



Recipes without Makers

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Introduction

Recipes are a cornerstone of all culinary cultures. They enable people to cook a variety of dishes, and they are essential in transferring that knowledge from location to location and from one generation to the next. Many learn cooking by observing, but recipes allow us to also learn to make dishes that come from outside of our own cultures. Many of us nowadays feed ourselves with an entirely multicultural diet because we now have access to recipes from all over the world.

When we think of recipes, what typically comes to mind is either a written recipe say, in a cookbook, or a verbal narration of how to create a dish. As a first approximation for what recipes are, we can say that a recipe describes the steps in the cooking which results in a type of dish. The existing theories mostly agree in broad outlines as to what recipes are, but important questions remain about their identity conditions. For example, are recipes akin to works of art in that they have authors or makers? When are two dishes instances of the same dish? How much can a recipe change before it becomes a different recipe, and who gets to decide what changes are allowed?

These questions might seem abstract, but we need to answer them in order to better understand what recipes are. And that matters because of the rising importance of recipes in societies. For example, let us consider the cookbook industry. Printed cookbooks are selling more and more, and cooking websites have an ever-growing number of users. However, a large number of cooking websites recycle the same recipes that often originate in famous cookbooks, or they are variations or simplifications of such recipes. Is that ok, or should it be considered plagiarism? What about cases where a chef takes traditional or pre-existing recipes from another culture and publishes them in a cookbook? Is there such a thing as cultural appropriation of recipes?

A theory of recipes may also have consequences on policy matters in the food industry. For example, the European Union protects regional ingredients, beverages, or dishes by forbidding others to use their names, which is why for example the name “Feta” can no longer be used for cheeses made outside of certain Greek regions, or why only the sparkling wines made in the Champagne region can be called “Champagne”. These decisions may partly depend on what is considered to





be the recipe for Feta or for Champagne, and thus whether it would be possible to replicate them in other regions.

In order to advance our understanding of recipes, a question we will focus on is how recipes come into being. In this paper I formulate a realist account of recipes and compare it to a constructivist account by Borghini (2015). Constructivists about recipes hold that the existence of recipes constitutively depends on a human *fiat*. So just as naming comes down to performative utterances like I name this ship *the Titanic*, the identity of a recipe is likewise dependent on a similar performance, once certain other conditions are met.

A constructivist theory would seem to have a simple answer to the question of the authorship of recipes. However, in this paper I argue that constructivism faces challenges in making sense of some of our intuitive understanding of recipes. In particular, I argue that there are cases where someone intends to imitate an existing dish and fails but thinks they have succeeded. The resulting dish and the recipe for it may now come to live a life of their own, resulting in a novel recipe that originally came in to being without the performative act that the constructivist argues is constitutively necessary.

As an alternative to constructivism I defend a realist account of recipes and dishes. A dish's identity depends on its core ingredients and its flavor profile, texture, temperature, and look, and a recipe's identity depends on the identity of a dish. So, whenever a novel dish comes into being—in other words a dish whose ingredients and flavor profile are different enough of some previous dish—a new recipe also exists.

I should emphasize that there has been very little work on the nature of recipes, so constructivism and realism are by no means the only alternatives there are. However, they represent two opposite points of view with constructivism emphasizing the role of human intentions and actions in recipe creation, whereas realism highlights how recipes depend on dishes themselves. Hopefully the discussion here will serve to map out some of the core positions and issues for the future study on recipes.

What Are Dishes?

Dishes as Anything Edible vs. Dishes as Preparations

Let us begin by clarifying the terminology we will use. In ordinary language the distinction between recipes and dishes is not always clear, as in “You’re stuck inside from the coronavirus quarantine and want to stress bake. Here are recipes you can make when you don’t have eggs, milk or butter” (<https://eu.usatoday.com/story/life/food-dining/2020/03/24/coronavirus-quarantine-what-can-you-bake-without-eggs-milk-butter/2907496001/>). However, strictly speaking recipes describe how to prepare a *dish*, and a dish is the resulting edible product—thus, if you are cooking, you are not making a recipe, but a dish. (Note that our discussion will equally apply to beverages, but for the sake of convenience we will include them under the term “dishes.”) A third component we need is cooking: a dish is the stuff that results from cooking. As a starting point, let us say that a recipe is something that describes how to cook a type





of dish. We should also distinguish between dish types, e.g., *Pasta Carbonara*, and dish tokens, that is, concrete instances of *Pasta Carbonara*.

