#101 – Ramen Mania
Ivan Orkin, the renegade New Yorker-turned-Japanese-ramen-chef, discusses ramen culture in New York versus Tokyo. Chef Nakamura from Sun Noodles explains what makes a great bowl of ramen. Later, seafood purveyor-turned-ramen-chef Yuji Haraguchi creates a New York deli-style version of his broth-less ramen dish, mazemen, using sustainable and typically discarded seafood from a nearby supermarket. The episode ends in Berkeley, Calif. with a tour of the local greenmarket from three former Chez Panisse chefs. After traveling to Japan, they opened a restaurant in the U.S. that serves ramen dishes with their local and personal spin.

#102 – Koreatown U.S.A.
This episode visits New York and Los Angeles — home to the two largest Korean populations in the United States — to explore what distinguishes each. Both are 24-hour hubs of food and drinking culture. However, New York City's Koreatown covers just one block, whereas Los Angeles' Koreatown seems like a city unto itself. At dinner with Lisa Ling and her husband Paul Song, chef Sang Yoon breaks down the basics of Korean cooking. Back in New York, at Saveur Magazine's test kitchen, Top Chef winner Kristen Kish, a Seoul-born Korean adoptee, receives her first-ever Korean cooking lesson, a kimchi tutorial, from Korean homemaker and YouTube sensation, Maangchi. The episode ends with a night out at Pocha 32, an export of Korea's popular "tent" restaurants.

#103 – Northern Thai Cuisine
Andy Ricker, a carpenter-turned-chef from Portland, Oregon, is known for bringing "authentic" Thai food to America. At a food festival in Las Vegas, Ricker prepares a welcome dinner for the participating chefs at the much-loved Lotus of Siam, with chef/owner Saipin Chutima at the helm. The duo creates their collective version of a spicy Issan dish. At the table, Jet Tila rhapsodizes about the days when his family opened America's first Thai grocery store in Hollywood, Calif., and introduced lemongrass, kaffir lime leaves and other ingredients to the American palate. The episode also includes visits to a Thai temple in Los Angeles.
#104 – Filipino Entrepreneurs
Filipinos comprise the second-largest Asian-American population nationwide, yet their cuisine is relatively unknown. PJ Quesada, founder of the Filipino Food Movement, explains Filipino cuisine while feasting at his friend Tim Luym's global-Filipino restaurant in San Mateo, Calif. Meet restaurateur Nicole Ponseca, who left her life as an advertising executive in New York to give voice to her culture through food. And finally, the two friends behind Bling Bling Dumplings manufacture thousands of dumplings — from scratch, at home — to serve at Coachella and other festivals.

#105 – Bay Area's Pacific Rim Cuisine
This episode introduces Olivia Wu, designer of the original Asian restaurant concepts on Google's "campus." Go behind-the-scenes at Google's first sit-down restaurant, as the assembly line churns out 2,000 servings of the Indian fried rice dish, biryani. A visit to Google's purveyors showcases the ethos of the Bay Area food culture — local, seasonable and sustainable. After a career in Silicon Valley, two retired Japanese executives returned to their ancestral farming roots and constructed an indoor vertical farm which services some of the top restaurants in the Bay Area. The episode ends at a now-mainstream tofu factory.

#106 – Chinatown, Reimagined
Track the evolution of Chinese food in America through the lens of two third-generation Chinese-American restaurateurs. Wilson Tang preserves the legacy of his family's dim sum parlor (America's oldest) while opening a fine-dining Chinese restaurant on Chinatown's expanding Lower East Side. Ed Schoenfeld, a self-proclaimed Chinese food expert and owner of one of the most critically acclaimed Chinese restaurants in New York, provides a tutorial on Peking duck preparation. The episode concludes at Hakkasan, a global Chinese brand that includes nightclubs and restaurants from Beverly Hills to Dubai to Shanghai.

Season II

#201 – Japan: Food as Obsession
Japan has mesmerized American foodies for generations, from supermarket sushi rolls to today’s Instagram-worthy bowls of chef-driven ramen. Today a new wave of Japanese cuisine continues to intoxicate us. In this episode, we explore American manifestations of “otaku,” the Japanese phenomenon that mixes cutting-edge pop culture and food obsession. At a “cat café,” sake and delicate Japanese desserts are served with a side of feline companionship. Kawaii, the Japanese cult of cuteness, finds an American outlet among suburban moms who painstakingly assemble – and blog about – elaborate bento boxes. And an American’s obsession with sumo wrestling brings to our shores some very large Japanese men and their recipe for chanko nabe, the stew that fuels their thunderous collisions.
#202 – Farm to Table, Asian Style
Who are the new rock stars of the food world? Here’s a hint: food doesn’t get from the farm to your table without a farmer. We walk the dusty fields of California’s Central Valley with a laconic third-generation Japanese-American rice grower who hopes his daughters will carry on the family business, and we harvest vegetables in an idyllic Bay Area farm plot where a Korean-American adoptee grows heirloom cabbages and herbs for the Lee brothers, the hoodie-wearing hipsters who run Namu, one of San Francisco’s hottest restaurants. And finally, on the beautiful Half Moon Bay coast, we tour the greenhouses where an idea hatched over beers by a pair of non-Asian electricians has turned into America’s only commercial wasabi farm, supplying the pungent fresh root to top chefs like Michael Mina and Iron Chef Morimoto.

