

# [PDF] Fresh Off The Boat: A Memoir

**Eddie Huang - pdf download free book**

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Author: Eddie Huang  
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**Description:**

**Q&A with Eddie Huang**

**Q. You're a chef, but your restaurant doesn't show up in this book until pretty late. If you're not writing about your restaurant--the fabulous Baohaus in New York--then what are you writing about?**

A. Food is at the core of the book, but I examine it beyond the plate, almost as a symbol. There's only one recipe in this book and there are no measurements. I want people to understand the power that food has as a gateway drug into culture and history, but, first and foremost, my book tells a story

about growing up Taiwanese-Chinese in America. It's a story about unpacking your identity, purging yourself of the things your environment has imposed upon your consciousness, and trying to set yourself free. I refused the American Experience I was sold, remixed it for myself, chopped it up, and sold it back.

**Q. One of the powerful aspects of the book is the language you use, which feels completely original. Where does your voice come from?**

A. Language is constantly changing and the biggest disservice you can do to yourself and your reader is to write how you think you're "supposed to" write. My parents didn't really speak English at home, so I had to develop my English voice independently and mostly through pop culture--I grew up speaking Chinese, listening to hip hop, and watching cable television. Learning to trust my own voice was probably the most important thing I ever did. When I was in college, Richard Ford visited during a speaking series and criticized Ha Jin, who had just won the National Book Award, for writing in English because it wasn't his native tongue, implying that Ha Jin should stick to Chinese. I was just a half-assed student at the time, but I stood up and argued with Ford from my seat till they made me sit down. My mother speaks broken English but even with her comic disregard for subject-verb agreement, she throws mad knowledge darts. You should never worry about what others think about the language you use, as long as it's truly your own.

**Q. What do you want readers to take away from *Fresh Off the Boat*?**

A. The simple surface reading of this book is to be yourself by any means possible. That's the basic theme, but I want people to see how implementing a simple concept like that takes a struggle between you and your country, you and your city, you and your reference group, you and your family, you and your race, you and the sub cultures you subscribe to, and on and on. It's about the constant battle between that little voice inside you and the people you love, the legacy you carry, the cultures that make you curious, the country that tells you who you're supposed to be. It's about the complexity of being an individual--about finding love in family, in friends, in food, in music and culture, and a million other surprising places, and figuring out how to bring all that together inside of you. It's about learning to be fearless, but it's also about the cost of those lessons and the literal and psychic violence you encounter when you try to break free.

There are tons of books about the struggle to be an individual, but with each one we reach more and more people who were never spoken to. I was always a weirdo growing up, but I believed that there were weirdos like me, and my writing this book is like Professor X putting on cerebro to find the other mutants.

--This text refers to the edition.

**From** Born in the U.S. to Taiwanese immigrant parents, Huang refuses to be a "lapdog under a bamboo ceiling," and his colloquial, furious memoir is as open about his struggling, screaming, sometimes abusive parents as it is about the prejudice he encounters growing up in Orlando and then in New York, where to this day "someone tells me to go back to China at least three times a year." He hates that everything he does is a statement about his people and where they are from, even as he refuses to be reformed, assimilated, apologetic. Always refusing to fit in, he wants to hurt people like they hurt him, and he succeeds. Now he runs a big New York City gourmet restaurant and a food store, and, throughout the book, food is front and center, including his mother's recipe for the best beef noodle soup. Readers will leave hungry, and many immigrants will recognize the refusal to go with the model minority myth. --Hazel Rochman --This text refers to the edition.

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