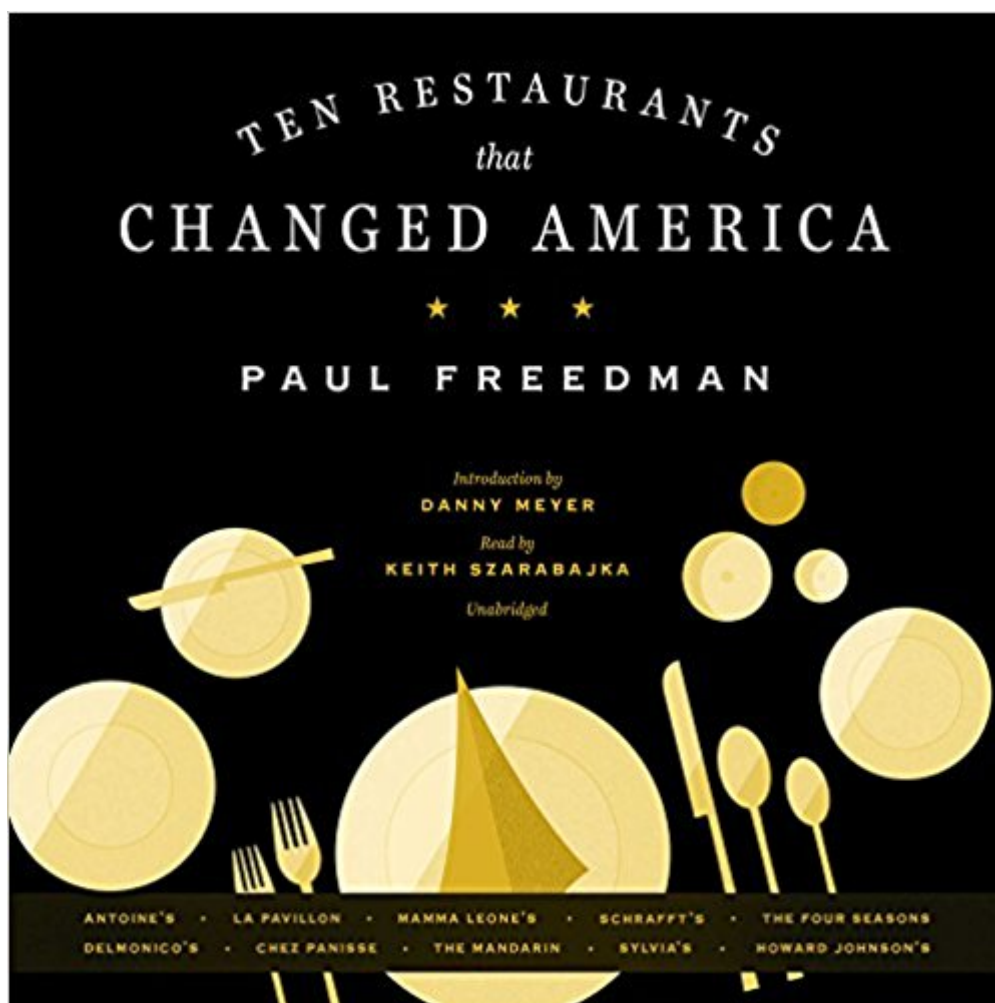


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Ten Restaurants That Changed America



Synopsis

From Delmonico's to Sylvia's to Chez Panisse, a daring and original history of dining out in America as told through ten legendary restaurants. Combining a historian's rigor with a foodie's palate, *Ten Restaurants That Changed America* reveals how the history of our restaurants reflects nothing less than the history of America itself. Whether charting the rise of our love affair with Chinese food through San Francisco's fabled the Mandarin, evoking the richness of Italian food through Mamma Leone's, or chronicling the rise and fall of French haute cuisine through Henri Soules Le Pavillon, food historian Paul Freedman uses each restaurant to tell a wider story of race and class, immigration and assimilation. Freedman also treats us to a scintillating history of the then-revolutionary Schrafft's, a chain of convivial lunch spots that catered to women, and that bygone favorite, Howard Johnson's, which pioneered on-the-road dining, only to be swept aside by McDonald's. *Ten Restaurants That Changed America* is a significant and highly entertaining social history.

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Customer Reviews

“Reading Paul Freedman about America, stalking myself through the taste of meals at eight of his ten restaurants, each sampled for different reasons at different moments in my life, I began to draw the outlines of a world I shared with other people, people more or less like me, and to wonder what *like me* meant when it came to expectations of inclusion, of common flash points of reference, of understanding and participating in the coded language of what we eat and how it is prepared and who is sitting at all those tables around us. I think that’s what

