

adam gopnik the table comes first

Adam Gopnik The Table Comes First: Exploring the Art of Connection and Conversation

adam gopnik the table comes first is more than just a phrase—it encapsulates a philosophy about the significance of gathering around a shared space to foster connection, dialogue, and understanding. Adam Gopnik, the celebrated writer and essayist known for his insightful commentary on culture, art, and everyday life, has often emphasized the profound role that the simple act of coming together at a table plays in shaping human relationships and communities. In this article, we'll delve into the meaning behind "the table comes first," explore Gopnik's perspectives, and uncover why this idea resonates so deeply in today's fast-paced, digitally-driven world.

Who is Adam Gopnik?

Before unpacking the phrase, it's helpful to understand the man behind it. Adam Gopnik is a prolific writer and staff writer for The New Yorker, where his essays and stories blend wit, warmth, and wisdom. His work often touches on the intersections of culture, history, food, and family life—subjects that reveal the layers of meaning behind everyday experiences. Gopnik's approachable writing style makes complex ideas accessible, and his reflections on the simple act of sharing a meal have inspired many to reconsider how we connect with others.

The Meaning Behind "The Table Comes First"

At its core, "the table comes first" is an acknowledgment that the place where people gather—the table—is fundamental to building relationships before anything else happens. Whether it's a family dinner, a business meeting, or a casual get-together, the table functions as a stage for conversation, negotiation, and bonding. Gopnik suggests that before ideas are exchanged or decisions made, the act of sitting together is what creates the conditions for meaningful interaction.

Community and Connection

The table symbolizes more than just a piece of furniture; it is a metaphor for community. Gopnik points out that the physical act of sharing a meal or simply sitting down together invites openness and vulnerability. It encourages listening and empathy, breaking down barriers that might otherwise keep people apart. In an age where digital communication often replaces face-

to-face interaction, the table becomes a sanctuary for genuine human connection.

Conversation as a Craft

One of Adam Gopnik's recurring themes is the art of conversation—something that flourishes at the table. He highlights how conversations over food or drinks often meander, allowing participants the freedom to explore ideas without pressure. This meandering is essential to creativity and understanding; it's at the table that people can refine their thoughts, share stories, and build consensus. The table, therefore, is not just a meeting spot but a creative space.

Adam Gopnik's Views on Food and Dining

Food plays a pivotal role in Gopnik's reflections on "the table comes first." He often writes about how the sensory experience of eating together enhances the social experience. Food, in this context, is a catalyst for connection—it invites people to slow down, savor, and engage with one another.

Food as a Universal Language

Gopnik notes that food transcends cultural and linguistic differences. When people come together to share a meal, they participate in a universal ritual that fosters inclusion and understanding. This idea emphasizes the democratic nature of the table—it is a place where diverse voices can be heard and appreciated.

The Ritual of Dining

The rituals surrounding meals—setting the table, passing dishes, toasting—are not mere formalities but integral to the social fabric. Gopnik often highlights how these rituals create a rhythm that encourages attentiveness and respect among participants. The act of preparing and sharing food becomes a shared responsibility that strengthens bonds.

Why "The Table Comes First" Matters Today

In our modern world, where technology dominates communication and schedules are packed with endless commitments, Adam Gopnik's reminder that "the table comes first" feels especially relevant. The phrase urges us to prioritize

real, in-person interactions that nourish our social and emotional well-being.

Counteracting Digital Overload

With smartphones and social media, it's easy to fall into isolated patterns of communication. Gopnik's emphasis on the table invites us to reclaim spaces for face-to-face dialogue. Sitting around a table encourages eye contact, attentive listening, and genuine presence—qualities often lost in digital exchanges.

Building Stronger Families and Communities

Research consistently shows that families who eat together regularly enjoy closer relationships and better communication. Gopnik's perspective aligns with these findings, underscoring the table's role as a foundation for trust and intimacy. Beyond family, community dinners and shared meals can bridge social divides, fostering inclusivity.

