

Food and Culture

A Reader, Third Edition

Edited by Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik

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Foreword from *The Gastronomical Me*, M.F.K. Fisher

Introduction to the Third Edition

Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik

Foundations

1. Why Do We Overeat

Margaret Mead

This piece questions attitudes towards food and eating in a world where food is overabundant and we face the ambiguity of overindulgence and guilt.

2. Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption

Roland Barthes

French structuralists explain how food acts as a system of communication and provides a body of images that mark eating situations.

3. Short excerpt from Distinction

Pierre Bourdieu

Bourdieu addresses differences between taste of luxury and taste of necessity through his theory of class distinction.

4. The Culinary Triangle

Claude Lévi-Strauss

This classic structuralist statement, often critiqued, shows how food preparation can be analyzed as a triangular semantic field, much like language.

5. The Abominations of Leviticus

Mary Douglas

Douglas applies structural analysis to the establishment of religious dietary rules as a means to develop self-control, distinction, and a sense of belonging based on the construction of holiness.

6. The Abominable Pig

Marvin Harris

Materialists like Harris reject symbolic and structuralist explanations and explain food prohibitions based on economic and ecological utility.

7. Industrial Food: Towards the Development of a World Cuisine

Jack Goody

The early industrialization of food processing was made possible by advancements in preservation, mechanization, marketing, and transport of food

items. These advancements also separated urban and rural societies from food manufacturing.

8. Time, Sugar, and Sweetness

Sidney W. Mintz

Colonialism made high-status sugar produced in the Caribbean into a working class staple.

Hegemony and Difference: Race, class and gender

9. More than Just the 'Big Piece of Chicken': The Power of Race, Class, and Food in American Consciousness

Psyche Williams-Forsion

Ethnographic, historical, and literary research reveals not only controlling and damaging stereotypes about African Americans and chicken but also the ways Black women have used chicken as a form of resistance and community survival.

10. The Overcooked and the Underdone: Masculinities in Japanese Food Programming

T.J.M. Holden

Cooking shows featuring male chefs predominate on Japanese television and propagate one-dimensional definitions of masculinity based on power, authority, and ownership of consumer commodities.

11. Domestic divo? Televised treatments of masculinity, femininity and food

Rebecca Swenson

Swenson analyzes how the programs of The Food Network manifest gender stereotypes while also providing an avenue for challenging ideas of male and female roles regarding food.

12. Japanese Mothers and Obentos: The Lunch Box as Ideological State Apparatus

Anne Allison

Japanese mothers, in preparing elaborate lunch-boxes for their preschool children, reproduce state ideologies of power.

13. *Mexicanas'* Food Voice and Differential Consciousness in the San Luis Valley of Colorado

Carole Counihan

Food-centered life histories portray the voices and perspectives of traditionally muted Hispanic women of rural southern Colorado whose food stories reveal differential behaviors and consciousness which promote empowerment.

14. Feeding Lesbian Families

Christopher Carrington

Because feeding work is complex, laborious, and highly gendered, it is problematic in lesbian families because a full accounting of it would destroy illusions of equality and call into question masculinity of gay men who do it and femininity of lesbians who do not.

15. Thinking Race through Corporeal Feminist Theory: Divisions and Intimacies at the Minneapolis Farmers' Market

Rachel Slocum

By applying feminist materialist theory Slocum analyses the embodiment of race and its manifestations through food practices and behavior displayed at the farmers' market.

16. The Raw & the Rotten: Punk Cuisine

Dylan Clark

Punk cuisine – based on scavenged, rotten, and/or stolen food – challenges the hierarchy, commodification, toxicity, and environmental destruction of the capitalist food system.

Consumption and Embodiment

17. Fast, Feast, and Flesh: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women

Caroline Bynum

Medieval women used food for personal religious expression, including giving food away, exuding foods from their bodies, and undertaking fasts to gain religious and cultural power.

