

# The Zest Podcast S6E7

[00:00:00] **Susan Carter:** But the most fascinating thing on the menus are all the different foods that they have. And it's things that we aren't familiar with today.

[00:00:07] **Dalia Colón:** I'm Dalia Colón. And this is The Zest. Citrus seafood Spanish flavor, and Southern Charm. The Zest celebrates cuisine and community in the Sunshine State. Break out the fine China and mind your manners, we're heading to the former Tampa Bay Hotel to learn how the wealthy wined and dined a century ago. Long before the Ritz Carleton or The Four Seasons, there was the Tampa Bay Hotel. Railroad giant, Henry B. Plant founded the hotel, which operated from 1891 to 1932, and during that time it served as a playground for the rich and famous. Today, the former Tampa Bay Hotel is home of the Henry B. Plant Museum on the University of Tampa campus. I stopped by the museum to learn who stayed at the old hotel, what they ate and lessons, their fancy schmancy meals can teach us today. In this conversation, we'll hear from three experts at the Henry B. Plant Museum. Melissa Sullebarger is curator of education. Susan Carter is curator and registrar. Lindsay Huban is the museum's interim director. Lindsay speaks first.

[00:01:24] **Lindsay Huban:** Right now we are in the museum office and the office is located in what was originally the Tampa Bay Hotel. Um, this building operated as a hotel from 1891 all the way until 1932. So quite a long time. And the reason that we are so excited to have you here today is because we have this fabulous collection of menus, information about fine dining at the hotel and the menus just have fantastic artwork in them and foods that we've never heard of. And, and we get so excited to share this information with, with whoever wants to hear it.

[00:01:55] **Dalia Colón:** I'm excited. It's very fancy so we'll have to get into that, but who built the hotel and what was the significance? Can you paint a picture for me?

[00:02:03] **Lindsay Huban:** Sure. So Henry Plant built the hotel. He actually developed a railroad into Tampa. So before Henry Plant got here after the Civil War, there were maybe 760 ish people. So just a, just a small fishing village. Henry Plant builds the railroad in decides to build this incredible winter resort. Really a playground for the community for, uh, wealthy travelers from the north, primarily. And, um, the population just explodes to 15,000 in a very short time, all because of this building. So I like to say that this is where the story of

Tampa starts; with this building. You can't talk about Tampa's history without the Tampa bay hotel without Henry Plant.

[00:02:42] **Dalia Colón:** And it is such a beautiful building. Susan, I wanna bring you in, uh, just a minute ago, Lindsay and I put our gloves like we're surgeons and, um, brought some fine China over here. So were all the meals as fancy as requiring fine China?

[00:02:57] **Susan Carter:** Oh, I think they were, this was like a five-star resort hotel. So of course they rolled out the red carpet to everyone that came and they were all kinds of courses and times for breakfast and lunch and dinner and tea. And it was very fancy. We consider it very fancy in our day and age anyway.

[00:03:18] **Dalia Colón:** Can you drop some names like who would've been staying here?

[00:03:21] **Susan Carter:** There are lots of famous people that would've stayed here. One of the most famous was Mrs. Edith Roosevelt, Teddy Roosevelt's wife, and she was here during the days of the Spanish American War in 1898. Other famous people. Lots came during the Spanish American War. We had Clara Barton who founded the Red Cross. We also had Mrs. Grover Cleveland.

[00:03:44] **Lindsay Huban:** Babe Ruth, John Phillips Susa. This is Lindsay, I mean, really you name them. The biggest stars of the day came here. Um, Nellie Melba, Sarah Bernhardt, and then there were dignitaries that would come and there would be special events for, you know, a dinner with the vice president or a dinner with the first lady, something like that. So, so this really, very much was high class. I know Susan and Melissa can talk about the different types of China that were used and their brands that, that some of our listeners are probably still familiar with today.

[00:04:13] **Dalia Colón:** Let's talk about the China. We'll get to the food, but first we'll talk about the China. Describe it. It's it's just golden. It's glistening. The sunlight is hitting it. Tell me about this China.

