

2-1:

Sophomore year, Houston, TX, I lived in a rather oriental community. After a winter football game a group of us decided to go out for Pho-Vietnamese soup- nothing special to them but definitely a new thing for me. We walk into this tiny place full of tables, most filled, but the important thing that stands out is me, the only “white guy” of course only my friends know I’m Hispanic. First thing is the sitting, I try to sit somewhere I can just hide from existence, such a failure since I’m twice the size of the rest of my friends, being the outsider, like a giant coming to a town for its daily meal, and it just ends so awkward, all the looks like “eww what is he doing here?”

So the giant eating the soup, or drinking, whatever. Thankfully this soup is definitely not small, my friends like to eat big. Now, I love oriental people, they just don’t seem to like me if they don’t know me, like a toddler running from a stranger, most people in the Pho shop don’t know me so naturally the stares begin. I don’t even know how to start to eat my soup, even as I reach for the soup spoon- the one with the slant not the straight one- I get a million and one looks. Now the traditional Vietnamese soup has a lot vegetables and a lot of strips of beef but the only two utensils you get are the soup spoon and chopsticks. As I spill everything out of the spoon back into my bowl my friends try to “encourage” me by making fun of me, what are friends for? Now it does help, takes the suspense off, the faces start to enjoy their own Pho, after having a small laugh at me, and I enjoy my warm bowl of Pho.

2-2:

A simple diner with the family. The night after graduation my family planned the usual family diner to celebrate, the special guest, not me, but my girlfriend who was for the first time meeting my family. Her name is Kim, she is of Vietnamese descent. My family with small but strong Honduran customs. And on the main dish? Tacos, buffet style, haha. Nothing is cuter than a small oriental girl preparing herself some tacos.

I offer to help, but I get rejected by my family as if they were testing her, now she doesn't know half the things that are on the table, she's so lost. And preparing something that you eat with your hands is just something she's not used to but she slowly manages. With a few hidden questions that she asks me telepathically, I help her prepare herself some tacos. After everybody's first bite it's like what it should be. A family diner.