So, what are dishes? That is a difficult philosophical question in itself so I cannot offer a full account here, but we will distinguish between some useful alternative accounts. It should be noted that since dishes and recipes are intimately connected, a complete theory of recipes should be ultimately paired with a complete theory of dishes. Borghini (2015) relies on a permissive view of dishes according to which anything edible to some agent is a dish for that agent. In other words, something can be a dish for an agent in a certain context but not for another agent, or not even for the same agent who is in a different context. The context sensitivity is needed to account for variability between different kinds of agents, for example, a dish for a dog may not be a dish for a human. What counts as a dish is also dependent on cultures since many humans eat things that others do not even consider edible.

The problem with the view that takes anything edible to be a dish is that it does not distinguish between mere foodstuff and dishes, which intuitively do differ. A more restricted view of dishes holds that for an edible thing to be a dish, some preparation must be involved. I think that definition is more in line with our intuitive notion of a dish. The problem is that not any preparation which leads to an edible result is a dish. Take salt dough for example. Salt dough requires preparation and it is edible, but it is not meant to be eaten and therefore intuitively it is not a dish (at least for humans). To rule out salt dough from the class of dishes, we may try to limit the range of preparations into those that aim to make foodstuff somehow *better to eat*, say, by making it safer, healthier, tastier, or more pleasant in other ways.

Here is an example of preparing a foodstuff so that it is better to eat from the animal world. The Japanese macaques on Koshima island used to eat their sweet potatoes unwashed, until in 1953 a female macaque started washing her sweet potatoes to remove the sand. Somehow the practice spread and soon a large part of the population was washing their sweet potatoes. An intriguing further development came when the monkeys started washing the sweet potatoes in salty water, apparently for the simple reason that the added salt made them taste better (Hirata, Watanabe & Masao 2001). I would like to suggest that whereas a sweet potato is merely foodstuff, a washed sweet potato is a dish for the Japanese macaques since it has been prepared in order to make it more pleasant to eat.

However, we need to sharpen the idea of what makes something better to eat. For example, vitamin pills are prepared out of edible ingredients so that they are healthy, and they are made to be consumed by way of eating (especially the ones that need to be chewed, not just swallowed). But they do not seem to be a dish. One might think that it is because they offer no energy; but a portion of shirataki “zero calorie” noodles seems like a dish even though it contains no calories. One might eat shirataki noodles to get the pleasure of eating without gaining energy, but not every dish is pleasurable to eat either. When people face famine, they eat for example bark, and a bowl of bark soup seems to be a dish even if we assume that the eating is not pleasurable. And perhaps there can be contexts where something similar to vitamin pills would count as dishes, for example, in a spaceship or in a future similar to the world of the 1973 film *Soylent Green* by Richard Fleischer.





One option is to take the “better to eat” to be dependent on both a context and an agent so as to define it as *better according to the agent in question* (in a particular context). That sounds more promising since dishes can serve a multitude of possible aims. Thus, one may prepare foodstuff into a dish whose aim is, for example, to nourish healthfully, to fatten someone up, to provide pleasure from flavors or textures, to cool one down, to give spiritual comfort, or to provide the nostalgic comfort of home. We have already assumed that a dish for one person may not count as a dish for another, for example, when it contains insects that the other one does not even consider to be food. So, we can extend that context dependence also to the preparations, so that whether a preparation makes something better to eat depends on the context.

To summarize, we have seen two possible ways to think of dishes: dishes as anything edible, including simple foodstuffs such as an apple, or dishes as foodstuff that is prepared in some way that makes it better to eat according to the context in question. Both ways of thinking of dishes are equally valid; however, later on we will see how the choice of a theory of dishes plays out in theories of recipes.

Dish Internalism vs. Externalism

Sometimes the preparations for a dish may not change the physical properties of the foodstuff in question. For example, there are dishes which should not be eaten before a religious or other kind of ceremony is performed, and that may be considered to be part of the necessary preparation for the dish to be ready. It is useful to make another distinction regarding theories of dishes which is independent of the distinction between dishes as anything edible (to someone) versus dishes as preparations which make something better to eat (according to someone). Let us distinguish between what I call *internalist* and *externalist* views of dishes or points of views on dishes (with apologies for philosophers for introducing another internalism–externalism distinction). When we identify a dish from an internalist point of view we are considering only its intrinsic properties. When we identify a dish from the externalist point of view, we are also taking into account its relational properties, for example, the way it was prepared and served, where its ingredients come from, who made it, and so on.

