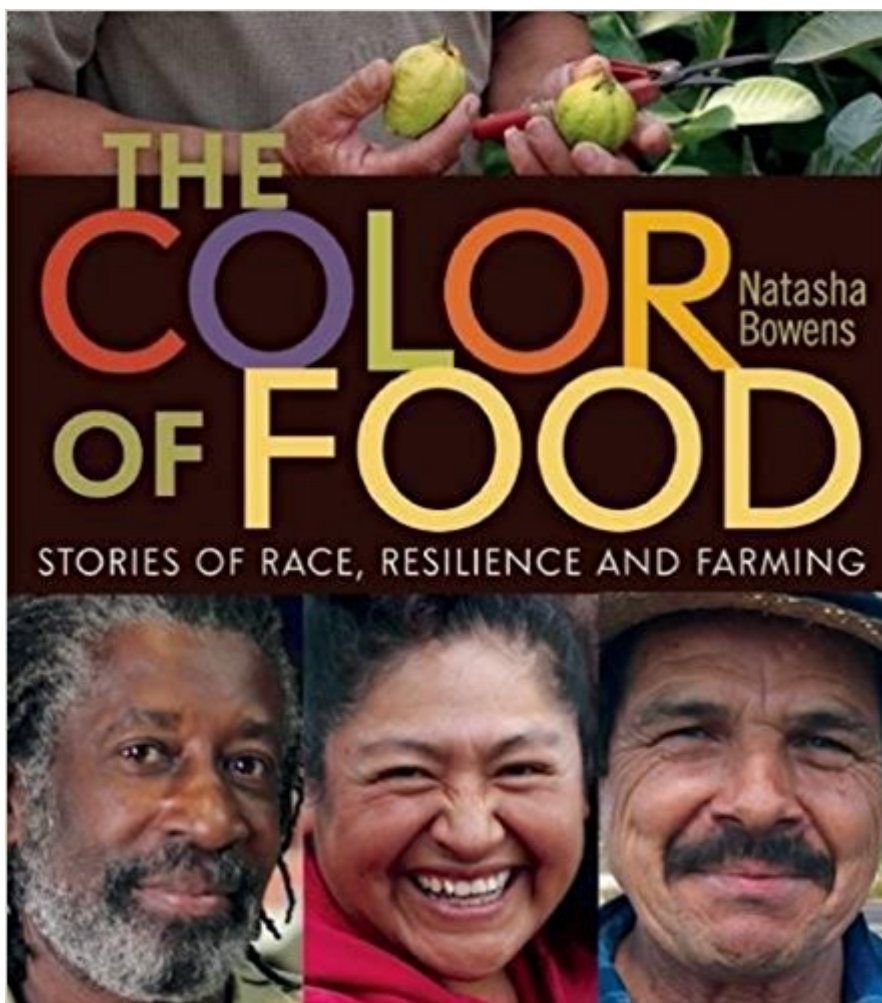


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The Color Of Food: Stories Of Race, Resilience And Farming



Synopsis

Imagine the typical American farmer. Many people visualize sun-roughened skin, faded overalls, and calloused hands—hands that are usually white. While there's no doubt the growing trend of organic farming and homesteading is changing how the farmer is portrayed in mainstream media, farmers of color are still largely left out of the picture. *The Color of Food* seeks to rectify this. By recognizing the critical issues that lie at the intersection of race and food, this stunning collection of portraits and stories challenges the status quo of agrarian identity. Author, photographer, and biracial farmer Natasha Bowens's quest to explore her own roots in the soil leads her to unearth a larger story, weaving together the seemingly forgotten history of agriculture for people of color, the issues they face today, and the culture and resilience they bring to food and farming. *The Color of Food* teaches us that the food and farm movement is about more than buying local and protecting our soil. It is about preserving culture and community, digging deeply into the places we've overlooked, and honoring those who have come before us. Blending storytelling, photography, oral history, and unique insight, these pages remind us that true food sovereignty means a place at the table for everyone. Natasha Bowens is an author, farmer, and creator of the multimedia project *The Color of Food*. Her advocacy focuses on food sovereignty and social issues.

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Customer Reviews

Shelia Trask, Publishers' Weekly, Summer 2015 Bowens's deep political understanding is obvious throughout her book; she's knowledgeable about the history of oppression that affects

farmers of color today and can explain the effects of political pacts like NAFTA on Mexican farmers, all while delivering pertinent statistics that illustrate her points. At heart, though, this is a book about the people themselves. What a book! Dive into the stories and photographs Natasha Bowens shares in these pages and you come up for air with a profound appreciation for the diversity of people planting the seeds and harvesting the foods to keep alive cultural traditions and nourish communities around the country. Anyone who eats should read this book: You will come to the table with new appreciation for the intersections between race and food that so often go unsaid and undocumented. Kudos to Bowens for creating this powerful and important book. — Anna Lappé, author, *Diet for a Hot Planet and Hope's Edge*

Natasha Bowens, through her compelling stories and powerful images of a rainbow of farmers, reminds us that the industrialization of our food system and the oppression of our people -- two sides of the same coin -- will, if not confronted, sow the seeds of our own destruction. — Mark Winne, author, *Closing the Food Gap: Resetting the Table in the Land of Plenty*

