

REAL LIFE

'I photographed everything I ate for a year'

Over the course of 365 days, Ellie Harrison, 24 from Nottingham, kept a food diary and took 1,604 photos of every morsel that passed her lips

I love eating and have always been quite greedy, although I've been vegetarian since I was 12. A few years ago I went on holiday to New York and everyone said, "You're going to love the food, it's amazing." So, as a record of my holiday, I decided to take a photo of everything I ate. I worked my way through bagels, pretzels, burgers and ice creams – 34 meals in all. A year later, an idea popped into my head – I decided to set myself a challenge and use my digital camera to photograph every single thing I ate for a year. My 22nd birthday was coming up and I decided to start it then. At breakfast that day, I took a picture of myself eating half a slice of toast – and for the next year, I took a

There were a few times I woke up in the morning with a fuzzy head, so I'd get my camera and have a look to remind me of what I was doing the night before. The morning after our graduation party, I woke up and found a picture of myself on my camera eating one of those horrible peelable cheeses, which I didn't recall at all. But incredibly, no matter how drunk I was, I always remembered to get someone to take a picture of me.

'If I ate out on my own, I'd use the timer on the camera. I got some funny looks'

photo of myself eating every bit of solid food that passed my lips. My boyfriend Jon got a bit fed up because he ended up taking half the photos. If we went out for a meal he'd be lumbered with taking my picture and he found it a bit embarrassing. However, if I was eating out on my own, I'd take it myself by setting it on a timer. That could also be quite embarrassing actually – I remember getting some funny looks on the train. In total, I took 1,640 images in the course of the year. I think I actually ate less because of the project – because I had to download the pictures, the less I ate, the less work I had to do. Also, if I ever forgot to take my camera out with me, I wouldn't be able to eat. I've never worried about my weight, but this was a really good way of controlling it. If there was a bowl of peanuts sitting in front of me, I'd probably not have any rather than go through the palaver of shooting it. Looking at the pictures makes me laugh – there I am on holiday at Loch Ness, at the Alton Towers Hotel when I finished my course, on Christmas Day with my family... It's a great record of what I did that year – and it's amazing to see how much my hair grew.

I planned a party for when the year came to an end, and made a lot of little cakes with "Eat 22" written on them. They were the last things I photographed myself eating. Afterwards, I went a bit crazy. I was on a "see food" diet – I'd see food and eat it. I was amazed by the freedom

Ellie's rules

- All food must be photographed before it is eaten
 - All food photographed must then be consumed
 - Any additional food eaten not included in the photograph must be photographed separately, i.e. second helpings, extra portions, desserts. In places where photography is not permitted (cinema etc), food must be photographed prior to entering or not consumed at all
 - In the case of party food (crisps in bowls etc), wherever possible, all handfuls should be photographed
 - Liquid is exempt – however, drinks which are considered to have some solid content should be photographed (soups etc)
 - Chewing gum is exempt
- You can see Eat 22 under 'Web projects' at www.ellieharrison.com



11 March 2001: 11.20am
Half a slice of toast with Snickers spread



11 March 2001: 11.36am
Pret a Manger Banana Cake



16 March 2001: 7.46pm
Chips



18 March 2001: 3.15pm
Salad, bread, hoummos, pickles, boiled egg



25 March 2001: 10.31pm
Fruitella sweets



27 March 2001: 3.58pm
Philadelphia and salad sandwich



28 March 2001: 7.32pm
Chips, salad, naan bread, ketchup, mayo



8 April 2001: 8.46pm
Couscous, tomato and kidney bean sauce



12 May 2001: 4.34pm
Chocolate and vanilla ice cream



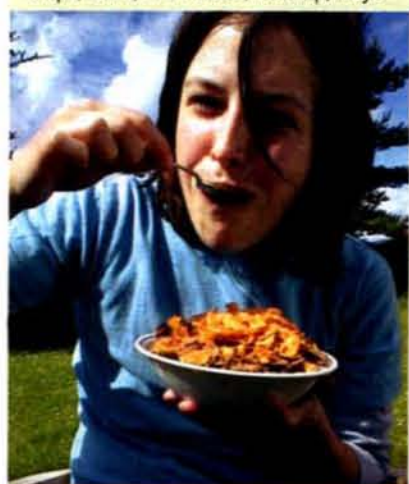
2 June 2001: 2.08pm
Vegetable noodle soup



22 June 2001: 11.41am
Allbran, Bran Flakes and Oat Sensations



29 June 2001: 9.35pm
Vegetable fajitas



16 July 2001: 10.41am
Allbran, Bran Flakes, Corn Flakes



19 July 2001: 3.48pm
Strawberry Cometto



3 August 2001: 1.15pm
Thai, daal, rice, two chapatis



30 August 2001: 4.37pm
Chocolate and toffee fudge twin ice cream



7 September 2001: 3.54pm
Large Danish pastry



18 November 2001: 2.12pm
Hoummos and tomato sandwich, crisps



Christmas Day 2001: 4.09pm
Some Kettle Chips



Boxing Day 2001: 3.19pm
Christmas chocolate log



31 December 2001: 2.42pm
Chips and two Celebration chocolates



31 January 2002: 2.02pm
Cream cheese sandwich, plum, orange



7 March 2002: 4.29pm
Two fingers of Kit Kat



11 March 2002: 8.20pm
Eat 22 souvenir cake