[00:04:24] **Melissa Sullebarger:** Yes. Well, the hotel actually had a lot of different sets of China, many different varieties from the United States, from Europe. All over the place. And one of the things that was actually relatively unique in the way that they used the China, was that they would use a mixed service of China. They would have different patterns and different varieties that would come out together. So in some of the descriptions and accounts of meals,

you hear all of these different varieties of China coming out with the different dishes.

[00:04:52] **Dalia Colón:** Huh. I thought that was like a modern, you know, looking at stuff at the thrift store kind of thing, but they did that on purpose.

[00:04:59] **Melissa Sullebarger:** They did. Um, a lot of the general aesthetic of the hotel, um, comes across as fairly eclectic from our perspective today. And that's visible in the decor. If you come to visit the museum, you can absolutely see that all the way up and down the hallway. And it was also true in the way that they used the China.

[00:05:16] **Susan Carter:** I'd just like to mention about the flatware on the tables. Um, the set that we have in front of us today, it's called Kings Two. That's the pattern. And it was made by Gorum and this was the fine silver that was used to, uh, serve the guests for all their flat wear their forks and their knives and their spoons. And the nice thing was each fork was engraved on the handle. Monogram TBH, all three letters were over one another for the Tampa Bay Hotel. And that was on the end of the handle. And then in later years they started using, um, as Mr. Plant died and city managers came in and ran the hotel and the standards dropped slightly. So they, their China patterns got a little bit heavier and more durable for a hotel. And then the flatware changed and the flatware became International Silver. So it was plated. And instead of having the TBH on the handle, they had it typed on and pressed onto the, um, edges of the knives and the forks and the spoons, Tampa Bay Hotel. It was written out and it's kind of fun today. Every now and then somebody comes and they donate a fork or a piece of flatware, and they say, our family stole this from the hotel and we're giving it back. We want it to come back home. So that's how we've acquired a lot of things here for the museum.

[00:06:38] **Dalia Colón:** I love that. I would've probably been one of those people who took something like when people eat at the white house, they say they always try to take a little something. Okay. That's very cool. We gotta talk about the food. You've got binders of menus here.

[00:06:52] **Susan Carter:** We do. Um, it's fascinating. When I first started, I can remember two or three menus in a file folder that we found and we started building the museum archives. Today we can proudly say we have over 50 different menus from the Tampa Bay Hotel dating back to 1891 up till 1932 when the hotel ceased existence. But the most fascinating thing on the menus are all the different foods that they have. And it's things that we aren't familiar with today. Um, I recall a guest that visited the museum, they asked what they

said, what is this on the menu? It's called saddle rocks. What in the world? Would saddle rocks be, and I wasn't sure. So I looked it up and we figured out saddle rocks were large oysters and they served those at the hotel. And then there are all kinds of other things and I've highlighted a few, there were pen money, pickles, and pen money. There was a woman. Who, um, came up with a pickle recipe and they called it pen- money pickles, because ladies, at the time they would bank money from sewing or taking laundry in or things, and they called it their pen money. And this one particular woman, give me one second. Okay. Mrs. EG kid. Invented the recipe for pen money, pickles. And she started it in her home in Richmond, Virginia in the 1860s. And it was one of the items that the Tampa Bay Hotel had on the menu, pen- money pickles. And I had to look that up because I wasn't familiar with it. but that was like the brand of pickles. And are they just pickles? I guess so.

[00:08:32] **Lindsay Huban:** There's lots of different pickled things on the menu too. It's not. Right. Not just pickled cucumbers. We're gonna have pickled mangoes. Yeah. Pickled mangoes. We found that one today. Pickled anything you can imagine,

[00:08:43] **Dalia Colón:** Lindsay, that's interesting. Would that have been. Uh, a main course, a pallet cleanser.

[00:08:49] **Lindsay Huban:** Well, if you take a look at one of the menus, so Susan is holding up a breakfast menu that has probably 50 different items on it. Oh, wow. So there are all these different courses, a lot of the lunches and dinners, would've been 10 course meals. So you might have had pickles to go with. I, I don't even know maybe pickles with your chicken course and then potatoes with your fish course.

