

The Pineapple: King Of Fruits - Francesca Beaman

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This enchanting, juicy history takes us from the pineapple's origins in the Amazon rainforests to its first tasting by Columbus in Guadeloupe and its starring role on the royal dinner tables of Europe. In the eighteenth-century this spectacular fruit reigned supreme: despite the fact that, at first, to cultivate just one cost the same as a new coach, every great house soon boasted its own steaming pits filled with hundreds upon hundreds of pineapple plants. As the Prada handbag of its day, a real-life, homegrown pineapple was a powerful status symbol, so much so that at first, it was extremely unusual actually to eat the fruit. The image appeared on gateposts, on teapots, furniture and wallpaper. A new phase opened when growers in the Caribbean began supplying pineapples in the 1840s and later the first canning factory was built in Hawaii. As the story rolls on, through the heyday of pineapple chunks and cocktails, right up to the fashions of today, it touches on pineapples and sex, pineapples and empire, pineapples in art. Why is the pineapple so special? In one surprising sense it is indeed ideal. Made up of hundreds of separate fruitlets, its spirals embody the gradations of the Golden Mean - it is mathematically perfect. But it is more than that - for years a focus of traveller's tales, it is a treasure of sight and scent and taste.

Packed with fascinating illustrations, this delicious book sees Fran Beaman explore the life and lore of the king of fruits: scholarly, witty and fun, it is a true hamper of delights.

Author: Beaman, Francesca
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