



Empires of Food: Feast, Famine, and the Rise and Fall of Civilizations

Evan D.G. Fraser, Andrew Rimas

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Using the colorful diaries of a sixteenth-century merchant as a narrative guide, *Empires of Food* vividly chronicles the fate of people and societies for the past 12,000 years through the foods they grew, hunted, traded, and ate—and offers fascinating, and devastating, insights into what to expect in years to come. In energetic prose, agricultural expert Evan D.G. Fraser and journalist Andrew capture the flavor of places as disparate as ancient Mesopotamia and imperial Britain, taking us from the first city in the once-thriving Fertile Crescent to today's overworked breadbaskets and rice bowls in the United States and China. Cities, culture, art, government, and religion were founded on the creation and exchange of food surpluses. Complex societies were built by shipping grain up rivers and into the stewpots of history's generations. But eventually, inevitably, the crops fail, the fields erode, or the temperature drops, and the center of power shifts. Cultures descend into dark ages of poverty, famine, and war.

A fascinating, fresh history told through the prism of the dining table, *Empires of Food* offers a grand scope and a provocative analysis of the world today, indispensable in this time of global warming and food crises.

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