

# The Oxford Companion to American Food and Drink (Oxford Companions)

*From Oxford University Press*

Offering a panoramic view of the history and culture of food and drink in America with fascinating entries on everything from the smell of asparagus to the history of White Castle, and the origin of Bloody Marys to jambalaya, the *Oxford Companion to American Food and Drink* provides a concise, authoritative, and exuberant look at this modern American obsession. Ideal for the food scholar and food enthusiast alike, it is equally appetizing for anyone fascinated by Americana, capturing our culture and history through what we love most--food!

Building on the highly praised and deliciously browseable two-volume compendium the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America*, this new work serves up everything you could ever want to know about American consumables and their impact on popular culture and the culinary world. Within its pages for example, we learn that Lifesavers candy owes its success to the canny marketing idea of placing the original flavor, mint, next to cash registers at bars. Patrons who bought them to mask the smell of alcohol on their breath before heading home soon found they were just as tasty sober and the company began producing other flavors.

Edited by Andrew Smith, a writer and lecturer on culinary history, the *Companion* serves up more than just trivia however, including hundreds of entries on fast food, celebrity chefs, fish, sandwiches, regional and ethnic cuisine, food science, and historical food traditions. It also dispels a few commonly held myths. Veganism, isn't simply the practice of a few "hippies," but is in fact wide-spread among elite athletic circles. Many of the top competitors in the Ironman and Ultramarathon events go even further, avoiding all animal products by following a strictly vegan diet. Anyone hungering to know what our nation has been cooking and eating for the last three centuries should own the *Oxford Companion to American Food and Drink*.

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## The Oxford Companion to American Food and Drink (Oxford Companions) Summary Details

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editorial:

Review

"Nearly 700 pages of Americana on the table, this reference work is the gift for the culinary student, chef or Food Network groupie on your list. It's fun to flip through - 'the mimosa is one of America's first designer cocktails' - or burrow into (the 'pies and tarts' entry goes on for three pages)."--*The Denver Post*

"Clearly written and concisely presented, this volume will be an affordable multidisciplinary resource"--*School Library Journal*

"When it comes to American food, there's no better resource than the new *Oxford Companion to American Food and Drink*. This monster-size tome weighs enough to work your biceps and contains more than 1,000 entries that should answer every last one of your culinary curiosities."--*New York Post*

"Amateur and professional food historians will join lovers of culinary trivia in alternately marveling and chuckling over *The Oxford Companion to American Food and Drink*, which tells just about everything you ever wanted to know on the subject, and then some.... Overall, it's a fun and informative read."--*San Francisco Chronicle*

"Whether you want to learn for learning's sake, dazzle friends with observations on the cocktail you're holding ("Did you know that Bourbon is a style of whiskey that can legally be made only in the United States?") or beef up your chances on a game show ("I'll take 'Drive-Ins' for \$100, Alex"), editor Andrew F. Smith's efforts should not fail to deliver. Many reference books fall short because they're, well, b-o-r-i-n-g.

This one isn't."--*Chicago Tribune*

"Unique, fascinating, fun and indispensable, *The Oxford Companion to American Food and Drink* is a must for anyone interested in the food culture of America, from the professional chef to the food writer to the lover of the table."--Jacques Pépin, star of *Fast Food My Way* and author of *The Apprentice*

"Here are the facts. This impressive Oxford Companion presents a complex subject without fuss or frills."--Anne Willan, director of *La Varenne* at Château du Feÿ, author of *La Varenne Pratique* and *The Good Cook*

"I've always wondered what American food and drink was exactly. Now that I've read the *Oxford Companion*, it's clear and understandable. And what a story! Filled with unusual twists and turns and peopled with ordinary and extraordinary cooks, chefs, farmers, inventors, scientists, restaurateurs, and entrepreneurs, I found it, like good food, quite irresistible."--Burt Wolf

"Erudite, witty, and stuffed with gems"--*The Daily Telegraph* (London)

#### About the Author

**Andrew F. Smith** teaches culinary history and professional food writing at The New School University in Manhattan. He serves as a consultant to several food television productions (airing on the History Channel and the Food Network), and is the General Editor for the University of Illinois Press' Food Series. He also edited the highly acclaimed 2-volume *Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America* and has written several books on food, including *The Tomato in America*, *Pure Ketchup*, *Popped Culture: A Social History of Popcorn in America*.

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