



Food and Faith in Christian Culture (Arts and Traditions of the Table: Perspectives on Culinary History)

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Without a uniform dietary code, Christians around the world used food in strikingly different ways, developing widely divergent practices that spread, nurtured, and strengthened their religious beliefs and communities. These never-before published essays map the intersection of food and faith over the past five centuries, charting the complex relationship between religious eating habits and politics, social structure and culture.

Theoretically rich and full of engaging portraits, essays consider the rise of food buying and consumerism in the fourteenth century, the Reformation ideology of fasting and its resulting sanctions against sumptuous eating, the gender and racial politics of sacramental food production in colonial America, and the struggle to define “enlightened” Lenten dietary restrictions in early modern France. Essays on the nineteenth century explore the religious implications of wheat growing and breadmaking among New Zealand’s Maori population and the revival of the Agape meal, or love feast, among American brethren in Christ Church. Twentieth-century topics include the metaphysical significance of vegetarianism, the role of diet in Greek Orthodoxy, American Christian weight loss programs, and the practice of silent eating rituals among English Benedictine monks. Two essays introduce the volume, with one explaining the important themes tying all the essays together, and the other surveying food’s part in developing and disseminating the teachings of Christianity and its tangible embodiment of the experience of faith.

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