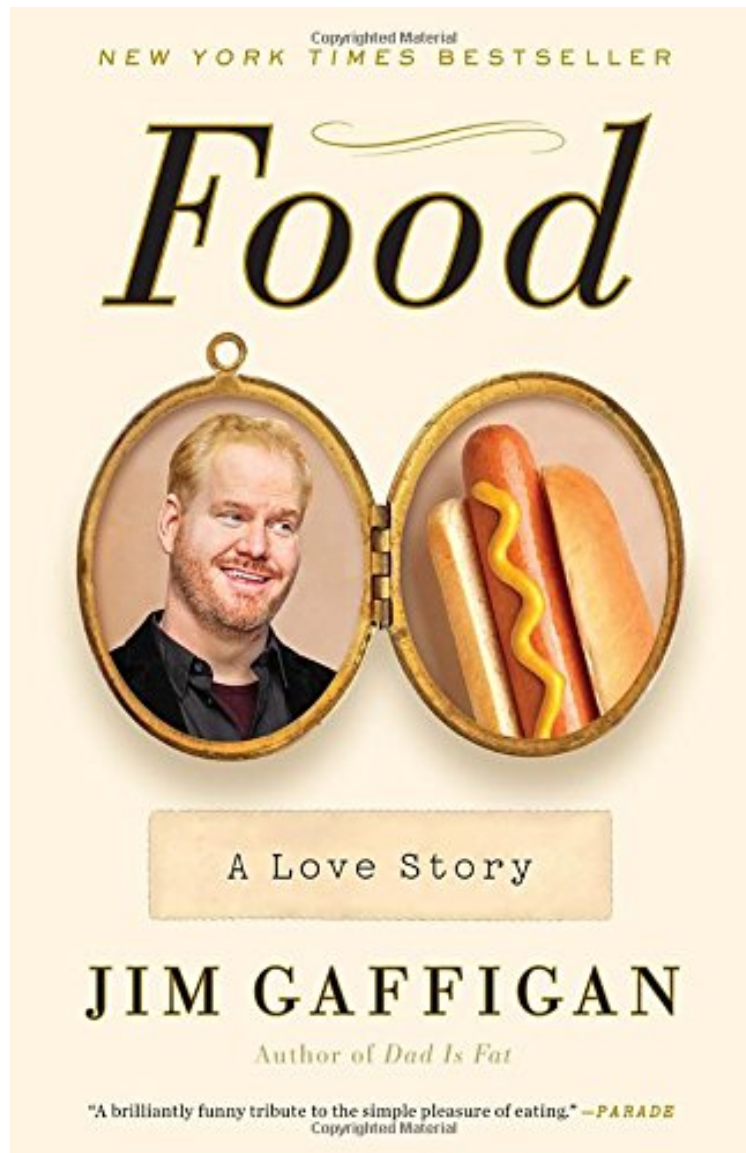


[Pdf free] Food: A Love Story

Food: A Love Story

Jim Gaffigan

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Jim Gaffigan : Food: A Love Story before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Food: A Love Story:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. "I've only seen a gun up close five times in my life, and four of those were in a Waffle House."By GabeI absolutely loved Jim's first book, "Dad is Fat". I listened to it 3 or 4 times on audio (the best way to experience it, because you get Jim's delivery and cadence), and I also purchased it on Kindle to read. For this follow up, Jim has done the seemingly impossible and written a book that is not only superior to "Dad is Fat",

but VASTLY superior. "Food: A Love Story" is laugh-out-loud hilarious from start to finish, causing many people to stare at me as I giggled to myself while reading. I read it on Kindle, and I can't wait to experience this book again on audio while driving to and from work to liven up my day. Every part of this book is hilarious, and I don't even know where to begin to describe it. It's just brilliant, genius, and insane all at once, while ripping apart every major fast food chain, food trend, and geographical food tendencies. Buy it, read it, laugh. Repeat! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. HOOSIER DADDY ?By theblackpillJust like his specials...but I miss his voice and his expressions. He is quite a good actor. So I enjoy his DVD s the most.I'm a Lake county xpat Jim grew up one Indiana county east of me. He lives in crazy town N.Y. I live in crazy state, Florida.If he ever needs material i sure hope he ends up down here....Florida, where everyone is funny/strange.If you come you'll need Solar Flare Sunblock and a burka, aluminum hat with a lightning rod.. Best to you and Jeannie and the kids.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. CD format - Jim Is funnyBy J. SpurwayAnother funny Gaffigan tome. Much of the humor is bits he has used in his standup, but there is some new stuff.Food is as family as DNA. When I talk to my mom, first we go thru everyone's medical history. Then, we go thru all the food: past, present, and future. The exception is when medical and food meld. "He was feeling so bad he couldn't finish eating the pizza."Shortly after eating a meal, we start discussing what we will have for the next meal. And some days are happier because of food. Saturdays are nice, but I eat lunch at Whataburger and that makes it the best day of the week times 1000.Sometimes I find a good place to eat, minus 1. Usually a salad place. I take my own salad dressing. Or a pizza place that is good, but I have to order extra cheese to make it a great pizza. Or a place that has good fries, but no Heinz ketchup.

Have you ever finished a meal that tasted horrible but not noticed until the last bite? Eaten in your car so you wouldn't have to share with your children? Gotten hungry while watching a dog food commercial? Does the presence of green vegetables make you angry? If you answered yes to any of the following questions, you are pretty pathetic, but you are not alone. Feast along with America's favorite food comedian, bestselling author, and male supermodel Jim Gaffigan as he digs into his specialty: stuffing his face. Food: A Love Story is an in-depth, thoroughly uninformed look at everything from health food to things that people actually enjoy eating.

