



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

By Jessica B. Harris

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Winner of the IACP Award for Culinary History

Acclaimed cookbook author Jessica B. Harris weaves an utterly engaging history of African American cuisine, taking the reader on a harrowing journey from Africa across the Atlantic to America, and 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 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.

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High on the Hog: A Culinary Journey from Africa to America By Jessica B. Harris Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Acclaimed cookbook author Harris (*The Africa Cookbook*, 1998) tells the story of the African diaspora through food, from the foodstuff brought along with African slaves to barely maintain them on the Middle Passage to the undeniable imprint of African American cuisine on southern American and Caribbean food. She traces African foods (yams, okra, black-eyed peas, corn), flavoring, cooking methods, and food rituals from the abduction of Africans and enslavement in the Americas to travel throughout the American and European continents, recounting tribulations and joy. Along the way, she profiles famous and obscure but gifted cooks; cooks in the big houses of slave plantations; “Pig Foot” Mary, who grew wealthy from sales of food she cooked on a stove mounted on a baby carriage; chefs who served meals to presidents; and members of a cooperative of black hoteliers in Philadelphia in the nineteenth century. Along with historical context, Harris offers recollections from her own travels and ends with selected recipes. Photographs enhance this passionate perspective on the culinary history of the African diaspora. --Vanessa Bush

Review

“Absorbing...Ms. Harris has an eye for detail and an inquisitive manner on the page, qualities that take any writer a long way.” ?*Dwight Garner, New York Times*

“Harris covers a lot of territory economically, offering a tremendous cast of characters whose names deserve wider renown.” ?*William Grimes, New York Times Book Review*

“Our leading historian of African-American cooking continues her quest to trace the multiplicity of ways that American food has been enriched--and in many ways created--by the Africans who were forced to immigrate to North America and their descendants.” ?*Vogue.com*

“Anyone interested in food history will find plenty to savor in Jessica B. Harris's latest book.” ?*Saveur Magazine*

“A satisfying gumbo of info, insight and research.” ?*USA Today*

“[A]...passionate perspective on the culinary history of the African diaspora” ?[Booklist](#)

“There is more than enough for every taste in [*High on the Hog*]” ?*Chicago Tribune*

“Harris's flavorful writing moves with an effortless voice that you feel could recite most of these pages from loving memory. As much historical document as ethnography of a vital and rich gastronomy, *High on the Hog* is a book to make your mouth water.” ?*Paste magazine*

“Rejoice, all you lovers of the personal and inimitable voice of Jessica B. Harris. In *High on the Hog*, she has woven her own story into the epic of the African Diaspora, using food to illuminate the intertwined tapestries of Africa, Europe, and America. From General George Washington's black cook Hercules to New Orleans' famed Dooky Chase, she shows how important are the African underpinnings of the American table. Harris's passionate devotion to languages and history, together with her own compassion and wit, resonate with the humanity she espouses in all her books, but especially this one.” ?*Betty Fussell, author of Raising Steaks and My Kitchen Wars*

“High on the Hog is a sweeping yet intimate view of food in African American life and the profound influence of blacks on American food culture. It is unusually well crafted and written with style and grace. Harris is an engaging guide in this journey that begins in Africa and ends in the twenty-first century. Her personal vignettes provide vivid detail of her experiences at sites of historical importance to the subject. She has rescued from obscurity many historical figures who make for fascinating reading and demonstrate the great range and diversity of African American achievement in areas of food culture.” ?*Charles Reagan Wilson, Kelly Gene Cook Sr. professor of history and southern studies, Center for the Study of Southern Culture*

“In *High on the Hog*, the inimitable Jessica B. Harris tells the story of the African American diaspora from the perspective of an accomplished food historian. Food, she tells us, is a metaphor for society. If so, I can't think of a better one. From slave food to Taste of Ebony, this is a gripping saga laced with descriptions of food that will make your mouth water.” ?*Marion Nestle, NYU professor and author of Food Politics and What to Eat*

About the Author

Jessica Harris is the bestselling author of *The Welcome Table, Sky Juice and Flying Fish, Beyond Gumbo, and Iron Pots & Wooden Spoons*, among many others. Her work has appeared in *Essence, Gourmet, Food & Wine, Cooking Light, and Eating Well*. She is a contributor to food website zesterdaily.com and *Saveur*. Harris is a professor of English in New York City and scholar-in-residence in the Ray Charles Chair in African-American Culture, at Dillard University in New Orleans.

Users Review

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