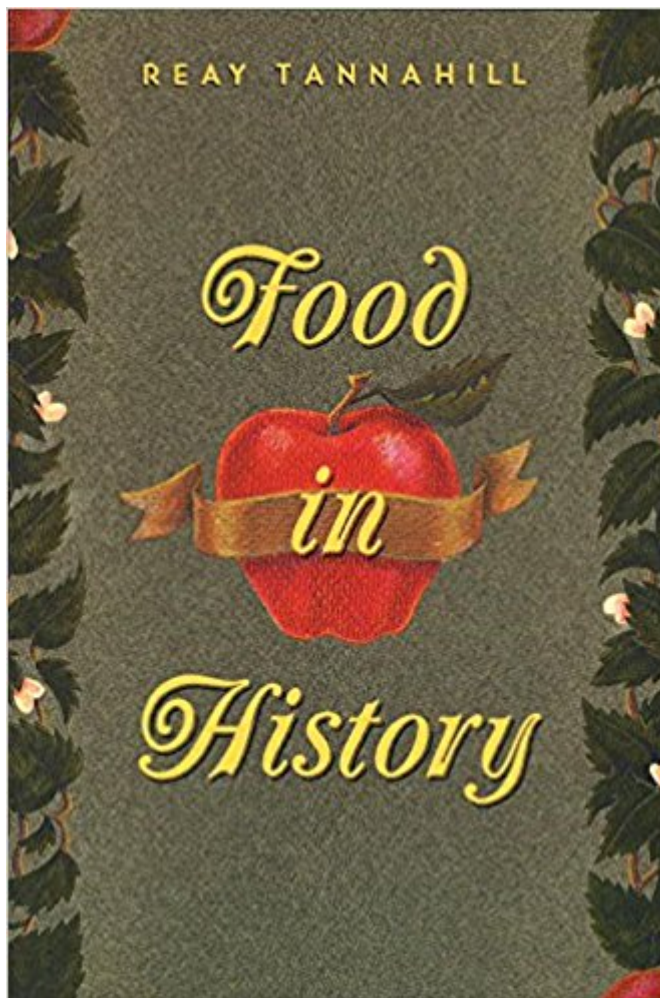


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# Food In History



## Synopsis

An enthralling world history of food from prehistoric times to the present. A favorite of gastronomes and history buffs alike, *Food in History* is packed with intriguing information, lore, and startling insights--like what cinnamon had to do with the discovery of America, and how food has influenced population growth and urban expansion.

## Book Information

Series: Food in History

Paperback: 448 pages

Publisher: Broadway Books; Revised edition (May 10, 1995)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0517884046

ISBN-13: 978-0517884041

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1.2 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 54 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #71,384 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #101 in Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Cooking Education & Reference > History #144 in Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Cooking Education & Reference > Essays #168 in Books > Science & Math > Agricultural Sciences > Food Science

## Customer Reviews

An enthralling world history of food from prehistoric times to the present. A favorite of gastronomes and history buffs alike, *Food in History* is packed with intriguing information, lore, and startling insights--like what cinnamon had to do with the discovery of America, and how food has influenced population growth and urban expansion.

Reay Tannahill is the author of *Food in History* and *Sex in History*, as well as the bestselling novels *A Dark and Distant Shore* and *The World, the Flesh, and the Devil*. She lives in London.

As usual, Ms. Tannahill is thorough and informative without being too scholarly. I like her no-nonsense style of writing and I'm enjoying reading about humanity's progression from hunter-gatherers to more sophisticated styles of finding and eating foods. Although this tome is not too scholarly, it is full of a lot of information that the average reader may find too esoteric. It's very

interesting stuff and anyone interested in how we got to where we are today might enjoy finding out how our ancestors' solutions to the daily problem of finding food gave rise to today's gourmet, foodies and vegans.

I would use this book for a high school/community college world history text. Not only is it very readable, but it brings out the dynamics between geography, industry, religion, and, of course tradition. Through food, something to which everyone can relate, one sees historical process rather than merely dates, politics and generals. And, as a survey book should do, it made me want to learn more.

This is one of the most detailed history books that I have ever read. Tannahill starts with food before the Neolithic Revolution and continues through the modern era. It was really interesting to read about the changes that took place post-Columbus and comparing the diet available to different places around the world. The book really does an excellent job putting food in its historical/social context. Most history books will look at the wars and conflicts of the time, this book will give a perspective that we are all used to: prices, wages, luxury goods. While it is not a recipe book, you will enjoy the few historical recipes/menus that are spread throughout the book. Pick it up and enjoy!

Food in History is an academic, yet readable, overview of food throughout history. From prehistoric hunting and gathering to modern day genetically modified crops, Tannahill looks at how food availability, preparation, and consumption have a profound affect on culture and politics. The book is divided into broad time categories - first thousands of years and then hundreds. In each section, Tannahill explores food in different broad areas such as the Americas, Europe, Asia, India, Africa, etc. This is not a cookbook - don't expect historical recipes. Also keep in mind that it's an overview - don't expect details on the evolution of every single regional cuisine. Food in History is very well researched and comprehensively documented. Tannahill has a pleasant writing style, and just when the material threatens to get a bit too dry, up pops an interesting factoid or anecdote to recapture your interest. I would recommend this book to anyone interested in how food has helped shape our history.

Wore it out the first time it came out so I had to buy a new one.

"Food in History," by Reay Tannahill, Revised Edition, Crown Publishers, NY, 1988. This 409-page

hardback provides an overview of the history of food stuffs. It begins with the domestication of animals (the dog was first in about 11,000 BC) and goes all the way to modern day subjects such as the green revolution. Concise sections cover almost every food topic. Sugar, the potato, honey, the tomato, soybeans, rice, corn, spices, tea, the horse, salt, and even pasta are included. Pasta may go back to the Etruscans as claimed, but clearly tomato sauce is newer. The tomato originated in North America and did not arrive in Europe until the Sixteenth Century. The list of foods originating in the Americas is impressive: the potato, the tomato, corn, avocados, pineapples, haricot, kidney and butterbeans, lima beans, scarlet runners, French beans, chocolate, peanuts, vanilla, red peppers, green peppers, tapioca, and the turkey plus tobacco, rubber, chewing gum and quinine. Many of the topics could make an entire book. Comprehensive coverage would make a multi-volume encyclopedia. Here, we get a two or three page overview with references. The story of the potato is told in two pages; the Irish potato famine gets two more. The book covers the globe including China, India, Egypt and South America. The author is from University of Glasgow. British topics seem well covered, but the discussion extends to America too. The story of canning is described in considerable detail, and so is frozen foods, but Clarence Birdseye (modern frozen foods) and JR Simplot (instant mashed potatoes, dehydrated onions, and frozen french fries) are omitted. This book is a nicely done overview of the subject. It is a handy quick reference to the subject and an excellent starting point for further research. References, bibliography, index.

A good book about food. Very informative and interesting to read. Would definitely recommend for anyone curious about types of food.

I found this book a very useful reference book for my current work. The development of food practices is largely overlooked.

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