


LUNCH HOUR

NYC

The New York Public Library

Stephen A. Schwarzman Building

D. Samuel and Jeane H. Gottesman Exhibition Hall

June 22, 2012–February 17, 2013



*“Every thing is done differently in New York
from anywhere else — but in eating the
difference is more striking than in any other
branch of human economy.”*

— George Foster, *New York in Slices*, 1849

The clamor and chaos of lunch hour in New York has been a defining feature of the city for some 150 years. Visitors, newly arrived immigrants, and even longtime New Yorkers are struck by the crowds, the rush, and the dizzying range of foods on offer. Of the three meals that mark the American day, lunch is the one that acquired its modern identity here on the streets of New York.

Colonial American mealtimes were originally based on English rural life, with a main meal known as “dinner” in the middle of the day. The word “lunch” referred to a snack that might be eaten at any time of the day or night, even on the run. But during the 19th century, under the pressures of industrialization, this meal pattern began to change. Nowhere was the change more dramatic than in New York, the burgeoning center for trade, manufacturing, and finance. Employees were given a fixed time for their midday meal, often a half hour or less. So, dinner was pushed to the end of the day, and lunch settled into a scheduled place on the clock between the hours of twelve and two.

Lunch Hour NYC looks back at more than a century of New York lunches, when the city’s early power brokers invented what was yet to be called “power lunch,” local charities established a 3-cent school lunch, and visitors with guidebooks thronged Times Square to eat lunch at the Automat. Drawing on materials from throughout the Library, the exhibition explores the ways in which New York City—work-obsessed, time-obsessed, and in love with ingenious new ways to make money—reinvented lunch in its own image.



Hot Dog Stand, West St. and North Moore, Manhattan. Berenice Abbott. Gelatin silver print, 1936.

The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs. Digital ID 1219152.

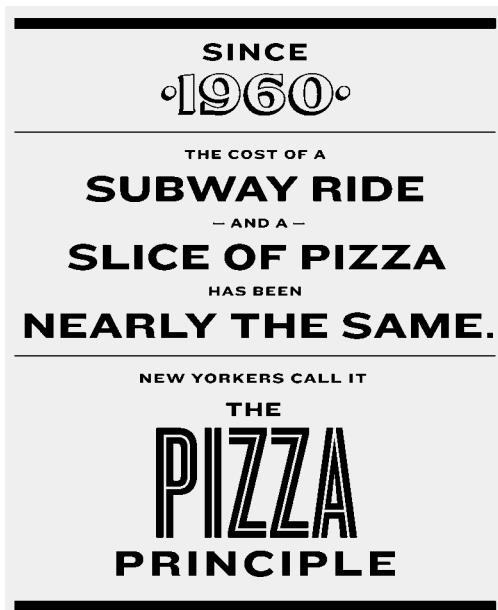
Exhibition Website

nypl.org/lunchhour

Hours and General Information

The exhibition is open Monday, Thursday–Saturday, 10 a.m.–6 p.m.; Tuesday–Wednesday, 10 a.m.–7:30 p.m., and Sunday (except in July and August), 1–5 p.m. Closed July 4; September 1–3; October 8; November 5, 11, 12, and 22; December 2, 24, 25, and 31; and January 1 and 21.

For more information on hours, current and upcoming exhibitions, programs, and services at The New York Public Library, call 917.ASK.NYPL (917.275.6975) or visit the Library's website at nypl.org.



Tours

Free public tours of the exhibition are available at 12:30 and 2:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and at 3:30 p.m. on Sunday.

Docent-led tours are an excellent way to see highlights of The New York Public Library's Stephen A. Schwarzman Building. Free one-hour tours are available at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and at 2 p.m. on Sunday. Tours begin at the reception desk in Astor Hall; walk-in visitors welcome.

Can't make it to a docent-led tour? Explore the building on your own with a self-guided tour, available in the Gottesman Hall and at the Information Desks. All group tours, including school groups, must be scheduled well in advance. Unauthorized tours are not permitted. To schedule a group tour, call 212.930.0650. Group-tour fees are \$7 per person (\$5 for seniors). To schedule a tour for K–12 students, call 212.576.0037; there is no charge for full-time students.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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*Rebecca Federman and Laura Shapiro,
co-curators*



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A Down-Town Lunch-Room in New York. T. de Thulstrup. Hand-colored wood engraving, 1888.

