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## Race, Racial Identity, and Eating

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### Synonyms

African American foodways; Colonization of food; Decolonized diets; Eating culture; Ethnic food; Ethnic identity; Exotic food; Immigrant food; Indigenous food; Mexican cuisine; Soul food; Slavery and food; Racialization; Racism

### Introduction

This entry explores race and racial identity as they pertain to food and eating in the United States. Race is a fundamental organizing principle of American society that structures all forms of social, cultural, and political life. In the humanities and the social sciences, race is primarily understood as a social construction that is evolving and historically contingent. Despite the shifting nature of race, since the advent of New World slavery, there has remained a salient racial hierarchy in the United States, which has consistently placed whiteness at its apex.

Food practices are implicated in "fields of relationships, expectations and choices, that are contested, negotiated and often unequal" (Watson and Caldwell 2005). Food and the sociocultural act of eating have been significant markers of racial identity throughout colonial and American history and remain central to the process of racialization in contemporary American culture. Conversely, the study of race is critical to understanding food and cuisine in the United States. This entry explores food/eating culture and racial identity as inextricably linked and sees them symbiotically constructing one another. This entry explores various tensions and discussions within food studies and examines the various historical, social, and cultural dynamics involved in food production, consumption, and circulation as they construct race from a transnational perspective.

This entry in particular will pay attention to the correlations between African American identity and race from a historical perspective and will present a loose chronology of some of the major ways by which the racialization of African descendants has occurred in the United States through food and eating. In addition, attention will be given to the correlation between a racialized immigrant identity and food, also from a historical perspective. However, because the topic of racial identity and eating is so expansive and such a format inherently limits the ability to cover the topic in its totality, this entry does not devote exhaustive attention to the ways that other communities of color and ethnic populations have been racialized through food. In particular, there is a long complex history, which has received a depth of academic attention,

P.B. Thompson, D.M. Kaplan (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Food and Agricultural Ethics*,
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-0929-4, 

of racializing East Asian, South Asian, Mexican, Hispanic, Caribbean, and European ethnic populations through food. Because of the constraints of this entry, the role of food in the racialization of these communities of color will only receive a brief cursory introduction in this entry.

## Defining Race, Racial Identity, and Racial Discrimination

This entry begins by laying out common definitions of race and racial identity before discussing the specific role of food and eating in the process of racialization. Throughout American history, race has been incorrectly understood in popular discourse and the sciences as inherently biological. Coinciding with the advent of slavery, European colonialists constructed a common understanding that certain races, primarily non-Anglo-European, Indigenous peoples of the Americas and African descendants were innately inferior based upon a set of essential physical characteristics such as skin colors, head shape, hair type, and body type, among others. Despite the inaccuracy of this understanding, the notion of racial inferiority based on physical traits has been used throughout colonial and American history to justify a racial hierarchy that privileges Anglo whiteness. This fraught understanding of race has, since colonial contact, been widely influential in all aspects of American social life including the physical bondage of slavery, criminal justice, segregation, the biological sciences, economics, politics, popular culture and sport.

More recently, in the humanities and social sciences, as well as partially in popular rhetoric, the notion of race as biological has been largely dismissed. It has been proven by academics, including but not limited to Michael Omi and Howard Winant, Charles W. Mills, Paul Gilroy, bell hooks, Robin D.G. Kelley, and David Roediger, among numerous other critical race theorists and critical philosophers of race, that there is no genetic difference among races (Omi and Winant 1999). Rather, it has been demonstrated that there is as much genetic variation within races as there is across them. Race is now commonly defined as a system of categorization that is socially constructed by complex social, cultural, economic, and political forces. This understanding of race is known as *racial constructivism* and asserts that even while race is no longer understood as biological, it came into existence and continues to exist because of human decisions and cultural trends.

However, as cultural theorist Robin D.G. Kelley makes clear, race was never simply about banal categorization, but rather was intended by Anglo colonists to function as a system of supremacy where one group, specifically Anglo whites, dominates and oppresses others. As Philosopher Charles Mills's seminal text *The Racial Contract* asserts, systems of racial oppression in the United States are predicated on a racial contract, which he defines as a set of meta-agreements between whites to categorize all non-whites as subpersons of inferior moral, cultural and legal status relation to whites (Mills 1999). This "contract" gives whites the right to exploit nonwhites and deny them opportunities commonly provided to whites. Mills makes clear that, for most of the modern era, whites have had as little obligation to recognize the rights of nonwhites and as such Anglo whites have utilized race in complex ways to privilege their place at the apex of a distinct racial hierarchy since the advent of New World slavery.

In addition, scholars have defined race as historically contingent and evolving and have made clear that the nature of racial identity, the process of racialization, and the nuances of race relations change and shift over time. However, with each evolution and change in the articulation of race (be it legal, political, cultural, social, or economic), racial categorization remains tied to a similar and replicable racial hierarchy that continues to privilege whiteness over all other racial identities.

Racial discrimination and racism are systems of advantage based on race, which constitute a set of evolving cultural messages, institutional policies, practices, beliefs, and actions of individuals. It is commonly understood that racism and racial discrimination require both power and privilege

and involves the creation or reproduction of structures of domination based on essentialist categories of race. In addition, racism and racial discrimination not only operate on an individual level in small-scale social interactions but rather are pervasive logics that are deeply embedded in societal institutions such as the state, legal system, criminal justice, urban space, and popular media, among countless other large sociopolitical institutions.

## Defining Eating Culture

While the definition of food is fairly commonly understood as any substance consumed which provides nutritional support for the body, this entry includes in that definition all "processes that make animal, vegetable or mineral into something to eat and then all that is involved in what happens next to bodies and societies" (Slocum 2011). The definition of eating and eating culture is far less widely understood. Eating culture is the complex set of discourses, representations, and social practices that surround the act of eating, ingestion, and food consumption (Tompkins 2012). This entry not only correlates race with food as a material object but also examines the social and cultural practices that surround eating and eating culture. In addition, it is important to note that eating provides unique means through which racialization is performed, because unlike other racial enactments, when eating, food literally gets ingested and fills the body on a material, physical, sensory, and affective level.

## Food and Eating in the Historical Construction of Racial Identity

### Sugar, Colonization, Slavery, and Race

Perhaps the first and most important correlation between food, eating, and race is the role of the sugar trade in the advent of New World plantation-style slavery and the distinct racial hierarchy that simultaneously emerged. In the sixteenth century, sugar was a highly sought-after commodity and luxury item throughout Europe. It was used not only as a condiment but also for medicine, rituals, ceremonies, and display. In the seventeenth century, sugar began to grow in popularity and emerged as a staple of most European diets by the eighteenth century. As such, European sugar traders actively sought out a new means of sugar production to meet this increasing demand, hence increasing commercial value of sugar. Because of the warm and moist climate, the European colonial accusations in the Caribbean, Latin America, and Southern United States were ideal for year-round growth of sugar cane and sugar production. As a result, European sugar producers built sugar plantations throughout these regions in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, the vast majority of the sugar consumed in Western Europe was produced in the Caribbean and other areas in the New World (Mintz 1986).

However, because the growth, harvesting, and production of sugar were so time and labor intensive, these plantation owners needed a viable source of inexpensive labor in order to produce sugar as cheaply and efficiently as possible. European colonists first turned to the colonized Indigenous population as a source of forced labor on the large-scale sugar plantations. However, because of their familiarity with the land (and ease of escape) and their dwindling population numbers (in large part because of the violence of European colonization), the Indigenous populations proved to be an insufficient labor source for sugar production. Thus, European plantation owners quickly turned to the African slave trade as a means to ensure a captive labor supply for the dangerous, violent, and intensive process that was sugar production. As a result, throughout the Caribbean, Southern United States, and Latin America, thousands upon thousands of West Africans were forced into bondage and held captive as a labor source on the European sugar plantations of the colonial world.

The life of a slave on a sugar plantation was brutal. Because sugar production was so physically demanding (involving cutting of the cane, crushing the cane, boiling, and sugar processing,

mixed with the searing humidity of these regions) and slave owners were so violent, many African slaves died during the sugar production process. Especially in the Caribbean, the rate of slave death was extremely high. This high rate of slave death fostered an increase in the number of West Africans brought to the New World in bondage to work in sugar production and fostered the expansion and growth of the West African slave trade, bringing thousands more West Africans to the Americas and the Caribbean in bondage to work in the European colonial sugar plantations.

Many historians and critical race theorists have tied the emergence of plantation-style agriculture, in this case for sugar production, to the advent of a distinct racial hierarchy that defines Africanness or blackness as inferior and places Anglo whiteness at its apex. In order to justify the brutal captivity that was slavery on a sugar plantation, Europeans needed to justify the bondage and continual violence against African slaves, and hence, the category of "black" was constructed as subservient and inferior to Anglo-European whiteness. To exploit slave labor in such a brutal fashion, European colonists associated blackness with racial and biological inferiority and imagined slaves innately subhuman and determined for such bondage. This form of slavery required exploitation based on racial logic, and the emergence of such a distinct racial hierarchy can be linked directly to plantation-style sugar production and the increased consumption of sugar throughout Europe.

## African American Foodways During Slavery

Decisions about what to eat are of utmost importance to preserving cultural and racial identity across geographic spaces and temporalities. Colonization and the slave trade caused an enormous amount of cultural exchange, blending, and hybridization that affected every aspect of cultural life, including food. This process of exchange, known as creolization, laid the foundations for African American food in the United States. African American food has its roots in the Igbo and Mande communities of West Africa because of the large number of slaves sent to the New World from this region (Opie 2008). Several foods that are common among African American communities have historical incarnations in this region of Africa. For example, grits are closely related to millet served in West Africa. Another example, fried chicken, which has a long historical and racialized connection to African American identity, has culinary roots in the West Africa palm oil-fried guinea hen. In addition, African slaves brought many foods such as rice, sorghum, coffee, okra, watermelon, and the "Asian" long bean to the Americas during the transatlantic passage to the Americas (Carney and Rosomoff 2011).

Since slaves were thought of as a valuable economic commodity, slave owners throughout the Americas often provided slaves with a daily provision of food which provided enough nutrients to sustain life and maximize their ability to function as a bonded source of labor. Although slave diets varied greatly throughout the Americas, slave provisions in the American South often included an allotment of grain or other simple carbohydrate and a weekly ration of salted meat (Eisnach and Covey 2009). However, these slave provisions were often lacking in size, variety, and nutrients, and as a result, slaves found creative ways to supplement their food intake. In the United States (both before and after the American Revolution), slaves often maintained small garden plots adjacent to slave quarters (such gardens were not very common in the Caribbean) where they grew foods common to West Africa. This allowed slaves not only the ability to supplement their nutritional intake but also an important means to maintain their cultural connections to the African diaspora and their West African cultural and culinary roots. Hence, these foods became an important means with which slaves maintained cultural and racial identity despite the brutal violence of their living and working conditions in American plantation bondage.

What's more, foods brought by slaves to the Americas not only became crucial to the assertion of African and African American identity but also became highly influential to American culinary identity. Because it was common to have slaves

work in the slave owners home or "big house" as cooks and domestic servants, many of the African culinary staples and cooking techniques mixed and blended with European cuisine to form new distinct American culinary cultures. Many of the foods that are commonly understood by most Americans today as "Southern", corn bread, biscuits, fried chicken, pork dishes, greens, gumbo, and jambalaya, are the direct result of African slave foodways and its central role in shaping Southern cuisine. Another prominent example includes barbeque, which is a central cooking style in the United States, which also remains central to African American cultural identity. Barbeque as a cooking style is a derivative from a combination of Indigenous pit grilling techniques, African grilling traditions, and African American cookery both before and after slavery (Warnes 2008). Many of these African American and distinctly Southern culinary traditions spread throughout the United States as a product of the Great Migration, which resulted in further culinary mixing between black and white populations. As a result, culinary cultures that remain central to African American identity, most notably barbeque, became common in places such as Kansas City, St. Louis, Chicago, the Midwest, and various cities in the Northern United States.

## Post Slavery, Reconstruction, Jim Crow, Civil Rights, and Soul Eras

Much like during slavery, in the postbellum era, African Americans utilized cooking and eating as a means to maintain the African American community and diasporic connections, as a form of cultural resistance, and as a means of creatively subverting white cultural domination. However, during this time, white Americans found ways to associate African Americans with certain foods, in particular chicken and watermelon, as a means to correlate blackness with inferiority and demeaning tropes such as laziness, buffoonishness, and propensity for criminal activity.

Minstrel shows were a form of American entertainment popular in the United States from the post-Civil War era into the early twentieth century. Minstrelsy consisted of musical and dance performances, comic skits, and variety acts that were performed by white people in blackface (and also to a lesser extent African Americans in blackface). Blackface is a form of theatrical makeup used in minstrel shows, vaudeville, and film in which performers paint their faces black using makeup or burnt cork in order to create an offensive stereotypical caricature of an African American. The minstrel show often began with brief burlesque performances and comic shorts in the early 1830s and emerged as a full-fledged form in the next decade. By 1848, blackface minstrel shows were widely popular and considered the most important popular culture entertainment of the time. They gained popularity, in part, by translating formal art such as opera and Shakespearian theater into popular terms accessible by a general audience. Minstrel shows and later vaudeville theatrical performances remained popular into the mid-twentieth century, and the tropes common of these theatrical performances were utilized in the early years of the film era.

Minstrel shows caricatured African Americans as dim-witted, lazy, buffoonish, superstitious, happy-go-lucky, musical, and innately criminal. Common tropes in these performances included "the mammy," a nurturing and subservient African American housekeeper and childcare provider; "the Uncle Tom," a subservient, religious, and passive older African American man; "the buck," a larger menacing and sexually dangerous powerful African American man; "the Jim Crow," a buffoonish, lazy, criminal, and dirty African American man; and "the coon," a mockery of African American men that was an arrogant, ostentatious figure who dressed in high style and spoke in a series of malapropos and puns that undermined his attempts to appear dignified.

Food and eating were often utilized in these theatrical and film performances to construct problematic and damaging tropes that associated African Americans with buffoonish, criminal, and dim-witted behavior. In particular, minstrel performers utilized watermelon and chicken to portray black Americans as less than human for the purpose of justifying systematic

discrimination and a racial hierarchy that privileges whiteness. While it is unclear where these stereotypes originated, numerous primary sources chronicle black resistance to slavery through day-to-day acts of defiance. Stealing from the slave master is an example of such forms of resistance, and it seems logical that food would be among the most desirable items to have been stolen, especially since slave provisions were often lacking. Both chickens and watermelons would have been commonly available on Southern plantations, and while the theft of these items can be seen as a challenge to slave master authority and a sign of slave agency, it is plausible that the stereotypical correlation between African Americans and these food items could have emerged at this time.

Minstrel performances, vaudeville, film, and consumer culture utilized images of chicken and watermelon to produce a constant stream of antiblack imagery by depicting African Americans as constantly eating, craving, stealing, and feverishly pursuing both chicken and watermelon above all else. This racist imagery produced by and sold to white Americans presented African Americans as unkempt and in tattered clothing, buffoonish, innately criminal, speaking in a highly stereotypical dialect, living in extreme poverty, lacking any ambition for education or social power, and largely content with their impoverished standard of living. Chicken and watermelon were utilized in these cultural forms to portray African Americans as animalistic and so subhuman that it was not education, wealth, or power that satisfied black ambition, but rather within this negative imagery African American desires were problematically directed solely towards chicken and watermelon. The "coon" character especially was depicted in such popular cultural performance as illiterate and lazy, content to waste the day either eating watermelon or chasing chickens (often unsuccessfully).

Three specific ways that both chicken and watermelon were utilized in popular performance and consumer culture to perpetuate racial oppression and antiblack sentiment warrant specific attention. First, African American men were depicted as constantly attempting to steal either chicken or watermelon in both minstrel performance and popular ephemera. Often these attempts were foiled by the overseer or slave master because of the African American's own blunders. It was also common to see the chicken personified and escaping capture by easily outwitting the reckless, ludicrous, and fatuous coon character. Such images were always decontextualized from a reality both during and post slavery where many slaves and sharecroppers faced high levels of poverty and often stole to supplement their food supply or as an active act of resistance against racial oppression. Rather, chicken and watermelon were used in such imagery to construct a discourse of the black male as innately criminal, an association that in many respects remains today. Second, often these popular culture productions often literally depicted African Americans as chickens. This literal construction of black man as chicken closely correlates African American identity with that of an animal, and in the case of chicken, an animal that is thought of as crude, witless, and only valuable in the eyes of white Americans as a source of food. Finally, by correlating African American men with chicken, in particular the rooster, popular culture was constructing a discourse on black male sexuality that viewed the black man as having an animalistic and uncontrollable sexual appetite, especially for the perceived purity of white femininity (often associated with the hen). Correlations between chicken and the black male body in part functioned to create a stigmatization and fear of black sexuality, which also remains salient in popular rhetoric today (Williams-Forson 2006).

It also should be noted that both chicken and watermelon were not simply utilized by white performers in minstrelsy, vaudeville, film, and consumer culture to construct detrimental racial tropes but also that these foods were appropriated by African Americans to resist racial domination. Not only did slaves and post slavery blacks steal such foods as a means to challenge the authority of Southern whites, but African American men and women utilized the sale of food in the ante- and postbellum eras to assert their collective agency and autonomy. In particular, "waiter

carriers," female African American cooks, sold food along railroad lines to train passengers to assert themselves as valid members of the nation-state through the demonstration of their economic value, build community, continue cultural traditions, and travel, all of which challenged existing racial (and gendered) power structures of the time (Williams-Forson 2006).

Food has also remained a crucial part of African American sociopolitical activity and organization during the Civil Rights, Soul Eras, and beyond. In the 1960s, the Black Panther used a free breakfast program to critique white American imperialism and domination by sustaining their own African American community through radical food spaces. This breakfast program advocated a revolutionary politics that rejected governmental food aid, which the Black Panther Party saw as a means to pacify and make docile the African American community. For the Nation of Islam, restricting ones diet and the consumption of healthy food protects against the consequences to one's health and domineering culture of a racist society. The Nation of Islam rejected soul food, especially foods like pork and chitterlings, because of their direct correlation to slavery and the diets imposed by slave masters. Other food activists during the Soul Era embraced soul food claiming it as a statement of "racial pride precisely because it reclaims food previously despised – those animal parts that slave had to eat because their owners would not" (Slocum 2011).

## Colonizing Native Diets

It also should be noted that European colonists and white American expansionists also used food to colonize Indigenous peoples throughout American history. Practices such as forced farming on Indigenous reservations, European eradication of the wild buffalo population, and highly processed US food provisions became a means of imperialism, colonization, and racial oppression enacted by Europeans and white Americans against Indigenous peoples. For example, the US federal government, in efforts to oppress and control the Indigenous people of the American plains, forced these populations to ranch, slaughter, and consume of beef, instead of hunting wild bison, which had been a common practice of Plains Indians for generations (Wise 2011). This food-based colonization has resulted in high levels of obesity, diabetes, and other diet-related health problems among many Native peoples. However, throughout the history of settler colonization, Indigenous peoples throughout the United States have fought back against this food-based colonization and made a radical claim of autonomy by decolonizing their own diets and restoring traditional foods, culinary techniques, and foodways to Indigenous cultural life. One notable contemporary example is the consumption of wild rice by the Ojibwa peoples of Minnesota.

## Racialization Beyond Blackness: Diaspora, Culinary Nostalgia, and "Ethnic Spice"

As mentioned above of African diasporic foodways, for immigrant groups throughout US history, food has functioned both as a means for racial othering and oppression and as a means for diasporic cultural continuity and the maintenance of a distinct ethnic identity. And while this entry does not detail the history of immigration and food in its entirety, it is necessary to point to some important trends in the ways which immigration implicates food and ethnic foods in racial hierarchies and racialization throughout US history.

