

HOW TO EAT ANYTHING And Enjoy It

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Chapter 1

Why

“Why does it matter what we eat or what we enjoy?” you might ask. Well, it matters because the whole world revolves around food. Communion, sacrifices to idols, family get-togethers, parties, feasts, weddings, they all center around food. When a man wants to get to know a woman, what do they do? They go out for dinner. So food is an integral part of our relationship with God, and with one another.

Have you found yourself in bondage to food itself rather than it being your ally? Food can bring people together but it can also separate people when they can't enjoy someone else's cuisine. When a meal is shared there is an almost spiritual connection that binds the participants together (particularly in the sacrament of communion).

And honestly it's just more fun to be able to eat anything without inhibition and to enjoy whatever is set before you.

Chapter 2

Appeals

In order for a food to be likeable it has to qualify for at least one of the ten food appeals. The error people often make when failing to enjoy a dish is not taking into account all the factors that really make something delicious; flavor is only one dimension. Some of these factors are a spectrum, and something can be appealing by being on either side, or sometimes in between.

2.1 Smell

Smell is often the first sense that tries to determine whether we like a food or not. It also influences flavor directly since sweet, salty, sour, bitter, and umami are not enough dimensions to differentiate every food. Some foods, like durian fruit smell horrible but some people like them regardless.

2.2 Sight

“People eat with their eyes.” Said Lynn my food trainer at a fast food restaurant, “It’s important that the food looks good.” And she was right, take a look at the ingredients to any processed food item, there’s always food coloring added, and the shapes and arrangements are mostly cosmetic. Advertising has been seducing people to eat by appearances ever since the serpent first tempted Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. If something looks good, one’s mind will prejudge it and it’s that initial judgment that plays a major role.

2.3 Texture

We see the dominance of texture based foods in potato chips, you wouldn’t eat a stale chip (because the appeal of a chip is in its crunchiness). If everything were a smoothie it wouldn’t be as delightful, unless you’re a person who has accustomed themselves to that quick creamy meal.

2.4 Flavor

We can’t neglect flavor. This is important, but not necessary for a food to be enjoyed. The flavor can be salty, sweet, sour, bitter, or meaty (umami). Some people favor some flavors over others and at different intensities.

2.5 Price

Whether the price of something is perceived as high or low can “make or break” the appeal of a dish. For example, if something is particularly bad in every other category, yet is free, and the eater is thrifty, then the food could prove quite enjoyable.

And likewise, if the food has a high perceived cost, someone with a sense of pride is bound to think it’s better than if it were cheap but the same in every other way.

2.6 Fun

Candies are made into all sorts of fun shapes like worms and rings and ropes and spheres. Or if the food has a fun origin because it's literally a rat or a worm, that could make it fun and thus enjoyable.

I used to dislike morel mushrooms and thought they looked like fried grey mice; so with this mental picture in mind, I found that the flavor was quite good for a mouse and have been enjoying them ever since.

2.7 Love

If a great amount of care was put into making something, or if it was made by someone you care about, or if you're sharing it with someone you like, the bond of the relationship will influence the enjoyability of the food.

But the food could also be appealing by belonging to someone who is your rival. You want to eat it before they do, so this can make the food enjoyable just because it deprives someone else of it.

2.8 Nutrition

If something is good for you, sometimes that's enough to make it a bit more delightful, especially if it's nutritious in a way that your other foods are not. There can be vitamins, minerals, trace nutrients, fats, proteins, starches, sugars,

This can go the other way too, sometimes the less healthy something is perceived the better it therefore must taste.

2.9 Familiarity

Often children will eat something no matter how bad it tastes because it's something they recognize. People coming back from a foreign country often want a "burger" or something American, just for the idea's sake.

If the appearance of the food is familiar yet contradicts the smell or flavor that can ruin the experience. Preconceptions can be your enemy if you expect something to taste differently than it does, if you lower your expectations to zero, everything becomes enjoyable.

Food can also be appealing by being unfamiliar and exotic. Or by being mostly familiar with a new *twist*, it can make an old food exciting again.

2.10 Extra Physical Affects

Caffeine stimulates the body, mint cools the mouth, pepper burns the mouth, and wasabi irritates the nostrils. The enjoyment of these effects is learned, but something can be enjoyed merely on the merit that it elicits one of these effects. It takes the boredom out of eating and takes the consumer to another world of food.

Chapter 3

Application

In order to start liking something, you should try to conjure up a good attitude about it prior to tasting it. If this fails and the sustenance is unenjoyable, try coming up with reasons from the ten appeals for why it's good.

"This may taste bad, but that means there will be more for me." Appeals to the cheap aspect of *price* since it's abundant and undesired. Some people eat black licorice specifically so that no one else tries to take a portion of it, and only later admire the scent and flavor.

"It's not as bad as it looks." The negative appearance and possibly the bad smell actually augment the mediocre flavor through the subversion of expectations.

"I dare you to eat that." This challenge makes the food fun to eat and it appeals to the eater's pride.

"It smells burnt, no wait, it's smoked, that's a plus." Framing a burnt flavor as smoked flavor makes a food more desirable.

"It's bitter, but it's gonna make the water I drink after this taste fantastic. So I guess I like bitter." Contrasting flavors can be a real ally.

"It's a weed, so it's natural and raw." This appeals to both nutrition and price, making something doubly desirable. It's also fun because something that is overlooked and commonplace and looked down upon has found a use.

"I made it, so it's pretty good." This appeals to a form of self-love, one appreciates themselves (usually), so they're more forgiving with the food they have prepared.

With enough creativity and imagination you can convince yourself that a food satisfies all ten appeals, but only four to six are necessary for most people. But since nearly everything qualifies for at least three, picky eaters are without excuse. So count the dimensions of your food and enjoy it for every aspect.