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Plats du Jour

William Black

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An irreverent and controversial exploration of the highways and byways of French cuisine.

There is more than a slight malaise in the air these days about French food and cooking. While the rest of the world delights in the intricacies of molecular gastronomy, and even Britain is reveling in a culinary renaissance, in France, the years of worship at the temple of the great god Michelin seems to have blinded them to change and evolution. Why is this? What is it about the French that causes them to be so blinkered about their food? Plats du Jour is an attempt to answer this question as William Black explores the highways and byways of French cooking.

Taking as his starting point the great tradition of French food, Black tackles years of received wisdom and parochial food snobbery head on, though with his mind (and his mouth) firmly open. He eats tête de veau and fried cow's udder with his French wife's family near Orléans. He samples the dubious (and illegal) delights of ortolan in the south-west and has the most painfully disappointing gastronomic experience of his life. He combs the beaches of Brittany for seafood and is chased away from a festival by an enraged Basque villager.

Plats du Jour is a book that the French aren't going to like very much. That said, it is a highly entertaining and irreverent look at the world's greatest culinary tradition, and required reading for anyone with an interest in food and cooking.

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