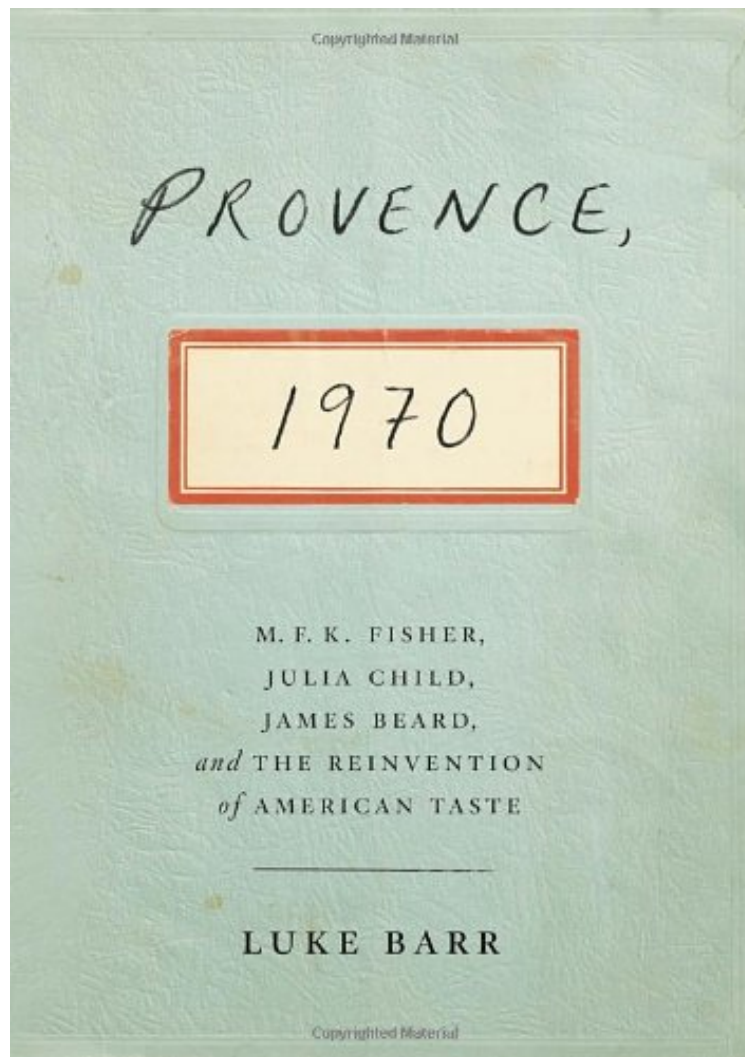


[Mobile ebook] Provence, 1970: M.F.K. Fisher, Julia Child, James Beard, and the Reinvention of American Taste

Provence, 1970: M.F.K. Fisher, Julia Child, James Beard, and the Reinvention of American Taste

Luke Barr

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Luke Barr : Provence, 1970: M.F.K. Fisher, Julia Child, James Beard, and the Reinvention of American Taste before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Provence, 1970: M.F.K. Fisher, Julia Child, James Beard, and the Reinvention of American Taste:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Beard, Fisher and Child, together at lastBy Joanna D.This book is written by a grand-nephew of M.F.K. Fisher and is the story of the conjunction of the stars: Fisher, James Beard and Julia Child. They meet in Southern France and they go back and forth across the Atlantic, changing how Americans

viewed and cooked food, expanding our horizons and also struggling with editors, wayward marriages, bad health and difficult partners and a life as a TV celeb. It's all great reading, and Barr does a superb job. Barr had access to the family records, which were boxes upon boxes of papers in a storage unit. Stacked--he said, to the ceiling. He went through them with patience and assiduity--and we are rewarded with this book, which has tidbits and stories, as well as information that you may never have read about M. F. K. Fisher. She was her own biographer in her essays, but her writing is veiled in many cases, so the view from the outside is one that adds perspective. We see much more about Julia (and Paul Child) as well as Simca (Simone Beck, co-author of Child) and sister Norah, Mary Frances' traveling partner. We even see more about "Chexbres" or Dillwyn Parrish, the love of her life and a painter. She was always oblique about "Chexbres" but we see him in the distance, true, but more directly. I'm a huge admirer of M. F. K. Fisher's essays, of which Auden said were the best of American literature. I so agree. So a funny moment: I'm acquainted with someone who was friends with Fisher and often spent time at the house in Glen Ellen. I asked her one day "Oh, so you knew M. F. K. Fisher. How I envy you--wish I had visited her when she was alive. I LOVE her writing." Blank stare from Fisher friend: "She...wrote?"

