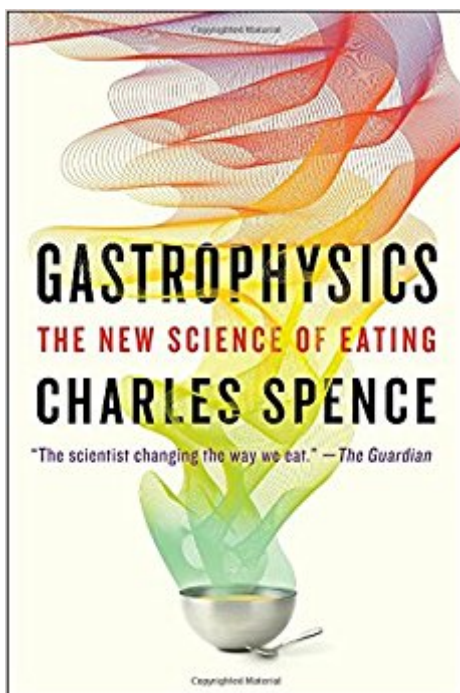


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Gastrophysics: The New Science Of Eating



Synopsis

The science behind a good meal: all the sounds, sights, and tastes that make us like what we're eating—and want to eat more. Why do we consume 35 percent more food when eating with one other person, and 75 percent more when dining with three? How do we explain the fact that people who like strong coffee drink more of it under bright lighting? And why does green ketchup just not work? The answer is gastrophysics, the new area of sensory science pioneered by Oxford professor Charles Spence. Now he's stepping out of his lab to lift the lid on the entire eating experience—how the taste, the aroma, and our overall enjoyment of food are influenced by all of our senses, as well as by our mood and expectations. The pleasures of food lie mostly in the mind, not in the mouth. Get that straight and you can start to understand what really makes food enjoyable, stimulating, and, most important, memorable. Spence reveals in amusing detail the importance of all the off-plate elements of a meal: the weight of cutlery, the color of the plate, the background music, and much more. Whether we're dining alone or at a dinner party, on a plane or in front of the TV, he reveals how to understand what we're tasting and influence what others experience. This is accessible science at its best, fascinating to anyone in possession of an appetite. Crammed with discoveries about our everyday sensory lives, *Gastrophysics* is a book guaranteed to make you look at your plate in a whole new way.

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Customer Reviews

A chatty whirl through the latest discoveries and their real-world applications, roughly organized by the five senses and different dining situations, Mr. Spence's book is far from a systematic

treatise on gastrophysics. • "Wall St Journal" "Real Simple" "fascinating...[Spence] considers everything from marketing and cognitive neuroscience to design and behavioral economics to get the scoop on how our brains process the food on our plate." • "PureWow" "Spence has a light touch and a knack for framing research questions in provocative headings: 'What's the link,' he asks, 'between the humble tomato and aircraft noise?' It's a question worth pondering should you have the dubious pleasure of being served an in-flight meal, just as you'll learn here why the barista at Starbucks puts your name on the cup (hint: it's not really a memory aid for said barista). A sharp, engaging education for food consumers and a font of ideas for restaurateurs and chefs as well." • "Kirkus" "Simply changing the name of a dish on a menu or the color of the plate on which it is served can dramatically alter our perception of taste and food quality, then everyone in the restaurant industry needs to read this and take a deeper look at the scientific secrets Professor Spence reveals in *Gastrophysics*." • "Larry Olmsted, New York Times bestselling author of *Real Food, Fake Food: What You Don't Know About What You're Eating & What You Can Do About It*" "Popular science at its best. Insightful, entertainingly written and peppered throughout with facts you can use in the kitchen, in the classroom, or in the pub." • "Daniel J. Levitin, New York Times bestselling author of *The Organized Mind* and *This Is Your Brain on Music*" "Spence allows people to appreciate the multisensory experience of eating." • "The New Yorker" "Not many people are as ready to realize the importance of the senses as Charles Spence." • "Ferran Adrià, El Bulli restaurant, Spain" "Can't fail to entertain, inform, and dazzle." • "Heston Blumenthal, The Fat Duck restaurant, UK" "A fascinating look at the science of food and how our perception is shaped by all our senses, not just taste." • "Sunday Times (UK)" "Gastrophysics serves up a mind-bending menu of fascinating insights." • "Observer (UK)"

Charles Spence is the head of the Crossmodal Research Laboratory at the University of Oxford. He has consulted for multinational companies including Toyota and ICI, advising on various aspects of multisensory design, packaging, and branding. He has featured frequently in *Time*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New Yorker*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Washington Post*, *Forbes*, *Barron's*, and *The Atlantic*. He is the co-author, with Betina Piqueras-Fiszman, of a college textbook, *The Perfect Meal*.

Gastrophysics is a manual for restaurants. It lays out in very precise terms how to affect the meal,