How to Embrace “The Table Comes First” in Your Life

If you're inspired by Adam Gopnik's philosophy, here are some practical ways to bring the idea of “the table comes first” into your daily routine:

- **Prioritize shared meals:** Make time for breakfast, lunch, or dinner with family or friends, even if it's just a few times a week.
- **Create a welcoming space:** Arrange your table to encourage conversation—remove distractions like phones and turn off the TV.
- **Engage in meaningful conversation:** Use mealtime to ask open-ended questions and listen actively.
- **Celebrate rituals:** Incorporate traditions like toasting, lighting candles, or simply giving thanks to enhance the experience.
- **Host communal gatherings:** Invite neighbors or colleagues to share a meal, fostering community spirit.

The Broader Cultural Implications of Gopnik's Idea

Adam Gopnik's assertion that "the table comes first" resonates beyond personal relationships. It touches on how societies organize themselves and negotiate differences. The table becomes a symbol for democratic dialogue, where voices can be heard equally and conflicts addressed peacefully.

Tables in History and Politics

Throughout history, tables have been the sites of important meetings—from peace negotiations to legislative assemblies. Gopnik's idea reminds us that the act of coming together physically is an essential precursor to cooperation and compromise. In a political context, "the table" symbolizes the space where dialogue begins.

The Table as a Metaphor for Inclusion

Sociologists and cultural critics often use the metaphor of "bringing someone to the table" to describe inclusion in decision-making processes. Gopnik's emphasis on the table highlights its symbolic power as a place of participation and belonging. It challenges us to consider who is invited and who is left out.

Reflecting on Adam Gopnik's Legacy and Influence

Adam Gopnik has long been a voice for mindfulness, empathy, and the appreciation of everyday moments. His reflections on "the table comes first" invite readers to slow down and recognize the importance of presence and shared experience. By championing the table as a space of connection, he encourages a cultural shift toward deeper human engagement.

Whether through his essays, books, or public talks, Gopnik's ideas continue to inspire those seeking meaning in modern life. His focus on the table as a starting point reminds us that before anything else—before ideas, actions, or decisions—there must be a space where people come together as equals, ready to listen and share.

As we navigate an increasingly complex and disconnected world, embracing the wisdom behind "adam gopnik the table comes first" offers a simple yet profound way to reclaim our humanity and build stronger bonds with those around us.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is Adam Gopnik, the author of 'The Table Comes First'?

Adam Gopnik is a Canadian-American writer and essayist known for his work as a staff writer for The New Yorker, where he has written extensively on culture, food, and society.

What is the main theme of Adam Gopnik's book 'The Table Comes First'?

'The Table Comes First' explores the cultural and social significance of food, emphasizing how cooking and communal dining shape human relationships and civilization.

How does Adam Gopnik define the relationship between cooking and eating in 'The Table Comes First'?

Gopnik argues that cooking is primary and fundamental, suggesting that the act of preparing food—rather than just eating—is what truly brings people together and creates meaning around the table.

What unique perspective does Adam Gopnik offer about food culture in 'The Table Comes First'?

Gopnik presents food not merely as sustenance but as an art form and a social ritual, highlighting its role in identity, tradition, and human connection.

In 'The Table Comes First,' how does Adam Gopnik approach the idea of home cooking versus dining out?

Gopnik emphasizes the importance of home cooking as a way to foster intimacy and creativity, contrasting it with dining out, which he views as more commercial and less personal.

What historical insights about cooking does Adam Gopnik provide in 'The Table Comes First'?

Gopnik traces the evolution of cooking from ancient times, showing how the development of fire and culinary techniques fundamentally changed human social structures and culture.

How has 'The Table Comes First' been received by critics and readers?

The book has been praised for its eloquent prose, insightful observations, and thoughtful reflections on food as a cultural cornerstone, appealing to both food lovers and general readers.

Does Adam Gopnik include personal anecdotes in 'The Table Comes First'?

Yes, Gopnik incorporates personal stories and reflections to illustrate the emotional and social importance of cooking and sharing meals.

What makes 'The Table Comes First' relevant in today's food culture?

'The Table Comes First' resonates today as it encourages a return to mindful cooking and eating, emphasizing sustainability, community, and the joy of shared meals in a fast-paced world.

