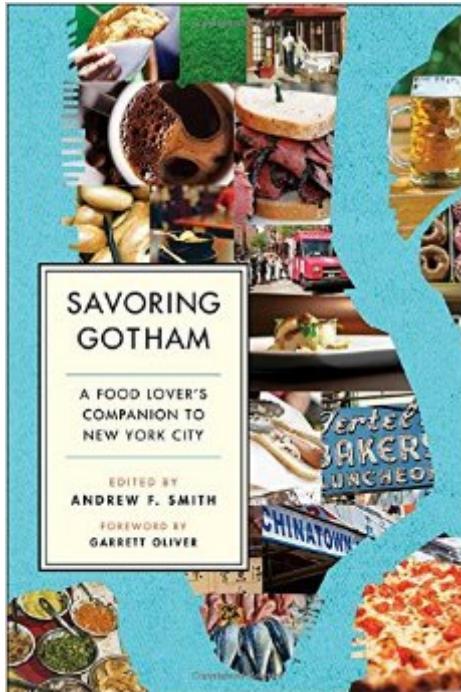


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# Savoring Gotham: A Food Lover's Companion To New York City



## Synopsis

When it comes to food, there has never been another city quite like New York. The Big Apple--a telling nickname--is the city of 50,000 eateries, of fish wriggling in Chinatown baskets, huge pastrami sandwiches on rye, fizzy egg creams, and frosted black and whites. It is home to possibly the densest concentration of ethnic and regional food establishments in the world, from German and Jewish delis to Greek diners, Brazilian steakhouses, Puerto Rican and Dominican bodegas, halal food carts, Irish pubs, Little Italy, and two Koreatowns (Flushing and Manhattan). This is the city where, if you choose to have Thai for dinner, you might also choose exactly which region of Thailand you wish to dine in. *Savoring Gotham* weaves the full tapestry of the city's rich gastronomy in nearly 570 accessible, informative A-to-Z entries. Written by nearly 180 of the most notable food experts--most of them New Yorkers--*Savoring Gotham* addresses the food, people, places, and institutions that have made New York cuisine so wildly diverse and immensely appealing. Reach only a little ways back into the city's ever-changing culinary kaleidoscope and discover automat, the precursor to fast food restaurants, where diners in a hurry dropped nickels into slots to unlock their premade meal of choice. Or travel to the nineteenth century, when oysters cost a few cents and were pulled by the bucketful from the Hudson River. Back then the city was one of the major centers of sugar refining, and of brewing, too--48 breweries once existed in Brooklyn alone, accounting for roughly 10% of all the beer brewed in the United States. Travel further back still and learn of the Native Americans who arrived in the area 5,000 years before New York was New York, and who planted the maize, squash, and beans that European and other settlers to the New World embraced centuries later. *Savoring Gotham* covers New York's culinary history, but also some of the most recognizable restaurants, eateries, and culinary personalities today. And it delves into more esoteric culinary realities, such as urban farming, beekeeping, the Three Martini Lunch and the Power Lunch, and novels, movies, and paintings that memorably depict Gotham's foodscapes. From hot dog stands to haute cuisine, each borough is represented. A foreword by Brooklyn Brewery Brewmaster Garrett Oliver and an extensive bibliography round out this sweeping new collection.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Savoring Gotham, A Food Lover's Companion to New York City Editor-in-chief: Andrew F. Smith and Foreword by Garrett OliverEditor-in-chief Andrew F. Smith, a widely respected food historian and the author of several award-winning culinary books such as New York City: A Food Biography, and foreword author and James Beard Award-winning Garrett Oliver, Brewmaster of the Brooklyn Brewery, joined forces with Oxford University Press to create this be-all and end-all compendium of food in New York City. But they couldn't do it alone. They wrangled nearly 180 of the most notable NYC food experts into sharing their areas of expertise within the more than 700 pages of this weighty tome. With approximately 570 entries, Savoring Gotham is the most comprehensive reference work on the history of NYC food and drink. The list of New York-centric foods is long: Snapple, egg-creams, Borden's condensed milk, cherry cokes, knishes, Salisbury steak, Haagen-Dazs ice-cream, dill pickles, cheese cake, pizza, and Oreo cookies make up the short list. There are many, many more. Remember, what wasn't created in Gotham was adopted and popularized to the point that it became primarily associated with New York City, such as New York-style pizza. From bagels to Waldorf salad, all the iconic foods of New York City are identified, their history and cultural identity are explored and their transitions as tastes changed over generations are examined. The same holds true for all the noteworthy restaurants and restaurateurs, the personalities in the front and the back of the house, the food purveyors, from pushcarts to huge wholesale and retail outlets, the markets, the celebrities, ethnic foods, films, neighborhoods and even the advertising and publications that promoted them all finally get the recognition they are due. As the award-winning culinary historian Laura Shapiro said: "This is an excellent and very well thought-out book many, many writers have been desperate to consult for years." To give you a brief example, did you know that: "black and whites, the oversized vanilla cake-like cookie with black and white iced

