

Sofrito

By Phillippe Diederich

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"In this entertaining debut novel, Frank Delgado tries to save his failing restaurant by returning to Cuba, his dead father's homeland, to get ahold of a top-secret chicken recipe. But there is more than delicious chicken at stake here. Food is the road home?geographically, emotionally, metaphorically. Peppered with cooking advice from chefs, ordinary folks, and celebrities including Fidel Castro himself (an advocate of pork), Phillippe Diederich's *Sofrito* is a love letter to the deepest recesses of nostalgia's heart." **Cristina Garcia**, author of *Dreaming in Cuban* and *King of Cuba*

Frank Delgado is no thief. He co-owns a failing Cuban restaurant in Manhattan's Upper East Side. The restaurant, like Frank, is rudderless. Lost. He decides he'll save the restaurant by traveling to Cuba to steal the legendary chicken recipe from the famed El Ajillo restaurant in Havana. The recipe is a state secret, so prized that no cook knows the whole recipe. But Frank's rationale is ironclad?Fidel stole the secret from his family, so he will steal it back. He will triumphantly bring that recipe back to Manhattan and turn his fortunes around.

Frank has no interest in Cuba. His parents fled after the Revolution. His dead father spent his life erasing all traces of Cuba from his heart with barbecues, television, lawn mowing and alcohol. So Frank is not prepared for the real Cuba. Sure, he gets beat up and almost killed, the secret service threatens him, but in the midst of the chaos, he falls in love with a prostitute and the city, and he unwraps the heroic story of his parents' life. Cuba begins to bind Frank together, the way a good sofrito binds the flavors of a Cuban dish.

Phillippe Diederich is a Haitian American writer and photojournalist raised in Mexico City and Miami, Florida. The dictator Papa Doc kicked his parents out of Haiti in the 1960s. Phillippe grew up listening to stories of nostalgia, revolution, and exile. His friends were the sons and daughters of parents who had fled oppressive regimes throughout Latin America.

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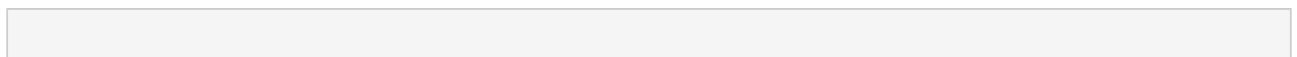
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Sofrito By Phillippe Diederich Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Review

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"Sofrito" has the sweaty seduction of Havana's streets and the warm spirit of its food." "Mark Kurlansky, author of Salt: A World History" and "Cod: A Biography of the Fish that Changed the World"

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"A moveable feast full of folkloric flavors, comical rhythms and magic. One man's quest for the perfect spice leads him towards love for a woman and for his lost Cuba. In heaven, I know Oscar Hijuelos is smiling."

"Ernesto Quinones, author of Bodega Dreams and Chango's Fire"

"Frank Delgado's parents fled Cuba after the Revolution, so when Frank has to make an unexpected trip to his parents homeland, he's not really prepared. What brings him to Cuba? Oh, no biggie just stealing a recipe that is a closely guarded state secret ... " "Susie Rodarme, Book Riot"

"Just before Cuba busts open and its complicated essence is diluted by un monton de turistas, Phillippe Diederich's debut novel gives us an immersion complete with sights, sounds and maybe most importantly tastes. Food and travel go together, both with the power to edify, transport and even haunt. "Sofrito" does all three." "Laura Reiley, Tampa Bay Times"

"The language, nuance and settings ring true and give insight into a world not known by many Americans. Using the metaphor of the sauce essential to all Cuban cooking, Frank Delgado's journey is a search of his personal sofrito, the personal foundation needed to understand his life and identity as a Cuban American." "Jesus Salvador Trevino, Latinopia"

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About the Author

Phillippe Diederich is a Haitian-American writer. Born in the Dominican Republic, he was raised in Mexico City and Miami. His parents were kicked out of Haiti by the dictatorship of Papa Doc Duvalier in 1963. He spent his youth listening to his parents and friends talking politics and nostalgically dreaming of the day they would return to Haiti. In 1980, the family moved to Miami, where they joined a community of exiles from all parts of Latin America--Cuba, Chile, Argentina, Nicaragua, El Salvador. Like other children of exiles, Diederich grew up without his relatives--grandparents, cousins, uncles, aunts. Diederich traveled repeatedly to Cuba as a photojournalist throughout the 1990s. He has an MFA in creative writing from the University of South Florida and lives in Florida. This is his first novel.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Rolanda Parker:

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