

"No Cookbooks Allowed" serves up flavorful meals of immigrant families

By Seattle Times, adapted by Newsela staff on 12.18.18

Word Count **481**

Level **500L**



Chef Melissa Miranda (right) and her mom, Marlene Miranda, cook for Melissa's pop-up dinners around Seattle, Washington, November 5, 2018. When Melissa was growing up, one household rule was uncompromising: The family cooks and eats together. Photo by: Ken Lambert/Seattle Times/TNS

SEATTLE, Washington — Melissa Miranda is a chef. Her parents are from the Philippines, and she was born in the United States.

Melissa learned to cook from her family. Her family never wrote down their recipes, though. Recipes tell cooks what they should do.

Other immigrants did not write down recipes. Immigrants are people who have moved from one country to another.

These cooks still made delicious food. Melissa wanted to learn their secrets.

She started "No Cookbooks Allowed." These are dinners around Seattle, Washington.

Melissa started the dinners with three friends. Their names are Alan Vu, Guitar Srisuthiamorn and Ronald Kuo. They are all from immigrant families.

Learned By Watching Cooks Make Family Meals

The friends watch home cooks make a family meal. Melissa then makes the meal at the dinners.

They plan to share the recipes online.

The dinners let people learn about immigrants.

Vu said, "The way for us to connect is through food and to be able to share it."

The next dinner was based on meals by Melissa's parents.

Her parents are Marlene and Rey. Melissa and her parents practiced for the dinner.

A Family Tradition

They practiced a Kamayan, a meal eaten with bare hands. The meal has rice, seafood and meat.

Marlene's mother taught her how to cook.

Marlene says they do not use recipes. They taste the food and follow their senses.

Melissa and her family made these dishes. They each tell stories about her family.

Dish No. 1: Adobong Pusit

Rey and Melissa used to go catch squid. This squid dish is popular in Rey's hometown.

The noodle dish has a salty taste and fishy smell.

Melissa's parents packed sardines and other "stinky" food in her lunch box. She was embarrassed. Other children made fun of her.

Now, she loves those flavors.

Dish No. 2: Lumpia Egg Roll

The recipe has been passed down in the family. Meat and other ingredients are mixed together. Then it is all wrapped up and fried.

Melissa also added oyster sauce.

Rolling lumpia takes some time. It is time the family spends together. They talk and laugh.

Dish No. 3: Barbecue Chicken

Chicken is soaked in ingredients, including 7 Up soda.

Both of Melissa's parents cook. They worked long hours for many years.

The family still always cooked and ate together. No television was allowed during the meal.

Dish No. 4. Escabeche (Fried Fish In Sweet-And-Sour Sauce)

Pompano fish is a fried and saucy dish.

The family went fishing. Rey would make Melissa get fish ready to cook.

He wanted to "teach her life skills" of a Filipino villager.

Dish No. 5: Ginataang Alimasag Crab Dish

Crab is cooked in coconut milk.

Melissa added a dark shrimp paste. Melissa had her mother taste it, and she liked it.

Marlene said Melissa took a family recipe and made it better.

Quiz

- 1 Which question is answered in section "Learned By Watching Cooks Make Family Meals"?
- (A) How do the "No Cookbooks Allowed" dinners work?
 - (B) When did Melissa first learn how to cook?
 - (C) What do Melissa's friends think about her cooking?
 - (D) Where did Melissa's parents immigrate from?
- 2 Read the section "A Family Tradition."
- Select the sentence from the section that explains HOW Melissa's family cooks all of their meals.
- (A) They practiced a Kamayan, a meal eaten with bare hands.
 - (B) The meal has rice, seafood and meat.
 - (C) They taste the food and follow their senses.
 - (D) They each tell stories about her family.
- 3 If readers are looking for information on a dish that Melissa decided to change a bit, which section should they read?
- (A) "Dish No. 1: Adobong Pusit"
 - (B) "Dish No. 2: Lumpia Egg Roll"
 - (C) "Dish No. 4. Escabeche (Fried Fish In Sweet-And-Sour Sauce)"
 - (D) "Dish No. 5: Ginataang Alimasag Crab Dish"
- 4 What information will the reader find in the introduction [paragraphs 1-6]?
- (A) an explanation of why Melissa started special dinners with her friends
 - (B) a description of some of the dishes that Melissa's parents have made
 - (C) an explanation of how Melissa's parents cook differently than her friends' parents
 - (D) a description of the recipes that Melissa used in "No Cookbooks Allowed"