

catchOn

The Future

of Food

CONFLICT & CONSCIENCE

Third Edition



SETTING THE TABLE FOR DISCUSSION

In preparing our third annual *'Future of Food'* report, CatchOn examined the changes now taking place in the culinary world to understand how these shifts will impact our future.

We've subtitled this report 'Conflict & Conscience' to reflect the opposing forces, ironies and thorny moral issues that are shaping the future of the food industry. For example, although consumers have more access to food than ever before, they've never been more removed from the cooking process and food sources. While the internet bombards us daily with new information, many of us remain ignorant of the origins of the food we consume.

Through our research and discussions with culinary experts, food critics, chefs and restaurateurs, we identified a number of key issues and emerging trends.

“ The future is always beginning now.
- Mark Strand, essayist ”

Chef, Charlatan or Showman?

In recent years, chefs have transitioned from instructors to innovators. Blue-collar cooks are now white-knight advocates. As chefs continue to step out of the kitchens and into the spotlight, how will their public personas evolve?

Faced with Waste:

With global food production struggling to keep pace with population growth, how are diners, restaurateurs and chefs cooking up solutions to produce more with less?

Keeping it Real:

Eager to embrace the farm-to-table trend, consumers are drawn to restaurants who bandy about buzzwords and catchphrases like 'organic', 'sustainably grown' and 'farm fresh'. The reality, though, is very different. With the rising incidence of food fraud and lab-created food products, is real food a thing of the past?

For each of these six issues, we've analyzed perceptions, uncovered realities and predicted how these changes will impact the future. With those for a thirst for information and a hunger for new trends, we trust CatchOn's latest *Future of Food* report will give you plenty to chew over.

Reaching Critical Mess:

Once venerated and feared in equal measure, restaurant critics have had their influence eroded through the changing media landscape and the growth of social media. The internet has replaced experts with amateurs as bloggers engage in a meals-for-mentions trade-off with restaurants. Will traditional food critics have the final say?

Tradition versus Innovation:

When it comes to new dining experiences, will science replace our senses? To what extent does technology impact our taste?

The Historical Future:

In a back-to-basics trend, chefs are honouring primal cooking techniques, returning to fire and water, exploring indigenous cuisines and delving into the past to create a new culinary future.

(F . O . F)

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Making

The

In recent years, chefs have transitioned from innovators to instructors. Blue collar cooks are now white-knight advocates. As chefs continue to step out of the kitchens and into the spotlight, how will their public personas evolve?

The Recipe for Success:

Take a dollop ofchutzpah, add a pinch of controversy, a generous dose of creativity, stir until a personality starts to thicken, bring to boil and present with a side dish of showmanship.

Since the emergence of modern restaurants over 100 years ago, the role of the chef has not changed. Traditionally regarded as cooks and creators, for the most part they toiled behind the scenes, entirely comfortable in their anonymity. Today however, successful chefs are entrepreneurs, social activists and budding scientists.

Like engineers, doctors and teachers, chefs can make a positive impact on society. After all, the ability to feed people and identify healthy food sources remains a global issue. Increasingly, chefs are combining their collective talents to challenge the ways we eat and cook.

Beyond mastering technical skills, the chefs of tomorrow need to understand farming methods and design trends, and to be prepared to mentor outside the kitchen and adapt to changing technologies.

The MAD Symposium and global cooking events such as The Gelinaz Shuffle are creating communities of like-minded culinary thinkers, or *philochefers*, who share ideas on the ever-evolving role of the chef. These movements are creating a new generation of chefs who, although coming from diverse backgrounds, share a mission to change the way we cook and eat.

New Chef



1



The new roles...

THE ARTIST

Pierre Hermé, the great French pastry chef, is heralded as “the Picasso of Pastry”. *The New York Times* compares Ferran Adrià to Salvador Dalí. Vicky Lau, Asia’s Best Female Chef 2015, was a graphic designer before entering the kitchen. Frédéric Peneau, chef-restaurateur behind Hong Kong’s Serge et le phoque, is a former architect.

Future chefs are no longer simply cooks working in restaurants; they are artisans, designers or visual artists operating in ‘studios’, ‘labs’ and ‘ateliers’.

Ukraine’s Dinara Kasko, a former architectural designer-turned pastry chef, uses design software and 3D printing to mould pastry structures that replace manual cooking techniques. Coolhaus, the Los Angeles-based ‘architecturally inspired’ brand of gourmet desserts, was co-founded by Freya Estreller and

Natasha Case, a former real estate developer and designer respectively. After losing their jobs in the economic downturn, they bought a food truck and introduced their brand of “Farchitecture”, a combination of food and architecture. In an effort to make architecture accessible and fun, they launched a range of ice creams and desserts named after designers, like “Renzo Apple Pie-ano”.

Today, food is being celebrated – and elevated – as an art form. The opening of New York’s Museum of Food and Drink (MOFAD) showcases the history, science and culture of food. Likewise, museums are turning their focus to F&B programmes. In *Situ* by Corey Lee, at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA), visitors are guided through a gallery of curated dishes from the world’s most celebrated chefs.

In the future, we will see more crossovers in the worlds of art, food and design. Chefs will continue to push the boundaries of culinary innovation, inviting guests to dine in the dark, in stripped-back spaces or in avant-garde settings designed to stir the senses.

THE ACTIVIST

Name any hard-hitting issue today – poverty, sustainability, genetic modification, childhood nutrition, refugees – and you’re likely to find a chef doing their bit to solve it. **Chefs today are using their celebrity to create change with socio-economic and environmental issues.**

Massimo Bottura, known for his contemporary Italian cuisine and securing the No.1 spot in the World’s 50 Best Restaurants 2016 list, is taking haute cuisine to the streets, feeding the homeless with his Refettorio initiative. During World Expo 2015 in Milan and this year’s Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, he and his band of volunteer chefs made comforting, nutritious meals for the homeless from food waste that would have otherwise been thrown away.

One of the forerunners in food activism is British chef Jamie Oliver who has taken his fight against childhood obesity from school cafeterias to halls of government, recently lobbying for a sugar tax in the U.K. While in the United States, former Noma head chef Daniel Giusti launched Brigaid, with the goal of putting chefs in schools to change the way students eat. Schools are also funding programmes to start community farms and gardens where children can take a hands-on approach to understanding where food comes from.



Food and policy has never been so closely linked, with chefs acting as counsel to politicians. Chef Dan Barber of Blue Hill was appointed by President Barack Obama to serve on the President’s Council on Physical Fitness, Sports and Nutrition, and is one of many chefs leveraging their culinary clout to lobby for change.

