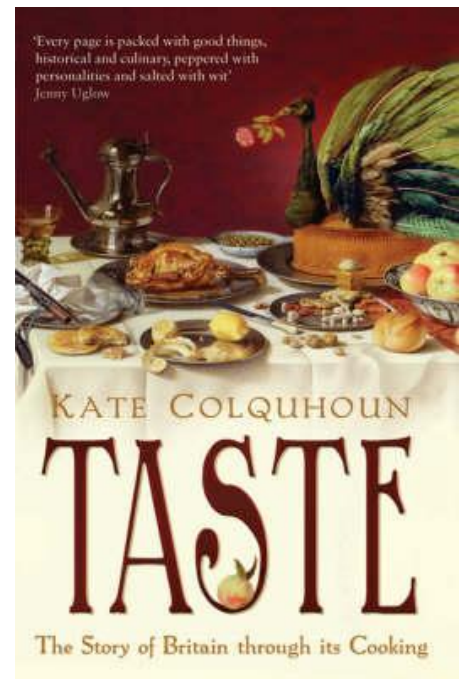


## Reading Guide:

# ***Taste: The Story of Britain through its Cooking***

Kate Colquhoun (2007)



1. In the chapter “Human Nature” there is much discussion about eating seasonally, simply, and with food from your own garden. How is this idea similar to today’s trend of eating local, in season food? Are there different motives behind it?
2. There are many ingredients and dishes mentioned (like cochineal) that we would quiver at the thought of eating today. Do you think these ingredients bothered people in the past, or is it a new aversion? Why are we put off at the thought of eating things that are perfectly edible?
3. When discussing the Victorians, Colquhoun notes that there was a great movement in society: “As everyone struggled for preferment, the cut of your dress, the type and extent of your furnishings, the food you put on your table all proclaimed who you were – or who you wanted to be.” Is this different today? Was this a new concern in the Victorian age with its ballooning population or is it just more apparent than it was in earlier eras?
4. Although *Taste* is a nonfiction book, Colquhoun uses various fiction works by authors like Jane Austen, William Makepeace Thackeray, Virginia Woolf, and Charles Dickens to help describe the food and its place in society. Do you think this is a useful tool? Is fiction that is contemporary to a period an accurate contextualization of that period? Why or why not?
5. Does *Taste* challenge any of your preconceived notions about British cooking? Why or why not?
6. Did you have a favorite recipe or dish from the text? Were there any dishes that did not seem palatable?

## About Kate Colquhoun

If you liked *Taste*, you may like these other books by Kate Colquhoun

- ***Murder in the First-Class Carriage: The First Victorian Railway Killing (2011)*** | The story of the race to catch a killer.
- ***The Busiest Man in England: A Life of Joseph Paxton, Gardner, Architect and Victorian Visionary (2006)*** | A biography of Joseph Paxton, known for the gardens at Chastworth House and the Crystal Palace.
- ***The Thrifty Cookbook: 476 ways to eat well with leftovers (2011)*** | A cookbook on how to reuse what you already have.

## Other related texts

- ***Salt: A World History***, Mark Kurlansky (2003) | A look at world history through the only rock consumed by humans.
- ***The Food of a Younger Land: A portrait of American Food – before the national highway system, before chain restaurants, and before frozen food, when the nation's food was seasonal***, Mark Kurlansky (2010) | An analysis of America's food, its development, and regional difference and recipes by the Federal Writer's Project during the Great Depression.
- ***An Edible History of Humanity***, Tom Standage (2010) | A unique view on world history by the author of *A History of the World in Six Glasses*, this book takes a look at how food was the root cause in many of the world's changes.
- ***Spice: The History of a Temptation***, Jack Turner (2005) | A history of why and how spice was sought in both the past and present.