

WELCOME — to our — TABLE



For Barney, Noah, Toby, Sol, Columba and Remy

L.M. and E.S.

To my wonderful husband, James

H.L.



First published 2023

Nosy Crow Ltd
Wheat Wharf, 27a Shad Thames,
London, SE1 2XZ, UK

Nosy Crow Eireann Ltd
44 Orchard Grove, Kenmare,
Co Kerry, V93 FY22, Ireland

www.nosycrow.com

ISBN 978 1 83994 504 5

Nosy Crow and associated logos are trademarks
and/or registered trademarks of Nosy Crow Ltd.

Text © Laura Mucha and Ed Smith 2023
Illustrations © Harriet Lynas 2023

Series based on an original idea by Moira Butterfield.

All rights reserved.

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not,
by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, hired out or otherwise circulated in
any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published.
No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system,
or transmitted in any form or by any means
(electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise)
without the prior written permission of Nosy Crow Ltd.

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Printed in Italy.

Papers used by Nosy Crow are made from wood
grown in sustainable forests.

13 5798642

WELCOME — to our — TABLE



WRITTEN BY
LAURA MUCHA and ED SMITH

Laura has travelled to every continent
of the world and writes books of poems,
facts and stories for children.

Ed writes lip-smacking recipes in his
cookbooks for adults. They're both
fascinated by the many different things
we humans grow, cook and eat. They also
share and enjoy many meals around the
same table (they're married), so decided to
join forces to create this book.

ILLUSTRATED BY
HARRIET LYNAS

Harriet was born and raised in Korea.
She loved doodling and decided to
become an illustrator at the age
of ten. She made that dream come
true and now illustrates children's
books, living in Cambridge, England,
with her husband and their son.
When she is not drawing, she enjoys
cooking exotic foods and walking
in the countryside.



TOMATOES



DOLMA



SOY SAUCE



CARROTS



PASTA



ARTICHOKE



WALNUT



BUTTER



PLANTAIN



OKRA



CHOCOLATE



MANGOES



EGGS

CONTENTS

Introduction Pages 6–7

Setting the table Pages 8–9

What do you use to eat your food?

What's your flavour? Page 10

How do we taste food?

Superbly smelly Page 11

Did you know you eat food with your nose?!

Let's talk about texture Pages 12–13

Foods that are slurpy, spiky or sticky . . .

Remarkable rice Pages 14–15

Have you eaten your rice yet?

Amazing maize Pages 16–17

Ways to eat maize

Brilliant bread Page 18

Bread around the world

Lunch on the go Page 19

What's in your packed lunch?

Noodles, noodles Pages 20–21

Oodles of noodles

Hot, hot, hot Page 22

Chilli peppers are HOT!

Terrific tomatoes Page 23

Did you know there are 10,000 types of tomato?

Do you dig it? Pages 24–25

Potatoes, cassavas and yams

Eat your greens Pages 26–27

Vegetables around the world

Pickles and ferments Pages 28–29

Do you know what sour tastes like?

Vegetable dishes Pages 30–31

How do you eat yours?

Hello, herbs Pages 32–33

Flavour-giving plants

A sprinkle of spice Pages 34–35

Tastes of home

Popped from a pod Page 36

From borlotti beans to black-eyed peas

Soybeans Page 37

Multitalented beans

Nuts Page 37

Nuts about nuts!

Brilliant beef Pages 38–39

From head to tail

Billions of birds Pages 40–41

Which do you prefer, chicken or egg?

Pork, glorious pork Page 42

Pulled, roasted, dried or stewed

Hungry for hangi Page 43

Lamb dishes around the world

Under the sea Pages 44–45

Shellfish, molluscs and cephalopods

Fabulous fish Pages 46–47

The most fished fish

The magic of milk Pages 48–49

And the marvellous things we make from it

Ice cream, ice cream Pages 50–51

Who wants an ice cream?

