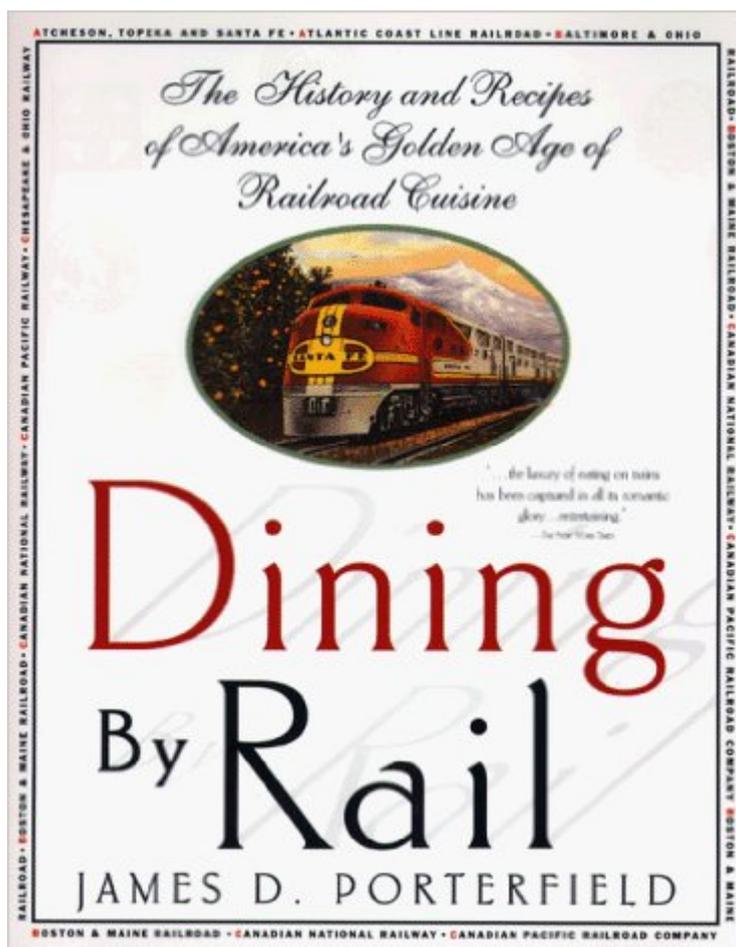


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Dining By Rail: The History And Recipes Of America's Golden Age Of Railroad Cuisine



Synopsis

Dining by Rail is James D. Porterfield's book of history and recipes from America's golden age of railroad cuisine. Porterfield is a devotee of railroad history and a gourmet cook, and while preparing this book he sorted through 7,500 railroad recipes. Full of authentic menus and classic recipes like Lobster Newburg, deviled eggs and blanc mange, Dining by Rail is the book for anyone who has ever dreamed of returning to the days of glamorous travel.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Here's what I said having bought the book from UK and had it sent to me in Australia....Firstly, this ignores as do many American books the rest of the world and makes of course no claim to do otherwise. This is its only flaw really; otherwise it covers the subject in unbelievable detail. Second, it's two books in one, with history more or less chronologically presented in the first half and with recipes and some information boxes in the second. Third, Porterfield trawled 7500 recipes to select 350 (I think it is) and lists them by Railroad and indexes them by type & Railroad. He has also selected recipes that are more akin to current food trends (i.e. leaving out those running in rivers of fat and oil or excessively heavy, I also suspect he has tried to keep the complexity down). He claims to have tried everything included and the 1 or 2, I have tried or modified and tried have been workable - i.e. they work like Delia Smith's do! I have made Strawberry & Rhubarb Pie, though with bought pastry or as a turnover/crumble and followed some of the recipe for Roast Turkey (substituting a corn fed chicken as its only September) but omitted the rice stuffing as we tend to eat

rice with our mains for convenience. The Railroads potato recipes are interesting though we seldom eat potatoes so haven't tried them yet but the idea of 2 different types, one used to stuff another is indicative of the care even baked potatoes got from the Railroad. There are several French Toast recipes as it seems it was a breakfast favourite on most lines. Fourth, as you read the first half you'll wonder into the second half and want to cook something or at least get a snack so this is a warning to you!

"Dining by Rail" should appeal to at least two types of curious readers; 1) railroad buffs, and 2) foodies. I'm not a real railfan, per se, although I do have a moderate interest in the history and technology of railroads. Even though my wife and I have taken several chartered steam train trips in Argentina, Ecuador and Peru, no one could ever accuse us of being "foamers." Food is another matter entirely--we ARE bona fide, enthusiastic foodies. Our cookbook library contains more than 400 volumes of recipes from all over the world. We spend many hours in the kitchen every weekend making exotic ethnic meals from these books. We've chosen many of our foreign trips at least partially on the basis of the cuisines of the places we planned to visit. And we NEVER eat fast food, but always opt for small, charming, local restaurants if at all possible. With all that said, I found James D. Porterfield's "Dining by Rail" to be a fascinating book. The 150-or-so-page Section I, "From Soot to Souffl  : Eating on the Train," relates, in great detail and in a highly readable style, the history of dining on trains. The tale starts with trackside food shacks and entrepreneurial purveyors of comestibles who roamed the aisles of passenger cars with fruits, sandwiches, snacks and drinks, all of questionable provenance, in the 1830s. The tale pretty much ends with the glory days of railroad culinary excellence over 100 years later, in the "Golden Age" of the 1930s, when specially equipped and staffed dining cars catered to every appetite of rail travelers, offering fine foods and superb service rivaling that of the finest hotels. Mr. Porterfield tells the whole story of how railroad dining concepts, cuisines, equipment and crews evolved in the years between.

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