

Dear readers,

We believe that food goes beyond language and cultural barriers. Collectively cooking and eating can be a way of bringing people closer together. When creating this learning experience we bonded most over our similar upbringing with regards to cooking and eating. One of the most common kinds of cuisines in Rotterdam would be Surinamese, where both of our families immigrated from to The Netherlands. This ethnic group is the largest minority demographic in the city, so it's a very popular option for locals, undoubtedly influenced by its convenience and the rich variety of flavours. But most importantly, once you step into the restaurant you can feel the warmth of the community and often even the family that embodies the preservation of tradition.

This publication was specifically designed for the learning experience of the RASL minor. In this publication you will find everything you need to make sambal, an important staple of Suri-Indonesian cuisine. It will not only tell you how to make it, but it will also give you a little context about, and why you are doing this.

For the sake of the learning experience you have already been provided with the ingredients.

So what is left to do is; (1) Form a group; (2) Read the publication together; (3) Divide tasks; (4) Cook; and (5) Eat! (Step two needs a bit more explanation. We like you to each read out a part of the publication whilst the rest of the group is prepping, cooking, and eating. You can appoint one person to read out loud, or you can have more people read, whatever you prefer.) Good luck with everything!

Lobi,

Damien & Eshrée



You'll need:

15 red peppers

4 shallots

4 garlic cloves

3 salam leaves

1 stalk of sereh

1/2 lime (juice)

5 tbsp ketjap manis

3 tbsp brown sugar

1 tbsp gula djawa

1 tsp trassi

1 tsp ground laos

Instructions:

Chop 4-5 shallots and 4 cloves of garlic as small as possible. Fry the shallot and garlic on medium heat in a wok for about 10 minutes in a dash of oil. Until the onions are soft and slightly golden brown.

Meanwhile, coarsely chop about 15 red chillies and add to the sautéed shallots and garlic after 10 minutes.

Now add 1 tsp vegan trassi or vegetable stock and 1 tsp ground laos.

Mix everything together thoroughly for a while.

Add a pinch of salt along with about 5 tsp ketjap manis, 2-3 tsp brown sugar, 1 tsp gula djawa and the juice of a 1/2 lime.

Mix everything well.

Bruise the bulbous side of a stalk of sereh and add (knotted) to the mixture. Also add 2-3 salam leaves. Simmer on low heat for 2-3 minutes. Do not overheat, otherwise it will burn.

Then keep stirring the sambal constantly until the liquid is gone. This will take some time.

You may turn up the heat a little.

When the sambal is nice and dry, it is best to store it in a (thoroughly cleaned) glass jar. Close the lid and turn the jar upside down for 15 minutes. Turn over and you can keep it covered for weeks!

In its essence sambal is a spicy condiment originally from Indonesia and Malaysia, that later traveled to Surinam and The Netherlands. There is a vast variety of sambal. But, today we've provided you with the ingredients to make sambal badjak.

