



I'll Have What She's Having: My Adventures in Celebrity Dieting

By Rebecca Harrington

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A hilarious look at the eating habits of the fit and famous--from Gwyneth's goji berry and quail egg concoctions to Jackie Kennedy's baked potato and Beluga caviar regimen--Rebecca Harrington leaves no cabbage soup unstirred in her wickedly funny, wildly absurd quest to diet like the stars.

Elizabeth Taylor mixed cottage cheese and sour cream; Madonna subsisted on "sea vegetables;" and Marilyn Monroe drank raw eggs whipped with warm milk. Where there is a Hollywood starlet offering nutritional advice, there is a diet Rebecca Harrington is willing to try. Facing a harrowing mix of fainting spells, pimples, and salmonella, Harrington tracks down illegal haggis to imitate Pippa Middleton, paces her apartment until the wee hours drinking ten Diet Cokes à la Karl Lagerfeld, and attempts something forbiddingly known as the "Salt Water Flush" to channel her inner Beyoncé. Rebecca Harrington risks kitchen fires and mysterious face rashes, all in the name of diet journalism. Taking cues from noted beauty icons like Posh Spice (alkaline!), Dolly Parton (Velveeta!), Sophia Loren (pasta!) and Cameron Diaz (savory oatmeal!), *I'll Have What She's Having* is completely surprising, occasionally unappetizing, and always outrageously funny.

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Editorial Review

Review

“Over the course of *I'll Have What She's Having*, Ms. Harrington eats like 14 different celebrities, both dead and alive. Among them: Madonna , Jackie Kennedy, Marilyn Monroe , Karl Lagerfeld, Dolly Parton, and the GOOP goddess herself, Gwyneth Paltrow . . . The writing—though not the food—is delectable.” – Bari Weiss, *The Wall Street Journal*

“Novelist Harrington (*Penelope*) undertakes a hilariously ill-advised experiment in celebrity diets ranging from Beyoncé’s master cleanse lemonade with cayenne pepper and maple syrup to Karl Lagerfeld’s guzzling reliance on Diet Coke... While the content is mostly lighthearted and humorous, there is a palpable undercurrent of sharp feminist commentary.” -- *Publisher's Weekly*

“Fandom through weight loss... well, why not? You’ll laugh out loud at the author’s attempts to follow the sometimes excellent, sometimes stomach-churning diet regimens of celebrities: Gwyneth Paltrow (tasty!), Elizabeth Taylor (peanut butter and steak, yuck), Madonna, Beyoncé and more.” – *People Magazine’s Best New Books*

“In each chapter of her witty book, Ms. Harrington eats like various celebrities, dead and alive. Among them: Madonna, Jackie Kennedy, Marilyn Monroe, and, of course, the domestic goddess herself, Gwyneth Paltrow. It turns out bombshells of Hollywood’s golden age had some nasty ideas about how to lose weight, particularly the gorgeous yo-yo dieter Liz Taylor. Ms. Harrington follows the diet laid out by Taylor in her 1987 book ‘Elizabeth Takes Off.’ One dinner consists of a piece of bread topped with steak and slathered with peanut butter. But that seems to pale in comparison to Taylor’s tuna salad, which consisted of tomato paste, tuna, grapefruit, scallions and mayonnaise. ‘She is, in short, an excellent broad with really bad taste in food,’ Ms. Harrington writes.” – Bari Weiss, *The Wall Street Journal*

“After the sugar-rush of the holidays come the January diet books. One of the most entertaining is *I'll Have What She's Having: My Adventures in Celebrity Dieting* by Rebecca Harrington . . . It’s both hilarious and sad to think of Gwyneth Paltrow subsisting on kale juice and raw almonds soaked in water, or Dolly Parton trying to slim down on vats of cabbage soup. In the end, Harrington decides, we should quit worrying about being perfect, and have a slice of pizza.” – *Minneapolis Star-Tribune* (“Five Faves of the Week”)

