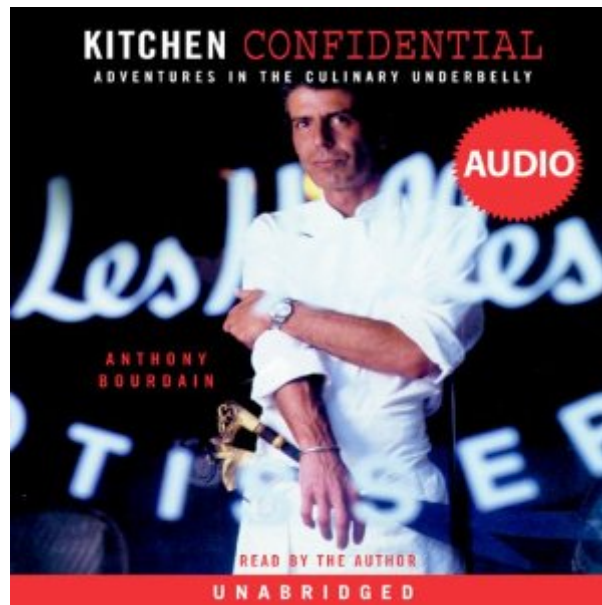


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Kitchen Confidential: Adventures In The Culinary Underbelly



Synopsis

After 25 years of sex, drugs, bad behaviour and haute cuisine, chef and novelist Anthony Bourdain has decided to tell all. From dishwasher to chef, from the Rainbow Room in the Rockefeller Center to drug dealers in the East Village, his tales are as unpredictable as they are funny and shocking.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In this book, Anthony Bourdain, executive chef at New York's Brasserie Les Halles, takes us on a wild ride through that city's food supply industry that includes surprises such as heavy drinking, drugs, debauchery, Mafiosi and assorted seedy personalities. It is clear that Bourdain enjoys a true passion for both food and cooking, a passion he inherited from the French side of his family. He tells us he decided to become a chef during a trip to southwestern France when he was only ten years of age and it is a decision he stuck to, graduating from the Culinary Institute of America. *Kitchen Confidential* is a surprisingly well-written account of what life is really like in the commercial kitchens of the United States; "the dark recesses of the restaurant underbelly." In describing these dark recesses, Bourdain refreshingly casts as many stones at himself as he does at others. In fact, he is brutally honest. There is nothing as tiresome as a "tell-all" book in which the author relentlessly paints himself as the unwitting victim. Bourdain, to his enormous credit, avoids this trap. Maybe he writes so convincingly about drugs and alcohol because drugs and alcohol have run their course through his veins as well as those of others. The rather raunchy "pirate ship" stories contained in this fascinating but testosterone-rich book help to bring it vividly to life and add tremendous credibility.

The book does tend to discourage any would-be female chefs who might read it, but that's not Bourdain's fault; he is simply telling it like it is and telling it hilariously as well.

This is a fascinating, alternately hilarious and appalling account of one chef's career in the restaurant business. Bourdain, now the Executive Chef at Les Halles in New York, regales the reader with a behind-the-scenes look at the kitchens of "gourmet" restaurants he has worked and the characters he has known. To call his account (and his fellow workers) "colorful" is an understatement. There is much to like in this book. Occasional insights into why ordering fish on Monday is not such a good idea (it's left over from Thursday's delivery) and the logistics of running a major restaurant are fascinating. Also, the anecdotes about management style and successful vs. unsuccessful restaurants make for interesting reading. Bourdain demolishes the mystique of cooking as an art to be mastered by only a few. From his perspective, cooking is a craft that can be learned through grit, endurance, and hard knocks. As he points out, the mainstays of his and many other kitchens are immigrants from Ecuador, Mexico, Bengal and elsewhere who are taught how to recreate consistently and under pressure dishes as directed by the chef. Restaurant work is not easy, and only the strong survive. It's a war out there--and the kitchen is the combat zone. That said, "Kitchen Confidential" is an uneven book that should have had a good editing. The individual chapters have the feel of freestanding pieces, and some of their content is repetitious. Much of the jargon and some of the details of how a kitchen is organized aren't explained until late in the book, even though he's been referring to them from the beginning.. By the time he finally does explain the slang and the esoteric details, the astute reader has already figured it out.

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