



The Life of Cheese: Crafting Food and Value in America (California Studies in Food and Culture)

By Heather Paxson

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Cheese is alive, and alive with meaning. Heather Paxson's beautifully written anthropological study of American artisanal cheesemaking tells the story of how craftwork has become a new source of cultural and economic value for producers as well as consumers. Dairy farmers and artisans inhabit a world in which their colleagues and collaborators are a wild cast of characters, including plants, animals, microorganisms, family members, employees, and customers. As "unfinished" commodities, living products whose qualities are not fully settled, handmade cheeses embody a mix of new and old ideas about taste and value. By exploring the life of cheese, Paxson helps rethink the politics of food, land, and labor today.

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Editorial Review

Review

“[The Life of Cheese] offers a unique glimpse of people who have taken food-making into their own hands.”
(*Mit-Ejmes* 2013-01-02)

“The Life of Cheese is one way to better understand that food is never just a thing to put in your mouth.”
(*Scientific American* 2013-01-02)

“Both scholarly and accessible, the book profiles people who make cheese and delves into the science, art, politics, and culture, as it were, of these artisan products.”

(*Boston Globe Book Section* 2013-03-19)

“A first rate read in understanding how and where our food comes from, and the artisanal life.”
(*Gothic Epicures Writing* 2013-04-02)

“For those who are true cheese aficionados and fascinated by its culture, this is the book for you.”
(Aron Row *City Book Review* 2013-02-21)

From the Inside Flap

“Paxson's book, like her subject matter, is lively, evocative, and masterfully crafted.”—Susanne Freidberg, author of *Fresh: A Perishable History*

“Through vivid storytelling, Heather Paxson advances a post-pastoral food ethos that reconsiders contemporary beliefs about America's food commerce and culture, reimagines our relationship to the natural world, and redefines how we make, eat, and appreciate food. For cheese aficionados, activists, and food scholars alike, reading *The Life of Cheese* will be a transformative experience.”—Amy Trubek, author of *The Taste of Place: A Cultural Journey into Terroir*

“*The Life of Cheese* is the definitive work on America's artisanal food revolution. Heather Paxson's engaging stories are as rich, sharp, and well-grounded as the product she scrutinizes. A must read for anyone interested in fostering a sustainable food system.”—Warren Belasco, author of *Meals to Come: A History of the Future of Food*

“This vivid ethnography of contemporary artisan cheesemakers explores both the labor of hand crafting and the moral overtones of this calling. For those who participate, ‘the life of cheese’ is indeed a calling in the spiritual or philosophic sense, entailing a journey through the biopolitical world of agribusiness, bacterial cultures, and the FDA. After reading this book, visiting a cheese counter will never be the same!”—Theodore C. Bestor, author of *Tsukiji: The Fish Market at the Center of the World*

“Anyone who loves cheese will find *The Life of Cheese* a fascinating read, illuminating layers of meaning in the artisan cheese revival that are rich and complex, like the flavors and textures of cheese itself. Heather Paxson is simultaneously documentarian and theoretician in her explorations of cheesemaking and its values, culture, socio-economics, and ‘microbiopolitics.’”—Sandor Ellix Katz, author of *The Art of Fermentation*

and Wild Fermentation

About the Author

Heather Paxson, Associate Professor of Anthropology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, author of *Making Modern Mothers: Ethics and Family Planning in Urban Greece* (UC Press).

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Adrienne McGinnis:

Nowadays reading books be than want or need but also get a life style. This reading routine give you lot of advantages. The huge benefits you got of course the knowledge your information inside the book that improve your knowledge and information. The info you get based on what kind of e-book you read, if you want get more knowledge just go with knowledge books but if you want feel happy read one along with theme for entertaining for example comic or novel. The The Life of Cheese: Crafting Food and Value in America (California Studies in Food and Culture) is kind of book which is giving the reader unstable experience.

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Shaun Richards:

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