

Kosher Nation: Why More and More of America's Food Answers to a Higher Authority

Sue Fishkoff

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Sue Fishkoff : Kosher Nation: Why More and More of America's Food Answers to a Higher Authority before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Kosher Nation: Why More and More of America's Food Answers to a Higher Authority:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Must-Read for the General Public By American Grocery ShopperMs. Fishkoff provides a detailed overview on the kosher food and kosher-certification industry that includes

numerous interesting side stories. As most people of the Judaic faith are already somewhat familiar with the history of kashrus, or religious dietary law, this book should be picked up and understood by the non-Jewish readers out there who have no clue as to how deep Judaic halacha (or Jewish Law) has penetrated their everyday lives and eating habits. Do you know what a hekhsher is? If you don't, then perhaps you should buy this book and discover how it affects you, your wallet, and your interests. The book is easy to read and chaptered well. 7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Richly Researched, Comprehensive, Very Readable By Joan F. Kasner I thoroughly agree with the rave reviews given to Sue Fishkoff's new book by the media, including the Forward, Ha'aretz and The New Republic. The many anecdotal reports present "You are There," scenarios, which richly add to the wealth of information provided by this award-winning Jewish journalist. Fishkoff writes in her usual fluid style, with a touch of gentle humor, when appropriate. And when facts are disturbing, as they are re: the greed and fraud found in the certification industry and the Postville slaughterhouse incident, Fishkoff lays out the facts in the straight-forward, unbiased manner, for which she is highly regarded as an investigative reporter. Between the covers of Kosher Nation readers will find anything they ever wanted to know about kosher, as well as facts about which they didn't even think existed. Everyone at all interested in kosher will find this book supremely informative, useful and fascinating. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. So That's Why! By Marlen I borrowed this book from a friend and am only a little over halfway through reading it. I am enjoying it so much that I've ordered my own copy (and not on Kindle, I want to be able to pass it around). The book reads easily, written with humor as well as insight into the influences of a changing world. I particularly like the discussions of "why Kosher", the issue of sharing kosher wine with those friends who don't keep kashrut and especially - can one be both green and kosher. These are issues that would not normally come to my mind. You don't need a kosher background to enjoy and learn from this writer and if you have a kosher background, there is still a lot to be learned from Ms. Fishkoff's latest book.

Kosher? That means the rabbi blessed it, right? Not exactly. In this captivating account of a Bible-based practice that has grown into a multibillions-dollar industry, journalist Sue Fishkoff travels throughout America and to Shanghai, China, to find out who eats kosher food, who produces it, who is responsible for its certification, and how this fascinating world continues to evolve. She explains why 86 percent of the 11.2 million Americans who regularly buy kosher food are not observant Jew they are Muslims, Seventh-day Adventists, vegetarians, people with food allergies, and consumers who pay top dollar for food they believe answers to a higher authority. Fishkoff interviews food manufacturers, rabbinic supervisors, and ritual slaughterers; meets with eco-kosher adherents who go beyond traditional requirements to produce organic chicken and pasture-raised beef; sips boutique kosher wine in Napa Valley; talks to shoppers at an upscale kosher supermarket in Brooklyn; and marches with unemployed workers at the nation's largest kosher meatpacking plant. She talks to Reform Jews who are rediscovering the spiritual benefits of kashrut, and to Conservative and Orthodox Jews who are demanding that kosher food production adhere to ethical and environmental values. And she chronicles the corruption, price-fixing, and strong arm tactics of early-twentieth-century kosher meat production, against which contemporary kashrut standards pale by comparison. A revelatory look at the current state of kosher in America, this book will appeal to anyone interested in food, religion, Jewish identity, or big business.

