

## BOOK REVIEW

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Mouritsen, O. G. 2013. *Seaweeds, Edible, Available & Sustainable*. University of Chicago Press, 283 pp. ISBN 978-0-226-04436-1.

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Ole Mouritsen, professor of membrane physics, brings his passion and inquisitiveness to the exploration of past, present and potential uses of seaweeds. His approach can best be described as artistic, gastronomic, and scientific. *Seaweeds* is a visual feast. Bright photographs, reproduced ancient illustrations, and line drawings compete with a well researched text for the reader's attention. The margin notes explore eclectic topics, such as Christopher Columbus' 1492 description of the Sargasso Sea and Matsuo Basho's 1600s Nori Haiku. Sixteen entertaining seaweed-oriented essays, often as the author's personal glimpses, survey an Icelandic Saga, Welsh caviar, small and large seaweed businesses, the Natural History Museum in London, and so forth.

*Seaweeds* opens with a description of man's use of seaweeds through the passage of time, biological notes, aquaculture, and unique aspects of chemical composition (60 pages). Next a meaty treatment of human nutrition, including *umami* (the fifth taste), iodine metabolism and cancer (58 pages). In my opinion, the heart of the book is the section

*Seaweeds in the kitchen*. Seventy-eight pages of mouth-watering, mind-expanding recipes (Celtic, European, North American, Asian) and descriptions of seaweed foods: Celp, a single malt Islay whisky—"salty, peaty, and the ultimate experience of the sea"—Applewood-smoked dulse on dark chocolate buttons, and breads, pasta, and tarts. A section on seaweed industry includes notes on algal gums, algal energy, animal and garden nutrition, and human health, including intriguing speculation seaweed components may reduce the incidence of HIV/AIDS (30 pages). Probably the most comprehensive nutritional composition of seaweeds available is provided in the *Technical and scientific details* section (19 pages). The phycophil is further assisted by an expansive bibliography, glossary, and index (35 pages). Very few typos exist but, on page 84, *Alaria* is misnamed *Undaria*.

*Seaweeds*, unique in its presentation and orientation, equally at home on the coffee table and in the office, is a must for your phyco edification and entertainment. I strongly endorse this tome and eagerly await Professor Mouritsen's next exploration.

LOUIS DRUEHL

*Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre, Bamfield, Canada*