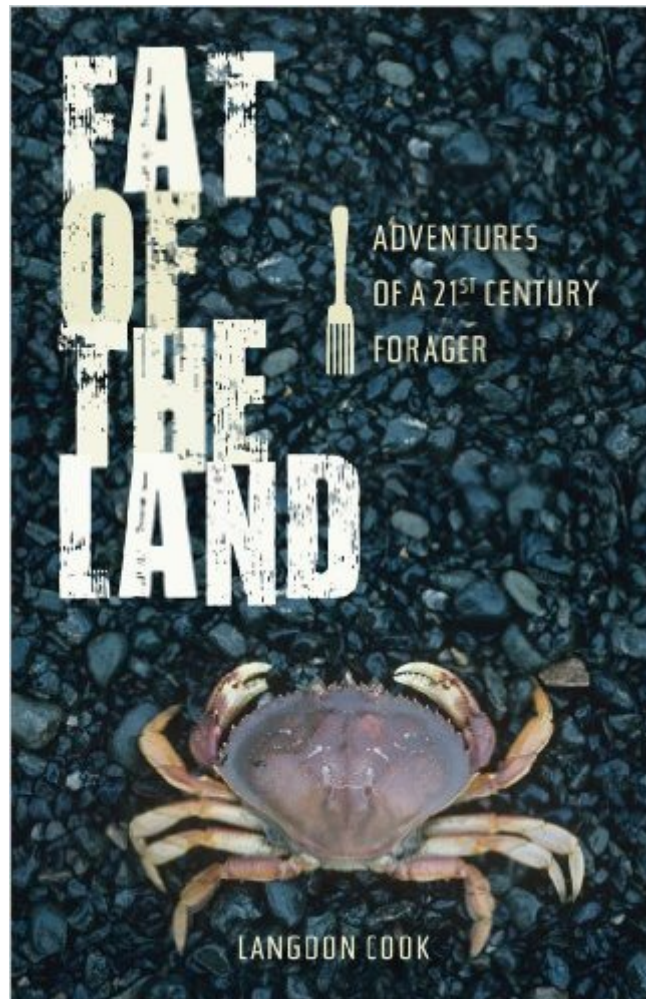


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Fat Of The Land: Adventures Of A 21st Century Forager



Synopsis

Foraging is not just a throwback to our hunter-gatherer past; it's a way to reconnect with the landscape. And Langdon Cook is not just your typical grocery cart-toting dad. For him, gourmet delicacies abound, free for the taking if we just open our eyes. As a result, he finds himself free-diving in icy Puget Sound in hopes of spearing a snaggletooth lingcod, armed with nothing more than a "Hawaiian sling." He bushwhacks through rugged mountain forests in search of edible mushrooms. He strings up a fly rod to chase after sea-run trout. He even pulls on the gardening gloves to collect stinging nettles. In wry, detailed prose, he traces his journey from wrangler of pre-packaged calories to connoisseur of coveted wild edibles. Structured around the seasons of the year, each chapter focuses on a specific food type and concludes with a recipe featuring the author's hard-won bounty, a savory stop to each adventure-filled morsel. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

Don't buy Fat of the Land as a field guide - although you'll pick up plenty of tips on edibles of the Northwest. Don't buy Fat of the Land for the recipes - as delectable as they may be. Buy Langdon Cook's Fat of the Land because it is a joy to read. The author's understated, delightful prose will make this a book that you will want to return to again and again. Witty, wry, a treasure. This is the best book I have read this year.

Langdon Cook's 'Fat of the Land' is more than a foodie read. His exploration of our region's lesser-known and lesser-loved delicacies, and his travels far and wide in pursuit of them, will provide a sort of shad's-eye view of some of the weirder ways to spend your time in the Pacific Northwest. Aside from the fascinating local lore--apparently, people 'squid jig' about a mile from my house--what I enjoyed most was Cook's sense of humor about himself. He doesn't pretend to be anything other than an urban male learning through trial and error about the natural world beyond (and often within) the city limits. There's no bluffing or jargon-spewing here: he's always ready to see the ridiculous side of his own adventures, and to appreciate the fecklessness of modern man in the wild. Overall, a great book for anyone who loves the outdoors but fears the razor-toothed ling and the deadly *Amanita phalloides* mushroom.

