to this broader foreign introduction was Indonesian cuisine.

Below in Figure 1.3, are the portion of the foreign recipes that appeared within both *Margriet* and *Libelle* in 1950, 1960, and 1970. On the y-axis is the percentage of the foreign recipes for the entire year and on the x-axis are the various countries split up by region. As seen, the vague category of *Oost-Azië* (East Asia) (Chinese, Indonesian, Filipino, Thai) is, overall, the third most popular following only *Frankrijk* (France) and *Zuid-Europa* (Southern Europe) (Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain). In 1950, the two most popular and published categories of recipes came from *Frankrijk* and *Oost-Azië*. In 1950, especially, most of the *Oost-Azië* recipes were Indo-Chinese. Moreover, in 1970, again the two most popular regions were *Frankrijk* and *Oost-Azië*. The graph highlights that while *Oost-Azië* was not always the most popular, it certainly had a great amount of initial media representation and was instrumental in introducing Dutch audiences to foreign foods through a slightly recognizable manner.

¹⁹⁶ Verriet, *Ongevaarlijk Avontuur*, 189.

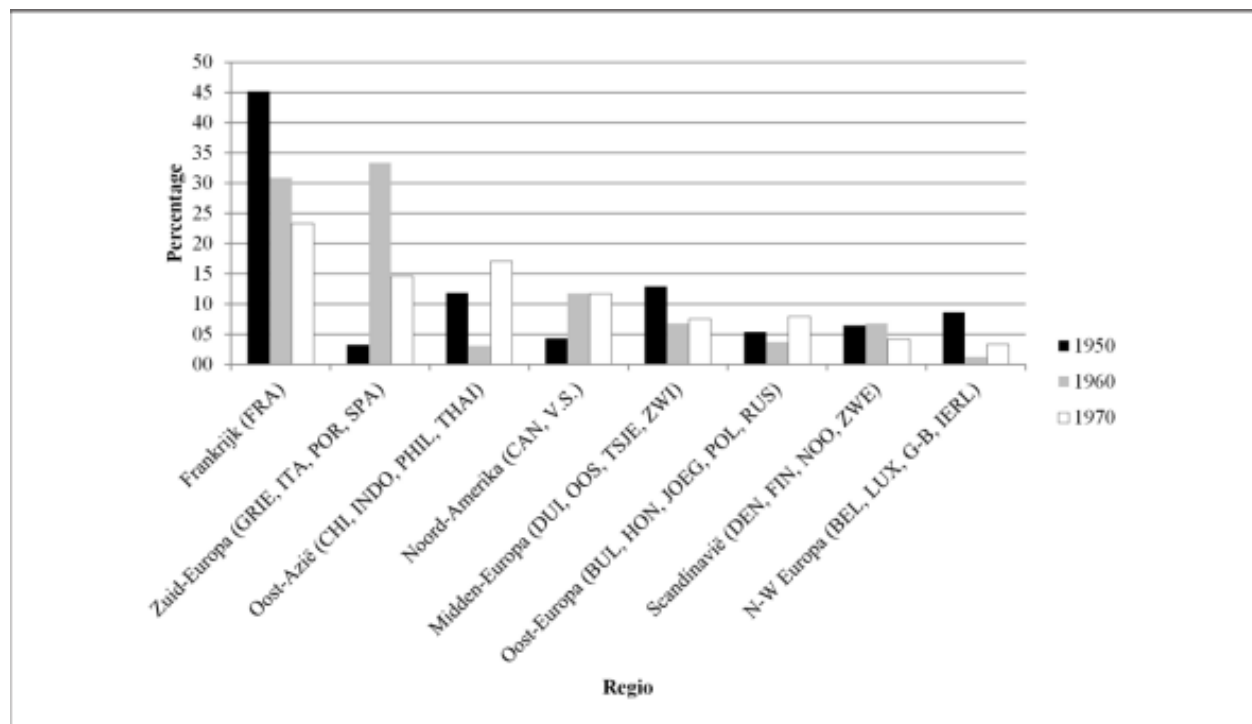


Figure 1.3: Total number of foreign recipes in the culinary columns of both *Margriet* and *Libelle*, divided by region and decade (1950, 1960, 1970)

However, this graph does not represent the quality of the published recipes. The media representation of Dutch-onesian cuisine was grossly inconsistent with original Indonesian dishes. The adapted recipes substituted so many ingredients and cooking techniques that the presented recipe was often a meager, bland mimicry of its begator. In crafting these recipes, an all-white, all-Dutch staff creatively re-invented dishes that barely represented the actual food back at the former colony. They presented it how they wanted it to be presented; they falsely sold these Dutch-onesian recipes as authentically Indonesian. They marketed almost all of their foreign dishes as if the recipes were complete, whole hearted representations of their original when in fact it was a fictitious, poor, less tasty substitute that did nothing to honor the ingeniousness, subtlety and craft of the original dish. They published the inauthentic as authentic for the profit

of none of the groups whose culture they rearranged and misrepresented. Moreover, to add insult to injury, they presented almost no history or cultural information about the dish.¹⁹⁷

That attitude encapsulated the few times that Indonesian cuisine was brought into the media and kitchen of Dutch audiences. In almost every single instance in the 1950s through to the 1970s, *Indische* recipes were misrepresented and traditional techniques and flavors were lost. And so, for a publication with the reach and popularity of *Margriet* to not only distort and belie it so fundamentally, but not even provide actual representations of the dishes, represents a large push by Dutch media to both co-opt and profit off an image of Indonesian cuisine, and therefore culture, for their own benefit. They created a new pseudo-cuisine: ‘Dutch-onesian’ where models of Indonesian dishes were taken and substituted with flavors, ingredients, cooking techniques, and culinary tools that were designed to not only attract Dutch audiences enough so that they would want to try them, but not be too exotic or strange so as to scare them away from trying this new food altogether. The end result is a rather fascinating, yet apocryphal compilation of dishes scattered throughout various media outlets and cookbooks. So, a great irony of these Dutch-onesian recipes was that while they certainly brought a lot of great attention to Indonesian food and helped Dutch audiences get acquainted with and acclimated to Indonesian cuisine, and so foreign cultures and cuisines as a whole, they did so at the expense of the gastronomic authenticity of their mother cultures. Because these magazine editors were profiting by appropriating Indonesian cuisine through the dissemination of Dutch-onesian recipes, they were engaging in a form of gastronomic colonialism and exploitation. Monetary gains almost exclusively went into white pockets at the expense of “brown” recipes.

That being said, it is hard to fully critique Dutch-onesian cuisine. The intention was to widen and broaden the scope of the Dutch kitchen, and *Margriet* and *Libelle* succeeded

¹⁹⁷ Salzman, *Continuity and Change*, 14

immensely. Had these magazines presented accurate recipes, then audiences would have either entirely dismissed them as too foreign, or, in case they actually did embrace them, not have been able to even find all the authentic ingredients at their grocery stores. The magazines were between a rock and a hard place. They truly wanted consumers to try foreign recipes, especially in the rural areas that had almost no access to the different cultures. Unfortunately, the largest cost of Dutch-onesian cuisine was authenticity. With the wider spread of ingredients in later years, however, recipes could be presented more truthfully -- and by then many people had already been converted to embrace foreign cultures and kitchens.

Margriet had a massive and unprecedented reach into the homes of Dutch people. In 1962, it was the most widely read *dameblad* in the country,¹⁹⁸ with 53% of all Dutch women over the age of fifteen (or an estimated total of around 2,182,000 out of 4,149,000 women) - and an impressive 35% of all men as well as - read *Margriet* weekly.¹⁹⁹ The influence, popularity, and consumption of *Margriet* was impressively almost equivalent across all income levels, age, and/or religion.²⁰⁰ At the end of the 1960s, there was a circulation of around 800,000 copies - with a larger concentration in larger, more urban environments.²⁰¹ For *Libelle*, another popular magazine, they cited an impressive 500,000 copies in circulation at the beginning of 1950 and, in 1967, they had a marginal increase of 532,283 copies.²⁰² In total, that meant that by 1966, no less than 85% of all women aged 16-60 within the Netherlands read a *damesblad* and, in their own approximations, more than an hour or so a week.²⁰³

¹⁹⁸ Zeep, Continuïteit en Verandering, 45.

¹⁹⁹ Verriet, Ongevaarlijk Avontuur, 179.

²⁰⁰ Atwood Statistics, Margriet Lezerskringonderzoek, 6.

²⁰¹ Verriet, Ongevaarlijk Avontuur, 186.

²⁰² Ibid, 186.

