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University of Alberta

Cookin' Up Rhymes: The Significance of Food in Latin Hip Hop

By

Meagan Miller

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## Introduction and Objective

Food and hip hop compliment each other like rice and beans. As mediums of artistic expression—providing a means to communicate ideas, beliefs, values, and identity—the two share many overlapping qualities. Food, just as hip hop, can be highly improvisational, cathartic, and used to build community. Both cultural productions brings people together through shared interests and experiences, creating a sense of camaraderie amongst those united. Furthermore, food and hip hop are inextricably linked, each influencing the other and generating new avenues of expression.

Food is a popular inspiration for hip hop and, over the past decade, there has been emerging evidence of how hip hop influences food. This phenomenon is observable through the culinary professionals and hip hop artists that have successfully traversed domains. Some chefs have gone on to become famed hip hop artists known for their culinary expressions. Action Bronson is an example of a rapper who was a respected fire-flame gourmet chef before he made his rap debut in 2011 (Bradley, “F\*ck, Thats Successful). Likewise, hip hop artists have moved from the studio into the kitchen to infuse hip hop into dishes. Cooking shows like *F\*ck, That’s Delicious* and *Martha & Snoop’s Potluck Dinner Party* are recent examples of mainstream manifestations of the relationship between food and hip hop, both featuring rappers preparing and eating meals as of 2016. Paralleling this phenomena, we can observe an expanding library of hip hop cookbooks. While many publications include punny recipes inspired by favourite hip hop artists, such as the ‘Public Enemiso Soup’ found in *Rapper’s Delight: The Hip Hop Cookbook*, rappers have taken it upon themselves to publish their own cookbooks. For example, Coolio’s book *Cookin’ with Coolio: 5 Star Meals at a 1 Star Price* offers ‘ghetto gourmet’ recipes and 2 Chainz’s digital cookbook *#MEALTIME* is filled with recipes of his favourite meals

to eat while on tour (furthermore, these cookbooks shed light on the lives of the rappers, providing a way for fans to get to know their idols more intimately through foods). In addition to hip hop cookbooks, there has also been a recent trend of hip hop themed restaurants. Menus are planned around hip hop music, often evoking the favourite foods of hip hop's legends or crafting dishes based on famous raps. Perhaps what lends to this interplay of indelible lyricism and edible expression is the frequency of which rappers use food as a referent for community building, as a means through which these "ideas, beliefs, values, and identity" are inextricably linked to the tastes and flavours of their lives.

Food has always been a rich site of signification, however, it has not been thoroughly studied in regards to its impact on music. Despite the ubiquity of food in hip hop, few scholarly studies have been conducted on the relationship between the two. It seems that only popular culture outlets have an interest in the topic. Online food magazines, like Bon Appétit, have capitalized on the subject by advertising hip hop related articles, such as a feature on what rapper 2 Chainz eats for breakfast. Other websites highlight the relationship between food and hip hop by listing "the most mouth-watering raps lyrics about food" (Bowdon, "The Most Mouth-Watering Rap Lyrics"). The majority of available information on the intersection of food and hip hop is the equivalent of 'junk food,' feeding readers empty calories in terms of content through lack of analysis and thinly guised interviews. Currently, the most accessible analysis of food in hip hop is a 2017 Noisey article titled *How to Rap About Food* that outlines rapper's relationships with specific foodstuffs like wine and fish. Although this article may be appetizing, it only provides a small taste of the endlessly rich meanings food provides and signifies in this particular genre of music.

While hip hop has recently gained respect and legitimacy in academia—with hip hop studies an established multidisciplinary field of study in select universities—much of the available research lacks Latinos and Latin America. Even though hip hop is a popular vehicle for musical commentary in our world today—transcending its origin in the urban neighbourhoods of New York—it is principally studied as an American cultural product. Only in the past few years has the topic been taken up by scholars around the globe. The recent book edited by Melissa Castillo-Garson and Jason Nichols, *La Verdad: An international Dialogue on Hip Hop Latinidades*, is revolutionary in contextualizing and critically examining Latin hip hop; broadening the definition of what Latin hip hop is, the anthology breaks new ground in hip hop studies by introducing the vast diversity of Latin American hip hop histories and expressions. Other scholars, such as Raquel Z. Rivera, have produced foundational work that addresses the role of Latinos in the development of hip hop since its origin. Focusing specifically on New York Puerto Ricans' contributions to the subculture, Rivera's book *New Yoricans From the Hip Hop Zone* is an important historical introduction to the subgenre and a valuable resource to hip hop studies. However, despite the recent groundbreaking work of scholars, there is a dearth of research that focuses on lyrical content of Latin hip hop. Available scholarship is commonly limited to examinations of the wider hip hop culture—graffiti, breakdancing, and music—situated in Latin American countries or the global impact of Latin hip hop.

For these reasons, the objective of this scholarship is twofold: first, to broaden the lyrical analysis of hip hop to include food studies and; second, to move away from the Americentrism and 'melting pot' politics of hip hop scholarship by focusing on Latin hip hop. By investigating the use of food metaphors in various Latin hip hop songs, this paper aims to determine how Latin hip hop artists use food to convey meaning and represent their unique identity in a globalizing

world. Before exploring the significance of food in Latin hip hop, however, it is imperative to define the limitations of the musical genre.

### **‘What the F\*ck Is Latin Hip Hop?’: Delineations of the Musical Subgenre**

As suggested by its name, Latin hip hop is related to, yet distinct from, hip hop through the key difference of sharing a ‘Latin’ quality. This quality is primarily in terms of linguistics but, in spite of that, hip hop lyrics do not have to be exclusively Spanish to be classified as ‘Latin.’ Instead, they can be written, spoken, or performed in English, Spanish, or a mixture of the two. Bilingualism is a meaningful aspect of identity for many hispanics. Therefore, this paper examines a variety of songs that are written and performed in English, Spanish, and Spanglish to provide a cross section of the hybrid nature of this musical category. However, if we do not define Latin hip hop by language, how should we categorize it?

The term Latin hip hop is inherently imperfect. As with any subgenre of music, Latin hip hop is nearly impossible to strictly define. For the purpose of this paper, the main characteristic of Latin hip hop is that it is produced by an individual of ‘Latin’ origin. While Latin hip hop may also include rap from the Iberian Peninsula, this paper focuses on the music of those who self-identify, either fully or partially, as part of the ethnolinguistic group Latino or have strong ties to the Latino community in terms of language, food, dress, popular culture, and so forth.

