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Peres-Food-Archaeology-transcript

00:00:14 **Chelsi**

Hello and welcome to the women in archaeology podcast, a podcast about, for, and by women in the field. My name is Chelsi Slotten and I'll be your host for the episode. On today's episode we'll be chatting with Dr. Tanya Peres about her research on the archaeology of food and the role food plays in creating community. This is particularly timely given the holiday season and the separation we're all facing due Covid-19. Completing the group today is Emily Long and Kirsten Lopez. Thanks so much for being here everybody.

00:00:42 **Emily**

Happy to be here.

00:00:43 **Tanya**

Thanks for having us.

00:00:45 **Emily**

This is definitely one of my favorite topics. I love food.

00:00:49 **Chelsi**

Don't we all.

00:00:49 **Tanya**

Most people do.

00:00:53 **Chelsi**

So Tanya, before we jump into the the meaty bits of the conversations. Can you just give our listeners like a real quick overview of who you are and what your research interests are?

00:01:05 **Tanya**

Yeah hi. Thanks again for having me. So, my name is Tanya Peres, and I'm an associate professor at Florida State University which is located in the capital of Florida, the city of Tallahassee. My general interests are in human-animal relationships. But of course as we all know those take many, many forms, and so I mainly focus on animals as subsistence with some forays into animals as representatives of Native world view or people's world views, but in subsistence, I've specialized in zooarchaeology. So I analyze animal remains from archaeological sites and I thought it was cute that you said the meaty bit of the podcast because I do like to research about meat even though I don't eat meat which is interesting. But lately, for the last I don't know not quite ten years. I've been

delving deeper into humans and their relationships with food and so that kind of falls under the subject of foodways and foodways archaeology and how people relate to their food in ways that aren't always articulated. So even you know, how we prepare our food and the kinds of dishes or culinary tools we might use when we're cooking our food, and how we serve it, and who eats certain foods who doesn't eat certain foods based on social and cultural norms. So that's really kind of trajectory of where my research has been going and my main areas currently of where I work are in the Southeastern US. I have a long time research interest in the state of Tennessee and more recently I've returned to my home state of Florida and I've been working on a site from the Spanish Colonial period where Apalachee Indians and Spaniards coexisted in Catholic Mission communities. So I've been really interested in how foodways played a huge role in the Spanish colonization of the area

00:03:13 **Chelsi**

That sounds super fascinating and I think this is a thing that everyone can get involved with, particularly around the holiday season when we think you know in the US about Thanksgiving and then all the religious holidays and the New Year that happen in December. We have these meals, these dishes that we like to make. I actually woke up at 6 o'clock this morning so that I could special order some Norwegian potato flatbreads to make this dish that my family makes once a year at Christmas,

00:03:45 **Tanya**

Very cool.

00:03:48 **Chelsi**

So we all have these like strong cultural connections to the food that we eat and the traditions that they symbolize and the memories that are kind of tied up in all of these different things.

00:04:00 **Emily**

Accurate. So when I think about that kind of stuff, like with your potato flatbreads and then Tanya you're talking about like your sites and the overlay of these different types of foods at the Spanish Colonial period it kind of makes me wonder, so if we were looking at our timeframe, and you know these holiday big events, we'd have like a very specific period maybe in the archaeological record where it's like all of a sudden there's a ton of turkey. How would you see then at a site in Florida? Like would it be easier to tell like everyday foodways, or is it easier to tell like these big events like Christmas?

00:04:36 **Chelsi**

So that's a great question, right? That's something that that archaeologists are so keen to figure out. What are the daily meals? What do those look like and are they truly different from special meals? Because like you said for American Thanksgiving we eat a lot of turkey. There's a huge increase in the amount of turkey being consumed and then of course discarded on this one day of the year. So do we see that at other sites? People think sometimes they can see that, you know falls under the rubric of feasting which has become a very popular topic in archaeology over the last couple decades to the point where there has been some kind of pushback on events being interpreted as feasting events without a more critical analysis. I think of the data and the context because so much of what we see as archaeologists are, these deposits are are not single events. I would say, it's not the norm to find single event deposits. Deposits are usually made up of lots of things that have happened over a period of time.

00:05:44 **Emily**

Mmmhmmm.

00:05:44 **Tanya**

So on the sites that I've been working on, these Appalachia Spanish mission sites, that's one of the things that I'm looking for are for markers of the religious traditions that the Spanish brought with them because these are very specific Catholic communities. That's how they were established. Many of them were not established like on top of pre-existing towns like you have maybe in mesoamerica. These are Franciscan friars coming in and bringing Indigenous peoples together into a new area, establishing these new customs. So one thing thing I've been doing, which is what takes me beyond just looking at animal remains is looking at, for instance, old cookbooks likes Spanish cookbooks from the fifteen and sixteen hundreds or at least look at the translations of them. I'm barely proficient in Spanish. So reading very old Spanish is not my area, but I have colleagues that do that and translate these things and so I can look at their translations.

00:06:46 **Emily**

That's so cool.

00:06:49 **Tanya**

It's pretty fun. Actually some of the stuff that's out there and... also looking at the religious calendar and the rules for the types of food that could and could not be eaten at that time because things have changed in the Catholic Church subtly over the last few hundred years. So those are things that I've been looking at and where we know that there are days where you cannot eat meat, in the Catholic Church they have abstinence from meat days. But it doesn't mean you couldn't have like beef broth or chicken broth because that wasn't technically meat.