"Nostalgic gastronomy," or the process by which one recreates their memories of home through food, has allowed immigrant groups, often in the face of oppression, alienation, and isolation, to bridge a "sensual gap" between the homeland and the United States by engaging in many of the culinary practices and cultural traditions of their respective home countries (Slocum 2011). While there is great culinary hybridization and exchange in the American culinary landscape, working against efforts to normalize their diets and firmly entrench them within mainstream American culinary habits, immigrant populations have pushed back and reasserted their cultural identity through the continued production, consumption, and sale of foods, dishes, and products unique to their cultural identity. For example, as

Krishnendu Ray and Anita Mannur detail, the Indian-American community has utilized food, articulated through either the literature or the restaurant industry, respectively, to maintain South Asian identity and remain culturally connected to the Indian subcontinent (Ray 2012; Mannur 2009).

However, despite the importance of immigrant foodways to the continuation of ethnic and cultural identity, immigrant foodways in the United States are often associated with the lower end of the culinary (and racial) hierarchy through a discursive connotation with toil, labor, and uncleanliness. On the other hand, European cuisine has often been understood within mainstream culinary discourse for its refinement of taste and culinary skill (Slocum 2011). In fact, ethnic food itself is a racialized term that has been used to "invoke the 'exotic' nonwhite other and that some ethnic foods are indeed more 'ethnic' than others." As such, the foods of racialized immigrant populations have often been used by Anglo whites to the maintenance of an articulate racialized cultural hierarchy (Padoongpatt 2011). For example, in the mid-eighteenth century, white American nativists often associated the Chinese population with the consumption of certain foods (most commonly rice but even sometimes cats and rats) as a means to claim that Chinese immigrants were disease ridden, dirty, weak, and unfit to enter into the larger American body politic. Despite the fact that food, specifically the prevalence of Chinese restaurants, has remained a central communal node and important source of labor for the Chinese American community, Anglo whites have used a discourse of Chinese cuisine as "foreign" and "exotic" to perpetuate the orientalist exoticization of Chinese culture and continually render them outside of American normative cultural identity.

### Mexican Identity, Borderlands, and Food

One example of this simultaneous process of racial othering and the maintenance of a distinct cultural identity through nostalgic gastronomy can be seen in the cuisine of the Mexican/Mexican American community. As Jeffrey Pilcher's several texts point out, food has been central to the development of Mexican nationalism and the emergence of a distinct Mexican identity in the face of European and American imperialism (Pilcher 1998). Popular Mexican foods such as corn, tortillas, and the working-class staple taco essentially fused European and Indigenous Mexican cuisines together, resulting in a new hybrid cuisine. This cuisine which merged parts of European and Indigenous culinary cultures together formed a new cuisine which came to be seen as representative of a distinct and emergent Mexican identity. These "Mexican" foods expanded into the United States with the annexation of Texas in 1845, the cession of Mexico in 1848, and the subsequent influx of Mexican immigrants across these newly established borders. The continuation of Mexican culinary traditions by Mexican populations in the United States offered the ability to remain connected to that Mexican ethnic and national identity by populations no longer living in what was politically considered part of the Mexican nation-state. For the Mexican American and Mexican populations, food became a way to maintain cultural and ethnic identity despite the shifting and permeable nature of the national borders and changes in national governing bodies.

However, much like Chinese cuisine before it, Mexican cuisine was used within popular American rhetoric as a means to distinguish Mexicans as outside of white American cultural identity and hence in a marginalized place in the racial hierarchy. In the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, especially in Southern California, Mexican food was associated with the influx of working-class migrant labors entering the country as part of the bracero program (a federal program which encouraged the immigration of seasonal farm laborers from Mexico). Mexican food, just like Chinese cuisine before it, was exoticized and racialized in this context. Mexican food came to be commonly understood by white Americans in Southern California as cheap, dirty, and of a lower culinary and cultural status as compared to European cuisine. Hence, this rhetoric surrounding Mexican cuisine hardened the racial tensions in California during the mid-twentieth century (which boiled over into physical violence

during the Zoot Suit Riots). According to Pilcher, it wasn't until Glen Bell opened several fast-food Mexican-themed eateries, known as *Taco Bell*, that Mexican food began to gain popularity outside of Mexican ethnic enclaves. Pilcher argues that Taco Bell succeeded not just by selling fast food but rather by selling a form of exoticism that allowed white Americans to sample Mexican cuisine without crossing the lines of segregation in the 1950s in Southern California, hence making it "safe" for white Americans to explore (a highly corporate and hybridized version) Mexican culture (Pilcher 2008). Therefore, food allowed Mexican and Mexican Americans to remain culturally connected to Mexico, while it was simultaneously being used to racialize Mexicans as outside of and inferior to normative American cultural identity.

### Food and White Racial Privilege

It also should be noted that within the racial ideologies of late twentieth-century liberal multiculturalism, white Americans have often utilized the consumption of "ethnic food" as a means to rearticulate their cultural and racial privilege. Common among progressive white food-conscious consumers of the late twentieth century is what Lisa Heldke defines as "cultural food colonialism," a white American passion for eating, cooking, and appreciating food that is rooted in a racist colonial thirst for adventure, authenticity, and novelty. As Heldke and other food scholars have noted, this logic reaffirms white privilege and white normativity by simultaneously rendering ethnic food as foreign and by securing the "food adventurer" as willing to collect and publicly display their experiences of ethnic and racial difference (Heldke 2003). White Americans have utilized orientalist logic to construct many ethnic foods from communities of color as peculiar, bizarre, unfamiliar, and even sometimes dangerous. Eating ethnically often becomes a performative act that progressive white consumers utilize to express a sense of bravery and adventure, as well as an adaptability and openness to experiencing the supposedly exotic cultures of immigrant groups. What is crucial, however, about eating ethnically for white consumers, however, is not just that the act is predicated on constructing ethnic food cultures as exotic or even grotesque (which is part and parcel of a nativist racializing project that throughout US history has understood immigrant bodies as unclean and disease ridden) but also how that consumption is then called upon to articulate a very particular type of ethnic cultural cachet and reinforce the cultural privilege of one's own white (privileged and normative) identity.

In summary, while white US citizens have used the taste of foreign foods to racialized immigrants of color people from Asian, African, and South American populations as exotic and hence racially other, these diasporic populations have also relied on cuisine and taste to discern and maintain their ethnic identity and assert their cultural validity within the dominant white normativity of mainstream American culture.

## Food Justice and Contemporary Correlations Between Eating and Race

This entry concludes by detailing some of the contemporary correlations between eating and racial identity by paying particular attention to contemporary debates surrounding food justice as well as by exploring the racial practices of contemporary alternative food movements. Communities of color often have not embraced alternative food movements (including the organic movement, local food movement, and slow food movement), which many of these movements' proponents envision as a solution to the widely documented ills of industrial agriculture. However, this is not the result of an African American community unsympathetic to the movements overarching goals of improving food quality and national health, but rather because of the use of color-blind rhetoric and exclusionary practices by active members of movements. These movements often articulate white ideals of health and nutrition as well as present a whitewashed vision of farming that erases the past and present of an American agricultural system predicated on racial exploitation. The US agricultural legacy

is tied to an institutional racism that forced African Americans and Mexicans into agricultural labor and removed Indigenous people (Mexicans and African Americans as well) from their land (Guthman 2008). However, the practitioners of alternative food movements present a vision of an idealized agricultural past that is free of such racial oppression. The primarily white members of alternative food practice seldom see the color-blind and whitewashed agricultural history as problematic, in part because of their own place of racial privilege and in part because of the pervasive normativity of their white racial identity. However, black activists are beginning to make a claim for the centrality of an African American space within alternative food movements, and it is increasingly common to see people of color at the center of alternative food practice, especially in inner cities throughout the United States.

Due to the long-term effects of institutional racism, African Americans disproportionately live in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods that lack access to quality, healthy, affordable food. These neighborhoods, known as food deserts, often lack an adequate number of (if any) quality supermarkets. It has been proven that such urban spaces have spatial and structural characteristics that result in poor diets, which have a detrimental impact on African American health and lead to disproportionately high levels of diet-related disease in the black community. The pervasive rhetoric has been that these health effects are not structural but rather a direct result of unhealthy characteristics of African American cuisine, in particular soul food, which critics argue is high in saturated fats and cholesterol. However, African American scholars, activists, and cookbook authors such as Bryant Ferry and Breeze Harper have written against such negative associations and have used food to combat the health problems of the black community by making radical claims against the colonization of the African American diet. Rather, it is important that the lack of access to quality food and the detrimental health effects that result in black communities are seen as a direct result of racialized institutional policies that have historically left African American communities at a disadvantage.

As expressed in the film *Soul Food Junkies* by scholar and activist Marc Lamont Hill,

> There is no better example of racism in the twenty first century than the relationship between black people and access to healthy foods. People think about racism as an individual act of discrimination from one person to another, but that's not what it is about. It is about systems, it is about structures, and it is about institutions. And the fact that black people live in neighborhoods where they can't get access to healthy food choices, and white people can get healthy food choices, that is classic text book racism. You want to wipe out an entire generation of people, you want to engage in a kind of twenty first century genocide, all you have to do is continue to do what we have been doing; which is deprive black people access to healthy food. (Hurt 2013)

## Summary

Race is defined as an evolving and historically contingent social construction predicated on the ability of Anglo whites to assert, promote, and maintain the ideal of white supremacy against all other racial groups. This racial hierarchy is predicated on a racial contract that underwrites and guides all major institutions and cultural practices in the United States and thus assigns political, economic, and social privileges based on racial identity. Despite the shifting nature of race, since the advent of New World slavery, there has remained a salient racial hierarchy in the United States, which consistently places whiteness at its apex.

Food and the sociocultural act of eating have been significant markers of racial identity and central to the process of racialization and the maintenance of distinct racial hierarchy throughout American history. Since the advent of New World slavery and the emergence of sugar plantations in the New World, food has been used to correlate communities of color, in particular African Americans, with a marginalized position in this racial hierarchy. However, communities of color have also used food as a means to assert their agency and self-determination, thus challenging their position within the dominant racial structure. Some of the major correlations

between African American identity and food include sugar consumption, plantation slavery, and the advent of racial hierarchies; transatlantic slavery and food in the construction of American cuisine; common African American tropes as constructed through food in postbellum popular culture; the role of food in radical black politics; and the role of race in alternative food movements and contemporary food justice issues. In addition, food and eating have been central in the process of colonization and racialization of Indigenous peoples; in the racialization and exoticization of immigrant populations, including but not limited to Chinese, Thai, and Mexican communities; and in the construction of white privilege. As such, this entry has maintained that food/eating culture and racial identity have been inextricably linked and have symbiotically functioned to construct one another throughout American history.

## Cross-References

- ▶ Culinary Cosmopolitanism
- ▶ Culinary Tourism
- ▶ Ethnicity, Ethnic Identity, and Food
- ▶ Food Deserts

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# Recipes


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## Synonyms

Description; Formula; Instruction; Method; Procedure; Process; Receipt

## Introduction

Recipes are the instructions for preparing an item or description of a process to accomplish a final

product. They also represent a style of literary writing described as "discourse" and can be structured in multiple different ways, depending on the product, the author, or the audience. Recipes are featured in many different formats, such as books, blogs, memoirs, websites, textbooks, newspapers, magazines, and still by word of mouth. Each of these sources targets a different audience, which allow the recipes to be shared with a large variety of people. Some may target professionals, while others write for home cooks. This entry will follow the history of recipes and look at the different sources of recipes such as cookbooks, websites, blogs, magazines, and other sources. It will discuss the different types of formats to write a recipe and delve into the ethical questions that arise from the writing and sharing of recipes.

## History

Recipes did not begin as a culinary source. Their beginnings were of a medical root. *The English Housewife*, written in 1615, was one of the first publications to contain written recipes, or "receipts," geared to the housewife. It used food ingredients as medicine, from both a curing standpoint and a preventative one. The wives of the farmers needed to know how to cook food, since they used cooking as a method of preventing many illnesses caused by unsafe water sources used for crop irrigation. Housewives needed to be intelligent and learned enough to be able to follow the written procedures, but not smart enough to bypass doctors. Doctors became the first recipe authors, of sorts, as they wrote down ingredients and procedures for women to care for the family; these included medicinal uses of food and food as prescribed lifestyles (Knight 2012).

In Roman times, around the first century, mothers taught their daughters how to prepare the foods commonly consumed in the home. This method of handing down recipes was common for many centuries, all the way through the nineteenth century, when literacy finally began to increase within female populations. When the recipes were first written, they did not follow the same guidelines or structure as modern recipes. In many cases, there were no lists of ingredients or any specifics on the quality or amounts required to produce a recipe with a consistent outcome. The instructions had people working off of descriptions of the end result of the product without including measured quantities. Descriptions such as add enough flour to make the dough stiff were meant to provide enough guidance to prepare food. Even though the instructions were written down, there was still a practical or oral aspect that must have occurred in order for the recipe to be passed down successfully. A person who prepared the item had to really understand how much flour is enough to make the dough stiff and how stiff the dough must really be. This made the recipes less accessible to people outside the family circle (Arnold-Ratliff 2011).

The early twentieth century began to see more formalization of a recipe. There were new tools introduced to the home and to the market that simplified the process of having real measures and also new methods of distributing recipes (Arnold-Ratliff 2011). However, in the 1920s and 1930s, in the time of the industrialization and depression, published recipes showed off an unethical approach in being published. This time was an era of the growth of industries, gadgets, and processed foods. The recipes published, many times were created by the companies of these food products or gadgets, made to sell what was needed to make the recipe perfect, thus making the recipe more about the use of the product, than the cooking of the meal (Wajda 2008).

Women's magazines of the early twentieth century featured recipes for the housewife to produce in her own home; they were also the perfect source to publish recipes laden with hidden advertisements for women to buy processed foods and products that advertisers wanted to sell. The manufacturers and producers of fast food and convenience products began to advertise the lack of time for women in the household to cook and did that not only through the products but through the recipes of easy-to-make, fast food in the home. Many times, these were advertised as

such in their titles, by including phrases such as easy to make or fast within the titles of the foods. In addition, recipes began to include suggestions of tools to use within the recipes that would also help to speed up the process, continuing the effort by manufacturers to sell. This made a recipe less of a cooking guide and more of a consumer marketing campaign.

Recipes in magazines, however, continue to be popular since then due to their style of writing and the fact that they are embedded within other topics that attract women. Whether it is fashion, news, or gossip, women's magazines feature recipes that target the type of reader. The recipes within magazines have attracted readers since the late nineteenth century; these now included more precise measurements and procedures that could be followed by a person, even if they had not before seen or tasted the food. Not only were the recipes published in the magazine itself, but the tradition of printing recipe cards for subscription began. Women signed up for a publication, which included both a magazine and recipe cards sent to the home in small collections. Some publications also included the wooden box to organize the recipes in. These recipe cards became more than just a way of sharing recipes; they are now a part of nostalgia and to many a diary of loved ones passed down through generations. Recipe cards spattered with grease, dough, or batter tell the story of a family. Martha Stewart Living magazine still prints recipe cards and also has more modern approaches such as applications and websites to accompany their printed magazine (Arnold-Ratliff 2011).

In the early twentieth century, a new cookbook genre became popular with the rise of immigrant cookbooks written due to nostalgia. Those far from home continued to learn their cooking heritage and traditions that had been lost or forgotten since moving far away from their homeland and, in many cases, their families. Many of these cookbooks are written in the form of community cookbooks, which are not only often a memoir filled with recipes, but one that is written from many different perspectives and which tell different stories, since they are a compilation of the recipes of a myriad of families. This was also a good way to share the one attachment that people tend to long the most when migrating, the food. Replicating the eating habits that in many cultures also include the traditions of eating as a family and form the bond between family members was important to immigrants. Writing it down was, in part, to keep the tradition alive and also to tell the story of their family and migration. In many cases, these hid a deeper story or context that would have been seen as unethical or illegal to share in the motherland. The cookbooks were a way of integrating recipes into a critique of the social, political, or economical context of a country, by writing about the food of their homeland in the language of the country they moved to, sharing experiences about life and culture in their home country.

Community cookbooks became a new way to share recipes, usually benefiting a good cause. However, this genre made it harder to leave out an ingredient or change the product, since many community cookbook projects were advertised "real" recipes that were tried and true. Due to this, the publishing of these recipes in these books attached the name to the reliability of a recipe. This became a form of "contract" which made it necessary for the recipes to be shared honestly (Kelly 2012).

Through the evolution of society, recipes have marked societal changes that changed households. Before the introduction of refrigerators, freezers, and stoves into the household, recipes commonly included procedures that described how to prepare and serve food without these devices. As the more modern implements were introduced into the home, recipes began to change in their procedures, teaching housewives how to properly prepare meals that made use of new kitchen gadgets. So, though the recipes and cookbooks are not themselves history books, their contents reflect the historical changes from the time, allowing historians to use them as historical sources (Kelly 2012).

Recipes also mark family histories. As recipes are passed along from one generation to the next, they usually are labeled with the name of the person passing along the recipe or the events in which they were usually served. As families have

welcomed other members and grown, recipes change and are modified, new ingredients are added, and different procedures are tested, until the result has become a newer, more modern version of a family classic. As families have become multicultural, the recipes have managed to record the societal changes. Many have also initiated food traditions for communities, which have also evolved through time, but have become part of what represents that community (Kelly 2012).

Recipes can be a way of showing societal needs and changes, since recipes are created for many different reasons. They can be as a source of need to feed one or many, a way to wisely make use of ingredients when resources are scarce, and creativity and passion for those who may want to explore a new avenue or, in many times, even competition (Heldke 1988). The way a recipe is created can also have a direct correlation with the literacy and socioeconomic levels. People with low literacy rates will not be able to read a cookbook, magazine, or any other written source of recipe. For that matter, many of their recipes continue to be passed down through oral tradition or they must rely on television or other visual format or aural format. It then becomes a matter of expertise and who the audience is. Part of writing a good recipe is making it clear to follow for the target audience. Part of writing a good recipe is making it clear to follow for the target audience.

Community cookbooks were the most popular during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the United States. The recipes were compiled and made into cookbooks by churches, community centers, aid centers, and other entities, usually as an item for sale used for fundraising. They were not considered great culinary resources or pieces of literature, since the authors were common people, usually homemakers, sharing family recipes. They are now recognized as primary sources for the history of small communities, families, towns, as well as gastronomic history. Due to the small circulation within these small communities, they are rare finds now stored in the Library of Congress and most recently scanned and digitized to allow for better record keeping of books in poor conditions due to age (Kelly 2012).

Community cookbooks are a different category of food writing. Each cookbook is written from multiple perspectives, since it usually contains a collection of recipes sourced by a myriad of people from a particular community or group, making the style in which each recipe is written different. Many of these cookbooks were also funded by local businesses in order to cover publishing costs, which in turn entitled them to advertisements within the book. Today, these advertisements provide a historical guide to the businesses and products sold in the different communities where these cookbooks were published. They also give insight on new products in the market at the time when they were written (Kelly 2012).

Most community cookbooks are not heavily circulated. Instead, their main readership is from the local community. Even though the recipes all vary due to the different authors who provide them, they are not all going to provide the same feeling of comfort with preparing the recipe as the cookbooks all written from an author that is usually followed. Instead, those people who have a good cooking reputation within the community will generally provide the recipes that are said to be better in quality by the standards of other community members who spread the word (Tomlinson 1986).

## Modern Recipe Sharing: Families, Cookbooks, and Blogs

Until recently, with the popularity of blogs, cookbooks were the main source of recipe sharing. At first glance, food recipes, in general, appear to be structured in the same way regardless of the source in which it is published. They generally list the ingredients at the top and below and include the instructions with which to put the ingredients together. This can be done in the form of a list or in a paragraph form. Many recipes have been guarded as a family's best-kept secret. Some will share recipes by omitting an ingredient. Oftentimes, that omission will

make the recipe falter. Other times, it will just alter the taste slightly, leaving it a little less delicious than its own version. Lying by omission is an unethical approach to recipe sharing, but a common practice, nonetheless. Many times, the owner of the recipe guards it and only gives out parts of the recipe, in order to remain the expert in preparing the dish. The same is true with celebrity chefs who are also on television or are cookbook authors. They want to be able to sell their products, so they will create special "secret" spice mixes that are needed in order to make the dish. These spice mixes are one of the ingredients listed in the recipe. Emeril Lagasse, for instance, has a line of spice mixes needed to prepare his dishes, which are sold in stores. In order to prepare these recipes, one would require his spice mixes (Essence), forcing readers to have to purchase the ingredient within his line of products to have the expected results of the recipe. Because of the importance placed on using that particular ingredient, a reader may steer away from the recipe due to not having such an important ingredient.

