

THOUGHTS ON FOOD

REFLECTIVE ESSAYS



BY TRADITIONALBODYWORK.COM

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Preface

In this book, Marce Ferreira shares his thoughts on food through a series of reflective essays.

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Marce initially studied Information Technology and worked seventeen years in software and database development for a variety of international companies and organizations.

A sabbatical year in Southeast Asia in 2009 changed his life's direction. After discovering the beauty and healing power of Traditional Thai Massage and Reusi Dat Ton (Thai Yoga), he decided to become a practitioner and teacher.

After his return to Europe, he started offering treatments and training, and — for about a decade — regularly returned to Thailand to teach English and to further his training, completing 800+ hours of studies in the Thai healing arts.

In 2018, he founded the TraditionalBodywork.com website as a platform to publish articles, eBooks, and Video Workshops about Thai Massage and Reusi Dat Ton.

Today, he also publishes works about other types of massage and bodywork, somatic practices, alternative and complementary therapies, nature, spirituality, and unconventional lifestyles.

In addition, he also shares essays, poems, and reflections about his personal life and experiences.

You can learn more about Marce Ferreira and the website through <https://www.traditionalbodywork.com/website/>

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Introduction

The Importance of Food

Food plays an all-important role for mankind. It influences a large variety of aspects of human life, including physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, economic, migratory, and environmental domains.

Food is intimately connected to life and death, health and disease, to pain and pleasure, and to sadness and happiness. In addition, many of our daily activities, including our daily routine, revolve around obtaining, preparing, eating, and digesting food.

Through a series of essays, Marce Ferreira reflects on food from different and sometimes unconventional perspectives. This book not only shares his *thoughts on food* but also aims to give the reader *food for thought*.

Reflective Essays

The Challenge of Safe and Healthy Food

In the context of proper self-care, the foods and drinks we consume are obvious points of concern. They are not only indispensable for human survival and provide us with much needed energy, but they are also essential to maintain or attain health.

Nevertheless, nowadays it is not so easy to choose safe and healthy food. For instance, we often don't know exactly how and where it's produced and what kind of ingredients it contains.

In general, not all ingredients and additives of processed and ultra-processed foods are mentioned on food labels, nor are the detailed ways of producing or growing food. And even if they are, you'll often find a series of scientific or unknown terms and phrases, which don't tell us much unless we would make a study of it.

Moreover, even if we understand the ingredients and additives and what they mean for our health, this knowledge does not tell the full story. For instance, an ingredient might be harmless or even healthy, but key questions remain: Where does it come from? How was it produced, collected, or transformed? In what type of soil did the plants grow? How was the cattle raised, and under what circumstances? Were parts of the ingredients genetically modified? Were hormones, pesticides, or fertilizers used? What about transport, storage, and packaging conditions?

In fact, we often rely on informed governmental regulation and inspections from official food, hygiene, and safety

departments. However, scientific insights and conclusions change regularly, and what was considered healthy and safe five years ago is sometimes seen as extremely harmful today. Moreover, the actual enforcement and inspections on food production and food safety are rather limited, based on samples, and honestly — it happens too often that in hindsight we need to admit that we have been sort of “poisoned” for many years by this or that product we habitually ate, day after day.

Another thing is that it turns out to be quite time-consuming and expensive to source, buy, process, and prepare healthy food. Nowadays, natural, safe, and healthy food is much more expensive than mass-produced and/or ultra-processed foods, and most people in modern society don’t have the financial means nor the time it needs to put together healthy meals on a day-to-day basis.

It often means that too many people go for fast, cheap(er), pre-processed, and/or ultra-processed nutrition, typically containing too much sugar, oils, fats and salt, and doubtful types, origins, and amounts of preservatives, emulsifiers, disinfectants, colorings, and flavorings, a lack of fibers, vitamins, and minerals, and so on. This generally doesn’t contribute to healthy and safe eating patterns, and thus risks poor health of body and mind.

For most people, the days of buying food directly from a local farmer, or of growing and foraging our own food, are largely over. And even if we had the time and means to do so today, we would need to know more than ever about its origins. We would need to ask: Was the soil clean? Were pesticides used? How was our local farmer’s cheese processed? What types of pastures did the cattle eat from?

Compared to the past, we also tend to eat more diverse. That is, we eat things that are grown or produced in other countries, but actually belong to the natural environment of those countries and to the diet of the people who live in them. For instance, today you find that Germans eat mangoes, Russians eat coconuts, and people in the tropics

eat apples, although these fruits don't naturally grow there, and were not a natural part of the people's diet in older times.

As it is, I have serious doubts if it is a healthy practice to eat food that doesn't belong to one's natural living environment, which is a topic you can read more about in the chapter [Locally Grown Foods and Foreign Produce](#).

In addition, eating a greater variety of different foods doesn't necessarily imply you eat healthier. For instance, we may eat ten different types of cookies, ten different types of ultra-processed sugary and "very healthy" cereals, and five different kinds of fatty pizzas during the week, instead of following a balanced diet.

In view of the above, we see that diversity in meals and food products often translates to a monotonous diet in which basically only the *flavors* change. This makes for a poor amount and variety of the nutrients we really need. Consequently, this type of eating habit most likely leads to poor physical and mental health, and reduced life expectancy.

Unfortunately, we cannot else than admit that many things within the food-chain are out of our own hands nowadays, which is due to the way the food industry works (and thrives), a lack of proper and detailed information, our busy lives which prevents us to spend more time sourcing, processing, and transforming our own food, and more often than not the structural lack of money to buy only healthy products.

For the vast majority of people, it's impossible to 'go back to nature' by buying a piece of land, growing their own food, and eating only that which they know the origin and production of. Nevertheless, by diving a bit deeper in what sorts of nutrients we need on a daily basis, by trying to make more time buying and cooking fresh and clean foods, and by studying the ingredients and additives of products

we buy just a tiny bit more than we do now, most of us could surely make improvements in the “food department.”

All in all, let’s not forget that [You Are What You Eat](#) — as the saying goes — and I can only imagine that we all would like to be the most healthy possible “food version of ourselves.” Choosing the proper types, diversity, ingredients, compounds, and amounts of food we eat is of high importance for our health, and it’s only justified to take what we eat very seriously.