Chefs are also coming to the rescue of refugees. Initiatives like The Conflict Kitchen, Migratory Chefs (Les Cuistots Migrateurs) and the Refugee Food Festival had renowned chefs partnering with refugee chefs for an exchange of gastronomy and

culture. *Soup for Syria*, a cookbook and humanitarian campaign designed to raise awareness for the Syrian refugees, was created by Lebanese food writer and photographer Barbara Abdeni Massaad.

Food waste and sustainability remain some of the most pressing issues facing chefs and restaurants today. Crafting strategies to address these issues is no longer an option but a business imperative. Bo.lan in Bangkok, known for its contemporary Thai cuisine, is striving to become the city’s first zero-waste restaurant by implementing its own organic waste recycling system and growing its own food.

Beyond the kitchen, chefs are embracing their new roles as agents of change. Connecticut chef Michel Nischan, founder of non-profit Wholesome Wave, is working to make farm-fresh produce available in low-income communities. Similarly non-chefs are making the connection between low-income families and access to nutritious food. American fashion designer Ron Finley, self-proclaimed “Guerrilla Gardener”, grows fruits and vegetables in South Los Angeles. “Growing your own food is like printing your own money!” says Finley. If food is as powerful as currency, we will be seeing more chefs standing up to shape policy and running purpose-driven enterprises.





1

THE EDUCATOR

With an increased awareness of – and concern for – health, hunger and waste issues, chefs are using their expertise in schools and non-profit organisations.

Long before Michelle Obama converted the White House garden into a vegetable patch, chef and restaurateur Alice Waters, the venerated high priestess of the farm-to-table movement and founder of Chez Panisse, was turning school playgrounds into “Edible Schoolyards”. Her pioneering programme engages children by teaching them to grow and harvest their own fruits and vegetables.

More recently, chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten started Food Dreams, a foundation that grants scholarships to graduates to pursue a career in the culinary arts and Michael Laiskonis, former executive pastry chef of New York’s Le Bernardin, was appointed creative director of the Institute of Culinary Education.

While culinary schools have been a thriving business, especially in the last decade, food brands also see the value in education. High-end chocolate brand Valrhona for example, has expanded its professional school to Brooklyn, offering pastry and confection classes with world-renowned chefs.

Although the restaurant industry remains competitive and stressful, communities of chefs are banding together to share information and serve as mentors. With the challenges and costs involved in opening a restaurant, **the future will see more chefs sharing their skills in a classroom rather than a kitchen.**



THE SCIENTIST

While chefs support artistic and philanthropic approaches to cooking, science and burgeoning technologies are changing how we eat.

Nathan Myhrvold, Microsoft’s Chief Technology Officer, is famous for his *Modernist Cuisine* cookbook, which applies scientific principles to cooking. J. Kenji Lopez-Alt, the American chef and author of *The Food Lab*, is a graduate of MIT and explains complicated recipes through scientific principles.

While a number of high-profile chefs, such as Heston Blumenthal and Grant Achatz, are known as much for their chemistry know-how as their culinary skills, we see this phenomenon filtering through to the general population. The phrase ‘molecular gastronomy’ once seemed exotic, but with sous-vide machines now as common as a blender, the concept has gone mainstream.

As diners develop more sophisticated tastes, there is increased demand for information. And technology is answering this demand. Apps like Chef Steps provide an online community of budding chefs who share fact-based tips and no-fail recipes.

Technology is also dictating the way we eat with a boom in meal-planning apps. **With this trend, chefs assume the role of an engineer**, working with start-ups to determine what, when and how people will eat. These

apps depend on a chef’s knowledge of chemistry to understand how meals can stay fresh and require their input on the packaging, recipes and ingredients.

In developed nations, fewer people are cooking than ever before. In American households in 2014, for example, less than 60% of dinners served at home were actually cooked at home. The figure was closer to 75% 30 years earlier. Despite these findings, the irony is that interest in cooking has never been higher.

Millennials are spending more on ready-made foods, feeding the creation of meal delivery companies and pre-packaged foods. According to a recent U.S. report, in-store dining and take-out of prepared meals from grocery stores grew nearly 30% since 2008, accounting for \$10 billion of consumer spending in 2015.◆

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In the future, chefs will need to be equal parts storyteller and technical master.

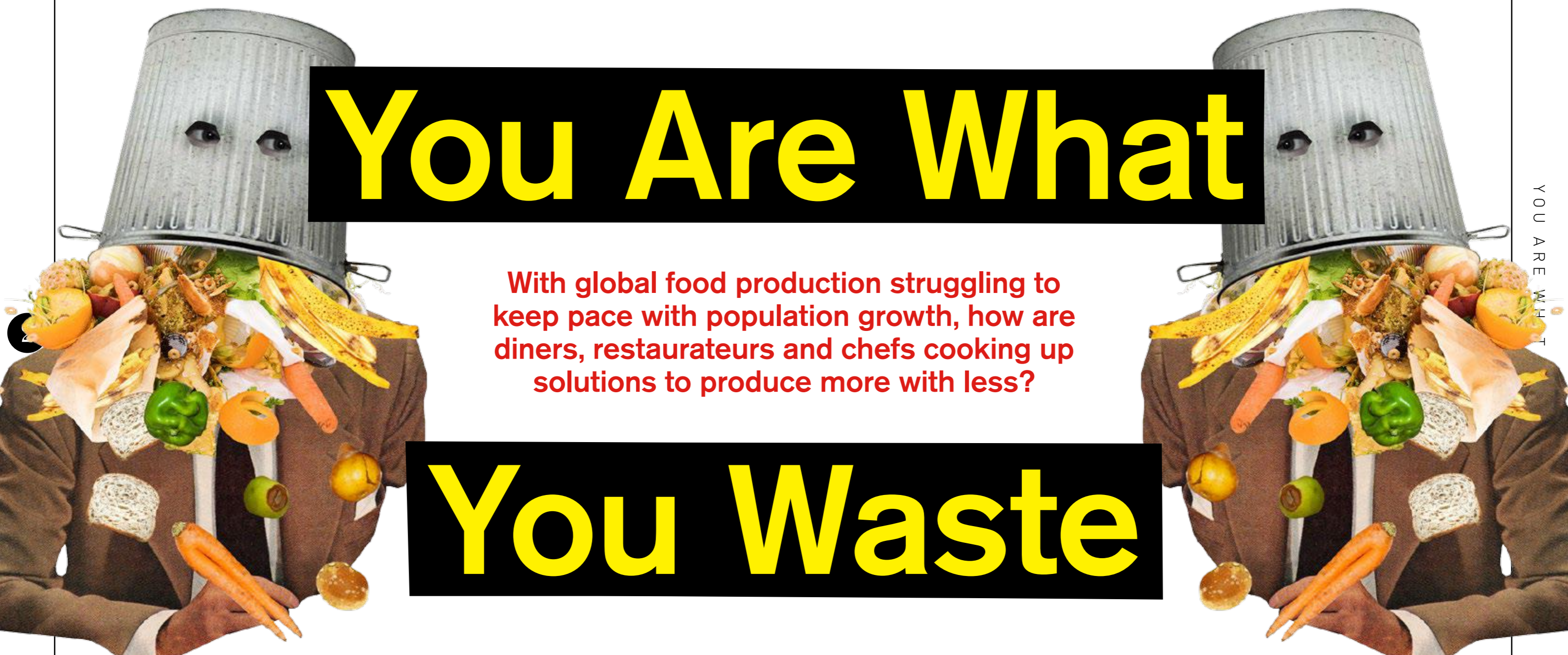
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The world today faces what is called the **“TRIPLE BURDEN OF MALNUTRITION : HUNGER, UNDERNUTRITION, OBESITY.”**