Latino is used as a loose category to define the shared history, culture, and language of the territories colonized by Spain. With the increasing growth of Latino populations in Canada and the United States, there is a tendency to naturalize the ties that bind Latinos and to gloss over an assortment of issues, such as: the internal variety within the collective, the specificities of each subgroup, and the historical relationship that each Latino subgroup has to other ethnic

groups. However, there are significant nationalistic and geographical differences amongst Latino populations. While there is no singular Latino experience, this paper strategically uses the term Latin/Latino as a pan-ethnic identity to approach the topic of food and identity formation. Opposed to ‘Latin American’ hip hop, ‘Latin’ hip hop is not limited to the geopolitical borders of Latin America. Given that the United States is home to more than 58.6 million Latinos, it is integral that the distinct cultural identities and issues of Latinos living abroad be considered in tandem to other Latin American populations—migration is an important reality of our modern world and is influential in cultural productions. The term Latin hip hop, therefore, is a broad definition that encompasses divergent styles and themes that reflect the diversity of Latino populations around the world. Before exploring lyrical content and motifs of Latin hip hop, it is paramount to understand the historical background and context of the broader musical genre.

### **The Basics: A Historical Analysis of Hip Hop**

What is hip hop? Most simply, it is a multifarious urban culture that developed during the early 1970s. Although it is difficult to trace the exact origins of the subculture, hip hop derives from the transculturation of black and Latino communities in New York inner-city neighbourhoods. Hailing from the streets of the Bronx, hip hop was the response of youth to the social problems that affected impoverished communities of New York, such as: crime, drug addiction, arson, and unemployment (Hager 3). Hip hop bridged the diverse populations of the neighbourhood as a means for youth to communicate personal and collectivizing experiences; African Americans, Latinos, and West Indians were united under hip hop through their shared legacy of exploitation, oppression, and colonization (Rivera X). As demonstrated by the work of scholar Raquel Z. Rivera, Latinos—specifically Puerto Ricans—have been present since the first

days of hip hop and have contributed immensely to the development of what is known as the ‘four elements’ of hip hop (Rivera 12). Historically, hip hop consists of four components: DJing (disc jockey), MCing (masters of ceremony), breakdancing, and graffiti (Rivera 12). For the purpose of this paper, hip hop is considered as its basic aural experience. That is to say, the combination of DJing and MCing known as rap music. It is important to acknowledge the interconnectedness of these elements in the development of the musical genre.

Hip hop is a highly appropriative music that is based in the musical traditions of afro-diasporic culture (Forman 30). Borrowing inventively from myriad sources, hip hop created new sonic forms that represented the diverse community of the Bronx (Forman 30). The foundational musical influences of the genre are soul, latin funk, and jazz, however, hip hop sources many other afro-diasporic musical and oral traditions from across the Americas and Caribbean (Rivera XI). The use of syncopation, repetition of a certain rhythm and/or melodic phrase, call-and-response patterns, as well as its heavy emphasis on lyrical competition, boasting, improvisation, and commentary on current events relates hip hop to an array of afro-latino musical genres, such as boogaloo, mambo, plena, bomba, and música jíbara, among others (Rivera XI). Hip hop's particular style of rhyming over a musical background, known as rapping or MCing, also evokes numerous afro-diasporic oral traditions (Rivera 30). Scholar David Toop notes the extensive list of rap's forebears, including “disco, street funk, radio DJs, Bo Diddley, the bebop singers, Cab Calloway, Pigmeat Markham, ... acappella and doo-wop groups, ring games, skip-rope rhymes, prison and army songs, toasts, ... all the way to the griots of Nigeria and the Gambia” (Rivera 30). Beyond musical influences, hip hop is based on the appropriation of music technologies (Forman 30). The turntable, mixer, and vinyl record were invested with different meanings and applications in the development of hip hop (Forman 30). The young DJs of the Bronx invented

new techniques for spinning and cueing “break” sections—when the beat is stripped to its barest essence—to create a continuous flow of music (Hager 36). Moreover, musical manipulations such as record scratching—used to make percussive sounds—resemble gourd scrapers found in latin music, further emphasizing the transcultural quality of hip hop (Rivera 39).

Since the 1980s, rap has been the most prominent, popular, and profitable of hip hop’s art forms. The proliferation of hip hop in mainstream culture began with the release of The Sugarhill Gang’s single, *Rapper’s Delight*, in 1979 (Hager 50). As the first popular commercial rap recording, *Rapper’s Delight* became America’s first encounter with the musical genre. The success of the song created a frenzy of rap artists clamouring to record their own albums, flooding the mainstream with hip hop music (Hager 50). Since then, the genre has diversified to involve more complex styles and forms that reflect hip hop’s growing audience. Hip hop has numerous subgenres including, but not limited to: alternative, conscious, freestyle, gangsta, grime, pop, and trap, among an extensive list of regional scenes and styles. The popularity of hip hop has traversed borders, moving outside of the United States to become a trans- and multinational cultural production. Through the processes of globalization, world scenes of hip hop have developed in every continent to represent local cultures.

Over the past few decades, hip hop has become one of the top selling musical genres worldwide and is currently the “most consumed music genre in the U.S.” (McIntyre, “Report: Hip-Hop/R&B Is The Dominant Genre”). It is evident that hip hop is the music of the people, reflecting common interests and issues through its lyrics. In addition to money, sex, and drugs, a popular theme that rappers evoke is food.

### **Food for Thought: The Ubiquity of Food in Hip Hop**

Anyone who listens to hip hop often enough recognizes that food is a lyrical trope of the genre. Food is easily one of the most pervasive obsessions of rappers. Be it drinks, meals, or the act of eating, food has been rapped about since the earliest days of the music. In hip-hop's first commercially successful hit, *Rapper's Delight* (1979), MC Wonder Mike infamously retells his disappointing experience of going over to a friend's house to eat where "the food just ain't no good" ("Sugarhill Gang – Rapper's Delight."). His description of the meal—soggy macaroni, mushed peas, and "chicken that tastes like wood"—is arguably the most iconic and memorable lyrics of the song ("Sugarhill Gang – Rapper's Delight."). As one of the first successful hits, *Rapper's Delight* has seemingly set the example for hip hop artists to discuss the foodstuffs of their lives. Now it is common to find food references in lyrics, song titles, albums, and cover art throughout the genre.

Hip hop artists reference food items in diverse and inventive ways. Food can be used as a badge of pride or social class, a marker of political solidarity, a metaphor for sexuality, an insult, or simply an exclamation of joy. However, food is most often used to symbolize a rapper's high-rolling lifestyle or hustler's credo. The old adage of "you are what you eat" lives on in the rap world, with rappers often flaunting their success through luxury food items. Moreover, at the core of every rags to riches story is the struggle of putting a meal on the table, and rappers often use this literally to refer to their power and success. A classic example is Notorious B.I.G.'s *Juicy* which discusses his rise to the top of the rap game—from "sardines for dinner" to sipping champagne when he's thirsty ("The Notorious B.I.G. – Juicy."). Food is used extensively throughout the genre even if it is used as a non-sequitur to maintain rhyme scheme. One explanation for food's pervasiveness in hip hop is that it holds a tangible significance in the mundane world. It does not require background information or formal teaching to be grasped—

food is a universal reference since eating is a human experience. For this reason, most rap will casually and effectively mention food if not utilize it as thematic subject.