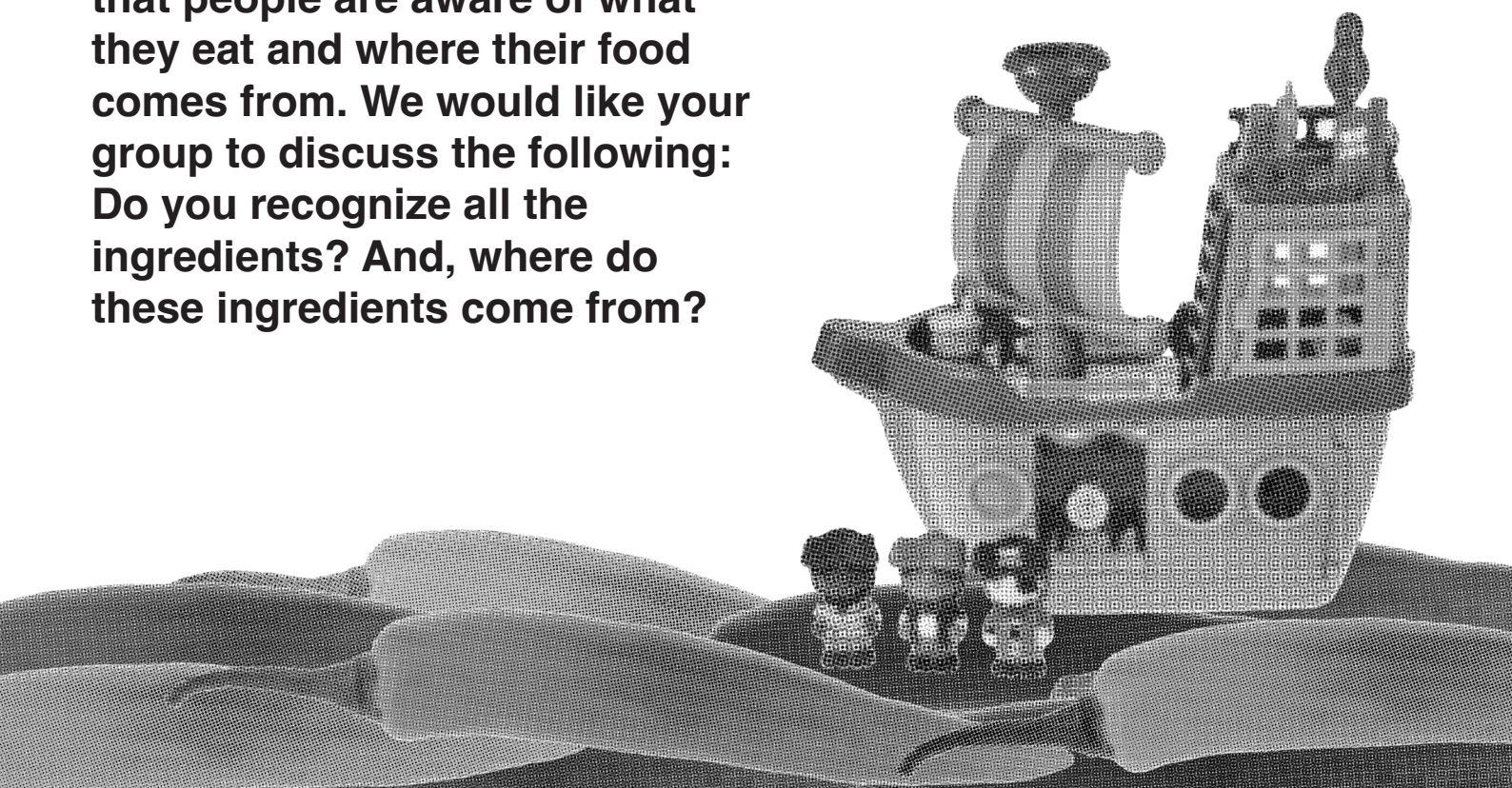
'Badjak' means pirate in

Bahasa. The sambal was given this name because this specific type of sambal was taken onto ships during voyages by fisherman to enhance the flavor off their meal.

Like the sambal badjak and the people who eat, the ingredients traveled around the world on ships from all corners of the world. Before, red peppers came to Indonesia and Malaysia, sambal was made mostly from ginger. But, after the Portuguese colonists took the pepper with them from South-America to South-East Asia, sambal became more and more spicy.

The Netherlands had several colonies, two of them being Indonesia and Surinam, when slavery was abolished in Surinam, the Dutch needed other people to work on their plantations. The solution was shipping people from the Dutch-Indies to Surinam, this group of people were named 'Javanen' after their island of origin. Logically, these people took their food culture with them. This ultimately resulted in Surinam having their own specific kind of sambal.

We believe it is important that people are aware of what they eat and where their food comes from. We would like your group to discuss the following: Do you recognize all the ingredients? And, where do these ingredients come from?