Recipe ownership or copyright becomes a legal matter best discussed by attorneys. Some recipes are altered to just meet the requirements to give an author new ownership to a creation. Copyright laws are not as specific or strict when it comes to the publishing of recipes, especially since the advent of the electronic recipe. This is due to the classification of recipes as a list of ingredients rather than a literary publication. Because creations have no protection to copyright laws and recipes have been declared as such, the same is true for them. The increased use of Internet sites as methods of exchanging recipes has had a huge increase on the number of recipes that are shared in blogs and other electronic methods, allowing readers not to buy magazines, newspapers, and cookbooks they would have otherwise published. Many publications have and will continue to lose audiences due to the use of online journals and blogs, and publishers will cease advertising in such publications, possibly leading many to cease printing (Lawrence 2011).

Cookbooks are one of the most popular forms of public recipe sharing. Cookbook sections in bookstores have continued to grow, flooded by books promising easy-to-make, flawless, gourmet, diet, ethnic foods sure to impress. Others become beautiful coffee table ornaments, meant to feature beautiful pictures of culinary creations or ingredients from around the world. So, though filled with recipes, some of these books will never be cooked from. The recipes will serve more as a literary text, a romance or adventure novel, or a fable, rather than a guide to food preparation. This can be true with many cookbooks, which feature beautiful pictures of the country and its dishes, but recipes that are unlikely to be featured in the common American household. Some of the recipes can be tedious to prepare, requiring more time than is available for the home cook. Others will have recipes of food products not likely to be consumed in the home today, such as organ meats or products that are expensive to buy in a time of troubled economy, such as caviar. However, the role of the woman as the homemaker may still entice her to read a cookbook, even if just as a literary work, reading through the recipes she knows she will not prepare (Bower 2004).

Many modern cookbooks have changed their style. No longer do cookbooks just list a series of recipes and are meant to be a source of culinary instructions as they once were. Many cookbooks now will blend in a story, making them more of a memoir and a cookbook and not just a recipe book. This is especially true of the cookbooks written by authors of blogs or stars of cooking shows, whose stories people have become familiar with and have become part of the family. The Barefoot Contessa Foolproof: Recipes You Can Trust, authored by Ina Garten, Food Network star, for instance, is embedded with first-person advice and instructions as well as personal stories and photographs of her family and friends, all of whom helped her illustrate the story of her dishes (Garten 2012). Deb Perelman, author of the Smitten Kitchen blog, recently published her first cookbook, the Smitten Kitchen Cookbook, which also features photographs of her family embedded with stories of when the recipes were made, written in the first person (Perelman 2012). So, the recipes take the backseat of the cookbook. Many of the recipes featured in both of these

books as well as other similar books note that they are adaptations of recipes from other sources and authors, slightly modified to fit a different setting, taste, texture, or purpose.

Though recipes themselves cannot be copyrighted, cookbooks and other media, which contain descriptions, photographs, or any other source of material that may be copyrighted, or a combination of other material mixed with recipes, are eligible for copyright. However, even within the copyrightable material, there is an unethical consideration; the US government copyright page states that if a person has specific ingredients within a recipe that they would not like revealed, they must not include them in the recipe, since copyright applications are public record. This allows for the lack of protection to occur (US Copyright Office 2011).

Recipe blogs, as is the case of Smitten Kitchen, 101 Cookbooks, and many others, have become more than just a collection of recipes. Many of them are known for their food photography. Others have become a new type of memoir. Blogs are embedded with the story of the author and allow for commentary from the community of readers who will also inspire and impact future entries. Also, there are more characters involved, since most of them have an autobiographical style that allows readers a glance into the life of the author. Blogs are nothing more than an electronic journal, one that is published immediately for people to read, allowing the authors to create a following. Many blogs have a female readership and resemble postwar cookbooks. They have become a source of teaching, not only food recipes but the recipe to being a successful housewife or hostess. The recipes will generally follow a common theme, such as comfort foods, vegetarian foods, healthy foods, or whatever the author's focus may be (Salvio 2012).

Blogs changed food sharing, since a cookbook or recipe within a journal or magazine would include the preparation of the dish itself and maybe a photo of the food. Blogs, however, do not just focus on the food itself but also discuss the process the cook had of getting to the final result, interspersing it with photos, which often illustrate the different steps of food preparation that allowed them to arrive at the final dish. This does not always include a flawless preparation, as is thought to have in many cookbooks. They also tell about the failed attempts to make, what in their imagination would turn out to have a fantastic end result, in the hopes to get commentary from readers on the process or even advice on how to make it work. These become part of the "story," since many food bloggers are professional writers, photographers, or graphic designers, who are amateur cooks and would like to combine one of their hobbies with the one thing they do best, in order to show off their skills in the hopes of being discovered. That blog at that point becomes more than the platform on which to share cooking advice and becomes an electronic portfolio, the beginning of a book proposal of sorts, becoming a gateway for publishers to find talented authors (Salvio 2012).

Many recipe blogs become the easiest sources for home cooks, since many are written by home cooks and housewives, who are constantly reminding readers they too are regular people, as they apologize for lapses in writing due to heavy workloads, travels, or taking care of their families. They have also become a quicker way to search for recipes as well as one that is less expensive. The recipes themselves and the ways their style differ, though most of them take the more modern approach of listing the ingredients first and providing the detailed instructions on how to put them together later.

Each blog has a topic that threads the recipes together depending on the author; this form of e-autobiography focuses on the one aspect of a person's life that is the most important and that becomes the glue that attracts readers (Salvio 2012). Smitten Kitchen focuses on family and comfort foods enjoyed by adults and children, oftentimes featuring recipes that are quick to make while taking care of a child or more detailed, time-consuming recipes prepared while someone else is caring for the child, while she has time to try out a recipe the author had been longing to make. Another style of blog is the one focusing on a dietary restriction or preference, as is the case of 101 Cookbooks, which is

about vegetarian, healthy options, or the myriad of blogs that take us through a person's struggle with chronic diseases, which change their eating and lifestyles forever and allow us to participate on their quest to making the perfect dish that will not taste as if it is missing something.

In one sense, many blogs resemble the cookbooks of the era of the depression and postwar World War II. In those decades of the 1930s and 1940s, women began to work to help support the family while men could not do it on their own or had gone to war. This created the need for two types of foods: comfort foods and those that were quick to prepare. These cookbooks also usually featured more of a memoir style of writing featured within modern blogs (Salvio 2012).

Blogs now feature many published recipes by home cooks and amateurs sharing their story of making it and even sharing what modifications they made to the recipe to make it more to their liking. Sometimes, they will change the name a little bit. Other times, they will simply state adapted from a source or inspired by such other sources. However, there are also the times when none of that is mentioned and the recipe is simply published as one more favorite within a repertoire that now gives readers the idea that the recipe was made up by the author of the blog, who is actually hiding the true creator of the recipe. Though the US copyright laws do not protect the lists of ingredients and claim that recipes cannot be copyrighted due to their constant evolution, the International Association of Culinary Professionals (IACP) has come in to protect the creations and created ethical guidelines that request people to use the aforementioned words of adapted by or inspired by to give proper credit to the originators of the recipes (Gemperlein 2006).

## Recipes Writing Styles

The first part of the writing style of a recipe is witnessed when reading the title. Many recipes are not given a name that is realistically describing the dish to be made. Instead, titles are used to be enticing (chewy chocolate chip cookies), sometimes to give information about the author (grandmother's pot pie), and other times to show prestige (best cookies ever). However, these do not tell a lot about the end result of the product. This can create a high expectation, one that is subjective and left to the imagination of the reader; if the end result of the product is below the expectations of the reader, they may feel misled, causing them to believe that they were lied to. Also, oftentimes, there may be ingredients that are unexpected in the recipe from reading the title that may cause a reader to believe that the recipe is not what they were promised. For instance, chocolate chip cookies or brownies may have walnuts in them, but were not listed as walnut brownies or chocolate walnut cookies.

The body of recipes can be written in many different styles. Recipes written in the style of procedural discourse will follow a structure that focuses on organizing the steps. The language will vary depending on the audience the recipe is geared towards. Recipes written for professionals feature jargon and industry terms, while that for the home cook uses more common language understood by nonprofessional cooks. However, whichever the audience, the procedure is very organized by numbering or listing the steps of the procedure. In some cases, keywords within each step can be highlighted, making each of the steps easier to read (Wharton 2010).

Prose is another method of writing a recipe. Some recipes will list the ingredients on the top and write the procedure as prose, with a more densely structured paragraph that goes through the entire preparation process. In the case of Escoffier, the entire recipe is done in prose, not listing the ingredients first, but rather the entire book structured as paragraphs (Escoffier 1979). Because the structure of these is blocky, it does not allow for easy skimming through the steps and will require more time and effort to go through the recipes. In many cases, these will be geared to professionals or people who enjoy cooking and understand the reward gained from reading through this style of recipe style. Reading through a recipe is not like reading through any instruction booklet, since recipes tend to have a more rewarding result to the process than most other sets of instructions (Wharton 2010).

In addition to how the recipes are written from the instruction perspective, many recipes are formatted in such a way that there is a short description at the introduction of the recipe. This may be within the beginning of a recipe. Many include instructions on serving sizes, serving suggestions, and a little bit about the recipe. Others will include a short introduction that explains the final outcome of the recipe. In the end, these prior instructions and observations may lead to prior misconceptions and judgment for the reader, in many cases causing the reader to try out or dismiss the recipe proposed to the author due to the dislike of the introduction or the instructions provided to preface the recipe. The opposite may also be true with instructions or descriptions appealing to the reader in such a way that they automatically buy into the recipe without even having prepared it yet and will be more likely to try it (Tomlinson 1986).

The choice on how to write the recipe and the style to use, though sometimes not purposefully, will become unethical. Recipes have the tendency of lying, sometimes to protect the integrity and "rights" to the recipe, and others simply by omission. Some families have such pride for the creations that are adored by many and also deeply connected to their roots that they will "take them to the grave." Many great recipes have probably been lost or forever morphed into a variation, due to people leaving out one key ingredient that no one can know about because it is what made grandma's recipe the best in the community. Many people find that tradition normal and acceptable; if they gave others the full recipe, the recipe would be able to be replicated, and they would no longer have the right or privilege to be the one to always prepare it (Tomlinson 1986).

The lying by omission occurs oftentimes depending on the audience to which the recipe is targeted. Many recipes, especially those geared to professionals, will include certain ingredients listed with the measurement of taste. Some books will have recipes that at a glance will seem easy, but as the cook reads on, it has them cooking out of two or more recipes from the cookbook, in order to complete the one recipe intended, making it way more complicated than the original impression. Food recipes are written based on a number of assumptions made by the author; for the amount of food per serving, for instance, when not noted by measure, the recipe will state the number of servings. However, that is relative, since the author will likely not know how hungry the person cooking will be, and if the amount considered to be a serving is not included, the amount may be different than what the cook expected to make (Tomlinson 1986).

Many recipes are a compilation of unfinished instructions; recipes will follow all of the steps of listing ingredients and then the basic description of how those are put together. However, oftentimes, they are done in a way that assumes that all the readers will know basic cooking steps or understand certain qualities about an ingredient that they have not yet been exposed to. When transferred orally, whether by a family member, television, or a demonstration, a person is able to see what the ingredients look like and what the textures feel like and see the thread of every single part of the process answering questions that are left unmentioned and more importantly unanswered to the reader. For instance, many bread recipes will list the amount of flour needed but will oftentimes say more flour for kneading or five cups of flour (or more if needed). The recipe, however, will not specify how much is more, how much flour for kneading, or any other details that will allow a nonprofessional or person who has never had access to bread making to understand the real instruction (Tomlinson 1986).

The incompleteness of recipes is also illustrated within the preparation of the ingredients used within the recipes themselves. Oftentimes, a recipe will include a small instruction within the list of ingredients, oftentimes also differentiating when that preparation must take place with just a small detail. For instance, a recipe may ask a cook to have flour sifted. This automatically makes an assumption that the person will know how to sift flour; in addition, having the ingredient first, with the comma, then the action, will mean the action must take place after measuring.

However, if the instruction read sifted flour, then the action must occur before the ingredient is measured. Many do not know this, since it is not readily explained. Missing the step of preparing the recipe will very easily ruin the dish, which the reader had a high expectation for (Tomlinson 1986).

This follows through into the assembly of the ingredients as well. For instance, recipes that call for creamed butter assume that a reader will know that they should beat the butter with sugar until it has enough air incorporated to it and that it will be creamy and lighter in color. However, many readers will not know that, and others may not have a mixer to facilitate the process already making it deceiving to the reader that they would be able to make the recipe (Tomlinson 1986).

Though the recipes themselves are usually structured with a list of ingredients and a set of instruction, their publication becomes different through the voice of the recipe or the person preparing it. Each of them has an emotional connection for the author and those who read it. They are also more than just an instruction to cook; recipes and their collections are also a part of history, literature, culture, and craft.

## Summary

Recipes are instructions to accomplish a final food product. They include the ingredients and procedures needed to prepare them and can be written and formatted in different ways. There are many different sources where they are published, each with a different readership. From cookbooks to blogs, this entry looks at the different writing styles of recipes as well as the ethical considerations behind recipe writing and sharing.

## Cross-References


- ▶ Cooking Tools and Techniques: Ethical Issues
- ▶ Culinary Tourism
- ▶ Restaurant Reviewing


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# Resource Conflict, Food, and Agriculture

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## Synonyms

Climate Change; Colonialism; Conflict Resolution; Egalitarianism; Foragers; Global Land Grab Controversy; Globalization; Land Disputes; Lifeboat Ethics; Malthus; Neo-Malthusian; Peasants; Resource Scarcity; Resource Tenure; Small Farmers; Structural Inequality; Violence; Weapons of the Weak

## Introduction

Resource conflict refers to tensions, disagreements, disputes, and struggles involving control over, or use of, land, water, forest, pasture, and related environmental features. Wars, violence, and insecurity related to resources, ranging from the oil fields of Iraq, the savannas of Darfur, the jungles of Chiapas, and the rural-urban interface of China. What constitutes a resource seems straightforward: an element of nature that people value and seek to use to attain an end. Defining value and use, however, is always culturally mediated, so that different societies may hold very different meanings, needs, and priorities regarding the world they inhabit. Despite the global spread of commercialization, Elizabeth Emma Ferry and Mandana Limbert (2008, p. 4) point out that "... nothing is essentially or self-evidently a resource. Resource-making is a social and political process, and resources are concepts as much as objects or substances." The presence of different cultural views and practices about the environment might not be recognized or easily translated, so that this incommensurability of understanding may in itself become a source of conflict.

The language of conflict, including of it resolution or transformation, is notoriously imprecise. For present purposes, "conflict" is defined broadly here as a situation where people clash due to a perceived serious incompatibility in their needs and interests, making the status quo no longer acceptable. This definition draws attention to the importance of focusing on underlying concerns and motives, rather than on outward manifestations of discord or antagonism. When dealing with food and agriculture, many conflicts are latent, reflecting structural inequalities, differences of power, or similar social cleavages. These latent conflicts are often deeply rooted in historical political economies and cultural institutions. Similarly, seemingly local or small-scale disputes may have broader socioeconomic, political, or cultural conflicts embedded in them. In general, the form and intensity of resource conflict vary widely. Conflict occurs at all societal levels, from the intra-household to the global. In many places resource conflicts appear to be increasing, driven not only by rising demand but also by political, socioeconomic, and cultural change. While humanity possesses the capacity to address issues of injustice and competitive consumption that drive many of these conflicts, it is by no means certain that it will be able to do so.

## The Questions of Causality and Understanding

Resource conflicts abound, and so do explanations for them: structural inequalities rooted in historical political economy, environmental scarcity, need or greed, resource curses, bad governance, and so on. To a large extent, these different interpretations reflect the varying theoretical interests and assumptions of their proponents. For example, Thomas Homer-Dixon's (1994) neo-Malthusian analysis highlights the role of population growth and rising consumption pressures as key factors in sparking violent environmental conflicts. In contrast, Nancy Lee Peluso and Michael Watts' (2001) collection of political ecology case studies focuses on how violence is a social project shaped by the imperatives of state power and market-driven actors in

specific settings. These differences in approach also underscore the wide range, complexity, and dynamism of conflicts, making it impossible to understand them fully from a single analytical framework. Resource scarcity, competition, inequality, poverty, neoliberalism, neocolonialism, and so on may seem as if they are "obvious" causal or triggering agents for conflict, yet people may decide to respond to circumstances through peaceful, rather than conflict, pathways. The plausibility of singular prime movers or triggers declines when one moves from the macro level to particular cases, where site- and actor-specific variables become more visible. This is not to say that inequalities, scarcity, governance, and so on do not matter, but rather that their relevance and significance in any setting be demonstrated rather than stipulated.

Understanding resource conflicts means understanding people, their characteristics, capacities, interests, and priorities. This means recognizing human diversity, including differences of gender, age, cultural background, and other dimensions. Gender, which refers to the culturally defined roles, relationships, and responsibilities of females and males, is an especially significant variable. The importance of women as resource controller and users is often underestimated or downplayed, which in itself has been a source of conflict. Discrimination against women embedded in tenure systems defined by custom, religion, or state authority is an inherent source of tension, given on-the-ground realities of women's actions as resource decision-makers and users. It is important to bear in mind, however, that conflict can follow "myriad social fault lines, pitting national and local elites against ordinary citizens, neighbor against neighbor, kinsmen again kinsmen, and husbands against wives" (Berry 2002, p. 639). In a study of land conflicts in pre-genocide Rwanda, for example, Catherine André and Jean-Philippe Platteau (1998) found that intense competition for resources spurred by population pressures, increasing inequalities, and changes in inheritance custom had brought property disputes into "the very heart of family life" as children clashed with parents and siblings with each other.

## Egalitarianism and Its Legacy

Unequal access to resources is one of the major factors generating conflict at all societal levels. It is a pervasive feature of today's globalized existence, as well as for many societies in the past. In fact, the legacy of past structural inequalities still influences the occurrence and character of resource conflicts in several parts of the world. For most of human history, however, food procurement occurred in a very different setting: small-scale, egalitarian foraging societies. The legacy of this long period of humanity's past is worth considering, Christopher Boehm (2012) observes, since it is the period when humanity's sense of morality emerged as a part biological and cultural evolution. His account of forager society differs from the Hobbesian portrayal of a realm where everyone was the enemy of the other. Drawing on ethnographic and other evidence, Boehm argues that sharing and cooperation in hunting, food distribution, and other tasks served as the cauldron for the rise of a moral community. Boehm also contends that egalitarianism was not the inevitable outcome of food or other material limitations among foragers but an outcome of an "intentionally reverse dominance order." Peer pressure and sanctions held in check those deemed as too self-serving and disruptive. Douglas Fry (2006) has observed that foraging bands most frequently dealt with resource scarcity by sharing, rather than with hostile competition, expecting reciprocity at a future time. Crosscutting ties based on kinship, friendship, shared rituals, and trade fostered trust and cooperation.

Sharing and reciprocity continue to be major economic principles in contemporary foraging societies, as well as among family-based farmers and herders, along with the urban poor. For people with low incomes, mutual assistance from relatives, friends, and neighbors constitutes a key economic resource, helping to overcome shortfalls in money, food, labor, and other needs. The reliance on cooperation does not mean that intra- or intergroup resource competition or conflict is not present. As in all places, at all times, conflict happens. Its occurrence may serve to

jeopardize these networks of assistance. People recognize their importance, taking care to maintain social ties, striving to mend them when breakdowns occur. Leading procedures of conflict resolution – negotiation, mediation, adjudication, and reconciliation – also arose during humanity's long history as foragers. A significant body of literature on conflict management and peace-building for resource conflicts and land disputes has emerged, including policy- and training-oriented works emphasizing collaborative approaches (Castro and Nielsen 2003; Castro and Engel 2007).

