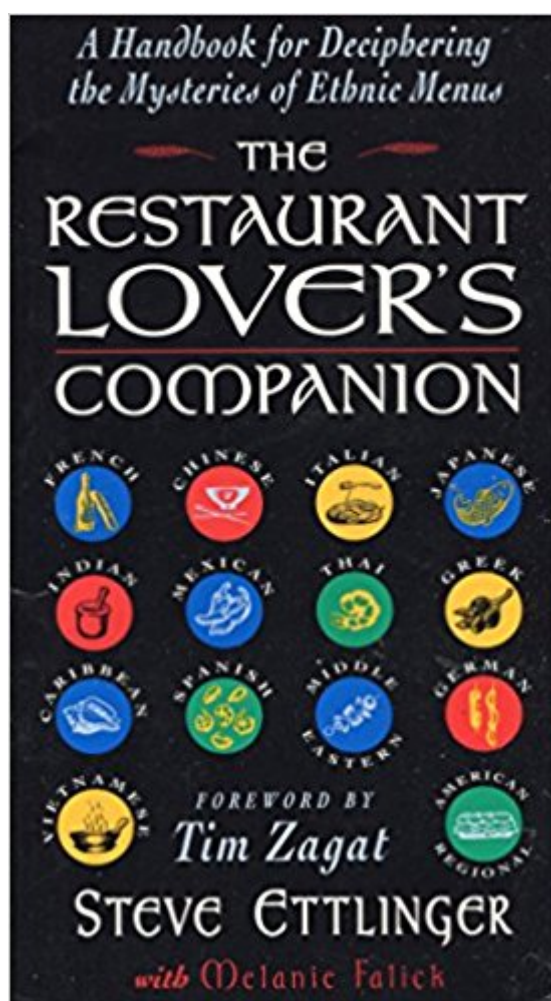


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The Restaurant Lover's Companion: A Handbook For Deciphering The Mysteries Of Ethnic Menus



Synopsis

Nothing is more mysterious than a foreign menu at a new restaurant. This helpful handbook demystifies fourteen popular foreign (and American regional) menus and helps diners distinguish authentic ethnic dishes from Americanized versions. Includes a foreword by Tim Zagat, editor of Zagat's Restaurant Guides.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Do you like to try new foods, new flavors, experiment with new menus? Do you go to ethnic restaurants? Baffled? Befuddled by the words, the descriptions, the cultural customs? I have your new best friend: "The Restaurant Lover's Companion." I have had this book for years but never had a chance to use it. Now I do. Wow, this will be my future companion on those outings to ethnic restaurants. If you will look at the cover, each of those colored circles represents a different culture: French, Chinese, Italian, Japanese, Indian, Mexican, Thai, Greek, Caribbean, Spanish, Middle Eastern, German, Vietnamese, and American Regional. The mystery of their menus is deciphered inside (borrowing from the phrase on the cover). I'm skipping to the Indian section. First, a description of the foods of the North and South: North influenced by Moghuls--elaborate meat preparation, velvety sauces, mild flavorings, cooked in oil; South--vegetarian predominantly, spicy, even fiery flavorings, steamed, healthier. A section is dedicated to the Principles of Flavor: "through the use of aromatics...an Indian demonstrates skill, creativity, and individuality." There is a paragraph on what to order to make up an Indian meal. A paragraph explains condiments and chutneys, garnishes, and pickles. Those items always confused me. Then follows the types of rice.

A last side bar explains that dish of fennel seeds and cardamom seeds by the door. Take a spoonful on your way out. They aid in digestion and refresh the palate. Tips for eating with your hands is also explained. Lastly, signature dishes are listed and two misconceptions dispelled. That was the introduction to Indian food. Next comes a section on appetizers, including all those Indian names and explanations and descriptions. This is the section where the reader really learns some things. Papadam (lentil wafers) and how to eat them and with them, Mulligatawny Soup (spicy soup made with lentils, tomatoes, and spices), Keema Naan (bread stuffed with lamb, herbs, and baked in a Tandoor oven (explained in a side bar), Rogan Josh (lamb cooked in a rich, creamy yogurt sauce with almonds and spices), and Aloo Palak (potatoes and spinach cooked with tomatoes and ginger in a tomato sauce). A total of 10 pages describes and explains terms of ethnic Indian foods. All other sections are similarly arranged. This is truly a "Restaurant Lover's Companion," along with your date/spouse.

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