



MY DRUNK KITCHEN

a guide to eating, drinking
& going with your gut

HANNAH HART

foreword by JOHN GREEN





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A Guide to Eating, Drinking
& Going with Your Gut

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DEDICATION

To RECKLESS OPTIMISTS

AND ALL WHO BELIEVE
WE CAN DO MORE
AND BETTER

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FOREWORD

BY JOHN GREEN

All the great food writers—from MFK Fisher to Julia Child—have understood that cooking and eating are not just about sustenance. We bring to our food all that is inside of us—the joy and the grief, and at times the intoxication—and the food is changed by the spirit in which we prepare it. I still remember the saddest peanut butter and jelly sandwich I ever made: I was twenty-two. My longtime girlfriend had dumped me. I had no career prospects and no money. I was living in a walk-in closet in a basement apartment in Chicago. A few days earlier, I'd reached for my box of Cheerios and the box jumped, because it contained a mouse.

I also remember the happiest PBJ of my life: Days after getting engaged, my now wife and I were in her apartment, drinking way too much wine, looking through her fridge for something we could make together.

Precisely the same ingredients resulted, of course, in vastly different sandwiches. The saddest PBJ superglued my tongue to the roof of my mouth with peanut butter, and the bread had all the flavor of construction paper. The happiest PBJ tasted like rainbows and roses. And this is the wonder of Hannah Hart's drunk kitchen: Whether you are deep in sadness or the happiest you've ever been, Hannah Hart knows how to make it better. She makes you feel less alone in the dark night of the soul, and even more joyful in the good times.

Hannah's YouTube channel rocketed to popularity not merely because she is punnily hilarious and knows how to make a fine drunken meal, but because like all the best food writers, in the process of teaching us how to cook she teaches us something about how to live. Hannah's fans are motivated by their love for her and for each other to raise money for charity and to volunteer in food kitchens around the world. We feel better about being ourselves because of her.

Food, when wielded properly, can make us more caring and generous. And no one understands this better than Hannah Hart. So yes, this book is hilarious, and you will enjoy every page of it. But make no mistake: Beneath it all lies the message that we must love ourselves and one another, and that together we can make it through.



INTRODUCTION

You're a narcissist, right?

Good. Because this book is about you.

Well, it's really about me. But it's about me and you. So does that work the same way? I hope so, because this book is about self-improvement and maybe it can improve itself as it goes along. Has a cookbook ever been self-aware? If not, this may be one of the first occasions for it.

This book is also about self-preservation. Or self-preservatives. Or preservatives. Like jam. You think that a delicious jelly snack is ever crippled by self-doubt? Nope. And you shouldn't be either.

But defeating self-doubt isn't the only thing you'll learn in this catalog of delights! Here you will find out how to encourage your guests to get creative with their libations ([Latke Shotkes](#)), how to achieve your goals with the resources at hand ([Saltine Nachos](#)), and even the importance of communication during experimental bedroom escapades ([Hot-Crossed Bunz](#)), but above all you will learn that it's in your best interest to be patient with your spouse during the holidays ([Trifle Troubles](#)).



This book will open up your eyes to strengths within you and around you that you may have never seen. For example, have you ever really thought about the structural integrity of a sandwich?

You see, a sandwich has the ability to combine all these varying elements of life to manifest a singular creation. The sandwich is composed of many seemingly opposing parts. You've got the lettuce and tomato (which is the smarts), the cheese (which is the sexually arousing part), the butter (lube), and the bread (that's like our skin, it keeps our insides from ending up in a big sloppy mess on the floor . . . though if your sandwich is already on the floor, then you should probably eat that. Like right now. That's the safest thing that you can do. Too much time has passed already to think about making another. Everyone is looking. Wait. Okay go now.). A sandwich comes into being and exists with you without judgment. Its presence in your life is only

to coat the stomach lining of your soul so that the harsh spices of reality don't make your heart burn. And we musn't judge each other's sandwiches. Or anything that we create. And frankly, as long as the sandwich of my life isn't fucking your wife or punching you in the face, I think that you've got nothing bad to say about the things that I do. (P.S. If I've done either of those things, then consider this my formal apology, Tim. I mean, nobody.)

So, as is clearly stated with my flawless sandwich analogy, this book is going to show you a different way of looking at things. Cookbooks especially.

And ultimately, my goal is that by the end of reading this book you will have learned a thing or two about how to follow your heart.

