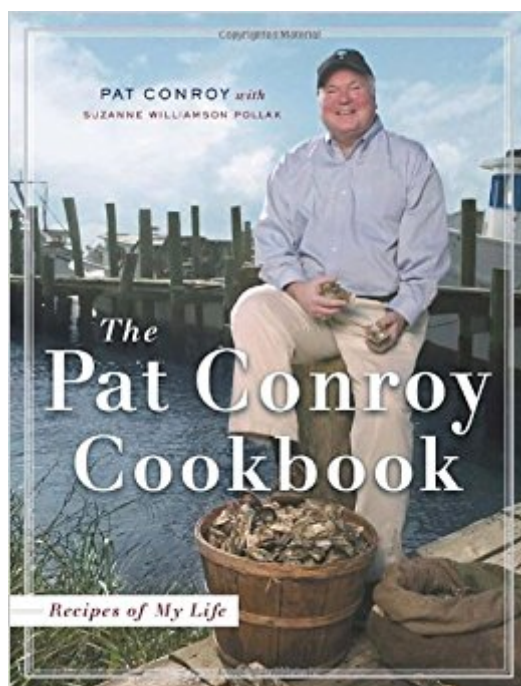


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The Pat Conroy Cookbook: Recipes Of My Life



Synopsis

“This book is the story of my life as it relates to the subject of food. It is my autobiography in food and meals and restaurants and countries far and near. Let me take you to a restaurant on the Left Bank of Paris that I found when writing *The Lords of Discipline*. There are meals I ate in Rome while writing *The Prince of Tides* that ache in my memory when I resurrect them. There is a shrimp dish I ate in an elegant English restaurant, where Cuban cigars were passed out to all the gentlemen in the room after dinner, that I can taste on my palate as I write this. There is barbecue and its variations in the South, and the subject is a holy one to me. I write of truffles in the Dordogne Valley in France, cilantro in Bangkok, catfish in Alabama, scuppernong in South Carolina, Chinese food from my years in San Francisco, and white asparagus from the first meal my agent took me to in New York City. Let me tell you about the fabulous things I have eaten in my life, the story of the food I have encountered along the way. . . .”

America’s favorite storyteller, Pat Conroy, is back with a unique cookbook that only he could conceive. Delighting us with tales of his passion for cooking and good food and the people, places, and great meals he has experienced, Conroy mixes them together with mouthwatering recipes from the Deep South and the world beyond. It all started thirty years ago with a chance purchase of *The Escoffier Cookbook*, an unlikely and daunting introduction for the beginner. But Conroy was more than up to the task. He set out with unwavering determination to learn the basics of French cooking—stocks and dough—and moved swiftly on to veal demi-glace and *pâte brisée*. With the help of his culinary accomplice, Suzanne Williamson Pollak, Conroy mastered the dishes of his beloved South as well as the cuisine he has savored in places as far away from home as Paris, Rome, and San Francisco. Each chapter opens with a story told with the inimitable brio of the author. We see Conroy in New Orleans celebrating his triumphant novel *The Prince of Tides* at a new restaurant where there is a contretemps with its hardworking young owner/chef—years later he discovered the earnest young chef was none other than Emeril Lagasse; we accompany Pat and his wife on their honeymoon in Italy and wander with him, wonderstruck, through the markets of Umbria and Rome; we learn how a dinner with his fighter-pilot father was preceded by the Great Santini himself acting out a perilous night flight that would become the last chapters of one of his son’s most beloved novels. These tales and more are followed by corresponding recipes—from Breakfast Shrimp and Grits and Sweet Potato Rolls to Pappardelle with Prosciutto and Chestnuts and Beefsteak Florentine to Peppered Peaches and Creme Brulee. A master storyteller and passionate cook, Conroy believes that “A recipe is a story that ends with a good meal.”

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This effort from the author of *The Great Santini* and *The Prince of Tides* is a joy on several levels. Conroy might not be the first to disguise a memoir as a collection of foodstuffs, but it's hard to imagine a more entertaining, honest and outlandish effort. In 21 chapters and 100 recipes, he traces his masticating, lusting, family-crazed, traveling life from a dysfunctional childhood in the South (with a tyrannical father and a mother who thought of cooking as "slave labor"), to gourmet adventures in Rome, Paris and the table of Alain Ducasse. The book aches with tales of times when eating is at its most urgent: in the face of love, or death, after an all-nighter with the guys or in the company of other great eaters. It's hard not to admire Conroy's innate ability to spin a yarn. And the food's not bad, either. From Conroy's days in the Carolina Low Country there are Crab Cakes and Peach Pie. In Italy, it's Ribollita and Saltimbocca alla Romana. A chapter entitled "Why Dying Down South Is More Fun" suggests proper fare for mourning, such as Pickled Shrimp and Grits Casserole. As Robert Frost might have pointed out, writing prose in a cookbook is like playing tennis without a net. Conroy is free to scatter his memories like buckshot with no real worries of chapter endings, plot lines and character development. In his hands, the technique propels both writer and reader into a state of fullness. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Fans of Conroy's novels will snap up copies of their idol's cookbook for more than just its recipes. Although Conroy offers a few recipes for dishes that he has loved since childhood, he comes to

admire more sophisticated fare when celebrity gives him access to whatever his tastes may desire. Conroy's earliest introduction to cooking came from the pages of Escoffier, the rigorous French chef who based his cuisine on stocks, and his example influenced Conroy's cookery forever. A stay in Rome gave Conroy nearly equal appreciation for Italian cooking. The true savor of the book rests in Conroy's ability to tell absorbing tales of how divergent dishes and exceptional ingredients came to be important to him. Thus, one of the book's vivid moments comes in a discussion of Vidalia onions with Conroy relating a hilarious story involving football, Wild Turkey, and a tart-tongued septuagenarian southern belle. Literary historians will particularly relish Conroy's account of how he came to write the ending of *The Great Santini* (1976). Mark Knoblauch Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