QUICK-LUNCH



At the turn of the last century, New York was a city focused on time, speed, and efficiency. Pocket watches became widespread, and punch clocks were introduced to make sure employees arrived and departed strictly on time. The most important part of the lunch break was not the food but how long it took to eat. "Haste seems to be a controlling factor in the luncheon of the worker," observed *Munsey's Magazine* in 1901. Such a world required a new phrase, "quick-lunch," which referred both to the high-speed midday meal and to the restaurants that specialized in it.

Geography, too, helped make New York the capital of quick-lunch. As the city's commercial center nestled into the lower half of Manhattan, middle-class merchants, traders, and financiers gradually moved into quieter neighborhoods farther north. No longer could they easily get home for a meal at noon. Quick-lunch made it possible for them to bolt through a plate of food and get right back to making money.

Detail of a Childs' Lunch Rooms menu. New York, January 9, 1900.
Rare Book Division.

"Lunch" entry in A Dictionary of the English Language.
Samuel Johnson. London: J. and P. Knapton; J. and T. Longman, 1755.
Rare Book Division. Digital ID 4001633.

for the reception of idiots and lunatics. *swif.*
LUNA'TION, *n. f.* [lunaïson, French; luna, Latin.] The revolution of the moon.
If the lunations be observed for a cycle of nineteen years, which is the cycle of the moon, the same observations will be verified for succeeding cycles for ever. *Helder on Time.*
LUNCH. { *n. f.* [Minshaw derives it from lazo, Spanish; Skinner from kleinten, a small piece, Teutonick. It probably comes from clutch or clouch.] As much food as one's hand can hold.
When hungry thou stood'st staring, like an oaf,
I flie'd the luncheon from the barley loaf;
With crumbled bread I thicken'd well the mets. *Gay.*
LUNE. *n. f.* [luna, Latin.]
1. Any thing in the shape of an half moon.
2. Fits of lunacy or frenzy, mad freaks. The French say of



Lunch venue with a deli counter. Gelatin silver print, 1942.

Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Photographs and Prints Division. Digital ID 4001744.



Image from "New York Cooking School" by
F. E. Fryatt. *Harper's New Monthly*, 1879.
Rare Book Division. Digital ID 4006911.

THE AUTOMAT



An Automat coffee spout.

The Automat was one of the wonders of New York. When Joe Horn and Frank Hardart opened their magnificent flagship on July 2, 1912—a two-story facade of stained glass, marble floors, and ornate carved ceilings, right in the middle of Times Square—the city was instantly captivated. Hungry? Drop a nickel in a slot, open the door to your chosen compartment, and pull your dish right out—a modern miracle! By the 1940s there were Automat restaurants all over the city. Children and tourists adored them, office workers depended on them, retirees gathered in them, and New Yorkers with nothing to spend on lunch stirred free ketchup into hot water and called it soup.

Despite their charm, the famous machines were not solely responsible for the Automat's popularity. Beginning in 1919 every Automat restaurant included a cafeteria; in fact, many of Horn & Hardart's restaurants were only cafeterias, with no machines at all. What made H&H the most successful restaurant operation in the country was a commitment to excellent food, low prices, and handsome surroundings.

But the all-day crowds that swarmed the Automat began to disappear in the 1950s as city dwellers moved to the suburbs and many office buildings opened their own cafeterias. At the same time, food and labor costs soared. H&H was forced to raise prices, quality declined, and the once-resplendent restaurants grew seedy. The last of them shut down in 1991, but nobody who dropped a nickel in the slot ever forgot the Automat, and the name still resonates as a beloved fixture of New York culture.

1900-26

Cafeteria Lunch.

57 Broad Street.

Not responsible for Hats, Coats or Umbrellas Left or Exchanged.

IF PLEASE REPORT ANY LACK OF ATTENTION.

Oysters and Clams.

