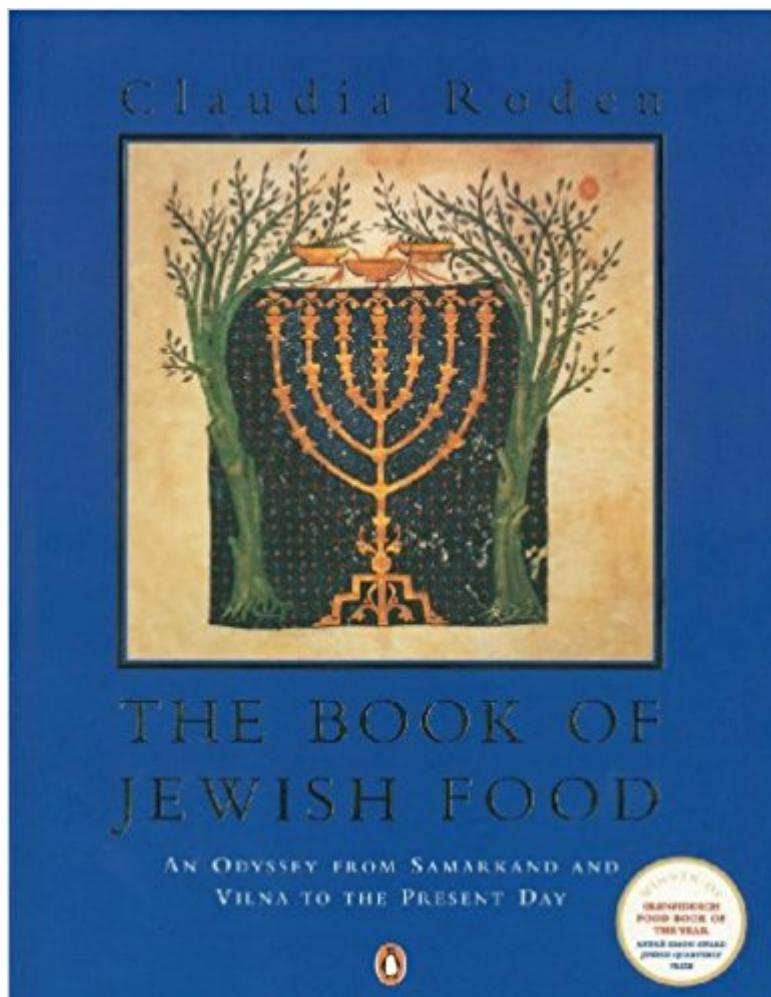


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Book Of Jewish Food



Synopsis

'No-one will ever produce a richer, or more satisfying feast of the Jewish experience.' - Simon Schama 'One can't imagine a better food book than this, ever: for the reader and the cook.' - Nigella Lawson, Vogue 'THE BOOK OF JEWISH FOOD deserves its definitive article. It should stand as the book for many years... It is not likely to be surpassed.' - The Telegraph 'Manna from Heaven.' - Independent on Sunday

Book Information

Paperback: 592 pages

Publisher: Penguin UK (August 3, 1999)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0140466096

ISBN-13: 978-0140466096

Product Dimensions: 7.5 x 1 x 9.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.9 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (100 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

November 1998 -- I just checked this book out of the library yesterday and stayed up until midnight reading from it to my husband. Now, he's not interested in recipes - it was the stories about Jews in Cairo, Jews in ancient Babylon, Arab and Jewish cooking under the Abbasid Caliphs in Baghdad, Jews in India, and most of all -- ANDALUCIA and the glories of Spain before the "Reconquista" that kept him entertained. Claudia Roden, culinary Scheherezade...Born in Cairo to a Sephardic family who left Spain in the 15th Century, Roden has a lot of good things to say about Arabs and Jews in the Middle East. She doesn't gloss over the difficulties but she's much more interested in talking about the long, long shared history of the two peoples. And she's interested in great food. You should check out the recipes from the various Indian Jewish peoples. I am planning to cook at least twelve of her recipes in the next month. Roden's writing style is direct, simple and wonderful. I am such a fan!!! As a Lebanese American Gentile married to a Jew (of Ashkenazi descent), I feel so grateful to have this book. It confirms my passion for all things Sephardic/Levantine, and gives me a

culinary bridge to my extended, multicultural family. Thank you, Claudia! You're a beacon of peace, besides being a culinary star!