Alongside casual food references, some rappers have taken their relationship with food to a new level of affection. MF DOOM dedicated an entire album to gastronomic references, titled *MM... Food*. Offering a buffet of food based rhymes, DOOM's songs range from topics of "gumbo" to "kookies" and everything in between. In comparison, Action Bronson has developed his own rap style—gastro-rap—using a gourmand's vocabulary and sensibility. His culinary knowledge allows him to prepare over-the-top lyrics about haute cuisine, separating himself from other rappers with lines that boast his expertise—"Got the lamb rack, pan-roasted, laced it with fennel/Little yogurt that been drizzled over/Might be a winner" ("Action Bronson – Nordic Wind."). Other artists mention food as a means of providing dietary advice to improve the health of their communities. For example, Dead Prez instructed listeners in his song *Be Healthy* to live a healthy lifestyle by eating "no meat, no dairy, no sweets/Only ripe vegetables, fresh fruit and whole wheat" ("Dead Prez – Be Healthy."). While rapper's preoccupation with food is often personal, it has been an integral aspect of the music and has shaped the very language of hip hop.

Food is frequently used as slang in hip hop vocabulary. Rappers have reinvented the significance of certain foodstuffs, for example: cheese, cream, or dough are often used to signify currency; beef stands in for grudges; yams indicate heroin or cocaine; broccoli suggests marijuana; and so forth. It is apparent that food has an extensive influence on hip hop and is frequently used as metaphor. As a personal yet communal signifier, food offers a new lens for understanding how hip hop artists express and create identity. Therefore, food as a topic of Latin hip hop is a refreshing approach to interpret how Latinos voice their realities.

## **The Meaning of Food: Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework of this paper borrows from Roland Barthes' *Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption*. While food is anthropologically considered the primary need of human survival, it serves more than to satisfy nutritional values. As Barthes asserts, food is also "a system of communication, a body of images, a protocol of usages, situations, and behaviour" (29). That is to say, food carries social meaning that promote particular aesthetics and characters. Thus, by consuming foods with specific social meanings we symbolically incorporate them into our personal and collective identities—simultaneously expressing identity while producing and reproducing it (Garth 1). This structuralist approach establishes a semiotics of food. Food functions in a sign system that is involved in processes of signification and interpretation (Barthes 29). Specific foodstuffs can be used to represent one's identity while doubly connecting to a wide range of social processes.

Tastes and tasting are not simply a reflection of personal identity but also work to construct collective identity. Just as sharing a meal can create community, food practices unite people through shared values or preferences to create a sense of belonging. Although not specifically related to food, Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Nationalism's Cultural Roots* offers a valuable perspective on nationalism and the creation of communities. Anderson suggests that nations are socially constructed communities imagined by people who perceive themselves as part of that group (256). Such communities are essentially 'imagined' in so far as they are the focus of a sense of belonging shared by people who in the nature of things cannot know each other at first hand (Anderson 256). While Anderson specifically references political nations, 'imagined communities' can be used to philosophize the 'nationalism' one feels towards cultural groups, religions, lifestyles, sports teams, and even foods or food habits. Culinary

practices have the ability to promote a sense of belonging or ‘nationalism’ by signifying cultural ties or shared values. For example, national dishes are popular or traditional foods that are strongly associated with a particular country and often interwoven into a nation’s identity. Likewise, many religions and lifestyles have specific food ideologies that unite members under a shared practice of what they eat or do not eat. Through a shared sense of belonging, food cultures connect different people in global food communities.

Just as food can be used to promote community, it can be used to distinguish different groups. Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of cultural capital offers a valuable perspective on how food can be used to differentiate social classes. Within his wider study of consumption practices, Bourdieu demonstrates that food tastes are embedded within a logic of distinctive class cultures and relationships (Ashley 64). As suggested by Bourdieu, class position is a product of how much capital we possess, the types of capital—economic, cultural, social, symbolic—we possess, and the chances groups have to capitalize on these assets in a particular historical location (Ashley 64). In this model, food offers a symbol for cultural capital—the different ways food is consumed can demonstrate social status (Ashley 66). Given that the bourgeois live without worry of obtaining daily necessities, Bourdieu suggests they often cultivate tastes that are distanced from these needs (Ashley 65). Bourgeois food practices are primarily concerned with the style, presentation, and aesthetic qualities, along with a general preference for ‘quality’ over ‘quantity’ (Ashley 65). In comparison, working-class food practices are characterized through a refusal of the restraints and pretensions of bourgeois culture—they place an emphasis on the ‘biological need’ to eat and the ‘immediate’ satisfactions of eating (Ashley 65). While individual taste may alter these preferences, the food consumption practices of an individual is situated within a wider

framework of class inequality and class struggle to express class identity as well as produce and reproduce class identity (Ashley 67).

Given that food is a representation of identity, it serves as an appropriate medium to discuss and explore how identity is constructed and conveyed in Latin hip hop. Using the cultural theories of Roland Barthes, Benedict Anderson, and Pierre Bourdieu, this paper explores a sample of Latin hip hop songs to examine the ways in which food is used to convey values and create identity. Through the close reading of song lyrics, food metaphors are interpreted and arranged into six broad categories: food and nation, food and class, food and gender, food and sex, food as an insult, as well as food and social problems. While these categories reflect general themes and patterns of how food is used in Latin hip hop, they are not exact.

### **Food Warning: Limitations of the Study**

Latin hip hop has many different musical and thematic styles due to factors such as region and time period. Although this paper attempts to include a wide sample of Latin hip hop, the corpus of songs used cannot be an exhaustive representation of the subgenre. Using convenience sampling to gather examples, artists and songs were chosen based on their accessibility and are not meant to be representative of any movement, region, or trend in Latin hip hop. Furthermore, this research does not intend to catalogue the varying kinds of Latin hip hop used in the sampling. The purpose of this paper is to examine the broad ways in which food has been used to convey meaning in the musical subgenre, not to create a directory of how each style of Latin hip hop uses food as metaphor. The categories used in this paper demonstrate prevalent lyrical motifs concerning food in Latin hip hop, but may not be applicable to all Latin hip hop songs.

Additionally, food can be used in different contexts within the same song. It is not uncommon for certain food stuffs to convey meaning that transgress categories concerning sex, gender, nation, or class. Given that some songs touch on multiple food issues, they may be discussed multiple times in this paper. This is to demonstrate the versatility of food in Latin hip hop and complicate our understanding of food as metaphor.

