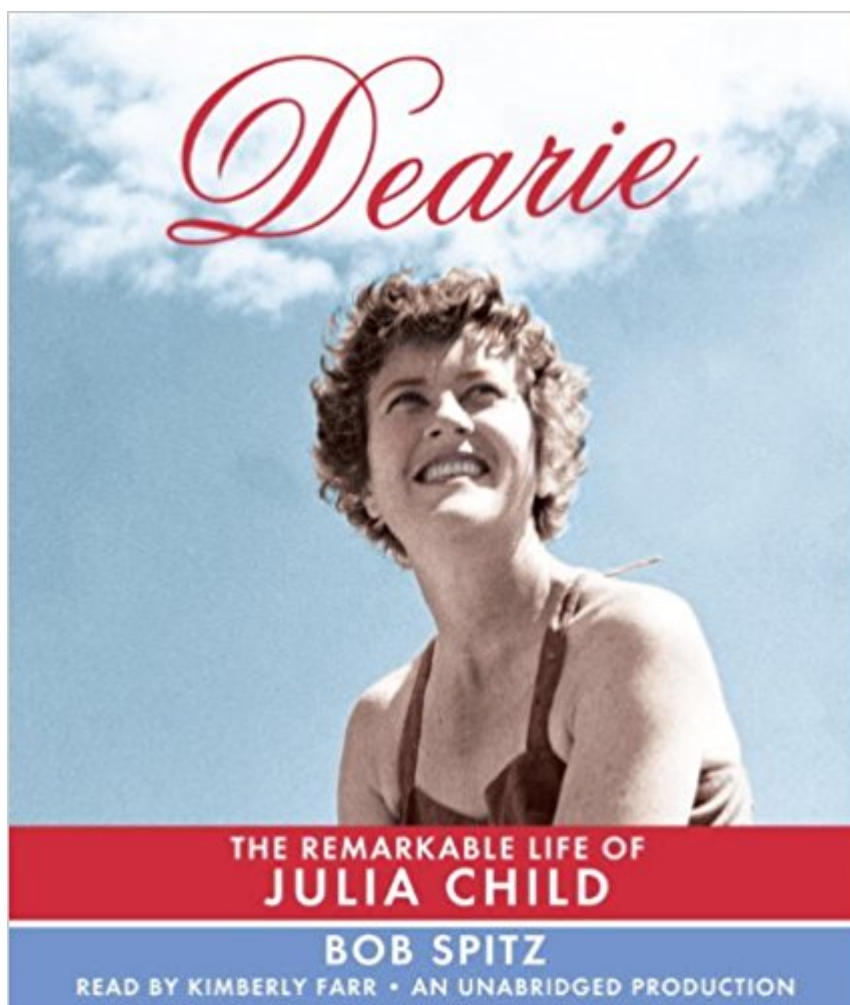


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Dearie: The Remarkable Life Of Julia Child



Synopsis

It's rare for someone to emerge in America who can change our attitudes, our beliefs, and our very culture. It's even rarer when that someone is a middle-aged, six-foot three-inch woman whose first exposure to an unsuspecting public is cooking an omelet on a hot plate on a local TV station. And yet, that's exactly what Julia Child did. The warble-voiced doyenne of television cookery became an iconic cult figure and joyous rule-breaker as she touched off the food revolution that has gripped America for more than fifty years. Now, in Bob Spitz's definitive, wonderfully affectionate biography, the Julia we know and love comes vividly and surprisingly to life. In *Dearie*, Spitz employs the same skill he brought to his best-selling, critically acclaimed book *The Beatles*, providing a clear-eyed portrait of one of the most fascinating and influential Americans of our time—a woman known to all, yet known by only a few. At its heart, *Dearie* is a story about a woman's search for her own unique expression. Julia Child was a directionless, gawky young woman who ran off halfway around the world to join a spy agency during World War II. She eventually settled in Paris, where she learned to cook and collaborated on the writing of what would become *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, a book that changed the food culture of America. She was already fifty when *The French Chef* went on the air—at a time in our history when women weren't making those leaps. Julia became the first educational TV star, virtually launching PBS as we know it today; her marriage to Paul Child formed a decades-long love story that was romantic, touching, and quite extraordinary. A fearless, ambitious, supremely confident woman, Julia took on all the pretensions that embellished tony French cuisine and fricasseed them to a fare-thee-well, paving the way for everything that has happened since in American cooking, from TV dinners and Big Macs to sea urchin foam and the Food Channel. Julia Child's story, however, is more than the tale of a talented woman and her sumptuous craft. It is also a saga of America's coming of age and growing sophistication, from the Depression Era to the turbulent sixties and the excesses of the eighties to the greening of the American kitchen. Julia had an effect on and was equally affected by the baby boom, the sexual revolution, and the start of the women's liberation movement. On the centenary of her birth, Julia finally gets the biography she richly deserves. An in-depth, intimate narrative, full of fresh information and insights, *Dearie* is an entertaining, all-out adventure story of one of our most fascinating and beloved figures. From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

