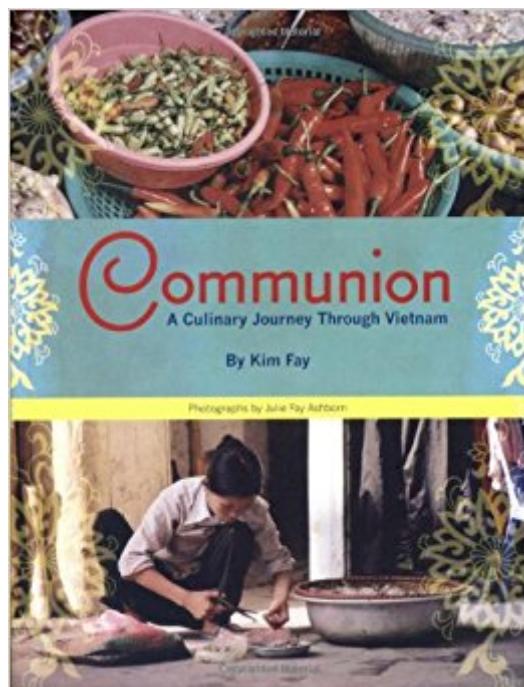


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# Communion: A Culinary Journey Through Vietnam



## Synopsis

Living in Vietnam for four years in the 1990s, Seattle native Kim Fay fell in love with the romantic landscapes, the rich culture, and the uninhibited warmth of the people. A decade later, she grew hungry for more. Inspired by the dream of learning to make a Vietnamese meal for her friends and family in America, Kim returned to Vietnam and embarked on an unforgettable five-week culinary journey from Hanoi to Saigon. Joined by her sister and best Vietnamese girlfriend, Kim set off to taste as much as possible while exploring rituals and traditions, street cafÃ©s and haute cuisine, famine and feast, and Communism and the legacy of war. Together, the three women discovered a society shaped by its ever-changing relationship with food. Every encounter serves up an enticing morsel, from uncovering the secret world of ragu in the French hill town of Dalat to bonding with the Julia Child of Vietnam in Saigon. Epicures and culture buffs will delight in markets, restaurants, farms, fisheries, and cooking classes as Kim assembles her dream meal and shares recipes such as banana flower salad and clay pot fish. Examining how we eat reflects who we are as individuals and as communities, *Communion: A Culinary Journey Through Vietnam* offers a feast for armchair gourmets, as well as a colorful guide for travelers hungering for their next adventure. Â

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Fay writes a poignant, funny and engrossing tale of food, culture and tradition in a country obviously so dear to her heart." --Zester Daily, September 3, 2010 "An extraordinarily personal book." - Evan Kleiman --KCRW's Good Food, August 7, 2010 "Kim Fay has literally written the book on Vietnam (twice)." --NBC LA's Feast, August 4, 2010 "Kim captures the nugget of great food

writing. Ingredients are important--yes--but context is so much more so." --Rambling Spoon, June 16, 2010 "Fay evokes her favorite dishes with language that lingers in the mind as beloved tastes linger on the palate." --Gastronomica, Spring 2011 In Communion, Fay takes readers on a more personal culinary journey. There are a handful of recipes, but the focus is on her delicious prose, which will leave the reader yearning for an authentic taste of Vietnam. --Library Journal, March 1, 2010

Kim Fay Pacific Northwest native Kim Fay first traveled to Southeast Asia in 1991. She spent four years living in Vietnam and has traveled back frequently, writing about the region. As an expert on travel literature and Vietnam, she has been a guest speaker on NPR and has written for numerous publications, including Travel + Leisure. She is the creator and series editor of the To Asia With Love guidebooks. SheÂ lives in Los Angeles. Julie Fay Ashborn Julie Fay Ashbornâ™s travels through Southeast Asia inspired her photography in To Asia With Love, To Vietnam With Love, and The Little Saigon Cookbook. She was raised in the Pacific Northwest and now lives in Los Angeles with her husband Clive, daughter Charlie, and son Oliver. Â

I always think that the planning and preparation for a big trip is half the fun, and Communion played a huge part in making my recent trip to Vietnam truly memorable. Kim Fay doesn't tell you about Vietnam, she takes you there. You can see it, smell it, taste it. I also bought the usual travel guides that told me what I should see, how to get there, and where to stay. Fay told me why I needed to go in the first place. Fay's travels with her sister, Julie, and friend, Huong, are a quest for the real Vietnam, not the one in the travel guides. Since she had lived there before, she knew what she was looking for. When I was researching for my trip, Communion opened my eyes to so many unforeseen things. How so much of the traditional cuisine was being lost, and the valiant effort of some to keep it alive. How difficult it was for the "winners" of the Vietnam war. We came home and continued living the American dream. They were just beginning to realize how hard their lives were to be in their victory. She brings many people to life, sharing their struggles and triumphs after the war. She relates how significant food is to the average Vietnamese person - the choice of every ingredient in every dish is purposeful, meaningful, and personal. I consider myself to be a foodie but this was a revelation to me. This intimate relationship between people and the true nature of every ingredient. I will never just sit and eat again. One of the main reasons for my trip to Vietnam was to go to cooking school. I did a lot of research on various schools but after reading Communion, I knew I had to meet Ms. Vy at the Morning Glory Cooking School in Hoi An. Fay's account of Ms. Vy was

so compelling and interesting. After spending time in the kitchen with Ms. Vy, I can say that Fay's impressions of her were spot on. She was as delightful and amazing as Fay portrayed her. Thanks, Kim, for a great find! The book gave me a great laundry list of places to go, things to do, people to see, and helped me compile the most important list - Things to Eat. And, for the most part, I did find and eat the wonderful dishes Fay recommended. Her descriptions were so good that when I finally did get to eat one of those much anticipated dishes, I didn't experience surprise, just a deeply satisfying, "I knew it would be that good." The book is now on my cookbook shelf, a handy reference for some of the mainstays of Vietnamese cuisine. Only instead of just a recipe with a list of ingredients and directions, I know what it is like to struggle to make the perfect spring roll, having heard it first from Fay's own personal experiences in the kitchen with her adopted Vietnamese family. One thing I regret about the trip was that I decided not to take the Communion book with me. I had read it twice, taken some great notes, but I always travel as light as possible. I was constantly wishing I had Communion with me to get Fay's take on something. Her account feels like a dear friend telling me about her trip, personal and intimate. It would be exactly the trip I would want if I could take my closest girlfriends to Vietnam. If you are planning a trip to Vietnam, read this first. If not, read Communion, then head to the nearest Vietnamese restaurant. Everything you eat will taste amazing!

Haven't made any of the recipes as yet, but Asian dishes are excellent.

This book was recommended to me when I share my desire to visit Vietnam. I love that the author shared her experience that centered around her culinary exploration. Food, sharing and cooking of Food, is such an universal experience. This book enrich my memories of my heritage.

Read in preparation for an upcoming trip thinking I would just learn a bit about the food of Vietnam. Feel I've learned much more and am all the more looking forward to my adventure because of this book.

Filled with lovely photographs, fantastic recipes and wonderfully detailed anecdotes about travel, cuisine, history and cultural mores, this is a great book for anyone with an interest in Vietnam. I saw it on a friend's shelf and borrowed it. It's provided me with many great, authentic recipes and piqued my interest in making the trip myself.

Well written and Easy to read. Great photos. I Could almost smell the food and feel the heat and humidity. A perfect book for a traveler and foodie!

This is the best book for any traveler to Vietnam

I really like her book.

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