### **‘Rice, Rum, and Ice’: Food and Nation**

By and large we do not eat a random assortment of foods to satisfy our hunger. Rather what and how we eat, or do not eat for that matter, is a clear indication of, and choice derived from, our personal and collective identities. As previously stated, food habits or practices often connect us to various ‘imagined communities’—particular food habits, diets, and tastes reflect the structure and culture of different nations. Expressed by the development of national cuisine, food is an important element in our political lives and national identities. Linked to shared history and culture, national cuisines reflect the popular or traditional food practices of different nations. In Latin America, most national cuisines or culinary traditions are based in the mixing of pre-Columbian and European food items (Garth 7). This creolization of foods became a symbol of the miscegenation of population and culture in the new world (Garth 7). Although every region has their own customs to reflect their own area, most Latin foods are corn based with beans, squash, or chiles, often supplemented with meat (Garth 8). Even when not the national dish of a country, other popular food items can come to symbolize a nation through their association with particular cultures. In Latin hip hop, many rappers refer to specific national

cuisines as a means to show nationalism or pride for their culture. What follows is an exploration of how national cuisines are used in Latin hip hop.

OG Kid Frost's song *Latin Kings* is a good example of how traditional food items are used to emphasize heritage and feelings of nationalism. While Frost spends much of his lyrics claiming his authority as a "latino fino to the hueso/[with] Respeto, to all [his] gente en el ghetto," he pays special attention to the food that asserts his 'authenticity' as a true chicano rapper ("OG Kid Frost – Latin Kings."). Despite his fame, Frost boasts about his "low profile lifestyle" and love for his "jefita bonita" who is in the kitchen "Cookin frijoles con aguita/Salsita, con tortillas hecho a mano" ("OG Kid Frost – Latin Kings."). These food items—beans, salsa, and handmade tortillas—reflect traditional Mexican cuisine and Frost lists them as a source of pride, stating that "it feels good to be chicano" ("OG Kid Frost – Latin Kings."). Beyond national cuisine, Frost also represents his culture by mentioning other qualities that he purports are Latino, such as "Fumando puros de Cuba/Menudo pa'la cruda/Plantando tomates y lechuga/Sarapes y juaraches/Feelin sucio salvaje en el zoot suit traje/Tomo vino con latinos unidos" ("OG Kid Frost – Latin Kings."). Frost's image of a Latin King plays on popular images of Latinos, such as smoking Cuban cigars while hungover, planting produce like tomatoes and lettuce, wearing long blanket-like shawls and woven shoes or zoot suits, and drinking wine. In this pan-ethnic description, wine becomes a symbol of unity. Frost drinks wine with all the Latinos, united under the imagined community of their shared Latinness or latinidades.

Another example of how national cuisine is used to demonstrate pride for cultural heritage is A.L.T.'s *Refried Beans*. Furthermore, by discussing his love of refried beans, the rapper emphasizes the importance of refried beans in Mexican culture. As a staple food item, A.L.T. states that "[he] can't live without 'em"; he loves refried beans more than any other food

(“A.L.T. – Refried Beans.”). He equates this dependency on refried beans as an experience shared by the entire nation, stating that because he is “Mexican, Mexican, [he] love[s] to eat them” (“A.L.T. – Refried Beans.”). A.L.T. goes on to describe the different ways his mother has traditionally prepared beans, with “a fresh tortilla” and “extra cheese” just as he likes it (“A.L.T. – Refried Beans.”). Refried beans become an allusion to his Mexicanness or mexicanidad.

Princess Nokia’s *Green Line* uses food to demonstrate the diversity of her community and the different cultures that influence her life. Exploring the sprawling and ever-changing areas of New York, Nokia addresses the Afro-Latinx and Italian American communities that add flavour to Green Line, Manhattan. Food is used to celebrate the neighbourhood—“Patsies for the eats/Casablanacas for the meats/La Tropenzas for the bread/Went to Hajis got a philly cheese instead” (“Princess Nokia – Green Line.”). Importantly, Nokia states that she frequents a restaurant named Ollin to “Drink horchata with [her] peeps” because “you know [she’s] Mexican” (“Princess Nokia – Green Line.”). Horchata is a Mexican drink made with rice and is flavoured with cinnamon and sweetened with sugar. In this song, horchata is imbued with ‘authentic’ Mexican culture since that she where she and her Mexican friends hang. Therefore, by drinking horchata, Nokia proves her mexicanidad and pride for her heritage. Furthermore, horchata is used as a means of community building. Given that she drinks it with her friends, the beverage represents community and Latino nationalism.

Mare Advertencia Lirika’s *Mujer Maiz* explores the importance of maize, or corn, in Mexican culture. Lirika candidly states that corn “es parte esencial de la identidad nacional y fundamental en la dieta de los mexicanos,” meaning an essential part of the national diet and fundamental to the diet of Mexicans (“Mare Advertencia Lirika – Mujer Maiz.”). Corn is a staple food for Mexicans and Lirika explains that corn is “indispensable” since it provides both

physical and spiritual nourishment. Referring to the indigenous cosmovision which states people came from corn, Lirika states that corn brought her consciousness; she is a woman made from corn—*mujer maiz*. Corn therefore becomes not only a badge of pride for her *mexicanidad* but more importantly her indigeneity.

The Orishas' *Guajiro* uses food to illustrate the lives of rural workers in Cuba and, in doing so, uphold the socialist values of the Revolutionary government. In Cuba, the *guajiro* is a lifestyle often related to rural or agricultural work, and holds an important position due to the government's encouragement of agricultural work from all of its citizens. This song focuses on the story of a *guajiro* working in the agriculture of sugarcane—one of Cuba's main agricultural products aside from tobacco. The Orishas discuss the hard work involved in the *guajiro* lifestyle, focusing particularly on the food they produce and eat. The food the workers plant directly reflects what they consume: "el arroz de todo el rancho/Un poquito de frijoles, pa mojar en fin de año/Un cachito de boniato, y un trocito de cebolla/Ajo para sazonar, el picadillo de Soja/También recogeré, el tomate en mi tractor" ("Los Orishas – Guajiro."). These food items—rice and beans, sweet potato, onion, garlic, and tomato—become representative of the working class and, in turn, Cuban culture. Despite the fact the *guajiro* can only eat "arroz con pollo, pa fin de año" (meaning rice with chicken for the end of the year) due to their financial position, they still celebrate their work and country with the entire neighbourhood with beer and yuca covered in garlic sauce ("Los Orishas – Guajiro."). Food is evidently a means of creating community and socializing, but also a signifier for Revolutionary Cuba's socialist regime. The hearty food of the agricultural workers represents the progressive social reforms of the government and the socialist principles of the people.

