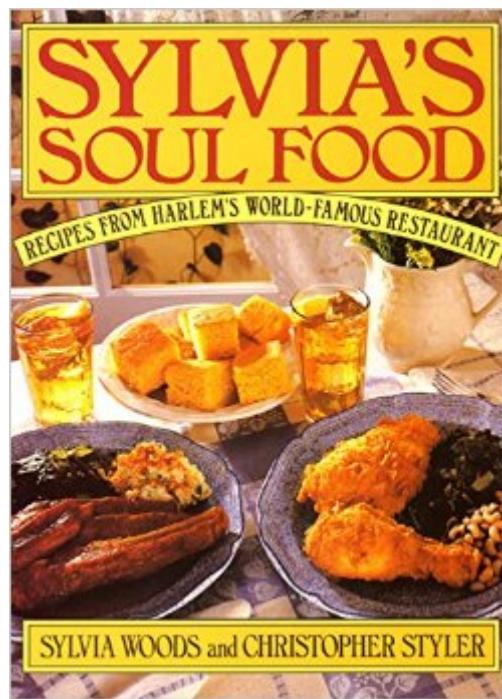


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Sylvia's Soul Food



Synopsis

Sylvia Woods has been barbecuing, baking, frying, and smothering New York City's best soul food for nearly thirty years. According to the Zagat New York City Restaurant Survey, "For down-home delicious Soul Food, this funky Harlemites is the real thing; go for great ribs, incredible fried chicken, fiery greens, and other artery-clogging Southern staples. Don't tell your doctor what you ate." Now, for the first time, the "Queen of Soul Food" reveals her recipe secrets for more than one hundred of the authentic, stick-to-your-ribs soul food and classic Southern dishes she serves at her world-famous Harlem restaurant. Start off with a breakfast of homemade pork sausage with eggs and the tenderest, flakiest biscuits you've ever eaten. Move on to tried-and-true soul food favorites that include Smothered Chicken, Fried Catfish with Hushpuppies, Sweet and Spicy Chicken Wings, Blackeyed Peas and Rice, and, of course, "Sylvia's World-Famous Talked-About Barbecued Ribs." Of course, no meal at Sylvia's would be complete without a couple of "sides": Fried Green Tomatoes, Collard Greens with Cornmeal Dumplings, Candied Sweet Potatoes, and more. Sylvia's desserts are enough to satisfy any sweet tooth: Peach Cobbler, Lemon Pie, and Three-Layer Caramel Cake. So, "if you're craving great barbecue, down-home soul food, and something uniquely New York, catch a cab up to Sylvia's, a marvelous restaurant serving up batches of great ribs, pork chops, candied sweet potatoes, and pecan pies that will satisfy the biggest eater in the family" (Passport to New York Restaurants). If you can't make it to New York, Sylvia's Soul Food will make you feel like you're there.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Having eaten several times at Sylvia's in Harlem I immediately bought this book excited that I now

would be able to prepare the same delicious, explode-in-your-mouth flavorful foods for my own family. Sylvia did not share her recipes at all. They are basic and without flavor. For the beginner it's a good starter foundation but soon enough even the novice will need to tweak and add spice/ flavor to the dishes. The macaroni & cheese was not creamy or tasty and Sylvia even had the option of adding food coloring, the biscuits were not sweet and flaky, the famous BBQ sauce was runny and did not add any flavor to meats. The banana pudding was flavorless and almost "rubbery". I could have used pudding or cake mixes out of box that were better tasting. I'm really saddened that Sylvia blatantly profited off of her reputation. She did not take into consideration that most people who bought her book were loyal customers who were expecting the same high quality soul food served in her restaurant. I'm sure most were extremely disappointed.

