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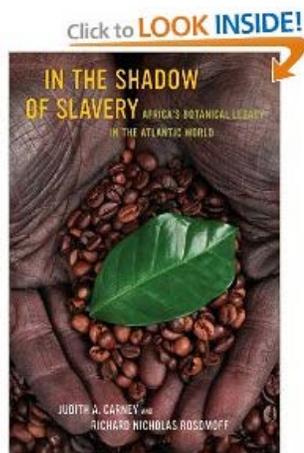
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## In the Shadow of Slavery: Africa's Botanical Legacy in the Atlantic World [Paperback]

[Judith Carney](#) (Author)

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### Book Description

Publication Date: **February 1, 2011** | ISBN-10: **0520269969** | ISBN-13: **978-0520269965** | Edition: **1**

The transatlantic slave trade forced millions of Africans into bondage. Until the early nineteenth century, African slaves came to the Americas in greater numbers than Europeans. *In the Shadow of Slavery* provides a startling new assessment of the Atlantic slave trade and upends conventional wisdom by shifting attention from the crops slaves were forced to produce to the foods they planted for their own nourishment. Many familiar foods--millet, sorghum, coffee, okra, watermelon, and the "Asian" long bean, for example--are native to Africa, while commercial products such as Coca Cola, Worcestershire Sauce, and Palmolive Soap rely on African plants that were brought to the Americas on slave ships as provisions, medicines, cordage, and bedding. In this exciting, original, and groundbreaking book, Judith A. Carney and Richard Nicholas Rosomoff draw on archaeological records, oral histories, and the accounts of slave ship captains to show how slaves' food plots--"botanical gardens of the dispossessed"--became the incubators of African survival in the Americas and Africanized the foodways of plantation societies.

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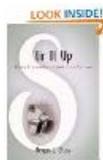
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"Today, many people are thinking differently, and more deeply, about food, slavery, and globalization. No one can connect these diverse topics more effectively than Judith Carney. Building on her pioneering study, *Black Rice*, Carney's absorbing new book--coauthored with Richard Nicholas Rosomoff--is original, wide-ranging, and provocative. Like a bountiful African gourd vine, this remarkable overview spreads in many directions and bears impressive fruit."--Peter H. Wood, author of *Strange New Land: Africans in Colonial America*

"In this highly original study, Judith Carney deliberately bypasses the huge (and hugely cruel) investment of slave labor power in the direct production of planter wealth. She offers in its place the less familiar chronicle of slave subsistence, and uncovers the essential role that African agricultural history had played in establishing and sustaining it. *In the Shadow of Slavery* goes back to Mother Africa, to shed new light on the Old World's part in the building of the New."--Sidney W. Mintz, author of *Sweetness & Power* and *Three Ancient Colonies* (forthcoming)

"Judith Carney has written a brilliant green history of the Black Atlantic, illuminating in creative, path-blazing ways the globalization of the magnificent African commons."--Marcus Rediker, author of *The Slave Ship: A Human History*

"*In the Shadow of Slavery* unveils an epic saga of global foodways involving African peoples and their African-American descendants. The authors brilliantly craft the historical and geographic story of the struggle to ensure the survival of their cultural-natural heritage, and the evolution of that heritage in the trans-Atlantic agrarian landscapes."--Karl S. Zimmerer, editor of *Globalization and New Geographies of Conservation*

"A fresh look at the African diaspora's far-reaching consequences by examining its effects on subsistence foods on both sides of the Atlantic. Carney provides a new understanding of the contributions that enslaved Africans made to American culture. An outstanding work."--Gail E. Wagner, University of South Carolina

"Following on the heels of her magnificent book *Black Rice*, Judith Carney delves deeper into the invisible history of the Black Atlantic's foodways. She provides nothing less than a radical re-reading of the role of Africans in shaping not simply New World agrarian systems but the ways in which food was processed, how animals were reared, husbanded and tended, and how African knowledge and practice contributed to the global table. *In the Shadow of Slavery* is a remarkable narrative achievement, a rich account of endurance, innovation, survival, travel and historical memory nourished not so much on the estates and plantations as on the slave plots, and in the hearths and kitchens of those who survived the Middle Passage. A tour de force."--Michael Watts, editor of *Curse Of The Black Gold: 50 Years of Oil in the Niger Delta*

