JULY 2025 • SPECIAL EDITION

EAT THIS BOOK

A Special Supplement to the An Tir Crier

JULY 2025

Eat This Book

March 2023–July 2025

Eat This Book was published for the first time in March 2021. For every month since (except for two) Eat This Book has run in An Tir's newsletter, The Crier. In February of 2023 a retrospective of the first two years ran with a short description of each of the previous 23 columns. I was also surprised when The Crier staff used their rare supplemental issue to re-run ALL of the previous columns collected into one edition. It can be downloaded here https://bit.ly/44wXWYk. This month's column we are not celebrating an anniversary, but I hope you will enjoy this retrospective of 26 columns from March 2023 to last month, June 2025. Also, the amazing Crier Staff, along with Baroness Anikó from Seagirt, has collected all 26 columns into another supplement issue.

It can be found here https://bit.ly/44wXWYk

As was done in the previous retrospective I have listed the columns in order of publication. Each have the name of the book(s) that was recommended, a brief comment and a hyperlink to the original column. Seven of the columns include recipes by the author of the book or by a guest columnist with a passion for the food and cooking from the recommended book and/or culture. These recipes give you a small taste of what you have in store when you explore the books.

Stock photo

Contents

March 2023

A Persian Cookbook: A 16th Century Person Cookbook: The Manual by Bavarchi translated from the Persian by Saman Hassibi and Amir Sayadabdi published in 2018 by Prospect Books. Among the many succulent recipes included in this book there are also five bread recipes.

April 2023

Platina: On Right Pleasure and Good Health by Mary Ellen Milham, published 1998 by Medieval and Renaissance Text & Studies. This book is Martino adjacent so you know it is one of my favorites. I have included 4 vegetable recipes redacted by me!

May 2023

Eating Shakespeare: Recipes and More from the Bard's Kitchen" by Betty and Sonia Zyvatkauskas published in 2000 by Prentice Hall Canada. Where for art thou Elizabethan recipes? Right here in this book.

June 2023

Tasting History: Explore the Past Through 4,000 Years of Recipes" by Max Miller with Ann Volkwein, Simon Element, 2023. Max Miller has taken historical food to social media. He is a phenom when it comes to content. His first book is filled with recipes from ancient to the recent past. He has shared some of his recipes with us in this month's Eat This Book.

July 2023

Early French Cookery: Sources, history, Original Recipes and Modern Adaptations" By Terence Scully, D. Eleanor Scully with illuminations by J. David Scully published by The University of Michigan Press, originally publish in 1995. The most comprehensive and up-to-date exploration of early French food.

August 2023

A Sip Through Time: A collection of Old Brewing Recipes" first published in 1995 by the author with a second printing in 1996, a third printing in 1997 and a fourth corrected printing in 2004. So many redacted recipes to quench your thirst.

September 2023

Anglo-Saxon Food and Drink" By Ms. Ann Hagen (2010) published by Anglo Saxon Books. With the sudden resurgence of research into this area of food history it is good to return to the classics.

October 2023

6000 Years of Bread: It's Holy and Unholy History" by H.E. Jacob originally published in 1944 by Doubleday, Doran, and Co., and translated by Richard and Clara Winston. The staff of life. Bread is one of the most important food products throughout our history. There are two recipes included in this month's column. One from Baroness Vasilisa Myshkina and a Cinnamon Snail Bread from Scappi redacted by me.

Continued next page

November 2023

Medieval Cuisine in the Islamic World: A Concise History with 174 Recipes" by Lilia Zaouali University of California Press, 2007. An important book that focuses on the exchange and influence between the Islamic and European worlds.

December 2023

Food and Feast in Medieval England" By P.W. Hammond 1998 Sutton Publishing. A beautiful book that covers a wide range of topics.

January 2024

Food and Drink in Medieval Poland: Rediscovering a Cuisine of the Past" by Maria Dombinska, revised and adapted by William Woys Weaver, translated by Magdalena Thomas, 1999 University of Pennsylvania Press. The only book on this topic.

February 2024

Indian Food: A Historical Companion" by K.T. Achaya Oxford University Press, 1994. Expand your food history knowledge into non-European cuisines.

March 2024

The Good Housewife's Jewel" by Thomas Dawson with an introduction by Maggie Black, Southover Press, 1996. I am sure you will enjoy these very approachable recipes especially the one I redacted, Elizabethan Sweet and Sour Chicken Sauce.

