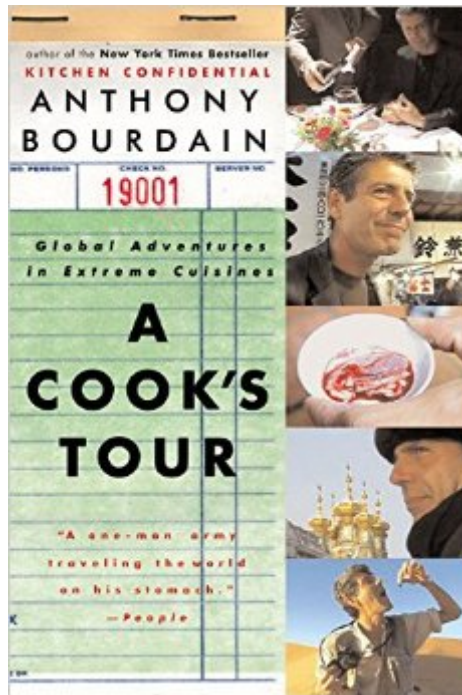


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A Cook's Tour: Global Adventures In Extreme Cuisines



Synopsis

The only thing "gonzo gastronome" and internationally bestselling author Anthony Bourdain loves as much as cooking is traveling. Inspired by the question, "What would be the perfect meal?," Tony sets out on a quest for his culinary holy grail, and in the process turns the notion of "perfection" inside out. From California to Cambodia, *A Cooks' Tour* chronicles the unpredictable adventures of America's boldest and bravest chef.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The colossal irony of the Food Network series on which this book is based is the heart felt statements in the author's previous book 'Kitchen Confidential' that he will never get his own Food Network series. He goes on in that book to say some rather unflattering things about Emeril Lagasse that seem to be a guarantee that his prediction will come true. Well, Anthony Bourdain got his own Food Network show, and it is, to my lights, the most enjoyable travelogue style show they have ever done. I will warrant the prediction that it will also be the most enjoyable travelogue show they will ever do. I think the original 16 to 18 episodes are even better than the 'second season' episodes he did which were not in this book. In the follow-up episodes, Bourdain (or his handlers) tend to start parodying themselves and make more coy, self-referential statements such as the cute business when Tony is in New Orleans and he gets slugged by matronly women for dissing their favorite son, Emeril. In case you are not familiar with the Bourdain persona, I can quote a local paper's comparison to Emeril as the Food Network's star student, Alton Brown as the class nerd,

and Tony Bourdain as the perennial juvenile delinquent. That is not to say Bourdain's view of things is juvenile. It is, in fact, as insightful as any other culinary commentary. The difference between Bourdain and other culinary travelers is that Bourdain is telling us about things from the inside, from the point of view of palate, tongue, nose, ears, and tummy. He is also talking from the inside in that he has been a working cook and chef for his whole life, who has seen just about everything the other culinary journalists have seen and more, including a stint at a childhood in France.

I purchased Kitchen Confidential and A Cook's Tour at an airport based on the recommendation of a chef who was cooking in our ski chalet. I read the two books by the time we'd returned home. As I read the reviews here, I'm amazed by some of the negative comments. Bourdain's offensiveness, the "shock value" of the cuisine and the fact that there are no recipes in the books seem to be common points of issue. One reviewer even recommended the purchasing of Jamie Oliver's books because they have cooking information in them. Bourdain likes to smoke, drink and use some occasional drugs. That is part of the adventure. I was laughing every time he recounted one of these stories. He's offensive, that's why he's funny and the writing is so entertaining. He also made an extraordinary number of friends in these countries (many are thanked in the notes at the end of the book) so he was hardly just trashing every foreigner he came across. As to the "shock value", sure he ate Cobras heart and other gruesome items that clearly would "shock". But in most cases he did it because these items were regional delicacies/specialties e.g. beating cobra heart. By and large he discusses "normal" food and I found this balance extremely interesting. Tales of the seafood, soups and other dishes that he eats in Vietnam comprise the majority of those chapters, not the cobra. Get past the occasional shocking item. I own all of Jamie Oliver's cookbooks and when I want to cook, I use those. When I want to have a bit of a laugh, Jamie Oliver's recipe for home made pasta isn't going to provide the entertainment I'm looking for. Bourdain will. Kitchen Confidential and A Cook's Tour are obviously not designed to be recipe books.

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