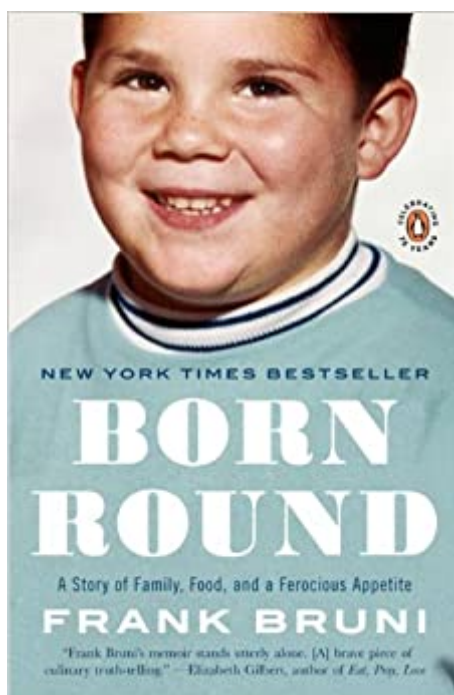


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# Born Round: A Story Of Family, Food And A Ferocious Appetite



## Synopsis

The New York Times restaurant critic's heartbreaking and hilarious account of how he learned to love food just enough. Frank Bruni was born round. Round as in stout, chubby, and always hungry. His relationship with eating was difficult and his struggle with it began early. When named the restaurant critic for The New York Times in 2004, he knew he would be performing one of the most watched tasks in the epicurean universe. And with food his friend and enemy both, his jitters focused primarily on whether he'd finally made some sense of that relationship. A captivating story of his unpredictable journalistic odyssey as well as his lifelong love-hate affair with food, *Born Round* will speak to everyone who's ever had to rein in an appetite to avoid letting out a waistband.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Best of the Month, August 2009: How a man with a lifelong battle of the bulge landed the job as the restaurant critic for the New York Times, the most influential job in the food world, is only half the story (more like a third, really) in Frank Bruni's brave, brutally honest, often hilarious, and truly endearing memoir, *Born Round: The Secret History of a Full-Time Eater*. Bruni struggled with over-eating since he was a boy growing up in a food-focused family in White Plains, NY. From adolescence through adulthood, Bruni was on the losing side of maintaining a healthy relationship with food, and eventually his inability to control his hunger--manifested in bulimia, convenience store binges, and bouts of sleep eating--defined his life. There aren't many books out there dealing with what it's like to be a man with an eating disorder. While Bruni's story is peppered with humor, his disgust at himself as he yo-yo's up to size 42 khakis at the Gap and endures years-long patches of

celibacy leaves the reader aching in empathy. Self-doubt about his appearance causes him to sabotage any chances at happiness as he makes lame excuses to postpone dates in the hopes that he'll drop those few extra pounds before he might have to reveal himself. And throughout the book he's banking on being slimmer in the future--whether it's a few days, weeks, or months--and sacrifices truly appreciating the present, even when he's holding prestigious jobs at Newsweek and the New York Times. "I was in retreat, my weight a reason not to reach out or take risks. I'd deal with my love life once I got thinner.... Fatness simplified life and lessened the stakes. It put life on hiatus, making the present a larded limbo between a past normalcy and a future one. It argued against bold initiatives.... But while I wasn't trying to make things happen, they nonetheless happened to me." There's a very funny account of how he worked with a photographer friend to digitally manipulate his author photo for *Ambling into History* in an attempt "to transform the round into the oblong, chubby into chiseled, gone-to-seed to come-to-Papa." When he saw the results of the final photo (the one that would be taped behind the reservation stand of many New York restaurants) his friend wondered: "When was the last time anyone at the publishing house saw you?" And when he gets the tap to become restaurant critic and leaves his gig as the Times's Rome bureau chief, he begins a preparatory world-tour of eating research before entering an exhausting career of eating out seven nights a week, juggling multiple dining identities (with matching AmEx cards), and becoming one of "the most loved and hated tastemakers in New York." --Brad Thomas Parsons --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Starred Review. More the gourmand than the gourmet, former New York Times food critic Bruni takes us through his love/hate relationship with food and catalogues everyone who ever fed him and what they served, every diet he went on and his fraught "even dangerous" relationship with food in this excellent memoir. Bruni is a talented reader with an intelligent voice, a perfect pace, impish humor and a contagious passion for his topic. Dieters may crumble under the weight of so many lavish descriptions of luscious treats, but Bruni's frank depiction of his eating disorders and his charismatic delivery make for memorable listening. A Penguin Press hardcover (Reviews, July 6). (Sept.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I never read restaurant reviews. Oh, I'll check out the number of stars in a NY Times review - but for whatever reason, I have never focused on Frank Bruni's apparently celebrated career as the Times food critic. I know and admire Bruni from his passionate, thoughtful, and usually powerful columns