April 2024

Jews, Food and Spain: The Oldest Medieval Spanish Cookbook and Sephardic Culinary Heritage" foreword by Paul Freedman from Yale University, Academic Studies Press, 2022 and Sephardi: Cooking the History. Recipes of the Jews of Spain and the Diaspora from the 13th Century to Today" Cherry Orchard Press 2021. One research book and one cookbook. Both are a great glimpse into Jewish food ways.

May 2024

Tastes of Byzantium: The Cuisine of a Legendary Empire", Tauris Parke, 2010, Andrew Dalby. More than just the popular Byzantium Beer recipe that is circulating in the Press.

June and July 2024 there were no columns published due to the number of events, law changes and announcements from the Board of Directors.

August 2024

The Closet of the Sir Kenelm Digby, Opened, 1669" edited from the first edition, with introduction, notes and appendices by Jane Stevenson and Peter Davidson, Prospect Books, 2010. 338 recipes, including 119 recipes for alcoholic beverages mostly for meads and metheglin.

Continued next page

September 2024

The Good Wife's Guide Le Menagier de Paris A Medieval Household Book was translated, with critical introduction, by Gina L. Greco & Christine M. Rose Cornell University Press 2009. Have you ever wanted to be a wealthy Parisian during the middle ages? This is the instruction book for you!

October 2024

Pleyn Delit: Medieval Cookery for Modern Cooks", 2^{d} Edition by Constance B. Hieatt, Brenda Hosington and Sharon Butler University of Toronto Press 1996. Food from the same time period as the Canterbury Tales.

November 2024

The Sensible Cook: Dutch Foodways in the Old and New World" by Peter G. Rose Syracuse University Press, 1989. This is the only book which focuses on this region and time period. Who knew that the Dutch were responsible for 70% of the grain imports from the Baltic. No wonder they are famous for their pancakes and wafers.

December 2024

Le Viandier de Taillevent" is translated, edited and commented on by James Prescott, known in the SCA as Master Thorvald Grimson, originally published in 1987 with a second edition in 1989 by Alfarhaugr Publishing Society, Eugene, Oregon and Le Viandier of Taillevent" by Terence Scully, University of Ottawa Press, 1988. Two books in one column and recipes from one of the authors. This is one to check out.

January 2025

The Oldest Cuisine in the World: Cooking in Mesopotamia" by Jean Bottero, translated by Teresa Lavender Fagan, The University of Chicago Press, 2004. Over 300 clay tablets and at least 40 recipes, none of which have been redacted. Lots of work to do for this community.

February 2025

The Most Excellent Book of Cookery" (Livre fort excellent de Cuysine
1555) edited and translated by Timothy J. Tomasik and Ken Albala, Prospect Books 2014. An interesting book by two wonderful authors from an overlooked time period in French cookery.

March 2025

America's First Cuisines" by Sophie D. Coe, University of Texas Press, 1994. A pioneer in American cuisine Dr. Coe is worth a read even with all the new material coming out about pre-Columbian food.

April 2025

Scents and Flavors; A Syrian Cookbook" edited and translated by Charles Perry New York University Press, 2017. A delicious exploration of 13th century Syrian food. There are also recipes by guest cook Urtatim Al-Qurtubiyya from the West Kingdom.

Continued next page

May 2025

La Varenne' Cookery: The French Cook; The French Pastry Chef; The French Confectioner" by Francois Pierre, Sieur de la Varenne A Modern English Translation and Commentary" by Terence Scully 2006 Prospect. Three books in one volume. French food, pastries and confectionary.

June 2025

A History of Cookbooks: From Kitchen to Page over Seven Centuries by Henry Notaker University of California Press, 2017 A whole book about cook books. What more could you ask for?

All book covers off public sites.
Unless otherwise attributed, photos are stock photos.