About the AuthorJIM GAFFIGAN is a New York Times bestselling author, comedian, actor, and executive producer of The Jim Gaffigan Show. When he is not eating in airports before flying to some city to eat and do stand-up comedy, he overeats in New York City and also lives there with his five young children and much smarter and thinner wife, Jeannie. Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.CURRICULUM VITAE What are my qualifications to write this book? None, really. So why should you read it? Here's why: I'm a little fat. Okay, to some I might not be considered that fat, but the point is, I'm not thin. If a thin guy were to write about a love of food and eating, I'd highly recommend that you do not read his book. I'm not talking about someone who is merely in good shape. I'm talking thin. Skinny. I wouldn't trust them skinnies with food advice. First of all, how do you know they really feel passionately about food? Well, obviously they are not passionate enough to overdo it. That's not very passionate. Anyway, I'm overweight. I'll admit it. I consciously try not to take food advice from thin people. I know this may not be fair, but when Mario Batali talks, I always think, Well, this is a guy who knows what he's talking about. He actually has experience eating food. This is why some sportscasters wonder what's going on in a player's head during a tense moment in a game, but the sportscaster who was once a player knows what's going on in a player's head. When I talk about food, I like to think I'm like one of those sportscasters who used to play professionally. I'm like the Ray Lewis or Terry Bradshaw of eat-ing. I'm like the Tony Siragusa of eating. Well, that's a little redundant. When a thin person announces, "Here's a great taco place," I kind of shut down a little. How do they know it's so great? From smelling the tacos? If they only ate one taco, the taco could not have been that great. Or maybe it was great, but the thin person cared more about the calories than the taste: "I had to stop at one taco. I'm on a diet." A taco that won't force you to break your diet just can't be that great. Fat people know the consequences of eating, but if the food is good enough, they just don't care. Overweight people have chosen food over appearance. When a fat person talks about a great place to get a burger, I lean in. They know. Speaking of thin people, another person it makes no sense to take advice from is the waiter. Why do fancy restaurants always hire thin, good-looking people to be the waiters? "I'll have the hamburger, and I want someone who is at least an 8 to bring it over to me. Can I see some headshots?" Why would we care what the waiter looks like? Even if we did, why would we take the waiter's advice? We don't know him. He is a stranger. "Well, he works there." Does that make him have similar taste in things you like? Does that make him honest? Not to sound paranoid, but the waitstaff does have a financial incentive for you to order something more expensive: "Well, I highly recommend the 16-ounce Kobe Beef with Lobster and the bottle of 1996 Dom Perignon." What restaurants really need is a fat-guy food expert. Many fine-dining establishments have a sommelier—a wine expert—to assist in wine selection, but if a restaurant really cares about food, they should have a "Fattelier." FATTELIER: Well, I'd get the chili cheese fries with the cheese on the side. You get more cheese that way. ME: Thank you, Fattelier. Although they can't be thin, the food adviser can't be too fat. If they are morbidly obese, then you can conclude that they will probably eat everything and anything and do not have discerning taste.

