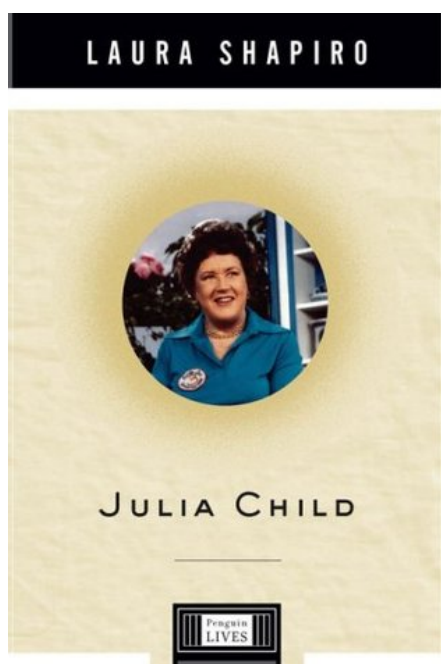




Julia Child

Laura Shapiro

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A biography of Julia Child from the award-winning author of *Perfection Salad*

One of the most beloved figures in 20th century American culture was Julia Child, the bouyant French Chef who taught millions of Americans to cook with confidence and eat with pleasure. With an irrepressible sense of humor and a passion for good food, Child ushered in the nation's culinary renaissance and became its chief icon. Unlike the great cooking teachers who preceded her, she won her audience through the revolutionary medium of television. Millions watched as she spun threads of caramel, befriended a giant monkfish, wielded live lobsters, flipped omelets and unmolded spectacular desserts. Her occasional disasters, and brilliant recoveries, were legendary. Yet every step of the way she was teaching carefully crafted lessons about ingredients, culinary technique, and why good home cooking still matters.

Award-winning food writer Laura Shapiro describes Child's unlikely career path, from California party girl to cool-headed chief clerk in a World War II spy station to bumbling amateur cook and finally to the classes at the Cordon Bleu in Paris that changed her life. Her marriage to Paul Child was at the center of all her work. Unlike much of what has been written about Child, Shapiro portrays a woman who was quintessentially American, and whose open-hearted approach to the kitchen was a lesson in how to live.

Julia Child Details

Date : Published April 5th 2007 by Viking (first published 2007)

ISBN : 9780670038398

Author : Laura Shapiro

Format : Hardcover 185 pages

Genre : Biography, Nonfiction, Food and Drink, Food, Biography Memoir, Cooking

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From Reader Review Julia Child for online ebook

Carol Ann says

While this was an interesting behind the scene look at Julia Child, I realized that bringing her to life was impossible. Ms Shapiro described Julia's enthusiasm and told us of her love affair with food, but Julia remained one dimensional. Because of repeats of her PBS show I knew what Ms Shapiro was trying to say. Unfortunately I still do not really know what French cuisine is, other than a set of rules. I do have something in common with Julia, I too love oysters!

Vicki says

This is a short listen, but it's really engaging. The narration is done by a niece of Julia Child's, and she really does a good impression of her aunt's voice without it being campy or annoying -- kind of essential for an audiobook about Julia Child!

What's interesting about this book, despite how fast it goes, is that it doesn't skate over Julia Child's flaws -- she was a human, just like all of us, not just a good kitchen fairy. What's so interesting about Julia Child is her charisma, and this book offers a good view of that by looking at the whole of her life. Not just the cute parts.

Marta says

eh.

Katie says

An engaging portrait of an even more engaging woman. A wonderful celebration of an American woman who celebrated food and cooking.

Jessica says

I loved to sleep over my grandparent's house a lot when I was younger. I used to watch her cook. She was so deliberate yet graceful in her movements as she folded eggs into flour or packed a cabbage leaf with a mixture of butter, onions, and hamburger. She could spend hours working on a dish then to my amazement deem it "not good enough" and put it in the fridge for our family to eat, or if it was "not right" (only in her discriminating opinion was there anything "not right" with the food she had made) she would throw it away. This would usually happen while the ingredients were still being mixed and the concoction wasn't the desired consistency, etc.

She taught me never to be afraid to throw something away I was making or had made, because mistakes were a part of the learning process of cooking. She had never had lessons herself and rarely did I see her use measuring cups or spoons, but her attempts always appeared (and tasted) just fine to me.

I don't know whether she watched Julia Child on the television but she certainly shared her spirit when it came to the love of cooking and creating. Time and love were the two ingredients Julia demanded of her own cooking as well as from those she was teaching; My grandmother still embodies Julia's spirit when she prepares meals for herself and my grandfather but due to the constraints of age that affect us all, she spends less time in the kitchen making entire meals for birthday parties, holiday gatherings, Christening celebration and wedding and baby showers, as I'm sure she'd like.

Tina says

An easy, quick read about the makings of an amazing, inspiring, Julia Child. From her days as a file- clerk to how she became a tv cooking sensation, this books touches on all the highlights we all know and love about Julia Child. Loved this little book!

Elisabeth Ensor says

I really enjoyed this as an audio book! I have been interested in Julia Child more recently since watching the Julie & Julia movie and I am glad I listened to this!

Her life is fascinating and I love how much her life changed by living in Paris, France- I just got back from Paris myself and it changed me forever!!!

