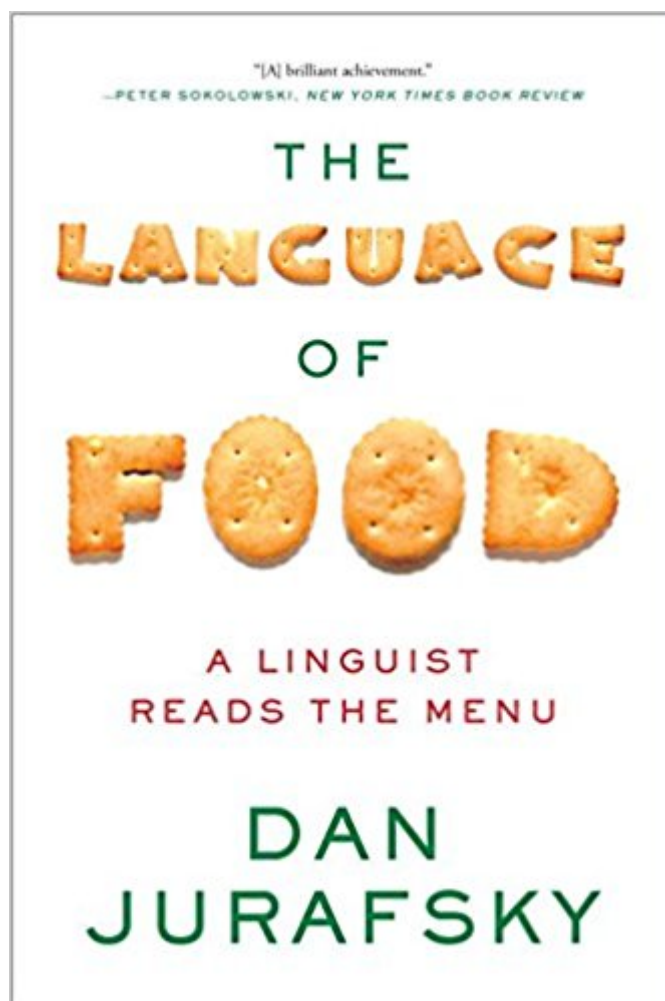


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# The Language Of Food: A Linguist Reads The Menu



## Synopsis

A 2015 James Beard Award Finalist: "Eye-opening, insightful, and huge fun to read." —Bee Wilson, author of *Consider the Fork* Why do we eat toast for breakfast, and then toast to good health at dinner? What does the turkey we eat on Thanksgiving have to do with the country on the eastern Mediterranean? Can you figure out how much your dinner will cost by counting the words on the menu? In *The Language of Food*, Stanford University professor and MacArthur Fellow Dan Jurafsky peels away the mysteries from the foods we think we know. Thirteen chapters evoke the joy and discovery of reading a menu dotted with the sharp-eyed annotations of a linguist. Jurafsky points out the subtle meanings hidden in filler words like "rich" and "crispy," zeroes in on the metaphors and storytelling tropes we rely on in restaurant reviews, and charts a microuniverse of marketing language on the back of a bag of potato chips. The fascinating journey through *The Language of Food* uncovers a global atlas of culinary influences. With Jurafsky's insight, words like ketchup, macaron, and even salad become living fossils that contain the patterns of early global exploration that predate our modern fusion-filled world. From ancient recipes preserved in Sumerian song lyrics to colonial shipping routes that first connected East and West, Jurafsky paints a vibrant portrait of how our foods developed. A surprising history of culinary exchange — a sharing of ideas and culture as much as ingredients and flavors — lies just beneath the surface of our daily snacks, soups, and suppers. Engaging and informed, Jurafsky's unique study illuminates an extraordinary network of language, history, and food. The menu is yours to enjoy. 30 illustrations

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“[Jurafsky’s] brilliant achievement is to weave together the journey food makes through culture with the journey its name makes through language.” - Peter Sokolowski, New York Times Book Review

“Writing with knowledge and wit, Dan Jurafsky shows that the language of food reflects our desires and aspirations, whether it’s on a fancy French menu or a bag of potato chips.” - Bee Wilson, author of *Consider the Fork: A History of How We Cook and Eat*

“Dan Jurafsky has taken on the subject with scholarship, wit, and charm, making *The Language of Food* a very engaging book.” - Mark Kurlansky, author of *Cod and Paper*

“Mix equal parts fascinating history, surprising etymology, and brilliant linguistic analysis, add a generous dollop of humor, and savor *The Language of Food*. You’ll never think of ketchup, French fries, fish and chips, or toast in the same way.” - Deborah Tannen, author of the #1 bestseller *You Just Don’t Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*

“Fresh and insightful” | The complexities of language, intertwined with the endless combinations of ingredients and the rich history of eating, make for a rich and rewarding read.” - Matthew Tiffany, Minneapolis Star Tribune

“Delightful. The distinguished linguist Dan Jurafsky brings a battery of skills to reveal the far-flung links of many of our dishes, to reveal how potato chip advertisements work, and to give an insider’s guide to reading menus. I couldn’t put this book down.” - Rachel Laudan, author of *Cuisine and Empire: Cooking in World History*

Dan Jurafsky, a recipient of a MacArthur "Genius Grant," is professor and chair of linguistics and professor of computer science at Stanford University. He and his wife live in San Francisco.

Very interesting. I had to write a review on this title in an English class in college and write a lengthy review over it for my professor. The author is a Stanford professor with a BA in linguistics and PhD in Comp Science. He writes about the origin of many very common food items from Ketchup - Catsup depending on where you’re from - to fish and chips and so many more. He focuses on nearly forgotten histories that predate our common understanding of some of the words and foods we use and eat every day. For anyone wanting some history or an interesting read on food, this would be a good place to start.

Fascinating book. You will never be able to read another menu without thinking about this books. The chapter on fish sauce is also of particular interest. As a person that loves food and eating (but

don't we all) I never thought that language could be so important to food and vice versa. Also, do not be worried that it is over-academic, the writing is easy to follow and the chapters are short and to the point. If you want to be able to impress your friends with facts about Heinz 57 or how you knew to avoid a restaurant because of the language on their menu, look no further. Great read.

Are you kidding. I want to take Prof. Dan to dinner anywhere he wants to go. This book skips down many paths. And like really good movies or literature becomes even bigger upon reflection. It's written well, chock full of insights and can satisfy the casual to the connoisseur. Dan, I'm free on Tuesday, how about you?

It read like a text book. It is probably good for a budding chef, but not for just entertainment reading.

Awesome treatise that smoothly combines several disciplines into a luscious cornucopia of information that will delight historians, linguists and foodies. :)

Inspiring!

I used this book for my Linguistics Final Paper and it was really an interesting read, (plus I got a B on it). It gives you a lot of history on the origins of food, their names as well as a bunch of neat facts anyone will enjoy :)

A superb study of food culture. It provides a history of the origins of many currently popular items, how we got them, countries of origin and how cuisines change over time. Interesting quantitative linguistic analysis of the sociology and social psychology of restaurant menus and Yelp comments. It gave me many insights into how we look at food and its place in social history.

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