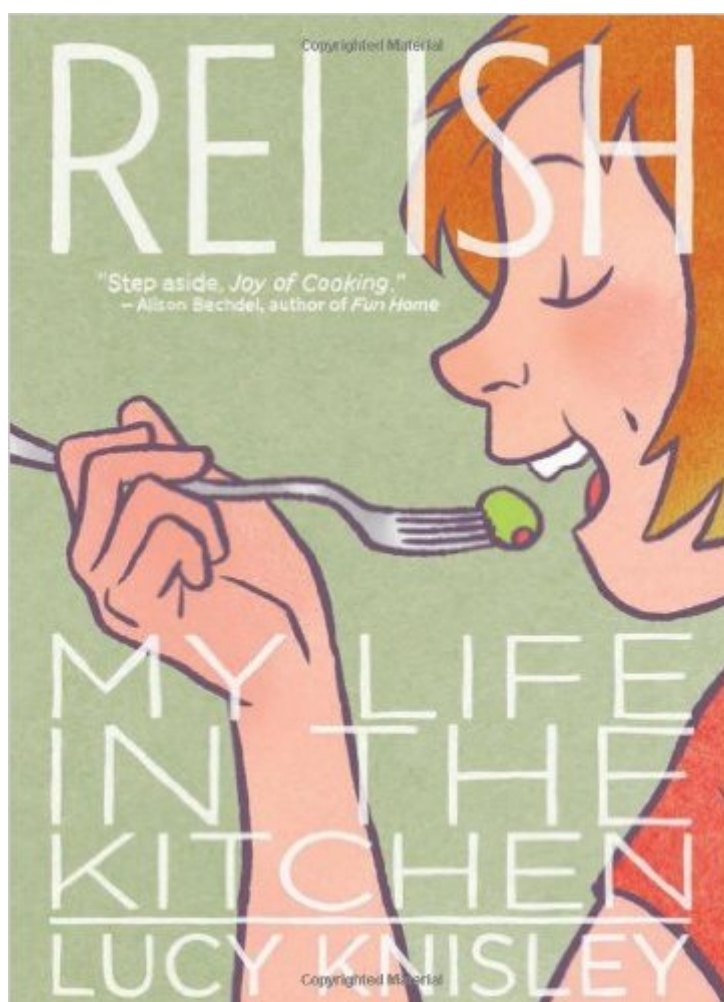


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# Relish: My Life In The Kitchen



## Synopsis

A NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER Lucy Knisley loves food. The daughter of a chef and a gourmet, this talented young cartoonist comes by her obsession honestly. In her forthright, thoughtful, and funny memoir, Lucy traces key episodes in her life thus far, framed by what she was eating at the time and lessons learned about food, cooking, and life. Each chapter is bookended with an illustrated recipe—many of them treasured family dishes, and a few of them Lucy's original inventions. A welcome read for anyone who ever felt more passion for a sandwich than is strictly speaking proper, *Relish* is a graphic novel for our time: it invites the reader to celebrate food as a connection to our bodies and a connection to the earth, rather than an enemy, a compulsion, or a consumer product. A Publishers Weekly Best Children's Book of 2013 An NPR Best Book of 2013

## Book Information

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Best Sellers Rank: #55,223 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #8 in [Books > Teens > Hobbies & Games > Cooking](#) #15 in [Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Graphic Novels > Contemporary Women](#) #64 in [Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Biographies & History Graphic Novels](#)

## Customer Reviews

*Relish: My Life in the Kitchen* is a memoir in comic form about the author's life experiences with food. I read it over the course of a couple of nights and really enjoyed it - though I highly suggest you read it when you have delicious food in the house and not when you are in the midst of a grocery shopping drought like me. It's a little depressing to read a book about the joys of cooking and eating well when you yourself are eating Morningstar buffalo wings and whatever you can salvage from a bag of green beans. But other people plan their grocery shopping better than I do! And Knisley does spend some of her book defending the joys of fast food restaurants and Ramen soup, so I didn't feel so bad. And honestly, Knisley is such a bright and cheerful person who draws