Oyster Points, by shell	15
Oyster Stew to order	20
" " Fry	25
" " Broiled on Toast	35
" " Pattie	15

Little Neck Clams, by shell	15
" " Stew	25
" " Fry	35

Soups.

Clam Chowder (Friday only) 10

Consomme 10

Fish.

Cod Fish Balls, Cream Sauce 10

Entrees.

Corn or Apple Fritters 10

Chicken Pattie 15

Steaks, Chops and Ham.

Small Steak, French Fried Potatoes 20

Steak, French Fried Potatoes 25

Mutton Chops 25

Broiled Sugar Cured Ham 25

" " 1 Fried Egg 25

Meats.

Prime Rib Roast 30

Hot Roast Beef Sandwich 10

Cold Corned Beef 15

Canned Beef Hash 10

Sausage and Hash, Sausage in pan 10

Poached Eggs, Extra 2

Boston Baked Beans 10

with Ham or Corned Beef 15

Pork and Beans 10

Ham or Corned Beef & Beans 10

Vegetables.

Celery 10

Green Peas 10

Stewed Tomatoes 10

Stewed Cucumbers 5

Desserts.

Baked Apple Dumpling 10

Cabinet Pudding, Wine Sauce 3

Rice Pudding 3

Cornstarch and Cream 10

Chocolate Eclair 3

Charlotte Russe 3

Apple Strudel 4

Stewed Prunes 4

Pies in Banquet 4

Eggs.

2 Boiled Eggs 15

2 Fried or Poached 15

2 Poached on Toast 20

Omelette, Plain 20

" " Ham or Parsley 25

Cakes, Toast, etc.

Blackbeet, Rice or Wheat 10

with Vermont Maple Syrup 10

Butter Toast 10

Milk Toast 10

Out Meal or Rice and Milk 10

Shredded Wheat and Milk 10

Graham Wafers and Milk 10

Milk Crackers and Milk 10

Toasted English Muffins 10

English Crumpet Poached Egg 10

Sandwiches.

Ham, Corned Beef, Cheese 5

Ham, Corned Beef, Sun-dried Tomatoes 10

Teas and Coffees.

Cup of Coffee 4

Tea in Order, Oolong and Greenpride in pots 5

English Breakfast 2

Cocoa per cup 2

Panc Milk, per glass 1

1/2 Cream 10

Pure Cream 12

1900-113

Cafeteria
57 Broad Street
Under New Management.

Special dishes for today.

Saturday, January 6, 1900

Please will order a lunch for the management
by sending your bill directly to the Cafeteria.

Spots.

Ham Club 10

Special Supp 15

Luncheon 10

Salads.

Salad Club 15

Salad Club 15

Dishes.

