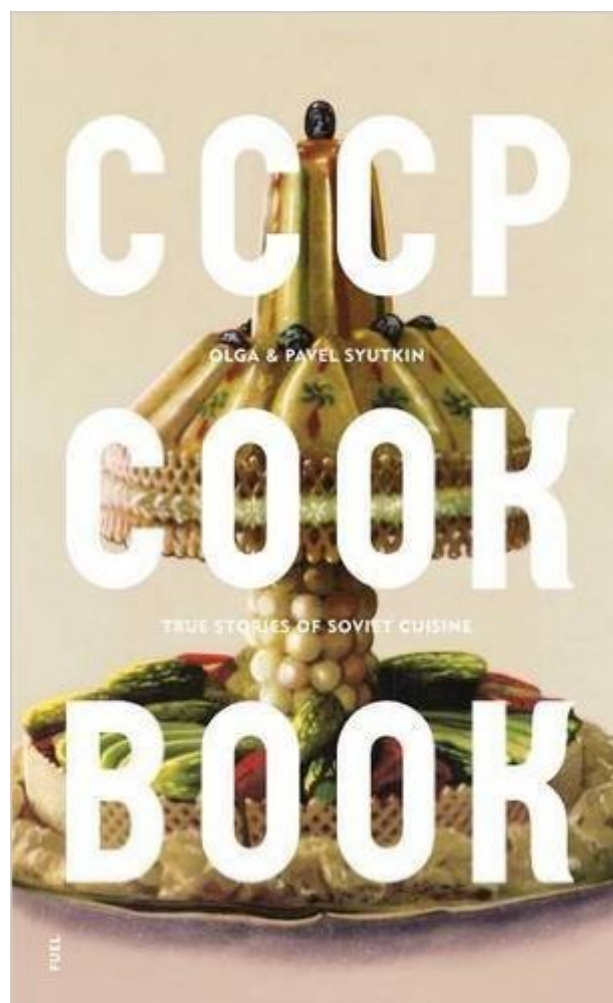


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CCCP COOK BOOK: True Stories Of Soviet Cuisine



Synopsis

As the Soviet Union struggled along the path to communism, food shortages were commonplace, and both Party authorities and Soviet citizens had to apply every ounce of ingenuity to maximize often-inadequate resources. The stories and recipes contained in the CCCP Cook Book reflect these turbulent times: from basic subsistence meals consumed by the average citizen (like okroshka, a cold soup made with the fermented beverage kvass) to extravagant banquets held by the political elite (suckling pig with buckwheat), with a scattering of classics (beef stroganoff) in between. Each recipe is introduced with a historical story or anecdote from the period, and illustrated using images sourced from original Soviet recipe books collected by the authors, food historians Olga and Pavel Syutkin. Many of the sometimes extraordinary-looking pictures depict dishes whose recipes used unobtainable ingredients, placing them firmly in the realm of "aspirational" fantasy for the average Soviet household. In their content and presentation, the recipes and illustrations act as windows into the cuisine and culture of the era. CCCP Cook Book offers an illustrated history of Soviet cuisine told through the stories and popular recipes from the period. The book contains 60 recipes from the Soviet period, including such delicacies as aspic, borscht, caviar and herring, by way of bird's milk cake and pelmeni.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Terrific book, lots of great ideas. A rich selection from snacks, soups, main dishes and desserts. Quite easy to follow. Whereas some items would not be typically encountered here (roast pig,

rabbit) the bulk of the material is available locally. Only disappointment I had no potato dishes. I think I'll try to make Kvass. Or how about Chicken Kiev? Or that old stand by Golubtsy.

What a strange little cook book. The illustrations take the reader back to another day and age and the recipes, while not as good as those I grew up with, are still worth a try. The book is small and the binding is typical of the old Soviet method of binding. Speaking of small, the book is a lot smaller than one might expect for the price, but the contents are what it's about.

Highly entertaining-I purchased this book for my husband, a VERY Americanized Russian who grew up in Northern Siberia. He loved it and I found it equally fascinating. It is perfectly written, very kitchy and provides a very clear context for the Soviet mass-managed food movement. I learned so much! I don't know if I will make the recipes, but I intend to order many more copies for gifts. (hurry and print more!!!)

Although I wouldn't feel inclined to follow any of its recipes, it gives a very interesting insight into the dishes of that time and place. The pictures and the ingredients ooze austerity and effort. And I do like the binding in itself, and additionally would find it very useful were I to follow any of the recipes, as it allows the book to stay open and flat at any page of choice.

A very interesting, compact, oblique history of the Soviet Union told through food. You can see the illustrations want to show bounty, plenty, sufficiency, but at those exact points where all this stops, you can also see the creeping paucity. There are parallels to recognise in our own (UK) post-war food-coupon economy, but the images in this book are shaded by the extra knowledge of a planned economy that intentionally produced the epic tragedies of gulags and starvation. My favourite illustration is the one of the jar and two tins of fish, one invitingly open, all against a backdrop of trawler afloat on a choppy, freezing Baltic Sea.

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