



Searching For Family and Traditions at the French Table, Book One

Carole Bumpus

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In *Searching for Family and Traditions at the French Table*, Carole Bumpus trips through four regions of France. Part culinary memoir, part travelogue, the book shares intimate portraits of three generations of French families whose homes Bumpus was invited into. She imparts the families' histories (often set against the backdrops of WWI and WWII), local traditions, foods, wines, and drinks, her text capturing a culture at once old and modern.

Beginning her tour in Paris—with her husband, Winston; her “French friend from California,” Josiane; and Jean-Claude, one of her many connections in France—Bumpus is told that, for the French, identity is all about history. Her host lays the foundation for her travels, lifting his glass and toasting: “Life is worth living, and if you can recognize the value of each pleasurable moment, you are truly a winner.” This sentiment is echoed throughout her tour: in toasts, traditional celebrations, and simple family gatherings.

Bumpus traveled east to Champagne, then to Alsace, Lorraine, and back to Paris. She ate, drank, and listened to reminiscences and poignant stories that contextualized the French people and their unique place in history. In both Alsace and Lorraine, she was confronted with the hardships left by the wars and their lingering effects on the local culture. The text reflects France's contentious relationship with Germany, including how the two regions would flip between being German and then French again post-conflicts.

The book is peppered with descriptions of regional and family dishes, with recipes for dishes like Alsatian Baekofe, Crepes, Ravioli Faris au Cresson, and Tarte Flambe included as an added bonus. *Searching for Family and Traditions at the French Table* is a wonderful ride through four regions of France, generating great excitement for its follow-up.

ERIC PATTERSON (September / October 2019)

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