

Collection Plan

Food is an integral part of society, and the food industry is essential to delivering, creating, and sustaining our foodways. With the impact of the pandemic, foodways around the world are changing rapidly. What will restaurants be like in a year or two? How will grocery stores change? What changes are we experiencing now that will continue to shape our foodways for the foreseeable future? Customs such as birthday candles on a cake or buffets may become things of the past or adapted to our post-pandemic society.

A foodways collection would help to archive the changing landscape of food and hospitality. From executive chefs to factory workers, the food industry has been hit by the pandemic without the luxury of stopping. While restaurants adapt or close, grocery stores and other food industry entities remain open and functioning even under mounting pressure from the public and governmental guidelines. At home, consumers are making do with ingredients and brands they may not have used before the pandemic. The public is making sourdough, supporting restaurants with pick-up orders, and re-evaluating their nutritional health.

Key themes/subjects of the collection would be the food industry and food culture. The food industry would include items from employees working in the food industry from grocery stores to warehouses. Food culture would include items that reflect the changes in how we create and use food such as the sourdough trend, consumer reaction to changes to restaurants, and food rituals.

A foodways collection will capture the changes to our foodways from its workforce to its consumers. This collection will help future researchers make sense of the changes in our foodways. The collection will be built by reaching out to food industry professionals from grocery stores to food instructors from the Culinary Institute of America. Items collected reflecting consumers will rely on articles, first-person accounts, and social media posts. Items such as stories from food industry workers, recipes created or used during the pandemic, articles about food, and videos of food preparation. Photography will also be a large part of the collection as photos show not only what people are making but how the landscape of foodservice is changing. Food is already a large part of the archive, but it is such a massive part of our lives that including more viewpoints on how foodways are changing is necessary.