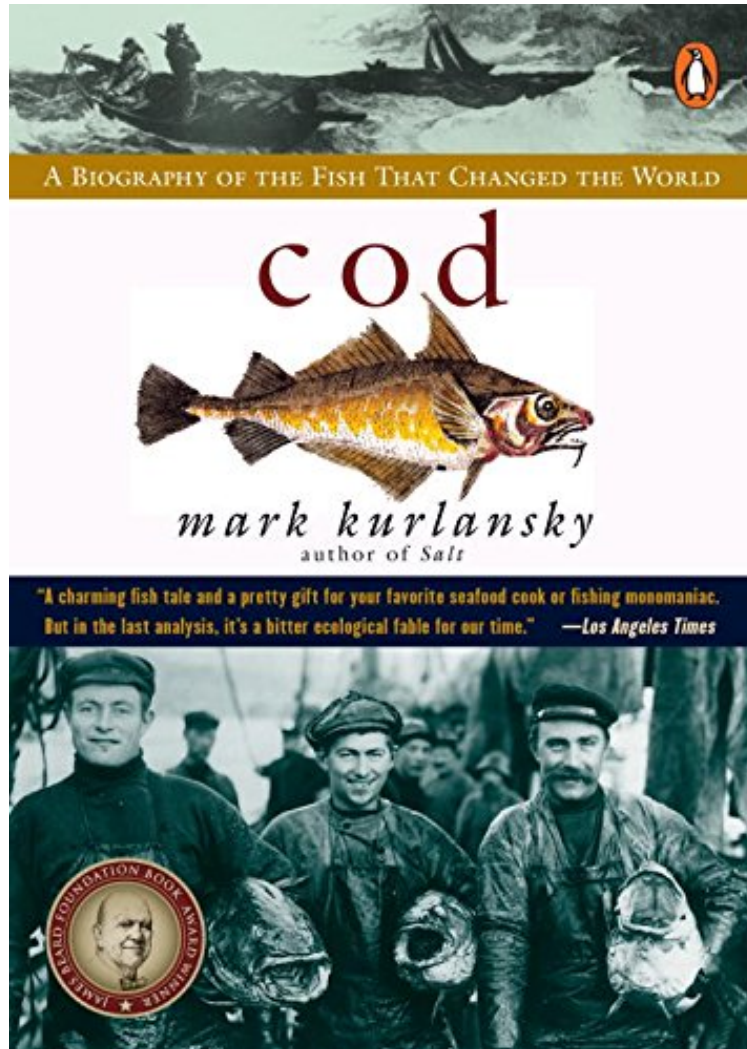


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## Cod: A Biography of the Fish that Changed the World

Mark Kurlansky

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#16822 in Books Mark Kurlansky 1998-07-01 1998-07-01Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 7.09 x .52 x 5.071, .43 #File Name: 0140275010294 pagesCod A Biography of the Fish That Changed the World | File size: 54.Mb

**Mark Kurlansky : Cod: A Biography of the Fish that Changed the World** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Cod: A Biography of the Fish that Changed the World:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Excellent ReadBy KennPettyI found the book Cod: A Biography of the Fish That Changed the World fascinating as the author stepped me through the history of Man searching for Cod to feed a burgeoning population in Europe and the nationalistic forces at work as well as the technological advances in fishing methods that allowed for ever growing catches while the fish stocks were dwindling over time due to overfishing. The fact that explorers who "discovered" North America found basque fishing vessels already there was

another interesting fact. The book is also filled with recipes and interesting anecdotes to help the reader understand how much the Cod has been an enabler in Western cultural development. The information on the development of Iceland into a modern western country during and after World War II and the "Cod Wars" between Iceland and Great Britain were interesting and to my surprise have come up in recent news reports about fishing quota disagreements between Iceland and the European Union. The writing is accessible and well done. As a comprehensivist I appreciated the well-crafted narrative that weaves all the connections between history, biology, technology, the rise of nations and geopolitical forces into a rich tapestry with a panoramic scope of interconnectedness. I look forward to reading his next book *Salt: A World History* which I just bought. 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. An incredible history, but not always a gripping read. By Bradley Nelson As a chef and history buff, this book seemed like it would be right up my alley. And I will admit that many portions of the book were utterly fascinating, specifically those regarding the complete history of cod fishing and the very nature of the cod itself. However, this book is not just a history of cod. It has an agenda, admittedly a good one, to protect the cod of the northern Atlantic. I'm all for that, but I didn't read this book to be convinced of that. The entire last chapter is essentially an emotional sob story of former cod fisherman, unable to do the work of their forefathers. Kudos to Kurlansky for that, but it felt like it belonged in a newspaper op-ed page, not a historical work. Aside from that, there are also a couple chapters that were a bit tough to get through, which may not be Kurlansky's fault, but perhaps of the subject itself. It's a small book and only took a couple days to get through, but unless this is a topic that immediately strikes your fancy, you might not finish it. But for any chef or history buff, I would still recommend this book, as it offers some pretty critical insight into a fish that really did change the world. 2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Reminds us that history is often made by economics. By Wayne A. Smith The author presents a readable overview of a fish that really did change the world. Kurlansky shows that while "great men" often drive history, resources and economics dictate the range of their choices and as often as not give a strong clue as to the probable direction of events. That said, this book gives tantalizing views of one of mankind's toughest and most dangerous industries - fishing. The reader may well appreciate the juxtaposition of gritty cod town life and the movement of nations in search of this most perfect food source. The book moves along quickly.