such bright and cheerful (and colorful!) pictures and shares such bright and cheerful food stories that it's impossible to feel bad when reading this book. I'm a big food lover myself, so I can identify with Knisley's inability to separate places she's visited from the food she's eaten while there. And the way she talks about potluck dinners and having friends over to share a meal - I absolutely agree with her, it's one of my favorite things in the world to have or attend a dinner party with close friends. This book doesn't have a plot. It is episodic in nature, starting with Knisley's childhood first in Manhattan, and then in upstate New York, through trips to Japan and Mexico and then her college stint in Chicago. She ends each chapter with a recipe (shared in a lovely cartoon format that I thoroughly appreciated), and throughout the book she has a lot of other really interesting tips and tricks. For example, she has a two-page spread on cheese that I found fascinating and even shared with my boss at work the next day. Knisley is much more down-to-earth about her food than a lot of food writers are. While she grew up on all sorts of gourmet dishes and enjoys them, she also likes McDonald's fries and Ramen soup. She points out that America is still growing into its food culture and that we can all help shape and define it in a way that fits us best. And that sometimes, if you want something to taste really good - you should just buy it from a professional! It's a refreshing and fun take on food culture, and one that I really enjoyed.

I slightly waffled between giving this four stars and giving it five stars. The book has some minor flaws, but none that really ruined it for me as a whole. *Relish* pretty much falls into the type of graphic novel I've come to expect from this publisher: a nice alternative/indie type niche read that is of good quality. While this is undeniably an autobiography of her life, it's also a story of food. Good food, bad food, and all that falls between those two groups. Knisley utilizes an episodic format with recipes or culinary advice sandwiched in between the tales. Most of the story is told in a linear format, but there are one or two mentions of her childhood later in the book. This works well, as it keeps the reader from getting too bored with the minute details. After all, meals are a relatively short portion of our lives and daily routine when you get down to it (even those meals that last for a few hours), so it makes sense that the stories should only be a few pages at a time. This might frustrate some readers that want to know more about a specific time period, though. I have to say that occasionally I wanted to read more about one or two things, such as Knisley's time at college. The artwork was something I really enjoyed and it helped out in some instances where the words couldn't entirely portray the scene alone. Now you might be thinking "but it's a graphic novel- it's naturally reliant upon pictures, right?" I'd agree, but there are some instances in graphic novels where the scene is given a complete narration/description, but is so well depicted in the artwork that

the written descriptions are superfluous and/or just a bonus extra. The scene I'm specifically thinking of is the scene of Knisley enjoying a brief respite from her busy catering/waitstaff job when she finds herself in a room with a large metallic sculpture she'd always admired from afar. Her communion with the piece is very well drawn and does an amazing job of showing her peace and reverence for the artwork and her joy at being given the ability to be alone with it due to her job. It's something that I think all of us can relate to in some form, even if we're not artists. In the end I'm giving this five stars. My main gripe of wanting more is pretty minor when I got down to it and I really loved this book. It's an easy read that I know I'll end up flipping through again in the future specifically because it's written in little vignettes rather than a longer narrative.

I am really tired of self proclaimed foodies who blog/write about food (My apologies to those who are true foodies and understand the fine art of creative, insightful, useful blogging - you are a rare breed). I find too much out there that is pompous, self-serving, and boring to read. So thank you Ms. Knisley for your sense of humor, clever illustrations, and honest approach to food and why/how we love it. I took my own trip down memory lane right along with you. You have a realistic and refreshing POV so please continue to write about food - or anything else for that matter.

Growing up, Lucy's parents loved food. Her mom, who liked to work in kitchens in New York, turned caterer after her parents' divorce. Her dad just loved good food. As she grew older and more appreciative of good cooking, Lucy never forgot her roots or her ingrained love of food. Told in chapters titled with her favorite food dishes, Lucy talks about her first delicious bites of each dish as well as some of her later life experiences. A fun read for fellow foodies everywhere. The illustrations were colorful, fairly easy to follow, and complemented the text. The story was a little dry in parts and I had a hard time getting into the story. The recipes inside were enjoyable to look at, but I hadn't had a chance to try any yet. Overall, I think people interested in food will enjoy this book, but as a stand-alone biography, probably not.

This won't be to everyone's taste, but it is an interesting book presented as a graphic novel. The memoir has long been a staple in Graphic Novels--and part of what sets it apart from Comics--and this is a nice focus for a memoir. It follows food as part of the author's life. I also like the photo album at the end. I enjoyed this book and will be looking for more Lucy Knisley works soon.

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