[00:09:09] **Susan Carter:** Right. They just had a variety of different things. This is a breakfast menu and it's very different than our breakfast menus. It's not just eggs and bacon and sausage and things like that. They had a lot of meats. They had fishes, um, potatoes. They even had bone turkey with jelly, ribs of beef. This was all on their breakfast menu, oyster Sue game pie,

[00:09:31] **Dalia Colón:** Tenderloin steak, Salisbury, steak, lamb chops. This is all for breakfast.

[00:09:35] **Susan Carter:** All for breakfast. Tongue caps, liver mint, lamb. Oh yeah. There's two different kinds of kidney on there. nut chop, all too many for me. Some of these dishes don't sound appetizing at all today, but this was

popular back in the 1890s for the Tampa Bay Hotel. And this was a very special breakfast meal because this was for the very first season when it opened.

[00:09:59] **Dalia Colón:** This is just fascinating to me. And there are a lot there's bananas, bananas, and oatmeal and things you would expect, but then a lot of things ribs, who's eating beef ribs for breakfast. I don't know. That is fascinating. Okay. So what else? This was breakfast. What's another sample menu.

[00:10:15] **Susan Carter:** Well, here I, um, highlighted eggplant and I highlighted the eggplant because within the collection, we have these things called stereo cards or stereoscopic views, and they made 'em and published them. And they were international views. They were views of buildings, architecture, famous places, all over the world. Well, one of 'em showed the Tampa Bay Hotel. Front east front of the hotel, which had a little garden and within the garden, they had eggplant growing out in the front yard. So what made me think the hotel chef was just walking a few steps out the door and picking the eggplant to go in dishes. And then sure enough, it shows up here on the menu.

[00:10:54] **Dalia Colón:** This is the dinner menu.

[00:10:56] **Susan Carter:** Uh, this is a dinner menu and this one happens to be from 1913 and the stereo card that showed the eggplant was from the 1890s. So. Makes me believe they probably had the little, um, eggplant growing on the front lawn, you know, mm-hmm way back in the 1890s also, but they called it eggplant, Tampa Bay.

[00:11:16] **Dalia Colón:** Uh, okay. What else is on the dinner menu? Let's let's read besides the pin money pickles. Let's read some of this. I can't pronounce half these words and they're in French. That's how I feel something. They were so bougie. Oil grouper sauce, Norwegian stuffed spring chicken with gibblit sauce, mashed potatoes and green beans. That sounds like a school lunch, you know, beach nut guava jelly. That, that I might try that raisin cakes. I love that half the menu is desserts strawberry short cake. Exactly. That's very Tampa Bay, mixed nuts, Hickory nuts, cluster raisins. Cream. And then there's some cheeses, crackers, steam dress, man. A lot of mayonnaise, a lot of mayonnaise. Yeah. They loved mayonnaise.

[00:11:59] **Lindsay Huban:** Well, and I don't, I don't think that that was necessarily mayonnaise the way we think of it today. I think it was maybe a little bit more of a catchall for sauce, Melissa, does that sound right to you?

[00:12:09] **Melissa Sullebarger:** Yes. So that's a, a term that's used a little more specifically nowadays than it has always historically been. Um, the ingredients in general are extremely interesting across all of these menus because some things, as you were noticing are exactly the kind of things you might expect to see on a menu in Tampa Florida, you saw the strawberries. You saw the grouper. Um, but there's also some things that you might expect to see that you don't see at all. For example, on none of the menus, are there any crab at all? And there's a lot less shrimp than there is lobster.

[00:12:41] **Dalia Colón:** Why is that?

[00:12:42] **Melissa Sullebarger:** Well, we're not entirely sure it could be the tastes of the people who were visiting the hotel, or it could be the experience of the people who were cooking in the kitchens because many of them were coming down from up north.

[00:12:54] **Dalia Colón:** Can you say more about the people who were cooking in the kitchens?