²⁰³ Nederlandse Stichting voor Statistiek, De Onbekende Lezeres, 16.

In addition, despite the predominantly urban readership, due to the sheer scope of its readership, both magazines were able to reach an unprecedented amount of people. And so, with such a wide audience, advertisers began to take notice of their selling potential and impressive reach. Many famous Dutch companies, particularly food manufacturers, began to advertise their products in both *Margriet* and *Libelle*. That exacerbated the increase of media attention for foreign culinary products, especially Indonesian ones.

Below, in Figure 1.4, is a graph representing the percentage of total foreign advertisements in both *Libelle* and *Margriet* in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. As observable, on the y-axis is the percentage of the foreign advertisements for the entire year and on the x-axis are the various countries split up by region. As seen, the category of *Oost-Azië* (East Asia) (Chinese, Indonesian, Filipino, Thai) is the highest all of the groups in the 1950s, and, while it certainly drops in the 1960s, it picks up again in 1970, trailing only *Noord-Amerika* (*CAN, VS*²⁰⁴) (North America (Canada, United States)).

²⁰⁴ VS stands for *Verenigde Staten* (or United States).

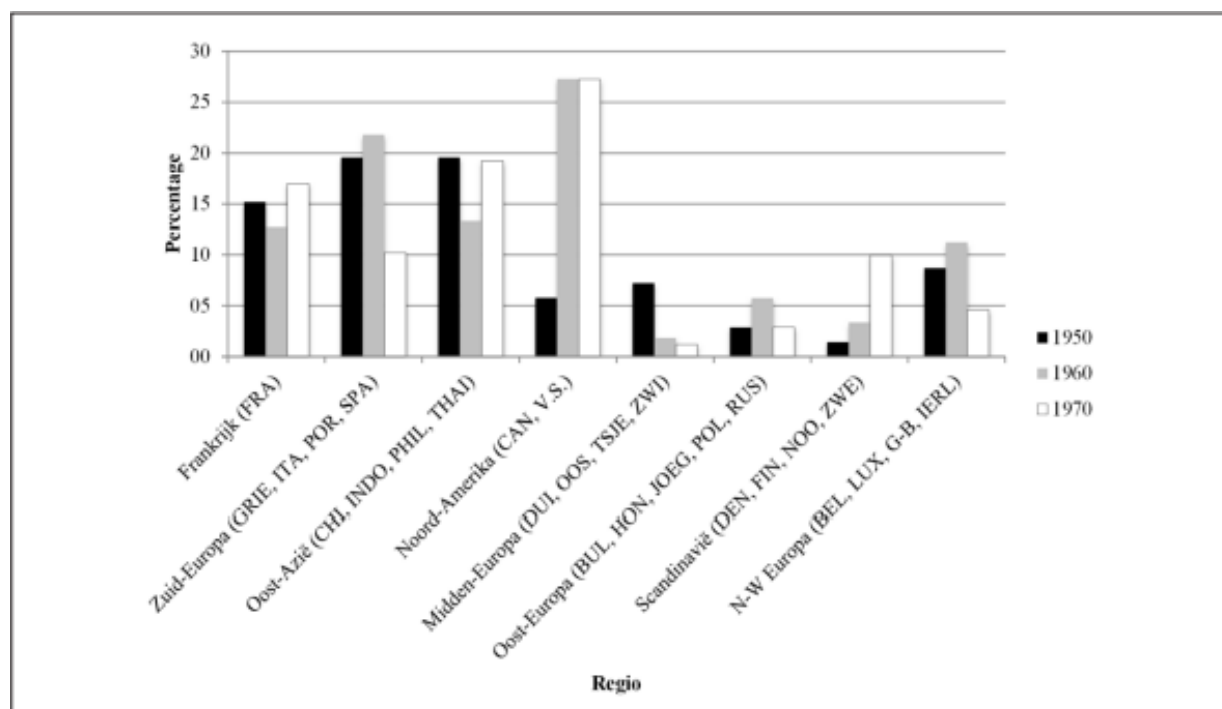


Figure 1.4: Total number of foreign advertisements in both *Margriet* and *Libelle*, split into various regions and decades (1950, 1960, 1970)²⁰⁵

The domestic consumption of not just Indonesian food, but all foreign and domestic foodstuffs was forever changed with the introduction of food distributors Conimex and Koen Visser. Of the two, Conimex was the most impactful, widely consumed, and long-lasting; its change in marketing in addition to the types of products offered illuminated social consumption trends and changes.

Conimex (which stands for Canned Import Export) was founded in 1932 by Tonnie Schouten and Fons Sterneberg. The definition of a true power couple, they originally set out to assemble and distribute Mediterranean products such as anchovies and olive oil back to the Netherlands. However, later that same year, a different couple, the Millenaars, emigrated from Dutch East Indies and, together, all four set up a trade in all aspects of Indonesian repast preparations. While they started small from their backyards, the company later ballooned to

²⁰⁵ Verriet, *Een Ongevaarlijk Avontuur*, 183.

make everything from sauces and spices to snacks and treats to prepackaged meals.²⁰⁶ Some of their products included pre-made *nasi goreng* and bami goreng to various flavorings such as sambal oelek,²⁰⁷ kecap manis,²⁰⁸ and other Indonesian-style ingredients and sauces. Together, the Sterneberg/Schoutens and the Millenaars manifested a company devoted solely to the manufacture and propagation of Indonesians comestibles.²⁰⁹ Pretty soon, Conimex was the most successful company completely devoted to and specializing in the manufacturing of Indonesian culinary products.²¹⁰ They were pioneers in the industry - for example, they had pre-made tinned cans of *nasi goreng* on grocery shelves before the post-World War II boom in the popularity of Indonesian cuisine as well as before any of their competitors.²¹¹ Much of their, and Koen Visser's popularities, were driven by two things: their effective uses of new food production technologies and their creative, convincing, and effective advertisements.

Post-World War II, Conimex and Koen Visser began to take greater advantage of incredible industrial and technological innovations and effectively apply them to their products. For example, technological innovations and advancements made physical transportation and transportation times quicker and easier. In addition, in a large part because of the great need for food to remain fresh for long durations during World War II, technologies such as freeze-drying and freezing became applied to the food industry in a much greater and important manner in the 1950s and 1960s.²¹² During that period, the food industry also made beneficial improvements in

²⁰⁶ Jhagroe-Ruissen and de Bakker, "Docentenhandleiding."

²⁰⁷ An Indonesian sauce and flavoring component made from red chiles, salt, vinegar, and other spices and vegetation.

²⁰⁸ Indonesian sweet soy sauce, also spelled ketjap manis.

²⁰⁹ Verriet, *Oprichting van Conimex*, 524.

²¹⁰ *Ibid*, 522.

²¹¹ Verriet, *Culturele Mentaliteiten*, 16.

²¹² Corver, *The Evolution of Freeze-Drying*, 67.

the use and affordability of canning. These developments in turn made the international range of all sorts of products more accessible and efficient.²¹³

When East-Asian products started getting produced and marketed on a greater scale in the 1950s, various food production and preparation companies solely advertised East-Asian inspired products as just “vaguely Asiatic” products. For example, in advertisements that ran in both *Margriet* and *Libelle* in 1950, 24 out of 27 Asian products promulgated had no country of origin; instead most opted for vague phrases such as “the East” or “the Orient.”²¹⁴ Such unspecificity reflected both a disinterest from both companies to bother correctly originating the ethnic sources of their products as well as interest from consumers. Many consumers neither minded nor wanted specific labeling stemming partly from consumer ignorance together with pure indifference.²¹⁵ However, the strategies of both Koen Visser and Conimex strove to promote veritable yet palatable and easy-to-cook Indonesian cuisine.

From the 1950s through to the 1980s, both Conimex and Koen Visser followed a heavy stream of ads specifically targeting housewives to make Indonesian products at home. Conimex published their first ad in *Margriet* in 1954 in which they advertised products that allowed consumers to make nasi and bami goreng at home.²¹⁶ In 1955, in both *Margriet* and *Libelle*, Koen Visser had advertisements for *nasi goreng* and bami.²¹⁷ Conimex also began running more advertisements in 1955. One in *Margriet* from that year, read:

Mmm, that smells delicious. Nasi Goreng? Nope... a stampot
prepared with scrumptious spices from Nasi Goreng from

²¹³ Verriet, Oprichting van Conimex, 524.

²¹⁴ Verriet, Ongevaarlijk Avontuur, 190.

²¹⁵ Jobse-van Putten, Onderscheid moet er Zijn. Culturele Heterogeniteit in de Nederlandse Voeding, 68.