Consider these audios as a biography more than cooking material. I can also highly recommend the paper version of the book, which does have the recipes as well as the full text (the CDs do say that they are excerpted). Considering Conroy's delivery is sleepier than the Savannah river, the book makes for a surprisingly satisfactory drive-time companion, although even for native Southerners it takes the better part of the first disk to get comfortable with the intonations; if you're not used to it, it might take longer, but it will be worth it. It wouldn't hurt to be familiar with Conroy's work (especially *The Great Santini*); if you aren't you'll end up wanting to go read his books which is probably the intent. In fact, I give this version only 4 stars for that very reason: you would do fine with the book but no disks, but the disks don't really work without the book so you'll end up buying that too. Go ahead and get both, you won't regret it (and your tummy will be very happy - might as well buy a larger belt while you're at it).

Perfect mix of delicious recipes and delicious prose. The "back stories" for the recipes make for some great reading while sitting in the kitchen, waiting for these treats to cook. My only complaint is that he hasn't done another volume of recipes. This book also has some good general cooking tips and hints in addition to the easy-to-follow recipes. Anyone who loves to go to old book stores and dig up local recipe books will love this book. I've given several copies as gifts for my friends who love to really Cook (with a capital C). My copy is grease-stained, dog-eared, marked with my notes, and WELL-LOVED. This book is like a good roux--rich, flavorful, complicated, and totally satisfying.

I can smell the mud, and I hear the gulls and see the shrimp boats coming in from my parents' bedroom window at Rockland Plantation. Wadmalaw Island. - Rockville, South Carolina. Twenty

miles or so south of Charleston. Famous for the 'Rockville Races' which are themselves famous for being an excuse for a weeks' worth of rowdy drinking and partying and sailboat races. Wadmalaw is the most Southern of the three islands after Charleston.... First there is James Island, then Johns, and then Wadmalaw. I learned Gullah. Or I think I did. I actually attended a 2 room schoolhouse on Wadmalaw Island - and after the 7th grade I was sent to Ashley Hall in Charleston, like all proper southern girls. And like all proper Southern belles, I did not read Pat Conroy until I got the hell away from debutante balls and propriety and had myself a good time - all so I could really enjoy this man's books! I wanted to move to the lowcountry from my exiled status in Florida several years ago... to rent a place on the last bastion of Gullah culture I could find... Daufuskie Island. It almost happened, and I was ready to live less than a quarter mile from the famous schoolhouse where he taught. The school is talked about in hushed, reverent tones. It is used for the many meetings now taking place between the actual inhabitants of Daufuskie and the rich newbies who want to develop the heck out of the island. I blame Pat Conroy totally for never letting me give up my fight to get back to my beloved land. My marshes. My shrimp boats. This quest to return to the low country is never ending. Reading this latest book is another impetus in my saddened soul to return to where I know I belong, and where Pat Conroy so sweetly describes my heart's desire when he is describing to his student, Jake, (in 'The Water is Wide') his love for oysters: "You like those oysters, teacher?" Jake asked me. "They taste good?" "Heaven. It's like tasting heaven, Jake," I answered. "You know what you're tasting, teacher?" Jake said. "You're tasting last night's high tide. Them oysters always keep some of the tide with them. It sweetens them up." Conroy sweetens me up. He convinces me that no matter how many obstacles might get in my way, I will return to my own heavenly paradise. With each book, Pat Conroy just keeps sweetening the pot. Rennie Manning

Conroy will always be my favorite author. My book club had an evening meeting with each of us bringing a dish made from one of the recipes. It was just a fun way to celebrate the author's life and enjoy his recipes!

The stories provide an interesting history of Pat's life, including his travels, friends, and events that shaped his life in an entertaining way. Being from the Low Country of South Carolina, it was easy for me to visualize the places mentioned in the book, many of which I have actually visited and enjoyed. I have read only one of Pat's novels, *The Lords of Discipline*, but became a fan and now intend to read his other novels.

Love this collection of Mr Conroy's memories and inspirations for some lovely dishes I look forward to making. It arrived as expected.

Loaned it to my sister who has a house on the Texas Coast in Rockport. Haven't seen it since.

My wife and I are to be the guests of a family half way around the world from our home in South Carolina. A gift was suggested that would tell this family something about where we came from. We will be dinner guests so the thought of a local cookbook came to mind. A cookbook by a renowned author, Pat Conroy, who is also passionate about food seemed to be appropriate. The book is interspersed with anecdotes about this area of South Carolina. As he says "it is my autobiography in food and meals and restaurants and countries far and near" We found it intriguing as well as useful.

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