1/3 of the food produced in the world for human consumption every year- approximately **1.3 billion tonnes** - gets lost or wasted.

U.S. consumers waste up to **50%** more food than they did in the 1970s.

Fruits and vegetables have the highest wastage rates of any food. In some countries, it adds up to **50%** of the fruits and vegetables produced.



You Are What

With global food production struggling to keep pace with population growth, how are diners, restaurateurs and chefs cooking up solutions to produce more with less?

You Waste

U.K. supermarkets wasted **235,000 tonnes** of food in 2015, of which around half was avoidable and in edible condition.

Only **3%** of wasted food by U.K. supermarkets in good condition is donated to feed the needy.

Food production is struggling to keep up with the global population growth. If nothing is done, we are at risk of running out by **2050.**

The Waste Race

Increased awareness of food waste and its impact on society and the environment is changing **consumer behaviour** and **food manufacturing processes**.

Start-ups, government initiatives and cutting-edge technologies are working to convert food waste into some thing edible.

FARMED TO FORM

Over 50% of vegetables and fruits are discarded because they don't look perfect, even though they're perfectly fine to eat. Social movements are raising awareness of imperfect food and educating consumers to look beyond the surface. Supermarkets like Intermarché in France, for example, sell imperfect produce at a much cheaper price to encourage consumption.

Start-ups are also doing their bit to curb food waste. Rubies in the Rubble, a U.K. based start-up, creates relish and chutneys out of food that would otherwise be wasted. The Real Junk Food Project is a global, organic network of pay-what-you-like cafes that convert food destined for landfills into delicious meals. There are already 125 of these cafes dotted

throughout the U.K., Australia, Europe and America and we can expect more in the near future.

HEARTBREAK FRIDGE

"Wasting food has become so normal there is now no stigma attached to throwing food away."

This was the shocking truth discovered behind British supermarket chain Sainsbury's recent study on food waste patterns. In response, the chain committed to distributing one million fridge thermometers to ensure fridges stay at the optimum temperature to prolong the life of fresh food.

U.K. households discard the equivalent of six good meals a week, largely due to being unaware of what can and can't be frozen and for how

long. Here's a cold fact: **Freezing does not alter the taste of food and freezers limit food waste.**

Freezer technology will evolve with speed-freezing functions and improvements to eliminate freezer burns and icing. We will see more 'walk-in freezers' in restaurant kitchens filled with produce bought in season and therefore at a lower price.

Likewise, 'smart fridges' now in development will play a crucial role in reducing food waste. These fridges can be linked to a mobile phone, giving users access to the contents of their fridge while in the supermarket so they can avoid impulse purchases or over buying.



WASTED EDUCATION

Consumers are changing their behaviour as they become more aware of the food waste issue. Schools are also focusing on the problem. In Leeds in the U.K., both private and public schools have started food waste programmes and finding solutions. The Fuel for Food Project, for example, converts wasted food into breakfasts for primary school students.

The online app Too Good To Go further illustrates consumer awareness.

The app allows users to buy leftover food from restaurants or connects them with other shoppers nearby who have bought items in bulk or accidentally bought too much.

Sell-by dates are also responsible for food waste. 84% of American consumers admit to discarding food after the recommended use-by date. These labels are not indicators of safety, but of freshness. The best way to understand this is through cooking. **Cooking with leftovers** will force home cooks to think outside the box, using a hodgepodge of ingredients to create a fresh new dish. In fact, Americans could rescue about 8 million pounds of food every year otherwise doomed by their use-by dates.

Governments are also regulating against companies that dump food in landfills. In America, five states and several cities have already introduced 'landfill bans' to reduce food waste. In February, France banned supermarkets from discarding edible foods, making food donations to food banks or charities obligatory.

JUNK FOOD

Groundbreaking technology is helping to reduce food waste. Scientists at Hong Kong's City University, for

example, developed a bio-refinery process that converts food waste into textile fibres. The discovery could help manage the 3,600 tonnes of food waste produced in Hong Kong every day.

Another invention, the 'BioDigester', converts food and paper waste into biofuel, which is combusted to generate heat, electricity or even renewable gas. In our fight against food waste, we will continue to see innovative processes that limit leftovers and recycle valuable resources. ♦



Garbage Soup

Not quite your garden variety vegetable soup but this hearty and delicious recipe turns your grubs into a gourmet treat using scraps destined for the garbage.

SERVES 1
for many days, or many for a day

Ingredients

- 4 - 5 potatoes of varying shapes and sizes, some bruised and dirty are fine
- 2 gnarly carrots
- 1 bruised, but firm onion (any colour is fine)
- 1 large leek (don't worry, the dirt outside washes off)
- 3 tbsp oil or fat (butter, lard, olive, grape, all are fine)
- 6 cups vegetable stock (made with any vegetable scrap that was about to hit the bin)
- 1/2 cup crème fraiche that's one week past expiry
- 1/4 cup minced herbs (gather all the bits left in your fridge)

Cooking Method

- 1 _____ Cut and peel all the vegetables, making sure to peel efficiently and save the scraps for compost.
- 2 _____ Sauté everything in a stock pot with the fat and cook until slightly translucent without burning.
- 3 _____ Cover the vegetables with the stock and simmer until softened and aromatic.
- 4 _____ Add the crème fraiche and herbs, stir and season.
- 5 _____ Enjoy with a nub of toasted stale bread.

