



Dr. Dolan in a grocery store in Muscat, Oman, in July 2019

Dolan publishes another book, a history of breakfast cereals

What might encourage a university English professor to research the history of breakfast cereals?

Dr. Kathryn Dolan, associate professor of English, is an American literature scholar who studies the connections between literature and food. As she explains in her latest book, *Breakfast Cereal: A Global History*, she became interested in cereal's intriguing history after making an odd observation about granola.

"I was noticing a pattern specifically with granola," she said. "It was really popular in the 1960s with hippies, and my parents were hippies. Folks would even say, 'You're totally granola.' It was like an adjective for being counterculture or liberal hippie."

She also discovered, however, that granola was popular throughout the health reform movement in the 1880s and 1890s. That coincidence motivated her to investigate the full history of cereals.

Dolan found it challenging to cover the long, diverse global history of breakfast in

a concise book. The task required her to synthesize and consolidate a huge amount of information. As she noted, "I spent months on what became just one chapter." She had to narrow down her research to the most intriguing details; otherwise, the book would have been too long for publication.

The recently published book discusses ancient civilizations' porridges as well as the eventual birth of cold boxed cereals. Dolan explains how John Harvey and W. K. Kellogg revolutionized breakfast in the 1890s with corn flakes. She also compares breakfast staples from other cultures, such as bread, tea, and honey in Iran vs. cheese and bread in Italy.

The author hopes her book will inspire people to reassess their breakfast routines in light of the history. She wants people to "be more thoughtful about what you are putting in your body and appreciate the history of how it all started and where it came from." *Breakfast Cereal* urges people to be more intentional about breakfast by

looking at it through the perspective of centuries of breakfast history and traditions.

For any fan of breakfast foods, Dolan's book provides an appetizing adventure through the evolution of the morning meal. She said, "I hope people just enjoy the book and they want to read more about the subject, or they think more about breakfast or about food in general."

