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"Nasrallah's epic food memoir offers a smorgasbord of date history and fascinating facts topped with a dash of culture and a sprinkling of Arabic myth. Spicy and exotic, Dates: A Global History is also jam-packed with scrumptious date recipes for every occasion. After one read of this book, you'll feel like an honorary member of Nasrallah's huge family: armed and ready to prepare your own Middle Eastern date banquet."—

Dates: A Global History, Nasrallah

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In Dates, Nawal Nasrallah draws on her experience of growing up in the lands of ancient Mesopotamia, where the date palm was first cultivated, to explore the history behind the fruit. Dates have an important role in their arid homeland of the Middle East, where they are a dietary staple, consumed fresh or dried, as a snack or a dessert.

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In Dates, Nawal Nasrallah draws on her experience of growing up in the lands of ancient Mesopotamia, where the date palm was first cultivated, to explore the history behind the fruit. Dates have an important role in their arid homeland of the Middle East, where they are a dietary staple and can be consumed fresh or dried, as a snack or a dessert, and are even thought to have aphrodisiac qualities. In this history, Nasrallah describes the central role the date palm has played in the economy of the Middle East. This informative account of the date palm's story follows its journey from its land of origin to the far-flung regions where it is cultivated today. Along the way, Nasrallah weaves many fascinating and humorous anecdotes that explore the etymology, history, culture, religion, myths, and legends surrounding dates. For example, she explains how the tree came to be a symbol of the Tree of Life and associated with the fiery phoenix bird, the famous ancient goddess Ishtar, and the moon, and how the medjool date acquired its name. This delightful and unusual

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book is generously illustrated with many beautiful images, and supplemented with more than a dozen delicious date recipes for savory dishes, sweets, and wine.

From grasshoppers to grubs, an eye-opening look at insect cuisine around the world. An estimated two billion people worldwide regularly consume insects, yet bugs are rarely eaten in the West. Why are some disgusted at the thought of eating insects while others find them delicious? *Edible Insects: A Global History* provides a broad introduction to the role of insects as human food, from our prehistoric past to current food trends—and even recipes. On the menu are beetles, butterflies, grasshoppers, and grubs of many kinds, with stories that highlight traditional methods of insect collection, preparation, consumption, and preservation. But we not only encounter the culinary uses of creepy-crawlies across many cultures. We also learn of the potential of insects to alleviate global food shortages and natural resource overexploitation, as well as the role of world-class chefs in making insects palatable to consumers in the West.

From curries to creamy piña coladas, a delectable global history of the many culinary incarnations of the coconut. The flavor and image of the coconut are universally recognizable, conjuring up sweet, exotic pleasures. Called the “Swiss army knife” of the plant world, the versatile coconut can be an essential ingredient in savory curries, or a sacred element in Hindu rituals or Polynesian kava ceremonies. Coconut’s culinary credentials extend far beyond a sprinkling on a fabulous layer cake or cream pie to include products such as coconut vinegar, coconut sugar, coconut flour, and coconut oil. Complete with recipes, this book explores the global history of coconut from its ancient origins to its recent elevation to super-food status.

It’s no surprise that sugar has been on our minds for millennia. First cultivated in New Guinea around 8,000 B.C.E., this addictive sweetener has since come to dominate our appetites—whether in candy, desserts, soft drinks, or even pasta sauces—for better and for worse. In this book, Andrew F. Smith offers a fascinating history of this simultaneously beloved and reviled ingredient, holding its incredible value as a global commodity up against its darker legacies of slavery and widespread obesity. As Smith demonstrates, sugar’s past is chockfull of determined adventurers: relentless sugar barons and plantation owners who worked alongside plant breeders, food processors, distributors, and politicians to build a business based on our cravings. Exploring both the sugarcane and sugar beet industries, he tells story after story of those who have made fortunes and those who have met demise all because of sugar’s simple but profound hold on our palates. Delightful and surprisingly action-packed, this book offers a layered and definitive tale of sugar and the many people who have been caught in its spell—from barons to slaves, from chefs to the countless among us born with that insatiable devil, the sweet tooth.

Sweet but starchy, soft but toothsome—and so easy to peel they just beg to be devoured—bananas are one of our favorite foods, found everywhere from gas station counters to Michelin star restaurants. Yet for as versatile and ubiquitous as this fruit is today, its history is a turbulent one, entangled in colonial domination, capitalist exploitation, sexual politics, and even horrific violence. Delving into the banana’s past, this book traces the complex circumstances of global modernity that perfectly aligned to grant us, often at tremendous costs, a treat we all now take for granted. Beginning with the banana’s origins in New Guinea, Lorna Piatti-Farnell follows its pathways to South East Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and the Americas, binding together a millennium of history into one digestible bunch. Focusing especially on the banana’s recent past, she shows how it rose from a regional staple to a global commodity, on par with coffee and sugar. She examines the ways it has been advertised, sold, and incorporated into popular culture, moving from nineteenth-century medical manuals to cookbooks, songs, slapstick comedy, and problematic figures like Miss Chiquita. Wide-ranging but pocket-sized, *Banana* is a culinary and cultural account of a peculiar little fruit that is at once the icon of exoticism and one of the most familiar foods we eat.

