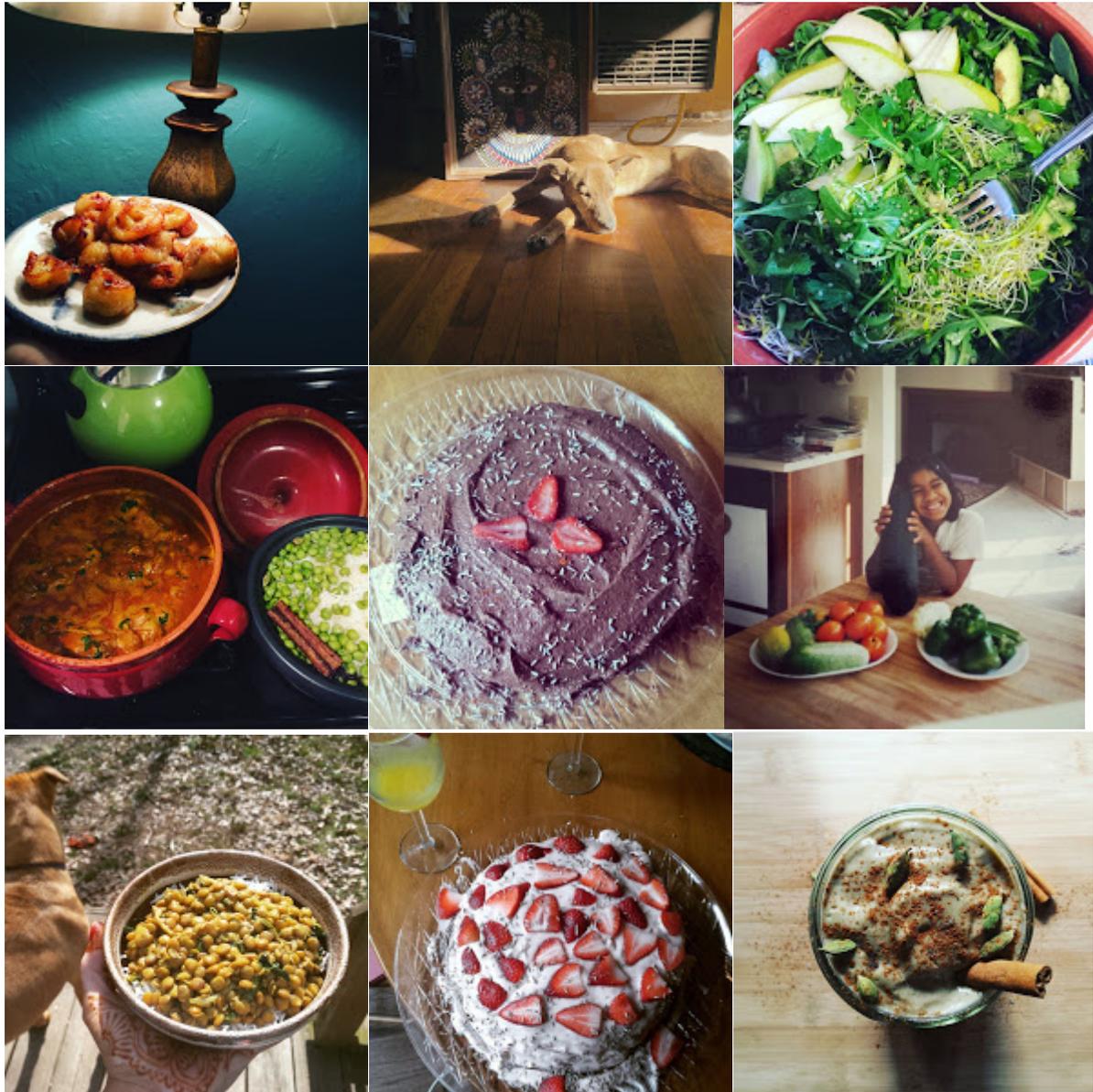


**coconut-brown bellies: a cooking & healing course**  
march 2016

facilitated by sumi dutta



**Workshop Description:**

Cooking food often draws us into the present moment—how much spice to pinch, when to stir, the smell of our labor—and we engage multiple senses. This course focuses on cooking as a healing art. How does our cooking give us a ‘temperature check’ on our mind/body/spirit? What openings occur? Cooking can be a daily practice that connects us to our life force--or erotic power. By cooking together, we’ll see what arises when we choose to learn from what Audre Lorde describes as our, “deepest and nonrational knowledge.”