## The Rise of Structural Inequalities

Despite these measures, societies eventually arose in human history characterized by what Jean-Jacques Rousseau called in 1754 moral or political inequality, organized on the basis of "different privileges enjoyed by some at the expense of others" (1987, p. 38). The emergence of hierarchical societies based on differential access to power and productive resources is recent by human evolutionary terms, first appearing only a few thousand years ago. With great insight, Rousseau attributed political inequality to the rise of agriculture and the gradual emergence of new ideas and practices regarding property. People came to accept privileged access to land, which altered in a fundamental way their relationships to each other:

> The first person who, having enclosed a plot of land, took it into his head to say *this is mine* and found people simple enough to believe him was the true founder of civil society. What crimes, wars, murders, what miseries and horrors would the human race have been spared, had someone pulled up the stakes or filled in the ditch and cried out to his fellow men: 'Do not listen to this imposter. You are lost if you forget that the fruits of the earth belong to all and the earth to no one!' (Emphasis in the original; Rousseau 1987, p. 60)

Agrarian states, such as in Europe and Asia during Rousseau's lifetime, were characterized by deep social inequalities. Disempowered rural populations had been converted into serfs, slaves, and tribute-paying peasants. As John Bodley (2001) observes, hierarchical societies by their very nature are predatory, always seeking to expand their access to resources, while experiencing competition from within for control over assets and the benefits from them.

The rise of the industrial capitalism based on global trade, wage labor, and technology run by fossil fuels extended and intensified inequalities. Resource conflicts were rife as enclosure movements, market pressures, and political actions promoted greater commercialization of property and rural labor arrangements. Colonial regimes in the Americas, Asia, and eventually Africa used violence and treaties to dominate and displace local populations. Estates, plantations, mines, forest reserves, and other commercial enclaves appeared, while colonial policies sought to convert local populations into cheap labor reserves to meet the needs of these new enterprises. Small farmers, herders, and foragers frequently found themselves in a precarious existence, their tenure rights insecure or unacknowledged, and with market and political processes favoring haves over have-nots. Political independence by itself failed to alter the circumstances of rural populations in the former colonies. The new leaders, like their predecessors, generally felt that indigenous or local resource institutions lacked development potential.

Agrarian inequality has generated conflict throughout history. On a daily basis, however, these tensions have been usually latent rather than open in character. For various motives, including feeling vulnerable to reprisals, people have avoided demonstrating dissatisfaction. "Agrarian peace," noted James Scott (1985, p. 40), may be "the peace of repression (remembered and/or anticipated) rather than the peace of consent or complicity." Scott coined the phrase "weapons of the weak" to describe covert acts of resistance by oppressed groups. Resistance could take the form of theft, false compliance, sabotage, or other acts interpreted as criminal rather than political by those in power. Sometimes rural grievances erupted into rebellions and revolts. Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels predicted that capitalism's inequalities would provoke revolutions in industrial societies, but these upheavals

mainly occurred in agrarian nations. Conflicts over land, resources, and political rights triggered revolutionary struggles in Mexico, Russia, China, and elsewhere. In some countries significant reforms occurred such as land redistribution and greater investment in rural public services. But these measures inserted new forms of state control vis-à-vis the rural population through land nationalization, collectivization, market controls, or other actions. New vulnerabilities and grievances arose among rural dwellers. Maoist China offered one of the most deadly examples, where perhaps 30 million people died of hunger during its Great Leap Forward program of the late 1950s. Market-based reforms since the late 1970s removed many of these "revolutionary" policies, opening new economic opportunities, but also setting launching new scrambles for resources.

## Resource Conflicts in a Globalized World

Market reforms embraced by most of the world's governments in recent decades have aimed to promote economic growth as the solution to humanity's problems. Economic globalization has accelerated resource extraction to meet rapidly, if unevenly, expanding demand worldwide while simultaneously promoting deterritorialization, reducing the role of political boundaries in separating humanity. As Jack Weatherford (1997, p. 7) points out, "we now are united in one network, in a single grid of interlocking institutions that spans the globe... The same market connects every country, every language, and every religious and ethnic group." While money allows these social relationships to appear transitory, their connections and consequences still exist. Seemingly trivial decisions made by individuals connect them with people elsewhere who may suffer great harm. For example, rising consumption of processed foods has greatly increased demand for palm oil among manufacturers. Consumers are usually unaware of its presence in their snacks and meals. Food processors find this saturated fat a useful ingredient. One of its main attractions is its low cost to them, which they obtain from Indonesia and other tropical countries. Rising palm oil demand has resulted in the expansion of plantations, displacing many communities and destroying rain forests. Globalization has helped to some extent the critics of the palm oil industry, facilitating their ability to transmit information about this situation. It is an uneven contest, at least for now, as palm oil consumption continues at a brisk pace.

Multinational businesses increasingly exercise influence over the allocation of agricultural and food-related resources globally. According to Raj Patel (2007, pp. 99–100), "Today, transnational agricultural corporations control 40 percent of world trade in food, with twenty companies controlling the world coffee trade, six controlling 70 percent of wheat trade, and one controlling 98 percent of packaged tea." Corporate involvement in food and related sectors has been touted as a way of promoting efficiency and innovation, promoting application of the latest industrial and biotechnology innovations. Agribusiness itself, however, is a source of conflict. Critics have long charged that corporations have used their market power and political connections to squeeze profits from both farmers and consumers. The health and environmental impacts of industrial agriculture have been other sources of controversy; for example, consequences arising from farm chemicals, feedlot wastes, and factory pollution. Agroecological studies carried out by Jules Pretty (2005) and others document industrial agriculture's externalities – enormous financial costs absorbed by society and ecosystems as a subsidy to business. These costs include numerous and widespread damage to human health; declining quality of water, soil, and air; and reduced wildlife and overall biodiversity. Nevertheless, the political and market clout of industrial agribusiness interests are so powerful that such concerns are not easily addressed in civic society.

The scope and magnitude of conflicts related to corporate investment in agriculture and related sectors is likely to increase in the future, reflecting its current boom occurring worldwide. The so-called global land grab emerged in the news media during 2008, in the midst of rising food prices and collapsing financial markets.

It had been already under way for years, stimulated by deregulation, privatization, food security concerns, China's economic rise, and promotion of "green" businesses such as biofuels and carbon forestry. Investors have targeted agriculture and resource sectors on all continents. An early report by GRAIN (2012), a nongovernmental organization, identified investments as coming heavily from China, India, and the Gulf States, as well as the West. The types of investors also attracted notice, as they included not only the expected agribusiness firms but also hedge funds, financial service organizations, and sovereign wealth funds. Governments, especially in developing countries, often sought out investors as a means of promoting economic development through capital and technology transfers. Officials leased or sold areas, usually without consulting the communities that depend on such areas for their livelihoods. Public information is generally lacking about these deals. No one knows how much land has been transferred to investors. The Land Matrix Project verified the existence of 924 agreements in the Global South and Eastern Europe involving 200 ha or more through September 2011. These agreements involved 48 million hectares, with 35 % of this land located in Africa. Many deals have yet to be verified.

The land agreements pose a major threat to the livelihoods and lives of communities, generating conflict. According to Human Rights Watch (2012), more than 70,000 people from Anuak and Nuer ethnic groups from Gambella, Ethiopia, are slated for involuntary resettlement so that Karuturi Global, an Indian agribusiness firm, can take over their land. They have sought redress in a number of settings, though without success to date. Their situation is by no means unique. On the contrary, development projects worldwide, including dams, roads, urbanization, mines, industrial complexes, and resorts displace an estimated 10 million people annually (Oliver-Smith 2005). In China alone, officials expropriated more than six million hectares of land for urban expansion between 1990 and 2010 (Amnesty International 2012). Aside from the trauma of the moves, these communities have had to struggle with issues of compensation, the process of moving, and the conditions of resettlement. Their experiences have often underscored their lack of bargaining power and inability to get governments, development agencies, and businesses to fulfill their obligations and responsibilities. Voluntary performance standards regarding human rights and environmental sustainability, such as the Equator Principles, have been adopted by development institutions and private businesses, but their effectiveness is not yet demonstrated. Communities have used lawsuit to pursue resource grievances, though they usually encounter substantial institutional, political, and other obstacles.

Global demand for resources has prompted modes of resource extraction that are less orderly than those found in land agreements and performance standards. Robert Buijtenhuijs (2000, p. 115) observed that in the 1980s, "a new phenomenon of 'predatory war' emerged in Africa... insurgent movements [who seek]... to secure by force of arms the economic resources in those areas which combatants control." They have focused on control of petroleum and valuable minerals such as diamonds, gold, and coltan, but agriculture and food supplies are often severely impacted by violence and insecurity. The unchecked global spread of small arms has enhanced the lethal capacity of these wars. Many studies have identified a "resource curse," which correlate to a rich natural resource endowment with seemingly incongruent poverty and endemic conflict (Collier and Venables 2011). "Cursed" situations are not inherent but the outcome of interests internal and external to these countries that benefit from modes of resource extraction utilizing violence and insecurity.

In spite of the challenges posed by globalization to community-based resource users, it has made it possible for them and supporters to mobilize on a wider scale. The uprising by the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) in Chiapas, Mexico, an area of perennial resource, class, and ethnic conflicts in 1994, received a tremendous boost from information-technology savvy supporters. Instead of being a little-known agrarian struggle in a remote part of southern Mexico, news spread quickly and globally about the

EZLN's agenda, including its opposition to the newly adopted North American Free Trade Agreement. Their information network also raised the visibility of the Mexican army's counterinsurgency campaign, causing it to halt on occasions. This situation contrasted with the government's past heavy-handed actions. Analysts at the Rand Corporation bestowed a new term, social netwar, to convey the skillful use of information technology in the opening phases of the EZLN's campaign. Globalization's influence is also evident in social movements such as La Vía Campesina, which brings together peasant, small farmer, and rural labor groups from around the world into a single organization. The United Nations now has a Permanent Forum on Indigenous People. Numerous NGOs such as GRAIN, the Oakland Institute, and Oxfam now deal with a range of land- and resource-related issues. Issues of agrarian justice such as land reform, which disappeared from policy discourse with the rise of pro-business policies, are being raised again by activists and academics (Rosset et al. 2006).

## Resource Scarcity

A recent report by the United Nations Environmental Program estimated that in the twentieth century, "... extraction of construction materials grew by a factor of 34, ores and minerals by a factor of 27, fossil fuels by a factor of 12, and biomass by a factor of 3.6" (UNEP 2011, p. 11). Remarkably, the report noted that overall prices for resources fell by 30 % during this same period. Patterns of resource supply have been dynamic, however, with newer sources of supply being sought, while greater efficiency is pursued. Skeptics of this seemingly endless horn of plenty have argued that ratios of energy returned for energy invested appear to be declining for key economic sectors, including food, petroleum, and mining (Hall and Day 2009). As mentioned earlier, the price of commodities ignores many costs, which end up absorbed by the public and the biological system they depend on. Human-driven global warming and its complex impacts underscore the dangers of continuing business "as is." Low-income rural communities constitute the most vulnerable populations to climate change, yet they are the ones least responsible for it (Castro et al. 2012).

With global population nearing seven billion and pressures for increased levels of consumption on the rise, the issues of scarcity and limits to growth within the context of current and future resource conflict. Thomas Malthus argued in 1798 that populations will procreate beyond the capacity of their habitat to support them. Their numbers tend to increase geometrically, while their food supply expands only arithmetically, with famine, poverty, and death the inevitable outcome of this imbalance. His ideas proved influential and controversial, coming in and out of favor. Neo-Malthusianism grew in the 1960s with the rise of environmentalism and fears about ongoing demographic growth in a world of finite resources. At a time when insurgencies raged in Third World countries, skepticism emerged about whether governments and markets could meet the challenge of uplifting the poor. The Paddocks (1967) claimed in *Famine 1975!* that today's "hungry nations" would be tomorrow's "starving nations." Garrett Hardin (1974) urged rich nations to adopt "lifeboat ethics," maintaining their security by eliminating immigration, foreign aid, and other actions to help the world's poor, whose overpopulated lands were essentially sinking ships. When Ethiopia's famine shocked the world in the mid-1980s, Hardin (1985) recommended withholding relief, since it would only exacerbate the underlying problem of too many people. The "let them starve" approach did not gain the public's attention.

The United Nations Environmental Program (2011) expects resource scarcity to emerge in coming decades. Michael Klare (2002, p. 213) believes that intensifying global competition for vital commodities will result in greater tension and disputes: "... resource wars will become, in the years ahead, the most distinctive feature of the global security environment." He suggests that this scenario could be avoided through cooperation, especially by setting up "robust international institutions" dealing with vital resources. Similarly, Thayer Scudder (2010) sees declining

living standards ahead, as humanity exceeds biophysical limits to growth. Once again, he warns that conflict and strife are likely unless cooperation and remedial action occur. Such predictions have been wrong before, but what will happen in the future remains to be seen.

## Summary

Conflicting interests in resources is a ubiquitous part of social life. How people have responded to such situations has varied through time. Forager and other egalitarian societies often relied on sharing and cooperation. The rise of structural inequalities in agrarian and industrial civilizations fostered more contentious circumstances, generating violence and insecurity regarding resources on a national and global scale. Resource conflicts are a pervasive part of today's globalized world, driven by consumerism and population growth in the context of deep inequalities. Globalization also offers opportunities for empowerment of marginalized populations and the international and equitable management of conflicts. Whether such actions will occur is unclear, especially given current fears about future global competition over vital resources.

## Cross-References

- ▶ Access to Land and the Right to Food
- ▶ Corporate Farms
- ▶ Environmental Justice and Food
- ▶ Land Acquisitions for Food and Fuel
- ▶ NAFTA and the Food and Agricultural Industries
- ▶ War and Food

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# Responsible Innovation in the Food Sector

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## Synonyms

Corporate responsibility; Ethical evaluation; Food industry; Innovation and risk; Stakeholders

## Introduction

Corporations carry the responsibility of ensuring their own profitability, the key to their survival. Yet they have widespread impacts on people that share the social space with them, people who are in turn instrumental to their profitability. The food sector, perhaps more than any other, brings into sharp focus the contradictions inherent in this setup. Food is a basic human need, critical for sustenance, health, and well-being. Innovation is at the heart of increasing yields, lowering production costs, and optimizing profit margins. Yet what if they come at the cost of lowered quality or safety of the food thus produced? Such dangers have led to increased awareness and a keener knowledge of food and nutrition issues among consumers, which in turn has put public pressure for greater transparency and accountability from the food sector.

Lawmakers have recognized the need to intervene, including, for instance, enforcing better labeling of ingredients and nutritional facts on food packaging. Corporations have been legislated or pressured to minimize or eliminate ingredients known to be harmful. However, the listing of components and percentages of various types of nutrition in a specific food product does not bring out information pertaining to practices used in producing, processing, or preserving food products. And some innovations will always be ahead of existing labeling requirements or known health risks. Are food corporations alone responsible to manage innovations whose results end up being ingested by millions of consumers? How could the food innovation process be better shepherded through to final regulatory approval? What if the innovation process were more fully integrated into the matrix of societal values from the outset of the design process? That notion is at the heart of Value Sensitive Design.

This entry aims to identify the stakeholders influencing the food industry and present the role and responsibility of each actor in working toward the common objective of growing and producing food that is both safe and healthy. Innovation in the food sector opens the way for corporations to harness the cutting edge of technology. In this context, Value Sensitive Design is an approach which seeks to better address uncertainty and ethical issues at an earlier stage in the life cycle of innovative food production so as to increase the probability that technological applications have a positive impact on health and safety.



## Stakeholders Involved

The food industry consists of companies and corporations that are directly involved in the production, processing, preservation, distribution, presentation, and sale of food. The methods adopted and the courses of action taken determine the nutritional value, quality, and long-term safety of food. Entities that play indirect roles may include research organizations, public agencies, and decision-makers, along with media that reflect societal values surrounding food and eating-related behaviors.

Research organizations include universities and other public agencies or private organizations that partake in innovation through experiment, analysis, and design. They naturally focus their research on the objectives of the parties that fund their efforts. Studies funded by industry tend to be geared toward profitability, taking less account of the wider value matrix through which the resulting innovations eventually ripple. The objectives of such studies may not include the fullest possible evaluation of health and safety. The testing done to identify harmful effects of cutting-edge food technology is often difficult to implement or non-exhaustive, due, for instance, to the presence of unexpected molecules or new biochemical combinations and the practical limitations of experimenting the synergistic or cumulative effect of each new element using methods based on previous food technology.

Public decision-makers and lawmakers are often influenced by the food sector toward approving industry practices even as they rely on the analysis and recommendations made by policy organizations for ensuring the health and welfare of consumers. Government agencies can protect the best interests of the latter by promoting responsible practices in the food industry. However, the current practices by which food products are certified as "acceptable" have often been challenged or found to be based on contradicting evidence. How best then to widen the net of social responsibility for innovative food design?

Based on their ongoing need to ensure profitability in a fiercely competitive market, whole sectors of the food industry understandably incite and encourage individuals and retail or institutional food purveyors (e.g., hotels and restaurants, schools, hospitals) to choose certain higher-profit margin foods over others, in spite of their doubtful nutritional value, at times contributing to overall unhealthy lifestyles (e.g., overly high fat, sugar, or salt contents, vestigial traces of growth hormone).

Consumers find themselves making food decisions based on emotional aspects rather than rational ones, such as the actual nutritional value or safety of given products. While it is difficult to curb misleading information in the mass media, it is possible to counter them through public awareness campaigns about healthier and safer behaviors (Glanz et al. 1998). As to the media proper, outside the realm of direct advertising, they influence individuals and institutional customers in their relationship to food. It has been reported that television advertisements directly affect children's eating habits and their food consumption (Arnas 2006). Prior research indicates that the media play a critical role in transmitting information to the public about the most pressing public health problems and framing attributions about who in society is responsible for solving these problems. For instance, it has been shown that the media served an important agenda-setting role in educating the public about the presence of trans fat in the US diet and describing the health risks these foods pose (Jarlenski and Barry 2013).

With a growing desire on the part of various societal actors and stakeholders to ensure better-informed decisions concerning the actual value of food products on offer, they will seek to take on more weight in the decisional matrix of what society perceives and allows as acceptably safe and nutritious food innovation. To keep in step with this evolution and better spread the burden of responsible technological innovation in the food industry, and thus increase predictability of innovation acceptance, food corporations will gradually move toward Value Sensitive Design implementation so as to ensure greater harmony between their mission statement and societal values, in the end better ensuring their long-term survival, which can come to be threatened by short-term profit orientation combined with post hoc strategies to convince various stakeholders of the innocuity of their innovative food designs.

In brief, to help innovation succeed, it is important to ensure an increasingly responsible process of innovation in which stakeholders are collectively accountable to other stakeholders within a process fully embedded in the societal value matrix, including a focus on the health and safety of anything that ends up on the dinner table, and Value Sensitive Design is a means to actually operationalize social values within an ethical design process.

## Innovation and Risk in the Food Sector

Food sector innovation is both product innovation *and* process innovation. The trend toward increasing vertical integration of food production, from seed development, farm crop production, food processing, and distribution, continues to evolve. This trend coexists with the concentration of development and production by an ever smaller number of corporate parties, partly due to the increasing scientific complexity of food product development and the associated need to quickly achieve economies of scale (Hellstrom 2003). With increasing advancements in technoscientific capability and market organization, the food sector may generate risks that could be difficult to assess or predict. The risks to society from food production arise along an increasingly science- and technology-dependent value chain but also with corporate practices that resort to emerging technologies with indeterminate health impacts. In such a context, the food sector is facing a number of difficult scientific, technological, socio-sanitary, environmental, and economic challenges. If the latter are not responsibly addressed, they may have systemic repercussions and harm societies' ability to provide healthy and nutritious food for their citizens. The transformations in market structures, modes of production, and distribution are often presented as increasing the rationality of food sector innovation. However, it is not yet clear what type of impact technoscientific capabilities, such as the genetic modification of crops and livestock, may have on individuals' health or on the environment. Popular understanding of these capabilities is often partial or biased. Despite the uncertainty of benefits and risks of these technoscientific advances, concentration in the market does not favor options such as organic or integrated farming systems, but rather promotes riskier technologies in order to remain competitive. Even if institutional customers' and consumers' expectations about food safety have generally increased, the additional costs linked to improved health and safety often constitute barriers to healthier food. Overall, the incentives to promote an eco-healthy food sector are weak.