²¹⁶ Salzman, Continuity and Change, 15.

²¹⁷ Verriet, Oprichting van Conimex, 523.

CONIMEX! You should not just use Bamboe Nasi Goreng in your Nasi Gorengs, but also in your Dutch dishes, such as stampot, baked potatoes, gravies, etc.²¹⁸

During the 1950s and 1960s, similar to the meals served at restaurants as well as the dishes prepared and included in some cookbooks, Dutch-onesian culinary presentations were the foremost ways in which Dutch cuisine was being presented and advertised. Even Chinese noodle dishes would be altered with an Indonesian style and presented as Indonesian cuisine.²¹⁹ Dutch-onesian recipes strived to market a new fusion cuisine - one that blurred the boundaries between the domestic and the foreign, Dutch and Indonesian - to Dutch audiences who were intrigued, yet nervous about foreign foods. In each ad, there was always a strong emphasis on the thrilling culinary adventure into new culinary territory that each housewife and her family could and would embark on.²²⁰ Advertisements stressed the novelty of the experience, while stressing both the easy preparation time and the scrumptious frugality.

Initially, the advertising strategy of both Conimex and Koen Visser sought to balance both the exoticism of the product with the manufactured fantasization and aestheticism of domestic life in mode in the 1950s. Published in *Margriet* in 1955, Figure 1.5 is a perfect example of not only the expectations for women and homemakers, but also the packaging and imagery of Indonesian cuisine and foodstuffs:

²¹⁸ Verriet, *Culturele Mentaliteiten*, 47.

²¹⁹ Van den Berg, 'Aloh Dan, Neem... Néém. 108.

²²⁰ Verriet, *Ongevaarlijk Avontuur*, 177.

Mams, eten we vanavond Bahmi in de stad?

Neen kind, want ik heb ontdekt, dat het thuis lekkerder en veel goedkoper is. Met 2 hele blikken **Conimex Bahmi**, een pak **Conimex Kroepoek Oedang Baroe** en een flesje **Conimex Ketjap Benteng** maak ik voor ons vieren de lekkerste Bahmi-Speciaal voor anderhalve gulden per persoon! En dat alles nog binnen een kwartier!

90 ct 2.10 1.-

Let vooral op dit merk!

CONIMEX
BAARN
Alles voor de rijkstafel
Vraagt steeds CONIMEX producten

FIGURE 1.5: A Conimex ad from *Margriet* in 1955 making Dutch audiences aware of the Eastern kitchen and the recipes that Conimex was carrying.²²¹ [The translation is in footnote 220]²²²

²²¹ Verriet, Oprichting van Conimex, 521.

²²² The translation:

Starting with the tagline: Momma, are we going to have Bahmi in the city tonight?

Main text: No sweetheart, because I have discovered that making it at home is more delicious and greatly less expensive. With just two whole cans of Conimex Bahmi, a pack of Conimex Kroepoek Oedang Baroe and a small bottle of Conimex Ketjap Benteng I will prepare the most delicious Bahmi-Special for us for just one and half guilders [the Dutch currency before the the

First and foremost, the advertisement makes reference to eating out at an Indonesian restaurant signifying that even in 1955, the option was starting to gain significant traction and place in the gastronomic Dutch consciousness. However, they quickly stress why making the food at home was not just a smarter, but easier option. In congruence with the appeal of Indo-Chinese restaurants at that time, the product adroitly markets itself as a wonderful complement to Dutch values through their prioritization on the low cost and production time. By emphasizing and positioning the meal as a tasty, fast, and inexpensive choice for dinner, they are cleverly appealing to the gastronomical values and desires of Dutch consumers: quick, big, inexpensive meals. While the budget and quick timing are both equally stressed, the novelty and excitement for ‘new’ and ‘exotic’ foods is also heavily played up.

In addition, the Indonesian comestibles themselves are highlighted and are given great prominence. For example, the ad excitedly highlights “Conimex Bahmi” (which just translates to “Conimex Noodles”)²²³, “Kroepoek Oedang Baroe” (new shrimp crackers), and “Conimex Ketjap Benteng.”²²⁴ The artistic and aesthetic designs on the BAHMI container are significant for a couple of reasons. For one, they draw heavily on Chinese influences despite the fact that the dish they are selling is native to Indonesia and not China. For example, they use Chinese characters, Chinese-inspired lettering for the “BAHMI”, and two traditional Chinese arches²²⁵ as

Netherlands joined the European Union in 1988 and adopted the Euro] per person. And all of that in just fifteen minutes!

Italicized line: Pay particular attention to this brand!

²²³ The dish that they are referencing is *bami goreng*. It is rarely just called ‘bami’ as that just means “noodle.” That being said, from context it can be gathered that Conimex is selling a noodle dish as the container on the ad has noodles on it.

²²⁴ Ketjap Benteng just means “fortified manis.”

²²⁵ Known as “pailou” - traditional Chinese architectural entrance structure. It is non-native to Indonesia and is not found on anything in Indonesia except for Chinese structures.

extra, ornamental decoration. In blurring the boundaries and ethnic specifics of both the dish as well as the indescriptive, Asian iconography, the goal was to exotify and emphasize the novel, Eastern aspects of the meal. That exotification and appropriative iconography continues with the depiction of the native women on the Conimex bottle.²²⁶ Near the bottom right-hand section of the advertisement is a dark-skinned woman in a native-print dress pounding something in a mortar-and-pestle. Her inclusion serves to not only provide an ethnic ‘face’ to the meal, but also contrast the white, Dutch women above her.

Furthermore, the aesthetic stylings of the Dutch women are symbolic of the intense social expectations for women of that era. Many advertisements and articles, such as this one, portrayed a completely idealized conception of a housewife with a perfectly starched dress, immaculately set and done hair, a glimmeringly white smile, and, most importantly, an overwhelming excitement for the never-ending grind of domestic life. The women in these ads were excited to not only prepare dinner, but to, importantly, do so quickly and on a tight budget. This emphasis on both the traditional role for women as well as the nondescript, Asiatic aesthetics continued into the 1960s as well. By the end of the decade, the purported origin of the products was not given nor was there a strong push from consumers to figure out.²²⁷ Advertisers marketed their products with a very “laissez-faire” attitude, applying the principle of ‘whatever works.’²²⁸

That being said, in the 1960s, driven by a new interest by consumers for more specifics on the origin of food products, advertisements by both Koen Visser and Conimex began to personalize the ethnic roots of their food products. So, in contrast to the previous “de-ethnicization”²²⁹ attempts made by previous advertisements, companies printed

²²⁶ A variation of the logo that has unfortunately remained as Conimex’s logo even today. I could not find many calls or movements to have the company change it.

²²⁷ Bos, Flach, Solingen, & den Hartog, *Voedingsmiddelenadvertenties*, 147.

²²⁸ Verriet, *Ongevaarlijk Avontuur*, 189.

²²⁹ Schrover, Mestdag, Van Otterloo & Zeegers, ‘Lekker’, 78.

advertisements with the ‘chefs’ of their meals on them. For example, one Koen Visser advertisement from *Margriet* in 1960 said this about their *nasi goreng*:

Prepared by a real ‘koki’²³⁰...That is why Koen Visser’s nasi goreng is even more tasty than the nasi goreng from even the best Indonesian restaurant...[also] Because real Indonesian chefs made it themselves! You notice that straight away: the flavor and...because Koen Visser’s nasi goreng deliciously comes ‘rul’²³¹ op on the table. A whole meal: exclusive...mouthwatering.²³²

Another advertisement from Koen Visser, this time for bami goreng, appeared in both *Margriet* and *Libelle* in 1960. It said something to the similar effect to the advertisement above:

The ‘tai chu’ finishes it himself...Only a Chinese chef can make a *real* bami goreng! And that is why KOENVISSER’s bami goreng is real bami goreng...Because in the kitchens of Koen Visser a Chinese chef waves the scepter for the preparation of this speciality.²³³

Interestingly, this advertisement chooses to make an incorrect claim about the preparation and origination of *bami goreng* in order to sell it. While *bami goreng* does traditionally use Chinese-style pulled noodles, bami goreng is native to Indonesia. And, while variations of

²³⁰ The advertisement is playing on the Indische term *kokkie*. The word for chef in Dutch is *kok* and so to call the chef *koki* is a play on the term *kokkie*. It was used for the purposes of adding a playful sense of ‘authenticity’ to the product by localizing it to Indonesia through the phonetic similarities between *koki* and *kokkie*.

