Rachel Franks

Introduction

Food has always been an essential component of daily life. Today, thinking about food is a much more complicated pursuit than planning the next meal, with food studies scholars devoting their efforts to researching “anything pertaining to food and eating, from how food is grown to when and how it is eaten, to who eats it and with whom, and the nutritional quality” (Durán and MacDonald 2034). This is in addition to the work undertaken by an increasingly wide variety of popular culture researchers who explore all aspects of food (Risson and Brien 3): including food advertising, food packaging, food on television, and food in popular fiction.

In creating stories, from those works that quickly disappear from bookstore shelves to those that become entrenched in the literary canon, writers use food to communicate the everyday and to explore a vast range of ideas from cultural background to social standing to provide some sense of a given social future (Patti-Farnell 80). For example in Oliver Twist (1838) by Charles Dickens, the central character challenges the class system when: “Child as he was, he was desperate with hunger and reckless with misery. He rose from the table, and advancing basin and spoon in hand, to the master, said, somewhat alarmed at his own temerity—Please, sir, I want some more” (11).

Scarlett O'Hara in Margaret Mitchell’s Gone with the Wind (1936) makes a similar point, a little more dramatically, when she declares: “As God is my witness, I'm never going to be hungry again” (419). Food can also take us into the depths of another culture: places that many of us will only ever read about. Food is also used to provide insight into a character’s state of mind. In Nora Ephron’s Heartburn (1983) an item as simple as boiled bread tells a reader so much more about Rachel Samstat than her social standing. She is, however, stated in the paragraph that she was described as “a distraught, rejected, pregnant cookbook author whose husband was in love with a giantess” (95). As the collapse of the marriage is described, her favoured recipes are shared: Bacon Hash; Four Minute Eggs; Toasted Almonds; Lime Beans with Peas; Linguine Alla Ceca; Pot Roast; three types of Potatoes; Sorrel Soup; desserts including Bread Pudding, Cheesecake, Key Lime Pie and Peach Pie; and a Vinaigrette, all in an effort to reassert her personal skills and thus personal value.

Grief can also result from loss of hope and the realisation that a life long dreamed of will never be realised. Like Water for Chocolate (1989), by Laura Esquivel, is the magical realist tale of Tita De La Garza who, as the youngest daughter, is forbidden to marry. Instead, she must take care of her mother, a woman who: “Unpredictable, when it came to divorce, desertion, dismembering, deserting, deserting, destroying or dominating […] was a pro” (87). Tita’s life lurches from one unhappy, unjust episode to the next; the only emotional stability she has comes from the kitchen, and from her cooking of a series of dishes: Christmas Rolls; Chabatella Wedding Cake; Quail in Rose Petal Sauce; Turkey Moi; Northern-style Chorizo; Oxstol Soup; Champandongo; Chocolate and Three Kings’ Day Bread; Cream Fritters; and Beans with Chile Texucana-style.

This is a series of culinary-based activities that attempts to superimpose normalcy on a life that is far from the everyday.

Grief is most commonly associated with death. Undertaking the selection, preparation and presentation of meals in novels dealing with bereavement is both a functional and symbolic act: life must go on for those left behind but it must go on in a very different way. Thus, novels that use food to deal with loss are particularly important because they can “make non-cooks believe they can cook, and for frequent cooks, affirm what they already know: that cooking heals” (Baltazar online).

There are three ways in which writers can deal with food within their plot. First, food can be totally ignored. This approach is sometimes taken, despite food being such a standard feature of storytelling that its absence, be it a lovely meal at home, elegant canapés at an impressively catered cocktail party, or a cheap sandwich collected from a local café, is an obvious omission. Food can also add realism to a story, with many authors putting as much effort into conjuring the smell, taste, and texture of food as they do into providing backstory and a purpose for their characters. In recent years, a third way has emerged: some writers place such importance upon food in fiction that the line that divides the cookbook and the novel has become distorted. This article looks at cookbooks and cookery in popular fiction with a particular focus on crime novels.

Recipes: Ingredients and Preparation

Food in fiction has been employed, with great success, to help characters cope with grief: giving them the reassurance that only comes through the familiarity of the kitchen and the concentration required to follow routine tasks: to chop and dice, to mix, to soft and roll, to bake, broil, grill, steam, and fry. Such grief can come from the breakdown of a relationship as seen in Nora Ephron’s Heartburn (1983). An autobiography under the guise of fiction, this novel is the first-person story of a cookbook author whose husband is in love with a giantess. She is, however, stated in the paragraph that she was not described as “a distraught, rejected, pregnant cookbook author whose husband was in love with a giantess” (95). As the collapse of the marriage is described, her favoured recipes are shared: Bacon Hash; Four Minute Eggs; Toasted Almonds; Lime Beans with Peas; Linguine Alla Ceca; Pot Roast; three types of Potatoes; Sorrel Soup; desserts including Bread Pudding, Cheesecake, Key Lime Pie and Peach Pie; and a Vinaigrette, all in an effort to reassert her personal skills and thus personal value.