Abbreviations & Conversions

T	**Tablespoon**
t	**teaspoon**
oz	**ounce**
lb	**pound**
opt	**optional**
g	**gram**
kg	**kilogram**
l	**liter**
ml	**milliliter**
pt	**pint**

All heat in this publication is in Fahrenheit

Fahrenheit	Celsius
32 degrees F	0 degrees C
100 degrees F	40 degrees C
125 degrees F	50 degrees C
140 degrees F	60 degrees C
150 degrees F	65 degrees C
160 degrees F	70 degrees C
175 degrees F	80 degrees C
180 degrees F	82 degrees C
200 degrees F	95 degrees C
212 degrees F	100 degrees C
225 degrees F	110 degrees C
240 degrees F	115 degrees C
250 degrees F	120 degrees C
275 degrees F	135 degrees C
300 degrees F	150 degrees C
320 degrees F	160 degrees C
325 degrees F	165 degrees C
350 degrees F	175 degrees C
375 degrees F	190 degrees C
400 degrees F	205 degrees C
425 degrees F	220 degrees C
450 degrees F	230 degrees C
475 degrees F	245 degrees C
500 degrees F	260 degrees C

Standard	Metric Equivalent
1 teaspoon	5 mL
1 tablespoon	15 mL
2 tablespoons	30 mL
1/4 cup or 2 fluid ounces	60 mL
1/3 cup	80 mL
1/2 cup or 4 fluid ounces	125 mL
2/3 cup	160 mL
3/4 cup or 6 fluid ounces	180 mL
1 cup or 8 fluid ounces or 1/2 pint	250 mL
1 ½ cup or 12 fluid ounces	375 mL
2 cups or 1 pint or 16 fluid ounces	500 mL
3 cups or 1½ pints	700 mL
4 cups or 2 pints or 1 quart	950 mL
4 quarts or 1 gallon	3.8 L
1 ounce	28 grams
1/4 lb. (4 ounces)	112 grams
1/2 lb. (8 ounces)	225 grams
3/4 lb. (12 ounces)	337 grams
1 lb. (16 ounces)	450 grams

Author Photo by Tessina (Geneva Borland)

Maestro Eduardo Lucrezia

"Eat this book" is a column produced for An Tir's Kingdom newsletter, *The Crier*. I hope to help you build your food history library. If you have a comment, book, country, or a time period you would like explored please write to me at: info@vastrepast.com

Visconti Eduardo Lucrezia is a mid-15th Century Italian Renaissance Court and Kitchen Punk. He is obsessed with the food from the Iberian Peninsula, specifically the recipes of Martino and Platina. He is a member of the Order of the Laurel, the order of the Pelican, a Baron of the Court of An Tir and a Lion, An Tir.

David Huffman-Walddon owns a technology consulting company, Renaissance Strategic Consulting, Inc., and an Arbonne health and wellness business. He has written on food history for *The Journal of Italian Food and Wine* and *Petits Propos Culinaires*. He has given papers on the food of the Italian Renaissance at the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery and the Renaissance Society of America.

His weekly food history and tradition column, *The Vast Repast*, was syndicated in Washington, Oregon, California and British Columbia. *Eat This Book* has run almost every month in *The Crier*, An Tir's official newsletter, since March of 2021.

A Persian Cookbook:
A 16th Century Person Cookbook: The Manual

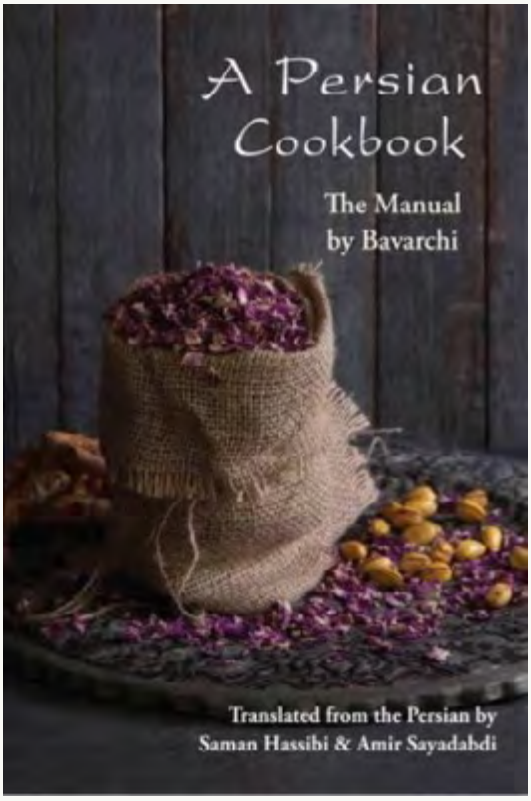
Lucky for us the stream of historical cookbooks being publish doesn't seem to be ending any time soon. Each year new manuscripts are unearthed or translated from their original language into English.