on issues related to gay rights on the Times opinion page - and that's why I bought this book. He's something of a gay hero to me and my spouse. The best part of this book, both the most lovingly written and the funniest, is all the vivid description of Bruni's family; in particular the two women - mother and grandmother - who he loved so fiercely and whose obsessive cooking habits surely influenced his obsessive eating habits. The hardest part of this book to read was the constant, sometimes dismaying, drumbeat of his lifelong eating disorder (which he never quite names as such). I appreciated his candor, and felt overwhelmed at moments with sympathy; but there were times when his self-destructive behavior just forced me to put the book down. It's so hard to read about such a nice guy messing up his life so badly over food. But do read this book. It is full of heart and humor good writing. It made me like Bruni even more than his courageous newspaper writing already has. It also made me wish he'd gone for some therapy in college and maybe saved himself some pain in his life. But, all in all, he's not to be pitied, and this memoir of struggling with food has lessons for all of us.

I love about this book its humanity. It is generous and benevolent. It exemplifies the honesty it extols in its conclusion. The book is good humored. I laughed aloud many times, especially reading the hilarious time table of the mother's Thanksgiving feasts. I found the section describing his months in Italy enlightening. Some reviewers object to the writing, though none that I have read says why. By contrast, I found Bruni's way with words carried me along effortlessly. I liked it very much.

I know I am so late to the game here, but was recommending this book today, and went to send the link-- and I just wanted to say, I really loved this book. there was so much I could relate to, and I love Frank's honesty and humor. and his descriptions of Italian American suburban culture were hilarious, his struggles with weight, eating disorders, dating, love-- all so relatable and I found myself cheering for him and for those parts of myself as well.

I read this book by Frank Bruni after watching him with Bill Maher recently. I was drawn to the book because of my struggle with weight. I identified with his tale of overeating and the requisite suffering that accompanies it. His path was my path but along the way I only gained 35 lbs. My mom was unlike Franks, but was known as "The Food Administrator". She was a terrific cook but monitored everyone's intake. I think that my overeating, unfortunately, was my passive aggressive way to punish her for what I don't know. PS I LOVED THIS BOOK

I absolutely adored this book. Somehow Bruni rendered what otherwise could have been a dark tale of self-loathing and obsession into a delightful coming of age narrative. Coming of age in that Bruni grew up and out of food (okay, so it took about 40-years) facilitated in part by his career advances which did for him as an adult what swimming did for him as an adolescent, and the other part by sheer determination. Told with complete candor and a great deal of humor--no doubt because he's on the other side of that buffet table--Bruni shares not just the details of his eating disorder but its consequences, while at the same time accepting responsibility and owning up to his acquiescence with a depth of insight that was both touching and humble. But that's not all. At the same time the book constitutes a literary ride-along into Bruni's personal and professional lives, revelatory of both mishap and triumph as he moves towards that journalistic Everest, The New York Times. While I hate the word "resonate," this book resonated for me at every level--from the food, the obsessional thinking about food and the art of mastering food, not to mention reviewing it in his capacity as restaurant critic for the New York Times. The fact it was laugh out loud funny was an added bonus. Warning: after finishing this book, I wanted to go out and eat-Everything!

I picked up this book because I am a huge Bruni fan from his New York Times articles and was especially moved by a recent article on his memories of his late mother's holiday cooking. But I got so much more than I hoped! A loving tribute to his boisterous Italian family that reminded me so much of my own, as well as a life lesson in how difficult it is to fight weight issues that not only made me much more sympathetic to those who suffer from this problem but also recognize my own weaknesses in that complicated arena. Bruni brings us in to his inner most thoughts and passions for his amazing family; a true gift from one who is not only a public presence but a gifted and insightful writer. It is impossible not to feel joy from the love and support he has sustained from his relatives (along with the pain and difficulties all families bring), but many of the stories are just plain funny! Thank you Mr Bruni for finally explaining to me why my Italian Grandmother had 2 kitchens in her very modest home, one in the basement! A wonderful reminder how important family is. But more surprising to me was the lesson I learned from his very personal account of his struggle with weight. I had never been particularly sympathetic to people with weight problems. It hasn't been easy for me to keep weight off, but I've succeeded. When I've binged I felt very guilty but got back on the wagon and got rid of the extra pounds. I never realized how voracious some appetites are and the levels of difficulty we all face in this arena. Thank you Mr Bruni for opening my eyes and giving me a real understanding. And how absolutely delicious that you learned the key to success in Italy! There is so much to learn, enjoy and savour in this book. I strongly recommend it to everyone

who loves their family, food and a good laugh!

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