



# Building Houses Out of Chicken Legs: Black Women, Food, and Power

*Psyche A. Williams-Forson*

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

# Building Houses Out of Chicken Legs: Black Women, Food, and Power

*Psyche A. Williams-Forson*

**Building Houses Out of Chicken Legs: Black Women, Food, and Power** Psyche A. Williams-Forson  
Chicken--both the bird and the food--has played multiple roles in the lives of African American women from the slavery era to the present. It has provided food and a source of income for their families, shaped a distinctive culture, and helped women define and exert themselves in racist and hostile environments. Psyche A. Williams-Forson examines the complexity of black women's legacies using food as a form of cultural work. While acknowledging the negative interpretations of black culture associated with chicken imagery, Williams-Forson focuses her analysis on the ways black women have forged their own self-definitions and relationships to the "gospel bird."

Exploring material ranging from personal interviews to the comedy of Chris Rock, from commercial advertisements to the art of Kara Walker, and from cookbooks to literature, Williams-Forson considers how black women arrive at degrees of self-definition and self-reliance using certain foods. She demonstrates how they defy conventional representations of blackness in relationship to these foods and exercise influence through food preparation and distribution. Understanding these phenomena clarifies how present interpretations of blacks and chicken are rooted in a past that is fraught with both racism and agency. The traditions and practices of feminism, Williams-Forson argues, are inherent in the foods women prepare and serve.

## Building Houses Out of Chicken Legs: Black Women, Food, and Power Details

Date : Published June 1st 2006 by University of North Carolina Press (first published January 1st 2006)

ISBN : 9780807856864

Author : Psyche A. Williams-Forson

Format : Paperback 317 pages

Genre : Food and Drink, Food, Nonfiction, Cultural, African American, History, Food History

 [Download Building Houses Out of Chicken Legs: Black Women, Food, ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Building Houses Out of Chicken Legs: Black Women, Foo ...pdf](#)

**Download and Read Free Online Building Houses Out of Chicken Legs: Black Women, Food, and Power Psyche A. Williams-Forson**

---

## **From Reader Review Building Houses Out of Chicken Legs: Black Women, Food, and Power for online ebook**

### **lynnee denise says**

my lady pays attention to the details of who I am...can't wait to read this wonderful jewel of a birthday gift.

---

### **Ai Miller says**

This book was a great look at the complications of stereotypes surrounding chicken and Black women, and really resting in those complications and resisting easy answers. It was very tenderly done, and I really appreciated the care with which Williams-Forson handled the various issues at play: not just the stereotypes and answering them, but also the lived experiences of Black women regarding their relationships to women. For that careful handling, I really recommend this book, even if the subject isn't one that you might immediately think would be interesting.

---

### **Hannah Edinburgh says**

Really fascinating, and a subject I never would have thought about or realized was so complex. I skimmed the last few chapters and it was a little too scholastic for me in some parts, but I really liked it.

---

### **John says**

A look at chicken in African-American history and contemporary culture, the ways women in particular have used chickens and cooking as a source of agency. Interesting in some parts, but problematic at others. She wants Kara Walker to be more explicit about the intentions of her art, for instance, which seems absolutely unfeasible. Got to talk to the author on the phone for our class, though, and she seems a nice, intelligent person.

---

### **Margaret Sankey says**

Considered for the food class, this is an anthropological-historical study of the foodways of African-Americans Americans, from the economic reality that women and children could raise chickens for a little extra money on very little resources, selling fried chicken to train passengers for extra income (or making box lunches because of non-existent or segregated eating facilities), the oral histories of the rise and fall of the Coon chicken franchise, white women competing to have the best cooks and pirating their recipes for "Southern" cookbooks, the prestige of being chosen to host the preacher for Sunday dinner, Chris Rock and the "taking the big piece of chicken" routine and the trope in the subversive silhouette artwork of Karen Walker.

---

### **Nijla Mumin says**

This is by far one of the most interesting books I've ever read. It explores the links between black american history/culture and the food we eat, drawing from extensive primary documents and research. It poses that food within the black experience, especially chicken, not as something of stereotype, but actually a tool of resistance and independence (as enslaved black women were able to sell it at a time when they were considered property) and illustrates how our connection to it and other foods has been become mocked, racialized, and minstrel-ized over time. Amazing exploration of socio-cultural proportions!

yay

---

### **Frankie says**

I must be terribly naive. I expected a book about the great heritage of Black people and great cooking. This is a book about prejudice. Most of it was prejudice I didn't even know existed. And I would have read it with interest if it hadn't been so dry.

---

### **Katie Wilson says**

While I was expecting this book to be more in line with the "food writing" that I like reading, it contained much more cultural/race/gender theory than I was expecting, and quite frankly, could handle.

Read Full Review: <https://mybookbagblog.wordpress.com/2...>

---