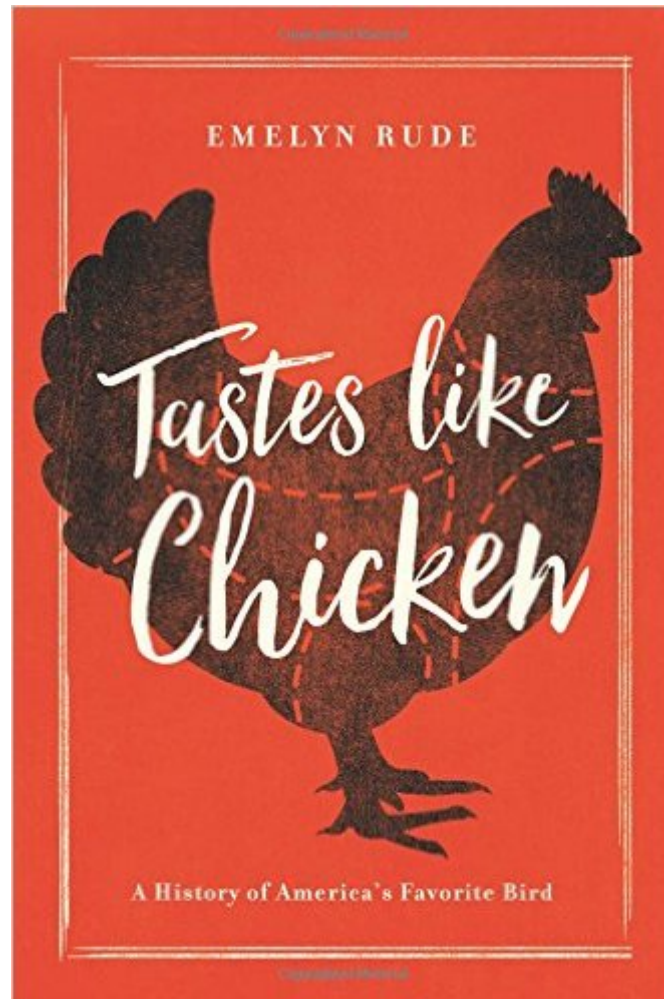


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# Tastes Like Chicken: A History Of America's Favorite Bird



## Synopsis

From the domestication of the bird nearly ten thousand years ago to its current status as our go-to meat, the history of this seemingly commonplace bird is anything but ordinary. How did chicken achieve the culinary ubiquity it enjoys today? It's hard to imagine, but there was a point in history, not terribly long ago, that individual people each consumed less than ten pounds of chicken per year. Today, those numbers are strikingly different: we consume nearly twenty-five times as much chicken as our great-grandparents did. Collectively, Americans devour 73.1 million pounds of chicken in a day, close to 8.6 billion birds per year. How did chicken rise from near-invisibility to being in seemingly "every pot," as per Herbert Hoover's famous promise? Emelyn Rude explores this fascinating phenomenon in *Tastes Like Chicken*. With meticulous research, Rude details the ascendancy of chicken from its humble origins to its centrality on grocery store shelves and in restaurants and kitchens. Along the way, she reveals startling key points in its history, such as the moment it was first stuffed and roasted by the Romans, how the ancients' obsession with cockfighting helped the animal reach Western Europe, and how slavery contributed to the ubiquity of fried chicken today. In the spirit of Mark Kurlansky's *Cod* and Bee Wilson's *Consider the Fork*, *Tastes Like Chicken* is a fascinating, clever, and surprising discourse on one of America's favorite foods.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I received a free electronic copy of this book in exchange for an honest review from Netgalley,

Emelyn Rude, and Pegasus Books. Thank you all for sharing this extraordinary history with me. Chickens are again very popular in American kitchens - and backyards. The last few years we have seen a massive return to the days of a coop in the back yard to provide GMO-free, pesticide-free, antibiotic-free eggs and chicken to American tables. Of course, few of us will actually kill and pluck and drain and clean our Hennie Pennies. But the eggs are awesome. This is a complex, informative and at times humorous history of the chicken in the settlement and growth of America. We follow the chicken from the colonial days when backyard chickens and their eggs added to Mom's work load and pin money, to the mega-factories producing millions of eggs, or millions of broiler chickens a week, around the world. One would think this to be a smooth, continuous climb through history. Emelyn Rude through meticulous research shares with us the fact that it was anything but a smooth journey. We see the rapid expansion of the need and popularity of chicken, once classified as a non-meat as is fish, as a religious preference and during wartimes and depressions and recessions and fad diets. And we see the chicken businesses grow, and then fail as prosperity and peace brings back the preferences for beef and pork in our diet. We see the effects on city lives as Americans work toward providing a 'chicken in every pot' and the drama of chicken unionizations and chicken Mafias and chicken monopolies and the effect of cheap chicken on poverty, both in America and around the world.

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