



A QUIXOTIC IRANIAN - GUATEMALAN COOK TRACES HIS LOVE FOR A SPECIAL FILIPINO DISH BY TAKING US BACK TO A TEENAGE HOUSE PARTY FROM HIS PAST WHERE HE LEARNS HOW TO TRANSFORM HIS ALIENATION INTO A RECIPE FOR EMPOWERMENT.

8 min 18 sec • Produced by Xylophone Films and ThePeoplesCook Project

ABOUT THE FILM

Famed culinary icon Chef Stache interviews the legendary quixotic Iranian-Guatemalan cook, Mero Cocinero, who traces his love for a special Filipino dish by taking us back to the San Francisco Bay Area of his teenage years. At a birthday party of his junior high friend, Mero faces the alienation, awkwardness and isolation of being the only Iranian-Guatemalan at the party. While the DJ spins 80s dance hits, young Mero learns how to transform his alienation into a recipe for empowerment. Afterwards, local folk hero Tita Betty joins Mero to break down the recipe so the audience can make it themselves.

Lumpia Campesina is a cinematic interpretation of a comedy routine from Robert Karimi's satirical comedy cooking show called The Cooking Show. This recipe then became an integral part of ThePeoplesCook Project: intergenerational cross-cultural dialogue about community nourishment through interactive storytelling and food experiences. Programming included pop-up restaurants, a live cooking show event, and workshops that taught basic cooking skills while participants exchanged ancestral recipes, food stories and food wisdom with each other. TPC has now served over 50000 people in the last 9 years.

The film contains a participatory component where audience members eat the dish during or after the movie screening.

ABOUT PRODUCERS



A.J. Calomay, a UCLA graduate with a Psychobiology and Cognitive Science degree, found passion in film and media while producing videos for UCLA's Filipino organization. In 2001, the West L.A. native established Xylophone Films, and along with Kid Heroes Productions, produced a decade's worth of high profile independent projects, including music videos for the Black Eyed Peas, "the Apl Song", "Bebot", Bambu "Old Man Raps", "the Debut" featurettes and the feature film "Lumpia". Calomay has also directed full-length documentaries for hip hop artists Dudley Perkins and Wildchild from Stones Throw Records. In addition to running Xylophone Films, Calomay runs a Filipino food pop-up called You Eat Now! and works as an editor/assistant editor in the post-production industry. He has worked with MTV News, Disney.com, Xbox, M3 Creative, mun2, Fandango, GuruHub.tv, NBC Universal/USA Network ("Covert Affairs", "Mr Robot"), and Warner Bros ("Speed Racer", "DC's Legends of Tomorrow").



John Manal Castro received his BA in Film and Television Arts at Cal State University, Long Beach where he wrote and directed the acclaimed short film, Diary Of A Gangsta Sucka, a biting experimental documentary poking fun at wannabe gangsters in suburban Los Angeles. Following graduation, he co-produced and co-wrote The Debut, one of the first American feature films about the Filipino-American experience. In addition to his film work, Castro attended the Culinary School Of The Pacific in Honolulu Hawaii. His experience inspired him to co-produce, write and perform onstage in the satirical food show experience: Cooking Show Con Karimi & Castro. He currently lives in Los Angeles where he cooks at a fancy hotel and runs You Eat Now!, a Filipino inspired restaurant pop up.



With 25 years of experience as a creative developer and comedic storyteller, **Robert Farid Karimi** entertains and educates. Working for corporate clients like HBO, General Mills, and the Kresge Foundation, he brings food, comedy, and interactive storytelling to events as small as 25 as large as 5000+. With his background as a producer/writer of his own comedy cooking show and veteran of stages all over the world, he knows how to bring home issues that inspire audiences and even sparks innovation in organizations globally. He facilitates staff and board retreats, serves as keynote speaker for organizations worldwide, and creates interactive experiences for corporate and non-profit clients with his critically acclaimed wit and warmth. As a performer, filmmaker and experience designer, Karimi's work has been featured throughout the country at venues such as the Nuyorican Poets Café, Contemporary Museum in Baltimore, San José Museum, Def Poetry Jam, The Smithsonian, and SXSW.

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