A Persian Cookbook: A 16th Century Person Cookbook: The Manual by Bavarchi translated from the Persian by Saman Hassibi and Amir Sayadabdi published in 2018 by Prospect Books is one of these treasures. Written during the post Islamic Safavid Period of the Persian Empire, in 1521. Bavarchi Baqdadi wrote this cookbook in what is now modern-day Iran, as a gift to his patron after he returned from a "spiritual pilgrimage to Ardabil to see the shrines of two prominent figures of the Safavids."

Little is known about Bavarchi Baqdadi except that Bavarchi, in Persian, means cook, and, from textual analysis of *The Manual*, cook was not only his profession, but also his father's. Both father and son seem to have been cooks to the Royalty, or at the very least the aristocracy of the time period.

The Manual starts, like many manuscripts from this time and place, "praising God and the prophet Mohammad." Bavarchi then goes on to honor his patron, only identified as "Mirzai", and Shah Ismail I – founder of the Safavid dynasty.

The translators, Hassibi and Sayadabdi, have done an excellent job of walking the reader through their process of translation, modern equivalencies and when, how and why they have inserted "Romanization of words." In their introduction to the work the translators also discuss the "Units of Measurements" used in the book, along with a chart of original measurements and their metric equivalencies (Table Three), another chart on the "Equipment" (Table One) discussed in the text, the types of "Noodles" (Table Two) included in the recipes, and a chart which goes into much detail on the "Romanization" of the Persian script (Table four).



The book is beautifully illustrated with 17 mouthwatering photographs, including the front and back cover, by Nadia Mackenzie. Seven of the photographs are of recipes cooked from the book by Catheryn Kilgarriff. She tells us that when she cooked them "the spices were aromatic, and the house was

full of the aroma of cinnamon, truly lovely."

Unfortunately, the recipes she redacted are not included in the book. The remaining 10 photographs are of spices, produce, nuts and other delicacies found in the recipes, including garlic, ginger, quinces and pistachios, to mention just a few. As mentioned above there are no redactions in this book, just the original Persian, but besides some measurements and a few exotic ingredients you will find most of the recipes easy to cook.

The cookbook itself is divided into 22 sections, although Bavarchi, in his introduction to the work gives us a count of 26 chapters. And, as the translators point out "there are also some inconsistencies between the titles given in the introduction and those of the book itself."

The first chapter of the book is titled, "On Komaj Breads." It starts by telling us that "bread stands before all food, it shall be spoken of first." There are five bread recipes in this chapter. First "Dar sefat-e komaj-e sade", which is a recipe for a plain leavened bread enriched with oil that can be supplemented with fennel, mastic and "whatever is desired." It is topped with "a little yogurt or dissolved saffron." The variations in this first recipe will give you many opportunities to amaze your friends and family.

The other four recipes in the bread chapter sound delicious as well. One is supplemented with quince or apples, another, described as "jeweled" is a savory meat bread flavored with sweet rosewater, layers of sugar, almonds, pistachios, green raisins, more saffron, and "six cooked eggs cut in half."

A full chapter on bread is unusual in pre-16th century cookbooks and this chapter will keep you baking, and experimenting. The next chapter, "On Noodles", includes 14 recipes. I can't wait to explore them all.

The remaining twenty chapters have titles such as, "On Wheat & Barley Stews", "On Savoury Rice Stews", "On Pilafs", "On Meat Stewes", "On Kebabs", "On Sweets" and many more. I am sure that *A Persian Cookbook: The Manual A 16th Century Person Cookbook* will provide you with hours and hours of cooking fun. I look forward to hearing about your culinary adventures.

Saman Hassibi and Amir Sayadabdi, the translators of this text, were doctoral candidates at the University of Canterbury (New Zealand). Now Sayadabdi is a lecturer in Anthropology at Victoria University in Wellington, New Zealand. His interests include the "anthropology of food and its intersection with gender studies, migration studies, and studies of race, ethnicity, and nationalism."