[00:12:58] **Lindsay Huban:** Sure. So a few, ye this is Lindsay. Um, a few years ago, we actually were lucky enough to acquire three photos, showing the kitchens and showing the people who worked in the kitchen. This is really incredible. Um, when we think about it, there, there have been more photos taken since January 1st of this year. This is now the middle of July. More photos taken this year than all of history beforehand. So to have a photo taken of yourself in the 1890s is really incredible. There might only be one picture of an individual. They might have never had their photo taken. So for us to acquire photos, showing a workspace with the employees in it, So people who given the attitudes of the day would not have been seen as being particularly significant or important. This is really fascinating. And Susan, I believe on the back. So one of them, it may have had the names of the individuals in the photo. So we have been doing a lot more work researching the people who are working in the kitchens, the chefs. And I love that in these photos, there are women working in the kitchens, again, kind of an unusual thing to have women working in that sort of industry.

[00:14:04] **Dalia Colón:** Hmm. That's a very good point. Here's the photograph. Oh, wow.

[00:14:07] **Susan Carter:** See the woman and how dressed up they are. This is Mr. Skinner. He was 21 years old when he started working at the hotel is the

head steward. And so he would've been in charge of the kitchen, help the chefs and hiring and firing them. And forth.

[00:14:22] **Dalia Colón:** Fascinating.

[00:14:23] **Lindsay Huban:** And I do love that in this photo here, that we're looking at, the woman is the only one not looking at the camera. She's the one who's still working. All the rest are posing for the photo.

[00:14:31] **Dalia Colón:** That's Ooh, that's such a good point. She's looking down the others. There are 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 people in the photo. One of which is a woman and she's like, look, I gotta bake this bread.

[00:14:41] **Lindsay Huban:** Yeah. I get stuff to do.

[00:14:42] **Dalia Colón:** Time is money. Um, can you talk about holiday menus? What would've been on a holiday menu. Okay. I'll give you a minute to shuffle through here. Okay.

[00:14:51] **Susan Carter:** Here's happy new year. Okay. Here's a Christmas.

[00:14:55] **Dalia Colón:** Oh, I see. Christmas. Let's do Christmas first and new year's. So when I think of Christmas dinner, I think of maybe a ham or a turkey. Um, some sides. Mm-hmm here's another Christmas one too. Okay. These are just different. Okay. So when I think of a.

[00:15:14] **Susan Carter:** They have the ham and the Turkey on there, I believe, but they have other things also, um, this particular Christmas, they had essence of fowl in cup and they had breast of chicken. They had Russian caribou, they had stuffed lamb chops.

[00:15:33] **Dalia Colón:** There's caribou on the menu?

[00:15:35] **Susan Carter:** That's what it right here. Russian caribou saute. A la .

[00:15:42] What is essence? Essence of fowl?

[00:15:44] **Lindsay Huban:** Essence of fowl. This one I think I have looked up before. If I'm remembering correctly, it's like a broth. So it's not as gross as it sounds.



[00:15:53] **Susan Carter:** Right.

[00:15:53] **Dalia Colón:** Okay. So what else? This is the Christmas menu. English plum pudding, Brandy sauce, strawberry shortcake, again, Napoleon lots of fruit. Okay. Fruit cake and nuts and cheeses. So that's all kind of..

[00:16:07] **Lindsay Huban:** Well, and you know, we've got our similar boiled potatoes and our sweet potatoes and there's cauliflower, mashed potatoes, peas, um, something called maraschino punch that might be tasty.

[00:16:17] **Dalia Colón:** I could get with that. Yeah. Okay. And, and then here's another Christmas Menu. Do we know about what year?

[00:16:22] **Susan Carter:** This, this one is 1911 or 1911. Here it is 1911 right there.

[00:16:27] **Dalia Colón:** Oh, wow. I cannot read half these words. should have studied French. Um, first of all, why, why is everything in French? Why is so much of the menu in French, is that because people spoke French or they were just trying to look high class.

