



Good to Eat: Riddles of Food and Culture

By Marvin Harris

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Why are human food habits so diverse? Why do Americans recoil at the thought of dog meat? Jews and Moslems, pork? Hindus, beef? Why do Asians abhor milk? *In Good to Eat*, bestselling author Marvin Harris leads readers on an informative detective adventure to solve the world's major food puzzles. He explains the diversity of the world's gastronomic customs, demonstrating that what appear at first glance to be irrational food tastes turn out really to have been shaped by practical, or economic, or political necessity. In addition, his smart and spirited treatment sheds wisdom on such topics as why there has been an explosion in fast food, why history indicates that it's "bad" to eat people but "good" to kill them, and why children universally reject spinach. *Good to Eat* is more than an intellectual adventure in food for thought. It is a highly readable, scientifically accurate, and fascinating work that demystifies the causes of myriad human cultural differences.

Title of related interest also available from Waveland Press: Kahn, *Always Hungry, Never Greedy: Food and the Expression of Gender in a Melanesian Society* (ISBN 9780881337761).

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Good to Eat: Riddles of Food and Culture By Marvin Harris Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #752727 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Waveland Pr Inc
- Published on: 1998-07-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.50" h x 5.75" w x .75" l, .80 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 289 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Author of *Cannibals and Kings* and other notable studies, anthropologist Harris here presents his findings on the "puzzling eating habits" of humans. Drawing from his research on a wide range of ancient and modern societies, he offers his theories of the effects that religious laws and customs have had on cultural attitudes toward foods. There are chapters on the approved and the forbidden: beef, horsemeat and the flesh of other animals, including humans, fish, insects. Harris documents his provocative views on regulations governing comestibles in various cultures. For instance, he concludes that swineherding was impractical for nomadic desert dwellers, hence pork became taboo not because pigs were unclean but because they needed too much care. As for taste preferences, Harris notes that "good to eat" translates as "good to sell" in profit-conscious countries like the U.S. Macmillan Book Club selection; Library of Science and Natural Science alternate; foreign rights: Marcella Berger, S & S. January 8
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From Library Journal

Why are the world's food habits or "foodways," as Harris refers to them, so diverse? In this scholarly yet fast-paced and very readable work, anthropologist Harris argues that "major differences in world cuisines can be traced to ecological restraints and opportunities which differ from one region to another." He explores varied cultural phenomena including preoccupation with meat-eating; avoidance of killing cows among Hindus; Jews' and Moslems' abomination of pork; American's aversion to horsemeat; Southeast Asians' loathing of milk; avoidance of eating insects and pets; and cannibalismall having, in Harris's interpretation, a rational basis in circumstances, costs, and benefits, rather than stemming from arbitrary symbolism. This well-documented book is entertaining as well as informative, and both laypersons and scholars will find it of interest. Joan W. Gartland, Detroit
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Review

"Marvin Harris writes well and simply. He routinely puts a spin to his theory and data that makes good reading." --Martha C. Ward, University of New Orleans

"Very informative and well-researched. My students are enjoying the book and we are having excellent discussions on the material. It is very instrumental for teaching cultural relativism and cultural materialism." --Jenna Strizzi, Roger Williams University

Users Review

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Joseph Tucker:

As people who live in often the modest era should be up-date about what going on or data even knowledge to make these keep up with the era and that is always change and move ahead. Some of you maybe can update themselves by reading through books. It is a good choice for you but the problems coming to you is you don't know which you should start with. This *Good to Eat: Riddles of Food and Culture* is our recommendation to make you keep up with the world. Why, because this book serves what you want and want in this era.

Tenesha Little:

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