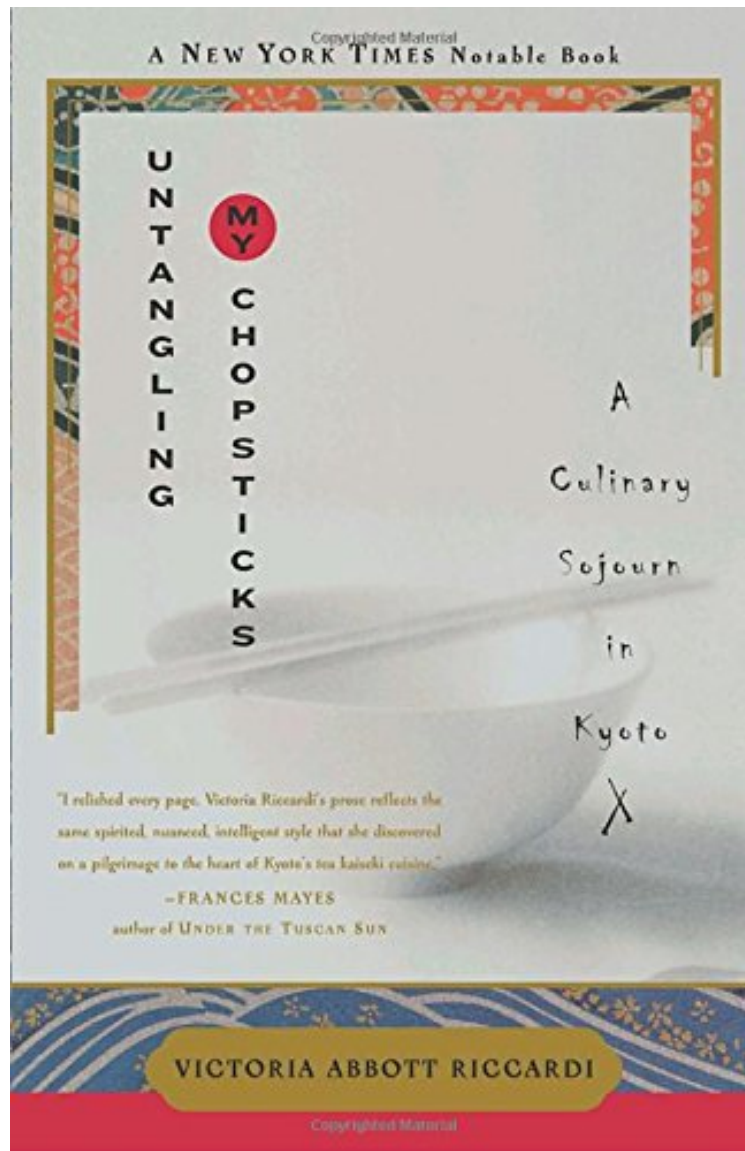


[FREE] Untangling My Chopsticks: A Culinary Sojourn in Kyoto

## Untangling My Chopsticks: A Culinary Sojourn in Kyoto

Victoria Abbott Riccardi

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**Victoria Abbott Riccardi : Untangling My Chopsticks: A Culinary Sojourn in Kyoto** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Untangling My Chopsticks: A Culinary Sojourn in Kyoto:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A very nice read, as well as including recipes By Steve W. HeimA very nice read, as well as including recipes! If you like Japanese culture and/or love food, I recommend it : ).I also recommend getting the physical book as opposed to the kindle, simply because it is then more convenient to access the

recipes. (Reading on the kindle was fine, no formatting problems, except for some words being split like so: mis alignment. Didn't really bother me though.) 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent! By Stephen H Bridges Poignant, intelligent, insightful, delicious. A joy to read and an excellent insight to a culinary world you don't often hear about. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A lovely look at a country through it's food By Hollywood Reader As I have in interest both in food and in Japan I was thrilled to discover this book. It turns out that Victoria and I were both in Japan at about the same time. She cooking in Kyoto and me studying photography outside of Tokyo. I fell in love with the colors and textures of this country and it's food... and this book captures it perfectly. A wonderful read... and do try some of the recipes! As a broke student in Tokyo I lived on Okonomiyak.

