

Tastes of Paradise: A Social History of Spices, Stimulants, and Intoxicants

By Wolfgang Schivelbusch

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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.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

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.

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From School Library Journal

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, VA*

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From Library Journal

Written by a German historian and social scientist, this unique exploration of the origins and evolution of pleasure substances in the industrialized world is well researched and profusely illustrated. The author examines the habits and customs surrounding the consumption of spices, coffee, tea, chocolate, alcohol, and narcotics to reveal the way these substances and the reactions to them reflected the fabrics, tensions, dynamics, and trends of various societies and nations. An unusual mixture of historical documents, amusing anecdotes, and pertinent statistics, this slim, thought-provoking volume should appeal to both history buffs and casual readers.

-*Linda Chopra, Cleveland Heights-University Heights P.L., Ohio*

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