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Farm to Fable

The farm to table movement promised an assurance of authenticity, quality and intimacy with a meal's origins. Unfortunately, that's not the reality. Globalisation, economics, technology and the logistics of the supply chain have seasoned our food with uncertainty. Consumers are now more disconnected than ever before to the origins of their food. While health-conscious consumers embrace the concepts of 'provenance', 'local' and 'farm fresh', truth is we're being fed a diet of fake food and half-truths. As unscrupulous suppliers deceive consumers through mislabelling, creative chefs are toying with our perceptions of real food and science is pushing the boundaries of lab-grown meat.

When it comes to food production, if you can't make it, fake it.

Who knew that our good intentions to eat healthier would backfire? Striving for a healthier lifestyle has come at a high cost. The proven health benefits of olive oil prompted a spike in sales and production. Recently, however, it was discovered that about 80% of Italian oil is neither extra virgin, from Italy or even composed of olives. Similarly, wild porcini and chanterelle mushrooms sold in Italy may have actually been grown in Yunnan, China. While there's nothing wrong with Chinese-grown mushrooms, an 'Italian' provenance speaks to a higher quality and authenticity.

For years, nutritionists have encouraged us to add seafood to our diet, hailing the curative effects of omega-3 acids. According to OCEANA Association, though, one in five seafood samples are intentionally mislabelled.

Among the 2,5000 sampled fish, 58% could cause health risks. To cut costs and boost profits, suppliers replaced expensive

fish with cheaper alternatives. Tilapia or tilefish for example, is very often passed off as red snapper.

Food fraud, whether in labelling or provenance, is rampant and lax import laws have contributed to the practice.

Declining natural resources and unrelenting global demand has sparked increasing cases of food fraud. In 2013, food sourcing and mislabelling became front page news when it was discovered frozen beef burgers sold in Irish and British supermarkets contained horse meat. More recently, Consumentenbond, a Dutch non-profit consumer protection organisation, tested 150 products and found one in five to be fake. Half the samples of manuka honey were fraudulent as were 47% of the lamb products. One-fifth of the tested lamb samples contained no lamb at all.

Sadly, we don't see this trend subsiding in the immediate future. With real, non-processed food resources dwindling and consumption increasing, the gap will be rife with unscrupulous suppliers. **Policing this isn't high on governments' lists** and it'll be up to consumer watchdog groups and individuals like chefs to

guarantee the quality and provenance of the food by demanding purveyors to account for a secure supply chain. To control the taste and quality of their food, **chefs will need to develop new skills**, from fermentation and curing to bread making, farming and butchering.

CULINARY TROMPE L'OEIL

Chefs are using chemistry – and a heavy dose of creativity – to create gastronomic illusions.

Molecular gastronomy ushered in a whole new way of looking at and working with food. And while pundits have heralded its demise, chefs will continue to manipulate flavours and textures, deconstruct then recreate food and serve us a bit of **theatricality on the plate and palate**.

The future of cooking won't just be about ingredient manipulation through gadgets and chemistry. **Flavour mimicry** is on the rise. Chefs are looking beyond the kitchen and laboratory into nature as a reference for culinary masquerade. Sorrel resembles green apple. Ants taste like berries. Black forest ham mimics the flavours of franks and beans, so when paired with craft beer, is elevated with complex aromas. Scent and flavour are invisible elements that create the memory and associations of a dish, yet are the most challenging for chefs to execute and diners to sense.



Form, function and flavours will continue to collide in exciting ways to challenge convention. A look back at some of the most iconic dishes in the last decade tells you that what's ahead could be even more fantastical.

Take Heston Blumenthal's iconic 'meat fruit', a chicken liver parfait referencing Medieval flavours yet encased in modern form – a jelly that resembles a fresh Mandarin orange. Andoni Luis Aduriz of Spanish restaurant Mugaritz, serves a veal dish that appears as a lump of charcoal. Grant Achatz from Chicago's famed Alinea redesigned green apple taffy as an edible helium-filled balloon.

FABRICATED FOOD

Lab-grown meat, once a *Soylent Green* symbol of a dystopian future, is now a reality.

Increasingly, consumers are opting for vegetable-based meals for their own health — and the health of the planet. While a vegetable-based diet leaves a smaller carbon footprint, livestock production is responsible for 14.5% of all greenhouse gas emissions. Coupled with fears about hormones and rising beef prices, it's hardly surprising that **meat consumption in the U.S. has been declining for a decade.**

Vegetable-forward restaurants — where vegetables are the main attraction — are increasingly popular. Al's Place in San Francisco's Mission District, for example, lists meat as a side dish on its menu. At the forefront of a growing trend, *Bon Appétit* magazine named Al's Place its best new restaurant in 2015.

Due to advances in the food-tech industry, though, several startups have replicated the taste of meat in plant-based products. The Silicon Valley start-up Impossible Foods has raised \$75m to develop plant-based meat and cheese imitations. According to the company's website: "The world loves meat, but relying on cows to make meat is land-hungry, water-thirsty and pollution-heavy. That's why we set out to do the impossible: make delicious meats

that are good for people and the planet." Their inaugural product, The Impossible Burger, is a lab-made meatless burger that cooks, smells and bleeds like beef.

New Wave Foods, another Silicon Valley start-up, created an algae-based shrimp, with flavours and textures to replicate the crustacean.

While plant-based meat has secured a place in the future, its development will run parallel to **in vitro** — or 'synthetic' — **meats**. Although production has yet to reach a commercial scale, it's likely to achieve this goal in the near future. Unlike traditional cattle farming, however, **in vitro** meat production leaves no carbon footprint, making it a very attractive option.◆

