



America's First Cuisines

Sophie D. Coe

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After long weeks of boring, perhaps spoiled sea rations, one of the first things Spaniards sought in the New World was undoubtedly fresh food. Probably they found the local cuisine strange at first, but soon they were sending American plants and animals around the world, eventually enriching the cuisine of many cultures.

Drawing on original accounts by Europeans and native Americans, this pioneering work offers the first detailed description of the cuisines of the Aztecs, the Maya, and the Inca. Sophie Coe begins with the basic foodstuffs, including maize, potatoes, beans, peanuts, squash, avocados, tomatoes, chocolate, and chiles, and explores their early history and domestication. She then describes how these foods were prepared, served, and preserved, giving many insights into the cultural and ritual practices that surrounded eating in these cultures. Coe also points out the similarities and differences among the three cuisines and compares them to Spanish cooking of the period, which, as she usefully reminds us, would seem as foreign to our tastes as the American foods seemed to theirs. Written in easily digested prose, *America's First Cuisines* will appeal to food enthusiasts as well as scholars.

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