

'There is a pleasure to it': the simple joy of eating the same meal every day

Level: Advanced

1 Warmer

a. Share your answers to these questions.

What did you have for breakfast this morning?

Where did you eat it and at what time?

What did / will you have for lunch?

What influenced your decision to eat these particular things?

Has your diet changed drastically over the last few years?

What would make you reconsider your diet?

2 Key words

a. Write the correct word(s) from the wordpool next to the definitions below. Then find and highlight them in the article to read them in context.

badgering (a) given despite decadence virtue
substantial fancy venerate relieve reasons
prove reconfigure dish dough borne (of)

1. temporary relief from something bad or tedious or annoying _____
2. trying to make someone do something by asking them again and again _____
3. respect or worship someone or something _____
4. a quality that is good, right and useful _____
5. a mixture of flour, water, fat etc that is baked to make bread or pastry

6. when the bread mix increases in size because of the yeast _____
7. deriving from; coming out of _____
8. used for saying that something happens even though something else might have prevented it

9. the opposite of plain and simple _____
10. food prepared and cooked in a particular way _____
11. makes a particular judgment after thinking about the facts of a situation in an intelligent and sensible way _____

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12. food that makes you feel full and satisfied _____
13. an excessive amount of pleasure _____
14. put something together in a different way; not in the way you did it in the past

15. a basic fact that you accept as the truth _____

b. Use some of the key words above to complete these sentences.

1. Do you have anything more _____ than these pretzels?
2. Her favourite _____ is Jamaican-style roast chicken.
3. It is a _____ that most animals will protect their young.
4. I prefer simple food to the _____ dishes you often get in expensive restaurants.
5. Shoppers will get a temporary _____ from the increased sales tax.
6. Use your hands to press the _____ firmly into shape to make pizza.
7. Three more nuclear power stations were built _____ widespread opposition.

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As our culinary horizons expand, there are those who find reprieve, and even mindfulness, in repeating the same dish over and over

Celina Ribeiro

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- 1 Every morning, while it is still dark, Anastasia Pollard wakes to the badgering of her dogs. She lets them out and immediately makes herself a coffee and toasts her home-made wholemeal seeded bread. She adds only butter. Honey if she's sick. Jam if she's feeling "greedy". She has done this every day for years and years and years.
- 2 The portrait artist is one of innumerable people around the world who resists a food culture which has come to venerate variety as a virtue.
- 3 For some it is an act of convenience, of rejecting the need to decide. For others, it is an act of connection and memory.
- 4 "There's a psychological association with morning, with getting up, with balancing myself for the day ahead," she says. "I always do that ... I know some people go to the shower and do all that – no. I have to have my toast and coffee absolutely first thing."
- 5 Pollard bakes her bread weekly, using a recipe which took a lot of trial and error. Baking your own bread, she says, feels like self care.
- 6 "I make the dough the night before," she says. "I soak the seeds; I make this pre-ferment. I get up and start the dough. Prove it forever. It's a process. I have to be very organised about it."
- 7 There are times when this process has fallen by the wayside, but she tries to stay on top of it: "I don't feel as fed with someone's bread as with my bread."
- 8 The coffee is also particular: "It has to be Lavazza." Pollard developed a love for the brand while living in Italy. Though she's been in the UK for a long time now, "it connects me with the time I spent in Italy. I love Italy and emotionally I think I'm still living there."
- 9 Pollard has a young son and a husband and neither are involved in her breakfast ritual. The meal is time alone. "I like getting up while it's still dark. I like how it sort of gently gets lighter and lighter ... I really love sitting in

the kitchen with the quiet and looking at the garden with my coffee and my toast. It very much is having this little time to myself."

'Three things in a bowl'

- 10 For Jane Newton, in Sydney's inner west, settling on a tripartite lunch which she has been eating every day for eight years now was a decision borne of pragmatism.
- 11 "It was something protein, something green, and some carbs to get me going through the day," she says. "I didn't research too extensively. I just sort of said: 'I'm going to do these three things in a bowl.'"
- 12 The curriculum coordinator's lunch consists of a microwavable rice bowl, green vegetables (broccolini usually), and tofu. It used to be tinned tuna before she went vegetarian a few years ago: "Despite the fact it's been the same core three ingredients every day, there is a pleasure to it.
- 13 "If I'm feeling fancy I'll put some avocado in. The newer addition, which has revolutionised the dish, is a bit of vegan kimchi on top."
- 14 Newton does not enjoy cooking. She enjoys eating out. She reasons that by having a guaranteed substantial lunch in the middle of the day, she has space for decision-making and decadence in other meals.
- 15 Although she eats at her desk while working, the few minutes she takes to assemble her dish – at nearly precisely midday – has become "a bit of a reset", a time without demand or decisions.

'It is good to be on autopilot'

- 16 "A lot has changed in my life," says medical researcher Sara Carrillo. Over the years she has lived in Spain, the UK, Sydney and now Melbourne. But her breakfast has remained constant. Every day she wakes to coffee with milk and two slices of toast with butter and raspberry jam: "That is the one thing I keep the same."
- 17 Moving between countries, and even cities, required Carrillo to reconfigure her breakfast. The jam had to change between the UK and Australia. The butter and bread had to change, too. It is now a wholemeal pane di casa: "Everything in this country is sourdough, and I don't like it."

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- 18 Carrillo says that when growing up in Spain, her mother would rush her through breakfast. Now she takes it slower – but there's still a connection to history. When her mother was growing up after the war, it was a given that she and all those around her would eat the same meals day in, day out: "All this variety that we have now is quite new in terms of history."
- 19 With this endless choice and all this change, returning each morning to the same breakfast for Carrillo is about waking up slowly "without the violence of 'Go! Go! Go!'"
- 20 "It's almost like a meditation, really. Having that extra time to yourself without having to think about anything."
- 21 "We are forced to get into active mode all the time. Sometimes it's good to be on autopilot."

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3 Find the information

a. Find information in the article to write under each of the categories in the box.

Names of the three women	Anastasia _____	Jane _____	Sara _____
Where they live			
Their jobs / professions			
The meal			
Where and when they eat it			
What the meal consists of			
Variations on the meal			
Changes they have made to their meal and reasons for these changes			
The benefits they get from eating the same meal every day			

4 Language – expressions and phrases

a. Find multi-word phrases in the article that match the meanings below.

- early in the morning, directly after you get up
_____ (2 words, para 4)
- a way of finding a good method that involves trying several possibilities and learning from your mistakes
_____ (3 words, para 5)
- when something is not successful or effective any longer
_____ (4 words, para 7)
- make sure you know what you are doing and that you are in control of a situation
_____ (*something*) (4 words, para 7)

b. Use the words to talk about the article.

c. Now use each one to talk about something relevant to your own life.

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5 Discussion

a. Discuss these questions.

- What is your morning routine / how do you start most days?
- What would the benefits be to your life if you ate the same thing for lunch every day?
- When during the day do you try to make or find time for yourself? How do you do this?

6 In your own words

a. Write the basic ingredients for these two meals that you could imagine eating every day for a year:

A healthy and nutritious breakfast _____

A balanced and substantial lunch _____