Fantastic fruits Pages 52–53

Feeling fruity

Going bananas! Page 54

Favourite fruits

An apple a day Page 55

From apple strudel to tarte tatin

Pastries and puddings Pages 56–57

Which sweet treat would you like to eat?

Future foods Pages 58–59

*What will we eat in the future?
What should we be eating now?*

Delicious! Page 60

Goodbye! Page 61

World map Pages 62–63

List of countries and places featured Page 64
and **The end**



ROTI



APPLES



HALVA



PEAS



ORANGES



YAMS



FLOUR



MOONCAKES



YOGHURT



AUBERGINE



MUSSELS



KIMCHI

This book is packed with lots of different ingredients and dishes from around the world. You can find a list of all the countries included on page 64.



INTRODUCTION

We all eat food. Every one of us.

Lots of us think about food too. Is it lunchtime yet?
What will we have for dinner?
Will there be pudding?

But do you ever *really* think about food? Like, how and where does rice grow?
Why does some cheese smell so bad? What exactly is a nut?!

There are almost eight billion humans on the planet in 195 countries. This book includes just some of the many different types of food that people grow, cook and eat in some of those places – otherwise it would be thousands of pages long!

WE ARE DIFFERENT.

BUT WE ALL LOVE FOOD.

WELCOME TO OUR TABLE!

We have included lots of words from around the world. If any look tricky to say, you can use the pronunciation guides provided.

Food doesn't just give us energy. It brings us together, and forms cultures and traditions. By learning about food, you can learn not only about different countries, but also how people have moved around and taken their favourite foods with them.

This book shows how children across the world eat the same things, the same things cooked differently, and different things altogether. It will introduce you to ingredients and dishes that you haven't heard of, let alone eaten before. But perhaps you'll want to. And hopefully you will!

Food is a BRILLIANT way to travel and explore the globe. So grab your chopsticks, knife and fork, or fingers, and let's tuck in.



SETTING THE TABLE

What do you use to eat your food?

Cutlery? Fingers? An edible plate?! Here are some of the ways children around the world move food to their mouths.



KNIFE

FORK



In Europe, Australasia, North and South America, children usually use a knife and fork when they eat savoury meals. They use the knife to cut and push food onto a fork, before lifting it with the fork to their mouths.

Spoons are also very useful for eating wobbly food like jelly!



Sometimes children don't use a knife. Instead they use a fork and spoon – for example when eating **FESENJOON** (*fess-en-joon*), a chicken stew from Iran.



SPOON

And sometimes they just use a spoon – because it's the best thing to hold liquids like soups and broths, or loose foods like **PORRIDGE** or **CONGEE** (*con-jee*).



FLAT-BOTTOMED SPOON

Spoons come in all materials, shapes and sizes. Some are small and dainty with curved bottoms. Others, like those used in Japan and China, have flat bottoms and high sides, which is helpful for holding as much scrumptious **SOUP** as possible!



CHOPSTICKS



Chopsticks come in twos. Each pair of sticks are the same length, but thinner at one end. They're the traditional way to eat food in East Asian countries including China, Japan, South Korea and Vietnam – and for eating their cuisine around the world. You eat by pinching the chopsticks together to pick up food or shovel it into your mouth.

HANDS

More than a quarter of the world eat mostly with their hands. For children in countries like India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Bhutan, their fingers are the main utensil for mixing food and putting it in their mouth.



And for children in Nigeria and South Korea, fingers are the most popular way to eat pounded **YAM** and **EGUSI** (*eh-goo-see*) **SOUP** and **SSAMBAP LETTUCE WRAPS**.



In Laos, we use our hands to squish sticky rice into a ball, before dipping it into sauce. Yum!

Even in countries where people mostly use knives, forks and spoons, fingers can be the most useful tools when eating certain things – like **PIZZA** in Italy.



In lots of countries, instead of fingers or cutlery, children use bread to scoop vegetables and swipe up stews.

