

# african american soul food history

## African American Soul Food History: A Rich Culinary Journey

**african american soul food history** is a vibrant tapestry woven from the experiences, struggles, and triumphs of African Americans throughout centuries. More than just a style of cooking, soul food embodies culture, resilience, and identity. It tells a story of survival and creativity, blending African heritage with the American experience, particularly during and after the era of slavery. Understanding this history offers a deeper appreciation of the dishes that have become beloved staples in many households.

## The Roots of African American Soul Food History

Soul food's origins trace back to West and Central Africa, where indigenous peoples cultivated a rich culinary tradition based on locally available ingredients and cooking methods. When Africans were forcibly brought to America during the transatlantic slave trade, they carried these food practices with them, adapting them to new environments and limited resources.

Slaves often had to make do with the least desirable cuts of meat and whatever vegetables could be grown or foraged. This necessity birthed many iconic soul food dishes. Ingredients like okra, black-eyed peas, yams, and rice were staples that connected enslaved Africans to their homeland, while cooking techniques such as slow simmering and deep frying evolved in the American South.

## Influence of Enslaved Africans on Southern Cuisine

The impact of African American cooking on Southern cuisine is profound. Enslaved cooks were often responsible for preparing meals for plantation owners, and their influence seeped into mainstream Southern food culture. Dishes like fried chicken, collard greens cooked with ham hocks, cornbread, and chitlins (chitterlings) became commonplace.

Despite the hardships, these meals were often prepared with great care and ingenuity. The use of spices, herbs, and seasoning reflected African culinary sensibilities. Over time, soul food became a way to preserve cultural identity and foster community, even in the face of oppression.

## Evolution Through Emancipation and the Great Migration

The end of slavery in 1865 marked a pivotal moment in African American soul food history. Freed from bondage, African Americans sought to establish new lives, often in rural areas of the South. Food remained central to family gatherings, church events, and social occasions, reinforcing bonds and traditions.

# The Great Migration's Impact on Soul Food

Between 1916 and 1970, millions of African Americans moved from the rural South to urban centers in the North and West, in a movement known as the Great Migration. This shift brought soul food into new contexts. In cities like Chicago, Detroit, and New York, soul food restaurants and catering businesses flourished, becoming cultural hubs and economic opportunities.

The urban environment also introduced new ingredients and influences. For example, canned and frozen foods became more common, and recipes adapted to fit the faster pace of city life. Despite these changes, soul food maintained its essence: hearty, flavorful dishes that evoke comfort and heritage.

## Key Ingredients and Traditional Dishes in Soul Food

Understanding the staples of African American soul food history means exploring the ingredients and dishes that have stood the test of time.

### Staple Ingredients

- **Greens:** Collard, mustard, and turnip greens are slow-cooked, often with smoked meats for flavor.
- **Legumes:** Black-eyed peas and lima beans provide protein and are central to many recipes.
- **Cornmeal:** Used to make cornbread, hoecakes, and other breads that complement savory dishes.
- **Pork:** From ham hocks to ribs and bacon, pork has been a primary meat in soul food, often used to season vegetables.
- **Sweet potatoes and yams:** These root vegetables offer sweetness and nutrition, appearing in pies, casseroles, and side dishes.

### Iconic Soul Food Dishes

- **Fried Chicken:** Crispy, seasoned, and deeply satisfying, it remains one of the most recognized soul food dishes worldwide.
- **Chitterlings (Chitlins):** Made from pig intestines, this dish is a testament to making the most of available resources.

- **Macaroni and Cheese:** Often baked and enriched with cheese, it's a creamy comfort food favorite.
- **Sweet Potato Pie:** A traditional dessert that celebrates the natural sweetness of sweet potatoes.
- **Hoppin' John:** A dish of black-eyed peas and rice, traditionally eaten on New Year's Day for good luck.

## The Cultural Significance of Soul Food

Soul food is far more than just nourishment; it's a symbol of community, struggle, and celebration. Family gatherings, church potlucks, and holidays often center around soul food, strengthening social ties and honoring ancestors.

## Food as Resistance and Identity

Throughout history, soul food has been a form of resistance against cultural erasure. By preserving traditional recipes and cooking methods, African Americans maintained a sense of identity and pride. This culinary heritage also challenges stereotypes by showcasing the creativity and resilience of Black communities.

