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Clarion Review

Cooking

Huckleberry Delights: A Collection of Huckleberry Recipes
Karen Jean Matsko Hood
Whispering Pine Press
Softcover $19.95 (320pp)
978-1-59649-385-8
★★★☆☆
(January 2007)

This little wild berry gets complete and undivided attention in *Huckleberry Delights* part of the author's Delights series of cookbooks. Unfortunately the huckleberry does not keep long or ship well so the book brings with it an appreciation for the Pacific Northwest the berries' native region. Readers from other parts will have to utilize frozen or canned huckleberries.

Karen Jean Matsko Hood is a poet literary advocate gardener and author who enjoys entertaining large groups of people. She begins with information about the huckleberry that covers the range of botanical classification cultivation and gardening folklore history nutrition and health poetry and festivals.

There are 273 recipes that cover everything from appetizers and dips beverages baking and jams to wine and spirits. Readers may be disappointed by the breads and rolls section. Huckleberries are called for in several run-of-the-mill recipes traditionally made with blueberries. The candy section offers more promise with standouts including Huckleberry Nut Candy and Huckleberry Nuggets (fruit and nugget candy rolled in confectioners' sugar). The dressings sauces and condiments chapter will be the most interesting section for experienced chefs and cooks—especially the Huckleberry Nutmeg Sauce and Wild Huckleberry Chutney.

For those who live in huckleberry country the section on preserving will bring back memories of picking berries in the hot July and August sun and preserving them for the rest of the year.

Nine poems about huckleberries are clustered in one area with copyright information after each poem. It would have been preferable if they were spread throughout the book as are the “Did You Know?” items.

Eating more fruit can help cut the risk of cancer stroke and heart disease and most people today do not eat enough fruit and vegetables for good health. Hood makes this little berry fun to eat and she shows an active imagination when it comes to creating recipes.

In an age when the sweet calories of fruit have to compete with the sweet calories of junk food the difference is that fruit has the soluble fiber the minerals the vitamins the antioxidants where junk food has none.

Mark Williams