



High on the Hog: A Culinary Journey from Africa to America

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Acclaimed cookbook author Jessica B. Harris has spent much of her life researching the food and foodways of the African Diaspora. *High on the Hog* is the culmination of years of her work, and the result is a most engaging history of African American cuisine. Harris takes the reader on a harrowing journey from Africa across the Atlantic to America, tracking the trials that the people and the food have undergone along the way. From chitlins and ham hocks to fried chicken and vegan soul, Harris celebrates the delicious and restorative foods of the African American experience and details how each came to form such an important part of African American culture, history, and identity. Although the story of African cuisine in America begins with slavery, *High on the Hog* ultimately chronicles a thrilling history of triumph and survival. The work of a masterful storyteller and an acclaimed scholar, Jessica B. Harris's *High on the Hog* fills an important gap in our culinary history.

Praise for Jessica B. Harris:

"Jessica Harris masters the ability to both educate and inspire the reader in a fascinating new way." -**Marcus Samuelsson, chef owner of Restaurant Aquavit**

High on the Hog: A Culinary Journey from Africa to America Details

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From Reader Review High on the Hog: A Culinary Journey from Africa to America for online ebook

Debbie says

Misleading subtitle

I expected the book to be more about food than it was. Instead, I got a large helping of editorializing on slavery, civil rights, disenfranchisement and complaints about black chef's not being fully recognized. Food and the culinary tastes of Africa were secondary.

I understand that the culinary traditions of Africa came to the U.S. on slave ships, but I don't think it warrants 60% of a book on food. I was happy to read the end of the book where Harris emphasized how food has connected African and African-American to each other and to the members of each group. Such community centered around food is replicated across cultures everywhere

The book could use some good editing; hyphenated words midsentence and frequent typos are distracting.

Marilyn B says

High on the Hog covers a subject matter that I am not at all familiar with - African American food culture. It was an interesting read, on a subject entirely new to me, and although there are a few passages where some detail seems lacking, Jessica Harris did a remarkable job of tying food and the evolution of culture together. I'm glad I read it.

Debra says

High on the Hog reviews the history of Africans in the western hemisphere, concentrating on the US, through food. Much of the book quotes primary sources. She demonstrates how food, recipes and even manners survived the slave period to become pervasive throughout American culture. Not only in the country south realm of blackeyed peas, fried chicken and watermelon (although she discusses that cuisine in depth as well)but also in the more rarified heights of high end restaurants and celebrity chefs. The book includes a selection of recipes (none of which I have tried yet, but have earmarked several.) and an extensive bibliography for further reading.

I did enjoy the book, and learned much from it.It is recommended. There is something, though, that leaves me rather unsatisfied.... I suspect a greater emphasis on the food rather than the more familiar history would have improved it for me.

Ann says

This is a fascinating and highly readable book and an important contribution to the social and culinary

history of African Americans (and by extension, all Americans). Her use of primary sources, stories of real people, and personal experiences combined smoothly. There are a few pages of recipes at the end, but don't pick this up expecting a cookbook. It's much more than that. The only criticism I have is that it could have used more careful editing. There are places throughout the book where the wrong word was used (due/do, proceeded/preceeded, etc.). Things like that are like nails on a chalkboard to nerds like me and should not have been allowed to pass into print.

Cindywho says

A student handed this to me- he'd only read it 1/2 way through but thought it was great. The best parts were in the first half, so I told him that was the case. Harris traces the foodways of the Africans that were shipped to and later emigrated to the United States. Many chefs were African American and influenced Southern food to a large degree. The stories are interesting and chilling and a compelling look back over the country's history.

Cinnamon says

I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book. And while I felt I knew a fair amount about the impact that Africans who came to the US as slaves had on our culinary history, I had no idea how much they influenced our farming techniques and abilities. Without slaves from Africa we would have had no rice culture in the south, or the ability to grow it. And animal husbandry skills would have been horrible and unable to sustain the cities that were growing during the 1800s. We owe a lot more to African cultures than we realize and Jessica Harris points out a lot of it. But it just made me want to read more about the subject.