Beyond culinary dishes, food exports also represent the nation from which they come from. Since colonization, Latin America and the Caribbean have been, and continue to be, a place from which companies, governments, individuals, and other entities from all over the world purchase or appropriate goods, labour, and resources (Garth 7). In particular, Latin America and the Caribbean have been exploited for sugar, coffee, and fruit (Garth 7). As national exports of the past and present, these food items have come to symbolize the specific countries on an international scale. Therefore, Latin rappers may call upon such national exports to represent their nation and national identity. Of all the kinds of food exports, alcoholic drinks tend to be the most popularly used food metaphor for nation, with specific liquors internationally recognized as the product of distinct countries. What follows are various Latin hip hop songs that explore the signification of specific food items in national identity and culture.

Mr Yosie Locote's *Celebrando a el estilo mexicano* uses Mexican alcoholic beverages to convey so-called 'authentic' Mexican culture and celebrations. Describing a scene at a ranch with Mariachi and Norteño music, Locote lists the various alcoholic drinks that Mexicans consume at festivities. Tequila is referred to multiple times throughout the song as a drink that is used to toast to the good times. As a liquor distinct to Mexico, tequila represents Mexican culture and identity. Locote references this beverage as something every Mexican drinks, uniting the nation through the social and cultural aspect of the alcohol. Furthermore, in addition to the Mexican beer Corona, the rapper mentions whiskey and Bucannas scotch. Although not Mexican products, these drinks are commonly associated with narcoculture and therefore also represent 'authentic' Mexican culture in the perspective of Locote.

In a similar manner, the Orishas's song *A Lo Cubano* uses Cuban food exports to describe what it means to be Cuban. The rappers declare they "represento ron, mulata, cuba hasta el fin"

(“Los Orishas – A Lo Cubano.”). Describing the ‘Cuban way’ as a bottle of rum and Cuban tobacco, the Orishas use the main national products of Cuba to represent the country. While most tourists also consider Cuba in terms of sun, rum, and cigars, the Orishas allude to a deeper significance of these cultural commodities. Rum refers to Cuba’s long history of a sugar economy. An integral aspect of the national narrative, sugar has shaped Cuba economically, culturally, and politically through its connection to slavery and miscegenation. As one of Cuba’s biggest products, rum is an affordable alcoholic beverage and is largely consumed by the Cuban population. For this reason, the Orishas repeat “Botella'e ron” in the refrain, meaning bottle of rum (“Los Orishas – A Lo Cubano.”). Despite employing cultural stereotypes, the rappers emphasize the importance of the drink in terms of Cuban nationalism and economy.

Likewise, Lapiz Conciente’s *Yo Soy Papa* uses national products of the Dominican Republic to convey his nationalism for the country. The Dominican Republic has traditionally been based on an agricultural economy of sugar, coffee, and tobacco. Conciente uses these commodities to represent his country and the streets he grew up on. He uses his “orgullosa de la calle/el tabaco y el ron”—meaning pride for the street, tobacco, and rum—as a way to express his personal identity through his different forms of nationalism to his community and country (“Lapiz Conciente – Yo Soy Papa.”).

Honourable mentions:

Cafe Tacvba - *Arboles Frutales*

Calle 13 - *Suave*

Delinquent Habits - *Western Ways*

Los Aldeanos - *Mangos Bajitos*

### **Canned Meat and Champagne: Food and Class**

Beyond nation, the ways in which we eat have a basis in class cultures, identities, and lifestyles. As previously mentioned, cultural theorist Pierre Bourdieu demonstrates how our food tastes are far from individual and instead have their basis in the social relationships between disparate groups, and in particular, social classes. Different social classes have particular food tastes and practices that are revelatory of their class culture. For example, bourgeois food preferences are generally more concerned with ‘quality’ and presentation, whereas the working class are more concerned with the ‘biological need’ to eat and prefer foods that satiate hunger from exhaustive work. While specific foodstuffs may be imbued with specific class signification, the ways of treating food and serving food are often more more telling than the resulting food product (Ashley 65). Nevertheless, in Latin hip hop, the cost of a particular food item is usually the most important detail, demonstrating the wealth or ‘authenticity’ of the rapper.

Bourgeois or upper-class foods are often used to express affluence in Latin hip hop. As a means to demonstrate their success, rappers often boast about the expensive foods and drinks that they can afford. Furthermore, many of these food items are used as not only an indicator of wealth, but also a demonstration of ‘cultured’ taste—the rapper’s ability to participate in bourgeois food culture. By subscribing to bourgeois food preferences, rappers gain cultural capital and, in turn, social status; the bourgeois foods or food practices become a testament to their power and prestige. Although Latin hip hop artists reference any number of bourgeois foods in their lyrics, expensive liquors are most frequently used to signify fortune. This trend is presented in the sample of songs below.

Los Rakas' *Copita de champaña* uses champagne to boast about their wealth and refinement. Repeating one phrase—"Una copita de champagna"—the song does little aside from boast about how the rappers drink champagne ("Los Rakas – Copita de champaña."). The signification of the drink provides greater social meaning than present in the lyrics. As an expensive alcoholic beverage, champagne is evidence of the rappers' wealth and success. Furthermore, Los Rakas declare that they drink their champagne in France—the cultural origins of the beverage. By stating this, the rappers emphasize the elegance and refinement of the drink while also raising their cultural capital; France has historically been the country with the most cultural influence and continues to be one of the leading tastemaker for bourgeois culture.

Other songs, such as Delinquent Habits' *Western Ways*, also use champagne as an indicator of wealth. However, as opposed to other examples, this song demonstrates the importance of how food is served and consumed in the signification of class culture. Habits describes his "late-nite binges and the all-nite party" lifestyle as a rapper, fuelled by alcoholic beverages and drugs ("Delinquent Habits – Western Ways."). In addition to "daily gettin' twisted off the herb and Bacardi," the rapper drinks "a little champagne" when he is flying in his jet ("Delinquent Habits – Western Ways."). Although Habits is consuming a drink that is already culturally associated with the upper-class, he further demonstrates his wealth and success through the way in which he consumes the champagne—during a "flight to 30 cities round this land" ("Delinquent Habits – Western Ways."). Furthermore, by stating all of his international destinations, Habits prove his influence and fame across the world, not just in Latin American countries.

Similarly, Lil Supa's *Hambre* uses bourgeois food and taste preferences as a means to legitimize his social position and authority. The rapper states that he "Prefier[e] blanco el vino

para los frutos del mar,” meaning he prefers white wine for his seafood (“Lil Supa’ – Hambre.”). Although relatively simple, this statement is loaded with symbolic meaning. First, it demonstrates Supa’s affluence through his ability to purchase seafood; as a product dictated by market price, seafood can easily be the most expensive food option on a menu. Second, it demonstrates Supa’s fluency in bourgeois food culture; his preference to drink white wine communicates his knowledge of wine pairings—white wine is meant for seafood or white meats, while red wine is for red meats—as well as his refinement in taste. Furthermore, it is evident that Supa’ believes this refinement is an indication of his social authority. He warns listeners to “No trates de engañar a alguien con buen paladar,” meaning do not try to deceive someone with good taste (“Lil Supa’ – Hambre.”). His knowledge of bourgeois food culture make him powerful and someone not to trifle with.

