

TRUTH TO POWER
DAILY FOOD

Food Issue Extra Helpings: Picking

What could possibly be the reason for the way I eat?

BY JORDAN GASS-POORÉ, 7:30AM, WED. FEB. 19, 2014



Picky eater. I wouldn't necessarily call myself a "picky eater," it's more that I have a refined palette that has been shaped by my experiences as an only child, growing up in a world of Eurocentric adults whose taste buds had been hindered by decades of smoking cigarettes and drinking alcohol.



What some might consider appetizing, I call gross (Photo by WikiMedia/Creative Commons)

My world may not have included beret-wearing baguette fights in the park or paisley-print fondue parties. Instead, my world was me and my grandmother, my *abuelita*, sitting around her dining room table, she, dressed in what could be described as a muumuu, picking and eating the insides of bolillos from HEB, the shells of which we would later feed to the birds in her backyard. It was years later, halfway through my childhood that I realized that the shell, or crust of the bolillo was edible.

What I saw, smelled, touched, and tasted as a child shaped me into the person I am today, because for me, at least, the old adage is true: You are what you eat. Do I dress stereotypically French on purpose, with black-and-white striped shirts, leggings, and flats... or is it because I like croissants, bisque, and cr me br l e?

Food is a state of mind and influences my decisions – like when I walked about an hour in the cold from the CARTS Station off E. Sixth to get a specific croissant and cup of coffee before I headed to my internship downtown because, if I was going to spend the money, I wanted to make sure it was going to be the best snack around. And it was. There's nothing worse than having to get the paste of a too-dry or too-buttery croissant out of your mouth by washing it down with coffee that goes down like crude oil.

Some people have called me a food snob, and I suppose I am. I refuse to eat fish from anywhere but one mainly organic restaurant in San Marcos because I know (at least *I think* I know) that the fish, when alive, were not swimming in a small barrel eating their own fecal matter. The whole E. Coli scare also has me buying into the organic propaganda, which is what I tell my friends when I want to feel cool. So, this means I spend an extra dollar or two on lettuce, apples, potatoes, and broccoli... pretty much any produce where the skin is eaten. I have seen organic food of the fried or battered variety but I will leave that to my boyfriend to eat, the same goes for most breakfast tacos and Mexican food in general. And definitely no condiments, except certain types of salsas, salts, peppers, olive oils, and vinegars. Mayonnaise and ketchup have made me want to vomit since I was a young child. Speaking of vomit, chili is disgusting. There's a story there about me hiding under a table as a child from my mom because I refused to eat the chili she had cooked.



Me. Disappointed with food. (Photo by Jordan Gass-Pooré)

Blame my grandmother. We all do. I remember her grinding sea salt from an oddly shaped clear container onto her homemade fries, and drizzling olive oil and balsamic vinegar on a bed of spinach leaves with dried cranberries, walnuts, and blue cheese crumbles, all the while dousing her food with the smoke from her fancy cigarette that would hang limply from her dry bottom lip. This is partly where my food (paranoia?) habits (?) come from. I was hard pressed to find another child who enjoyed capers, artichokes, and asparagus, much less could spell and pronounce them.

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