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Five Things About Blogging That Surprised Me

Yep. I started a [blog](#) on June 30, called Will Write for Food. It's an add-on to my [book](#) of the same name, a way to update information on food writing and blogging. Here's what I learned that was not what I expected:

1. **Blogging is a lot of work.** I had no idea how much time I would spend coming up with ideas, writing and refining them over several hours, adding links and images, announcing the blog on Twitter and Facebook, then managing comments on the blog, Facebook and Twitter. It's a whole new industry. When I'm procrastinating about getting other work done, there's nothing better.
2. **I'm pathetic when no one comments.** Once I post, I check it several times to see if anyone comments. Then I berate myself if they don't. Does it mean I'm not popular? Does this blog make me look fat? It's like being in high school.
3. **I'm part of a new world full of engaging people.** This is one of the best surprises. All through the day, I hear from food writers and bloggers who make intelligent, thoughtful, often funny, and insightful comments. It's lovely when I've been alone at my desk for hours.
4. **I was wrong about Twitter.** I take back everything I said. I use Twitter to announce new posts (not every time, as that is considered too promotional), and people re-Tweet them, which drives readers to my blog. My biggest response so far (aside from a free trip giveaway) was on a [post](#) about accepting freebies. I've also found that people are more interested in following me on Twitter than on "friending" me on Facebook.
5. **It's led to new opportunities.** Starting the blog helped me become a panelist at [BlogHer Food 09](#), one of the instructors at the [Food Blogger Camp](#) in Ixtapa, and led to a [quote](#) in the Christian Science Monitor.

Overall, blogging is a fascinating and satisfying experience. I recommend it, if you've been procrastinating. I've also started coaching people who want to start blogs or refine

a current one.

Also, since this newsletter only comes out 4 times per year, the [blog](#) is a much better way to keep in touch. So if you haven't already:

- [Follow me](#) on Twitter
- [Friend me](#) on Facebook
- Let my new posts come to you. Get them by email or in an RSS feed on a web page. Go to the [blog's](#) bar to sign up where it says "subscribe."

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Tons of Upcoming Classes and Speaking Engagements
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September 22 - October 13, 2009

[The Art of Cookbook Writing](#): STARTS TUESDAY!

Book Passage

Corte Madera, CA

Four Tuesday nights, 7 - 9 p.m.

\$155

Sign up now, as time is running out. Have you always wanted to write a cookbook? Here's a chance to expand, shape and structure your idea and give it your own personality. You'll learn to write mouth-watering recipes that make readers want to rush into the kitchen. In-class exercises, real-life examples, and lots of support will move you a step closer to getting your cookbook published. We'll also cover how to market it.

September 26, 2009

[BlogHer Food '09](#) (SOLD OUT)

St.Regis Hotel

San Francisco, CA

8 a.m. - 8 p.m.

\$110

It's BlogHer's first food blogging conference. I'll be part of a panel titled "Values Track: The Meaning of Identity and the Value of Voice in a Crowded Food-blogging World. I'll have comments before the session on my blog instead of handouts, and will cover the conference in future posts.

October 11-November 8, 2009

[Get That Proposal Written - and Sell Your Book!](#)

The Writing Salon

Berkeley, CA

Five Sundays, 7-9:30 p.m.

\$185 members/ \$215 non members

If you're writing a memoir, reference book, cookbook, how-to book or any other kind of non-fiction, you need a book proposal to present to editors and agents. It's a kind business plan that describes the book, and argues why it's necessary and why you're the best person to write it. You'll learn how to write one, section by section, and each week you'll have a homework assignment. At each class, I'll offer comments and encouragement about what you've written so far.

Tuesday October 27, 2009

[How to Get Happily Published](#)

Leite's Culinaria

One-night Virtual Workshop

8:45 - 11:15 p.m.

\$85

Call in from anywhere for this 2 1/2-hour conference call. Producing a beautifully written book on a killer subject is filled with excitement and fraught with problems. In this interactive workshop, you'll learn all about the publishing world, how to handle yourself professionally, what to expect from yourself, your agents and edits.