Nowadays, when hundreds of cookbooks flood the book market, and each regional or ethnic cuisine type gets its share of ink and paper, choosing a cookbook is not an easy task. Well, this task becomes much easier when one book of its kind stands far above the rest - and I believe that this is the case with Claudia Roden's book of Jewish Food. This book is remarkable in many ways - the clear and simple way in which the recipes are presented, the wonderful historical inserts, and above all - the feeling that there's someone with you in the kitchen when you cook, someone who's deeply informed about the recipe and its cultural background, and who's also there with you, helping you to make the best out of it. The book is masterfully organized - the grouping of recipes is so logical and yet not annoyingly rigid, and the index is a masterpiece on its own - there's no way you can miss a recipe that you want: you'll find it under its name, or under any of the principal ingredients used in it. Timing given for each recipe is relatively realistic, and so are the serving amounts. I strongly recommend this book.

Claudia Roden's opus, THE BOOK OF JEWISH FOOD, must be considered the definitive work on the history of the cuisine of the Jewish people. Anyone wishing to own a single Jewish cookbook need look no further than THE BOOK OF JEWISH FOOD. This is a work of amazing scholarship, tantamount to a doctoral dissertation which clearly would earn honors; a Nobel laureate if that award were to be granted for cookery books. Roden takes on a subject that almost is too vast, covering every area in which there ever has been a Jewish population, including Ethiopia, India and China. She not only presents a large variety of recipes typical of each separate region, but she illustrates both the similarities of these recipes and their differences. The food, well, the food is marvelous; delicious enough in the description that one's mouth waters merely reading the text. This book is much more than a cookbook. It is a work of social anthropology and food historiography, with recipes that are--yes!--good enough to eat. THE BOOK OF JEWISH FOOD is a work of genius. It clearly is the definitive Jewish cookbook for the coming millennia.

A wonderful book that most of my family and friends own, my non-Jewish flatmate read through like a novel, and I always have difficulty putting down. Since Ashkenazi cooking can be found in countless other Jewish cookery books, I appreciated the main focus on Sephardic cooking. I am vegan and even so found hundreds of recipes. The cultural background information is fascinating,

and the religious information enables you to produce something a bit different at the festivals - we had the most fabulous (Iranian, I think) stew last Rosh Hashanah, together with home-made challah, and were quite spoilt for choice when it came to making haroset. The only problem is that I get so seduced by reading the recipes that I end up making too much food! However, my friends have certainly been enjoying the pastries I take to meetings. I have had no problems following the delicious recipes and Roden is usefully realistic about substitutes for ingredients unobtainable in Britain, warnings for extra-hot dishes and so on. She also gives basic recipes followed by several variations for many dishes, especially the popular ones; this can be useful if you want a different slant on a traditional dish, for example a borsht which isn't too violently beetrooty. The personal touch - anecdotes about where she met the recipe donor, or traditional dishes in her family - is delightful.

The book is filled with delightful illustrations, photographs, and the sort of Jewish history I hungered for. But speaking of hungry, if you plan on doing more than just reading this book you may be disappointed, as I was. The recipes were too basic. Once I followed through with them, I realized that Ms. Roden had to be leaving fairly important things out. She states that she chose the versions of the recipes that she found most appealing, but I believe her choices in fact reflect her desire not to frighten more simple and less experienced chefs with too many instructions or ingredients. But it is not helpful to leave out basic instructions, ie: in the "Pot Roast" recipe she fails to instruct the reader to brown the meat before adding the water. For Ashkenazi recipes there are many more helpful books on the market. For myself, I'm still searching for a good Sephardi cooking resource. In the end, I'm not sorry I bought the book, while it is not a great cookbook, it is a beautiful treasure of a book and an outstanding tribute to our culture.

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