This is not to say that they won't have valuable views. I'd still trust an overly fat person over a skinny one any day. The best adviser would have a very specific body type: pudgy or just a little overweight. This makes it clear they have a somewhat unhealthy relationship with food, but not a clinical problem. They are eating beyond feeling full. Sure, I am describing my own body type, but that's why I am qualified to write this book about food. What other credentials do you need, really? Stop being a snob. Read the book already.

STEAK: THE MANLY MEAT As a child I was confused by my father's love of steak. I remember being eight and my dad ceremoniously announcing to the family, "We're having steak tonight!" as if Abe Lincoln were coming over for dinner. My siblings and I would politely act excited as we watched TV. "That's great, Dad!" I remember thinking, Big deal. Why can't we just have McDonald's? To me, my father just had this weird thing with steak. I thought, Dads obsess about steak the way kids obsess about candy. Well, my dad did. I'd watch him trudge out behind our house in all types of weather to the propane grill after me or one of my brothers barely averted death by lighting it for him. He would happily take his post out there, chain-smoking his Merit Ultra Light cigarettes and drinking his Johnnie Walker Black Label Scotch alone in the darkness of Northwest Indiana. He'd stare into the flame like it was an ancient oracle relaying a prophecy that solved the mysteries of life. Given the sheer joy that standing at the grill gave my father, I was always amazed by how bad he was at cooking a steak. Maybe it was the grilling in virtual darkness, or maybe it was the Scotch, but his steaks were usually really burnt and often had the flavor of cigarette ashes. At the table he would try to justify the charred meat in front of the family: "You like it well done, right?" Again, my siblings and I would politely lie. "It's great, Dad. Thanks." I think I actually grew to enjoy the taste of A.1. Steak Sauce mixed with cigarette ash. A.1. was always on the table when my dad would grill steaks. It seems everyone I knew had that same thin bottle of A.1. It always felt like it was empty right before it flooded your steak. Ironically, the empty--feeling bottle never seemed to run out. I think most people still have the same bottle of A.1. that they had in 1989. Once I looked at the back of a bottle of A.1. and was not surprised to find that one of the ingredients was "magic." By the time I became a teenager, I generally understood that steak was something unique. It had some kind of a deeper meaning. I still preferred McDonald's, but I realized steak was certainly not something my father would've been able to eat growing up as the son of a denture maker in Springfield, Illinois, in the 1940s. I remember thinking that maybe eating steak was actually my father's measure of success. He wasn't poor anymore. He and his children could afford to eat burnt steak. Even in my twenties, when I would go home to visit my father after my mother passed away, he and I would always eat a cigarette--ash-infused steak that he had overcooked on the grill. Many years later I realized that following my mother's death, my father pretty much ate steak every night. Probably because my mother was not around anymore to say, "Well, obviously you shouldn't eat steak every night!" When I think back to my father eating steak day after day, year after year, I can only come to one conclusion: my father was a genius. I don't know what happened, but steak makes perfect sense to me now. I was really overanalyzing it as a teenager. My father was not cooking steak on the grill to get away from his family or eating it daily to prove to himself that he wasn't poor; my father was eating steak because consuming a steak is one of the great pleasures we get to experience during our short time on this planet. This was probably one of my most profound coming--of--age realizations. Steak is really that amazing. Steak is so delicious, I'm sure the first person to go on a stakeout was eventually disappointed: "Been sitting in this car all night and still no steak! Not even a basket of bread." I'm actually relieved I inherited my father's love of steak. Where I was raised in the Midwest, all the men around me seemed