These two different ways of identifying dishes also imply a difference regarding how we know about the properties of the dish. To find out some of the properties of a dish in the internalist view we can look at it and eat it, or perhaps analyze it in a lab, but for ordinary purposes our senses of taste, smell, touch, vision, and to some extent hearing provide plenty of information about the dish’s intrinsic properties. In the externalist view the dish’s properties may extend far and wide and require a broader understanding of how the dish relates to its makers, to the culture of the people who make it, to its environment in terms of its ingredients, or to its own origins regarding its recipe.

Let us summarize the conceptual analysis we have done. When we are thinking of recipes for a dish, we should clarify at least whether we are talking about dishes in the permissive sense where anything edible counts as a dish, or in the more restricted sense where some preparation is needed. Once that choice is made we need to specify whether we are talking about dishes from the internalist or externalist point of view.





Finally, we should be mindful of dish types vs. dish tokens. For example, if we talk about two different concrete dishes *aka* dish tokens that have the same intrinsic properties, we may say that they are instances of the same internalist dish type. But those same dish tokens may not be instances of the same externalist dish type, if for example their ingredients come from different countries.

In what follows I develop a theory of recipes for dish types where dishes are understood to require some preparation and they are identified as in the internalist view. It is not because I think dish internalism is in any way superior to dish externalism, but because dishes identified via internalism are simpler and make for less complications in the theory. It is better to start with a simple theory which can then be extended and modified to also cover dishes as identified by dish externalism.

Constructivism and Realism about Dishes

Let us now turn our attention to recipes. Earlier I said that recipes are roughly speaking descriptions of the cooking process that result in a type of dish. This definition is rough indeed as “description” is too narrow and applies mostly to written recipes. When someone is cooking on the basis of a recipe, we can distinguish two essential elements: the actual cooking process (that follows the recipe) and the final dish, which in part also determines what the recipe was, and whether the recipe was successfully followed. When we think of several instances of cooking following the same recipe, we have cooking types. A recipe can be thought of either as a cooking type or as the information that the cook follows in their cooking. The information can be thought of as an abstract object, akin to a musical work or the content of a book, or as the way it is stored for example as the *conceptualization* or a mental representation of how to prepare a dish. In this paper there is no space to go deeper into the question of the metaphysical nature of recipes, but it is useful to be aware of the ways in which recipes can be thought to exist. I will treat recipes as conceptualizations had by agents or as cooking types, which I take to be the two sides of the same coin. Let us now focus on the following question: when do recipes come into being?

Borghini develops a constructivist account of recipes whose core idea is that recipes are constituted by human *fiat*: “what matters [for the identity of a recipe] is that whoever produces the recipe recognizes it as such” (Borghini 2015: 724). The producer of the recipe—usually the cook—must go through a process of identification, that is, of identifying something of a suitable nature as a recipe. That process is typically performed via a speech act. Borghini takes the identification of a recipe to be a *performative utterance* which brings into life a social entity. A recipe is thus brought about by, say, uttering “I call this the *Lockdown pantry pasta*,” or by writing down the name of the recipe. Borghini is careful to add that although the human fiat is necessary for a recipe to exist, there are further necessary conditions related to the expertise of the cook.

Borghini holds that constructivism is the right theory of the identity of dishes as well. In other words, whether a dish exemplifies a certain recipe (say, a *Coq au vin*) constitutively depends on the declaration of intention of the cook, though it will have





to fulfill certain conditions set out by the recipe as well. He compares the dependence of the identity of dishes and recipes to the identities of musical performances: whether something is a cover of a song or not depends partly on what the players intend to be playing, though obviously it will also depend on whether they have the skills to play the song in question. That is constructivism in a nutshell. We will see more details of it later but let us first look at realism about recipes and dishes which takes a very different approach to both.

Whereas constructivism takes the identity of recipes and dishes to be constitutively dependent on human agents, the realist view developed here gives center stage to cooking and the final dish. We identify a dish in an internalist way based on its ingredients and its gustatory properties, like its flavor profile, texture, temperature, and look. A recipe's identity derives from both the internalist identity conditions of a dish and the way it was cooked. Thus, if two tokens of dishes are of the identical type from the internalist point of view and they were cooked the same way, then their recipe is the same.

