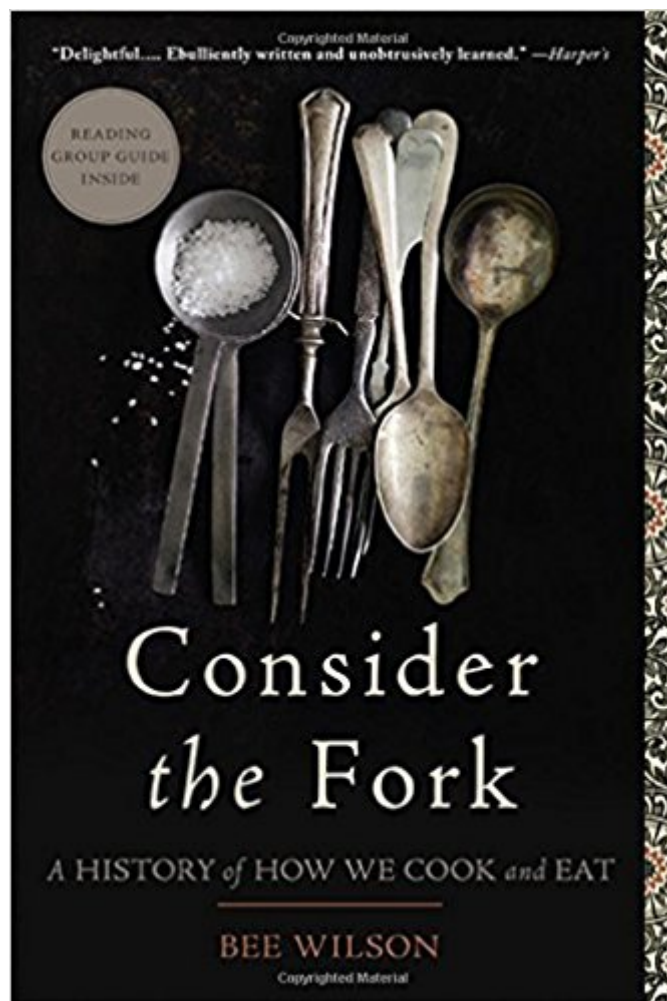


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# Consider The Fork: A History Of How We Cook And Eat



## Synopsis

Since prehistory, humans have braved sharp knives, fire, and grindstones to transform raw ingredients into something delicious—or at least edible. Tools shape what we eat, but they have also transformed how we consume, and how we think about, our food. In *Consider the Fork*, award-winning food writer Bee Wilson provides a wonderful and witty tour of the evolution of cooking around the world, revealing the hidden history of everyday objects we often take for granted. Technology in the kitchen does not just mean the Pcojets and sous-vide of the modernist kitchen, but also the humbler tools of everyday cooking and eating: a wooden spoon and a skillet, chopsticks and forks. Blending history, science, and anthropology, Wilson reveals how our culinary tools and tricks came to be, and how their influence has shaped modern food culture. The story of how we have tamed fire and ice and wielded whisks, spoons, and graters, all for the sake of putting food in our mouths, *Consider the Fork* is truly a book to savor.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

**\*Starred Review\*** At every turn, Wilson's history of the technology of cooking and eating upends another unexamined tradition, revealing that utensils and practices now taken for granted in kitchen and at table have long and remarkable histories. The knife evolved from primitive humans' need to reduce food to manageable portions. Thermometers helped make home ovens practical. Some of the first pleas for animal rights arose from the use of caged dogs to turn spits in front of kitchen hearths. Most societies weigh recipe ingredients, but Americans continue to measure ingredients by

volume. Wilson traces this deviation back to the difficulty of lugging scales westward across the frontier. Wilson's book teems with other delightful insights, laying to rest such questions as what Chinese parents say to their children to persuade them to finish their food, since they can't employ the typical American admonition about children starving in China. (Answer: Don't disrespect the sweat of the hardworking rice farmer.) --Mark Knoblauch --This text refers to the Audio Cassette edition.

Reading [Consider the Fork] is like having a long dinner table discussion with a fascinating friend.... Leisurely but lively...a pure joy to read. • Los Angeles Times; Delightful.... [An] ebulliently written and unobtrusively learned survey. • Harper's Magazine; [A] sparkling...fascinating and entertaining book. • The Sunday Times (London); One part science, one part history, and a generous dash of fun. • Good Housekeeping; Wilson's insouciant scholarship and companionable voice convince you she would be great fun to spend time with in the kitchen.... [She is] a congenial kitchen oracle. • New York Times Book Review; Fluid yet engaging, just like a good conversation over a pan of sizzling vegetables. • New Republic; A delightfully informative history of cooking and eating. • ELLE Magazine; Wilson is a good tour guide.... [A] dizzying, entertaining ride. • Wall Street Journal; A book to savour.... You will never look at a kitchen knife in the same way again. • The Independent (London)