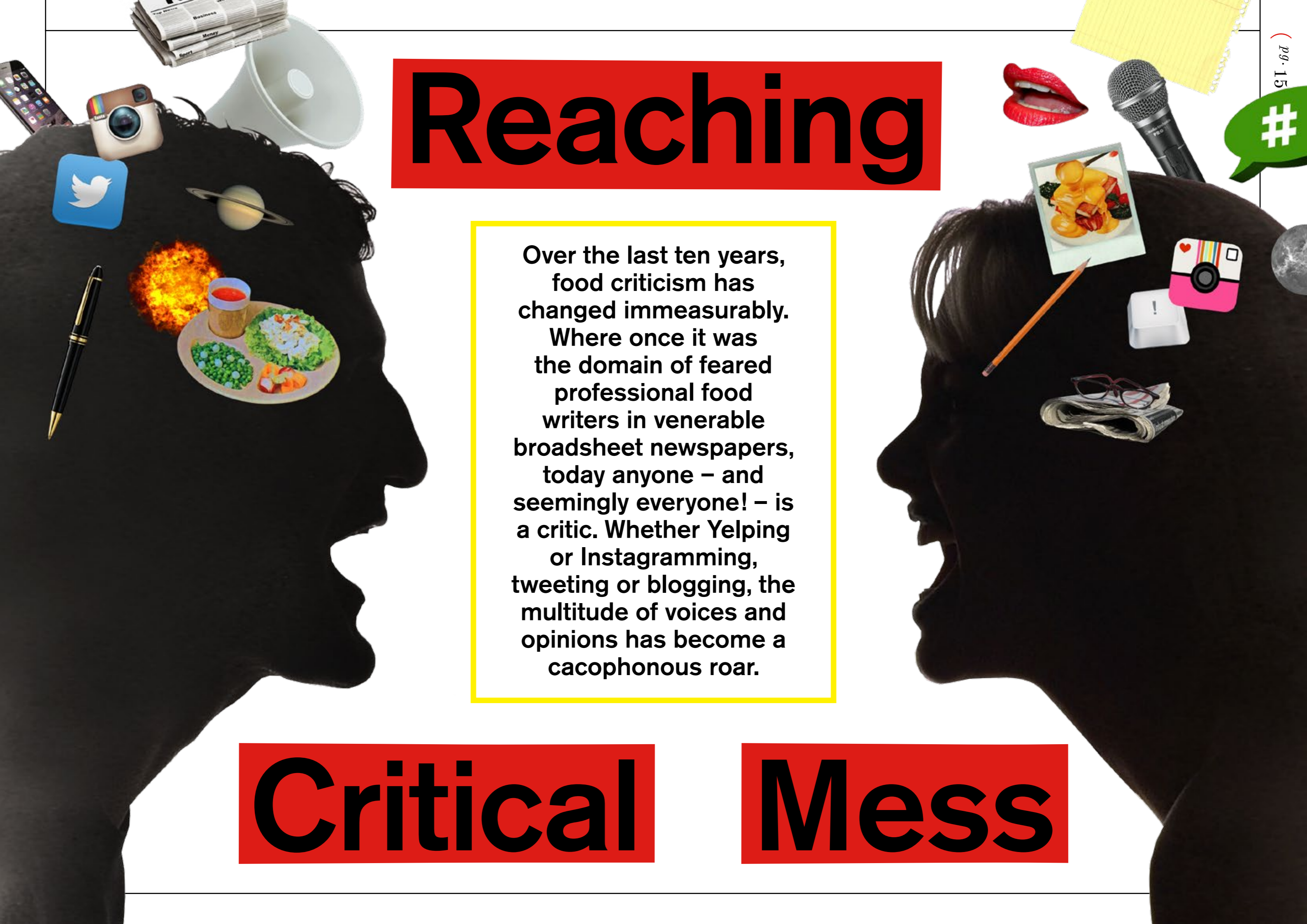


Reaching

Over the last ten years, food criticism has changed immeasurably. Where once it was the domain of feared professional food writers in venerable broadsheet newspapers, today anyone – and seemingly everyone! – is a critic. Whether Yelping or Instagramming, tweeting or blogging, the multitude of voices and opinions has become a cacophonous roar.

Critical

Mess



SOCIAL MEDIA HAS POSITIVELY IMPACTED FOOD CRITICISM. DISCUSS.

Chefs and restaurant owners now have multiple channels of feedback on their work, even if they're not always happy to read them. Some of the best bloggers have the integrity, experience and talent to stand as credible voices, often beating professional critics when it comes to audience size, while many of the world's top chefs have embraced Instagram and other platforms in order to showcase their most beautiful dishes.

Food magazine *Saveur's* annual awards champion the very best blogs, while standout personal sites such as *Ulterior Epicure* or *The London Foodie* gain thousands of followers and readers.

MOST BLOGGERS ARE MERELY BLACKMAILERS. AGREE?

For every painstakingly-researched and considered online review, there are countless cringe-inducing stories of threats from bloggers to post bad reviews unless a restaurant serves up a complimentary meal. John Lethlean writes at *The Australian* newspaper and reported how a Sydney-based restaurant called out a request from an Instagrammer to get a free meal in exchange for "*Instagram coverage and reviews.*" The restaurant's response was barely fit to print.

This new paradigm of food 'criticism' is not a flash in the frying pan. Those seeking to shamelessly profit from culinary blackmail are unfortunately here to stay. Taking on the digital cowboys at their own game, naming and shaming some of those guilty of profiteering, is one response. But this being a vast and unregulated universe, most have carried on regardless, hunting down the next free risotto or Rioja.

As Lethlean explained, qualified food critics seem to be "*a diminishing coterie who are more valuable than ever in a world of exploding food options.*"

WITH A MEDIA UNIVERSE IN FLUX, BLOGGERS HAVE THE LAST WORD.

In an age of attention-deficient readers who won't spend more than three minutes on a story, it's easy to posit that bloggers will be the future arbiters of taste.

But judging by the success of *LA Times* food critic Jonathan Gold, respected critics still have a powerful voice. No ordinary writer, he's been the subject of a feature-length documentary, titled *City of Gold*, and also holds the distinction of being the first and only food critic to win a Pulitzer Prize for his work. His rigorous approach delivers a passionate, informed and hugely entertaining body of work that is testament to how good – and important! – food writing can be.

His is a world where money and status are irrelevant, where dining epiphanies take place in plush dining rooms in Beverly Hills as well as in front of humble taco stands. His voice is counted on by thousands of readers and can determine the success – or otherwise – of new restaurants.

Another voice comes in the form of respected lists such as *The World's 50 Best Restaurants* or *The Michelin Guide*, both of which allow for informed debate and discussion around the value of restaurant criticism. While often controversial and always subjective – let's not pretend otherwise – they also serve to connect diners to the world of gastronomy, identifying and endorsing new destinations and trends, broadening culinary horizons.

So where does that leave food criticism going forward? Will bloggers and Instagrammers overtake the Jonathan Golds of the world?

It would seem that a hybrid of these various attributes could provide the Holy Grail of food criticism: knowledgeable, beautiful, impartial, carefully-crafted copy, allied with compelling images, social and digital integration, backed up where necessary by credible industry lists and sources.