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In Angelina’s Bachelors (2011) by Brian O’Reilly, Angelina D’Angelo believes “cooking was not just about food. It was about character” (2). By the end of the first chapter the young woman’s husband is dead and she is in the kitchen looking for solace, and survival, in cookery. In The Kitchen Daughter (2011) by Jack McHenry, Ginny Selvaggio is struggling to cope with the death of her parents and the friends and relations who crowd her home after the funeral. Like Angelina, Ginny retreats to the kitchen.

There are, of course, exceptions. In Ntozake Shange’s Sassafrass, Cypress & Indigo (1982), cooking celebrates, comforts, affirms and seduces (Calta). This story of three sisters from South Carolina is told through diary entries, narrative, letters, poetry, songs, and spells. Recipes are also found throughout the text: Turkey; Marmalade; Rice; Spinach; Crabmeat; Fish; Sweetbread; Bread Pudding, Cheesecake, Key Lime Pie and Peach Pie; and a Vinaigrette, all in an effort to reassert her personal skills and thus personal value.

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Take fusilli […] People say this pasta was designed by Leonardo da Vinci himself. The spiral fins carry the biggest amount of sauce relative to the surface area, you see? But it only works with a thick, heavy sauce that can cling to the grooves. Conchiglie, on the other hand, is like a shell, so it holds a thin, liquid sauce inside it perfectly (17).

Recipes: Dishing Up Death

Crime fiction is a genre with a long history of focusing on food; from the theft of food in the novels of the nineteenth century to the utilisation of many different types of food such as chocolate, marmalade, and sweet omelettes to administer poison (Berkley, Christie, Sayers) to the lethal arsenic receiving much attention in Darrow, Maley and Sayers’ Strong Poison (1930). The Judge, in summing up the case, states to the members of the jury: “Four eggs were brought to the table in their shells, and Mr Urquhart broke them one by one into a bowl, adding sugar from a stiffer […] he then cooked the omelette in a Palmer dish, with a sauce of hot jam” (14). Prior to what Timothy Taylor has described as the “pre-todle era” the crime fiction genre was “littered with corpses whose last breaths smelled oddly sweet, or bitter, or of almonds” (online). Of course not all murders are committed in such a subtle fashion. In Roald Dahl’s New Boyfriend (1953), Mary Maley returns home to find her policeman husband, clubbing him over the head with a frozen leg of lamb. The meat is roasting nicely when her husband’s colleagues arrive to investigate his death, the lamb is offered and consumed: the murder weapon now beyond the reach of investigators. Recent years have also seen more and more crime fiction writers present a central protagonist working within the food industry, drawing connections between the skills required for food preparation and those needed to catch a murderer. Working with cooks or crooks, or both, requires planning and people skills in addition to creative thinking, dedication, reliability, stamina, and a willingness to take risks. Kent Carroll insists that “food and mysteries just go together” (34).
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appearance in (2007), which features short stories in between the pages of recipes. There is also Estérelle Payany's...

which provides the adjectives of a character or situation that she is struggling to understand. Yet breaking up the action...

Three ounces of water and one very heaped teaspoon of dark roast coffee per serving. I used half Italian roast, and half Maracaba—a lovely Venezuelan coffee, named after the country’s major port, rich in favour, with delicate sweet overtones.) Water and finely ground beans both go into the ibrik together.

This provides insight into Clare’s character: that, when under pressure, she focuses her mind on what she firmly believes to be true—not the information that she is doubtful of or a situation that she is struggling to understand. Yet breaking up the action within a novel in this way—particularly within crime fiction, a genre that is predominantly dependant upon generating tension and building the pacing of the plotting to the climax—is an unusual but ultimately successful style of writing. Inquiry and instruction are comfortable bedfellows; as the central protagonists within these works discover something, the readers discover who committed murder as well as a little bit more about one of the world’s most popular beverages, thus highlighting how cookbooks and novels both serve to entertain and to educate.

Some authors integrate detailed recipes into their narratives through description and dialogue. An excellent example of this approach can be found in the Coffeehouse Mystery Series by Cleo Coyle, in the novel On What Grounds (2003). When the central protagonist is being questioned by police, Clare Costi’s answers are interrupted by a flashback scene and instructions on how to make Greek coffee:

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Some authors will save their recipes, serving them up at the end of a story. This can be seen in Julie Hyzy’s White House Chef Mystery novels, the cover of each volume in the series boasts that it “Includes Recipes for a Complete Presidential Menu!” These menus, with detailed ingredient lists, instructions for cooking and options for serving, are segregated from the stories and appear at the end of each work.

Yet other writers will deploy a hybrid approach such as the one seen in Like Water for Chocolate (1989), where the ingredients are listed at the commencement of each chapter and the preparation for the recipes form part of the narrative. This method of integration is also deployed in The Kitchen Daughter (2011), which sees most of the chapters introduced with a recipe card, those chapters then going on to deal with action in the kitchen. Using recipes as chapter breaks is a structure that has, very recently, been adopted by Australian celebrity chef, food writer, and, now fiction author, Ed Halmagyi, in his new work, which is both cookbook and novel, The Food Clock: A Year of Cooking Seasonally (2012).