Risk management becomes increasingly difficult when the desire to innovate outstrips the ability to assess and absorb the risks (Smith 1992). Due to the coevolution of technological innovation and risk in the food sector, many new risks seem inevitable and impossible to predict. Some authors even consider that the interpenetration of complex technologies and daily life makes risk a greater part of reality (Beck et al. 1994; Lash 1994). If this is the case, should it be recommended to go beyond traditional risk assessments founded on observationally grounded science and include broader approaches, taking into account public involvement (through awareness, negotiation, facilitation, regulation, and monitoring), Value Sensitive Design, in brief, the infrastructures through which the agro-food innovations pervade socioeconomic life? While a precautionary approach has been proposed, such an approach does not seem viable because it would generate restrictions on food sector innovation (Hellstrom 2003). A systemic approach, namely, one that can better assess the unanticipated consequences of existing or new technologies, seems to be more appropriate for reducing technological risks while promoting responsible innovation. Such an approach could take into account the chain of risk factors in conjunction with the cycle of innovation in a variety of areas. One thinks of, among others, the insufficient knowledge of key regulatory stakeholders, which can affect a system adversely, or the marginalization of specific groups with knowledge, interest, or indirect bearing on a system, or still minimal support for public officials or corporate managers who have the potential to enforce measures to better balance benefits against risks in the corporate pursuit of profit (McEntire 2001).

## Value Sensitive Design in the Food Sector

In order to encourage responsible food sector innovation, a Value Sensitive Design approach goes beyond profitability (and the relevant efficiency and usability requirements) to take into account the wider socioeconomic context,

i.e., the consequences and risks as well as viewpoints about how science is related to technology and society, making it somewhat easier to anticipate some of the consequences of innovation (Korthals 2011). It becomes a proactive form of responsible innovation where peripheral experts, industry representatives, and lay publics are called in to help shed light on the consequences of new proposed technologies, resolve problems of risk assessment and management practices, provide new cognitive frameworks for complexity reduction, and suggest new ways of managerially drawing the boundaries of emerging technological systems (Funtowicz and Ravetz 1993; Hellstrom 2003). However, such an approach calls for a high level of mutual trust and sustainability. It is known that personal choice is pivotal in moving society toward a more sustainable food future, and it could be argued that sustainable food producers are looking to give consumers opportunities to make a positive impact. However, producers and consumers are often unable to connect because of the lack of reach or consideration or exposure for various initiatives.

Just as converging technologies bring forth synergistic innovations which can be highly unexpected and sometimes risky, so could this convergence inspire the very design process from the outset. This willingness to imagine the food sector as a "convergence of technologies," crossing traditional boundaries between fields or disciplines, is vital to the success of the food sector. "Converging Technologies" is a label used to point at synergies between originally separate fields leading to revolutionary innovations and thereby new impacts (Houdy et al. 2011). In the food sector, the convergence of high-tech disciplines makes it increasingly difficult for specialists in one field to assess the work of others also involved in the process. Multiple ethical and social issues arise that need attention and the traditional way of addressing these issues is becoming problematic as the roles and stakes change due to the developments instigated by technological advances. For instance, it has been suggested that instead of conducting an ethical evaluation after a genetically modified food has been marketed, it could be incorporated into the design phase. In this way, researchers and producers can recognize their responsibility to address the ethical issues involved in food sector innovation (Timmermans et al. 2011). Value Sensitive Design does justice to this shift of responsibility in addressing ethical issues at an earlier stage in the life cycle of innovative food developments. It supports design processes that take into account rapid technological development, on the one hand, with uncertainty and urgent ethical concerns, on the other.

Value Sensitive Design starts from the premise that technological applications are value laden in the sense that they have a morally relevant impact on individuals and society (Van den Hoven et al. 2008). Acting in accordance with moral values such as freedom, trust, or fairness is facilitated or constrained by technology (Timmermans et al. 2011). Where other design frameworks focus on functional requirements such as usability, efficiency, or speed, Value Sensitive Design primarily and specifically focuses on values and requirements of moral import. For instance, by including the moral values of trust and fairness and implementing them into the design, first, ethical issues can be addressed in the design phase and, second, relationships between the producers and the organizations promoting a sustainable food sector can be enhanced and lead to a much greater awareness of, and access to, food choices for people and communities as a whole. By working together, a more trustworthy relationship is achieved and a wider network of support established toward the goal of a responsible innovation in the food sector.

Among other principles, Value Sensitive Design calls for inclusiveness of and openness to all stakeholders and accountability of researchers and other promoters, due to the social, environmental, and human health impacts that their work may have on present and future generations (Houdy et al. 2011; Timmermans et al. 2011). Stakeholders' involvement is a key feature of Value Sensitive Design. At present, the traditional actors involved in the food sector are not able to assess and control the technological artifacts. The burden of responsibility shifts to

technological specialists involved in design and implementation. Value Sensitive Design offers a methodological stance that can help to bridge the gap between responsibility and design in the food sector. It is an operationalization of social values within the design process. This methodological stance, not bound by specific applications or issues, provides a general approach to deal with human values in innovative design processes. For instance, in the conceptual investigation stage, one inquires about how the technology could both benefit and negatively impact stakeholders, whether the latter interact directly with a technology or are peripherally connected to the technology. By connecting the values discerned to specific stakeholders, a more specific picture is drawn of the impact of any given innovation.

## Social Responsibility in the Food Sector

The food sector relies on the creation and maintenance of consumer trust. Growing consumer awareness is demanding greater transparency and accountability from the food industry, and corporations must demonstrate their willingness to be held accountable for the quality and long-term safety of their products. To keep up with these demands, corporations have engaged with research organizations in new ways of innovation or have deliberately integrated social, environmental, and health concerns in their business operations. A number of studies have argued that such strategic management – through the use of social, environmental, or sustainability drivers – can be a route to responsible innovation, to create new products, services, processes, and new marketplaces (Little 2006; Mahlouji and Anaraki 2009). Other studies have reported that companies that do not take into account the increasing importance of social responsibility may not survive, in much the same way as those who fail to innovate (MacGregor et al. 2007). However, other commentators consider that some aspects of socially responsible innovation could be incompatible with certain types of innovation. For example, Midttun (2006) argued that in the case of disruptive innovation – innovations that improve a product or service in ways that the market does not expect, typically first by designing for a different set of consumers in the new market and later by lowering prices in the existing market (Christensen and Rayner 2013) – firms have to change rapidly and as a result, they may disappear in a competitive market. In such circumstances, it might be difficult to combine competitiveness and responsibility objectives. Disruptive innovations often rely on new techniques or technologies, for which scientific knowledge is still limited and for which all consequences cannot always be foreseen. For instance, the impact of certain food innovations, which are now used in many consumption products, is still uncertain, and the consequences on health and environment are not precisely known. Responsibility, through the ability to understand and anticipate the consequences of actions, is a major criterion which should be integrated in innovation models, and especially in disruptive models, where anticipating consequences is a major challenge and where the integrity of individuals is at stake (Pavie and Egal 2010).

Most of the time though, it has been shown that the ripple effects of engaging in responsible innovation are unlimited and the benefits multiple, and not only for corporations (Business for Social Responsibility 2010). In fact, the strong demand from the market for quicker product or service development can threaten responsibility in the medium or long run (Pavie and Egal 2010). The more rapidly decisions are made, the more responsibility is needed to balance the risks. Therefore, corporations being aware of market pressure and time constraints, responsibility should remain a strong concern in the innovation process. Moreover, it strengthens accountability, helps improve quality of life, increases opportunities, empowers people, and is an investment in communities. While the concept of social responsibility is often associated with business practices, meaning that companies should contribute to the welfare of society and not be solely concerned with making a profit, it is the people who run businesses. Therefore, responsibility

begins with the people. And in regard to food, since food is fundamental to human life and a vehicle for improving health and welfare, everybody – as stated by the American Dietetic Association – needs to be responsible (Rodriguez 2010), whether they work in production, processing, preserving, or presenting food products. According to another organization, Business for Social Responsibility, since the production, distribution, and sale of food and beverage products affect global sustainability issues, ranging from access to water and workers' rights to hunger, poverty, health, and wellness, companies need to understand these impacts in order to devise effective strategies to promote sustainable farm-to-fork food chains and to meet the demands of customers, investors, NGOs, and government regulators (Business for Social Responsibility 2010).

## Summary

There is no clear agreement on how to regulate the application of new technologies in the food sector. The risk assessment and management of these technologies have to take into account a complex array of human needs, economic interests, technoscientific uncertainties, and political responsibilities. One of the key considerations will be how far regulatory authorities are willing to compromise between competing stakeholder interests (Hellstrom 2003). The positions of all the actors involved, from the farmer to the consumer, need to be analyzed, in connection with the scientific and ethical implications of the new technologies, so as to identify how to encourage responsible innovation, despite the uncertainties. The diffusion of a new technology is not only a matter of technical progress but also of public approval and policy. As other authors have pointed out, because of their systemic intersection between technology, society, and market, food sector policies will have to reflect safety goals, state technological limits, and requirements as well as outline ethical issues (Foray et al. 2012; Hellstrom 2003).

Value Sensitive Design widens the sphere of responsibility within any innovative process, better integrating the unforeseeable impacts of emerging technologies into the social fabric from the outset, anchoring the process to the contextual set of values of the society within which the innovation may spread.

## Cross-References

- ▶ Agricultural Ethics
- ▶ Corporate Social Responsibility and Food
- ▶ Eating and Nutrition
- ▶ Ethics in Food and Agricultural Sciences
- ▶ Farmer-Scientist Knowledge Exchange
- ▶ Food Ethics and Policies
- ▶ Food Labeling
- ▶ Food Risks
- ▶ Informed Food Choice
- ▶ Systemic Ethics to Support Wellbeing

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# Restaurant Reviewing

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## Synonyms

Food columnists; Food journalist; Food writer; Restaurant critic

## Introduction

The most famous of the American restaurant reviewers are those who work at the *New York Times*. The national newspaper has largely set the standard for restaurant reviewing and food criticism. One of the most well-known critics is Craig Claiborne who became the food editor of the *Times* in 1957 and began using the star reviewing system (Claiborne 1982). On May 24, 1963, Claiborne first used a three-star scale. He added a fourth star a year later without explanation. The use of stars in a restaurant review was copied by newspapers across the country and is commonly used today (McNamee 2013). Some culinary historians have regarded the role of restaurant reviewer to be similar to theater or book reviewers at newspapers (Davis 2009). Journalism historians consider food critics to be part of the women's pages of newspapers until the mid-1970s (Voss and Speere 2013, pp. 41–50).

There is no specific training for a professional restaurant or food critic. The *Village Voice's* restaurant critic Robert Sietsema said that that being a journalist was the best preparation for the role. He said: "We're reporters who happen to write about food." *Washington Post* restaurant reviewer Tom Sietsema said he received his training from his predecessor food editor Phyllis Richman. He said: "I learned what a good story was. I got to test the bulk of the recipes for the paper. I was making no money but I was eating very well" (Raskin 2012). Richman also said that journalism ethics were central to her approach to criticism: "I hardly ever use the first person in my reviews. Perhaps it's out of some traditional journalistic priggishness on my part. But I think it's appropriate that there be a distance and a sense of objectivity in that distance" (Dornenburg and Page 1998, p. 165).

## Growth of Restaurants

By the 1800s, various incarnations of Delmonico's were established in New York City; some consider it America's first great restaurant. Antoine's opened in New Orleans in 1840, which was

a move away from New York having all of the premier restaurants. The Michelin Guide to restaurants began using a star-rating system in 1926. Prohibition which forbids the consumption of alcohol hurt restaurants and led more people to eat at private clubs. Another significant moment in restaurant history occurred when Henri Soule's Le Pavillon opened in New York City in 1941. According to the *New York Times* food editor Jane Nickerson, there were more than 21,000 restaurants in her city by 1949. She wrote: "They serve to the city's residents and guest foods in so many languages as to rob the city of any one set of distinctive dishes." She went on mention Polish, French, Italian, Chinese, and German restaurants (Tracy 1952, p. 143).

The growth of fast-food and chain restaurants occurred in the 1950s and the 1960s. Typically, these eateries are not reviewed as the business model is for food to taste the same at each franchise. A few chain restaurants have been reviewed. The *Grand Fork Herald* reporter Marilyn Hagerty's March 7, 2012, review of the new Olive Garden in town turned into national news. Soon after it was posted online, the review had gone viral – picked up by Gawker and mentioned on numerous blogs (Hagerty 2012). Before long, there had been more than a million page views of the article, and the reviewer ended up as a judge on the television show *Top Chef*.

## Food Reviewing History

Likely the first American restaurant reviewer was Duncan Hines – in the years before, he went on to help found the cake mix company that bears his name. A traveling salesman, Hines would take notes about the places where he dined and what he ate while on the road. In 1935, he and his wife first included short reviews of diners and other eateries on the back of their Christmas card. The following year, he published his reviews in the booklet "Adventures in Good Eating" which went on to be published in 46 editions. The reviews were brief and largely focused on the menu. For example, in 1939, he wrote about Colonel Sanders' Café in Corbin, Kentucky. (This was before Sanders began his Kentucky Fried Chicken franchises.) Hines noted that it was a good place to eat "sizzling steaks, fried chicken, country hams and hot biscuits, 60 cents to $1." Later, he collected recipes from the places where he dined that led to a three-times-a-week syndicated newspaper column "Adventures in Good Eating at Home" (Reynolds 2012).

For decades, most restaurant reviewing was about local eateries and restaurant criticism ran in the women's pages of newspapers. In later years, there would be stand-alone food sections. One of the most well-known food journalists in the 1940s through the 1960s was Clementine Paddleford who reviewed restaurants and wrote about food for the *New York Herald Tribune* (Alexander and Harris 2008). Often in her own plane, she flew to different cities to write about home cooks and what was served in restaurants. While in Milwaukee, for example, she wrote about the city's famed Mader's restaurant which had been serving German food since 1903. She described the history of the restaurant and included recipes for Sauerbraten, potato dumplings, and cheese torte (1960, pp. 346–347). In a 1964 column, she wrote that she had visited 36 countries searching for the best restaurants but found that the top eateries were in Manhattan. She explained: "The exploring gourmet can eat here in lavish elegance or in quiet simplicity" (Paddleford 1964, p. 148). The newspaper food section normalized the otherwise exotic dishes, the growth of restaurants, and the increasing trend of eating out. The dishes were unique to the demographics of those who lived in the readership area versus national food-related magazines.

In 1964, the *New York Herald Tribune* published a collection of columns from its top writers including Paddleford who noted that "restaurants are my beat." Of the 18,000 eateries in the city, she detailed her 100 favorites. Rather than being negative about a restaurant's failings, she focused on what was best. In the French category, she recommended Café Argenteuil. She wrote: "My favorite appetizer there is Baked Clams done garlic and herbs, with a dash of lemon and Pernod." She wrote that at Le Veau

d'Or, 90 % of the customers spoke French. She gave three stars to Italian Pavilion. Of Michael's Pub, she wrote: "When a pub becomes famous in New York City you can bet your buttons it's quite a place." Rather than being anonymous, she went into the kitchen to speak with the chef. At Karachi Restaurant, she described the chef bending over his curry pots (1964, pp. 147–148).

Jane Nickerson was the first person to review restaurants for the *New York Times*; she was the food editor from 1942 to 1957. The pre-Claiborne food section had been thought of as being largely fluff. Then in a journalism industry publication, former *New York Times* food journalist Molly O'Neill credited Nickerson with being one of the first food journalists to apply ethics and news values to her craft. According to O'Neill, news was central to the story lines in the vast majority the *Times'* food stories during Nickerson's tenure. During one period early in the 1950s, 646 out of 675 food stories possessed a news hook, as catalogued in the *New York Times* index, and the percentage remained the same throughout the 1950s (2003, pp. 38–45).

When Nickerson reviewed restaurants, her dinner partners often included popular chef and cookbook author James Beard and longtime Associated Press food editor Cecily Brownstone. At that point in the 1940s, the reviewers ate for free at the restaurant and the focus was on the best dishes rather than a focus on the negative elements. It was a practice that changed after the Charles Van Doren television scandal in the late 1950s – made famous by the 1994 movie "Quiz Show." He confessed to cheating on the popular quiz program *Twenty-One* in front of the Congress. In the aftermath, many media outlets, including the *New York Times* and the Associated Press, strengthened their ethics policies. In part, this meant that critics could no longer accept free meals at restaurants as it was perceived as potentially slanting the review.

## Restaurant Reviewing Culture

American restaurant reviewing has long been based on the critic maintaining a high level of anonymity. Like the reviewers of the future, Hines said that he tried not to be recognized so that he did not get preferential treatment. For example, he used a photo that was two decades old on his book jacket. He did, however, ask to see the kitchen after his meal. He wrote: "Food is a matter of taste. Good food is fresh, carefully prepared under sanitary conditions" (1955, p. 30). Staying anonymous is a key to ethical reviewing for most critics. The goal is to experience the restaurant the way an average customer would experience it. To demonstrate how different a dining experience can be when a critic is known, consider *New York Times* critic Ruth Reichl who had two different experiences when she ate in disguise and later as herself; she wrote about both meals and how critics tend to get better treatment than an average diner.

Some of the restaurant critics wore disguises while dining. Mimi Sheraton who followed in the footsteps of Claiborne at the *New York Times* wrote the she worked hard to preserve her anonymity for as long as possible. She turned down all invitations to restaurant-related events, wore a wide-brimmed hat for press photos, and never appeared on television without a disguise. Reichl not only ate in disguise, she created different characters, which she outlined in her 2005 memoir, *Garlic and Sapphires* (Reichl 2005). The concept of using disguises may be a gendered one. *New York Times* restaurant reviewer Pete Wells wrote that he does not wear a disguise as the hair pieces for men tend to be of poor quality and would draw attention to the person wearing it. He wrote in 2012: "Anybody can spot those from across the street. The whole point of a disguise is to make you inconspicuous" (Wells 2012).

Richman was able to dine anonymously for the first 5 years she reviewed restaurants in Washington, D.C. She said her gender helped her: "There were hardly any women reviewing restaurants in the 1970s, and restaurants did not recognize women." After the *Washingtonian* Magazine ran her photo, she was recognized more often. She said that she did not think it impacted the meal, other than portions being larger and with more garnish. Quality appeared to remain the same.

She said: "It just astonishes me how much obviously bad food I get when I am recognized in restaurants" (Dornenburg and Page 1998, p. 44).

It is common for restaurants in America to keep a photo of the area newspaper critic in the kitchen in the hopes of spotting him or her. The need for anonymity is an American concept. French critics call ahead to let a restaurant know he or she is coming. In Britain, the photo of the restaurant critics runs next to their columns. The point is to impress the critic with the chef's best performance (Parsons 2010).

The American restaurant reviewers typically make reservations under false names and use various phone numbers. They paid using cash or credit cards in other names. The reviewer typically brings guests so that several dishes can be sampled at the same meal. According to current *Los Angeles Times* food editor Russ Parson: "This ensures that a restaurant has minimum warning that a critic is coming, on the theory that there is little that can be done once he or she is in the door. There is no way for a chef to dream up some super-elaborate dish or acquire higher-quality ingredients at the last minute" (2010). On the other hand, at the *New York Times*, Sheraton was asked what a chef could do on short notice to improve a meal when a reviewer is spotted. Her answer was: "Just about everything" (2004, p. 104).

