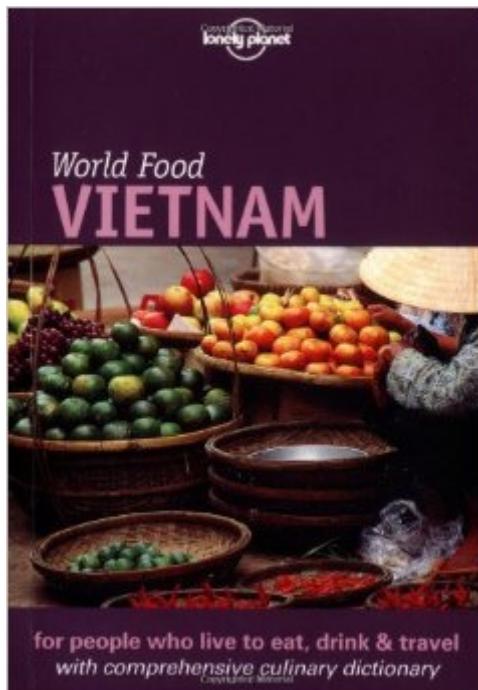


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Lonely Planet World Food Vietnam



Synopsis

The definitive culinary guide to Vietnam. With tantalising photography throughout and written in an entertaining, opinionated and contemporary style, this guide is intended to be the benchmark for the country's cuisine. This pocket-sized guide includes everything to do with eating and drinking in Vietnam.

Book Information

Series: Lonely Planet World Food Vietnam

Paperback: 240 pages

Publisher: Lonely Planet Publications (March 2000)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 186450028X

ISBN-13: 978-1864500288

Product Dimensions: 6.6 x 4.6 x 0.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.8 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (9 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #483,116 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #37 inÂ Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Asian Cooking > Vietnamese #86 inÂ Books > Travel > Asia > Vietnam #273 inÂ Books > Travel > Food, Lodging & Transportation > Dining

Customer Reviews

The book is well put together but it is a more chatty version of a food guide. In its tone and topic it humanizes the Vietnamese via the vehicle of food removing stereotypes. It covers topics that other Vietnamese cookbooks do not cover very much such as, etiquette and placement of items in a greater meal context. Which for the traveler and non traveler is a very good thing. However it is NOT a cookbook though it has some recipes. Its main focus is to enable you, the traveler, to experience Vietnamese food on location. Which this book does very well. I found things somewhat factually wrong - the dog meat section. Though it tries to make you feel better about eating dog meat by saying that the dogs' lives are happy until their quick death -- certain instances of this are not true. Look up Temple's book on modern Vietnam _Shadows and Wind_ in describing how the dogs were beaten to death for tenderizing purposes to celebrate a New Year meal. This method may disturb some people but the ancient Romans practiced similar methods (see Plutarch's essay on vegetarianism). Anyway, it is a flaw of fact. This book proves to be a wonderful companion to other books such as, Trang's _Authentic Vietnamese_. It provides, in its small pages, information on

modern food, history, and background information on Vietnam in a compact way that is well written and succinct. The photographs and layout are very well done creating a very pretty book. In conjunction with *Lonely Planet Vietnam* it is indispensable. For the cookbook enthusiast it is a good item for a collection emphasizing southeast Asian cuisine. It is a good source for background information and gives a more modern slant on things.

Any traveler worth his or her salt knows the best and easiest way to get to the heart of a country is to experience firsthand the culinary delights that country has to offer. Lonely Planet has figured this out by publishing a series of fine, pocket-sized books under their "World Food" series, and the Vietnam tome is one of their best thanks to the zeal of the author, Berkeley-based food adventurer Richard Sterling. This book was an invaluable guide for me when I visited that epicurean paradise five years ago as he covers the vast landscape of food and drink there. Sterling moves fluidly from the culture and history of Vietnamese cuisine through the staples and specialties you would find in a Vietnamese kitchen to the nuances of regional fare, whether it's the heavy influence of Chinese cuisine in the North or the use of exotic tropical fruit in Southern dishes. I particularly like the sections that focus on celebrating with food, the delicacies you find in street kiosks and the chapter on the bold palate, which includes dishes that use toads, cobras, rodents and of course, dogs. Obviously not all the food is meant to be savored by everyone, but this provides a comprehensive, easy-to-read guide to the variety of tastes and sensations to be experienced including a definitive culinary dictionary, a quick-reference glossary and useful phrases when you order food and drink there. Sterling includes recipes, city maps highlighting his favorite eateries, and the "Faces of Gastronomy", which highlights local chefs and food experts. In fact, when I visited Hoi An, I visited one of them based on the author's recommendation, Miss Vy, who owns the Mermaid Restaurant.

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