
Introduction

The first time I read a food blog, the experience was a revelation. Here was some of the most interesting writing about food I had ever come across. And it wasn't in a cookbook, or a magazine. It was on the Internet, and it was written by someone with enough passion to cook and write about it almost every day. Even better, I rapidly discovered that there were lots of these food blogs.

Food blogs aren't just lists of recipes. They are accounts of inspired cooking and odes to the beauty and flavor and sensuousness of creation. And they are also travelogues that whisk you away to far off places, the rich history and culture of other lands. In a few moments you can be lifted away from your dreary desk and landed in the sun-soaked Mediterranean, savoring a salty pissaladière, or down by the Bayou in Louisiana, almost hearing the 'gators splash and sucking on the crawdad heads.

Food blogs are as varied as the cultural world on which they are overlaid. They come in all shapes and sizes. Some race to chronicle the latest fad. Others celebrate the long, slow sensuous joy of the natural seasons and harvests, and of making each food perfect in its own place and time. Some expound at length on the history and provenance of everything and anything. Others dash off a sublime snack in minutes. And they challenge each other to get better and better.

I was absolutely astonished that these gems were not better known. And so *Digital Dish* was conceived. *Digital Dish* isn't quite a cookbook and it isn't quite a good afternoon read—it is a slice of one, spread with an essence of the other. It is a compilation of the best entries that the authors have written in their online food weblogs over the course of five seasons.

At the time this book begins, in the Summer of 2003, there were fewer than 50 food blogs that were easy to track down. By the time the book ends, in the Summer of 2004, there were several hundred. By the time you read this, there will be thousands. Newspapers and regular food magazines are writing about food blogs and food bloggers. Awards groups are recognizing the food weblog as a creative initiative worthy of notice.

Remember that this is a book about food: selecting it, cooking it, eating it. If you don't have exactly the ingredients that a recipe requires, don't worry. By the time you've read the whole book, you'll realize that many of these recipes came about because the author didn't have the exact ingredients

for an intended dish. Change things around a little. Substitute a little. And if you come up with something new, you may be tempted to start your own food blog and tell us all about it! While you're about it, if you have a food blog that you want us to look at for the next volume, let us know at foodblogs@pressforchange.com.

It is likely that you will find several items in this book that intrigue you. Go visit the food weblogs from which they were taken and leave a comment, or send an email letting the authors know you appreciate them.

Each entry in the book has an index number as part of the heading. Since we can't put web links into this book, if you go to <http://www.digi-dish.com/links>, you can enter the index number for the entry and go straight to the original page.

There are some conventions we have followed in this book. When there is an explicit recipe, we have made it clear so that you can follow it. There are three indexes at the back to make it easy to find what you are looking for. The entries are indexed by recipe title, by main ingredient(s), and by the food weblog from which they came. Since the entries are also published in chronological order, you have four ways to find something you are looking for! We have done our best to provide metric and imperial equivalents whenever we could.

Owen Linderholm

The Digital Dish Blogs

A Girl's Gotta Eat
<http://www.agirlsgottaeat.com>

A Girl's Gotta Eat. And so does everyone else. Fortunately, Sasha Wilson has a host of answers for any need, whether everyday or extraordinary. Plus you get your recipes and anecdotes straight from a working chef who knows the score.

Appetites

www.appetites.us

Robert Peyton occasionally claims to have been raised by Nutria in the swamps outside of New Orleans. When not practicing law, cooking, or eating, he spends time fighting crime as a masked vigilante. Actually, not so much “masked” as “in his underwear,” and not so much “fighting crime” as “surfing the internet.” He can also cook a mean gumbo...

C’est moi qui l’ai fait!

http://scally.typepad.com/cest_moi_qui_lai_fait/

It would be almost sacrilegious to leave the French out of any sort of food book. Pascale Weeks demonstrates just why the French are way out in front when it comes to food. Everything about food matters. Recipes are worked, reworked, and worked again. The history and provenance of food and recipes is tracked down. And we all benefit.

Chronicles of a Curious Cook

<http://cheapcooking.com/blog/>

It doesn’t seem fair. Some people seem able to work full time, dash off dinner for a family, decide that it was good enough to write about, then write an entry in their food blog chronicling a marvelous culinary triumph—and have time for other things. Every day. So it’s good that Ellen Ferlazzo can show us all how to do it...

Cook Sister

http://cooksister.typepad.com/cook_sister/

South Africa by way of London. Jeanne Horak has a wonderful knack for evoking the culture and lifestyle of South Africa in her culinary essays. Exotic places and foods pop in and out of her writing. She takes us with her as she reaches back to her childhood to remember comfort food, then whisks us back to modern London to talk about how to get the right meat to cure your own Biltong.

Cuisine Capers

<http://www.cuisinecapers.com/>

One of the most endearing aspects of the American character is an acceptance of variety—at least in food. While it is all too easy for the rest of the USA (and the world for that matter) to dismiss the Midwest, there is some fantastic cooking to be found there, rooted in traditions from Scandinavia, Germany, France, and elsewhere. Irene Cash and her blog partner Vic Marsh introduce us to it all.

Edible Tulip

http://edibletulip.typepad.com/edible_tulip/

Daphne Randall, the author of Edible Tulip, loves true, fresh, local food. She breaks into paeans of praise when a new vegetable is in season, even Brussels sprouts. Then she gets busy and shows us all what to do with them in creative, original dishes.

Foodster.net

<http://www.foodster.net>

Some of the best food blogs come about when a group of people realize they have a passion for food and cooking and want to share what they have done. Foodster is a group food weblog with authors drawn from around the world (many of whom are based in the cosmopolitan city of London). Go to Foodster for a lively conversation between the world's cultures and their dishes.

