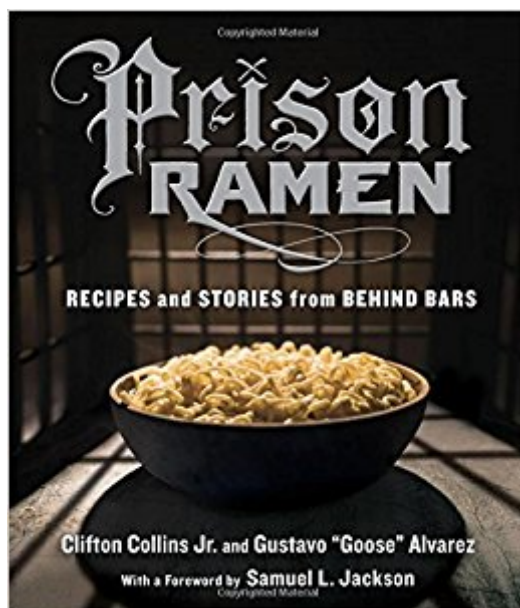


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Prison Ramen: Recipes And Stories From Behind Bars



Synopsis

A unique and edgy cookbook, *Prison Ramen* takes readers behind bars with more than 65 ramen recipes and stories of prison life from the inmate/cooks who devised them, including celebrities like Slash from Guns n' Roses and the actor Shia LaBeouf. Instant ramen is a ubiquitous food, beloved by anyone looking for a cheap, tasty bite—including prisoners, who buy it at the commissary and use it as the building block for all sorts of meals. Think of this as a unique cookbook of ramen hacks. Here's Ramen Goulash. Black Bean Ramen. Onion Tortilla Ramen Soup. The Jailhouse Hole Burrito. Orange Porkies—chili ramen plus white rice plus a bag of pork skins plus orange-flavored punch. Ramen Nuggets. Slash's J-Walking Ramen (with scallions, Sriracha hot sauce, and minced pork). Coauthors Gustavo "Goose" Alvarez and Clifton Collins Jr. are childhood friends—one an ex-con, now free and living in Mexico, and the other a highly successful Hollywood character actor who's enlisted friends and celebrities to contribute their recipes and stories. Forget flowery writing about precious, organic ingredients—these stories are a first-person, firsthand look inside prison life, a scared-straight reality to complement the offbeat recipes.

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Customer Reviews

Clifton Collins Jr. is an actor who's appeared in *Pacific Rim*, *Transcendence*, *Traffic*, and other films, including the upcoming *Triple Nine*. Samuel L. Jackson, who wrote the Foreword, is the award-winning actor who has appeared in more than 100 films, including *Pulp Fiction* and *The Avengers*.

Introduction

One hot day in August, there was a prison riot at the California Institution for Men in Chino. I was halfway through a six-year sentence, the father of young children, and I wanted nothing to do with extending my time in that hellhole. But the race riot that unfolded that night was inescapable. I was with a group of Southern California Hispanics, outnumbered and trapped in the last surviving dorm. Fires raged all around us. More than one hundred angry men were doing everything possible to break down a secured door. Their only desire was to maim or preferably kill us. We were pretty much doomed—we knew it, they knew it. The only thing I had left in that shithole worth fighting for were the pictures of my kids taped to my locker shelf. So we prepared ourselves for the massacre, lacing up and wrapping towels around our necks to protect our jugulars. There were two Christian brothers in our dorm just praying. It was pretty grim. And then, as the door began to give way and the rioting inmates were just about to storm in, two older guys ran to our aid. They were OGs—Original Gang members of the Crips—and they stood between us and the bloodthirsty attackers. They must have argued for two hours, until finally the rioting inmates backed down. The lines of race and gang affiliation are deeper in prison than anywhere else, so the fact that these African American guys defended us—Hispanics—against their own brothers is practically unheard of. Since fires were still raging, and the door to our dorm was now jammed, we and our enemies were both trapped. They were outside in the prison yard, freezing and huddled up. I noticed one of the OG men passing them the little bit of food he had, from his locker. At that moment I felt it only right to try to return a small portion of a big favor. I gathered all the homies and we began to cook all our Ramen and commissary. We made huge spreads, jugs of coffee, and snacks. We shoved all the blankets and mattresses we could fit through the door they had once attempted to break down to kill us. Most of them were just kids, barely in their twenties, living and following the same lies we were. Shortly after this, I received a visit from my childhood friend Clifton. Growing up in the mean streets of West L.A., who would have thought that many years later we'd still be friends? We came from the same housing projects, but grew up in different worlds. Cliff was never deep in the game like many others, but he was always in the mix. Squabbling, getting shot at, holding his own in street fights like the rest of us. Then he'd bounce the spot and go to an audition. I'd get snatched from the spot and go to juvenile hall. This went on for many years—casting calls for him, county jails for me; movie deals for him, state and federal prisons for me. Through it all, we maintained our friendship through letters, phone calls, and visits, always holding the dream that one day we'd collaborate on something. I pitched this idea to Cliff when he visited me after the riot and now it's a book in your hands. Take it from someone who knows

what heâ€™s talking aboutâ€”you can change your life from wherever you are right now.â€”Gustavo â€œGooseâ€ Alvarez

