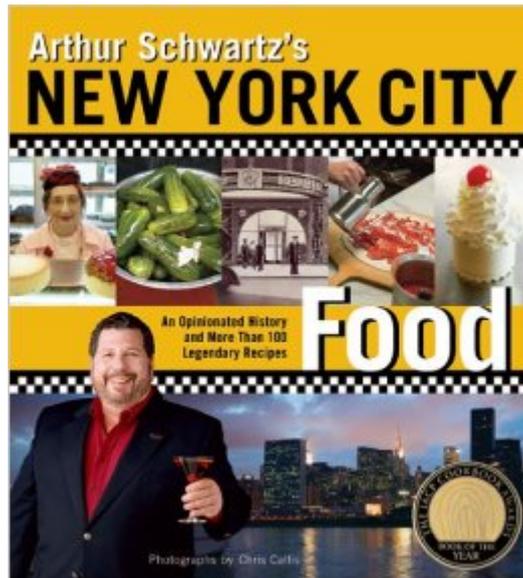


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Arthur Schwartz's New York City Food: An Opinionated History And More Than 100 Legendary Recipes



Synopsis

Arthur Schwartz is the Big Apple's official foodie-about-town, a fellow who has fork-and-knived his way through the five boroughs. He knows his knish from his kasha, his bok choy from his bruschetta, his falafel from his frittata. And in Arthur Schwartz's New York City Food, which won the IACP Award for Cookbook of the Year in 2005, he shared his gastronomic expertise, chronicling the city's culinary history from its Dutch colonial start to its current status as the multicultural food capital of the world. The affordable new paperback edition is chock-full of the same fascinating lore, along with 160 recipes for American classics that either originated or were perfected in New York: Manhattan Clam Chowder, Eggs Benedict, Lindy's cheesecake. Throughout the book, Schwartz's text is transporting, taking readers back to Delmonico's, the Colony, and the Horn & Hardart Automats. Whether revealing how an obscure dish known as Omelet Surprise was transformed into the decidedly chichi dessert Baked Alaska; investigating why some Jewish restaurants came to be known as Roumanian steakhouses; or instructing readers on the way to bake a molten chocolate minicake worthy of Jean-Georges Vongerichten, Arthur Schwartz's New York City Food is the ideal dining companion.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

New York City Food is clearly aimed at those who grew up in New York, and I must include myself among them. Schwartz brings back the memories of the food we (and our parents) grew up with, and provides plenty of history that we never knew. In 21 chapters, Arthur Schwartz covers NYC's

food history. For example, a whole chapter is devoted to Delmonico's, which brought us such well-known dishes as the Delmonico steak, Delmonico potatoes, eggs benedict, and lobster newburg; the restaurant introduced the upper crust to such newfangled ingredients as eggplant and artichokes. The restaurant was important as a see-and-be-seen destination, but its less obvious influences are longer-lasting: it was the first successful a la carte restaurant in the U.S. Five chapters are devoted to the food and influences of the major (and many) immigrants who came to New York City: the Germans (from delicatessens to Luchows), the Jews (the interview with Sol Kaplan, the original owner of Guss' Pickles, may make the book worth the purchase price), Italians, Irish, Chinese -- you get the idea. Other chapters focus on something historical or quintessentially New York: hot dogs, the glamour years (including the 21 Club), the golden age of cocktails. Schwartz gives plenty of fun history -- at least it's fun if you have your own memories of Dinty Moore's, or remember your Mom wishing she could go to the Rainbow Room -- as well as a wonderful business and social context (such as the low regard with which the Irish were held in the 1800s, or why Diamond Jim was such a major figure in the City). Even better, he provides recipes for many of the dishes that make New Yorkers most nostalgic. Everything from the original Thousand Island Dressing (introduced at the Waldorf) to a good knish.

This is a great book, written by someone with impeccable credentials ... former chief food columnist for the New York Times, and a NYC born and bred native. The author delves deeply into the history of NYC, and then works his way forwards to the present era - but he spends most of his time and energy covering the topic from the gilded age of the 1890's through the late 1980's. Between those dates he overviews all the most well known and influential restaurants of the day, along with information on who the movers and shakers were, what was served, and how they influenced the trends of the day. The author also includes about 100 classic recipes, from a wide variety of sources, directly relating to the names that he covers. The author does the job credit - the historical information is meticulous, the recipes authentic (and he even included a recipe index in the back), and the book is well organized and well packed with classic photos and anecdotes, and plenty of New York verve and originality. Want to know the origins of Steak Diane? Porterhouse Steak? Lobster Newberg? NYC Pizza? It's all in there. Just a few minor nits, in no particular (there are really just my own notes, to serve as a memory jog for eventually writing a letter of feedback to the author).*

* Seafood (chapt 2): This chapter was already obsolete at the time it was first published. There are no photos of the Fulton Fish Market (gasp), nor is there any significant coverage of its recent relocation to uptown. That section DEFINITELY needs update and expansion, both text,

photos, and recipes.

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