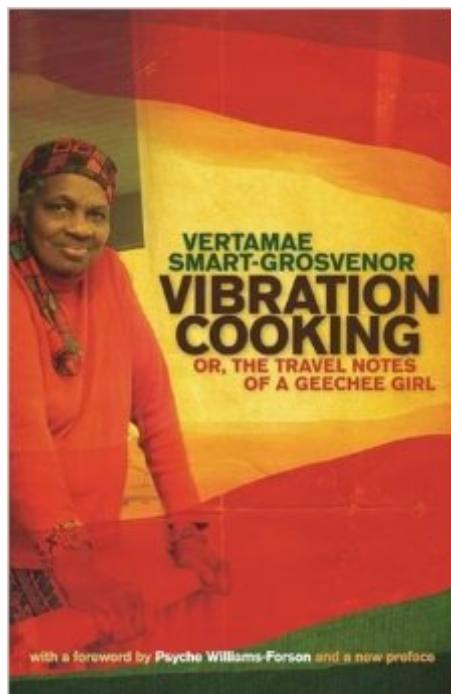


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Vibration Cooking: Or, The Travel Notes Of A Geechee Girl



Synopsis

Vibration Cooking was first published in 1970, not long after the term “soul food” gained common use. While critics were quick to categorize her as a proponent of soul food, Smart-Grosvenor wanted to keep the discussion of her cookbook/memoir focused on its message of food as a source of pride and validation of black womanhood and black consciousness raising. In 1959, at the age of nineteen, Smart-Grosvenor sailed to Europe, “where the bohemians lived and let live.” Among the cosmopolites of radical Paris, the Gullah girl from the South Carolina low country quickly realized that the most universal lingua franca is a well-cooked meal. As she recounts a cool cat’s nine lives as chanter, dancer, costume designer, and member of the Sun Ra Solar-Myth Arkestra, Smart-Grosvenor introduces us to a rich cast of characters. We meet Estella Smart, Vertamae’s grandmother and connoisseur of mountain oysters; Uncle Costen, who lived to be 112 and knew how to make Harriet Tubman Ragout; and Archie Shepp, responsible for Collard Greens à la Shepp, to name a few. She also tells us how poundcake got her a marriage proposal (she didn’t accept) and how she perfected omelettes in Paris, enchiladas in New Mexico, biscuits in Mississippi, and feijoada in Brazil. “When I cook, I never measure or weigh anything,” writes Smart-Grosvenor. “I cook by vibration.” This edition features a foreword by Psyche Williams-Forson placing the book in historical context and discussing Smart-Grosvenor’s approach to food and culture. A new preface by the author details how she came to write Vibration Cooking.

Book Information

Paperback: 256 pages

Publisher: University of Georgia Press (April 15, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0820337390

ISBN-13: 978-0820337395

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.7 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.9 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars (See all reviews) (7 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #17,549 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #3 in Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Regional & International > U.S. Regional > Soul Food #7 in Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Biographies > Rhythm & Blues #28 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Professionals & Academics > Culinary

Customer Reviews

I was looking for a recipe for the original pound cake with one pound ingredients including one pound of sugar, one pound of flour, one pound of butter, etc. The recipe was in this book along with some other wonderful old-fashioned recipes.

Fascinating book, both from a cultural perspective and a culinary one. I've listened to the author when she was on Public Radio, which, along with my love of cooking and quest for all things southern, is what drew me to this book. Sit back, relax and catch the vibrations of what the food is telling you to do.

A very fine biography of a little Gullah girl who somehow finds her way to Paris, great cooking, and great writing skills. Her sense of self is strong; her tone is objective; her style is full of energy and wit. There are also some recipes, though not written with the 1/2s, 1/4s, etc. But you can follow them: Her approach is about originality and self-discovery, both in life and cooking. She comes across as a loving, tough, strong woman. I give this book as gifts sometimes.

This is an unusual narrative cookbook, an unapologetic, in-your-face story of a young black woman from the south who travels to Paris on the eve of the 1960s. I enjoyed the book because I grew up in the same era, but on the opposite coast, with very different experiences, although both the author and I grew up very poor. Still, white poor isn't exactly the same as black poor, and so it was a peek into a different existence, of a brighter more energetic person than I. Some of the recipes are rather vague, and it is assumed the reader already knows how to cook. Some are very clear and easy to follow. Reading this book almost 30 years after it was written, the slang of the 1960s seems dated and a little tedious.

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