



spare me the passion

This month **Nick Harman** asks why it's not enough to simply like doing something, to be keen on doing it or even to be in love with doing it...

Any CV that doesn't contain the words 'I am passionate about...' is destined for the HR bin, whilst job adverts are apparently obliged to contain the criteria 'must be passionate about...' even when the job offered is stacking shelves or double entry bookkeeping. The impression given is that there are masses of people running around wild-eyed, rending their garments and crying aloud to the heavens at all times of day and night. Your own life seems rather dull compared to theirs, filled as they are with all this incredible passion.

Unfortunately experience tells us that people in the throes of passion are not always going to be good at what they are doing. Passion leads people into hasty and bad decisions, like marriage or other people's bedrooms, makes them ignore common sense and in extreme cases commit violence. In fact in the United States civil courts, a crime of passion is referred to as "temporary insanity" and *crime passionel* was until quite recently a valid defence in France when accused of murder.

Chefs are not immune to this fashionable rubbish. I have lost count of the number of chefs who have told me, when interviewed, that they are 'passionate about sourcing locally', or 'passionate about organic produce.' These are all laudable sentiments, of course, but am I really expected to believe that chef goes postal when his tomatoes come from another county or his beef doesn't have an organic sticker on it?

And of course in the online world it's obligatory to say you are passionate about food if you want to be admitted to the gang. It goes hand in hand with taking pictures of every dish you're served using a Canon Blogmatic Mk II and then Tweeting, instead of eating the food and talking normally to the people at the table with you.

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Well sorry. I like my food as much as anyone else but I reserve my passion for relationships, which is surely where it belongs. The only passion I want near my table is the fruit.

I am quite passionate about this, as you perhaps can tell.

Nick Harman is editor of www.foodepedia.co.uk and was shortlisted last year for The Guild of Food Writer's Restaurant Reviewer of the Year.