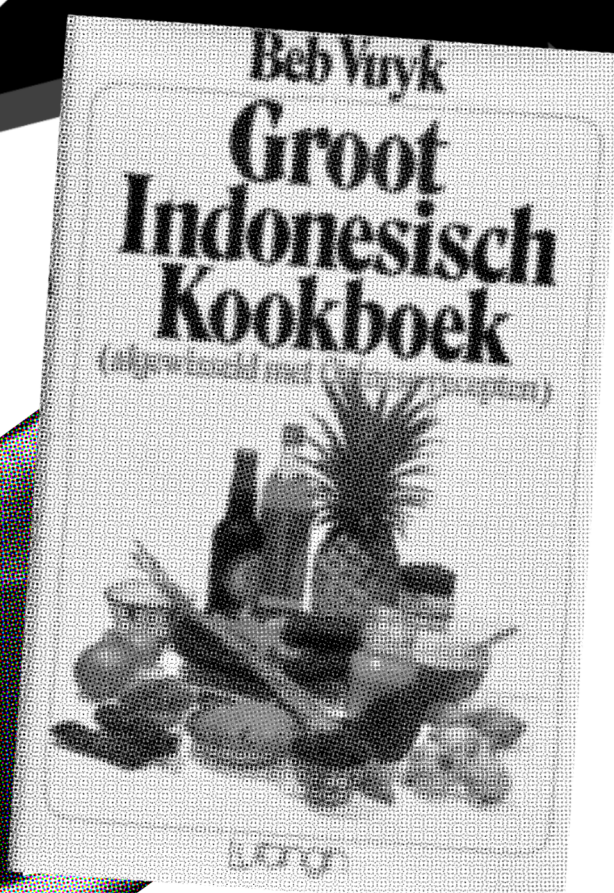
Ever since I can remember there has always been two or more types of sambal in the fridge. We would eat it with Indonesian dishes like Nasi Goreng but also put it on a peanutbutter sandwich. When calling my mom and my grandma to ask what they know about sambal they both told me about Beb Vuyk's cookbook. Vuyk (1905-1991) was a Dutch writer of Indonesian-Dutch descent. Her cookbook "Groot Indonesisch Kookboek" contains mostly classic dishes. My grandma told me that her mom had two Indonesian cookbooks Vuyk's and 'Het Oost-Indisch recepten voor de Hollandsche en inlandse keuken' [The East-Indian cookbook containing 456 tried and tested recipes for Dutch and native cuisine] by Catenius van der Meijden, first published in 1866. This book was written for Dutch people in the Dutch East Indies. When Indonesia became independent after World War II and many Indonesian-Dutch peoples, like my grandma, moved to The Netherlands. This helped Indonesian food like sambal to become popular in the Netherlands. Even though my grandma preferred Vuyk's cookbook, her mom gave her the one from Catenius van der Meijden. Both cookbooks keep being republished which helps to preserve the authentic Dutch-Indonesian food culture.

BEB VUYK

Today you're making a less expensive version of Vuyk's recipe. But for reference we'd like to show you the version that's in the 'Groot Indonesisch Kookboek'.

Ingredients:
12 kemeris (puffed) // 10 lomboks (chopped) // 200 grams onions (chopped) // 3 cloves of garlic (chopped) // 3 teaspoons Javanese sugar // 1 tsp laos // salt // 1 tsp trasi // 2 tsp oil / asem the size of a walnut // 2 sprigs of sereh (quartered) // 1/8 block of santen

Instructions:
Finely rub the puffed memoirs with the lomboks, onions, garlic, sugar, laos, some salt and trassi. Fry all these together in the oil until the onions turn yellow. Make asem water and use 4 tablespoons of hot water for this. Add this to the fried spices along with the sereh and the cube of santen. Boil gently until the mixture starts to thicken and the oil from the santen floats to the top. Remove the sereh. Done!