Additional Resources

Adam Gopnik's "The Table Comes First": An Exploration of Food, Culture, and Connection

adam gopnik the table comes first is more than just a phrase; it encapsulates the core philosophy behind Adam Gopnik's celebrated work that delves into the intricate relationship between food, culture, and social interaction. In his book, "The Table Comes First," Gopnik takes readers on a compelling journey through the world of French cuisine, exploring not only the art of cooking but also the profound significance of dining as a social ritual. This article provides an in-depth review and analysis of Gopnik's narrative, highlighting how his work intersects with broader themes of cultural identity, culinary history, and the evolving dynamics of food in society.

Understanding Adam Gopnik's Perspective in "The Table Comes First"

Adam Gopnik, a renowned essayist and critic, is known for his insightful commentary on culture and society. In "The Table Comes First," he shifts his focus to gastronomy, but the book is far from a typical cookbook or food guide. Instead, it presents a thoughtful meditation on why food matters—not just nutritionally, but emotionally and culturally. Gopnik argues that the act of coming together at the table precedes and shapes the culinary experience itself, hence the titular assertion that "the table comes first."

This premise challenges the common notion that food is primarily about taste or technique. Instead, Gopnik emphasizes that the social context—family gatherings, celebrations, communal meals—is what imbues food with meaning. This approach aligns with anthropological views on food as a language of connection and tradition, making the book resonate beyond mere recipes.

French Cuisine as a Cultural Lens

At the heart of "The Table Comes First" lies a deep appreciation for French cuisine, which Gopnik uses as both a subject and a metaphor. French food, with its rich history and codified techniques, serves as a window into the culture's values and social structures. Gopnik explores how French cooking is inseparable from French life, where the rhythms of meals dictate social interactions and communal bonds.

However, unlike many culinary writers who romanticize French gastronomy solely for its sophistication, Gopnik balances admiration with critique. He acknowledges the rigidity and exclusivity often associated with French culinary tradition, while also celebrating its ability to create moments of joy and belonging. This nuanced perspective adds depth to his analysis and invites readers to reconsider their own food cultures through a comparative lens.

Key Themes in "The Table Comes First"

Several themes emerge prominently throughout Adam Gopnik's exploration of food and dining, each contributing to a richer understanding of why "the table comes first."

The Primacy of Social Connection

Central to Gopnik's thesis is the idea that food's greatest value lies in its capacity to bring people together. The table is a stage for conversation, negotiation, and relationship building. In a world increasingly marked by isolation and digital interaction, Gopnik's emphasis on shared meals as a form of human connection is both timely and profound.

This theme connects with recent sociological studies that highlight how communal eating fosters empathy and strengthens community ties. Gopnik's reflections echo these findings, reinforcing the table as a site of cultural continuity.

Tradition Versus Innovation

Another compelling aspect of "The Table Comes First" is Gopnik's exploration of the tension between culinary tradition and innovation. French cuisine, emblematic of culinary orthodoxy, often resists change, yet Gopnik acknowledges the necessity of evolution in food practices to reflect contemporary realities.

He discusses how chefs and home cooks alike navigate this dynamic, balancing respect for heritage with the desire to experiment. This tension mirrors broader cultural debates about authenticity and progress, positioning food as a microcosm of societal change.

The Ritual of Eating

Gopnik pays particular attention to the ritualistic elements of dining. The sequence of courses, the etiquette observed, and the pacing of meals all contribute to the experience. He suggests that these rituals serve as a framework that elevates eating from mere sustenance to an act of art and meaning.

This viewpoint aligns with historical analyses of food rituals across cultures, highlighting their role in reinforcing social hierarchies and shared identities. Gopnik's treatment of dining ritual invites readers to appreciate the subtle choreography behind every meal.

Comparative Insights: Gopnik's Approach Versus Other Culinary Writers

While many food writers focus on recipes, ingredients, or the chef's creativity, Adam Gopnik's "The Table Comes First" stands out for its anthropological and philosophical approach. Unlike Anthony Bourdain's gritty exploration of food culture or Michael Pollan's focus on sustainable eating, Gopnik zeroes in on the social fabric woven around meals.

