



Foreword

Everyone Eats

By Marion Nestle

In this astonishing and gorgeous book, writer Faith D'Aluisio and photographer Peter Menzel give entirely new meaning to the well-worn adage "You are what you eat." They searched the world to find 80 people who could hardly differ more in age, occupation, income, and nationality, but were willing to provide a list of everything they might eat in one day. In doing so, these people revealed volumes about their identity, culture, and daily life, and the world they inhabit.

What I Eat presents the stories people told of the foods they ate in one day, in sequence of the number of calories contained in those meals. Totaled up, the calories in their meals ranged from a starvation-level 800 to a seemingly impossible 12,300. Are such diets typical?

As Faith explains in her introduction, the calories listed here are not meant to be seen as precise representations of average daily intake. Instead, they are brief, impressionistic cross-sections that may well include under- or overestimations of usual daily food consumption. Even so, this book provides an incomparable documentary record of the stunning diversity of foods, diets, and occupations that sustain life in today's world.

Most of the people interviewed for this book say they have more than enough to eat, sometimes much more. Only a few do not, so the book begins, appropriately, with them. The Maasai herdsman (800 calories) and the runaway Bangladeshi boy (1,400 calories) stand for the billion or so people in the world who go hungry every day, and the many more who barely get by.

For the rest of us, the variety of food choices is astounding. The stories in this book illustrate the unwelcome transition from traditional foods to processed junk foods as globalization expands. What people eat reflects the economic effects of globalization, as well as the effects of a globalized food supply on health and the environment. Together, these 80 diets have more to tell us about the human condition in this century than any textbook or statistical table ever could.

Let's thank Peter and Faith for giving us this magnificent document of the ways in which food affects our lives and actions, and gives us so much pleasure. They inspire those of us privileged to choose our diets according to our own desires—such as the luminaries who summarize their views below—to do so responsibly and ethically.

I, for example, love food. The pleasure of food underlies my usual advice: Eat less, move more, eat plenty of fruits and vegetables, and don't eat too much junk food. I find this advice easy to follow, as it leaves plenty of room for choice while promoting a food system that is more just and sustainable and better able to provide enough delicious food for everyone on this planet, poor and rich alike.

Marion Nestle is the Paulette Goddard Professor of Nutrition, Food Studies, and Public Health at New York University and author of Food Politics and What to Eat.

Abdul-Baset Razem and his family eat a midday meal of maktoubeh (upside-down casserole of chicken, rice, and vegetables) in the Palestinian Territories.



Nguyễn Thi Huong boils water for tea over a rice straw fire in the cooking house of her family compound outside Hanoi, Vietnam.

I rarely cook at home. I eat at work.

There is nothing in my refrigerator at home except fruit.

Ferran Adrià • *Head chef and owner of El Bulli, in Spain, regarded as one of the best restaurants in the world*

I've developed into a grazer at night. During the day I eat very little. When I sit down with the rest of the staff for our preservice meal, I like to have a green salad with white vinegar and olive oil, not much else. I want a clean mouth when service starts. I spend the evening tasting—sauce bases, grains, mountains of braised vegetables, and a steady diet of different meats and meat cuts. I taste to correct seasoning, adjust acidity, check doneness. I taste to learn how well we've trained the cooks. I taste to better understand the components of a dish. **I taste to stay in business. I don't taste for pleasure.**

Dan Barber • *Winner of the 2009 James Beard Foundation Award for Outstanding Chef*

My diet was essentially Ameri-omnivorous with a heavy focus on meat (corned beef and hot dogs in early years, more international later) and animal products in general. At some point I saw the writing on the wall: This style of eating wasn't sustainable for me, or the land, air, or water, or, for that matter, the animals. **I devised a diet for myself that was called (by my friends) "vegan before 6 p.m."** For most of the day I eat nothing processed, no junk, no animal products. At night I do whatever the hell I want. I figure I've changed my calorie intake from 10 or 20 percent unprocessed plants to somewhere over 50 percent. I've done it over three years, and it's been easy and feels permanent.

Mark Bittman • *Author of Food Matters and How to Cook Everything*

The only difference between "treat" and "threat" is the letter h. These harmful food habits include huge portion sizes and a high frequency of eating, especially high-fat and high-calorie foods. When we cut back on these habits, we can reclaim our health, and also dedicate the saved resources to those in obvious need. We call this "outdulgence"!