00:07:24 Chelsi

Oh interesting

00:07:26 Tanya

Right very interesting. So, okay, what does that mean in terms of zooarchaeology? Well, then that means that animal bones and carcasses were being processed for things other than just meat. Can we find evidence of that? And so that is something that I'm looking into, I'm very excited for this project, actually these projects as there are multiple sites that I'm working on. Of course, it's difficult because the preservation in Tallahassee is just terrible in terms of bones because the soils here are very clay and acidic and so we have to look in really specific areas.

00:08:01 Kirsten

I can only imagine what are some of the environments that you've seen in Florida that do have or would have good preservation for that type of archaeology?

00:08:16 Tanya

So for looking for foodways data, and you know, there are multiple categories for foodways data, so if we're looking at just faunal material, shell midden sites or shell mounds or shell bearing sites have great faunal preservation because the calcium in the shell neutralizes the soil and we don't have any of those from the Spanish Colonial period, at least not in Tallahassee, but we do have them from other time periods, and I've looked at some sites, multiple sites actually in this area from other time periods, and you know, the faunal preservation is just like a zooarchaeologists dream. You know big bones, lots of small bones. It's great. In terms of faunal preservation for the Spanish Colonial period I know in St. Augustine they've excavated wells, and so these are wells that are dug probably like to the water table, so they could be anywhere from like 6 feet to 8 feet maybe a little deeper if necessary and then barrels, wooden barrels were put down into the hole with the bottoms cut out to basically be enclosure so that the water would stay flowing upwards and not seep out into the surrounding ground and I was just relooking at an article that Elizabeth writes wrote about faunal analysis of this well that was excavated in Saint Augustine. It's just really fascinating the excavation that took place to to recover these materials from this well and that the preservation was pretty great all things considered for that time period. Now here in Tallahassee, we have not recovered any wells like that. We've not identified any but I would say that the majority of the work on the sites from this period, the Spanish Colonial period which is roughly talking like 1633 to 1704 is hard end date. There is, most of the work has been on identifying sites in the large structures at sites, so things like churches, the convento at San Luis de Talimali which was the western capital of Spanish Florida. They also had a fort that was built there. There are number of Spanish residential structures and then a very large Apalachee Council house. So all of that work was focused on architectural features and kind of site layout which is super important and for me it's a great foundation that that

work has been done but that meant that they weren't focused on looking for foodways data, right because that was right.

00:10:57 **Chelsi**

Yeah

00:10:58 **Tanya**

that's not the focus. So there have been some big pit features uncovered that were backfilled with a lot of trash, that have had better preservation and so some of those have been excavated and some of the material has been analyzed and I excavated a portion of one in 2018 and all things considered the preservation was really good. So we're finishing the analysis for that. So yeah, I'm looking forward to that and then the next site I work at we're hoping to find some more of those types of features.

00:11:24 **Chelsi**

So I'd like to go back and touch on something you said probably a couple minutes ago now, but you mentioned the different kind of food restrictions around the religious calendar, which got me thinking about, even if bones are being used to make broth, which would have been allowed, and the preservation may not be good enough for this, but have you seen any sort of changes in the stratigraphy? Where there's some areas for some portions of the stratigraphy that you find for example more fish bones because I know a lot of the days that you're not allowed to have meat you can have fish.

00:12:04 **Tanya**

That's a great question. That is something that I'm definitely interested in exploring. It seems that in terms of deposition of... well, first of all these sites again, they're newly created communities not on previous sites for sure like San Luis de Talimali. We know there was not an Appalachia Village their first. Like they specifically chose to put the community on that area because it was basically like neutral ground. In terms of nothing having been there prior from the Appalachies. So in terms of deposition and stratigraphic changes in food remains, we have not seen that only because we just I don't know, the sites are not not occupied that long it's less than 80 years at San Luis and everything is just dumped into pits. And so that's another thing that I'm interested in is looking at the ideas of the social norms around the deposition of food waste, like what did the Spanish think was the right way to get rid of food waste and other trash and what did the Appalachians think was the right way to get rid of food waste and trash? Cause I don't think at first they were the same. I think it changes right and it probably becomes more Spanish like. And at San Luis we have increased in the Spanish population there over time so that will definitely drive how how and where to look for these types of things.

00:13:32 Emily

That's really cool. Are you able to, this might be going too far down the rabbit hole... just with like disposal mechanisms, are there any ways of seeing a unique overlap in foodways where something that was distinctly Appalachie or distinctly Spanish then kind of coming together because they're living in the same community that like you're seeing all of a sudden the Spanish are starting to eat something they wouldn't have had otherwise or vice versa.