This perspective makes his work particularly valuable for readers interested in the intersection of food and society rather than just gastronomy. It also complements other cultural critiques by providing a nuanced understanding of how food functions as a symbol and facilitator of human relationships.

Pros and Cons of Gopnik's Narrative Style

- **Pros:** Gopnik's prose is elegant and accessible, blending personal

anecdotes with scholarly insight. His ability to connect food with broader cultural themes enriches the reader's appreciation of everyday experiences.

- **Cons:** At times, the book's focus on French cuisine may feel limiting to readers seeking a more global perspective. Additionally, those looking for practical cooking advice might find the narrative abstract or theoretical.

The Relevance of "The Table Comes First" in Contemporary Food Culture

In an era dominated by fast food, individualism, and virtual interactions, Adam Gopnik's "The Table Comes First" offers a compelling reminder of the enduring importance of shared meals. His work encourages a reevaluation of how modern lifestyles impact the communal aspects of dining.

Moreover, the book's insights hold particular significance amid current trends such as the farm-to-table movement, the resurgence of family dinners, and the cultural emphasis on food as identity. By foregrounding the table as the foundation of culinary experience, Gopnik advocates for a more mindful, connected approach to eating.

Implications for Food Enthusiasts and Cultural Scholars

For food enthusiasts, Gopnik's work provides a richer context for understanding why certain dishes and dining practices resonate on an emotional level. It moves beyond taste to explore the stories and relationships that imbue food with meaning.

For cultural scholars, "The Table Comes First" serves as a case study in how food functions as a cultural artifact. Gopnik's integration of history, sociology, and personal narrative offers a multidisciplinary framework for examining food culture.

The book's exploration of the social dimensions of eating also provides valuable insights for policymakers and educators interested in promoting community health and social cohesion through food-related initiatives.

Adam Gopnik's "The Table Comes First" remains a thoughtful and provocative contribution to food literature. By emphasizing the primacy of the table, Gopnik invites readers to reconsider the central role of shared meals in shaping culture, identity, and human connection. His work challenges us to

appreciate not just what we eat, but how and with whom we choose to break bread.

Adam Gopnik The Table Comes First

adam gopnik the table comes first: The Table Comes First Adam Gopnik, 2011-10-25
Transplanted Canadian, New Yorker writer and author of *Paris to the Moon*, Gopnik is publishing this major new work of narrative non-fiction alongside his 2011 Massey Lecture. An illuminating, beguiling tour of the morals and manners of our present food manias, in search of eating's deeper truths, asking Where do we go from here? Never before have so many North Americans cared so much about food. But much of our attention to it tends towards grim calculation (what protein is best? how much?); social preening (I can always score the last reservation at xxxxx); or graphic machismo (watch me eat this now). Gopnik shows we are not the first food fetishists but we are losing sight of a timeless truth, the table comes first: what goes on around the table matters as much to life as what we put on the table: families come together (or break apart) over the table, conversations across the simplest or grandest board can change the world, pain and romance unfold around it--all this is more essential to our lives than the provenance of any zucchini or the road it travelled to reach us. Whatever dilemmas we may face as omnivores, how not what we eat ultimately defines our society. Gathering people and places drawn from a quarter century's reporting in North America and France, *The Table Comes First* marks the beginning a new conversation about the way we eat now.