²³¹ The term ‘rul op’ translates roughly as ‘loosely’ or ‘non-sticky’ and so the term ‘rul op tafel’ roughly translates to ‘loosely on the table.’ It has no direct translation into English in this context as the term implies a certain manner that the Dutch wanted their rice to be. They wanted the rice to be non-sticky and so that all of the add-ins (such as pork, vegetables, etc) were evenly spread throughout the rice. The Dutch did not want to eat congealed, sticky rice and so marketing the rice as ‘loose’ was to great advertising potential for the product and greatly appealed to Dutch tastes. For the purposes of fried rice, that rings especially true as consumers would want to fry the non-clumpy rice over rice with clumps.

²³² Verriet, *Culturele Mentaliteiten*, 47-48.

²³³ *Ibid*, 48.

wok-fried noodles certainly exist within China, advertising *bami goreng* specifically through the use of a Chinese chef is another example of the exotification and blurring of ethnic boundaries for the purposes of Dutch consumption.

On the whole, these ads were incredibly successful at not only promoting Indonesian products, but also empowering their female readers to express creativity and individual choice within their kitchens. In *huishoudscholen*, women were taught to follow recipes exactly and never stray from the recipes in the book. Domestic science taught women not how to experiment with different ingredients or meals, but instead copy pre-existing, decades-old recipes.²³⁴ Personal taste could of course be exercised, but only in moderation and never at the expense of the budget nor nutrition of the food. That being said, in a survey conducted in 1968, most women said that they liked to experiment in the kitchen.²³⁵ Moreover, emblematic of just how much Dutch cuisine had quickly changed in a couple of decades, in a different survey, 68% of women said that they sometimes use sambal in their cooking and would definitely be open to trying new ingredients in the future.²³⁶

Advertisements of the 1960s and 1970s began to reflect that cultural, feminine expectation as well as the increased culinary expectations and purchasing realities of consumers in regards to Indonesian recipes and foodstuffs. According to An 't Hoen, a writer for the magazine *Libelle*, these strange, exotic items became not only more accessible, but also more accepted and common in everyday settings, such as the grocery store. In 1970, they reported on the new array of gastronomic possibilities in the grocery store:

²³⁴ Otterloo, *Nieuwe Producten*, 258.

²³⁵ Verriet, *Culturele Mentaliteiten*, 49.

²³⁶ Verriet, *Oprichting van Conimex*, 524.

Different things, like, for example, loempia, sates, babis, and pangsit, can be bought totally ready or half-prepared in the form of snackbars, at a Chinese restaurant or sometimes from the freezer of a self-service store.²³⁷

By the 1970s, the Conimex advertisements were proof that much had changed since their first advertisement in the 1940s and 1950s. In their new advertisements, they were not only poking fun at the tired humdrum of the Dutch cuisine, but also harping on the excitement, especially from young people, for something new and exciting. In an advertisement that was published in both *Margriet* and *Libelle* in 1970, the tagline read:

If you experience exuberant defiance in this time of old,
overcooked potatoes and scarce, expensive vegetables and you
face the daunting task of having to serve a decent meal...then you
can only be saved by calmness and Conimex.²³⁸

Echoing that cultural sentiment, Figure 1.6 is a section of a famous Conimex advertisement published in *Margriet* in 1970:

²³⁷ Verriet, *Ongevaarlijk Avontuur*, 186.

²³⁸ Verriet, *Culturele Mentaliteiten*, 45.



Figure 1.6: A Conimex advertisement published in 1970 in *Margriet*.²³⁹ [The translation is below in footnote 238]²⁴⁰

In the advertisement above, the image of the perfect housewife of the 1950s is long gone, instead replaced by a picture of an unhappy, upset woman with tousled hair and in clear, desperate need of some sort of break. Before her is the dauntingness of not just repetitive domestic labor, but a repetitive culinary tradition. It was really in the 1970s when a movement to revolutionize and cosmopolitanize Dutch habits and food culture took seed in everyday life and everyday eating practices. People not only began to grow tired of the “humdrum” of Dutch cuisine, but actually had the financial means and time to genuinely gastronomically experiment foreign cuisines. Inspired by a desire for creativity and novelty, Conimex and Koen Visser sold their products as an opportunity to experiment. Indonesian cuisine, they emphatically publicized, was new territory by which one could gastronomically explore and gustatorial adventure. Their creative push extended just beyond solely Indonesian dishes, but in the possibility of Indonesian

²³⁹ Ibid, 71.

²⁴⁰ ^The Conimex ad above reads: If you have that feeling, go adventuring with Conimex!

dishes and recipes as core ingredients in assembling interesting, flavorful, exciting, hybridized recipes. For example, in 1970, one *Libelle* editor famously inscribed a recipe for *babi panggang with cognac*, a Indonesian-inspired take on bananas foster.²⁴¹ Other examples of hybridity included *bami goreng* with green peas and mustard instead of ginger and another recipe for *Italian Nasi Goreng*.²⁴² These concoctions are emblematic of a wider shift away from Dutch-onesian cuisine as they represent not only a new era of personal, culinary individuality but also an increase in a general openness to global fusion.

For the next decade or so, Conimex and Koen Visser rode the wave of Indonesian popularity to the shores of monetary triumph. However, much in the same vein as restaurants, their success in pulling audiences into foreign tastes inadvertently led some of their consumers to venture into other gastronomical territories. Pretty soon, the 1980s ushered in a more diverse array of recipes and advertisements for other international cuisines. Both the recipes and advertisements shown during that time were not only more authentic but also even more accessible outside of the magazine pages. Concurrently, television started becoming an even bigger medium for recipe transmission as well as advertising. That led to the slow decline of magazines - a trend continuing, unfortunately, into today. That being said, the influence these magazines had on Dutch culture cannot be overstated enough.

Starting in the 1940s through to the 1980s, these magazines were both the arbiter and the chroniclers of social change in the Dutch kitchen. They served as a wonderful historical archive of the sweeping revolution of the representation and potential of Indonesian cuisine. Starting with Dutch-onesian recipes one can clearly track a time of greater and more experimental, fluid hybridity. Even today, *Margriet* is trying to return ownership of their recipes. Annually, *Margriet*

²⁴¹ Verriet, *Ongevaarlijk Avontuur*, 189.

²⁴² *Ibid*, 189.

has an Indonesian chef, Lonny, give his favorite, special recipes.²⁴³ However, their recipes were not the only ones capable of transmitting social changes - cookbooks played a large role in that as well.

COOKBOOKS:

The primary method that *Indisch* food first reached the Netherlands was through the pages of cookbooks. Even starting in 1860, the first Indonesian cookbook was published in the Netherlands - although it was mostly for show as most people could not cook the recipes provided as they did not have access to many Indonesian ingredients during that time. Even before World War II, eight Indonesian cookbooks were published.²⁴⁴ The recipes inside are frequently and explicitly “edited for Holland.” However, they were almost solely bought and used in the West and were only purchased by wealthy families.

Post-World War II, there was a decade-long lull in the production of cookbooks as there was both no money to buy them as well as no need - as all housewives already had their *huishoudschoolkookboek*.²⁴⁵ Moreover, at least in the 1950s and throughout a fair amount of the 1960s, *Margriet* and *Libelle* were properly supplying a majority of the Dutch population with all of the new recipes that could ask for. That being said, one cookbook did get published, however not exactly for Dutch audiences.

In 1961, Dutch-born and raised C. Countess van Limburg Stirum published her classic English-language cookbook, *The Art of Dutch Cooking: or, How the Dutch Treat*. The cookbook

²⁴³ Lijftogt, *Multicultu-reality*, 16.

²⁴⁴ Protschky, *Colonial Table*, 348.

²⁴⁵ This is an example of the beautiful, agglutinative properties of the Dutch language. This long word just means *huishoudschool* cookbook.

is predominantly a compilation of classic Dutch recipes borrowed from templates of *huishoudschool* textbooks, but presented to English-speaking, predominantly American readers.

Near the end of the cookbook, she does include a rather interesting recipe: *nasi goreng*.

Fascinatingly, she writes:

A few easy [dishes] have become so popular that they can be regarded as 'national dishes.' ...A book on Dutch food therefore cannot be called complete without a few recipes for Indonesian food.²⁴⁶

To inscribe that powerful unity of Dutch and Indonesian cultures and cuisines at such an early point is not only quite alarming but beguilingly simplistic as her recipe, much like most other recipes from that time period, is quite emblematic of Dutch-onesian cuisine. The recipe is riddled with substitutions and alternative cooking methods without any acknowledgement of the original recipe of the dish nor its culinary history. Below is the *nasi goreng* recipe in all of its charming absurdity:²⁴⁷

²⁴⁶ Limburg Stirum, *Art of Dutch Cooking*, 180.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 181.