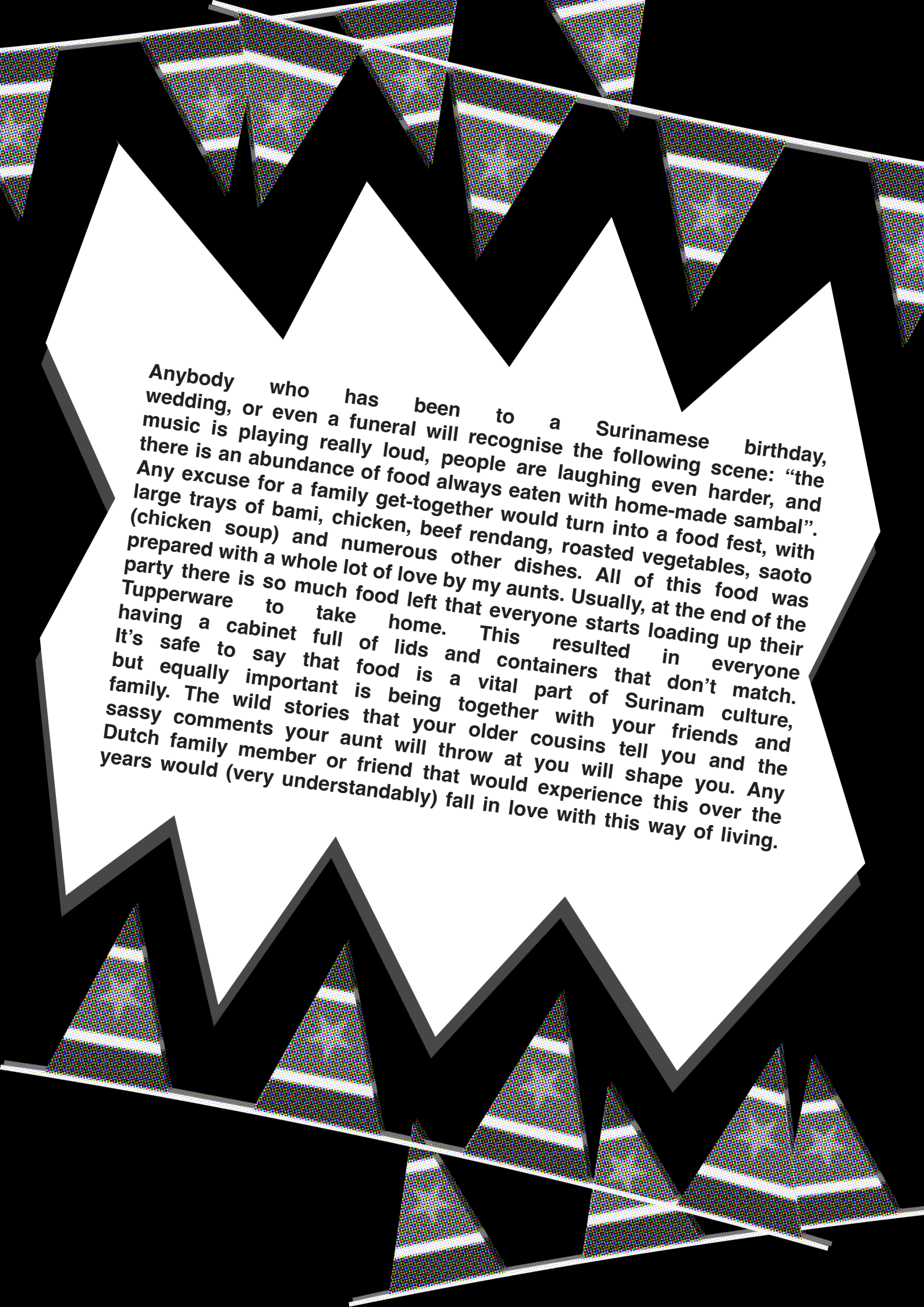




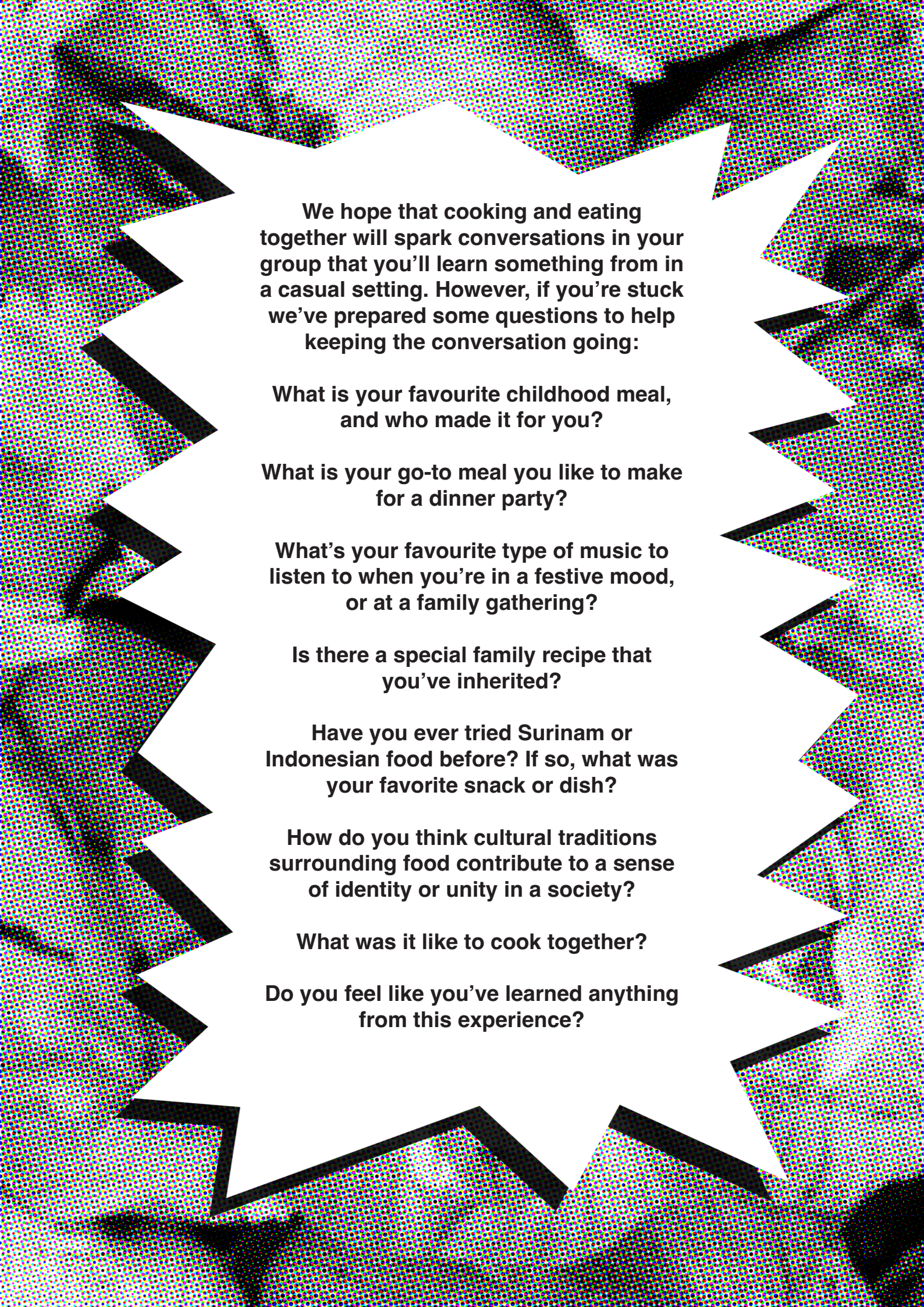
DUTCH FOOD

This learning experience was partly created as a comparison of the Suri-Indonesian food culture we grew up with, to the Dutch food culture we saw around us. But what exactly is this? Dutch chef Joris Bijdendijk, the head of the Rijksmuseum restaurant, had this to say about it:

