

Culinary history essay sample



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Whether cooking is considered a hobby, a chore or a career, it has become a part of our everyday lives. In fact, it is one of the multi-billion industries all over the world today, which is why a lot of business enthusiasts invest in this type of venture. Not only in the field of business, any interested person can practically explore culinary arts even at home. Because of its continuous growth, it has become a popular and patronized ability. Those who want to learn more about cooking even enroll in specialized cooking schools to enhance their skills.

Culinary as an art is derived from the word “culina,” which literally means kitchen or cooking. Therefore, culinary arts simply suggest the “art of cooking.” According to “Culinary History” (n. d.),

The origins of cooking are obscure. Primitive humans may first have savored roast meat by chance, when the flesh of a beast killed in a forest fire was found to be more palatable and easier to chew and digest than the customary raw meat. They probably did not deliberately cook food, though, until long after they had learned to use fire for light and warmth. It has been speculated that Peking man roasted meats, but no clear evidence supports the theory. From whenever it began, however, roasting spitted meats over fires remained virtually the sole culinary technique until the Palaeolithic Period, when the Aurignacian people of southern France apparently began to steam their food over hot embers by wrapping it in wet leaves. Aside from such crude procedures as toasting wild grains on flat rocks and using shells, skulls, or hollowed stones to heat liquids, probably no further culinary advances were made until the introduction of pottery during the Neolithic Period (para. 1).

Moreover, “ The earliest compound dish was a crude paste (the prototype of the pulmentum of the Roman legions and the polenta of later Italians) made by mixing water with the cracked kernels of wild grasses. This paste, toasted to crustiness when dropped on a hot stone, made the first bread” (“ Culinary History,” n. d., para. 2). In “ Culinary History” (n. d.), it stated that,

Culinary techniques improved with the introduction of earthenware (and, more or less concomitantly, the development of settled communities), the domestication of livestock, and the cultivation of edible plants. A more dependable supply of foodstuffs, including milk and its derivatives, was now assured. The roasting spit was augmented by a variety of fired-clay vessels, and the cooking techniques of boiling, stewing, braising, and perhaps even incipient forms of pickling, frying, and oven baking were added. Early cooks probably had already learned to preserve meats and fish by smoking, salting, air-drying, or chilling. New utensils made it possible to prepare these foods in new ways, and such dishes as *bacalao a la vizcaina* (“ dried cod”) and *finnan haddie* (smoked haddock) are still eaten (para. 3).

For the centuries that followed, innovations in cooking flourished in different parts of the world such as China, the Middle East, Mexico, Central America, Turkey, Egypt, Germany, India, Japan, France, and many European countries. Further cultivation and farming of various plants has given way to the discovery of many food recipes and methods of cooking. However, these culinary strategies vary from culture to culture.

According to “ Culinary History” (n. d.),

Modern European cooking was shaped in large part by the conditions existing during the early Middle Ages. In the north, where abundant timber and a relatively cold climate favoured the use of open fires, the rotating spit and suspended cauldron gave rise to a cuisine that consisted of thick roasts and long-simmered soups, stews, and sauces. Because trade access to other regions was limited, home-grown raw materials were used almost exclusively. Abundant pasturage permitted large dairy herds. Dairy products were thus major components of the cuisine, and butter was the principal cooking fat. Along the Mediterranean, where olives were abundant, fuel scarce, and the climate warm, an oil-based cuisine developed. This cuisine comprised mainly light dishes that could be cooked quickly over enclosed charcoal fires and small cuts of meat that did not require prolonged exposure to heat. The Italians also made more extensive use of ingredients and culinary ideas imported from the East. The spit and cauldron, which evolved into the roasting oven and stockpot, were the chief utensils of the north, but the south relied on the skillet and the saucepan. These contrasting approaches are reflected today in dishes as different as the French *tripes à la mode de Caen*, which requires up to ten hours of slow cooking, and the typically Italian *saltimbocca alla romana*, a light veal dish that can be sauteed in minutes (para. 10).

In East Asia, advancement of culinary arts also thrived. As mentioned in “*Culinary Arts*” (n. d.),

The tea ceremony was originated in China by Buddhist monks who believed that tea had medicinal qualities. It was brought to Japan in the 13th century, but it was not until the 16th century that Zen monks had mastered, codified, <https://assignbuster.com/culinary-history-essay-sample/>

and ennobled the drinking of tea. Once practiced only in Zen monasteries, the tea ceremony is now popular among the general public. The Japanese tea ceremony, or cha-no-yu, is the ancient practice of serving tea according to a strict ritual that defines the manner in which tea is prepared and served. Rooted in ZEN BUDDHISM, the art of the tea ceremony symbolizes aesthetic simplicity through the elimination of the unnecessary.

