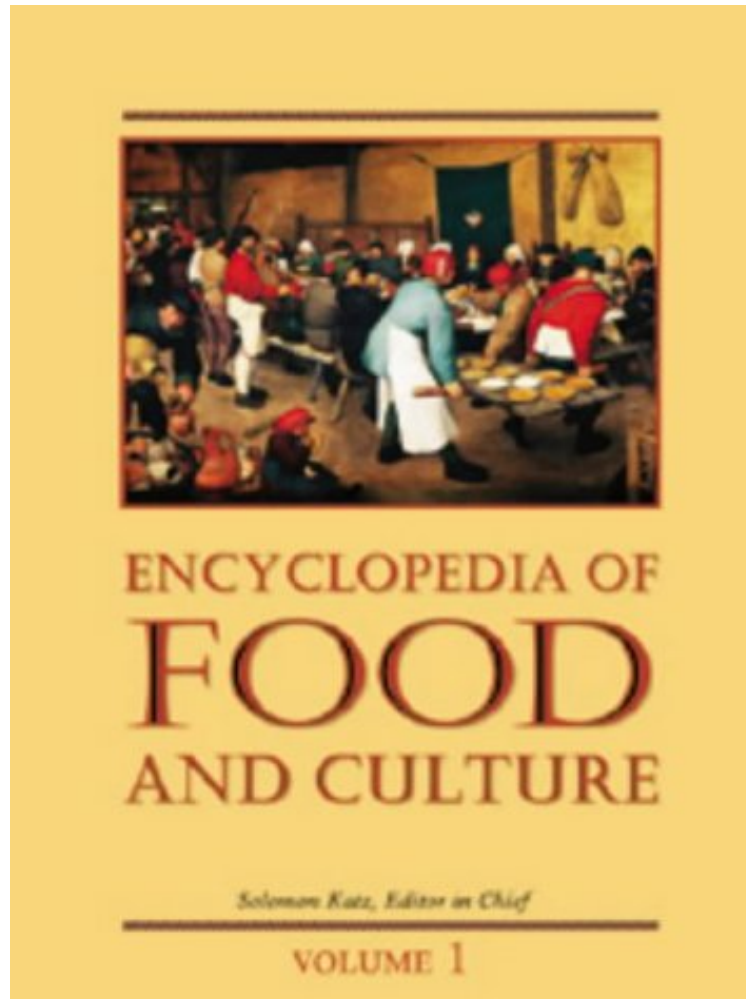


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Encyclopedia of Food and Culture (Scribner Library of Daily Life) (3 Volume Set)

Solomon H. Katz, William Woys Weaver

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Solomon H. Katz, William Woys Weaver : Encyclopedia of Food and Culture (Scribner Library of Daily Life) (3 Volume Set) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Encyclopedia of Food and Culture (Scribner Library of Daily Life) (3 Volume Set):

this reference book offers informtion on all aspects of food in human culture

From Booklist*Starred * The Journal of Social History recently published " Essay: Food and History" (fall 2002) by John C. Super. The author highlighted two significant resources in the study of food, The Cambridge World History of Food (2000) and The Oxford Companion to Food (1999). The Encyclopedia of Food and Culture should certainly be an addition to future essays. Edited by an anthropologist with assistance from a culinary historian, this new set complements the Oxford and Cambridge offerings.As the title implies, the encyclopedia discusses food in its relation to society. The 600 articles, arranged alphabetically, cover everything from the significance of Betty Crocker to bioactive food components. Chronological scope encompasses the Paleolithic origins of hunting and current trends such as comfort food and fusion cuisine. Length of the signed articles ranges from less than a page for most biographies (Birdseye, Clarence; Escoffier, Georges-Auguste) to more than 10 pages for Dairy products and Sensation and the senses. Some topics, among them Beer, France, and Fruit, are examined in series of subentries. See also references and current bibliographies are at the end of each entry, with some bibliographies containing Web sites. Interspersed throughout the text are boxes and sidebars on subjects such as genetically modified organisms, a controversial topic that is treated impartially. A box adjacent to the entry on Julia Child provides three quotations by Child. The best one is this advice: "No matter what happens in the kitchen, never apologize." The volumes also include tables with statistical information; for example, production, imports, and exports of butter by country. In addition to the set's 550 black-and-white photos and 50 maps, each volume has a section of color plates, an eclectic mix illustrating relationships between culture and food. A plate in volume 1 offers a detail of a Spanish still-life painting containing biscuits, a page from a Belgium biscuit catalog, and a photograph of a bread vendor in Central Asia. Interesting textual links between culture and food include a discussion of the problem of litter in the U.S. because of fast-food restaurants and the elevation of the chef, making "going to restaurants a combination of high theater and spectator sport."The contributors are listed in the appendix with affiliation and the articles they wrote. They include a number of U.S. academics but also Alan Davidson, the editor of The Oxford Companion to Food; the famous Paris bread baker, Lionel Poilane, who died last fall; Chef Fritz Blank of Deux Cheminees in Philadelphia; and cookbook author Elisabeth Lambert Ortiz. The appendix also has "Dietary Reference Intakes" and a "Systematic Outline of Contents," which is a good finding tool. The index is comprehensive, indexing minor names such as Marjorie Hendrick and the Watergate Inn, which are mentioned in the entry United States: Middle Atlantic. Criticisms are few. A general bibliography would have been useful because sometimes books mentioned in articles are not cited in the accompanying bibliographies. The ice cream entry says nothing about the great variety of flavors that are now in existence. The cookbook article fails to mention the effect of Erma Rombauer's Joy of Cooking on women in the twentieth century.Although this is an expensive resource, it is well worth the money. Recommended for all academic and public libraries that have patrons interested in food and culture. RBBCopyright American Library Association. All rights reserved