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A small book that, like its subject matter, is an easily digestible package full of tasty tidbits. Finally, Anastasia Edwards lists a great biscuit bucket-list in the appendix. I do recall absolutely loving Jammie Dodgers as a child although now can only think of them as some rival gang ready to shape up to the Peaky Blinders.

Tomato: A Global History by Clarissa Hyman is another enjoyable excursion with us tripping our way through the tomato story. It's my favourite fruit, so I thought, 'lucky Clarissa to get to do this one'. Yet, I wondered, just where do you start with something as ubiquitous as the tomato? Sensibly she starts at the beginning, traces it from source in the Andes, tracking its development through to modern times. On arrival in the Old World its lack of popularity initially was due to native conservatism. Nevertheless in spite of making little impression upon Europe until the late eighteenth century, the facts are that tomatoes were prolific, easy to grow and therefore easily incorporated into the diets of the poor. In time, interest in the tomato steadily grew and the tomato began to be cultivated in the gardens of the rich.

Clarissa charts its transmutation from small and sour berry into the 'love apple', that thing of beauty, lushness, heady sweetness and perfume that we know today. She tracks it across continents and back again. Italian immigrants returned it to the Americas in drastically altered form and cultivation began on a commercial scale. Today it flaunts itself in an ever-increasing variety of colours, shapes, and guises. Sadly, its very fecundity also made it ripe for 'industrialization', all too often turning it into a genetically manipulated, tasteless, hydroponically derived abomination – 'the garnish' that squats on the edge of every plate of food served up by lazy chefs. Happily, in recent times there has been a move to bring back flavour; to grow the old breeds in the ground and ripen the fruit in the sunshine. We are encouraged to eat them seasonally. Coequally the growing of tomatoes is seriously big business and the book finishes with the news that we are now awaiting the first harvesting of tomatoes to be grown in space.

Personally I am content to settle for the ones I grow in my garden and using them in the intriguing recipes to be found in the final pages. What a story, truly from rags to riches, and one which Clarissa Hyman tells so well.

Di Murrell

Madeleine Neave: *Vintage Breadboards: Makers, Designs, and Recipes*: Prospect Books, 2019: 270 pp., paperback, £16.00.

The Antique Breadboard Museum in Putney on the south side of the River Thames is unique: a small Putney terraced house; the front room packed with breadboards and breadknives (I should stress the knives, they're quite as interesting as the boards); a curator who takes the awestruck visitor carefully through the collection – which was made by her late mother, Rosslyn Neave,

who was by way of an antique dealer, a caner and restorer of chairs, with a stall on Portobello, and a fervent collector of breadboards. At the end of the visit, a generous cream tea is provided. True obsessives may wish to take the Airbnb room that is also available. This book, which celebrates the mother, the museum and the artefacts themselves with loads of colour photographs, facts, anecdotes and recipes, is pretty unique too. Breadboards can be an avenue to a greater understanding of the industrial revolution, of the way that mechanized arts and crafts have a dignity too easily denied them (by the likes of Wm Morris), of the impact of the repeal of the Corn Laws, and of the ingenuity and connoiseurship of dealers and collectors in later years. There are things, and artists and companies, in this book that you will never have imagined existed. The whole thing is quite surprising. It is one of those books that you pick up and say, 'What can there possibly be to tell about breadboards?' At the end, you say, 'I want to know more, please.' The only problem is that you can never cut bread on them again because you'll score them to perdition.

María José Sevilla: *Delicioso. A History of Food in Spain*: Reaktion Books, 2019: 344 pp., hardback, £25.00.

Choosing the order in which review-books get read is a bit like choosing which food on one's plate to eat first. Most people seem to prefer to eat the stuff they like least first, saving the best for last. Faced with a pile books to review, my response is not dissimilar – I select those which have the least appeal to review first. These tend to be the more scholarly offerings that focus on contemporary social processes, research on the effects of nationalism or globalization, analysis of different food cultures and the like. I'm entirely conscious of my lack of academic credentials when faced with a well-researched and erudite study, that seeks to fill some gap in our food knowledge, written to serve as a future text for students in the field. Yet it is sent for review in hopes, perhaps, of tapping into a wider lay audience. I tell myself that I am therefore reviewing it with that potential non-expert reader in mind and get stuck in. Often, as it happens, those books viewed with most trepidation will turn out to be rivetingly interesting. So much so that I happily bombard my nearest with pithy items, newly come-by, relating to the eating habits of middle America or the symbolic nature of Bulgarian yogurt – at least until the next review comes along.

Which brings me nicely to María José Sevilla's *Delicioso*. This was to be my treat after the hard slog. After the heavier items in my pile I was ready to relax and enjoy a spot of unalloyed hedonism. I kept eyeing it. I loved the look of it: the cover of vegetable wallpaper; its weight; the density of the print. I took in the title noting that it did not call itself, *A History of the Food of Spain* but rather, *A History of Food in Spain*. A signal surely that this was not to be a plodding excursion, century by century, of collected texts but something a