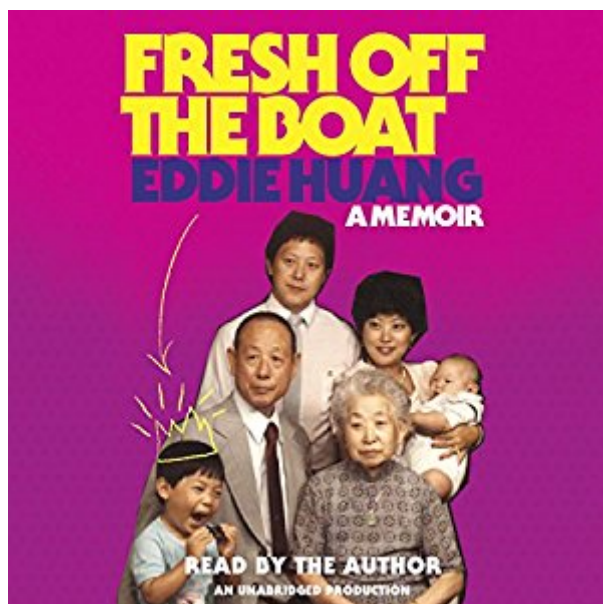


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Fresh Off The Boat: A Memoir



Synopsis

"Long before I met him, I was a fan of his writing, and his merciless wit. He's bigger than food." (Anthony Bourdain) Eddie Huang is the 30-year-old proprietor of Baohaus - the hot East Village hangout where foodies, stoners, and students come to stuff their faces with delicious Taiwanese street food late into the night - and one of the food world's brightest and most controversial young stars. But before he created the perfect home for himself in a small patch of downtown New York, Eddie wandered the American wilderness looking for a place to call his own. Eddie grew up in theme-park America, on a could-be-anywhere cul-de-sac in suburban Orlando, raised by a wild family of FOB ("fresh off the boat") hustlers and hysterics from Taiwan. While his father improbably launched a series of successful seafood and steak restaurants, Eddie burned his way through American culture, defying every "model minority" stereotype along the way. He obsessed over football, fought the all-American boys who called him a chink, partied like a gremlin, sold drugs with his crew, and idolized Tupac. His anchor through it all was food - from making Southern ribs with the Haitian cooks in his dad's restaurant to preparing traditional meals in his mother's kitchen to haunting the midnight markets of Taipei when he was shipped off to the homeland. After misadventures as an unlikely lawyer, street fashion renegade, and stand-up comic, Eddie finally threw everything he loved - past and present, family, and food - into his own restaurant, bringing together a legacy stretching back to China and the shards of global culture he'd melded into his own identity. Funny, raw, and moving, and told in an irrepressibly alive and original voice, *Fresh Off the Boat* recasts the immigrant's story for the 21st century. It's a story of food, family, and the forging of a new notion of what it means to be American.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"This book isn't for everyone. I thought it wasn't for me when I first started reading it. Eddie Huang is the owner of Baohaus, a NYC eatery that is one of the hottest places in town. This is his autobiography, the story of his evolution from a confused kid who was fresh off the boat to an entrepreneur and a food celebrity. I really like this book because his life experience runs parallel to mine in many ways. There are differences though, and even though Eddie speaks from a place that is near and dear to my heart, I am from an era that is far removed from Eddie Huang's generation. Hip-hop isn't my thing and I just don't get it. BUT, there are enough commonalities so that I do get where he is coming from. We both were born in Taiwan, we both came to America as young children. We both found our way through the maze that is America. Eddie did it about twenty years after I did, and he did it with far more courage. I went through the Caucasian society by keeping my head down and working at getting better and smarter their way. Eddie did it by figuring out his way and then having the courage and discipline to stay with it. I seethed inwardly at the racial stereotyping and the inequalities inherent in America, Eddie fought those things and more. Literally. First of all, being the only Chinese kid in the neighborhood is not a good deal. The stereotypes run rampant and people get really ticked if you don't behave the way they want you to behave. Both of us have been through all that and Eddie's stories, while outrageous sounding, smack of the truth. He is as real as it gets, even more real than anyone wants. The other part of the growing up Chinese/Taiwanese in America is the relationships we have with our families, particularly our parents.

Being from the northern plains (fly-over country to those from the coasts), I was not aware of Eddie Huang or his Baohaus restaurant prior to reading his memoir. Now I wish I lived closer to New York City so that I could taste a sample of his signature bao. I did know what they were (Taiwanese/Chinese meat in a bun) before reading the book, and his sound scrumptious. Eddie Huang is the son of Taiwanese immigrants who struggled as many do to acclimatize and succeed in the United States. His father eventually put together enough capital to open a steakhouse and the family (parents and three sons) moved rapidly from poverty to wealth in Orlando, Florida. In the book Eddie describes the difficulties he had trying to find a way to fit in - a Chinese boy with a love of hip-hop and Taiwanese food. Eddie spent his teen years trying to live the gangsta lifestyle which eventually got him into trouble with the law. His parents sent him back to Taiwan to try to get his act

together. Eddie Huang is a very smart guy - both street smart and book smart. He learned from his past, went on to college and then to law school, making his father very proud by passing the bar exam on the first try. All set for life, except that Eddie hated the legal life. He wanted to open a restaurant that would fill both a hip-hop need and a desire for authentic Taiwanese food. So with encouragement from such Food Network notables as Guy Fieri ("Diners, Drive-ins and Dives") and Anthony Bourdain ("No Reservations") who he met through a cooking contest, Eddie moved ahead with his passion. It was an instant success and seems to be going well. He also writes a food blog and has several videos on his website that document much of what he has written in the book. I enjoyed the book immensely.

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