

Crystal Castro interviewed by Armando Castillo  
October 21, 2019  
Bronx NY

Armando Castillo: My name is Armando Castillo and I'm interviewing Crystal Castro at my home in Bronx NY on 10/21/19 do you give me permission to record this oral history

Crystal Castro: Yes

AC: Where do you grow up?

CC: Bronx, New York.

AC: Describe one of your favorite meal growing up.

CC: One of my favorites growing up is pasta.

AC: Does it has any significance behind it?

CC: Yes, it brings back memories when we use to cook with mom and dad and my oldest sister, we use to make the meatballs with the pasta and noodle

AC: Is there any food that reminds you of your loved ones?

CC: Yes, Fadina.

AC: Why?

CC: There is a certain scent to it, that brings me back.

AC: Is there any memory that you have in terms of making a meal with an older person in your family or life?

CC: hum... yes. What do we make...? We used to make easy stuff me and Cristina..... We would make mac and cheese.

AC: Currently what is your favorite meal to eat and why?

CC: It still is pasta because it became more of a family thing it started off that way and continue to make the effort of the family time because it's always the best time.

AC: What is your favorite meal to make and why?

CC: Pasta

AC: For the same reason?

CC: Yes

AC: Ok

CC: Just different type of pasta

AC: If you could pick anyone in the world who will you eat your favorite meal with?

CC: Family.

AC: Any reason why? Why you would not pick a celebrity.

CC: Because family is number one and a lot of time they stuck at work and not being available for your family and kids so that time is very important.

AC: Are there any food you would not eat?

CC: No, I'm always willing to try anything.

AC: Are there any food that before you may have not wanted to and now you may like it?

CC: It was bacalao. It was disgusting when I was a kid but now, I love it.

AC: Are there certain food you only eat on certain occasions?

CC: Yes

AC: What would those occasions be?

CC: Normally, it is Thanksgiving and Christmas

AC: What is the food you would eat?

CC: Penin, Pasteles, Bastalon

AC: Who in your life cook the best meal?

CC: I would say, my husband Angel

AC: What did he make?

CC: Chicken Parm.

AC: I thought you were going to say rice.

AC: What does the phrase eating well mean to you?

CC: Healthy.

AC: What are the food you will consider healthy?

CC: Stir-fried vinegar and some white rice, broccoli, and stuff.

AC: Are there any particular restaurant you will consider your favorite?

CC: Yes, Olive Garden.

AC: What's your favorite to order there?

CC: Pasta

AC: Do you think that any food you eat, or cook could potentially shape you into who you are? Whether that be if you were younger and now?

AC: I don't know.

CC: I'm not sure. Maybe .

AC: OK.

AC: Do you think that maybe cooking and eating influence you? Like developing an appreciation for you or something like that?

CC: Yeah.

AC: Are there any rule or tradition that you follow in regard of eating?

CC: No.

AC: if you were able to go anywhere in the world to try new food where would you go and why?

CC: Italy.

AC: Why Italy? Pasta?

CC: Pasta and Pizza.

AC: Do you think that maybe trying pasta is more a traditional form or just pasta?

CC: I guess it's just because it's pasta.

AC: What a meal or snacks you could eat all the time and never get tired of it or even a drink. Anything?

CC: Meal is pizza, I can eat pizza every day.

AC: What about Snacks?

CC: Snacks? Cookies and milk.

AC: What about a drink?

AC: Milk to go with the cookies?

CC: Milk to go with the cookies and also cream soda is my favorite.

AC: To you what is the most important meal of the day?

CC: Lunch

AC: Why is that?

CC: Lunch because it holds me until I get home.

AC: When you wake up in the morning is there anything you look forward to when it comes to food?

CC: When I wake up in the morning?

AC: Yes, when you first start thinking about food is there anything you look forward to even if it is later in the day or something like that?

CC: Mainly on the weekend because during the week I'm always on the go and I don't really get to eat. So on the weekend, I do look forward to cooking breakfast with Angel and having some bonding time with the girls watching TV and bacon and eggs stuff like that.

AC: Describe your relationship with your favorite cook.

CC: My relationship with my favorite cook?

AC: Like whoever in your life made your favorite meal. Describe your relationship with them and do you think that food had anything to do with that like sway it in a certain direction.

CC: I think my dad. We used to make scrambled eggs and peppers and onion and stuff it just the way he made it and the bond we have cooking it just made it more delicious.

AC: Is there anything you think of when you cook?

CC: Aside from eating it?

AC: Anything that has to do with food like you think you making it good if people are going to like it or not?

CC: No not really no one else is going to be there.

AC: Do you think cooking can help you with how you feel?

CC: Yeah absolutely especially when you have a stressful day cooking can definitely get you out of there and have you focus on something else aside from your stressful day.

AC: Do you think that cooking can have a negative impact on how you feel or cooking or eating?

CC: No, I think it's more of a positive.

AC: Do you have any bad habit when it comes to eating so like people like slurping they soup or chewing with their mouth open.

CC: Yes, yes, I can't stand it. My daughter does it and it drives me insane. I'm yelling during the time because I can't stand it.

AC: What is one of your most favorable and memorable stories when it comes to cooking?

CC: That's tough. I will have to say last year Angel and I, we offered to make Benin which is Pork shoulder and it was overnight and we have to wake up every two hours to make sure that it was cooking right and also flipping it over and it took a lot of time by the time it was 12 o'clock in the afternoon where it was complete and it was worth everything because you know all the time invested in cooking.

AC: If you could eat outside your own culture who could you say make the best food?

CC: outside my culture?

CC: So. let's say we Puerto Rican I like a lot of Dominican dishes.

AC: Ok/

AC: Like what would be your favorite?

CC: Like mangu which is plantanos and ...(undeciphered)... and cheese and salami... I like Dominican dishes and Mexican dishes because those are really good.

AC: Like what?

CC: My favorite place that I go that I get all time for lunch is this place called "Lolita's" and I get like these burritos and it has chicken rice and avocado and everything in there and it's just so good.

AC: Is there any cultural food that you had, and you didn't like as much?

CC: I've tried Indian food.

AC: It wasn't for you?

CC: It's too spicy.

AC: And out of like candy and drinks and stuff is there any artificial flavor that's your favorite?

CC: I would say strawberry-like strawberry candy is my favorite and I like a lot of sour candies

AC: What strawberry candy is your favorite? Like what specifically?

CC: Like sour power.

AC: That's about it. Is there any question that I didn't ask and I should have asked? regarding food? That you thought it might be good to answer?

CC: What's your favorite take out?

AC: Actually, what is your favorite take out?

CC: Chinese food.

AC: I feel like that's pretty standard though.

CC: Ueah Chinese food or Domino's Pizza.

AC: Ok then what's your favorite fast-food chain?

CC: Like what do you mean?

AC: Like McDonalds and Burger King which one of those is your favorite?

CC: I will say McDonalds before Burger King.

AC: And what about as a whole like mention any fast-food place.

CC: I like Taco Bell are really good.

AC: Really? Ok.

CC: KFC I can go on....

AC: So certain dishes from each fast food.

CC: Yes

AC: I appreciate you with your time and yeah that's it thanks you.

CC: You are welcome.