



# International Food Films: Culture and Relationships

Presented by Rita and Bill Hadden

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# 8-week Outline (key film excerpts shown in class)

- 1. Eat Drink Man Woman (Taiwan, 1994)
- 2. Like Water for Chocolate (Mexico, 1992)
- 3. The Lunch Box (India, 2013)
- 4. Julie and Julia (NYC, France, 2009)
- 5. Tampopo (Japan, 1985)
- 6. The Hundred Foot Journey (France, India 2014)
- 7. Babette's Feast (Denmark, 1987)
- 8. Big Night (U.S., 1996)
- QUESTIONS?

# Food for Thought

## Family, Food and Independence

**Food and its preparation enables the development of relationships.**

**OR**

**Preparing food = means to avoid interaction?**

# Eat Drink Man Woman (Taiwan, 1994)

- **Award/recognition:**

- Nominated for Academy, BAFTA, and Golden Globe Awards; won Golden Bear at Berlin Film Festival.

- **Director, producer, writer: Ang Lee**

- Lee's work is known for its emotional charge, and exploration of repressed, hidden emotions.

- 8 of his films have received multiple Academy Award Nominations w. 12 wins, BAFTA Award Nominations w. 14 wins, Golden Globe Award Nominations w. 9 wins.

- Best known films include: The Wedding Banquet; Sense and Sensibility; Pushing Hands; Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon; Brokeback Mountain; Lust, Caution; Life of Pi; Eat Drink Man Woman.

# Eat Drink Man Woman (2)

- **Setting:** Taipei, Taiwan.
- **MAIN CHARACTERS:**
  - Mr. Chu: retired master chef in Taipei;
  - His 3 single daughters: Jia-Jen (teacher), Jia-chien (airline executive), Jia-ning (fast food server);
  - Chu's neighbor Jin-rong, her young daughter Shan-Shan, and her mother Mrs. Liang;
  - Old Wen: Chu's best friend and colleague, mentor to Jia-chien.

# Eat Drink Man Woman (3)

## Synopsis:

Distracted by their complicated love lives and secret ambitions, three adult sisters reluctantly humor their widower father and retired chef by enduring the elaborate, traditional Taiwanese dinners he insists on having every Sunday.

# Eat Drink Man Woman (4)

## Questions for discussion:

- What does title of film signify?
- "The people next door communicate by singing; we communicate by eating." What does this mean?
- What tensions are there between father and daughters, among daughters?

(See next slide)

# Eat Drink Man Woman (5)

## Questions for discussion:

- Is Chef Chu's art of cooking lost, no longer relevant?
- In last eating scene, how is conflict between Tradition & Modernity, between Confucian Filial Piety & Western Individualism resolved?
- In your opinion, is Chef Chu's food preparation to dev. relationships, or to avoid interaction?





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