But first you'll have to trust your gut.





KITCHEN BASICS

How to Make the Most of What You've Got

Life is not a box of chocolates.

Life is more like an empty plate.



That's not to imply that your plate is and forever will be bare, but rather that the emptiness of the plate mirrors the blank expanse of an unused canvas and the ingredients (or paints) we begin with are predetermined: ethnicity, location, financial status, genetic predisposition to chocoholism, etc.

Now, all of these factors differ from person to person, but the shared experience lies in the random lot you are dealt . . . and that it is up to you (as it is to all of us) to fill your plate with a meal you like to eat. As Voltaire once said, "Each player must accept the cards dealt: but once they are in hand, he or she alone must decide how to play the game." Or something like that. I don't remember exactly . . . I'm not very good at remembering quotes word for word, or following instructions step by step,

staying on track when writing the fourth paragraph of my first book . . .

Anyway! The first step in creating the meal of your life is to properly assess the fixings around you. Like stumbling into a kitchen (perhaps while drunk?) and spying a loaf of bread, some butter, some cheese, and knowing *deep in your core* what to do next.

For me, this began as a child. Without going into too much detail, I will simply say that my family struggled with money and I spent a great deal of time alone. Now, despite the disadvantages of my home life, I was blessed enough to never be bullied. I was well liked and friendly and frankly just loved being in the company of other kids. So for the most part, I never felt “different”—except during lunch.

During lunch, there was no simple way to hide the truths that food revealed. Everyone would sit on the asphalt in circles, or at the lunch table in rows, and in front of each child would be their social marker:

- **Brown paper bag labeled with name, simple sandwich, nothing more:** You could tell that this kid had a single parent who was trying. They probably knew some Tracy Chapman songs by heart. On Halloween their costume (if any) would be homemade.
- **A balanced meal in a plastic lunch box with thermos:** This meant that there was at least one doting parent at home while the other was off earning their station. That kid occasionally showed up with something store-bought—an item a parent could grab while standing in line for their coffee. Maybe this meant the night before (or the morning of) had been a little rough on the home front.
- **Hot lunch:** The contents were the same for everyone, but some paid with money and some had special tickets. I would sometimes start the year with a special ticket, but if there was even a renewal period, that’s when my portion would run out and I’d be left to my own devices.

Thus, relying on the special ticket for making sure I got fed at school was a faulty system. “Will She Eat It?,” however, was not.

I like to think of “Will She Eat It?,” as an interactive performance piece: an art form to be executed with extreme attention to detail and a subtle grace. If undertaken lightly, you might fall into the unpleasant category of “mooch,” from which there would be no return. My older sister had made that mistake, and I was fortunate enough to witness this play out in the politics of her fifth-grade social circle from my second-grade sidelines.

The rules of the game were quite simple. Everyone would contribute a portion of their lunch and *as a group* we concocted a special recipe. Upon its completion, I would . . . eat it. Combinations could include (but were not limited to):

- M&M’s and Fig Newtons, maybe with an accompanying ketchup garnish;
- Cheez-Its dipped in chocolate pudding;
- Potato chips crushed into Jell-O snacks (preferably green-flavored for the limey kick; the red didn’t do much for my palate and would cause headaches from what would later be identified as a familial allergy to the popular chemical Red Dye #40, outlawed in many European countries but readily embraced by our American dietary needs for color and excess);
- Bologna and peanuts.

The point of the game was to encourage as much chaos as possible. Given the diverse social circles on the schoolyard, it was easy to bounce from group to group without drawing too much attention. I was lucky in that way. I liked to think of myself as something akin to a traveling minstrel. With an appetite.

The game moved in easy cycles, as it was a community effort, really. Bursts of laughter would attract others. It brought people together and kept everyone involved. I considered using this as a future campaign slogan for office:

“Yes, I’ll eat that.”

With everyone’s lunches laid bare, we could observe each other’s differences and expand our tiny worlds.

“Why does your juice box look like that?”

“My mom always makes me eat leftovers.”

“What’s wrong with your Cheerios?”

“These are Froot Loops.”

“No, those are Fruity O’s. I have Froot Loops.”

“OH! LUCKY! I want Lunchables.”

Ah, Lunchables.