00:14:05 Tanya

Yeah, so okay in thinking about changes in deposition or discard of food waste, I have to say that in terms of the Apalachee around what their food waste process looked like immediately prior to Spanish colonization, we don't know. A lot of those sites have not been excavated and there's been so much urban development in Tallahassee that we probably will have lost a lot of those sites and plus there's the preservation issue. So if you move a little further back in time, looking at Mississippian period food disposal patterns, which is you know, what we call the Native American period prior to European contact that ends in the 14000's, for the most part at sites that I've looked at, you know, they're usually either sheet middens where the waste is deposited, or it's put into pits as well like you backfill pits with waste because you don't want big gaping holes, you know around your community. That's just a death trap for children and small animals kind of thing. So or maybe it's a playground for small children sometimes I think my children would to be playing there, making mud pies. But in terms of looking at like foods that maybe the Spanish would adopt from the Indigenous people and vice versa that for sure we've seen happening. That happened during that period pretty clearly where the Spanish wanted to keep their traditional food ways, like they wanted to eat their traditional foods, but because they had to become self-sustaining communities here in Appalache province, any kind of rations or imports from St. Augustine even were very few and far between and so they did things like they brought cows with them and there were some Spaniards that developed large cattle ranches. So there's a lot of beef that was eaten here in Appalachia province. That was not eaten at St. Augustine. They didn't have the same access to it. There is you know fish that's being eaten. It seems like at least in St. Augustine the Spaniards were eating larger fish than the Indigenous population and the record for the Indigenous populations of fish eating goes back hundreds and thousands of years and they're all you know, very consistent what they were eating and then the Spaniards came in and they were eating bigger fish like mullet. They start eating a lot of mullet and big mullet and mullet can get pretty hefty in terms of fish size. Or the Spaniards were eating fish that were caught in deeper ocean waters versus things that could be caught in the estuaries. Some of that may have been, you know, bringing their fishing technologies with them from places in Spain because you know where they may have come from in Spain may have been coastal kind of deep-water Atlantic Ocean and that's how they knew how to fish or maybe

they were sailors and they knew how to learn how to fish on boats which would be hook and line, kind of deep water stuff. So it's lots of questions, not enough time to answer them all.

00:17:26 **Chelsi**

Yeah, but it is interesting to look at how foodways change out of necessity when people transplant themselves geographically. Just because one plant might grow in Spain won't necessarily grow in the southeast of the US and vice versa

00:17:47 **Tanya**

exactly

00:17:49 **Chelsi**

so, are their recipes that, and this might be something that you've seen in some of the older cookbooks, that for example have like handwritten notes in them where they've been like scratched out and they said "oh well, like we can't get X here, but you can sub in this amount of y to do something similar"?

00:18:10 **Tanya**

I would love to see that cookbook that had hand written notes in it. So, you know, the book that I'm thinking of was written by Juan Altamiras and he was a Franciscan Friar. I think it was written the fifteen hundreds and it's probably been updated by other individuals since then. It's one of those like cookbooks that has almost a life of its own after he wrote it down. It then went on to I think to be added on by other individuals but I've not seen that kind of individual notation I would love to. I imagine that many people just had recipes in their heads and that a lot of the cookbooks from that time period were written for people that had to cook for more than their family. So where I have my own personal collection of cookbooks right that I use for my family, but some of the recipes in these books would have you making like cookies for a hundred people or something and so clearly it's you know for a banquet hall or visiting dignitaries or something. Now I will say in these, some of the recipes that I've read they do incorporate things like turkey which is Indigenous to the Americas

00:19:26 **Emily**

that's cool

00:19:27 **Tanya**

It is pretty cool and actually my library at my university just had this great thing going on in November it was called the Great Rare Books Bake-Off and it was very cool. They picked a different type of recipe for every week, so one week was appetizers and another was main dishes or side dishes and I was in it for the desert week and and they had a whole blog series going about it and

you could choose recipes from any of the rare historic cookbooks in the special collections at our library or anywhere, you know, any kind of historic cookbook. So I actually chose a recipe from, while I try to get it from the Altamiras book, but I had a hard time finding a dessert recipe that sounded dessert-y to me, like some of it was more like rice pudding type stuff and I'm sorry for all those people that love rice pudding, but to me, it's not really like dessert enough

00:20:23 **Emily**

Oh my husband's Portuguese and the deserts tend to be very like, either very eggy or very yeah lots of rice.

00:20:29 **Chelsi**

And a couple hundred years ago you definitely have different ingredients that are available. We are unfortunately the end of this segment, but I really want to hear the end of this story. So after the break, we'll come back and talk about making food from recipes that are hundreds of years old

00:20:46 **Emily**

And that we need a new Netflix series.

00:21:05 **Chelsi**

Hi everyone and welcome back to the Women in Archaeology Podcast. On today's episode we've been joined by Tanya Peres and so far we've been talking a little bit about her work with foodways in the Southeastern portion of the United States and as we ended the last segment, we were talking about doing some experimental archaeology through baking historic recipes. And Tanya, I think you said you were making a dessert and struggling to find a dessert that was dessert-y enough.

00:21:35 **Tanya**

Yeah,

00:21:35 **Chelsi**

Do you want to fill us in on the rest of that story?

00:21:38 **Tanya**

Sure. So yeah, I wanted something that was dessert-y enough for this Great Rare Books Bake Off because I knew I was going to have to eat it at least a little bit and I was going to make it so my kids would want to eat it. So I wanted something that wouldn't go to waste. I also wanted something that had an ingredient from the Americas like if it was a historic recipe, I wanted it to not just be sugar and butter and flour. And after looking through the translated version of Altamiras cookbook all I was finding was you know, some kind of rice pudding type dish or apples, baked apples, which is not

exciting enough, sorry for those people that love baked apples. I reached out to one of my colleagues at the University of West Florida, John Worth who is a historic archaeologist and translates Spanish documents from the 15th through 17th centuries. And I know that he has lots of documents translated that he hasn't published the translations because there's not enough time in the day. So I contacted him and you know said here are my requirements: It can't be ingredients that are super difficult to find, it has to be tasty, and has to have at least one ingredient Indigenous to the Americas. Can you help me out?

00:23:01 **Emily**

That's a great list.