Nasi Goreng / Indonesian Fried Rice

2 medium-sized onions, chopped fine

2 cloves garlic, crushed

1 teaspoon red chili pepper, chopped fine

1 teaspoon salt

Oil

3 cups cooked, cold rice

½ pound roasted pork or ham

4 eggs

1 tablespoon butter

Fry the onions with the garlic, red pepper, and salt in oil in a heavy skillet until the onions are brown. Add the rice and fry until golden brown, stirring frequently with a wooden spoon. Dice the pork or ham into small pieces and add into the rice. Fry for five more minutes. Beat 4 eggs; add 1 tablespoon of water. Heat the butter in a frying pan and bake an omelette. Cut into long strips. Serve the Nasi Goreng with these strips on top. Some people prefer a fried egg to the omelette. This dish is eaten from a soup plate with a spoon and fork. A knife is never used. Beer is the drink that goes with it. Instead of pork or ham, roasted chicken or prawns/shrimps (1 cup) can be used.

This recipe is a perfect representation of Dutch-onesian cuisine within the Netherlands. In an effort not to scare off Dutch housewives with too many foreign ingredients, almost all traditional recipes and flavorings have been altered. These changes lead to a very tasty dish, but unfortunately not *nasi goreng*. The alterations would not be too bad if there was any explanation that the presented dish was not authentically Indonesian. However, there weren't any. This early deception and misrepresentation was quite common in many older Dutch recipes for Indonesian meals. This palatability was part of a broader cultural move to make colonialism as a whole more palatable to Dutch people. For example, according to Johnny van Schaik, in schools in the 1960s and 1970s, repression of Indonesian independence movements were simply taught as 'police operations' and there was no significant history instructed about colonialism. So, this sanitized

consumption of Indonesian cuisine mirrored that of broader Dutch sentiment about colonialism - keep it palatable, unproblematic, clean, easy to digest.

Traditional *nasi goreng* has a conglomeration of vegetables (that can range from mushrooms, bean sprouts, bok choy, cabbage, carrots, etc.) and *always* includes kecap manis. Moreover, although she specifies that shrimp and chicken can be added, pork is the major protein added. Again, as previously stated in the recipe of the *loempia* of *Margriet* in 1950, the use of pork is extremely contrary to the ideals of traditional Indonesian cuisine. Not only is it extremely unhalal as Indonesia is a highly majority country, but for that reason it is almost never found in the country. So, the use of pork here solely represents a Dutch culturally gastronomic and economic choice. While the addition of pork is quite noticeable, just as perceptible is the loss of Indonesian flavorings. Traditional *nasi goreng* has a lot of spices and flavorful sauces mixed in, especially, ketjap manis. The absence of such flavorings not only represents the temporal reality as it was almost impossible to find kecap manis in an everyday grocery in the 1960s, least of all in America, but also that palates, both American, but especially Dutch, were not used to consuming pungent and aggressive flavors.

In addition, *nasi goreng* is also usually cooked in a wok with peanut or sesame oil - butter or lard is not commonly put into it. The use and preparation of the eggs is another huge Dutch gastronomic influence. Traditional *nasi goreng* is made in one wok - rarely stopping the cooking process once it has begun. Initially, all of the items that have to actually get cooked get placed into the oil first. So, that typically means beginning with frying the vegetables and proteins and then adding the pre-made rice into the mix along with other sauces and spices. So, if eggs were to be added, they typically get cracked into the dish in the wok in the midst of cooking, not strewn over the top at the end. However, having a fried egg at the end is a Western addition as it

is more conducive to a Western-style, flat pan. That being said, a fried egg became a very popular addition to many Dutch recipes for *nasi goreng*.

Finally, with the second to last line, “Beer is the drink that goes with it”, the recipe represents a fundamental change to both Dutch diet and modes of consumption as well as implications about fundamental aspects of the dish itself. By inscribing that the dish is typically accompanied by a beer, that implies that the dish is a dinner dish. So, by indicating that the recipe is common dinner fare that is codifying the fact that back in the Netherlands, the timing of the hot meal has functionally been altered. Instead of it being during the middle of the day, this recipe shows that hot recipes had begun to gear themselves as dinner fare. However, to frame *nasi goreng* as ‘dinner fare’ stands in fundamental opposition to its manners of consumption in Indonesia. Back in Indonesia, it is served day-round and routinely gets eaten for breakfast. So, to present this dish as just a fun meal to cook for dinner, fundamentally alters the dish’s autochthonous, multifaceted, temporal essence. Another recipe that does just the same is her recipe for *pisang goreng*:²⁴⁸

²⁴⁸ Limburg Stirum, *Art of Dutch Cooking*, 184.

Pisang Goreng / Baked Bananas

4 bananas

2 tablespoons of butter

pinch of salt

lemon juice

Peel the bananas and cut them in half lengthwise. Place them in a well-greased baking dish. Dot with butter and sprinkle with salt and lemon juice. Bake in a hot oven (450 degree F.) for 6 minutes.

Although the dish sounds objectively delicious, it is by no means what *pisang goreng* actually is. *Pisang* means banana and *goreng* means fried so the correct iteration of the dish would be fried not baked. Most commonly in Indonesia, bananas are coated in a rice flour blend with a little turmeric, to make it yellow, and then deep fried. They are one of the most popular street foods found in Indonesia and can be consumed at any time of the day. This recipe, however, is presented as a nice, sweet-savory dessert. Moreover, traditionally, lemon juice is not added on top.

On the whole, the whole cookbook was just a phenomenal representation of not just how Indonesian cuisine was portrayed in the 1960s, but on Dutch cultural self-image. As previously stated, many aspects of the recipe, such as the ingredients, cooking methods, and times of consumption, all reflect what boundaries Dutch audiences and consumers had deconstructed and continued upholding. That being said, the 1960s was a definitive era for the deconstruction of many cultural barriers; more and more people wanted to start cooking the Indonesian cuisine they ate at restaurants, at home.

In addition to the increase in personal wealth that allowed people to purchase different ingredients and foodstuff items, previously inaccessible ingredients were beginning to appear on grocery shelves. For example, with the increased availability of Eastern vegetables and spices in specialized stores on the Dutch market by 1967, the Chinese-Indonesian recipes presented in *Margriet* magazine started to resemble genuine Chinese-Indonesian cuisine more closely.²⁴⁹ Furthermore, Tokos grew in size and popularity as well.²⁵⁰ Dutch consumers as well wanted to genuinely learn how to actually and properly cook Indonesian food. However, cookbook writer Mary Brückel-Beiten perfectly describes what she saw the role of the cookbook author for their audience; her philosophy perfectly outlines that of Dutch-onesian:

Also many Dutch people, who have learned to appreciate Indian cuisine in restaurants and would like to prepare these dishes themselves, are also put off by the many names of unknown ingredients. But the writer clearly helps us find our way in this labyrinth and - what is very important - gives us the Dutch surrogates, which sound pleasantly familiar to us.²⁵¹

There was a deep, needed vacuum of authentic Indonesian cookbooks. That was, until the largest shift in the presentation and consumption of Indonesian cuisine came in biblical form through the colossally impressive and instructive, *Groot Indonesisch Kookboek*.

No other literature about Indonesian cuisine made/will make as large of an impact as *Groot Indonesisch Kookboek*. First published in 1973 by Beb Vuyk²⁵², it arrived with great

²⁴⁹ Salzman, *Continuity and Change*, 13.

²⁵⁰ Otterloo, *Chinese and Indonesian Restaurants*, 159.

²⁵¹ Brückel-Beiten, *Hollandse Rijsttafel*, 2.

²⁵² An accomplished author, chef, and civil rights advocate, Beb Vuyk was one of the most important Dutch writers of the twentieth century. Born to an Indonesian father and Dutch mother in Rotterdam, she spent her youth in the Netherlands and was subjected to racism and discrimination by her schoolmates. She graduated with a degree in nutrition and food science and, in her desire to travel the world, headed to her father's homeland back in Indonesia. There she meets her husband and starts a family. However, during the Japanese occupation, she is interned and faces three abysmal years. When she returned to the Netherlands, she took up

acclaim and avid interest. It is certified an instant culinary classic and thousands upon thousands of copies were sold. Over the years, Vuyk revised the book many times and sought to make it as accurate a representation of Indonesian cuisine as possible. The cookbook demonstrates a lot about not just shifts and cultural trends regarding Indonesian cuisine, but also how they affected and were affected by Dutch culture. Due to her stature as a writer as well as her ability to capture Dutch culinary zeitgeist allowed her to fundamentally alter the Dutch relationship to Indonesian cuisine in innumerable positive manners. A fortitudinous combination of elements that especially led to her success were not only her smart, accessible recipes, but also the spread of Indonesian ingredients and food items.