to love three things: fixing stuff, cars, and steak. I learned that a real man loves fixing stuff, cars, and steak. Well, at least I've got one of those three. If eating steak is manly, it is the only manly attribute I possess. I'm not handy. I can't fix things. Whenever something breaks in our apartment, I just look at my wife sheepishly and say, "We should call someone." I don't even call. My wife calls. I can barely figure out the phone. When the handyman comes over, I just kind of silently watch him work. I don't know what to say. "You want some brownies? My wife could bake us some brownies. I'd bake them, but I don't know how to turn the oven on." I try to act like I'm working on something more important. "Yeah, I'm more of a tech guy. I'm really good at computer stuff like checking e--mail." I'm just not manly. I don't know what happened. The men in my family are manly. My dad and my brothers loved cars. I mean LOVED cars in a manly way. They'd talk about cars, go to car shows, and even stop and look at other people's cars in a parking lot. I barely have an opinion on cars. I do know that trucks are manlier than cars. The most manly form of transportation is, of course, the pickup truck. My brother Mike has a pickup because he's a MAN. Pickup commercials just give me anxiety. There's always a voice--over bellowing, "You can pull one ton! Two tons! You can pull an aircraft carrier!" I always think, Why? Why do you need that? I only see people taking their pickup trucks to Cracker Barrel. My brother Mike, like many other pickup owners, never seems to be picking anything up in his pickup. I find this confusing. It's like walking around with a big empty piece of luggage. "Are you about to travel somewhere?" "No, but I'm the type of guy who would." To be fair, I really can't judge. I don't own a pickup—or even a car, for that matter. Whenever I go back home to Indiana to visit my brother Mitch, who is car obsessed, I rent a car and drive to his house from Chicago. We usually have the same conversation.

MITCH: What kind of car did you rent? **ME:** I think it's blue. **MITCH:** Is that four or six cylinders? **ME:** (pause) It has four wheels. I think. Wait, cylinders aren't wheels, right? But steak steak I get. If eating steak is manly, then I'm all man. I'm like a man and a half. I love steak so much, it's actually the way I show affection for other men. "You're

such a good guy, I'm going to buy you a steak." Men bond over steak. "We'll sit and eat meat together and not talk about our families." I recently toured for two weeks with my friend Tom. When I returned home, Jeannie asked, "How's Tom's family?" I don't know. I only spent like twelve hours a day with the guy. I know he likes a medium-rare rib eye. What else is there to know? I order steaks from Omaha Steaks. Yes, I order my meat over the Internet, which I'm pretty sure is a sign of a problem. I guess I don't want my steak shopping to cut into my steak-eating time. Ordering Omaha Steaks is very simple. It's like .com for beef. A couple of days after I place my order, a Styrofoam cooler shows up. It's the same type of cooler that I imagine they will deliver my replacement heart in. Omaha Steaks is nice enough to provide dry ice in case I'd like to make a bomb or something. Occasionally, when I grab my Omaha Steaks cooler out of the hallway I'll make eye contact with a neighbor, who I'm sure will later tell his spouse, "Jim got an-other box of meat today. That apartment will be available in a couple weeks." The only problem with Omaha Steaks as a company is that you can't get rid of them. Once you order from them, they are like Jehovah's Witnesses calling all the time. OMAHA STEAKS REP: Hey, you want some more steaks? ME: I just got a delivery yesterday. OMAHA STEAKS REP: How about some rib eyes? ME: I don't need any more steak, thank you. OMAHA STEAKS REP: How about some filets? You want some filets? ME: Really. I'm fine with steaks. OMAHA STEAKS REP: Okay, I'll call tomorrow. ME: Um OMAHA STEAKS REP: Hey, you want some turkey? Ham? ME: I thought you were Omaha Steaks? OMAHA STEAKS REP: You want some drywall? ME: Aren't you Omaha Steaks? OMAHA STEAKS REP: I'm right outside your window. I'm so lonely. I could never be a vegetarian for many reasons, but the main one is steak. Sure, bacon, bratwurst, and