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Freelancing in a Challenging Economy
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It's tough to be a freelance writer right now. New projects get cancelled or put off, money's tight, and some publications just say they're not buying right now, no matter how good your pitch.

What can you do? Regardless of which publications you're pitching, work smarter by recycling your work. Rewrite your story for non-competing publications and websites. By the time you've done all the research for a health-focused magazine on agave nectar, perhaps there's a trend piece with recipes for an industry restaurant magazine, or a trend piece on sugar substitutes for a general magazine. Why charge on to the next subject when you can make the most of the research, interviews, and recipe development you've done already?

Now, if you want to know which national food magazines are doing well, they're the ones connected to television and branding. Winners in this economy tend to be newer, particularly those with multiple brands, such as a TV show, cookbooks and branded cookware.

If you want to pitch these publications, please buy at least two copies and study them, not only for freelance opportunities but also to get the name of the right and most current editor from the masthead. Try a senior editor but not the person at the top. It's probably not the managing editor, often in charge of getting the publication out rather than reading queries.

1. At *Every Day with Rachel Ray*, about 50 percent of the magazine is freelance written. Start with ideas for the smaller pieces, such as the

short travel columns.

2. *Food Network's* new eponymous magazine debuted in October with two test issues and will publish nine issues this year. Freelancing opportunities are limited to the smaller pieces.

3. *Food and Family* magazine, put out by Meredith's custom publishing division for Kraft, has an enormous circulation of 7 million. Here's an [example](#) of the types of features it publishes.

The traditional, classic food magazines, however, are losing advertisers, according to the Media Industry Newsletter. *Gourmet* lost almost 25 percent of its ad pages last year. *Cooking Light's* ads dropped 21 percent, *Bon Appetit* was down 17 percent, and *Food & Wine* fell 8 percent.

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News from Clients and Students
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- *The Christian Science Monitor* published **Karen Leland's** piece on pomegranates. She also writes a [bi-monthly column](#) for the Huffington Post.

- **Tracey Ceurvels-O'Grady's** [piece](#) on soufflés appeared in *Relish* magazine.

- **Stephanie Stiavetti's** [story](#) on cazuelas appeared on NPR's *The Kitchen Window*.

- **Kristin Jackson-Ellis** wrote a feature on wineries for *Edible East Bay*.

- As for **me**, while my book, [Grilled Pizzas & Piadinas](#), co-written last year with chef Craig Priebe, has received lots of press for the pizzas, here's a big [feature](#) on making piadinas.

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Who's on Twitter?
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Twitter is the latest form of communication for the short attention span set. You get only 140-characters to express your thought of the

moment, called a tweet.

Who's exposing the details of their day? A short search revealed such Twitterati as:

- Ruth Reichl, editor of *Gourmet*
- Pete Wells, dining editor of the *New York Times*
- Amanda Hesser, food columnist at the *New York Times*
- Blogger David Lebovitz
- David Leite of Leitesculinaria.com
- Ed Levine of Serious Eats
- Author Michael Rhulman
- Writer John T. Edge
- Houston Press restaurant reviewer Robb Walsh.

And many of these people talk to each other. That's how I found them.

Most tweets are too cryptic or offer material that doesn't interest me. It's kind of like reading a micro celebrity magazine, where the subjects write their own material, ex. Ruth Reichl noting she had dinner with Alice Waters (named only as "Alice"). There's no content about the dinner conversation in her tweets. That's what would interest me.

John T. Edge is one of the few whose chicken scratches make sense. Here's one I loved: "Red velvet cake for breakfast. A fat slice. With cream cheese icing. Because it was on the counter, leftover from last night, that's why."

If you'd like to try it, [sign up](#) and see if you can follow the shorthand. To read more, see this breathless [endorsement](#) of Twittering by the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

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Resources

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- What happens at a photo shoot for a cookbook? Here's author Andrea Nguyen's eye-opening [blog](#) post on how it worked for her upcoming Ten Speed cookbook on dumplings.
- A *Wall Street Journal* writer [explores](#) a few food websites that caught her eye.

Hurry! Apply for an award from the Association for the Study of Food and Society, deadline April 1. The ASFS Book [Award](#) recognizes an

outstanding book about food published within the last two years.

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News You Can Use
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- I'm sad to report that after more than 18 years, the [Cook's Library](#) bookstore in Los Angeles will close April 30. I've spent many rapturous hours browsing the tiny isles. Owner Ellen Rose believes she has lost too many sales to the Internet. Markdowns have already begun, so place your final orders now and give Ellen a celebrated send-off.

- As recipe developers, what is our part in making the nation fatter? This [article](#) shows how we're adding more calories to the dishes we create.

- A new national food magazine called [Food](#) premiered at the end of last year. The layout could be better but I picked up the premier issue at an airport, and it was full of ads, so the staff seems to understand distribution and sales. I wish them luck.

- The *Times of London* identified the [50 best](#) food blogs, with Orangette in the lead. In a related story, [read](#) about Orangette's author, Molly Wizenberg, and her new memoir.

- Carlo Petrini, head of Slow Food, [discusses](#) the relevance of organic food in our current economy, plus other issues such as eating less meat, in this revealing interview.

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An Opportunity to Write
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-- Linda Murray Berzok needs your stories. The editor of the upcoming anthology *Storied Dishes: What Our Family Recipes Tell Us About Who We Are and Where We've Been* (Praeger, 2010), she's looking for "1100 to 1200-word compelling, literary food memory essays focused on a significant recipe passed on by an important woman friend or relative. Also needed is the recipe itself with a headnote. Personal photos are a plus."

Essays need edge and depth and should be jargon-free. She can show you a sample. They may be amusing, satiric, disturbing, sad, poignant, powerful or uplifting. Strong unusual ethnic backgrounds are a plus,

especially Mexican, American Indian and African-American. She wants stories of female relatives other than mothers and grandmothers, and those with a connection to 9/11, memorial stories (foods made and served at funerals/memorial services), recipes given as gifts in bridal showers and recipes acquired at potlucks.

The deadline is April 15, 2009. Act fast. Send an informal, 3 to 4 sentence query to her at Imberzok@hotmail.com.

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Just for Fun
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In celebration of Passover, coming April 8, I offer this [oldie](#) but goodie about making Matzo Ball Soup, a superb example of voice. Plus, you'll learn a lot of Yiddish.

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Upcoming Classes
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April 25, 2009

Get Your Book Published: The Ins, Outs, Ups and Downs

[The Writing Salon](#)

Berkeley, CA

10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

\$55 members/ \$65 non-members

Wondering how the book industry works and what happens when you're ready to send your ideas or manuscript out? Join me in this 3-hour discussion and learn what it takes to get your book published.

May 11-15, 2009

Symposium for Professional Food Writers

[The Greenbrier](#), White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, USA

\$1503-\$2335

I first attended this conference in 1999, and now return as a speaker. I'll offer individual coaching on freelance writing. My particular sessions are a workshop on proposal writing and a panel, "How to Sell Your Food Book Idea With or Without an Agent."

May 26-June 23, 2009

Food Writing for Food Lovers

[The Writing Salon](#)

Berkeley, CA
7 - 9:30 p.m.
\$185 members/ \$215 non-members

We explore food blogging, writing feature articles, food memoir, restaurant reviews, and more. If you love food, this class shows you how to express your passion on paper. Plus, your fellow classmates will be as obsessed with food as you are.

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Other Events You Might Enjoy
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September 11-13
[The Oxford Food Symposium](#)
Oxford, England

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Please forward this email to anyone you think might be interested. All previous issues are now archived on [my website](#). There's a place to sign up there 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 Spring,
Dianne