

Script: A Conversation with Jarek Aniszewski

Music (keep playing as background when introduction begins)

Hi I'm your guest _____ for El Paso Food Voices. Today I'll be sharing with you _____ (creating an emotional appeal)

(Music as transition)

Welcome, I'm your host, **Charis Saenz**, for today's episode. El Paso Food Voices explores El Paso, Texas' food landscape by gathering food-based stories from our residents. This project offers a taste of a living history that speaks of ethnic and racial cross-cultural connections. If we're what we eat, we're committed to highlight the food-based culture and history of this city. In this spirit, let's begin our conversation on commensality, the act of eating together, with our guest, Jarek Aniszewski.

(Music as transition)

Topic #1: Autobiographical

Set up: Let's start with learning a little bit more about you.

Question: What has been your journey in developing a love for cooking and in calling El Paso home?

Topic #2: The Aniszewski's Table

Set up: Jarek, the first time I spoke with you, you said that you love to eat and you love to talk! I believe your comment encapsulates the generous spirit in which you invite others to share your table. You don't usually ask guests to bring a dish; you simply cook for others twice a week and see who shows up.

Question: How did these gatherings start and why?

- What kind of food can your guests expect to eat when they have dinner at your house?
(and)
- What lessons have you learned from hosting people?
(and)
- What types of challenges have you had to overcome?

(Soft background music)

Public Service Announcement:

Thank you for joining us today at El Paso Food Voices. If you're interested in practicing commensality, consider visiting the Raindrop Turkish House. The Raindrop Foundation aims to cultivate friendship and promote understanding of diverse cultures through its unique services to the community, one of which is Turkish Cooking Classes. For \$15.00, participants can cook and eat a Turkish dinner with other members of the community. Classes usually take place on Saturdays from 3 to 6 PM at 1030 N Zaragoza Rd. To find out about upcoming dinners and learn more about the Raindrop Turkish House in El Paso, visit their facebook, @raindropelpaso.

Let's get back with our guest, Jarek Aniszewski. In this next segment, we explore how commensality can transcend gender norms and cultural divides.

(Soft background music)

Topic #3: Hospitality: Lessons and Expressions

Set up: Hospitality and communal eating have long been an important part of human connection and well-being. I'm thinking of the symbolic meaning that different cultures and faiths attribute to communal eating or how travelers often survived on the hospitality of others. Your profession as an endocrinologist is focused on caring for others. When you come home, you continue that care through your dinner gatherings.

Question: What does hospitality mean to you, and has that meaning been shaped by your cultural identity?

- What do you hope to communicate through your food and hospitality?
(and)
- How has hosting others been beneficial for you?
(and)
- What are some Polish hospitality customs?

Topic #4: Gender Norms and Familial Relationships

Set up: While cooking is often understood as an expression of care, this expression has also been associated with women as the primary cooks in the family. Yet cooking in your household is a collaborative effort. Your wife has mentioned something along the lines of “You know you’re really best friends with your husband when you can still cook together.”

Question: How has cooking with your family shaped your family dynamics and influenced your relationship with them?

- How has food and cooking been important throughout your relationship with your wife?
(and)
- What were the family dynamics in your kitchen growing up?

Topic #5: Cultural Bonds Through Food: Communion Across Ethnic Boundaries

Set up: Research from scholars in the Humanities and Social Sciences has shown that the communal incorporation of food can create a sense of belonging and collective identity among individuals. Commensality isn’t just about what we eat, it’s about who we eat with.

Question: What types of relationships have emerged from your gatherings and who might we expect to find at your table?

- How do your guests and the El Paso culture influence the way you host or what you decide to cook?
(and)
- Have you witnessed your food playing a role in educating your guests on different cultures other than their own?

A Few More Questions

- What's on the menu for next week?
(and)
- How does one go about getting invited to your table?

We want to thank once more our guest, Jarek Aniszewski for sharing his knowledge on commensality, a fascinating El Paso food-based topic.

Music begins again (the section that will end the podcast)

El Paso Food Voices was created by Meredith E. Abarca, professor of Food Studies and Literature at the University of Texas at El Paso; produced by Adrian Mesa from UTEP's Creative Studios, and music composed by Jake Jacobs. To learn more about how food practices, memories, and stories shape a city's history, culture and its character, please visit us at El Paso Food Voices.