



Gulp: Adventures on the Alimentary Canal

By Mary Roach

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Gulp: Adventures on the Alimentary Canal By Mary Roach

The irresistible, ever-curious, and always best-selling Mary Roach returns with a new adventure to the invisible realm we carry around inside.

“America’s funniest science writer” (*Washington Post*) takes us down the hatch on an unforgettable tour. The alimentary canal is classic Mary Roach terrain: the questions explored in *Gulp* are as taboo, in their way, as the cadavers in *Stiff* and every bit as surreal as the universe of zero gravity explored in *Packing for Mars*. Why is crunchy food so appealing? Why is it so hard to find words for flavors and smells? Why doesn’t the stomach digest itself? How much can you eat before your stomach bursts? Can constipation kill you? Did it kill Elvis? In *Gulp* we meet scientists who tackle the questions no one else thinks of?or has the courage to ask. We go on location to a pet-food taste-test lab, a fecal transplant, and into a live stomach to observe the fate of a meal. With Roach at our side, we travel the world, meeting murderers and mad scientists, Eskimos and exorcists (who have occasionally administered holy water rectally), rabbis and terrorists?who, it turns out, for practical reasons do not conceal bombs in their digestive tracts.

Like all of Roach’s books, *Gulp* is as much about human beings as it is about human bodies.

15 illustrations

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Gulp: Adventures on the Alimentary Canal By Mary Roach Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

An Amazon Best Book of the Month, April 2013: Mary Roach's investigations into weird body science were inspired by a plastic torso with removable organs in her fifth-grade class, "the point at which curiosity began to push aside disgust or fear or whatever it is that so reliably deflects mind from body." Since then, she's investigated death (*Stiff*), sex (*Bonk*), life after death (*Spooked*), and life in zero-gravity (*Packing for Mars*). Now, she cruises down the alimentary canal with *Gulp*. As you'd expect with Roach, this isn't a methodical top-to-bottom tour. It's more delightful and memorable than that. She's a gorgeous writer, a master of sly asides, puns, and the bizarre but ultimately relevant story, sounding at times like an absurdly well-informed comedian (her footnotes are must-reads). And her evocative portraits of experts obsessed with their piece of the digestive puzzle--the surprising properties of saliva, nuances of chewing and digesting, and, yes, the incredible control of the colon--coaxes her readers beyond the gag reflex, inspiring awe for the world inside ourselves. --*Mari Malcolm*

From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review In her latest rollicking foray into taboo, icky, and underappreciated aspects of the human body, best-selling science writer Roach takes readers on a wild ride down the alimentary canal. Not that the author of *Stiff* (2003), *Bonk* (2008), and *Packing for Mars* (2010) ever takes a direct route anywhere. No, voraciously curious and intrepid Roach zips off in whatever direction her ardor for research and irrepressible instinct for the wonderfully weird lead her. She begins this hilarious, mind-expanding inquiry into eating, digestion, and elimination with the symbiosis between smell and taste, guided by an olfactorily gifted "sensory analyst," then profiles Horace Fletcher, proponent of a rigorous chewing routine known as "Fletcherizing" practiced by Henry James and Franz Kafka. We learn more than one can imagine about saliva and our passion for crispy and crunchy foods. Given Roach's fascination with what we find disgusting, scientific obsessions and bizarre experiments, and horrifying things we do to ourselves, the stories get stranger as she proceeds down the body. Roach interviews a prison inmate about "rectal smuggling" (including cell phones), tells tales of flatulence, and reveals the truth about Elvis Presley's fatal megacolon. For all her irreverence, Roach marvels over the fine-tuned workings and "wisdom" of the human body, and readers will delight in her exuberant energy, audacity, and wit. --*Donna Seaman*

Review

"There is much to enjoy about Mary Roach's infectious awe for quirky science and its nerdy adherents, her one-liners... She is beloved, and justifiably so." (Jon Ronson - New York Times Book Review)

"As engrossing as it is gross." (Entertainment Weekly)

"Far and away her funniest and most sparkling book, bringing Ms. Roach's love of weird science to material that could not have more everyday relevance. . . . Never has Ms. Roach's affinity for the comedic and bizarre been put to better use. . . . "Gulp" is structured as a vastly entertaining pilgrimage down the digestive tract, with Ms. Roach as the wittiest, most valuable tour guide imaginable." (Janet Maslin - New York Times)

"A delicious read and, dare I say it, a total gas." (Kate Tuttle - Boston Globe)