adam gopnik the table comes first: Table Comes First Signed Adam Gopnik, 2011-11-29
adam gopnik the table comes first: The Art of Slow Writing Louise DeSalvo, 2014-10-07 In a series of conversational observations and meditations on the writing process, *The Art of Slow Writing* examines the benefits of writing slowly. "DeSalvo turns what might have been an exercise in navel-gazing into a lively and inspiring guide for writers of all stripes. Buy two copies—the first will quickly sprout dog-ears." —Publishers Weekly (starred review) *The Art of Slow Writing* examines the benefits of writing slowly, in a series of short, conversational chapters on the writing process. Louise DeSalvo advises readers to explore their creative process on deeper levels by getting to know themselves and their stories more fully over a longer period of time. DeSalvo includes anecdotes from classic American and international writers, such as John Steinbeck, Henry Miller, Virginia Woolf, and D.H. Lawrence, as well as contemporary authors such as Michael Chabon, Zadie Smith, Jeffrey Eugenides, Ian McEwan, and Donna Tart. *The Art of Slow Writing* is a gem of a book, a lovely, unhurried, meditative approach to writing that is truly the antidote to our 24/7 constant rush of a world, and DeSalvo is a skillful, patient, and thorough guide for anyone who is engaged in creative endeavors. "Leavened by her own elegant and energetic prose, *The Art of Slow Writing* distills the wisdom of long experience. Whether in the classroom or on the page, DeSalvo is that rare teacher who is both exacting and inspiring." —Kathryn Harrison, New York Times–bestselling author of *Enchantments*, *The Kiss*, and *The Binding Chair* "I want to hand a copy to every writer I know and every writer I don't know. This book is a gift. Its insights are unparalleled. . . . Read it more than once—the first time for pleasure and many more times for its invaluable insights into the craft." —Margaux Frago, author of *Tiger, Tiger: A Memoir* "Wise and insightful. . . . A welcome reminder that in this fast-paced world, some things should not be rushed." —Christina Baker Kline, #1 New York Times–bestselling author of *Orphan Train*

adam gopnik the table comes first: Savoring Gotham Andrew F. Smith, 2015 *Savoring Gotham* traces the rise of New York City's global culinary stardom in 570 accessible, yet well-researched A-Z entries. From the Native Americans who arrived in the area 5,000 years before New York was New York, and who planted the maize, squash, and beans that European and other

settlers to the New World embraced centuries later, to Greek diners in the city that are arguably not diners at all, this is the first A-Z reference work to take a broad and historically-informed approach to NYC food and drink.

adam gopnik the table comes first: How to Hygge Signe Johansen, 2017-01-03 An “uplifting, heart-warming, life-enriching” primer for adopting the simple and satisfying Nordic lifestyle—from the author of *Scandilicious Baking* (Nigel Slater, author of *A Thousand Feasts*). The “Danish coziness” philosophy is fast becoming the new “French living” in terms of aspirational lifestyle books and blogs. There are countless viral articles comparing the happiness levels of Americans versus Danes. Their homes are more homey; their people are more cheerful. It’s an attitude that defies definition, but there is a name for this slow-moving, stress-free mindset: *hygge* (pronounced “hoo-ga”). *Hygge* values the idea of cherishing yourself: candlelight, bakeries, and dinner with friends; a celebration of experiences over possessions, as well as being kind to yourself and treasuring a sense of community. *How to Hygge* by chef and author Signe Johansen is a fresh, informative, lighthearted, fully illustrated how-to guide to *hygge*. It’s a combination of recipes, helpful tips for cozy living at home, and cabin porn: essential elements of living the Danish way—which, incidentally, encourages a daily dose of “healthy hedonism.” Who can resist that? “Throughout, Johansen’s tone is an embodiment of the philosophy: she encourages readers to appreciate the small moments, taking baby steps and savoring the ride rather than racing to the finish line. Readers interested in simplifying their homes and lives are sure to find plenty of practical recipes and suggestions here that they can implement immediately.” —Publishers Weekly “Full of inspiration for ethical, conscious living.” —Making Roots

adam gopnik the table comes first: In the Restaurant Christoph Ribbat, 2019-08-20 What does eating out tell us about who we are? The deliciously cosmopolitan story of the restaurant from eighteenth-century Paris to El Bulli, now in paperback. The restaurant is where we go to celebrate, to experience pleasure, to show off - or, sometimes, just because we're hungry. But these temples of gastronomy hide countless stories. This is the tale of the restaurant in all its guises, from the first formal establishments in eighteenth-century Paris serving 'restorative' bouillon, to today's new Nordic cuisine, via grand Viennese cafés and humble fast food joints. Here are tales of cooks who spend hours arranging rose petals for Michelin stars, of the university that teaches the consistency of the perfect shake, of the lunch counter that sparked a protest movement, of the writers - from Proust to George Orwell - who have been inspired or outraged by the restaurant's secrets. As this dazzlingly entertaining, eye-opening book shows, the restaurant is where performance, fashion, commerce, ritual, class, work and desire all come together. Through its windows, we can glimpse the world.