Qashqai shopkeeper in Dasht-e Arzhan (Fars Province, Iran) Wikimedia commons

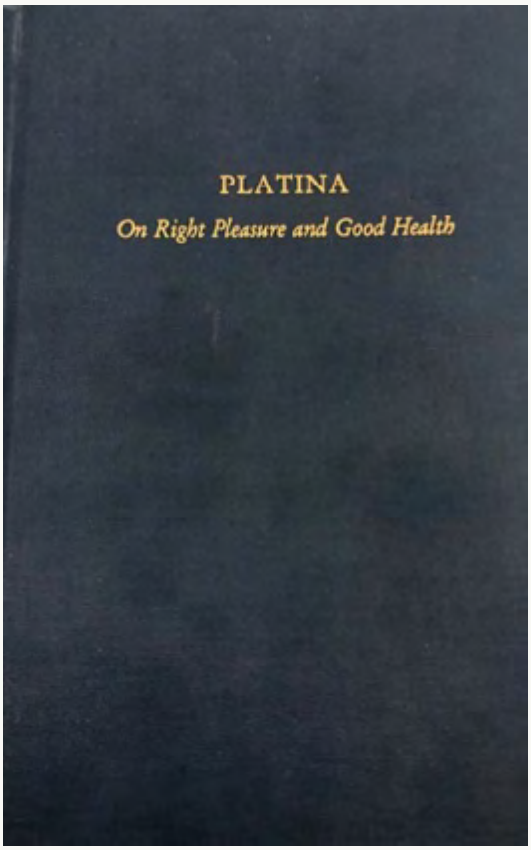
De Honesta Voluptate et Valetudine

Closely related to my obsession around Martino, the good cook from 1460's Aquila, Italy, is a cookbook by Bartlolmeo Sacchi (aka Platina). His book *De Honesta Voluptate et Valetudine* was published in 1475 in Venice and was the first printed cookbook.

Sacchi was an Italian humanist and historian who rose to favor during the papacy of Pius II. He belonged to the College of Abbreviators from 1458 – 1464, was imprisoned in Rome's infamous Castel Sant'Angelo by Pope Paul II in September of 1464, and subsequently released in January of 1465.

Platina wrote his most famous book, *The Lives of the Popes* in 1474 and in June of 1475, under Pope Sixtus, he became the first librarian of the Vatican Library, a position he occupied until his death in 1481. *De Honesta* was written in Latin and divided into 10 'books' or chapters and is filled with hundreds of recipes.

The last five chapters are taken almost directly from Martino's slightly older manuscript, *Libre de Arte Coquinaria*, Platina acknowledges Martino's contribution to "De Honesta." He tells the reader, "if possible, he should be completely like the man from New Como [Martino], the prince of cooks of our age, from whom I have learned the art of cooking food."



Platina took the 261 recipes included in Martino's cookery book and incorporated them into the last five books of *De Honesta*. The first five books are mostly made up of commentary on agriculture, medicine, humoral theory and general food information, but if you look closely approximately 165 recipes, including recipes for meat, fruit dishes, dairy, miscellaneous and 62 for vegetables, can be found.

De Hontesta was published and re-published and re-published again and again in the original Latin and was translated and printed in Italian, German, French and many other languages.

Currently, we are lucky to have several easily available editions of the original Latin, as well as two translations, but the one I want to recommend to you this month is *Platina: On Right Pleasure and Good Health* by Mary Ellen Milham, published 1998 by Medieval and Renaissance Text & Studies. Dr. Milham was a classics professor specializing in Greek and Latin. Her approach to *De Honesta* is academic in nature. She reviews many, if not all, of the early editions of the

book in order to publish an edition of the work which didn't actually exist, but is close to a true, corrected copy of the work.

De Honesta is filled with hundreds of recipes. There are no redactions included, but the instructions plain and simple and easy to cook. The last five books, as noted above, are Martino's recipes. He includes pasta dishes, roasted, boiled and stuffed meat recipes, a few vegetables, many different tarts, fish recipes galore and even ubiquitous peacock shooting fire from his mouth.

The last five books are worth exploring and sharing with your friends and family. The first five books you have to dig a bit further, these recipes are hidden among the agricultural and medical texts. The digging is so worth it.

There are five categories of recipes included in the first five books. The dairy recipes are the smallest with only 8 recipes. The recipes include: buns stuffed with cheese, milk sweetened with sugar or honey, a recipe for smoked cheese, details on how to make ricotta, as well as what recipes to use it in, how to make butter, and eggs cooked in vinegar. In BK II recipe #17, "De Caseo" (On Cheese) Sacchi takes us through all the steps of making a good smoked cheese, including forming the cheese from the coagulated milk, placing it into "molds or reed containers or baskets" so the whey can drain and then salting, smoking and aging the cheese. This recipe is so detailed it could easily be used today with only a small addition to the directions regarding the heating and coagulation of the milk to obtain the curds.

