From Brahmin Julia to Working-Class Emeril: The Evolution of Television Cooking


Link to Published Version: https://www.wiley.com/en-au/High+Pop%3A+Making+Cul...
*Subscription may be required

Abstract

In the early 1960s, National Educational Television (NET) initially rejected a Boston-based culinary program hosted by a woman named Julia Child. The rationale was that the cooking show was an outdated format from the 1950s. Child was picked up by a regional outfit called the Eastern Educational Network, which was her eventual platform for international fame and fortune. (Ledbetter, 1998: 89)

In her voice - "to-mah-toe," "herbs" with a hard "h" - you hear the patrician New England ancestry, the Smith education, the dozen years spent living abroad. In her manner, you see at heart a California girl, raised in Pasadena, supremely unselfconscious. Drop a fish in your kitchen, and "Wooooo is going to know?" (Cyr, 2000: 40)

People lined up at 6 a.m. to get seats - on a Saturday morning, no less. Inside, the 2,000-person crowd jumped to its feet, cheering and clapping in unison as the music keyed up and an announcer shouted, Let's get ready to rumble .... [W]hooping Jans were assembled for the taping of a show by Emeril Legasse, a gourmet master chef with blue-collar appeal who has turned the Food Network into Must See TV Once a 24-hour outlet for Julia Child reruns, the cable channel has become eye-candy for food voyeurs who watch more for entertainment than cooking advice. (Brown, 1999: n.p.)