Graham and Treena Kerr • *Chef and producer of The Galloping Gourmet*

The reason I took off more than 75 pounds in the last year was because nobody told me to. I realize taking off weight is a self-induced mental exercise. Although I glibly said I took off the weight by "shitting more than I was eating," my diet was even simpler. **I just ate less—a whole lot less. And my brain thought it was a good idea.**

Richard Saul Wurman • *Creator of the TED and TEDMED conferences*

My food intake is tempestuous, a series of mad crashes that sometimes don't last long but can be very intense. I'm inconstant over time, and preternaturally ardent in the moment. For a week I'll fall into the grip of peanut butter, preferably crunchy, by the heaping spoonful, just before midnight, day after day. I had a torrid affair not so long ago with a lamb meatloaf with a salty feta heart. And of late I've fallen under the spell of chicken salad, so perfect with the right amount of mayonnaise, so receptive to my beloved dill. Add some slivered almonds and I'm a goner—at least for a short while.

Frank Bruni • *Author of the best-selling memoir Born Round and former restaurant critic for the New York Times*

I travel for a living, mostly in remote areas. On assignment, I eat what is put in front of me. **Often you don't know if the chicken head floating in the soup is reserved for the honored guest or is a joke on you.** Best to assume the former. After 30-some years of this, I've developed a cast-iron stomach and catholic tastes. On the trail, I eat lightweight but filling oatmeal and couscous. At home, it's rib eye or elk steak, generally with my own perfectly made *chimichurri*, a salad in and of itself.

Tim Cahill • *Founding editor of Outside Magazine and best-selling author*

You can learn to love or hate anything. Vegetables are a "free pass"—delicious and easy to love. Lemon juice is my preferred dressing, and steaming my preferred mode of cooking them. I try not to use oil dressing, even olive oil, which adds an amazing amount of calories. In general I avoid frying, or even sautéing in oil, and prefer grilling, steaming, and roasting. I try to teach myself not to like cheese (which

is hard), butter, milk, things that are "white" (flour, rice, etc.), desserts, sugar in coffee—sugar in anything except naturally in fruit, the second category I allow myself without hesitation. I try not to drink spirits but allow myself a few glasses of wine a few days a week (many calories). Also, I've learned that the portions we tend to eat are ridiculous. **I am better off with one-fifth of my original typical portion, so that old Italian tradition of serving food in family platters is gone.** (We used to eat our first plateful as fast as possible so we could take more from the family platter before it was all gone.) That's what I've learned so far in a life that is always changing. The key, of course, is to train myself to love the things that are good for me and eschew the things that are not.

Francis Coppola • *Filmmaker, wine producer, and hotelier*

Coming from a family farm where I milked cows, collected eggs, and butchered our animals, I gorged on the high-protein, high-fat diet, although we also had a big garden. Sometimes I ate the game that I'd hunted. Then I did a big research program on nutrition and cancer and had my head turned. The results favoring plant-based foods were dramatic, and also consistent with some remarkable work of others. Ever since, my wife, our five grown children, five grandchildren, and **I have been eating an entirely plant-based diet.** After our taste preferences changed, it's been no turning back, for over 20 years now.

T. Colin Campbell • *Jacob Gould Schurman Professor Emeritus of Nutritional Biochemistry at Cornell, and coauthor of The China Study*

Los Angeles is probably the most diverse food city in the world at the moment: the hub of a great agricultural area, the nation's largest port, the epicenter of twenty-first-century immigration, and

the seat of the American imagination. As the belly tasked with making sense of it all, I couldn't imagine confronting a more varied diet, careening from pitch-perfect Modenese restaurant meals to live Korean seafood to armloads of perfect tangelos to the sensation that **I am assembling a cow's head in my stomach, one taco at a time.**

Jonathan Gold • *Pulitzer Prize-winning restaurant critic and author of Counter Intelligence: Where to Eat in the Real Los Angeles*

Everyone teases me about my diet. I don't eat much, and I don't think about the calories or nutritional value at all. In the early 1970s, when I first learned about intensive (factory) farming, I became a vegetarian. **Since I stopped eating meat, I have felt "light" and believe this is why I have so much energy.** If everyone thought about the food they eat—where it came from, how many "food miles" it traveled, and how it was produced—they would probably make changes in their eating habits, especially if they were to think of how the production of huge quantities of cheap meat affects the environment, the suffering of the animals, and human health.

