

Caucasus Mountains. Also detailed are experiences of not only making the dishes but procuring their ingredients, with descriptions of dried spices like *khmelisuneli* (a mix of fenugreek, coriander, garlic, chilies, and pepper) and dried marigold in market stalls, to the breads and vegetables that are still sold out of the trunk of a car. Goldstein even shares her fear of scarcity with tales of hoarding certain elusive spices, like blue fenugreek, in her kitchen cabinets.

Sharing stories of recipes lovingly passed down from mother to daughter, the importance of tradition and time spent with family is underscored, whether it be in the kitchen preparing a meal or at the table eating and drinking wine (or better yet, outdoors around an open fire grilling meat). She also shares stories of camaraderie and solidarity, particularly among women, when preparing these meals together in the more labor-intensive, traditional ways (i.e., without modern kitchen gadgets like food processors and yogurt makers). In this way, Goldstein successfully evokes in the reader a sense of nostalgia for an agrarian way of life that elsewhere has been largely lost in the quest for “modernity.”

Like other cuisines of Eastern Europe and Russia, potatoes, beets and cabbage keep their seats at the table, with corn and wheat being the main staples. What is less expected is that nearly every recipe has some form of fresh herb, whether it be summer savory, sage, tarragon, field mint, or cilantro. As Goldstein writes, “Fresh herbs are a fixture at any meal, whether casual or formal” (p.82). Even *achma-makarina*, something akin to Georgian mac n’ cheese, contains parsley. Walnuts and walnut oil are also integral to Georgian recipes, from main dishes cooked with poultry (though braised pheasant calls for hazelnuts) to sides like *khenagi*, the Georgian Jewish version of matzah balls made from walnut flour and eggs, and desserts such as *pakhlava* (walnut pastry) and *gozinaki* (candied walnuts). Georgians even cook their beets, potatoes, and cabbages with walnuts.

From Georgian egg salad (with butter!) to cooked *sulguni* cheese with mint and eggplant with cheese and yogurt (with more butter!), cheese, egg, and yogurt are so central to Georgian cuisine that the book required an entire chapter to detail this variety. The “Breads and Grains” chapter includes tarragon pie, with its flaky crust and savory herb flavor, and hard-boiled eggs. This recipe highlights the familiar yet strange sensory qualities of the food of this region; a flaky, butter pastry with an egg, but then there is a tremendous amount of fresh tarragon (1/2 pound!) bringing robust grassy and anise notes to the pastry dish. Goldstein also honors the Georgian love of soup by including ten distinct recipes—including a cold gazpacho-like soup, yogurt soup similar to that found in Turkey (with a vegetarian twist), and bean soup made with another Georgian staple, red kidney beans (*lobio*).

Beyond familiarizing readers with Georgian dishes, *The Georgian Feast* does a superb job of linking the dishes to the region’s history and culture. This includes Georgian wine-making, an ancient tradition that has persisted for nearly eight thousand years, despite waves of various conquerors attempting to destroy their vineyards over the centuries. I was surprised to learn that Georgia is thought to be where winemaking first originated. With the recent resurgence in the popularity of clay fermentation vessels, Goldstein highlights the important contributions that Georgia continues to make to winemaking today.

Russian students of mine have raved about the exquisite-ness of Georgian cuisine. After reading Goldstein’s book, I am more convinced and curious than ever, and nearly ready to book a flight to Tbilisi to smell and taste this simple, elegant cuisine (not to mention the wine) firsthand, in this place Steinbeck himself once called “magical.” To be sure, I will be packing my cherished copy of Goldstein’s book for the trip. The only thing missing is a map for excited travelers like me who are hoping to embark on a culinary tour.

—Maya Moore, University of Vermont

Canned: The Rise and Fall of Consumer Confidence in the American Food Industry

Anna Zeide

Oakland: University of California Press, 2018

280 pp. \$34.95 (hardcover); \$29.95 (paper); \$29.95 (eBook)

In *Canned*, Anna Zeide presents an insightful and multifaceted examination of American canned food from its origins in the mid-nineteenth century up to the present, focusing on the partnerships among growers, factories, researchers, media outlets, and governmental agencies that combined to make canned food ubiquitous in modern America. Today, canned foods may be commonplace, but Zeide begins by emphasizing how difficult it was for the National Canners Association (NCA) to convince wary shoppers to accept (even embrace) a product that they could not see or touch before purchasing. Media outlets, moreover, reported dangerous (sometimes exaggerated) stories of food contamination and death by botulism in canned foods. In short, Zeide’s assessment of how the canning industry journeyed from wartime exigency to hesitant approval to commonplace commodity might anticipate the trajectory of genetically modified foods, as well as current concerns over food labeling and production. And her concluding chapter, examining BPA in canned soup, reminds readers that customers’ acceptance of canned goods cannot always be taken for granted. Ultimately, this is an

accessible and highly readable account of an industry that, by promising shoppers access to distant foods without regard to growing seasons or spoilage, has been viewed as both miraculous and dubious.

