



The Heretic's Feast: A History of Vegetarianism

Colin. Spencer

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In this fascinating and informative story of vegetarianism since prehistoric times, Colin Spencer describes the religious, philosophical, and social aspects of vegetarianism, introducing such prominent and often colorful practitioners as Pythagoras, Ovid, Leonardo da Vinci, Sir Thomas More, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Paine, Leo Tolstoy, George Bernard Shaw, Gandhi, and Hitler. Though the word "vegetarian" was not coined until the mid-nineteenth century, the meatless diet has been around for as long as people have. Spencer describes the major movements that shared the doctrine as well as the surprisingly diverse moralities, perspectives, and philosophies that motivated them. He shows that vegetarianism, when not forced on humans by poverty, was often just one element in a radical ideology that repeatedly led to the marginalization of vegetarians in our society. This gracefully written and meticulously researched book presents not only a surprising slice through world history but also an unusual story of dissidence and revolt.

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