adam gopnik the table comes first: Awaiting the King (Cultural Liturgies Book #3) James K. A. Smith, 2017-11-07 In this culmination of his widely read and highly acclaimed Cultural Liturgies project, James K. A. Smith examines politics through the lens of liturgy. What if, he asks, citizens are not only thinkers or believers but also lovers? Smith explores how our analysis of political institutions would look different if we viewed them as incubators of love-shaping practices--not merely governing us but forming what we love. How would our political engagement change if we weren't simply looking for permission to express our views in the political sphere but actually hoped to shape the ethos of a nation, a state, or a municipality to foster a way of life that bends toward shalom? This book offers a well-rounded public theology as an alternative to contemporary debates about politics. Smith explores the religious nature of politics and the political nature of Christian worship, sketching how the worship of the church propels us to be invested in forging the common good. This book creatively merges theological and philosophical reflection with illustrations from film, novels, and music and includes helpful exposition and contemporary commentary on key figures in political theology.

adam gopnik the table comes first: Taste Sarah E. Worth, 2021-11-11 A thoughtful consideration of taste as a sense and an idea and of how we might jointly develop both. When we eat, we eat the world: taking something from outside and making it part of us. But what does it taste

of? And can we develop our taste? In *Taste*, Sarah Worth argues that taste is a sense that needs educating, for the real pleasures of eating only come with an understanding of what one really likes. From taste as an abstract concept to real examples of food, she explores how we can learn about and develop our sense of taste through themes ranging from pleasure, authenticity, and food fraud, to visual images, recipes, and food writing.

adam gopnik the table comes first: Midlife Maze Janis Clark Johnston, 2017-02-16 Have you found yourself wilting in midlife, and wondering what you might do to flourish in your remaining years? Have you lost your way in the midlife maze due to a significant loss? Did you lose your job or desired career advancement? Did you separate or divorce? Did your last child leave home? Did your family experience a virtual storm of bankruptcy or lose your life savings in a financial meltdown? Did you or someone in your family experience the loss of good health? Or did you weather the death of a family member, partner, or friend? Your loss story is personal. Your path through winding passages during midlife is unique. Perhaps the most important encouragement for your grieving process is to know this simple fact: grieving is a natural healing response to loss rather than a pathological experience. Midlife can be a time of reflection, rebellion, or reconnecting to old or new interests and activities. It can also be a time when losses start to happen or begin to pile up – divorce, death of a loved one, loss of a job or home, the moving out and on of grown children—and learning how to move forward can be a challenge. Here, a seasoned psychologist looks at the geography of loss in midlife, the way it can affect us, and what we can do to get back on track or redirect ourselves when necessary. Through first hand stories and practical exercises, the author leads readers through the midlife maze to a place of recovery, purpose, and peace.

adam gopnik the table comes first: *Telling Tales* Penny Perrick, 2018-07-12 The poignant biography of Anita Leslie, only woman to have been awarded both the Croix de Guerre and the Africa Star in World War II. Anita Leslie (1914-85), best known for popular biographies of her relatives including Jennie Churchill, Winston's mother, was also an unlikely war heroine. In 1940, Anita volunteered as an ambulance driver. By the end of the war, she was the only woman to have been awarded both the Africa Star and the Croix de Guerre, alongside the other medals for her service across all four fronts of WWII, as recounted in her remarkable memoir *Train to Nowhere*. In this revealing biography, Penny Perrick brings Anita to life: her complicated early years, her love for her children, her passion for Ireland, her career as a writer, and the ongoing family drama about Castle Leslie. *Telling Tales* is a scintillating and poignant account of this flamboyant woman.