Fucking delicious, amazing, perfect Lunchables. Food that was so clean it couldn’t even touch *itself*. Endless combinations and assemblies. Stacks of snacks to satiate. Nothing on this earth could beat the taste of that sweet plastic cheese and the hot-pink meat. On top of a Ritz cracker? This was the height of luxury in my eyes. My lunchtime Lolita. The second someone peeled back that plastic top, the longing on my face could belie the levity of the game itself. The sheer want would radiate from me.

(Not to mention that Lunchables kids were their own breed in my mind. They were on sports teams, they seemed to be endlessly tall and slender, and they always had siblings. Lunchables parents knew how to get a family of six out the door. That sort of family often had a student body president or two in the mix.)

But let’s go back to life as an empty plate. Each day we must fill it. But we won’t always have the pantry full of whatever we like best (for me that would be a pantry where every shelf contained cheese, the bottom shelf bearing the most soft and subtle, then each level above graduating to firmer and . . . stinkier, frankly), but that doesn’t take away our agency over what’s available.

In the section ahead, KITCHEN BASICS, you’ll learn the foundation of kitchen improvisation. You’ll learn how to say “Yes!” to your instincts and put that positive spin on the mess that’s unfolding around you. Now, don’t worry, no one begins as a master of self-sustainability. Each of these recipes will come with additional tools and tips (and drinks) for filling your heart as well as your stomach.

Take this bacon, for instance . . .



This bacon is an optimist! Somebody's doing it right! (As long as "it" doesn't refer to proper cooking bacon, because I mean come on.)

{ THE HARTWICH }

If you don't know history, then you don't know anything. You are a leaf that doesn't know it is part of a tree.

—MICHAEL CRICHTON



I'd like to start this book of original recipes by saying that nothing is ever really original. Not to imply that this whole thing has been plagiarized (shout-out to Shia LaBeouf!), but rather that invention stems from the ability to connect information to imagination.

Thus, it's important to use history to learn about things. It helps you expand your perception of the known world and increases your ability to create and connect within it.

For instance, the origin story of the sandwich has always been one of my favorite moments in history.

The 4th Earl of Sandwich, John Montagu, was a gambler and a chatterbox. He was also a brilliant military strategist and possibly a workaholic. Whatever. The point is that he was constantly occupied with doing shit. Thus, never wanting to break from the task at hand (which was primarily drinking and gambling), he would simply order his kitchens to bring him a slab of meat wedged between two pieces of bread for ease of consumption. This habit became well known among his associates, so they to

began to order “The Sandwich” when in his company.

So see! The best of inventions can come from tales of inebriated convenience. I call this delectable treat The Hartwich, because I am self-absorbed.



PRO TIP: To learn more about things, read books or use the Internet!

Cocktail

Casual beer. Appropriate for solo day-drinking!

Ingredients

- *bread crumbs
- *ground turkey
- *garlic
- *oregano, basil
- *avocado
- *hummus
- *bean sprouts
- *tomato
- *raw onion
- *cheese
- *lettuce
- *potato chips and dried seaweed (for snacking on)

Instructions

First, mash the bread crumbs and the ground turkey (or chicken, depending on your mood and what is in your fridge) into a giant meatball, roughly the size of your first. Throw in some garlic or whatever to give the meatwad an extra punch. I like to add a little oregano, basil, or the “Italian seasoning” mix that the spice company so helpfully puts together for me.

Then, bake it. Cook it until it is done, all the way through. Don’t let the Hartwich poison you.

Once you’ve got your giant baked meatball, cut it in half so it roughly resembles the top and bottom of a hamburger bun. (AHA, now you see where I am going with this.)

Next, mash up your avocado and use it as a spread on your buns (not those buns, people), along with the hummus. Throw in bean sprouts, tomato, and onion. Take a break and eat some seaweed or potato chips as a snack. Add some cheese to the sandwich if you do the dairy thing.

Use two pieces of lettuce to hold your sandwich and take a bite.

The sandwich should be roughly the size of a small slider, and pretty easy to consume. Mal

like five. Eat them in private for maximum enjoyment.



WARNING: Cooking in an oven, on a stove top, or on any heated surface (including city sidewalks in summertime) should only be attempted while accompanied by an adult. And by “adult” I mean someone who isn’t drunk. It can be your kid sister too. She seems pretty responsible for a sixteen-year-old. I mean, she’s always reading those YA books, so she must have learned a thing or two about life.



