intentions of fair trade to reform the global market and analyzes the risks associated with bringing fair commodity trading to the mainstream. He looks at the challenges in retaining the integrity of a visionary new form of business that strives to support culture and individual livelihood.

As one of the only independent studies on fair trade, Jaffee’s book is of great import, especially his findings that most small, fair trade farmers do not, in fact, escape the cycle of poverty (p.237), contrary to the claims (or at least hopes) of fair trade proponents. He further observes that food security in Oaxaca is directly affected by the stability of coffee prices, perhaps due to the continued dependence on conventional market structure for conducting alternative trade. Thus, fair trade might be more an ideal model than a vision for reconceptualizing the trade of commodities (food and otherwise). Nevertheless, fair trade has proved to help farmers become less indebted, have higher gross incomes, engage in more environmentally beneficial coffee farming methods, and foster greater community and individual pride. Jaffee concludes that “it is precisely because fair trade does make some difference that the system must be improved” (p.246). For Jaffee, the products bearing the fair trade label are valuable, at the very least, for their ability to “convey information about the social conditions under which they were produced and about the people who produced them” and to “reconfigure local people’s opportunities to improve their social and economic conditions” (pp.14, 94).

Jaffee’s style is compassionate, comprehensive, and original. His book is highly readable and includes well-organized data that help draw a complete picture of the quality of life in both Oaxacan communities. Jaffee creates a deeply moving portrait of the economic and intimate realities of coffee farming and offers important glimpses into the family and cultural life of food production. His book is highly recommended for introductory and specialized courses in food security, international development, and cultural studies.

—Amanda Rappak, York University

Bookends

1080 Recipes
Simone and Inés Ortega
976 pp. Illustrations. $39.95 (cloth)

The fanfare generated by Spain’s celebrity chefs and their cocina de vanguardia has brought worldwide attention to the country’s gastronomy and its bountiful ingredients. This media buzz has allowed cookbooks like Simone Ortega’s classic 1080 Recetas—a basic reference in every Spanish home—to find an audience beyond the borders of Spain.

In 1972, when 1080 Recetas was first published, there were few serious rivals. Only Cocina, a primer for Spanish homemakers published by the Sección Fememina del Movimiento (the Women’s Section of Franco’s Nationalist Movement), helped to preserve the values of the traditional home and table, urging women to be patriotic citizens, good Christians, and good wives: “Have a delicious meal prepared for him [the husband] when he returns from work, preferably his favorite dish.” Simone Ortega Klein, on the other hand, drew from her family’s Alsatian heritage and political liberalism (furthered by her marriage to the son of the famous Spanish philosopher, José Ortega y Gasset) to elaborate on standard Spanish cuisine by introducing a French flair.

The cookbook’s ideology was straightforward, with a simple presentation of recipes from 1 to 1,080, from familiar foods for everyday meals to foods for special occasions. Cooking terminology, measurements, and techniques were equally uncomplicated—bake in a medium oven, one soup spoon of flour, ½ glass oil, 30 grams butter, a bunch of aromatic herbs, or a pinch of baking soda. The beauty of Ortega’s simplicity was the way in which she encouraged readers to develop a feel for cooking and to be more creative in the kitchen.

However, an English-language edition for the Anglo-Saxon home cook had to be more attractively packaged. Even in its forty-eighth printing, the Spanish version remains a paperback with no illustrations; until recently, the cracked binding and loosened pages of my own edition had to be held together with a rubber band. By contrast, the Phaidon edition is an extravagant hardcover, with photographs of the recipes and colorful illustrations by the Spanish artist Javier Mariscal. It includes useful cooking tips and a glossary; the recipes are indexed in Spanish and English; and there is a bonus section with recipes from ten Spanish guest chefs. Otherwise, the book is faithful to the original in its delivery of recipes from 1 to 1,080.

The essence of Spanish cookery is immediately apparent in the ingredients: Salt Cod and Potato Croquettes, Garlic Soup with Eggs, Artichokes Stuffed with Serrano Ham, Baked Tuna with Green Mayonnaise, and Veal Kidneys in Sherry Sauce with Rice. Then there are the typical dishes familiar to travelers: Galician pie (empanada gallega), Spanish potato omelet (tortilla de patatas a la española), gazpacho, stewed oxtail (rabo de buey guisado), fried hake (filetes de merluza rebozados y fritos), and the ubiquitous...
and favorite paella, followed by a classic flan. More adventurous cooks will find plenty of recipes to test their expertise, such as Octopus with Paprika, Rice with a Crust, Cardoon in Milk Sauce with Saffron and Cinnamon, Beans with Clams, and Partridges with Grapes, finished off with Fig Compote with Red Wine and Spices.

