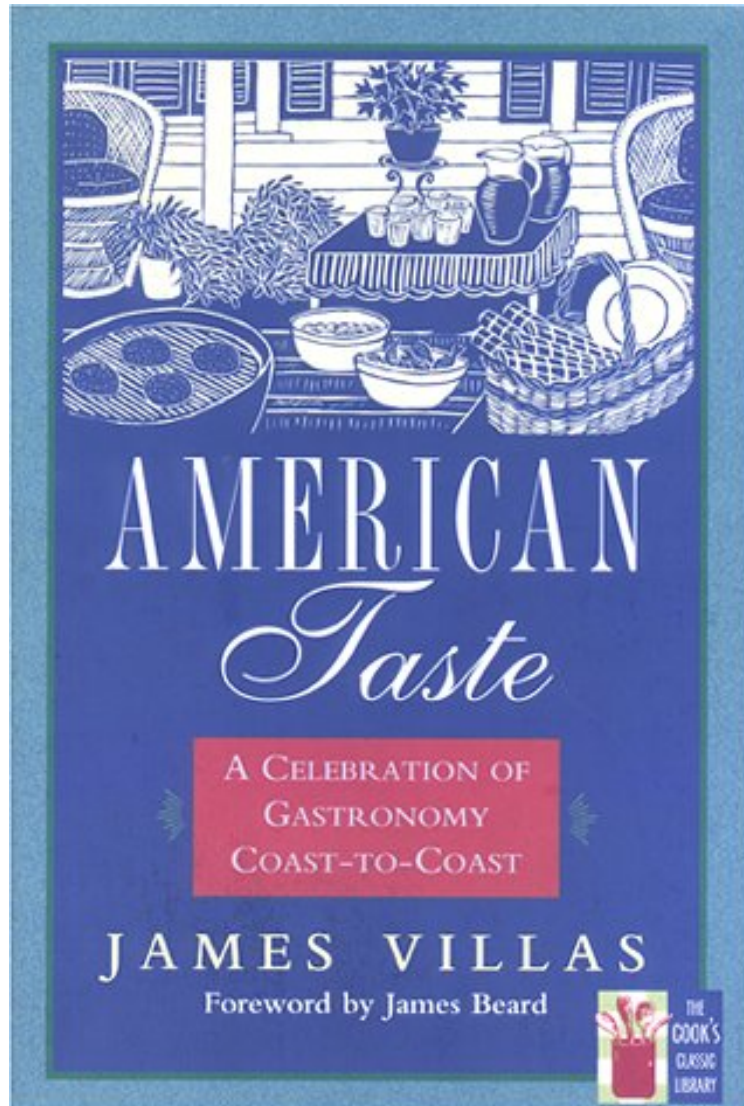


[Download] American Taste

American Taste

James Villas

*DOC | *audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF | ePub*



DOWNLOAD



+

READ ONLINE

#4607047 in Books Lyons Burford, Publishers 1997-03-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 .82 x 6.03 x 9.001, #File Name: 1558215727352 pages | File size: 74.Mb

James Villas : American Taste before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised American Taste:

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Great Read on what makes American Food. Recommended By B. Marold 'American Taste' is the first book of culinary writer extraordinaire, James Villas, who has served the exposition of American eating by producing cookbooks of Southern cuisine with his mother, major books of great American comfort foods such as casseroles and biscuits, essays on American cuisine such as this work, and a better than average book of memoir essays entitled 'Between Bites'. While not as dominant a figure as either James Beard or Julia Child,

