



## It's Only Slow Food Until You Try to Eat It: Misadventures of a Suburban Hunter-Gatherer

By Bill Heavey



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**“Mr. Heavey takes us back to the joys—and occasional pitfalls—of the humble edibles around us, and his conclusions ring true.”—*Wall Street Journal***

Longtime *Field & Stream* contributor Bill Heavey has become the magazine's most popular voice by writing for sportsmen with more enthusiasm than skill. In his first full-length book, Heavey chronicles his attempts to “eat wild,” seeing how much of his own food he can hunt, fish, grow, and forage.

But Heavey is not your typical hunter-gatherer. Living inside the D.C. Beltway, and a single dad to a twelve-year-old daughter with an aversion to “nature food,” he's almost completely ignorant of gardening and foraging. Incensed at the squirrels destroying his tomatoes, he is driven to rodent murder—by arrow. Along the way, Heavey is guided by a number of unlikely teachers, from the eccentric Paula, who runs an under-the-table bait business, to Michelle, an attractive single mom unselfconsciously devoted to eating locally. To the delight of his readers and the embarrassment of his daughter, he suffers blood loss, humiliation, and learns, as he puts it, that “‘edible’ is not to be confused with ‘tasty.’”



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**It's Only Slow Food Until You Try to Eat It: Misadventures of a Suburban Hunter-Gatherer** By Bill Heavey **Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

“Locavores can be tiresome with their insistence on sourcing (and discussing) everything they put in their precious little mouths. Bill Heavey ran the risk of being a bore in his account of attempting to hunt, fish, grow or forage as much of his food as possible, *It's Only Slow Food Until You Try to Eat It*, but escaped thanks to good humor, poking fun at hard-core foodies and himself while still finding merit in the movement. . . . **Mr. Heavey takes us back to the joys—and occasional pitfalls—of the humble edibles around us, and his conclusions ring true.** The finest things I ever ate, wandering the East Coast with rod and gun for 30 years, were the most local . . . Mr. Heavey reaffirms the value of things small and common that were once treasured but that we now walk by without a passing glance: persimmons, cattails, giant mushrooms, squirrels, morels, dandelions, wild cherries, frogs, crawfish and the whitetail deer that occasionally wander through backyards—at their peril, if it's Mr. Heavey's lawn.”—*Wall Street Journal*

“Heavey’s bumbling attempts at self-sufficiency are **a winning mixture of compelling and hilarious.**”—*Modern Farmer*

“There is much to like about Bill Heavey’s latest book. In it, Heavey, editor-at-large and back page columnist for *Field & Stream* magazine, follows a sometimes difficult, often challenging, and occasionally humorous path to eating wild. . . . The book is an enjoyable read, funny without being cute and thought-provoking without an overbearing teacher-to-student tone. If you’re not already a Heavey fan, this will likely turn you into one.”—*Courier-Journal* (Louisville)

“A humorous tale about a subject that’s often taken too seriously.”—*Grubstreet*

“An engaging autobiography/ersatz primer on how to (or not to) undertake subsistence living in an urban environment. While this title is chock full of facts about nature and industrialized foodways, it’s also a story about friendship and falling in love. VERDICT: Laced with tart humor and spiked with moments of sentimentality, this work makes for a compelling read.”—*Library Journal*

“Brilliant and incisive. . . . *It's Only Slow Food Until You Try to Eat It* is gently thrilling and endlessly emblematic of the chaotic way people evolved to become what they are now. The thing about life is that on your way to the hunt, you never know what you’ll gather.”—*The VC Reporter*

“Heavey tells a tale in which a totally normal dude gets a wild hair up his ass about growing, hunting, and foraging for his own food. The trouble—and the delight—is where he lives; not Idaho or someplace rural, but rather inside Washington D.C.’s Beltway. The result is **a hilarious and super instructive book** . . . Heavey’s experience writing for magazines obviously taught him how to master the skill of keeping the reader’s attention. His dry hilarity on everything from rototilling to the rarely-seen but abundant monkeyface eel marks, makes this book something special.”—*Library Journal*

“If Bill Heavey felt like it, he could write a book about something as boring as shuffleboard and it’d turn out to be good. He’s just that sharp and funny. But thankfully, in *It's Only Slow Food Until You Try to Eat It*, he chooses to write about things that are close to my heart, such as hunting, fishing, and wild food. Whether he’s hanging out with trendy foragers in San Francisco or butchering caribou with indigenous hunter-gatherers in

Alaska, he relates his experiences with respect, curiosity, and well-honed humor. **Not only is this book perfect for anyone who loves food or the out-of-doors; it's perfect for anyone who loves a good story, well-told.**"—Steven Rinella, author of *The Scavenger's Guide to Haute Cuisine*, *Meat Eater*, and *American Buffalo*

"Bill Heavey is the convivial and erudite hunting/fishing/foraging/trespassing partner you never had—and just as well, because he generally returns from the 'wild' (backyard, park, and—yes—cemetery) bloodied and reeking. His **entertaining yet sneakily informative** tales will have you rolling in the thistle."—William Alexander, author of *The \$64 Tomato*

"This is a tale of a leap into the deep-end of extreme foodieism—**clumsy, bold, courageous, hilarious, honest, and touching**. Bill wrote an onion. The first layer is a funny, witty adventure story. Peel it back, and we'll find leaf upon leaf of how-to, coming-of-age, consumerist criticism, cultural discovery, plights real and imagined, and ultimately, a love story. Bill has given us all permission to not only discover a new facet of our edible lives, but to enjoy it."—Duff Goldman, *Ace of Cakes*

"The age-old art of foraging takes Bill Heavey from his back yard to a Louisiana swamp and points beyond. But this is not a tale of trendy tablefare. **With a healthy dose of skepticism, a dollop of humor, and even a dash of romance, Heavey transforms the typical ingredients of midlife crisis into a surprising feast of renewal, finding true sustenance in nature's garden.**"—Langdon Cook, author of *Fat of the Land*

"A book with many layers, it's **refreshingly untrendy**, and it's narrated with great humor and honesty."—PopMatters

About the Author

**Bill Heavey** is an editor-at-large for *Field & Stream*, where he has written since 1993. His work has appeared in numerous publications including *Men's Journal*, *Outside*, the *Washington Post*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times Magazine*, and *Best American Magazine Writing*.

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