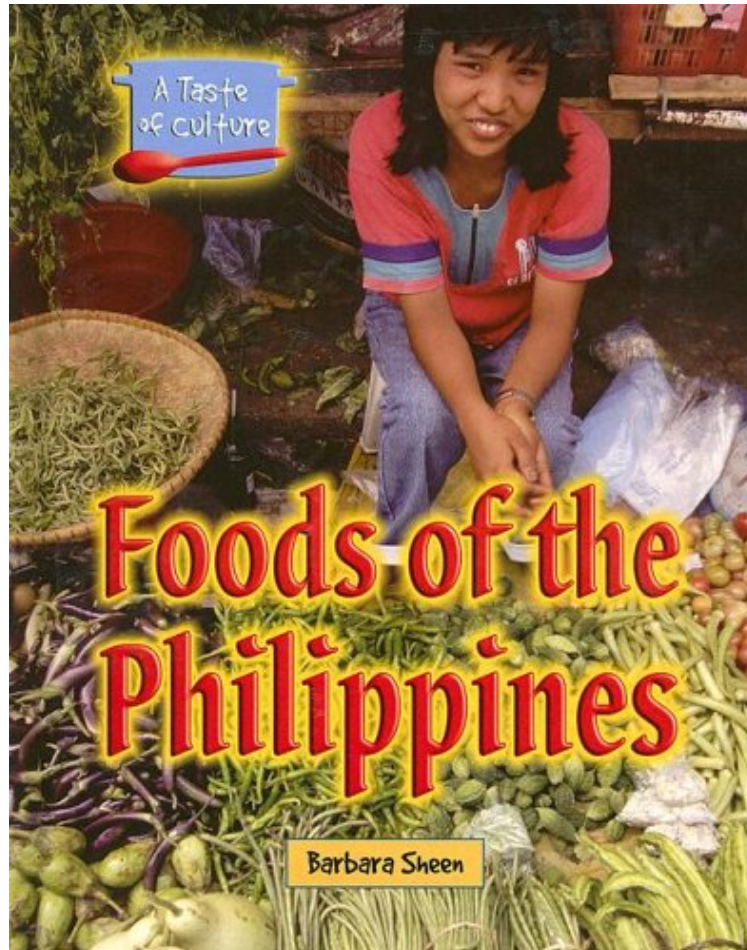


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Foods of the Philippines (Taste of Culture)

Barbara Sheen

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Barbara Sheen : Foods of the Philippines (Taste of Culture) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Foods of the Philippines (Taste of Culture):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Well-meaning but shallow and poorly editedBy vivid_bluePicked this up hoping to give my (US) husband and daughter a sense of the richness of Philippine cuisine. Not sure I would bother sharing this with them - this reads like an airline magazine's coverage of a travel destination. It touches lightly on the influence of other cultures (Spanish, Chinese, Malay) on Philippine cooking, but barely gives a sense of the inherent regional differences. And even though the cover shows a woman (presumably) selling fresh produce, there is little or no mention of the fruits and vegetables that are so particular to the Philippines: lanzones, rambutan, chico, atis; ampalaya, okra, gabi, kangkong. (They are certainly not unique to Filipino cuisine, but they are rarely found in such proximity, either.)For instance, the author devotes a section to the coconut and cooking with coconut milk, but doesn't mention that the Bicol region is known for this style of cooking (and is also distinguished from much of the Philippines for its spicy food). Nor does she talk about the different names for ginataan, a sweet dish ("benignit" in

Cebuano, "alpahor" in Chavacano, and "ginettaacute;n" in Ilokano). Dishes of the same name can vary wildly in makeup across the archipelago, and this I think makes for a wonderful variety of tastes and culinary identity within a relatively small country, but you wouldn't know it from this book. I really wonder if the author has been to the Philippines. Much of the local flavor in the book comes from quotations of other cookbooks or writers, not from her personal account. "Journalist Olivia Wu describes the kitchen of a Filipino grandmother..." Also, many of the phonetic pronunciations (not to mention spellings of names of dishes) offered in the book are pretty far off. (It's bah-NGOOS, not bahn-GOOS.) Plus, she sometimes confuses the method of cooking with the ingredients. For example, paksiw (not pak-i-saw) is a way of cooking with *vinegar* (vinegar is the key ingredient, everything else is variable), and it can be used for vegetables and meat, not just for fish and seafood. Was this ever reviewed by a Tagalog speaker before going to print? Overall, I think it would be more useful to read a travel guide to the Philippines, covering regional fiestas, history, and notable sites, and then skim various Philippine cookbooks for a more accurate picture of the country and its cuisine.

Take a tropical vacation to the Philippines. Explore this fascinating nation's history, geography, economics, folklore, art, celebrations, and daily life through its food. Colorful photographs and kid-friendly recipes make this book both beautiful and delicious. What a great and fun way to discover a new culture!