

Let Them Eat Breakfast

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Qu'ils mangent du petit déjeuner

It is said that breakfast is the fuel of champions, that it is a sacred meal and the canvas upon which you paint your day. How might this be true when, during the week, the window one has in the morning to actually enjoy a breakfast is so very small? Breakfast should not carry such great importance when most of us only have a few minutes to sit down and have a bite before rushing out the door to face our day.

In day to day life, it is most unlikely to start your morning without a major inconvenience. Time turns to sand in our hands, slipping right out between our fingers. There is not a soul able to relish in a decent breakfast like God intended. Between malfunctioning alarms and losing sight of your keys, wallet and phone, people tend to break their fast with a quick cuppa and a few stale cookies dug out of the bottom of a jar- which, as you might know, does not satisfy the needs of your grumbling stomach. And if yours is weak, as is mine, a hot beverage with no solid food to cushion it will boggle your guts and send you straight to the toilets. One could argue that you can get your morning meal when commuting or at your workplace. But how many times has the thermos spilled out when the bus hit a speed bump? How many lattes have gotten cold before you could drink them because you were too distracted with work? Breakfast, as it turns out, is a meal to be eaten as paupers, whatever you can get your hands on will have to be sufficient to placate your hunger until lunch time.

At midday, we crave some form of sustenance. The feeling of an empty stomach renders us useless. We cannot think straight and our work is jeopardised. So we make a choice out of three options with the limited time we get for our lunch break: run home and prepare an instant meal, eat from a tupperware filled with yesterday's leftovers, or spend a great deal of money eating out in the café around the corner- which, shared with a friend can be a lot of fun, until the bill arrives, that is. *Le déjeuner*, yet again, turns out to be a poor excuse for a meal if you are tied down to the responsibilities of a workman. If you are wondering where brunch will be placed, get ready to be disappointed. Brunch is a fabrication made by the Lords of today, who have lots of victuals and do not know what to do with them, thus they have contrived a new mealtime involving premium food, like smoked salmon bruschettas, oyster rockefellers, crepes and croissants, with drinks that range from mimosas all the way to the most rare herbal infusions, this is not a meal for the everyday man, so it should not be judged as one.

The kingdom's one to watch is the prince, as he will someday become the ruler of the realm. Similarly, the meal to watch is the *goûter*. After a long day of non-stop drudgery, and even if your workday is not over, the afternoon stills us, time passes in slow motion. Around 5 p.m. there is not a soul unable to take a break and relish in a glorious snack. This mealtime is perfect for socialising, cafés are filled to the brim with all sorts of jolly couples engaging in meaningful conversations over a shared piece of cake and a jug of lemonade in the summer, or a steaming Earl Grey in the winter. In the spring you may see groups of friends enjoying a round of mates in the sunshine, and in autumn a great deal of introverts, coffee in hand, reading novels by the window.

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Even if the *goûter* can be for most the preferred mealtime, after a lousy breakfast and a poor lunch, the recommended daily calorie intake is not achieved. And this responsibility lies unintentionally on what I think is the King of Meals: Dinner. In the evening, it seems that we have all the time in the world– albeit not much energy– yet we get to prepare hefty dishes, which will satisfy the monster that has grown inside us, growling for something to eat. Dinner is also a meal we can share with the whole family, talking about our day and appreciating each other's company. After an arduous day of gruelling labour, spending time with the calming presence of our loved ones is much needed. And at last we are appeased, we get to go to sleep with a full stomach and a contented heart.

In the realm of meals, breakfast, however important, is as gratifying as the work serfs were subjected to in feudal times. But when the Revolution strikes, and the labourers attain the hard-earned rest they have demanded, they get to enjoy the holy times, with a great array of *pâtisseries* and *gateaux* and a cup of *Café Noir*– no milk, no sugar–, or even a rich hot chocolate. There is time to stuff one's face unhurriedly. The peasant settles down at the head of the table and a crown is placed on his head. Breakfast claims its rightful place as King. The order is restored: on the day of Saturn and the day of the Sun, we can eat breakfast like Kings, lunch like Princes and dine like paupers; and get our afternoon snack in whichever way it is needed to appease our appetite.