

FOOD RESILIENCE ZINE



WHAT IS FOOD RESILIENCE?

Between October and December 2022, artists [Noemi Gunea](#) & [Dana Olărescu](#) hosted a series of weekly workshops on the topic of food resilience, supported by [Polish Migrants Organise for Change \(POMOC\)](#) and [Calthorpe Community Garden](#). Three sessions were delivered by four other artists whose practices were relevant to the topic.

The project invited Londoners of Eastern European heritage to explore food, plant, and cultivation knowledge-sharing as a tactic to withstand and organise during the cost of living crisis. How do economics and food politics intersect, and how can we act on the insights acquired on our migrant journeys?

Each session included a sharing circle and the preparation of a simple dish. We looked at cooking as an act of creativity, combining tradition, sustainable ingredients and internationalism. We chopped, boiled, fried and ate together, dreaming of wider networks of mutual aid, aired out financial anxieties and historical traumas, and started new friendships. Food is a powerful, uniting means of social resistance against the powers that be.

This zine is a record of what was shared. Please pass it on.





**On Ukraine:
Continue donating
to civil society
organisations
Inoculate
yourself against
misinformation
and disinformation**

WHY COLLECTIVITY?

Participants talked about the importance of connection with people from Eastern Europe during Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, reason which underpinned their attendance. War in Ukraine had in fact, been raging for nine years.

It was stated that even optimists had been plunged into a deep depression by the invasion, as it meant that countries were spending their money on death rather than life. One person had begun to cook traditional recipes at the start of the invasion, while tinned food was collected compulsively to protect against future supply shortages. Someone else was scared of being "sent back home" if they ran out of money, despite rationally knowing that it is very unlikely.

Eastern Europeans don't feel protected in the 'West' - particularly since the withdrawal of the UK from the European Union - and therefore constantly prepare for the end of the world, even when they are in the UK. It seems that our ancestral fears are incredibly difficult to undo and overcome.

When Eastern European parents ask: "do you have enough to eat?" irrespective of financial circumstances, we know that food scarcity and food security are eternally interlinked.

CRISIS CRISIS CRISIS
THERE WILL ALWAYS BE
A FRIEND TO MAKE
POVERTY FEEL LIKE LESS
OF A DISPOSSESSION

DEMOCRATIC SOUP

Artist, educator, and POMOC co-founder, [Madga Fabianczyk](#), led a 'Democratic Soup' session. Based on the premise that each attendee brings an ingredient for a collective negotiation of what goes in the dish. This becomes a metaphorical starting point for a discussion on notions of democracy present in the way we work, think, and organise our lives. Collective cooking becomes a way to connect and an attempt to imagine a different kind of democratic ideal.

Looking at food justice, Andreea Tudose, an artist and Food Resilience participant invited us to think about the physical and mental conditions facing land workers during the Anthropocene¹. So much of the food we waste is produced with the sweat and tears of these workers – how can we honour their efforts, and advocate for better conditions?

Andreea shared and read [this article](#) out loud, which encapsulated her rage and cry for help for this issue. Will you consider sourcing your food in ethical places that treat workers with dignity and respect?

¹The current geological age, viewed as the period during which human activity has been the dominant influence on climate and the environment.



Join trade unions that caters to migrant workers, such as IWGB (Independent Workers' Union of Great Britain)

GHERKIN?

ALWAYS PRESERVE IN SALT!



TEA POLITICS

Lika Tarkhan-Mouravi and Olha Pryymak unveiled the story behind Georgian tea. In 1845, black tea was brought to Georgia from China, and considered a great luxury. At the end of the 19th century, Georgia quenched the Russian imperialist thirst for caffeinated drinks, bringing in cultivars from India, China and Japan. After plantations were ruined in WWI, the Soviet Union decided to bring back the glory of 'green gold' (Georgian tea), and took all possible shortcuts to ensure maximum production. Harvesting was done automatically by machines, shortening the production phases. Branches would also make it inside the tea packs.

We reflected on creativity in times of hardship; Lika's mother had been gathering recipes from her friends, showing how these change depending on available resources. Each dish would bear the name of the relevant prime minister in power.

We spoke about the spiritual aspect of tea drinking that disappeared with mass production. Olha led us into a tea meditation, spending a quiet moment showing gratitude to those who grew, harvested, packaged, and brought us this tea.



HOROSCOPE



Cucumber: *determined, strong, humorous*



Cauliflower: *ambitious, patient, reliable*



Green tomato: *adventurous, unique, sincere*



Garlic: *authentic, trustworthy, generous*



Onion: *kind, aware, understanding*



Horseradish: *imaginative, passionate, affectionate*



Corn: *loyal, brave, empathetic*



Rye: *helpful, dependable, witty*



Buckwheat: *caring, admirable, considerate*



Mullberry: *vulnerable, warm, creative*



Sour cherry: *intuitive, loving, intellectual*



Beetroot: *sweet, persistent, observant*

MOURNING RITUALS

When mourning in Romania, we give 'pomană', an offering of bread, colivă, and other useful items and foods.

