

*to Eat?* demonstrates a return to form. Each question has been researched from a variety of angles such as considering different ways to reduce our carbon footprint beyond recycling food packaging (for example, by eating less meat and fewer dairy products). The information is delivered in an insightful, easy-going manner with a smattering of personal anecdotes on her own experiences of trying to become a more conscientious food consumer. At the end of each chapter there are three suggestions on how we can become more ethically, nutritionally and sustainably food aware with increasing levels of commitment. In the chapter on the green kitchen these include *easy* ideas which can be put into practice on any high street (cooking seasonally). The next level of commitment is *worth the effort* such as preserving seasonal gluts of fruit or vegetables. The culmination are *hopes and dreams* of how today's problems could be solved in an ideal world (environmentalism will one day be appreciated for its creativity rather than its denial). She has used a variety of sources for her research including interviews with suppliers and campaigners. Although a selected bibliography is supplied an appendix of the organizations that helped Ellis scrutinize the answers to these questions would not have gone amiss.

SAM BILTON

Laura Gosalbo & Henri-Pierre Millescamps: *Celebrity Chefs. Food Entertainment History: Gastronomía Activa*, 2009, 455 pp., hardback, €50.

This is so far a privately published volume, but the authors hope that a commercial house will take them up. The subject is a good one; the photographs are aplenty; there are useful tables and facts and figures; and the coverage is estimably international. So bravo for effort and one hopes they are adopted, when some unevennesses might be ironed out without effort.

Faramerz Dabhoiwala: *The Origins of Sex. A History of the First Sexual Revolution*: Allen Lane, 2012, 484 pp., hardback, £25.00.

This is an excellent book covering the transition from a society that imprisoned or executed adulterers to one that discussed them; from one which frowned upon harlots to one that embraced them however ambivalently; from one that had little concept of private to one where it was accepted. The transition, you might say, from medieval to modern,

taking place over the long eighteenth century. He has read widely; he writes well; the subject is a gripper. Not a lot to do with food, I admit, but read it none the less. I would have liked greater attention to the French and a closer look at the parallels between England and the rest of Europe. A handsome book too.

Claudia Roden: *The Food Of Spain*: Michael Joseph (Penguin), 2012, 512pp., hardback: £25.00

Shortly after chef Pepe Rodríguez Rey, who cooks near Toledo, won Spain's 2011 National Gastronomy Prize, he commented that, for him, 'el toque en la cocina se aprende en casa.' In other words, the touch – or essence – of good cooking is learned at home. Straightforward as it sounds, in a country where the limelight now falls almost entirely on restaurant cooking – even homely dishes are generally 'perfected' by chefs for the media – one is grateful to hear the idea.

One is appreciative, then, that Claudia Roden dedicated five years of research to teasing out what Pepe's comment means on the ground. In her large and beautiful new book, *The Food of Spain*, she explores edible Spain across time and place, celebrating its diversity, human and geographic, as a source of creativity. This central theme is an important one. As historian Raymond Carr jokingly put it, Spain is a country with as many *chorizos* as virgins.

Roden herself uses humour to approach another key theme, the extent to which Spanish cooking today is a construct of reality. Reinvention of tradition has played a part in that, often creatively, but modern branding operations have been less positive in tilting our understanding of influences, regions, dishes and produce. Roden deals with this by passing on all kinds of people's thoughts and differences of opinion, often, one guesses, with a smile, sometimes, perhaps with a wince.

In her choice of just over 200 recipes she picks many dishes new to readers abroad. What a lovely surprise to find *faríñes*, the northern corn gruel served up in its modern meaty form; *arnadí*, Valencia's sweet potato or pumpkin pudding; *sopeao*, southern tomato sops. Humble in origin, these dishes resist the idea of perfection. Every hand may bring something special to them.

Other delicious things come from affluent home cooking: roast chicken with apples and grapes, fish in saffroned béchamel, a chocolate and chestnut custard. Here the book leans away from the frugal central