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*Présentation de l'éditeur*The bestselling story of Julia's years in France—and the basis for Julie Julia, starring Meryl Streep and Amy Adams—in her own words. Although she would later singlehandedly create a new approach to American cuisine with her cookbook *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* and her television show *The French Chef*, Julia Child was not always a master chef. Indeed, when she first arrived in France in 1948 with her husband, Paul, who was to work for the USIS, she spoke no French and knew nothing about the country itself. But as she dove into French culture, buying food at local markets and taking classes at the Cordon Bleu, her life changed forever with her newfound passion for cooking and teaching. Julia's unforgettable story—struggles with the head of the Cordon Bleu, rejections from publishers to whom she sent her now-famous cookbook, a wonderful, nearly fifty-year long marriage that took the Childs across the globe—unfolds with the spirit so key to Julia's success as a chef and a writer, brilliantly capturing one of America's most endearing personalities.

*Extrait*Foreword_In August 2004, Julia Child and I sat in her small, lush garden in Montecito, California, talking about her life. She was thin and a bit stooped, but more vigorous than she'd been in weeks. We were in the midst of writing this book together. When I asked her what she remembered about Paris in the 1950s, she recalled that she had learned to cook everything from snails to wild boar at the Cordon Bleu; that marketing in France had taught her the value of “les human relations”; she lamented that in her day the American housewife had to juggle cooking the soup and boiling the diapers—adding, “if she mixed the two together, imagine what a lovely combination that would make!”The idea for *My Life in France* had been gestating since 1969, when her husband, Paul, sifted through hundreds of letters that he and Julia had written his twin brother, Charles Child (my grandfather), from France in 1948–1954. Paul suggested creating a book from the letters about their favorite, formative years together. But for one reason or another, the book never got written. Paul died in 1994, aged ninety-two. Yet Julia never gave up on the idea, and would often talk about her intention to write “the France book.” She saw it, in part, as a tribute to her husband, the man who had swept her off to Paris in the first place.I was a professional writer, and had long wanted to work on a collaborative project with Julia. But she was self-reliant, and for years had politely resisted the idea. In December 2003, she once again mentioned “the France book,” in a wistful tone, and I again offered to assist her. She was ninety-one, and her health had been waxing and waning. This time she said, “All right, dearie, maybe we should work on it together.”My job was simply to help Julia tell her story, but it wasn't always easy. Though she was a natural performer, she was essentially a private person who didn't like to reveal herself. We started slowly, began to work in sync, and eventually built a wonderfully productive routine. For a few days every month, I'd sit in her living room asking questions, reading from family letters, and listening to her stories. At first I taped our conversations, but when she began to poke my tape recorder with her long fingers, I realized it was distracting her, and took notes instead. The longer we talked about “little old France,” the more she remembered, often with vivid intensity—“Ooh, those lovely roasted, buttery French chickens, they were so good and chickeny!”Many of our best conversations took place over a meal, on a car ride, or during a visit to a farmers' market. Something would trigger a memory, and she'd suddenly tell me about how she learned to make baguettes in Paris, or bouillabaisse in Marseille, or how to survive a French dinner party—“Just speak very loudly and quickly, and state your position with utter conviction, as the French do, and you'll have a marvelous time!”Almost all of the words in these pages are Julia's or Paul's. But this is not a scholarly work, and at times I have blended their voices. Julia encouraged this approach, pointing out that she and Paul often signed their letters “PJ” or “Pulia,” as if they were two halves of one person. I wrote some of the exposition and transitions, and in so doing tried to emulate Julia's idiosyncratic word choices—“Plop!,” “Yuck!,” “Woe!,” “Hooray!” Once I had gathered enough material, I would write up a vignette; she would avidly read it, correct my French, and add things as they occurred to her in small, rightward-slanting handwriting. She loved this process, and was an exacting editor. “This book energizes

