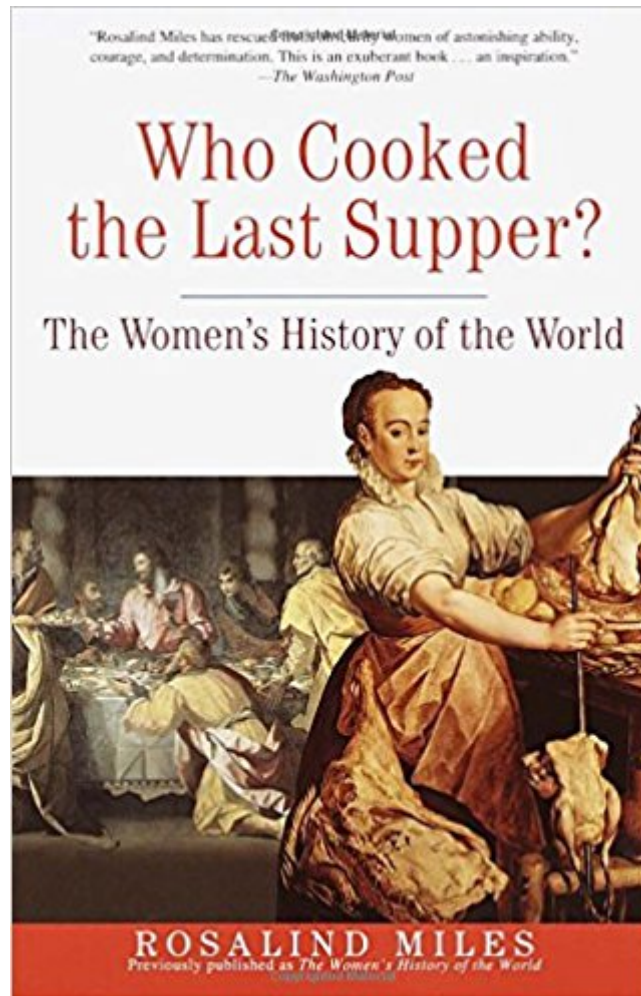


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# Who Cooked The Last Supper: The Women's History Of The World



## Synopsis

Who Cooked the Last Supper? overturns the phallusy of history and gives voice to the untold history of the world: the contributions of millions of unsung women. Men dominate history because men write history. There have been many heroes, but no heroines. Here, in Who Cooked the Last Supper?, is the history you never learned--but should have! Without politics or polemics, this brilliant and witty book overturns centuries of preconceptions to restore women to their rightful place at the center of culture, revolution, empire, war, and peace. Spiced with tales of individual women who have shaped civilization, celebrating the work and lives of women around the world, and distinguished by a wealth of research, Who Cooked the Last Supper? redefines our concept of historical reality.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

For every woman who has ever wondered what the women were doing while generals fought battles and kings beheaded their enemies (and for every man who hasn't), this book is for you. Originally published as The Women's History of the World, this reissue comes complete with Rosalind Miles's wry wit and disarming puns on everything from the phallus to bride sales, a very necessary comic relief to the recounting of centuries of abuse and oppression. Miles's engaging story starts with the first woman and her contribution of the essential human gene imprint, and the great evolutionary leap made by the development of monthly menstruation (rather than occasional heat). From the very beginning, women played a central role in human evolution, from their critical part in sustaining early tribes with their food gathering (hunting brought marginal food

contributions) to the impetus for developing the first technologies--sticks for digging and slings for carrying babies. In fact, the first God and the first priest-poet were female. Miles gives a relishing description of the Great Goddess Mother and her worshipers, poets, priests, queens, lovers, athletes, and soldiers who had not yet been told that they were physically weak, emotionally unstable, or intellectually inferior. The history of women is, of necessity, also the history of men, and Miles claims the turning point for the former came when the latter finally got the great Aha!--the realization that sperm was essential for fertilization and that men weren't as superfluous to procreation as previously believed. What follows is not only the story of the attack on women's bodies and repression of their lives, but of women who found ways to subvert and convert the power of men. Examples of active, courageous, and inspiring women abound, from women warriors in Islam to the woman doctor who opened the first birth control clinic. Miles also reveals the barbaric truths behind euphemisms like chastity belt and child bride, and the truly impressive strength of such heroines as Florence Nightingale, who was nicknamed "the lady with the hammer" for attacking a locked storeroom when she needed nursing supplies, and Harriet "General" Tubman, who not only smuggled black slaves to freedom but commanded an action during the Civil War that liberated more than 750 blacks. This is a bracing, disturbing, and always lively read and proves definitively that in history there were always women, too. --Lesley Reed

