



My Last Supper: 50 Great Chefs and Their Final Meals / Portraits, Interviews, and Recipes

Melanie Dunea

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A gorgeous photo collection where world-rekknowned chefs describe their ideal last meal, featuring Ferran Adrià, José Andrés, Lidia Bastianich, Daniel Boulud, Anthony Bourdain, Scott Conant, Gabrielle Hamilton, Eric Ripert and many more. Includes recipes.

Chefs have been playing the "My Last Supper" game among themselves for decades, if not centuries, but it had always been kept within the profession-until now. Melanie Dunea came up with the ingenious idea to ask fifty of the world's famous chefs to let her in on this insider's game and tell her what their final meals would be. *My Last Supper* showcases their fascinating answers alongside stunning *Vanity Fair*-style portraits. Their responses are surprising, refreshing, and as distinct from each other as the chefs themselves. The portraits-gorgeous, intimate, and playful-are informed by their answers and reveal the passions and personalities of the most respected names in the business. Lastly, one recipe from each landmark meal is included in the back of the book.

With *My Last Supper*, Dunea found a way into the typically harried, hidden minds of the people who have turned preparing food into an art. Who wouldn't want to know where Alain Ducasse would like his last supper to be? And who would prepare Daniel Boulud's final meal? What would Anthony Bourdain's guest list look like? As the clock ticked, what album would Gordon Ramsay be listening to? And just what would Mario Batali eat for the last time?

Featuring: Ferran Adrià, José Andrés, Dan Barber, Lidia Bastianich, Mario Batali, Rick Bayless, Michelle Bernstein, Daniel Boulud, Anthony Bourdain, Scott Conant, Gary Danko, Hélène Darroze, Alain Ducasse, Wylie Dufresne, Suzanne Goin, Gabrielle Hamilton, Fergus Henderson, Thomas Keller, Giorgio Locatelli, Masa Kobayashi, Nobu, Jamie Oliver, Jacques Pépin, Gordon Ramsay, Michel Richard, Eric Ripert, Marcus Samuelsson, Charlie Trotter, Jean-Georges Vongerichten, and more...

My Last Supper: 50 Great Chefs and Their Final Meals / Portraits, Interviews, and Recipes Details

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Heather says

Ok, I didn't actually "read" this book. I simply leafed through it. There isn't much substance to the book. There is a simple questionnaire for each of the 50 chefs included in the book in which they tell their what their last meal would be, with whom they would share it, what music would be playing, etc. At the end of the book they have one recipe from each chef.

The best part of the book (the part I cared about) are the photographs of the chefs. The chefs obviously designed their own photo shoots. Mario Batalli is dressed in chef whites with a giant rutabaga on his head. Gordon Ramsay has a close-up black and white photo of his face from the side. The best of all is Anthony Bourdain. His picture really captures his personality. He is photographed in front of a brick wall with a cigarette in one hand and a large meat bone in the other hand in front of his "nasty bits". Mmmmm.

Beth Ann says

I bought this book because the idea of a last meal intrigued me. I loved reading what each chef would have for their last meal and the setting that they would select. This is a beautifully illustrated book with photographs artistically staged by Melanie Dunea and I loved having this book on my coffee table for people to pick up to browse. It really got me thinking about food and what my favorite last meal would be. While I would not pay full price for a book like this it definitely held my attention and I enjoyed every single page as well as the recipes at the end.

Rachel C. says

Answers ranged from short and sweet (and mouth-watering!) to long-winded and ridiculous. I was surprised by how many chefs would choose to cook their own last meal. I was not surprised that Anthony Bourdain is a much-desired dinner guest. (Note: There's an absolutely priceless portrait of Bourdain - the book is worth a flip-through for that alone.)

Recipes in the back are either absurdly simple (scrambled eggs; toast with shaved truffles) or too hard to attempt. They seem mostly there for atmosphere than for actual cooking instruction.

Steven Peterson says

What an interesting thesis! What would be the last supper of a series of fine chefs! Melanie Dunea, the author, notes (page 7): "Chefs have been playing the 'My Last Supper' game, in one version or another, since humans first gathered round the flames to cook. . . . "If you were to die tomorrow, what single dish, what one mouthful of food, would you choose as your last?"

And then, we see the answer to that existential question by 50 chefs.

Anthony Bourdain says that his final dish would be: "Roast bone marrow with parsley and caper salad, with a few toasted slices of baguette and some good sea salt." So far, so good. We see his recipe for the marrow at the end of the book, and it's a bit different!

What about Mario Batali? He'd like his last meal on the Amalfi Coast, with his family and friends such as Emeril Lagasse. The meal itself? Eight to ten courses! Beginning with marinated anchovies, to a Neapolitan version of a grilled cheese sandwich, to . . . And on it goes. He gives us a recipe for one item, Shrimp in Crazy Water--but not the rest. Would have been fun to get the whole picture.

Then, Alain Ducasse. He would begin with a coponata (a Sicilian specialty), then roasted quail in Madiran wine sauce, then smooth celeriac puree with nutmeg, and a finish with apple slices. Again, boy, I'd like to see all of the recipes, although his Melt-in-Your-Mouth Apple Slices, which is included in the volume, looks pretty good.