hemispheres is a New York cookie? Mimi Sheraton, famous food-writer and critic, was the first female restaurant critic for The New York Times? by 1760 New York was the leading city in prostitution, alcohol consumption, and oyster eating? by 1880 New York area oyster beds produced 700 million oysters a year, and that rich or poor, oysters were the unifying egalitarian food of every New Yorker? the police raid at the Stonewall Inn causing three days of rioting in Greenwich Village in 1969 marked the beginning of the gay liberation movement? wearing its 1920s nickname The Big Apple New York is widely acknowledged as the Food Capital of America? Lest you think Savoring Gotham is just about food, bars, breweries, and distillers get coverage, as do neighborhoods, nationalities and life styles. Entries such as gay bars, Greenwich Village, Hell Kitchen, ~~Prohibition~~, ~~Harlem~~, ~~Brooklyn~~, ~~Five Points~~, and Puerto Rican, among many others, plumb the culinary fringes. Naturally, given Garrett Oliver's prominence in the brewing field, and the popularity of craft beers and ciders today, breweries get their fair share of attention, too. The first brewery in New York (then New Amsterdam) was opened around 1632 on a street which became known as Brewers Street. By the end of the 1800s the State of New York grew most of the hops for all the breweries in America, 48 of which were in New York City. Early NYC breweries that grew to national recognition were Schaefer, Piels, Schlitz and Rinegold. But today those once prominent names have less recognition than the modern Brooklyn Brewery. Probably everyone reading Savoring Gotham will find something missing or only mentioned briefly. One of the earliest references to food in New Netherland's literature was the theft of a peach by a Native American from a Dutchman's tree that caused the Peach Massacre or the Peach War. It is not included in Savoring Gotham. And while Pansy Bars are mentioned, it is only in one sentence, relegating them to Harlem and Greenwich Village. The Pansy Craze could have used its own entry, placing the widely popular establishments featuring outrageous gay and drag performers squarely in midtown during the early 1930s. This was the peak of homosexual acceptance in America between the wars. There are other omissions as well, notably that of Jane Brody, cook book author and New York Times columnist, but perhaps with her body of literature leaning more to health and nutrition, she did not make the cut. No matter, there is nothing that can't be amended and updated in a second edition. Meanwhile, the editors made clear that any book of this sort inevitably had to leave some things out either by design or inadvertence. Then again, the subject may simply be too big to fit in one volume. But what does fit is an exhaustive overview of the rich culinary history of the melting pot of America: New York City. It has

to be mentioned that besides the food and beverage entries, or, more specifically, because of what those entries contain, a good overview of the history of New York City, from the earliest of settlers—“the Native Americans” through the Dutch and right up to today’s mix of ethnicities, can be gleaned from these pages. So you may come to *Savoring Gotham* for the culinary aspects of New York City, but you’ll leave well versed in its local history. Ethnic foods, native foods, food culture, foodies, celebrity chefs, famous restaurants, restaurant trends, culinary schools and the journalists who chronicle them—all this and much, much more can be found in the pages of *Savoring Gotham, A Food Lover’s Companion to New York City*.

Great concept but badly organized. Alphabetical order of entries created the need for much repetition of information. A thematic grouping of interrelated entries would have minimized the need for repeated explanations. Has a depth of good information, but as is too often the case, is somewhat Manhattan-centric. You can’t examine New York and stop cold at the city line. At least I can’t.

Such an interesting compendium of food history, a perfect companion to *Gotham*, I hope they do these for cities around the world.

This is such a great history of food in New York! Love that I can look up some of the people and places we go to.

Disappointing - not what I expected

Must have for foodies.

Very proud to be one of the 180 contributors to this great book!

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