“Harrington delves into the lives of legendary beauties in the most personal way possible: by emulating their diets. From Greta Garbo to Beyoncé, Harrington chronicles the food and fitness regimens that may or may not transform us into svelte stars, too . . . Hilariously humanizing.” – *TimeOut*

“While this is not a “tell-all” of *When Harry Met Sally*, Harrington’s new book gives readers the inside scoop of what celebrities do to diet. Harrington actually tries these diets—including Pippa Middleton’s haggis and Beyoncé’s ‘salt water flush’ in this hilarious account.” – *The Reading Room*

“If you're hoping to take a critical look at the odd and interesting ways famous people eat, you'll enjoy digging in to Harrington's short, quippy book . . . Pop culture enthusiasts will devour it.” – *StyleBistro Book Club*: January 2015

About the Author

Rebecca Harrington is the author of the novel *Penelope*. She studied history and literature at Harvard and journalism at Columbia. Her work has appeared in *New York Magazine*, *The New York Times*, NPR.com and other publications. She lives in New York City.

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A JOURNEY BEGINS

I have always noticed diets. Diets are everywhere. You can't be a woman and not think you need to go on a diet or get a face transplant. Preferably the face of a famous person so that you can never get lost. But noticing diets is completely different from doing many of them in succession. Who would do that? Me. Here is the story.

The first diet I ever went on was William Howard Taft's diet. William Howard Taft was America's fattest president, and I found his diet on this sleep apnea website that someone sent me. This sleep apnea website was convinced that "no president with the possible exception of Lincoln has faced greater challenges" than Taft because he might have had sleep apnea. Actually, they are still not sure whether he actually had sleep apnea or not. He was always falling asleep at the card table.

A small part of the website was devoted to a diet Taft went on in 1905. Taft had always been appointed to posts because people liked him (even though his best friend *and* his wife wrote books about how they hated him), and at this point he had just been appointed secretary of war by Roosevelt and wanted to be seen in fighting condition. So he went on a diet that called for boiled fish in the morning, mutton at night, and glutinous biscuits for snacks. He lost a bunch of weight because that is disgusting.

This diet obsessed me. Why? I don't know. I went on it for no reason. The hardest part was the glutinous biscuits. I had to make them from scratch, and I used a shampoo bottle to roll out the dough. Sometimes I would read the letters of Major Archibald Butt, Taft's best friend who hated him. But mostly I boiled sole for breakfast and ate it with Worcestershire sauce.

After I enjoyed boiled fish in the morning for a decent amount of time, I started to tell my friends about the new cool diet I was on that was making me lose no weight.

Some seemed confused about why I would be so interested in the eating habits of Taft. ("It's because he had a cow named Pauline!" I would say.) Others suggested I do regular diets of real celebrities that people were interested in, and since I had decided that celebrity eating seemed a lot odder than normal eating, I agreed, and my diet adventure was born.

What is the enduring fascination with celebrity eating? One of the strangest things about researching these diets was how easy it was to find out what famous people eat every day. People are obsessed! It is practically the only thing you can find when researching actresses. That and how fun it is to work with someone who seems vaguely boring.

Not content to leave such business to *Us Weekly*, many modern celebrities have chosen to monetize their eating habits themselves, releasing cookbooks and workouts and various other lifestyle trinkets. Their nutritional regimens are now part of the business of being a celebrity. In our current antiglut, GMO-phobic culture, this often means celebrities must espouse a "healthy," "non-processed" life-style, even if they are lying and actually keep their bodies in shape with a combination of excellent genes and cigarettes. I suppose celebrities are providing a road map for imitating them. And when telling us how to imitate them, sharing an eating plan is so much easier than offering up a screed about genes and cigarettes—not to mention more

attainable, less jealousy-inducing, and more marketable. If you knew that eating goji berries would make you look like Jessica Biel, why wouldn't you do it?

