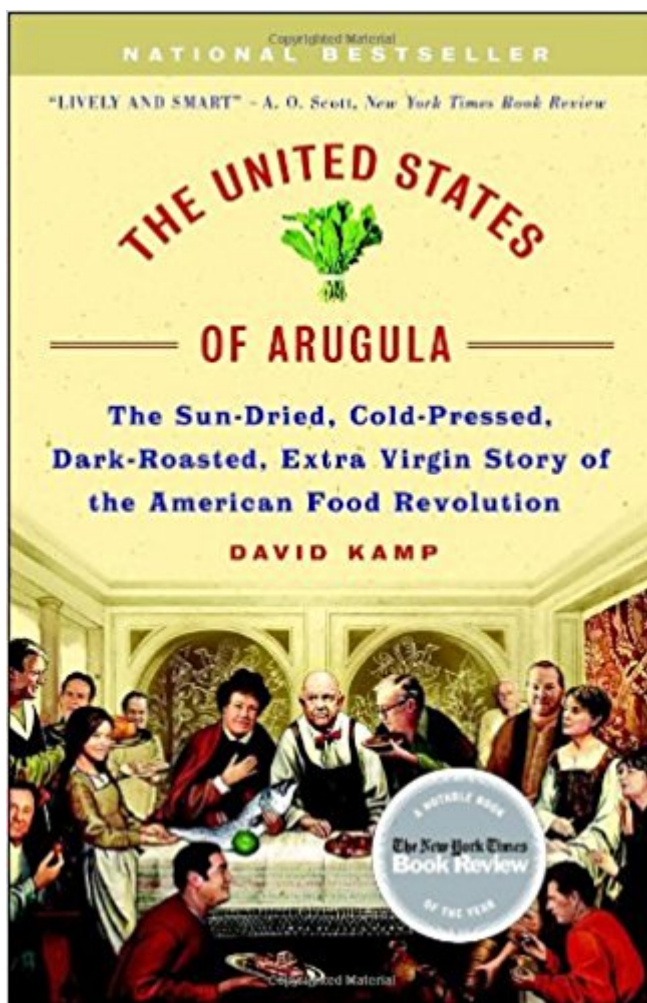


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The United States Of Arugula: The Sun Dried, Cold Pressed, Dark Roasted, Extra Virgin Story Of The American Food Revolution



Synopsis

The wickedly entertaining, hunger-inducing, behind-the-scenes story of the revolution in American food that has made exotic ingredients, celebrity chefs, rarefied cooking tools, and destination restaurants familiar aspects of our everyday lives. Amazingly enough, just twenty years ago eating sushi was a daring novelty and many Americans had never even heard of salsa. Today, we don't bat an eye at a construction worker dipping a croissant into robust specialty coffee, city dwellers buying just-picked farmstand produce, or suburbanites stocking up on artisanal cheeses and extra virgin oils at supermarkets. The United States of Arugula is a rollicking, revealing stew of culinary innovation, food politics, and kitchen confidences chronicling how gourmet eating in America went from obscure to pervasive and became the cultural success story of our era.

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Customer Reviews

• "With the sweep of an epic novel, David Kamp takes us behind the scenes and into the sweaty, wacky, weird trenches of the Great American Food Revolution. His reporting is solid, his storytelling magnificent, and his good humor is seemingly inexhaustible . . . a terrific book." • "Molly O'Neill • Culturally aware and cleverly written, this anatomy of the French-fried versus sun-dried tension at the heart of American gastronomy is refreshingly non-snooty." • "Atlantic Monthly" • A page-turner filled with fascinating footnotes, a delicious dish about bold-faced names, and an in-depth look at the ways in which a series of food pioneers touched off a revolution." • "USA Today" • Juicy, irreverent, and full of bite." • "Gael Greene

David Kamp has been a writer and editor for Vanity Fair and GQ for more than a decade. He lives in New York.

In the last 40 years, the predominant food culture in America has become "gourmet". Salsa and sushi have gone from unknown to ubiquitous, and local ingredients, specialty cooking tools and celebrity chefs have become routine. The United States of Arugula attempts to tell the story of how this happened. This book is a fairly fun read, although it meanders quite a bit. We start with the Big Three that popularised inventive cooking and dining - James Beard, Julia Child and Craig Claiborne, and go all the way to Emeril Lagasse's restaurant empire. Kamp has certainly done his research, and the text is packed with all kinds of little asides and tidbits that make the events in the book come to life. Any revolution always begins with a few people, and it is always interesting to read about those people's motivations and understand the movement itself in context. Kamp takes this a little too far, though and the book comes off as overly gossipy. Beard and Claiborne's (among others) sexual preferences are exhumed in detail, and there's a lot of focus on who did and didn't get along. For instance, Graham Kerr, a contemporary of Julia Child who also had a popular cooking show, is introduced as "Everyone in the food world agreed on one person they could hate", even though their hate of him had no bearing on any significant events. I wish that Kamp had instead devoted that space to the events he mentions omitting in his introduction. Another problem with this book is that it was really hard to follow. I usually read epic fantasy and have no trouble keeping hundreds of characters straight in my head, but Kamp introduces so many names that it detracts from the flow of the book. Many of the people mentioned by name are only mentioned once, which adds to the confusion (is this a person I'm supposed to know?) Adding to this is Kamp's love of tangents, he does not stick to one person or one chronological period or even one story. Chapter 2 starts off with an introduction of Pierre Franey entering the US, but jumps quickly to Jacques P  pin's childhood, and then to French cooks' propensity for local foods, to an explanation of "classic French cooking", to a biography of Antonin Car  me and so on... and when the book got back to Franey's story after he gets off the boat, I had a hard time remembering who he was. Aside from those two issues, the book was a great primer on recent food history in the United States.

i picked this up on a "you might also like" recommendation and was not disappointed. it made for great beach reading and was such a great history, pre-food network, of the industry and the big names involved. i think anyone will love hearing the stories of how all the names they have come to

throw around on a daily basis came to be. growing up in california in the early 80's i just wish my folks were more into food and such as i have become as an adult because i could have experienced this burgeoning movement first hand.

If you are a foodie like me you will love this book! I have followed chefs and collected cookbooks for over 42 years. This book describes in detail the food revolution in America. This book puts everything in order and makes everything make sense beginning with Julia Child to Celebrity chefs on the Food Network. I highly recommend this book if you love to cook!

This is an amazingly well written , informative and entertaining book. Not just for foodies but for anyone interested in understanding the development of American popular culture.

A foodie's delight of US culinary history, It was a great read

The footnotes contained some of the most interesting information. Similar to most history texts, this book was filled to over-flowing with names and dates, so many that it was difficult to keep up with later references, and soon I gave up flipping back and forth. While the gossip, insider information about the culinary star's personal lives appealed to my voyeuristic side, it was not helpful to understanding the evolution of food in America. Perhaps the next attempt to understand why and what we eat in America should be shared with a sociological, ecological and spiritual framework.

A fun and witty story about food trends in America. Purchased this as a gift for myself and enjoyed every page.

Thank you

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