In comparison, lower-class food practices are often used in Latin hip hop to reflect on hardscrabble days. As a subculture, members are often judged on their ‘authenticity’—social identification with hip hop’s urban origins. For this reason, rappers often stress experiences of poverty or hardship which, at its core, is a fight to put a meal on the table. By referencing lower-class foods and the streets they were raised in, rappers attempt to legitimize their place in the hip hop scene. What follows is an exploration of how Latin hip hop artists use lower-class foods to discuss social class and class identity.

Akwid’s *Es mi gusto* uses ‘lowbrow’ food preferences to demonstrate how fame and success have not changed their lifestyle. The rappers unapologetically describe their lives, stating that “el gusto que yo tengo de cerveza y no de vino,” meaning they prefer beer over wine (“Akwid – Es Mi Gusto.”). Beer is a cheap and usually unpretentious alcoholic beverage, whereas wine is a more sophisticated drink that can be much more expensive depending on the

make. By stating that they prefer beer over wine, the rappers articulate that they associate with lowbrow culture. Despite fame and fortune, they do not pretend to have refined or expensive taste. Instead, they proudly do what they want regardless of what others think of them.

Likewise, A.L.T.'s *Refried Beans* contrasts bourgeois foods with traditional Mexican cuisine to proclaim cultural pride and connection to his people. The rapper uses caviar as a comparison to refried beans. As an expensive delicacy, caviar is a bourgeois food that represents the epitome of class and luxury. However, despite “tr[ying] it twice,” the rapper only “want[s] some beans with a side of rice” (“A.L.T. – Refried Beans.”). Refried beans are a staple food in Mexico, providing inexpensive sustenance for those who “can't afford meat” (“A.L.T. – Refried Beans.”). By choosing refried beans over caviar, A.L.T. expresses his pride for his mexicanidad but also his preference for lower-class food items. Even though he has the means to purchase caviar, the rapper conveys his devotion to his people by denouncing the refined food of the bourgeois. Instead, A.L.T. exalts the virtues of refried beans and traditional Mexican cuisine.

In a similar manner, Calle 13's *Baile de los Pobres* uses food to demonstrate the differences of Puerto Rico's social classes. Presenting themselves as the lower-class protagonist of the song, Calle 13 directly compares the food of an upper-class woman with their own. The rappers declare that “tu tomas agua destilada, yo agua con microbios” and “tu comes filet, y yo carne de lata,” meaning you drink distilled water and eat filet whereas I drink water with microbes and eat canned meat (“Calle 13 – Baile de Los Pobres.”). The food they both consume emphasizes the stark difference between the upper and lower classes, especially in terms of sanitation and quality. The distilled water and filet—a lean cut of meat—demonstrate the wealth of the woman and her ability to afford the best quality, whereas the lower-class man's water with microbes and canned meat communicate the little means he has to survive. Although the song

goes on to discuss how these social divides do not matter on the dance floor, Calle 13 uses food as a means to express the lived reality of many Puerto Ricans living in poverty.

Honourable mentions:

Calle 13 - *Tengo Hambre*

Control machete - *Justo N'*

### **‘Soy Fruta Completa’: Food and Gender**

In addition to nationalism and class identity, food consumption and taste can be tied to gender identification. Traditionally, food preparation has been carried out in the private and domestic sphere. For this reason, it has been linked to ideas about the female gender and nurturant mothering. Despite the fact that food production has generally moved to the public sphere—managed by complex laws and ideas about cleanliness and health—the idea that women are responsible for cooking meals for their family endures in many societies. In addition to food preparation, there are countless taken-for-granted assumptions that food consumption and taste reproduce gendered identities. For example, heavy foods, such as steak, are often considered masculine whereas light foods, such as salad, are treated as feminine (Ashley 71). While these gendered tastes are culturally constructed, they are experienced as ‘natural’ because they have become ‘common-sense’ and are embodied as they are reproduced through practice. Although problematic, these gendered tastes often serve to construct individuals’ food habits or preferences and are affirmed through social interactions (Ashley 71). In Latin hip hop, rappers call upon gendered notions of food and food preparation to convey understandings about gender

and gender roles. While some hip hop artists reassert many of these taken-for-granted assumptions, others challenge these beliefs to reimagine gender.

OG Kid Frost's *Latin Kings* is an example of how some Latin rappers reproduce traditional gender roles through food and food preparation. Frost states how his "jefita bonita"—most likely signifying his mother—makes tortillas in addition to beans and salsa ("OG Kid Frost – Latin Kings."). Although not prescribing gendered roles, the rapper demonstrates how cooking meals is traditionally considered the role of women in Latino communities. By stating that his mom makes handmade tortillas, Frost propagates these heteronormative ideas of women belonging in the domestic sphere while he operates in the public.

In comparison, Rebeca Lane's *Mujer Lunar* uses food as metaphor to assert her independence and strength as a woman. Playing on the phrase 'media naranja,' which means half an orange or soul mate, Lane states that "yo soy fruta completa no busco media naranja" ("Rebeca Lane – Mujer Lunar."). Declaring herself as whole, the rapper does not search for a male partner to complete her. Instead, she proclaims that she is all she needs to fulfill her life.

Likewise, Krudas Cubensi's *La Gorda* challenges patriarchal ideas of women through the allusion to food. Although the song does not directly use food as a means to explore gendered identity, it discusses women's relationship to food through the subject of fatness.

Heteronormative ideas of gender place value on slenderness—in certain times and places—suggesting that women must be slim and beautiful to have social worth. However, the Krudas Cubensi challenge these conceptions of gender by describing fatness as an attribute rather than an atavistic trait. They proudly declare they are round, "like bread" ("Krudas Cubensi – Gorda Lyrics."). Furthermore, instead of ascribing to social norms that suggest women should show restraint with food, the rappers announce that they eat what they want and enjoy the process.

Food is used as a tool of resistance, declaring their agency and power in combating social norms with an appetite that subverts ideas that women are providers that never take for themselves.

Alternatively, Princess Nokia uses gendered food stereotypes to demonstrate how women can gain power by working within the grooves of the patriarchy. In her song *Versace Hottie*, Nokia describes herself as the archetypal rich snobbish girl—a Versace hottie. Stating that she does not like soda or carbs, the rapper announces that she only eats “salad green with the top-grade celery” (“Princess Nokia – Versace Hottie.”). Although these food preferences reproduce cultural assumptions of women—preferring to eat light and healthy foods in order to maintain their figure—Nokia uses these manifestations of her vanity to accentuate her power in society. Given that women often access social authority solely through their sexuality, the rapper states her food practices as testimony to her beauty and prestige. She flaunts her feminine food practices, using patriarchal ideas of women to her advantage. Furthermore, with righteous indignation, Nokia states that she “don't need a homie” and would “rather eat by [her]self than dine with bologna” (“Princess Nokia – Versace Hottie.”). Comparing men to the inexpensive and low quality lunch meat of bologna while doubling down on the colloquial use of the word to refer to a fool, the rapper further expresses her status as a ‘Versace hottie’ and how she is incomparable in the hip hop game.