Freedman intended us to do. . . . Ten Restaurants is a book as much about the contradictions and contrasts in this country as it is about its places to eat. It is designed to keep you up, thinking, and, as I did this summer, returning to its rich, and often troubling, pages. — Jane Kramer, *The New Yorker* — “Fascinating. . . . In his sweep through centuries of food culture, Freedman illuminates much more than what happened in the front or back of the house of these 10 distinct places (although he does plenty of that). He effectively makes the case that the story of America’s restaurants is one of changing immigration patterns, race relations, gender and family roles, work obligations, and leisure habits. . . . [Freedman’s] insights are shrewd and demonstrate the power of historical study in understanding the world. — Joe Yonan, *Washington Post* — “Impeccable Inevitably, a book like this will induce a feast of delicious nostalgia in most readers, a longing for all those good and even some not so good menus and dishes past. But the culinary and cultural journey Mr. Freedman has taken us on demonstrates the abiding qualities in our society and its openness to new sources and sourcing, its diversity, its restlessness with the same old thing, its capacity for reinvention and assimilation all of which bode well for the future of America’s restaurants and its cuisine. — Martin Rubin, *Washington Times* — “Fascinating....Mr. Freedman’s book suggests that it’s not ultimately restaurants that change America but the people in the kitchen. — Victorino Matus, *Wall Street Journal* — “Eminently readable. . . . In a narrative that is intellectually delicious, Freedman presents a new way of thinking about you are what you eat. This will appeal widely, engaging readers with both a casual or scholarly interest in food history and its influence on American culture in the late 19th and 20th centuries. — Courtney McDonald, *Library Journal* — “A robust historical trek through America’s restaurant cuisine over three centuries. . . . Delightfully illustrated with menus, photos, and other visual accompaniments, the narrative delves into each of the 10 restaurants’ unique stories, beginning with America’s first restaurant, Delmonico’s Culinary historians, those besotted with food culture, and curious general readers will all find something of value in this well-researched, entertaining social and cultural history. — Kirkus Reviews — “The most important and entertaining book on the subject of food that I’ve read in years! Paul Freedman paints a portrait of a culture whose cuisine is only beginning to emerge. Witty, sensitive, surprisingly sensuous — more, please! — Molly O’Neill, author of *One Big Table* — “Paul Freedman, one of the world’s most learned food writers, has focused his extraordinary scholarship on a deconstruction of American dining from the corner deli to Chez Panisse. If you enjoy a brown paper bag of fried clams as much

as a fourteen-course tasting menu, and ever wondered how it all came to be a part of daily American life, this is the book for you. *Ten Restaurants That Changed America* is the most enlightening kind of history, as Freedman takes a fresh look at what we take for granted and reveals the extraordinary matrix of cultural and culinary currents that have made it all possible.

— Frederick Kaufman, author of *Bet the Farm: How Food Stopped Being Food*

“Pleasure without snobbery: Paul Freedman’s book is itself exactly what the very best American food has always been.”

— Joyce E. Chaplin, professor of early American history, Harvard University

“Spanning over 100 years, Paul Freedman’s engrossing and well-researched exploration of the restaurant as an American institution presents us with a gallery of unforgettable characters, iconic dishes, and unique places. Immigrants, entrepreneurs, chefs, and impresarios all loom large in a narrative that accurately tracks the historical changes in how we eat in public.”

— Fabio Parasecoli, director of Food Studies Initiatives, The New School

--This text refers to an alternate Audio CD edition.

Paul Freedman is a history professor at Yale University. The editor of the ICP Award-winning *Food: The History of Taste* and the author of *Out of the East: Spices and the Medieval Imagination*, he lives in Pelham, New York.

This is a great book for anyone interested in restaurant/culinary history. The restaurants themselves are interesting, but what I found the most fascinating was how the author captured each era as it related to contemporary society. At first I thought this might be tedious, but once I read into just a few pages, I was completely engrossed by the detail and very thorough research which was presented in such a delightful way. What a fabulous read.

This is a very good book! It looks at a series of restaurants throughout American history. Paul Freedman, the author, says of his goal: "Reading about the ten restaurants gives me a sense of American diversity, and how these different experiments expressed a sense of love that is the basic ingredient of any major endeavor." The restaurants selected? Some great names and some surprises. The places: Delmonico's (America's first "great" restaurant), Antoine's (a Creole restaurant), Schrafft's (a restaurant designed for women), Howard Johnson's (designed to be predictable and dependable as a chain), Mamma Leone's (an Italian restaurant), Sylvia's (soul food in Harlem), Le Pavillon (a major French restaurant from the mid-20th century), The Four Seasons (as Freedman puts it, "The Epitome of Modern"), and Chez Panisse. One of the themes is the

change in fortunes of these restaurants. Some simply did not adapt to a new era, others lost key actors who helped the place flourish. But what makes this special is the detailed description of how each of these worked and the role of key actors/actresses for each). There is a personalism that makes this work enticing. All in all, a fine volume on the tradition of American restaurants and their place in the society of their times. . . .,

Excellent gastronomic social history. The book reveals the changing styles & tastes of Americans eating out. A chapter on the Mandarin Restaurant, for example, is not just about that particular restaurant but includes the story of all "chinese" restaurants in America and why they are what they are.

This is such an interesting book, especially if you're a foodie or just like history. We gave it to a relative for Christmas, and she was immediately intrigued. She is well traveled, and indeed, is a foodie and an excellent cook. It's the kind of book you can pick up and read short sections when you have a little free time. The historic photos included for each restaurant add greatly to the overall information and give you a better understanding of their place in American history.

I got this book because of how much I appreciated professor Freedman's "Open Yale" course on the early middle ages. He organized a lot of information and made it interesting. He did the same with this book. It has insight into history, social trends, the business of running a restaurant, and, of course, a lot about food. I read it on my Kindle. I think I missed some of the detail from the menus, but it was a treat to be able to touch a word and immediately see the definition! (I even got an invitation to download the French dictionary.) My thanks to the author for an amazing amount of research made so interesting.

Interesting way to look at the history of America through restaurants. It is a way to learn more about history in terms of the way people lived in a developing and finally developed country.

Fascinating history of USA from 1800's on by examining the food and the people who made it. If you like history and like to eat you'll enjoy this one.

Fabulous book! Hard to put down, but a pleasure to keep coming back to each weekend. Since the chapters are dedicated to the individual restaurants, it was easy to digest in bites (pun intended)!

Though each restaurant's story was interesting, the chapters on Howard Johnson's and Schrafft's were especially interesting as they conjured up childhood memories of fried clams and ice cream sundaes with my grandparents! Thank you for this book!

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