Featured Essay: Author Bob Spitz on *Dearie* Because Julia Child is such a familiar and beloved presence in our culture, it is amazing how much there was left to learn about her. Julie and Julia, along with Julia's lovely memoir *My Life in France* only scratched the surface of this remarkable and fascinating woman who actually launched PBS (really!) and defined the American palate. For much of her adolescence and throughout her twenties, Julia was something of a lost soul. She burned with a desire to have an impact on the world but had no idea how to make that happen or what field she might excel in. It disappointed her that she was nothing more than what she called "a social butterfly," without a goal. "I felt I had particular and unique gifts," she wrote in her diary, "that I was meant for something, and was like no one else." How right she was! But she weathered many misadventures before those gifts began to materialize. Oddly, everything began to coalesce for Julia in Ceylon, of all places. At the outbreak of World War II, still without a sense of purpose, she volunteered for government service and was shipped overseas as a member of the OSS, America's burgeoning spy agency that later became the CIA. She worked in its Registry, under "Wild Bill" Donovan, and was responsible for the location and movements of every U.S. spy operating in the Southeast Asia theater. In Ceylon, Julia also met her future husband, Paul Child, who worked in a capacity similar to hers. Initially, Julia had had a hard time finding true love--it took her awhile. Back home, the heir to the Los Angeles Times had proposed to her on several occasions, but he struck Julia as too bland for her outsized spirit. She was a big person (over 6'3") with a big personality and couldn't be contained in the expected role of "the little woman." I found it very moving when she finally found true love, although she was still adrift about what her life purpose would be. A lunch in France changed everything. It was a powerful moment

when she hit on her true calling at the age of forty. In the book, I delve into the extraordinary path Julia followed to create eye-poppingly delicious food and introduce it to an American public that was starving for a new, imaginative and creative way to cook. From there, it was through engaging force of her once-troublesome outsized personality that she went on to have a profound impact on the way people eat--and live. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

“A biography perfectly suited to its subject -- as lively, fascinating, and singular as Julia Child herself.” — Daniel Okrent, author of *Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition* “A revelation.” — Lev Grossman, *Time Magazine* “Spitz captures another side of [Julia’s] complex personality: her fierce diligence in mastering the science as well as the art of cooking through detailed experimentation and her concern to translate the preparation of complex French recipes for readers in America . . . An engrossing biography of a woman worthy of iconic status.” — *Kirkus Review* (starred) “A rollicking biography that captures the vision, pluck and contagious exuberance that were the essence of Julia Child.” — *People Magazine* “In this affectionate and entertaining tribute to the witty, down-to-earth, bumptious, and passionate host of *The French Chef*, Spitz (The Beatles) exhaustively chronicles Child’s life and career from her childhood in California through her social butterfly flitting at Smith and her work for a Pasadena department store to her stint in government service, her marriage to Paul Child, and her rise to become America’s food darling with the publication of *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* and her many television shows. . . Released to coincide with Child’s centenary, Spitz’s delightful biography succeeds in being as big as its subject.” — *Publishers Weekly* (starred) “The most engaging celebrity biography we’ve read in years . . . Spitz manages to convey the vigor, curiosity, confidence and booming voice of a truly remarkable woman as if she is sitting at the kitchen table with you. . . Spitz is a fantastic writer.” — *LA Weekly* “A much-appreciated, well timed gift to us all . . . Julia has never been more alive in the hearts and minds of those who grew up with her and drank her dreams.” — *The Huffington Post* “In what is by far the most substantial new book on Child, Bob Spitz draws a lively, affectionately detailed portrait . . . [with] the kind of language, slangy and salty, that Child would have enjoyed and might have used herself.” — *Wall Street Journal* “Spitz gives us plenty of the wacky one-liners that endeared Child to her television audience, and a warm, nuanced portrait. But his bigger achievement is in setting her career against the most significant movements of the 20th century, from McCarthyism to the sexual revolution to the greening of America. He reveals how she helped redefine domesticity in the media age, transforming the way we cook, eat and think about food. . . A consideration not only of her life but of

her place in 20th century American history, the book makes a strong case for Child as a 'cultural guerrilla' on par with Andy Warhol, Bob Dylan and Helen Gurley Brown." "Newsday" "After wiping your drool off the page, you might wonder where Spitz uncovered such narrative gold . . . Author and subject almost become one, as Spitz channels the spirit of Child in his own words. . . His detailed research into mid-century American cooking helps us understand why exactly Child was such a big deal" • "Becky Krystal, Washington Post