In Mexico, **TORTILLAS** (*tor-tee-yas*) accompany most meals to mop up juices. In Indonesia, flaky, stretchy **ROTI** (*roh-tee*) are the perfect way to eat soupy dal. And in Ethiopia, **INJERA** (*in-jeh-ra*) is both a plate and scoop for the different vegetables, lentils and stews that sit on top of it.



Injera is like an edible plate! We tear off pieces to scoop up stews.



ROTI

Happy eating!

In many countries, the cook or the host often says something before everyone begins their meal.

Do you say anything before you eat, or do you dive right in?

BON APPÉTIT!

(*boh-na-peh-tee*)
"Enjoy your meal"
in French

KEU A KA 'ONO!

(*kayoo ah kah oh-noh*)
"Bon appétit"
in Hawaiian

SMAČNÓHO!

(*smatch-no-ho*)
"Let it be tasty for you"
in Ukrainian

TË BËFTË MIRË!

(*ter berft meer*)
"May the food do you good"
in Albanian

SAHTAIN!

(*sa-tain*)
"Double your health"
in Lebanese

KIA MĀKONA!

(*kee-a maah-ko-na*)
"Eat well"
in Māori
(spoken in New Zealand)

HA KUU MACAANAATO!

(*ha koo ma-aan-tou*)
"Have a nice meal"
in Somali


WHAT'S YOUR FLAVOUR?

How do we taste food?

Although we eat food using our mouths, we actually experience it in many ways. Flavour is a combination of taste, smell and physical sensations like temperature and tingling. And there are some foods that can trick us into thinking they're burning hot, when actually they're not!


Our tongues sense five different tastes:

SWEET




Sweet means sugary things like strawberries, syrups and cakes. Long ago, when people had to search for their food in the wild, a sweet taste would have told their tongue that they'd found an ingredient packed with energy. Nowadays, sweet food is much easier to get hold of so we have to be careful – too much sugar can lead to health problems.

SALTY




Salty food like pretzels, bacon and crisps can be tasty... as long as they're not TOO salty. That's because too much salt can be dangerous. In other words, by helping us taste, our tongue can also keep us safe!

SOUR




Sour means things that are acidic like lemons and vinegar. Sometimes sour can be great. But if your tongue thinks something is too sour, it may be that an ingredient you're eating has gone off and could be harmful for you.

BITTER



A small amount of bitterness can be nice – a twist of orange peel, a forkful of kale. But if something is VERY bitter, it can mean that it's poisonous. That's why our tongues notice and dislike the taste.

UMAMI (oo-mah-mee)



You can taste umami in foods like tomatoes, mushrooms and soy sauce – and often it leaves us wanting more. That's because it's in savoury foods that are usually good for us.

Tingling hot or freezing cold?

As well as sensing taste, your tongue has receptors that tell your brain if food is burning hot or freezing cold. But some ingredients, like chilli peppers, mustard and horseradish, trigger the same receptors. So your brain may think your mouth is burning, even though it's not. And others, like mint, include something called 'menthol', which convinces your tongue that it's cold!

There are also a lot of spices that will make your lips and tongue buzz, fizz and feel numb. One example is Sichuan peppercorns. In China, where they come from, the sensation is known as *ma la*, which means 'tingling hot'.

HOT

COLD

SUPERBLY SMELLY

Did you know you eat food with your nose?!

Whenever you think something you're eating is fruity, floral or spicy, you're describing its flavour. And flavour mostly comes through our nose! Our sense of smell is SO powerful that it can make us hungry. That's why some shops pump out smells – they're trying to make us buy their food!

Some foods are seriously stinky, but we still enjoy eating them. Would you like to try any of these?



DURIAN

(juor-ree-uhn)
This fruit is absolutely packed with goodness. But it's illegal for people in Singapore to carry it on public transport!



