

Duluth Campus

*Department of Sociology -Anthropology
College of Liberal Arts*

*228 Cina Hall
1123 University Drive
Duluth, Minnesota 55812-3306*

*Office:218-726-7551
Fax: 218-726-7759*

22 January 2017

Anthropology of Food Week 3

"Settled Ingredients: Domestic Food Production"

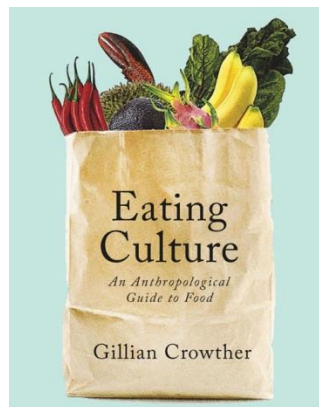
Diet and Human Evolution: Archaeology / Prehistory

Hunter-Gathering or Foraging, and the Emergence of Food Production

Video Explorations:

Marcus Samuelsson's *The Meaning of Food*: "Food & Life"

Did Cooking Make Us Human?



When Mark Bittman, one of the great food writers of our times, when he bid farewell from *The New York Times* food column that he has been writing for five years (to join a California start-up food company), commented on what major advances—and areas of no progress—have and haven't been made in the area of Food while he was food editor of *The New York Times*

(2011-2015). His farewell column was an excellent summary of what has happened in recent years . . .

“A Farewell, Mark Bittman“

(The New York Times, Sunday, 13 September 2015)



Bittman noted, as he moved on . . .

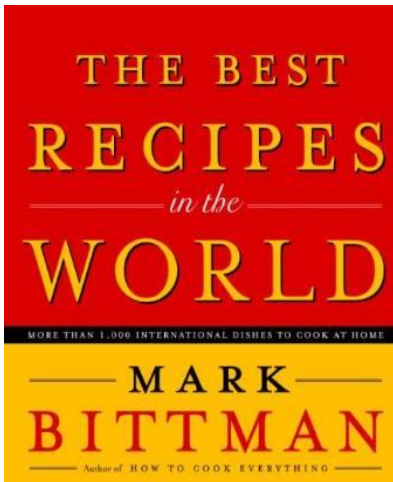
“When I began, nearly five years ago, food was not generally considered as serious a topic as it is now. . . .

Mostly I believe that I’ve identified the major issues facing us in the interwoven worlds of food, agriculture, nutrition and the environment. . . . **Now, nearly everyone knows that food matters. If you see food only as food, if you think of food only as pleasure, your head is in the sand. Food affects just about everything, and vice versa. The increasing awareness of this has led to big changes at the intersection of food and news and opinion.** When I began, there were a few people writing seriously about food online and in print; I knew most if not all of them. Our positions were often similar, but to speak in *The Times* gave the ideas broader exposure. And indeed, what I’ve written has been, generally speaking, valued beyond my dreams. . . .”

“The world of food writing has changed. Dozens if not scores of writers are expressing opinions about food, often daily. That, combined with the competition to be distinctive, leads to tremendous pressures that sometimes result in hasty, often exaggerated positions along with ridiculous stances, like expressing disdain for salads or arguing that increasing the minimum wage for food workers is harmful.”

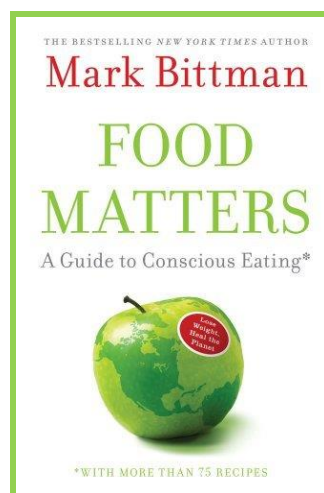
Bittman concludes with his views of what “real progress” has been made, and what food problems remain intransigent and a disappointment to him.

Bittman, of course, was into the world-wide Anthropology of Food, including his highly proclaimed applied work . . .



(P.S. If you get married and invite Kim and I to your wedding, this is what you will get for a wedding present.)

Food Matters, more now than ever . . .



[What to Eat?](#)

Looking forward *to class matters* this week . . . we begin our Video Explorations

with Marcus Samuelsson who will start us off—for the most part—on a happy positive cheerful optimistic joyful note. In his usually upbeat way Marcus Samuelsson will start off the **Video Explorations** with *The Meaning of Food: "Food & Life"* as he examines the general **symbolic importance of food and eating**.

