

New publication examines 'Food in the Time of COVID-19'

August 20 2020, by Jon Niccum



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Few processes have been as disrupted by the pandemic as simply eating a meal.

Gastronomica: The Journal for Food Studies is publishing a special issue on Aug. 19 dedicated to this topic. "Food in the Time of COVID-19" details how those in the industry—from farmers and restaurant employees to home cooks and activists—are dealing with the pandemic.

"Our goal was to give voice to [ordinary people](#) and to workers within the [food industry](#) during the early stages of the pandemic," said Eric Rath, a professor of history at the University of Kansas and one of the international team of scholars who form the editorial collective of *Gastronomica*.

Culled from hundreds of entries, the issue offers intimate portraits of responses to this crisis. These stories "document the vulnerabilities of our global [food](#) system, the resilience of food service workers and the anxieties that permeate our commercial spaces. But they also find hope and at times humor amidst the chaos."

Rath cites an article about an Asian-American homemaker in Lawrence as one that resonates with him most.

"She describes turning to foraged foods not only to put off having to shop during the pandemic, but also to avoid the subtle forms of racism she regularly experiences, and which are heightened now due to anti-Asian sentiment," he said. "Hers is one of several essays that provide inspirational stories of life under quarantine and ask larger questions about how we are handling the crisis."

So can the food industry recover from this [pandemic](#)? "It will have to change dramatically. It is hard to imagine a return to all-you-can-eat buffets even if a vaccine becomes available," Rath said.

"I expect that the food industry will face tremendous challenges in the months ahead, and I worry especially for the people working in the back

of the house because they are among the most economically vulnerable."

More information: Food in the Time of COVID-19:
online.ucpress.edu/gastronomica/issue/20/3

Provided by University of Kansas

Citation: New publication examines 'Food in the Time of COVID-19' (2020, August 20)
retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-08-food-covid-.html>

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