

Sacre Cordon Bleu: What the French Know about Cooking



Michael Booth has had his fill of celebrity chefs and their recipes. He wants to know how to cook, not just to follow recipes. So, he burns his cookery books and, together with his young family, heads for a new life in Paris - reasoning that, if anyone can be trusted to make food complicated, it's the French. He embarks on the ultimate foodie fantasy, enrolling at the world's most famous cooking school, Le Cordon Bleu, whose wise and cranky French chefs begin to transform him into a professional, tutoring him in the fascinating, bizarre and occasionally arcane ways of classical French cooking. Meanwhile, he and his family try to adjust to the challenges of life in Paris: dealing with the park Nazis, sweet-talking the Metro police and trying not to look when the neighbours start having sex out of their window. In this riveting and hilarious book Booth introduces us to his fellow food-obsessed students from around the world; meets Gerard Depardieu (who reveals why you should never eat vegetables from his grandmothers garden); and hears the extraordinary predictions of the future of food from Herve This, the founding father of molecular gastronomy. Booth shares with us the secrets of his training at Le Cordon Bleu and of French cooking itself, explaining how to make the perfect sauce; the secret of great stocks; how to win a fight with a lobster; and how to avoid maiming yourself while cleaning your knives. He explores how France rose to culinary pre-eminence and asks if Paris still deserves its reputation as the culinary capital of the world. Following both traumas and unexpected triumphs at school, Booth embarks on the ultimate chefs challenge, he goes to work at the Michelin-starred Paris restaurant of the most famous chef in France, Joel Robuchon.

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