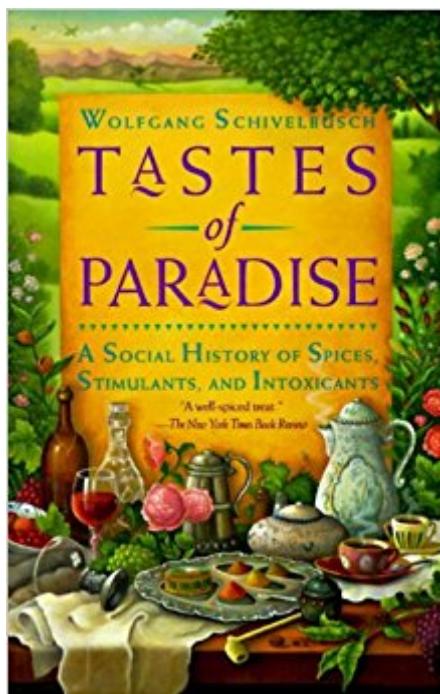


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# Tastes Of Paradise: A Social History Of Spices, Stimulants, And Intoxicants



## Synopsis

From the extravagant use of pepper in the Middle Ages to the Protestant bourgeoisie's love of coffee to the reason why fashionable Europeans stopped sniffing tobacco and starting smoking it, Schivelbusch looks at how the appetite for pleasure transformed the social structure of the Old World. Illustrations.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This social history of pleasure-producing substances covers the Middle Ages to the modern era from the perch of an adroit and amiable Marxist sociology. Illustrations. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc.

YA-- A lavishly illustrated, anecdotal survey of all of the substances we chew, drink, or inhale for pleasure and how they were discovered and adopted by humankind. The book shows in fascinating detail how each stimulant, spice, or intoxicant served a particular need for an individual culture and how each, in turn, affected that culture and its behavioral norms. There is no index, but the table of contents is extensive, making it both an effective research tool and an enjoyable source of recreational reading.- Richard Lisker, Fairfax Public Library, VACopyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Starts intriguing and informative, but later loses its former quality.

I enjoyed this book. It is well written and interesting and I learned quite a bit. The reason I only gave it 3 stars is that the book is too short. There are sections where you wish Mr. Schivelbusch had fleshed things out a bit. The book has many interesting illustrations but in a 228 page book over 100 pages of illustrations are just too much! So, be forewarned! If you are looking for some depth to sink your teeth into this is not the book for you. However, if you are satisfied by small portions than by all means.....Bon Appetit!

I'm about half through the book and I find it good over all, but there is one aspect that makes me a bit twitchy. I'm currently reading the section about coffee. The author does an excellent job of noting how coffee and the symbolic overtones it took functioned during the early modern period. However, he doesn't seem to know that even today coffee is known to have the side effects attributed to it then. He attributes qualities like "drying", etc, to symbolic or misinformed aspects of the humoral philosophy of medicine, and hypothesizes that "dryness" was attributed to coffee perhaps because it was roasted. Well, while the humoral system was so flawed that that it was laughable, it wasn't entirely wrong. Coffee does dehydrate people. It does cause severe health issues today, and doctors tell people to stop drinking it or reduce intake for many of the same reasons. The terminology was different, but the observations were actually fairly accurate. I agree with the author that coffee was highly contested for socio-religio-political reasons and that the health issues were used to that end, but the author is wrong several times when he reduces those health effects to ONLY symbolic. They were both. I'm actually hoping he resolves this a bit later. Sometimes people can come off heavy in an argument at one point in a text, and then modify that perspective later. This reader looks forward to finding out and if she finds it to be so, will alter her review accordingly.

Good

Interesting book, nice to read. Took it for a class

I still reference this book. 6 years later.

Interesting read, bought it a few years back, just asking for a review now...

Great read

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