

## **Evolving Mango Metaphor In Diaspora Literature: Maintaining Immigrant Identity Through Foodways**

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**Abstract :** This paper examines examples of the shared use of mango references as a culinary metaphor powerful in maintaining immigrant identity in the works of diaspora authors from a variety of regions of the world, including South Asia, the Caribbean, and Africa, and across a variety of genres, including novels, culinary memoirs, and children's books. There has been past criticism of so-called sari-mango literature, suggesting that use of the image of mango is a cliché, even "lazy," attempt to "exoticize" and sentimentalize South Asia in particular. A broader review across national boundaries reveals that diaspora authors, including those beyond South Asia, write nostalgically about mango as much about the messy "full body" tactile experience of eating a mango as about the "exotic" quality of mango representing the "otherness" of their home country. Many of the narratives detail universal childhood food experiences that are more shared than exotic, such as a desire to subvert the adult societal rules of neatness and get very messy, or memories of small but memorable childhood transgressions such as stealing mangoes from a neighbor's tree. In recent years, food technology has evolved, and mangoes have become more familiar and readily available in Europe and America, from smoothies and baby food to dried fruit snacks. The meaning associated with the imagery of mangoes for both writers and readers in diaspora literature evolves as well, and authors do not have to heed Salman Rushdie's command, "There must be no tropical fruits in the title. No mangoes."

**Keywords :** identity, immigrant diaspora, culinary metaphor, food studies

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