From Publishers Weekly In this informative and revealing primer on kosher food, practice, business, and history, Fishkoff delves into the ins and outs of why the kosher industry continues to grow at an astounding rate despite the small number of observant Jews who actually require kosher-certified food. Having spent years researching and following mashgichim (Orthodox Jews who supervise the production of kosher food and ingredients around the world), Fishkoff has an impressive arsenal of firsthand stories and inside information to keep the narrative moving. The volume provides in-depth chapters on what kosher means, what mashgichim do, the growth of the kosher supermarket, kosher winemaking, and going kosher globally, among other related topics. With an obvious zeal for what she writes, Fishkoff will engage readers with both the religious and professional facets of this complex and misunderstood standard as she explains why so many people prefer kosher cuisine despite its higher costs. (Oct. 12) (c) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist Why is kosher food so popular in the U.S.? Eighty-five percent of the 11.2 million Americans who buy it are not Jewish. Muslims, Seventh Day Adventists, vegetarians, and people with food allergies are among those who are willing to pay more for food that is certified kosher. Fishkoff traveled all over the U.S. and to Shanghai to learn about the consumption and production of kosher food, interviewing food manufacturers, rabbis who oversee the production and service of food, ritual slaughterers, wine makers, and restaurant owners. She also examines the eco-kosher movement and the recent scandal at a kosher meatpacking plant in Iowa, which made Conservative and Orthodox Jews demand higher ethical and environmental values for kosher food production. This informative and entertaining look at the state of Jewish dietary practice in the U.S. will be enjoyed by those interested in food, religion, and/or business. --Barbara Bibel The breadth of Fishkoff's research is remarkable: no crumb, no bug is too minute for discussion. At the same time, she broaches larger questions about religious identity and acculturation, about marketing, commercialization, and

globalization. As *Kosher Nation* ably demonstrates, what and how we eat remains a highly effective means of telling the story of who we are. . . . Expertly chronicled. *Commentary* Fishkoff has made full use of her journalistic toolkit to deliver a fascinating look at a seemingly niche industry. Following the investigative DNA of Eric Schlosser and Michael Pollan, Fishkoff shines a light on a national food trend that needed investigation. *The Huffington Post* A refreshingly straightforward and well-researched piece of journalism. . . . *Kosher Nation* will likely find a home in college classrooms, book groups, and any place where discussing and exploring the subject at greater length is encouraged. . . . As the wrinkles of Jewish history unfold, readers will surely look to *Kosher Nation* for insight on how the foods Jews eat (and don't eat) shape the Jewish community and, remarkably, the world. *The Forward* Fishkoff deliciously serves up the kashrut industry in *Kosher Nation*. [She is] entertaining and sympathetic throughout. *The Wilson Quarterly* Informative and richly researched. . . . Sensitive to the ways in which kashrut is at once a hoary ritual practice and a modern-day business, a spiritual pursuit and an earth-bound enterprise, Fishkoff has us see the many internal contradictions that keep the system spinning . . . documenting them instead of erasing them, and as a result they emerge with full force, to endow her narrative with bite and backbone. . . . A lively portrait of what it means to keep kosher in the twenty-first century . . . a fascinating tale of how the instruments of modernity often enlarge rather than diminish the parameters of religious experience. Jenna Weissman Joselit, *The New Republic* Fishkoff delves into the ins and outs of why the kosher industry continues to grow at an astounding rate despite the small number of observant Jews who actually require kosher-certified food. . . . [A]n impressive arsenal of firsthand stories and inside information keeps the narrative moving. . . . *Kosher Nation* will engage readers with both the religious and professional facets of this complex and misunderstood standard as she explains why so many people prefer kosher cuisine despite its higher costs. *Publishers Weekly* Kosher food has a definite spiritual meaning, but Fishkoff examines all aspects of the industry, from certifying agencies to kosher butchers to the effects of globalization, presenting general trends through anecdotes about individuals involved. This makes the book more relatable. . . . Fishkoff accessibly presents information about current trends and their historical precedents. . . . She shows how definitions of kosher change in response to intra-Jewish developments, as well as to trends in America at large, such as industrial farming, the ascendance of big-box stores and ethical concerns like sustainable agriculture, animal welfare, and working conditions. She is careful to define all terms that might be unfamiliar to readers without a Jewish background, and she provides a helpful glossary at the end of the book. Thorough and approachable. *Kirkus* sA revealing behind-the-scenes exploration of the kosher food industry and the people who work in it. Comprehensive, absorbing, and sometimes disturbing, *Kosher Nation* explains what kosher supervision means and how it affects every American who purchases food. Jonathan D. Sarna, Joseph H. Belle R. Braun Professor of American Jewish History, Brandeis University, and author of *American Judaism: A History* Like the eyes of the dedicated mashgichim Fishkoff profiles, *Kosher Nation* leaves no corner of this once-mysterious world in the dark. Comforting as kugel yet daring as kosher bacon bits, this book should be glued to the back of the Talmud as mandatory reading. David Sax, author of *Save the Deli: In Search of Perfect Pastrami, Crusty Rye, and the Heart of Jewish Delicatessen*