**A Woman's Place** There may have been only men sitting at the table, but *Who Cooked the Last Supper?* asks writer Rosalind Miles (I, Elizabeth; Guenevere, Queen of the Summer Country). Bent on setting the record straight, Miles offers a keen and passionate look at women's contributions to civilizations from hunter-gatherer societies to the present, shining a spotlight into neglected corners as well as on familiar figures: who knew, for example, that Florence Nightingale defied a military commander and, wielding a hammer, broke into a locked storeroom after he refused to give her medical supplies? Readers will delight in this rebel-rousing read, previously published in 1990 by HarperPerennial as *The Women's History of the World*. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

**4.5 Stars** What does this book cover? This book is organized into 4 sections with 3 chapters each. Part one (In the Beginning) covers the first women--detailing prehistoric women's roles and importance; the great goddess--discussing early women centric beliefs; and the rise of the Phallus--discussing sexuality and setting the stage for the overthrow of female rights,

bloodlines, and worship. Part two (The Fall of Woman) covers God the father documenting how the organization of monotheist religions established unequal balances of power; the sins of the Mothers exposing the abuses inflicted upon women because of their bodies; and a little learning exploring how the development of literacy offered escapes as well as further suppression of women. Part three (Dominion and Domination) covers women's work exposing the myth that women not only did less work than men but also the difficulty and unpleasantness of much of her manual labor; revolution, the great engine looking at distinctly different types of revolutions yet how they both failed to usurp the status quo; and the rod of empire exposing how imperialism further served to oppress and abuse women and extend the patriarchy. Part four (Turning the Tide) covers the rights of women discussing the modern developments that continues to oppress women and the beginnings of the women's movement; the body politic discussing the role of contraception; and daughters of time further detailing the advancement of contraception as well as the strides of the second wave of the women's movement.

Triggers: Religion readers who are unwilling to see past the inherent misogyny in major world religions will have issues with this. My advice to readers keep an open mind and check your own affiliations at the door. Abuse physical, psychological, sexual; you name it, it's documented here. Violence including rape, genital mutilation, female infanticide, and murder. Oh and some ridiculous contraception ideas. It's not pretty, but it's women's history without all the whitewashing. My advice to readers bring tissues and don't eat lunch first.

Controversies: At times, does the author belittle and reduce the importance men played in not just history but the advancement of the human race? Absolutely, but isn't that what traditional history has done to women? Until an edition of world history where the sexes are presented equally becomes the mainstream text, readers are going to have to accept that as long as sexism exists a universal human history is out of reach.

Historical Accuracy: I am not a historian so I can't comment on the complete accuracy of every incident and historical event referenced in this text. However, I think an objective historian would agree (and many have) that a vast number of history texts out there aren't accurate either, whether through omissions, hero-making, and/or outright misrepresentations. It's interesting though how those texts were accepted for so long, yet let a woman offer up a book on history that proposes that it was the female of the species who had the greatest role in the continuation of the human race,