"In this brilliant book, Judith Carney charts the diaspora of African flora that resulted largely as an unintended consequence of the forced migration of Africans from the Old World to the New. European slave ships unwittingly carried Africa's botanical heritage along with the people who valued it to the Americas. Africans cultivated foods crucial to their very survival in what Carney beautifully styles 'botanical gardens of the dispossessed'. A must-read for anyone interested in the circulation of plants, peoples, and competing knowledges in the Atlantic World."--Londa Schiebinger, author of *Plants and Empire: Colonial Bioprospecting in the Atlantic World*

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★★★★★ **Foods from the African diaspora** March 18, 2010

By [Pamela Robinson](#)

Format: Hardcover

The perception of Africa as a long-starving continent dependent on others to feed its people gets upended in "In the Shadow of Slavery: Africa's Botanical Legacy in the Atlantic World."

Authors Judith A. Carney and Richard Nicholas Rosomoff present a scholarly argument that African foods, originally brought aboard ships to keep both crews and slaves fed with familiar foods, came to the Americas and became part of the crops and foods eaten in the West. There are even some folk stories that have been passed down the generations of African women secreting away rice seeds in their children's hair so they would have something to eat once they were separated and that white owners discovered and took control of the seeds.

Even before the growth of the slave trade to the New World, European and Asian explorers and businessmen were finding and trading for African foodstuffs, with rice, millet, yams and plantains becoming popular.

References to foods originating in Africa turn up everywhere, in the memoirs of slave ship captains, Jesuit missionaries, plantation owners, and early visitors to the colonies of the New World. The success and value of the African foods is repeatedly noted in areas where slaves were allowed to grow their own crops for subsistence purposes. In many cases, the early settlers were forced to turn to their slaves' foods when European foodstuffs were not available.

Carney delves into the specific plants and their regions of origin, noting that many New World colonists refer to items from "Guinea," meaning western Africa, or attach the word "Angola" to others.

This is another rock-solid contribution to overlooked American history, one that alters the image of helpless Africans utterly dependent on their masters for survival.

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★★★★★ **crisp and accessible treatment of the Columbian Exchange** March 13, 2011

By [hmf22](#)

Format: Paperback

The Columbian Exchange has been a hot topic since Alfred Crosby's 1973 monograph of that title, but the conventional wisdom, now featured in many textbooks, is that the Columbian Exchange chiefly involved the transfer of crops from the New World to the Old World and

animals and diseases from Old World to New. Africa is usually depicted as a passive beneficiary of New World crops rather than as an active partner in the Columbian Exchange. In this impressive work, Judith Ann Carney and Richard Nicholas Rosomoff detail the many, many plants that traveled from Africa to the Americas, including millet, sorghum, rice, yams, plantains, taro, coffee, cola nuts, sesame, watermelon, okra, and pepper. (There is a complete list on pp. 136-137.) Some of these crops originated in Africa; in other cases, West Africa served as a conduit for species that originated in Asia. Carney and Rosomoff explore how African plants (as well as some animals) got to the New World and how and why they took root after arriving there. In doing so, they provide fascinating sidelights on the Atlantic slave trade, South American maroon communities, and slaveholders' widespread practice of allowing and expecting slaves to grow some or much of their own food. All this in less the 200 pages, with copious illustrations, detailed footnotes, and a bibliography. Highly recommended.

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★★★★★ **This could be a diet book!** March 15, 2011

By [Harry C. Riley](#)

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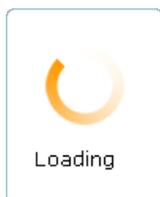
I read this book and then reread it and I realized this is the only book that talks about us and our botanical expertise in the New and Old World! I could be wrong! You get a very good idea of how early African Americans ate and how we survived and what we grew in our gardes that will sustain use in hard times. I also have new culinary ideas from the book and realize whky certain foods are more prominent in the different culture of the new world. This book is a must read for any one who wants to garden for health or just do it how it was done!

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