

# My Day on a Plate: Nora Ephron

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Nora Ephron—novelist, screenwriter, director, serious eater—is as comfortable in front of a pot of beef bourguignon as she is behind a movie camera. With her latest film, [Julie & Julia](#) (about Julia Child and a blogger who recreated all 524 recipes in *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*), out this week, the woman behind *When Harry Met Sally...* and *Sleepless in Seattle* dishes about everything she ate over the course of 24 hours.



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It's summertime, so my husband and I usually have a bowl of **cherries** that we take out of the fridge first thing in the morning and eat all day long. They were excellent yesterday. We don't normally do breakfast during the week; on the weekend we get very serious and get bacon (the kind that's chunks, not strips) from [Flying Pigs Farm](#) at the [Union Square Greenmarket](#) and make potatoes fried up with it. But yesterday I just had **toasted sourdough bread** with very good **salted butter**. I'm religious about salted butter. I don't understand how it happened that everyone thought we should all have sweet butter. I blame the French. It's like those enormous spoons we all have for our dessert now. We get our butter at—I'm ashamed to report—Eli's Marketplace, the most expensive place to buy anything in New York, let alone good salted butter. It's [Kate's Homemade Butter](#), but I think “homemade” might be a euphemism. **The cherries came from [Butterfield Market](#) on Lexington Avenue; they have great cherries. We've tried all the cherries in the neighborhood and we even flew some in from California a couple of weeks ago, but they weren't as good as the ones at Butterfield. By the way, I'm not a coffee drinker, so the caffeine comes later.**

I saw this movie the other night called [The Cove](#), which is a terrifying documentary about horrible people in Japan who kill dolphins. After the screening there was a panel discussion about mercury poisoning and I'm sorry to say but it gave me a gigantic craving for tuna. I was on a press junket for my movie a couple of weeks ago, and I ordered a tuna sandwich for lunch at the hotel, and it didn't taste remotely like my kind of tuna salad. So I made **tuna salad** at about 1:15 with a can of **Bumblebee tuna**, **mayonnaise**, and **chopped celery**, and I had some great **cherry tomatoes**, too,

which I sliced in half, and I had that with [Tostaditas tortilla chips](#). To me, it doesn't matter what kind of tuna it is, as long as it's Bumblebee. I had the entire can, and it was a big can. Yesterday it was water-packed, but I like the oil-packed a little more. And of course I washed it all down with my favorite beverage: **Coke Zero**, which is a breakthrough in soft drinks. It tastes so much like Coke. They developed it for men because they thought "Diet Coke" sounded wussy. And "zero" is not a wussy word. I have one every single day and I try to wait until noon to have it. Sometimes I don't make it, but yesterday I did. I have no idea if Julia Child drank Coke or what she really liked to drink, except for wine. She drank that by the gallon.

All afternoon I had **cherries**. I would wander from my computer into the kitchen and have a few cherries and wander back again. When they're really good, it's almost like eating an apple. You can almost get four bites. These were Bing cherries. I don't like the yellow ones as much. I'm a big one for wandering into the kitchen as a break for what I'm doing, so it was cherries, cherries, cherries, and then more cherries.

At 7:45, we went out to dinner at Elio's. I had called them to ask that they save me an order of soft-shelled crabs because they sometimes run out. So I had a **Kir**, which is what I've been drinking lately. I alternate between Champagne and a Kir. It was a delicious Kir, which I had with ice on the side so it would last almost forever. I had a wonderful **salad of radishes, cucumbers, and tomatoes** in a vinaigrette. I'm going to make it this weekend in my own way, which will probably be with sour cream and a little balsamic vinegar. One of the nicest things about it was that it came in many tiny little bits and it took me way longer to eat my salad than anyone else at the table. They wolfed theirs down while I was still picking away. Then I had **soft-shelled crabs amandine meunière**. I could eat them every night, but I can't have them at home because my husband doesn't like them. It's one of the few food divisions in our marriage, along with calf's liver, which he also doesn't like. I've loved soft-shelled crabs from the very first time I had them. They didn't exist in California when I was growing up. You do see them now in L.A., but I would never buy them there. So the first time I had them was in Washington, D.C., in 1961, and I remember thinking to myself, "Where have these been all my life?" It was in a little teeny French restaurant next to the [Hay-Adams Hotel](#) that's not there anymore. I also had an order of **string beans** because they make really excellent string beans at Elio's, which is one of those places you could eat at a couple of nights a week and be completely happy. We also like Sistina, a wonderful Italian restaurant uptown, and another one of my favorites is Payard Bistro, which just closed; they made the best croque monsieur in New York. It's tragic. They had a fight over the rent with the landlord and now it's one of many, many places in the neighborhood that are no longer open.

For dessert I had **cheesecake**, but just to keep the others company. It was okay, but it reminded me that I have to make some cheesecake soon, because I like my own better than any other. Taste in cheesecake is very individual. Some people love ricotta cheesecake and I hate ricotta cheesecake. I use the Philadelphia Cream Cheese package recipe. I didn't drink any wine with dinner, but I was still nursing my Kir all the way to dessert. I only have one drink a night because if I drink more than that I wake up at two in the morning.

I guess I've always been a food obsessive, and it has gotten worse the older I've gotten. When we were working on *Julie & Julia*, I went back to the Julia Child cookbook and made some things I haven't made in a while, one being **beef bourguignon**, which to me is a hilariously 1960s dish that everyone felt they had to serve at a dinner party or they weren't a grown-up. I still make things from that era, like **chicken curry with six little bowls of condiments**, that being another standard of my youth. And I still love **paella**. I don't use the [Vincent Price](#) recipe, even though I have that [cookbook](#). I do it my way: I start with a cooked chicken, so I can make a paella in about thirty minutes.

That brings us to this morning. I haven't had anything yet, but I know what I'm going to have: **half a cantaloupe with cottage cheese**. Then we're going to get in a car and go out to East Hampton and buy Long Island tomatoes at the Pike Farm Stand on Sagg Main Street and I'm going to have a **tomato sandwich on sourdough bread with mayonnaise** for lunch. I don't think any day is worth living without thinking about what you're going to eat next at all times.

As told to Mark Rozzo

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