00:23:04 **Tanya**

That actually would be like a fun, like you said we should have a Netflix show. And there you go. You can have these little challenges, right?

00:23:10 **Emily**

I already see a zoom video chat where it's like we do this digitally and just like, okay who's gonna be Paul, who's gonna be Prue?

00:23:23 **Tanya**

I like it very much. I think we'd have a lot of volunteers. So he was kind enough to actually go through and find recipes and then translate them for me. And he went through there's a cookbook by Juan de la Mota, but it's a recipe for Bizcochos. And I think the original recipe is called Vizcochos de Saboya and this is from around 1755. So a more recent than the Spanish Colonial stuff I work on but not too much. If it's written down it was around before 1755 and in my blog post, it lists out the entire recipe and I remember reading it and I was like is this for real? Like 8 egg white and then a pound of sugar, which you then had to like push through a sieve and dry on a drying rack and it was just all these crazy things that I was like, wow sounds interesting, has pork lard in it. I don't know, it was getting to be a bit much. So I was like, okay Vizcochos, you know is a popular recipe still so I did some of course Google searching and found a recipe that was a more modern version of chocolate Bizcochos and then I updated it even more just using stuff that I had in my house. Plus I wanted to add cinnamon to it, which the original didn't call for. So so I ended up making a modified version and I included the recipe on the blog post and it turned out, so I cooked it as a bread like in a loaf pan instead of as cookies, and it was it was very good. I used chocolate chips that were sweetened with stevia that my husband brought home. I don't know they were fine. They didn't taste very different but it was clearly very different from the original recipe which was more just you know, Bizcochos than we can handle at my house. So it was a very fun experiment and I would definitely like to do more of those. I think those are the kinds of things we should do. We should revisit some of these

old recipes to see how cooking has changed given the modern convenience of the kitchen equipment that will have

00:25:39 **Emily**

That's really interesting. I do wonder, I mean considering that kind of recipe they would have had probably even further back, have had a lot of those ingredients somewhat readily available like sugar. Maybe?

00:25:53 **Chelsi**

I think some of them but I'm just watching the very first season of The Great British Bake Off when they actually traveled around to different estates rather than just being at one and talked to historians and curators at museums and chefs about old recipes and they made a traditional English pudding from like the sixteen hundreds.

00:26:20 **Emily**

Mmm.

00:26:20 **Chelsi**

It didn't have any sugar in it. It was like flour and lard and was apparently very dense and stodgy and even if some of these ingredients were available, you know in moving into the 1700 and 1800 like yes people could get sugar. But who could get sugar? And you know, like was that an everyday common ingredient or was that something that was just seen among the wealthier class and how that kind of interplays?

00:26:52 **Tanya**

Yeah, that's a good point. I mean there were other types of sweeteners besides sugar and any experienced cook knows how to substitute in things like honey for sugars and I know specifically with like the Franciscans, they tended to have their own gardens and I'm thinking like the Franciscans over in Spain or Italy maybe even had raised their own honey bees. I'm trying to think I visited Assisi in 2007 and I feel fairly certain if I can remember that far, you know that far back in time that we visited a monastery outside of Assisi that had a very thriving honeybee colonies, I guess multiple and they sold bottled honey there and it was one of those like, it was a long time tradition for them. So honey is more or less easily substituted for sugar. If you can't get sugar then there are other things that maybe you could sub in for it.

00:27:57 **Kirsten**

Well, and it makes me a little bit curious. In the last segment we talked a little bit about like availability of things in the Americas that weren't available in Europe and vice versa. I would be

curious, granted this would be in Florida so it's a significant distance still, but depending on the trade networks that might have been in place would maple sugar or maple syrup have been available?

00:28:27 **Tanya**

That's a good question because the maple syrup comes from so far north. I don't know because Spain really didn't go you know, they stayed in the Southeast. They didn't really push further north. They were trying to get back to the Gulf Coast, like they were trying to stay on the Gulf Coast more or less. They were looking for gold and whatnot. Yeah. I was trying to think if there were other types of things that could be used as a sweetener. I mean wine can be sweet and so you do see recipes like, you know Apple stewed in wine which would have brought out their sweetness or even fruits themselves at the height of ripeness can be very sweet and so you might incorporate fruit, mashed fruits or something into a dessert.

00:29:10 **Kirsten**

Yeah, like dates is something that's popularly used today for people that can't have cane sugar, coconut sugar. Obviously, these are things that wouldn't have been available then but it does make you wonder a little bit about like what fruits would have been that sweet locally that could have been an easy go to or thought of as possible substitute by the Franciscans and some of that depends on the how flexible they may have seen their foods because depending on the era and obviously the European culture, certain things were seen as accessible or as acceptable to bring into the European diet. Whereas other things later or in other areas may not have been and obviously good examples of that are all of the Indigenous American foods that were exported to Europe and you mentioned turkey earlier as one of those but as like with western expansion, you know, the U.S. moved westward most Indigenous foods that were newly encountered during that period were not seen as acceptable

00:30:29 **Kirsten**

foods and it's a very different way that they would or wouldn't incorporate things versus like you get off a boat and you have been eating the same food, or flour, or rations for months, you know anything might look apatizing

00:30:56 **Chelsi**

It kind of makes me wonder about the perception of sugar and the perception of sweetness. Obviously in the world today sugar is added to everything. You look at ingredients list of things that you would never in a million years expect to have sugar in it and like there it is- high fructose corn syrup or cane sugar, beet sugar, whatever it is, but I remember for example, I was doing some archaeology on a boat so we did not have ready access to a shop sometimes for a couple weeks on end. And when we did have access to a shop we were more concerned about making sure that there

were like good nutritious staples that would keep us going through long long days in the field. So for two and a half months, I didn't eat hardly any condensed sugar, like not candy bar, no ice cream, no soda, that sort of thing. And when I came back from that trip, I was like, oh, yeah I haven't had any Ben & Jerry's in a while. I'm gonna have some cookie dough ice cream. I remember taking a bite of it and just being like what am I eating? That is so sweet. So just just modern perceptions, and modern preoccupations with sugar and sweetness. Would have been that important?

