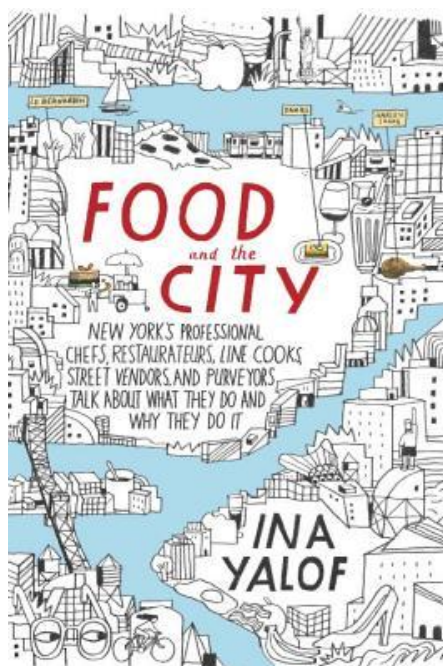




Food and the City: New York's Professional Chefs, Restaurateurs, Line Cooks, Street Vendors, and Purveyors Talk About What They Do and Why They Do It

Ina Yalof

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An unprecedented behind-the-scenes tour of New York City's dynamic food culture, as told through the voices of the chefs, line cooks, restaurateurs, waiters, and street vendors who have made this industry their lives.

In *Food and the City*, Ina Yalof takes us on an insider's journey into New York's pulsating food scene alongside the men and women who call it home. Dominique Ansel declares what great good fortune led him to make the first Cronut. Lenny Berk explains why Woody Allen's mother would allow only him to slice her lox at Zabar's. Ghaya Oliveira, who came to New York as a young Tunisian stockbroker, opens up about her hardscrabble yet swift trajectory from dishwasher to executive pastry chef at Daniel. Restaurateur Eddie Schoenfeld describes his journey from Nice Jewish Boy from Brooklyn to New York's Indisputable Chinese Food Maven.

From old-schoolers such as David Fox, third-generation owner of Fox's U-bet syrup, and the outspoken Upper West Side butcher "Schatzie" to new-kids-on-the-block including Patrick Collins, sous chef at The Dutch and Brooklyn artisan Lauren Clark of Sucre Mort Pralines, *Food and the City* is a fascinating oral history with an unforgettable gallery of New Yorkers who embody the heart and soul of a culinary metropolis.

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Date : Published May 31st 2016 by G.P. Putnam's Sons

ISBN : 9780399168925

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Format : Hardcover 384 pages

Genre : Food and Drink, Food, Nonfiction, Travel, New York

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Eric Rothman says

Inspiring stories, but I find compilations like these difficult to stay motivated through. Just my personal taste / shortcomings.

Katie says

Great book- VERY interesting to read about all of the various positions in a restaurant.

Aharon says

Some interesting stuff but when did people start printing and binding blogs?

Susan says

I tried, I love food books but this was a slog.

Mike says

A fascinating, if at times skimmable, collection filled with interviews with culinary professionals across the city of New York, from Le Bernardin to the cafeterias of Rikers Island. Neruda wrote dismissively once of the poet who eats bread every day but has never met a baker, and this book would be tremendously instructive in generating empathy in the many many people I see behaving callously or rudely towards the people who work in places where food is bought and sold.

Martin Doudoroff says

Some nice, easily-digestible stories that reflect the diversity, triumphs, tribulations and sacrifices of food industry workers in NYC. But not much of a book.

John says

Review to come.

Glenda says

3 1/2 out of 5

When it comes to food culture, I would like to think I know my way around. I worked in the restaurant industry for nearly 20 years, from fine dining to busy coffee shops. Most of that time was spent as a server but I also did my share of mixing cocktails, bussing tables, washing dishes, prepping food, and (on a few occasions I would like to forget) cooking breakfast and lunch.

The late Anthony Bourdain is still my hero. The Food Network Channel is my go-to television choice. And I love reading about the hard living behind the scenes, of the struggles a chef had before becoming a chef.

I think that's what missing from Food in the City.....the darker realities behind the successes. All of the stories show that the adage "work hard and you will succeed" is true, and that is fine and dandy, but I wanted more. Since it was New York City, I guess I was expecting a grittier take on the restaurant business. Most of the stories seemed to center around 5 star restaurants or caterers who work for the rich and famous. What about that Mom and Pop diner with the best meatloaf or the hot dog vendor who's held down the same corner spot for 20 years? I am always impressed by those who can land an executive chef job at a young age but what about the deli workers and diner servers who have worked hard at the same hole-in-the-wall for years? Those were the stories I was looking for and, sadly, did not find very many in this collection.

