

their homes when I was a youngster visiting her in NC. There is a certain nostalgia there as the Jewish people always treated her with respect and dignity. All the while they were walking their own precarious tightrope between the gentiles and the black people. I also found something more while poring over the pages of this book and that is a link to my family's own Jewish past. I have the utmost respect for the amount of research done by Marcie Ferris. It was a herculean task! Oh, and the recipes (the few) are pretty terrific. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Matzah Ball Gumbo By Charlotte E. Rich Great book. It has such good stories about different southern towns. I can relate to some of them since I grew up in Savannah and now live in Atlanta. It also has some interesting recipes. I like seeing the pictures of different people in the book that told stories. If you like recipes with stories this is a great book. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Interesting By mpez0 Interesting reading for a background on late 19th - early 20th century Southern US Jews, from a culinary standpoint. Because of Kashrut, looking at the cooking traditions is a good way of getting at Jewish migrations.

From the colonial era to the present, Marcie Cohen Ferris examines the expressive power of food throughout southern Jewish history. She demonstrates with delight and detail how southern Jews reinvented culinary traditions as they adapted to the customs, landscape, and racial codes of the American South. Richly illustrated, this culinary tour of the historic Jewish South is an evocative mixture of history and foodways, including more than thirty recipes to try at home.

From Publishers Weekly Many traditional Southern foodspulled-pork barbecue, crab cakes, fried oyster po' boys, to name a few violate traditional Jewish dietary laws, which forbid the consumption of pork and shellfish. What's a Southern Jew to do? Anthropological historian Ferris (UNC Chapel Hill) answers that question in a gustatory tour of the Jewish South. She uncovers many dishes that blend Jewish and Southern foodways (recipes included for such tasties as Temple Israel Brisket and Cornmeal-Fried Fish Fillets with Sephardic Vinagre Sauce). Ferris sees food as a symbol that encompasses the problem of how Jews live in a region dominated by Christians: "The most tangible way to understand Jewish history and culture in the South is at the dinner table." Cynics will wonder if a Jewish kugel (noodle casserole) prepared in the South is really any different from kugel in Chicago. Ferris's answer is an emphatic yes because Jews in the South face different challenges than those in Chicago. Southern Jews must be more intentional about cooking that kugel and passing the recipe down from generation to generation. If this book were a restaurant, Michelin would award it two out of three stars: not absolutely first-rate, but "excellent cooking, worth a detour." (Oct.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. Ferris continues the exploration of Jewish influences on Southern cooking with Matzoh Ball Gumbo.--Daily Advertiser The definitive study of the genre. . . . From Ferris's research a wonderful collection of recipes has emerged. . . . Ferris meticulously records never-before-told tales from folks like African American bar mitzvah caterers in Atlanta, Orthodox rabbis accused of smoking tongues in decidedly unkosher smokehouses in Memphis, and a family in the Mississippi Delta who, unable to keep kosher for lack of available ingredients, would nonetheless never eat catfish.--Saveur Fascinating reading mixed with delicious recipes.--Chicago Tribune A heartwarming, beautifully researched travel through Southern history that readers can really sink their teeth into. . . . Matzoh Ball Gumbo is literally a true taste of the good things in life emerging from the tragedies and triumphs of cultural diversity and the recipes . . . will be a high point of the book for any cook, any reader. The proof, as they say, is in the pudding and Matzoh Ball Gumbo serves it to perfection." --The Advocate This culinary journey embraces oral histories, poignant anecdotes and evocative photographs to explore the power of food in the Jewish South. More than 30 recipes, many blending Jewish and Southern food traditions, add a cook's perspective and illustrate the story at the dinner table.--Chapel Hill Magazine Like the gumbo of its title, Marcie Cohen Ferris's new book offers a rich stew to savor. . . . Meticulously researched and documented, eminently readable, further enlivened with the voices of Ferris's many interviewees, and illustrated with photographs, newspaper clippings, and more, Matzoh Ball Gumbo provides an utterly nourishing read.--The Forward A New York Times Notable Cookbook of 2005 A Chicago Tribune Favorite Cookbook of 2005 A Pittsburgh Post-Gazette Top Cookbook of 2005 [Matzoh Ball Gumbo] . . . is a blend of research and real people. . . . The tales--insightful, funny and occasionally heartbreaking--come complete with recipes, including one for her mother's Rosh Hashana jam cake.--New York Times Extraordinary and multifaceted. . . . It is at once scholarly and entertaining--a difficult combination to achieve. [This reviewer] smiled at many passages, delighted in the personal stories, and developed a much stronger sense of place. And [the reviewer] was always left hungry.--Journal of Southern History In Matzoh Ball Gumbo, A Culinary Journey of the Jewish South, Arkansas native Marcie Cohen Ferris explores how Jews embraced, avoided, and adapted southern food and, in that process, found themselves at home.--Chapel Hill Herald It's delightful to be able to experience these flavors in your own kitchen and equally enlightening to reflect on the simple acts of daily meals that can combine to create a history.--Appetite for Books A compelling storyteller, Ferris turns history into riveting reading.--Jewish News Takes readers on a tasty road trip.--Arkansas Libraries Nine-tenths Jewish American history, one-tenth cookbook, Matzoh Ball Gumbo: Culinary Tales of the Jewish South combines tales of growing up and growing old in a Southern Jewish family with vintage black-and-