Life Lesson

Sometimes when I have an original idea, I like to keep it to myself for a while. Giving away the goods or sharing the thought before it’s fully cooked can sometimes reduce your enthusiasm level or incentive to execute the as-of-yet-unveiled brilliance. It’s okay to keep things close to your chest and not share them until you’re ready to do so. Thus, feel free to take those improv classes without telling your coworkers. They might not get it for a while and, for me, disbelief does not translate to motivation.

Don’t do things to prove others wrong. Do things to *prove yourself right.*



{ CAN BAKE }

Life is to be lived, not controlled; and humanity is won by continuing to play in face of certain defeat.

—RALPH ELLISON



Now, to be fair, it's not easy to create an original piece of art from scratch. For instance, *The Hartwick* took *at least* an hour for me to think of and some people just don't got time for that sort of dilly-dallying. So! If you want to create, but are hindered by the weight of the task ahead, then here is a recipe that will still allow you some small measure of invention . . . but mostly it just involves heating things that are already prepared in a can.

Cocktail

Beer (in a can! because this is the theme?)

Ingredients

*a can!

*something to put on top of the can!

Instructions

First, go to your cabinets and check out what you've got. If you find you've got an abundance of canned items that you never get around to opening, this might be a good time to send in the *Hoarders* audition tape that everyone keeps joking about. Ooh! Or you could donate some of those cans to your local food bank. Putting the "CAN" in "PHIL-CAN-THROPY"... What do you mean that's not a word?

Next, open up the can. Then put something on top. Need suggestions?

- Tomato soup > a grilled cheese
- French onion soup > Swiss
- Chili > an entire baked potato
- Chicken soup > puff pastry ([pictured](#)). Chicken NOT pie!
- Cherry pie filling > puff pastry again! Instant pie.
- Black beans > cheddar cheese and tortilla chips! Weird, hot, bland nachos!

See, the options are really limitless. The world is your oyster. Ooh! Oyster crackers would be good with a can of clam chowder. Better add that to the list. Feel free to write it yourself in pencil. Here, let's make a space for your own genius below.

- _____ > _____ (That's great!)
- _____ > _____ (Yum! I want some!)
- _____ > _____ (You are so smart and good!)

I thought I would throw in some affirmations just in case. Now delicately place the item on top of the can and the can onto the top of the top rack of the oven. Close the door and never look back!

Except in like ten minutes when you definitely should look back and take it out of the oven.

Life Lesson

Don't tell yourself to quit before you ever get the chance to try.
Never forget the importance of a CAN-DO attitude.



I sometimes have a hard time explaining what *My Drunk Kitchen* is all about. Or why it matters to me so much. So I went on my Tumblr and asked people what it meant to them. This is what they wrote:

“My Drunk Kitchen isn’t just a show. It’s a wondrous virtual community of love, learning, and acceptance. And puns. A shit ton of puns.”

—pippinmiller

“My Drunk Kitchen is a few minutes where you can laugh at puns and slurs and slips and drops and learn absolutely nothing.”

—bestofthorn

“My Drunk Kitchen is about realizing that just because something didn’t turn out the way you wanted it doesn’t mean it is bad, that

you can make the best out of a bad situation even if it seems hard to try, and to never forget cheese when making grilled cheese.”

—the-frozen-city

“It’s a show that is about loving and accepting yourself. It is about making the best out of an interesting situation. Sure, there is drinking, messes, and puns, but above all, My Drunk Kitchen is a show that shows you that you are not alone and reminds people that there is more to life than just you.”

—weirdo-in-austin

“My Drunk Kitchen is about making the most of every situation. Like maybe everything didn’t turn out the way you expected it to, but there are always lessons to be learned and silver linings. It’s also about loving yourself and loving others. And having a good time. It’s like one giant international party facilitated through the Internet. It allows people from one side of the world to have a good laugh with people on the other side. It’s about so much. :)”

—thoughts-to-constellations

“This is a show about friendship.”

—*My Drunk Kitchen*, episode 1, March 2011

“My Drunk Kitchen is an excellent example of the journey being more important than the destination.”

—Lucy8675309

So basically, the timeline breaks down like this:

In March 2011, I was lonely and got really drunk and put it on the Internet.

In March 2012, I moved to Los Angeles to pursue a career in entertainment.

In March 2013, my roommate and I launched a campaign to raise over \$200,000 and travel across the country doing charity work culminating in over 100,000 pounds of food being redistributed and over 94,000 people fed.

And now in 2014, I am “publishing” my first book.

If you can figure out how that happened, let me know. For now I am just grateful that so many people around me allowed this to happen. So thank you.



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