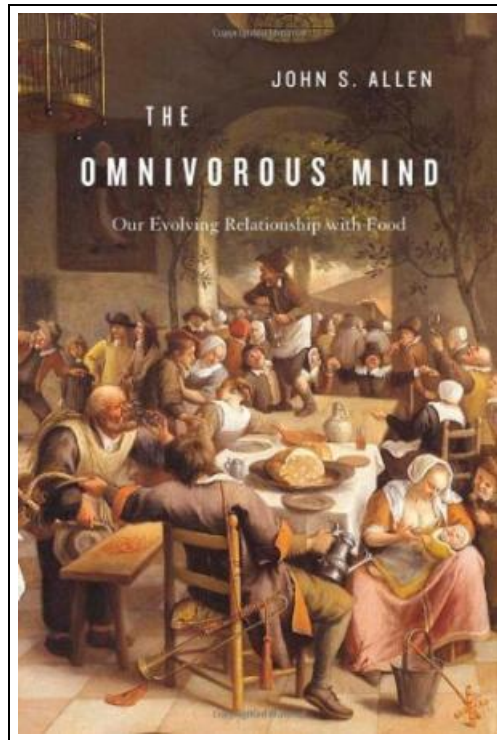


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HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS, United States, 2012. Hardback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. In this gustatory tour of human history, John S. Allen demonstrates that the everyday activity of eating offers deep insights into human beings biological and cultural heritage. We humans eat a wide array of plants and animals, but unlike other omnivores we eat with our minds as much as our stomachs. This thoughtful relationship with food is part of what makes us a unique species, and makes culinary cultures diverse. Not even our closest primate relatives think about food in the way Homo sapiens does. We are superomnivores whose palates reflect the natural history of our species. Drawing on the work of food historians and chefs, anthropologists and neuroscientists, Allen starts out with the diets of our earliest ancestors, explores cooking's role in our evolving brain, and moves on to the preoccupations of contemporary foodies. The Omnivorous Mind delivers insights into food aversions and cravings, our compulsive need to label foods as good or bad, dietary deviation from healthy food pyramids, and cross-cultural attitudes toward eating (with the French, bien sur, exemplifying the pursuit of gastronomic pleasure). To explain, for example, the worldwide popularity of crispy foods, Allen considers first the food habits of our insect-eating relatives. He also suggests that the sound of crunch may stave off dietary boredom by adding variety to sensory experience. Or perhaps fried foods, which we think of as bad for us, interject a frisson of illicit pleasure. When it comes to eating, Allen shows, there's no one way to account for taste.



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