Butter Fish 10

Lobster Fish 20

Lobster Club 20

Lobster Club 25

Lobster Club 30

Lobster Club 35

Lobster Club 40

Lobster Club 45

Lobster Club 50

Lobster Club 55

Lobster Club 60

Lobster Club 65

Lobster Club 70

Lobster Club 75

Lobster Club 80

Lobster Club 85

Lobster Club 90

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Lobster Club 1060

Lobster Club 1065

Lobster Club 1070

Lobster Club 1075

Lobster Club 1080

Lobster Club 1085

Lobster Club 1090

Lobster Club 1095

Lobster Club 1100

Lobster Club 1105

Lobster Club 1110

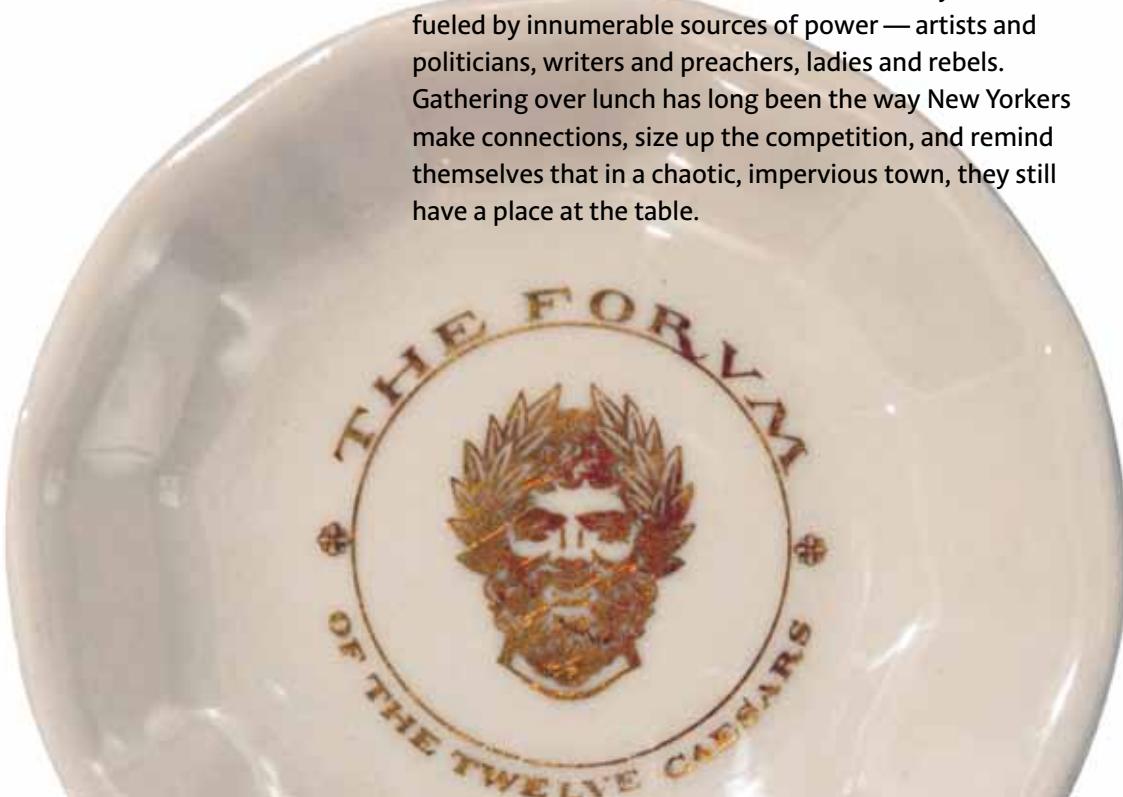
Lobster Club 1115

Lobster Club 1120

POWER LUNCH

The term “power lunch” first appeared in *Esquire* in 1979, in a story about the Grill Room at the Four Seasons restaurant in New York. But the event itself had been thriving ever since lunch became the meal tied most closely to the ticking clock of the workday. In a city defined by speed, time was a luxury, and businessmen whose status freed them from the confines of the strictly enforced lunch hour established a ritual of midday dining with their colleagues.

The template for power lunch was set in the 1830s by Delmonico’s, where sophisticated cooking, ostentatious decor, and a prime location in the business district proved an immortal combination; hundreds of imitators sprang up over the years. The concept of power lunch, however, was never defined solely by the men in expensive suits who made it famous. New York has always been fueled by innumerable sources of power — artists and politicians, writers and preachers, ladies and rebels. Gathering over lunch has long been the way New Yorkers make connections, size up the competition, and remind themselves that in a chaotic, impervious town, they still have a place at the table.



Dish from the Forum of the
Twelve Caesars. New York,
ca. 1960s.

LUNCH AT HOME



Advertisement for Jell-O.
Pictorial Review, 1926.
General Research Division.
Digital ID 4001690.

In 1942 the New York newspaper *PM* asked two families, the Dalys of the Bronx and the Ledermans of Brooklyn, to shop and eat for one week according to economical menus designed by the paper's food editor. ("Purpose: To demonstrate our guiding principle that food can be attractive, good and good for you on any income.")

The medium-cost dinners included steak and halibut, while the low-cost dinners featured liver and codfish cakes. Their lunches, however, had no such clearly defined identities. One family had vegetable soup, the other tomato; one ate lettuce sandwiches, the other peanut butter. On most days it would have been impossible to guess the budget difference between these families based on what they were assigned for lunch.