And on it goes. It's kind of fun to see what these fine chefs would have as their last meal, whom they would like to dine with, whom they would like to cook the meal, where they would like the meal to take place. I find this work enchanting. But, again, I'd sure like to see all of the recipes for those final meals, rather than the small selection. Without that, this seems just a bit incomplete. Still and all, this is a neat volume.

Katura says

So the premise of this book is to ask 50 amazing chefs what they would eat for their final meal on earth. Each chef gets a chance to answer the question with a complete story and a beautiful picture of the scene of their final meal. The pictures are absolutely stunning. You will feel as if you are a guest at the table. As you read the book you get a chance to know the chefs better, marvel at the wonderful food pics, and also appreciate the food we get to eat while we are still here. It's a book that has a permanent place on my coffee table.

Sergio GRANDE says

If most of the world's top 50 chefs would choose surprisingly simple dishes as their last meals, you have to wonder why some of us even consider selling our cars to dine at one of their fancy restaurants (although I had dinner at El Bulli, in 2008, and the food bill was only around €130 per capita).

Basically, it's the "Ratatouille" concept: there's nothing to beat a simple dish, a traditional home recipe, made with top quality fresh ingredients by a master.

Great coffee table book/conversation piece too.

Elizabeth says

This is not a lengthy book, just a coffee table book for foodies. I loved the photography (my favorite is of Helene Darroze, but Anthony Bourdain's near-nude pic is provocative). The interview given to each chef was

the same- your last meal: who's there, what is it, where is it, etc.

It shows people who love their craft talking about the thing they love and contemplating the best and greatest possible moment they could have with food. It makes you think of it, too, of course, which is bittersweet.

I enjoyed the range of recipes at the end, too, from the "I could make that" to "where the heck would I buy that in my area?"

I recommend it for a quick read for anyone who loves chefs or food plus photography. It would also be a good coffee table book for making conversation. This is a nice premise, and I thoroughly enjoyed reading it!

Neil says

Probably the best true coffee-table book I ever bought. Gorgeous!

The photographs are terrific, the typography faultless, and the choice of chefs only slightly skewed towards Americans. In addition it has recipes at the back, none of which I'll ever attempt, because if anything needs more than five ingredients I surrender.

And anyway, it's too special to keep on a shelf in the kitchen.

I'd add to this that, although a few chefs chose simple 'comfort' food...which incidentally would be my own choice...only one chose to eat at someone else's restaurant: Tony Bourdain wanted Fergus Henderson, at St.John's in London. Shows humility and a generosity of spirit. I'd invite A.B. to my last supper, I think.

I've already re-visited this crit twice. Here I am for a second afterword.

I have become convinced, over the past few years, that every experience is precious. And since food is one of the few individual choices left to us, that our choice of food is paramount. In Singapore, I go for Chilli Stingray, or horribly-expensive Sushi; in London, breakfast at the Dean Street Townhouse, and dinner at Bentleys or Chor Bizarre. At home, heart-stoppingly creamy scrambled eggs with (cheap) caviare, sardines on crusty toast, or Welsh Rarebit.

I just had the latter with a glass of Bad King John dark ale. I could die happy.

Choose every meal as though it were your last.

Robyn says

Not what I was expecting, and it's disappointing. I first heard about this book during an episode of Top Chef All-Stars, when the author was a guest. I never felt the need to own the book (coffee table books don't entice me), but when I saw it at the library I thought it would be enjoyable to read once. Between the discussion on Top Chef, the dust jacket description, the fact that it was shelved in the cooking section of the library (641.5092: Cooking; History, Geographic Treatment, Biography), and the cover phrasing ("50 Great Chefs and Their Final Meals, Portraits, Interviews, and Recipes), I really thought this was a book about the chefs and about food. I had somehow visualized it as a much more personal book. I expected the chefs to be photographed with the meals they selected, maybe with some of the family they'd like to enjoy the meal with. Basically I expected the photographs to serve the content, to give me a window into the chefs. Instead this is a photography book in which the subject matter is little more than a gimmick. They're very arty

photographs (Giorgio Locatelli in front of an aluminum wall hung all over with mackerel, Mario Batali with radishes draped over his head, Wylie Dufresne in lounging pin-up pose with a slice of cheese hanging out of his mouth) that, in general, do nothing more than reinforce the public face of the chef. Exceptions to this--positive ones--include Michelle Bernstein, Suzanne Goin, and Tetsuya Wakuda.

Anthony Bourdain's introduction is phrased as if written by someone who has seen the final product, but I can only assume he'd seen only the photographs, because he talks about how chefs have eaten the best foods in the world, but when asked this question, they say they want "poor-people food". "A crust of bread and butter". He discusses how in response to this question, chefs revert to childhood pleasures. Yet most of the chefs in this book say they want caviar, otoro tuna, foie gras, truffles, and very expensive wines or champagne. The introduction set me up to expect a sweet, heartfelt series of responses, when what I read was sheer indulgence in very expensive food.

