

Andrew & Carey

Andrew and Carey are a couple in their mid 20s who live in Park Slope, Brooklyn. Andrew works in film and Carey is an arts professional and painter. I observed them make dinner for themselves.

Interview

What do you do before you start cooking?

C: We sit on the couch for about 20 min. saying "What do you want to eat?" "I dunno, what do *you* want to eat?"

A: Carey is comfortable just eating cereal, but I'm not like that.

Who usually does the cooking?

C: Andrew. He usually does everything. You'd think that might cause tension but it doesn't. Who does the dishes cause more tension.

A: Sometimes the tasks will be divided a little, if there's a lot of chopping Carey will help out.

Do you usually cook from recipes?

A: No. Most of the things I make I've made many times before. It's all from memory. I like cooking, but I don't *love* it. I do it mostly out of necessity. Often I'll make lunch and it will take me 30 minutes. I'm often frustrated by how long it takes.

How often do you cook?

A: I cook two or more meals a day; five days a week. Lately, I've been working from home and exercising, so I'll sometimes cook four meals a day.

Is there anything in the kitchen you never use?

C: Cookbooks. We get them as gifts and never use them.

A: We've never used the broiler. Not once.

C: If we had a toaster we'd never use it. That's why we don't have one. For a long time we never used the blender, but then Andrew started going to the gym and he started making smoothies.

Is there anything you use all the time?

C: The strainer. We use it for pasta and veggies.

A: We use the pans. We only have four. We often boil water. No matter what the frying pan gets used.

C: The knives. We got some nice knives a while ago and its amazing how much of a difference that makes. You realize how much you use your knives when you get some nice ones.

Is there anything you love but rarely use?

C: No

A: No. We don't have that much stuff, and we use what we have.

Why do you cook?

A: Biological necessity. And to save money. I hate spending money on food.

C: We do go out often, but it's always such a crazy waste of money. I know some people, especially in New York City, who eat out all the time, and I think its just amazing how much money they're throwing away.

C: Can I tell you of some inventions I'd like?

Of course.

C: I'd love something that would keep track of what you eat. I know there are things like that online, where you enter in what you ate and it tells you about your nutrition, but that's too much work. Maybe if it was like the barcode scanner at the grocery store; I'd just run my dish over the scanner and it would know what I had eaten.

A: Dishes that wash themselves. We already have a dishwasher, and that's still too much work.

C: And something for cleanliness. I'm paranoid about salmonella and Andrew isn't. We have separate dish towels. Andrew might touch some raw meat and then touch his dish towel. I would never do that. My dish towel is always salmonella free.

You know what I'd like? Maybe a soap dispenser where you don't have to touch anything to get the soap. Now if you have contaminated hands, you have to touch the top of the dispenser, and then it's contaminated.

Observations/Interpretations

2/15/06

The meal prepared was very simple. It consisted of bacon, scallops, and spaghetti--all mixed into one dish. To me, the meal was original but simple. It

seemed consistent with Andrew "liking but not loving" cooking. Andrew said he had made the dish many times before.

There were not many steps to the process. Carey started cutting the bacon into smaller strips on a cutting board while Andrew put water to boil and started to heat the scallops in the frying pan. Andrew talked to me while the scallops were cooking and Carey continued cutting.

Carey admitted that she would not usually be doing the cutting, and was amazed by how much fat was on the bacon.

Andrew worried that he did not get enough scallops.

Once the water was near boiling Andrew got out the spaghetti. He opened a package, got out the pasta, and then realized that it wasn't the right pasta. It couldn't be combined with the pasta they just bought because the cooking times were different. He put the spaghetti back in its package, opened the new packages, broke the pasta in half and put it in the water.

I asked if they listened to music while cooking (music was on the stereo at the time). They said yes, but often the TV was on. The TV/living area was right next to the kitchen, almost integrated with it. Carey said she would often watch while Andrew cooked.

I asked if the kitchen was a social place and Andrew said it wasn't really because the living area was so close. People would hang out in the living area, and they could still talk to people in the kitchen. Carey said that in her parent's house the kitchen was social. At parties people would always end up in the kitchen.

When the scallops were finished, Andrew held the pan over the sink at an angle and spooned out the broth that leaked from the scallops.

Then the bacon was cooked (I did not record/do not remember how or in what). Once the pasta was done it was put in the the strainer in the sink. Then it was combined with the scallops and bacon, stirred, and served. The whole process took a little over 20 min.

We all drank wine throughout the process. They had a bottle of wine already open when I arrived. It had been uncorked previously and had foil on its top.

Cleanup was simple. Food was scraped from the plates and from the cutting board directly into the garbage. Dishes were put in the dishwasher while the knives and spatula were washed in the sink.









