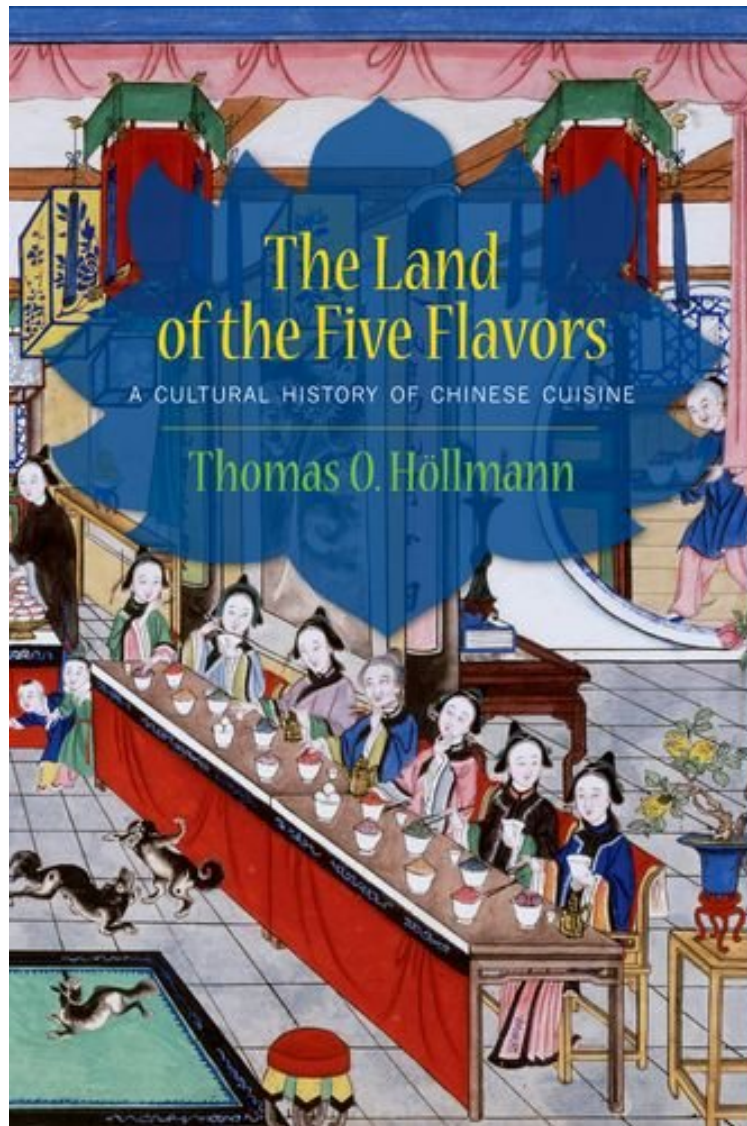


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The Land of the Five Flavors: A Cultural History of Chinese Cuisine (Arts and Traditions of the Table: Perspectives on Culinary History)

Thomas O. Houml;llmann

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Thomas O. Houml;llmann : The Land of the Five Flavors: A Cultural History of Chinese Cuisine (Arts and Traditions of the Table: Perspectives on Culinary History) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Land of the Five Flavors: A Cultural History of Chinese Cuisine (Arts

and Traditions of the Table: Perspectives on Culinary History):

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Everything You Didn't Know about Chinese Cuisine and History By Rachel Anne Calabia The Land of the Five Flavors is a curious cross-cultural text: this edition is an English translation of a German text that speaks about the social history of Chinese food. I'm still wrapping my head around this language puzzle. How far removed is the translation from the culture being discussed? Did they use existing English translations of ancient Chinese sources, which are quoted in sidebars throughout the book? Did they translate everything afresh? I wish the publishers reassured readers like me with a note on their translation process. Setting aside these questions though, this book provides an amazing analysis of Chinese culinary obsessions. With regional recipes interspersed with illustrations and the occasional statistical chart, Chinese food is put under a microscope. Everything from noodle production, historical food prices, and cannibalism is covered. My favorite chapter is the one on alcohol. Booze and its effect on Tang period literature made me laugh. It's all heady, heavy stuff. Since it's an academic text, the book is occasionally bogged down with its precise and pedantic language. This isn't easy-to-read nonfiction. For those who are up to the challenge, though, The Land of the Five Flavors is both rewarding and illuminating. (This review previously appeared in the San Francisco Book Review.)