## Modern Interpretations and Health Considerations

In recent decades, there's been a renaissance of soul food, with chefs reimagining classic dishes using healthier ingredients and cooking techniques. While traditional soul food is often rich and calorie-dense, many modern cooks emphasize fresh vegetables, lean proteins, and alternative cooking methods without sacrificing flavor.

This evolution reflects a broader awareness of health concerns like hypertension and diabetes, which disproportionately affect African American populations. Yet, the heart of soul food – its warmth, depth of flavor, and cultural roots – remains intact.

## Preserving the Legacy of African American Soul Food History

Documentation and celebration of soul food history have grown through cookbooks, documentaries, and festivals. Organizations and communities work to ensure that this vital part of American culinary heritage is recognized and preserved for future generations.

# Tips for Exploring Soul Food at Home

For those interested in experiencing soul food, here are some helpful pointers:

1. **Start with classics:** Try making collard greens, cornbread, or fried chicken to get a taste of traditional flavors.
2. **Use authentic ingredients:** Look for smoked turkey wings, fresh greens, and quality pork products to capture the true essence of the dishes.
3. **Learn the history:** Understanding the stories behind the food enhances appreciation and connection.
4. **Experiment thoughtfully:** Don't hesitate to adapt recipes to your dietary needs or preferences while respecting the roots of the cuisine.

African American soul food history is a testament to resilience and cultural richness. Its dishes tell stories of survival, adaptation, and celebration that continue to inspire and bring people together today. Whether enjoyed in a family kitchen or a bustling restaurant, soul food remains a powerful link to heritage and community.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What are the origins of African American soul food?

African American soul food has its origins in the culinary traditions of enslaved Africans in the American South, who adapted their native African ingredients and cooking methods using available local resources.

### How did slavery influence the development of soul food?

Slavery influenced soul food by forcing enslaved Africans to make meals from limited and often undesirable ingredients, such as offal and greens, which they transformed into flavorful dishes using African cooking techniques.

### What role does soul food play in African American culture?

Soul food serves as a cultural connection to African heritage and history, symbolizing resilience, community, and family traditions passed down through generations.

### Which ingredients are commonly associated with traditional African American soul food?

Common ingredients include collard greens, black-eyed peas, sweet potatoes, pork, cornmeal, and

spices, many of which have African roots or were staples in the American South.

## **How has soul food evolved in modern times?**

Modern soul food has evolved to include healthier preparation methods and diverse influences while still honoring traditional recipes, reflecting changing dietary preferences and cultural pride.

## **What is the significance of soul food in African American celebrations and gatherings?**

Soul food is central to African American celebrations and gatherings as it fosters a sense of identity, community bonding, and the honoring of cultural heritage through shared meals.

## **Additional Resources**

African American Soul Food History: A Culinary Journey Through Culture and Resilience

**african american soul food history** is a rich and complex narrative that intertwines the culinary traditions of Africa, the harsh realities of slavery, and the vibrant cultural identity of African Americans. This cuisine, celebrated for its bold flavors and hearty ingredients, is more than just food—it is a testament to survival, ingenuity, and community. To truly appreciate soul food, one must delve into its origins, evolution, and the socio-economic factors that shaped its prominence in American culture.

## **The Origins of African American Soul Food**

The roots of African American soul food trace back to West and Central African culinary practices. Enslaved Africans brought with them knowledge of farming, seasoning, and cooking techniques that were adapted to the limited resources available in the Americas. Ingredients like okra, black-eyed peas, yams, and rice became staples, reflecting a continuity of African agricultural heritage.

However, the brutal conditions of slavery meant that African Americans often had access only to the less desirable cuts of meat and limited food supplies. This scarcity forced creativity and resourcefulness. Foods such as chitlins (pig intestines), hog jowls, and cornmeal were transformed into nourishing meals. The use of spices, slow cooking methods, and communal sharing turned these humble ingredients into dishes that would lay the foundation for soul food.

## **The Influence of Slavery and Segregation**

The period of slavery and subsequent segregation deeply influenced the development of soul food. Enslaved people were often given the “trash” or “offal” parts of animals, which white slave owners discarded. Yet, through skillful preparation, these parts became cherished dishes within African American communities. The use of greens like collards, mustard, and turnip greens, cooked with smoked meat, added flavor and nutrition.

Post-emancipation, African Americans continued to rely on these traditional foods, which remained affordable and accessible. During segregation, soul food restaurants and eateries became cultural hubs, especially in the South. These establishments not only provided sustenance but also fostered community solidarity and cultural pride amidst systemic oppression.