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Julia Child and Friends By Stella Carrier Provençe, 1970; M.F.K. Fisher, Julia Child, James Beard, and the Reinvention of American Taste by Luke Barr touches on areas such as the expat-bohemian way of life (page 69), There is also an interesting statement, made in the book (on page 132), where Julia Childs considered New York Times critic Craig Clairborne a snob, even though she liked and respected him. Supporting reasons were given such as; Clairborne mentioned that no American cooking could touch France's greatest and then there was "the letter." Julia Childs and her husband Paul wrote Clairborn a letter to protest his subtle criticism of Henry Haller, a White House Swiss-American chef under Nixon And LBJ, and who was popular for his state dinners (page 133).

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Lovely Memories By Bronte22 This lovely and satisfying book took me back in time to when the food culture of the United States was radically changing. I was newly married, and I vividly remember that in Chicago there was an explosion of really interesting and diverse restaurants. Those of my childhood and teen years were pretty nondescript, and the food offerings quite consistently American, unless you were in one of the restaurants in Chinatown or Little Italy along Taylor Street. It was all pretty boring. But quite suddenly, almost as if someone had turned on a light switch, everything seemed to be changing. There were now even cookbooks that thankfully moved beyond Betty Crocker in their imagination and ingredients. Provençe, 1970 helped me understand why. Of course, I was a fan of Julia Child and watched her show religiously. I owned her *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* and still make the leek and potato soup from it ... by far the easiest recipe in the book. But I wasn't really aware of the fascinating people (beyond Julia) that were behind this movement that was enriching my life and opening up so many possibilities. Luke Barr's book is well-written and provides both a realistic view of these people as human beings and a reverence for the past and for what they contributed to our present. I especially loved the last chapter when Barr and his family went to some of the places chronicled in the rest of the book. It was described with great tenderness and awakened my own feelings of nostalgia for that time and for the past we can never fully retrieve no matter how hard we try.

Disclaimer. I am also a certified Francophile and a lover of Provençe in particular. I happily add this to the list of books I recommend to others with that same condition. What this book has in common with many of the others on my list is the passion for life, the *joie de vivre*, it depicts that is emblematic of the French spirit. Food accompanied by good conversation is surely one of the greatest of life's pleasures. *N'est-ce pas?*

Provençe, 1970 is about a singular historic moment. In the winter of that year, more or less coincidentally, the iconic culinary figures James Beard, M.F.K. Fisher, Julia Child, Richard Olney, Simone Beck, and Judith Jones found themselves together in the South of France. They cooked and ate, talked and argued, about the future of food in America, the meaning of taste, and the limits of snobbery. Without quite realizing it, they were shaping today's tastes and culture, the way we eat now. The conversations among this group were chronicled by M.F.K. Fisher in journals and letters—some of which were later discovered by Luke Barr, her great-nephew. In Provençe, 1970, he captures this seminal season, set against a stunning backdrop in cinematic scope—complete with gossip, drama, and contemporary relevance.

.com An Best Book of the Month, October 2013: Over the long last weeks of 1970, the era's true tastemakers--Julia Child, M.F.K. Fisher, James Beard, Simone Beck, and Judith Jones, among others--serendipitously found themselves gathered in Southern France. Decades later, Luke Barr, M.F.K. Fisher's grand-nephew, discovered her journals and letters and set about recreating this time of improbably wonderful convergence, when they cooked, feasted, and talked deep into the night, arguing about technique and taste until loyalties were redrawn and opinions reinvented. Beard, Childs, and Fisher each came away with new visions for a new American food culture, distinctly different from their culinary heartland of France. With Fisher's instinct for elegantly simple and sensuous detail, Barr immerse us in this sea change, when our collective culinary ambition started its shift from *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* to *The Art of Simple Food*. --Mari Malcolm From Booklist *Starred * Much like an auspicious conjunction of heavenly planets, December 1970 found the greatest luminaries of the French-American food world gathered in one place. Julia