I became interested in the diets of celebrities not necessarily because I wanted to have the ideal body (I already knew I was too squat, like a partridge waddling across a field) but because I really do like movies and I have always enjoyed doing experiments on myself in the style of Benjamin Franklin. I suppose it is the Enlightenment philosopher within me. Although, my experiences with the diets were probably closest to *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* rather than any other seminal text of literature. I ate and then I discussed the aftereffects of what I ate with a barely suppressed glee and a pretend hatred.

Here are the rules I set for myself: I would try to eat the way celebrities normally eat. While it could be amusing to try to imitate the life-threatening efforts made by Christian Bale to slim down to the size of a Popsicle stick for *The Machinist*, it wasn't scientific enough for me, Ben Franklin. I would also buy any cookbook a celebrity wrote, even if it looked really bad. And I would try to employ exercise regimens, clothing choices, or dinner parties when appropriate.

But when faced with the almost Herculean task of dieting like a celebrity for an extended period of time and reporting on it, I had to ask myself a certain number of questions. What would happen to me after going on a million celebrity diets? Would I live? Would my friends stay with me until the end even though I kept making them come to my house for dinner parties where they all told me to my face that they despised all of my food? Would I get a rash on my cheek and would it clear up? Could I achieve my ideal body? My ideal personality (a combo of Liz Taylor and Liz Taylor)? I also wanted to answer what always seemed to be either a genius rhetorical question or a question that made absolutely no sense: Are you what you eat?

Actually, the idea that you are what you eat may have come from Ludwig Feuerbach—a respectable philosopher George Eliot translated into English. Or it may have come from a great eater and dieter, Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, who was both the founder of the low-carbohydrate diet and the writer of several tomes about gastronomy. Is the idea a philosophical meditation on the process of imbibing or the siren call of the celebrity dieter? I was about to find out!

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jose Longoria:

As people who live in the actual modest era should be revise about what going on or facts even knowledge to make them keep up with the era that is always change and make progress. Some of you maybe will certainly update themselves by studying books. It is a good choice for you personally but the problems coming to you actually is you don't know which one you should start with. This I'll Have What She's Having: My Adventures in Celebrity Dieting is our recommendation to make you keep up with the world. Why, as this book serves what you want and want in this era.

Julie Kappel:

Playing with family in a very park, coming to see the coastal world or hanging out with friends is thing that usually you may have done when you have spare time, then why you don't try factor that really opposite from that. 1 activity that make you not experiencing tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you

are ride on and with addition of knowledge. Even you love I'll Have What She's Having: My Adventures in Celebrity Dieting, you are able to enjoy both. It is good combination right, you still would like to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh come on its mind hangout fellas. What? Still don't get it, oh come on its called reading friends.

Brandon Erickson:

Your reading sixth sense will not betray anyone, why because this I'll Have What She's Having: My Adventures in Celebrity Dieting reserve written by well-known writer whose to say well how to make book that may be understand by anyone who read the book. Written within good manner for you, leaking every ideas and creating skill only for eliminate your own hunger then you still skepticism I'll Have What She's Having: My Adventures in Celebrity Dieting as good book not merely by the cover but also by content. This is one publication that can break don't evaluate book by its deal with, so do you still needing yet another sixth sense to pick this!? Oh come on your looking at sixth sense already told you so why you have to listening to a different sixth sense.

Joseph Gabriel:

Some people said that they feel weary when they reading a book. They are directly felt that when they get a half portions of the book. You can choose the actual book I'll Have What She's Having: My Adventures in Celebrity Dieting to make your current reading is interesting. Your skill of reading skill is developing when you like reading. Try to choose straightforward book to make you enjoy to see it and mingle the opinion about book and reading through especially. It is to be very first opinion for you to like to start a book and examine it. Beside that the guide I'll Have What She's Having: My Adventures in Celebrity Dieting can to be your brand-new friend when you're sense alone and confuse using what must you're doing of these time.

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