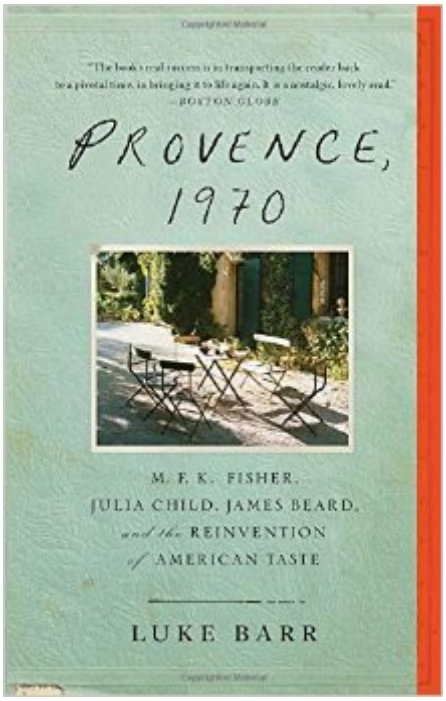
Provence, 1970: M.F.K. Fisher, Julia Child, James Beard, And The Reinvention Of American Taste



Synopsis

Provence, 1970 is about a singular historic moment. In the winter of that year, more or less coincidentally, the iconic culinary figures James Beard, M.F.K. Fisher, Julia Child, Richard Olney, Simone Beck, and Judith Jones found themselves together in the South of France. They cooked and ate, talked and argued, about the future of food in America, the meaning of taste, and the limits of snobbery. Without quite realizing it, they were shaping todayâ ™s tastes and culture, the way we eat now. The conversations among this group were chronicled by M.F.K. Fisher in journals and lettersâ ”some of which were later discovered by Luke Barr, her great-nephew. In Provence, 1970, he captures this seminal season, set against a stunning backdrop in cinematic scopeâ ”complete with gossip, drama, and contemporary relevance.

Book Information

Paperback: 320 pages
Publisher: Clarkson Potter (November 4, 2014)
Language: English
ISBN-10: 0307718352
ISBN-13: 978-0307718358
Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.7 x 8 inches
Shipping Weight: 10.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)
Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (204 customer reviews)
Best Sellers Rank: #53,297 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #60 inÂ Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Regional & International > European > French #68 inÂ Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Cooking Education & Reference > History #86 inÂ Books > Travel > Europe > France > General

Customer Reviews

Anybody out there remember the suburbs in the 1960s? The food, I mean? We had roasts and burgers and tuna casseroles and franks & beans. If we wanted exotic food, we went to the neighborhood Italian restaurant for lasagna or pizza, or to the Chinese restaurant for chop suey. There were no Thai restaurants or Indian restaurants or Greek restaurants. In California we had Mexican restaurants, but they were non-existent outside the Southwest. Hawaiian food was available - in Hawaii.If you were inclined to adventurous cooking, you were limited by what was available at the market - and in most American towns it was almost impossible to find olive oil or lettuce other than iceberg. Cheese came in three flavors - American, Swiss, and Cheddar.The premise of Luke Barr’s book is that when the major American food personalities of the time arrived

in Provence in late 1970, it was the threshold of a change in American dining. He makes a case that those writers (Julia Child, Richard Olney, James Beard, and Barr's great-aunt M.F.K. Fisher) were drivers of that change.My initial reaction to the notion that several food writers could change the way America ate, was skepticism. But when I recalled how limited our diets were then by today's standards, I had to concede that something caused that change. Maybe it was those few personalities or maybe they were just quick to see what was already happening and jumped on board. Either way, we get to spend a couple of months in Provence with an outspoken bunch of characters.Barr's access to M.F.K. Fisher's papers make this an original work, since much of his research revolves around a detailed diary that she kept while in Provence that year. Her daily letters to her confidante/lover provided more detail.

In 1970, food writers M. F. K. Fisher, James Beard, Julia Child, Simone Beck, Judith Jones, and Richard Olney found themselves in Provence at roughly the same time, meeting with and talking to one another. The first five had established a beachhead in changing American home cooking, in the Fifties full of canned cream of mushroom soup, canned spaghetti, canned fried onions, molded Jell-O salads, and mini-marshmallows. Fresh produce was limited in variety and availability, mainly because few people demanded it. It was extremely difficult to buy a loaf of bread that *couldn't* last weeks on a supermarket shelf. Even small mom-and-pop bakeries produced a bread as close to genuine bread as Pringles are to potato chips. "Convenience" guided the home cook. M. F. K. Fisher created an American yearning for good food, mainly by recalling her tours of France. James Beard, with a basis of real home cooking and an apprenticeship in France, provided mostly simple recipes that emphasized fresh ingredients and celebrated not only France, but classics of American regional cuisine and regional ingredients. Julia Child and Simone Beck provided step-by-step instruction (more Julia than Simone) which enabled the American home cook to master certain dishes and techniques of French cuisine. Judith Jones, their editor at Knopf and one of their volunteer testers, was instrumental in getting Mastering the Art of French Cooking and other influential cookbooks published. Richard Olney came along a bit later, railing against "theatrical restaurant cuisine" and setting up the French home kitchen as the culinary ideal. He approached French cooking almost like a Zen discipline -- a way of thought, rather than a set of procedures. His recipes weren't necessarily simple, but they did claim authenticity.

English) Two Towns in Provence: Map of Another Town and a Considerable Town [Paperback] [1983] (Author) M. F. K. Fisher Taste of Home:Casseroles: A Collection of Over 440 One-Pot Recipes - Straight from the Kitchens of Taste of Home Readers (Taste of Home Annual Recipes) Philip A. Fisher Collected Works, Foreword by Ken Fisher: Common Stocks and Uncommon Profits, Paths to Wealth through Common Stocks, Conservative Investors ... and Developing an Investment Philosophy Fisher-Price Little People: Let's Imagine at School! (Fisher Price Lift the Flap) James Beard's Theory & Practice of Good Cooking The King Arthur Flour Baker's Companion: The All-Purpose Baking Cookbook A James Beard Award Winner (King Arthur Flour Cookbooks) Culturematic: How Reality TV, John Cheever, a Pie Lab, Julia Child, Fantasy Football... Will Help You Create and Execute Breakthrough Ideas Who Was Julia Child? Peter Beard Beard on Pasta Cavern of Clues: Be a hero! Create your own adventure to uncover Black Beard's gold (Math Quest) Harrison Fisher: Defining the American Beauty (Schiffer Book for Designers & Collectors) The Vegas Diaries: Romance, Rolling the Dice, and the Road to Reinvention Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature Unconventional Leadership: How Henry Ford Taught Me About Reinvention and Diversity The Fabulous Reinvention of Sunday School: Transformational Techniques for Reaching and Teaching Kids Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970’s History and Impact