As people exchange recipes in reality, so too do fictional characters. The Recipe Club (2009), by Andrea Israel and Nancy Gafni, is the story of two friends, Lilly Stone and Valerie Rudman, which is structured as an epistolary novel. As they exchange recipes and ingredients, they correspond, after which they make their own versions of the dishes. The two friends live in New York and London, respectively, and write to each other about the food and the city, sharing news and gossip.

Some readers are contributing to the burgeoning food tourism market by seeking out the meals from the pages of their favoured novels in bars, cafés, and restaurants around the world, expanding the idea of “map as menu” (Spang 79). In...

The listings include details for John’s Grill, in San Francisco, which still has on the menu Sam Spade’s Lamb Chops, served with baked potato and sliced tomatoes: a meal enjoyed by author Dashiel Hammett and subsequently consumed by his well-known protagonist in The Maltese Falcon (193), and the Café de la Paix, in Paris, frequented by Ian Fleming’s James Bond because “the food was good enough and it amused him to watch the people” (197). Those who are inspired to follow the footsteps of writers can go to Harry’s Bar, in Venice, where the likes of Marcel Proust, Sinclair Lewis, Somerset Maugham, Ernest Hemingway, and Truman Capote have all enjoyed a drink (195) or The Eagle and Child, in Oxford, which hosted the regular meetings of the Inklings—a group which included C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien—in the wood-panelled Rabbit Room (203).

A number of eaters have developed their own literary themed series such as the Peacocke Tearooms, in Cambriidgehire, which blends their own tea. Readers who are also tea drinkers can indulge in the Sherlock Holmes (Earl Grey with Lapsang Souchong) and the Doctor Watson (Keemun and Darjeeling with Lapsang Souchong). Alternatively, readers may prefer to side with the criminal mind and indulge in the Moriarty (Black Chai with Star Anise, Pepper, Cinnamon, and Fennel) (Peacocks). The Moot Bar and Café, in Melbourne, situated in the basement of the State Library of Victoria, caters “to the whimsy and fantasy of the fiction house above” and even runs a book exchange program (The Meat). For those who wish to indulge for free, or unwilling, to travel the globe in search of such savoury and sweet treats there is a wide variety of locally-based literary lunches and other meals, that bring together popular authors and wonderful food, routinely organised by book sellers, literature societies, and publishing houses.

There are also many cookbooks now easily obtainable that make it possible to re-create fictional food at home. One of the

Foods; Desserts; and Cookies & Other Sweets based on the pages of children’s books, literary classics, popular fiction, plays, poetry, and proverbs. If crime fiction is your preferred genre then you can turn to Jean Evans’s

Conclusion

Cookbooks and many popular fiction novels are reflections of each other in terms of creativity, function, and structure. In some instances the two forms are so closely entwined that a single volume will concurrently share a narrative while providing...
information about, and instruction, on cookery. Indeed, cooking in books is becoming so popular that the line that traditionally
separated cookbooks from other types of books, such as romance or crime novels, is becoming increasingly distorted. The
separation between food and fiction is further blurred by food tourism and how people strive to experience some of the foods
found within fictional works at bars, cafés, and restaurants around the world or, create such experiences in their own homes
using fiction-themed recipe books. Food has always been acknowledged as essential for life; books have long been
acknowledged as food for thought and food for the soul. Thus food in both the real world and in the imagined world serves to
nourish and sustain us in these ways.

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fictional-crime-moments-involving-food/.


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Information for these popular cookbook books is included as well, such as the author's name and the book's publication date. This list includes the best cookbook novels, textbooks, and... List of famous cookbook books, listed alphabetically with jacket cover images of the books when available. Information for these popular cookbook books is included as well, such as the author's name and the book's publication date. Examples of books on this list: Mastering the Art of French Cooking, The Joy of Cooking and many more. This list should answer the questions, "What are the best cookbook books?" and "What are the most famous cookbook books?" eBooks - Category: Cooking - Download free eBooks or read books online for free. Discover new authors and their books in our eBook community. Here you can find free books in the category: Cooking. Read online or download Cooking eBooks for free. Browse through our eBooks while discovering great authors and exciting books. Free eBooks (BookRix only). eBooks for Sale. Beliebte Kategorien: Fantasy Romance Thriller Fiction Science Fiction Juvenile Fiction ...more. Languages. English. Mastering the Art of French Cooking is a two-volume classic. The iconic Julia Child, along with Simone Beck and Louise Bertholle, created this classic cookbook that every food lover should own, especially those with an affinity for French cuisine. Designed to introduce French cuisine to Americans, this timeless masterpiece features an array of detailed recipes and techniques, from simple to complex, adapted for American kitchens through the use of American ingredients and conveniences. With over 500 recipes and 100 illustrations, the book is brimming with mouthwatering selections, including... A professional cook and baker, and a famed food blogger, David Lebovitz left the Bay Area years ago and set up a home in Paris.