The internet has begun to chip away at the ability for a reviewer to remain unknown. In December 2010, the *Los Angeles Times* published an article in its food section about the public outing of its food critic. One of the owners of the new Beverly Hills restaurant Red Medicine created a firestorm by confronting *Times* restaurant critic S. Irene Virbila while she was waiting for a table. Her photograph was taken and her party was kicked out of the restaurant. The photograph was then posted on the Internet. A newspaper article about the evening noted: "By the next morning, more than 15 years of working to remain anonymous were ruined" (Reynolds and Lynch 2010).

To be ethical and fair, most critics follow the recommendation that the restaurant be visited three to five times before a review is written. Claiborne initially dined at a restaurant twice before reviewing it. He later added a third visit. Some newspapers will wait a certain amount of time after a restaurant opens before they review it. At the *Los Angeles Times*, the policy is to wait a 3-month grace period "to get the kinks worked out before reviewing" (Parsons 2010). Other critics feel that if restaurant is open and charging full price for meals, it is fair to be reviewed immediately (Rousseau 2012).

The Association of Food Journalists includes ethical guidelines for restaurant reviewers on its website. The organization recommends: "Reviews should be conducted anonymously whenever possible. Critics should experience the restaurant just as ordinary patrons do." The organization also addressed ethical concerns about new restaurants: "To be fair to new restaurants, reviewers should wait at least 1 month after the restaurant starts serving before visiting. These few weeks give the fledgling enterprise some time to get organized."

## Small-Market Restaurant Critics

While New York, Los Angeles, and New Orleans tend to dominate restaurant reviewing, most metropolitan newspapers employ their own restaurant critics. For example, Ruth Gray was the food editor and restaurant critic for the *St. Petersburg Times* in the 1970s (Gray 1975). She got into food writing after earning a degree in home economics from Kansas State University. She regularly reviewed restaurants in her "The Realm of Dining Out" and her "A la Carte" columns. She wore hats and scarves and ducked inside the ladies room to take notes and stay inconspicuous. When one server called her by name and said the meal was on the house, she did not write the review. It was a busy beat. For example, between September 1974 and January 1977, she reviewed 118 local restaurants. She would take her husband and two to four friends to eat at the restaurant. She rated the restaurants based on quality of food, atmosphere, service, and price. Only four restaurants earned excellent in all areas that were evaluated (Witwer 1977).

One particular review led to a pile of letters in response, so many that an ombudsman editor's column was devoted to the review and response. Gray's review had begun with an account of what she believed to be rude treatment by the staff. Gray and her husband arrived on a rainy evening and by the time they entered the restaurant, their clothes were soaked. Gray had removed her wet coat and was treated rudely by the hostess. In Gray's review, she wrote that the embarrassment and indifference had impacted her meal. Readers wrote in to support the restaurant, arguing that the restaurant needed to have standards if it was to uphold its elegant reputation. Gray didn't back down from her assessment. "My assignment is to give a truthful account of my dining experience," Gray responded in an editor's column (Goldman 1978). Reviews that included treatment by a restaurant's staff, in addition to the food served, is typical protocol in the industry.

One of the best-known modern newspaper restaurant critics was Elaine Tait of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* who wrote restaurant reviews for 35 years. Upon retirement, said of the job: "I didn't realize how exhausting and invasive it was until I was out of it." She has a wheat allergy which prevented her from eating too much pasta or cake while reviewing. She recalled that "You have to have a full battery of people to go out with you, and it has to be a convenient location and time for them. People tend to get very blase about it after a few times" (Ludwig 2011).

## Food Magazines

Food magazines have been common for decades and often featured food criticism. *Gourmet* was introduced in 1941. While World War II was looming, the magazine focused on luxury rather than the everyday work of home cooks. Its tagline was: "The magazine of good living." It was largely based on a male audience. As culinary historian Laura Shapiro wrote: "Haute Cuisine was strictly a male preserve in France, and America inherited the prejudice" (2004). Publisher Conde Nast closed the publication in 2009 after an almost 70-year tenure. The magazine *Food & Wine* was started in 1978 as a more down-to-earth alternative to *Gourmet*. Initially, it was called the *International Review of Food & Wine* which had a prototype published in *Playboy*. The magazine continues today, as does *Bon Appetit* which began in 1956.

A significant difference between the newspaper and magazine was the business models and ethical guidelines. At newspapers, there is a distinct separation between the editorial department which produced the food section and the advertising side of the publication. Advertisers cannot dictate what reporters write about, how something is written, or where an advertisement will appear in a publication. There is a looser relationship at magazines. Advertisers can dictate where their ad appears and what kind of stories it is advertising near in the publication. Further, newspaper journalists are more fact based than their magazine counterparts who may take a more creative approach. Reichl wrote that she learn that when she went from writing for a magazine where she could invent dinner partners to writing for newspapers where she needed to take a different approach (2012, p. 32).

## Democracy of Restaurant Reviewing

A new democracy for food and restaurant reviewing was on its way even before the internet. In 1979, Tim and Nina Zagat started distributing their restaurant reviews based on a poll of customers. Rather than the experts from newspapers or magazines, regular consumers judged the eateries based on food, decor, service, cleanliness, and cost. A 30-point scale was used to evaluate the restaurant. Initially they self-published the Zagat Guide and distributed it through individual bookstores. By the 1980s, they were publishing commercially and caught the New York restaurant community's attention. They sold 75,000 copies per month in 1986. They went on to survey restaurants across the country. In 2011, the company was acquired

by Google and reviews are integrated into Google Maps and Google+.

Today, reviewers can check in on social media sites like Yelp, Foodspotting, or Foursquare and describe their meals and service experiences. Research has found that about 45 % of consumers have already decided where to eat with the help of an online dining guide (Pan 2012). Online reviews are significant in deciding what's for dinner – 57 % of patrons rely on them. This does not mean that the system is democratic. There are numerous public relations firms that offer services to eliminate or bury negative reviews and to increase positive reviews. Signe Rousseau examined the interaction between food and individual reviewers in her 2012 book, *Food and Social Media*. She wrote: "The main narrative around social media and food criticism concerns the fact that, as the saying now goes, everyone is – or at least can be – a critic." The legal and ethical implications of this new model are still being debated.

## Summary

Restaurant reviewing or food criticism is a written critical analysis of culinary dishes or eateries. Both terms are used to describe a critical, evaluative opinion that often involves some kind of rating system. Women's magazines and the food coverage within have been studied to some extent, but the same generalizations drawn from those works cannot necessarily be applied to newspaper food sections. The two media forms usually operated quite differently in its separation of the editorial and advertising relationship. Further, a newspaper has a local readership unlike a national magazine.

## Cross-References

- ▶ American Cuisine, Existence of
- ▶ American Food Rhetoric
- ▶ Culinary Cosmopolitanism
- ▶ Food and Class
- ▶ Restaurant Workers

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## Restaurant Workers

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### Synonyms

Chefs; Cooks; Food service workers; Food workers; Servers; Waiters

### Introduction

Restaurant workers include a diverse group of occupations and jobs that contribute to the operations of a restaurant. While tasks and occupational demands vary according to each specific position, there are issues that are shared among all workers. These issues include low pay, long hours, occupational and safety hazards, recognition for their services, and representation in the wider workforce.

### Background

Restaurant workers are classified as individuals who work within the wider leisure and hospitality industry at the site of a restaurant. What constitutes a restaurant is open to interpretation. Broadly speaking, a restaurant is an eating place where meals are served to customers. Depending on the interpretation, there have been different dates named as the establishment of the first restaurants.

However, the founding of what many consider to be the modern ideal of a restaurant is dated to eighteenth-century France. The term restaurant evolved from a dish. In eighteenth-century France, a restaurant was a quasi-medical bouillon, a type of restorative broth. Restaurateurs' rooms were opened, specializing in the preparation of these broths (Spang 2000). They also provided other fare and became popular in post-revolutionary France. What distinguished these eating houses from that prior is that modern restaurants were places to be seen as much as they were places to dine. Moreover, they were located in urban centers and became part of the social landscape.

The first restaurants in America originated in the late eighteenth century. These were originally modeled on those developed in France. They were found in the cities of Boston and Philadelphia and later spread to other metropolitan centers.

These early dining spaces in France laid out the signature elements of modern restaurants. Restaurant cultures thrive in urban centers, although they can also be found in smaller towns and villages. They provide a selection of prepared food for clientele and are social spaces as much as they are commensal spaces. Today, the restaurant can even be considered part of the entertainment industry as it is heavily involved in the selling of desires and moods alongside the selling of its food.

Contemporary restaurants have evolved from their eighteenth-century origins. Today in the United States, restaurants are part of what the Bureau of Labor Statistics calls food services and drinking places. The range of modern restaurants includes full-service restaurants as well as limited-service eating places; cafeterias, grill buffets, and buffets; snack and nonalcoholic beverage bars; special food services; and drinking places serving alcoholic beverages. Although

fast-food restaurants and fine dining restaurants serve dramatically different clientele at different price points, many of the occupational issues, hazards, and ethical quandaries exist across different dining venues.

Restaurants have a significant financial impact on local and national economies. In the United States, it is the largest private sector employer. Across the country there are 980,000 locations of restaurants with 13.1 million employees. The industry is predicted to bring in $660 billion dollars of sales in 2013. Restaurants are a popular form of small business as they have low start-up costs and relatively few institutional barriers to entry (Fine 1996). In the United States, 93 % of restaurants employ less than 50 individuals.

Depending on the needs and size of establishment, the types of restaurant workers employed will vary. They can include bartenders, chefs and head cooks, station cooks, food and beverage servers, food preparation workers, and waiters and waitresses. Overall, these jobs require little entry-level education. In the United States, the only notable difference is that the entry-level education required for a chef or head cook was nominally higher, at the level of a high school diploma or equivalent. Most require less than the equivalent to a US high school diploma. Pay for these occupations are also largely low, with median pay at approximately $20,000 US dollars as of 2010. In 2010 median pay for a bartender was $18,680; a waiter or waitress earned around $18,330. For a cook that figure would rise to $20,260. Among restaurant workers, chefs and head cooks earn the most with median pay around $40,630. Overall restaurant jobs represent 7 of the 11 lowest-paying occupations in the United States.

## Barriers to Entry

There are few barriers to entry to restaurant occupations. As a result, the restaurant industry has a diverse workforce, employing significant numbers of women; immigrants, including undocumented immigrants; and ethnic minorities. In the case of new immigrants and undocumented immigrants or groups like the physically challenged or mentally handicapped, restaurants become one of the few places for employment (Fine 1996).

It is also a widely accessible form of employment. Roughly one-third of Americans gained their first work experience in a restaurant and half of all adults have worked in the restaurant industry at some point in their lives. In particular fast-food restaurants and chain restaurants employ large numbers of new jobseekers because they do not require previous relevant work experience. Because of the accessibility of restaurant work, there is a common misconception that restaurant workers are young people earning extra spending money or saving for higher education (Jayaraman 2013). In actuality workers represent a diverse range of ages and skillsets, and many remain in the industry for decades.

While there are educational institutions that provide training in some of the restaurant trades, such as culinary schools, bartending academies, and wines certification programs, they are not necessary for this industry. Among cooks and chefs, some receive training through formal and informal apprenticeships. This remains a strong tradition in Europe where cooks would be educated on the job, although this practice is less common in other parts of the world. Even in today's culinary industry, this tradition continues to persist. Short-term informal, often unpaid, work experience called a stage may be taken to expose one to different culinary ideas or to network and develop contacts. It has been argued that having a formal education is useful for promotion, particular among cooks seeking future administrative or managerial positions.

While restaurant work has become a trendy occupation among the middle and upper middle classes in the United States (Zukin 1995), workers in this industry still come primarily from lesser socioeconomic and underrepresented backgrounds (Fine 1996). Women represent approximately two-thirds of workers in tipped occupations in 2011 in the United States. Women of color, notably Black and Hispanic women, are disproportionately represented

among these numbers. Although the restaurant industry is one that has a diverse workforce, discrimination on the basis of race, gender, and other factors have created inequalities.

The Restaurants Opportunity Center has found that white applicants were nearly twice to receive job offers and earned nearly 12 % more than workers of color. Male workers also earned nearly 22 % more than female workers (2009). Notably in New York City, discriminatory hiring practices are often used to control the "symbolic economy" of the restaurant (Zukin 1995). High-end restaurants have a preference for hiring young people of European-American heritage with artistic backgrounds for front of house staff under the guise of enhancing the atmosphere of the dining room. Back of house positions are also plagued by inequalities. In the United States, only 19 % of chefs are female. Male executive chefs earn $18,000 more per year than their female counterparts. And while the restaurant industry in the United States may employ workers from a range of ethnic backgrounds, very few minorities are visible in positions of power or leadership. Few attain the position of head chef outside of ethnic restaurants.

## Categories of Restaurant Workers

Restaurant workers are generally divided into three categories: front of house or those who whose duties fall primarily within the dining room; back of house staff or those who work in the food preparation and kitchen areas; and management, a category which includes the owners of the establishment. While all types of restaurant workers are involved in the everyday production of food and service to customers, their occupational identities and occupational challenges differ based on their roles in the environment.

Within restaurant operations, their tasks, occupational identity, and responsibilities are designated according to whether they are front of house or back of house workers. Those working in front of house positions deal primarily with customer service, although they also liaise with management and food preparation staff. Those employed in back of house positions are primarily responsible for food preparation and production, although they will collaborate with management or front of house staff in matters of food and beverage pairings, service efficiency, and other issues that concern restaurant operations as a whole.

Restaurants employ systems of hierarchies to distinguish one restaurant worker from another. Many formal French kitchens are organized through a brigade system, a system of rankings based on military hierarchies invented by Auguste Escoffier in the nineteenth century. Kitchen workers were ranked according to task and status, with a chef serving as a top commander. Even in those kitchens that lack some of these formal distinctions, there is an element of distinction between different tasks and different responsibilities held among chefs. These hierarchies are significant because chefs are often publicly recognized for their labor, with some attaining celebrity status (Rousseau 2012). Meanwhile those who work in lesser ranks, such as dishwashers and pot washers, receive limited recognition for their work. Although these workers perform critical operational tasks, often serving as the "backbone" to operations, they are rendered largely invisible in the eyes of the public.

Servers, sometimes called waiters or waitresses, are another highly visible category of food worker. These front of house workers interact directly with restaurant clientele. Their tasks include serving food and beverages and some cleanup of the dining space. Their roles also include interactions with kitchen staff in the back of house: placing food and beverage orders, communicating customer requests, and some food preparation. While this group of workers is the most "public" because they deal directly with customers, they too are often rendered "invisible" because of their servile roles (Cobble 1992; Paules 1991).

Though excluded from the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics' classifications, restaurant workers can also include managers, service directors, and other managerial or administrative staff. These individuals, however, are not counted officially as restaurant workers in the

US Bureau of Labor Statistics' classifications. Nor are they thought of to be on the front lines of restaurant work, through either the food preparation end or customer service. These individuals often earn more than their counterparts. Also excluded are those who provide extraneous services. They may be part of the restaurant atmosphere but are not counted as restaurant workers. These positions include the coat check attendant or parking valet. Also left out of this classification are sommeliers or wine stewards and sanitation and cleaning staff, which also are responsible for the upkeep and running of a restaurant.

## Status and Professionalization of Restaurant Workers

Public perception of restaurant workers is mixed. Although in the United States and Western Europe there has been a growing awareness of food culture through the popularization of cooking shows, food magazines, and food blogs, this reflects the lifestyles of a very limited few in the restaurant industry. Sociologist Gary Allen Fine's study of restaurants in the Twin Cities area revealed conflicting viewpoints on the public perception of cooks. Fine's restaurant industry informants revealed that some cooks believe that the public does not respect them and that they would face difficulties transitioning to a professional job if they chose to leave the restaurant industry. Others feel that they are recognized as artists (Fine 1996). Cooks and kitchen workers report the emotional satisfaction as one of the positive elements of their work. There is high self-satisfaction and the public acknowledgement of their work, through restaurant reviews, write-ups, blog posts, and word-of-mouth comments. Restaurant work is also highly mobile and employment is relatively flexible, as culinary skills are portable.

Restaurant workers have been parodied in popular media. Many of these portrayals of restaurant workers have been negative. Strong stereotypes in service work exist, such as the trope of the rude or incompetent waiter (Bell and Valentine 1997). Some restaurants have used it to their advantage as a marketing gimmick. Edsel Ford Fong, a waiter at the former Sam Wo Restaurant in San Francisco, was legendary for his brusque service and was nicknamed the world's rudest waiter. However, most of these stereotypes are used to suggest incompetency rather than an act performed by the worker.

Cooks and chefs, in particular, have seen their share of stereotypes. Sometimes these stereotypes are promoted and aggrandized as part of a glamorous, "rock 'n' roll" lifestyle. Celebrity chefs like American Anthony Bourdain and British Gordon Ramsay have played up these characterizations to the advantage, using it as a scripted form of personality for the media. However, these stereotypes reveal an underlying issue in the public image of cooks. They have been, throughout various historical periods, viewed as problematic or troublesome. To deal with the problematic character of cooks and restaurant workers, there have been attempts to reform the industry through the establishment of standards.

In the Western culinary world, the matter of "professionalization" has been a part of the discourse surrounding restaurant workers, particularly chefs, since the eighteenth century (Trubek 2000). The "professionalization" of cooks has resulted in the formation of chefs' associations and organizations, the establishment of cooking schools, and the adoption of industry standards that range from uniform to hygiene standards. Two of the most widely recognized symbols of a cook – a white chef's hat known as a toque and a white high-collared jacket – were adopted in the nineteenth century. Other elements of professionalization, such as the formation of a brigade system used in classical French kitchens, suggested a reporting hierarchy. It also helped generate status among different workers in a vocational kitchen setting. In other culinary contexts cooks were professionalized as part of political campaigns. In the former Soviet Union and in China, vocational cooking schools were established as a means to control and widely disseminate culinary knowledge. All of these discourses surrounding professionalism have impinged on the suggestion that cooks are morally deficient to some capacity and needed to be vocationally reformed through the interventions of outside institutions.

## Labor Conditions

Restaurant work is physically demanding. Issues of long hours, stress, pressure, poor working conditions are among the drawbacks of restaurant work. Working hours are long and workers can suffer from a range of occupational injuries. Kitchen workers are subject to burns, cuts, and other bodily injury incurred during the preparation of food.

Restaurant workers are often expected to work through injury, pain, and illness. Compounding the issue is that many restaurant workers are not given paid time off for illness or medical care, which is problematic in an industry where injury and illness rates are high. This has also caused debate about public health, as restaurant workers come in contact with customers and their food and can easily transmit illnesses. A Restaurant Opportunities Centers United study in 2010 found that 87.7 % percent of restaurant workers in America surveyed were not given paid sick days. Nearly 90 % did not have health insurance through their employer.

Cooks and kitchen workers are prone to injuries like carpal tunnel syndrome, tennis elbow, herniated discs, hip pain, and other conditions due to long hours and the repetitive nature of kitchen tasks. Many governments have legislation and bodies that govern workplace safety. In the United States, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has standards to minimize workplace injury and a reporting mechanism to cite violators. While there are protective measures in place like rest breaks, nonslip shoes, or nonslip floor mats, restaurant work is still considered to be dangerous due to the physical demands and long hours required. Despite governmentally mandated safety measures, employers may violate the rules. The Restaurant Opportunities Centers United found that 38.1 % of restaurant workers in America surveyed in 2010 were asked to perform tasks which put their own safety at risk.

Restaurant work is not only physically demanding, but it is also an emotionally challenging job. Restaurant workers, especially front of house workers, are expected to "perform" and entertain restaurant patrons, providing a form of "emotional labor" alongside physical labor. Their job requires emotional management, from changing their surface emotional displays to controlling deep inner feelings to accommodate customer' needs and to conform to management demands for hospitality. Servers, in particular, are often required to exhibit a high amount of emotional management. In countries where tipping is part of the social norm, emotional labor can directly impact income as customers often base gratuities on the level of emotional service received.

