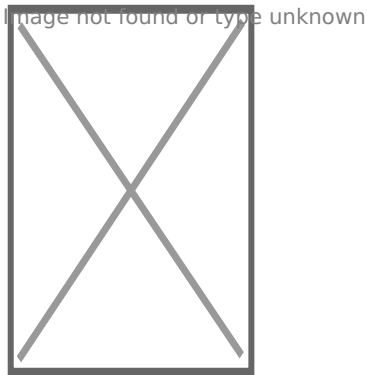


Epicurus and the Pleasure of the Stomach

Post by "Kalosyni" of August 16, 2022 at 8:16 AM

Here is an interesting read I just stumbled upon -- chapter four in a book called "Meals Matter: A Radical Economics Through Gastronomy" by Michael Symons. With this link it appears one can also scroll back to the start of the chapter. The author has an interesting way of interweaving the philosophy. (I haven't yet read all of the chapter, but wanted to share it right away).



[Meals Matter](#)
books.google.com

Post by "Kalosyni" of August 16, 2022 at 10:08 AM

The first two-thirds of this chapter (link in the above post) is very good, and highly recommend it -- it brings forward the idea that food, the table, and social eating was of primary importance in Epicureanism. Some excerpts:

Quote

Plutarch would describe the Garden as sharing "common meals" or *trapezai*, literally, "tables" (Clay 2009, 23). A typical meal of this time and place might open with tasty small dishes, resembling modern *mezedes* (appetizers). A main course combined *sitos* (the staple of wheat bread, barley mash, or a pulse) with *opson* (the relish of fish, meat, vegetable, cheese, or just olive oil). *Oinos* (wine) was the universal drink, famously taken after the food in a drinking party or symposium.

But our interest is not particularly the food so much as its central importance...

...Radically, Epicurean meals were the deliberate reason and means for philosophizing...

...With the stomach foundational, Epicurus gave integrity to the individual. We shall keep finding, nonetheless, that the individual requirement to eat, and to labor to achieve that, necessitates conviviality...

...Epicurus was irrepressibly social, advising: "You must reflect carefully beforehand with whom you are to eat and drink, rather than what you are to eat and drink." He went on: "For a dinner of meats without the company of a friend is like the life of a lion or a wolf" (Bailey 1926, 101)

Post by "Don" of August 16, 2022 at 11:22 AM

The Epicurus quote is from Seneca's letter 19:

[Moral letters to Lucilius/Letter 19 - Wikisource, the free online library](#)

Ut se res habet, ab Epicuro versura facienda est. 'Ante' inquit 'circumspiciendum est cum quibus edas et bibas quam quid edas et bibas; nam sine amico visceratio leonis ac lupi vita est.'

Google translate: As things stand, the verses must be made by Epicurus. 'Before,' he says, 'it is necessary to consider with whom you eat and drink, rather than what you eat and drink; for without a friend the entrails of a lion and a wolf are life.'

I assume he's talking about lions and wolves eating other animals entrails (visceratio)?

Well, that certainly gives another spin on it! I really need to learn Latin. Who has a better grounding in Latin to provide an alternative translation?

"Thou art (saith (Epicurus)) to take care with whom thou eatest and drinkest before thy meate, then what thou eatest and drinkest: for a plentifull and fleshie feast without a friend, is the life of a Lion or a Wolfe. "

[The workes of Lucius Annæus Seneca, both morrall and naturall Containing, 1. His bookes of benefites. 2. His epistles. 3. His booke of prouidence. 4. Three bookes of anger. 5. Two bookes of clemencie. 6. His booke of a blessed life. 7. His booke of the...](#)

Post by “Godfrey” of August 16, 2022 at 3:00 PM

[Kalosyni](#) please consider posting more if you read further in the book! I read a short article some time ago by (I think) the same author. I enjoyed the article and was curious how the author was going to develop his ideas. I also think we have a thread on that: I'll see if I can find it.

Post by “Godfrey” of August 16, 2022 at 3:02 PM

Here it is:

Post

[A foodie ponders Epicurus the epicurean](#)

https://www.academia.edu/11401667/_Epic...es_philosopher

This essay was a nice accompaniment to my tea and dark chocolate this morning. I enjoyed the author's discussion of pleasure, food and friendship in the Garden. He also addressed Plato nicely. I'm not so sure about his linking Epicurus to liberalism, but I really haven't given that much thought so maybe I'm exposing my ignorance. All in all, I found it a very perceptive piece that, to me, conceives of Epicurus much as we do here and...



Godfrey

February 9, 2020 at 3:38 PM

Post by “Don” of July 8, 2025 at 9:53 PM

https://youtu.be/jx3_lbW5Cig?si=-gbMFK-pYn74hkEK

Post by “Kalosyni” of July 9, 2025 at 9:59 AM

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2636-epicurus-and-the-pleasure-of-the-stomach/>

[Don](#) "How to eat like a stoic" ...a "stoic-friendly" lentil soup...he says that they don't get to use [garum \(fish sauce\)](#). 🤔

But the full Roman recipe has quite a few ingredients (starts approx. at 2:25 into the video).