pastrami are pretty amazing, but steak is the soul of all carnivores. Steak is the embodiment of premium meat eating. I'm a meat lover, and steak is the tuxedo of meat. The priciest dish on most menus is the "surf and turf," the steak and lobster. Who are they kid-ding? The steak is clearly driving the steak--and--lobster entrée. The steak is the headliner. There are way more people going for the steak and the lobster than people going for the lobster and the steak. The people who want the lobster are just order-ing the lobster. Lobster's appeal is all perception, and steak is truly extraordinary. Steak has its own knives. There aren't steak restaurants. There are steakhouses. Steak gets a house. There's no tunahouse. Tuna gets a can. I love a steakhouse. It's really the perfect environment for eating a steak. They always seem like throwbacks to another era. A time when kale was just a weed in your backyard. All steakhouses seem to be dimly lit and covered in dark wood. They are usually decorated with a combination of red leather and red leather. You know there is a huge locker full of hanging carcasses, like five feet away. The waiters are no--nonsense pros. They approach in a gruff manner: WAITER: (deep, scratchy voice) Welcome. Let's not beat around the bush. You getting a steak? We serve meat here. Want some meat? ME: Yes, ma'am. At Peter Luger's in Brooklyn, the waiter usually won't even let you order. "You're all getting porterhouse." Um, okay. Some steakhouses show you the meat raw. At places like Smith Wollensky, a tray will be wheeled out with different cuts on it. One by one the waiter will pick up a glob of raw meat and thrust it at the table. "You can get this. You can get this." Men are such visual animals that they'll point at the fat--swirled hunk of flesh and grunt, "That one." It's all very simple and primal. At other restaurants, fancy non--steak items are prepared in a code of complexity: "Al dente." "Braised." "Flambéed." But the way steak is cooked is understandable even to a monosyllabic caveman: "Rare." "Medium." "Well." You barely even have to know how to talk. Of course, vegetables are also served at steakhouses, but they are called "side dishes." Like their presence there is only justified by the existence of steak. They're the entourage of the steak. And you can take them or leave them. The sides are not included with the purchase of steak. They are à la carte in steakhouses, like napkins on Spirit Airlines. Sides are never called "vegetables," because what is done to vegetables in steakhouses makes them no longer qualify as vegetables. GRUFF WAITER: We have spinach cooked in ice cream. We also have a bowl of marshmallows with a dollop of yam. And our house specialty is a baked potato that we somehow stuffed with five sticks of butter. We also have a "diet potato" that is stuffed with only four sticks of butter. Everything about a steakhouse is manly, so it's no surprise that sports heroes own steakhouses. I've been to Ditka's, El-way's, and Shula's, which all had great steaks, but I'm pretty sure those NFL greats didn't cook my steak. "Hey, you were good at football. Why don't you open a meat restaurant? They have nothing to do with each other." Nothing except the same demographic: manly men. Like me. My love of steakhouses is sincere. When I die, I would like to be buried in a steakhouse. Well, not buried. Just my casket on display in the dining room. That way people can come in, eat, and stare at me lying in state. Maybe someone will say, "Jim died too soon, but this steak was aged perfectly!" I don't think people in steakhouses would mind that much about my casket. People are in steakhouses for steak. PATRON: Why is there a casket in the middle of the room? WAITER: Oh, that is a comedian, Jim Gaffigan. His only wish was to PATRON: I'll have the rib eye, baked potato, and can I get blue cheese on the side? WAITER: I'll bring that right away, Mrs. Gaffigan. I love steakhouses, but I realize there is something barbaric about the whole experience. Going to a place to eat cow hind parts. Eventually, eating steak won't be socially acceptable. In two hundred years I'm sure the following conversation will take place: PERSON 1: Did you know that in 2014 people would sit in dark rooms and eat sliced--up cow by candlelight? PERSON 2: Not my ancestors! My ancestors have been vegan since they came over on the Mayflower. I read that on Ancestry.com. CUP OF GRAVY I suppose I've become desensitized to the level of unhealthy eat-ing in America. An 80--ounce soda, all--you--can--eat buffets, and a Wendy's Triple only seem like logical options