“...in the Netherlands there is some sort of inferiority complex around our food. If you ask a Dutch person what our food culture is they’d say: “kale, cheese, ‘stampot’”. And, if you would ask a foreigner they’d say: “The ‘Gouda’ or ‘stroopwafels’”, while there is so much more. Even though we’re a tiny country we produce food that we export to every corner of the Earth. And, that’s the crazy thing about the Netherlands, we have everything. We have langoustines and St Jacob’s mussels in the North Sea, the finest cheeses, the finest veal, I can’t even think of everything. All for export. And, for ourselves we produce the plastic factory cheese, preferably a pre-cut square because then it fits nicely on my sandwich. And we prefer to have a “standing lunch” with a slice of bread on top of my glass of buttermilk. As long as it’s quick you know. And that’s a kind of mercantile spirit in it, like from the VOC era. The VOC era, you have to imagine that through this country came the most beautiful spices, the tastiest things. And what we did was just trade. But we skipped to enjoy it ourselves!”



Anybody who has been to a Surinamese birthday, wedding, or even a funeral will recognise the following scene: "the music is playing really loud, people are laughing even harder, and there is an abundance of food always eaten with home-made sambal". Any excuse for a family get-together would turn into a food fest, with large trays of bami, chicken, beef rendang, roasted vegetables, saoto (chicken soup) and numerous other dishes. All of this food was prepared with a whole lot of love by my aunts. Usually, at the end of the party there is so much food left that everyone starts loading up their Tupperware to take home. This resulted in everyone having a cabinet full of lids and containers that don't match. It's safe to say that food is a vital part of Surinam culture, but equally important is being together with your friends and family. The wild stories that your older cousins tell you and the sassy comments your aunt will throw at you will shape you. Any Dutch family member or friend that would experience this over the years would (very understandably) fall in love with this way of living.



We hope that cooking and eating together will spark conversations in your group that you'll learn something from in a casual setting. However, if you're stuck we've prepared some questions to help keeping the conversation going:

What is your favourite childhood meal, and who made it for you?

What is your go-to meal you like to make for a dinner party?

What's your favourite type of music to listen to when you're in a festive mood, or at a family gathering?

Is there a special family recipe that you've inherited?

Have you ever tried Surinam or Indonesian food before? If so, what was your favorite snack or dish?

How do you think cultural traditions surrounding food contribute to a sense of identity or unity in a society?

What was it like to cook together?

Do you feel like you've learned anything from this experience?

ALTHOUGH THIS LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOCUSSES ON SAMBAL BADJAK THERE ARE MANY MORE TYPES OF SAMBAL TO MAKE AND EAT. WE'VE PROVIDED A SMALL LIST OF THE MOST COMMON TYPES YOU'LL BE ABLE TO BUY IN THE SUPERMARKET.



SAMBAL BADJAK

This is a fried sambal. The name badjak means pirate. The sambal got this name because sailors took the sambal with them on long voyages at sea. Frying the sambal makes the pepper's spiciness milder, and also allows it to be preserved longer.



SAMBAL BRANDAL

Brandal means rascal. The sambal got this name because of its extra spicy flavor. Like sambal badjak, this sambal can be preserved longer due to frying. But, compared to sambal badjak, this one is considerably spicier.



SAMBAL MANIS

Manis means sweet. This sambal is slightly milder than sambal Brandal and Oelek. It gets its sweet taste from the extra gula jawa and/or ketjap manis added to it. And it's very tasty as a dip for kroepoek.



