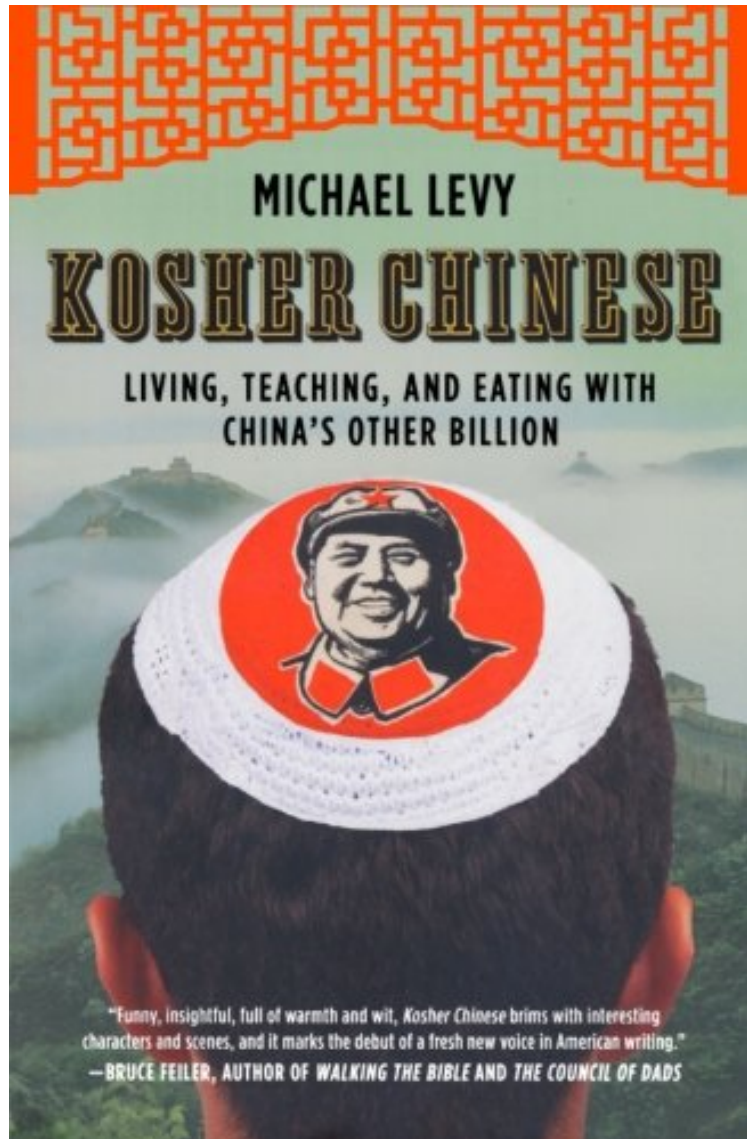


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Kosher Chinese: Living, Teaching, and Eating with China's Other Billion

Michael Levy

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#921602 in Books Michael Levy 2011-07-05 2011-07-05 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.50 x .58 x 5.50l, .48 #File Name: 0805091963256 pages Kosher Chinese Living Teaching and Eating with China's Other Billion | File size: 73.Mb

Michael Levy : Kosher Chinese: Living, Teaching, and Eating with China's Other Billion before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Kosher Chinese: Living, Teaching, and Eating with China's Other Billion:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Not a cookbook or restaurant guide. Something even betterBy

Owl Michael Levy's "Kosher Chinese" came recommended by a cheerful bibliophile who runs a great restaurant. The cover looked like a big sushi with a picture of Mao on it. At the incredibly low price of a used book, why not? Readers, this is not a cookbook and that sushi is a yarmulka of an Orthodox Jew with a picture of Mao on it, the black seaweed wrapping actually Michael Levy's hair. This narrative of a 29 year old ESL/literature teacher's two years in China as a Peace Corps volunteer has plenty about eating, the alimentary canal, food and cuisine. These are incidental, compared to what else "Kosher Chinese" covers. The book is more concerned with friendships, the fiddler-on-the-roof quality of respecting an ancient, complex culture while "representing" the United States, and the dilemmas facing many us, wherever we live, when our reach exceeds our grasp however good our intentions. Levy is a fine writer and a man who goes with the flow. For example, his colleagues at the University in Guiyang initiate a Friday Shabbos, 'with Chinese characteristics.' In search of cheese for a pizza to be served by popular demand, Mike and his Chene colleague Jennifer pass through a meat market that leaves him queasy: "We listened to music until my stomach was completely settled and then entered the restaurant supply store. Towards the back, tucked into a corner, was a freezer. Inside the freezer were bricks of long-frozen cheese. I pulled out a two-foot long, twenty-five pound bag of frozen parmesan, feeling like Oliver Twist. It would be enough cheese for a year. "Now you can cook us pizza for Shabbat!" Jennifer was twitching with excitement..." (p.92). "Kosher Chinese" could be in itself, almost, a validation of relevance of the Peace Corps in the spinning political-economic globe of today. Even more, it is a reminder that way down deep, as well as close to the surface, the world has many caring, compassionate people who with humor, determination, and skill are themselves the bridges we need built---while having themselves giving to others one heckuva memorable experience, composed of moments---like the picnic with the Wang sisters and the final basketball game---great and small. Any reader alerts? Remember this is a narrative story, not an analytic tale. It is produced as a basic book. There is no index, no maps, no heavy-weight paper, no photographs---and no recipes. For those, readers would need to select from among the five Chinese Kosher cookbooks liberally available through . Highly recommended for a page-turning read that nourishes mind and spirit. Write on, Mike Levy, and may the force be with you! 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Authentic By PhotoBug I have taught two semesters of university sophomore English in Shandong Province. My experiences paralleled the author's. It was refreshing (not to mention validating) to have someone else's take on life as an American teacher in China. Levy's book is gently written with self-deprecating good humor. The affection that grew for his Chinese students and friends over the two years that he taught is sensitively portrayed. Anyone would enjoy and benefit from reading this account of Peace Corp work in a provincial Chinese city. It makes sense of Chinese thoughts and customs that otherwise are baffling to the average Westerner. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Kosher Chinese By anthro I've read several books by Americans teaching in China, but this was the best. In the second half of the book Levy really gets inside the minds of his Chinese students, and shows how they face change. At first they are reluctant to speak out but they write honestly and powerfully. He struggles with Chinese methods of teaching but finally succeeds in getting them to share how they are thinking about China. A complex picture emerges of how they view their lives. The author also describes his struggles with living in a different culture (culture shock). Very honest and at times he is very funny too. For example when the students meet as a group on Friday nights to learn about Jewish ritual. Delightful read.