I have had Sylvia's book for several years and just happened to think of writing a review after I wrote a couple for some sewing books that I own. I read through the reviews of others and was surprised to read some of the negative ones. I have used quite a few of the recipes in this book. In fact, I am preparing the meatloaf recipe tonight. However, of all the recipes in the book, my absolute, hands-down favorite is the Smothered Pork Chops. I have served it several times to friends and they rave about it every time. With regard to the negative reviews, one has to understand that this is "down home" type cooking. That is what "soul food" is all about and every ethnic group has some kind of "soul food". Furthermore, everyone's mother or grandmother is going to cook the family's dishes a little bit differently from everybody else's mother or grandmother. Can you imagine how many different recipes there are for meatloaf? While I do not put yellow food coloring in my macaroni and cheese, I do prefer to use yellow cheese over white, and I do know that there are people who serve mac and cheese that is quite yellow throughout. I suspect that they are using the food coloring. After you have come to understand how a dish is supposed to taste, you are going to adjust it further for your taste and that of your family members. Sylvia's mac and cheese is wonderful, but so is Patti LaBelle's, and her dish is made differently. Sylvia's Chicken and Dumplings are also delicious, but some times, I use Paul Prudhomme's version. Readers, the bottom line is to use what suits you regardless of who wrote the book or the review, and enjoy. I am quite pleased with the book and enjoyed reading Mrs. Woods' introduction.

HAVING BEEN A CUSTOMER AT SYLVIA'S, I CAN ASSURE THE READER, THE FOOD IN THIS BOOK CAN'T COMPARE TO THE FOOD IN HER RESTAURANT. THE FOOD AT SYLVIA'S IS HIGHLY SEASONED AND DELICIOUS. TOO MANY OF HER RECIPES CONTAIN YELLOW

FOOD COLORING. DOES YOUR MAC'N'CHEESE CONTAIN YELLOW FOOD COLORING? I DIDN'T THINK SO. I FIND THIS BOOK IS A RIP-OFF. IF YOU HAVE EVER TASTED THE SYLVIA'S I KNOW, THAN YOU WOULD SEE THAT THIS BOOK SHOULDN'T EVEN BE CONSIDERED SOUL FOOD! JUST ANOTHER MARKETING PLOY.

Mrs. Woods' book offers some real gems - those biscuits and that pound cake, for example. It is risky business, though, to prepare the recipes as directed - they usually require much tweaking and additional flavor. I hope that is not really the barbecue sauce for the world-famous ribs - when I made it here at home, it was thin and flat. The pound cake is delicious - but DO NOT try to bake that huge cake in a 9" loaf pan - a 10" tube pan bakes it nicely. I really wanted to trust this book, but Mrs. Woods obviously shares her secrets as grudgingly and as vaguely as most good cooks.

As a soul food cook and a person who has eaten at Sylvia's, I can assure anyone that Sylvia shares none of her secrets in this book. This book lacks creativity and instructs to season with salt and pepper only. Any good soul food cook knows that seasoning is the key to great taste and one must season with much more than just salt and pepper. Better book choices with soul food recipes include the "Essence Great Cooking" cookbook as well as the tried and true "Ebony Cookbook." Also see juanthom11's listmania list "Burnin' Soulfood Cookbooks."

I bought this for the ribs recipes and I was not at all disappointed. It's a very new approach for me, but one that turned out beautifully. I've used other recipes in this book, and all have come out as promised (especially the fried chicken recipe), but the ribs are the ones I come back to again and again. I'm very glad I got this book and wouldn't hesitate to recommend it to anybody interested in Southern comfort cooking.

I checked out her cookbook from the library four years ago, I love the recipes so much, especially the peach cobbler, I wanted to purchase the book but my funds are limited. So I checked it out again and tried some more of her recipes, they are so great! My family loves it! I do have one of her books that I got through a book club which wasn't bad (meaning the price only 2 bucks, but worth a lot more!) But Sylvia's Soul food book they did not have. I would really like a chance to purchase all her books. Sylvia, you have simply stolen my heart as well as my appetite. I look forward to trying more of your recipes! One of your number one fans!

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