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adam gopnik the table comes first: Contested Tastes Michaela DeSoucey, 2018-12-04 An inside look at the complex and controversial debates surrounding foie gras In the past decade, the French delicacy foie gras—the fattened liver of ducks or geese that have been force-fed through a tube—has been at the center of contentious battles. In *Contested Tastes*, Michaela DeSoucey takes us to farms, restaurants, protests, and political hearings in both the United States and France to reveal why people care so passionately about foie gras—and why we should care, too. Bringing together fieldwork, interviews, and materials from archives and the media on both sides of the

Atlantic, DeSoucey offers a compelling look at the moral arguments and provocative actions of pro- and anti-foie gras forces. She combines personal stories with fair-minded analysis and draws our attention to the cultural dynamics of markets, the multivocal nature of “gastropolitics,” and the complexities of what it means to identify as a “moral” eater in today’s food world. Investigating the causes and consequences of the foie gras wars, *Contested Tastes* illuminates the social significance of food and taste in the twenty-first century.

adam gopnik the table comes first: The Swerve Stephen Greenblatt, 2012-09-04 Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Nonfiction • Winner of the National Book Award • New York Times Bestseller • A Kirkus Reviews Best Book of the 21st Century (So Far) Renowned scholar Stephen Greenblatt brings the past to vivid life in what is at once a supreme work of scholarship, a literary page-turner, and a thrilling testament to the power of the written word. In the winter of 1417, a short, genial, cannily alert man in his late thirties plucked a very old manuscript off a dusty shelf in a remote monastery, saw with excitement what he had discovered, and ordered that it be copied. He was Poggio Bracciolini, the greatest book hunter of the Renaissance. His discovery, Lucretius’ ancient poem *On the Nature of Things*, had been almost entirely lost to history for more than a thousand years. It was a beautiful poem of the most dangerous ideas: that the universe functions without the aid of gods, that religious fear is damaging to human life, that pleasure and virtue are not opposites but intertwined, and that matter is made up of very small material particles in eternal motion, randomly colliding and swerving in new directions. Its return to circulation changed the course of history. The poem’s vision would shape the thought of Galileo and Freud, Darwin and Einstein, and—in the hands of Thomas Jefferson—leave its trace on the Declaration of Independence. From the gardens of the ancient philosophers to the dark chambers of monastic scriptoria during the Middle Ages to the cynical, competitive court of a corrupt and dangerous pope, Greenblatt brings Poggio’s search and discovery to life in a way that deepens our understanding of the world we live in now. “An intellectually invigorating, nonfiction version of a Dan Brown-like mystery-in-the-archives thriller.” —Boston Globe

adam gopnik the table comes first: Short Course in Rum Lynn Hoffman, 2015-02-24 From swashbuckling pirates and Caribbean sugar plantations to rum punch and trendy tiki bars, rum is one of our best loved and most historic liquors. The *Short Course in Rum* began, naturally, as a look at noble, fragrant, complex, wood-aged rum: the type of liquor that's served in snifters and consumed slowly, even reverently. Author Lynn Hoffman (*Short Course in Beer*) had the suspicion—maybe even the conviction—that rum was a serious, big deal sort of thing, somewhere above single-malt scotch and maybe (just) below cognac. He was infused with missionary zeal. He was hoping to gather the rum snobs of the world to talk about esoteric little bottlings. He was a purist and he wanted to meet other purists and convert the uninitiated. When he started some serious tasting, what he discovered made him abandon the purist approach and embrace the wild and wonderful world of rum. He discovered that rum has taken many forms throughout its history—Rumbullion alias Kill-Devil, Demon Rum, and more. He learned about the American Revolution, lush desserts, the sugar trade, the anti-saloon League, prohibitionists, abolitionists, and alchemists. He tasted great rum from craft distillers and incredible inventions from bartenders. Inside you'll discover: •the world's best wood-aged sipping rums •recipes for the best rum cocktails plus •the secrets of creating your own great recipe •the adventures of working in a small craft distillery Lynn Hoffman discovered a world in rum and he invites you to sit down with him and share that world. Skyhorse Publishing, along with our Good Books and Arcade imprints, is proud to publish a broad range of cookbooks, including books on juicing, grilling, baking, frying, home brewing and winemaking, slow cookers, and cast iron cooking. We've been successful with books on gluten-free cooking, vegetarian and vegan cooking, paleo, raw foods, and more. Our list includes French cooking, Swedish cooking, Austrian and German cooking, Cajun cooking, as well as books on jerky, canning and preserving, peanut butter, meatballs, oil and vinegar, bone broth, and more. While not every title we publish becomes a New York Times bestseller or a national bestseller, we are committed to books on subjects that are sometimes overlooked and to authors whose work might not

otherwise find a home.

