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Notable & Quotable: The \$1,500 Sandwich

The unseen riches of free exchange.

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From an online post by Cato Institute researcher and editor Chelsea German, Sept. 25:

What would life be like without exchange or trade? Recently, a man decided to make a sandwich from scratch. He grew the vegetables, gathered salt from seawater, milked a cow, turned the milk into cheese, pickled a cucumber in a jar, ground his own flour from wheat to make the bread, collected his own honey, and personally killed a chicken for its meat. This month, he published the results of his endeavor in an enlightening video: making a sandwich entirely by himself cost him 6 months of his life and set him back \$1,500. . . .

The inefficiency of making even something as humble as a sandwich by oneself, without the benefits of market exchange, is simply mind-boggling. There was a time when everyone grew their own food and made their own clothes. It was a time of unimaginable poverty and labor without rest.