Like most newspapers at the time, *PM* promoted mainstream eating habits, and its menus rarely took into account social or cultural differences. But in the case of lunch, the newspaper may have been right on target. Lunch at home exists in a culinary world of its own. Even families that make a point of maintaining ethnic traditions at dinner often combine new ways with old at lunchtime. Convenience tends to be mandatory, but nearly everything else about it is negotiable. By the 1940s *PM*'s version of lunch—canned soup, a sandwich made from anything at hand—was turning up in households across the city that had little else in common.

CHARITABLE MEALS



Boys eating at P.S. 40.

Jessie Tarbox Beals.

Gelatin silver print, 1919.

Manuscripts and Archives Division.

Digital ID psnypl_mss_1024.

“Philanthropists may urge what reforms they will,— less crowding, purer air better sanitary regulations: but this question of food underlies all.”

— Helen Campbell, *Darkness and Daylight, or, Lights and Shadows of New York Life*, 1892

During the last decades of the 19th century, as the city's crowded tenement neighborhoods became increasingly notorious, philanthropists and reformers began to practice charity in a new way. Rather than simply handing out food or cash, they spent time with the poor themselves, trying to learn more about their social and economic conditions so that they could offer meaningful help, including education and job training. Jacob Riis, the muckraking police reporter at the *New-York Tribune* who specialized in exposés of slum life, was an influential figure among these reformers. He and others believed that teaching the poor to cook and eat healthfully was an important key to progress.

This new thinking about charity gave rise to New York's school lunch program, which began in 1908. It was clear to progressive reformers that many schoolchildren in the city's poor neighborhoods were undernourished and therefore too tired and listless to learn. The New York School Lunch Committee, an independent charity headed by the activist Mabel Kittredge, introduced the city's first school lunch at P.S. 51, an elementary school on West 44th Street with a high population of German and Irish students. Lunch included thick slices of bread, a warm soup or other entrée, and for dessert a sweet potato, sweet crackers, or cake. In the course of the next half century, school lunch became a federal program and one of the nation's most important initiatives in child nutrition.



Placard advertising apple selling by the Depression-era unemployed. 1930.

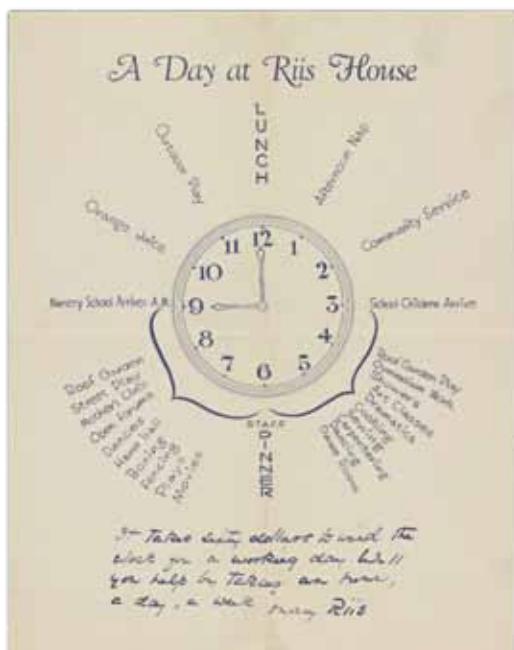
Rare Book Division. Digital ID 4006912.

SUGGESTED READING

Titles marked with an asterisk (*) are for sale in the Library Shop.

Adults

- *Coe, Andrew. *Chop Suey: A Cultural History of Chinese Food in the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- *Grimes, William. *Appetite City: A Culinary History of New York*. New York: North Point Press, 2009.
- *Hauck-Lawson, Annie, and Jonathan Deutsch, eds. *Gastropolis: Food and New York City*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.
- *Meehan, Peter and David Chang, eds. *Lucky Peach* food magazine. San Francisco: McSweeney's, 2011–.



A Day at Riis House. Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement House. New York, ca. 1910s.

Manuscripts and Archives Division. Digital ID 4001702.

*Sax, David. *Save the Deli: In Search of Perfect Pastrami, Crusty Rye, and the Heart of Jewish Delicatessen*. Boston: Mariner Books, 2010.

*Shapiro, Laura. *Perfection Salad: Women and Cooking at the Turn of the Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.