The Color of Food captures the heart and souls of farmers of color... farmers that are frequently forgotten as the stories of agriculture in our country are told. Through the lens of a camera we step into the cultural history of our foods and the beautiful and proud people that grow them. — Cynthia Hayes, executive director, Southeastern African American Farmers Organic Network

True to her ancestral ties, Natasha brings forth the hope of a new generation of young people of color fixed on recapturing the energy, history and tradition of farming. The power of storytelling is etched in each farmer's tale of courage and resiliency as they look at farming, not as oppressive, but as a vibrant celebration of who they are. The Color of Food makes the ancestors rise up in triumph! — Karen Washington, farmer, activist, and cofounder, Black Urban Growers

It is impossible to understand food in America without digging deeply into race, class and culture. People's perceptions are their realities, and The Color of Food contributes to changing our reality by changing our perception of the hands, hearts and faces in the food movement.---Malik Yakini, executive director, Detroit Black Community Food Security Network

Natasha Bowens brings us two critical reminders: the potential and pitfalls of a movement in any singular form; and the importance of vision and determination in doing truly groundbreaking research. The Color of Food represents the best kind of research inspired and independent, a project of deep listening and unbounded sharing. Our task is to cultivate the questions she scatters, in a rich and colorful light. — Philip Ackerman-Leist, author, *Rebuilding the Foodshed* and director of the Masters in Sustainable Food Systems, Green Mountain College

The food movement has woken the world to joy of food, but the beauty of the people who grow it is too often hidden. That's why Brown Girl Farming is so gorgeous. This is a book that celebrates the food

movement leaders to whom I've been honored to be able to turn for wisdom. To read Natasha Bowen's journey through North America is to draw from the rich, exquisite and too often hidden work of people of color in reinventing the modern food system. From First Nation to immigration, there isn't a topic on which Bowen's curiosity doesn't latch, nor her camera capture. It's a must-share book for anyone who holds hope in their hearts about the future of food.

—Raj Patel, Author of *Stuffed and Starved* Shelia Trask, Publishers' Weekly, Summer 2015

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Redefining the face of the American farmer

Through her compelling stories and powerful images Natasha Bowens' rainbow of farmers remind us that the industrialization of our food system and the oppression of our people -- two sides of the same coin -- will, if not confronted, sow the seeds of our own destruction.---

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I co-facilitate a "Hunger Banquet." This year we are choosing Natasha Bowen's book as our focus. Bowens has so much to say! (By the way, at a Hunger Banquet, audience members are randomly chosen to be rich, middle income or poor. The rich get a great banquet, the middle income get an ok meal, the poor get a handful of rice and some water. Then we talk!) Bowen's book brings to life the issue of food justice. I especially appreciate her section called "Generation Rising" about young farmers. Our Hunger Banquet audience is full of millennials who will be inspired by these stories. The stories of "the elders" are very moving too. I liked the one about the migrant mom who left her employer because of her family's exposure to pesticides. Her son developed leukemia. When she signed up for a FARM INCUBATOR project she started living a better life. I recommend this book to anyone who has ever pattered around in soil or sunk teeth into a fresh picked tomato. I'm buying several copies to give as gifts.

If you care anything about social justice or food security then I highly recommend this book. I stumbled upon this title about a year ago while casually researching "food deserts". Now, I work for

one of the farmers that was highlighted and am helping to build capacity so that he can continue the work. You will connect with each farmer on a different level, and the best part is that they are REAL people. This is my go-to reference when I forget why I started the journey of food advocacy.

These stories are about real people. You can read their stories and see their pictures. Natasha does not hide the truth but shows that strong people in strong communities can overcome huge challenges. Community is spoken of often, community is shown to work and work well. These farmers are helped by the community and in return they give back to the community. This is what we must work for, the people in power will not help us. Ms. Bowens has had her hands in the soil, she can reach out in a way that I never could. The quotes from people in these stories will move you. The pictures are reason enough to buy the book, as a photographer I can only say wow. Thank you Natasha.

A seminal work in highlighting, dignifying, and inspiring greater discussion about farmers of color in North America. It spans the width and breadth of the experiences of Black, Latino, Asian, and Native American farmers. Natasha has given us a gift whose rewards do not end; a work to be shared, stories to be retold, and a movement to power forward.

Race and color are issues that have been rarely addressed in discussions of farming. This book carefully addresses these issues in a number of locales and race backgrounds. This topic is extremely provocative and has much importance for farming in the future.

I know the author personally and this book is a wonderful reflection of the dedication she has to gardening and the culture of agriculture. A wonderful and easy read.

great book

The Color of Food is a vibrant, gorgeous looking book of stories told by farmers of color who are changing the landscape of farming and homesteading all over the world. I loved reading about the creativity and resilience of farmers of color as they work in community to fight exploitation, marginalization and bring good food to families and communities of color. I was amazed and heartened by the deep political organizing that is being done against corporate greed and that farmers and communities are finally being recognized as critical players as we continue to learn

about race and class and culture and our food source. Thank you Edelweiss for giving me the opportunity to review this book for an honest opinion.

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