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British Food: An Extraordinary Thousand Years Of History



Synopsis

This a revised and updated edition of an award-winning book, recognized as THE authoritative work on the subject of British food. It is a breathtaking attempt to trace the changes to and influences on food in Britain from the Black Death, through the Enclosures, the Reformation, the Industrial Revolution, the rise of Capitalism to the present day. There has been a recent wave of interest in food culture and history and Colin Spencer's masterful, readable account of our culinary history is a celebrated contribution to the genre. There has never been such an exciting, broad-scope history of the food of these islands. It should remind us all of our rich past and the gastronomic importance of British cuisine.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Few national cuisines have endured as much abuse as Britain's. Vilified as unimaginative and heavy, it has traditionally been recognized for only two achievements: the English breakfast and Christmas dinner. But, Spencer explains, even before the Romans brought their civilization to the islands, Celtic agriculture and animal husbandry produced a wide range of foodstuffs. Anglo-Saxon England knew how to stew meats with savory herbs before that practice became common in Europe. The Norman conquest introduced exotic spices. Medieval England even saw the invention of fast food, in the cookshops that lined the Thames, catering to boatmen and travelers. And imperialists returned home with knowledge of India's elaborate food tradition, full of strong, penetrating spices and herbs. Victorian home cooking succumbed to uniformity under one of the

earliest cookbooks: Isabella Beeton's Book of Household Management (1800). Rationing and postwar austerity in large part gave birth to British cooking's modern evil reputation, but globalization and affluence have transformed London into one of the world's gastronomic capitals. A glossary assists readers with old and unfamiliar kitchen terms. Mark Knoblauch Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

A stimulating work.... What did the Brontës dine on at Haworth Parsonage? How did Jane Austen's family cook prepare the sauce? Colin Spencer will tell you. His book is a joyous, lively mine of information. (Times Literary Supplement) A book so absorbing it may even stop the reader from falling asleep after Christmas dinner. (London Times) One of the most fascinating and riveting reads this year. Go buy. (Scotland on Sunday) Never has there been such a breathtakingly comprehensive, wide-ranging and fascinating food history as this stonking great tome by Colin Spencer. The amount of research involved makes the brain boggle. (Daily Mail) Sure to become a classic. (The Independent Magazine) British Food describes the glories and the decline of the nation's cuisine over the centuries... Spencer traces the country's lamentable decline in cuisine through the Reformation, Puritanism, and the Industrial Revolution... Modern Britons would not recognize the impressive lists of ingredients their ancestors used. (Library Journal) [Spencer] ably covers a millennium and more, reflecting intelligently on the dramatic, and often sudden, dietary developments wrought by political and economic change... Spencer's rich lode of information about British food justifies his subtitle's claim that its present vigor caps off 'an extraordinary thousand years of history.' (Claire Hopley Washington Times) Spencer's interesting book is a worthwhile addition to the food history literature. Recommended [for] all levels. (Choice) Ten reference books every food lover should own... #10 British Food (Waitrose Food Illustrated) --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Have read it off and on over the course of the year on my ipad. Have thoroughly enjoyed having it to turn to, and have learnt a great deal from it. Many highlighted items to go back to and think more about.

I'm starting a thesis related to british cuisine, and Spencer's "British food" is a MUST for anyone interested in this subject.

It is a very interesting book. I was disappointed that the description was not clear. I was expecting a collection of actual recipes from times past.

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