18. Not just 'a white girl's thing': The changing face of food and body image problems

Susan Bordo

Bordo argues that eating disorders and body image issues are created through social and media pressures that target all women regardless of race or class.

19. Demedicalizing Anorexia: Opening a New Dialogue

Richard O' Connor

This paper offers a biocultural approach to anorexia that stresses how young people obsess not over beauty but over an ascetic search for self-control.

20. Feeding Hard Bodies: Food and Masculinities in Men's Fitness Magazines

Fabio Parasecoli

Men's fitness magazines define masculinity through discussions of food and body, increasingly involving men in concerns about constructing corporeal perfection and regulating consumption to build muscle and strength.

21. Cooking Skill, the Senses, and Memory: the Fate of Practical Knowledge

David Sutton

Practical knowledge of food preparation is an embodied skill that uses all the senses. Standardization of modern food practices affects the social dimensions of this type of experiential learning.

22. Not 'from Scratch': Thai Food Systems and Public Eating

Gisèle Yasmeeen

The urban phenomenon of public eating in Thailand is a reflection of changes in gender, labor, and household dynamics in a (post)industrial food system.

23. Rooting Out the Causes of Disease: Why Diabetes is So Common Among Desert Dwellers

Gary Paul Nabhan

Skyrocketing adult-onset diabetes among desert dwelling Seri Indians of Northern Mexico suggests that changes in diet have caused this major health problem and

that traditional desert foods – especially legumes, cacti, and acorns – are protective.

24. Between Obesity and Hunger: The Capitalist Food Industry

Robert Albritton

Political economists identify how the industrial food system manipulates the price of commodity goods in order to shape the diet of Americans. This global capitalist food system with its cheap and addictive foods promotes both hunger and obesity.

Food and Globalization

25. As Mother Made It”: The Cosmopolitan Indian Family, “Authentic” Food and the Construction of Cultural Utopia

Tulasi Srinivas

This article examines the growing consumption of packaged foods by middle-class South Asian Indians in Bangalore and Boston and focuses on the relationship between authenticity, meanings of motherhood, and definitions of the family.

26. ‘Real Belizean Food’: Building Local Identity in the Transnational Caribbean

Richard Wilk

Transformations in Belizean food from colonial times to the present demonstrate transnational political, economic and culinary influences that have affected the ways Belizean people define themselves and their nation.

27. Let’s Cook Thai. Recipes for Colonialism

Lisa Heldke

Cultural food colonialism is reproduced by food adventurers who seek out ethnic foods to satisfy their taste for the exotic other.

28. Slow Food and the politics of ‘Virtuous Globalisation’

Alison Leitch

This chapter provides a brief history of the Slow Food movement’s politics and controversies.

29. Taco Bell, Maseca, and Slow Food: A Postmodern apocalypse for Mexico’s Peasant Cuisine?

Jeffrey M. Pilcher

The case of Mexico highlights challenges to the program of Italy’s Slow Food Movement which offers strategies for the maintenance of traditional, local, and sustainable Mexican food but which does not address problems of class and food access.

30. Food Workers as Individual Agents of Culinary Globalization: Pizza and Pizzaioli in Japan

Rossella Ceccarini

This chapter examines globalization of food through a case study of pizza in Japan through the transnational experiences of Japanese and Italian pizza chefs.

31. Of Hamburger and Social Space, Consuming McDonald’s in Beijing

Yungxiang Yan

In Beijing, Chinese consumers localize fast food by linking it to being American and being modern. They enjoy the standardization of meals, the hospitable service, the democratic environment, and the cleanliness, which create a desirable space to socialize and linger.

32. On the Move for Food: Three Women Behind the Tomato's Journey

Deborah Barndt

The neoliberal model of production has contributed to the feminization of labor and poverty as told through the stories of two Mexican and one Canadian worker forced to adapt to the flexibility of labor in the global food system.

