



The Migrants Table: Meals And Memories In

Krishnendu Ray

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To most of us the food that we associate with home—our national and familial homes—is an essential part of our cultural heritage. No matter how open we become to other cuisines, we regard home-cooking as an intrinsic part of who we are. In this book, Krishnendu Ray examines the changing food habits of Bengali immigrants to the United States as they deal with the tension between their nostalgia for home and their desire to escape from its confinements. As Ray says, "This is a story about rice and water and the violations of geography by history." Focusing on mundane matters of immigrant life (for example, what to eat for breakfast in America), he connects food choices to issues of globalization and modernization. By showing how Bengali immigrants decide what defines their ethnic cuisine and differentiates it from American food, he reminds us that such boundaries are uncertain for all newcomers. By drawing on literary sources, family menus and recipes for traditional dishes, interviews with Bengali household members, and his own experience as an immigrant, Ray presents a vivid picture of immigrants grappling with the grave and immediate problem of defining themselves in their home away from home.

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