A theory of recipes and a theory of dishes are two separate topics but due to their intimate relation it is natural to think of them in a similar way. Thus, even though the realist theory of recipes is not inherently committed to a realist theory of dishes, let me show how it would go. First, the identity of a dish is determined as described above from an internalist point of view. Thus, two concrete dishes are an instance of the same dish type if their core ingredients are the same and they have the same core gustatory properties. I should emphasize that "the same" should be taken to be context-sensitive: for example, if a chef in a restaurant teaches their staff how to prepare a dish, they expect them to be able to reproduce it to a very high degree of similarity. However, if you and I are planning to cook the same dish in our respective homes, we may take the dishes as being of the same type even if there are some variations in the quality of our ingredients and the final flavor profiles of the dish (say, you might prefer it saltier than me, or you chopped the vegetables in a slightly different way).

Now, someone might worry that the realist account developed here has made recipes too far removed from our intuitive conceptions of what a recipe is. One may object as follows: the prototypical recipes are not abstract entities (cooking types) or merely in someone's head but they are written down or spoken out, they have names, and they might even have more culinary value than someone's random conceptualization of how they combined the leftovers in their fridge into a quick lunch dish. If any old dish has a recipe, what distinguishes those recipes from the kind of recipes we learn or share?

These challenges rely precisely on those intuitions that support constructivism, namely that a recipe exists only if someone so intends and thereby does a suitable performative act, like giving the recipe a name and writing it down or making a YouTube video of it. However, I think the only difference between those recipes and the ones that were never written down or passed on is simply that some are made public, some are not.

We can imagine a solitary master chef who has created dozens of delicious recipes that would be absolutely worth sharing but she just does not care to do so. Her recipes remain in her head as mere conceptualizations and she never names any of them. But





they are still recipes—information about how to prepare a dish or cooking types. We need to be careful not to confuse creating a recipe with marking down or naming a recipe. Creating a recipe happens when the cook has decided and completed all the steps in how to prepare the dish. They may also mark down the recipe or name it, but according to the realist theory advanced here those acts are not acts of creation. An unnamed, unwritten recipe is still a recipe.

The point about culinary value is related. Naturally, the better the dish the more reason there is to write down the recipe in order to remember it and to share it. Typically, the better a recipe is, the better known it is. So again, the dishes that are prepared just once because they turned out to be not very good do have a recipe, but there simply are not enough reasons to keep a record of them or to share them. But bad or forgotten recipes are still recipes.

One of Borghini's reasons for defending constructivism is that he thinks realism cannot explain some of our intuitions in certain cases. One problem relates to a cook's authority over the recipe:

Mild realism falls short of capturing the identity conditions of a good number of important recipes. For instance, some recipes—e.g. a chef's salad or a house pizza—owe their identity to the sort of person preparing them rather than to the ingredients or the procedures. In general, the idea that a recipe depends on the fiat of the cook is entirely in keeping with practice, but mild realism is unable to accommodate any case of this sort. (Borghini 2015: 724)

Borghini's point here is that as the author of the recipe the chef has more authority than anyone else regarding the recipe, which gives them the power to modify it to a certain degree. Thus, say a house pizza can be considered to remain the same even if the chef somewhat tweaks it.

My realist take on the case is somewhat different. We should again mind the distinction between creating recipes and naming them. For example, a restaurant may always have a dish called "Chef's salad" in their menu even though its recipe changes every week. What that shows is the name "Chef's salad" is ambiguous between a variety of salads, each of which has their own recipe. According to the theory developed here, the recipe comes first, and if the cook is so inclined, they can name it. The naming itself may well require a performative act, but for a recipe to be named it must already exist. The problem Borghini's example illustrates, however, goes beyond the more superficial question of what's in a name and has to do with the acceptable modifications to a recipe. We return to the question briefly later.

The Identity of Recipes

We have seen that according to constructivism, a recipe comes into being when its author does a performative act such as naming the recipe, announcing its existence, or writing the recipe down. The identity of the recipe depends in part on the author's decision, so that a Chef's salad may have acceptable modifications while still remaining





the same recipe. However, there are other conditions for the identity of a recipe which we will look at in this section.

Earlier I said that recipes are cooking types or conceptualizations of how to prepare a dish, but we did not yet discuss whether a recipe can exist without the dish in the realist account. It might seem possible: after all, one can invent a recipe first and then try it out. However, I think what really happens is that one has an idea for a recipe, then one goes on to test the idea by preparing the dish, and only once the dish is ready does the full recipe exist. That is because the imagined recipe is not yet complete enough to count as a recipe. Let me try to explain that more clearly.