Ultimately, one thing hasn't changed: Diners still want to read from writers who truly know what they are talking about. Those who have years of experience tasting, researching, interviewing and writing come to their conclusions based on experience, not on free lunches or Photoshopped iPhone snaps. ♦

A scroll with a shield, pen, knife, and coins. The shield is blue with a gold border and a gold fleur-de-lis. The pen is silver and the knife is black. There are three coins: a silver dime, a copper penny, and a gold dollar coin. The scroll is on a red background.

The **10** Commandments of Writing Food Reviews

{ I }

Dining out can make you poor. It doesn't make you a seasoned food critic.

{ II }

Thou shalt not use one's position to secure free meals or receive special treatment. Contrary to what many assume, the restaurant is under no obligation to host your friends or members of your family.

{ III }

Restaurants shalt not expect a favourable review upon offering a free meal and likewise critics shalt not let a free meal influence the review.

{ IV }

Thou shalt not write bland reviews. Support your opinions with a deeper knowledge of food rather than relying on taste alone.

{ V }

Thou shalt ask. If you're unclear about a menu's concept or a dish's ingredients, ask during the meal. Don't voice your assumptions or misgivings after the fact.

{ VI }

Thou shalt keep a professional distance from chefs. How else can one maintain objectivity?

{ VII }

Thou shalt follow basic journalistic standards by fact checking all details and accurately spelling the name of the chef and restaurant.

{ VIII }

Restaurants shall observe that there is no such thing as a 'soft opening'. If the doors are open, you're open to criticism.

{ IX }

Thou shalt reflect upon the work and discipline of legendary food critics, from A.A Gill to Pete Wells, Jonathan Gold or Fay Maschler before considering to be one.

{ X }

Thou shalt strive to be original in formulating one's opinions and not be influenced by prior reviews and comments made by others.



Tradition vs

Innovation



7

SYNTHETIC PLEASURES

We're quickly losing the art of dining. In the pursuit of efficiency, the rituals of cooking and eating have been reduced to their most basic forms. What was once a communal experience is now a solo chore.

Cooking has become an inconvenience, disrupting our daily work-obsessed routine. For a protein boost, we take powdered shakes in the form of Soylent and Huel and tolerate its gritty contents and cardboard

blandness. In this instance, 'cooking' comprises taking a measurement, adding water, shaking and consuming. No chewing required.

The process and skill once required to create a perfect cup of coffee no longer apply, making the office 'coffee break' obsolete. Instead, it's now possible to chew on a caffeine gummy from Go Cubes to trick your brain into receiving a caffeine jolt and powering through an extended workday.

The meditative ritual of tea making has been debased into an aerosol can. With No More Tea Bags, users simply spray the contents into a cup and add hot water. Turns out even the 90-second routine of immersing a tea bag into hot water can be sped up.

Even taste and flavours are synthetic reproductions. 'Real food' has been engineered in an effort to replicate the original taste of food we've lost through technological advances in food production and farming. Our taste buds are no longer able to detect subtleties, a skill prized in haute-cuisine.

We don't cook, but we want to see how food is prepared. We can watch a two-hour stew being made through two-minute cooking videos. No words or personalities are required to explain complex instructions, but a pair of hands chopping and sautéing away will teach the

understanding of a dish. *Tastemade*, the digital food and travel publisher, gets more than 1.3 billion monthly views on Facebook and averages 300,000 views per day on Instagram with their regular video recipe posts. Despite these staggering numbers, millennials are still not entering the kitchen, and most likely will never recreate the dishes they've watched online.

SINGLE SIGNALS

This super-efficient and hyper-connected world has reduced the need for physical interaction. We order food through a meal app, never once having to look at or interact with a person. We learn about restaurants and food through photography and on our Instagram feeds. Images profile a dish, its flavours and associated emotions. Add a #hashtag and geotag and we feel like we've already been there, done that.

Social scientists are also pointing out to the growing number of single people. In 1970, there were 38 million single people in the U.S., constituting 28% of the population. In 2014, there were 107 million and they comprised 45% of the population.

Restaurateurs are taking advantage of this go-it-alone trend. Marina Van Goor is the creator of Eenmaal, Amsterdam's pop-up restaurant catering purely for solo diners. Her intention is to destigmatise eating alone. "I've already got such positive reactions to the concept," Van Goor explains. "In a global busy city, there's an increasing interest in moments of disconnection. With Eenmaal, we have created an attractive place for such a disconnection, by eating alone

at a table for one." The 'table for one' reservation is becoming the norm as more people accept the reality of dining alone and restaurants adapt with bar seating and communal tables. This disconnect is compounded by the use of smartphones. As we eat in silence and stare into the screen, we share images via smartphones to our virtual dinner companions. **The communal act of eating is now online as the internet consumes our food and we, in turn, consume the internet!**

