The book closes with Greta Gaard’s interrogation of human, animal, and plant separations. Gaard questions whether or not plants are assumed to be an inferior form of life by those who problematize, blur, or work to deconstruct the human-animal boundary. While this essay seems to differ from the others, it calls into question a possible blind spot regarding plant-based food when it comes to sociocultural ethics, just as many authors call attention to this with respect to meat in previous chapters.

These examples show just how deep the line is that people continually draw between themselves and (farmed) animals. There appears to be an unquestioned assumption among Western citizens that animals are naturally made for consumption. Although animal welfare is omnipresent in discussions such as those above, there never seems to be critical discussion of the ultimate issue in farmed animal well-being—the necessity of death. Essays which highlight the silences that permeate discourse around meat expose the fact that talk of “humane” or “compassionate” meat serves to further normalize the practice of animal consumption and human supremacy. *Meat Culture* is an important book because it makes visible the ways farmed animals are rendered invisible as a result of human privilege.

—Nathan Poirier, Michigan State University

Coming to My Senses: *The Making of a Counterculture Cook*

Alice Waters

New York: Clarkson Potter, 2017

xi + 306 pp. Illustrations and photos. $27.00 (hardcover)

In *Ten Restaurants That Changed America*, Paul Freedman argues, “By 1980, Chez Panisse was more than an innovative French restaurant; it had become the most famous restaurant in the country” (New York: Liveright, 2016, p. 367). That most famous of restaurants would come to focus on high quality, fresh and natural, seasonally and geographically defined ingredients. In perhaps oversimplified terms, one could argue Berkeley, California’s Chez Panisse is responsible for what is known today as the farm-to-table revolution.

The innovative and famous restaurant inspiring that revolution is the result of the efforts of Alice Waters. Initially, Waters founded Chez Panisse as a place where her friends could enjoy a truly good meal versus what they could find in the all-too-common, smoke-filled coffeehouses dotting the local landscape. What took hold proved to be a journey, at that time unforeseen by Waters. With hindsight now on her side, that journey is the focus of Waters’s memoir, *Coming to My Senses: The Making of a Counterculture Cook*, an incomplete yet still essential read for anyone knowingly or unknowingly inspired by this accidental revolutionary.

Far from her first book, Waters is also widely known, to name but a few, for *The Art of Simple Food*, *The Art of Simple Food II*, *My Pantry*, *Chez Panisse Vegetables*, *Chez Panisse Fruit*, and *Chez Panisse Desserts*. Perhaps what she is most proud of are her efforts with the Edible Schoolyard Project—a joint undertaking with Berkeley’s Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School that envisions “gardens and kitchens as interactive classrooms and a sustainable, delicious, and free lunch for every student” (https://edibleschoolyard.org/).

Elements of her story were also captured by PBS’s *American Masters* series (www.pbs.org/wnet/americanculinarymasters/american-masters-chefs-flight-alice-waters/8537/). In *Coming to My Senses*, however, readers finally encounter Waters telling her own story in her own words.

Not surprising, Waters takes her readers on a chronological journey that begins with her early childhood in New Jersey. That story then follows the moves her family made from New Jersey to Indiana and then finally to Southern California. While she initially enrolls as a student at the University of California–Santa Barbara, her sister Eleanor persuaded Alice to transfer with her in 1963 to the University of California–Berkeley. Recalling the change, Waters notes, “Terrible things were happening in the world, and the culture at Santa Barbara felt so willfully blind to the unrest. There were rumblings about student protests, people standing up for civil rights at Berkeley. We knew something big was happening. Thank goodness Eleanor brought me with her” (pp.84–85).

As previously echoed, the revolutionary culture surrounding Berkeley is an essential component in both Waters’s and Chez Panisse’s story. However, Waters’s most formative experiences came during her junior year in college when she studied in France. In particular, she refers to her love for France as “insatiable” (p.110) and spent as much time as possible exploring the countryside, tasting what its unique regions offered—“special dishes from special places” (p.112).

As a result of those discoveries, her “whole library of French cookbooks that go back to the beginning of gastronomy in France were the foundation of Chez Panisse” (p.118).