Where our food comes from and how we get it is not always on the minds of contemporary eaters but Langdon Cook brings all these things into view in 'Fat of the Land.' I enjoyed his depictions of foraging for mushrooms, dandelions and entering the waters for fresh crab, oysters and squid. Cook brings to life many distinctive characters who accompany him during his foraging excursions. These characters came to life on the page as colorful people - just as interesting as the catch of the day. As someone who is squeamish about fish I found myself wishing for more chapters about plants instead of the finned delicacies that Cook obviously loves (he has chapters dedicated to ling, shad, steelhead and silver salmon) but these chapters were nevertheless well written and held my attention until the next chapter about mushrooms or berries which I intrinsically enjoyed. I am sure there are many readers who will glean much more enjoyment from these chapters than I did. The recipes at the end of each chapter are introduced by little entertaining vignettes and describe in detail how to prepare these mouth watering meals. This book is just as much a culinary adventure as it is an off-the-land cookbook to treasure. Keep it on your kitchen cookbook shelf after reading it. It is sure to inspire and encourage many tasty meals. Having lived in Alaska and now Washington and foraged for many edibles myself, I would recommend this read to any of my friends.

I enjoyed this book, and the ideas that it expressed of gathering a variety of your own food in a sustainable manner. This is tremendously appealing to me, and the essays were somewhat inspiring in that part. That being said, the writing was underwhelming, and the essays were very short. I couldn't get away from feeling that with a little more detail, or a little more information these essays would have been excellent. I was consistently left feeling that the essay was about 90% done, and that the author couldn't be bothered for more. I hope he was fishing. I gave three stars

wishing I could have given it 3.5. Thinking about it, I wish I had found it in a library and not bought it. This made it a 3 rather than a 4.

Cook is a modern, urban male indigenous to an opposite coast where clams are fried, not dug. Relocated to the Pacific Northwest for graduate school, he met a fascinating young poet with an ear to the wind and an eye to the ground, and by her beauty, found himself rapt. In a comically-told recollection of her contempt at his efforts at a woo with a reconstructed fast food breakfast sandwich ("I don't do McDonald's", she said dryly), his now wife and twice-babymama opened the door to a world that would clearly become a new passion for Cook. Langdon Cook is no latter-day Euell Gibbons, and *Fat of the Land - Adventures of a 21st Century Forager* is no mere *Stalking the Wild Asparagus*. More than simply a field guide to modern locavory, *FotL* is a series of witty vignettes that are really about the people and places that have informed his passion - they all just happen to involve the hunt for "foods that don't run away." These are forthright tales of character-building trial and error (smashed shells of many razor clams before hitting limit), of humility at the smallness of men in an unforgiving landscape (and fast tides that fill slow boots with icy water), and thankfully, of hard-won triumphs (even if those triumphs are later rudely stolen in the middle of the night by greedy raccoons and must be re-won the following day). And more than a gatherer of popular and less-loved wild foods alike, Cook is clearly a writer.

What a great find and a good read. Hailing from the back woods of AI, I picked wild blackberries and poke in the 40's and 50's. Also went frog gigging on Friday nights-Langdon Cook has captured my precious memories in his modern day quest to find good natural food. His stories kept me up past midnight which is late for me. If you like stopping to look at a tree, bird or just being still to feel nature, you will enjoy this book. I am going to be waiting for the next book.

This one of the smartest and most entertaining books on food, nature and cooking to come along. It blew me away. Cook is a great writer. Like a younger, hipper Jim Harrison. A must read.

I enjoyed reading the book. The stories are entertaining while being educational, much better than a dusty tome. This book is for enjoyment, not so useful for identification. It does get you motivated to get out the door with your field guide.

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