One important issue to notice about the relation of recipes to dishes is that any ordinary recipe, like a recipe in a cookbook, is always an incomplete description of how to cook a dish. Let me list some factors that matter for the final dish which are typically left out of a recipe (see also Borghini (2015: 729–30) for some further factors):

1. The temperature at which the preparation should happen, e.g., what counts as room temperature, “warm” or “cool” (as in keep the dish in a cool place until served). Room temperatures will be very different in say, a barely-heated British apartment in the winter and a kitchen in the subtropics in the summer. A good example of that is the common simplification that red wine should be served at room temperature; however, the intended room temperature is around 15–19 degrees Celsius (59–66 degrees Fahrenheit) which is much colder than the standard room temperature in a lot of countries or during warm seasons.
2. The cooking temperature of the stove. Typically, a recipe will say something like “cook on medium heat.” But there are massive differences between what is low, medium and high heat on different types of stoves. For example, wok recipes say “cook on high heat,” but actual wok burners are much more powerful than the standard burners in European stoves.
3. The exact type of cooking vessels and utensils. For example, the size, thickness and type of a frying pan, cooking pot or oven dish will massively impact basically all of the aspects of how the ingredients cook.
4. The size of the ingredients. For example, one large potato can be the equivalent of four small ones, one large courgette the equivalent of three small ones, and so on.
5. The variety of vegetables or fruit used and their exact level of ripeness. For example, compare a barely red, hard tomato grown in a North-European greenhouse to a ripe San Marzano, or think of the “ripen at home” fruits and veggies which will never attain the flavor and texture of properly ripened ones. Or think of all the recipes which call for say, “green chilies” without specifying which species it should be.
6. The level of quality and freshness of spices and condiments. For example, the average supermarket versions of spices and condiments are often a pale imitation of the genuine items.

These are some of the features that are crucial to the identity of a dish, but which are not mentioned in a typical written recipe. And neither are they part of a newly invented but not yet tried idea for a recipe. A recipe is always a recipe for a particular





dish, but if the recipe is incomplete it can give rise to several different dishes. That is why I hold that a recipe's existence and identity depend on the existence and identity of a dish. In this respect Borghini agrees:

Unlike movies, literary works, and certain musical works, it seems that recipes are *not* autonomous entities, but are vicarious of dishes. [...] it is impossible to spell out recipes in details that would match a full-fledged dish. If so, then it is allegedly impossible to gain full acquaintance with a recipe, unless we have experienced a dish instantiating that recipe. [...] I am contending that until a recipe has not been realized, we can only speak of it as an entity that could exist in potency, but that is not yet existing. [...] A recipe is existentially linked to some dish instantiating it: no such dish, no recipe. Knowledge of the recipe hence requires acquaintance with some dish instantiating it and, typically, a process of apprenticeship that would fine-tune our acquaintance. (Borghini 2015: 730–1)

To illustrate the points about acquaintance with a dish, if a chef in a restaurant wants to teach the kitchen staff a recipe, they do much better if they show how to cook it and have the staff taste the dish than if they write the recipe down. If the staff have not tasted the dish, they are in a sense working blind. Borghini further argues that in order to imitate a dish, one needs not only acquaintance with it but also expertise in the relevant abilities. Cooking is a skill which requires apprenticeship, and different dishes may require specific skills that need to be learned. Given that I take recipes to be conceptualizations of how to prepare a particular dish, if one observes the making of a dish and tastes it but lacks the skills to make it, one does not yet know the full recipe for it. Knowing a recipe means knowing how each step in the preparation is performed. That is why classic French cookbooks do not only have recipes, but they teach a large number of techniques that must be mastered in order to be able to follow the recipes.

Thus, if there is no dish, there is no complete recipe. What about the other way around: can there be dishes without a recipe for them? Borghini holds that not every dish has a recipe, since he thinks that a crucial precondition for a recipe to exist is the *repeatability* of a dish: “a recipe—in first approximation—comprises the array of repeatable aspects of a dish whose replication would deliver a dish of the same sort” (722). This has the following consequences:

Not every dish need exemplify some recipe. In principle, the procedure that delivers any dish has some aspect to it that could be replicated. However, some dishes—and the procedures that deliver them—remain neglected. It may be because they are unappealing; but, more circumstantial reasons could intervene too, for instance the conditions in which the dish is prepared may be truly exceptional (e.g. a dish prepared while stranded on a highway or during an expedition to the Antarctic) and replicating it is not worth it. Thus, only selected dishes enter the ranks of recipes. (Borghini 2015: 722)

That is a natural thing to say from the constructivist point of view which holds that a recipe exists only if there is a cook who performs the appropriate act that brings





a recipe into existence. If the cook knows that the dish cannot—or should not—be replicated, they will not create the recipe.