Having grown up in the Netherlands, she personally knew Dutch culinary traditions, mentality, and gustatorial history. She had grown up eating both Dutch and Indonesian cuisine and knew how to balance both. In writing the *Groot Indonesisch Kookboek*, she knew that she had to balance the authentic background and flavors of the Indonesian kitchen, but adapt some of the more piquant tastes to softer Dutch palates. So, a beautiful mesh of the two worlds occurred and with it, a true gastronomical revolution within the Netherlands. For example, here is a short passage from the *Groot Indonesisch Kookboek* talking about Dutch and Indonesian gastronomic tastes:

Here in the Netherlands we have to use a medium-spicy pepper called Spanish peppers and are referred to as “lombok” in these recipes. The Dutchman - with the exception of those who have an Indisch past - is a bit hesitant about very spicy food and all those red peppers could seem dangerous to him. Fortunately, there are

writing and began writing books about not only her life, but Indonesian history and Indo experience. Her writings brought her notoriety not just for herself, but all Indo experience. With her impassioned and humanizing prose, she was able to bring a lot of attention to Indo peoples and their history. Today, she is most likely remembered for her *Groot Indonesisch Kookboek* and the incredible advocacy she did for her community.

various preparation methods that allow the dish to retain its red color and at the same time temper its heat.²⁵³

In all of her recipes, she not only calmly walks Dutch readers through treacherous gastronomic territory but also finds manners by which to personalize and humanize her recipes. She discusses her own childhood and the dishes that meant the most to her. She famously included a recipe for her husband's favorite sambal. Observing her *nasi goreng* recipe, especially in relation to the other *nasi* dishes already presented, allows one to truly understand her talent as both a chef and a storyteller:

Nasi Goreng I (gebakken rijst)

Nasi goreng is typically eaten for breakfast in Indonesia. It is made with the leftovers that remain from the previous night's dinner. Leftover cold rice, cold chicken or cold meat, and also leftover sambal.

500 grams of pre-cooked rice

200 grams of finely sliced onions

2 cloves of garlic, also finely chopped

2 or 3 teaspoons of sambal

4 tablespoons of oil

leftover meat, chicken or shrimp

2 tablespoons sweet ketjap

Mash onions together with garlic and sambal with a little salt in a mortar and pestle or turn them in a mixer. Fry the mixture in the oil until the onions are light yellow. Then add the leftover meat in and fry them together. Now, work in spoonfuls of the cold rice throughout. Finish the nasi goreng with two tablespoons of sweet ketjap. Give it a fried egg and a sour pickle.

Vuk's recipe for *nasi goreng* is what the dish traditionally looks like. Everything from the ingredients to the flavors and sauces to the proteins are textbook *nasi goreng* edits. Crucially, as

²⁵³ Vuyk, Groot Indonesisch Kookboek, 55.

well, Vuyk’s recipe is the first so far to have *ketjap manis* and *sambal* both added; those two especially are the true flavors of a classic *nasi goreng*.

And once people got a taste of Vuyk’s cooking, they were not only hooked, but expectant of all other cookbooks to do the same. For example, in Figure 1.7 below, represent the number of times that the term authentic gets incorporated into the title of a cookbook. The x-axis represents years and the y-axis represents the number of times the word authentic appears in the titles of cookbooks. It is evident by the graph, how much of an influence Vuyk’s book made on Dutch gastronomic mentality:

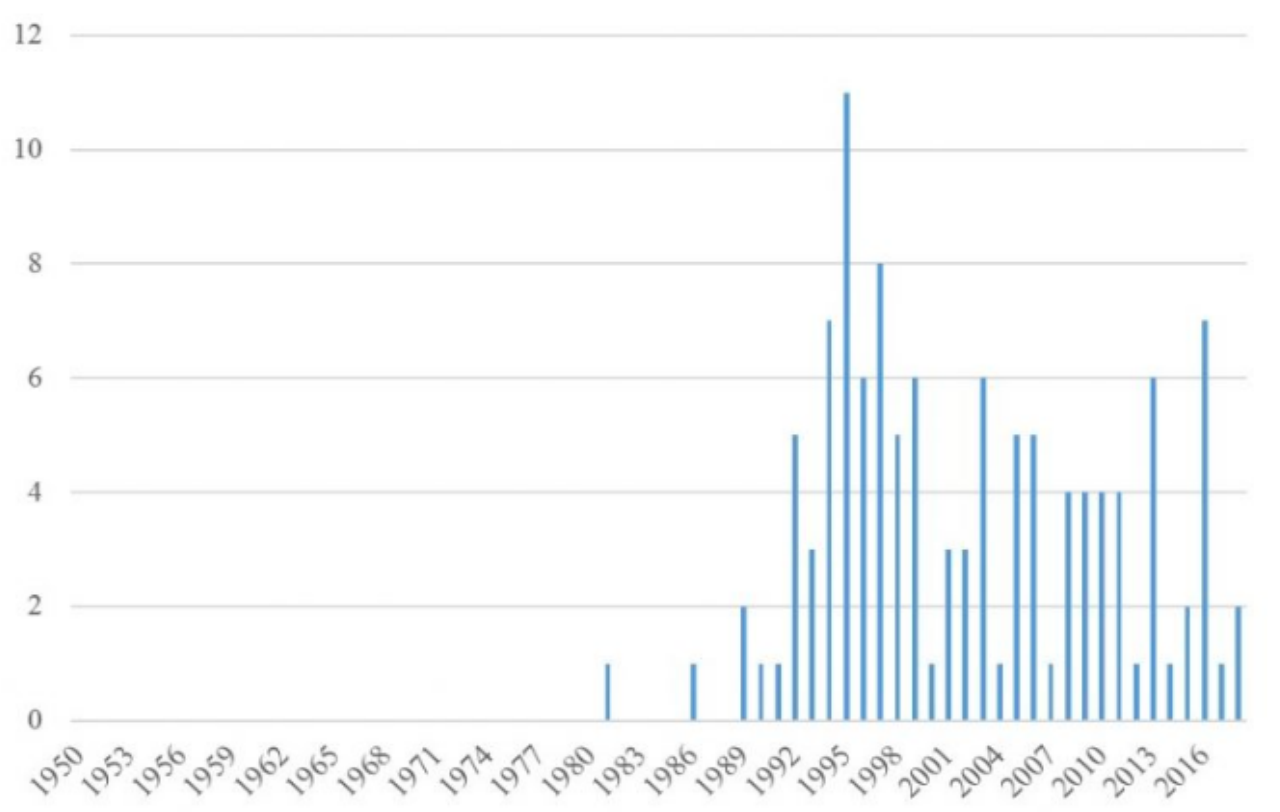


Figure 1.7: Dutch cookbooks with “authentic” in the title.

The increase in the use of the term “authenticity” is attributed as a reaction to the new, unprecedented growth in the globalized food chain of the 1970s. As the decades wore on, globalization successfully wormed itself into Dutch gastronomic and cultural spaces. In Amsterdam, for example, the number of traditional Dutch cafes and bars got outnumbered by foreign food establishments in the 1990s.²⁵⁴ That sense of multiculturalism is carried into another Dutch-American cookbook called *De Nederlandse Keuken/The Dutch Kitchen*.

Here are two recipes from it:

The first is *Rijst met Kippenragout/Rice with Chicken Ragout*²⁵⁵:

Rijst met kippenragout / Rice with chicken ragout

300 g rice	1 tablespoon finely chopped chives
500 ml chicken stock, fresh or cubed	1 tablespoon ground ginger
250 g boneless chicken breast	1 tablespoon sambal oelek (Indonesian spicy paste)
1 tablespoon oil	25 g butter
250 g small mushrooms, quartered	25 g flour
1 onion, finely chopped	100 ml cream
1 tablespoon finely chopped parsley	salt and pepper

Cook the rice according to the instructions on the package. Bring the stock to a boil and cook the chicken breast until done, about 10 minutes. Let it cool slightly, then chop. Strain the stock. Heat the oil in a frying pan and saute the mushrooms and onion about 5 minutes until golden brown. Add the parsley, chives, ginger and sambal and mix well. Melt the butter in another pan and stir in the flour. Add half of the stock and stir well until blended. Add the rest of the stock and stir until the sauce has thickened. Stir in the mushroom mixture. Serve the ragout over the rice.