00:32:21 **Tanya**

Yeah, that's a good question. I mean I think of sugar as being something that is, in very small quantities, kind of necessary for humans, right? Like we do need sweetness in our diets sometimes not all the time. So, I don't know. I don't know. It's a good question because I know in the ethnohistoric document of European men that kind of explored or wandered around the Southeastern US and took notes on what Indigenous peoples were eating. They found Indigenous food to be sour and not always to their liking and a lot of that had to do with the use of maize here in the Indigenous Southeast and that just like in Mexico and other places that relied heavily on maize for their subsistence. It's you know, mixed with like ash or ...

00:33:24 **Kirsten**

lime or something

00:33:24 **Tanya**

Thank you I want to say lye, which is soap. So that's not it. But like a wood ash or something to help break it down so it's nutrients are bioavailable and that can make the porridges that are made out of this mixed maize sour tasting and so I think when the Europeans adopted corn, they turned the name into corn instead of maize, when they adopted corn into their diets that they kind of dropped that part of the foodway and the processing of it because it wasn't to their maybe liking taste-wise. But of course then it turned into a very terrible public health situation because there was widespread pellagra everywhere because of it.

00:34:14 **Emily**

Yeah just for our listeners. What is pellagra?

00:34:18 **Tanya**

Pellagra is, it's a deficiency, I think I want to say it's niacin. I'll have to look up the exact vitamin and mineral that you end up being deficient in. But if you have a diet that is heavily reliant on things like corn and not fresh fruits and meats or even like milk or something, which is what a lot of poor farmers in Europe and even here in the United States in like the 1920s and 1910s relied upon, that you get this terrible disease or sickness which you know, it starts off with like diarrhea and you can't

eat, your skin becomes like kind of scaly and you know, eventually you can die from it. It's a very, very nasty disease to have

00:35:10 **Chelsi**

That does not sound pleasant

00:35:11 **Emily**

It's like sprinkle some ash in there. Come on guys.

00:35:14 **Tanya**

Yeah, right. It's like or drink it with fresh milk or something, you know something that's fresh.

00:35:19 **Emily**

Yeah, I am wondering so with the experience you had with the one recipe. Are there any other recipes you've seen in your studies and whatnot either from Indigenous cultures or from the Spanish that you're like, I really want to give that a try?

00:35:37 **Tanya**

Yeah, so I teach a class on foodways archaeology and the last few times I've taught it I have taught it based on Spanish Colonial period recipes because we have more of those than we do of the Indigenous recipes. So I do include Indigenous recipe sometimes but usually we focus on Spanish recipes, but during the class the students choose a historic recipes from a list that I provide and they have to research all of the ingredients and write a paper on it and they have to cook the dish and then in normal times, right when we're not in the middle of a pandemic, they will bring the dish either to the class if it's during the spring semester or summer semester, or for the fall semester we time it so that they will make the dish and bring it to our department's annual pig roast that we have every year and so we have a whole table of these, historic Spanish dishes and it's kind of become a thing that people look forward to if they know I'm teaching the class and so we can sample, you know, different kinds of recipes maybe based on, sometimes they're based on Indigenous ingredients to the Americas like squash so like a butternut squash dish or something and I've had the apples with Red Wine Ragu that's in the Altamiras cookbook that I didn't want to make for the Great Rare Books Bake-Off and they're fine. It's fine. It's not my favorite thing, but you know, it's always interesting to try these different recipes out.

00:37:10 **Chelsi**

And it's such great teaching practice. I did a similar thing for a Classics class that I took in undergrad and I remember that recipe and I remember kind of the sensory experience of cooking it and what it smells like. It smelled great and then it came out of the oven and it sat for 30 minutes and it turned

into a brick, You had to soak it to not break your teeth off. But I have these strong, visceral, emotive memories associated with that and it's such a great teaching practice to get your students or yourselves, if you're exploring a new topic, to experience it in a different way, to engage in a more organic human way than just reading a book. That's really amazing that's the assignment that you give to your students

00:38:04 **Tanya**

Thanks. Yeah. It's definitely you know, it's a favorite. It's really fun. I even will make something, like I'll wait till the students choose from the list and then I'll look at what's left over and the last time we did it was in the fall of 2019 and I made a Spanish torta, you know, like an egg and potato dish - gosh, it was so good and it was the first time I'd made one in a cast iron skillet, you know the the real way of doing it not cheating in a pan or something and baking it in the oven and it was it was amazingly delicious and it was very popular at the pig roast, it went very fast. I've made it several times since then just to eat, you know, it's like oh well, look, I found a new recipe because my family will eat it. So I'll make it

00:38:49 **Kirsten**

I have definitely had personal obsessions with historic cooking blogs and YouTube channels and stuff that will kind of look into- this was a number of years ago. I can't remember the name of the blog. There was a woman who took some of the early 19th century Victorian cookbooks from the US and tried to duplicate the process, not just the recipes themselves but also because of, as you mentioned in your introduction, how cooking was done is so significantly different like how that can affect the flavor and also just the process itself. It's hard to follow a recipe that's cooking something over an open fire or in a, you know cauldron in a fire, on your electric stove, you know?