### **Juicy Fruit and Candy Dreams: Food and Sex**

Food and sexuality have been associated in various ways throughout history. Certain foods like oysters or chocolate are commonly believed to be aphrodisiacs, having the ability to increase sexual libido. Likewise, food is sometimes used during intimate romantic or sexual moments, such as whipped cream or chocolate dipped strawberries in popular media.

Importantly, food can also be used metaphorically to symbolize sex. Body parts involved in sexual relations or sexual acts are often figuratively represented through food or methods of food preparation. While this may include foods as phallic symbols, food is most often used to describe women and their bodies. For example, fruit and dessert are frequently used to describe the shape or taste of a woman. However, even though food is useful in creating sexual innuendo, it also contributes to the objectification of women—being viewed primarily as an object of male sexual desire. What follows is an exploration of how Latin hip hop artists use food to discuss sex and sexual organs.

Akwid's *Taquito de ojo* uses food to illustrate desire for a woman. Comparing a beautiful woman to a sweet taquito—a Mexican food dish that typically consists of a small rolled-up tortilla that contains a filling—the rappers create a regional version of the phrase 'eye candy' ("Akwid – Taquito De Ojo."). The song goes on to fantasize about the woman's body and the rappers' preferences in terms of women. In typical hip hop fashion, Akwid objectifies the women. Discussing her large breasts and long legs that "[l]e pone tentacion como un candy," meaning tempt him like candy, the rappers speak of her more as a sexual object than person ("Akwid – Taquito De Ojo."). It is evident that they consider her a tasty treat that is meant to be consumed by fantasizing about sex with her in tandem with the description of a sweet taquito.

In comparison, Destiny's *Orange Blossom* uses food to sexually empower herself as a woman. Comparing herself to an orange blossom, Destiny describes her body as a sweet fruit ready to be consumed. Telling listeners to "peel [her]" and "eat [her] barely like an apple," she encourages sexual objectification ("Destiny – Orange Blossom."). It is evident that Destiny is aware of the male gaze and how she can use her sexuality to her advantage. The rapper gloats about how her fragrance and flavour causes men to be "beggin for [her] presence," allowing her

to assert her power and authority (“Destiny – Orange Blossom.”). Furthermore, the rapper uses fruit to create a thinly veiled allusion to her sexuality—she describes how she is “juicy” and has “been drippin for an hour” (“Destiny – Orange Blossom.”). By using fruit, Destiny presents her sexuality as an organic instinct that is as natural as fruit. In this way, the song is somewhat didactic, teaching women to embrace their sexuality as well as their bodies.

Calle 13’s *La Jirafa* uses food and food preparation to create inventive allusions to sex. The song begins with the narrative of a guy bringing a girl over to his house. Sensing her hesitation, the protagonist tells her that “aquí no hay cuchillos ni pistolas / Aquí hay mucha, mucha, mucha, mucha cacerola,” meaning there are no knives or guns here, but instead there is a lot of casserole (“Calle 13 – La Jirafa.”). Casseroles are typically considered comfort foods, composed of multiple layers. Therefore, it can be interpreted that casseroles are used to demonstrate safety and warmth or comfort. By stating that he has no knives or guns but rather a lot of casserole, the rapper reassures his lover that nothing bad will happen to her—sex will be enjoyable. The song goes on to say what the lovers are going to do together, stating “vamo’ a embarrarnos en una tortilla,” “vamo’ a hacer tembleque mezcla’o con natilla,” and that they will “revolviendo la masa” (“Calle 13 – La Jirafa.”). The translation of these actions are: let’s spread ourselves into a tortilla, let’s make tembleque—a coconut dessert pudding from Puerto Rico—with whipped cream, and stir the batter. Although these food items might have specific signification, the importance of the statements lies within the act of preparing and cooking food. The making of sweet desserts as well as the motions of stirring or spreading the tortilla are allusions to sexual activity.

Honourable mentions:

Calle 13 - *Atrévete-te-te*

Calle 13 - *Baile de los Pobres*

Destiny - *Apple Pie*

### **“No me llames frijolero”: Food as an Insult**

Beyond positive attributes, food can be used as a derogative to insult or offend people. Given its tangible quality, food is an apt medium to express contempt or disapproval since it is a reference that everyone can understand. While many food insults are regionalized, there are some common ways in which food is used as a pejorative. What follows is an exploration how Latin hip hop artists use food to communicate disdain.

Molotov’s *Frijolero* is an excellent example of how food is used as derogatory slang. Frijolero, or beaner, is an insult to Mexicans or people of Mexican descent. Deriving from the prevalence of beans Mexican culture, the term has come to symbolize more than a love of beans; beaner is used to say "dirty, nasty, poor, illegal, bean-eating Mexicans" (“Molotov – Frijolero.”). Unsurprisingly, Molotov states “No me llames frijolero”—don’t call me beaner—in his song (“Molotov – Frijolero.”). Explaining that it is a racial slur used by cowards, Molotov presents the point of view of Mexicans. Interestingly, this song also includes the opposing view of ‘gringos’ to provide a seemingly balanced debate about illegal immigration; he shifts between both perspectives calling himself, and asking not to be called, beaner.

In comparison, Akwid’s *Como, Cuando & Donde* demonstrates how food can be used as colloquial put-down. The song discusses how the rappers took a romantic interest to McDonalds and she didn’t want anything to eat—“le compre un Bigmac, su soda y todavía no quiere nada,” meaning I bought her a Bigmac and a soda and still she did not want anything (“Akwid – Como,

Cuando Y Donde.”). Bigmacs are inexpensive and low quality hamburgers from McDonalds.

Given that the woman did not want to eat anything from the fast food chain, it can be interpreted that the woman thought the food was beneath her. As a response to her disappointing attitude, the rappers the rapper tells her “No seas Fresa,” meaning do not be a strawberry (“Akwid – Como, Cuando Y Donde.”). Although fresa generally means strawberry in Spanish, it is also used in Mexico as pejorative to describe someone who is stuck up or snobby. With this food insult, the rappers tell her not to be elitist and to eat the food they bought her.

### **‘Mangos Bajitos’: Food and Social Problems**

While food can be used to signify positives, it can also reflect disadvantages. Latin America and the Caribbean have a history of being exploited for goods, labour, and resources. Foods—such as coffee, sugar, and fruit—in particular have been the main source of economy for many Latin American and Caribbean countries and, with that, have brought many social and cultural consequences. For this reason, food can be used to discuss issues of a nation. What follows is an exploration of how Latin hip hop artists use food to examine social problems.

