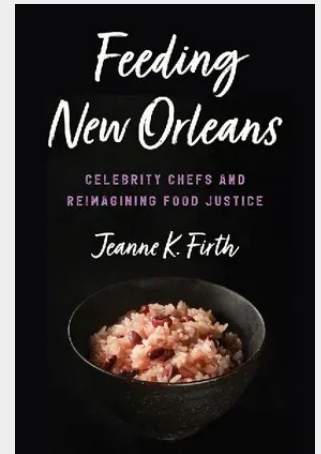


Feeding New Orleans

Celebrity Chefs and Reimagining Food Justice

After Hurricane Katrina in 2005, many high-profile chefs in New Orleans pledged to help their city rebound from the flooding. Several formed their own charitable organizations, including the John Besh Foundation, to help revitalize the region and its restaurant scene. A year and a half after the disaster when the total number of open restaurants eclipsed the pre-Katrina count, it was embraced as a sign that the city itself had survived, and these chefs arguably became the de facto heroes of the city's recovery. Meanwhile, food justice organizations tried to tap into the city's legendary food culture to fundraise, marketing high-end dining events that centered these celebrity chefs. Jeanne K. Firth documents the growth of celebrity humanitarianism, viewing the phenomenon through the lens of feminist ethnography to understand how elite philanthropy is raced, classed, and gendered. Firth finds that cultures of sexism in the restaurant industry also infuse chef-led philanthropic initiatives. As she examines this particular flavor of elite, celebrity-based philanthropy, Firth illuminates the troubled relationships between consumerism, food justice movements, and public-private partnerships in development and humanitarian aid.

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