

Author Spotlight: George Ancona

What inspired you to write *Come and Eat!*? What kind of preparation/research went into it?

As a photographer I've travelled to many different countries around the world where I was often invited into homes of strangers to eat. Places like Mexico, Pakistan, Iceland, Tunisia, Peru, Japan, and many others. The meals created a bond between myself and my hosts. So I wanted to share this experience for kids by doing *Come and Eat!*

Describe the best meal you've ever eaten.

I've been asked that question about my books. That's like asking which of my six kids is my favorite. Each meal is a celebration of life and I appreciate the meal I have just consumed.

Ok, then describe the most unique meal you've ever had.

It was a hot Sunday at the beach in Brazil. Came time for lunch and I went into our friend's house and sat at a long table surrounded with friends and had a feijoada. This is a black beans stew with many different meats, sausage, jerky, and served with white rice, kale, farofa (manioc flour), peeled orange and vinaigrette. The aftermath was lying in a hammock to sleep for a few hours.

Thanksgiving is coming up soon; what is your favorite Thanksgiving or cooking-related experience?

I'm not very good in the kitchen but for Thanksgiving my Brazilian wife Helga, leaves the turkey cooking to me.

Have your experiences as a photographer affected the way you view food and the rituals surrounding its consumption?

I grew up eating Mexican meals at home and Italian, Polish, Jewish, Irish, German, Puerto Rican, meals in neighbor's kitchens. As an art director I was asked to design the photographs for Betty Crocker cookbooks. I would sketch a photograph for a recipe and send the sketch to Minneapolis. Later I flew out to direct the photography. When finished shooting we would eat the subjects for lunch.

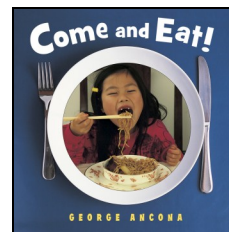
What was your favorite food as a kid?

My Mom cooked Mexican meals and I loved tacos of roast pork with Yucatec spices. But living in Coney Island in an Italian neighborhood I must admit that pizzas became my favorite. A close second best was Nathan's hot dogs.

~~~~~By George Ancona~~~~~



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