

FRENCH GASTRONOMY: THE HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY OF A PASSION (HARDBACK)



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Columbia University Press, United States, 2002. Hardback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. This we can be sure of: when a restaurant in the western world is famous for its cooking, it is the tricolor flag that hangs above the stove, opined one French magazine, and this is by no means an isolated example of such crowing. Indeed, both linguistically and conceptually, the restaurant itself is a French creation. Why are the French recognized by themselves and others the world over as the most enlightened of eaters, as the great gourmets? Why did the passion for food-gastronomy-originate in France? In *French Gastronomy*, geographer and food lover Jean-Robert Pitte uncovers a novel answer. The key, it turns out, is France herself. In her climate, diversity of soils, abundant resources, and varied topography lie the roots of France's food fame. Pitte masterfully reveals the ways in which cultural phenomena surrounding food and eating in France relate to space and place. He points out that France has some six hundred regions, or microclimates, that allow different agricultures, to flourish, and fully navigable river systems leading from peripheral farmlands directly to markets in the great gastronomic centers of Paris and Lyon. With an eye to this landscape, Pitte wonders: Would the great French burgundies enjoy such prestige if the coast they came from were not situated close to the ancient capital for the dukes and a major travel route for medieval Europe? Yet for all the shaping influence of earth and climate, Pitte demonstrates that haute cuisine, like so much that is great about France, can be traced back to the court of Louis XIV. It was the Sun King's regal gourmandise-he enacted a nightly theater of eating, dining alone but in full view of the court-that made food and...



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