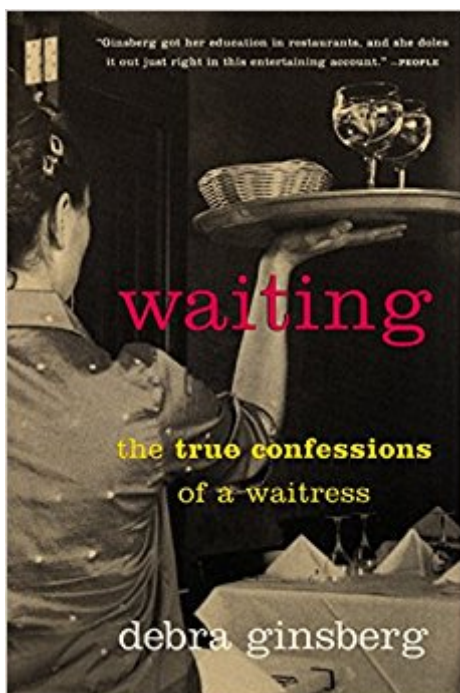


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Waiting: The True Confessions Of A Waitress



Synopsis

A veteran waitress dishes up a spicy and robust account of life as it really exists behind kitchen doors. Part memoir, part social commentary, part guide to how to behave when dining out, Debra Ginsberg's book takes readers on her twenty-year journey as a waitress at a soap-operatic Italian restaurant, an exclusive five-star dining club, the dingiest of diners, and more. While chronicling her evolution as a writer, Ginsberg takes a behind-the-scenes look at restaurant life—revealing that yes, when pushed, a server will spit in food, and, no, that's not really decaf you're getting—and how most people in this business are in a constant state of waiting to do something else.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In a truly just world, everyone would have to wait tables for at least six months, just to know what it's like. Failing that, we have writer-waiter Debra Ginsberg's tasty memoir to remind us about life on the other side of those swinging doors. Horror stories? After 20 years of serving other people's food, she's got 'em--and being handed a drunk's vomit-soaked napkins certainly fits the bill. But even though she expresses the usual frustrations with bad tippers and control freaks, in the long run Ginsberg is anything but bitter. In fact, she recently left her publishing job to return to waiting tables, hooked on the freedom, spare time, and ready cash the lifestyle provides. Of course, there are other perks too. Sex thrives in the close quarters and steamy atmosphere of a typical restaurant (not to mention with the high-drama personalities who work there). Fans of *Kitchen Confidential* will be relieved to know there's as much bad behavior among the floor staff as there is in the back of the house. As in that book, Ginsberg also relates some eyebrow-raising tales about what can happen

before your food gets to your table. (The moral here: "It really does pay to be nice to your server.") But *Waiting* is far more than just a sexual soap opera or a cautionary guide for dining out; it's also the story of one woman's coming of age, most of which just happens to take place while she's wearing an apron. During her tenure as a waitress, Ginsberg thrives as a single mother and comes into her own as a writer--and waiting (as she suggestively calls it) helps her do both. Most of us (including waiters) think of the profession as a stopgap, not a career, but what happens on the way to somewhere else, Ginsberg writes, is every bit as important as the final destination: "Perhaps the most valuable lesson I'd learned was that the act of waiting itself is an active one. That period of time between the anticipation and the beginning of life's events is when everything really happens--the time when actual living occurs." --Mary Park --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Ginsberg has spent nearly 20 years, more on than off, as a waitress, developing a love/hate relationship with a career most of her college-educated peers see either as a way station or a pink-collar province. Though neither a fully ripe memoir nor a truly spicy dish on the food biz (for that, see Anthony Bourdain's *Kitchen Confidential*; *Forecasts*, April 24), her collection of anecdotes, covering subjects from her father's luncheonette to fancy restaurants, conveys the unpredictability and humanity of this humble but essential work. Ginsberg sketches co-workers, both lively and burnt out, and her inspired and irresponsible bosses. A good view of the "parallel mating dances of staff and patrons" is one perk of her perch; she posits that the risk-taking, gregarious types who work for tips foster mutual attractions. In the "feudal pyramid" of the waitstaff, busboys are at the bottom and managers at the top, but waitresses must keep both happy to make sure things run smoothly and that tips ensue. Some scenes are wild: as a cocktail waitress during manic "Buck Night," she saw patrons drink the potent (and free) "Bar Mat," made up of bar spillage. Readers might pick up some pointers: bad-tipping regulars will suffer subtle server sabotage; customers who harangue staff for decaf might end up with regular. Ginsberg's more personal segments, which can be aimless, portray an intelligent single mom, fiercely committed to her son, with worries about her potential as a writer and her future. She quits waitressing only to return a year later, concluding that "the act of waiting itself is an active one" and that there is beauty and simplicity in the small acts of her work. Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Thanks for taking us along on your journey. I really enjoyed it and I liked the update you did at the

end. Cheers!

As the rare oddball who dreamt of being a server as a young adolescent but never bucked up the courage to try it until I was 25, I can wholeheartedly attest to the rush and excitement (and frustration) of serving tables. The book is a nice medley of memoir and insider's guide that is quite captivating. Even though I didn't relate to some anecdotes and wish the author was more critical of the sexual harassment that is mentioned multiple times, I still thoroughly enjoyed this attempt to garner more respect for the server community :)

As a lifetime waitress, I truly loved how true to form the book was written. I just hated to come to the end of the book!!! Actually had to laugh out loud at some of her stories.....soooo real!!!!!!

Oddly enough, I received a copy of this book, as a gift, three years ago. After rushing my education, receiving a Master's degree at 21, I found myself still employed as a server. Needless to say, I related to the story, which some may argue, is why I rated it a five. Most people take for granted, how many educated servers there are and how annoyed we get when you treat us like a "dumb server." If I have any hopes for this book, it's that some non-service industry types read it and get a better understanding of "the other side." I found this book to be a quick and easy read, but very enjoyable. She reiterates that common curiosity goes a long way, whether you are a server or being served. Definitely a must read for anyone that has waited tables and should read for anyone that has or will ever eat out.

OMG! Of course unless you work in this industry we could never have imagined what goes on behind the scenes of a restaurant. Insightful, interested and funny! Debra is a fabulous author and she does a marvelous job telling her funny and sometimes sad story. Kudos to you and I do hope you have a very happy life that you deserve!!! Loved book highly recommend!!!

After hearing the interview on NPR with Debra Ginsberg, I expected more story and behind the scenes, rather than biography

After reading *Waiting*, unable to put it down, I loved it! I have been waiting and bartending for 10 years now at multiple establishments over the years and this book is ridiculously spot on in every way. It gives me someone else prospective and assures me that waiting tables really isn't such a

bad job and I make far more money in less time than a "real job". Thank you so much Debra for such a fantastic read and uplifting view on something I have always thought was so inadequate!!

It's pretty interesting. It makes you want to know more about her son, and how he is doing now.

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