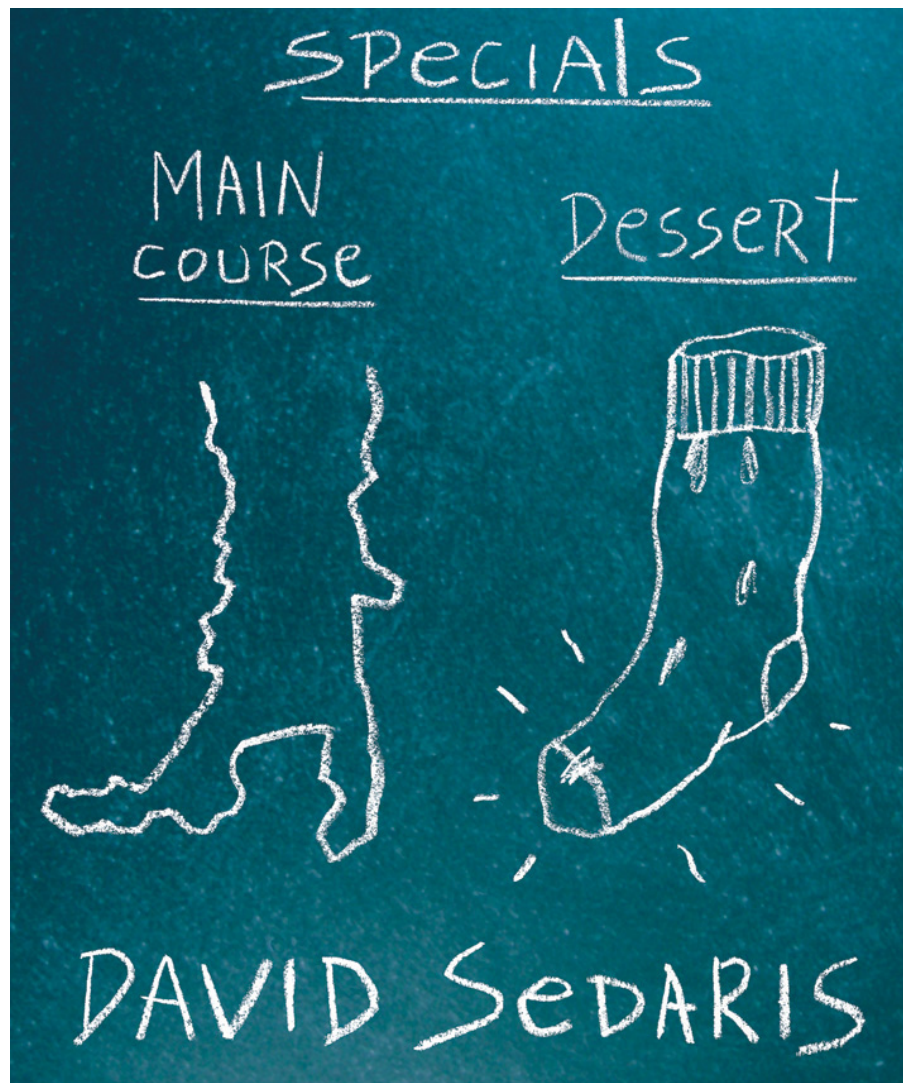


DAVID SEDARIS

writer

The best-selling humorist (his books include *Me Talk Pretty One Day* and *Dress Your Family in Corduroy and Denim*) has sampled culinary offerings around the globe. He and partner Hugh Hamrick divide their time between Paris and London. The title of Sedaris's latest book of essays, *When You Are Engulfed in Flames*, just might hint at his prowess in the kitchen.



Rather than photographing the camera-shy author, we illustrated his food adventures.

Where do you like to eat in Paris?

The cafeteria at Les Invalides. I like that it's self-serve and you don't have to waste time waiting for the bill.

Of all the places you've been, where is the best food?

Last year, Hugh and I went to the town of Mantua [in Lombardy, Italy], where the specialty was a kind of donkey bourguignonne. I'd always thought Italian cooking was the best, but then we spent three months in Tokyo. It wasn't just the food that impressed me, but the kindness of the

people who made and sold it. I normally prefer eating at home, but in Japan, going out was a pleasure.

What's the most unusual thing you've eaten?

A few years back, in Barcelona, I tried some Camembert-flavored ice cream. It was basically Dirty Sock: The Dessert.

What would people be surprised to find in your kitchen?

Me cooking. Actually, *surprised* isn't the right word. People would be horrified. They would run. This is not just

me being modest. If Hugh is out of town, I'll cook my own meals, but I'm embarrassed to have anyone over. Grocery shopping, I love. Even washing up doesn't bother me, but when it comes to actually making stuff, it's best that somebody else does it.

Where was your most memorable meal?

It was at a place called Al Forno in Providence, Rhode Island. My family ate there for my sister Gretchen's college graduation, and it was a revelation. At that time—it was the mid-1980s—Italian, to most people, meant lots of

red gravy. Here, by contrast, everything was sauceless, and all the meat was grilled over a wood flame. I had the lamb, and it was the first time I'd ever seen fresh rosemary.

What are you having for dinner tonight?

It's a friend's birthday, so Hugh and I are going to St. John in London. The restaurant boasts a tail-to-snout menu, and though some of it's a little too spooky for me, I love the bone-marrow appetizer. It looks so stark and architectural upon the plate—a miniature Stonehenge served with a long spoon.

~INTERVIEW BY BEKAH WRIGHT