white photographs and mouth-watering recipes. . . . Exhaustive research and an index for quick and easy topic recipe lookup round out this leisurely reading delight.--Midwest Book Just plain fun, as well as being thought-provoking. . . . This is the sort of book that causes you to interrupt your spouse's work to read bits aloud. It will be at the top of my gift list for almost everyone next year, and it should certainly be on your bookshelf.--Southern Cultures Many traditional Southern foods--pulled-pork barbecue, crab cakes, fried oyster po' boys, to name a few--violate traditional Jewish dietary laws, which forbid the consumption of pork and shellfish. What's a Southern Jew to do? Anthropological historian Ferris . . . answers that question in a gustatory tour of the Jewish South. . . . If this book were a restaurant, Michelin would award it two out of three stars: . . . 'excellent cooking, worth a detour.'--Publishers Weekly Fascinating reading, mixed with delicious recipes.--Houston Chronicle Handsomely produced, filled with vivid and evocative photographs with many piquant sidebars. . . . The carefully selected recipes that accompany each chapter are skillfully adapted and usable.--Journal of Material Religion Sprinkled with recipes, [Matzoh Ball Gumbo] is a culinary walk through the unique history of the Jews of the American South.--World Jewish Digest A must-read for Vicksburg-area residents. . . . Ferris is no ordinary cookbook author. She is a writer of history Southern Jewish history as it can be told through the recipes served on Jewish family tables.--Vicksburg Post Matzoh Ball Gumbo is a well-researched book, lovingly told with personal anecdotes, illustrative visual materials, and . . . historical and family recipes.--Gastronomica In Matzoh Ball Gumbo, author Marcie Cohen Ferris has chronicled an important history of food and culture that is a fundamental element of who we are as southerners.--A Rep Reading blog [A] big beautiful book about Southern Jewish cooking, and the cooks who cook it, and the families who eat it.--Arkansas Times A compelling storyteller, Ferris turns history into riveting reading.--Jewish Telegraphic Agency With recipes like Sabbath Marble Cake and Mimah's Cheesecake, this book is sure to be a hit with anyone interested in cookery, Jewish history, or Southern history.--Library Journal It may sound trivial, but no doubt the invention of Crisco was the answer to the prayers of some Jewish women in the South. . . . The miracle of Crisco is just one of the fascinating facts presented in Matzoh Ball Gumbo: Culinary Tales of the Jewish South. . . . Ferris . . . tell[s] the history of the Jewish South from a cook's perspective.--Raleigh News Observer A Jewish native of Arkansas and anthropological historian examines the compromises, adaptations and challenges of a people adrift in a land where such forbidden foods as pork and shellfish were staples.--Black Issues Book A fascinating story of immigration, acculturation, and assimilation. . . . Matzoh Ball Gumbo is a book to savor and to share.--Austin Chronicle A fascinating look at the differences of the kosher kitchen.--Charleston Post Courier Goes far beyond the kitchen . . . documents Southern Jewish domestic, social, racial, religious, and business life over three centuries. Rich in anecdote and based on extensive interviews, Matzoh Ball Gumbo records an important aspect of the American Jewish experience.--Jewish Book World A bountiful feast brimming with well-researched history, loving memories, and unique recipes. This is the perfect introduction to the distinctive faith, culture, and foodways of southern Jews.--Jonathan D. Sarna, Brandeis University Marcie Cohen Ferris's Matzoh Ball Gumbo is the definitive study on Jewish cooking in the American South, taking the reader on a fascinating journey to dinner tables throughout the Mississippi Delta, Charleston, and beyond. Over four centuries, southern and Jewish cultures have mingled, resulting in Pecan Kugel and Pesach Fried Green Tomatoes. A delicious and sometimes poignant world emerges, complete with the history, stories, and recipes from this unique cultural cross-section of southern Jews.--Joan Nathan, author of Jewish Cooking in America Delectable, from start to finish. Marcie Cohen Ferris does for the ethnography of food in the Jewish South what Jessica Harris has done for African Diaspora cooking. Matzoh Ball Gumbo tells the story of how Jews who settled south of the Mason Dixon line adjusted their eating habits to their new surroundings and created a unique creole cuisine. At the heart of the story is a paradox: how can there be such a thing as southern Jewish cooking when the laws of kashrut, governing what foods Jews may or may not eat, forbid such staples of southern kitchens as pork, shrimp, oysters, and crab? When you've tried Baked Redfish in Creole Court Bouillon you'll know.--Dale Rosengarten, curator, Special Collections, College of Charleston, and coeditor of A Portion of the People: Three Hundred Years of Southern Jewish Life