Marcus' presentation this week contains a segment on "Preparing Last Meals." It's part of **"Food & Life" coverage. Check the *Forum* posts from last week to see what others in the class would have as their last meal**, if they had the opportunity to choose their last meal. It's an interesting selection of choices. **And don't overlook last week's trivia question: "What would Willie Nelson's Last Supper be?"**

This week (and next) Marcus Samuelsson talks about "Food & Life" in *The Meaning of Food* (pp.1-33, optional)—asking the questions, "What is Food?" "What is a Meal?" and then looking at "Homey Food," "Sacramental Food," "and "Erotic Food." That later topic on erotic food brings us all the way back to the "Food Pornography" Sherri Inness accuses The Two Fat ladies of indulging in.

Food binds family to the point of death among the Balti, as among many peoples of the world. And, on feast days like the Mexican feast of *Dia de los Muertos* (2 November), food binds together the living and the dead members of a family. Paul Buffalo's people, the *Anishinabe* (Chippewa / Ojibwa of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Ontario), regularly offered food offerings to the dead, just like the Mexican people for *Dia de los Muertos*, but all year long.

If you were / are a member of a culture that practices food rituals such as those of *Dia de los Muertos*, it would be pretty difficult to answer last week's "Last Meal" *Forum* question, as there *wouldn't ever be* a last meal so long as any of your descendants remained alive and committed to cultural traditions like respecting *el Dia* and its requisite food offerings to the dead.

The first porcupine I ever ate was with some of the last of the very traditional hunters and gatherers of the Leech Lake Reservation. Paul Buffalo (born first in 1898/9 and again on White Oak Point on the 4th of July in 1900) and I—in the mid-1960s—shared a porcupine, boiled whole, with his brother “Joe Sky” Nason in a small log cabin in the woods west of Deer River. “Joe Sky” killed it with a wooden club explaining that he just had a hankerin’ for some old time food—very much **like we will see this week in the BBC video *Did Cooking Make us Human?*** Paul Buffalo’s family lived following the traditional seasonal food cycle until WWI, about 1915.

I had the right-front leg and shoulder of the porcupine, which, when I first saw it, was sticking up out of the pan about four inches, hairy paw attached. The cooked porcupine had a *really* strong flavor, for my tastes, but the old-time lumberjacks who chewed snuff, chewing tobacco, and plug tobacco most of their lives *loved* porcupine—because it was a food that they could still taste after having ruined their taste buds with a life of chewing snus and plug tobacco (sometimes at the same time). In traditional times *Anishinabe* peoples in northern Minnesota did not generally “hunt” (actually more like *collect*) porcupine. No, they generally left porcupines alone *because* porcupine were very easy to catch—one could do it with just a stick—and porcupine was thus a sort of “survival” food in case they didn’t get other meats (which wasn’t very often). In the classical anthropology film *The Hunters* the small Khoisan* hunting party of four, of a group which had been without meat in their camp for a month, eventually “collected” two porcupine after coming home empty-handed two or three times.

*[aka the Kalahari Bushmen, !Kung, San, and other names]

During Week 3 of Anthropology of Food we're traveling back into prehistoric times. You will see some of these materials also in Chapter Two of *Eating Culture*, “Settled Ingredients: Domestic Food Production,” and in Chapter Four, “Cooks and Kitchens.”

If you find some of the **names of the prehistoric apes and early humans** (and their home locations) confusing, don't let that bother you. **Not so long ago a whole major species was added to the list: *Homo naledi*.** The class materials this week will walk you through these foreign-sounding topics, *sans* *Homo naledi*, and provide a little more illustration to the points that the text makes. The video *Did Cooking Make Us Human?* will also review some of the main prehistoric players in the ancient food scene.

And **remember, the exams are open-book tests**—so bear in mind that you *do not* have to memorize these names and facts. So familiarize yourself with the materials, but don't spend too much time trying to commit the details to memory. (If you haven't read the materials about the Anth of Food exams yet, it might be a good idea to do that before too long. You can find that information at http://www.d.umn.edu/cla/faculty/troufs/anthfood/afexams_midterm.html.)

For this week—for the entire term, for that matter—**focus on the *ideas* and main concepts and differing points of view**. In the video *Did the Cooking Make us Human?*, for example, pay attention to what **Richard Wrangham's *ideas*** are, and how he argues in support of them.