*Zagat New York City Restaurants 2012. New York: Zagat Survey, 2011.

*Ziegelman, Jane. *97 Orchard Street: An Edible History of Five Immigrant Families in One New York Tenement*. New York: Smithsonian Books/HarperCollins, 2010.

Ages 3–6

- *Fleming, Denise. *Lunch*. New York: Henry Holt, 1992.
- *Wells, Rosemary. *Yoko*. New York: DisneyHyperion, 2009.

Ages 7–12

- Kent, Rose. *Kimchi and Calamari*. New York: HarperCollins, 2007.

*Krosoczka, Jarrett. *Lunch Lady and the Cyborg Substitute*. New York: Knopf, 2009.

Young Adults

*Pollan, Michael and Richie Chevat. *The Omnivore's Dilemma: The Secrets Behind What You Eat* (Young Readers Edition). New York: Dial Books, 2009.

Schlosser, Eric. *Chew on This: Everything You Don't Want to Know about Fast Food*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

For a complete list of programs accompanying the exhibition, including information on dates, times, and locations, please visit nypl.org/lunchhour.

Author @ the Library

To complement the exhibition *Lunch Hour NYC*, the Mid-Manhattan Library hosts a series of programs about food, cooking, and other culinary pleasures with some of today's most popular food writers, bloggers, and chefs.

Fast Food and Junk Food: An Encyclopedia of What We Love to Eat, Andrew F. Smith

My Korean Deli: Risking It All for a Convenience Store, Ben Ryder Howe

Vegetables, Revised: The Most Authoritative Guide to Buying, Preparing, and Cooking, James Peterson

Mushroom, Nicholas P. Money

The Life and Times of the Knish, Laura Silver

In My Kitchen: 100 Recipes and Discoveries for Passionate Cooks, Ted Allen

Baked Explorations: Classic American Desserts Reinvented, Matt Lewis and Renato Poliafito

Daisy: Morning, Noon, and Night: Bringing Your Family Together with Everyday Latin Dishes, Daisy Martinez

Film Series: Eating Out in New York

This series presents six eclectic films in which New York City's vibrant food culture plays a starring role alongside the likes of Cher, Audrey Hepburn, Dustin Hoffman, and Katie Holmes: *Big Night, Breakfast at Tiffany's, The Cookout, Kramer vs. Kramer, Moonstruck*, and *Pieces of April*.

Selected Teen Programs

Get Green

Avoid the plastic bag — bring your own! Make a reusable tote bag and use it to haul home groceries. Paint, stitch, and bedazzle to your heart's content, and enjoy going green in style.

From Garden to Plate

Interested in eating locally and organically? Join teen chefs as they craft tasting experiences based on the produce from the Seward Park Library garden. Learn about kitchen chemistry through basic cooking techniques, and be sure to browse the amazing NYPL menu collection to whet your appetite for future dishes.

Selected Children's Programs

Go, Slow, and Whoa Stoplight

Through a demonstration and a hands-on project, children learn about which foods are great to eat every day, which foods should be eaten less often, and which ones aren't a good choice at all: "Go" foods, "Slow" foods, and "Whoa" foods. Presented by the Children's Museum of Manhattan. For ages 5 and older.

The Things That We Eat:

Tales to Celebrate the Treasures of Food

Storyteller LuAnn Adams shares such tales as "Green Eggs and Ham," "The Carrot," and "Why the Sky Is Far Away." For ages 4 and older.

Educator Programs

Bring your class for an exhibition exploration! To arrange a camp, school, college, or teacher group visit, please go to teachandlearn.nypl.org to make a reservation.

Educator Open House

Educators are invited to an open house in conjunction with *Lunch Hour NYC*. Explore the new exhibition, discover NYPL's digital resources, and find out how they can support your classroom teaching. Reservations required. Please e-mail teachandlearn@nypl.org.

Teaching & Learning Programs at NYPL are made possible by a generous grant from The Carroll and Milton Petrie Foundation.



Automat, 977 Eighth Avenue, Manhattan. Berenice Abbott. Gelatin silver print, 1936.

The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs. Digital ID 482752.

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