



Colonial Food in Interwar Paris: The Taste of Empire

By Lauren Janes

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In the wake of the First World War, in which France suffered severe food shortages, colonial produce became an increasingly important element of the French diet. The colonial lobby seized upon these foodstuffs as powerful symbols of the importance of the colonial project to the life of the French nation. But how was colonial food really received by the French public? And what does this tell us about the place of empire in French society?

In *Colonial Food in Interwar Paris*, Lauren Janes disputes the claim that empire was central to French history and identity, arguing that the distrust of colonial food reflected a wider disinterest in the empire. From Indochinese rice to North African grains and tropical fruit to curry powder, this book offers an intriguing and original challenge to current orthodoxy about the centrality of empire to modern France by examining the place of colonial foods in the nation's capital.

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Editorial Review

Review

“As this remarkable book shows, the colonial foods that the French chose - and, as significant - chose not to eat open a window onto popular attitudes to empire at a singularly visceral level. Taste preferences are revealed here as profoundly conservative, often unreceptive to the efforts of government agencies and colonial lobbyists to persuade French consumers, not just to 'think' imperially but to 'eat' imperially as well.”
?Martin Thomas, University of Exeter, UK

“An absolutely fascinating study of the impact of colonial food on France between the wars. In many ways this story sets the stage for our own global food supply with all its inherent problems of inequality of wealth, chauvinistic protectionism, the influence of politicians on international development, the allure and disgust of the strange and exotic, and the terrible consequences for places around the globe that supply rice, sugar, chocolate, coffee and other foodstuffs. The book emphasizes beautifully how food both defines Frenchness but also how it is used to exclude the other.” *?Ken Albala, University of the Pacific, USA*

About the Author

Lauren Janes is Assistant Professor of History at Hope College, USA.

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