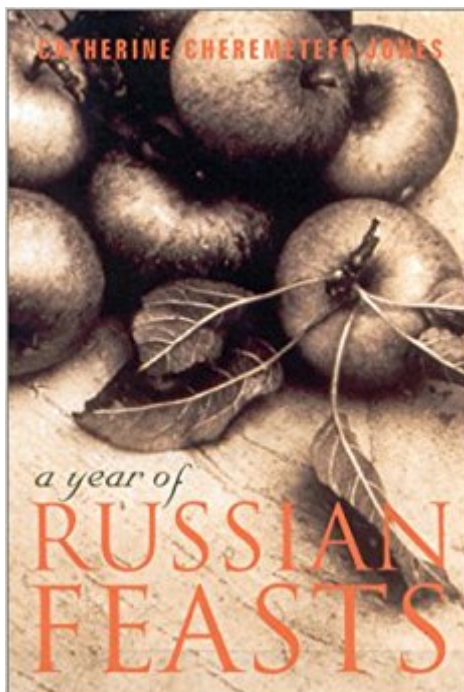


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A Year Of Russian Feasts



Synopsis

Equal parts travel memoir and cookbook, *A Year of Russian Feasts* combines Catherine Jones's warm, insightful writing style with her sensitive approach to discovering her family's heritage and its cuisine. Jones takes the reader on an unforgettable journey to her private Russia featuring celebrations, seasons, and people. Her forty recipes highlight Russia's finest dishes.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Jones, a descendant of the Sheremetev clan of the Romanov dynasty, lived in Russia from 1991 to 1994. During this time of glasnost and perestroika, she became friends with many Russian people and was able to explore their culture and food. Her culinary journey through Russia resulted in a book that is part travel memoir and part cookbook. Arranged by season ("Russian Summers") and occasion ("A Birthday Party at Viktor's"), the book chronicles her stay in Russia through recipes and essays about Russian cuisine, customs, and traditions. Leaving out European-inspired fare such as Beef Stroganov and Chicken Kiev, she instead includes the home cooking that is often inspired by the Russian Orthodox Church. Each chapter contains recipes such as Cheese Pancakes with Blueberry Sauce, Russian Easter Bread, and Individual Mushroom Casseroles and is accompanied by the often-poignant stories behind them. Not just a mere recollection of events, Jones's book includes cultural information such as a description of a typical Russian wedding as well as traditional techniques such as dying eggs with onion skins and the art of brewing tea, Russian-style.

Recommended for larger travel and cookery collections. Pauline Baughman, Multnomah Cty. Lib., Portland, OR Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Jones spent the first part of the turbulent decades of the nineties in Russia where she witnessed the collapse of Soviet Communism. There she began to appreciate the old Russia, which resurfaced in public religious and cultural expression. In *A Year of Russian Feasts*, Jones explains to Western readers the regularly recurring Russian Orthodox feasts, those traditional dishes associated with them, and the holidays' significance in the life of the church and the people. In Orthodoxy, prior to feasting comes fasting, so Jones' first recipes exemplify ascetic vegetarian dishes. Then it's on to the celebrations. There are simple and hearty beet soups, meat-stuffed dumplings, sweetly spiced and aromatic Easter bread, and many variations on potatoes. Rich and hearty, the recipes evoke a strong sense of the Russian landscape. Recipes require only generally available ingredients, so they are readily duplicated. Mark Knoblauch

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I bought this book as a gift to my American friend as I had often been asked what Russian food is like. This book turned out to be great for this purpose as not only it has the most famous Russian recipes but it also explains the history behind the dishes, it truthfully tells what we have on our tables when we invite friends, have family events or religious holidays. It is more than just a cookbook, it is an interesting story told by somebody who really knows what Russian feasts are. I've already bought two more books for my other friends.

I've been interested in all things Russia since adopting my son two years ago from the Voronezh region, and this book has helped to keep that interest going. It's not just a basic cookbook, but more a travelogue and cultural history with recipes added in. I like how the author explains social and family traditions along with her seasonal exploration of Russian food. After all, our special foods aren't made and consumed in a vacuum - tradition and custom dictate many of our special menus. If you read this book you will get a better understanding of how and why the Russians do what they do. It makes me wish I'd tried harder to eat real Russian food when I was there.

commentary and historical references describe holidays in Russia and some of the foods prepared not really a cook book. However very informational.

Great resource that's true to culture. Every recipe so far has turned out great, and as a Russian I can say that this is exactly what we eat back home. Highly recommended.

I love this book. I originally checked it out from my library but, decided that the recipes were too good and the story of this family was too endearing to not have my own copy. I have shared it with many people since I got my own copy!

Jones's memoir-cookbook takes the reader on a personal journey to Russia, the land of Jones's ancestors. It's full of interesting stories about the people she encountered there, with a focus on culinary topics. Each chapter deals with a single theme: springtime in Russia, tea and birthday parties, home-canning, mushroom hunting, weddings, Christmas and New Year's celebrations--all from the personal perspective of the author and her experiences in Russia. The 40 recipes she includes are accurate and can be easily reproduced in American home kitchens. A "must-buy" book for anyone interested in Russian cuisine.

I was enticed to buy this book by its cover. It is, however, more than just a beautiful cover! I love to "read" recipes and this one has the added plus of a story with the recipes. Ms. Jones' writing style is warm and intimate. I felt as though she was personally telling me her story. For dinner tonight I made the Cabbage Salad and plan on making the Russian Cream with a Berry Sauce for guests later this week. I believe that is the perfect endorsement of this wonderful, readable book!

Catherine not only captures the essence of the food, but also gives us a most intimate glance into the country, it's culture, and it's people. Living there for a time and having a Russian mother (and grandmother) on hand has given her an edge that almost no one else can duplicate! Her descriptions are interesting, the recipes are clear and easy to follow, and the insights and traditions on the food are priceless, making it an absolute "must" for the serious "foodie."

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