adam gopnik the table comes first: Studies in Urbanormativity Alexander R. Thomas, Gregory M. Fulkerson, 2013-12-19 The world has been witnessing a long unfolding process of urbanization that not only has altered the structural basis of society in terms of political economy, but has also symbolically relegated rural people and life to a secondary or deviant status through an ideology of urbanormativity. Both structural and cultural changes rooted in urbanization are connected in complex ways to spatial arrangements that can be described in terms of inequality and uneven development. Through a focus on localities, *Studies in Urbanormativity: Rural Community in Urban Society* examines the implications of urbanization and its corresponding ideology. Urbanormativity justifies rural domination by holding urban life as the standard against which rural forms are compared and deemed to be irregular, inferior, or deviant. Urban production, as conceptualized in this book, is inherently exploitative of rural resources—natural, social, cultural, and symbolic. As this exploitation advances, a wake of entropic conditions is left behind in the forms of degraded landscapes, broken social institutions, and denigrated communities, cultures and identities. Edited by Gregory M. Fulkerson and Alexander R. Thomas, *Studies in Urbanormativity* engages a topic on which scholars have been surprisingly silent. Designed for advancing theory and practice, the chapters provide new theoretical tools for understanding the complex relationship between the urban and rural. While primarily intended for scholars and practitioners interested in rural life, rural policy, and community development, the insights of this book will also be of interest to scholars studying various forms of cultural and social domination, as well as identity politics.

adam gopnik the table comes first: Anything That Moves Dana Goodyear, 2014-11-04 The popular New Yorker writer combines the style of Mary Roach with the on-the-ground food savvy of Anthony Bourdain. Dana Goodyear's narrative debut is a highly entertaining, revelatory look into the raucous, strange, fascinatingly complex world of contemporary American food culture. At once an uproarious behind-the-scenes adventure and a serious attempt to understand the implications of an emergent new cuisine, it introduces a cast of compelling and unexpected characters—from Los Angeles Times critic Jonathan Gold, to a high-end Las Vegas purveyor of rare and exotic ingredients, to the traffickers and promoters of raw milk and other forbidden products, to the hottest chefs who rely on them—all of whom, along with today's diners, are changing the face of American eating. Ultimately, Goodyear looks at what we eat, and tells us who we are. As she places all of this within a vivid historical and cultural framework, she shows how these gathering culinary trends may eventually shape the way all Americans dine. What emerges is a picture of America at a moment of transition, designing the future as it reimagines the past.

adam gopnik the table comes first: Waiting for the Sunset Tom McCollough, 2012-05 This book is volume three of McCollough's memoir. Ever since joining a writers' group at the Saratoga Retirement Community in 2006 he has enjoyed writing these short pieces of memoir and commentary. But, this is the final book in the series. He will continue to write and comment, but not for publication.

adam gopnik the table comes first: Virgin Territory Nancy Harmon Jenkins, 2015-02-10 An illuminating look at olive oil with 100 recipes from the country's leading authority on the subject and author of *The Four Seasons of Pasta*. Olive oil is more popular than ever, thanks to its therapeutic and preventative effects in treating different diseases, as well as the growing variety of brands and imports available. Nancy Harmon Jenkins, arguably the leading authority on olive oil and the healthy Mediterranean diet, presents more than 100 dishes that showcase olive oil, ranging from soups to seafood to sauces to sweets. Along with favorites like tapenade and pesto, you'll find other exciting dishes like North African Seafood Tagine, Oven-Braised Artichokes with Potatoes and Onions, and Quince and Ginger Olive Oil Cake. But this book isn't just a collection of hearty and healthful recipes; Jenkins also covers the history and culture of olive oil as well as how to buy it and cook with it. A thing of beauty with the stunning photographs of exquisite dishes as well as Jenkin's own Tuscan olive tree grove, *Virgin Territory* captures the delights of making and cooking with olive oil. "Nancy Harmon Jenkins makes a compelling case that our most important cooking medium—olive

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