



Cavemen, Monks, and Slow Food: A History of Eating Well

Devra Gartenstein

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During the Middle Ages, when sugar was rare and expensive, rotten teeth were a status symbol. Today, sugar is so cheap that food manufacturers use it for filler, and we rhapsodize about the fresh, local ingredients that medieval peasants grew in their kitchen gardens. Cavemen, Monks, and Slow Food: A History of Eating Well tells the fascinating story of our relationship with our meals, from the Paleolithic hunters who painted their prey on remote cave walls, to the medieval monks who fashioned fine cheeses and liqueurs, to the artisans and organic farmers who supply today's trendy restaurants. This book tells the riveting tale of our perpetually unfolding relationship with food, while offering needed perspectives on urgent modern concerns.

Cavemen, Monks, and Slow Food: A History of Eating Well Details

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From Reader Review Cavemen, Monks, and Slow Food: A History of Eating Well for online ebook

Evelyn says

This book has a lot of history about the Food Industry and is really such an easy read everyone should check it out!

I found the first half less interesting, which covered the Pre-Neolithic to the Middle Ages, but I have also studied this period so it may have just seemed repetitive. If you have already a really well rounded knowledge of the history of Food, it may not be for you. Once Gartenstein gets into the Industrial Revolution things really become interesting, I learned about the origins of many of my favorite foods and companies. One of the biggest issues you realize is the food has been repeating its' history over and over it's amazing to see the waves of changes and to be able to see where the Industry is going from here.

Cindy says

A brief look at food through history. Writing is clear. The author has a bias toward plant based food diet, but doesn't preach about it as some do. If you know nothing about food history, this is a fine book; but if you are familiar with food and all forms of history about it -- then this is not the book for you.

DM says

This was an amazing book. Recently I got into cooking and over the summer I experimented. Htis book was amazing in that it told me things about the food I use everyday, their origins and other little tidbits that I did not know before. Like the whole thing with balck teeth and how it was a status symbol back then, the blacker your teeth were, the richer you were. It was easy to read, clear bold print and the little stories told in a narrative style was enjoyable to read. Written by a woman who knows about food, this is a simple easy to read book for a lazy sunday when you don't want to get out of bed. Loved it.

Stephanie says

I received a copy of this book through Goodreads. Aside from presenting a history of human eating habits, Gartenstein opens the reader's eyes to the substandard conditions that surround all aspects of what we eat today and compares it to the simple, organic foods our ancestors enjoyed. She also provides knowledge and information the reader may find useful in altering their own diet to benefit themselves, the people working hard to produce their food, and the environment. While it doesn't seem to be a deliberate jab at today's food industries, the author doesn't spare any feelings and admirably lays out all of the cold, hard facts for anyone willing to listen- whether it's what we want to hear or not.

I was impressed by the author's expansive history of not only the common, dominant civilizations of each

era, but also of lesser known groups, such as the Akkadians and Harrappans. Not much about these cultures is common knowledge, but Gartenstein did not overlook the effects even these people had on the cuisine of their time. She also references lesser-known documents and laws that shaped the landscape of human appetites.

The author left no topic unexplored. From hunting to farming, food processing, advertising, and legislation. The author weaves a wonderfully intricate web that shows the steady flow of how mankind went from starving hunter-gatherers to comfortably overfed and taking food for granted.

The only flaws I could find in this book were typographical. Every topic is well-researched and connections from one age to another show the natural progression of human diets all over the world. I highly recommend it to anyone at least a little interested in knowing exactly what we eat today and how it compares to the foods of times long past. I give this book five stars.

Beth Jusino says

There are plenty of books out there that tell us what to eat, but this is a rare find that explores WHY we like what we do. From the earliest hunter/gatherers to the (surprisingly less healthy) farmers, to the gluttony of the early American expansion, Gartenstein looks at quantity and quality, and points the way for us to understand the context of our own relationships with food.

Debbie says

I really enjoyed this til about two-thirds through and then it became a bit too preachy and scientific. I understand the issues, but practical considerations (modern lifestyles) and sheer numbers of human mouths to feed need to be catered for as well!

Sallyann says

A great read - very entertaining!

Chrissie says

I won this book through Goodreads. It was okay, but it covered too much history to talk about anything in depth.
