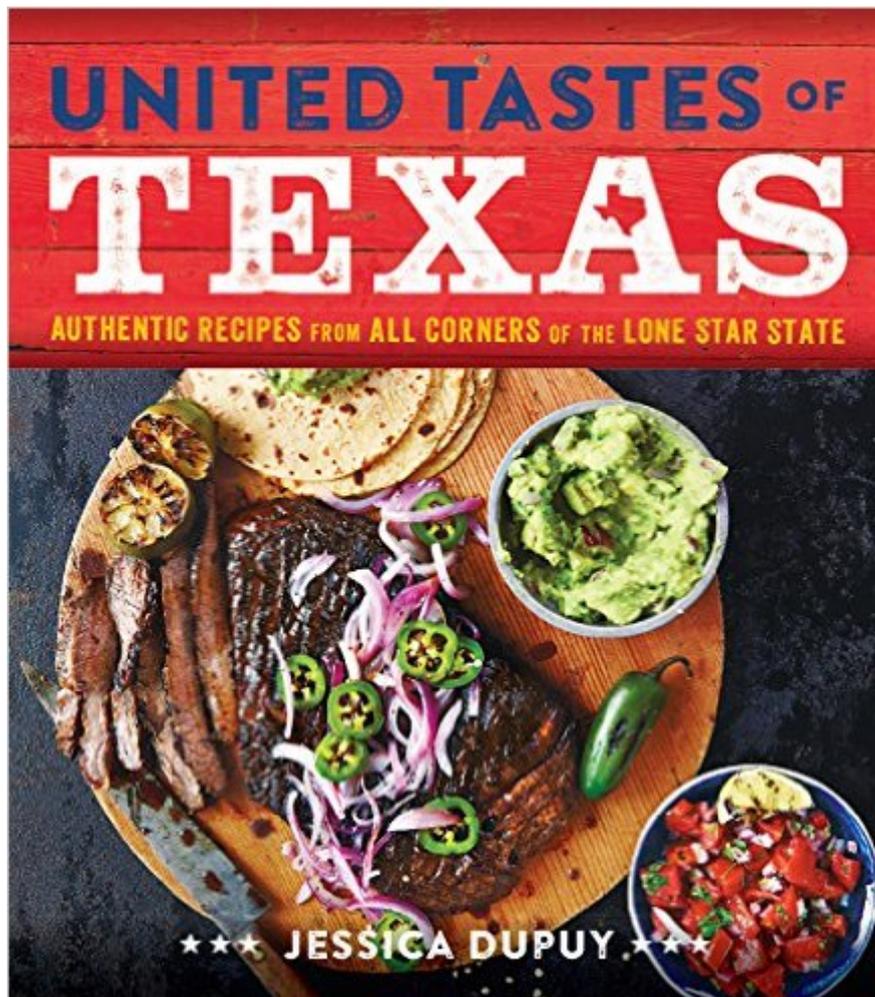


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United Tastes Of Texas: Authentic Recipes From All Corners Of The Lone Star State



Synopsis

There are many things that are big in Texas: Wide open spaces, personalities, hair, but above all, there's flavor! United Tastes of Texas is your geographical guide to Texas cuisine based on five distinct culinary regions: Central, Coastal, East, South, and West Texas; as well as the culinary influences brought by settlers from countries including Czechoslovakia, Germany, Mexico, and Spain. Each chapter starts with a brief history of the region, as well as plenty of interesting facts and bits of history including notes on cooking equipment, stories on local chefs and restaurants that have helped shape each of the regions, and pages of beautiful photography and imagery. But foremost is the food: 125 recipes featuring traditional and regional-specific dishes and cooking methods including Texan takes on Black-Eyed Peas, Skillet Cornbread, Shrimp Creole, Smoked Brisket, Smoked Tortilla Soup, and one of the most classically Texan dishes - Chicken Fried Steak, just to name a few. Whether you're a native Texan in need of recipe inspiration, a Texas ex-pat longing for a taste of home, or a culinary adventurer ready to explore the Lone Star State, United Tastes of Texas packs plenty of history, travel, and food into one book!

