The world's fare: food and culture at American World Fairs from 1893-1939.

Elizabeth Badger, Western Washington University

Date Permissions Signed
7-19-2012

Date of Award
2012

Document Type
Masters Thesis

Degree Name
Master of Arts (MA)

Department
History
Abstract
Why is the American culinary tradition as conflicted as it is? How is it that processed foods, foreign cuisine and home cooking can all be lauded as American ways of eating? This paper highlights the conflict between top-down government and corporate prescriptions on how we should eat and the reality of what was consumed by using American World Fairs as snapshots of particular points in time. Utilizing guidebooks, cookbooks, magazine articles and advertisements, this paper aims to show that these trends, appearing, were already beginning to develop in part due to ideas presented at these fairs intentionally or otherwise. First covering the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, it highlights the growing rift between home cooks and secular and commercial reformers so that by the 1939 World's Fair, a visible schism between commercial ideas on how to eat and the ideas of gourmands and regular cooks had developed. At the same time, it highlights how neither message was negated by the counterarguments, resulting in a society that eats both hot dogs and lauds local, cooked cuisine. In other words, rather than change national paradigms, the new ideas presented at the fairs simply built on preexisting ones while giving reinforcement to others on why the old ones should continue to exist.

Keywords

Publisher
Western Washington University

OCLC Number
804862842

Digital Format
application/pdf

Geographic Coverage
United States

Genre/Form
Academic theses

Language