VIEUX BOULOGNE

(vyuh boo-loyn)
Many cheeses have a strong smell, but some people think this cheese from France is the smelliest of all. Its pong has been compared to a farmyard, rotting leaves and manure.



NATTO

Natto is a Japanese dish made from soybeans that is sticky, slimy and smelly. Lots of people eat it because it's good for you, but they don't always enjoy the experience!



STINKING TOE FRUIT

The West Indian locust is also known as the 'stinking toe tree'. Not only do its seed pods look like big toes, but they also smell like them once you crack open their shell.



SURSTRÖMMING

(suh-stru-ming)
The fish in Sweden's surströmming has been fermented, which is why it whiffs so much (surströmming literally means 'sour herring'). But don't worry, not all tinned fish is this pongy!



LET'S TALK ABOUT TEXTURE

Foods that are slurpy, spiky or sticky...

Texture is as important as flavour. Food feels very different depending on whether you have to chew, chomp or slurp it. Which of these textures do you know and enjoy?



JELLY

From Belgium to Brazil, Cambodia to Canada, foods with a jelly-like texture are popular across the world. Sometimes they're bouncy, gooey and gummy, and need a good chew. Sometimes they're slippery, wibbly and wobbly, and you can slurp them through your teeth.

CHICKEN FEET

There isn't much meat on chicken feet! In fact, they're really just skin, bone and something knobbly called 'cartilage'. They're popular in China, where an important part of enjoying food is its *kougan* or 'mouth feel'. Eating chicken feet means gnawing, chewing and savouring the texture, as well as any flavours they've been cooked in.



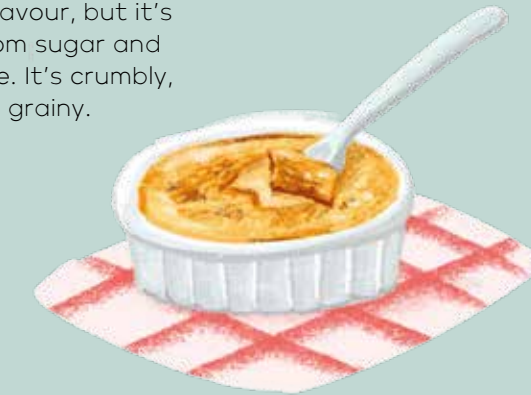
CRISPS

Also known as potato chips, crisps are thin, crunchy and... CRISP! Some of them can also be a bit greasy because of the oil they're fried in. They're particularly popular in France, the UK and the USA.



HALVA

Halva is eaten in Middle Eastern countries like Cyprus, Lebanon and Turkey. You can add other ingredients for flavour, but it's made mostly from sugar and seed or nut paste. It's crumbly, chalky and grainy.



CRÈME BRÛLÉE

(*crem broo-lay*)

If you want to get to the silky custard in a traditional French *crème brûlée*, you need to shatter the crisp and crunchy top first. SMASH!

PASTA

Spaghetti and other Italian pasta shapes are slippery and smooth. This can make it difficult to eat them without slurping!



BREAD AND BUTTER PUDDING

When slices of bread and butter are soaked in a milky custard and cooked, they create a traditional English pudding that's spongy, soft and smooth.



BOBA

A popular drink in Taiwan is bubble tea – but the 'bubbles' aren't full of air. They're bouncy, springy and chewy little balls called *boba*, and children suck them up through wide straws. Boba are made from tapioca, which comes from a root vegetable called cassava (see page 25).



BILTONG

Most of the time, food isn't very nice to eat if it has dried out. But there are some meaty snacks that are deliberately dry, leathery and tough. It can take a lot of effort to eat biltong from South Africa, but it's worth it!

Crunchy is...

KNACKIG **CRUIXENT**
(*k-nack-ig*) in German
(*croo-shent*) in Catalan

MKARMECH **KNAPRIG**
(*me-karr-mesh*) in Arabic, spoken in Algeria
(*k-nar-prig*) in Swedish

Lumpy is...

