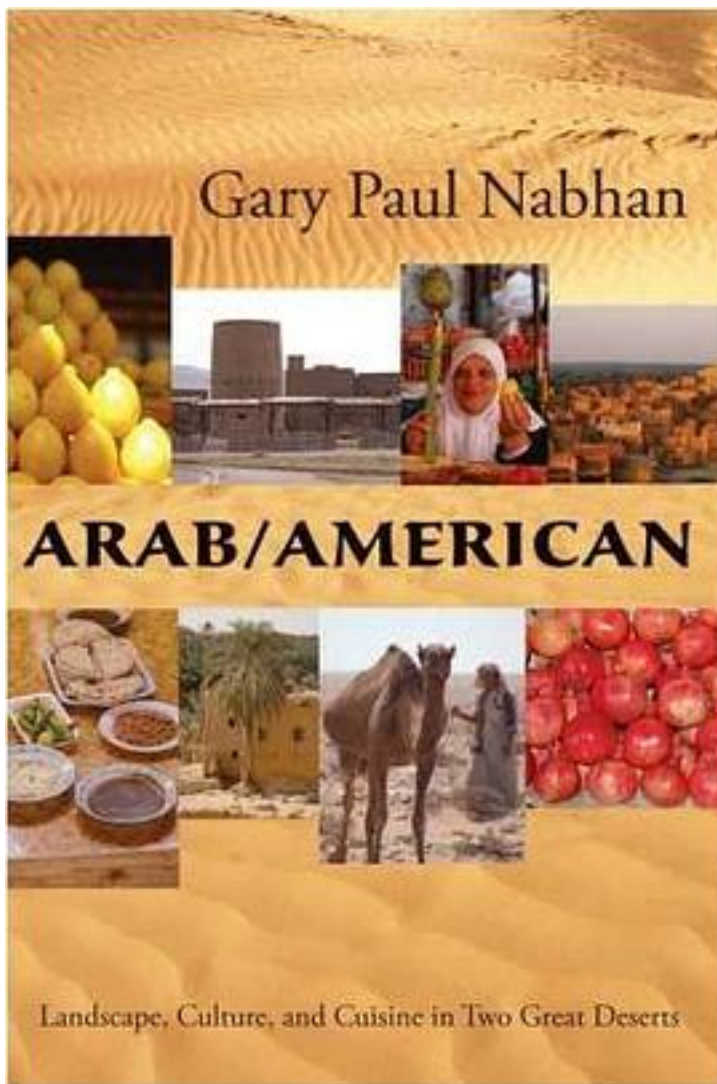


Arab/American



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The landscapes, cultures, and cuisines of deserts in the Middle East and North America have commonalities that have seldom been explored by scientists and have hardly been celebrated by society at large. Sonoran Desert ecologist Gary Nabhan grew up around Arab grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins in a family that has been emigrating to the United States and Mexico from Lebanon for more than a century, and he himself frequently travels to the deserts of the Middle East. In an era when some Arabs and Americans have markedly distanced themselves from one another, Nabhan has been prompted to explore their common ground, historically, ecologically, linguistically, and gastronomically. Arab/American is not merely an exploration of his own multicultural roots but also a revelation of the deep cultural linkages between the inhabitants of two of the world's great desert regions. Here, in beautifully crafted essays, Nabhan explores how these seemingly disparate cultures are bound to each other in ways we would never imagine. With an extraordinary ear for language and a truly adventurous palate, Nabhan uncovers surprising convergences between the landscape ecology, ethnogeography, agriculture, and cuisines of the Middle East and the binational Desert Southwest. There are the words and expressions that have moved slowly westward from Syria to Spain and to the New World to become incorporated faintly but recognizably into the language of the people of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. And there are the flavors—piquant mixtures of herbs and spices—that have crept silently across the globe and into our kitchens without our knowing where they came from or how they got here. And there is much, much more. We also learn of others whose work historically spanned these deserts, from Hadji Ali (aHi Jollya), the first Moslem Arab to bring camels to America, to Robert Forbes, an Arizonan who explored the desert oases of the Sahara. These men crossed not only oceans but political and cultural barriers as well. We are, we recognize, builders of walls and borders, but with all the talk of a homeland today, Nabhan reminds us that, quite often, borders are simply lines drawn in the sand.

作者介绍:

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