Jane Goodall, PhD, DBE • *Founder of the Jane Goodall Institute and UN Messenger of Peace*

My favorite food, bar none, is brussels sprouts—roasted, sautéed, or (most often) steamed for just a few minutes, not too long, not so long that they lose their crunchiness or bright green color. Spaghetti with pesto sauce, or with olive oil and garlic and topped with a little chopped parsley or a sprinkling of peas, followed by a salad of romaine lettuce and arugula with vinaigrette, accompanied by a glass of red wine and a bottle of seltzer—that is my idea



Baker Akbar Zareh, who works seven days a week, prepares rounds of dough that he'll bake in his gas-fired clay ovens to make flat cracker bread in Yazd, Iran.

of a perfect meal. While I'm cooking, a martini is nice, made with gin straight out of the freezer.

Hendrik Hertzberg • *Senior editor of the New Yorker and author of ¡Obámanos!: The Birth of a New Political Era*

I'm a thin restaurant critic, something people don't like. It's by design, not happy genetic accident. After losing weight on a sensible diet just as I was hitting teendom, **I eliminated temptation by giving in and deciding to eat what I want most.** That's sugar, bread, cream, and cheese—the perhaps not fantastically healthful staples of my diet, but amply supplemented with constant fresh vegetables and meat (artisan-raised of course!), and (sustainable) fish. And I eat pretty much all the time, always keeping a bit of appetite for the next taste.

Corby Kummer • *Restaurant critic, coauthor of The Pleasures of Slow Food, and a senior editor at the Atlantic*



Marie Paule Kutten-Kass checks the cherry custard cake and the chicken that she's baking simultaneously for her family's lunch in Erpeldange in Bous, Luxembourg.

You are only as young as the last time you changed your mind, and **the easiest way to change your mind is to eat a food you've never eaten before.** The more improbable the food, the wider your horizon will be stretched.

Kevin Kelly • Senior maverick for Wired and author of What Technology Wants

A few years **after high school, I read about the Maasai practice of drinking cattle blood for strength. I tried it for six weeks, drinking a quart a day** from a slaughterhouse in Oakland until I got a clot stuck in my throat. Now, 75 years later, I get all my protein from egg whites and fish. No cake, no pie, no candy, no ice cream, but I do have one glass of wine with my dinner. I work out every morning, seven days a week—even when I'm traveling. I hate it. But I love the results! That's the key, baby!

Jack LaLanne • The Godfather of Fitness and author of Live Young Forever

One of the things I most love about food as a subject is its endless variety, and the bottom line on our understanding of food and health has seemed for some time to be that **the more biochemical diversity in our diet, the better.** For both of these reasons, I eat all kinds of things all the time and especially enjoy making and eating all-inclusive dishes: Asian curries and Mexican moles with a dozen or more ingredients melded together. The one thing I eat every day is yogurt from a culture I got from an Indian friend about 15 years ago and have kept going ever since.

Harold McGee • Author of On Food and Cooking

For years Americans have lived under the pall of the food puritans, mostly feeling guilty because they can't adhere to the punishing dogma of skinless chicken breasts, bran cereal, skim milk, and raw broccoli. **The average eater can't stick to this soulless diet for long, so splurges on pornographic food: chicken nuggets, 32-ounce sodas, corn chips, and donuts.** The long-life alternative to these extremes is the diet of real, traditional, nutritious, delicious, satisfying food I've enjoyed my entire life: cheese omelets with bacon, rich homemade soups, pâté, caviar with sour cream, juicy sausage, aged cheese, beef stew, creamy raw milk, strawberries with whipped cream, and yellow grass-fed butter so thick on your bread that you make teeth marks in it. The best revenge is eating well.

Sally Fallon Morell • President of the Weston A. Price Foundation, founder of A Campaign for Real Milk and author of Nourishing Traditions

I grew up in Texas on a diet consisting mainly of chili, cheeseburgers, and chalupas, washed down with Dr. Pepper. (Hey, if it's from a Dr., it has to be good for you, right?) When I was profoundly

depressed and unhealthy at age 19, I began studying with an ecumenical spiritual teacher who patiently explained that if I began eating a predominantly whole food, plant-based diet, along with exercising and practicing meditation and yoga, I would feel better, not only physically, but emotionally. It was true. Now, three decades of clinical studies have proved that this approach can often stop or even reverse chronic diseases including coronary heart disease, prostate cancer, type 2 diabetes, elevated cholesterol, high blood pressure, and obesity. Our latest studies show that **when you change your lifestyle, you change your genes**—turning on genes that prevent disease and turning off genes that cause prostate cancer, breast cancer, heart disease, and other illnesses—over 500 genes in only three months.