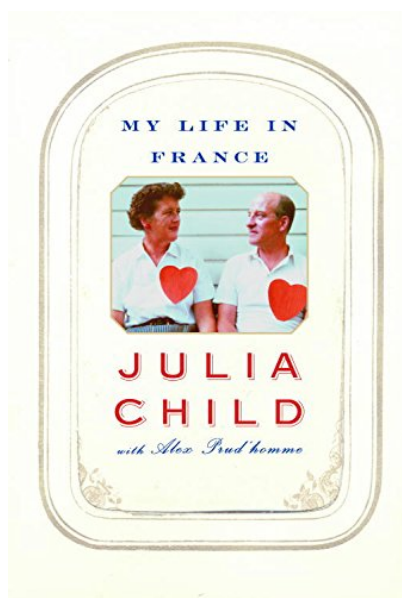
me!" she declared. Julia and I shared a sense of humor, and appetite, and she thought I looked like Paul, which probably helped our collaboration. As for me, I was grateful for the chance to reconnect with her and to be part of such an interesting project. Some writers find that the more they learn about their co-authors the less they like them, but I had the opposite experience: the more I learned about Julia Child, the more I came to respect her. What impressed me most was how hard she worked, how devoted she was to the "rules" of *la cuisine française* while keeping herself open to creative exploration, and how determined she was to persevere in the face of setbacks. Julia never lost her sense of wonder and inquisitiveness. She was, and is, a great inspiration. Another great inspiration has been our editor, Judith Jones, who worked with Julia for more than forty years. With patience and a deep understanding of our subject, she was indispensable in helping to shape this book. Judith's assistant, Ken Schneider, was also a great help. On August 13, 2004—just after our conversation in her garden, and only two days before her ninety-second birthday—Julia died of kidney failure in her sleep. Over the next year, I finished *My Life in France*, but every day wished I could call her up and ask her to clarify a story, or to share a bit of news, or just to talk. I miss her. But through her words in these pages, Julia's voice remains as lively, wise, and encouraging as ever. As she would say, "We had such fun!"

Alex Prud'homme August 2005 Introduction This is a book about some of the things I have loved most in life: my husband, Paul Child; *la belle France*; and the many pleasures of cooking and eating. It is also something new for me. Rather than a collection of recipes, I've put together a series of linked autobiographical stories, mostly focused on the years 1948 through 1954, when we lived in Paris and Marseille, and also a few of our later adventures in Provence. Those early years in France were among the best of my life. They marked a crucial period of transformation in which I found my true calling, experienced an awakening of the senses, and had such fun that I hardly stopped moving long enough to catch my breath. Before I moved to France, my life had not prepared me for what I would discover there. I was raised in a comfortable, WASPy, uppermiddle-class family in sunny and non-intellectual Pasadena, California. My father, John McWilliams, was a conservative businessman who managed family real-estate holdings; my mother, Carolyn, whom we called Caro, was a very warm and social person. But, like most of her peers, she didn't spend much time in the kitchen. She occasionally sallied forth to whip up baking-powder biscuits, or a cheese dish, or *finnan haddie*, but she was not a cook. Nor was I. As a girl I had zero interest in the stove. I've always had a healthy appetite, especially for the wonderful meat and the fresh produce of California, but I was never encouraged to cook and just didn't see the point in it. Our family had a series of hired cooks, and they'd produce heaping portions of typical American fare—fat roasted chicken with buttery mashed potatoes and creamed spinach; or well-marbled porterhouse steaks; or aged leg of lamb cooked medium gray—not pinky-red rare, as the French do—and always accompanied by brown gravy and green mint sauce. It was delicious but not refined food. Paul, on the other hand, had been raised in Boston by a rather bohemian mother who had lived in Paris and was an excellent cook. He was a cultured man, ten years older than I was, and by the time we met, during World War II, he had already traveled the world. Paul was a natty dresser and spoke French beautifully, and he adored good food and wine. He knew about dishes like *moules marinières* and *boeuf bourguignon* and *canard à l'orange*—things that seemed hopelessly exotic to my untrained ear and tongue. I was lucky to marry Paul. He was a great inspiration, his enthusiasm about wine and food helped to shape my tastes, and his encouragement saw me through discouraging moments. I would never have had my career without Paul Child. We'd first met in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) during the Second World War and were married in September 1946. In preparation for living with a new husband on a limited government income, I decided I'd better learn how to cook. Before our wedding, I took a bride-to-be's cooking course from two Englishwomen in Los Angeles, who taught me to make things like pancakes. But the first meal I ever cooked for Paul was a bit more ambitious: brains simmered in red wine! I'm not quite sure why I picked that particular dish, other than that it sounded exotic and would be a fun way to impress my new husband. I skimmed over the recipe, and figured it wouldn't be too hard to make. But the results, alas, were messy to look at and not very good to eat. In fact, the dinner was a disaster. Paul laughed it off, and we scrounged up something else that night. But deep down I was annoyed with myself, and I grew more determined than ever to learn how to cook well. In our first year as young marrieds, we lived in Georgetown, in Washington, D.C., in a small white clapboard house on Olive Avenue. While Paul worked on mounting exhibits for the State Department, I worked as a file clerk. In the evening, I would approach the stove armed with lofty intentions, the *Joy of Cooking* or *Gourmet* magazine tucked under my arm, and little kitchen sense. My meals were satisfactory, but they took hours of laborious effort to produce. I'd usually plop something on the table by 10:00 p.m., have a few bites, and collapse into bed. Paul was unfailingly patient. But years later he'd admit to an interviewer: "Her first attempts were not altogether successful. . . . I was brave because I wanted to marry