Cooking and sharing food in a collective space adds vibrations and rich context to our relationships with each other, so we will also explore (over time) the ways in which food tells a story about our group dynamics. Cultivating intimacy with the ingredients we use, the meals we conjure, and then devour together, is central here as this cooking circle considers the ways in which our spirit is cooked into the food.

*This course is for folks who want to:*

- ❖ Start and/or develop their own cooking practice
- ❖ Learn recipes and build confidence in the kitchen
- ❖ Build connections, friendships, and community through cooking together
- ❖ Dig into personal and ancestral histories using food as an entry point
- ❖ ‘Drop in’ and learn from their bodies

**Location:**

1152 Metropolitan Parkway SW Apt #4, Atlanta, GA 30310 (Sumi’s home).

**# of participants:** 4-7 (max) people.

**Course Dates:**

Four (4) Wednesday evenings in March from 6:30 – 9:00pm.

- ❖ March 2, 2016
- ❖ March 9, 2016
- ❖ March 23, 2016
- ❖ March 30, 2016

*Participation:* It is preferred that folks in the course can attend each session in March, and if not, miss only one evening meeting. Showing up and co-creating the space is the commitment I ask from each participant, meaning you contribute to different cooking tasks as well as sharing your thoughts and reflections about the process with the group.

**Assignments:** I will ask each participant to share a recipe/dish that we will cook during one of our course sessions. I ask for folks to share a recipe that they have some connection to, whether it be a familial dish or such-and-such’s recipe, a meal that they associate with good memories, and/or a dish they would like to restore from difficult memor(ies). Folks will bring this written recipe to the first meeting (March 2, 2016) and include what ingredients are needed to prepare it. I will have these ingredients on the evening that we prepare this dish as a group. We will

schedule when each participant's dish will be cooked throughout the course and that person will be our guide/sponsor for cooking the dish.

*Evaluation:* There are no evaluations or certification given to participants in the course.

*Cooking Meals:* Each meal you cook in the workshop series will be like an in-class exam. Just kidding! That would be horrible and counterintuitive. As we cook each meal, the instructions will be different as we move along and share with each other in group. Cooking in pairs or small groups, folks will share tasks, witness each other in their cooking process, ask each other questions and ask their partners to describe their particular cooking process. How do they make decisions in the kitchen? What is the emotionality they bring to their cooking process—habits, joys, frustrations, familial/ancestral patterns? This is a reciprocal process of being mindful for both parties.

**Safety procedures:** Our first task will be to agree on safety procedures in the kitchen and in our discussions. If children are in the space, we should be extra mindful of sharp objects (i.e. knives and scissors).

**Sanitation:** Many sanitation concerns I believe we will navigate as a group. Generally, in group cooking situations, folks wash their hands before touching ingredients and should be particularly careful of cleaning surfaces where raw meat has been. Our sanitation needs may also return us to our early childhood experiences and home/family of origin. I think our circle ought to discuss our personal notions of sanitation collectively at the beginning of the course.

**Accessibility:** If dis/abilities such as chronic fatigue and/or illness keep folks from prepping, cooking, eating foods, or otherwise participating in particular aspects of the workshop, we will discuss modifying and/or allocating different roles for different folks. For example, if repetitive motion feels taxing on a participant's body, we will negotiate as a group how to divide labor and tasks in the workshops. For the space to be accessible to those with fragrance allergies, I ask that folks wear unscented/fragrance free products. Making sure instructions are clear for folks to understand will be my job as a facilitator as people may get overwhelmed by a lot of information all at once due to cognitive blockages and/or feeling mentally foggy. For folks with blindness or low vision, the letters/any written materials will be large and legible, as well as read aloud. Unfortunately, the kitchen space (my home) is not wheelchair accessible and if this is an issue for participants I will find another free or low cost space for our workshop. There is a fire escape with four (4) flights of stairs that leads to the back door of my apartment and a front entrance to my apartment that has two (2) smaller flights of stairs. Prior to the workshop and on our first evening meeting, we will check-in as a group around each participant's accessibility needs, as well as keep the conversation around dis/ability alive throughout the workshops, should different needs arise.

**Food allergies:** Before the series of cooking workshops begin, participants should let me know if they have food allergies, foods they don't eat, and foods they don't desire to cook or touch for whatever reason. Aside from allergies, this does not mean those foods won't be cooked in the space however I hope to accommodate each participant's dietary needs and wants. Meals that we

cook together can also be collectively agreed upon so that all participants have an understanding of each others needs, dislikes, and desires—all part of our (food) histories.