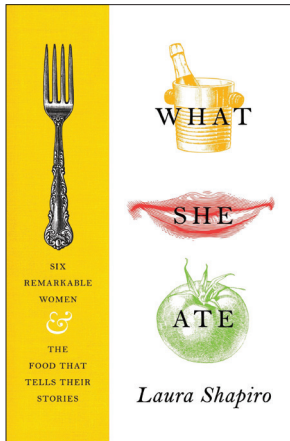


Bayou Bend/Rienzi Book Club Guide

January 2019



Reading Guide:

***What She Ate: Six Remarkable Women and the Food That Tells Their Stories* by Laura Shapiro (2017)**

1. What was the most surprising thing you learned from this book? What will you remember about it a year from now?
2. Did you agree with the choice of the six women who were profiled in the book? Why or why not? Why do you think Laura Shapiro chose them?
3. Which profile did you find to be most interesting or engaging? What worked about it?
4. Did you think that looking at the women's history with food was an effective way of discussing them? What worked or didn't work about this approach?
5. Did anything in the six biographies in the book connect with you personally and your history with food? If someone wrote a biography of you using this approach, what would be included?
6. Would you recommend this book to others? Who do you think the ideal reader for this book would be?
7. What does Laura Shapiro do well in this book? What do you wish she had done differently or better?
8. What other books, movies, or resources would you recommend to someone who enjoyed this book?

Author Biography

Laura Shapiro was a columnist at *The Real Paper* (Boston) before beginning a sixteen-year run at *Newsweek*, where she covered food, women's issues, and the arts and won several journalism awards. Her essays, reviews, and features have also appeared in the *New Yorker*, the *New York Times*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, *Gourmet*, *Gastronomica*, *Slate*, and many other publications. Her first book was *Perfection Salad: Women and Cooking at the Turn of the Century* (1986). She is also the author of *Something from the Oven: Reinventing Dinner in 1950s America* (Viking, 2004), and *Julia Child* (Penguin Lives, 2007). In June 2012, the New York Public Library opened an exhibition called *Lunch Hour NYC*, co-curated by Shapiro. More recently, Shapiro was featured in Michael Pollan's Netflix documentary series *Cooked* (2016).

Related Texts

If you liked *What She Ate*, you may enjoy these other books. Descriptions courtesy of Amazon.

- ***The Culinaricians: Lives and Careers from the First Age of American Fine Dining* by David Shields (2017)**
David S. Shields profiles 175 influential cooks and restaurateurs in *The Culinaricians*, a beautifully produced encyclopedic history of the rise of professional cooking in America from the early republic to Prohibition. Though many of the gastronomic pioneers gathered here are less well known, their diverse influence on American dining should not be overlooked—plus, their stories are truly entertaining.
- ***The Jemima Code: Two Centuries of African American Cookbooks* by Toni Tipton-Martin (2015)**
Women of African descent have contributed to America's food culture for centuries. To discover the true role of black women in the creation of American, and especially southern, cuisine, Toni Tipton-Martin has spent years amassing one of the world's largest private collections of cookbooks published by African American authors, looking for evidence of their impact on American food, families, and communities.
- ***The Gourmands' Way: Six Americans in Paris and the Birth of a New Gastronomy* by Justin Spring (2017)**
During the 30-year boom in France following World War II—*les Trente Glorieuses*—Paris was not only the world's most stylish tourist destination, it was also the world capital of gastronomic genius. In *The Gourmands' Way*, Justin Spring tells the story of six American writer-adventurers, A. J. Liebling, Alice B. Toklas, M. F. K. Fisher, Julia Child, Alexis Lichine, and Richard Olney, having the time of their lives in the City of Light during this period and, in doing so, transforming the way Americans talk and think about food.
- ***United Tastes: The Making of the First American Cookbook* by Keith Stavelly and Kathleen Fitzgerald (2017)**
The Library of Congress has designated *American Cookery* (1796) by Amelia Simmons one of the 88 "Books That Shaped America" recognized as "the first American cookbook." Situating *American Cookery* within the post-Revolutionary effort to develop a distinct national identity, Keith Stavelly and Kathleen Fitzgerald demonstrate the book's significance in cultural as well as culinary terms.

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