00:39:53 **Tanya**

Right and also, I mean the idea of you know, we have three meals a day and we might cook for two of them or maybe all three of them now that we're home all the time and that's, I don't think cooks in the past cooked separate meals three times a day.

00:40:09 **Kirsten**

Oh, yeah.

00:40:10 **Tanya**

Yeah. I think it was more of a like here, I'm going to make this big pot of stew and it's going to stay warm on the fire and you can come get some when you're hungry kind of thing. And on you know, the idea of we have electric stoves or I have a gas stove and oven but it's still electrically lit and I don't have to make a fire in my oven when I want to cook something, but I did tell my husband after

I made the bizcochos recipe that I wanted him to build a Forno in the backyard which you know is an outdoor oven.

00:40:38 **Kirsten**

Yes.

00:40:38 **Tanya**

He kinda looked at me sideways and was like...sure

00:40:44 **Kirsten**

That would be

00:40:47 **Chelsi**

So we'll all cross our fingers that you end up with an outdoor oven and that does bring us to the end of our second segment. This has been a super fascinating conversation on experimental archaeology and cooking so stay tuned for all the fun conversation that will continue in the next segment.

00:41:14 **Chelsi**

Hi everyone and welcome back to the Women in Archaeology podcast. In the last segment we were talking a little bit about some experimental archaeology and recipes from historic sources that we like making and as the last 40 minutes or so should tell you, there is obviously tons of scope to do some super, super interesting research looking at foodways, and I understand Tanya that you are now working for the University of Alabama Press or an editor for them and you're looking for books submissions?

00:41:48 **Tanya**

Yes. So I am a new series editor for the University of Alabama Press. So not working for the University, just an editor for their press series and the series is called Archaeology of Food and my book Bacon, Bourbon, and Black Drink, which I co-edited with Aaron Deter-Wolf of the Tennessee Division of Archaeology, was the first book published in that series and three additional books have been published in their Feeding Cahokia, one about salt in eastern North America, and another that's a more global view of food and the human past. And then I know there are a number of books in the pipeline and various stages of publication, but we are currently looking for people to submit their book ideas and book proposals for the series and they can reach out to me via email about that and we can talk and if they're not sure what a book proposal needs to include I'm very happy to answer any questions about that and it's very exciting to have a series dedicated to the archaeology of food and the different ways that we can think of, you know food in the past and how archaeology

intersects with it. So it's not limited to just one kind of food or one time period or the Southeastern US it's meant to be a global series.

00:43:10 **Kirsten**

Very nice.

00:43:11 **Chelsi**

Yeah sounds amazing. I'm looking forward to reading those books as they come out.

00:43:15 **Tanya**

Yeah, me too. I can't wait. I mean I know there are people out there and hopefully people that are listening to this podcast that have some ideas they want to share with us. So I'd be happy to read them.

00:43:26 **Emily**

Awesome.

00:43:27 **Chelsi**

That sounds fabulous. I do think for this last segment we are going to shift a little bit to talk about the food and the holidays and also just kind of things that are going on with covid-19. I know a lot of people traveled for Thanksgiving in the US and I know here in the UK we've been given a five day window to travel over the Christmas period to see family but there is concern, and I think it's justifiable, about covid cases rising and spikes that can be seen from families getting together over the holiday. And obviously this has been a super hard year for everyone. It's been nine months, but it feels like an absolute age and we still want to feel like we're together at the holidays and food is a great way to do that. So, I don't know Tanya do you just want to jump in talk about some of the ways that food is culturally important and what it means to people.

00:44:30 **Tanya**

Yeah. I mean, I think that, you know food allows us to share connections with family members, of course, but also, ancestors right. People from our past. We like cooking things the way our grandmother, great-grandmother, grandfather, great-uncle or somebody did it and that's part of our story and it's part of the story we share with, you know, our partners and our children and it's just a shared part of humanity. And even if we have recipes that aren't written down their in our head and they were told to us by, you know, an elder or someone in our family that that allows us to carry on that tradition. It is a pretty neat way to be, to be connected because it's you know, the recipe itself so all of the ingredients and directions and then it's the actual doing of the recipe and then the eating of the recipes. So there's a lot of connection on multiple levels there.

00:45:28 **Chelsi**

Yeah, definitely. I know I mentioned previously that I woke up very early to buy this Norwegian flatbread because it's super time intensive and you need like a giant griddle to make these flatbreads on and I just don't have the space in my very small flat but the recipe that I was talking about is one that's you know make as you can and to taste. There aren't really measurements and it's something that came over from Norway when my family emigrated to the US in the 1800s so it's the same recipe that generations of people in my family have made and there's a lot of connection there and it you know, it's nice to know at Christmas time that my parents are probably going to be making it, my sister's probably going to be making it. And even though I live 3,000 miles away from one of them and 6,000 miles away from the other it still makes us feel like we're together.

