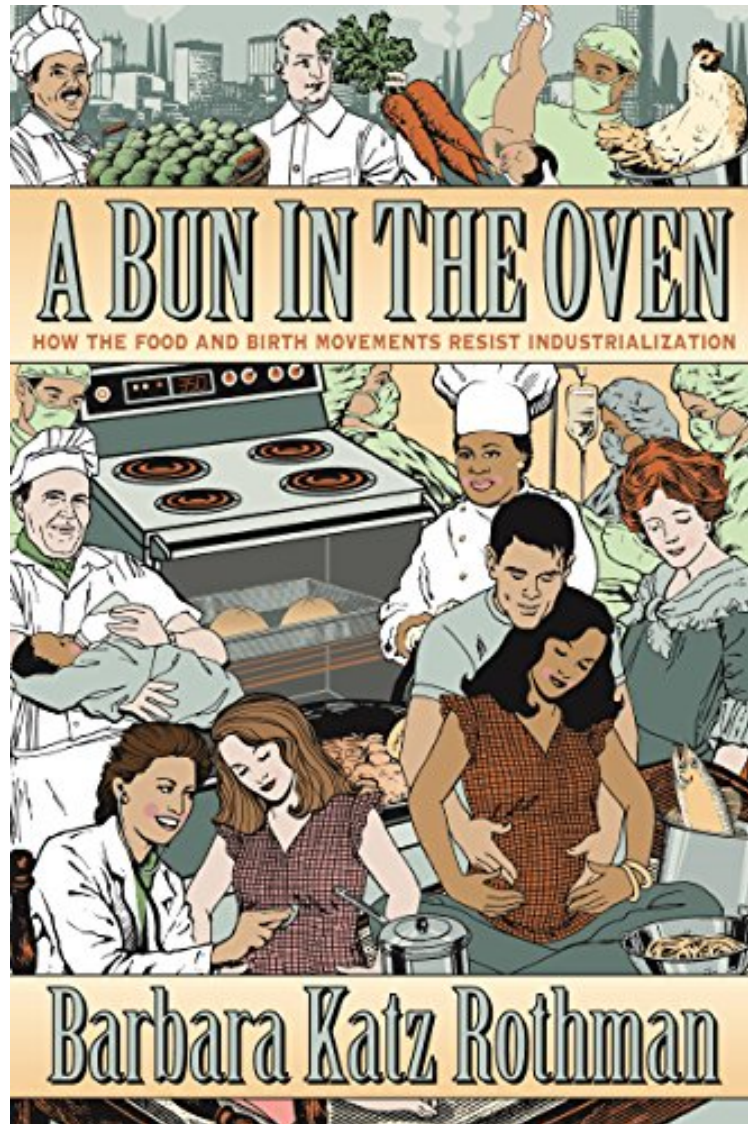


# A Bun in the Oven: How the Food and Birth Movements Resist Industrialization

Barbara Katz Rothman

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**Barbara Katz Rothman : A Bun in the Oven: How the Food and Birth Movements Resist Industrialization** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Bun in the Oven: How the Food and Birth Movements Resist Industrialization:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A gripping and powerful book. By jakeI started reading Barbara Katz

Rothman's excellent "A Bun in the Oven" over Easter (seemed appropriate on a couple levels). Wow. I'm finding it to be a gripping, enjoyable read and brimming with beautiful writing and powerful quotes. "We need not be caught between hard, by-the-numbers science on the one hand, and soft womanly instinct on the other. We can, instead, look at skills and craftsmanship. In the world of food, people can talk about 'natural' and 'skill' in the same sentence, talk about natural ingredients and processes and skilled artisans making something beautiful. So it can be in the world of birth." "Can it possibly be right that almost every baby begins life in precisely the place almost every older person passionately wants not to end it?" "I want a birth movement that can address the industrialization of birth as the food movement has done for the industrialization of food."

