



More than a Meal: The Turkey in History, Myth, Ritual, and Reality

Karen Davis

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This scholarly and authoritative book examines the cultural and literal history, as well as the natural history and biological needs and concerns of turkeys. Davis explores how turkeys came to be seen as birds who were not only the epitome of failure or stupidity but also the suitable centerpiece of the celebration of freedom in America itself—Thanksgiving. She examines the many varieties of turkeys and uncovers the methods by which millions of turkeys are raised, fattened, and slaughtered on farms around America today.

Davis takes us back to European folklore about turkeys, the myths, fairytales, and downright lies told about turkeys and their habits and habitats. She shows how turkeys in the wild have complex lives and family units, and how they were an integral part of Native American and continental cultures and landscape before the Europeans arrived.

Finally, Davis draws conclusions about our paradoxical, complex, and "bestial" relationship not just with turkeys, but with all birds, and thus with all other animals. She examines how our treatment of animals shapes our other values about ourselves, our relationship with other human beings, and our attitude toward the land, nation, and the world.

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