Can there be dishes without recipes in the realist account? Given that we take dishes to be prepared foodstuff, in most cases recipes and dishes connect in a natural way: since a dish must be prepared somehow, normally it also has a recipe which is the conceptualization that specifies the preparation. For example, the Japanese macaques' dish of a potato washed in saltwater has a recipe, which is the conceptualization of the process (however, it is conceptualized by the macaques) or simply the cooking type, the action type of washing a potato in saltwater.

However, a preparation cannot always be fully conceptualized so that repeating the steps (the cooking type) would result in the very same dish, identified from the internalist point of view. For example, the essence of spontaneous fermentation is that the dish under preparation (typically a beverage such as beer or wine) is left to catch wild strains of yeast or bacteria that are floating in the air, reside in the barrel used, or come as a byproduct of some of the ingredients used. When the process is repeated the resulting product may never taste exactly as the previous batch since how the product changes is up to the environment and outside of the control of the maker. Does that therefore mean that such products do not have a complete recipe, since the very same dish as identified by its flavor profile cannot be recreated?

On the other hand, in the above kind of cases there is a complete recipe in the sense of a complete information or conceptualization of the process itself; there is a cooking type that can be repeated; it just leaves some aspects of the process up to the environment. So, what should we say of cases where the recipe specifies the full cooking process, but nevertheless the dishes that result from it may not be of the exact same type because the recipe intentionally lets the environment influence the result? In such cases we might think of the recipe not as a perfectly specific recipe for a particular dish, but more like a recipe template which results in various different dishes. And in fact, a lot of recipes leave room for choice regarding the exact ingredients used, which makes them also rather like templates to be filled in.

Thus, rather than thinking of recipes simply as complete or incomplete, we can think of recipes in a hierarchical way, akin to the taxonomic hierarchy in biology (thanks to Andrea Borghini for the analogy). Complete recipes are like species: for example, a specific version of Swedish meatballs, say, the one made by Sven's grandmother, is one species, and the one sold in Ikea is another species. "Swedish meatballs" is akin to genus, which belongs to the family of meatballs that would include Middle-Eastern *kofta*, Italian *polpette*, *bola-bola* from the Philippines, and so on. When we learn public recipes, we typically learn either complete recipes aka recipe species, or recipe templates that belong to a genus, that leave some choice over the details. Once one has fixed the details, the resulting dish is an instance of a recipe species, a complete recipe. (see Hirvonen MS for more on the incompleteness of recipes).

Let me illustrate the idea with our example of spontaneous fermentation. Suppose we have a recipe for ale which includes spontaneous fermentation. Given that the resulting ale may always vary in flavor, we should think of its recipe as a recipe template, a recipe genus. Each time the recipe is followed it results in a specific ale, which theoretically speaking has a recipe; it is the information about the cooking





process, including the environment. However, in practice the particular recipe can never be repeated because there is no way to insure that the environment will ever be the same. Perhaps the notion of a recipe used here is very abstract, but it emphasizes the inherent relation of a particular dish to its recipe.

One reason which makes realism especially appealing is its ability to explain the feeling we have that certain traditional, classic dishes and their recipes have changed and at worst, they have become fakes. Oliver (2007) describes how the beer industry has replaced most of the traditional ways of brewing by novel ingredients and methods which are cheaper and more reliable, but flavorwise the results are vastly inferior and in other respects too they are very different from the original beers. One of the famous companies which gave up the tradition of cask-conditioned brewing and replaced it with filtered and artificially carbonated fizzy beer was Guinness:

Guinness pioneered this neat trick in the 1960s. Until then Guinness had been a cask-conditioned beer. When cask-conditioned beer is pumped quickly into a glass, the beer mixes with air. Nitrogen forms small stable bubbles and air is mostly nitrogen. So this gives a beer a tight creamy head. I think you can pretty much see where this is going. Nitrogen was dissolved into the beer, which was then forced out of the special new Guinness spigot at high pressure. This caused the nitrogen to break out of solution, and *voilà*, a tight creamy head on a very lightly carbonated glass of Guinness. (Oliver 2007, 39)

Realism can easily explain why a connoisseur of Guinness who was used to it being cask-conditioned would be very disappointed and upset by the change: Guinness went and changed the recipe while still calling the beer by the same name. Constructivism has more work to explain what goes on in such cases, since presumably the Guinness factory is the chef and the authority over the recipe of Guinness, and thus are permitted to modify the recipe. The intuition that the contemporary Guinness is fake Guinness is hard to make sense of in the constructivist picture.

