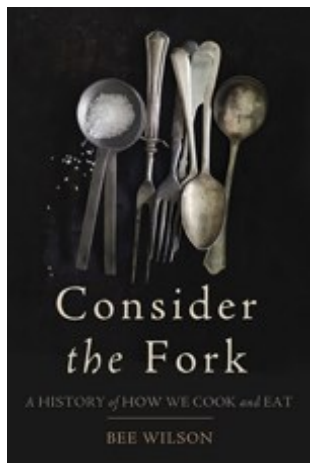




# Discussion Guide

## About the Book



Book Title: *Consider the Fork: How Technology Transforms the Way We Cook and Eat*

Author: Bee Wilson

Published by Basic Books, 2012

Author Website: [www.beewilcon.com](http://www.beewilcon.com)

Book Website: <http://www.considerthefork.com/>

Available: Amazon (Book, Kindle, Audible), Barnes and Noble (Book, Kindle, Audible), Indiebound.com, Powells.com

## Questions for Discussion

- 1. What were your general impressions of the book?**
- 2. As you think about the changes in food preparation over time, what have been the positive developments? What changes would you consider not as positive?**
- 3. What is your favorite kitchen tool and why? (You might ask everyone to bring their favorite kitchen tool to the book club meeting to discuss).**
- 4. She suggests archaeologists of the future may refer to us a “mug” culture. Invite everyone to bring their favorite mug to your book club meeting and explain why the mug is their favorite. Do your mugs define you in any way?**
- 5. Does it make a difference to you whether or meal is prepared quickly in a microwave or slowly on the stovetop and in the oven?**
- 6. Read over the MAMs comments. Which of the MAMs do you most agree with and why?**
- 7. Would you recommend this book for other Book Clubs? Why or why not?**
- 8. In what ways, if any, will this book change your life or perspective?**

*Another discussion guide can be found at: [http://www.bookbrowse.com/reading\\_guides/detail/index.cfm/book\\_number/2785/consider-the-fork](http://www.bookbrowse.com/reading_guides/detail/index.cfm/book_number/2785/consider-the-fork)*

## Nancy and the MAMs discuss the book...



**NANCY:** One of our MAMs Book Club Springfield members picked this book after seeing it reviewed by the Smithsonian. She told us “I often see books I want to read there. I needed a book for my selection, so I thought this would be fun.” In our book club, we have agreed to take turns selecting, with no guidelines, so we found ourselves reading this anthropological look at the history of eating and food preparation. I would first like to say “Thank you, Bee Wilson, for taking the time to look back and help us consider the history of food preparation over time and culture.” Bee meticulously researched and compiled information on 8 topics – from Pots and Pans to Knives; from Fire to Measuring, from Grinding to Eating, Ice and finally the Kitchen. Those of us born into this time of convenience have only a vague awareness of the hard work necessary to prepare food in most of human history. Reading Bee’s book, helped me image those who literally kept the fire burning, the young boys and later dogs turning the first roast rotisseries, the women and men whose days were defined by hunting and gathering, cooking and tending the pots.

This book calls me to be grateful for all the innovation and development leading to the modern kitchen. And it reminds me to savor the simple things – like the timeless wooden spoon. And, I realized how mindlessly I often use my own kitchen tools. As I seek to be more mindful, I found myself wanting to scrub my pots so the copper shines. I want to learn to sharpen my knives, and maybe shop for a really good one. I’d like to buy a mortar and pestle that my Mexican friend uses to adeptly to make guacamole.



**SALLIE:** I liked the “Pots and Pans” chapter the most... especially when she was talking about the pottery. She says that early societies were defined by their pottery... and so perhaps we will someday be called the “mug” society. She wrote “Many of us cling to particular vessels, fetishizing over this mug or that plate.” (Location 361-Kindle). You may think that is funny, but since I drink tea every morning, I do have fetishes with my mugs! I take great pride in my collection of tea mugs!



**MOLLY:** I focused on the “Grind” chapter. Always keep my nose to the grindstone, my Mama used to say. Cooking was a lot of work before blenders and automatic choppers came into vogue. Listen to this: “Behind every course of a grand dinner was a mini-army of minions with sore arms.” (Location 2403-Kindle). She speaks of “technological stagnation” in this area for thousands of years. The kitchen helpers used sieves, mortar and pestles. I’ve been wanting to get a mortar and pestle. I think it’d be rather cathartic. Listen to me! Such luxury to choose to grind my food because it will give me time to take out my anger, or think about my day, or pretend I’m old fashioned!



**PRISCILLA:** Did you think she was poking fun at those that spend thousands to renovate their kitchens? I would love to have a beautiful kitchen. If Moses and I get married, he said he’d remodel mine for me. He knows the way to my heart!



**KATHARINE:** I loved her discussion in the fourth chapter on “Measure.” She talks about how Americans are so meticulous with streets, phone numbers and other measures but she asks... “So why, then, when it comes to cooking, do Americans throw reason out of the window and insist on measuring cups?” (Location 1937-Kindle). When I studied in England, they used weight to measure dry ingredients, which makes much more sense. She poked fun at how Americans think cook books can tell you how to make a perfect dish, but really it comes down to the experience of the cook. I still can’t replicate my mother’s dishes! I’ve given up trying.



**JANE:** Personally, I liked the “Knife” chapter. I signed up to take a Knife class after reading her stories. Listen to this: “There is peculiar joy in holding a knife that feels just right for your hand and marveling as it dices an onion, almost without effort on your part.” (Location 880-Kindle). I can’t say I’ve ever had that peculiar joy, but dammit I added it to my bucket list. After I take this class, I’m going to get the perfect knife and I’ll invite you all over for **Chinese after I master Zen**



**ABIGAIL:** I did find this book went on a little much. Consider the spoons! Consider the forks! More information than I needed in that chapter on eating! But she did say..... “Having more gadgetry -- more kitchen belongings – at our disposal does not necessarily make life easier.” (Location 2945 – Kindle). Alleluia! Let’s live a little more with less! Molly, you may find that mortar and pestle may be more helpful than you think!