



## **Consuming Passions: A Food-Obsessed Life**

Michael Lee West

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"Every Sunday, the whole family gathered at Mama Hughes's house in Amite County, Mississippi. They were ferocious eaters and talkers, devouring rumors and innuendo with gusto. Food was their common language, and everyone understood the dialects." -- Aunt Tempe, reminiscing about family dinners

From Michael Lee West, author of the acclaimed *American Pie, She Flew the Coop*, and *Crazy Ladies*, comes a delightfully quirky memoir of an adventurous food-obsessed life, laced with delicious secret recipes passed from generation to generation. Wonderfully presented and thoroughly entertaining, this warm and witty work unites West's evocative voice and humor with the uniquely American form of kitchen tales in the tradition of Laurie Colwin.

West lends her distinctive humor and often hilarious insights to stories about her trials and tribulations as a Southern woman who became an "accidental gourmet." In this irresistible memoir mothers swing from chandeliers, elderly aunts brew love potions, a South American nymphomaniac stirs up trouble at a Louisiana barbecue joint, Margaret Mitchell's bed is discovered during a routine antique hunt, a cabbage-eating ghost haunts relatives, mother and daughter peek under fig leaves on statues, and bees attack--all in pursuit of good food.

By watching a multitude of relatives cook, squabble, and carry on tradition, Michael Lee West went from a noncooking student to a full-on gourmet of food and words. Using her own experience and the witticisms of relatives, or clever inspirations overheard in parking lots on the way to the mayor's funeral, West fills these pages with insights such as:

"Potato salad is our friend. It will never let you down. It's a shame we have to eat it, but that's life" and "Live and learn. Die and get food. That's the Southern way." Often bawdy and always entertaining, West is wonderfully outrageous, charming, and delightful.

"Anybody can cook. But it takes a special person to feed the souls of her guests."-- Miss Johnnie, sitting in a rocking chair, musing about hospitality, 1979



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