00:46:36 **Tanya**

Yeah. I mean that's so true in even a non-covid-19 times right. We can't always be with all of our family members, but we can still have some kind of shared experience through those family recipes. We do, you know similar things and my family like at Thanksgiving, especially . I'm thinking of my sister and I both love to cook and we love to host Thanksgiving and we take turns but she lives in Tennessee and I live in Florida, so it's not always possible to be together. And so when we're not together we talk on the phone, you know leading up to Thanksgiving about our shopping experiences and what is our menu. Like we have a menu that we each come up with and we even have a shared Pinterest board about new recipe ideas

00:47:21 **Chelsi**

I love that

00:47:22 **Tanya**

And it's really yeah. We it's a private one so we can really just put our you know things that we particularly like on there and then we realized like once we had small children around us that talking on the phone and trying to cook always meant that then the small children would come find us, so it made it more difficult to talk on the phone. So we started texting. We do a lot of texting of you know, what time does the turkey need to go in the oven if I'm trying to eat at four o'clock and this big of a turkey. And we have this whole like method of cooking a turkey in a brown paper bag that she shared with me a number- like 10 no probably more like 15 or 16 years ago now and yes, I did say I don't eat meat but I still cook the turkey at my house every year and it's perfect every time

00:48:08 **Emily**

Of course.

00:48:10 Tanya

Because of the recipe she gave me. But then I have to make, like she makes her own kind of stuffing and I make the stuffing recipe the way by husband's mom makes it because that's what he always liked and it's a good recipe. So I make that recipe but with my own little spin on it so that instead of having like a casserole dish of stuffing his mom always rolled it into balls like slightly larger than a meatball or something, but then I found that it took up too much space in my oven trying to finish up all the different dishes, so I started putting them in muffin tins. I have like cupcake pans that are just six cups at a time and I can make them in my toaster oven. While everything else is cooking in the oven. So we call them stuffin muffins and they're good. They're so good. I like want some right now and the cranberry sauce recipe that I make I got that out of a magazine a number of years ago, but now my sister and my mother-in-law make it and so every year my mother-in-law text me like, what's the recipe again, and I'm like, oh, it's just, you know, one bag of cranberries to one cup of sugar to one cup of apple cider like super easy, but you know, we always want to make sure we get it right. So I look forward to that kind of interaction every year because it's fun and it's like that's what we talked about at that time every year. Those kinds of recipes. It's pretty fun.

00:49:33 Kirsten

Yes.

00:49:34 Emily

That's really cool. To jump in I guess so on the opposite end of the spectrum of Norwegian flatbreads and these wonderful sounding turkeys and stuffin muffins. I am from a very Midwestern family. So it's all about the casserole.

00:49:51 Chelsi

Yeah.

00:49:52 Tanya

A Hotdish, isn't that what they're called a Minnesota?

00:49:54 Emily

In Minnesota, but I'm from Ohio and our big thing on Christmas, and it's hilarious because my brother and I both insist on making it even when we're apart, and it is that kind of like communal thing cause we know my mom's gonna have it, and my brother's gonna have it, and I'm going to have it and my brother's wife and my husband thinks like the weirdest thing but so you chop up a whole bunch of white bread and you cube it and let it go stale and then is you pour a cup of cream of mushroom soup, cup of milk over all of that then you'll whip up a whole bunch of a Eggs, pour that on top of that then you slice up a whole bunch of those little Beanie Weenies, you know little

miniature sausages, throw it on and then literally add like a pound of shredded cheddar, bake it, you've got Christmas morning breakfast.

00:50:57 **Tanya**

Wow.

00:51:05 **Emily**

Oh, yeah, so literally I've had that probably every year since I was probably a toddler. It's like the standard. I remember it every year and like a lot of other family members make it, my mom says she's been making it forever and she can't even remember when she started making it and then there's this recipe that my aunt's make it more than my family does but I've made it a few times and I really love this recipe. It's my great-grandmother's cinnamon roll recipe. This my great-grandmother who lived on a dairy farm in West Virginia, they were self-reliant and she apparently like she got up at 4 a.m. and started cooking and you know wasn't done until she went o bed. And you know, she made her own bread, her own cottage cheese, her own everything. And then she had a loom and so she made fabric. She's just sounded like a hardcore, hard-working lady and so her cinnamon rolls are just amazing. It's just this very yeasty dough I mean it's just the best cinnamon roles ever. So that's it for me, but it's just that like culture, that family we;re just like yes, that's from West Virginia. This is from Ohio. This is from wherever that make me feel very at home.

00:52:11 **Chelsi**

Well and it doesn't have to be someone you're blood-related to. Your cinnamon roll story reminded me, I haven't thought about this in years because I haven't had one of these cinnamon rolls since I went to University and but I grew up in a little half circle that there were five houses and three of the houses had either young kids or kids who were just old enough to babysit so we formed a pretty tight relationship with with my neighbors and the kids are constantly playing out on that circle together and you know in each other's houses and one of them had a backyard pool, so pool partyies and like it was a good place to grow up. But one of the neighbors, it was a Jewish family, but she knew Christmas was very important and that it was nice to have warm things Christmas morning, but that if we'd all been to you know midnight service, which was a tradition in my family and in the other neighbors that waking up super early in the morning to make cinnamon rolls was something that was not necessarily the thing you wanted to do. So from my earliest Christmas memories until I went away to University, every Christmas morning she would wake up at four o'clock in the morning and make cinnamon pecan sticky rolls.

00:53:34 **Tanya**

Oh my God

00:53:35 **Chelsi**

For both families and she would show up at 9:30 in the morning and leave an insulated dish on the porch so that if we weren't awake yet, she wasn't waking anybody up.