[00:16:43] **Lindsay Huban:** It could be a little bit of both. Um, so Henry Plant would bring in chefs for the Tampa Bay Hotel that were very well known that might have worked in big fancy hotels in New York, or worked as personal chefs for people who were high up in the government, something like that. So having a celebrity chef is not a new thing. The chefs who are here at the Tampa Bay Hotel were some of those celebrity chefs. So if you're trying to impress the wealthy and powerful, are they gonna be more impressed by, you know, grandma's ham or by I'm gonna pronounce this horribly cream pompadour, all crouton souffle or consummate Palestine. I have no idea what that is.

[00:17:19] **Dalia Colón:** Sweet gerkins. It's like something you would just grab off the shelf..

[00:17:23] **Lindsay Huban:** And celery. So, um, Tampa bay was, was one of the celery capitals of the world. So we see celery on a lot of our menus.

[00:17:30] **Dalia Colón:** And is it just plain celery?

[00:17:32] **Lindsay Huban:** Sometimes, sometimes it's stewed celery. Sometimes it comes with your pickle course with your olives and your gerkins.



[00:17:38] Melissa, do you wanna say something about the celery? This is a passion of yours. she's nodding.

[00:17:43] **Melissa Sullebarger:** Well, the, I mean, as, as Lindsay's already said, celery was one of the major crops coming out of our region in that time period. It's not necessarily one that we associate with Tampa Bay nowadays, but celery was. Very much something that we were producing in this area. And it was very popular. Um, there are a lot of vegetables that were actually quite popular in this time period, especially if you could get them fresh, it's unusual in some parts of the country to be getting fresh vegetables, because we don't have things like refrigerated trucks driving all over the country. So if you can come down to an area where they actually grow something like which to us seems very ordinary celery, and actually have it fresh, that can be rather exciting.

[00:18:25] **Dalia Colón:** Okay. Celery and exciting being used in the same sentence. on purpose for the first time in the history of the world. All right. Let's look at this, um, new year menu from 1912, January 1st, who wants to take a stab at pronouncing these words? I see. Okay. Roast ribs, boiled new potatoes, mashed potatoes, summer squash. This all seems pretty normal. Peaches..

[00:18:50] **Susan Carter:** Peaches Melba. malady sauce and ..

[00:18:53] **Dalia Colón:** What's malady sauce?

[00:18:54] **Susan Carter:** I'm not certain. I'll have to look it up in the Mrs. Cleveland's white house cookbook from 1886 that we have from the archives.

[00:19:01] **Dalia Colón:** So, okay. Mrs. Grover Cleveland, The White House cookbook. So people would be sort of inspired by whatever she had going on at The White House. Is that the idea.

[00:19:10] **Susan Carter:** Right they would've been okay. And I was gonna go back to Peach's Melba because Nellie Melba stayed at the Tampa Bay Hotel and they named peach Melba after Nellie Melba.

[00:19:21] **Dalia Colón:** Okay. Have heard of peach Melba.

[00:19:23] **Lindsay Huban:** So Susan who was Nellie Melba,

[00:19:25] **Susan Carter:** Nellie Melba was an opera star.

[00:19:28] **Lindsay Huban:** I think she was from Australia.

[00:19:29] **Susan Carter:** I think she was, yeah.

[00:19:30] **Melissa Sullebarger:** Nellie Melba was from Australia. This is Melissa now. Uh, she's remembered as being an incredible talent and an incredible primadonna. There are a lot of stories about her having significant demands. There are legends of her bathing and champagne. But one thing that we definitely know is true about her is that Peaches Melba is named for her.

[00:19:54] **Dalia Colón:** Very cool. Okay. So this again is the 1912 New Year's Day dinner menu. Were there different menus for different tiers of guests, or was everyone who stayed here treated pretty much the same?

[00:20:08] **Lindsay Huban:** Well, that's an interesting question. And I think it kind of brings up the breakfast room of the Tampa Bay Hotel. So we had a very fine dining room that could seat 800 people. There was a balcony at the top where musicians would play because of course you have to have live music during dinner.

[00:20:24] **Dalia Colón:** What kind of music?.