"With the same eager curiosity that she previously brought to the subjects of cadavers, space, and sex, the author explores the digestive system, from mouth to colon." (New Yorker)

"[A] merry foray into the digestive sciences...Inexorably draws the reader along with peristaltic waves of history and vividly described science." (Brian Switek - Wall Street Journal)

"You'll come away from this well-researched book with enough weird digestive trivia to make you the most interesting guest at a certain kind of cocktail party...Go ahead and put this one in your carry-on. You won't regret it." (Amy Stewart - Washington Post)

"*Gulp* is about revelling in the extraordinary complexities and magnificence of human digestion." (The Economist)

"A witty, woving romp of a book... Roach...is a thoroughly unflappable, utterly intrepid investigator of the icky." (Chloe Schama - Smithsonian)

"Relentlessly fun to read." (Bee Wilson - The New Republic)

"Never before has the process of eating been so very interesting.... After digesting her book, you can't help but think about what that really means." (Micki Myers - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette)

"One of my top criteria for pronouncing a book worthwhile is the number of times you snort helplessly with laughter and say, "Wow! Did you know that ... " before your long-suffering spouse throws a book at you from across the room. My personal spouse says that, in this department, "Gulp" takes the cake." (Adam Woog - Seattle Times)

"Letting this brilliantly mischievous writer, for whom no pun is ouch and no cow sacred, dip her pen into the font of all potty humor must have seemed even riskier than her previous excursions into corpses (*Stiff*), the afterlife (*Spook*), sex (*Bonk*) and outer space (*Packing for Mars*). But dip she did?at one point she put her whole arm into a cow's belly?and came up with another quirkily informative pop-science entertainment in *Gulp: Adventures on the Alimentary Canal*." (Jeffrey Burke - Bloomberg)

"Once again Roach boldly goes where no author has gone before, into the sciences of the taboo, the macabre, the icky, and the just plain weird. And she conveys it all with a perfect touch: warm, lucid, wry, sharing the unavoidable amusement without ever resorting to the cheap or the obvious. Yum!" (Steven Pinker, author of *How the Mind Works* and *The Better Angels of Our Nature*)

"As probing as an endoscopy, *Gulp* is quintessential Mary Roach: supremely wide-ranging, endlessly curious, always surprising, and, yes, gut-wrenchingly funny." (Tom Vanderbilt, author of *Traffic: Why We Drive the Way We Do (and What It Says About Us)*)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Wesley Powell:

This book untitled *Gulp: Adventures on the Alimentary Canal* to be one of several books that will best seller in this year, that's because when you read this book you can get a lot of benefit on it. You will easily to buy this book in the book store or you can order it by way of online. The publisher of this book sells the e-book too. It makes you more readily to read this book, as you can read this book in your Smart phone. So there is no reason to you personally to past this e-book from your list.

William Patterson:

The guide untitled Gulp: Adventures on the Alimentary Canal is the guide that recommended to you to see. You can see the quality of the publication content that will be shown to you. The language that publisher use to explained their ideas are easily to understand. The article writer was did a lot of analysis when write the book, to ensure the information that they share to you personally is absolutely accurate. You also might get the e-book of Gulp: Adventures on the Alimentary Canal from the publisher to make you far more enjoy free time.

Simona Vela:

A lot of people always spent all their free time to vacation or even go to the outside with them household or their friend. Did you know? Many a lot of people spent these people free time just watching TV, or playing video games all day long. If you would like try to find a new activity this is look different you can read the book. It is really fun to suit your needs. If you enjoy the book which you read you can spent the entire day to reading a publication. The book Gulp: Adventures on the Alimentary Canal it is quite good to read. There are a lot of individuals who recommended this book. These were enjoying reading this book. Should you did not have enough space to deliver this book you can buy typically the e-book. You can m0ore effortlessly to read this book from the smart phone. The price is not to fund but this book possesses high quality.

Stephany Garcia:

Gulp: Adventures on the Alimentary Canal can be one of your beginner books that are good idea. All of us recommend that straight away because this publication has good vocabulary which could increase your knowledge in vocabulary, easy to understand, bit entertaining but nevertheless delivering the information. The writer giving his/her effort that will put every word into joy arrangement in writing Gulp: Adventures on the Alimentary Canal although doesn't forget the main position, giving the reader the hottest and based confirm resource facts that maybe you can be one among it. This great information can certainly drawn you into brand-new stage of crucial considering.

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