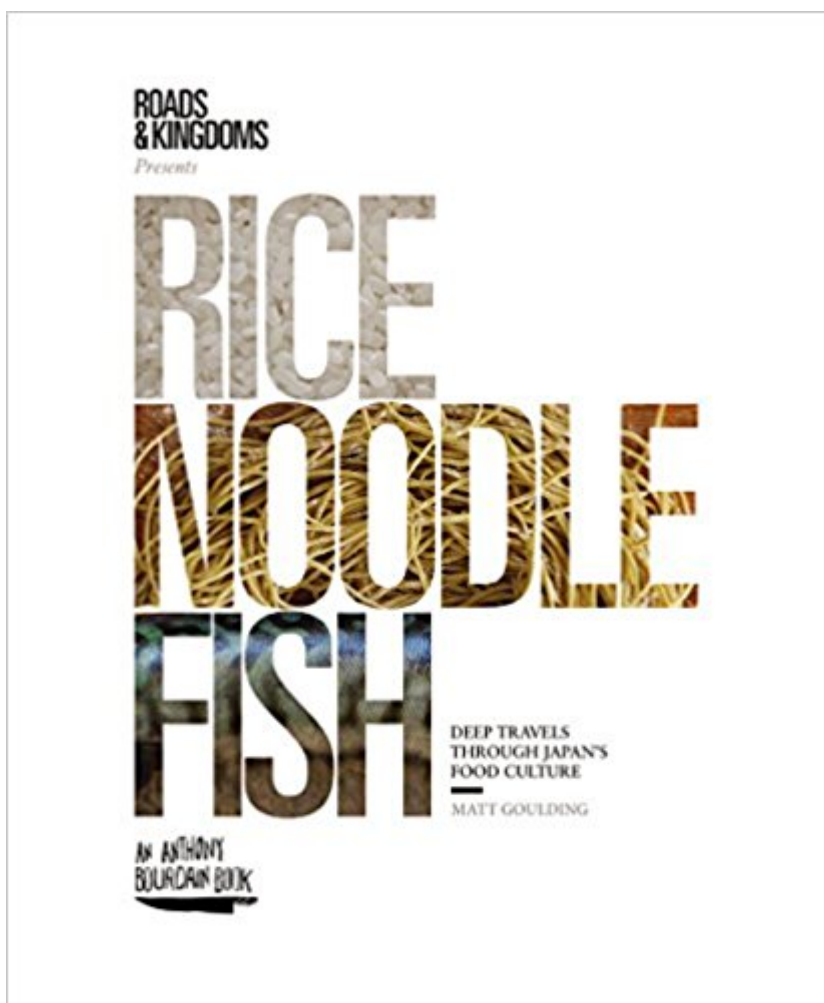




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Rice, Noodle, Fish: Deep Travels Through Japan's Food Culture



Synopsis

2016 Travel Book of the Year by the Society of American Travel Writers
Finalist for the 2016 IACP Awards: Literary Food Writing
Named one of the Financial Times' "Best Books of 2016"
An innovative new take on the travel guide, *Rice, Noodle, Fish* decodes Japan's extraordinary food culture through a mix of in-depth narrative and insider advice, along with 195 color photographs. In this 5000-mile journey through the noodle shops, tempura temples, and teahouses of Japan, Matt Goulding, co-creator of the enormously popular *Eat This, Not That!* book series, navigates the intersection between food, history, and culture, creating one of the most ambitious and complete books ever written about Japanese culinary culture from the Western perspective. Written in the same evocative voice that drives the award-winning magazine *Roads & Kingdoms*, *Rice, Noodle, Fish* explores Japan's most intriguing culinary disciplines in seven key regions, from the kaiseki tradition of Kyoto and the sushi masters of Tokyo to the street food of Osaka and the ramen culture of Fukuoka. You won't find hotel recommendations or bus schedules; you will find a brilliant narrative that interweaves immersive food journalism with intimate portraits of the cities and the people who shape Japan's food culture. This is not your typical guidebook. *Rice, Noodle, Fish* is a rare blend of inspiration and information, perfect for the intrepid and armchair traveler alike. Combining literary storytelling, indispensable insider information, and world-class design and photography, the end result is the first ever guidebook for the new age of culinary tourism.

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Customer Reviews

“[Goulding] manages to be entertaining, informative and inspirational as he recounts his

many meals in one of the world's most popular food destinations. [his] gift for phrasing and razor-sharp prose elevate what could have been yet another rote travelogue into something much better. (Publishers Weekly (starred review)) "Rice, Noodle, Fish isn't just a travel document—it's a literary exploration of just what makes Japan the place that food lovers lay awake at night and dream of. (Men's Journal) "Whether you're the sort of person who brakes for a new ramen-ya or a neophyte who still thinks that a California roll is an acceptable sushi bar order, you'll have fun, learn some things—and probably start looking up flights to Narita on Kayak after reading a few pages. (Los Angeles Times

The world needs *Roads & Kingdoms*. It needs this book. Anthony Bourdain An innovative new take on the travel guide, *Rice, Noodle, Fish* decodes Japan's extraordinary food culture through a mix of in-depth narrative and insider advice, along with 195 color photographs. In this five-thousand-mile journey through the noodle shops, tempura temples, and teahouses of Japan, Matt Goulding, co-creator of the enormously popular *Eat This, Not That!* book series, navigates the intersection of food, history, and culture, creating one of the most ambitious and complete books ever compiled from the Western perspective about the Japanese culinary landscape. Written in the same evocative voice that drives the award-winning magazine *Roads & Kingdoms*, *Rice, Noodle, Fish* explores Japan's most intriguing culinary disciplines in seven key regions, from the kaiseki tradition of Kyoto and the sushi masters of Tokyo to the street food of Osaka and the ramen culture of Fukuoka. You won't find hotel recommendations or bus schedules; you will find a brilliant narrative that interweaves immersive food journalism with intimate portraits of the cities and the people who shape Japan's food world. This is not your typical travel guide. *Rice, Noodle, Fish* is a rare blend of inspiration and information, perfect for the intrepid journeyman and armchair traveler alike. Combining literary storytelling, indispensable insider information, and world-class design and photography, the result is the first-ever guidebook for the new age of culinary tourism.

