

Show Notes

Date: 8/5/22

Name of Podcast: Read. Return. Repeat. A ReadICT Podcast.

Episode Title and Number: A Plate of Culture (Season 2, Episode 5)

Episode Summary: In this episode, co-hosts Sara Dixon and Daniel Pewewardy explore category 9, a book about immigration through the lens of food. Joining them on the podcast is Nina Mukherjee Furstenau, a food journalist and author of the 2014 Kansas Notable Book *Biting Through the Skin: An Indian Kitchen in America's Heartland*. A first-generation immigrant who moved to Pittsburg, Kansas from India as a young child in the 1960s, Ms. Furstenau shares her in experience of growing up as an immigrant in the heart of the American Midwest, how she stays connected to her culture through food and how we can learn about people through the foods we share.

Guest Bio: Nina Mukerjee Furstenau is a journalist, author, and editor of the FoodStory book series for the University of Iowa Press. She was a Fulbright Global research scholar (2018-19), is on the board of directors for Media for Change, and has won the MFK Fisher Book Award, the Grand Prize Award for Culture/Culinary Writing from Les Dames d'Escoffier International, a Kansas Notable Book award, and more.

Green Chili & Other Impostors (Chilies, Chhana and Rasa in India), her most recent work was published in October 2021 in the U.S. and December 2021 in India. Other published works include the award-winning book, *Biting Through the Skin: An Indian Kitchen in America's Heartland*, as well as *Tasty! Mozambique*, *Savor Missouri: River Hills Country Food and Wine*, and numerous stories and essays for newspapers and magazines. She engages as a speaker at conferences such as NonfictionNow, Unbound Book, Iowa City Book Festival, Food, Fork and Pen, and more.

Furstenau served in the U.S. Peace Corps (1984-86) and was one of its delegates for the U.N. World Conference on Women in Nairobi, Kenya. She was director of Food Systems Communication for the University of Missouri's Science and Agricultural Journalism program (2010-2018), and completed food/nutrition projects in Ghana and Mozambique for USAID and the McKnight Foundation. She was editor, then publisher of three business magazines, has served as a judge for national journalism competitions such as the James Beard Media Awards, the Lowell Thomas Travel Writing competition, and others. Furstenau received an M.A. in English/creative writing and bachelor's in magazine journalism from the Missouri School of Journalism.

Topic Index:

What inspired her to become a food writer (1:33)

Growing up as an immigrant in the American Midwest (3:32)
What connects her to her Bengali culture (7:28)
Living between two cultures (9:51)
Assimilation vs. embracing one's ancestral culture (12:49)
What can we learn about cultures through their native foods (17:12)
Working in the U.S. Peace Corps (26:28)
Being awarded the 2014 Kansas Notable Book (34:30)
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Heritage foods (40:38)
How food can bring comfort to geographically displaced people (43:43)
Nina's favorite food (46:03)
What we can learn from immigrants (47:55)

Books Recommended in this Episode:

A Good Provider is One Who Leaves: One Family and Migration in the 21st Century, Jason DeParle

The Leavers, Lisa Ko

The Arrival, Shaun Tan

Resources & Links:

Books by Nina Mukherjee Furstenau

[Biting Through the Skin: An Indian Kitchen in America's Heartland](#)

[Green Chili and Other Impostors](#)

[Chilis, Chhana & Rasa: Heritage Foods of Bengal](#)

[Savor Missouri: River Hill Country Food and Wine](#)

[Tasty! Mozambique: A Feed the Future Project](#)

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Other Resources

[BOMB Magazine Article \(February 23, 2022\)](#)

[Columbia Daily Tribune Article \(October 29, 2021\)](#)

[Kansas Notable Books](#)

[Left Bank Books Presents: Nina Mukherjee Furstenau with Ann Lemmons Pollack \(October 27, 2021\)](#)

[Libby](#)

[M.F.K. Fisher Prize](#)

[Mango Languages](#)

[Media for Change](#)

[Nina's Website](#)

[Vox Voice Podcast: Episode 17 \(June 3, 2022\)](#)

Full Transcript: http://wichitalibrary.org/BooksMore/podcast/Pages/rrr_s2e5.aspx

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