The term 'pomana' derives from the Slavonic verb поменъ (pomen - to remember), and suggests the giving of something valuable with little or no possibility of an equivalent material return. Refusing pomană is considered a disrespectful act. In this session, we spoke about economies of generosity, and invited each other to create new traditions around fulfilling our basic needs, so that we may befriend people outside of our social classes and care roles. Can we learn to gain fulfilment from helping each other, rather than put pressure on ourselves to do everything individually?



SOIL PLEDGES

33% of the Earth's soils are already degraded and over 90% could become degraded by 2050. (FAO and ITPS, 2015; IPBES, 2018). It takes 1000 years to generate three centimetres of top soil, and if current rates of degradation continue, the world's top soil could be gone in 60 years.

Interdisciplinary artist [Anca Dimofte](#) joined the Day of the Dead celebrations at Calthorpe Community Garden and offered a slice of the traditional Romanian colivă, in exchange for pledges for soil health. The grief was used to catalyse people's commitments towards its recovery.

"I pledge to respect the soil, not to use any harmful chemicals in my garden, and to grow native species."

"Soil, I love you. You are the essence of life. I will do everything in my power to sing your praise and work to keep you safe and healthy."



FOOD RESILIENCE RESOURCES

Regenerate the soil by adding natural nutrients (ground coffee, egg shells, banana skins)



Whether you already put the below into practice, would like to, or are simply curious about embracing food resilience, these are some of the ways participants avoid the neoliberal food-traps such as creating food waste, ruining the environment, and deteriorating labour conditions.

Support Granville Community Kitchen, Made in Hackney, Company Drinks, and other groups who work hyper-locally

Add warming spices for circulation (parsley, thyme, mustard, cinnamon)

Grow food

Cook with 3 ingredients max. 'Italian style'



Explore garlic as a natural antibiotic

Freeze leftovers



Cook in batches

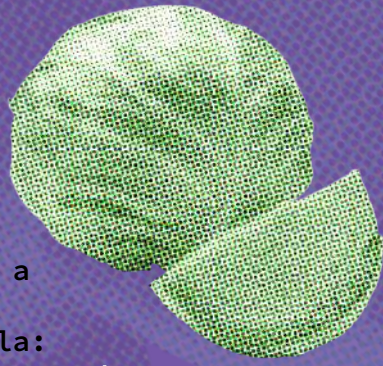
Use dry bread to make cake



JOIN A FOOD CO-OPERATIVE!

Use a compost bin

Use a waste prevention app to save food from going to landfill (Olio / Too Good To Go)



Share dishes with neighbours & friends

Use cabbage as a plaster

Calthorpe Community Garden is a food co-operative. To join, get in touch with Mila: mila@calthorpecommunitygarden.org.uk

THIS IS HOW WE SURVIVE

A poem by Rita Suszek after workshop notes

This is how we survive
With a smile
With a swap
With leftover soup
We dip the bread into water and fry it and call it cake
We gather strands of friendship so we don't break
This is how we survive

Spoonful of sugar makes the medicine go down
Borrow it from your neighbours and make medicine
Onions, garlic, thyme
This is how we survive

We thrive sometimes, take risks
There will always be a crisis, it is the nature of life
But if nothing pans out
Long as there's food I can cook, I'm fine
This is how we survive

We hoard and grab, but stay ready to party
Give all to friends, preserve what we can
Keepers of recipes, grandma's lost pies
Rich memories, bland flavours when there was no spice
USSR got our tongues and our lives
But this is how we survive

Media bombarding occupy our thoughts
Hard to remember what elders forgot
There's always money for bombs, all the while
Some here go hungry, some will surely die
Cook for an army, share it, freeze it, try
Cause this is how we survive

I don't want to go back where I'm from
So make my place here, go to shops, find home
Manuka honey, grandma's jam, black tea
I'll volunteer, find my people, be
Pay through the nose for a Ryanair flight
Cause this is how we survive

I don't need much so in this way I'm rich
I'll mend and save and compost and stitch
Freedom is when you can't lose all that much
Carry a thermos, sandwiches, eat starch
Play yellow sticker games, hunt lower price
As this is how we survive

We know you see us as backwards and odd
With different weather, languages, and food
And different worship, and habits, and god
Here we all cook this democracy soup
We pick your fruit, work the slaughterhouse and bar
And this is how we survive -

and before
We had some history that chases us, mars
All that we work for and all we still we are

But we are here and live here and will thrive

This, this is how we survive

FOOD RESILIENCE

A zine for food lovers, fighters, and political thinkers

Marta Marsicka: Food Resilience curator

Magda Fabianczyk: Food Resilience coordinator

Mila Campoy: Food Resilience host at Calthorpe Community Garden

Noemi Gunea: facilitator, publication text & drawings

Dana Olărescu: facilitator, publication text & design

Photos by: Anca Rusu, Noemi Gunea, Dana Olărescu, Nefeli Kentoni. Selected photos from personal and public archives

Much gratitude to all participants and co-facilitators

Stay in touch:

info@pomoc.org.uk

info@calthorpecommunitygarden.org.uk