The other disappointing aspect is how much of a Q&A this book is. Clearly the author sent her list of questions to each chef and they sent back their answers. I thought this would be conversations or small essays, not form questionnaires. Between the art photography and the "answer these 6 questions" format, the meals don't take shape for me. They become just a list of foods, in most cases with no background, and I find that I rarely care about the meal because it's just like reading a menu with no dish descriptors: black type on a white page. Speaking of which, on many pages one answer was printed in large type across the full two-page spread and it got lost in the crease. A book that retails at \$40 should have done a better job with layout such that I wouldn't have to break the spine to find the word "it" in Masa Takayama's response.

The recipes clearly aren't intended to be made by the reader. After all, the first listed recipe is Cod Foam, which requires an iSi soda siphon, N2O (nitrous oxide) cartridge, silpats, fondant sugar paste, etc. There's also a recipe for "the huge, almost prehistoric-looking spider crabs of Asturias", a salad that calls for pig's foot, tail, ear, and snout, and a dish calling for cactus salad as one ingredient.

The pros are 1) the chefs selected, these are impressive names to have gotten to participate (and she got 50 more to participate in her follow-up, though that one includes more celebrity cooks than fine chefs). 2) The photos aren't what I'd want from the project but they are at least good quality.

Girl Underground says

This was a treat for someone who likes to know what well-traveled celebrity-chef palates crave or would want for their last meal. The photos were interesting and fun, though not necessarily artistic. A few of the recipes were a little out of reach for the home cook because of rare and/or expensive ingredients, but I was relieved to see that most of the recipes were doable, not just because I could easily make them at home, but because it proved that celebrity chefs liked to roll homestyle, too!

Vee says

This was the most delightful coffee table book!

Some of the greatest chefs of our time relay their answers about their last meal, who would prepare it, the ambiance and the atmosphere of the event. LOVE.. LOVE IT!

I'm surprised by how many chefs would like to make their last meals themselves! I guess it's their art, their

craft and they know exactly how they want it done. There's so much that goes into setting up a meal: the art of the table, the drinks, the pairings, the complimentary spices and vegetables. So very inspiring. I think more about the meals I serve these days and how I lay them out...because... it could be.. just could be.. my last supper.

Sara DeSantis says

A really fun read!

Stephen says

There is a game commonly played by food people of all sorts -- eaters and well as cooks -- called, variously, "Last Meal" or "Last Supper" or something similar. In it, each participant says what he or she would like to eat at their final meal. From this game, Melanie Dunea derived the concept for a book. She asked fifty top chefs six questions: What would be your last meal on earth? What would be the setting for the meal? What would you drink with your meal? Would there be music? Who would be your dining companions? Who would prepare the meal? The responses of Ferran Adria, Lidia Bastianich, Mario Batali, Anthony Bourdain, Rick Bayless, Daniel Boulud, Alain Ducasse, Wylie Dufresne, Thomas Keller, Anita Lo, Jacques Pepin, Gordon Ramsay, Eric Ripert, Marcus Samuelson, Charlie Trotter, Jonathan Waxman and many others appear. The first 150 pages of the book contain the answers along with a photographic portrait on each chef, which photos are absolutely brilliant. The book concludes with 75 pages of recipes, contributed by some of the chefs, for dishes named in their responses.

Melissa Conner says

If you knew you were going to die tomorrow, what would your last meal be? Would you be adventurous and try something new and foreign, or would you stick to something tried and true: a meal you knew well and loved?

For the 50 chefs interviewed in Melanie Dunea's book, *My Last Supper*, the infamous question of "The Last Meal" brings many back to the days of growing up in the kitchen, helping mom, grandma, or other family members cook up simple pasta meals, while snacking on bread and butter. While the thought of "The Last Meal" frustrates many chefs (like asking an author what their favorite book is or asking anyone to name their favorite song or food), the responses given in *My Last Summer* were so beautiful and simple. While many chefs admitted that they would indulge in everything and anything, many said that their last meal would be simple and light...bread and fine olive oil, a light pasta salad, or just an evening filled with fine wine and friends.

Complete with beautiful photographs of every chef interviewed, *My Last Supper* is a real feast for all the senses. Well known chefs like Mario Batali, Rick Bayless, Anthony Bourdain, Jamie Oliver, Jacques Pepin, Gordon Ramsay, Eric Ripert, Charlie Trotter, Jose Andres (my favorite!), Lidia Bastianich, and many more are asked a series of five questions, all having to do with the last meal. The questions include: "What would

your last meal be?”, “Who would dine with you?”, and “Who would prepare it?”.

For lovers of food and the people that make it best, My Last Supper is a beautiful coffee table book that will leave you questioning your culinary favorites...and what your epic “Last Meal” might be.

Read more reviews at <http://thehobbeehive.wordpress.com>

Rebecca Huston says

This big coffee table book is all about a game that chefs play late at night. If you were to have your last meal, what would it be? Big sumptuous portraits, mouthwatering descriptions of extreme, simple, abundant, or fanciful meals, and recipes. Great stuff!

For the complete review, please go here:
<http://www.bubblews.com/news/6592084-...>
