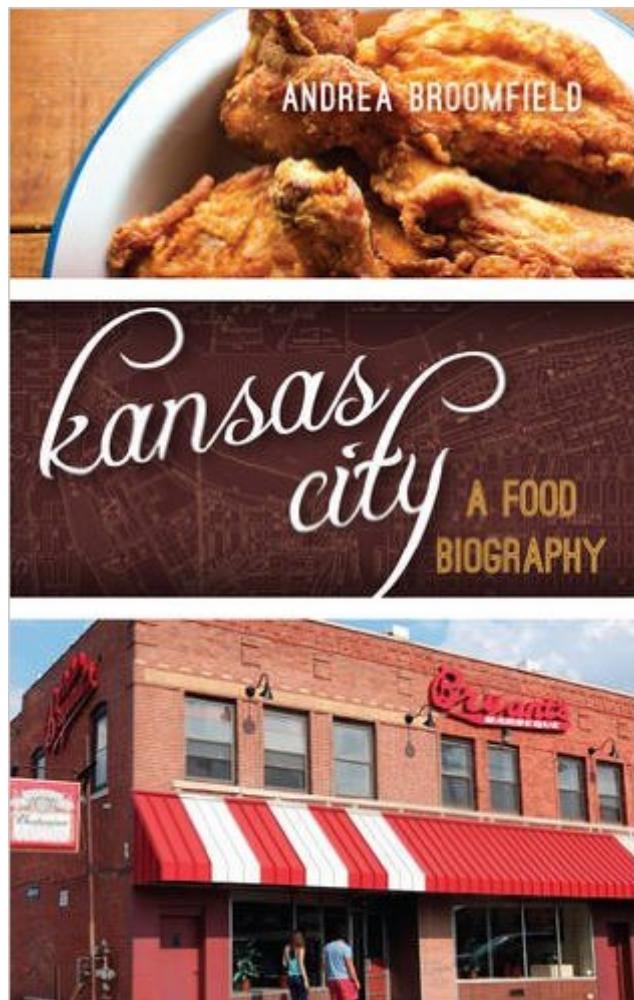


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# Kansas City: A Food Biography (Big City Food Biographies)



## Synopsis

While some cities owe their existence to lumber or oil, turpentine or steel, Kansas City owes its existence to food. From its earliest days, Kansas City was in the business of provisioning pioneers and traders headed west, and later with provisioning the nation with meat and wheat. Throughout its history, thousands of Kansas Citians have also made their living providing meals and hospitality to travelers passing through on their way elsewhere, be it by way of a steamboat, Conestoga wagon, train, automobile, or airplane. As Kansas City's adopted son, Fred Harvey sagely noted, "Travel follows good food routes," and Kansas City's identity as a food city is largely based on that fact. *Kansas City: A Food Biography* explores in fascinating detail how a frontier town on the edge of wilderness grew into a major metropolis, one famous for not only great cuisine but for a crossroads hospitality that continues to define it. *Kansas City: A Food Biography* also explores how politics, race, culture, gender, immigration, and art have forged the city's most iconic dishes, from chili and steak to fried chicken and barbecue. In lively detail, Andrea Broomfield brings the Kansas City food scene to life.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Every place has a food history, but I didn't get that until I read this book. Perhaps it felt that there was no history because I live in what seems like the franchise food capital of the world, Overland Park, Kansas, next door to Kansas City. But Overland Park is named for the Overland

Trail, and folks had to park their Conestoga wagons here while they got provisions for the long, franchise-free trek to the west. Provisioning is the heritage of this place, and that takes many forms: farmers' markets, grocery stores, local specialty restaurants, and, of course, a lot of franchises. I buy corn (local) that can be husked at the store to complement the Copper River salmon (not local, obviously) bought at the same grocery store. That store got started in 1936. Who knew? Now every time I shop there I am aware of how I am entwined with a bit of history. And importing luxurious seafood is not new; in the late 1800s it was fresh oysters that were in demand. Prohibition shut down breweries, but the craft beer movement re-inspired them. The writing helped me realize that the way we eat (and drink) is part of a continuum. If you think that something is new, you just haven't looked deeply enough into the past. There is a lot packed into this book. The research was thorough and the writing engaging. I would have given another star if the maps had been bigger and clearer and if more maps had been included. I couldn't find some key words in the index that would have made it easier to find sections I wanted to reread, so an even bigger index would have been nice.

Anyone who grew up in Kansas City will love this food "biography" of the Cowtown. It's a great history as well.

Looks like a great book. But \$38?? What makes it worth 3 times more than others.

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