he has thereby succeeded at just about every recognized form of culinary writing, especially when you add his food column which ran for decades in 'Town and Country' magazine. By covering so many culinary bases, Villas has created a niche for himself in American culinary writing which is not as scholarly as John Thorne, Jeffrey Steingarten, or Paula Wolfert, less personal than Jim Harrison, better informed and more involved than Alan Richman, but with certainly the strong opinions of Harrison and Richman, with the authority of having worked full time in the field for over thirty years now. For readers just discovering this book, it is important to recognize that the essays were published over 20 years ago and were probably written in the ten (10) years before that. Therefore, they represent something of a time capsule where one can read about the culinary world of almost a generation ago when Julia Child was important but not yet deified, James Beard was the biggest influence in writing about American food, Alice Waters was still getting her bearings at Chez Panisse, Paul Prudhomme had just left Commander's Palace in New Orleans and Emeril Lagasse was still a very minor player indeed. This is also a time just before the iron grip of the culinary police grasped our food conscience and made us fearful of all things tasty due to fats, eggs, or carbs. At least, that is how Villas makes us feel, with his rapture over good French fries, pates, terrines, gumbos, and Brunswick stew. It is no surprise that Villas, a North Carolina Tarheel to his core, largely equates American cooking with Southern cooking. His very first essay deals with that paragon of Southern cuisine, fried chicken. He here claims that no one except a native Southern cook can do true justice to fried chicken and proceeds to give the gospel on how it is done. It is notable that his recipe disagrees on some important points with many other experts on Southern fried chicken I have audited, especially those with such heady credentials as Edna Lewis, James Beard, and 'Cooks Illustrated' magazine. What is interesting however is not the differences, but the similarities. While Villas calls for a marinade in sour milk, acidulated with lemon juice, Lewis and 'Cooks' use buttermilk, which is simply a natural sour milk. Beard also uses mild, but no acid, and all agree on the importance of cutting whole chickens rather than using precut parts and using a cast iron frying pan. I am certain that Villas' recipe will produce primo fried chicken, but I am also certain that his approach is not the ONLY way to achieve Southern fried perfection. Villas takes a similarly strong position when it comes to that quintessentially American technique, barbecue. From many hours in front of the TV watching Al Roker, Bobby Flay, and Steve Raichlen, I know that the centers of the barbecue religion are North Carolina, Memphis, Texas, and Kansas City. Needless to say, Villas elevates back country Tarheel techniques to the level of gospel and, in his first essay on the subject, relegates all that stuff they do in Texas to the footnotes of culinary consideration. To be fair, in a later essay, he visits some prime Texas barbecue eateries and recants, allowing that beef can approach the great taste achieved from a well barbecued piece of pork. To also be fair about his regionalism, Villas does give a fair amount of time to non-Southern specialties such as native American cheeses and true caviar, harvested from American bred sturgeon. He is especially fond of the national love and creativity with the lowly sandwich, most especially the hamburger; the bacon, lettuce, and tomato sandwich; and the glorious club sandwich. In spite of how important the sandwich is to American eating, Villas bemoans how poorly the hamburger is served in so many fast food outlets. If I were to cite one aspect of this book with which to encourage you to buy and read it, it would be for Villas' advice on sandwiches. Like so many of his opinions, I cannot follow him to create an inch and a half-thick burger with close to half a pound of carefully ground meat. I am much fonder of Julia Child's recipe using five ounces and a liberal enhancement from encapsulated sauted shallots. But again, Villas' strong opinions are always sound, especially with his advice on how to acquire the best meat for his tasty burger. The very best thing about Villas' essays is the fact that he pokes his discriminating nose into some of the more obscure corners of American gastronomy. I found his essay on Bourbon especially interesting, as he reveals that the rules for distilling and aging Bourbon are about as strict as any French, German, or Italian rules on crafting beer, cheese, and wine. Among other things, it explains why Jack Daniels product is not really Bourbon, but simply a 'sour mash whiskey'. Unlike Bourbon, these essays are Villas without the effects of aging which may have mellowed his writing in his later books. Villas' writing is entertaining for his strong opinions. These opinions may shorten the shelf life of his writing, but I personally find his thoughts as nourishing as more moderate writers such as Thorne, Colwin, and M.F.K. Fisher. Very highly recommended vintage writing on food. Buy it!

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Read and Enjoy...By bonny frenchJames Villas is not only witty but is an excellent cookbook writer as well. Loved the book and strongly recommend it.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. why I love the book AMERICAN TASTEBy T. M. Mckinleysuch a great read, I love James Villas' books on food, he is indeed an American treasure.....the book arrived in perfect condition, only wish it was available in hardcover, as I tend to be rough on my bindings

One of the most entertaining books on contemporary American cuisine.

"A landmark."--Craig Claiborne