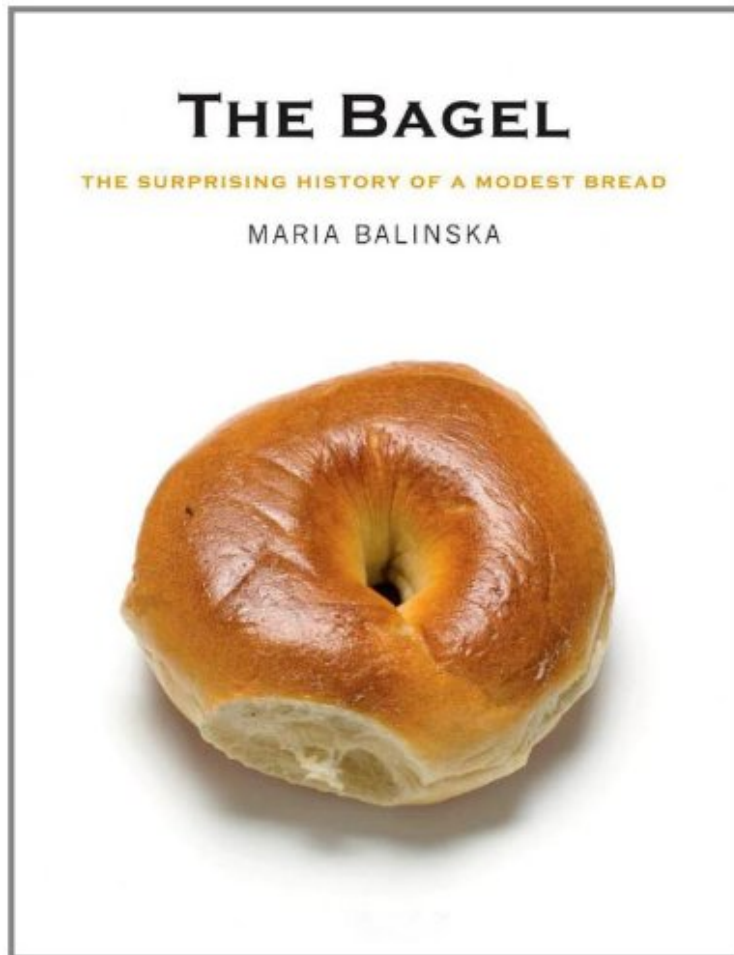


[Free and download] The Bagel: The Surprising History of a Modest Bread

## The Bagel: The Surprising History of a Modest Bread

*Maria Balinska*

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**Maria Balinska : The Bagel: The Surprising History of a Modest Bread** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Bagel: The Surprising History of a Modest Bread:

12 of 13 people found the following review helpful. History-Lite.By Gerard J. St. JohnThis short book (195 pages) does not purport to be a definitive history of the bagel. As the author notes, the bagel is a modest bread made of commonly available ingredients, flour, water and eggs. It should not be surprising that many people throughout history have mixed these ingredients into a dough that is boiled and then baked in a circular shape with a hole in the middle. Similar foodstuffs have been found in many places, including China and Italy. This book focuses on the bagels of the Jewish bakers in Poland and in the United States. It is history-lite. Actually, it is "histories-lite." It presents a series of summary histories. It tells the story of Jan Sobieski's military victory, lifting the siege of Vienna in 1683. It tells the story of the hard-working bakers and the impoverished peddlers of bagels in the cities of Poland for more than two centuries. It tells the story of the Jewish immigrant bakers in the lower east side of New York City. It tells the role of

the Polish Jews in the labor movement in the first half of the 1900s, a movement that pitted capitalism against socialism. And it tells how the Lender brothers guided their bagel baking company into a multi-million dollar business. Together, these summary histories provide clear snapshots of the lives of people who are not usually mentioned in traditional history books. The book is well written and well worth reading. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Fariousgood history - and pretty much factual! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The Bagel: A Cultural History By Aice R. Hammond A delightful little book! A charmingly well written journey through the bagel's history, with many interesting asides and footnotes. Well researched and documented but never dull. A find.

If smoked salmon and cream cheese bring only one thing to mind, you can count yourself among the world's millions of bagel mavens. But few people are aware of the bagel's provenance, let alone its adventuresome history. This charming book tells the remarkable story of the bagel's journey from the tables of seventeenth-century Poland to the freezers of middle America today, a story of often surprising connections between a cheap market-day snack and centuries of Polish, Jewish, and American history. Research in international archives and numerous personal interviews uncover the bagel's links with the defeat of the Turks by Polish King Jan Sobieski in 1683, the Yiddish cultural revival of the late nineteenth century, and Jewish migration across the Atlantic to America. There the story moves from the bakeries of New York's Lower East Side to the Bagel Bakers Local 388 Union of the 1960s, and the attentions of the mob. For all its modest size, the bagel has managed to bridge cultural gaps, rescue kings from obscurity, charge the emotions, and challenge received wisdom. Maria Balinska weaves together a rich, quirky, and evocative history of East European Jewry and the unassuming ring-shaped roll the world has taken to its heart.

From Publishers Weekly From the Italian ciambella in a 17th-century portrait of a young prince to the 1959 album *Bagels and Bongos* by pianist Irving Fields, journalist and BBC radio editor Balinska traces the cultural identity of a New York City icon from its humble beginnings in Poland to the freezer section of American supermarkets. Balinska's own interest in the bagel began with a year spent in Warsaw, Poland, as a graduate student, where she learned that her own family history was relevant to that of the bagel. She then unearths a plethora of little-known facts about this breakfast staple, recounting its role in children's nursery rhymes, Poland's economic crisis of 1929, even its place in a *McCall's* magazine spread in 1963 next to Shirley Temple where the magazine encouraged its readers to Join the stars below in this salute to Manhattan's most popular breakfast bagels and lox. While the book may be too dry for the run-of-the-mill bagel lover, academics and dedicated foodies will appreciate Balinska's considerable research as well as her forays into the late 19th-century Jewish immigrant experience and American pop culture. Photos. (Nov.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist The bagel may have grown out of its New York insularity to become an American icon, but its origins are not what many people have come to believe. Historian Balinska traces the bagel's history and discovers antecedents in southern Italy and in Muslim northwest China. Despite the oft-repeated legend, the bagel did not originate as a tribute to Polish king Jan Sobieski after the Battle of Vienna in 1683, for documents citing the ring-shaped bread substantially antedate that event. In the nineteenth century, both Jewish and Gentile bakers sold bagels in local eastern European markets. Jewish immigrants brought the bagel to New York and made it popular. With a keen ear for telling the anecdote, Balinska reports how the bagel entered urban history, how it figured in labor disputes, and how America's bagel capital may have shifted to Mattoon, Illinois, whose bakery daily turns out three million bagels. --Mark Knoblauch "After years of research on Jewish food in America, I thought I had discovered all there was to know about the bagel and its journey. But then I read Maria Balinska's lively and well-researched book, *The Bagel*. Her book has filled in many of the questions I had about the bagel and raised new ones, too." Joan Nathan, *Slate*