The traditional ceremony, as practiced today, takes place in a tea room, or cha-shitsu, situated in a garden or a special room within a house. The simply constructed room is small, accommodating a host and five guests, and the floors are covered with straw (tatami) mats. The most formal ceremony takes four hours, and two types of green tea are served. A gong is sounded to signal the beginning of the ceremony. Following a prescribed pattern, the host prepares the tea with the utmost exactness. The principal guest is served first, after which the ritual is repeated. The accurate and delicate performance of each act is thought to represent the fundamental Zen principles of harmony, respect, purity, and tranquility.

The Chinese have been using cast-iron stoves some hundred years back. It was only in the 15th century that the Europeans began using such materials for cooking. Moreover, South Americans initiated the use of haricots beans in Europe at this time. Amidst the 15th century, Europe started to grow chillies. During the end of the 15th century, the navigator Christopher Columbus wrote an account of spices he found in his journeys.

By the 16th century, Italians raised a variety of wild and poisonous celery while kidney beans and vanilla pods were introduced by the Americans in

some European countries. The Portuguese businessmen from America also brought in Europe cashew nuts and peanuts. In Mexico as well, rice and limes from the Spaniards amazed Mexico. The Spanish traders also “discovered” avocado fruits in Mexico. Chocolate (similar to the present-day hot chocolate) was also introduced as a beverage in Spain. By the middle of the 16th century, Italians added cauliflower to the cookery of France.

In the 17th century, many chocolate houses were built. They were made as places for socialization or for meetings. For the first time in this era, gin was fermented in Holland and gained popularity all over Europe. Coffee drinking and the establishment of cafes also flourished in Europe particularly in Vienna, Austria, France and Italy. The Americas also felt the upsurge of coffee use.

Upon the arrival of the 18th century, “Jean Naigeon; a merchant from Dijon, France creates what is now known as Dijon mustard. In Naples pasta was made by mixing the dough by foot. Ferdinando II (the king of Naples) unhappy with this production method hired the famous engineer Cesare Spadaccini who designed a (the) bronze machine that did this work” (“Culinary History,” n. d.). During this period, the first American cookbook entitled “The Complete Housewife” was made available in print in Virginia. Further innovations in cooking stoves were done at this time including the invention of the early cooking range. Furthermore, the canning process of preserving food and food products was developed as well.

The 19th century saw more improvements in the culinary industry. For the first time, large-scale candy-making brought forth economic rise in England.

More hotels, cafes and restaurants were established. In Scotland, the world's first biscuit factory was built. Among the many discoveries/inventions of this era are refrigeration method of food preservation, the fine art of gastronomy ("the intelligent knowledge of whatever concerns man's nourishment"), the first friction matches, modernized chocolate powder, Bearnaise sauce, the first practical ice-making machine, Lea and Perrins Worcester sauce, the installation of mobile kitchens, the use of gas in cooking, Lipton tea, the first ice cream factory, Tabasco sauce, margarine, the first milk chocolate powder, evaporated milk, and the first Coca-cola in bottles.

Most culinary events in the 20th century are further improvements or multiplication of products already available. More food factories, food chains, cafes, restaurants, and hotels opened for business. Electrically-driven appliances responsible for cookery were invented such as the electric cooking range.

At present, the 21st century looks into the modern-day chef since most food materials for cooking have already been discovered and invented. Today the successful chef needs more than technical expertise (Guggenmos, n. d., para. 4). Because of the very competitive nature of the culinary industry, he must also develop effective communication technique and interpersonal skills in dealing with customers and clients. The quality of a chef's product is what determines the success of his craft. In order to do this, he must be updated with the latest technological advancements in cooking to keep up with the fast-paced world today.

Another perspective in looking into the history of culinary is through the establishment of culinary arts education or cooking schools across time. It has been recorded that before the creation of formal cooking schools in the United States, there were already professional cooks who taught the culinary art to individual students who have a passion for cooking. These teachers gained their expertise in apprenticeship programs. In the late 18th century, the first formal culinary schools were founded to cater people with interest in cooking.

Acceptance of culinary education became progressive upon the invention of the television in the 1940's. In this post-war period, the American economy was booming and many people became interested in becoming a chef (“History of Culinary Arts Education,” n. d., para. 2). Students in cooking schools increased in number over the years. Because of this growth in culinary education, an Accrediting Commission was organized in 1986, which was recognized in 1990 by the U. S. Department of Education. Over 100 cooking schools are officially accredited at present.

