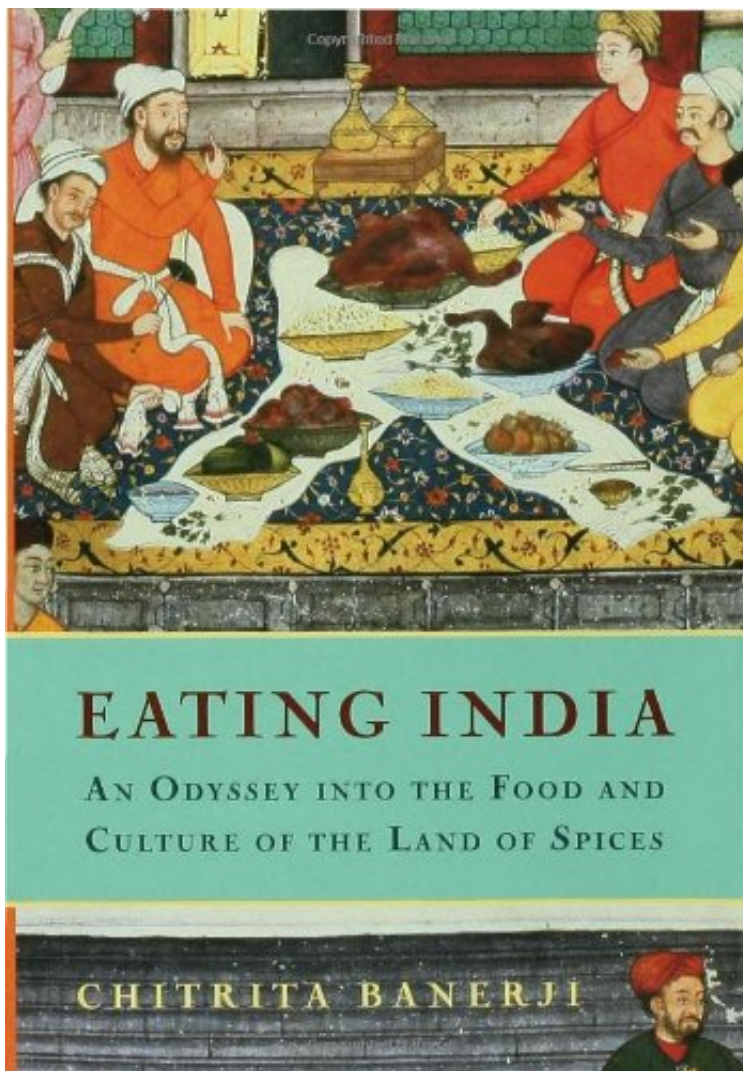


(Download free pdf) Eating India: An Odyssey into the Food and Culture of the Land of Spices

Eating India: An Odyssey into the Food and Culture of the Land of Spices

Chitrta Banerji

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Chitrta Banerji : Eating India: An Odyssey into the Food and Culture of the Land of Spices before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Eating India: An Odyssey into the Food and Culture of the Land of Spices:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. An epicurean's introduction to India By Ashutosh Chatterji I was a little intimidated by some of the reviews of this book which seemed to indicate that Ms. Banerji had simply written several hundred pages extolling the superiority of her (and mine) native Bengali cuisine over the rest of the regional cuisines. What I found reading this book was an amazing journey through the length and breadth of India, looking

deep into the rich culinary heritage of each area in the context of the regional history, geography and folklore, with scholarly erudition that is surprisingly "unputdownable" for even a casual reader like me. It is true that Ms. Banerji draws comparisons with her native Bengali cuisine, something that she is very grounded in, and is genuinely proud of. However, for each of the regional cuisines, she manages to find out at least some aspect that is superior to Bengali cuisine and she makes no attempt to gloss over such ideas. After traveling across Bengal, Goa, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Punjab, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh (Lucknow and Varanasi), through the villages of aboriginal Indians (tribals) in Bihar, Chhatisgarh and the northeastern states, as well as to the kitchens and dining rooms of India's disappearing minorities such as the Jews, Parsis and East Indians, I feel compelled to travel across India not just for its food but everything else that Ms. Banerji's writings evoke. The only reason that I give this book 4-stars is because of a very large number of typographical errors that are an irritant at best for a reader who understands the context, but will probably be misleading for the reader not initiated to Indian culture. 3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. blantly biased but interesting By R. Syedi agree with reviewer Ashwin Needamangala. the author's bias towards all things bengali is incredibly blatant. and moreover she repeatedly drives the point home that many ingredients such as onions and garlic are considered "impure" and "unclean" in the hindu diet because they are traditionally used to cook meat in muslim cuisine. considering hinduism predates islam in india i wonder how accurate this interpretation truly is and how much of it has to do with what seems to be a chip on the author's shoulder against muslim cooking and perhaps islam in general. and even as she claims to not prescribe to hinduism she repeatedly drives the significance of the caste-system home without much of a sense of criticism on the matter. nevertheless the book does present quite a bit of useful historical information about various regional cuisine in india. i particularly liked her explanations of the colonial legacy on certain types of eating habits and now popular fusion type dishes. and the books work well as a sort of travelogue. 13 of 14 people found the following review helpful. Eating India By Diana Rohini LaVigne Title: Eating India Author: Chitrita Banerji ISBN: 978-1-59691-018-8 Publisher: Bloomsbury USA Review By: Diana Rohini LaVigne, Indian Life Style Magazine From local eating myths to well-known facts about how food migrates with its people, Eating India rips into the history of food in India leaving no stone unturned. Wonderfully written in travel journal-style, Eating India takes readers from the pepper capital of Kerala to the imperial styled northern cuisines of Muslims to the eating habits of the fast-paced city by the sea, Bombay. Chitrita Banerji challenges her own childhood memories of various cuisines and asks locals about emerging trends in food'. She strives to find the 'real' story from 'real' people and delivers a knock-out book in the end. The details of her findings are laced with interesting tidbits about the geographic region, the nature of the people in the area and a vivid description of the sights and sounds so that a reader can place themselves exactly in that area without difficulty. This is an important book in order to preserve some of the finer details about the exquisite cuisine in India. Without this book, the world might lose some of that history. Eating India is fun to read, delivers an incredible amount of information and an important part of keeping the history of India's cuisines alive.

