



## The Book of Jewish Food: An Odyssey from Samarkand to New York

By *Claudia Roden*

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A monumental work--the story of the Jewish people told through the story of Jewish cooking--The Book of Jewish Food traces the development of both Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jewish communities and their cuisine over the centuries. The 800 magnificent recipes, many never before documented, represent treasures garnered by Roden through nearly 15 years of traveling around the world. 50 photos & illustrations.

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

Claudia Roden, author of *The Book of Jewish Food*, has done more than simply compile a cookbook of Jewish recipes--she has produced a history of the Jewish diaspora, told through its cuisine. The book's 800 recipes reflect many cultures and regions of the world, from the Jewish quarter of Cairo where Roden spent her childhood to the kitchens of Europe, Asia, and the Americas. Both Ashkenazi and Sephardic cooking are well represented here: hallah bread, bagels, blintzes, and kugels give way to tabbouleh, falafel, and succulent lamb with prunes, which are, in turn, succeeded by such fare as Ftut (Yemeni wedding soup) and Kahk (savory bracelets).

Interwoven throughout the text are Roden's charming asides--the history of certain foods, definitions (Kaimak, for instance, is the cream that rises to the top when buffalo milk is simmered), and ways of preparing everything from an eggplant to a quince. In addition, Roden tells you everything you've ever wanted to know about Jewish dietary laws, what the ancient Hebrews ate, and the various holidays and festivals on the Jewish calendar. Detailed sections on Jewish history are beautifully illustrated with archival photographs of families, towns, and, of course, food. *The Book of Jewish Food* is one that any serious cook--Jewish and non-Jewish alike--would gladly have (and use often) in the kitchen.

#### From Publishers Weekly

As the biblical echo of the title indicates, this collection is as instructive and comprehensive as a textbook. Roden (*Mediterranean Cookery*, etc.) divides the territory in two parts: "The Ashkenazi World" and "The Sephardi World." She chronicles the lives of Jews all over the world in short segments on unusual Jewish communities past and present, such as those of Salonika, Greece, and China. These sections, and the many other notes on subjects ranging from the New York Deli to salt herring are gems. Recipes are numerous and diverse: Yellow Split Pea Soup with Frankfurters, Pumpkin Tzimmes, Small Red Kidney Beans with Sour Plum Sauce, Cold Stuffed Vine Leaves, and Fish Balls in Tomato Sauce. Some highlights include the chapter on Sephardic breads (Algerian Anise Bread, North African Sweet Breads with Nuts and Raisins) and the one on Ashkenazic desserts (Mandelbrot, Hanukah Jam Doughnuts). All of this can be a little overwhelming at times (and, as Roden acknowledges in the introduction, many Jewish foods simply reflected the cuisines of the places where Jews were living rather than their own specific culture). Yet with few omissions (e.g., the instructions for making pasta specify rolling out the dough "as thin as possible" but don't explain how), Roden proves a practiced, reliable guide.

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#### From Library Journal

Roden (*Good Food of Italy*, LJ 10/15/90) is an authority on Mediterranean and Middle Eastern food. Her exhaustively researched and impressive new book is obviously a labor of love. Born in Egypt, she offers a wide-ranging exploration of Jewish culture and food, with more than 800 recipes from Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews all over the world. She begins with an extensive introductory section on Jewish identity, kosher laws, biblical history, and holy and holidays, then deals separately with Ashkenazim and Sephardim. Faced with dozens of versions of both traditional and unusual dishes from different communities, she sought to present the best, whether from a scholar in the Middle East or from a housewife in London; for some dishes, however, she gives more than one recipe, along with variations. The text is packed with sidebars and boxes on cultural history, culinary anthropology, and other relevant topics. Other good books on Jewish cooking that appeared recently include Gil Mark's *The World of Jewish Cooking* (LJ 9/96) and Robert

Sternberg's *The Sephardic Kitchen* (LJ 9/96), but Roden's is a far more ambitious work, invaluable as both a cookbook and a reference. Essential.

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## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Jodi Saldana:**

The book with title *The Book of Jewish Food: An Odyssey from Samarkand to New York* contains a lot of information that you can find out it. You can get a lot of help after read this book. This kind of book exist new knowledge the information that exist in this reserve represented the condition of the world at this point. That is important to you to learn how the improvement of the world. This particular book will bring you inside new era of the globalization. You can read the e-book on the smart phone, so you can read the item anywhere you want.

#### **Beverly Bell:**

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#### **Doris Garcia:**

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