to me. I love the rare moments when I'm truly surprised by American eating. A while ago I was back in Indiana in my hometown walk-ing around the Kmart, or, as we called it, "the mall." You can typically find just about anything you need in one of these "big box" stores like Walmart and Kmart. What I especially love about Kmart is the ambience. I always feel like I've entered a store that was just attacked by a flash mob. Everything always looks and feels a little disheveled. There will be some random empty shelf. There's always a huge corner display tower of sale products that looks like it will collapse on you if you breathe on it. There will be a broken jar in one aisle and an abandoned sock in the next. The selection and layout suggest that this might not be the ideal place to buy a suit or use a public restroom. Anyway, on this fine day I was looking for diapers when I saw a seventy--year--old man walking around the Kmart drinking something I realized later was a cup of KFC gravy. Now, in full disclosure, I love gravy. Who doesn't, really? It's gravy, after all but I've never considered gravy a beverage. Even in my most private moments with gravy I've never contemplated taking a swig. This is coming from someone who drank a product called Yoo--hoo on many occasions as a teen-ager. The thing I found most impressive was that not only was this stranger drinking gravy, he also wasn't even trying to hide it. When I first spotted the stranger, I saw the KFC Styrofoam cup, saw him take a drink, and assumed well, obviously this guy is not drinking gravy. Then I encountered him again standing in front of me in the checkout line. It was at that moment I saw the thick brown liquid in the cup and confirmed that it was, in fact, a cup of KFC gravy he was drinking. And then, almost as if to prove a point, he turned around and took a sip right in front of me. Our eyes met, and he gave me a warm Midwestern smile as if to say, "Hey, how's it going?" I nodded and said hello and was only a bit more than slightly tempted to exclaim, "You realize you're drinking gravy, right?" I don't know what the events were that led up to this stranger drinking the cup of gravy in that Kmart. I like to think he walked into KFC with the intention of drinking gravy. Maybe his order was simple. "Yeah I'll have the large mashed potatoes and gravy. And hold the mashed potatoes." Maybe in order to avoid judgment or scorn, he ordered the mashed potatoes, got the gravy on the side, and just threw the mashed potatoes away. Or maybe he really could have cared less what anyone thought, which is more likely, since he seemed like a proud gravy drinker greeting the cashier while she scanned his heart medication. I'm no health nut, but I can only imagine what this guy's next medical checkup was like. I picture a doctor in a white coat glancing down at a chart as he walks into an examination room with our gravy drinker sitting on the examination table. The doctor would then tilt his head to the right, perplexed by the results on the chart: DOCTOR: Mr. Jones, I've got your cholesterol levels here. (beat) Okay, you are aware your blood is not moving? GRAVY DRINKER: (nods) DOCTOR: This is kind of a strange question. Um. You haven't been drinking gravy, have ya? Because based on the test results you're, like, 90 percent meat by-product. GRAVY DRINKER: (nods) DOCTOR: We're going to have to register you with the government. I guessed the age of our gravy drinker to be around seventy, but I have no idea how old he was or how long he had been drinking gravy. Maybe he was younger. Maybe gravy drinking is one of those rapid--aging behaviors, like smoking. Or maybe he was an even older guy and the gravy--drinking habit had plumped out his wrinkles so he actually looked younger. I suppose his unique consumption of his gravy cup was voluntary, but I honestly don't know. Maybe his wife was just trying to kill him. GRAVY DRINKER: Honey, I'm going to Kmart. WIFE: Well, why don't you have a cup of gravy? GRAVY DRINKER: Well, I