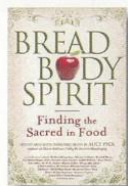


SOUL FOOD

The Sacred on Our Tables

Offering grace before meals is but one method for recognizing the sacred role food plays in our lives. Two authors show us where to look for other spiritual cues in the food we eat.



Bread, Body, Spirit: Finding the Sacred in Food

Edited and with introductions
by **Alice Peck**
Skylight Paths Publishing
Softcover \$19.99 (208pp) 978-1-59473-242-3

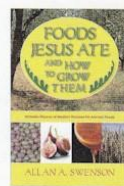
After the grueling work of hunting and gathering, small groups of humans sat together around a roaring fire. They shared food and stories, developing unity and group spirit. Food was survival and community, and the people knew where the food came from and the effort it took to get it home. Today, in the world of vending machines, instant pudding, and microwave meals, things often aren't as clear.

Peck, whose other anthology, *Next to Godliness: Finding the Sacred in Housekeeping*, has gathered articles, poems, and essays from publications throughout the world that center on how people honor the act of growing, preparing, eating, or abstaining from food. Memoirist and food writer Betty Fussell describes battling a live eel that has a Rasputin-like will to live. Essayist Alison Luteran considers how "... every strawberry she had ever eaten... had been picked by calloused human hands." Islamic studies professor, Omid Safi, reminisces about the gooey, sweet, date omelets his mother rose early to cook on Ramadan mornings to fortify the family before the day-long fast.

Each section of the book is a meditation focused on the different facets of gardening, feasting, fasting, serving, cooking, eating, composting, and being grateful. Whether people are enjoying at a Passover Seder or breaking the Ramadan fast or receiving the symbolic body and blood of Christ, food can be much more than simple fuel. This thoughtful book keeps the Buddhist's chant "Seventy-two labors brought us this food; we should know how it comes" alive in the pages. (April) *Deirdre Sinnott*

Foods Jesus Ate and How to Grow Them

Allan A. Swenson
Skyhorse Publishing
Softcover \$14.95 (288pp) 978-1-60239-214-4



For Christians, bread and wine symbolize the substance of Jesus and the promise of eternal life. Jews eat bitter herbs at the Passover Seder to remember the bitterness of life as Egyptian slaves. Today, as people advocate eating locally and restarting the concept of Victory Gardens on the White House lawn, choosing to grow the very same foods available to Jesus can add special meaning.

Master gardener and author of over thirty books such as *Flowers of the Bible*, *Herbs of the Bible*, and *Plants of the Bible*, Swenson guides readers through where to buy, how to plant, and even how to cook the healthy and delicious food mentioned in the Bible. He also adds suggestions for sponsoring biblical feasts at places of worship and visiting the flourishing Bible-inspired gardens in various parts of the world. Everything a potential gardener or cook needs to know is contained in these beautifully illustrated pages.

Swenson discusses the origins of foods such as almonds (one of the earliest domesticated fruit trees appearing in the Bronze Age), lentils (in the human diet since Neolithic times), garlic (originating 6,000 years ago in Central Asia), and many other common foods. He advocates getting children involved because, "Seeds are the beginning and the end, minuscule miracles that contain all that's needed to produce a melon, a head of lettuce or other biblical foods." Learning about the foods Jesus ate can draw readers closer to the scriptures and healthy eating. (June) *Deirdre Sinnott*

CONTRIBUTORS

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