Intoxicating and evocative, vanilla is so much more than a spice rack staple. It is a flavor that has defined the entire world—and its roots reach deep into the past. With its earliest origins dating back seventy million years, the history of vanilla begins in ancient Mesoamerica and continues to define and enhance today’s traditions and customs. It has been used by nearly every culture as a spice, a perfume, and even a potent aphrodisiac, while renowned figures from Louis XIV to Casanova and Thomas Jefferson have been captivated by its aroma and taste. Featuring recipes, facts, and fables, *Vanilla* unravels the delightfully rich history, mystery, and essence of a flavor that reconnects us to our own heritage.

You can pick Chicago deep dish, Sicilian, or New York-style; pan crust or thin crust; anchovies or pepperoni. There are countless ways to create the dish called pizza, as well as a never-ending debate on the best way of cooking it. Now Carol Helstosky documents the fascinating history and cultural life of this chameleon-like food in *Pizza*. Originally a food for the poor in eighteenth-century Naples, the pizza is a source of national and regional pride as well as cultural identity in Italy, Helstosky reveals. In the twentieth century, the pizza followed Italian immigrants to America, where it became the nation’s most popular dish and fueled the rise of successful fast-food corporations such as Pizza Hut and Domino’s. Along the way, Helstosky explains, pizza has been adapted to local cuisines and has become a metaphor for cultural exchange. *Pizza* also features several recipes and a wealth of illustrations, including a photo of the world’s largest and most expensive pizza—sprinkled with edible 24-karat gold shavings and costing over \$4000. Whether you love sausage and onions on your pizza or unadorned cheese, *Pizza* has enough offerings to satiate even the pickiest of readers.

Olives are at once a mythical food—bringing to mind scenes from ancient Rome and the Bible—and an everyday food, given the ubiquity of olive oil in contemporary diets. In this succinct and engaging history, Fabrizia Lanza traces the olive’s roots from antiquity, when olive oil was exalted for ritual purposes and used to anoint kings and athletes, to the sixteenth century, when Europeans brought the olive to the New World, to the present day, when, thanks to waves of immigration and the popularity of the healthy Mediterranean diet, the fruit has successfully conquered our palate. Lanza describes the role that olive trees, olives, and their oil have played in myths, legends, and literature, as well as in the everyday lives of people living throughout the Mediterranean. Also included is a global selection of recipes featuring olives and olive oil that showcase the fruit’s culinary diversity. A

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concise appendix of popular olive varieties, organized by country, rounds out this informative account. Featuring a wealth of historical detail, useful descriptions, and delicious recipes, this book will change how you think about that bottle of Extra Virgin Olive Oil you reach for out of habit and swirl into the pan.

Most of us can't make it through morning without our cup (or cups) of joe, and we're not alone. Coffee is a global beverage: it's grown commercially on four continents and consumed enthusiastically on all seven—and there is even an Italian espresso machine on the International Space Station. Coffee's journey has taken it from the forests of Ethiopia to the fincas of Latin America, from Ottoman coffee houses to "Third Wave" cafés, and from the simple coffee pot to the capsule machine. In *Coffee: A Global History*, Jonathan Morris explains both how the world acquired a taste for this humble bean, and why the beverage tastes so differently throughout the world. Sifting through the grounds of coffee history, Morris discusses the diverse cast of caffeinated characters who drank coffee, why and where they did so, as well as how it was prepared and what it tasted like. He identifies the regions and ways in which coffee has been grown, who worked the farms and who owned them, and how the beans were processed, traded, and transported. Morris also explores the businesses behind coffee—the brokers, roasters, and machine manufacturers—and dissects the geopolitics linking producers to consumers. Written in a style as invigorating as that first cup of Java, and featuring fantastic recipes, images, stories, and surprising facts, *Coffee* will fascinate foodies, food historians, baristas, and the many people who regard this ancient brew as a staple of modern life.

"Honey is now thought of mostly as a sweetener, but in its long history around the world, it has been treated as a food, tonic, medicine and preservative. It was also used in religious rituals as a sacred food from the gods. And its creators - bees - are vital to the pollination of wild plants as well as many domesticated crops. Lucy M. Long explores the fascinating history of honey, tracing its use and meanings through numerous cultures and demonstrating how this seemingly simple substance is connected to politics, religion, economics, popular culture and beliefs about the natural and supernatural world"--Publisher's website.

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