Remember that **archaeology is one of the four main branches of American Anthropology** (from Weeks 1 and 2). And next week *enjoy* having a look at our prehistoric past, including the information on prehistoric cows in **the film *Holy Cow***.

This will be our main focus on prehistoric times.

The current introductory slide sets are long, as I wanted to include a fair amount of illustrative materials to show you what the authors were talking about for most of the items covered in *Eating Culture*. **This week we'll switch over to video materials**, for the week, and return to the Introduction Slides as time permits.

Use the Student Collaboration Space wiki for project collaboration and sharing of ideas; the on-line wiki is listed below. Use these facilities to find out what the other students in the class are up to, and what projects they're thinking about working on.

Share your ideas, including study-questions with your classmates? Discuss them on-line with the others in class . . .

s2017 **Student Collaboration Space**
for your own personal use

 [Wiki for Project Collaboration](#)

QUICKMAIL (see sidebar)

The above items will be found at the top of your **Moodle** folder under “Student Collaboration Space”.

Your **Assignments and Activities listings** are available in the **Week 3 Block** of your **Moodle** folder.

This week the Assignments and Activities include . . .



[Reading Assignments for Week 3](#)



[Live Chat: Picking a Project Topic, Week 3 Day 4, Tuesday, 24 January 2017, 7:00-8:00 p.m. CDT](#)

If you have trouble getting started with your Project—“getting started” basically means picking a topic—let me know and I’ll help you work out an interesting topic. For a starter, tune in to the Live Chat on Tuesday evening with your questions about the Project . . .

If you have any questions about getting started on your project, let me know. In the meantime, you can find the general information for your **class project** at <http://www.d.umn.edu/cla/faculty/troufs/anthfood/afproject.html>.



Pre Assessing Yourself (from last week, if you haven’t done it yet)



[Forum: What's for Supper? \(Due by the end of Week 3—Saturday, 28 January 2017\)](#)



Forum: Food and Climate Change (Due by end of Week 3--
Saturday, 28 January 2017)

REM: If you're curious about how the grading of the *Forums* is done, have a look at <http://www.d.umn.edu/cla/faculty/troufs/anthfood/afgrades.html#gradingpolicies>.

Forum postings are worth up to twenty points each; if you are checking on the grading scale look at the "N=20" column. This chart compares the point system of this course with the newest version (3 January 2011) of the UMD grading system. You might find the sections "**The Curve**" and "**Grading Gymnastics . . .**" interesting

<http://www.d.umn.edu/cla/faculty/troufs/anthfood/afgrades.html#curve> and

<http://www.d.umn.edu/cla/faculty/troufs/anthfood/afgrades.html#gymnastics>.

REM: Major Due Dates are listed at

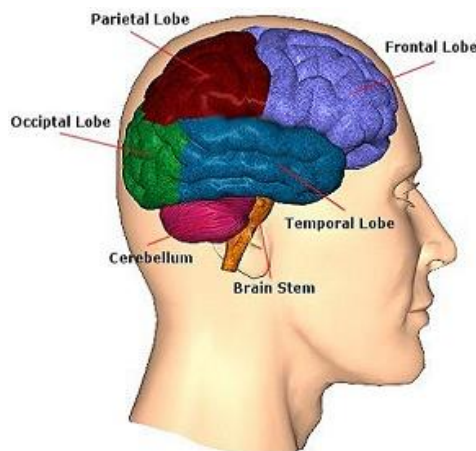
<http://www.d.umn.edu/cla/faculty/troufs/anthfood/afdue-dates.html>

[including Term Paper / Exams / Extra Credit Papers . . . not including weekly *Forum* and Review assignments...]

This week our **trivia question for fun** relates to last meals

(below the "Reading Assignments" section of Block 2) . . .

**The human brain encodes what three factors
in processing nouns?**



[\(Answer\)](#)

Tuesday we'll have a short presentation from MPIRG, an excellent UMD Student association . . .

Tuesday, 24 January 2017



Brief Presentation

MPIRG Duluth

Minnesota Public Interest Research Group

As usual, if you have any **questions** right now, please do not hesitate to post them on the **Moodle** "QUICKMAIL", "Messenger" or e-mail troufs@d.umn.edu, or stop in before or after class across the hall in Cina 215. And that goes also for questions about getting started on **your project**. Project information is on-line at <http://www.d.umn.edu/cla/faculty/troufs/anthfood/afproject.html>.

Best Regards,

Tim Roufs

<http://www.d.umn.edu/~troufs/>