Woven into the chronological narrative defining Waters’s memoir are related sidebars offering insights into the development of her culinary approach. Set in italics and appearing in each of the thirteen chapters, these details allow readers to learn how Waters thinks about, for example, cheese. In the very first such note, Waters claims, “I’ve always loved cheese. I love it. I love that it has so many possibilities, culinarily—from the little
cheese in a taco to the whole myriad of goat cheeses and French cheeses” (p.14). Cumulatively, these sidebars help readers grasp why seemingly simple yet critical details make a difference in not only how Waters thinks about food but also in how she encouraged so many others to think likewise.

What proves curious about Waters’s memoir, however, is that it concludes with a chapter entitled “Opening Night.” Although the chapter includes more details than simply the ones chronicling that historic day for Chez Panisse, her memoir ends shortly thereafter. While the sidebars help fill in many of the specifics, historians such as Freedman note that Chez Panisse, by its very nature, is a philosophical work in progress. The absence of details leading one from opening night to the present day only leaves the reader wanting more. Perhaps a second volume is thus in order.

Regardless, no one can deny the life story of this accidental revolutionary is essential reading for individuals wanting to understand how we eat today. For example, Waters concludes by making this seemingly grandiose claim: “[F]ood is the most political thing in all our lives. Eating is an everyday experience, and the decisions we make about what we eat have daily consequences. And those daily consequences can change the world” (p.302). When a trip to the local Walmart yields the particulars about where the various apples on display were sourced, Waters’s influence is undoubtedly not far away.

—Todd C. Ream, Taylor University and Excelsia College

Interpreting Food at Museums and Historic Sites
Michelle Moon
Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016
xiii + 205 pp. Illustrations. $35.00 (paper)

Over the past two months I have started and stopped this review multiple times (apologies Gastronomica editors!). Specifically I was struggling for the hook that would bind together a synopsis of Michelle Moon’s excellent book. Ultimately I gave up and am borrowing the metaphor that Moon used for the book in its opening pages—a braid of challah (a loaf of bread crafted from woven strands of dough). The key point is that the volume is not exactly a book in a traditional sense. Much like Moon’s challah, the book is not a single entity but rather multiple strands that can be consumed as interwoven ideas or pulled apart and consumed separately—a point that Moon also makes in her introduction (p.xi). In evaluating this book it is equally important to acknowledge a second point that Moon makes: the book is not about food history or museums and food. Instead, it is a book on how museum professionals can be “interpreters of food history” and the connections between food and broader social processes.

As for the volume specifics, Interpreting Food is the sixth contribution in the American Association of State and Local History’s Interpreting History series. It is also the first volume in the series whose focus is on material culture (food) instead of a group of people or a particular time period. The volume has seven chapters, with chapters 2–6 being its core. Each of these core chapters addresses an important theme in food studies. Topics include (by chapter): food and identity, food and health, food and place, food technology and fashion, and food politics (her actual titles are lengthier and more creative). Describing the book as a series of chapters, however, does not do it justice: each chapter is an historical and cultural sketch of the stated theme, framed around brief sections on “Best Practices,” “Discussion Starters,” “Key Interpretive Concepts,” and “Fresh Ideas,” which are first-person narratives on the subject at hand. True to her aim, each chapter provides the reader with more than enough foundational resources to start building out food-centered exhibits in museums and other historical settings. The premise behind both the volume and the chapter organization is that food touches many of the significant social issues today, including race, class, health, gender, and politics, and thus this work seeks to provide a guide for educators to contribute to contemporary discussions on those topics (and others) through food.

I will admit that there were a few times during my reading when I found myself starting to say “but what about...?” For instance, W.O. Atwater is not mentioned at all in the book (Atwater is seen by many as the key player in the food science movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries). However, to nitpick about omissions is not entirely fair given the aim of the book. Moon is quite upfront about the fact that her intent was not to produce a compendium of scholarship on a particular topic (p.x) but rather to produce a guide for making food the center of museum interpretations. Overall Moon has done an admirable job drawing from many disciplines for this work, including historical archaeology, folklore, food studies, government documents, historians, and more. She should be commended for the array of scholarship that was incorporated into the book.

At one point one of Moon’s interlocutors uses the term “intellectual pantry” (p.32). In many ways this book is Moon’s intellectual pantry; the organization may not be familiar to some readers, but all the necessary ingredients are present and there is a clear logic to the book’s organization. Interpreting Food is