Challenging, Contesting, and Transforming the Food System

33. The Chain Never Stops

Eric Schlosser

The mistreatment of meatpacking workers in the United States is linked to the high rates of trauma in this dangerous industry and reveals general problems of corporate food production.

34. Fast food/organic food: reflexive tastes and the making of 'yuppie chow'

Julie Guthman

This article examines salad greens to study the development of modern organic food production, its roots in the counter culture movement of the 1960's, and its transformation into a gentrified commodity reserved for a privileged niche market.

35. The Politics of Breastfeeding: An Advocacy update

Penny Van Esterik

The commodification of baby food has had severe consequences, but advocacy groups actively resist the promotional tactics of transnational food and pharmaceutical companies.

36. The Political Economy of Food Aid in an era of Agricultural Biotechnology

Jennifer Clapp

The advent of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) has seriously affected food aid, even in the context of famine and extreme hunger.

37. The Political Economy of Obesity: The Fat Pay All

Alice Julier

The culture-wide denigration of the "obesity epidemic" is not only due to its health consequences, but also to the political and economic benefits to the food corporations, the diet industry, and the health professions.

38. Want Amid Plenty: From Hunger to Inequality

Janet Poppendieck

Because of great need, many U.S. volunteers feed the hungry, but charity not only fails to solve the underlying causes of hunger – poverty and inequality – but contributes to it by offering token rather than structural solutions and taking the government off the hook.

39. Community Food Security: “For Us, By Us”: The Nation of Islam and the Pan African Orthodox Christian Church

Priscilla McCutcheon

McCutcheon looks at Black Nationalist religious organizations that aim to achieve racial self-reliance through community food movements.

40. Learning democracy through food justice movements.

Charles Z. Levkoe

The modern detachment of people from their food sources has fostered a surge of community involvement in the food movement. Through engagement in food justice organizations the public is relearning democratic citizenship and empathy for activism.

Preface to the Third Edition

In this third edition of Food and Culture: A Reader, our aim mirrors that of the previous two editions: to provide a comprehensive introduction to the field that contains classic foundational pieces, a range of outstanding articles reflecting diverse perspectives and topics, and cutting edge new work. This task has become more challenging with each edition as the field has exploded over the past sixteen years since the first edition appeared in 1997. To include new work and keep the Reader current and lively, we had to omit some pieces that we love, but we hope that the new articles will excite our readers and more than make up for what we dropped.

In this new edition, we have kept almost all of the foundational pieces but cut the article by De Certeau and Giard to include a selection from Pierre Bourdieu. We have modified the section on food consumption and the body by reducing the number of articles on anorexia nervosa, expanding the focus on obesity, and including more diverse approaches to the body. This edition of the Reader maintains broad geographical and multi-cultural coverage with articles on Euro-Americans, African Americans and Latinos as well as on Japanese, Greek, Italian, Thai, South Asian, native American, Mexican, and Chinese food cultures. It continues to explore enduring topics of food and gender, consumption and meaning, globalization, and political economy, but introduces new topics with articles on farmers' markets, community food security, the complexities of the organic food market, democracy and food justice, cooking skill and its meanings, gender in food television, and packaged foods in the South Asian diaspora.

Since the first edition of the book, we have been privileged to participate in the creation of the sumptuous covers. From the multihued noodles and fruit of the first edition, to the sensuous chocolate dessert and colorful spices of the second, we have endeavored to combine foods like fish and tomatoes with culturally constructed products like sandwiches. We chose the Thai fruit and vegetable carving for this edition's cover to

underscore the skill and effort involved in transforming foods into edible works of art, and the important place of the visual aspects of food in the anthropology of the senses.

We are pleased to publish this third edition not only in standard book format but also as an electronic book. For instructors who adopt the book in courses, we have also prepared test questions which are available on the book's website. We have tried to pay more attention to temporal context in this edition, noting the original date of publication on the title page of each article, to draw more attention to the scholarly context in which these papers were written.