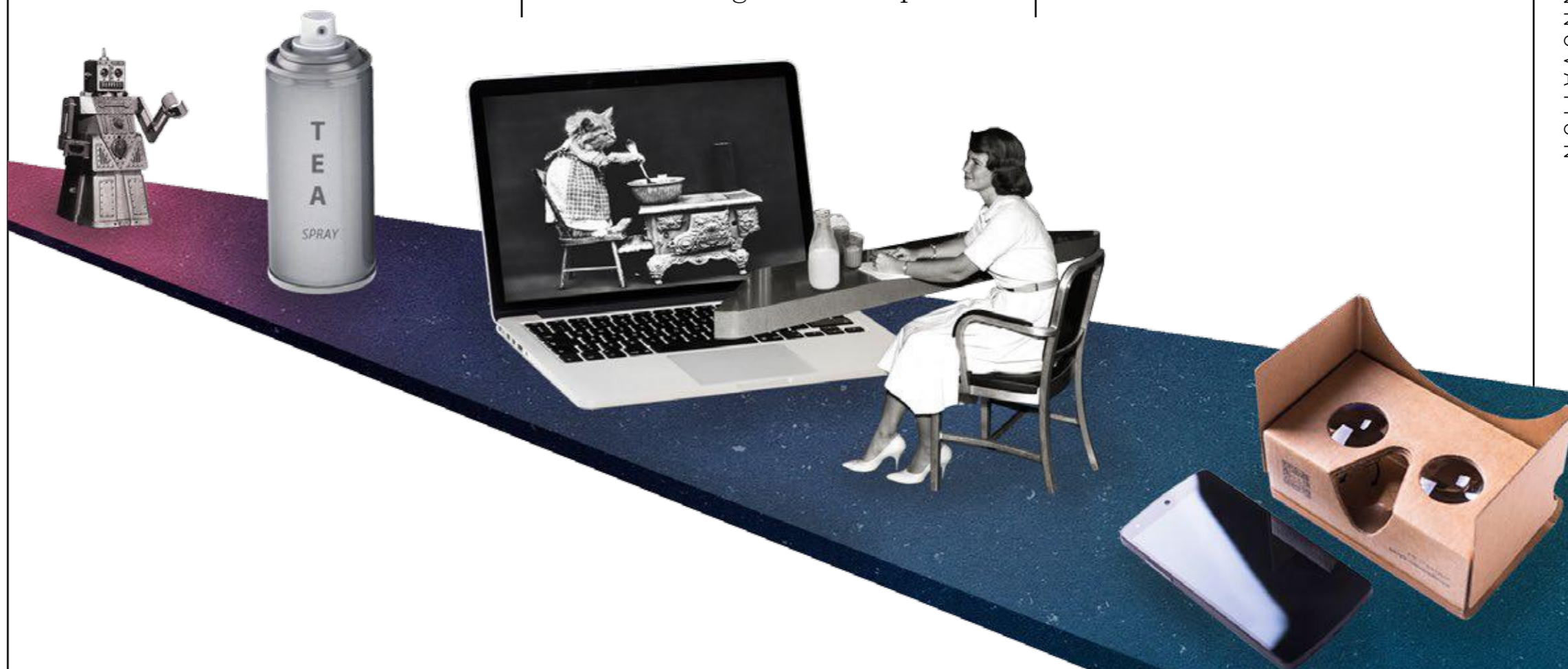
COOKS IN CONTROL

We want to be better cooks without ever having to cook. New cooking gadgets allow us to produce no-fail recipes with precision and control, skills normally developed through years of training.

Our reliance on technology is replacing our ability to cook with our senses and learning from our failures. Breville's Control Freak, the latest induction cooktop, allows for unprecedented control of temperature, heat speed and time. Cooks no longer have to practice

perfecting crème Anglaise because the Control Freak will do it for you.

Through technology, we can limit the failures and feel less intimidated about cooking. The advances do the calculations, measurements and guesswork for us. We are adapting the way we eat and cook to make the processes quicker and easier. But through these changes are we losing our instincts, intuition and vulnerability? With the internet, societal shifts and the advent of virtual reality headsets, social isolation is likely to rise. Eating and cooking, once communal experiences, are likely to become solitary duties performed out of necessity rather than connection.◆



A

Historical

Future Is In The Past: In a back-to-basics trend, chefs are honouring primal cooking techniques, returning to fire and water, exploring indigenous cuisines and delving into the past to create a new culinary future.

Nostalgia and history are shaping the way we eat. Our generation is focused on recovering, preserving **and maintaining cultural traditions through food** by referencing historical texts and recipes or revitalising ancient cooking methods in a contemporary context.

“ When it comes to eating, food and memory are inextricably linked. ”

Future



FIRED UP

The discovery of fire marked the dawn of civilisation. Despite the many technological developments in cooking and farming, fire remains a primal symbol that unites cultures and binds us with nature.

On the Netflix series *Chef's Table*, Argentinian chef Francis Mallmann celebrated open-fire cooking and revealed a movement where chefs are digging pits, firing up grills, and abandoning the glistening kitchen for smoke and soot.

Sweden's Niklas Ekstedt is another chef who has ditched modern technology in his restaurant and opted instead to burn a variety of Scandinavian woods for fuel. His rustic cooking methods reflect a back-to-basics movement that is being embraced by chefs around the world.

While cooking is as old as time, its organic, untamed qualities recall how our ancestors survived. Cooking with fire is at the heart of so many culinary traditions and dishes, from South Africa's 'braai', to Mongolian grilling, Turkish kebabs, and English Sunday roasts.

Complementing this new obsession

with open-fire cooking, **traditional cast iron cooking vessels and hand-forged brass cutlery** are also making a comeback. As **respect for cooking traditions** grow, people will continue to find ways to reconnect with their past, tap into food memories and explore with primal, natural elements.

WATER YOU WAITING FOR

Water is the source of all food. Dating back to prehistoric times, cooking with water signalled a tremendous advancement. It tamed the uncontrollable beast that is fire, allowed a simple pot to braise and boil and introduced new flavours and textures. With global warming and increasing drought affecting food-producing regions, we are learning that **water is a resource, not a commodity.**

While fire will continue to ignite culinary excitement, water is reviving how we farm, cook, eat and preserve our food. For example:

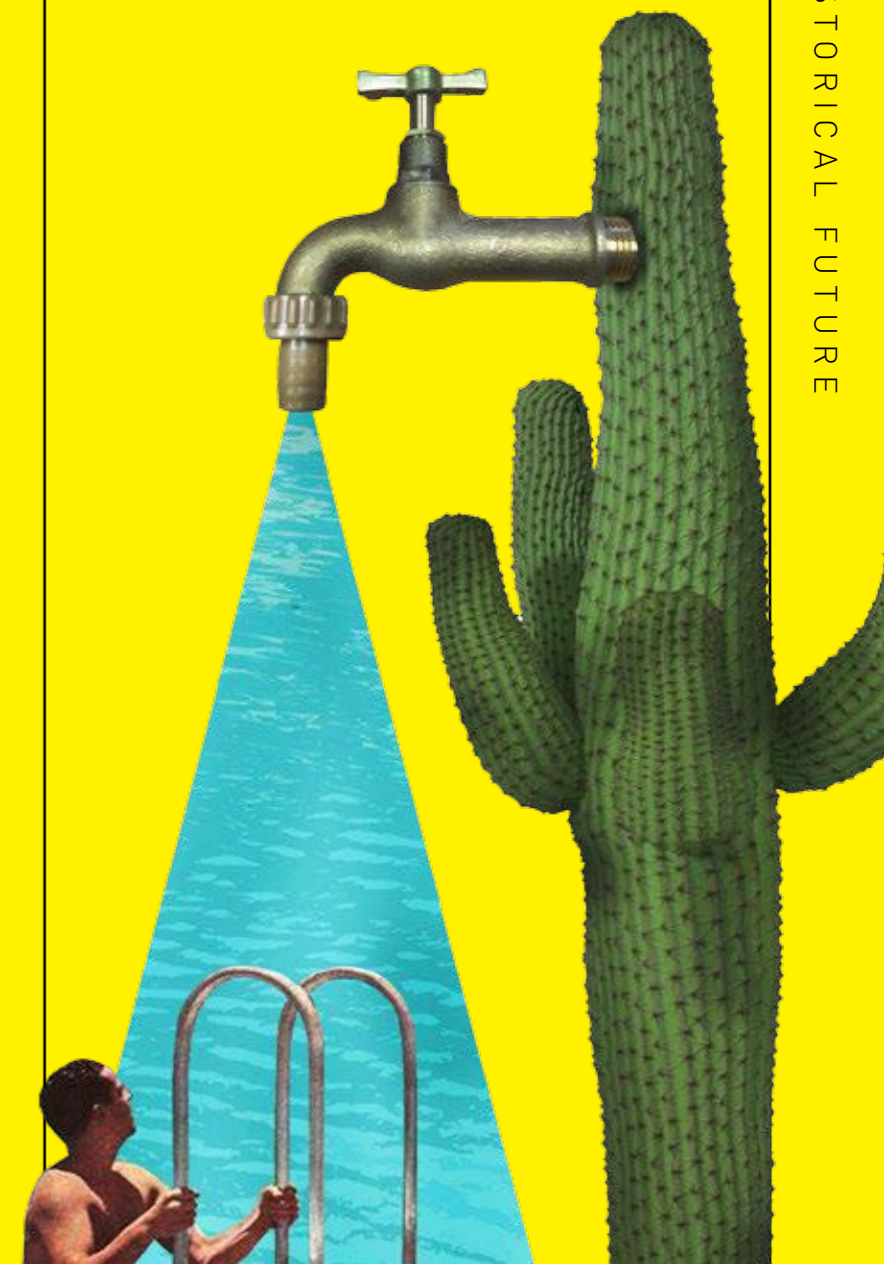
- **Hydroponic farming**, a more environmentally-friendly alternative that does not need soil, re-uses water, produces higher yields and requires less space.
- **Algae-based seafood** is emerging as a replacement for proteins.