²⁵⁴ Otterloo, *Changing Position*, 184.

²⁵⁵ Arkel, *De Nederlandse Keuken / Dutch Cuisine*, 73.

Traditionally stewed meat in the Netherlands either goes on top of potatoes or just the bottom of the plate, so the addition of the rice is definitely not conventional. Not only is it a healthy alternative inspired by modern food movements in the Netherlands, but also it shows the increased proliferation of Asian ingredients in everyday Dutch dishes. The *sambal oelek* and the ginger are two other signs of the same.

The second is *Bruinebonesoep*/Brown Bean Soup.²⁵⁶

<u>Bruinebonenesoep / Brown Bean Soup</u>	
25 g butter	1.5 kg cooked brown beans (fresh or jarred), drained
150 g cooked bacon, diced	250 ml tomato puree
2 onions	1.5 litre beef stock, fresh or cubed
1 large leek	1 teaspoon sweet soy sauce
1 tablespoon paprika powder	salt and pepper
<p>Heat the butter in a large pan and brown the bacon. Add the onions, leek and paprika powder. Stir well. Add beans, tomato puree and stock. Bring the soup to a boil and let it simmer for about 10 minutes. Season with soy sauce, salt and pepper.</p>	

A version of this dish, known as *sayur kacang mera* is found in Indonesia. Within the Netherlands, it expresses how common it is to now see Indonesian ingredients used in everyday, classic Dutch dishes.

Overall, one is able to track a similar journey through cookbooks as one is able to do through magazines and restaurants. Initially, Dutch-onesian cuisine was employed as a method by which to acclimate Dutch audiences to foreign, pungent flavors. But as time progressed, minds got more open, and wallets got fatter, the authenticity of the foreign dishes got more

²⁵⁶ Arkel, *De Nederlandse Keuken / Dutch Cuisine*, 39.

genuine. Especially when it comes to cookbooks, the true magnitudeness impact of Beb Vuyk cannot be understated - she single handedly changed the face of *Indisch* food and people through her amazing work. But, despite her encouragement of domestic cooking, one dish that was rarely attempted at home in its entirety, but quickly became one of the most popular dishes to emerge from the *Indisch* kitchen, was a dish known as *rijsttafel* (rice table).

RIJSTTAFEL²⁵⁷

For many colonial nationstates, one or a few dishes from their colonized countries have come to heavily populate restaurant and dinner tables of the mother country. For the United Kingdom, chicken tikka masala is a perfect example of gastronomic acculturation due to its use of Western ingredients and flavor profiles (British-invented curry powder, heavy use of cream, mild flavors, and tomatoes) and Indian cooking techniques and ingredients.²⁵⁸ Its consumption proliferated across Britain and throughout the Western world. So, currently, despite its non-Indian origination not only is it a staple for all Indian restaurants but is also commonly found on home dinner plates around the world.²⁵⁹ For the Netherlands, that dish is *rijsttafel*. *Rijsttafel* has become the definitive Indonesian dish served at *every* Indonesian restaurant that you will encounter in the Netherlands. The dish has an extremely complex and complicated history within both Indonesia and the Netherlands.

Originally, this meal was created by Indonesian chefs for Dutch imperialists during the colonial period. When the Dutch colonial first arrived, they were transfixed, beguiled, and enchanted by the cuisine of the native Malay peoples. The first example of it was in the

²⁵⁷ Its literal translation is “rice-table.”

²⁵⁸ Tannahill, *The Food Supply Revolution*, 388.

²⁵⁹ Pilcher, *Food in World History*, 69.

beginning of the 1800s. *Rijsttafel* is essentially a conglomeration of various Indonesian dishes all put together on one table. As historian Susie Protschky wrote:

The varied and intricate dishes and condiments that comprised a rijsttafel were a labour-intensive affair that often involved several cooks and a procession of servants, and also took a long time to consume. While a modest rijsttafel might consist of “only” six dishes, the grander version amounted to a luxurious feast, one that was eaten in particular places associated with elite Dutch culture, notably the steamships that brought Europeans to the Indies and the hotels that were scattered through major colonial cities. It was also served in many colonial homes, often on Sundays or at dinner parties, or, curiously, as a precursor to a European main course.²⁶⁰

Over the course of the 1800s, eating ‘rice with some side dishes’ became a popular hot midday meal among the Dutch in Indonesia. Although simple meals were prepared in the *rijsttafel* fashion, it soon became known as an elaborate feast. Colonial Dutchmen would ask their chefs to prepare it for special guests and occasions. These *rijsttafels* were lavish colonial banquets of abundance, grandstanding, and privilege. They were presented as a conglomerative exploration of the rich and flavorful tradition of Indonesia, but served in a way that suited Europeans’ ravenous tastes and curiosities.²⁶¹ First iterations included “lines of servants and waitresses in sarongs often served up to 40 different dishes in a single meal.”²⁶² With the *rijsttafel*, colonial Dutchmen could extravagantly relish and sample many new, exotic vittles as well as impress their typically non-residential, European guests with their mimetic profligacy of Indonesian cuisine.²⁶³ When the Dutch brought this exploitative presentation back with them, an increased interest in not only Indonesian cuisine, but later other foreign foods followed as well.

²⁶⁰ Protschky, *The Colonial Table*, 350.

²⁶¹ Wall Memorial, “Indo Dutch Food Culture.”

²⁶² Djiwandana, “Food For Thought: Indonesian Cuisine in the Netherlands.”

²⁶³ Wall Memorial, “Indo Dutch Food Culture.”

That being said, “the rijsttafel is as far removed from [stampopot] as can be imagined: exotic, rather than domestic; celebratory, rather than commemorative; lavish, rather than austere; variegated, rather than limited.”²⁶⁴ So, the *rijsttafel* took many (hopefully at this point, relatable forms) upon entry into the country. Brought back by returning military and civil servants as well as Indonesian immigrants, the *rijsttafel* became not only a memory of tradition and heritage, but took on lives of its own in its new home. One famous example of this comes from Mary Brückel-Beiten again who wrote a book called, *De 'Hollandse Rijsttafel' voor de Hollandse Huisvrouw en de 'Indische Rijsttafel'*.²⁶⁵ In an article, historian Jon Verriet writes an analysis of her work:

The Indonesian part of the book is presented as the ideal, the final goal, while the Dutch part 'de-ethnises': it replaces coconut milk with cow's milk, (Spanish) pepper with tomato puree and ginger with mustard, and the writer says, ‘Knowledge of the Indonesian kitchen is not needed beforehand.’²⁶⁶

Currently, the *rijsttafel* is an elaborate mix of various small mezze or tapas-style platters, the current *rijsttafel* is typically a combination of 10-15 (but can even be as many as 20) little platters centered around a copious amount of rice (typically white rice, but other variations of *nasi* (rice in Indonesian) are also common.) There is a lot of preparation that goes into making a proper *rijsttafel*. Each *schoteltje* (small dish) is traditionally an entire dish back in Indonesia, so although the presented plates aren't that big, around 10-15 separate dishes have to be made for the *rijsttafel*, some of which are unique to just the *rijsttafel*. The dishes themselves also skew towards the cuisine of East Java.²⁶⁷ Each restaurant serves their own unique version of the meal

²⁶⁴ Fernández-Armesto, *Near A Thousand Tables*, 145.

²⁶⁵ From *De 'Hollandse Rijsttafel' for the Dutch Housewife and the 'Indische Rijsttafel'*.

²⁶⁶ Verriet, *Een Ongevaarlijk Avontuur*, 179.

²⁶⁷ Protschky, *Colonial Table*, 347.

so no two joints in Indonesia have the exact same *rijsttafel*. So, here are the varied possibilities of any *rijsttafel*:

In addition to the dishes that comprise the *rijsttafel*, there are other famous Indonesian meals throughout the Netherlands. Bami Goreng, (an egg noodle dish)²⁶⁸, Frikadel Panggang (Indonesian for oven roasted - a type of meatloaf), Ayam Smoor (braised chicken with kecap manis), Erwtensoepp met Sambal (green split pea soup, traditionally made so thick that a spoon could stand up straight, with sambal and rice), and Indische Pastei Tutup (Shepherd's Pie Indonesian style).²⁶⁹

In addition to the dishes that comprise the *rijsttafel*, there are other famous Indonesian meals throughout the Netherlands. Bami Goreng, (an egg noodle dish)²⁷⁰, Frikadel Panggang (Indonesian for oven roasted - a type of meatloaf), Ayam Smoor (braised chicken with kecap manis), Erwtensoepp met Sambal (green split pea soup, traditionally made so thick that a spoon could stand up straight, with sambal and rice), and Indische Pastei Tutup (Shepherd's Pie Indonesian style).²⁷¹

Today, the *rijsttafel* occupies a hugely important space in the Netherlands as it represents so much. To most Dutch people, it is a delicious representation of cultural integration. To some Indonesians, it is a sign of recognition and acceptance. For Indos, it is symbolic of their mixed heritage. To travellers of the Netherlands, it represents just another reason to go.