## Evolution and Cultural Significance

Soul food's evolution is closely linked to migration and cultural exchange. The Great Migration, which saw millions of African Americans move from the rural South to urban centers in the North and West, spread soul food beyond its geographic origins. This movement introduced soul food to new audiences and sparked adaptations that reflected local tastes and ingredients.

## Key Soul Food Dishes and Their Symbolism

Several dishes have become emblematic of African American soul food history, each carrying symbolic weight:

- **Fried Chicken:** A dish that combines African frying techniques with Southern ingredients, symbolizing celebration and hospitality.
- **Collard Greens:** Often cooked with smoked meats, representing resilience and the ability to thrive despite adversity.
- **Macaroni and Cheese:** A comfort food that reflects the blending of African American tastes with mainstream American cuisine.
- **Black-eyed Peas:** Traditionally eaten on New Year's Day for good luck, connecting to African and Southern traditions.
- **Cornbread:** A staple carbohydrate, representing sustenance and home cooking.

These dishes are more than mere sustenance; they are embedded with cultural narratives and historical significance.

## The Socioeconomic Impact and Modern Interpretations

In contemporary society, soul food continues to hold a complex position. On one hand, it remains a vital cultural expression and a source of identity for many African Americans. On the other hand, concerns about health have prompted critical discussions around traditional soul food recipes, which often feature high levels of fat, sodium, and cholesterol.

## Health Considerations and Adaptations

Historically, soul food was designed to be calorie-dense and energy-rich to sustain hard labor. Today, however, the prevalence of diet-related diseases in African American communities has led to reconsideration of traditional recipes. Many chefs and home cooks are reinventing soul food by incorporating healthier ingredients and cooking methods, such as baking instead of frying or using smoked turkey instead of pork.

This adaptation reflects a balancing act between preserving cultural heritage and promoting wellness, illustrating the dynamic nature of soul food.

## The Role of Soul Food in African American Identity

Soul food remains a potent symbol of African American identity and heritage. It is central to family gatherings, church events, and holidays, reinforcing bonds and shared history. Moreover, soul food restaurants and festivals serve as sites of cultural transmission, educating younger generations about the cuisine's origins and significance.

The rise of soul food in popular culture and its integration into mainstream culinary landscapes have also sparked conversations about cultural appropriation versus appreciation. Advocates emphasize the importance of acknowledging the historical context and honoring the African American community's contributions.

## Comparisons with Other African Diaspora Cuisines

African American soul food shares similarities with other African diaspora cuisines, such as Caribbean and Brazilian food, which also blend African ingredients and cooking methods with local influences. For instance, the use of spices like cayenne pepper, the cultivation of okra, and the preparation of stewed greens are common threads.

However, soul food is distinct in its unique adaptations to the American South's social and agricultural environment. The interplay between African heritage and the realities of slavery and segregation set soul food apart as a culinary tradition rooted in resilience and reinvention.

## Key LSI Keywords Integrated Naturally

Throughout this exploration of African American soul food history, terms such as "soul food recipes," "traditional African American cuisine," "southern cooking," "soul food origins," and "black culinary heritage" have been woven into the narrative. These keywords enhance the article's SEO performance while maintaining an organic and informative flow.

The journey of soul food—from its African roots through the hardships of slavery to its present-day cultural significance—embodies a story of survival, creativity, and identity. Understanding this history enriches the appreciation of soul food beyond its flavors, highlighting its role as a living

testament to the African American experience.