If you're interesting in cooking, this is the book for you. Didn't know that mortar and pestles have been around for 20,000 years? True, apparently. The overbite that humans have? Only 200-250 years since that developed; before that, top teeth met bottom teeth in the front of the mouth to make tearing meat from the bone directly more efficient. Changes in eating habits made for changes to the jaw. Amazing. Anyway, great info about food preparation through the ages, development of kitchen gizmos and labor-saving devices (especially once slaves and indentured labor disappeared from homes of the wealthy). Neat info like Americans are the only cooks in the world to use measuring cups and measuring spoons; everyone else measures in their hand or with their fingers (just a pinch) ... who knew? And some measure by weighing each ingredient, apparently much more exact. Charmingly written, like having a conversation, though a bit more editorial attention would have been helpful. A few words are glitched almost as though the ebook was scanned from a print copy, but howlers like the following show up every once in a while: "This whirling mechanism was a big improvement on quern still took two the basic quern, but a large rotary women to operate, one to

feed in the grain and one to keep turning it." Huh? I swear I read that six times and still can't figure out what it might have been originally, how many sentences are jumbled together, or what. ('Quern' I got because it's explained elsewhere - it's the bottom part of a circular grain mill against which the upper stone is rotated to grind the grain.) So, I recommend the book despite the few puzzles that appear here and there. Graphically excellent, illustrations are crisp and clear (though I don't understand why fractions are sometimes displayed as graphics; one doesn't need a picture of  $7/16$ " when the numerals as text are fine; typographically okay, formatted fine on my Kindle Keyboard.

Some tighter editing would have made this book much better.... but overall, the content is fascinating and is reasonably accurate. Very easily gobbled up in a day. While I would have preferred specific Chicago style end notes, general notes are provided, as is a bibliography for those who wish to fact check and research further. I enjoyed it. I'm not sure why the Kindle version has so many typos, but this seems to be a common complaint. I bought, and will always buy, a hard copy to read. I've tried, but I don't care for Kindle at all.

If you enjoy cooking ....or just enjoy eating....this book is a fun and entertaining read. But it is also far more than that. Combining anthropology and archaeology this well researched and documented book reveals far more than the history of apparatus and how cooking has changed. I discovered this book while reading a novel in which one of the characters was reading the book. I am glad that I ordered it for myself. Despite its contents heavy on history and science it is eminently readable. I bought it for my daughter for Christmas thinking she would enjoy it. Decided to read it myself and am so glad that I did. Written by a British writer it has a European and British tilt but for me that makes it all the more interesting. I think you will be surprised at the breadth of knowledge imparted you would never have thought about and certainly never associated with cooking much less the apparatus used for cooking. Covering the history of various cooking tools, both those that work and those discarded anyone interested at all in the subject of food will find this a tasty read. If there were six stars I would give it to this book and can highly recommend it both to the culinary inclined, those interested in history as well as the general reader.

I 'had' to read this book for a college class I am taking - I use the parentheses because I actually loved this book (and how often can you say that about required college texts?) The author uses a conversational tone to walk us through a few millennia of kitchen lore and gadgetry. I can't say I've ever given much thought to the fork before - but to find out that when the fork became part of our

meal routine, this led to quick, universal changes in our anatomy over very short periods of time? Who knew! I found this book incredibly informative and entertaining at the same time.

Superb. I'm gonna read it again. I'm a foodie and the admin of a Facebook culinary group and this book is just so stimulating, so chock full of historical insights. I also like the way it's organized around utensils and cooking processes.

I picked this book up after hearing about it on Writing Excuses. I found that this book was both informative and entertaining. I also picked up the audible so that I could listen to it when I was unable to read, and found the Narrator was fantastic as well. Excellent tone, pacing and, her accents and dialects are well done. I recommend this book if you have an interest in the tools you use in the kitchen and want to see where we've been and why we are where we are today!

I will never look at a fork, spoon, or knife the same way again. I also will be eternally grateful for my modern stove, toaster, and microwave. I am not much of a cook and part of the reason I got this book was an attempt to engage myself in the history so as to hopefully find more motivation to learn to cook. I was not prepared for the amount of history involved. This book has given me an entirely new respect for cooking. I actually found myself tired out just by reading some of what people had to do to prepare relatively simple dishes in the past! I was equally fascinated and horrified by some of the conditions and contraptions described. I think it is safe to say I will never look at cooking or food prep the same ever again. However, the book had the desired effect, I've been cooking more and actually sort of enjoying it when I do. I would recommend this book for anyone interested in becoming fascinated by forks, and eternally grateful for a stove that heats up in under an hour and won't choke you with smoke.

Well written - but not what I expected. Maybe I've been cooking too long and was looking for something a bit more enlightening.

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