[00:20:25] **Lindsay Huban:** Um, you know, some of the menus actually have a list of pieces that would've been performed during dinner. So, um, it might have been just I'm imagining sort of lilting, you know, violins and just pretty drifting sound coming down over you while you're eating. Um, but if you were say a maid that came along with the family to take care of the children, you and the five year old twins are not gonna be eating in the dining room. You're gonna be across the hall in the breakfast room. Hmm. Yeah.

[00:20:57] **Dalia Colón:** Tell me more. no, no, I love this because when we think about this time, there were all these people who were invisible, who were propping up the, the, the Melba's of the world. So tell me more about them. What would've, what would they have been eating Melissa in the breakfast room?

[00:21:14] **Melissa Sullebarger:** That's an excellent question. I'm not sure if I know that one off the top of my head.

[00:21:17] **Lindsay Huban:** Well, I know we can say that they would've been eating some similar foods. They might not have been prepared quite to the same level. They certainly wouldn't have been eating off of the same kind of China and things like that. The meals wouldn't have been quite as, or. Quite as elaborate, maybe fewer courses, because also if you're sitting there with five

year old twins, you don't want a 10, your, a 10 course meal, you wanna get out of there so that they can be ramping around, outside again.

[00:21:39] **Dalia Colón:** How long would a, a 10 course meal have taken? Are, are they doing anything besides eating all day?

[00:21:46] **Lindsay Huban:** They're changing clothes because you can't wear the same dress to lunch. Absolutely. That you wore breakfast clearly. Yeah. Yeah. Um, what would they have been doing all day, Melissa?

[00:21:55] **Melissa Sullebarger:** Well, there's an enormous amount of activities that were offered at the hotels. So if you were to go to breakfast, you could certainly rise, dress for breakfast to go to breakfast after which you would want to. Most likely change again for whatever you were going to be doing in the morning, which could be anything ranging from tennis golf. You might be going out hunting, cuz that was actually a major amusement in this era. Uh, and also in this area, which if you look at our menus, you'll see a lot of game birds and a lot of fish as well, which some of them may have been brought back to the hotel by guests who were visiting and who went out hunting or fishing. Having done your morning activity may come back to the hotel and you might choose to have a lunch at that point.

[00:22:39] And then you would, of course, before lunch need to have changed clothes because you would've gotten all sweaty doing your morning activities. After lunch, you would go and find what you were going to be doing for most of the evening. You might change clothes again, depending on what that is. You might go to see a show at the casino, which was not a gambling house, but a performance hall.

[00:22:58] **Dalia Colón:** Where was that?

[00:22:59] **Melissa Sullebarger:** Uh, it was in between the hotel and the river. The building doesn't exist anymore today. It did, unfortunately, burn down so we don't have it anymore. But there was a building in between the hotel and the river called the Tampa Bay Casino. It was a performance hall. It also did include card rooms. It may have been the place of a little bit of gambling. There was a bowling alley and the major hall where all of the theatrical productions took place was also an indoor pool. The floor could be taken up and there was a pool underneath. So a visitor could certainly be visiting that area.

[00:23:34] **Dalia Colón:** Wow. I'm trying to imagine this because you pull up now and the and museum, which was the hotel is now the University of Tampa

campus. Mm-hmm on the banks of the Hillsborough River in downtown Tampa. And I'm trying to, to picture this casino, it seems like such a different era, Susan overall, what would you say were the biggest differences between the way they dined back then and the way we dine today?

[00:23:59] **Susan Carter:** It was a long drawn out affair, I would say. Um, you know, you got prepared and dressed to go to the dining room and you took your time and they had multiple courses. So you would be there and be entertained for hours. The grand dining room in the Tampa Bay Hotel was the largest room in the entire building. Eight hundred people could be seated for dinner in the space. And there's a large dome at the top of the room and around the dome, there's a beautiful balcony and in the balcony, that's where they had musicians. So the musicians would be up there playing music. So you could have stayed there for hours and listen to the music and a lot of the menus, um, reflect, or some of the things that I have seen, reflect that they ate dinner a lot later than we eat. They were eating well until the hours of the night, like eight or nine o'clock at night. And it would go on until midnight or so.