Dean Ornish, MD • Founder of the Preventive Medicine Research Institute and author of The Spectrum

"Why aren't you fat?" People always say it accusingly, as if someone who's spent her life writing about food and restaurants should be overweight. The answer is that I eat with all my senses and savor every bite. **The trick is to understand your own hungers—and follow no rules.** Your body knows what it needs; you just have to learn to listen.

Ruth Reichl • Author, editor, and restaurant critic

The key to my diet is provenance. It is dictated by what is available that is locally produced, seasonal, and organic. **I'll deprive myself of tomatoes for the whole year until they are ready, but when they are, I truly enjoy them.**

Alice Waters • Chef, activist, author, and founder of Chez Panisse and the Edible Schoolyard

At 31, I was a young academic physician and neuroscientist full of ambition and hubris. Then, one October evening, I replaced a missing subject in my own brain scanning experiment—and discovered I had brain cancer. For years after the initial treatment, I continued to eat lunch the way I had perfected it, standing up in the elevator between my lab and the clinic: chili con carne, a white bagel, and a can of Coke—every day. **After I relapsed and had to go through treatment again, I became curious about how I could strengthen my body against cancer.** It started with food. I've become a Mediterranean eater: many vegetables, much fish, splendid fruits, herbs and spices, and very little red meat, sugar, or white flour. I still can't get over the fact that I feel so much healthier now than I did before I had cancer!

David Servan-Schreiber, MD, PhD • Adjunct professor of general oncology at the M. D. Anderson Cancer Center and author of Anticancer: A New Way of Life

For the most part, we maintain a Chinese takeout and pescatarian household. I cook whatever veggies Farm Fresh to You delivers that week and compost the scraps. Beans, tofu, rice, potatoes, and pasta are staples. For fish, I consult two iPhone apps, one to find species with low mercury levels, the other to see if they are sustainable. We don't make it a habit to have junk food in the house, but in airports and at truck stops, I buy Cheetos. When traveling in other countries, I always eat the local cuisine, but just the vegetarian offerings. There are occasional slip-ups in translation: The sautéed "beans" turned out to be bees. The popular local snack that looked like Cheetos was actually deep-fried larvae.

Amy Tan • Best-selling author

I grew up eating a very mainstream mid-twentieth-century diet. Through college and medical school I ate anything and everything, often in great quantity. Then in 1970 I made a lot of changes in my lifestyle, including my food choices. I saw that at age 28 I was overweight, not in shape, and not prepared to undertake the kinds of travel and exploring I wanted to do. **I took up yoga, increased my physical activity, practiced meditation, and became a lacto-vegetarian.** My body responded dramatically, motivating me to continue on this path. I started eating fish in the mid-1980s and now mostly eat fish and vegetables. I grow a lot of my own food and love to cook. My nutritional philosophy is summed up in my anti-inflammatory diet, based on the Mediterranean diet. I avoid refined, processed, and manufactured food, and love olive oil, vegetables of all kinds, good Japanese food, green tea, and dark chocolate.

Andrew Weil, MD • Founder of the Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine and best-selling author

Growing up in a Midwestern agricultural family, my interest in food started early. I later studied food science, medicine, and public health, and my research has tracked the diets of several hundred thousand people for three decades. We have seen that **replacing refined starches, sugar, red meat, and dairy foods with whole grains and plant sources of proteins and fats is associated with far better long-term health and well-being.** Fortunately, this led me to the traditional Mediterranean diet, which is far more enjoyable than the beef, mashed potatoes, and gravy of my childhood.

Walter Willett, MD, PhD • Professor of epidemiology and nutrition at the Harvard School of Public Health



Noolkisaruni Tarakuai, the third of four wives of a Maasai chief, milks a drought-stricken cow at her home near Narok, Kenya, and is able to draw only a half cup of milk.

In my twenties I studied the diet of wild chimpanzees by staying with the same individual from dawn to dusk. Long walks were accompanied by crawling, climbing, and running through difficult brush. **Sometimes I spent the day without any human food.** Chimpanzee diets included about 10 to 20 different foods a day, but however hungry I was, the forest smorgasbord was a miserable experience. A find of a few wild raspberries brought rare joy, but mostly the fruits were as fibrous as sugarcane, and as strong in their flavor as crab apples or hot radishes. I could never come close to filling my stomach. Simple dishes of pasta or rice that awaited me in camp after dark became as rich a promise as any feast. We are a lucky species. Most other species would like to have their meals cooked. We alone get the privilege!

Richard Wrangham, PhD • Ruth Moore Professor of Biological Anthropology at Harvard University and author of Catching Fire