

Plate-eating good: University of Montreal professor designs edible tableware

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Finishing your plate may soon take on a literal meaning. Diane Bisson, a professor at the Université de Montréal School of Industrial Design, has fashioned edible plates that are practical, stylish and tasty. She has completed the first phase of her research, which has resulted in a book highlighting more than 50 tested recipes and 400 tested prototypes: *Edible, The Food as Material*.

"The idea of using food to support a meal isn't new. The hollow loaf of bread or the curved leaf are fine examples," says Bisson. "Corn-based and potato-based comestible plates do exist, but they are designed to be biodegradable rather than eaten. They've had no market success because they look like cardboard and aren't appetizing in the least bit."

Bisson wants to change that. To do so, she enlisted the help chef Daniel Girard and dietician Véronique Perreault of the Institut de tourisme et d'hôtellerie du Québec. She also worked with chefs from the bakery *Première Moisson*. "We began by exploring the technical, mechanical, chemical and colour properties of foods which provide both the challenges and the key to the eventual object," says Bisson.

Using preservatives or artificial colours was out of the question. Even sugar was eliminated as a potential base ingredient, since Bisson wants the product to be ethical and in tune with today's social and environmental conscience. She researched leguminous flours, fruit pastes and juices to create crunchy, chewy and gelatinous textures.

The trial and error phase led to satisfactory results. "We had to deconstruct foods and reinvent a culinary language, which was a challenge for the chefs," says Bisson, a process that's pictorially documented in *Edible, The Food as Material*. The book presents all materials used and tested and molded to provide a glimpse of the potential end product.

For the second phase of the project, Bisson plans to work with a gourmet caterer to design a five-course meal in which all the dishware and cutlery is edible. A third phase will focus on products that are more neutral and accessible to the general public.

Source: University of Montreal ([news](#) : [web](#))

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