



Choux Questionnaire: Lenore Newman

A riff on [the well-riffed Proust Questionnaire](#), the CFS Choux Questionnaire is meant to elicit a tasty and perhaps surprising experience, framed within a seemingly humble exterior. (And yes, some questions have a bit more *craquelin* than others.) Straightforward on their own, the queries combined start to form a celebratory pyramid of extravagance. How that composite croquembouche is assembled and taken apart, however, is up to the respondents and readers to determine. Respondents are invited to answer as many questions as they choose.

The final question posed—*What question would you add to this questionnaire?*—prompts each respondent to incorporate their own inquisitive biome into the mix, feeding a forever renewed starter culture for future participants.

Our Choux Questionnaire respondent for this issue [Lenore Newman](#). Lenore is the director of the Food and Agriculture Institute at the University of the Fraser Valley, where she holds a Research Chair in Food and Agriculture Innovation. She is a professor in the Faculty of Science at UFV, and is an emeritus member of the Royal Society of Canada's New College.

What is your idea of a perfect food?

Sweet and umami. A buttery pecan pie for example.

Of what food or food context are you afraid?

Eggplants. I have a deadly allergy, and they lurk in things. Otherwise, I've eaten everything.

What word or concept describes an admirable food system?

Efficient.

What word or concept prevents many food systems from becoming admirable?

Fragile.

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Which food person do you most admire?

Anthony Bourdain. He was my hero.

Which food innovation do you try to ignore?

Eating insects.

What is your greatest gastronomic extravagance?

Hot chocolate made with ambergris in the style of the French kings.

What is your current state of hunger?

Full.

What do you consider to be the most overrated food or food context?

Thirty-course tasting menus. They are an ordeal.

On what occasion do you feign satiety?

Business meetings.

What do you most dislike about dinner tables?

When I'm seated by the leg and I keep jostling the entire table. This happens weirdly often.

What is the quality you most like in a fruit?

I adore all fruit. Ripeness is key.

What is the quality you most like in a cut of meat?

I'm vegan these days so I'm going to say, "made from plants."

Which condiments do you most overuse?

Truffles. Love those little guys. Even the shady oil.

What kinds of gardens make you happiest?

Ones that allow foraging.

Which culinary skill would you most like to have?

My wok skills are a bit weak. I overcrowd the pan.

If you could change one thing about nutrition, what would it be?

Sugar would be as healthy as a good workout.

What do you consider your greatest edible achievement?

A friend and I once recreated an entire Delmonico's meal, including the weird staging. It was a blast.

If you were to die and come back as an (edible) animal, vegetable, or mineral, what would you like it to be?

Absinthe. The price of euphoria shall be madness.

Where (and/or when) would you most like to dine?

There is a night market in Taipei I have my eye on.

When do you have no appetite?

That's a thing?

What is your most treasured kitchen implement?

My chef's knife. I'd grab it before my laptop if there was a fire.

What do you consider to be the most processed kind of food?

All food is processed, and the weirder the better. But then again, I've eaten salmon grown in a vat, so I'm the wrong person to ask.

What is your favourite aroma?

In the kitchen? Roasting onions. In the world? Petrichor.

What spice, kitchen implement, or cookbook do you use most rarely?

I always think I will use cloves and somehow, I never do.

What do you most value in your friends?

I like it when they are chefs and feed me. Chefs are also handy if you need help with weird food adventures.

Who are your favourite food scholars?

Dan Bender. He knows how to eat.

Who is your hero of food media?

Aside from Anthony Bourdain? Cat Cora has my heart.

With which cuisine do you most identify?

Szechuan. It's like life. Somehow spicy and numb at the same time.

What is your most powerful sense?

Smell.

What are your favourite agricultural, culinary, or gastronomic words?

California breakfast buffet.

What is it about composting that you most dislike?

No fire. I like fire.

What would you eat as your last meal?

Well, given that it would literally kill me, I could do eggplant. Cross two things off my list at once!

What foodish epitaph would you assign to yourself?

"I think this mushroom is safe."

What question would you add to this questionnaire?

What is the worst meal you've ever had?