Though it's primarily Punjabi food that's become known as Indian food in the United States, India is as much an immigrant nation as America, and it has the vast range of cuisines to prove it. In *Eating India*, award-winning food writer and Bengali food expert Chitrita Banerji takes readers on a marvelous odyssey through a national cuisine formed by generations of arrivals, assimilations, and conquests. With each wave of newcomers—ancient Aryan tribes, Persians, Middle Eastern Jews, Mongols, Arabs, Europeans—have come new innovations in cooking, and new ways to apply India's rich native spices, poppy seeds, saffron, and mustard to the vegetables, milks, grains, legumes, and fishes that are staples of the Indian kitchen. In this book, Calcutta native and longtime U.S. resident Banerji describes, in lush and mouthwatering prose, her travels through a land blessed with marvelous culinary variety and particularity. REVIEWS: "Skillfully moving backward and forward in time, Banerji, a culinary historian based in the U.S. whose previous books have explored the cookery of her native Bengal (*Life and Food in Bengal*), regards India with the intimacy of a native, the curiosity of an outsider and the broad vantage of an expatriate. In the course of her culinary tours across the subcontinent, she poses compelling questions about the nature of authenticity in a time of great flux, the mutability of tradition and the place of food in secular life and religious culture. For answers, she looks not only to the past but to the present as it unfolds in roadside shacks, sweet shops or a temple canteen, describing how outside influences such as colonialism and immigration have shaped India's regional cuisines. Early in this engaging work, Banerji recounts how whenever she invites Americans to her home for an elaborate meal, rather than sampling each dish in sequence—the better to appreciate its subtle flavors—her guests heap together meat, rice and

From Publishers Weekly Skillfully moving backward and forward in time, Banerji, a culinary historian based in the U.S. whose previous books have explored the cookery of her native Bengal (*Life and Food in Bengal*), regards India with the intimacy of a native, the curiosity of an outsider and the broad vantage of an expatriate. In the course of her culinary tours across the subcontinent, she poses compelling questions about the nature of authenticity in a time of great flux, the mutability of tradition and the place of food in secular life and religious culture. For answers, she looks not only to the past but to the present as it unfolds in roadside shacks, sweet shops or a temple canteen, describing how

outside influences such as colonialism and immigration have shaped India's regional cuisines. Early in this engaging work, Banerji recounts how whenever she invites Americans to her home for an elaborate meal, rather than sampling each dish in sequence; the better to appreciate its subtle flavors; her guests heap together meat, rice and vegetables on one plate. The decision to allow appetite and intellectual curiosity to determine her course could easily have resulted in a similar mishmash. It is to the author's credit that her journeys to Benares, Gujarat and points south retain their unique flavors. Copyright © 2007; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "Award-winning food writer Banerji examines in marvelous detail the cultural and historical influences that have shaped regional cuisine in ancient and modern India... Readers will savor the author's mouthwatering prose... After reading this engaging work, one will appreciate the complexities and subtleties of Indian cuisine." Library Journal "This book is a fascinating tour through the culinary and cultural landscape of India, with mouthwatering descriptions of local delicacies and brief historical side-tours that provide context and background for the reader." Jewish Advocate, 6/22/07 "Chitrita Banerji is one of those rare writers who can tease the meaning out of ordinary foods without ever seeming trivial, pretentious or self-indulgent... Banerji peels back the husk of triviality to reveal the history, culture, and emotional ballast that can reside in even the most everyday dish... Even if you only have a passing interest in India, this book is worth a read." Gourmet's Choptalk "Highly recommend this newly-published book for literate and engaging writing on travel in India and Indian food in various parts of the country. Must-read for Indian food fans." Chowhound.com [Banerji is] a wonderful food writer. Neither a travelogue nor a recipe book, this is a personal journey to more than a dozen regions in India... This is food writing at its best, historically and culinarily informative... and filled with the interestingly personal.... The stuff of interesting dining, thinking, and reading." Gastronomica

About the Author Chitrita Banerji grew up in Calcutta and came to the United States as a graduate student; she received her master's degree in English from Harvard University. She has since become an internationally recognized writer on Bengali food, and is the author of *Life and Food in Bengal*, *Bengali Cooking: Seasons and Festivals*, and *Feeding the Gods: Memories of Women, Food, and Ritual in Bengal*. A two-time winner of Sophie Coe awards in Food and History, she has written about food for *Gourmet*, *Gastronomica*, *Granta*, the *Boston Globe*, and the *American Prospect*. She lives in Cambridge, Mass.