



Cooking with Grease: Stirring the Pots in America

Donna Brazile

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Cooking with Grease is an inspiring, behind-the-scenes memoir of the life and times of a tenacious political organizer and the first African-American woman to head a major presidential campaign.

Donna Brazile fought her first political fight at age nine -- campaigning (successfully) for a city council candidate who promised a playground in her neighborhood. The day after Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, she committed her heart and her future to political and social activism. By the 2000 presidential election, Brazile had become a major player in American political history -- and she remains one of the most outspoken and forceful political activists of our day.

Brazile grew up one of nine children in a working-poor family in New Orleans, a place where talking politics comes as naturally as stirring a pot of seafood gumbo -- and where the two often go hand in hand. Growing up, she learned how to cook from watching her mother, Jean, stir the pots in their family kitchen. She inherited her love of reading and politics from her grandmother Frances. Her brothers Teddy Man and Chet worked as foot soldiers in her early business schemes and in her voter registration efforts as a child.

Cooking with Grease follows Donna's rise to greater and greater political and personal accomplishments. But each new career success came with its own kind of heartache, especially in her greatest challenge: leading Al Gore's 2000 campaign, making her the first African American to lead a major presidential campaign.

Cooking with Grease is an intimate account of Donna's thirty years in politics. Her witty style and innovative political strategies have garnered her the respect and admiration of colleagues and adversaries alike -- she is as comfortable trading quips with Karl Rove as she is with her Democratic colleagues. Her story is as warm and nourishing as a bowl of Brazile family gumbo.

Cooking with Grease: Stirring the Pots in America Details

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From Reader Review Cooking with Grease: Stirring the Pots in America for online ebook

Sue Lusk says

I really liked this political history as told from her journey through the ranks of the Democratic party , she has a great story to tell, only gave it 3 stars though because seriously she really needed a great editor to compliment her story. Hard to follow at times. With that said it was a quick read told from her perspective.

Kecia says

Let me start by saying Al Gore will always be my 43rd President and that is the context of which I started reading Cooking with Grease.

I enjoyed Cooking with Grease but her editors really did a poor job. The last few chapters were really chopped up and that was the part of her story I most wanted to read the most. It was frustrating because everything was almost in Cliff Notes format.

What I learned was that she has a good relationship with my former Congressman and neighbor, Dick Gephardt. That was a nice surprise.

Even though Cooking with Grease was published before the 2004 election but I still found it remarkable that of all the names she names in this book, one name did not appear...Barack Obama. Go figure.

Now, where can I get a good fried shrimp po'boy?

Miah D says

I lov4 Donna Brazile the political strategist. I db't carr the same feelings for Donna Brazile the writer. Her story is compelling, but at best choppily written. She needs an editor--badly. An editor would be able to take a great story and turn it into great writing. Overall, this is an easy read that I would recommend for a women looking for insiration, but beware that there are llots of pages of "Famous Donna Brazile Name Dropping" mixed with misplaced southern cooking metaphors.

Again, the story is inspiring, compelling and inspirational. The writing is flat.

Simon says

It seemed a bit preachy, and ego driven.

Bookworm says

Definitely not a great memoir for politics. Although I was really interested in reading Brazile's story after following her on Twitter for quite a while, seeing her name here and there, etc. I didn't know all that much about her. As election is ramping up I thought this would be another helpful read (as well as a book for fulfilling my desire to read as many books by black authors for Black History Month as possible), but unfortunately it didn't turn out that way. As other reviews mention, it's pretty poorly edited and Brazile's own story isn't that fascinating in this retelling.

While I did find her childhood and young adulthood interesting (including how growing up in poverty, the Civil Rights Movement, etc. all shaped her views), it's really boring. I thought I'd like it better as it moved into her political work but again, this just wasn't a very interesting story. The name-dropping did not upset me as it seemed to for other reviewers (politics can be an insular world where everyone knows everyone else and she DID work with some prominent, nationally known politicians).

I did find certain anecdotes interesting. The story of how she got fired from the Dukakis campaign was really fascinating, but those few pages were among the few highlights in the book. It's a pity because she obviously has unique insights, but when I put down the book after I had finished I just felt like I didn't get a lot out of it.

