



Choux Questionnaire: Megan J. Elias and Alex Ketchum

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 respondents for this issue are Megan J. Elias and Alex Ketchum. Together, they are Lambda Literary Award Finalists for their work as co-editors of *Queers at the Table: An Illustrated Guide to Queer Food with Recipes* (Arsenal Pulp Press, 2025) and the co-chairs of two editions of the Queer Food Conference. Individually, Megan (she/they) is the [Winiarski Curator of Food and Wine History](#) at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, as well as the author of five books about food history, editor of the Oxford Bibliographies Online Food Studies articles, and a board member for the Association for the Study of Food and Society. Alex (she/her) is an Associate Professor at McGill University's Institute for Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies (IGSF) and an elected member of the Royal Society of Canada: College of New Scholars. She is also the Director of the [Just Feminist Tech and Scholarship Lab](#) and the author of several books, including *Revolution: A History of Feminist Restaurants, Cafes, and Coffeehouses*, *How to Organize Inclusive Events and Conferences* and the forthcoming *Digital Queers and High Tech Gays: The History of LGBTQ+ Cyber Activism*.

What is your idea of a perfect food?

Megan: crunchy, tangy, salty

Alex: one that can be shared

What word or concept describes an admirable food system?

Alex: one that values people, planet, and community

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

Alex: extraction

Which food person do you most admire?

Megan: My cousin the organic vegetable farmer. He manages to grow a huge variety of vegetables and fruits for the local food bank and he's a genius at cooking too.

Alex: Megan J. Elias, since they are a great collaborator.

Which food innovation do try to ignore?

Alex: the obsession with protein

What is your greatest gastronomic extravagance?

Megan: cocktails—so unnecessary but so intriguing!

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DOI: [10/15353/cfs-rcea.v13i2.817](https://doi.org/10.15353/cfs-rcea.v13i2.817)

ISSN: 2292-3071

What is your current state of hunger?

Megan: I'm always interested in seeing the dessert menu.

What do you most dislike about dinner tables?

Alex: When they are too formal and it interrupts being able to connect with others.

What is the quality you most like in a fruit?

Megan: perfume

Alex: When it is so sweet and juicy it drips down your chin.

Which condiments do you most overuse?

Megan: dukkah

Alex: salsa verde

What kinds of gardens make you happiest?

Megan: very wild cottage gardens

Alex: abundant and wild

Which culinary skill would you most like to have?

Megan: breadmaking

Alex: improved knife skills

What do you consider your greatest edible achievement?

Megan: banana butterscotch pie with gingersnap crust

Alex: some of my recent recipe development projects with masa harina

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

Megan: rainbow chard

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

Megan: I wish I could magic myself into the dinner depicted on the cover of our book. [Blue Delli quanti's illustration](#) looks like the perfect potluck.

When do you have no appetite?

Megan: I am even hungry in my dreams.

What is your most treasured kitchen implement?

Megan: my moka pot

Alex: stand mixer

What is your favourite aroma?

Megan: toast

Alex: pumpkin spice in fall

What do you most value in your friends?

Megan: willingness to share food

Who are your favourite food scholars?

Megan: Alex Ketchum, of course! And SO many others: Meredith Abarca, Lisa Heldke, Hanna Garth, Lori Flores, Mark Padoongpat, Farha Ternikar, Alice Julier...

Alex: Oh, there's so many amazing folks—don't make me pick favourites. I would say I have deep admiration for scholars who think critically about labour, gender (and sexuality!), and class in their scholarship.

Who is your hero of food media?

Megan: Soleil Ho

With which cuisine do you most identify?

Megan: New York—a little of everything!

Alex: Southern/Baja Californian Mexican (the food I grew up with and is my comfort food and favourite style to cook)

What is your most powerful sense?

Megan: smell

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

Megan: pickle, romesco, sambal, Eccles cake

What is it about composting that you most dislike?

Alex: When cities don't have systems set up—it is wonderful when cities and towns create infrastructure to support it.

What would you eat as your last meal?

Megan: bacon, egg, and cheese from a New York City coffee cart

Alex: charbroiled fish tacos, tortilla chips with guacamole, a frozen lime margarita, and frozen yogurt (vanilla-, chocolate-, and coffee-flavoured) with carob chips and gummy bears

What foodish epitaph would you assign to yourself?

Megan: “Now she can stop trying to make sourdough.”

What question would you add to this questionnaire?

Megan: What non-edible thing do you wish were edible?

Alex: Salty or sweet?