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**african american soul food history: Global Black Narratives for the Classroom: Africa, the Americas and the Caribbean** BLAM UK, 2023-12-06 Rather than reserving the teaching of Black history to Black history month, Black narratives deserve to be seen and integrated into every aspect of the school curriculum. A unique yet practical resource, Global Black Narratives for the Classroom addresses this issue by providing primary teachers with a global outline of Black history, culture and life within the framework of the UK's National Curriculum. Each topic explored in this essential book provides teachers and teaching assistants with historical, geographic and cultural context to build confidence when planning and teaching. Full lesson plans and printable worksheets are incorporated into each topic, alongside tips to build future lessons in line with the themes explored. Volume II of this book explores the following parts: Part 1 guides teachers through planning and delivering lessons focused on Africa. Pupils will benefit from developing a diverse and accurate understanding of the changing nature of Africa throughout history, linking the continent's social history with its geographical features. Part 2 'The Caribbean', builds upon the lesson plans of Part 1 to further highlight the interconnectedness of diaspora cultures in influencing the musical, visual and religious practices of the Caribbean and Central America. Part 3 begins by addressing the incorrect assumption that the history of Black people in the Americas begins and ends with plantation slavery. Instead, this section proposes a range of in-depth lesson plans on the diverse histories, cultures and experiences of Black people within the United States. Created by BLAM UK, this highly informative yet practical resource is an essential read for any teacher, teaching assistant or senior leader who wishes to diversify their curriculum and address issues of Black representation within their school. It is published in two practical and comprehensive volumes. Volume 1 covers Britain and Europe, whilst Volume 2 includes Africa, the Americas and the Caribbean. Each volume can be used



individually for teaching but when used together they provide a truly global perspective on black history and culture.

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**african american soul food history:** The Routledge History of American Foodways Michael D. Wise, Jennifer Jensen Wallach, 2016-02-12 The Routledge History of American Foodways provides an important overview of the main themes surrounding the history of food in the Americas from the pre-colonial era to the present day. By broadly incorporating the latest food studies research, the book explores the major advances that have taken place in the past few decades in this crucial field. The volume is composed of four parts. The first part explores the significant developments in US food history in one of five time periods to situate the topical and thematic chapters to follow. The second part examines the key ingredients in the American diet throughout time, allowing authors to analyze many of these foods as items that originated in or dramatically impacted the Americas as a whole, and not just the United States. The third part focuses on how these ingredients have been transformed into foods identified with the American diet, and on how Americans have produced and presented these foods over the last four centuries. The final section explores how food practices are a means of embodying ideas about identity, showing how food choices, preferences, and stereotypes have been used to create and maintain ideas of difference. Including essays on all the key topics and issues, The Routledge History of American Foodways comprises work from a leading group of scholars and presents a comprehensive survey of the current state of the field. It will be essential reading for all those interested in the history of food in American culture.

**african american soul food history:** Insatiable City Theresa McCulla, 2024-05-10 Theresa McCulla probes the overt and covert ways that the production of food and food discourse both creates and reinforces many strains of inequality in New Orleans, a city often defined by its foodways. She uses menus, cookbooks, newspapers, dolls, and other material culture to limn the interplay among the production and reception of food, the inscription and reiteration of racial hierarchies, and the constant diminishment and exploitation of working-class people. McCulla goes far beyond the initial task of tracing New Orleans culinary history to focus on how food suffuses culture and our understandings and constructions of race and power--

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by, the racial and class identities of Black Jacksonians. By tracing these contemporary African American foodways, *Getting Something to Eat in Jackson* offers new insights into the lives of Black Southerners and helps challenge the persistent homogenization of blackness in American life.

**african american soul food history:** *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America* Andrew Smith, 2013-01-31 Home cooks and gourmets, chefs and restaurateurs, epicures, and simple food lovers of all stripes will delight in this smorgasbord of the history and culture of food and drink. Professor of Culinary History Andrew Smith and nearly 200 authors bring together in 770 entries the scholarship on wide-ranging topics from airline and funeral food to fad diets and fast food; drinks like lemonade, Kool-Aid, and Tang; foodstuffs like Jell-O, Twinkies, and Spam; and Dagwood, hoagie, and Sloppy Joe sandwiches.

**african american soul food history:** *At the Table of Power* Diane M. Spivey, 2022-09-13 *At the Table of Power* is both a cookbook and a culinary history that intertwines social issues, personal stories, and political commentary. Renowned culinary historian Diane M. Spivey offers a unique insight into the historical experience and cultural values of African America and America in general by way of the kitchen. From the rural country kitchen and steamboat floating palaces to marketplace street vendors and restaurants in urban hubs of business and finance, Africans in America cooked their way to positions of distinct superiority, and thereby indispensability. Despite their many culinary accomplishments, most Black culinary artists have been made invisible—until now. Within these pages, Spivey tells a powerful story beckoning and daring the reader to witness this culinary, cultural, and political journey taken hand in hand with the fight of Africans in America during the foundation years, from colonial slavery through the Reconstruction era. These narratives, together with the recipes from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, expose the politics of the day and offer insight on the politics of today. African American culinary artists, Spivey concludes, have more than earned a rightful place at the table of culinary contribution and power.