An irreverent tale of an American Jew serving in the Peace Corps in rural China, which reveals the absurdities, joys, and pathos of a traditional society in flux. In September of 2005, the Peace Corps sent Michael Levy to teach English in the heart of China's heartland. His hosts in the city of Guiyang found additional uses for him: resident expert on Judaism, romantic adviser, and provincial basketball star, to name a few. His account of overcoming vast cultural differences to befriend his students and fellow teachers is by turns poignant and laugh-out-loud funny. While reveling in the peculiarities of life in China's interior, the author also discovered that the "other billion" (people living far from the coastal cities covered by the American media) have a complex relationship with both their own traditions and the rapid changes of modernization. Lagging behind in China's economic boom, they experience the darker side of "capitalism with Chinese characteristics," daily facing the schizophrenia of conflicting ideologies. Kosher Chinese is an illuminating account of the lives of the residents of Guiyang, particularly the young people who will soon control the fate of the world.

From Publishers Weekly In this lively memoir of serving in the Peace Corps in Guiyang, China, Levy explores a society in flux while mining the entertaining if familiar terrain of cross-cultural misunderstandings. He struggles to explain English terminology to students who unknowingly translate their names into expletives, is coerced into eating the specialty at Dog Meat King, and finds that the community distrusts him not merely because he is American, but because he is Jewish. But Levy turns his perceived otherness to his advantage, earning the nickname "Friendship Jew" and being tapped to lead a student organization, the Guizhou University Jewish Friday Night English and Cooking Corner Club, a rare extracurricular activity in a culture Levy finds devoid of such opportunities. "There were no glee clubs, school newspapers, yearbooks... expressions of creativity were mere distractions, as was critical thinking." Pop culture references abound: Sex and the City, Star Wars, The Matrix are all name checked as if to suggest that Levy is

grasping for familiarity in a foreign land, but their ubiquity becomes tiresome. Humor works best when Levy uses them to point to matters of deeper significance, such as the Westernization of China. As one of the local teachers encapsulates it, "Wal-Mart is the future, and Chairman Mao is the past." Interested readers would do well to check out Peter Hessler's Peace Corps memoir, *River Town: Two Years on the Yangtze*. (July) (c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved. A funny and informative account of life in Guizhou province, deep in the heart of China. As a Peace Corps volunteer, Michael Levy came to know and love a part of the country that few visitors see, a world away from Beijing and Shanghai. Peter Hessler, author of *River Town* and *Oracle Bones* As a Peace Corps volunteer, Michael Levy taught for two years in a corner of China overlooked by tourists and correspondents. *Kosher Chinese* is a heartfelt, engaging memoir that captures at once the poignancy and humor of daily life in the new China. Levy's narrative balances his own acclimation to China with his students' acclimation to university life, and independence. This is what it feels like to be immersed behind the headlines--for Levy, it came to feel like home. Michael Meyer, author of *The Last Days of Old Beijing: Life in the Vanishing Backstreets of a City Transformed* Michael Levy is the tour guide to the real China we all long for. Funny, insightful, full of warmth and wit, *Kosher Chinese* brims with interesting characters and scenes, and it marks the debut of a fresh new voice in American writing. Bruce Feiler, author of *Walking the Bible* and *The Council of Dads* With intelligence and zesty good humor, Levy tells the story of his sojourn as an ESL teacher in Guiyang A rollicking, thoroughly refreshing debut. Kirkus As in Peter Hessler's *River Town* and Peter J. Vernezze's *Socrates in Sichuan*, Peace Corps experience is the inspiration for Levy's cheekier and freewheeling but insightful adventure story. Library Journal About the Author Michael Levy is an educator, writer, and traveler, who currently teaches in Brooklyn, New York, at Saint Ann's School. Levy returns frequently to Guiyang to check in on his students and visit the basketball courts where he momentarily attained stardom. While in the United States, he keeps strictly kosher. While in China, he eats anything with four legs except the table.