



# **It's Only Slow Food Until You Try to Eat It: Misadventures of a Suburban Hunter-Gatherer**

*Bill Heavey*

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A longtime contributor to *Field and Stream*, Bill Heavey knew more than a little about hunting and fishing when he embarked on an ambitious project a few years ago to see how far he could get eating wild. But Heavey knew next to nothing about gardening or foraging, and he lives in northern Virginia, close to Washington, D.C. The rural wilds, this was not. Is it any surprise that his tasty triumphs were equaled by his hilarious misadventures?

With just the right dose of self-deprecation, Heavey tells the story of his quest, beginning locally and moving out from there. He digs up the ground behind his house and plants an elaborate garden only to be driven to squirrel murder (and a cover-up). He experiences abundance mania in the perch run on the Potomac, and again when he spots perfect wild mushrooms in Arlington National Cemetery. He forages for wild watercress, berries, and pawpaws within the beltway, and hunts crayfish in Louisiana and caribou on the Alaskan tundra.

With teachers that include Paula, a grizzled local so popular among DC fishers that she's been called the Pablo Escobar of herring; Hue, a Bronze Star ex-military survival instructor and foraging expert; Michelle, a single mother unself-consciously devoted to eating local, and Jody, a weathered Cajun fisherman, Bill learns how to catch and cook frogs, prepare cattail pancakes, make salads out of garden weeds and bake a pie with foraged wild cherries.

To the delight of his readers and to his young daughter's despair, Heavey also suffers serious blood loss, humiliation, and meals that are best described as edible. Entertaining and informative, this is Bill Heavey at his best...and worst.

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