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Imagine an old drunk guy who happens to know everything about China telling you about its food history.... By jellyjams Amazing book. You'll hate it if you're looking for yet another "food journey" book about personal experiences of eating food while traveling or whatever... but if you want a rigorous (if spastic) academic survey of EVERYTHING ever written historically about Chinese food as relates to economics, culture, and agriculture... then you'll probably like it. And if anyone knows of any other books about any cuisine that are at all similar, please let me know by commenting on this review! I would love to read dozens of books like this one....

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Culture and agriculture not Cuisine and styles By DelAnne Title: The Land of the Five Flavors - A Cultural History of Chinese Cuisine Author: Thomas O. Hollmann Published: 12-10-13 Publisher: Columbia University Press Pages: 216 Genre: Food. Cooking Wine Sub Genre: Cultures; History; Asian; Cookbooks: Chinese ISBN: 9780231161862 ASIN: B00GF2SORI Reviewer: DelAnne Reviewed For: NetGalley My Rating: 3 1/2 Stars. The rating makes it look like this book was not interesting but it was. It was just not what I was expecting. I was thing more of the various food styles, such as Cantonese, Mandarin, Sichuan, Hunan and Beijing etc. How the different provinces developed the flavors in that region. That being said I did enjoy reading the cultural and economic history of the people, nation and agricultural development. I should love to learn more of the background on Chinese food production, but would like to be better informed on the subject matter. If the ever do get a historical book on the development of the various provinces' food tastes, then count me in to read is as soon as it is off the presses. My rating for the misnomer of The Land of Five Flavors Title is 3 1/2 out of 5 stars.

Renowned sinologist Thomas O. Hollmann tracks the growth of food culture in China from its earliest burial rituals to today's Western fast food restaurants, mapping Chinese cuisine's geographical variations and local customs, indigenous factors and foreign influences, trade routes, and ethnic associations. Hollmann details the food practices of major Chinese religions and the significance of eating and drinking in rites of passage and popular culture. He enriches his narrative with thirty of his favorite recipes and a selection of photographs, posters, paintings, sketches, and images of clay figurines and other objects excavated from tombs. Hollmann's award-winning history revisits the invention of noodles, the role of butchers and cooks in Chinese politics, debates over the origin of grape wines, and the causes of modern-day food contamination. He discusses local crop production, the use of herbs and spices, the relationship between Chinese food and economics, the influence of Chinese philosophy, and traditional dietary concepts and superstitions. Citing original Chinese sources, Hollmann uncovers fascinating aspects of daily Chinese life, constructing a multifaceted compendium that inspires a rich appreciation of Chinese arts and culture.

Photos, posters, paintings and sketches alternate with recipes in this fascinating book, which takes ingredients from several types of available sources: part cookbook, part cultural history of China through its kitchen. (William H. Nienhauser, University of Wisconsin-Madison) Hollmann deftly blends descriptive text and illustrations together with dozens of brief, amusing tidbits from an amazing spectrum of Chinese historical sources. The book's great attraction is the presentation of many complex, extremely disparate materials in nimbly condensed, accessible form. Hollmann makes it look easy. (Anne Mendelson, author of Milk: The Surprising Story of Milk Through the Ages) Anyone interested in China or in food history needs this book, an insightful introduction to China's food traditions that is anchored in an understanding and appreciation of centuries of Chinese history and culinary culture, from the earliest empires to the present day. (Naomi Duguid, author of Burma: Rivers of Flavor; co-author of Beyond the Great Wall: Recipes and Travels in the other China) This engaging look at China's culinary history will appeal to readers interested in China and those who enjoy books on cooking. Library Journal (Library Journal) Rewarding and illuminating. (Rachel Anne Calabia San Francisco Book) Brief, readable, and entertaining... (CHOICE) About the Author Thomas O. Hollmann is a professor of Chinese studies and ethnology at the Ludwig Maximilian University

in Munich and a former vice president of the Bavarian Academy of Science. His publications include *The Silk Road* and *The Old China: A Cultural History*. Karen Margolis is a writer and translator living in Berlin. She is also the translator of *The Art of Philosophy* by Peter Sloterdijk.