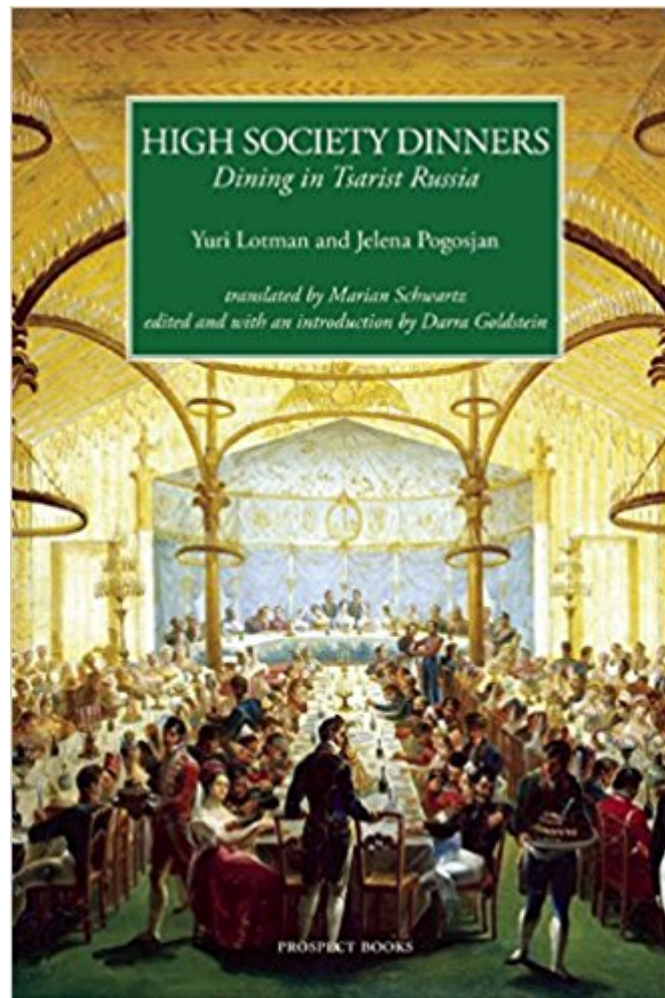


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# High Society Dinners



## Synopsis

High Society Dinners offers extraordinary insight into the domestic arrangements of the Russian aristocracy, presenting nine months' worth of menus served in St Petersburg to the guests of Petr Durnovo (1835 - 1918), Adjutant-General of the Tsar's Imperial Suite, part of an important late-19th-century dynasty that included ministers and high officials. The menus themselves would be useful enough for what they reveal about culinary culture in Russia, but Yuri Lotman's commentary is invaluable, dissecting the dining rituals and the social circles of the participants. Durnovo's menus and guest lists, interspersed with extracts from family letters and the leading newspapers and journals of the day, set in context the domestic and gastronomic underpinnings of life in this group at the heart of the Russian empire. Translated by Marian Schwartz (who has worked with M. Gorbachev and translated works by Tolstoy, Bulgakov and Lermontov), the book as a whole is annotated and introduced by Darra Goldstein, Founding Editor of Gastronomica and Willcox B. and Harriet M. Adsit Professor of Russian at Williams College. The book is illustrated with paintings and photographs that give a sense of the high society milieu in mid-nineteenth-century Russia.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

There are many ways to resurrect the past, to understand how people lived. One way is through memoirs and biographies. Another, is through photography or paintings. Yet another would be to look at what people ate, and how. We are, after all, what we eat. And how. Taking this approach,

re-nowned Russian cultural historian Yuri Lotman analyzed the menu book of a prominent St. Petersburg family from 1857 and 1858, interspersing his fascinating, if often tangential, commentary with other historical artifacts, from foreign and domestic newspaper reports to letters and contemporaneous tidbits about life in the Romanov court. As a result, the book is a vivid demonstration of how food and the meals they comprise can inform the wider cultural context of events. And it offers a rich insight into the social history - culinary and otherwise - of the nineteenth century Russian gentry and the world they inhabited. As reviewed in Russian Life magazine.

I can not put this book down!! I know it was not meant to be funny, but I don't remember when I laughed so hard ever. I wish I could find one in Russian

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