There are people dedicated to improving the way we eat, and people dedicated to improving the way we give birth. *A Bun in the Oven* is the first comparison of these two social movements. The food movement has seemingly exploded, but little has changed in the diet of most Americans. And while there's talk of improving the childbirth experience, most births happen in large hospitals, about a third result in C-sections, and the US does not fare well in infant or maternal outcomes. In *A Bun in the Oven* Barbara Katz Rothman traces the food and the birth movements through three major phases over the course of the 20th century in the United States: from the early 20th century era of scientific management; through to the consumerism of Post World War II with its turn to the French in making things gracious; to the late 20th century counter-culture midwives and counter-cuisine cooks. The book explores the tension throughout all of these eras between the industrial demands of mass-management and profit-making, and the social movements composed largely of women coming together from very different feminist sensibilities which are working to expose the harmful consequences of industrialization, and make birth and food both meaningful and healthy. Katz Rothman, an internationally recognized sociologist named midwife to the movement by the Midwives Alliance of North America, turns her attention to the lessons to be learned from the food movement, and the parallel forces shaping both of these consumer-based social movements. In both movements, issues of the natural, the authentic, and the importance of meaningful and personal experiences get balanced against discussions of what is sensible, convenient and safe. And both movements operate in a context of commercial and corporate interests, which places profit and efficiency above individual experiences and outcomes. *A Bun in the Oven* brings new insight into the relationship between our most intimate, personal experiences, the industries that control them, and the social movements that resist the industrialization of life and seek to birth change.

A sociologist in the world of midwifery is introduced to food studies, and spots parallels everywhere with the world of birth. Her wittily named study ranges insightfully from Julia Child to natural childbirth, and from Lamaze and Pavlov to labour times, Cesareans and kale chips as she considers how birth and food, once so profoundly part of women's world of production, ultimately came to be acts of consumption. *Times Higher Education* "A Bun in the Oven is an intriguing, often startling reading, especially if you have never given much consideration to birth and all that implies. It is also a very personal and moving account, in which the author shares episodes of her own life, her reflection on death, life, and suffering, as well as more general considerations about authority, gender, and power." - *Huffington Post* "A Bun in the Oven is an erudite but fun read into these two worlds and how people struggle for identity, choice, voice and meaningful experiences in our increasingly industrialized world. The reader leaves with an understanding and appreciation for the struggles of both the food and birth movements and a sense of what these two, often overlapping, life-or-death important movements can learn from one another." - Jonathan Deutsch, co-author of *Barbecue: A Global History* "Katz Rothman is at her most interesting when explaining why the modern medicalized birth which increases the speed and reduces the pain of labour is not always best for either mother or baby." - *Times Literary Supplement* "This book is intended for gender and women's studies, sociology, anthropology, and medical studies audiences, but would be useful also for psychologists interested in women's health, health psychology, and feminist psychology. The authoritative sociological and historical background that Rothman places the activities of eating and giving birth provides an extremely useful context from which to study individual choices and social behavior." - *PsycCRITIQUES* "This book is readable, authoritative, and thoughtful. Its combination of scholarly expertise and heart-on-its-sleeve advocacy gives it a distinct voice that is sure to provoke reaction especially if it is, as Rothman and I would hope, taken up by readers who are not already foodies and birthies." - *North American Dialogue* "Katz Rothman's deep examination of the history of midwives and childbirth in America allows her to explore not only the birth and food movements of today, but also much more: capitalism, privilege, the meaning of home, and some might argue the meaning of life." - *Feminist Collections* "Barbara Katz Rothman provides an unsettling comparison of two domains where women's labor has been colonized by men in the name of science and industry. In the process she gives a rare insight not only into what happens when the gap between everyday experience and expert knowledge is bridged in the name of professionalism, but also equips her readers with reasonable hope in cross-fertilizing lessons from the food and the natural birthing movements. Students, teachers and scholars will earn much in engaging with Katz Rothman's rich description and sharp critique." - Krishnendu Ray, author of *The Migrants Table: Meals and Memories in Bengali-American Households* "Rothman is passionate about her topic, and her writing style reflects her

enthusiasm. The book is well-researched and fun and offers a useful model for the comparison of two important social movements."-Journal of American Culture"A Bun in the Oven is a fascinating investigation of the parallels and differences between two important consumer movements of our times: the food movement and the birth movement. Witty and thought-provoking throughout, it will stimulate discussion among those who seek to keep artisanal skills and knowledge alive in both of these fundamental areas of our lives."-Ina May Gaskin,author of Spiritual MidwiferyAbout the AuthorBarbara Katz Rothman is Professor of Sociology, Public Health and Womens Studies at the City University of New York. Her previous books include In Labor, The Tentative Pregnancy, Recreating Motherhood, The Book of Lifeand, with Wendy Simonds, Laboring On.