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Home Cooking In The Global Village: Caribbean Food From Buccaneers To Ecotourists (Anthropology And Material Culture)



Synopsis

Winner of the Society for Economic Anthropology Annual Book Prize 2008. Belize, a tiny corner of the Caribbean wedged into Central America, has been a fast food nation since buccaneers and pirates first stole ashore. As early as the 1600s it was already caught in the great paradox of globalization: how can you stay local and relish your own home cooking, while tasting the delights of the global marketplace? Menus, recipes and bad colonial poetry combine with Wilk's sharp anthropological insight to give an important new perspective on the perils and problems of globalization.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“Home Cooking in the Global Village is an outstanding example of contemporary anthropology. It offers a good balance between ethnographic and historical information. With its compelling presentation on the effects of globalization, this book is ideal for courses on Latin America or the Caribbean. As the book considers the role of food, any course on the anthropology of food would benefit from it as well.”
— Michael R. McDonald, Florida Gulf Coast University

Richard Wilk is Professor of Anthropology and Gender Studies, Indiana University.

In *Home Cooking in the Global Village: Caribbean Food from Buccaneers to Ecotourists*, anthropologist Richard Wilk argues against the simplistic notion that in today's hyper-connected world, "...culinary diversity is disappearing under a monotonous food landscape of burgers and fries." That's only one way to look at it, Wilk says; the other way is to see "the inevitability of globalization but ... compromise and reduce its impact by adapting and preserving local and ethnic traditions of food, music, dance, and language." Rather than colonial and Western civilizations swallowing local culture, says Wilk, it's more global give-and-take. In other words, the same forces and factors which created the small creolized country of Belize in the first place eventually created "Belizean food," a concept that didn't even exist until the arrival of the tourist industry. By studying Belize's food history, Wilk addresses the country's evolution from colonial backwater to international destination by looking at what people ate and what items were imported and exported from its shores. He also takes on the eternal Belizean paradox: why has such a rich, fertile chunk of Central America always had to rely on tinned food from Europe and the United States? The answer surprised me. The book is full of many tasty, interesting morsels -- including recipes at the end of each chapter.

This book on the history of globalization in Belize is very well written. It is accessible and understandable to everyone, providing an insight into events and contexts that led Belize to how it exists today. More importantly, by using Belize as a case study, it speaks volumes on consumption and globalization as a whole with great cases on its positives and negatives. I cannot recommend a better book if you are interested in global food issues from a cultural and economic standpoint.

Has some great recipes! Well laid out and easy to read.

This excellent book, which I recently taught in an upper level undergraduate course, examines Belizean food from the time of Europeans' arrival to the present. It moves beyond the dichotomies of cultural homogenization and hybridity or resistance to show that globalization and localization are part of the same process and this has been true for several centuries. It is without a doubt the best thing I have read on globalization and consumption and I'll be thinking a lot about it as I develop my research on consumer culture in Latin America. I particularly liked the analyses of the symbolism of meat among pirates, respectability and reputation, the style sandwich, and the rise of Belizean cuisine. The idea of "home cooking" conterposed to the fast vs. slow food debate is terrific, and closing the book with the "beans and rice" recipe was a delightful touch. I would strongly

recommend it to readers interested in globalization and consumer culture in Latin America as well as food studies.

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