#203 – Food of the Gods
At Asian places of worship across America, visitors are welcomed in the same way: through the simple, generous gesture of offering food. At the Hsi Lai temple in southern California, a visual marvel and one of the largest Buddhist temples in America, saffron-robed nuns are our hosts at a restaurant serving Chinese-style vegetarian cuisine, including dishes shaped and flavored to resemble meat. In Hollywood, the Sikh temple welcomes everyone – from its own members to the local homeless population to visiting film crews – for a rich buffet of lentil curries, hot chai tea and parathas made on the spot by the congregation. And at New York’s first Indonesian mosque, a bustling food fair offers halal dishes deeply saturated with the spices and flavors of a vast, melting-pot archipelago that’s home to the world’s largest Muslim population.

#204 – Big Business in Little Saigon
From neighborhood restaurants to global powerhouses, the hunt is always on for the next big trend in the food world. With ethnic cuisine driving the industry’s growth, and Vietnamese businesspeople increasingly at the forefront, we visit three entrepreneurs who are bringing rice noodles, fish sauce and fiery curries into the mainstream. In the strip malls of Orange County’s Little Saigon, a glamorous songstress parleys her image as the Vietnamese Madonna into a thriving trade in banh mi and pho, while a young veteran of the fast-casual giant Chipotle leads the company into a new, nationwide venture based on spicy Southeast Asian grub. And the godfather of Vietnamese cooking in America, Charles Phan, raises the cuisine to James Beard Award-winning heights.

#205 – Made in Chinese America
China’s rise is not just washing billions of renminbi onto our shores. It’s also introducing us to the vast diversity of Chinese food and the powerful hold of Chinese traditions that have nothing to do with fortune cookies and take-out chow mein. On San Francisco’s storied Grant Avenue, we drop in on a wedding where a second-generation American and his fresh-off-the-boat northern Chinese bride offer a festive fusion: lion dancers gyrating to traditional music and dyed-blonde guests gyrating to a hip-hop D.J., in between the highly symbolic lucky-eight courses of a Chinatown banquet. Then we visit the kitchen of a young entrepreneur who prepares and delivers...
“confinement” meals – a strict diet based on ancient principles of “heating” and “cooling” to promote healing after childbirth – to both new immigrants and to Chinese-American women reclaiming the heritage of their great-grandmothers. Our chaser: a nocturnal visit to a cocktail den in Manhattan’s Soho that specializes in drinks made with baijiu, the fiery Chinese brew that is the world’s most heavily consumed spirit.

#206 – Indian Cuisine Arrives
Every year trend watchers predict that Indian cooking will finally take off in America the way that Chinese and Japanese did long ago. And every year Americans don’t venture beyond chicken tikka masala and a chai latte at Starbucks. But thanks to a new generation of chefs and entrepreneurs finding inventive ways to present pungent Indian flavors to American palates, the time may have finally arrived. A former private-equity banker shoots for the big time with a fast-casual concept that channels Chipotle in a zen-like space more like a gallery than a quick-service restaurant. At one of New York’s hottest new restaurants, a husband-and-wife team from Australia present fresh interpretations of their grandmothers’ dishes in a bright room with a Bollywood vibe. And America’s most celebrated Indian chef, Floyd Cardoz, returns from a sabbatical in his home country to open a sister restaurant to the Indian-comfort-food canteen that’s been a blockbuster success in Mumbai.

#207 – Taiwan’s True Flavor
When I tell people I was born in Taiwan, they no longer innocently regale me with stories of their vacations in Thailand. But Taiwanese food, a distinctive blend of rustic aboriginal fare and the refined cooking of the Chinese master chefs who arrived with Chiang Kai-shek in the 1940s, continues to live in the shadow of better-known regional cuisines like Cantonese, Shanghainese and Fujianese. After a shopping trip to a Chinatown market with Cathy Erway, author of “Foods of Taiwan,” we make what is perhaps the most famous Taiwanese dish, beef noodle soup, the ultimate late-night craving in a late-night food culture. At Taiwan Bear House, started by young, homesick expats, we sample a New York take on the Taiwanese bento boxes known as biandang. In Orange County, we visit the closest American version of the signature Taiwanese night market, where Hugo, a proud son of Taiwan, hawks his wares like a carnival barker and feeds me oyster pancakes and fish balls stuffed with cod roe. Finally we drop in on the Boba Guys, who serve an all-natural iteration of Taiwan’s most ubiquitous export, bubble tea, at hipsterized cafes across America.