An unexpected, energetic look at world history on sea and land from the bestselling author of *Salt* and *The Basque History of the World*. Cod, Mark Kurlansky's third work of nonfiction and winner of the 1999 James Beard Award, is the biography of a single species of fish, but it may as well be a world history with this humble fish as its recurring main character. Cod, it turns out, is the reason Europeans set sail across the Atlantic, and it is the only reason they could. What did the Vikings eat in icy Greenland and on the five expeditions to America recorded in the Icelandic sagas? Cod, frozen and dried in the frosty air, then broken into pieces and eaten like hardtack. What was the staple of the medieval diet? Cod again, sold salted by the Basques, an enigmatic people with a mysterious, unlimited supply of cod. As we make our way through the centuries of cod history, we also find a delicious legacy of recipes, and the tragic story of environmental failure, of depleted fishing stocks where once their numbers were legendary. In this lovely, thoughtful history, Mark Kurlansky ponders the question: Is the fish that changed the world forever changed by the world's folly? Every once in a while a writer of particular skill takes a fresh, seemingly improbable idea and turns out a book of pure delight. Such is the case of Mark Kurlansky and the codfish. David McCullough, author of *The Wright Brothers* and *1776*

.com You probably enjoy eating codfish, but reading about them? Mark Kurlansky has written a fabulous book--well worth your time--about a fish that probably has mattered more in human history than any other. The cod helped inspire the discovery and exploration of North America. It had a profound impact upon the economic development of New England and eastern Canada from the earliest times. Today, however, overfishing is a constant threat. Kurlansky sprinkles his well-written and occasionally humorous history with interesting asides on the possible origin of the word codpiece and dozens of fish recipes. Sometimes a book on an offbeat or neglected subject really makes the grade. This is one of them. From *Library Journal* In this engaging history of a "1000-year fishing spree," Kurlansky (*A Continent of Islands: Searching for the Caribbean Destiny*, LJ 1/92) traces the relationship of cod fishery to such historical eras and events as medieval Christianity and Christian observances; international conflicts between England and Germany over Icelandic cod; slavery, the molasses trade, and the dismantling of the British Empire; and, the evolution of a sophisticated fishing industry in New England. Kurlansky relates this information in an entertaining style while providing accurate scientific information. The story does not have a happy ending, however. The cod fishery is in trouble, deep trouble, as the Atlantic fish has been fished almost to extinction. Quoting a scientist from the Woods Hole Biological Laboratory, Massachusetts, Kurlansky notes that to forecast the recovery of the cod population is to gamble: "There is only one known calculation: 'When you get to zero, it will produce zero.'" Highly recommended for all general collections. ?Mary J. Nickum, Bozeman, Mont. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Booklist* When something is said to have "changed the world," it is either a technological innovation or an article of trade. The North Atlantic cod is the latter, which may come as news nowadays, when it is best known as having

virtually vanished from the Grand Banks, ruining the once robust fishing economies of maritime Canada and New England. Kurlansky introduces the delectable white-fleshed fish's long history by taking us out with some Newfoundland fishermen now employed in surveying the remaining cod population. But then he backtracks to tell an epic of transoceanic trade. Cod was for 1,000 years a commodity central to Europe's development and, through Europe, to development in North America, the West Indies, and Africa. Indeed, the Basques of northwestern Iberia and then the Norse discovered America well before Columbus when they probed westward, fishing for cod. Later, the fish became essential to slavery: the best dried cod was exchanged in Europe for goods to be traded for humans in Africa, while lower grades, still highly nutritious, were sold to feed West Indian plantation slaves. That is just some of the grand-scale history Kurlansky relays with maximum readability, plenty of handsome illustrations, and a 40-page appendix of superlatively annotated recipes. Ray Olson