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Customer Reviews

United Tastes of Texas is a beautiful cookbook, put out by Southern Living. The pictures are inviting. The recipes are well laid out, ingredients list then the recipe instructions. The instructions are clear and concise. We lived in El Paso for 3 years and drove around Texas. The diversity of the landscape is equal to the diversity of the food scene. From upscale elegant, to BBQ, TexMex, it's all

in Texas, and like Texas this book is a sprawling food map of the Lone Star state. The recipes are divided by ingredients, West Texas, Coastal Texas, East Texas, Many recipes have little interesting introductions talking about the food or where it's from or the history. But, no matter how well written a cookbook, or how luscious the pictures, it comes down to how does the food taste, can a home cook make this, and do I want to use this book more than once. The answers are yum, yes, and I already have several recipes marked to make again, and again. Melissa Guerra's Tamales are spicy and delicious, and yes it calls for lard, and yes, buy some for an authentic taste. I have a beloved King Ranch chicken recipe that we use often, the one in this book is different, different enough I can now make both happily. The addition of smoked chicken for regular really boosts the flavor, taking it from casserole to special. San Antonio Puffy tacos are amazing, the masa tacos puff up and become light, airy, crunchy and the filling is fabulous with beef and Mexican beer. Actually, this one is also a Melissa Guerra recipe. If you're in the mood for fresh seafood, Tex-Mex, or a good steak, this book has it. And it doesn't skimp on desserts either, Tequila lime pie, pralines, Cinnamon ice cream, cakes, it's in here. There is also a section on cocktails.

I'm not sure what I was expecting with this book, but as a native Texan who loves regional cuisine and has spent quite a few years in many parts of the state, I was simultaneously impressed and let down by this volume. The book covers what I'd consider "pop" Texas cuisine. The recipes are what most people who would buy a book of Texas recipes would expect. BBQ, Tex-Mex, and "Southern", are all represented, but not much past that. The photography is great and most of the recipes have an accompanying photo. There are also short chef bios of locally known chefs, and factoids randomly placed throughout. However the book feels like it lacks depth and heart, something that's required in a book about Texas food in my opinion. The book feels very Food Network - like a collection of the top 100 recipes found in Texas restaurants. However very few are day to day dinner options for most families. If you were looking for a pretty coffee table centerpiece with staples like chicken fried steak, enchiladas, or a basic BBQ brisket, this is a good volume to pick up. However, if you're a Texan who was hoping to grab a book with more depth or the stereotype of meat, meat, and meat, this isn't a great option. If you're looking for everyday cooking options, this book is also not for you.

Most of these recipes are not unusual if you've been eating Mexican food beyond tacos and enchiladas, or Louisiana inflected coastal food, and most are simply nicely done versions, such as a Citrus Vinaigrette. However, there are a few intriguing recipes that I have enjoyed that I haven't

encountered before, such as Ninfa's Green sauce (avocado & sour cream, etc.), various spicy "quesos" (Texas fondu, some made with real cheese but some with "processed cheese"), Lemon Lavendar Pound Cake, etc. Other recipes may be new to some, such as Chimichurri, Adobo, Green Chile Pork Stew, Flan, Bourbon Sweet Potatoes, King Ranch Chicken, Jambalaya, Buttermilk Pie, and so forth. And there are ordinary recipes such as meatloaf, chicken & dumplings, fried fish, peach preserves, etc. This is a nicely produced book which breaks Texas into culinary regions. Each recipe has an introduction that explains something about it or puts it into its culinary context, for example Tarte Flambée (a flatbread with creme fraiche, bacon and onion) is influenced by Alsatian immigrants, or Kolache's come from Czech influence. Each recipe has a large color photo, and there are interspersed interviews with various chefs. Not surprising, many are for meats and many are grilled. This would be a great gift for someone who likes to grill, or a beginning cook who likes Mexican (and Louisiana style) foods. For someone experienced with grilling and Mexican culinary traditions, there won't be as much new here, but it is still a nice collection.

This is how I want to cook, this is what I want to serve, this is what I want to eat, all in this one book. Fresh and favorites, this is not just another Tex-Mex cookbook, you get recipes off the gulf and all areas and traditions of the big state of Texas. If Texas was to have a cook book as big and as bold as Texas, this is it! Great stories of some of the colorful contributors and wonderful, engaging photography. These recipes are true and tested not forced to fill a book these are true favorites. The recipes are straightforward as are all the ingredients as I went through each one. I am a big fan of the Pioneer Woman books for the interesting photography, the stories and just the fun. This book delivers the same atmosphere but in a Texas/Route 66/Tex Mex/Houston way. Don't even hesitate. Give as a gift this book is GORGEOUS.

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