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To summarize, the core difference between constructivism and realism is the role of the chef (or chefs) with respect to the coming of being and nature of a recipe. According to constructivism, a recipe exists in virtue of the *fiat* of the chef (assuming they fulfill some other conditions) and they also have authority over the way the recipe can be changed. Realism leaves the chef out of the picture and takes recipes to be the type of cooking process (or the information about it) which results in a particular dish. We have also seen that knowing a recipe requires much more than following a public recipe and doing one's best in cooking the dish, due to the typically incomplete nature of public recipes. One way recipes change or arguably come into being is when someone follows an incomplete recipe (or unsuccessfully follows a complete recipe) and then continues to make the resulting dish in their own way afterwards. So, what happens in such cases according to constructivism and realism? Let me illustrate the problem with a story.





A Recipe without a Maker

In the ancient times before internet there was a small, isolated Northern country, call it Norland, whose inhabitants very rarely if ever had any interactions with Italy, Italians, or Italian food, including pizza. Norland did not import food, so they grew their own tomatoes in greenhouses under lamps. They had heard of mozzarella and produced their own version of it, which however had little to do with the real mozzarella in terms of its flavor or texture. One day a Norlander, call him Arvid, is emptying his grandmother's attic and finds a recipe of Neapolitan Pizza Margherita. Arvid doesn't know what it is but decides to give the recipe a try.

Arvid goes to his local grocery store and buys the ingredients: local tomatoes, local mozzarella, etc., and proceeds to cook the dish in his old gas oven. However, Arvid lacks acquaintance of how Neapolitan Pizza Margherita's texture and flavors should be, he lacks knowledge and skill in preparing the crust, the ingredients used are too different from the intended ones, and the oven is much too weak. All in all, the flavors and the textures just aren't right at all, so the result is not similar enough to a genuine Neapolitan Pizza Margherita to count as an instance of it. But Arvid doesn't know that because he has never eaten a genuine Neapolitan Pizza Margherita, and he loves the pizza he made.

He offers the dish to his friends who like it, and they ask him for the recipe. In a few years the country abounds with homes and restaurants making the said dish, known as "Neapolitan Pizza Margherita," which however bears little resemblance to the Neapolitan Pizza Margherita. Norlanders also like to experiment, so it is common to add things like reindeer, elk, or salmon as extra toppings.

We are assuming that the new pizza is not an instance of the Neapolitan Pizza Margherita. So, what is then the recipe that the Norlanders got from Arvid? My take on the story is that a new recipe has come into being without any performative having taken place—all Arvid tried to do was to make a Neapolitan Pizza Margherita but he failed, and his failure created a new dish and a new recipe. Whereas Arvid's first making of a pizza could be considered a failed attempt at a Neapolitan Pizza Margherita, he accepted the resulting dish as a perfect result. From then on, he intended to replicate *the pizza he made*, and his pizza provided the dish that the other Norlanders were later trying to imitate. Arvid's recipe shares its name with (Neapolitan) Pizza Margherita, but otherwise the two dishes are very different.

This case illustrates the core difference between constructivism and realism. Given the emphasis constructivism gives to the chef's *fiat*, it is hard to see what is going on in the case. One option is that according to constructivism, the Norlanders are continually and unsuccessfully trying to cook Neapolitan Pizza Margherita, of which there is only the original recipe. Since Arvid thinks he is merely following the original recipe, he will never make a performative utterance aimed at creating a new recipe. Realism in contrast identifies a dish based on its core ingredients and flavors, and a recipe is the way to cook the dish. Since there is a large difference between Arvid's pizza and Pizza Margherita, the two dishes are different, and so are their recipes. The recipe Arvid used was to some extent incomplete since it did not specify the quality of the ingredients, the type of oven to use, and so on. Consequently, Arvid created a complete recipe, Arvid's Pizza Margherita, which became the favorite of Norlanders.





