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of her chapters. Perhaps this is a 'trope' too far, (a word which occurs often, unsurprisingly, throughout the book), but, she says, as with the egg, to read the literature of food in general 'opens up for us a profound sense of its many and various purposes, its disturbing plenitude. It is hard to stop reading and writing about food'.

Di Murrell

David Castro Hussong and Jay Porter: *The Baja California Cookbook. Exploring the Good Life in Mexico*: Ten Speed Press, 2020: 272 pp., hardback, £22.50.
Upon opening *The Baja California Cookbook* we are immediately offered up a satisfying palette of reds, ochres and sharp greens that tells us a great deal about the tastes held in store. Chef David Castro Hussong proceeds to take us on a tour through his homeland from the vantage point of his award-winning restaurant Fauna where simplicity is key. In these sumptuous recipes that range all the way from the earthiness of the ranch (Grilled Rabbit with pasilla chile marinade) to the free and easy perfection of steaming over beach-fires (Mussels 'Playitas' with chorizo) we are introduced to the bare beauty of Baja cuisine. Despite the emphasis on creating dishes that are easy to execute in the kitchen Hussong points out early on that a mainstay of the Mexican diet, the flour tortilla can 'take some time and practice for the uninitiated to master.' Clearly there is much to learn here. This being said Hussong concedes that attempts to replicate Mexican food outside of the region might not produce results that are precisely authentic but 'it will taste good. And that's most important after all.' Presented in four unfussy sections each with fantastic photographs of the region *The Baja California Cookbook* brings an unpretentious warmth to any kitchen.

Matt Lord

Troy Bickham, *Eating the Empire. Food and Society in Eighteenth-century Britain*. Reaktion Books, 2020; 285 pp., hardback, 89 illustrations, £20.00.
[I wrote this review for the Asian Affairs Journal *but thought it useful not to let it languish there.]*
Professor Bickham presents here an account of the four major 'ingestibles' (only one of them a food) – tobacco, tea, coffee and sugar – that were the economic foundations of the trade underpinning the first British empire in the long eighteenth century. It is remarkable to see how they can be portrayed as underpinning the public social intercourse of their consumers in the same period. There were other new(ish) ingestibles at the time – chocolate, port wine, potatoes, tomatoes, opium – but perhaps none of these counted quite so much as imperial entities, nor had the social penetration of Professor Bickham's quartet which he uses 'to better understand Britons' relationships with the empire and its influence on their lives.'