Hot Water Bath

<http://www.hotwaterbath.blogspot.com/>

At the other end of the spectrum from the group food blog is the highly specialized food blog. Hot Water Bath, from Marsha Wirtel, is about home canning. Sauces, pickles, fruit— anything that can be preserved in a jar. This specialized form of cooking is an art unto itself and Marsha guides you easily through the potential pitfalls.

Il Forno

http://ilforno.typepad.com/il_forno/

Alberto Chinali is a food blog hero. He came up with the monthly “Is My Blog Burning?” event and is now Italy Forum Host for eGullet. But he is also a fount of knowledge about truly authentic Italian cooking. Alberto can be your guide to undiscovered treasures like “the Chapati of Romagna.”

Kitsch’n’Zinc

<http://kitschnzinc.blogspot.com/>

Food bloggers seem to specialize in wry, self-deprecating humor. So it is only after diving into acerbic commentary on the state of the food industry in general that you realize that Brian McCune is a professional chef who abounds in creativity and wit.

Looka/Gumbopages

<http://www.gumbopages.com/looka>

Not all food blogs are just food blogs. Looka! is more like a flood. Chuck Taggart covers food, cocktails, politics and music—not necessarily in that order—and covers them with such depth and frequency that the food output alone is more than most blogs. Here you’ll find unusual drinks, great food, and a lot of spicy New Orleans attitude.

Mary Beth’s Kitchen

http://longleaf.typepad.com/switched_at_birth/mary_beths_kitchen/index.html

The long, slow, sweet pace of country life in the South glows through every word of this wonderful food blog by E. J. Westmark. Southern American cooking is grounded very solidly in a rural tradition and Mary Beth’s Kitchen is no exception.

MeatHenge

<http://www.meathenge.com>

Another specialist food blog, MeatHenge is all about meat—buying meat and cooking meat. Guy Prince, or Dr. Biggles in his meat persona, is truly an expert. All kinds, all cuts come under his scrutiny in his search for flavor. This site was a finalist in the food weblog awards, and *Gourmet* magazine has written about MeatHenge.

My Latest Supper

<http://www.la-cena.co.uk/cenablog.html>

The experience of another culture and another place are the essence of food weblogging. But food weblogs often come about from a transplanting of one culture to another. Carlo Albertoli is an Italian who has started a new life and career as a chef in Brighton in the South of England. He delights and amuses as he recounts the culture clash through his life and cooking.

Shiokadelicious

<http://www.shiokadelicious.com/shiokadelicious/>

Shiokadelicious is a delightfully named blog based in Singapore. Renee Kho has put together an essential food blog as she covers Singapore and South East Asian cooking from a home and family perspective. Even better, she is clearly one of the best Asian cooks and writers about Asian cooking that you will ever encounter. Shiokadelicious is a very popular food weblog and was a finalist in four categories in the food weblog awards.

Spiceblog

<http://spiceblog.blogspot.com/>

Just like the Western Australian desert, which surrounds his hometown of Perth, Anthony Georgeff writes with a stinging dry wit about food, cooking, and life on the far edge of the Indian Ocean. Completely unafraid to tackle new adventures, he was nominated for best food weblog post in the food weblog awards for the tale of an epic trek into the Outback to cook with fire under the stars.

The Accidental Hedonist

<http://www.accidentalthedonist.com/>

The Accidental Hedonist is the host of the annual food weblogging awards. Kate Hopkins' site is also a place to find writing and sharp opinions on a very wide range of food topics. It moves from dining out to cooking, to trends in food, in eating, and news about food in general; and in particular, how to really enjoy it all.

The Domestic Goddess

<http://www.domesticgoddess.ca/>

The pure joy of cooking and creating food is the single biggest attraction of food weblogs and it shines out especially strongly from some authors' writing. Jennifer Hamilton hosts one of the most celebratory food weblogs around. Her recipes and writing won her a Food Weblogs award in 2004 for best single post to a weblog.

The Grub Report

<http://www.grubreport.com>

The Grub Report is a very unusual and creatively presented blog. It looks like a menu from which you can pick wide-ranging and creative selections of food writing. Stephanie Lucianovic's blog is more about the experience of food than about recipes. She regales us with tales from the food industry, where she has worked as everything from a chef in a test kitchen, to being a retail cheesemonger.

The Passionate Cook

<http://thepassionatecook.typepad.com/thepassionatecook/>

Some food blogs are much more about cooking and specific recipes than others, but oh, what recipes! Johanna-Maria Wagner lives up to her Austrian heritage with delicious, modern cooking that has just a slight tilt toward Central Europe. She was a finalist for the Food Weblog awards for humor and best recipes.

Tomatilla

<http://www.tomatilla.com>

Tomatilla specializes in creative, improvisational cooking—without recipes. For Owen Linderholm, recipes are more like guidelines or starting points, just to see what you can do with what's in front of you. For him, cooking is more like performance art—he may start with a recipe but he could end up anywhere.

Too Many Chefs

<http://www.toomanychefs.com/>

Just to prove that there really can't be too many cooks, Too Many Chefs, another group food weblog, is a serious source for creative and original recipes as well as interesting takes on common food issues. The six authors are based in the USA and Europe. Too Many Chefs was the winner of the group food blog award from the Food Weblog Awards.

Wine Rant

<http://www.winerant.com>

Food blogs aren't just about food. There is a whole subculture of wine blogs and drink blogs and highly specialized ones like chocolate blogs. Wine Rant, created by Jeff Burns, is a witty, assertive food blog with a touch of spice and a citrus zing in the finish. It's also not above including some really good recipes to pair with the specific wines he recommends.