Rachel says

Such an enjoyable read. Jessica B. Harris's storytelling was so compelling and interesting that I didn't want to finish the book, but unfortunately I could only make it last so long.

Nina Chachu says

Enjoyable, rather personal history of African American food. Some recipes. Some of the historical background is fascinating.

Shawna says

The most comprehensive history of African American food. I loved it

Cindy says

Themes: food, slavery, race, family, work,
Setting: Africa and the US

I didn't get what I expected from this book. I think what I expected was something along the lines of *The Fortune Cookie Chronicles*, by Jennifer 8 Lee, only about African American food, with the author picking one or two ingredients to highlight and telling how they came from there to here, picking a few popular recipes, maybe her family's favorites or some regional recipes, spotlighting some key historical figures, debunking a few myths, then tackling some more serious subjects, and making me hungry along the way.

But Harris chose quite a different route. Yes, she mentions some historical figures and regional recipes, and her family, especially her mother, is part of the story, but this is a more serious look at African American history and how food has played a part in that experience. It's not a particularly light and easy read, but it was interesting. The recipes at the end are not all mouthwatering (seriously, possum and sweet potatoes? Um, no thanks. Fried chicken is a definite yes, but even the sweet bean pie sounds intriguing but I don't think I'll make it.) but they made for some interesting reading.

I won this book through Good Reads' First Reads and I really appreciate the chance to read it. If you are interested in African American history or food, I can recommend it. 4 stars.

Leslie Reese says

This book is a rich, tasty stew made of historical broth and seasoned with facts and figures, cultural reflections both sweet and savory, and anecdotes on the spectrum between horrific and triumphant. Jessica B. Harris's culinary journey traces the arts of cultivating, harvesting, processing, cooking, and serving food which enslaved Africans brought to American shores, along with foods such as watermelon, okra, and blackeyed peas. She explains the origins of what is typically known as African American "soul food" and why it was so named, and shows how culinary aptitudes and services were some of the first avenues for blacks to excel with some measure of autonomy, creativity, respect, and entrepreneurial success. Initially published in 2011, I hope that future editions of this book will include colorful maps to illustrate where and when culinary gifts of the African diaspora converged with other traditions to create the wonderful flavors our contemporary palettes take for granted. This edition DOES include 21 illustrations, 19 pages of recipes, and 10 pages of suggested further readings in history, culture, and cookbooks.

Marsha Nelson says

High on the Hog is about the history of southern cooking in America. It delves into the background of the recipes, manners of cooking, and the passage of this knowledge from generation to generation going back to the slaves. It is not a cookbook but contains some authentic recipes that have survived through time. At times I found it a bit dry but if read in stages it is easy to maintain interest and focus. I learned a great deal about a subject in which I was obviously lacking knowledge and for that reason I enjoyed it.

On Point says

Listen to what Jessica Harris has to say about her "High on the Hog" here: <http://bit.ly/hufQdJ>

Our word for okra comes from the Igbo language in Nigeria. Gumbo, the word itself, harks back to the Bantu. So does “goober,” as in peanut.

Watermelons appear in Egyptian tomb paintings, and have been grown for centuries in the Kalahari. Black-eyed peas pour out of markets from Dakar to Zanzibar – and across soul food menus and kitchen counters all over America.

African-American food and food ways have worked deep into the American palate. Culinary historian Jessica Harris from New Orleans explains the soul and the history of African-American cooking in her new book, "High on the Hog."

Lynda Brown says

Won this on first reads giveaway, can't wait to review it.

This book wasn't at all what I thought it would be, but was pleasantly surprised.

High on the Hog is a history of foods and recipes, starting in Africa continuing to North America including the Caribbean, passing on from generation to generation. Not only a culinary history of African Americans, but also a basic history lesson as well. The combination of stories of real people and personal experiences, makes for a very interesting book.

JayBee says

Love this book. If you love cookbooks with a story, this is for you. I cannot stop raving about this book and the stories that accompany the recipes. I have it displayed on my baker's rack