I was disappointed at the end with her refusal of the organic food movement! She always sided with the large food companies over small food movements and would not acknowledge food allergies in the USA? I was sad for her and I think she has fallen off that pedestal I put her on after seeing the movie!

But I can admire someone and be inspired by their life-whether I agree with them 100% or not- we can all choose to see the good in others!

One of my 2019 goals is to make her famous Beef Bourguignon!!

Lynda says

Very well written.

Mme LionHead says

This was not a very impressive book. Anyone wants to know more about Julia Child's personal life and her journey to becoming an icon in the culinary world should just read her autobiography "My Life in France". This book didn't offer many new insights that weren't already covered in Child's own book. I did find Child's view on traditional male-female roles and her disapproval on homosexuality interesting. One would assume she could be a feminist as herself being a working wife, and yet, her personal opinion was quite the opposite.

I listened to this book only because I needed an audiobook... my library OverDrive is running thin of options,

which was not ideal as I promised not to waste my time on books I knew I wouldn't like as much.

Sophia Musgrave says

Since seeing Julie and Julia I was more interested in the real life of Julia Child. This author does not disappoint! Although this biography was a bit short, it gave all the details necessary to make an informed picture of one of the world's most fascinating women. I also liked how Julia's truly personal and human characteristic were brought to light and praised. As said in this biography, Julia was always Julia to everyone she met, not just the formal Mrs. Child. She dispensed with all formalities with her warm and down to earth personality. This novel gives an in depth look into the shaping of her character and her history as she became one of the world's most well known and loved cooks. I do wish it went more in depth into her childhood and later years, but altogether, a phenomenal good read and if you are fascinated with learning more about her, this would be a great start!

Erin Beckwith says

this book was given to me as a birthday present in September and, having little to no interest in Julia Child, I put off reading it until recently when my other options were dense tomes that I didn't have the stamina to touch. Having just read Sarah Vowell, who's writing voice is so original, honest, and non-cliched, this book seemed utterly dry and typical at first. About 50 pages in, I'd learned enough about Child's life to care about her future, so I kept reading. It was really Julia that made me like this book--who could resist reading the life of a heroine that became one because she stood up for what she believed it, never gave up on herself, and was unflaggingly positive and honest at the same time? While I don't agree with all she did and said, as it's clear the author doesn't (or may not) as well, I appreciate her life's work, and feel a bit as if I know her. There was more to this book than at first was apparent--in a sneaky, albeit highly intelligent manner, it sucks you in and lets you know all there is of interest about Julia's life, and flows along effortlessly then suddenly you realized you've been reading for an hour and a half! Easy to read, informative, inspiring, and all in all an, pretty enjoyable.

Jill Moore says

There is a difference between the Julia Child we want to believe we know and the human being that existed. I've had a fascination with Julia for the longest of times and have read lots of books about her, her cooking, her marriage to Paul Child, and her life in France. Ms. Shapiro provided me with a deeper look into the woman beneath the surface. Alongside the stories of her rise to culinary stardom are quotes that show a different side -- one of disdain for homosexuality in the 50's and 60's (although she had a reversal of conscience when a dear friend died a slow, agonizing death from AIDS), and more than a bit of snobbery for housewives. Julia even went so far as to suggest that there should be more men in cooking because women weren't serious enough. She felt that women leaned towards hysteria and fear in the kitchen and made housewives sound like chowder-headed twits.

I have to admit that learning these things has tarnished my admiration for Julia. I always thought that if I could have met her and known her, we could have been great friends. Sadly, I know now that her viewpoints on women and human sexuality would have made that impossible.

Schmacko says

This is an easy-to-read account of Julia Child, her life, her marriage, and other information about her. It has the benefit of not being too wandering or in-depth, as are some other bios about the American woman who helped create the seminal French cookbook for the home cook and brought public cooking shows back to life.

Shapiro probably spends a little too much time defining Childs' politics - beliefs shaped by her time, her dislike of her dad's conservative, but her unwillingness to understand her importance as a working woman whose husband played a supporting role. A whole section is spent on Childs' thoughts on homosexuality...perhaps that's important considering that her contemporary and friend James Beard was. However, I never knew of Childs' biases, nor did I care to (and I'm a gay man). I know people of her time would've had less exposure and more trouble with gender questions and sexual identity.

Still, most of the rest of the book is breezy and reverent enough of the woman - her legend and her flaws.

Kirsten says

Listened to the audiobook of this bits and pieces at a time over a month. Having only experienced Julia Child previously in the movie featuring Meryl Streep I was interested in hearing more about her, her life, and her cooking. Which this book delivered.

I particularly enjoyed the mention of a green jello salad recipe that Julia disliked as it is one that my grandmother used to make and continues to be made each Christmas long after she was gone, that I also don't care for. heh.

Lauren Schnoebelen says

4.25 ??

This was such a fun and heart warming story. Being someone who was born shortly before her passing, I never got to experience this moment in American culture. Listening to this story and how impactful she was in trying to teach Americans to value a cooked meal as well as pushing more women to be chefs was exactly what I needed. It was definitely a surprise though to hear the chapter on her homophobic views and how they influenced her relationships with well known gay chefs in America. Being someone who loves a good book on food and the culture surrounding it, I highly suggest taking a listen (or read).
