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Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology

Title

Jacknis (Ed.): *Food in California Indian Culture*

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/07p4b05v>

Journal

Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology, 26(1)

ISSN

0191-3557

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Publication Date

2006

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REVIEWS

Food in California Indian Culture

Ira Jacknis (Ed.)

Berkeley: Phoebe Hearst Museum of Anthropology, 2004, (Classics in California Anthropology), 490 pages, 72 photographs and 7 illustrations; notes, references, \$34.95 (paper), ISBN 0-936127-08-2.

Reviewed by Jan Timbrook

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Modern-day California is a food-obsessed culture. Celebrity chefs are hailed for their creative use of fresh, local ingredients, and gourmet restaurants take reservations months in advance. As *Food in California Indian Culture* demonstrates, however, there is a much longer history of distinctive culinary traditions in California than most people realize.

This book does not consist of lists of foods eaten by various native peoples. Those can be found in many other publications, but they don't actually reveal much about the culture and certainly don't make compelling reading. Instead, editor Ira Jacknis delves more deeply into gastronomy, cuisine, attitudes and beliefs about food. In doing so he provides welcome insight into the real lives of the first people of our region. A rich and thorough introduction followed by a compilation of previously published writings from diverse and often obscure sources, this book is both an excellent reference work and quite enjoyable to read.

Selections include excerpts from classic studies done by academic researchers, observations recorded in historical accounts, vivid personal recollections, and oral narratives in the words of the people themselves. The founding fathers of California anthropology are well represented, though their somewhat dry writing style is often outshone by the poetic power of native expression in early texts as well as in recent essays. The selections span cultures throughout the state from Hupa to Mohave, Sierra Miwok to Pomo and Chumash, and in time from the late nineteenth century to the present day.

The selections are organized under the following headings: Plants (actually only acorns); Animals (including insects); Tribal Accounts (mostly ethnographic reports); Myth, Ritual and Oratory; Historical Perspectives; and Contemporary Perspectives. In each of these sections, the textual descriptions are enhanced by a portfolio of well-chosen photos of gathering, storing, and preparing food. Each of the papers is introduced with information about its author and a brief discussion of its place in the history of the field. This will be very helpful even to readers who are already familiar with these works.

Most valuable in placing all of them into context, however, is Jacknis's thoughtful and well-written "Notes toward a Culinary Anthropology of Native California," a descriptive summary that comprises the first quarter of the book. He points out the pitfalls of over-generalizing about which foods were eaten in each part of the state. The traditional emphasis that many authors have placed on acorns, deer, and salmon, ignoring many less dramatic or less easily observed foods, has led them to overlook the extreme variability between local groups. What is meant by the relative "importance" of any food item to a particular group—the caloric or protein input to the diet, or the cultural esteem in which the item is held—has rarely been addressed explicitly.

In this detailed introductory section, Jacknis takes a closer look at each element of food-related practices with examples from throughout the state, well annotated with citations, creating a lively menu showcasing the great diversity of Native Californian culinary arts. Photographs complement this chapter as well. Among the topics are selection of food items; gathering and hunting practices, including ownership, division of labor, and spiritual aspects; and processing and storage methods. In most cases, ingredients were not usually mixed together nor were spices added in preparing a dish, but there is still plenty to say about cooking—moist or dry methods, how hot, how fast, enclosed or not, and the containers and implements used.

The discussion of eating includes what constitutes a meal; when, where, and with whom food is eaten; table manners; disposal of refuse; fasting; special diets;

food taboos and restrictions; the role of food in rites of passage; the association of food with power and with cultural identity; and much more. Changes over time include effects of introduced species, new technology, and restricted access. Linguistic aspects include the adaptation of old names for new foods. In addition, traditional foods are significantly represented in contemporary California Indian art. With such a flavorful mix, this book is a great value at \$17.50 a pound.

Among people of all cultures, food isn't just something to eat: it sustains much more than the body. Humans everywhere have always occupied themselves with thinking about food, weaving stories around it, investing it with symbolism, and incorporating it into ritual, ceremony, and social life. Anthropologists know that, but until now they haven't paid much attention to all that's involved in the everyday routine of preparing, serving, and eating a meal. We can heartily thank Ira Jacknis and the Hearst Museum for making the initial foray in that direction. With native-inspired dishes making their way onto restaurant menus at the National Museum of the American Indian and beyond, *Food in California Indian Culture* provides the basic ingredients for a true "California cuisine"—California *Indian* cuisine—to achieve the wide recognition it deserves.



Doing Archaeology: A Cultural Resource Management Perspective

Thomas F. King.
Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2005,
166 pp., \$21.95 (paper).

Reviewed by Adrian Praetzelis

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It's news to no one that far more archaeology is done for the purposes of cultural resources management (CRM) these days than for academic research. Yet Tom King's newest offering is the first book designed for beginners that focuses on this aspect of archaeological practice. But perhaps 'beginners' is the wrong word. This very readable introduction—part textbook, part memoir—would be invaluable to students, professionals in environmental compliance, tribes, and anyone who wants to understand the process of 'doing archaeology' in the rough and tumble world of CRM.

If this were just another introduction to archaeology it would hardly be worth noting. But it's not. King is the best-known CRM practitioner in the USA, and for my money, the most highly respected. A Petaluma native, his name adorns the Society for California Archaeology's award in CRM. He is also his own man, who draws from many years of experience to offer an insightful and occasionally idiosyncratic view of his subject. It is not surprising to see this book published by Mitch Allen's newly established Left Coast Press. Along with Malcolm Margolin of Heyday Books, Allen is one of the very few quite admirable publishers who seem more concerned with public service and innovative scholarship than with their own bottom line.

Known in some circles as the bad boy of CRM for his rejection of business as usual, King is always honest, imaginative, and controversial. Readers of his previous books will recognize the straightforward style and conversational tone that make King's work such a pleasure to read. He doesn't pussyfoot around awkward issues, such as "the race thing" (p.116). And for those of us who earn our bread by wading through oceans of flaccid