[00:24:51] **Melissa Sullebarger:** I've seen that as well. I was just reading an etiquette guide before we sat down to have this conversation. And I found a, now this was for home meals, but I found a description dictating that, uh, a fine dining occasion at home with guests should not run any later than 10:30 to 11 at night. Unless of course there is an evening engagement following that.

[00:25:13] **Dalia Colón:** Evening engagement following? I'm in my sweatpants by like 9:00 PM. Okay. I see, uh, Susan, you were flipping through your pages and you have some etiquette rules.

[00:25:21] **Susan Carter:** I did.

[00:25:22] **Dalia Colón:** I wanna hear, I wanna hear it.

[00:25:24] **Susan Carter:** This is so fun. When Melissa brought up etiquette, I just thought about all the Victorian etiquette rules that were customary, and I'll just read off a few of them. Um, arrive for dinner promptly on time. This rule does not apply for a ball when it's considered fashionable to arrive up to one hour late. A lady should never have more than one glass of champagne. One should never carry bon-bons away from the table. And then we can't believe this one, a young lady never imbibes more than three glasses of wine at dinner. We're like, whoa, three glasses of wine? That's a lot. Mm-hmm so she could have three glasses of wine that only one glasses of champagne. Never wear

gloves at the table, unless your hands for some special reason are unfit to be seen.

[00:26:16] **Dalia Colón:** What reason might that be?

[00:26:17] **Susan Carter:** I have no idea. Chewing gum is as vulgar as it is disgusting. Never explain at the table. Why certain foods do not agree with you? You just wish some of these rules applied to today. um, do not attempt to speak with the mouthful. Never make a display when removing hair insects or other disagreeable things from your food,

[00:26:43] **Lindsay Huban:** from your food.

[00:26:44] **Dalia Colón:** From your food? If that doesn't just say at all.

[00:26:47] **Susan Carter:** And it just goes on and on. I mean, these are just so fun. I just pulled out the ones that apply to dining that they're, you know, all kinds of other ones never interrupt or correct. Someone telling a story and you know, there's just tons of different ones.

[00:27:02] **Dalia Colón:** What a different world. I mean...

[00:27:04] **Susan Carter:** It was,

[00:27:04] **Dalia Colón:** I was. Eating on the way over here. And then chewed gum all in my car. No special outfit, no violin playing in the background..

[00:27:13] **Lindsay Huban:** But you weren't wearing gloves. So that was okay.

[00:27:15] **Dalia Colón:** I was not wearing gloves. Yes. And, and everything agreed with me. Yeah. But, um, Lindsay, what do you think the way they ate says about that time overall?

[00:27:26] **Lindsay Huban:** I think it speaks to, for the guests who are staying here, I think it speaks to the incredible luxury that they enjoyed, that they were able to have these elaborate meals daily, that they were able to. Spend this much time and effort dining. I mean, just, just to not have to, one, worry about where your food is, come, coming from, worry about, do I have enough money to afford my food? I mean, all of these courses, these are, these are not inexpensive items to have this much fresh produce and the fruit like Melissa was talking about, it's really incredible. So the menus kind of can tell two stories. One, we can talk about the guests and the people who enjoyed these

foods and imagine what that might have been like. But then when you stop and think about all the work and all the effort and the hundreds of people whose labor went into creating, not just the food, but the menu too. I mean, the Christmas Menu that we were looking at is beautifully decorated. Illustrated in color, again, a very rare thing for this time period. So the amount of work that went into it is just incredible. Um, and speaking of the artwork, I would be remiss if I didn't tell you about my favorite, it's a Thanksgiving Menu.

[00:28:33] **Dalia Colón:** Let's do it.

[00:28:34] **Lindsay Huban:** I thought that Susan knows which one I'm talking about. It's a Thanksgiving Menu. And clearly the Turkey has won the battle this year because the Turkey is wearing a crown and a cape, and the man is walking away with some bandages. .

[00:28:46] **Dalia Colón:** Gosh, I love these menus. You mentioned the Christmas Menu. It's got Santa with a sack of toys and, and holly going around it, it looks like something you'd make on, uh, like Microsoft Word, maybe.

