



# Let the Meatballs Rest: And Other Stories About Food and Culture (Arts and Traditions of the Table: Perspectives on Culinary History)

*Massimo Montanari*

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Known for his entertaining investigations into culinary practice, Massimo Montanari turns his hungry eye to the phenomenon of food culture, food lore, cooking methods, and eating habits throughout history. An irresistible buffet of one hundred concise and engaging essays, this collection provides stimulating food for thought for those curious about one of life's most fundamental pleasures.

Focusing on the selection, preparation, and mythology of food, Montanari traverses such subjects as the status of the pantry over the centuries, the various strategies of cooking over time, the gastronomy of famine, the science of flavors, the changing characteristics of convivial rituals, the customs of the table, and the ever-evolving identity of food. He shows that cooking not only is a decisive part of our cultural heritage but also communicates essential information about our material and intellectual well-being.

From the invention of basic bread making to chocolate's reputation for decadence, Montanari positions food culture as a lens through which we can plot changes in historical values and social and economic trends. Even the biblical tale of Jacob buying Esau's birthright for a bowl of lentils is a text full of essential meaning, representing civilization's important shift from a hunting to an agrarian society. Readers of all backgrounds will enjoy these delectable insights and their easy consumption in one companionable volume.



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