guess I could WIFE: And why don't you sign this additional life insurance policy? GRAVY DRINKER: Boy, you love buying life insurance. EVEN FEWER PEOPLE LIKE VEGETABLES If nobody wants fruit, even fewer people want vegetables. This is because, overall, vegetables taste horrible. Don't believe me? Why, then, are we surprised when vegetables taste good? "Oh my God, this beet is delicious." We are surprised because the expectation is that vegetables will taste like, well, vegetables. People eat vegetables, but nobody WANTS to eat vegetables. Think back to the last time you ate a vegetable. Did you WANT to eat the vegetable? Be honest. Maybe it was part of a healthy choice you made: "I'll eat some carrots." Congrats on that healthy choice, but don't confuse a healthy choice with a desire to eat a vegetable. I mean, I don't want to be fat, but I want vegetables less. Of course, I'm forced to eat vegetables when there are children present. Parents dishonestly announce how good vegetables are in front of young children, hoping that because of the young-sters' absence of life experience and sheer stupidity, they will be tricked into liking them. The lie that "vegetables are good" usually expires around the same time as the belief in Santa and the notion that adults actually know what they are doing. Let's say I'm wrong. Maybe you do want to eat a vegetable. Let's now subtract deep frying, vinegar, dairy, oil, or an unhealthy amount of salt from the vegetable. Do you still WANT the vegetable? If you say no, you are like me. If you said, "Yes, Jim, I love eating raw radishes by the handful," you are a weirdo and probably need therapy. Okay, I'm jealous. Mostly I've found that vegetables MUST be deep--fried, drowned in vinegar, or covered with some form of dairy or salt to have any appeal. Even at that point, the improvement is very minimal. It's staggering, the exertion that is put into making vegetables appealing. I'd like to applaud the effort behind grilled vegetables, but I'm pretty sure everyone finds them soggy and a waste of precious grill space. At their best, vegetables are the sidekicks. The opening band you didn't come to see at the concert. The asparagus next to the steak. The expectation is that the entrée is so good you won't notice that you are eating mutant blades of grass. There is no better sidekick than the potato, mostly in deep--fried form. Even so, potatoes, like corn, are fake vegetables and a great excuse to your wife if you eat a lot of fries and tortillas: "I had so many veggies today, honey!" THE VEGETABLE TRAY Occasionally, raw,

naked, unenhanced vegetables are shame-lessly presented as if they are actually desirable. This is the case with the elaborate vegetable party tray. When you are at a party and there is a vegetable tray, aren't you a little surprised? I always think, Wow, that's a waste of money. A tray of veg-etables at a party almost makes me sad. Here is a meticulously arranged tray of neatly cut vegetables for someone to throw out at the end of the night. I think crudités is a French term meaning "toss in le garbage at end of le party." The only thing that raw vegetables have ever been good for is the careers of hummus and ranch dressing. The vegetable tray reflects very poorly on the shortsighted host of the party you are attending. "Who is throwing this party? A nutritionist? Peter Rabbit? Is this a party or a Weight Watchers meeting?" You know they are just there for decora-tion. Who doesn't want to look at pretty colors while scarf-ing down pigs in a blanket? But actually eat the raw vegetable decoration? Hell, I'd rather eat a candle. What, I'm the only one here who eats the occasional candle at parties? Why do you think they're scented? I almost feel sorry for the vegetables on the tray. They don't stand a chance against the other party appetizers. I know what it feels like to be the cauliflower next to the chips and guaca-mole. I've been to the beach and been the pale guy next to the tan bodybuilder. It's not a good feeling. CAULIFLOWER: What the hell am I doing on this table? I can't compete with a bowl of peanut--butter--filled pretzels! As if that ranch dressing is going to help sell me. Some of us have to settle down with the ranch dressing. The usage is getting out of control. "I can't help it. I love ranch dressing. I