GÆTITTA **KEKKJÓTTUR**
(*guy-t-eeta*) in Sinhalese, spoken in Sri Lanka
(*khek-yott-urh*) in Icelandic

Chewy is...

GOMMOSO
(*go-moh-zo*) in Italian

ŽVÝKACÍ
(*zh-wee-kats-ee*) in Czech

TAAI
(*tie*) in Afrikaans, spoken in South Africa

Sticky is...

MELEKIT **GLUDIOG**
(*muh-luh-keed*) in Malay
(*glee-dee-og*) in Welsh

GLUANT **CI LAP LAP**
(*gloo-on*) in French
(*chee lap lap*) In Cantonese, spoken in Hong Kong

REMARKABLE RICE

Have you eaten your rice yet?

In many South East Asian countries, asking whether someone has eaten their rice yet is another way of saying "how are you?".

Humans eat on average 70 kilograms of rice per person, per year. That's the weight of an adult! In some parts of the world, people eat up to three times that amount.

Of all the plants that are grown for humans to eat, rice is one of the most important. And there are more than 40,000 varieties, from fluffy to sticky, long to short, black to red!

Grains of rice are actually the seeds of a type of grass. Farmers plant the grass in fields that are flooded with water. The grass loves the soggy environment, and the water also keeps pests away.



As the grass grows, the ground dries – either naturally or because farmers drain the field. Eventually, the ground is dry enough to walk on and the rice grains are plump enough to be harvested. Farmers then cut and collect the grass, often by hand. That means growing rice takes a LOT of work.

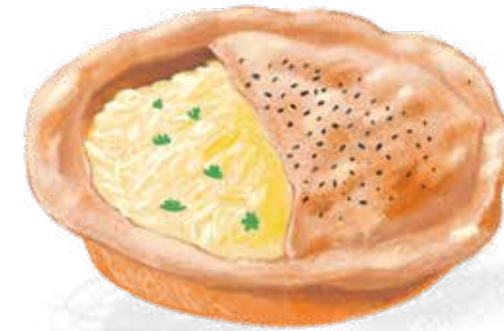
Next, the grass is bashed to knock the seeds out. But it's still not rice as we know it just yet . . .

The seeds then have to be dried out and separated from their outer coats.

That's a lot of effort for one grain of rice . . . especially when a bowl might contain as many as 5,000!



From field to fork



BIRYANI (*bih-ree-yah-nee*) is an Indian dish where fragrant rice is layered with potatoes, spices and meat, then topped with pastry. This pastry 'lid' keeps the steam and flavours in the pot until everything is cooked and the lid is removed.



JOLLOF RICE is a mix of rice, spice, chillies, onions and tomatoes, and will almost always be on the table at parties and gatherings in Nigeria and Ghana.



RISOTTO is a creamy rice dish from Italy. To get the right texture, you must, must, MUST keep stirring as you cook, as this helps it become really oozy.



In Iran, rice is sometimes served with **TAHDIG** (*taa-deeg*). This is when a crisp golden layer from the bottom of the pan is served as a crunchy top to the fluffy grains. Everyone will want a piece!



CONGEE (*con-jee*) is rice that's boiled for a long time until it's very soft and watery. In China, people often eat congee for breakfast with eggs, fish or pickled vegetables.



In Spanish, **PAELLA** (*pa-eh-yah*) is the name of a round shallow pan with a flat bottom – and that's exactly what paella is cooked and served in. It's made from rice, peppers, saffron and either meat, shellfish or both! If it's cooked well, there will be a crusty layer of rice at the bottom.



Little grains of rice are BIG in Thailand. Rice is eaten with a lot of savoury meals, but it can also be the main part of a dish. **KHAO NIAOW MA MUANG** (*cow nee-ow muh mu-ang*) is a pudding made from sticky rice that is cooked in coconut milk and served with mango. Yum!