**african american soul food history: Pathologizing Black Bodies** Constante González Groba, Ewa Barbara Luczak, Urszula Niewiadomska-Flis, 2023-05-18 *Pathologizing Black Bodies* reconsiders the black body as a site of cultural and corporeal interchange; one involving violence and oppression, leaving memory and trauma sedimented in cultural conventions, political arrangements, social institutions and, most significantly, materially and symbolically engraved upon the body, with “the self” often deprived of agency and sovereignty. Consisting of three parts, this study focuses on works of the twentieth- and twenty-first-century fiction and cultural narratives by mainly African American authors, aiming to highlight the different ways in which race has been pathologized in America and examine how the legacies of plantation ideology have been metaphorically inscribed on black bodies. The variety of analytical approaches and thematic foci with respect to theories and discourses surrounding race and the body allow us to delve into this thorny territory in the hope of gaining perspectives about how African American lives are still shaped and haunted by the legacies of plantation slavery. Furthermore, this volume offers insights into the politics of eugenic corporeality in an illustrative dialogue with the lasting carceral and agricultural effects of life on a plantation. Tracing the degradation and suppression of the black body, both individual and social, this study includes an analysis of the pseudo-scientific discourse of social Darwinism and eugenics; the practice of mass incarceration and the excessive punishment of black bodies; and food apartheid and USDA practices of depriving black farmers of individual autonomy and collective agency. Based on such an interplay of discourses, methodologies and perspectives, this volume aims to use literature to further examine the problematic relationship between race and the body and stress that black lives do indeed matter in the United States.

**african american soul food history: Constructs of "home" in Gloria Naylor's Quartet** Claudia Drieling, 2011

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embracing a plant-based diet? Eric Adams believes that you can. A police officer for more than two decades, Eric Adams was a connoisseur of fast food, and like so many people with stressful jobs, the last thing he had time to think about was eating healthily. Diabetes runs through his family, as it does for so many within the Black community. When he himself was diagnosed with the condition in 2016, he became determined to get to the root of the problem: the food he was eating. By switching to a vegan, wholefood diet, he lost weight, lowered his cholesterol, and improved his health beyond recognition. Armed with the hard science and real-life stories of others who have transformed their bodies by changing their diet and lifestyle, *Healthy At Last* shows that not only are these kind of radical health improvements possible, they can also be enjoyable. With shopping tips and gentle lifestyle advice, Eric is on a mission to share how you can become healthier without abandoning the food you love. He explores the origins of soul food and how it can be reimagined with healthy alternatives. From Chipotle Mac 'n' Cheese to Chewy Peanut Butter Cookies, Eric is keen to show this is not about restriction but instead finding joy in real food. Packed with up-to-date nutritional advice and recipes from the likes of Dr Michael Greger, Raymond Jackson, Paul McCartney, Alan Cummings and more, this is the perfect book for anyone looking to improve their health in small, manageable and pleasurable steps.

**african american soul food history:** *The African American Experience in Cyberspace* Abdul Alkalimat, 2003-12-20 The World Wide Web is the greatest source of information used by students and teachers, media and library professionals, as well as the general public. There is so great a flow of information that it is necessary to have a tool for guiding one to the best and most reliable sources. This important new guide to the African American experience in cyberspace fills this need for people in all areas of Black Studies and Multiculturalism. There is no search engine list that can match the quality of sites to be found in this book. Alkalimat provides an easy to use directory to the very best websites that deal with the African American Experience. The first section covers every aspect of African American history, while a second section deals with a diverse set of topics covering society and culture. Each chapter has a brief essay, extensively annotation on the five best sites for each topic, and then a group of good sites and a short bibliography. This book is designed for a course at the high school or college level. This book should be kept near every home computer that people use to surf the web for Black content. Most people have found out that the major corporations and governments have been the dominant uploaders of information into cyberspace. This volume is different because it is a serious introduction to the full democratic use of the web. These websites will introduce people to the people who are serious about ending the digital divide because they are busy uploading information about the most excluded and marginalized people, the African American community. Many of these sites are being established by Black Studies academic programmes, as well as community based organizations and institutions.

**african american soul food history:** *My Grandmother's Deep South Soul Food Cookbook Volume 2* Tasha C. Scott, 2013-11-30 Volume 2 of My Grandmother's Deep South Soul Food Cookbook which contains more classic soul food favorites for holidays and everyday quick meals.