## Unions and Professional Associations

There are organizations that recognize and represent restaurant workers. In various countries, restaurant workers can gain certifications as a mark of distinction or accomplishment. The French government awards a Meilleur Ouvrier de France (MOF) for accomplishment in specific trades. A food work is a category recognized, and cooking and running restaurants is a category for which one can achieve an award.

The American Culinary Federation provides certifications for cooks, chefs, and other culinary workers at different levels in the United States. This often is for those seeking advance certification leading to advancement and senior positions in a restaurant. Often these certifications can command higher salaries or serve as a recognizable accomplishment on a job application. But the drawbacks to obtaining these requirements include a minimum number of years of relevant work experience, letters of reference, application fees, testing fees, and fees to pay for tuition, travel, housing, and meal during the testing certification period that come out to estimated $4,000–6,000, a sizeable cost in a what remains a low-wage industry.

Numerous other organizations exist representing the interests, including CulinaryCorps, the International Association of Culinary Professionals, the James Beard Foundation, the National Confectioners Association, the World Association of Chefs Societies, Confrérie de la Chaîne des Rôtisseurs, and Les Dames d'Escoffier. Many of

these associations cross professional lines, representing restaurant workers and other culinary professionals. Confrérie de la Chaîne des Rôtisseurs is a gastronomic society that boasts both industry members and those who are generally interested in promoting and developing the gastronomic arts. Many of these associations deal more with raising the public profile of cooks and restaurant workers and engage with the role of gastronomic development rather than addressing labor conditions.

Restaurant workers voice their labor and industry concerns primarily through unions. The Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union (HERE) is an American labor union founded in 1891. It later joined with the Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees to form UNITE HERE in 2004. It represents major hospitality industry employers, including large casinos like Harrah's, Caesars Palace, Wynn Resorts, major hotel brands (Hilton, Hyatt, and Starwood), and Walt Disney World Resorts. Individual states and local districts have local chapters of UNITE HERE, such as the Culinary Workers Union located in Nevada with 60,000 members. Restaurant Opportunities Centers United is the largest worker center in the United States dedicated entirely to the concerns of restaurant workers. Around the world, there are also trade unions that represent hospitality workers and restaurant workers. For example, the Swedish Hotel and Restaurant Workers' Union has a membership of 61,000 members. While there are a number of labor organizations representing restaurant workers in the United States and globally, the majority of industry employees are not unionized and do not have collective and formal channels of addressing occupational concerns. Overall less than 1 % of restaurant workers in America have no collective representation.

## Fair Pay

Fair pay among restaurant workers is a source of contention. Workers are often expected to work long hours. While many may only be paid for their legal working hours, which in the United States is an 8-h shift, restaurant workers are often expected to work longer than the legal time period with no overtime pay. Wages overall for the industry are low, as mentioned in a previous section. In America workers' wages have remained stagnant over the last 20 years, in part because the federal minimum wage for tipped workers remains $2.13 an hour. Workers have been fighting to receive fair pay and the right to receive a "living wage."

A major controversy in the United States surrounds the matter of tipping. Servers and other front of house workers receive the majority of their pay through gratuities or tips. Many front of house restaurant workers are classified as tipped employees by the United States Department of Labor. Tipped employees are workers who customarily and regularly receive more than $30 per month in tips. The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) allows the employer to withhold a tip credit. In other countries, notably for some in Western Europe, servers are paid set hourly wages. Gratuity for service is often built-in to the bill or added as a standard service charge. Additional gratuity may be left at the whim of the customers, but it is not expected and the amounts are often small change. In some parts of the world, such as Japan, gratuity is not part of restaurant culture and may possibly cause offense. In Australia, tipping in certain establishments, such as a casino, can be constituted as a form of bribery.

In the United States, gratuity is not often built into dining costs and customers are expected to compensate front of house staff through the practice of tipping. This often amounts to 15–20 % additional payment on top of the dining bill. Depending on the individual management policy, tips can be pooled among workers or distributed to individual servers. Tipping is meant to reward quality and efficient service; however, this practice creates much tension between restaurant workers. Kitchen staff normally do not receive any percentage of tips, even if they are pooled among workers. Pooling tips rewards higher amounts to servers and lesser amounts to other front of house workers like bussers. Tensions between tipped and non-tipped workers can

exist between restaurant workers. There can be resentment between these two groups, leading to conflict within the work environment. Many restaurants that participate in tipping do not require tipped workers to share their tips.

Legislation in the United States has regulated pay among workers who receive tips. The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) requires a minimum wage of $2.13 for tipped workers, compared to $7.25 for nonexempt workers. Legally tips are considered the sole property of the tipped employee. However, restaurant workers have complained that the FLSA creates an unfair system, as employers can withhold tips. Furthermore, millions of workers have also experienced wage theft when they were not paid the wages and tips they were owed. Fair pay for restaurant workers has long been an issue of contention, which has affected restaurants at all socioeconomic levels.

## Summary

In summation, this essay raises some of the issues currently faced by the diverse category of workers in the restaurant industry. While occupational demands vary across job segment in this industry, many of these problems are universal among all restaurant workers. Restaurant workers are receiving more attention for their efforts as issues of industry discrimination, labor conditions, fair pay, collective bargaining, and recognition of their labor are being addressed on a political and social level. Social media has raised attention to their plight, and unions and organizations continue to draw public attention to their causes. In the end, restaurant workers are a critical part of many economies while contributing strongly to the social landscape of a community.

## Cross-References

► Food and Place
► Occupational Risks in Agriculture

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# Right to Food in International Law

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## Synonyms

Food security; Food sovereignty; Human right to adequate food; Right to feed oneself

## Introduction

The *right to food* is a human right. It protects the right of all human beings to live in dignity, free from hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition. The right to food is protected under international human rights and humanitarian law. The right to food has been defined as

> the right to have regular, permanent and unrestricted access, either directly or by means of financial purchases, to quantitatively and

> qualitatively adequate and sufficient food corresponding to the cultural traditions of the people to which the consumer belongs, and which ensures a physical and mental, individual and collective, fulfilling and dignified life free of fear. (Ziegler 2008, 17)

With almost 870 million people chronically undernourished in 2010–2012, the number of hungry people in the world remains unacceptably high. The vast majority live in developing countries, where about 15 % of the populations are estimated to be undernourished (FAO 2012). The right to food approach to food insecurity is based on the premise that tackling world hunger requires improving not the availability of food, but access to food for the vulnerable and deprived. Indeed, the lack of access to food is almost never the result of a general scarcity of food. Instead, people are deprived of food because they have no opportunity to produce it, cannot earn a sufficient income to buy the food they need, or are unable to work at all (Künnemann and Ratjen 2004, 1). For this reason, the right to food approach calls for a specific focus on categories of people that are vulnerable or marginalized, such as the landless, the unemployed, the elderly, indigenous peoples, women, children, and people with disabilities.

Most accounts of the history of the right to food point to Franklin Delano Roosevelt's famous 1941 "Four Freedoms" speech as a starting point. The speech – which looked forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms (freedom of expression, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear) – is notorious because it set out the idea of civil and political rights and economic and social rights as part of an indivisible and global value system (Roosevelt 1941). The holistic notion of human rights was subsequently expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, which included the right to social security; to work; to rest and leisure; to an adequate standard of living, including food, clothing, housing, and medical care; and to education.

This entry presents internationally agreed definitions of the human right to adequate food, conceptual developments in the last decades, and an overview of the challenges facing the full realization of this fundamental human right globally.

## Definitions of the Right to Food

The human right to food is recognized in Article 25, paragraph (1), of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

> Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control. (UN General Assembly 1948)

The right to food is also recognized in Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which came into force in 1976. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations actively participated in the drafting of Article 11, and FAO's Director-General proposed the substance of what became paragraph 2 of that Article, which addresses the negative right to freedom from hunger. Article 11 reads:

1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. The States Parties will take appropriate steps to ensure the realization of this right, recognizing to this effect the essential importance of international co-operation based on free consent.
2. The States Parties to the present Covenant, recognizing the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger, shall take, individually and through international co-operation, the measures, including specific programs, which are needed:
   (a) To improve methods of production, conservation and distribution of food by making full use of technical and scientific

knowledge, by disseminating knowledge of the principles of nutrition and by developing or reforming agrarian systems in such a way as to achieve the most efficient development and utilization of natural resources;

(b) Taking into account the problems of both food-importing and food-exporting countries, to ensure an equitable distribution of world food supplies in relation to need." (UN General Assembly 1966)

In addition, the human right to adequate food is recognized in specific international instruments such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Art. 24(2)(c) and 27(3)), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Art. 12(2)), or the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Art. 25(f) and 28(1)). The right to food is also recognized in regional instruments – such as the Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, known as the Protocol of San Salvador (1988); the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990); and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003) – and in numerous national constitutions.

The right to food is to be distinguished from the concepts of "food security" and "food sovereignty." One of the most commonly used definitions of *food security* is that of FAO, which states that "Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (FAO 2008). Food security is the most widely used term in global debates about hunger and malnutrition; it is commonly used by UN agencies, development organizations, and governments across the globe. *Food sovereignty*, in turn, is a concept originally coined in 1996 by La Vía Campesina, a transnational social movement of peasant and indigenous organizations (Vía Campesina 1996). Food sovereignty calls for the rights of local communities and nations to decide their own food policies. A large number of actors, including governments, have integrated the food sovereignty concept into their terminology and have contributed to its further development. Today, the definition provided in the 2007 Declaration of Nyeleni is considered to be the most representative. Food sovereignty is defined as "the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems" (Nyeleni Food Sovereignty Forum 2007). Contrary to food security, food sovereignty is generally described as a rights-based concept, for it includes the right to food and the right to produce food, as well as a number of other associated rights (to land, resources, live in dignity, etc.) (Claeys 2012).

## Normative Elaboration of the Right to Food

Following its international recognition, the right to food underwent a period of intense conceptual elaboration in the period ranging from the coming into force of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in 1976, to the adoption by the FAO Council of "Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security" in 2004.

A large number of such developments took place within the United Nations. In 1979, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) began monitoring the right to food. In 1983, the UN Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights named Asbjørn Eide Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food. The same year, the ECOSOC commissioned a report on food as a human right, which began the process of adding clarifications and new implementing instruments. In 1985, the ECOSOC established the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) to receive country reports and monitor progress on implementing the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The Committee is composed of

independent experts, serving in their personal capacity, elected by the states parties.

In the early 1980s, a number of committed civil society groups started working on specific economic, social, and cultural rights. In the NGO field, the foundation of FoodFirst Information and Action Network (FIAN) in 1982 was followed by the establishment of the Habitat International Coalition (HIC) in 1987, the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE) in 1992, and the Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR) in 1993. FIAN International, which developed as an international network with its secretariat in Heidelberg, Germany, focused exclusively on the defense and promotion of the right to food. FIAN members substantively contributed to the conceptual debates on the right to food that took place at the UN and in academic circles. Yet, the organization rapidly developed its own interpretation of the right to food: from the outset, FIAN insisted that the right to food be understood and implemented as the *right to feed oneself* (Künnemann 1984, 95). FIAN activists put a lot of emphasis on the situation of the rural poor (and small-scale farmers in particular) who constitute the bulk of the hungry and malnourished and on the importance of securing access to the means of producing food, such as land, water, and other natural resources.

In 1996, the World Food Summit convened in Rome reaffirmed "the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger" (World Food Summit 1996). Responding to pressure from civil society organizations (CSOs), governments requested that the right to food be given a more concrete and operational content (World Food Summit 1996, objective 7.4). Two documents were released in the following years to provide a better understanding of the right to food: the General Comment No. 12 of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the FAO Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security.

General Comment No. 12 on the right to food was adopted in 1999 by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR). General comments aim to elucidate the Committee's own understandings of the rights and obligations anchored in the Covenant (Riedel 2009, 143). General Comment No. 12 helped define the core content of the right to food and how states could implement the right to food domestically. The core content of the right to food is described by three A's – *accessibility*, *availability*, and *adequacy*. While adequacy refers to the quality and nutritional and cultural value of food consumed, accessibility and availability address the means of acquiring food. *Accessibility* requires economic and physical access to food to be guaranteed. Economic accessibility means that food must be affordable. Individuals should be able to afford food for an adequate diet without compromising on any other basic needs, such as school fees, medicines, or rent. Physical accessibility means that food should be accessible to all, including to the physically vulnerable, such as children, the sick, persons with disabilities, or the elderly, for whom it may be difficult to go out to get food. *Availability* requires, on the one hand, that food should be available from natural resources either through the production of food, by cultivating land or animal husbandry, or through other means of obtaining food, such as fishing, hunting, or gathering. On the other hand, it means that food should be available for sale in markets and shops. *Adequacy* means that the food must satisfy dietary needs, taking into account the individual's age, living conditions, health, occupation, sex, etc. For example, if children's food does not contain the nutrients necessary for their physical and mental development, it is not adequate. Food should also be safe for human consumption and free from adverse substances, such as contaminants from industrial or agricultural processes, including residues from pesticides, hormones, or veterinary drugs. Adequate food should also be culturally acceptable.

General Comment No. 12 also contributed to a better understanding of the obligations of states to *respect*, *protect*, and *fulfill* the right to food

(following the typology developed by Asbjørn Eide) and of the responsibilities of third parties with respect to the right to food. The obligation to *respect* peoples' existing access to food (be it through agriculture, fishing, husbandry, or purchase) requires states not to interfere with the means by which people acquire food. This obligation requires that states look at the impact of legislation, regulation, and government action on how people procure food. The obligation to *protect* the right to food requires states to adopt measures to ensure that enterprises or individuals do not deprive individuals of their access to adequate food. This obligation provides that states regulate non-state actors and create entities to monitor and investigate third parties and that institutions are in place to ensure that those whose rights have been violated are able to seek remedies. The obligation to *fulfill* the right to food has two elements: provide and facilitate. The obligation to *fulfill* (provide) requires that states meet the right to food directly when individuals or groups are unable to meet their food needs by their own means, for example, through food stamps, social security schemes, or food aid delivery. The obligation to *fulfill* (facilitate) requires states to be proactive in creating activities aiming at reinforcing people's access to and utilization of resources and means to ensure their livelihood in the future, for example, through reinvestment in small-scale farming or employment creation.

The right to food, as described in the General Comment 12, is to be achieved progressively. The concept of *progressive realization* seeks to take into account the potentially costly implications of some state obligations, especially of the obligation to protect and the obligation to fulfill, in particular for Southern countries. Yet, states are required to take steps to achieve the full realization of the right to food *to the maximum of available resources* and to seek international assistance in case they lack the resources they need. They must also immediately prohibit discrimination in access to food and to the related resources (on the basis of race, color, sex, language, age, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, disability, or other status) and adopt measures to eradicate discrimination on these grounds.

In addition to the *substantial* requirements described above, the right to food places a number of *procedural* requirements on states. States are required to ensure that people can adequately participate in government decision-making, from policy formulation to lawmaking down to administrative acts. For example, when negotiating trade and investment agreements, states should conduct *human rights impact assessments* to ensure that the agreements they conclude are consistent with their obligations under international human rights instruments (De Schutter 2011). The procedural principles at the heart of the right to food – participation, accountability, nondiscrimination, transparency, human dignity, empowerment, and rule of law – have been summarized by the FAO with the acronym PANTHER (FAO Right to Food Team 2013).

The Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security were adopted in 2004 by the 187 Member States of the General Council of the FAO. The Guidelines were celebrated for bringing an economic and social right "from formal recognition at the international level to full engagement by governments and international organizations" and from principle into "proposals for concrete action" (Rae et al. 2007, 457). The history of the FAO Voluntary Guidelines is considered a success story by many observers for the importance of civil society's contribution to the process and content and for managing to gather the necessary impetus to make it happen. Contrary to the elaboration of General Comment 12, the content of the Guidelines was discussed in an intergovernmental process rather than by experts alone. The negotiation process paved the way for the increased involvement of CSOs in the policy elaboration work of the FAO and is said to have had a lasting influence on the way FAO interacts with civil society (Rae et al. 2007, 457). It has also facilitated the inclusion of CSOs as active stakeholders in the reformed Committee on World Food Security (McKeon 2011).

## Monitoring and Implementing the Right to Food

Following the adoption of the Voluntary Guidelines, significant progress has been made in the implementation of the human right to adequate food at the country level. Advances are patent in five areas: the integration of the right to food in constitutions, the adoption of legal and constitutional frameworks, the development of national strategies based on the right to food, the use of the right to food in courts, and the design of institutions charged with ensuring progress toward the realization of the right to food (De Schutter 2010, 2012a, b). In addition, country assessments conducted either by the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food (called official missions) or by nongovernmental organizations have done a lot to demonstrate that the right to food requires attention to be paid to multiple policy areas in order to be fulfilled. The right to food approach to hunger and food insecurity is increasingly associated with interministerial and cross-sectoral coordination as well as with the setting of clear targets and adequate budget allocations.

At the international level, a Right to Food Unit (now Right to Food Team) was set up within FAO with the aim to support the implementation of the right to food. The Unit develops methods and instruments to assist stakeholders in the implementation of the right to food and information and training materials on the right to food. It is also supposed to work toward integrating the right to food into FAO's work. The UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, a new institution established in 2000, also contributes significantly to the implementation of the right to food at the global level. Appointed by the Commission on Human Rights, the Special Rapporteur belongs to the UN Special Procedures system. The mandate of the Special Rapporteur is to establish cooperation with governments; intergovernmental organizations, in particular the FAO; and nongovernmental organizations and to make appropriate recommendations on the realization of the right to food as well as to identify emerging issues related to the right to food worldwide.

In parallel, developments have taken place in the area of monitoring efforts undertaken by states to meet their human rights obligations. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) developed indicators to address the problems of how to measure effectively the degree of rights realization. Three kinds of indicators were elaborated with the support of academics and specialized NGOs: *structural indicators* (measure whether or not appropriate legal, regulatory, and institutional structures are in place), *process indicators* (assess whether laws, policies, and programs are in place to implement specific rights), and *outcome indicators* (evaluate the results achieved) (FAO Right to Food Unit 2008, Vol. II, 18).

Progress has also been made, in recent years, in better understanding the extraterritorial implications of the right to food. Indeed, the advent of economic globalization has meant that states and other global actors exert considerable influence on the realization of economic, social, and cultural rights across the world. In 2011, in an attempt to address this situation, a group of experts in international law adopted the "Maastricht Principles on Extraterritorial Obligations of States in the area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights." The *extraterritorial obligations* of states broadly fall under two categories: the obligations relating to the acts and omissions of a state, within or beyond its territory, that have effects on the enjoyment of human rights outside of that state's territory and the obligations of a global character that are set out in the Charter of the United Nations and human rights instruments to take action, separately and jointly through international cooperation, to realize human rights universally (ETO Consortium 2011, paragr. 8).

Finally, in December 2008, an "Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights" (OP-ICESCR) was adopted, following intense advocacy by a network of international civil society organizations, including, among others, the Amnesty International, the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE), the FoodFirst Information

and Action Network (FIAN), the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and the International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR-Net). The OP-ICESCR allows victims of violations of ESCR to present complaints before a United Nations body against a state that violates the obligations established in the Covenant, if the state has ratified the Optional Protocol. Following ratification by 10 states, the Optional Protocol will come into force on May 5, 2013.

Despite the development of new legal frameworks, institutions, and mechanisms to monitor the implementation of the right to food, at both the national and international levels, violations of the right to food remain a daily reality. Despite decades of the growing global wealth, poverty and food insecurity remain pervasive, and socioeconomic and gender inequalities endure across the world. Individuals and communities face the continuing deprivation and denial of access to essential lands, resources, goods, and services by state and non-state actors alike. The full realization of the right to food will require structural changes both at the national and international levels. At the national level, the elaboration of participatory *right to food strategies*, ensuring policy coherence across sectors, could go a long way toward addressing the specific needs of the most vulnerable segments of the population, either in urban settings or in the countryside. At the international level, an alternative global governance framework for food and agriculture will need to be developed as an alternative to the still prevailing Washington consensus (De Schutter 2009) to ensure that international trade, finance, and investment rules, as well as global development and cooperation policies, effectively contribute to the realization of human rights for all. The recent reform of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) could be promising in that regard, in that the reformed CFS provides a new space for the meaningful participation of non-state actors in intergovernmental decision-making processes and new ways of setting international norms.