If realism is true, recipes come into existence quite easily. I think looking at actual recipes and their origins speak in favor of that too. The world is nowadays full of different types of pizzas, but they all had the same origin. Are they all really pizzas? We are all familiar with the arguments over what counts as a pizza and what does not: “You cannot put pineapple in a pizza,” “You can’t make pizza if you don’t have a pizza oven,” “Pizza must have a thin crust,” and so on.

When there are many variations of one recipe, rather than to argue which ones are the real thing and which are not, we can rather consider them as subtypes, as in the biological hierarchy. For example, pizza has so many subtypes that it can be considered to be an order. The members of its family are say, New York style pizza, Neapolitan pizza, Chicago pizza, and so on; the genera of each family are types of pizza toppings like Pizza Margherita, Primavera, and so on, and finally, the species are particular versions of those, like Arvid’s Pizza Margherita. In other words, “pizza” refers to such a high-level category that it leaves open much of its characteristics. If one specifies the family of pizza, say Neapolitan pizza, we still only get a recipe template, an incomplete recipe which merely specifies the core features of all Neapolitan pizzas. Complete recipes are had by specific dishes, like Montrose Pie, a pizza with bananas by Reds Pizza in Santa Monica, California.

The final topic we should address is traditional recipes which have acquired a legally protected geographical status in Europe, for example, cheeses such as *Gorgonzola*, *Comté*, or *Feta*, various kinds of regional products like types of honey, wine, liquors or bread, and even parts of dishes like the sauce *Amatriciana Tradizionale*. Borghini argues that the reasoning behind such protected geographical statuses relies on realism. However, I think that is the case only if one accepts what we have called an externalist view of dishes, which seems to correspond to what Borghini calls an *extended concept* of a recipe or a dish:

When speaking of a dish or a recipe, at times we refer merely to the item that is consumed—say, a slice of pizza; in other contexts, however, we refer to that item *plus* the relevant events that brought to its realization; the relevant events, in turn, may be limited to the action of the cook (say, all the toil and labour that went into preparing the slice) or, rather, the events may comprise a more extended series (e.g., the farms where the grains, the tomatoes, and the milk were produced). I call the latter the *extended concept* of a recipe or dish. (722)

If one conceives of dishes in the externalist way with quite strict standards for what counts as the same dish, then a realist can argue that say, Feta cheese can only be produced based on the milk of sheep or goats from specific Greek regions because that is the core ingredient used in making Feta. However, I think that most recipes can be reproduced relying merely on the internalist view of a dish—its flavor, texture, temperature, and look—thus ignoring where the ingredients come from. Sometimes the origin of an ingredient is essential to its having the right flavor, in which case the recipe requires the use of the ingredient with a particular origin, but the origin plays a role only insofar as it has a notable impact on flavor.

In short, realism could be used to defend the protected geographical status of certain dishes, but only when there are good reasons to think that the region where they are





produced makes a difference to the dish's flavors, or if one relies on the externalist concept of a dish which is problematic in many ways. However, there are lots of reasons to have a protected geographical status for dishes and produce that go well beyond the idea of protecting a traditional recipe. Whether we choose constructivism or realism as the best theory of recipes is not enough to adjudicate whether dishes should be protected based on their geography.

Conclusions

The aim of this paper has been to present a viable alternative to constructivism about recipes. Realism grants recipes life irrespective of their social existence: what matters is that someone has created a novel dish, and a recipe is the information/conceptualization of how to prepare the dish, or a cooking type which results in the dish. Some recipes become public recipes by being written down, named, and shared. Public recipes may go on to have a long, famous life, and they most likely also give rise to several new recipes which start out as either failed attempts at the original, or as intentional modifications of it.

Constructivism gives more emphasis to the selection process by cooks, by taking them to have the power to decide which among the dishes they have cooked get to have a recipe. However, I argued that there are some recipes where it is less clear how the constructivist would explain their coming into existence. I gave the example of recipes without makers, illustrated by the story of the Norlandish Pizza Margherita which came into being by accident but went on to live an illustrious life.

No doubt both constructivism and realism capture some aspects of what we take recipes to be, and to decide between them or possible other theories will require much more space than we have here. I have provided some groundwork for future theorizing, as well as a realist account which takes the identity of a recipe to depend on the cooking process which leads to a particular dish. The recipes existence is thus strongly dependent on the process of cooking and on the dish. Recipes can also come to have a social life in the form of public recipes, but I take that to be a non-essential part of the true nature of recipes.¹