[00:28:57] **Lindsay Huban:** Yeah. Yeah.

[00:28:57] **Dalia Colón:** Printout at.

[00:28:58] **Lindsay Huban:** This is, you know, Pinterest, you're gonna put this on your board.

[00:29:01] **Dalia Colón:** Pintrest goals for sure. Susan, what do you have here?

[00:29:05] **Susan Carter:** I just pulled one of my favorite menus. This is the 4th of July menu from 1898. And during the early days of the hotel, this is significant because a hotel wouldn't have been open for the 4th of July. The hotel was seasonal during Henry Plant's time and only open from around November, December until April, they would close it for the season because it gets so hot here in the summer. But anyway, they reopened the hotel for the Spanish American War and the officers and dignitary stayed here. This was the U.S. Army headquarters. And so of course, for the 4th of July, they had a famous menu here.

[00:29:41] **Dalia Colón:** Who's on the cover?

[00:29:41] **Susan Carter:** And the cover is.

[00:29:44] **Dalia Colón:** It's a guy with a mustache,

[00:29:46] **Melissa Sullebarger:** an impressive mustache.

[00:29:48] **Susan Carter:** We can check.

[00:29:50] I think it's do so like a general from the war.

[00:29:53] **Dalia Colón:** Yeah, I didn't mean to put you on the spot. I just,

[00:29:55] **Susan Carter:** no, but then all the, the whole menu, it, they have Consume Dewey. Cream Hobson, baked snapper a la Sampson. So they named every course on the menu, after someone who was associated with the war, all the dignitaries and the officers and generals and so forth, their names appear on the menu.

[00:30:15] **Dalia Colón:** Wow. Shoulder of lamb, asparagus on toast, Olympia pudding, apple pie. So that must have been refrigerated. Those apples did not grow here in Florida.

[00:30:25] **Susan Carter:** No.

[00:30:26] **Dalia Colón:** Uh, Royal milk and tea crackers. That's interesting. So this was during the war.

[00:30:30] **Lindsay Huban:** That was right war. So this was during Spanish American war.

[00:30:33] **Dalia Colón:** Wouldn't that be considered inappropriate today to have someone fighting the war who was a higher up staying in this fancy hotel, eating all this amazing food. I don't know. I think that's poor form and you know what? That wouldn't work today because we have smartphones.

[00:30:51] **Lindsay Huban:** Exactly.

[00:30:51] **Dalia Colón:** So there would be a picture of some high up general eating in, I don't know, the Ritz Carlton while everyone else was eating their like MREs.

[00:31:01] **Lindsay Huban:** Yeah.



[00:31:01] **Dalia Colón:** And it would be all over the media.

[00:31:04] **Lindsay Huban:** Yeah. We would hope that wouldn't come today.

[00:31:07] **Dalia Colón:** Okay, Melissa, I'm coming back to you.

[00:31:08] **Melissa Sullebarger:** Absolutely.

[00:31:09] **Dalia Colón:** What do you think? The way they eat can teach us today?

[00:31:13] **Melissa Sullebarger:** Well, I think one of the major takeaways is to consider, and this might seem an odd takeaway, but how our food gets to us, because one of the major novelties of having all of these things here in Tampa, Florida was that Tampa, Florida was not much of a town prior to the building of the hotels. So there were agricultural products that were local, but there were a lot of things that had to be brought here, whether it be by steamship or train. And a lot of the luxury here is the existence of all of these things. And these highly skilled chefs, all in the same place that all of these very wealthy people are coming to vacation. Nowadays, a lot of these things seem less luxurious or maybe downright unpleasant to us. But the, the transportation and the way that everything got to them really was the major novelty behind all of this. And I think we are quite aware today of how food transportation can really affect our day to day lives.

[00:32:12] **Dalia Colón:** That was Lindsay Huban, Susan Carter and Melissa Sullebarger of the Henry B. Plant Museum in Tampa. I'm Delia Colon. I produce The Zest with Andrew Lucas. We get help from Chandler Balkcom, Mark Haze and Hana Abdel Magid. The Zest is a production of WUSF Public Media .