

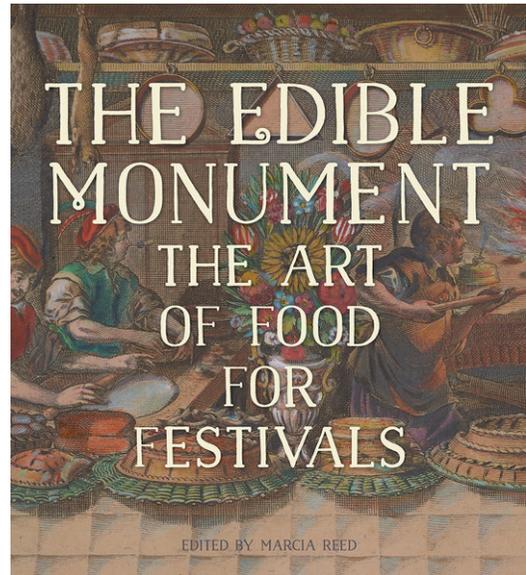


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A SUMPTUOUS ACCOUNT OF THE DYNAMIC INTERPLAY BETWEEN ART AND THE CULINARY IN THE WESTERN WORLD

LOS ANGELES — Food has always been essential to festivals. Thoughts of the holidays bring memories of special dishes and elaborate menus. To celebrate with food, to be fed and catered to, satisfied and sated, is to feel special and honored. We see the linked meanings in various languages: feast, festival, festa, fête. Festive times give people permission to be extravagant, to imagine a paradise on earth with everything we ever wanted to eat and drink. In early modern Europe, feasts were carefully prepared meals with extraordinary dishes that required substantial amounts of imagination, labor, and time. Vast sums of money were spent on them. Artistically designed courses and settings presented exotic edibles on special plates and étagères. And foods of nearly every variety were literally made into monuments and sculptures, displaying a wealth of food to be admired, desired, and consumed—and serving as an emblem of the prestige or social status of those who footed the bill.



As a pendant to an eponymous exhibition to be held at the Getty Research Institute this fall, **The Edible Monument** (Getty Publications, hardcover, \$35.00) brings these culinary works of art into clearer focus than ever before. From the banquets of the Medici and the Palace of Versailles to the pig feasts of Bologna and pre-Lenten festivals of Bavaria—with, yes their trees strewn with sausages—this book offers a sumptuous feast of images and anecdotes, presenting new and different perspectives on food as art, bringing the culinary more prominently into the history of early modern Europe, and whetting the appetite at every page.

ABOUT THE EDITOR - Marcia Reed is chief curator at the Getty Research Institute. She is the editor of *China on Paper* (Getty Publications, 2007).

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The Edible Monument: The Art of Food for Festivals

Marcia Reed

Getty Research Institute

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