**african american soul food history:** *African American Folklore* Anand Prahlad, 2016-08-08 African American folklore dates back 240 years and has had a significant impact on American culture from the slavery period to the modern day. This encyclopedia provides accessible entries on key elements of this long history, including folklore originally derived from African cultures that have survived here and those that originated in the United States. Inspired by the author's passion for African American culture and vernacular traditions, *African American Folklore: An Encyclopedia for Students* thoroughly addresses key elements and motifs in black American folklore-especially those that have influenced American culture. With its alphabetically organized entries that cover a wide range of subjects from the word conjure to the dance style of twerking, this book provides readers with a deeper comprehension of American culture through a greater understanding of the contributions of African American culture and black folk traditions. This book will be useful to general readers as well as students or researchers whose interests include African American culture and folklore or American culture. It offers insight into the histories of African American folklore

motifs, their importance within African American groups, and their relevance to the evolution of American culture. The work also provides original materials, such as excerpts from folktales and folksongs, and a comprehensive compilation of sources for further research that includes bibliographical citations as well as lists of websites and cultural centers.

**african american soul food history:** *Routledge International Handbook of Food Studies* Ken Albala, 2013-05-07 Over the past decade there has been a remarkable flowering of interest in food and nutrition, both within the popular media and in academia. Scholars are increasingly using foodways, food systems and eating habits as a new unit of analysis within their own disciplines, and students are rushing into classes and formal degree programs focused on food. Introduced by the editor and including original articles by over thirty leading food scholars from around the world, the Routledge International Handbook of Food Studies offers students, scholars and all those interested in food-related research a one-stop, easy-to-use reference guide. Each article includes a brief history of food research within a discipline or on a particular topic, a discussion of research methodologies and ideological or theoretical positions, resources for research, including archives, grants and fellowship opportunities, as well as suggestions for further study. Each entry also explains the logistics of succeeding as a student and professional in food studies. This clear, direct Handbook will appeal to those hoping to start a career in academic food studies as well as those hoping to shift their research to a food-related project. Strongly interdisciplinary, this work will be of interest to students and scholars throughout the social sciences and humanities.

**african american soul food history:** *The Oxford Companion to American Food and Drink* Andrew F. Smith, 2007-05-01 Building on the highly praised and deliciously browseable two-volume compendium the Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America, this new work serves up everything you could ever want to know about American consumables and their impact on popular culture and the culinary world. Within its pages for example, we learn that Lifesavers candy owes its success to the canny marketing idea of placing the original flavor, mint, next to cash registers at bars. Patrons who bought them to mask the smell of alcohol on their breath before heading home soon found they were just as tasty sober and the company began producing other flavors. Edited by Andrew Smith, a writer and lecturer on culinary history, the Companion serves up more than just trivia however, including hundreds of entries on fast food, celebrity chefs, fish, sandwiches, regional and ethnic cuisine, food science, and historical food traditions.

**african american soul food history: Hog and Hominy** Frederick Douglass Opie, 2008-10-08 "Opie delves into the history books to find true soul in the food of the South, including its place in the politics of black America."—NPR.org Frederick Douglass Opie deconstructs and compares the foodways of people of African descent throughout the Americas, interprets the health legacies of black culinary traditions, and explains the concept of soul itself, revealing soul food to be an amalgamation of West and Central African social and cultural influences as well as the adaptations blacks made to the conditions of slavery and freedom in the Americas. Sampling from travel accounts, periodicals, government reports on food and diet, and interviews with more than thirty people born before 1945, Opie reconstructs an interrelated history of Moorish influence on the Iberian Peninsula, the African slave trade, slavery in the Americas, the emergence of Jim Crow, the Great Migration, the Great Depression, and the Civil Rights and Black Power movements. His grassroots approach reveals the global origins of soul food, the forces that shaped its development, and the distinctive cultural collaborations that occurred among Africans, Asians, Europeans, and Americans throughout history. Opie shows how food can be an indicator of social position, a site of community building and cultural identity, and a juncture at which different cultural traditions can develop and impact the collective health of a community. "Opie goes back to the sources and traces soul food's development over the centuries. He shows how Southern slavery, segregation, and the Great Migration to the North's urban areas all left their distinctive marks on today's African American cuisine."—Booklist "An insightful portrait of the social and religious relationship between people of African descent and their cuisine."—FoodReference.com

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