Call for Papers: Special Issue on Food at the Fair

This special issue of Food, Culture & Society will examine how fairs and expositions – at local, regional, national, and international levels anytime from the nineteenth century to the present – reflect and shape perceptions of food production and consumption for mass audiences. It will consider the perspectives of fair organizers, publicists, exhibitors, concessionaires, restaurateurs, and consumers in constructing and experiencing the diversity of food cultures on the fairgrounds.

Articles might consider questions like: how did (or does) the exhibition of food reflect transformations in food manufacturing or production over time? What impact did factors like audience, location, funding, or managerial oversight have on the exhibition of food? What techniques did food exhibitors use to attract the attention of visitors and how did these techniques shape fairgoers’ experiences? Were there any significant differences in the food experiences of local vs. international tourists or of visitors of different gender, race, ethnicity, class, age, etc.? How did food exhibits function to reinforce or challenge ideas about progress, technology, agriculture, industrialization, race, region, class, nationality, ethnicity, or gender? What was the relationship between corporate and government food messages at the fair? How did fair exhibits and concessions strive to shape perceptions of the palatability and edibility of foods from around the country or the world and were they successful? How did the concessions and amusement areas of fairs represent food in comparison to more formal exhibition halls?

How did physical space within exhibition halls or of the fairgrounds as a whole impact depictions of food at the fair and its potential appeal to consumers? How did expositions allow for a more diverse, multicultural food experience for fairgoers while also replicating stereotypical and ethnocentric conceptions of specific cuisines? In answering these questions, this special issue invites authors who might take a comparative approach to the study of fairs and expositions, crossing regional or national boundaries or considering fairs of varying audiences and historical periods.

This special issue welcomes papers that place the scholarship on food and on expositions in conversation in order to demonstrate the importance of these mass cultural events as sites where local, regional, national, and corporate food identities were simultaneously made and unmade. Submitted articles are usually between 8000-9000 words (including all notes, references, etc.)
and must not exceed 9000 words in total.

Special Issue Publication Schedule:
Essay abstracts due: March 15, 2019
Notification of preliminary acceptance (pending peer review): April 1, 2019
Full drafts due: November 1, 2019
Peer review process (4-6 months to review, revise and review again): up through June 2020
Copyediting: Early 2021
Published: Mid-2021 (April or June issue)

If you are interested in submitting a paper to the special issue, please send a 300-word abstract to guest editor, Bonnie M. Miller (bonnie.miller@umb.edu), by March 15, 2019.

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