

on such arrogant tastes, and it could not be too high if it went towards those whose long hours of tough work barely provide enough to live on.'

As the publisher says, this is an exceptional work that will delight both historians and food scholars.

BARBARA SANTICH

Regula Ysewijn: *Pride and Pudding: the history of British puddings*: Murdoch Books, 2016: 368 pp., hardback, £20.00.

I've often thought that the history of puddings would be a cracking subject for a book, and I know other people do too, so the main question in my mind is how come it's taken a Flemish girl, native of Antwerp, and a publisher essentially based in Australia to take the subject seriously? This must, in part, be due to the combined talents of the author and her husband. This is not only a history of British puddings: it's a fully-functioning recipe book with what amounts to a potted history of British food at the start, a discussion of historic cookery books, many snippets of social history, and gorgeous photographs by the author. There are also some 'wicked' (her adjective, not mine) illustrations by her husband, Bruno Vergauwen, who I suspect found himself eating enormous amounts of pudding of various descriptions during the two years this tome was in the writing. It's definitely a tome – it weighs in at just shy of one and a half kilos, and not much of that space is without print or picture.

Added to this, they also did the book design. To my mind this is perhaps the least successful thing about the book, and not just because it is essentially red and white – do they not know that the Scottish Saltire is blue and white? This is a book with 'British' in the subtitle after all. It is, perhaps, the paper – this is heavy and good quality, and very, very white, perhaps best for the photographs, but I don't find it easy on the eye. Relatively small typeface is used in places, which had me peering at the page sometimes. But this is a minor point, especially when set against the richness of the contents, and the recipes and their page numbers are usefully detailed on the contents page.

These are divided into five main chapters, with an additional chapter of useful recipes for sauces, pastry and biscuits which appear as ingredients elsewhere. The main chapters include Boiled and steamed puddings; Baked puddings; Batter puddings; Bread puddings; and Jellies, milk puddings and ices. This moves the discussion through a logical progression from some of the earliest recorded puddings to the more frivolous and dessert-like items. The recipes are detailed and occasionally include photographs of different stages of, for instance, making sausage-type puddings, where the protagonists are either concentrating hard or not altogether enjoying the process. Regula is not afraid to call a gut a gut and her recipes for some of these early and (nowadays) less familiar puddings are among the most interesting in the book. But there are many other goodies to choose from, including delicious sounding castle

puddings, General Satisfaction, which to this reader seems vaguely reminiscent of a cooked trifle in its ingredients and architecture (have a look on page 176), and Kentish cherry batter puddings. There are also some great snippets of unlikely trivia. Who else has noticed that Pelegrino Artusi described toad-in-the-hole?

One could, perhaps, argue that it's easy to uncover such details through internet searches and there is a danger of getting itchy-bitsy in what is a really very serious book, but Google is here to stay, and it's how it is used that matters. The author seems to have done her reading and homework, including, by several mentions in the text, and the subjects of some of the photographs, at least one of Ivan Day's historic food courses. The photographs generally, as one would expect from someone who is described by the publisher as a professional photographer, are lovely, and although I suspect they have not been treated to the subterfuges of the food stylist, they have a cohesion through the book and a use of props which makes them harmonious.

Given the weight, this book is not bedtime reading, which is a shame because there is much to enjoy. Regula is Flemish, so presumably not a native English speaker, but her prose canters along in a pleasant and refreshingly colloquial manner. Full marks for squeezing so much in: it may be a big book but then this is a big subject.

LAURA MASON

Gary Allen: *Sausage: A Global History*: The Edible Series: Reaktion Books, 2015: 160 pp., hardback, £10.99.

This is a most engaging volume, written with enthusiasm by a writer who knows his way around the kitchen. It comes highly recommended, and is part of the publisher's 'edible series', which I applaud. More risky is the 'global history' subtitle. Is that possible in a text that covers 142 pages before references, bibliography and index? The author's approach is stronger on the lexicographical approach – the myriad names for sausage across the world – than the conceptual. The problem is highlighted by a quotation put on the back cover, 'the Chinese have made sausages since around 600 BC', taken from p. 75. What the author appears to mean is that they are recorded in texts by then, which is interesting. Presumably before that they didn't just throw away all the guts of the animal. As the author acknowledges in places, eating sausages or equivalent goes back to the earliest times, and a greater anthropological grasp is needed. 'A hunter realised' (9) does not rise to the occasion, belonging to the ancient Greek notion of the *protos heuretes* or 'first discoverer'. Similarly, in a curious passage, we are told something about immigrants into North America: many came from Europe and other continents, but so did the Native Americans, who came from Asia, he tells us (62). Why are we reminded of that, but not of the Magyars, also mentioned, not travelling from Central Asia,