and Paul Child hosted a holiday get-together for James Beard, Richard Olney, Judith Jones, Simone Beck, and M. F. K. Fisher at their Provençal mas. As it turned out, this culinary summit meeting marked a turning point. American cooks had absorbed French technique, and this apprenticeship now approached its end. No longer cowed by French rules and rigorous traditions but grateful for the tutelage, confident American cooks commenced a redefinition of what their native cuisine might become. Fisher, doyenne of American food writers, kept a detailed journal, and her grandnephew, Barr, has plumbed its pages to re-create just what transpired in those remarkable days at the Childs' La Pitchoune. These driven and vivid personalities all come back to life with their quirky opinions, their rivalries, their loves and affections, and their refined palates. Despite the present glut of Julia Child and M. F. K. Fisher books, this little history makes it all fresh again. --Mark Knoblauch "The book's real success is in transporting the reader back to a pivotal time, in bringing it to life again. It is a nostalgic, lovely read." —Boston Globe "A fascinating narrative." —New York Times "Required reading for anyone who fears a little life-upending change—even if they know change will bring happiness and relief." —Oprah.com "An enjoyable and perceptive group biography that reads as fluently as a novel." —The New Yorker "Barr's careful presentation of his characters' trajectories reveal[s] Provence as an important work of cultural history in the guise of a foodie treat." —Slate "The interplay of these four fiercely independent personalities makes this book a guilty pleasure." —Wall Street Journal "Delightful fodder for foodies." —Publishers Weekly "Luke Barr has inherited the clear and inimitable voice of his great-aunt M.F.K. Fisher, and deftly portrays a crucial turning point in the history of food in America with humor, intimacy and deep perception. This book is beautifully written and totally fascinating to me, because these were my mentors—they inspired a generation of cooks in this country." —Alice Waters "Luke Barr conjures the past and pries open the window on a little known moment in time that had profound implications on how we live today. With an insider's access, a detective's curiosity, and a poet's sensitivity, he illuminates a culinary clique that not only changed the way we eat, but how we think about food. Provence, 1970 is as much a meditation on the nature of transition and the role of friendship, as it is on the power of food to unite, divide, and ultimately nourish the soul. For this a 'non-foodie' it was a revelation—for the connoisseur among us, it may well be orgiastic." —Andrew McCarthy, author of *The Longest Way Home: One Man's Quest for the Courage to Settle Down* "Luke Barr has brought the icons of the food world vibrantly to life and captured the moment when their passion for what's on the plate sparked a cultural breakthrough. His graceful prose provides a thorough, affecting account of their talents and reveals how their disparate personalities defined the very essence of French cuisine." —Bob Spitz, author of *Dearie* "Brilliant conversation, dimmed lights, culinary intrigue, urchin mousse, a glass of Sauternes . . . Luke Barr has written one of the most delicious and sensuous books of all time. It brims with love of food and wine." —Gary Shteyngart, author of *The Russian Debutante's Handbook and Super Sad True Love Story* "Luke Barr has written a lovely, shimmering, immersive secret history of an important moment that nobody knew was important at the time." —Kurt Andersen "Luke Barr has written a wonderful, sun-dappled account of the pleasures of cooking and eating in good company. With the deftest of touches, he describes a gathering of celebrated chefs—including Julia Child, his great-aunt M. F. K. Fisher, James Beard, and Richard Olney—and the way their American palates transformed French culinary rules for a homegrown audience. Both a meditation on the power of friendship and the uses of nostalgia, *Provence, 1970* is the kind of book you want to linger with as long as possible." —Daphne Merkin "Luke Barr paints an intimate portrait of the ambitious, quarrelsome, funny, hungry pioneers who brought about a great culinary shift—the ending of the classical era, and the beginning of a newly experimental, wide-ranging, ambitious cuisine, one that was inspired by France but was quintessentially American in style and flavor. *Provence, 1970* gives a front-row seat to the creation of modern American cooking." —Alex Prud'homme, co-author with Julia Child of *My Life in France*