I couldn't get through the first 20 pages without buying a proper omelet pan. Still, it dragged in parts. Did we really need 10 pages on how Simca got her nickname? I had to skim parts, but was also inspired by the amazing life of Julia Child, written by a man who obviously respected her, as well.

Not only was Julia Child's life interestingly revealed but so were the lives of her family members, of her husband and his family and the pertinent aspects of lives of those surrounding her, including Simca, James Beard, Craig Claiborne and many others. I thought Bob Spitz captured the essence of Julia to the point that it often felt like he was telling the story of her life in her own words, or at least in the tone in which she would have told it. This came across even more in the Audible version I listened to than it did in the print version. We read it for our book club selection this past month and all enjoyed it very much. I highly recommend it. Takes one through one's own journey with food over the decades since Julia Child became known to us.

I enjoyed learning about the woman behind the tv persona, as I have watched her shows all my adult life. I have liked them all! As everyone knows her voice and personality was the hook! The book at times in the early war years before Paul dragged for me. However once they met and were honest with each other and their feelings for one another and together, I was now fully engaged! I liked her spunk and her strength, she was stubborn, passionate, honest and hungry for adventure. Unlike most of us she embraced the opportunity when it presented it's self. A good lesson I took from her life is "keep on going and don't apologize if you believe in your actions and keep on moving forward". I have cried only twice over a famous person's passing in the last 30 years, the first was Princess Diana when she died so violently and so suddenly, (for her & her boys). And at the end of Mr. Spitz's book Dearie, two tears slid down my cheeks! Not because she passed (we all will) but she did it her way, until the raft hit the water! She was and will remain an inspiration to me. Good book Mr. Spitz.

What a woman. What a book. While some have criticised Spitz for going into too much detail, I felt it added, rather than detracted, from the story. A very well written book which spends a great deal of time on the two major influences on her life: her relationship with husband Paul and their time in France. This is a respectfully written book which leaves the reader in no doubt of where Julia sits in history. It shows us what a driven, powerhouse of a woman she was who had a major influence on a generation of American woman's lives. Thankfully, however, it is not a book which glorifies Childs - it factually exposes all aspects of her personality. I recently saw the light-hearted comedy drama *Julia & Julia* and enjoyed it immensely (Streep was fabulous). However, having read this book, I realise now it totally undersold how influential Child was. If you love cooking and love France this is a book for you. An absolutely astonishing life.

This biography of Julia Child is filled with interesting anecdotes about her life, particularly about her early years in California. If you love Julia, you'll probably find this book worth the slog through some really terrible writing. Some of the word choices and phrases are such howlers that I had to put down my Kindle.

I picked up this book after hearing Bob Spitz's interview on NPR on Thanksgiving morning while I was struggling in the kitchen with preparing my turkey. Hearing him talk about Julia's philosophy in cooking and life, and enjoying several good chuckles at his anecdotes, I immediately downloaded this book on my Kindle. Sunday of Thanksgiving weekend, I had just polished off the last chapter. I usually quickly read books, but this book I found especially hard to put down. I grew up watching Julia with my parents, and I own her *Mastering* book-- but never before have I truly understood what a remarkable woman she was. I found her story a real inspiration-- especially for those of us still trying to find our calling in life. Julia didn't even know how to cook until she was almost 40! Julia's story came into my life at just the right time-- I highly recommend it!

A much more detailed account of this remarkable woman's life. This book covered her life from birth to death.

I was riveted by the very first page. The story is told in the same breathless way Julia Child spoke and is lovable for that, if no other reason. I have read other biographies of Julia Child; so, I thought I knew just about all there was to know. I was wrong. The author presents details of Julia's life, particularly the last few years that I had only glimpsed when she was on *Good Morning America* or

when she appeared with Jacques Pepin. He does not limit himself to the last few years, though. This is Julia as a child, teenager, college student (not a very good one, it turns out), aimless young adult, driven member of the nascent OSS, an outsider at an all men's club cooking school, all they way through her various television shows and cookbooks. This was a good read, filled with details that made me fall in love with Julia Child all over again.

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