As it was published in 2004, it was interesting to see this prior to the election Obama and the present-day/more recent politics but I just couldn't help but feel really bored. It's no 'Game Change'. And while I certainly couldn't expect it to be as entertaining, I just couldn't help but feel this was a missed opportunity. Got as a bargain book but would really recommend getting it from the library unless you need it for a specific reason (ie research on a campaign she worked on).

YT says

Brazile, Brazile, Brazile. I have to give her the fact that she grew up while racism was a word of depth in the US. With that being said, let me share the most shocking part of the book (and it almost made me stop reading):...her mother comment something about her being like the other girls, to what she responded: "...if I grew up to be like the other girls, then I'd be going after her husband, like all the other girls". Let it be said that the man she is referring here is her biological father. That is the most disrespectful thing I have ever read, I couldn't even think about trying to make or even try to explain that rationale to my mother, just to make my point...once I read that, I was biased.

Brazile grew up to be a big deal in the Democratic party, she brags about it a lot during the entire book, but when she got to handle a presidential campaign it seems she couldn't control her staff and when things were going bad she referred to it as "the campaign" as in trying to distance herself from it.

Another thing I did not like was the way black people (or "her people" as she called them) are portrayed in this book. She was very emphatic that she always wanted to bring black people to the table, and she made it a priority. But, isn't it supposed to be about talent regardless of color? and to put the lid on the top, she once mentioned she was also working on getting the Hispanic vote for her candidate but she did not mention once in the entire book what she did to gain knowledge about the Hispanics needs...meaning, that section of the population was only votes for her. She also claims to be the most fervent catholic yet she was campaigning for pro choice options.

The book is interesting but the duality of thought is what got me uncomfortable. Brazile has been working

since a child and her career paths at least have had good intentions.

Donna Kubiak says

Life story of one of my favorite CNN political strategists. This book shows her determination and perserverance toward doing what she started wanting to do when she was a young child..manage a presidential campaign,which she did for Al Gore. Pretty uplifting for a woman to do this typical male job. And do it well!

Elly says

Very interesting. It was interesting to read the inside story of the 2000 'hanging chad' election.

Irene says

This needed a good editor. Listing the address of every office from which she worked and the names of the roads she traveled between her residence and each office was dragged down the prose. We also did not need to know that every liberal, African-American political figure of note as well as most white liberals in politics were her very bestest friend. Her self insight seems to reach its highest level in high school, or early college. After that, she seems to continue to view her experiences through the same lense of awareness. The self-congratulatory tone and self-praise for being the lone consistant champion of the down trodden became grating after the first post-college chapter.

Paulatics says

Donna is one of my heroes. This book is informative and enjoyable.

Beverly says

Donna Brazile is an inspiration to all who believe in being empowered by the right to vote and participate in the political process of this country! the book was a little choppy but her story is worth the lack of edited perfection.

Barbara says

Loved reading about Donna Brazile's childhood, imagining what a determined child she was. Found it very interesting how she moved back and forth from cause activism to political work. At 23 she was a key mover in the 20th anniversary of the March on Washington, organizing more people to attend it than had been at the original. The skills she picked up there perfectly positioned her to be a major player in her campaign work.

It's painful to read her recounting of how the Democrats take African-Americans for granted but don't want to be too closely associated with them. Reading about the role of Susan Estrich in the Dukakis campaign helped me understand her role in the 2008 campaign when she disrespected Obama and Obama voters repeatedly.

My only regret was that I didn't notice when I picked up the book that it was published in 2004. I want to hear her reflections on the years since then! I've always admired her, but now she's a real hero to me.

Mukeary says

A combination of how the author's difficult upbringing led to her passion for social justice which led to her choice of careers. Hearing her at Chautauqua was what motivated me to read this.

Polly Callahan says

author was head of Gore's campaign
students like it

Janet W. says

I really enjoyed the book. It seemed as if Donna Brazile was just talking to you instead of down to you. It was a fast read and I realize that sacrifice one has to make to really become successful.
