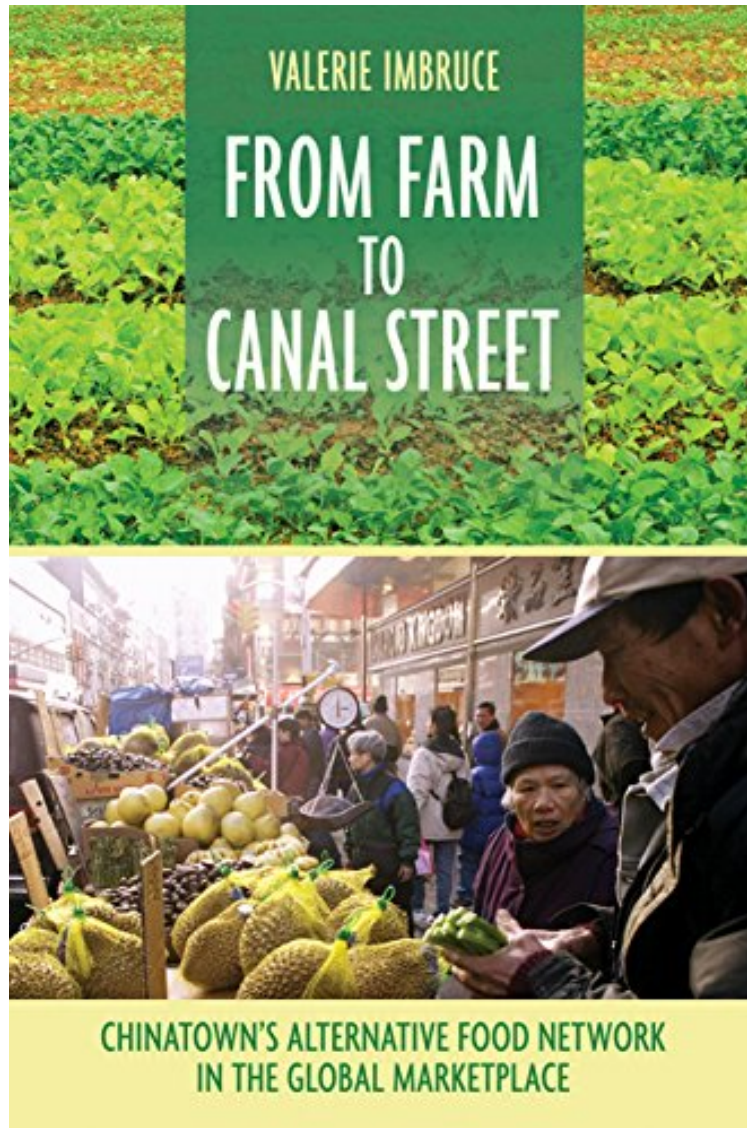


From Farm to Canal Street: Chinatown's Alternative Food Network in the Global Marketplace

Valerie Imbruce

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Valerie Imbruce : From Farm to Canal Street: Chinatown's Alternative Food Network in the Global Marketplace before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised From Farm to Canal Street: Chinatown's Alternative Food Network in the Global Marketplace:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Asian Vegetables in Local Farmers Markets By Sheila Gray For some consumers knowing what is in the food they eat and where it has been grown is essential. Other consumers pay little attention to these details. 'From Farm to Canal Street' offers up the pathway of produce from its time in the

ground in Honduras to the street market and then finally to the home or restaurant tables in greater New York City. It provides foodies another facet of their food origins. As Americans became more interested in "foreign" or exotic foods beginning in the 1960s was just the beginning of a food revolution related directly to the Asian crop producers and food markets. It is this breakthrough of average American diets adding Asian vegetables to their everyday meals that the demand has remained constant over time. The author provides a broad understanding around the complex network of the Asian food market system. She details how it works despite its non-traditional methods and how it continues to thrive. Supply and demand drives decisions made by local market vendor farmers in our own communities by a complex formula. What to grow for which consumer, the restaurateur versus the weekly shopper at a local booth or farm stand. Keeping farm economics in the forefront of deciding what to grow based on return. Overall Imbruce provides research based information about the circle of Asian vegetables how they are grown and what it takes to bring them to the table. She also includes a comprehensive listing of various Asian crops and their season of availability.

On the sidewalks of Manhattan's Chinatown, you can find street vendors and greengrocers selling bright red litchis in the summer and mustard greens and bok choy no matter the season. The neighborhood supplies more than two hundred distinct varieties of fruits and vegetables that find their way onto the tables of immigrants and other New Yorkers from many walks of life. Chinatown may seem to be a unique ethnic enclave, but it is by no means isolated. It has been shaped by free trade and by American immigration policies that characterize global economic integration. In *From Farm to Canal Street*, Valerie Imbruce tells the story of how Chinatown's food network operates amid—and against—the grain of the global trend to consolidate food production and distribution. Manhattan's Chinatown demonstrates how a local market can influence agricultural practices, food distribution, and consumer decisions on a very broad scale. Imbruce recounts the development of Chinatown's food network to include farmers from multimillion-dollar farms near the Everglades Agricultural Area and tropical "homegardens" south of Miami in Florida and small farms in Honduras. Although hunger and nutrition are key drivers of food politics, so are jobs, culture, neighborhood quality, and the environment. Imbruce focuses on these four dimensions and proposes policy prescriptions for the decentralization of food distribution, the support of ethnic food clusters, the encouragement of crop diversity in agriculture, and the cultivation of equity and diversity among agents in food supply chains. Imbruce features farmers and brokers whose life histories illuminate the desires and practices of people working in a niche of the global marketplace.

"Instructors of courses in food systems: this book belongs in your syllabus. It is essential reading for anyone interested in who produces food for urban areas and how it gets into cities."—Marion Nestle, *Food Politics*

"The excellent *From Farm to Canal Street* is lively and accessible. Valerie Imbruce describes a food contracting system that is an alternative to the dominant vertically integrated corporate system. She systematically tracks the links to Chinatown's internationally extensive food supply chain. This book offers validation of a food chain that the New York City government does not publicly acknowledge and that the city's current land use policies could effectively wipe out by encouraging further upscale real estate development in Chinatown."—Lynn McCormick, Hunter College

"In *From Farm to Canal Street*, Valerie Imbruce provides a unique perspective on food systems."—E. Melanie DuPuis, Pace University, coauthor of *Alternative Food Networks: Knowledge, Practice, and Politics*

Valerie Imbruce deftly balances her expertise in ethnobotany with a nuanced understanding of food marketing to present a compelling, relatable and thought-provoking picture of an alternative food network based on years of extensive fieldwork. Chinatown food markets are seen by hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers every day, but who but Imbruce would dig deep to explore what is really happening, locally and globally? The book is model food studies."—Jonathan Deutsch, Drexel University, coauthor of *Food Studies: An Introduction to Research Methods*

Valerie Imbruce reveals why Chinatown produce markets are so abundant and of such high quality and how they support small farmers and feed food lovers of modest to low incomes. In the face of agribusiness, the global patenting of seeds, and huge chain supermarkets, *From Farm to Canal Street* offers stunning insights about alternative, translocal network of producers in the Americas supplying urban markets with fresh, quality fruits and veggies. Imbruce effectively challenges cynicism and wrong-headed assumptions about what is possible in alternative food systems. This game-changing book opens up new horizons for policy debates and food justice strategies."—John Kuo Wei Tchen, New York University, author of *New York before Chinatown: Orientalism and the Shaping of American Culture, 1776–1882*

About the Author Valerie Imbruce is Grant Writer for Strategic Research Initiatives at Binghamton University; The State University of New York.