Don't get me wrong, I did enjoy reading these quick 3-6 page stories from some of the top in the New York City food scene. But after awhile it started to seem like the same story, just a different name and restaurant attached. A person could easily pick 15 or so at random and have the full effect of the book.

Overall, Food and the City wasn't bad and I would say give it a try. For me, it just didn't deliver the figurative punch I was expecting from a food expose.

Feel free to follow me <http://alldragonsread2.home.blog>
Happy Reading!!

Jamie Edwards says

It's not necessary to have lived in NYC to enjoy this book but wow, it certainly helped! Am passing along to every foodie I know and also my 12 year old daughter, who I hope gets inspired by the fantastic stories of grit and passion told from the POV of chefs, line cooks, purveyors and bakers. A walk down memory lane, aka Columbus Avenue, from Fairway to Zabars and all over the five boroughs of the city.

Kate says

This is a book of oral interviews with various people in New York City who are involved in some aspect of the food industry. However, before I can tell you any more, I need to vent about the author's weird quirk that has been driving me mad from page one. In each of these very-short chapters, the author would open with a

brief third-person introduction, describing the person they were interviewing - but the author wouldn't use the person's name!

For example, the opening interview is with Noe Baltazar of Buena Vista Tortillas. The author's first introductory paragraph is just describing the company. The second paragraph opens, "He owns the company." Who? WHO owns the company? Why are you saying "he" instead of saying, "Noe Baltazar is the owner of the company?" I suspect it was trying to come off as all artsy and mysterious, but it drove me UP THE WALL, and I'm getting mad about it all over again here.

Such annoyances aside, this was a solid book. Some of the stories were extremely interesting, but I wish the author had focused more on curating quality content over quantity. All of the narratives were fascinating, but I wanted more detail, and was left with so many questions, particularly when the interviews only spanned a page or two. Additionally, this book felt a bit like a gimmick: the author basically transcribed a bunch of oral interviews, rather than truly cultivate any type of narrative.

Melanie says

Excellent look into the life of restaurant personnel and New Yorkers in general. I learned alot. Skipped a few chapters because some people have potty mouths and that's not enjoyable to read.

Susan Olesen says

Food and the City, by Ina Yalof, is a compendium of short interviews (3-4 pages each) with various people in the food industry of New York City, from simple food carts to the cafeterias of Riker's Island to Peter Luger's. This is not so much a book about the food but the people behind it, people who were born here, or just got off the boat. Some of them are professionally trained, others have worked their way up to the top from simple dishwasher, or continued on in a family business they've known all their lives. Others used it as a change of career. Every one of them is absolutely passionate about their job, a requirement in a business where 18 hour days are common.

Despite the number of interviews, few stories are repetitive, beyond talking about the long hours they each put in. Because NYC is a 24-hour city, some may go to work at 3:30 am, or 10 am, or 11 pm. Many failed the first time. Others hit the jackpot on the first try, choosing the right locations at the right time. I worried I'd find the book boring - I'm not fond of interview books or volumes of very short works, but in all, I found it inspirational. Every person was following their passion, whether they knew what they loved or came to it by sheer chance (such as slicing lox as a retirement career). None were afraid of hard work or taking that wild chance, or of failing. If nothing else, I have a whole new series of eateries to try in New York!

Amy says

This was a really fun, well-written book of vignettes from New York City's food scene in all its iterations. I really enjoyed the trip!

Jenni says

I received this book in exchange for an honest review... And I'm so glad that I did. I can not recommend this book to enough people. The stories in the book are short, sweet and crisp. They portray the characters in an amazingly real and relatable way that makes you want to know the next and the next. I was so excited when people from one story would mention the people from one that came before, or that would mention someone that you'd then hear from later in the book.

The book was so well written. Coming from the food service industry, I was inspired by the passion the story tellers hold and are able to share with the audience. Some of the stories had moments of heartbreak in them- and while they were all positive and uplifting, I found myself with tears in my eyes several times.

I found the author on Instagram and she immediately said hello and asked me what I thought of her book. This approachability is mirrored in her conversations with the storytellers in the book and you truly get that this book was a work (and I'm sure, a labor) of love.

I can only hope upon reading this that she writes more like it. I would love to hear the stories of other purveyors in other cities. This isn't a book that describes the dishes of these individuals, but you'll still be salivating at the thought of tasting the creations of the people within. If you want to share a passion for food with the people that know and understand it the best, read this book. Then do what I do... And hand it to someone else so that maybe they'll travel to New York with you to furrow out these inspiring locations to hear their stories first hand.

Jenny says

Loved seeing the different personalities and roles that make up the food scene in NYC! So interesting to see a small snippet of their lives.
