

CULINARY HISTORIANS OF NEW YORK *present*

GASTRONOMY AND GLUTTONY IN EARLY MODERN CHINA

Tuesday, January 31, 2006

China is generally acknowledged to be one of the most food-oriented cultures in the world. For persons of refinement, an interest in and knowledge about food was from antiquity one of the essential attributes of the cultivated life. Chinese gastronomy encompassed, in differing measures at different times, an intimate understanding of the properties of food, a quest to achieve perfect balance in one's physical intake, and the pursuit of gourmet pleasures. Apart from consistent concerns with health and nutrition, gastronomy consisted of two main branches: procuring and savoring the best and rarest foods, a time-consuming preoccupation with results that were, however, quite fleeting; and writing about those foods, which created a more permanent frame of reference in the form of a widely respected literary genre with a venerable pedigree.

Just in time for the Chinese New Year, Joanna Waley-Cohen will examine the intersection of aesthetic and gustatory taste(s) in China, including a consideration of regional cuisine, in three broad historical periods generally associated with large-scale consumerism in China. These periods are the southern Song (1127–1376); the late Ming (c1550–1644), and the latter part of the eighteenth century, which marked the turning point in the fortunes of the Manchu Qing dynasty (1636–1912). In each period the consumerist phenomenon involved food as well as a broad spectrum of other goods and manufactures.

Joanna Waley-Cohen is professor of history at New York University. Among her publications are *The Sextants of Beijing: Global Currents in Chinese History* (1999); *The Culture of War in China: Empire and Military under the Qing Dynasty* (2006); and "Taste and Gastronomy in China", in Paul Freedman, ed., *Food: A History of Taste* (2007). She is currently at work on a study of the intersection of aesthetic and gustatory taste in China from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries.

Location: Park Avenue United Methodist Church
106 E. 86th St @ Park Ave. 3rd Floor

Sign-in & reception: 6:30 PM
Lecture: 7:00 PM

Coming up:

February 23, 2006: The Dark Side of Rum: A History with Jared Brown & Anistatia Miller

April 3, 2006: Spices and the Medieval Culinary Aesthetic with Paul Freedman

For up-to-date information click on "events" at www.CulinaryHistoriansNY.org

Name _____ Tel _____

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Members \$25 _____ Senior and Student Members \$22 _____ Guests \$35 _____

Please make checks payable to Culinary Historians of New York and send to:
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