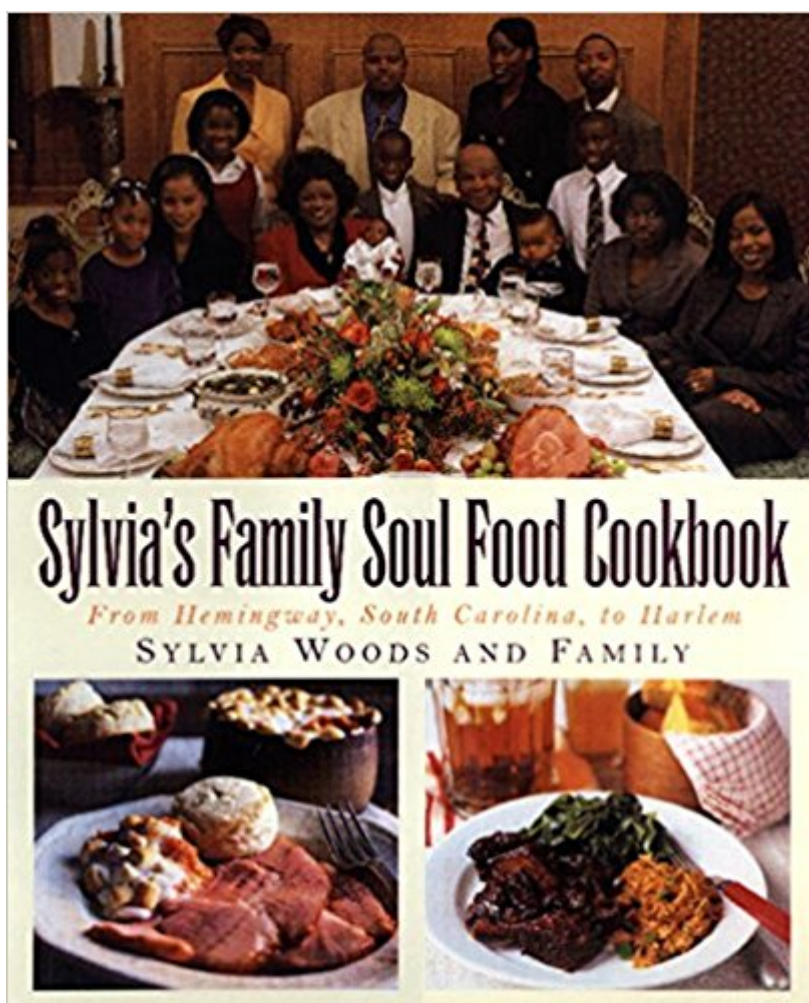


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Sylvia's Family Soul Food Cookbook: From Hemingway, South Carolina, To Harlem



Synopsis

Sylvia's Family Soul Food Cookbook begins as Sylvia recalls her childhood, when she lived with both her mother and her grandmother -- the town's only midwives. The entire community of Hemingway, South Carolina, shared responsibilities, helped raise all of the children, and worked side by side together every day in the bean fields. Perhaps most important, the community shared its food and recipes. When Sylvia set out to write this cookbook, she decided to hold a cook-off back home in Hemingway at Jeremiah Church. Family and friends of all ages shared their favorite dishes as well as their spirit and love for one another. The recipes offered at the cook-off were then compiled to create this incredible collection, along with many of Sylvia's and the Woods family's own recipes. Here are the kinds of recipes you'd find if you visited the Woods family's home. Sylvia's daughter Bedelia is well known for her Barbecued Beef Short Ribs, which are as sassy and spicy as Bedelia herself. Kenneth, Sylvia's youngest son, has loved to fish ever since he was a child, spending his summers by the fishing hole in Hemingway. Now Kenneth's son, DeSean, enjoys fishing, too. Kenneth's Honey Lemon Tilefish, DeSean's favorite, is just one of Kenneth's special recipes presented here. And there are many, many other wonderful dishes, too. In this remarkable cookbook, Sylvia has gathered more than 125 soul food classics, including mouthwatering recipes for okra, collard greens, Southern-style pound cakes, hearty meat and seafood stews and casseroles, salads, mashed potatoes, macaroni and cheese, and more. These recipes are straight from the heart of the Woods community of family and friends. Now Sylvia gives them to you to share with your loved ones. Bring them into your home and experience a little bit of Hemingway's soul.

