

Amazon.com Review

5.0 out of 5 stars Simply delicious!

By [Tchitcherine](#) on October 12, 2014

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This is a wonderful book that "works" on three different levels:

First, it gives the history of the most important sweets around the world, and traces their lineage and background. For example, I never knew that baklava can be traced to ancient Greek honey cakes, or that American apple pie derives from Dutch tarts.

Second, it provides the ethnological context for each sweet and describes the national, religious, and social significance of many humble desserts. For example, the discussion of cacao in Latin America and chocolate sweets in Mexico that combine ingredients from all over the world, or the detailed description of the "baklava wars" that rocked the Middle East and the Balkans. In that respect the book brings out many interesting connections; for instance reading about the Nepalese halwa made me think of similar Lebanese and Middle Eastern delicacies with similar sounding names. The final result, when I tried it, closely resembles my version of halva. This sent me to the book's index, trying to figure out the possible route of transmission.

Lastly, and most importantly, the book gives numerous unique and wonderful recipes from every corner of the world. The bibliography is as legitimate as you may find in an academic book, and the Roufs trace every

recipe, often to authoritative local chefs or to online sources, and sometimes to the best and most authoritative source of all -somebody's grandma.

If I could change something about the book, I would have the desserts indexed alphabetically -now they are listed under their respective countries/regions of origin. Oh, and wait, about the "baklava wars"...