

[PDF] Appetite For Life: The Biography Of Julia Child

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Description:

Noel Riley Fitch's savory new biography, *Appetite for Life*, reveals a woman as appealing as the good food and serious cooking she popularized. As a California girl and Smith College undergraduate, Fitch writes, Julia McWilliams was notable for her high spirits and voracious appetite. Performing intelligence work in Asia during World War II, she met Paul Child, and their marriage of mutual devotion and affection endured until his death in 1994. His postwar assignment took them to France, where she discovered her true calling.

Fitch reminds us that Child championed fresh ingredients at a time when frozen foods and TV dinners dominated American supermarket shelves, and that she demystified haute cuisine with her

earthy humor and casual attitude toward mistakes. This affectionate portrait of the remarkable Julia Child reflects her fervent belief that the pleasures of the table are a natural accompaniment to the pleasures of life.

From No one person in the U.S. improved the nation's standard of eating more than Julia Child. Her celebrity stems less from her masterwork, *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, than from her perennially popular PBS television series, *The French Chef*. Born into a wealthy Southern California home, Julia McWilliams led a lively but pampered existence until she met Paul Child in wartime India. These two eager esthetes, for whom the worst possible sin was being boring, bonded into an extraordinarily strong marriage that helped the husband survive McCarthy's purges and gave the wife a decade to focus on her revolutionary book. Although the Childs crossed paths with dozens of political, artistic, and literary notables in postwar Paris, Marseille, Bonn, Oslo, and Washington, biographer Fitch does little but catalog names. But he does make both Childs' personalities come alive, from Paul's meticulousness to Julia's exuberant, even bawdy, gusto. Uneasy yet productive relationships among Julia and her coauthors fed off both professional and cultural differences. Fitch recounts in mortifying detail one of publishing's great gaffes: Houghton Mifflin let *Mastering* slip away to Knopf. Julia's evolution from author into television personality and food guru began in her fifties; now in her eighties, she continues to reshape the food world she transfigured. *Mark Knoblauch*

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