Book Information

Hardcover: 288 pages

Publisher: William Morrow Cookbooks; 1 edition (June 23, 1999)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0688162193

ISBN-13: 978-0688162191

Product Dimensions: 7.5 x 1 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.5 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 105 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #488,954 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #83 in Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Regional & International > U.S. Regional > Soul Food

Customer Reviews

When Sylvia and Herbert Woods bought a small Harlem luncheonette in 1962, they never dreamed that it would become famous as the premier soul food restaurant in New York City. Their four children and many friends and relatives all contributed to this accomplishment, and Sylvia's latest book (after Sylvia's Soul Food) is as much a testament to them as it is to the Southern food she serves. A friendly introduction describes Sylvia's early life in Hemingway, S.C., emphasizing hard work, spirituality, devotion to family and cooking according to the seasons. Seventy photographs illustrate the stories she tells, creating the atmosphere of a family album. All her famous dishes are here: From Bedelia's Oven-Fried Chicken, Holiday Chitlins and Bert's Catfish Stew to Candy Yams Soufflé, Frances's Old-fashioned Collard Greens, Hush Puppies and Creamy Banana Pudding. Soups, main courses of all kinds, sides ("the heart of soul food"), breadstuffs and lavish desserts are all deeply flavorful; Chicken Soup, for instance, is loaded with vegetables, black pepper and hot sauce. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Sylvia Woods, born in Hemingway, South Carolina, started the world-famous Sylvia's Restaurant in 1963 and opened a second restaurant in Atlanta in 1997. She owned a line of canned and bottled food products that is sold in supermarkets across the country.

There are no pictures of how the meals should look and many of the dishes are ordinary (things that are simple that you do right now when you cook). Personally I grab a cookbook when I want to wow someone and that doesn't mean that I'll have to spend hours in the kitchen. Cookbooks assist me with bring a little extra flavor to the table. I was surprised at how basic many of the recipes were. You really don't need a cookbook for them. However, this book may be great for the beginner.

Of the two Sylvia's books, this is definitely the prize. Sylvia collects recipes from friends, family and neighbors, and writes nostalgically about picnics, church events and fun serving soul food. Sylvia founded a wonderful restaurant business in Harlem, NY and in Atlanta, Georgia. She reveals some of her secrets to soul food here. But the recipes are deceptively simple and unless you grew up on great soul food (I did not) you might have trouble to reproduce the complexity of flavor. Like Cajun cooking, soul food seems to be based on experience and a honed sense of taste for seasonings that defies documentation. But you can try, and this is a fine book for recipes, especially for chicken and for vegetables like limas and greens. Mmmmmmm.

As expected!

Lots of recipes that remind me of my moms cooking.

I'm a young black woman who just moved on my own. I want to be able to make meals to impress and I feel like with the help of this cookbook I can definitely do that. People who are on some health kick might find something to complain about, but everything in moderation folks. Some of the recipes are meals you can make any day of the week and they will be delicious.

Certainly not what I expected. More stories about the family than actual recipes. The ones that are illustrated are bland and basic. I'm very disappointed. Wish I could get a refund!!!

I've been collecting cookbooks for over 25 years, since my high school days. I currently have over 300, but room in the kitchen for only about 5 - the current "workhorses" of the collection. Sylvia's book has stayed in the kitchen for several years now, where I can get to it quickly. I've tried many of the recipes in her book, and have been immensely pleased. Other reviewers have all said it as well or better than I could, but I have to add the fact that, when we're trying to come up with an idea for something for dinner, my husband has developed a habit of grabbing the book from its home on the counter between the refrigerator and microwave and saying, "well, let's see what Sylvia recommends today." I don't know about her other cookbook, but this one is definitely a keeper. Edited 10-12-2003: we tried the chicken perlow from this book tonight, essentially a one-pot dish featuring highly seasoned chicken and rice with a bit of bacon and onion. Absolutely delicious! I can see why it's been a family favorite across the south for generations.

What a joy to read and to own! This woman's love for her family, for others, and for God shines through every page. That this love is combined with an iron determination and discipline makes a very remarkable person. After reading her book, I'd love to drive to Harlem and meet her! As a white Southerner I am grateful to her for her documentation of our recipes. These were common to both black and white Southern people who farmed and wasted NOTHING. Thank you, Sylvia, and the best of continued success to you and your family!

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