Culinary history can also be focused in terms of the cookbook. According to “Culinary History” (n. d.),

Since the early beginnings of writing, humans have been recording recipes: recorded on a clay tablet by Sumerians were recipes, including one for making ale. Likewise, numerous recipes have been located in Egyptian hieroglyphics. The ancient Greeks appear to have been the first to compile cookery manuscripts. While many manuscripts in ancient times were written, only one is known to have survived. The Artis

Magiricae Libre X was written in part by Marcus Apicius in the first century. Roman and Greek chefs wrote down their recipes and their ideas of cookery survived at least in monasteries and in the Byzantine Empire (para. 1).

The Arabs revelled in cookery and the first known non-Roman cookery manuscripts were written in Baghdad in the 9th century. The crusades revived interest in culinary arts in Western Europe, and in particular the spices of the east. Subsequently, dozens of cookery manuscripts were written in England, France, Germany Italy and Spain. The similarity of these manuscripts indicates that the chefs and the Royal families that they served were interconnected (para. 2).

Twenty-five years after Johann Gutenberg printed his first book in 1450, Bartolomeo de Sacchi di Piadena (otherwise known as Platina) published 'De honesta voluptate' in Venice. This was translated into German, Italian and French, and frequently republished throughout Europe. About 250 of Platina's recipes were borrowed from a manuscript written by Martino, who lived during the 1450-75 period. Martino's recipes were reprinted in Epulario (Of Feasting) two hundred years after their origin (para. 3).

Eight years after the publication of 'De honesta voluptate', the Roman cookbook of Apicius was published in Italy. It was frequently republished and translated into French and Spanish, but not English until centuries later (para. 4).

Many religious men were also considered cooks during their time including Bartolome Scappi (1540-1570) and Pope Pius IV. Scappi introduced various cooking techniques which are still applied today such as marinating, braising

and poaching. Aside from that, he imitated the Arab art of baking pastries and in 1570, published a well-illustrated cookbook with about 1, 000 recipes revealing the secrets of Renaissance culinary accounts.

Francois Pierre de la Varenne's (1615-1678) ' Le Cuisinier Francois' was perhaps the most significant cookbook in France after the Platina was released. This publication opened new doors to a new era after the secluded Medieval period and the Renaissance movement. From then on, cooking was considered a systematic craftsmanship since various explorations in cooking methods were applied by French cooking schools. Many French cookbooks followed.

About a century later came the publication of Menon's ' La Cuisiniere bourgeoise.' Though his identity remains a mystery, his culinary method was a combination of art and science which is why his cooking style has been constantly argued.

The fine art of gastronomy was furthered upon the publication of ' La Physiologie du gout' by Brillat-Savarin and Jean Anthelme in 1825. In the same year, The Physiology of Taste was released in England. During the 18th century, recipe books in England were often authored by women. As such, the contents cover not only recipes per se but common sense and experience-enriched articles. To name some of these cookbooks, there was ' The Art of Cookery' by Hannah Glasse, published in 1747 and ' The Frugal Housewife' by Susannah Carter, first released in 1772 in London, England.

Auguste Escoffier was one of the contemporary writers who made some of the most important cookbooks in his era. His publications were considered

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sophisticated. Among his works were ' Le Traite sur L'art de Travailler les Fleurs en Cire' (1886), ' Le Guide Culinaire' (1903), ' Les Fleurs en Cire (a new edition in 1910), ' Le Carnet d'Epicure' (1911), ' LeLivre des Manus' (1912), ' Le Riz' (1927), ' Le Morue' (1929), and ' Ma Cuisine' (1934).

Another significant work was written by Louise Saulnier in 1914. It was entitled ' Le Repertoire de la Cuisine' where it only showed a list describing various French dishes, not exactly a recipe book. Translation in English was made a chef named by Brunet. In 1796, Amelia Simmons was the first American to author a cookbook entitled ' American Cookery.' This work displayed various American methods of cooking.

Following thereafter, a leap forward was made by the author, Mary Randolph in 1824. Her work ' Virginia House-wife' introduced Americanized cooking among the British. She was also influential in American cooking which exhibited various alterations in standard recipes as her inculcation of Spanish style culinary in American dishes. She adapted cooking styles from other cultures and combined them to produce a new output and variety of recipes. Because of the significant contributions she created, her works were later published in Great Britain and France.

In the present age, modern-day cookbooks are still published from time to time displaying an array of modifications of already published recipes. Cooking experts continue to explore the many things they can do to further culinary arts all over the world. Many students chose to study in cooking schools since this is one of the most progressive careers nowadays.

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