On August 8, 2009, I was in Iowa finishing up a heavy scene for a film I was doing with Adrian Brody and Forrest Whitaker called *The Experiment*. Itâ€™s loosely based on Philip Zimbardoâ€™s Stanford prison experiment of 1971, in which regular citizens were assigned the roles of guards and prisoners for a psychological studyâ€”to disastrous effect. This particular night was the scene of the big uprising, the convicts against the newly corrupt guards who had become sadistic. Shooting this scene was unusually tense because the director had taken off for a week and we were left to shoot, act, and riot on our own. There were some injuries, but we dealt with them and lived to tell the story. The following morning I got the news that while I was shooting a riot scene in a movie, my boy Goose was fighting for his very life. I felt sick and wished I could have been there to get his back, as he has always had mine. The odds have never been in his favor, but somehow he has always managed to prevail; I hoped this was one of those times. Never getting a straight story from news outlets, I did everything I could to get the real story. I took to Twitter and asked hood friends who lived in the area. I heard grisly details about point-blank shootings and convicts getting sliced open with makeshift swords of broken windows, but no Goose. Just when I feared the worst, I got news that he was all right. We got on the phone and I made plans to go out and see him. He told me of the event that occurredâ€”a meal shared rather than bodies destroyed. I could hear the amazement and pride in his voice. Everything was going to be all right.â€”Clifton Collins Jr.

So many good recipes. I'm an English teacher in an urban setting. I bought enough Ramen for all my students and had each select a recipe. They made "How To..." writing pieces and videos and "Ramen Review" articles for their recipes. They had a blast and still were completing technical and descriptive writing. More importantly, there's no such thing as bad Ramen!

I read about this book this morning (9/1/16) in an article about ramen in prison in the *Washington Post* and I've seen on prison shows. This book gives a great perspective from "behind the bars". I did try some of the recipes and they're really good! Some were a little spicy but that was easy to change. I love making salads with ramen so these are a whole different twist. Yes I have a good many ramen cookbooks but this was not just a cookbook! Thank you for the life lessons.

The book arrived promptly, and in good condition. I purchased it because of both the article on NPR as well as really enjoying Clifton Collins JR in *Boondock Saints 2*. I like reading about food, and I

was looking for something to broaden my horizons as well as helping me cheapen the cost of cooking. It is a good read, and I definitely recommend it, but I'd get it from the library first if I were you. SPOILERS AHEAD: The thing that REALLY disappointed me was the book was primarily filler: full of recipes from celebrities and random individuals that it felt to me hadn't had any really real prison experience. Example: Taryn Manning. Actress, sure she's on Orange is the New Black, so some relevance there, but her article was just one night in the drunk tank and her recipe was just the directions on the back of a ramen package. A massive letdown. There were some great ones though. Shia Labeouf's article was a good read, Danny Trejo was awesome as always, and Gustavo 'Goose' Alvarez's stories were humbling, chilling, and made me incredibly grateful for the lot I have. He provides a great insight into survival and the lengths people go to make it a single day, and to just how quickly the tides can turn.

Whoever came up with the idea to print this book out was on point. I'm not sure if I'll ever try any of the recipes in there, but the backstories were fun to read. If you're expecting a Rachael Ray/Ina Garten-type book, don't bother with this one. This is the book Anthony Bourdain probably would have written if he'd been locked up in Pelican Bay on a murder one charge. lol

It's a fun recipe book about the various ways of prepping ramen. Some of these recipes are really creative and sound tasty and hardy. I guess you get creative while in prison. The stories in the book range from riots and gang activity to the incredibly mundane. I found the book did an excellent job of portraying the author's experience in the US prison system. There were a wide range of activities that someone 'from the outside' wouldn't think of and the whole book was very thought provoking, and made me think about the liberties, freedoms, and luxuries I have in my everyday life.

This was fun to read the stories and some good idea to use ramen, saw someone on you tube try a recipes and I had to get the book.

Best book in category hands down.....Sent to my lady who is in Coleman Federal Prison (Satellite Camp) and she was hoping to find something out there that had realistic meal prep ideas for actual Federal (specifically because of access to microwaves changes a lot of the equation) inmates and she said this had that, and had so great short stories from some of your celebrity lawbreakers and some from unknown individuals but as a whole the book was spot on and a direct hit for me on the trying to earn a lifetime of booty on demand when she comes home to me, objective :) . The seller

did state that there were prisons throughout the country that had quite the lock on any and all items coming on prison grounds. Some of the more strict prisons that are on high alert about the content of the material that is being admitted on grounds have flagged the publication on the grounds that there are one or two recipes for hooch, pruno, or buck as they call it down in the dirty south camps. :) fortunately my girl is in a Big Girls Summer Camp as far as prisons go, so the book was in hand without the first incident. She did see the recipes but with attempts on production of contraband is absolute grounds for transfer, and since it was Martha Stewart's top choice for facilities, I doubt further explanation is needed on how sweet of a camp it is. The stereotypical Club Fed for white collar folks that are not exactly gangbangers. If they can get it on compound then your prisoner will be a happy individual with this (watch for people trying to clip pages to take back to their personal quarters for real. the place is sweet but they are still inmates and I imagine other camps would handle the publication in a variety of different ways. Good luck to you if you send it out. SIDE NOTE (I myself personally spent 2 years of my own life in Ga Prisons. So I had a good idea of what I was searching for when she asked me about looking for something like it. MOST books with titles like this are weak on content and really not what an inmate current or former would classify as helpful in any capacity!)

This book was flagged by the prison for information on weapon making. Do not order this for an inmate.

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