



# BEST MEAL OF MY ADULT LIFE

By: Dr. Aliyar Cyrus Fouladkhah, PhD, MPH, CPH  
*Inaugural Publication of Food for Public Health Series (June 2019)*

## Best Meal of My Adult Life

Many great meals and conversations with friends and family are forever engraved in my memory, detailed and masterfully prepared meals in Japan, colorful and vibrant dishes in the Dominican Republic, very traditional foods in a century-old truckstop in the middle of Colorado, amazing seafood of New Haven, Connecticut, and even the world-famous Persian Beluga caviar from southern shores of the Caspian Sea. This dish, however, is perhaps the most favorite meal of my adult life. Not just because of the superb taste and astounding presentation, not to mention the nutritional value, but also for the great way the food was prepared. Among all places, we tried this meal last evening in Antigua, Guatemala. Antigua is a Spanish-speaking, small city in the central part of Guatemala, founded in the early 16th century and surrounded by semi-active volcanic mountains. The town is one of the UNESCO's world heritage centers, packed with magnificent historic buildings and a very lush, diverse, and floral vegetation in the city and the surroundings.

The meal was prepared in a small family-owned business, with a medium-size farm as part of the restaurant. Everything in the dish, including the poached eggs and even the edible flower on top, was from their own farm. They did not need to use any packaging material for the many ingredients of the meal so no plastic was sent to the landfill or our oceans, and they did not emit any unnecessary carbon dioxide to our fragile ecosystem because of the unnecessary transportation of the ingredients. The

dish came also with a small basket of bread-fragrant, with amazing texture, and recently made with only a few simple ingredients. Nothing like the bread many of us eat every day, made with two dozens of ingredients and additives, packed with salt, and resembling a soft, sliceable, shelf-stable brick.

What we cannot see in the photo is a very mild local fermented beverage flavored with hibiscus and a really good friend from the food safety and public health workshop I taught in Antigua, who generously introduced me to this place.

I know it is very difficult and time-consuming to be conscious about every meal we consume, especially as all of us are having very busy lives and are surrounded by unhealthy options. But if we eat meals like this more often, we will have longer lives, with the days to come having more quality as well, and the planet that we leave behind for our kids and grandkids is less damaged and less polluted.



Public Health Microbiology Laboratory



TSU-21-190(B)-12b-83024-Tennessee State University  
is an AA/EE employer.