I first fell in love with *Roads and Kingdoms* back in early 2012, after randomly stumbling on a tweet linking to co-founders Nathan Thornburgh and Matt Goulding's rough and tumble, yet mesmerizingly written and incredibly well-informed adventures in Myanmar. *Roads and Kingdoms* then was a heady cocktail of cuisine, cultural commentary, history and geopolitical reflections all wrapped up in what seemed like an online journal of two experienced, savvy travelers who nevertheless have not lost their sense of infectious awe and insatiable curiosity at the world.

Fast forward several years later, and they've released their first book in tandem with the sensei of all culinary wanderers, Anthony Bourdain's *Rice, Noodle, Fish*, a meticulously curated pilgrimage through Japanese cuisine (arguably the best in the world) as written by Matt and as edited by Nathan. It's a book that crystallizes the best qualities of what makes *Roads and Kingdoms* peerless in the world of digital journalism. It is quite simply a marvel of a book, one that food enthusiasts will devour in one sitting. Thoughtfully conceptualized, each chapter focuses on a key Japanese city and paints detailed profiles of some of the culinary artisans (shokunins) which make that particular city's food so indelibly great. Matt Goulding's writing, as it is on *Roads and Kingdoms*, is impressively specific and evocative, a smart, inclusive voice that is as much experienced guide as warmly approachable barstool (or more appropriately teppan counter stool) companion. So who is *Rice, Noodle, Fish* for? I think it's for us readers who are not just attracted by the sensory descriptions of cuisine, however passionately and vividly written, but more importantly are curious and concerned about the cultural context behind it. In the Hiroshima chapter for example, he writes impeccably about the complicated flavors and textures of okonomiyaki, but also deftly weaves a multi-threaded fabric of the resilience of Hiroshima's citizens, the nuances of Japanese immigration, and the sadness of a history that can't be erased. The Kyoto chapter is as much about the wondrous kaiseki meals he partook of as it is about a food scene that intricately and subtly co-mingles iron-clad social traditions and small, restless jabs at change and contemporaneity. *Rice, Noodle, Fish* is exhilarating reading, packed with information and pleasurable prose, clearly communicating that behind every gorgeous Instagram photo of sushi or ramen or chawanmushi is the cultural weight of the society that bore them.

Five stars for content, deducted a star for Paperwhite formatting. Content GREAT - but the Kindle version has formatting issues that make important parts of the text difficult to read on Kindle Paperwhite. The supplementary text at the end of chapters is in light gray lettering. It's especially annoying because the text is black when you flip the page - then it flashes and becomes a lighter low-contrast color that is barely readable. It's fine on a computer or color Kindle. *Roads & Kingdoms* tells the story of place through food, history, people, and culture. If you are planning a trip to Japan, buy this book, without hesitation. I already had a trip to Japan planned, and the first two chapters have already convinced me that I will have a deeper understanding of what I'm about to experience because of this book. If you're not planning a trip to Japan, you will want to after reading this. It's making me want to plan a second trip to Japan already. The book is so rich in detail that I know I will

only scratch the surface in my first visit. The prose is masterful, dense and engaging. It's a world beyond the typical travel guide that is little more than a list of trivia. The supplementary information is extremely useful, and none of it is contained in the preview sample. For example, "The Rules of Sushi" details how to properly eat different types of sushi - both to avoid committing an accidental faux pas, as well as to enjoy it in the intended manner: no ginger (it's a palate cleanser), no wasabi in the soy sauce, and always eat nigiri sushi in one bite. It has pictures of different types of sushi, with the name of the item in both English and Japanese script. It would be amazing if Roads & Kingdoms could update the Kindle version so the text of the entire book is legible in black and white. I even read the sample to check for formatting, since legibility is a very common problem on Paperwhite with anything other than plain black text. The pictures will of course need to be looked at on computer, phone, or color Kindle regardless, which is expected. Despite this, I am thrilled that I heard about this book on "Splendid Table". It will enrich my trip to Japan as well as my understanding of Japanese history and culture.

Fantastic read! I only know Japan through the people that I have been lucky enough to meet over the years from those islands, but this book convinces me that I must now go! And eat! Every story, every photograph is a triumph. The Roads and Kingdoms team has done an amazing job of giving The Reader insight into the country's culture through the lens of its food and a view of the Japanese mindset through the lens of its craftsmen and their dedication to perfection. Matt Goulding entertains while educating. My favorite thing: have fun while learning and enjoying a truly beautiful book. I agree with Bourdain's back cover comment: The world needs Roads & Kingdoms. It needs this book. Thank you for giving it to us. Now I have to go find some uni and plan a trip as soon as possible.

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