and so much of her credibility and the credibility of the text is called into question. It is also disturbing how some readers see bias in this work but not the work of the male dominated texts on the market and utilized in the public school systems. That alone says a lot about the extent that sexism is so subconsciously rooted in society. We've somehow been trained to accept HStory but not hers. And this is a large problem which I believe the text addresses. History has been shaped and documented through various fields of study where women were not only ignored and dismissed but consciously omitted by men in favor of a pro-male view where man is more important to the survival of human kind than women. Accepted history texts lack the incorporation of women's role, if not their very existence, throughout places in history. Once you accept that women and their story have been suppressed, one must pose the next logical question of why. Miles attempts to answer this. Shortcomings: There are certainly places in the text where sources and exact time periods could be clearer in a wider context and background, as well as a fuller picture of the examples would be beneficial. The author assumes the reader has a developed formal education and prior knowledge of people, incidents, and events in history. There are admittedly also places where Miles's word choice might be going for effect but at the same time distorts her claims. For example, a good editor might have recommended that she substitute "only" with "largely" when referring to Jackie O and Lady Di's fame and accomplishments via their "royal" men. Were their life's accomplishments solely tied to their husbands? No. But would they be the historical icons they are had they not married those men in the first place? Nope. In another instance, replacing "no" with "minimal" when asserting men's function and significance under Goddess culture might help avoid the obvious contradiction that comes a few paragraphs/pages later. How I felt reading this book: Some chapters made me feel proud to be a woman and inspired to work towards advancing equality. Some chapters made me angry "the injustices, the abuses" it's a gut-wrenching history pill to swallow. Some chapters I was holding back the tears. This isn't a light read nor should the subject matter be taken lightly, but it is important to understand. Is this a feminist text? By definition (cited here from Merriam-Webster dictionary) and largely from a scholarly theorist perspective feminism is "the theory of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes as well as organized activity on behalf of women's rights and interests." This book offers theories (along with and backed by research from various fields of study) of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes so in that frame of reference it's a feminist text. But bear in mind that over the years the term feminism has taken on a variety of negative connotations (often the work of its opposition in an attempt to discredit it), but I'm not going

to give recognition to those distortions. Why this text is still relevant: The lack of a women's history or women studies discipline in general education curriculums have left a large crux of 21st century women and men uninformed and misinformed. And though originally published in 1988, and thus the last nearly thirty years are not included, this book not only documents women's struggles through the ages, but also points to issues still at the forefront today. Women and men living in 2017 should possess a basic understanding of how history has swayed backwards and forward through slow transitions and difficult strides towards equality. We can't assume that because it's been won, that it can't be taken away. From the very beginning of time, women weren't affronted with inequality; instead they descended to it. Many rights that were won in the 20th century were given freely in earlier civilizations. Women's equality has not historically been a linear progression, but more a series of setbacks and advances as societal conditions change. Women's oppression, while universal and unrelenting for millennia, varies widely by class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and religion. There is no one answer to fix all ills. Bottom Line / Hard Truths: If you are looking for a fluff piece highlighting well known women through the ages, this is not one of them. This text looks at historical trends and attempts to offer viable explanations (through what little evidence and unbiased scholarship there is on certain time frames) as to not just what women were doing while men were getting all the credit, but why they were omitted in the first place. And I suspect that might be what some readers struggle with—the idea that it became a conscious effort to suppress women's voices and women's contributions. It's mind boggling really that one can acknowledge women's absence from traditional text but still refuse to admit there is a long standing patriarchal bias that made it that way in the first place. It's as if some readers want to know what's missing but don't want to face the disturbing realities of its absence.

A wonderful overview of history from the female perspective. This book is not hostile or frustrated, but rather opens us all to see that our world has been equally dependent on the woman and the man. I enjoyed it to a great extent.

Don't read this book if you're not prepared to be angry and upset. It was so full of facts and ideas that it took awhile to read and absorb, but it is a history of women from pre-written history until the current era. The first part relied on archeology and current primitive cultures to ascertain what happened before written history, and I thought that part took some liberties that weren't necessarily warranted, but it certainly told an interesting story. The rest is a relentless telling of how women

came to be and are kept in subjugation and how some women were able to break free.

Enlightening, but not a comfortable read.

I found this a very good description of the plight of women throughout recorded history. Seen as possessions or at best second class humans the female of the species has been relegated to the sidelines of the historical record. Rosalind Miles tells the story well and the touches of humor lift the text from becoming too depressing. Well worth the time taken to read this work.

Who Cooked the Last Supper? is a wonderful history of women. It looks at the history of men and women's interactions from the earliest history to the 1970s, and is filled with interesting insights, sharp sarcasm and many hilarious interludes. Her approach to history, looking at the role of women through their roles in religion and the rise of monotheism as the turning point where it all went wrong, is fascinating. While the primary focus of her research is Europe, she does include a wide breadth of information about Australians Aborigines, African Tribes, India, and the role of women in some parts of East Asia. I would recommend this book to anyone interested in women's history, feminism, or gender roles.

couldn't really get going on this book, read a couple chapters and quit reading it

good read

This book could have been light: with fun and little known facts .... or heavy: with treatise ... it tried to be both and doesn't cut it

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