



Soul Food: Classic Cuisine from the Deep South

Sheila Ferguson

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“Soul food is just what the name implies. It is soulfully cooked food . . . good for your ever-loving soul . . . the shur-‘nuf kinda down-home cookin’ that I grew up on,” writes Sheila Ferguson. Abundant in flavor and variety—ranging from classics such as barbecued spare ribs, fried chicken, cornbread, and collard greens to less well known but equally sumptuous recipes such as sweet potato biscuits, grits soufflé, and wild fox grape wine—soul food is a truly American cuisine, originated in the deep South by slaves and later shaped and expanded by the rich diversity of African-American culture.

In a book brimming with humor and vibrant personality, Sheila Ferguson presents 200 mouth-watering recipes, many of them part of her own family heritage. She explains the blend of African, Cajun, Creole, and other influences—such as gumbo and jambalaya—behind their enticing flavors, describing the meals of the slave quarters and elegant plantation houses and, along the way, passing on family anecdotes and kitchen secrets handed down from generation to generation.

Some recipes, such as cornmeal griddlecakes, pigs’ feet, smothered okra and tomatoes, or brown suga’ pound cake, are old-fashioned country favorites. Others, such as sautéed scallops, vegetables seasoned with smoked turkey, and roast pheasant with wild rice stuffin’, are well suited to today’s more sophisticated palates. All are clearly explained, with an emphasis on the important details of preparation and ways to vary recipes to your own tastes. Through them you learn to use all of your senses in the style of the great soul food chefs, working by touch, taste, sight, smell, and even sound.

But this is much more than a collection of recipes. Each dish is introduced by a brief narrative, written in Sheila Ferguson’s distinctive, eloquent cadence. And the book is prefaced by a glossary and general introduction that explains how the cuisine we know today evolved. Old family photographs and a series of stunning, set-piece color shots lovingly evoke the spirit of soul food and illustrate fifty of the book’s delicious dishes.

This classic cookbook, embracing one of America’s richest regional cuisines, provides a rare combination of exciting, appetizing recipes and compelling reading to delight the soul of cooks and food-lovers everywhere.



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