



The Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America

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The Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America From Oxford University Press

The history of food and drink in America is an exciting tale of unexpected twists and turns that are even more amusing than the oft-repeated myths. It is a story filled with hot-shot inventors, high-flying promoters, risk-taking growers, efficiency-conscious processors, hard-hitting advertisers, and lip-smacking consumers--all of whom have contributed to transforming lowly American food into a worldwide culinary delight. In 800 intriguing articles (from over 200 contributors), the Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America covers the significant events, inventions, and social movements in American history that have affected the way Americans view, prepare, and consume food and drink. In an A-Z format, this two-volume set details the regions, people, ingredients, foods, drinks, publications, advertising, companies, historical periods, and political and economic aspects pertinent to American cuisine. With contributions from academia, industry, and the culinary world, the Encyclopedia provides a far-ranging yet cohesive account of American history and culture from a gastronomic perspective. From the extravagant feasts of Diamond Jim Brady in the Gilded Age to the fad diets and the health consciousness of today, the status and cultural significance of American food and drink has transformed throughout the years. With interesting anecdotes, informative sidebars, and generous bibliographies, the Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America will captivate readers--from scholars and food lovers everywhere--in this journey through American culinary history.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Whether readers make a living studying culinary traditions or just enjoy eating, they'll find this book a marvel. A trove of in-depth information on every aspect of American food and drink—such as holiday food traditions, the Slow Food movement and vegetarianism—the book strives to place its subject in historical and cultural context and succeeds brilliantly. Smith, who teaches culinary history at the New School University, compiles 800 articles and 400 illustrations in a colossal package, resembling *Schott's Food & Drink Miscellany* in the same way that the kitchen at the Four Seasons resembles the galley of a Manhattan apartment. Under "C," we find "Chickpeas," "Child, Julia," "Clambake," "Cola Wars," "Community-Supported Agriculture" and "Cooperatives"; while "T" offers entries on "Taco Bell," "Tea," "Thanksgiving," "Transportation of Food" and "Tupperware." Readers will be hooked upon opening either of the work's two volumes and flipping to any page. Among the offerings are a *Nation* article from 1879 that delights in fathers who'd mortify their daughters in social situations by joking about the "frivolousness of napkins"; an entry on the french dip sandwich crediting a Los Angeles sandwich shop owner with inventing the item in 1918 (he accidentally dropped a roll into the roast drippings as he prepared a beef sandwich for a customer); a piece on Rastus, the fictional chef whose image has appeared on Cream of Wheat packages since 1896; and a fascinating exploration of Southern regional cookery. For food lovers of all stripes, this work inspires, enlightens and entertains. B&w illus.

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From School Library Journal

Starred Review. Grade 9 Up—An authoritative resource that brings together "the best scholarship on the history of American food." Considering the subject from varied perspectives, the 770 articles discuss food and drink within the context of politics; geography; commerce; technology; medicine; class structure; agriculture; and symbolic, spiritual, and ethical values. The alphabetically arranged entries include chronological overviews of events and trends ("Cooking Schools," "Myths and Folklore"); specific foods and drinks ("Po'boy Sandwich," "Coca-Cola"); ethnic, religious, cultural, and racial contributions ("Native American Foods," "Thanksgiving"); biographies ("Lagasse, Emeril," "Pullman, George"); and political and social movements ("Temperance," "Pure Food and Drug Act"). Each entry includes a briefly annotated bibliography and cross references to related articles. Black-and-white illustrations add interest; most of them are historical reproductions with brief identifying captions. The writing is clear, the coverage is thorough, and the index is comprehensive. With entries ranging from "Bialy" to "Borden" (complete with a sidebar on "Elsie the Cow"), and "Vegetarianism" to "Vienna Sausage," this is an encyclopedic smorgasbord where readers can either casually graze multiple offerings or choose a single topic and dig in.—Joyce Adams Burner, Hillcrest Library, Prairie Village, KS

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From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review Following *The Oxford Companion to Food* (1999) and *The Oxford Companion to Wine* (1999), here is another reference title to feed our fascination with the things we eat and drink. The goal is to pull together "the best scholarship on the history of American food" and make it available to a wider audience. General editor Smith teaches culinary history at the New School University and has written several food-related books. In addition to academicians, the nearly 200 contributors include chefs, cookbook authors, and food writers.

In 770 A-Z entries, readers will find discussions of particular foods and drinks, such as *Brandy*, *Club sandwich*, *Orange juice*, and *potatoes*; more general food categories, such as *Airplane food* and *cocktails*; and brands, such as *Jell-o*, *Snapple*, and *twinkies*. There are also entries for people (Clarence Birdseye, Julia Child [with her 2004 death date noted], Wolfgang Puck); appliances and gadgets (*Bread machines*, *Frying baskets*, *Pot holders*); businesses and companies (*Dairy industry*, *Delicatessens*, *Nabisco*, *Pizza Hut*); and iconic marketing images such as the *Pillsbury Doughboy* and the *Quaker Oats Man*. Entries such as *Southeast Asian American food* and *Southwestern regional cooking* treat the contributions of ethnic groups or geographic areas. The long article *Historical overview* offers a detailed chronological survey from the colonial period to the present. Finally, a host of entries address food-related scientific, social, and cultural issues: *Celebrity chefs*, *Chemical additives*, *Food stamps*, *Etiquette books*, *Jewish dietary laws*, *Temperance*, and more. Entries on particular foods or gadgets are generally just two or three paragraphs long, but some entries cover many pages. *Native American foods* and its subentries, for example, extend for almost 40 pages and include numerous sidebars, quotes from primary sources, a chart detailing foods of the Columbian exchange, and a recipe for Navajo fry bread. Most entries conclude with a bibliography, and separate general bibliographies for food and drink follow the A-Z portion of the text. Also appended are a list of food periodicals; an extensive list of food Web sites; directories of major food-related library collections, museums, organizations, and festivals; and a topical list of entries. Navigation is aided by a detailed index and ample cross-referencing. The 350 black-and-white illustrations add to the set's appeal.

The encyclopedia is not intended to be comprehensive, and readers are bound to find omissions--no entries for the Food Network and Weight Watchers, for example, although the index points to entries in which they are discussed. There is some overlap with *The Oxford Companion to Food* and *The Oxford Companion to Wine*, though these titles have a more technical slant. *The Encyclopedia of Food and Culture* (Scribner, 2002) shares *The Oxford Encyclopedia's* historical and cultural context, but Scribner's 600 entries are stretched across the globe. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America* is highly recommended for all academic and large public libraries and any smaller public libraries that can afford it. *Mary Ellen Quinn*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Julie Kappel:

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