- **Seaweed** is replacing kale as the new green alternative.
- The Japanese 'raindrop' cake, a traditional dessert featuring transparent agar jelly, became an online sensation and sparked a craze for see-through dishes.
- **Clean, clear ice blocks** are elevating whisky appreciation and the art of mixology.
- Sous-vide cooking, the vacuum and water-based cooking method at the heart of molecular cuisine, has now made its way into the consumer's kitchen and given a key role in daily food preparation.

With water-based farming and food production on the rise, we can expect changes in the way we cook and eat.

- **Braising and stews** will make a comeback. A healthy alternative to grilling and sautéing, big pot cooking evokes a nostalgic home cooking vibe.
- **Steaming**, a foundation to Chinese cuisine, will be more prominent in Western cuisines as health-conscious consumers educate themselves about how food is cooked. 'Steam restaurants' in Asia will eventually expand to western countries and replace the Asian hot-pot experience.
- **Chilled liquids** such as ice cream, shaved ice and slushies will continue to reign. Chefs will continue to refine their ice-cream and frozen confection repertoire, whether it's creating nostalgic soft-serve confections or avant-garde creations.

- Bottled water will be eliminated from restaurants with diners opting instead for **'house water'** made from purified water or sparkling water makers.
- Plant-based water is evolving beyond coconut and aloe drinks. **Cactus, maple and artichoke waters** have the added nutritional benefits that are gaining popularity over sport drinks.
- **Farming with seawater** not only addresses the issue of water shortage, but also provides a solution to producing food in challenging environments and climates.



LOOKING BACK TO FORGE A FUTURE

What is Culture Without Cuisine?

While chefs rebuild a relationship with nature through fire and water, many are also revisiting culinary traditions to create **cultural touchstones**.

Our ability to link a dish with a country shows how integral food is to a cultural identity. What dim sum is to Hong Kong, ramen is to Japan, tiramisu is to Italy and hot dogs are to the U.S.. Looking to dig into their cultural roots, chefs are exploring dishes that have been lost to time and **unearthing agricultural species** that connect the past to the present.

In an effort to preserve Italian heritage, Italian agronomist Isabella Dalla Ragione is preserving Italy's forgotten fruits by referencing Renaissance-era still-life paintings for ancient fruit varieties and cultivating them. Likewise, the Southern Exposure Seed Exchange in the U.S. has been preserving a slice of American culinary identity through **heirloom seed saving**. At the recently opened National Museum of African American History and Culture, a café serves regional American cuisine that reflects the diversity of African-American cuisine.

In the current climate of political and racial turmoil, indigenous identities are strengthened as ethnic groups stand to be recognised. "Sioux chef" Sean Sherman sought to recover the lost flavours of indigenous North Americans **by mining anthropological and ethnographic texts** and diary entries of his native ancestors. Indonesian "culinary anthropologist" Lisa Virgiano studied the cooking methods of the 600-plus native tribes that make up the Indonesian archipelago in order to create an authentic menu at restaurant Kaum in Potato Head, Bali.

A Back-to-Basics Recipe

Acting as culinary scholars, chefs are changing the dining experience. While fine dining will continue to occupy a revered space in gastronomic arts, pedigree chefs are abandoning their stars for **scaled-down simplicity**, opting to create accessible, **nostalgia-evoking menus**.

New York City's Brooks Headley, formerly the pastry chef at Del Posto, left his four-star kitchen to open Superiority Burger, an unpretentious restaurant serving a vegetarian and "accidental" vegan menu. Bangkok's Gaggan Anand will reportedly leave his top-ranking restaurant by 2020 to move to Japan to open a small restaurant. There's a collective movement among chefs to scale back the size of their restaurants, reducing service and going for a back-to-basics vibe. Chefs want to **regain ownership of the kitchen and restaurant**, creating more intimate and less pretentious dining environments.

The **comfort of simple foods** such as ice cream, burgers or a bowl of hot noodles triggers childhood memories. Chefs are trying to recapture these fleeting food memories through simple, familiar food. El Bulli's Ferran Adrià, for example, wanted to create a pizzeria to deconstruct the world's most popular dish to provide an 'honest interpretation' on why it remains so popular.

While an experimental meal can surprise your senses and expectations, memories of comfort food are both personal and universal. Pop-rock candies speak to a global generation while Spam speaks to another. Given the high cost of labour and ingredients, chefs and diners will turn their focus to creating food that revives priceless childhood memories. Food that evokes a sense of nostalgia might just be the highest expression of culinary skill.◆





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Special Thanks

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(F . O . F)

CatchOn is a brand communications and PR consultancy in hospitality, travel, and lifestyle. While we're usually busy spicing up brands, cooking up creative ideas, stirring up media interest, or making the unsavory palatable, we're always on the hunt for what's next. Food has long held our fascination because it intersects with virtually every aspect of living today.

The third edition of *"The Future of Food"* is our way of sharing our interest in the growing global discourse.

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ABOUT

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