

VARIETY

What is Minnesota food? New TPT series serves up steamed buns, sticky rice and masala

An offering from TPT examines Minnesota cuisine, one dish at a time.

By Sharyn Jackson (<http://www.startribune.com/sharyn-jackson/285385111/>) Star Tribune |

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What exactly is Minnesota cuisine?

A new series from Twin Cities Public Television is exploring that question. Spoiler alert: In the first six-episode season, now streaming online, hot dish doesn't make a single appearance.

"Relish," a web-only series (<https://www.tptoriginals.org/series/relish/>) with new episodes each Wednesday, examines the many diverse cultures that call Minnesota home. To do that, chef and host Yia Vang heads into the home kitchens of other local chefs, who demonstrate the makings of their favorite, heritage-rich dishes.

Vang fills Hmong-style steamed buns alongside his mother, Pang. José Alarcon makes tortillas from the heirloom maize he uses at his Minneapolis restaurants Popol Vuh and Centro. Ann Ahmed, chef and owner of Lat14 and Lemon Grass Thai Cuisine, tosses sticky rice in a bamboo basket. Brian Yazzie explains the origins of the Native dish Three Sisters. Chef Lachelle Cunningham re-imagines soul food by making a vegan banana pudding. And Jamal Hashi, who introduced Minnesotans to camel-on-a-stick at the State Fair, toasts and grinds spices into a Somali masala.

"We have just such a wealth of richness in our food cultures and different communities in Minnesota, and it's been wonderful to celebrate the different aspects of that," said Brittany Shrimpton, who co-created the series with Amy Melin. "We're just hitting the tip of the iceberg, but there are so many more food traditions we can explore."

To find their stars, Melin and Shrimpton met with food writers, chefs and others in the local food scene to come up with a wish list. While the first season largely focused on professional chefs, the producers hope to feature more home cooks — like Vang's mother — in the future.



TPT

New web series "Relish" features host and chef Yia Vang — and steamed buns.

Relish: For Host Yia Vang, Food Starts With Family

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