00:53:45 **Emily**

Ooohh,

00:53:47 **Chelsi**

To have fresh, hot out of the oven rolls. I should, I should contact her and see if I can get that recipe.

00:53:53 **Tanya**

That's really neat.

00:53:54 **Chelsi**

Thank you for reminding me Emily

00:53:58 **Emily**

That is a lovely memory

00:53:58 **Kirsten**

That is awesome.

00:54:01 **Emily**

I want to be her neighbor.

00:54:05 **Chelsi**

Yeah, she is a nice lady.

00:54:05 **Kirsten**

Yes all of the connections and that's I think a really great way to bring the holidays home when you can't go home I guess is the best way to put that. You know recipes that you are connected to through memory through ancestry. Earlier, I think it was actually during one of the breaks I had mentioned I was really excited that Tanya had made bizcochos as her cookie choice because I recently learned from a relative of mine. I'd received a recipe of bizcocheetos from New Mexico where my family's from and I still have family there, but I didn't really know them growing up. So learning and finding these connections to parts of my family that have been, I wouldn't say lost me but just distant and that I've been reconnecting with in the last couple of years is really a neat addition and also Emily's bit as well about including aspects of her husband's family's meals and the

way that those come together and that's something that I know we have some close friends that we won't be getting together with this year. Obviously. They usually come from Seattle down to Portland and we will often have a big Christmas or Thanksgiving dinner. And the funny thing is that many of us have severe either food allergies or other intolerances. So I end up, it's become my thing on a personal level to take these on as challenges to make like their favorite childhood dishes. That's something that they can actually eat.

00:55:58 **Chelsi**

You're the best

00:56:00 **Kirsten**

It's super fun. So you know, even if it's something that like you find later that you can't have or you know, your diet restricted to an example could even be like Christmas enchilades or tamales, both of which have been a thing in the past occasionally in my family and contain either tomato or pepper sauce and anyone who has acid reflux may not be able to partake so being creative with trying to form fit these old memory recipes, or even just contacting distant relatives or people that you haven't talked to in a long time to get the recipes and that was one thing I appreciated Tanya about what you're talking about with reaching out to family to have those conversations about like what was that one thing that like you had to know on this recipe to get right.

00:56:59 **Tanya**

Yeah, I mean it is, you know, definitely like get those recipes while your family members are still around. I have multiple three-ring binder notebooks of recipes things that I've pulled out of magazines or friends have you know, shared their family recipes with me or recipes from my own family members, and I've always wanted to put together like a family cookbook to give to my other family members but the one I imagined in my head is super complicated. And so I don't have time to do it and I did try starting a family cookbook blog like, you know, so I could post the recipes online for the family members to go find but I apparently am the only person that uses it. So at least it's still there for me when I can't remember the recipe for whatever it is that I'm trying to make I can go find it. But one thing I did want to say for any of the listeners that don't feel that they're a very good cook or that they don't know how to cook. You know, you have to try and all cooks have started somewhere right, with very little knowledge of how to do it and thinking back about my learning to cook. You know, my mom taught me how to cook some things and my grandmother taught me how to cook some things but for the most part I just did it. I just started cooking for myself and my brother and I lived together as roommates in college, and so we would cook together and try to recreate recipes from our grandmother or just come up with recipes that we liked, you know, we would perfect certain things and that's what we became known for and then being exposed to other cultures foods through my friends in college was a really cool experience and I learned how to

make additional dishes from you know, their family members and reading cookbooks. I read cookbooks like a, like a book and cooking magazines. You know, there are a lot of blogs and I still do get some recipes from blogs, but I have found that not all blog recipes are tested well enough that they're foolproof. And so if you're just starting out, I don't recommend getting random recipes off Pinterest because they're not for sure going to work, like go to tried and true recipes, websites, or cookbooks, or cooking shows on TV and and try those out. That way you're less likely to fail and then you know feel like you don't want to try it again, because sometimes you have to try recipe several times before you get it just the way you want it.

00:59:40 **Chelsi**

Yeah, so I will throw out there I have, cooked is probably the wrong word, but crunchy spaghetti before so just keep going, keep trying

00:59:55 **Tanya**

I always burn spaghetti in my instantpot but I keep trying because I'm going to figure out how to do it.

00:59:58 **Chelsi**

Exactly and that does bring us to the end of our episode for today. But hopefully you've come up with some good

01:00:07 **Chelsi**

ideas for how to still feel like we're together this holiday season, even when, for the health of each other, it's really better that we stay physically separated and always lovely to have everyone listen. Emily, Tanya and Kirsten thank you so much for coming on. This has been a of fabulous conversation.

01:00:26 **Kirsten**

It's been so much fun.

01:00:29 **Tanya**

It has been a lot of fun. Thanks

01:00:30 **Emily**

Tanya. Thank you so much for coming. This has been a blast.

01:00:34 **Chelsi**

Yes, if you are interested in coming on the show in 2021 or you have thoughts on this or any of our other shows. You can always reach out to us on Twitter @WomenArchys or email us at

womeninarchaeology@gmail.com. And you can also check out the blog and I think if you keep a weather eye on the blog you may see one or two recipes from the hosts. pop up on the blog in the coming weeks.

01:01:02 **Emily**

Who wouldn't want the recipe for the beanie weenie casserole

01:01:06 **Chelsi**

Who wouldn't

01:01:06 **All**

[Laughter]

01:01:13 **Chelsi**

So on that note, Happy Holidays. Happy New Year. And let's all hope 2021 is a bit brighter. woohoo