## Summary

The right to food is an internationally recognized human right. The normative elaboration of the right to food was achieved, in the last decades, mostly through interactions between academics and human rights experts at the UN level. The normative content of the right to food is now well defined, and so are the obligations that fall on states when it comes to its realization. The right to food now faces challenges of enforcement and implementation.

## Cross-References

- ▶ Access to Land and the Right to Food
- ▶ Extraterritorial Obligations of States and the Right to Food
- ▶ Food Security
- ▶ Food Security and International Trade

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# Rousseau and Food

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## Synonyms

Taste and distaste and food; Vegetarian diet; You are what you eat

## Introduction

Throughout his work, Jean Jacques Rousseau is concerned with food and diet. His writings suggest that a wholesome diet leads to a wholesome character and that good taste is a matter of purity and simplicity in both diet and actions. A vegetarian himself, he often advocates a vegetarian diet, especially for children.

### Civilization Is the Result of Moving from Meat Eating to Grain Eating

In both *A Discourse on Inequality* (Rousseau 1984) and *On the Origin of Languages* (Rousseau 1966), Rousseau describes "civilized man" as the result of the evolution from savage hunter, through barbaric herdsman, to civilized farmer. The different social organizations described by Rousseau correspond to "man's"

livelihood and, more specifically, to his relation to what he eats: "The savage human is a hunter, the barbarian is a herdsman, and civil man is a tiller of the soil" (Rousseau 1966, p. 38). Rousseau describes the savage men as "terrible meat eaters" who hunt and kill animals (Rousseau 1966, p. 35); while barbaric herdsmen are a step forward because they cultivate and domesticate animals for food, civilized men have learned to use animals both directly and indirectly for food through harvesting crops using animals to till the soil. The movement from spontaneity to convention, from savage to civilized, is a movement away from chance and toward necessity.

### The Birth of Love and Nations Is Related to Food

Even Rousseau's most romantic description of the birth of love, and thereby of nations, is related to consumption: the girls come to the watering hole to fetch water and the boys to water their herds. "Feet skipped with joy, earnest gestures no longer sufficed, being accompanied by an impassioned voice; pleasure and desire mingled and were felt together. There at last was the true cradle of nations: from the pure crystal of the fountains flow the first fires of love" (Rousseau 1966, p. 45). Language is not only from, but also for, passion; "stirring the heart and inflaming the passions takes words" (Rousseau 1966, p. 8). Language, then, becomes part of a mating ritual that gives birth to love. But, the fire of love is not far from the fire necessary to cook the cattle that the boys are herding; and the stirring of hearts is born from the stirring of pots into which the girls have poured their bounty. The beginnings of love and therefore of nations were the result of the combination of water and cattle, eventually boiling together in the cauldron of domestic bliss.

On Rousseau's account, human society is organized according to providence in accordance with its provisions. In other words, "we are what we eat." Savages eat wild animals and they are wild. Herdsmen eat domestic animals, so even if they are still barbaric and their manners crude, they have been domesticated. Civilized men eat cultivated grain and through their cultivation of the soil, *they* become cultivated: "Concerning agriculture, which is slower to come into being: it is connected to all the arts; it leads to property, government, and laws, and gradually to the misery and crime that are inseparable for our species from the knowledge of good and evil" (Rousseau 1966, p. 37).

Not only are the human and humanity constituted in relation to what they eat, but also men constitute themselves as humans by using animals directly and indirectly for food, by eating animals. At one point, Rousseau suggests that humans are separated from animals through their ability to make and use fire, but it turns out that fire is motivated by the need to cook meat. Again, the ability to cook other animals and eat them becomes a sign of our distinctiveness and intelligence. In a footnote, Rousseau remarks "...no one would say that any beast, wild or domestic, has acquired the skill to make a fire in the same way that we do. Thus these rational beings who are said to have formed a short-lived society before human, still did not reach a level of intelligence at which they were able to strike a few sparks from a flint to make a fire, or even to preserve whatever random fires they might come across" (Rousseau 1966, p. 41). Here, the ability to make fire is seen as a sign of intelligence and of man's capacity for reason. Yet, in the paragraph to which this footnote is appended, Rousseau claims that the stomach and intestines of human are not made to digest raw meat and that "with the possible single exception of the Eskimos...even savages cook their meat" (Rousseau 1966, p. 41). So, fire is not a sign of intelligence as much as a natural necessity given the constitution of man's gut. Rousseau goes on to say that people gather around fire because the flames are useful and pleasing "and on this simple hearth burns the sacred fire that provokes in the depths of the heart the first feeling of humanity" (Rousseau 1966, p. 41). Humanity, then, is born out of man's *need* to cook and eat animals (even while for Rousseau civilization is born out of human overcoming the need to eat animals). In this passage, man's intellectual superiority over animals appears as a consequence of man's *need* to cook his meat. Again, the providence of nature gives human a necessary advantage over animals

when it comes to fire; and the proof of this advantage is that men can kill, cook, and eat animals.

### Man Is an Omnivore, Which Makes Him Superior to Other Animals

Man also has the advantage that, unlike animals, he is not a picky eater. Because men will eat anything, they are more adept at survival than other animals. Again, Rousseau links man's distinctiveness to his digestive track and eating habits, which, it turns out, he appropriates from other animals: "Man dispersed among the beasts, would observe and imitate their activities and so assimilate their instincts, with this added advantage that while every other species has only its own instinct, human, having perhaps none which is peculiar to himself, appropriates every instinct, and by nourishing himself equally well on most of the various foods the other animals divide among themselves, he finds his sustenance more easily than do any of the others" (Rousseau 1984, pp. 81–82). Men *learn what and how* to eat from animals; through this animal pedagogy, they are able to imitate animals and assimilate animal instincts. And, while each animal eats only what is natural to it, by imitating all of them, men eat everything.

In fact, Rousseau's argument for man's freedom against animal instinct hinges on his observation that men will eat everything while animals have more restrictive diets. It is noteworthy that it is not animal in general or animality that teaches men what is edible; rather, the assortment of animals in their midst teaches them about different food stuffs that may be eaten. It is only by learning lessons from various animals that men develop the multifarious diet that gives them the edge, through which men become human. Men eat/assimilate animals both literally as food and figuratively insofar as men ape animals' eating habits.

In his discourse on inequality, this argument takes many forms involving diet and food, including the fact that unlike other animals, human does not serve as food for another (Rousseau 1984, p. 83); he is distinctive in that he eats but is not eaten by other animals. Rousseau also cites differences in human and animal infancies and maternal feeding practices as reasons for human sociality – human mothers are able to carry their young to feed them at all times while other animals cannot (Rousseau 1984, p. 84). Ultimately, though, human is distinguished from animals through his "free will," which is based on the freedom to eat anything while "a pigeon would die of hunger beside a dish filled with choice meats and a cat beside a pile of fruits or grain, even though either could very well nourish itself with the foods it disdains, if only it were informed by nature to try them" (Rousseau 1984, p. 87). Man's resistance to "the call of nature" is the result of his ability to appropriate instincts from a variety of other animals that allows him to eat indiscriminately among their foodstuffs. So, it is man's assimilation of animal instinct that enables him to transcend instinct, which amounts to the freedom to eat as he will, which he learns from animals (Rousseau 1984, p. 87).

### The Virtues of Vegetarianism

Given Rousseau's stance on eating meat, the sign of more civilized men should not be that they can eat anything but rather that they can choose what they eat. In *Émile*, Rousseau repeatedly condemns meat eating, especially in children and nursing mothers. He claims that children fed a vegetarian diet are less likely to get worms and colic because farinaceous foods produce more blood than meat and they are less likely to rot (Rousseau 2003, p. 28). He extols the virtues of milk, which (along with cheese, judging by his recollections in *Confessions*) is one of his favorite foods; he proposes that "Milk, although manufactured in the body of an animal, is a vegetable substance; this is shown by analysis; it readily turns acid, and far from showing traces of any volatile alkali like animal matter, it gives a neutral salt like plants" (Rousseau 2003, p. 29). And as further proof of the benefits of a vegetarian diet, he says that the milk of herbivores is sweeter than that of carnivores. He argues that a diet of vegetables is not only healthier than a diet of meat but also more natural. As "proof" that eating meat is not natural, he claims that children do not like to eat meat

(Rousseau 2003, p. 140). And, as he does so often, he points to the behavior of other animals to demonstrate what is natural to human animals: "Women eat bread, vegetables, and dairy produce; female dogs and cats do the same; the she-wolves eat grass. This supplies vegetable juices to their milk. There are still those species which are unable to eat anything but flesh, if such there are, which I very much doubt" (Rousseau 2003, p. 29). That all animals eat vegetables is proof that it is natural to do so. As we have seen, although meat eating is natural to savage human, the more civilized man becomes, the greater the distance from his "prey." Or, conversely, the more human distances himself from the animals that he eats, the more civilized he becomes.

Recall that the third stage of man's development, as Rousseau describes it, is plowman who cultivates grain instead of cattle. At this point, there are two possible directions for human: he can continue to eat meat but now distance himself from the killing of his animal food in order to disavow his killing, or he can choose not to eat meat. Grain becomes either a means to feed animals for man's consumption or a means by which human makes the transition from carnivore to herbivore. Rousseau begins by arguing that a vegetarian diet is healthier, then he claims that it is more natural, and finally, he makes a connection between taste and morality: vegetarianism is a moral choice that is evidence of man's freedom not to eat meat. Unlike other carnivores, human can choose to become an herbivore. Unlike animals, in humans, eating gives rise to moral inclinations. For Rousseau, this is another reason why the child's diet is important. Given his statements on taste, in a paradoxical sort of way, animals should have a better moral sensibility than humans.

### The Beginnings of Private Property Is also Related to Food

Rousseau maintains that "the first cake to be eaten was the communion of the human race" (Rousseau 1966, p. 35). It is cake that brings men together; cake is the basis of human society. No other animal can make a cake, which for Rousseau is the result of the cultivation of fields, the beginning of all art and artistry (never mind that Rousseau does not talk about the making, but the eating, of cake, ignoring the fact that other animals can eat cake and ignoring the fact that even cavemen painted pictures). Sowing for harvest requires ownership of land, tools, foresight, and community, all of which are lacking in hunters or shepherds (Rousseau 1966, pp. 33–34). Although animals are used for farming and many of the early tools for tilling the soil required oxen and horses, Rousseau imagines the civilized man as a grain eater who begins to separate himself from the animals that he consumes, which are raised and slaughtered elsewhere and for which he trades his harvest. In this regard, distance between human and his animal-eating is a sign of civilization. He no longer hunts wild animals or slaughters his domestic animals; now, he uses animals to produce crops that he can exchange for animals once they have become meat and other commodities. This is the beginning of property, which Rousseau identifies with the beginning of dependence, bondage, servitude, and the inequality of men (e.g., Rousseau 1984, pp. 105–106). We could say that for Rousseau as human disavows his dependence upon animals and his diet of animals by shielding himself from their production for food, by turning them into commodities – meat instead of animals – he becomes more civilized (and more corrupt). Human society, then, is based on the double sacrifice of animals: first the killing of animals for food and then the concealing of that killing so that human can continue to eat animals without guilt. Rousseau's text seems to argue that vegetarianism might be a sign of higher development.

Rousseau's writings suggest that choosing to eat cake instead of eating animals is a sign of the higher evolution of natural human. Rousseau also identifies the inequality of men in society with differences between foods that did not exist with natural or primitive human: "Now if we compare the prodigious diversity of upbringings and of ways of life which prevail among the different classes in the civil state with the simplicity and uniformity of animal and savage life,

*where everyone eats the same foods*, lives in the same style and does exactly the same things, it will be understood how much less the difference between human and man must be in the state of nature than it is in society…" (my emphasis, Rousseau 1984, p. 105). Eating the same foods is the first characteristic of the equality among animals, including savage men. Like the differences between animals and human, differences between men are evidenced in the differences between what they eat. Again, freedom is described as the freedom to eat what one will, to eat freely from a variety of foods, while servitude (whether it is to instincts in the case of animals or to other men in the case of humans) is evidenced in not having a choice about what one eats.

Rousseau compares the accumulation of slaves as property to the collection of cattle. And, he says that the rich are like "ravenous wolves, which, having once tasted human flesh, refuse all other nourishment and desire thenceforth only to devour men" (Rousseau 1984, p. 120). It should not be surprising, then, that for Rousseau, man's relation with animals sets the stage for his relation with humans – we mistreat each other because we mistreat animals. For example, collecting and owning cattle prepare human to collect and own human slaves (Rousseau 1984, p. 131). And, from hunting and killing animals, human learns war and conquest; "war and its conquests is just a kind of manhunt" (Rousseau 1966, p. 36). Herding cattle teaches men to herd men; hunting wild animals teaches men to hunt men. Man's cruelty to other men echoes his cruelty to animals. The rich can be "like wolves" and "devour" men only because men first prey on wolves. Again, Rousseau claims that man's character is formed in relation to what and how he eats: flesh eaters are cruel while flower eaters are gentle (Rousseau 2003, pp. 140–141). He asserts that "all savages are cruel, and it is not their customs that tend in this direction; their cruelty is the result of their food. They go to war as to the chase, and treat men as they would treat bears…Great criminals prepare themselves for murder by drinking blood" (Rousseau 2003, pp. 140–141).

## Moral Tastes Develop from Tastes in Food

Arguing for a vegetarian diet, in *Émile*, Rousseau maintains that it is not only for health's sake that children should avoid eating meat but also for their characters (Rousseau 2003, p. 140). He argues that eating flesh begins and ends in cruelty. Quoting Plutarch, he gives a forceful account of the barbarity of killing and eating animals (Rousseau 2003, p. 141). Barbarity toward animals begets barbarity toward fellow humans. Rousseau's analysis suggests that hunting and killing animals are training grounds for hunting and killing men; war is a natural outgrowth or at least a side effect of slaying animals. Flesh eaters make war and war-makers are hunters.

For Rousseau, when it comes to ethics or morality, the process of assimilation is not just metaphorical but also literal. In *Émile*, he describes in detail the proper diet to nourish both body and mind. There, he recommends a vegetarian diet, especially for children, who he says are healthier when they do not eat meat (Rousseau 2003, p. 28). As we have seen, he extols the virtues of milk, particularly the milk of herbivores, which he says is sweeter than that of carnivores (Rousseau 2003, p. 29). Even the curds in milk are healthy because they nourish by becoming solid and therefore do not merely pass away as liquid (Rousseau 2003, p. 29). Rousseau prefers simple, easily palatable, pure foods, such as milk and cheese. But food is much more than nourishment for the body. In *Émile*, food is also a pedagogical tool used to "lead children through the mouth" (male children are more susceptible to these techniques than female children, who are "more eager for adornment than for food") (Rousseau 2003, p. 139, cf. 396). Cakes are used to teach children the value of industriousness and exercise (Rousseau 2003, p. 127). And ice cream becomes a tutorial in coldness (Rousseau 2003, p. 199); and finding lunch is the goal of astronomy lessons (Rousseau 2003, p. 173).

Indeed, for Rousseau, what and how one eats are signs of the strength of one's mind. He says "gluttony is the vice of feeble minds. The gourmand has his brains in his palate, he can do nothing but eat; he is so stupid and incapable

that the table is the only place for him, and dishes are the only things he knows anything about" (Rousseau 2003, p. 139). As he describes it, we should attend to good eating habits not only for the sake of our bodies but also for the sake of our minds. This is because of all of our senses, taste (*goût*) affects us most in that "it concerns us more nearly to judge aright of what will actually become part of ourselves, than of that which will merely form part of our environment" (Rousseau 2003, p. 138). Although he maintains that matters of taste (*goût*) – both physical tastes and aesthetic tastes – are physical and material, nevertheless, they both affect the mind and character (e.g., meat eaters are cruel) and can be symptoms of a weak mind and character (e.g., gourmands are stupid). It is interesting to note that Rousseau uses the same word "goût" for taste in both the physical and the moral sense. We need to concern ourselves with good taste but not necessarily with what tastes good. We can (and should) train our tastes to appreciate purity and wholesome "goods." Moreover, he suggests that simple tastes are closer to nature and therefore not just good to eat but morally good. The sensation of taste gives way to, and becomes a sign of, moral taste.

Although Rousseau says that the laws of moral taste and physical taste differ, he repeatedly associates pure and wholesome food with pure and wholesome morals (cf. Rousseau 2003, pp. 365, 139, 368). Both moral taste and physical taste are good when they are close to nature, while both become corrupt the further they move away from nature. In this romantic view, nature is innocent, pure, wholesome, and good; and it is corrupted only by man's attempts to change it. Rousseau's writing suggests that if we assimilate what is pure, wholesome, and good, then we become pure, wholesome, and good: we are what we eat because the sense of taste affects us more than other senses insofar as food becomes part of ourselves.

A healthy and pure lifestyle satisfies itself with a healthy and pure diet: "There are no such cooks in the world as mirth, rural pursuits, and merry games; and the finest made dishes are quite ridiculous in the eyes of people who have been on foot since early dawn" (2003, p. 379). In Rousseau's romantic vision, exercise and picnics outdoors beneath a tree or alongside a river are the greatest pleasures because they are the purest, which is to say the closest to nature: "our meals will be served without regard to order or elegance; we shall make our dining-room anywhere, in the garden, on a boat, beneath a tree …" (Rousseau 2003, p. 379). For Rousseau, taking pleasure in such simplicity is evidence of a pure heart.

When Rousseau turns his attention from physical tastes or food to aesthetic tastes, he once again insists that Émile develops simple tastes "in order to keep his taste pure and wholesome" (Rousseau 2003 p. 368). Even as he maintains that bodily tastes and moral tastes are two separate realms, he continues to develop the analogy between them: aesthetic tastes are moral only if they are natural, pure, and wholesome, while food that is natural, pure, and wholesome nourishes a good body and a good mind or soul. In the end, one of the central lessons of *Émile* is that the natural human should develop a taste for pure, simple, and wholesome nourishment for *both* body and soul. In order to be pure, however, Émile's simple pleasures must be shared with others. Many of Rousseau's lessons are designed to teach the value of generosity: "If you have pleasure without pain let there be no monopoly; the more you leave it free to everybody, the *purer* will be your own enjoyment … real pleasures are those which we share with the crowd; we lose what we try to keep to ourselves alone" (my emphasis, Rousseau 2003, pp. 381–382). Here, Rousseau is discussing poachers and "ordinary sportsman, who on a good horse, with twenty guns ready for them, merely take one gun after another, and shoot and kill everything that comes their way, without skill, without glory, and almost without exercise" (Rousseau 2003, pp. 381–382). His ideal estate is wild and without fences where game is not preserved and therefore not poached or hunted without strenuous efforts. The way that one hunts animals becomes a criterion for good taste. Hunting and eating will be truly pleasurable – pure pleasures – only if they are close to nature and simple and one has to work for them. Only then will one truly appreciate them without squandering

them and without arrogance. The "good" hunter hunts for exercise and food to share and not for trophies or sport alone.

"Good taste," then, also requires that Émile gives up illusions of property or ownership. His estate will have no borders to keep animals in or to keep poachers out. He will share his wealth with others because only then will it bring him pleasure – a lesson that he has taken to heart. Émile knows that "with health and daily bread we are rich enough" and that wealth "cannot buy you pleasure"; and because "his heart is purer and more healthy. . .he will feel it more strongly" (Rousseau 2003, p. 383).

## Summary

So, for Rousseau, a pure and healthy heart is more committed to the good life, which he describes as simple and natural, without pretense or property. Conversely, the good life produces a good heart, both physically and morally. The good is related to tastes, both in food and in pleasures. Moral tastes and bodily tastes, then, are intimately connected. If we eat good food, we become good people.

## Cross-References

- ▶ Cooking Tools and Techniques: Ethical Issues
- ▶ Gluttony
- ▶ Meat: Ethical Considerations
- ▶ Taste, Distaste, and Food
- ▶ Vegetarianism
- ▶ You Are What You Eat

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