However, many rightfully critique the total embrace of the *rijsttafel*. Critics argue that it is a dish deeply rooted in painful exploitation and disrespect of Indonesian culture and cuisine. Moreover, some Indonesian people still say they feel forgotten and overlooked within the media,

²⁶⁸ Ibid, 347.

²⁶⁹ Hollander, "Indo Dutch Kitchen Secrets"

²⁷⁰ Protschky, Colonial Table, 347'

²⁷¹ Hollander, "Indo Dutch Kitchen Secrets."

legislation, and the public sphere.²⁷² Commentators say that going forward, although *rijsttafel* has a lot of community-building potential, it is crucial that its painful history be acknowledged and taught.²⁷³ Without the context that begat it, each bite is tinged with harmful ignorance - one that only permeates a larger erasure of colonial malfeasances and atrocities. Only through learning all of the cultural significance of the meal can *true* civic integration occur.

Back in Indonesia, the *rijsttafel* is not as embraced. In fact, it's almost completely forgotten. For many reasons, as soon as colonization ended in 1949, the dish was essentially expelled - socially and gastronomically repelled from almost all kitchen tables and restaurant menus. Primarily, the dish is antithetical to Indonesian cultural and gastronomic values and practices. While Indonesian cuisine is quite bold and pugnacious in terms of its flavors, and, ironically, customarily similar to the Dutch kitchen and cuisine in the fact that it also centralizes restraint and prudence. Presenting a cornucopia of dishes, especially in such an indulgent, ostentatious manner, is quite obnoxious and immoderate to Indonesian values and standards. So, except during religious festivals, very rarely will one come across an extravagant or flamboyant culinary presentation in the same likes of the *rijsttafel*.

Moreover, the central, originating philosophy of the *rijsttafel* was the exploitation, exhibition, and exotification of Indonesian cuisine for a Dutch, and more generally Western, audience. So, it is completely understandable that many Indonesians did not want to maintain that exploitation of their own cuisine. When Dutch servicemen and their families were forcibly expelled, the appeal and need for the dish went with them. So, in current-day Indonesia, even in previously-heavily Dutch areas, it is very rare to come across the meal within Indonesia and a fair amount of Indonesians have no idea what a *rijsttafel* even is. As one Dutch website simply

²⁷² Protschky, *Colonial Table*, 351.

²⁷³ Djiwandana, "Food For Thought."

put it with typical Dutch directness, “[Their ignorance] is totally logical because it is not their food.”²⁷⁴ It is common to see plenty of *rijsttafel* dishes in restaurants, street markets, or dinner tables but always the full-sized version. Interestingly, there is a dish similar to *rijsttafel* known as *nasi rames or nasi campur*. Essentially a miniature version, it is a single dish with a scoop of white rice in the middle surrounded by different vegetable and meat dishes.²⁷⁵ Yet, because the various dishes are contained within one plate, it is significantly less ostentatious and disagreeable.

That being said, as previously mentioned, *rijsttafel* is currently a national treasure. Fascinatingly, despite its controversial, painful, and unequal history, in the Netherlands it is considered quite a non-partisan, popular option for consumption. For example, when Dutch prime minister Mark Rutte was asked for his favorite food by a Facebook audience, he selected *rijsttafel* as his favorite dish. That widespread popularity and reverence was also reflected in the decision by the national UNESCO committee to proudly declared that:

The Indische group has profoundly affected Dutch society...by their take on hospitality, sharing happiness, the famous Indorock [music]...and of course by the taste and scents of the Indische cuisine.²⁷⁶

For that reason, it is a popular notion that “Indonesian *rijsttafel* has some claim to be considered the Dutch national dish.”²⁷⁷ On December 1st, 2015, the Netherlands added the traditional *Indische* (a Dutch adjective, “pertaining to the colonial mixed culture of the former Dutch East Indies”²⁷⁸) *rijsttafel* to the National Inventory Cultural Heritage (NICH). The NICH

²⁷⁴ Roys Indo Recepten,” *Geschiedenis Indische Rijsttafel*.”

²⁷⁵ Katz, *Encyclopedia*, 395.

²⁷⁶ Kulpers, *Makanlah Nasi! (Eat Rice!)*, 5.

²⁷⁷ Fernández-Armesto, *Near A Thousand Tables*, 145.

²⁷⁸ Keasberry, “Indische Rijsttafel.”

is part of the Netherland's response to signing the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage whereby the Netherlands agreed to preserve and reflect on the diverse traditions of the country.²⁷⁹ There is also a group known as the *Samenwerking Erfgoed Rijsttafel* (SER, Cooperation Heritage Rice Table) whose sole purpose is to manage the narrative and history of *rijsttafel* for generations to come.²⁸⁰

With the inundation of Indonesian and Chinese dishes, the Netherlands quickly became a more socially conscious, accepting, and multicultural place over the course of the twentieth century.

CONCLUSION

At first, the ingredients of colonized countries were considered exotic, bizarre, foreign. But as they became more accessible to colonizing nations, they dispersed themselves into their supermarkets and dinner plates. Gradually they became absorbed into the cultural fabric of the colonial state. Lines between former colonies and former mother countries blurred. Dishes and ingredients were messily and unequally interchanged; unprecedented acculturation occurred without much deep thought. With no organized exchanges done that honored and respected the traditions of the colonized country, their cultures were pillaged for everything that the Europeans found uses for. So, this *cultural theft* led to a one-sided merging and blending of two cultures without the input of the other.

Prior to World War II, the Netherlands relied heavily on global trade as its primary source of revenue. Despite this, many parts of the country, particularly those outside of economically

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁰ Kulpers, *Makanlah Nasi! (Eat Rice!)*, 19.

active Western cities, were highly isolated culturally and socially. The war brought about significant and far-reaching changes, catalyzing socio-political, socio-economic, and socio-cultural transformations within the Netherlands. As a result, urbanization, cosmopolitanism, and societal modernization gained momentum, fundamentally transforming the nation in an irreversible way.

Indonesian cuisine played a crucial role in the broader cultural shift that was taking place in the Netherlands. This shift was facilitated by economic prosperity, a globalizing mindset among Dutch citizens, and the return of individuals from the former Dutch East Indies. Indonesian cuisine not only influenced Dutch eating habits but also broader cultural mentalities. Dutch media sources initially promoted and adapted Indonesian cuisine, resulting in a fusion mix of Indonesian and Dutch cuisines known as 'Dutch-onesian' cuisine. Consumption and representation of Indonesian cuisine occurred in various spheres, including restaurants, magazines, and cookbooks, each with their own complex agendas, problems, dynamics, audiences, and care for the subject matter. The availability of authentic Indonesian foodstuffs and recipes, coupled with an increase in personal finances, expedited a growing interest in Indonesian cuisine and elevated it to a significant place within Dutch culture.

What is uniquely remarkable about the relationship between the Netherlands and Indonesia is how much cuisine played a role in their history and, more importantly, in their reconciliation. But, the situation is still very messy. While the introduction of Indonesian cuisine helped break down cultural walls and open the country up to receiving the world, how much did the Netherlands do the same for Indonesia? The impact of Indonesian cuisine on the Dutch kitchen is disproportionately higher than it is the other way around. Within Indonesia, there are very few traces of specifically Dutch influence on the overall cuisine and there is still a lot of

resentment for the centuries of brutal treatment by Dutch hands. Whereas in the Netherlands, Indonesian cuisine is not heralded, but seen as an essential part of Dutch cultural, and culinary, identity.

But, this sloppy, unequal, colonialistic, imperialistic, and yet delicious exchange of foods leaves more questions than it answers. What should modern-day Dutch eaters do to respect the role that colonization played in their food? Or should Dutch eaters stop eating Indonesian food as a form of cultural reparations? How much more education about colonialism still needs to be done? How much is food representative of an eater's culture? Where does one culture start and a different end? And, most importantly: *wat zal u eten?*

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