SAMBAL OELEK

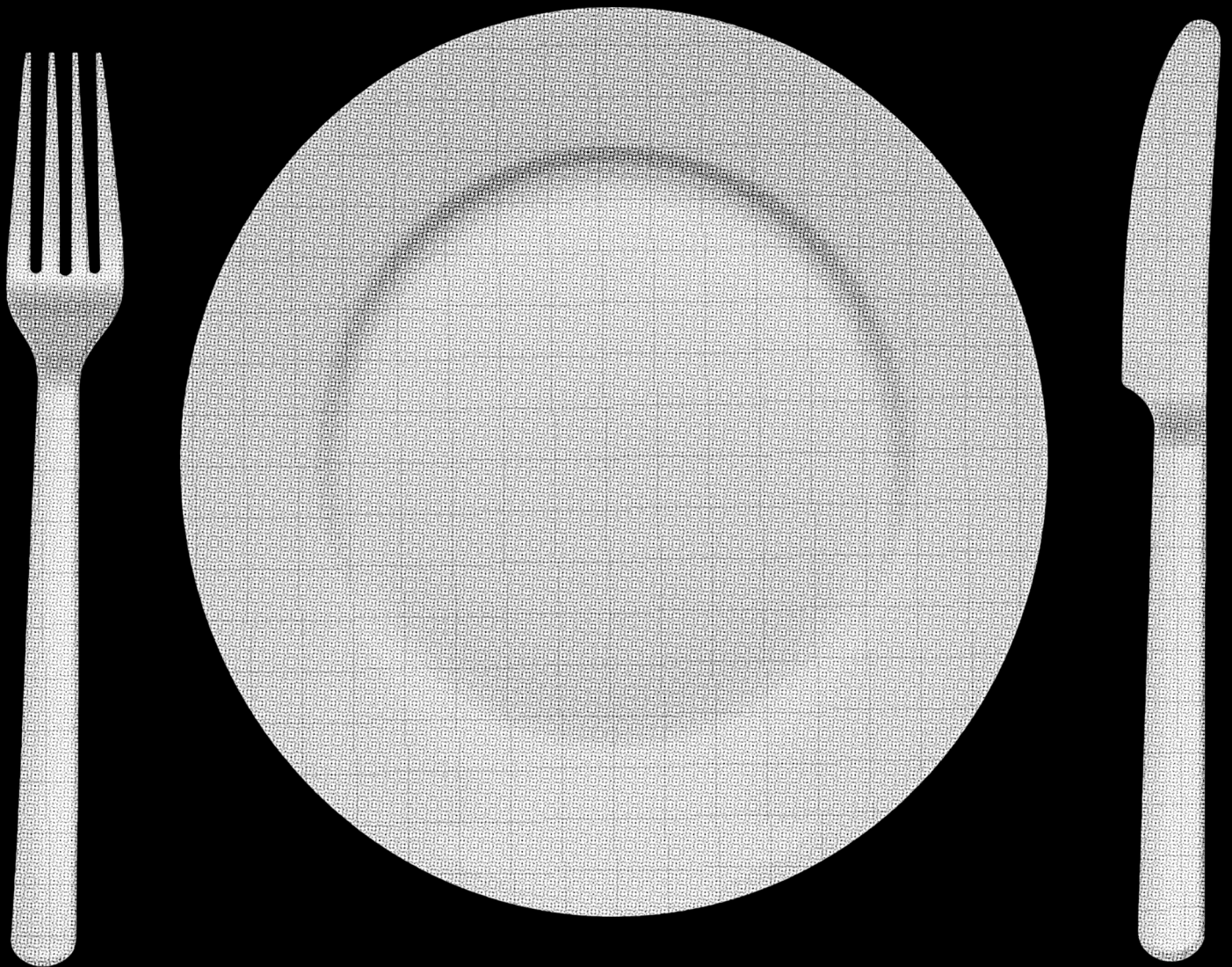
Oelek means 'rubbing', and refers to making this sambal with a mortar and pestle. This set of two simple tools is used to prepare ingredients by crushing or grinding them into a fine paste or powder. This is the most common sambal in the Netherlands, partly because it is often offered with Chinese-Indonesian takeaway restaurants.



MADAM JEANETTE SAMBAL

Also known as 'Surinamese sambal'. Whereas sambal from Indonesia is prepared with Lombok chillies, this one is made with the extra spicy Madam Jeanette Sambal. The origin of the name is not clear, but this pepper would possibly be named after a local sex worker who was known for their fiery personality.

THE ONLY THING LEFT TO DO IS...



...EAT AND ENJOY YOURSELVES!

