



Hamburger: A Global History (Edible)

Andrew F. Smith

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McDonald's founder Ray Kroc once said, "It requires a certain kind of mind to see beauty in a hamburger bun." The hamburger has been a staple of American culture for the last century, both a source of gluttonous joy and a recurrent obstacle to healthy eating. Now the full beauty of the burger in all its forms is explored in *Hamburger*, a debut title in Reaktion Books' new Edible series.

Andrew F. Smith traces the trajectory of hamburger history, from its humble beginnings as a nineteenth-century street food sold by American vendors, from which it soon spread to the menus of diners and restaurants. The sandwich came into its own with the 1921 opening of the first hamburger chain, White Castle, and subsequent successful food chains such as McDonald's and Wendy's ensured the burger's success in the United States and around the world. The hamburger irrevocably changed American life, Smith argues, as the sandwich propelled the rise of fast food over home-cooked meals in Americans' eating habits. At the same time, burgers were making inroads in American culture, as well as becoming a rich symbol in paintings, television, and movies. Smith also discusses the darker nutritional, economic, and cultural conflicts raised by the hamburger, such as the "McDonaldization" of international cultures.

A juicy and richly illustrated read, *Hamburger* will stimulate the taste buds of carnivores the world over.

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