

The Anthropology of Food

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Arts C227

The Anthropology of Food Module

- Engages with key food related themes
- Allows you to develop an interest in most (if not all) areas of anthropology and explore those interests in relation to food
- Weekly 3 hour lectures/seminars/workshops with a range of activities and formats
- Extra-curricular food-related excursions
- Assessment by extended essay (7000 Words)



Food opens up key areas anthropology...

- ‘Nutrition as a biological process is more fundamental than sex. In the life of the individual organism it is the more primary and recurrent want, while in the wider sphere of human society it determines, more largely than any other physiological function, the nature of social groupings, and the form their activities take’

(Richards 1932: 1, cited in Mintz 1985: 3-4)

- ‘Tell me what you eat and I will tell you what you are’
(Brillat Severin 1825)

Everyone Eats!

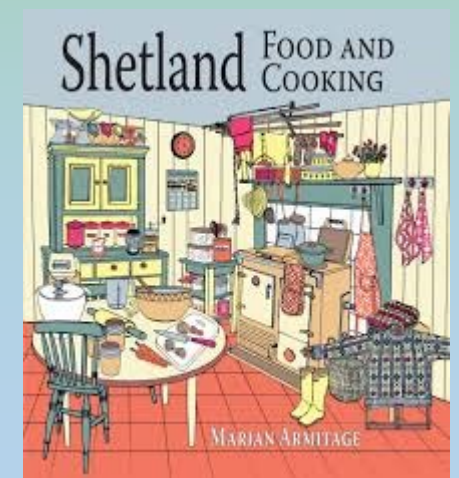
- Food is at the centre of human self-definition. It involves:
 - (i) the senses and the body
 - (ii) nutritional necessity and the self
 - (iii) interactions with other species (animals and plants)
 - (iv) cultures and deep structures of meaning
 - (iv) social categories, identities, subjectivities
 - (v) political engagements



Social Organization and Cultures

Food: societies, values, practices:

- Relatedness
- Cuisine
- Gender
- Celebrations
- Nationality
- Taboo
- Ethnicity
- Tradition
- Commensality



Food Production, Exchange, Consumption



Food Provision

= production, distribution, consumption

- Food chains & food regimes
- The local & the global
- Governance and certification
- Moral economy
- Food Sovereignty
- Ethical Consumption



Food, the body and the self

- Taste
- Memory
- The body (obesity, anorexia, orthorexia)
- Food, materiality, and multispecies engagements



Food Transitions

- Food and power
- Traditions, the authentic and unique
- Mass production
- Governance and Traceability



Beware fruits and vegetables that look too good to eat

They Could Be Prematurely Ripened & Coloured: Consumer Body

TRICK OR TREAT?

Consumer groups are warning that many fruits and vegetables are being ripened and colored in ways that make them look more appealing than they are. The groups say that some of these products are being sold in stores and online, and that consumers should be aware of the risks of eating them.

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HOW THE PUBLIC CAN BE DECEIVED

MEAT

- Selling non-organic meat as organic.
- Adding excessive water to meat without declaring it.
- Selling meat unfit for human consumption.
- Adding beef and other meat to 100% pork sausages.
- Selling 'lean' meat that contains as much fat as standard.
- Substituting Parma ham with a cheaper product.

FISH

- Selling farmed fish as wild.
- Mislabeling the geographic origin.

FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

- Selling conventional produce as organic.
- Giving the wrong geographical origin.
- Selling cheaper varieties of produce as an expensive variety such as King Edward.
- Adding GM soy beans to conventional beans, without declaring them.

EGGS

- Selling battery farm eggs as free-range.

CHEESE

- Using cow's milk rather than buffalo milk to make mozzarella.

OLIVE OIL

- Dyeing it dark green with chlorophyll to make it look like extra virgin.
- Diluting it with a cheaper hazelnut oil.

ORANGE JUICE

- Diluting it with inferior quality juice.
- Adding beet sugar to sweeten 'natural' orange juice.

COFFEE

- Adulterating highly sought-after arabica beans with cheaper varieties.

ALCOHOL

- Selling counterfeit versions of big brands, which can include dangerously high levels of methanol.
- Watering down spirits.
- Substituting cheap varieties for expensive premium brands in bars.
- Adding extra sugar during wine making to increase alcohol content.

RICE

- Using cheap varieties to bulk up expensive basmati rice.



Topics

Engage with food related topics in seminars and extended term papers....

Meat

Diets

Rituals

Veg(etari)anism

Body morphologies

Fasting

Alcohols

Fast foods

Potatoes

Spices, tea, coffee

Quinoa

Slow foods

Freeganism

Halal

Famines

Maize

Cannibalism

Certification

Funerals

Feasts

Taboos

Tea and Coffee

Farming

Supermarkets