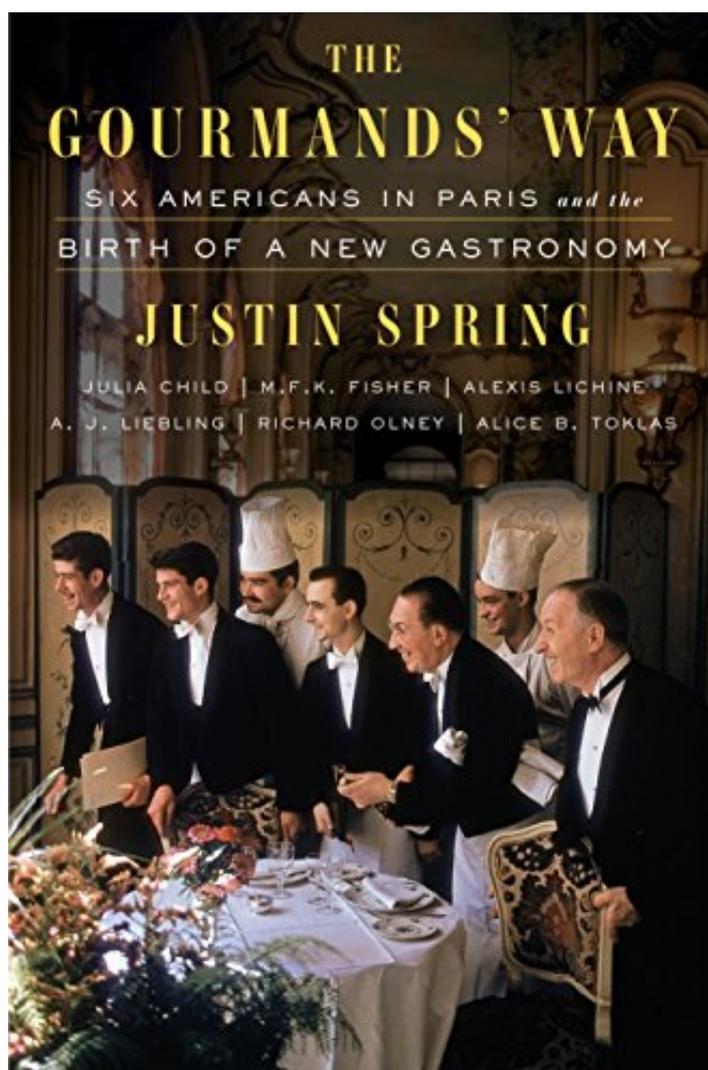


The Gourmands' Way: Six Americans in Paris and the Birth of a New Gastronomy

by
Justin Spring



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Synopsis

A biography of six writers on food and wine whose lives and careers intersected in mid-twentieth-century France During *les trente glorieuses*—a thirty-year boom period in France between the end of World War II and the 1974 oil crisis—Paris was not only the world’s most delicious, stylish, and exciting tourist destination; it was also the world capital of gastronomic genius and innovation. *The Gourmands’ Way* explores the lives and writings of six Americans who chronicled the food and wine of “the glorious thirty,” paying particular attention to their individual struggles as writers, to their life circumstances, and, ultimately, to their particular genius at sharing awareness of French food with mainstream American readers. In doing so, this group biography also tells the story of an era when America adored all things French. The group is comprised of the war correspondent A. J. Liebling; Alice B. Toklas, Gertrude Stein’s life partner, who reinvented herself at seventy as a cookbook author; M.F.K. Fisher, a sensualist and fabulist storyteller; Julia Child, a television celebrity and cookbook author; Alexis Lichine, an ambitious wine merchant; and Richard Olney, a reclusive artist who reluctantly evolved into a brilliant writer on French food and wine. Together, these writer-adventurers initiated an American cultural dialogue on food that has continued to this day. Justin Spring’s *The Gourmands’ Way* is the first book ever to look at them as a group and to specifically chronicle their Paris experiences.

What people say about this book

Paris fan, "Get your seat at this historic dinner party!. A sumptuous banquet of a book like having an intimate dinner with some of the 20th century's foodiest of foodies! Slip into your chair between Julia Child and Alice B. Toklas (who met each other several times in Paris) or nudge your way to get the seat next to M.F.K. Fisher! A fascinating read for Paris fans, cooks, history buffs or all of the above!"

P. Stern, "A fun and carefully researched book. This is a successful book and a pleasure to read. I found that it worked particularly well in two ways: (1) it introduced me to several new and fascinating figures working and writing about French food in the immediate post-war period -- particularly Richard Olney and Alexis Lichine; (2) for both these people and other, more familiar figures (Julia Child, A.J. Liebling), Spring manages to braid together the various lives so that they take on a quality of "more than the sum of their parts." We get a new vantage point not just on his subjects, but on a period in history characterized by infatuation with French food/wine and new expressions of a willingness to learn. There are many sharp observations and deep learning on the subject of how French food and wine have had an impact on the US. I have to say, though, that if you are interested in the rise and fall of French cooking *as a cuisine* in this country, Paul Freedman's "Ten Restaurants that Changed the World" is a better book. Freedman, a professional historian, has an uncanny ability to see the long arc and make felicitous generalizations about cultural trends."

Raymond A. Souza, "Well Writen Multiple Biography. Highly Recommended. A surprisingly interesting multiple biography of six people and their contemporaries from the end of WWII to the 70's/80's. Generally tells the story of how American's learned about and absorbed French cuisine into our culture. Fascinating details about these people's lives and the part that each of them played in this transformation. On top of that, Justin Spring is a great writer so the book is hard to put down. One of my favorites."

V. M. Badertscher, "Foodies in mid century Paris. I found this book to be fascinating because I love cooking and writing. someone with no particular interest in food (beyond getting something to eat) may not be so excited. I was introduced tp food writers I had not known previously, and renewed acquaintance with 'old friends' like M.F.K. Fisher and Julia Child. One of the results of reading The Gourmands is an expanded "to be read" list."

Mark H J, "An informative and entertaining read. I found this book so compelling I didn't want to stop reading it. The authors style keeps you wanting more. I can't wait to see some of his other books!"

Theo Smit, "Irresistible to a person of a certain age. If you are like me and grew up with: Julia

Child, Richard Olney, MFK Fisher etc a book like this is irresistible. Original, instructive and well written. I loved it. But if you are much younger I wouldn't know. You'd have to be interested in American culinary history and or French food. These people were very important to Alice Waters and her ilk. So that might be a link, but otherwise I otherwise. Or maybe you're just interested in a good read then this would be a good choice too."

Denise, Ottawa, "Great book - am totally loving it. I have just started reading this book, and I love it. I have already read about, or books by, Julia Child and MFK Fisher, and am really enjoying learning about these other food/cooking authors whose work was also influential. Very well-written and full of information. I am really pleased I bought it."

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