like to dip my pizza in ranch dressing." That's fine. You are just not allowed to vote anymore. Ranch dressing is rather pathetic, really—after all, it's made from buttermilk and sadness. Prior to ranch dressing, nobody had ever eaten a raw vegetable. Throughout history, mankind has always known that vegetables were primarily put on this Earth for decoration. FARMHAND: Done with the harvest. Nobody is eating the Indian corn. FARMER: Feed it to the cows. FARMHAND: They didn't want it either. FARMER: Throw it on the front porch next to the gourd and jack--o'-lantern and remind me not to grow it next year. TYPES OF VEGETABLES A list of different types of vegetables reads like the roster of attendees at an international conference for the barely edibles. Brussels Sprouts: Clearly some kind of cruel joke by God. Bell Pepper: Probably what makes cooked bell peppers so special is that they can ruin the taste of any dish they are in. Green, red, yellow, or orange peppers—you can change the color, but when I see one, I prepare for dis-appointment. Green is by far the worst of the culprits. Green peppers can make the best steak bitter and a grown man cry. Radish: Interesting fact: No one has ever really wanted to eat more than one radish in a lifetime. Radishes are a fascinating example of how something can be both tasteless and burn your tongue at the same time. Celery: Celery better get buffalo wings a great holiday pres-ent every year. Squash: The name says it all. Pretty much the only thing that can squash my appetite. Cauliflower: The unpainted broccoli imposter. Asparagus: Most interesting thing about asparagus is how fast it makes your pee smell like asparagus. Zucchini: The cucumber's ugly and disappointing cousin. (Similar to what the raisin cookie is to the chocolate chip cookie.) Cucumber: The cucumber is just a pickle before it started drinking. PICKLES AND HOT PEPPERS It seems whenever I identify a green vegetable I enjoy, it is a pickled vegetable or a hot pepper. Pickles are so good you'd think being "in a pickle" would be a good thing. Actually, a great thing. Pickles are delicious. Imagine a Cuban sandwich without the pickle. Wait, don't do it. It's a sad thought, actu-ally. A Cuban sandwich without the pickle is just a ham--and--cheese sandwich with a slab of pork. Who would ever order that? Well, I guess I would, but I am a unique case. If a pickle can define a meal, a hot pepper is there to over-power one. The hot pepper is the marching-band cymbal of vegetables. It's like, "This is a pretty tasty sandwich—WOW, HOT PEPPER!" The super--hot-food thing is weird. It's like, "Eat this thing that will burn off your nose hairs and kill all your taste buds to make the food better." It's surprising that we don't put thumbtacks on our beds to enjoy our sleep more. But for me hot peppers are highly addictive. I seem to have an abusive relationship with hot peppers. I probably need a support group. I know what they are going to do to me, yet I cannot resist them. At night I'm all "Yay, jala-peños!" The next morning I'm all "Boo, jalapeños!" Still, like a true codependent, I am the person who willingly keeps going back to the abusive relationship. I don't want to give too much information, but they were probably eating jalapeños the night before writing the Johnny Cash song "Ring of Fire." Still, I would much prefer to suffer the aftereffects of an exciting hot pepper than eat a boring vegetable. What am I, a monk? As a society, I am sure we can all agree that vegetables should be removed from their classification as actual food. I am pretty confident that the food experts agree, because they are giving us subliminal anti--vegetable messages. For instance, remember that "healthy" food pyramid they used to show, where the stuff you are not supposed to eat is in that tiny tip and the things that are good for you are at the bottom? I don't want to sound like a conspiracy theorist here, but I believe that the true purpose of that pyramid is to be a rating system for taste. It's no surprise that the vegetables are the lowest on the scale. I think that the secret engineers of the food pyramid de-sign are the Masons. They hate vegetables too, right? Let's just admit the truth. After all, what is most people's worst fear be-sides death? You got it: ending up a vegetable.