Los Aldeanos’s *Mangos Bajitos* uses the metaphor of mangos to discuss the underpinnings of Cuba’s international relations. The rappers describe Cuba as “la tierra de los mangos bajitos,” meaning low-hanging mangoes, which plays on the commonly used metaphor of ‘low-hanging fruit’ (“Los Aldeanos – Mangos Bajitos.”). Signifying easily obtained gains, this figure of speech has been adapted to reflect Cuba through the description of mangos—a tropical fruit that is plentiful on the island. Using this metaphor, the Aldeanos discuss how Cuba is a beautiful and culturally rich country that, nevertheless, has been exploited by foreigners. The rappers describe that this problem first began with colonization—when “Europa entera abusan de

[su] pueblito” (meaning when all of Europe abused their town)—and continues to present day (“Los Aldeanos – Mangos Bajitos.”). Tourists take advantage of the country's poor economy, where “Todo barato” (meaning everything is cheap), with little respect to how they affect the locals (“Los Aldeanos – Mangos Bajitos.”). Although Cuba has plenty to offer, the country has relied on its ‘low-hanging mangos’ for quick fixes that do not offer long-term solutions. Los Aldeanos discuss how picking the low-hanging fruit has caused life in Cuba to be much more difficult than one might expect.

Likewise, Residente uses food to discuss the obstacles of his country in *Hijos del Cañaveral*. The entire song focuses on how Puerto Ricans have been taken advantage of by other countries and companies. The rapper states that Puerto Ricans are “los hijos del trabajo sin merienda, la limonada para el capataz de la hacienda” (“Residente – Hijos del Cañaveral.”). Lemonade is used as a metaphor for how the foremen of the hacienda used to reap the rewards of hard work from labourers. Referencing to the hacienda system—plantations in Latin America—the rapper describes how his people were exploited; the workers were forced to work without break and for little profit. Puerto Rico has a long history of sugar and coffee haciendas that have shaped the culture and economy of the country. Although the hacienda system started to decline in Puerto Rico with industrialization in the 1950s, Residente states that the system has left lasting impacts on his country and its people. Despite poverty and environmental disasters, the rapper demonstrates that Puerto Ricans are resilient and overcome many of the obstacles they face—even though “el calor [se] calienta la cerveza” meaning the heat warms their beer, Puerto Ricans find a way to persevere (“Residente – Hijos del Cañaveral.”). Furthermore, Residente uses food to discuss his country’s relations with the United States. Puerto Rico is “unincorporated territory” of the United States, meaning the island is controlled by the U.S. government but is

separate from the mainland. Residente refers to this relationship when he states “Los palos de guanábana no dan manzanas,” meaning the soursop tree does not bear apples (“Residente – Hijos del Cañaveral.”). Soursop is a tropical fruit native to Puerto Rico and is used to symbolize the country. Likewise, apples are often used in popular culture as a reference to the United States since New York commonly described as ‘the big apple.’ By stating that the soursop tree does not bear apples, Residente suggests that, despite being a U.S. territory, Puerto Rico will never americanize nor be under the full control of the United States. They are a nation with a rich and distinct culture, and they are proud of the obstacles they have overcome.

Honourable mentions:

Actitud María Marta - *La Angelita*

Orishas - *Habana*

### **Food Fight: Conclusion**

Latin hip hop artists use food in myriad ways to convey meaning. Food and food preparation are referenced in Latin hip hop lyrics to discuss issues relating to nation, class, gender, sex, insults, and social problems. While these themes may be interpreted in vastly different ways, Latin hip hop artists demonstrate how food is a real sign, offering a system of communication in society; it can be used to symbolize identity—who you are, where you are from, what you believe, and how you live. While this paper focused on the ways in which Latin hip hop artists use food as a metaphor for identity, the study of food is a critical field of examination that offers many other ways to interpret food and eating. For example, the signification of food can relate to food ethics—such as animal, environmental, and labour

rights—as well as the ways in which it contributes to systems of oppression. Food studies asks critical questions that relate to everyday practices that directly affect the lives of humans, animals, and ecosystems around the world.

The dearth of information concerning food in hip hop is representative of how the field of food studies has plenty of potential for new research in scholarship. Cultural Studies as well as other academic fields offer many new possibilities in which foodstuffs and cuisine can be studied. Given that food is paramount to life, we should thoughtfully consider what it means as well as the varying ways it functions in our lives.

## List of Songs

Actitud María Marta - *La Angelita*  
Akwid - *Como, Cuando & Donde*  
Akwid - *Es mi gusto*  
Akwid - *Taquito de ojo*  
A.L.T. - *Refried Beans*  
Bocafloja - *Que Dificil Es*  
Cafe Tacvba - *Arboles Frutales*  
Calle 13 - *Atrévete-te-te*  
Calle 13 - *Baile de los Pobres*  
Calle 13 - *La Jirafa*  
Calle 13 - *Suave*  
Calle 13 - *Tengo Hambre*  
Control Machete - *Justo N'*  
Delinquent Habits - *Western Ways*  
Destiny - *Apple Pie*  
Destiny - *Orange Blossom*  
Krudas Cubensi - *La Gordá*  
Lapiz Conciente - *Yo Soy Papa*  
Los Aldeanos - *Mangos Bajitos*  
Los Rakas - *Copita de champaña*  
Lil Supa' - *Hambre*  
Mare Advertencia Lirika - *Mujer Maiz*  
Molotov - *Frijolero*  
Mr Yosie Locote - *Celebrando a el estilo mexicano*  
Mr. Yosie Locote - *Efe De Friday Efe De Fiesta*  
OG Kid Frost - *Latin Kings*  
Orishas - *A Lo Cubano*  
Orishas - *Guajiro*  
Orishas - *Habana*  
Princess Nokia - *Green Line*  
Princess Nokia - *Versace Hottie*  
Rebeca Lane - *Mujer Lunar*  
Residente - *Hijos del Cañaveral*

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death She cooks meth and injects it everyday from the same old dirty needle The one she lets her ex boyfriend use now and again She has nothing to gain, except drugs up her vein It's time to get to the hop when we hip to the hop as we hop to the hip [Hook] Hip to the hop, hop to the. hip Hip to the hop, hop to the hip Hip to the hop, hop to the hip, hip, hip Hip to the hop, hop to the hip Hip to the hop, hop to the hip Hip to the hop, hop to the hip, hip, hip [Hook] Hip to the hop, hop to the hip Hip to the hop, hop to the hip Hip. to the hop, hop to the hip, hip, hip Hip to the hop, hop Submitted in fulfillment of the degree of BA Honors in Spanish and Latin American Studies; Supervisor: Dr. Russell Cobb.Â food and hip hop; Latin hip hop. Type of Item. Research Material. DOI. <https://doi.org/10.7939/R3959CP3R>. License. Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International.