Two years out of college and with a degree from Le Cordon Bleu in Paris, Victoria Riccardi left a boyfriend, a rent-controlled New York City apartment, and a plum job in advertising to move to Kyoto to study kaiseki, the exquisitely refined form of cooking that accompanies the formal Japanese tea ceremony. She arrived in Kyoto, a city she had dreamed about but never seen, with two bags, an open-ended plane ticket, and the ability to speak only sushi-bar Japanese. She left a year later, having learned the language, the art of kaiseki, and what was truly important to her. Through special introductions and personal favors, Victoria was able to attend one of Kyoto's most prestigious tea schools, where this ago-old Japanese art has been preserved for generations and where she was taken under the wing of an American expatriate who became her mentor in the highly choreographed rituals of this extraordinary culinary discipline. During her year in Kyoto, Victoria explored the mysterious and rarefied world of tea kaiseki, living a life inaccessible to most foreigners. She also discovered the beguiling realm of modern-day Japanese food—the restaurants, specialty shops, and supermarkets. She participated in many fast-disappearing culinary customs, including making mochi (chewy rice cakes) by hand, a beloved family ritual barely surviving in a mechanized age. She celebrated the annual cleansing rites of New Year's, donning an elaborate kimono and obi for a thirty-four-course extravaganza. She includes twenty-five recipes for favorite dishes she encountered, such as Chicken and Egg Rice Bowl, Japanese Beef and Vegetable Hotpot, and Green-Tea Cooked Salmon Over Rice. *Untangling My Chopsticks* is a sumptuous journey into the tastes, traditions, and exotic undercurrents of Japan. It is also a coming-of-age tale steeped in history and ancient customs, a thoughtful meditation on life, love, and learning in another land.

From Publishers Weekly In 1986, two years out of college and restless at her job with an ad agency, Riccardi left New York to spend a year in Kyoto, where she lived with a Japanese couple and attended an elite school devoted to the study of kaiseki, a highly ritualized form of cooking that accompanies the formal tea ceremony. From her adoptive "family" she learned about Japanese home cooking and Kyoto's food markets. At the kaiseki school, she was introduced to an art form in which everything is symbolic, from the food and utensils to the colors of the guests' kimonos. Immersion in Japanese cuisine taught her about the country's history, culture and art as well as its cooking, so that even a meal in an ordinary restaurant left her feeling that she had "visited a museum, heard a fascinating lecture, opened several gorgeously wrapped gifts, and consumed the essence of spring in Kyoto." In her delightful and unusual culinary memoir she includes 27 recipes. A few, such as summer somen with gingered eggplant, are for dishes she was served at a Zen temple. Some, including miso-pickled romaine stems wrapped with smoked salmon, and red and white miso soup with sea greens, are from kaiseki meals in which she participated. Others, such as chicken and rice egg bowl, "Japan's quintessential comfort food," are representative of everyday fare. Although many of the ingredients used in these recipes are unusual, Riccardi, who writes for such magazines as *Eating Well* and *Bon Appetit*, makes them sound worth searching for. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. "I relished every page. Victoria Riccardi's prose reflects the same spirited, nuanced, intelligent style that she discovered on a pilgrimage to the heart of Kyoto's tea kaiseki cuisine." --Frances Mayes, author of *Under the Tuscan Sun* "As Victoria Riccardi goes in search of culinary enlightenment in this intimate and beautifully crafted memoir about living, cooking, and falling in love with Kyoto, the reader is seduced and transported by the scenes and flavors she paints with words. Riccardi writes with a sensuous eye for detail that brings alive the extraordinary beauty of Japan and the sumptuous pleasures of its table." --Lora Brody, author of *Growing Up on the Chocolate Diet* "Victoria Riccardi writes from the heart. A personal story of determination and discovery, *Untangling My Chopsticks* offers a refreshing glimpse into the tastes, intrigues, and traditions of modern and ancient Japan." --Elizabeth Andoh, Japan correspondent, *Gourmet* magazine, and author of *At Home with Japanese Cooking* "Victoria Riccardi's *Untangling My Chopsticks* folds back the screen on a city and its traditions just enough to satisfy our curiosity without diminishing the mysterious allure. Her friendships and experiences are recounted with delightful delicacy, and the kaiseki meal and tea ceremony come alive not only as cultural rites but also as delectable gastronomic and esthetic experiences." --Susan Herrmann Loomis, author of *On Rue Tatin* From the Hardcover edition. From the Author Peppered with humor, filled with adventure, and rife with unexpected surprises, *UNTANGLING MY CHOPSTICKS: A Culinary Sojourn in Kyoto* is the story of a young American woman with a passion for food and an appetite for adventure finding her way in the elusive often secretive

world of modern-day Japan. Two years out of college with a degree from Le Cordon Bleu in Paris, I packed up my life in New York to move to Kyoto, Japan to study tea kaiseki, a ritualized form of cooking that accompanies the formal tea ceremony and evolved in Kyoto's Zen temples. When I arrived, I had no job, no place to live, and spoke only sushi-bar Japanese. A year later I left a changed person. In *UNTANGLING MY CHOPSTICKS*, I take you deep into the heart of Kyoto to experience the beauty, aesthetics, social customs, and intricacies of this alluring and exotic culture. In rich and evocative detail, I reveal the subtle complexities of ancient and contemporary Japan, and share a kaleidoscope of impressions to help you understand this special place and way of life where one comes to "expect the unexpected." Far more than a book about food, *UNTANGLING MY CHOPSTICKS: A Culinary Sojourn in Kyoto* is a tale about finding peace amidst the chaos of life. It is also a subtle love story sprinkled with Zen that will offer you a new way of looking at the world.