

straightforward. The price will put the book out of the reach of most individuals.

H. E. Nursten

Handbook of Indigenous Fermented Foods. (2nd edn). Ed. K. H. Steinkraus. Marcel Dekker, New York, 1996. ISBN 0 82479 352 8. 792 pp. Price: £128.

The first edition of this book was the result of Herculean efforts by Professor Steinkraus and four co-editors to turn the literature and papers submitted to the 1977 Bangkok Symposium on Indigenous Fermented Foods into a comprehensive and cohesive book which has been the standard work in the area ever since. It is now 11 years since that publication and the intervening years have seen much development in the area. Unfortunately, most of these developments are not incorporated into this new edition. At least three quarters of the book is identical to the previous edition, including references to 'recent research' dated 1977 and the inclusion of costs, prices and scale of manufacture data for years ranging from 1968 to 1976. In some cases, newer

literature is given as an addendum to chapters but has not been incorporated into the body of the text. There are some additional topics and reorganisations, such as a section on 'Lactic acid fermented foods for feeding infants' and the creation of a new chapter for 'Food fermentations involving an alkaline fermentation', but even here inconsistency leaves natto in its original location rather than in the new chapter. In mitigation, it is true that to review and update the whole of the literature on indigenous fermented foods has become too big a task for one person and if there is to be a true third edition of this book it will surely be multi-authored. In sum, it is more accurate to describe this book as a reprint with additions rather than as a revised and expanded second edition, as claimed by the publishers. Hence, if you already own a first edition there is little need to purchase the second edition. If you do not have the first edition, then this book is still an unrivalled compendium of the infinite variety of indigenous fermented foods that are made around the world, but one that is a starting point rather than a review of current knowledge.

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