Saturday, October 31, 2009

[Food Writing for Food Lovers](#)

The Writing Salon

San Francisco, CA

10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

\$95 members/ \$110 non-members

Join me in this one-day overview of food writing, including articles for newspapers and magazines, blogs, recipes, and cookbooks, with writing exercises designed to inspire and motivate you.

Tuesday, November 10, 2009

[How to Write a Killer Cookbook Proposal](#)

Leite's Culinaria

One-night Virtual Workshop

8:45 - 11:15 p.m.

\$85

Call in from anywhere for this 2 1/2-hour conference call. If you're curious about writing and publishing a cookbook, here's your chance to move forward. Learn what's involved in creating the kind of proposal that shows off your cookbook idea in the best light, while crystalizing your idea. January 9-16, 2010

[Food Blogger Camp](#)

[Club Med Ixtapa Pacific](#)

Ixtapa, Mexico

3 days-1-week

\$599 to \$999 per person based on double-occupancy

Sharpen your skills with ten food writers, bloggers and photographers at this first annual Food Blogger Camp on the western coast of Mexico. Each day, we'll lead workshops on how to improve blog, photography and multimedia skills. Beyond the seminars, join us on a walking tour of the colorful Zijuatanejo market, taste tacos and tequilas, visit the fisherman's market and talk with local farmers about sustainable agriculture. The week will feature a variety of topics and first-hand experiences, giving you the opportunity to experience all the ingredients of a successful food blog.

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News from Alumni

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- Shelly Peppel launched the [Food News Journal](#), a daily list of food news from the best media sources. She wrote me this email: “Whether you realize it or not, your invigorating class sparked my ideas for this site. I’m really grateful.”

- Erin Laverty finished her Master's in Food Studies at New York University and is doing freelance research and fact checking at *Food & Wine* magazine,

- Faith Kramer now writes [a regular column](#) on Jewish cooking for the “j,” the newspaper of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish community. The opportunity came after an editor spotted her blog, [Blog Appetit](#).

- Rachel Trachten wrote a piece called Marvelous Mushrooms for [Edible East Bay](#) magazine.

- Suzanne Vandyck is the new author of [The Food and Cooking of Belgium: Traditions, Ingredients, Tastes, Techniques, and Over 60 Classic Recipes](#). The book has also been translated into Dutch.

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What’s New in Food Writing

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- [Afar](#), a new magazine, has a regular section called Feast, on “A local dish and its connection to its culture, plus selected spices, beverages, street markets, and kitchen tools. Plus, recommendations for good eating in other countries from well known American chefs.”

- Amanda Hesser, formerly of the *New York Times*, has started a publishing venture based on readers submitting recipes that others vote on. See [Food 52](#).

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Resources

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- Wondering how many hits a particular website or blog gets? Look it up on [Quantcast](#).

- A new website, [Project Foodie](#), lets you search from more than 95,000 recipes listed in magazines, television, cookbooks and newspapers.

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Just for Fun

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- The James Beard Foundation held its first Twitter Cookoff. The winning recipe came from [@ndiceglie](#): 2oz rye; 0.5oz lime; 0.5oz sryup(in 1:1 sugar:H2O steep 5each cardamom & *anise pod, 1 stk cinnamon/12hrs); 2– Peychaud : SHAKE.

- *Alimentum* is holding a [food poetry contest](#). Deadline is December 1, 2009 and the winner receives \$500 and publication in the magazine.

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Events You Might Enjoy
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October 8-10, 2009
[IACP Food History Symposium](#)
All Things Culinary Around the World in 1849
And Their Convergence Upon California
Lodi, CA

November 7 and 8, 2009
[Styling and Photo Techniques for Food Writers and Bloggers](#)
Long Beach, CA
Matt Armendariz, author of the blog [Matt Bites](#), is part of this 2-day class, held at his studio.

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Please forward this newsletter to anyone you think might be interested. All previous issues are now archived on [my website](#). There's a place to sign up for this newsletter as well.

To change your email address or unsubscribe, please email me: dj@diannej.com

I will not rent, trade or sell your email address to anyone for any reason.

Happy fall,

Dianne