Zeide begins each chapter with an iconic canned food, such as condensed milk to describe canning in its infancy during the U.S. Civil War or tuna to describe the 1950s, a decade in which “canners were happy to sit back and observe a trusting nation awash in canned foods” (p.137) (although, Zeide points out, this trust was never complete or permanent). The earliest canned foods, Zeide maintains, fed sailors, soldiers, and explorers—people in remote locations where canned foods were “used mostly in exceptional situations, rather than as part of regular meals” (p.11). While “canned foods enabled imperial conquest, the exploration and settlement of new lands, and the provisioning of armies fighting for national unity” (p.12), supplying field rations provided a technological boost and financial opportunity to expand the reach of canned foods to the civilian market during and after the Civil War. Zeide notes that the production of canned foods skyrocketed from five million cans before the war in 1860 to ninety million by 1880 (p.16). By the twenty-first century, canned foods represented a multi-billion-dollar industry and nearly all Americans had canned food in their homes. Innovative technologies (pressurized cooking, chemical additives during the canning process, improved bacteriological research, and faster machinery to produce, pack, and seal cans) combined with marketing strategies to convince consumers that canned food was wholesome, even when buyers could not see the food contents inside.

Zeide skillfully connects her study of canning to larger developments in nineteenth- and twentieth-century history. Explaining the popularity of canned goods at the turn of the century, she notes that urban migration and housing patterns contributed to the rise of canned, rather than fresh, produce. “Between 1870 and 1920, over forty million Americans moved into cities,” Zeide points out. “Increasing urbanization brought with it smaller kitchens, no root cellars for winter cold storage, and easier access to urban grocers that sold commercially canned goods” (p.27). Canneries themselves “inevitably reshaped human relations ... deskilled labor, creating opportunities in rural areas, and boosting trust in scientific expertise” (p.28). She uses studies of pea canneries in Wisconsin to emphasize the joint efforts of agricultural colleges and corporate canning businesses to improve yields and raise crops intended for canning (indeed, Zeide points out, peas were one of the few crops more likely to be eaten in canned than fresh form). Peas were the product of 1920s botanists “bringing a scientific approach that distinguished” accredited biologists “from

previous sporadic efforts” (p.68)—thus, canneries and the research they sponsored fueled the professionalism of agricultural science which, in turn, boosted the profitability of canneries themselves.

Canned employs a wide range of sources (state and national archives, trade journals, corporate records, popular advertising) to assess nearly two centuries of food history, and in this study Zeide wisely avoids academic jargon to produce a rare find—an academic book that is genuinely entertaining to read. For instance, her discussion of Campbell’s Tomato Soup, one of the most iconic canned foods in history, walks readers through an imaginary supermarket, emphasizing the multiple steps, most invisible to the consumer, involved in getting cans onto store shelves. While researchers in agriculture and food studies will certainly find *Canned* an important text, the book also addresses themes of gender and consumerism, labor (especially the overlap between farm and factory), journalism, and public health. But this book is written in an accessible style that makes it ideal for undergraduate courses and readers interested in contemporary food debates. For instance, Zeide illustrates the long history of government regulators cooperating and collaborating with the canning industries they are charged with regulating and controlling, a pattern that has stimulated scientific research on the one hand, while lessening the effectiveness of governmental oversight on the other. Extending this pattern into the present debate over BPA in canned foods, Zeide concludes that “canned food appears fundamentally flawed and embedded within a regulatory system that fails to fix these flaws” (p.186). Her discussion of marketing research and consumer focus groups in the twentieth century likewise reflects contemporary concerns over how food is advertised and labeled. Above all, Zeide’s book raises fundamental questions about the American diet and the multifaceted relationships among growers, processors, government, and science that collectively determine what ends up in our foods—pressing concerns in the past and present.

—Justin Nordstrom, Penn State Hazleton

GMOs Decoded: A Skeptic’s View of Genetically Modified Foods

Sheldon Krimsky

Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2019

216 pp. Black and white illustrations. \$24.95 (hardcover)

No new technology has ever been as controversial or divisive as food biotechnology, says Sheldon Krimsky in *GMOs Decoded*. He offers a careful analysis of scientific studies on each of the various contentious issues that have made genetically modified