More clues to the Spanish culinary arts can be gleaned from the book’s brief explanations and notes. You can learn how to prepare octopus, cut up a chicken, roast red peppers, fix variety meats, or venture into furred and feathered game—all part of the Spanish repertoire. You will discover that a cork added to stew can tenderize the meat, and that paella reaches the point of perfection when left to stand for five minutes on top of a damp dish towel before serving.

Where the book falls entirely short, however, is in its cultural indicators. Mere translations of recipe names fall flat: Important Potatoes, Widow’s Potatoes, and Eggy Mimosa do not entice the cook to look further. Regional references are noted by name only—Santiago Torto, Murcian Rice and Fish Stew, Asturian Beans, for example—while careless or too literal translations abound: flambé, “crunchy fruit” in lemon sauce, and “Little Pavian Soldiers” misguide the neophyte Spanish cook. The opportunity to convey the country’s gastronomic culture, though not Ortega’s original intention, would have greatly enhanced the appeal of this cookbook to foreigners. Instead, 1080 Recipes is a mere replication of 1080 Recetas de cocina, at best a support for cooks wishing to reproduce the fundamentals of Spanish cuisine.

—Jane Canova, Williams College

Pepper
Christine McFadden
Bath, UK: Absolute Press, 2008
256 pp. Illustrations. £15, $24.95 (cloth)

The history of the spice trade is essentially the history of the quest for pepper, starting some three thousand years ago. Although pepper has long not been traded ounce for ounce for gold, in volume and value it is still the most important spice traded worldwide. Pepper production doubled in the ten years up to 2003, as Vietnam and Brazil established huge new plantations, and Indonesia increased its output, leading to a glut and stockpiling as prices declined. A small Asian harvest in 2007 seems likely to restore balance.

No longer exotic, or even unusual, pepper and salt are put on the table in restaurant and home alike without much thought. Christine McFadden’s book brings the focus back to pepper by providing a very readable account of the history, trade, production, and processing of pepper and other pungent spices often used as pepper.

Pepper has long been named according to its origin, the best being Malabar, Wynad, Tellicherry Extra Bold, Lampong, Sarawak, and Muntok. As we consumers pay more attention to the provenance of our food, spice merchants now offer peppercorns by region of production in addition to the standard, anonymous jars of peppercorns on supermarket shelves. McFadden provides a useful guide to the aromatic and flavor profiles of pepper from different regions, with recommendations in some recipes about which one to use. The charts of comparative tasting notes on pepper and the “exotics” are helpful for the shopper and cook.

Photographs and extensive notes on black, white, green, and red peppercorns are followed by similar treatment of long pepper, cubeb, and the unrelated grains of paradise, pink pepper (Schinus terebinthifolius), allspice, Sichuan pepper, and sansho. McFadden also provides a useful chart on the wider pepper family, including the pungent leaves used in many regions of the tropics.

Grains of paradise, and even long pepper and cubeb, are becoming easier to find as spice merchants respond to a demand from chefs and experimental cooks. While McFadden includes a few recipes using these spices, I would have welcomed more suggestions about dishes to make with them, as well as with hoja santa (Piper auritum) leaves from Central America and lá lót/chaa phluu (Piper sarmentosum) leaves now available in Asian groceries.

The recipes are nicely varied with standards like steak au poivre, hot and sour soup, and chicken curry alongside chickpeas with feta and preserved lemons, tomato rasam, and peppers meringue grissini.

The book is handsomely produced, which adds to its attraction on the cook’s shelves.

—Jill Norman, London

A Sacred Feast: Reflections on Sacred Harp Singing and Dinner on the Ground
Kathryn Eastburn
Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2008
xxiii + 162 pp. Illustrations. $24.95 (cloth)

Singing may be an expression of the soul, but in Kathryn Eastburn’s A Sacred Feast: Reflections on Sacred Harp Singing and Dinner on the Ground, it’s a time for get-togethers and