



What the Slaves Ate: Recollections of African American Foods and Foodways from the Slave Narratives

Dwight Eissnach, Herbert C. Covey

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Carefully documenting African American slave foods, this book reveals that slaves actively developed their own foodways-their customs involving family and food. The authors connect African foods and food preparation to the development during slavery of Southern cuisines having African influences, including Cajun, Creole, and what later became known as soul food, drawing on the recollections of ex-slaves recorded by Works Progress Administration interviewers. Valuable for its fascinating look into the very core of slave life, this book makes a unique contribution to our knowledge of slave culture and of the complex power relations encoded in both owners' manipulation of food as a method of slave control and slaves' efforts to evade and undermine that control.

While a number of scholars have discussed slaves and their foods, slave foodways remains a relatively unexplored topic. The authors' findings also augment existing knowledge about slave nutrition while documenting new information about slave diets.

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