the satisfaction, enjoyment and memorability of the event. The advice comes from Charles Spence's day job, running a gastrophysics lab in Oxford, where human guinea pigs give up their secrets "secret from themselves mostly. Things like how the shape of plates or their tint affect the experience. Why airline food tastes less than fabulous (there are four very good reasons). How rotating the plate changes the entire impression of the meal. How spraying food fragrances warms up the audience. How the sound of crispness changes our attitude. How the weight of cutlery changes our impression. How putting up a sign (Italy Week) and using red checkered tablecloths make diners think the same Italian menu items from always are suddenly fresher and more authentic. How eating off a tablet computer screen (as a plate) allows for a background video to complement the food. Who knew the act of eating could be so complex? Every one of the five senses plays major role in our experience. Each one gets its own chapter to start the book off in a highly detailed and instructive, not to say addictive manner. Smell works in two areas "before the food enters the mouth and at the back of the throat. Smell alone has a direct connection to the brain, giving it by far the most influence on our appreciation. Taste, by comparison, is a weakling limited to five sensations. Food in motion (bacon sizzling, cheese flowing, yolks oozing) is a proven irresistible visual in advertising. There are endless experiments restaurants have tried. In order to get everyone in a good mood, one placed mooing cylinders (and nothing else) on its tables. With nothing else to fiddle with, people picked them up, tilted them, and they mooed, quickly causing everyone in the room to do the same, with resultant universal laughter. Controlling the setting is critical, which is why some high end places make you drive 50 miles out of town, and others in the city center allow no windows at all. All these and hundreds more factors are proven motivators of the palate. Unfortunately, we don't remember food as much as the experience. We remember the setting, the service, the lighting, and the comfort better than the food itself. This is frustrating for super chefs, and they constantly try to improve the memorability factor, not with the food, but with sideshows. In a nod back at supper clubs with floor shows, they use gimmicks like mp3 players, aroma sprays, live musicians, motorized dessert carts and robot servers to make the event memorable. This leads to a problem with the book: the last third is all about these extraneous attempts to make events memorable, well outside the scope of gastrophysics. The potential of battery-operated forks and fur-covered spoons is beyond. Another problem with Gastrophysics is that it is mostly about the super-rich restaurateurs. Spence loves citing world-renown establishments, constantly and repeatedly. The kind of places that charge upwards of £300/\$400 (and up to £1000) for a set tasting. They are his peeps. But they are the exception. Also, the many soft, black and white images are less than appetizing. Finally, Spence has a nasty habit of overusing

exclamation points! Oddly for a scientist so finely attuned to the subtleties of fine tuning, their use is confusing and distracting! The overall impression is overwhelming, making *Gastrophysics* a go-to reference for the food industry. And yes, you can and should try these things at home. David Wineberg

Why we eat the foods we eat. Why the color and shape of the dish makes a difference

It is interesting , popular and with some new ideas ! Not a real scientific book . Easy to read but with great distance from the course of Science and cooking from Harvard . Thanks for your services .

Easy reading, yet full of research based factual information.

Absolutely technical, but not in the biology way, mostly in the way it discusses how we decide what to eat, and why, and how smells and noises have a strong impact on our choices. After my recent studies on Neuromarketing, I was really happy that I came across this essay! Molto tecnico, ma non perch  si metta a spiegare la biologia della digestione, quanto piuttosto perch  esamina attentamente quali sono gli stimoli esterni che possono essere utilizzati per influenzare quello che scegliamo di mangiare. Considerato che recentemente avevo studiato un pochino di Neuromarketing, sono stata contenta di essermi imbattuta, quasi per caso, in questo saggio.

Charles Spence, an experimental psychologist who runs the Crossmodal Research Laboratory at Oxford's University, is the author of *Gastrophysics: The New Science of Eating*, where he fascinates us with discoveries on how memories, associations and emotions enhance the experience of eating, what Spence calls "the everything else." *Gastrophysics* conglomerates different disciplines such as experimental psychology, cognitive neuroscience, sensory science, neurogastronomy, marketing, design, and behavioral economics. Don't get discouraged about all this plethora of science; the book is easy to understand. Who Does *Gastrophysics* affect? Many modernist chefs are first to try *Gastrophysics*'s discoveries to create multisensory dishes. Moreover, modernist restaurants use this knowledge to keep relevancy in the culinary scene. At some point, even if you don't visit these Michelin-starred restaurants, you'll receive the influence of *Gastrophysics*, because the discoveries at the *Gastrophysics* lab will pass to the modernist restaurants and later to the mainstream through the food and beverage companies. Food vs Service Spence tells the story of a chef that wanted to know what his

diners remembered of the fabulous meals he served. The chef sent a questionnaire to his guests a couple of weeks after they have eaten at his restaurant. Surprise! The diners answered they remembered the experience, the meal not so much, not the specific ingredients and flavor combinations the chef worked hard to create. The diners remembered the surprising and/or unusual aspect of the service such as when the waitress sprayed some aroma over their dish. Furthermore, the experience was memorable, no doubt the guests enjoyed the food, but the factors that may bring them back are the combination of delicious food and great service.

5 Senses: Food Flavor Enhancers | Multisensory Dishes

The multisensory experience is happening whether we are aware of it or not. Furthermore, the researchers have found more connections between the senses than they ever realized. Many Chefs, restaurateurs, and the food and drink industry know the atmosphere affects everything. They have the interest on influencing people's behavior for different reasons, thanks to Gastrophysics. Chefs focus on food, but also they work to influence the environment to make a memorable experience for the guests enough for them to comment and recommend their restaurants. Modernist restaurants use plenty of resources to keep on top of people's memory with jaw-dropping effects, and they go to an extent that will depend on your budget to recreate the same experience at your dinner party. According to Charles Spence, the food and beverage industry funds widely the Crossmodal Research Laboratory. They work closely to quantify how much the atmosphere influences people's rating of taste, flavor, and preference. People involved with food and beverage businesses focus on different factors to improve the experience of their clients and increase their sales. Different aspects applied such as the art of food plating, the music at a restaurant or a supermarket, the packaging of food, the service, to keep client's loyalty and increase the business revenue, but the advances on Gastrophysics research take all that experimentation to a whole new level. How the mind and senses help to enhance food flavor is complex and fascinating. Even if we are unaware of gastrophysics, chefs, restaurateurs, and the food and beverage industry are paying attention, and using all the research results Gastrophysicists have discovered, and so can you now.

ARC REVIEW

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