Julia. I trust I did not betray my point of view.” (He did not.) In the winter of 1948, Paul was offered a job running the Visual Presentation Department for the United States Information Service (USIS) in Paris, and I tagged along. From Publishers Weekly Famed chef Child, who died in 2004, recounts her life in France, beginning with her early days at the Cordon Bleu after WWII. Greenberg, an actress for radio and commercials, does a fine job capturing Child's joie de vivre and unmatched skill as a culinary animateur. We hear Child's delight and excitement when she discovers her calling as a writer and hands-on teacher of haute cuisine; her exasperation as yet another publishing house rejects her ever-growing monster of a manuscript; and her joy at its publication and acclaimed reception after more than a decade of work. Child's opinionated exuberance translates remarkably well to audio, from her initial Brahmin-like dismissal of the new medium of television (why would Americans want to waste a perfectly good evening staring into a box, she wondered?) and frustration at her diplomat husband being investigated in the McCarthy-driven 1950s to her ecstasy about roast chicken and mulish insistence on the one correct method to make French bread at home. The seamless abridgment has no jarring gaps or abrupt transitions to mar the listener's enjoyment. Potential listeners should beware, however: this is not a book to hear on an empty stomach. Bon appétit! Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

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Commentaires clients
Commentaires clients les plus utiles
5 internautes sur 5 ont trouvé ce commentaire utile.
Julia sauce Julia
Par Kat l'expat
Julia Child était-elle vraiment sympathique? En tout cas cette autobiographie l'est à 100%. On ne devait pas s'ennuyer en compagnie de "such a big girl". La scène où elle et son mari poursuivent une souris en mimant la chasse à courre - découverte quelques jours auparavant à travers les récits d'un très compassé chasseur blasonné - en dit long. L'ami américain à qui j'ai prêté ce bouquin et qui comme moi navigue dans les eaux de la soixantaine, s'est régalé. Découvrir le très long chemin et la méthode de travail harassante qui ont conduit à la publication de The mastering the art of french cooking est passionnant. Voir la France des années 50 à travers un regard américain est parfois déroutant mais devient vite captivant. En plus l'écriture est belle et le vocabulaire étonnamment riche. Je le relirai sûrement.
0 internautes sur 0 ont trouvé ce commentaire utile. Assez bien
Par Meli6282
La vie qu'a vécu Julia Child et son mari dans la France des années 50-60-70. Elle vivait pleinement les choses, était passionnée de nourriture et de cuisine françaises. Son petit neveu écrit ce roman, comme un témoignage ou biographie de cette dame

haute en couleurs. Mais l'écriture est vieillotte, et je me suis vite lassée de lire toujours un peu la même chose. Le film qui a été fait sur la vie de Julia Child avec Meryl Streep est bien plus agréable et vivant. 0 internautes sur 0 ont trouvé ce commentaire utile. A lovely trip to the 1950s in Paris Par izzie31 I have really enjoyed reading about Julia Child's inspiring trip to Paris and Marseille. She is so passionate about food, restaurants and storekeepers that I feel like I have strolled with her in the streets of Paris we both know so well. As a Parisian, I grow nostalgic of that time when life seemed a lot easier!

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