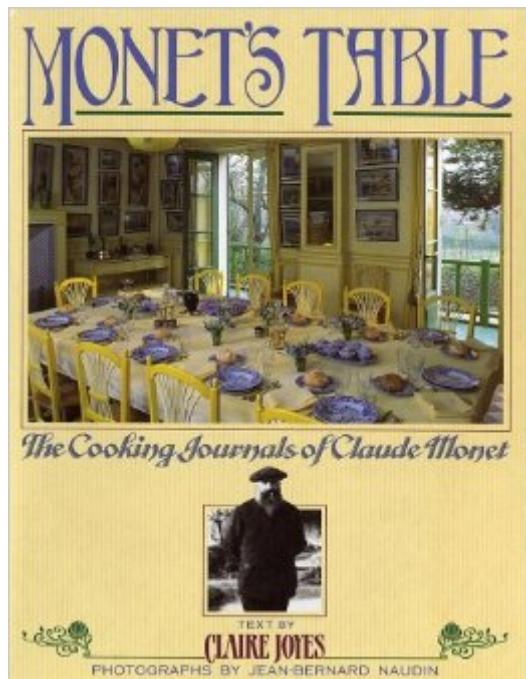


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Monet's Table: The Cooking Journals Of Claude Monet



Synopsis

One of the most influential painters of modern times, Claude Monet lived for half his life in the famous house at Giverny. It was after moving here in 1883 with his future second wife, Alice Hoschedé, and their eight children that Monet's work finally achieved recognition. His growing success meant that he was able to indulge his passion for comfort and good living. Family meals, special celebrations, luncheons with friends, picnics: all reflected the Monets' love of good food. Just as the inspiration for many of Monet's paintings was drawn from his beloved gardens and the surrounding Normandy landscape, so the meals served at Giverny were based upon superb ingredients from the kitchen-garden (a work of art in itself), the farmyard, and the French countryside. A moody, reserved, and very private man whose daily routine revolved totally around his painting, Monet nevertheless enjoyed entertaining his friends, many of whom were leading figures of the time. As well as his fellow Impressionists -- in particular Renoir, Pissarro, Sisley, Degas and Cézanne -- other regular guests included Rodin, Whistler, Maupassant, Valéry, and one of Monet's closest friends, the statesman Clemenceau. They came to dine in almost ritual form, first visiting Monet's studio and the greenhouses, then having lunch at 11:30 (the time the family always dined, to enable Monet to make the most of the afternoon light). Tea would later be served under the lime trees or near the pond. Guests were never invited to dinner; because Monet went to bed very early in order to rise at dawn. All the guests were familiar with Monet's rigid timetable. The recipes collected in his cooking journals included dishes Monet had encountered in his travels or had come across in restaurants he frequented in Paris as well as recipes from friends, such as Cézanne's "bouillabaisse" and Millet's "petits pains." For this book, the author Claire Joyes, wife of Madame Monet's great-grandson, has spent years selecting the Monets' favorite recipes and writing a wonderfully evocative introductory text. All of the recipes have been artfully prepared and brought back to life in Monet's own kitchen by master chef Joel Robuchon. Illustrated with sumptuous reproductions of Monet's paintings, spectacular original four-color photographs of Giverny, selected shots of finished dishes, and facsimile pages from the notebooks themselves, this book provides a fascinating and unique insight into the turn-of-the-century lifestyle of one of the world's most celebrated Impressionist painters.

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Customer Reviews

As a lover of the Impressionist movement, I felt compelled to make the pilgrimage to the house of Claude Monet located a few miles north of Paris in the small town of Giverny, Normandy. Monet's refuge is a shrine of the art world renowned for its beautiful and expansive garden filled with flowers, trees, a lake and its famous bridge. When I entered Monet's home, the dining room made a strong impression upon me: large, very inviting and splashed in yellow as if Monet had tried to capture the strong summer sun to overcome the cloudy winter days of Normandy. The table for twelve was tastefully set with blue and white china with a centerpiece of dazzling fresh flowers, as if beckoning its guests to prepare for a savory adventure to be accompanied by lively discussion. As I passed through the dining room into the kitchen, I noticed that the old, black oven fitted with brass trim and graced with copper pots and pans was still capable of generating warmth, even if the fire went out of it long ago. It was at that moment that I decided to purchase "Monet's Table: The Cooking Journals of Claude Monet", and I have reaped far more from this book than the French francs I had traded in return. In an interview published on November 26, 1900, in "Le Temps", Claude Monet declared "I am a Parisian of Paris. I was born there in 1840, ... I was born incapable of being disciplined. No one was ever able to make me stick to the rules, not even in my youngest days." Despite this boastful protestation, I am of the personal opinion after having studied his art, visited his home and read books and journals about the artist, that he was, if not disciplined, then certainly dedicated and devoted to the creation of the sensory arts of painting and fine dining in their truest form.

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