



# **Eight Flavors: The Untold Story of American Cuisine**

*Sarah Lohman*

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This unique culinary history of America offers a fascinating look at our past and uses long-forgotten recipes to explain how eight flavors changed how we eat.

The United States boasts a culturally and ethnically diverse population which makes for a continually changing culinary landscape. But a young historical gastronomist named Sarah Lohman discovered that American food is united by eight flavors: black pepper, vanilla, curry powder, chili powder, soy sauce, garlic, MSG, and Sriracha. In *Eight Flavors*, Lohman sets out to explore how these influential ingredients made their way to the American table.

She begins in the archives, searching through economic, scientific, political, religious, and culinary records. She pores over cookbooks and manuscripts, dating back to the eighteenth century, through modern standards like *How to Cook Everything* by Mark Bittman. Lohman discovers when each of these eight flavors first appear in American kitchens—then she asks why.

*Eight Flavors* introduces the explorers, merchants, botanists, farmers, writers, and chefs whose choices came to define the American palate. Lohman takes you on a journey through the past to tell us something about our present, and our future. We meet John Crowninshield a New England merchant who traveled to Sumatra in the 1790s in search of black pepper. And Edmond Albius, a twelve-year-old slave who lived on an island off the coast of Madagascar, who discovered the technique still used to pollinate vanilla orchids today. Weaving together original research, historical recipes, gorgeous illustrations and Lohman's own adventures both in the kitchen and in the field, *Eight Flavors* is a delicious treat—ready to be devoured.

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