There are 16 recipes included in the meat category, including one fish with olives recipe. There recipes included salted meats, poultry stuffed buns, roasted meats flavored with citron, several stew-like dishes, sausages, pigeons cooked in verjuice, poultry brains seasoned with mint, vinegar and spices. And others.

There are 43 fruit recipes in the first five chapters. They detail the preservation of fruits such as plums, apples, cherries, pears and peaches. They instruct the cook in pickling fruits and melon rinds and detail many ways to candy fruit. Also found among the fruit recipes is a method for curing olives and flavoring them with fennel. The candied fruits are a standout in this collection.

In the quince entry, BK II recipe 6, details how to candy quinces. It says first rinse them in rainwater, par-boil them, dip them in honey and then dry them in the shade on a linen cloth. It then directs the cook to keep them in a pot with honey and sprinkle spices, specifically cloves, cinnamon and ginger, over them. The recipe continues on, altering the primary ingredient (quince) by listing five variations on this candy "gourds, lemons, citron apples, pears, and apples."

The category which is the most noteworthy is vegetables. There are very few vegetable recipes included in any of the 15th century cookery books, so it is remarkable to find 62 recipes for vegetables in "De Honesta." This treasure trove includes: pickled and spiced cucumbers, candied gourds, roasted beets with garlic, beans cooked with garlic, vinegar preserved thistles seasoned with laser and cumin, cooked asparagus, capers, parsnips, carrots, onions and leeks, as well as raw and cooked salads too numerous to detail here.

Check out BK IV recipe #6, where Platina suggests the use of "finely-cut onion" in a purslane salad. BK IV recipe #4, where borage is tossed with calamint, mint, salt, oil and vinegar and then "serve(d) immediately to your guests." Or BK IV, recipe #5 "Conditura Pantodapum" (a salad with many herbs) composed of a minimum of thirteen greens and herbs, and tells the reader they need "an ample dish" and that it requires "more oil and less vinegar." 41 of the total vegetable recipes are cooked in some way.

Half-length portrait of Bartolomeo Sacchi (Platina), Italian historian, facing to the left. Engraved by Nicolas de Larmessin. Isaac Bullart. Académie Des Sciences Et Des Arts. - Amsterdam: Elzevier, 1682

Wikimedia commons

How the vegetables are cooked can be broken down into three distinct methods – roasting (eight total recipes), boiling (13 total recipes) and frying or sautéing (18 total recipes). In most instances the cooking method is indicated directly.

37 recipes do not fall into one of the other four categories. Included in this "miscellaneous" category are several recipes for bread, practically the only ones found in any of the cookery books from this time period, nut candies, olive oil, rendered fats, vinegar, beverages, spiced and herbed candies, and three "salad" recipes that are composed entirely of flowers (rosemary flowers, chicory flowers and mallow flowers).

For instance, in BK I recipe #16, there is a recipe for spiced pine nut candy, which Platina notes is called "Bellaria" and in BK III #4 Sacchi gives us another recipe for Pine nut candy and tells us "the nobler and rich eat these, often in Lent." These candies, "pastelli", are gilded "for pleasure." In these chapters Sacchi also has instructions on how to make fennel buns and other bread products, or "buns, which enclose in dough, figpeckers and small birds or fresh rich cheese." He also tells us that these buns are cooked in "the oven with the bread" or "on the hearth under a lid covered with ashes and coals."

Mary Ella Milham was a professor emerita in the Classics Department at the University of New Brunswick. She was a prolific writer with over 45 works published in 6 languages. Dr. Milham was a member of the Waukesha first nations community and was the "only woman to have served as president of the Classical Association of Canada."

SERVES *4-6 PEOPLE*
COOK TIME *20M*

DEEP FRIED PARSNIPS TIDBITS

De Cariota et Pastinaca
. . . Frigi etiam excavata post primam concoctionem in oleo et liquamine farina involuta solet.

On Carrots and Parsnips
. . . Also Fried: Scoop them out (of the water) after the first boiling (and) as is the custom toss them in "farina" (flour or meal) and (fry) in oil and fat.

INGREDIENTS

2 cups	**rendered pork fat (lard)**
1 cup	**olive oil**
6 quarts	**boiling salted water**
1 pound	**parsnips, peeled and diced into 1 inch cubes**
1 cup	**semolina**
1 t	**salt (to taste)**

1. In a medium cast-iron pot heat pork fat and olive oil up to 360°F.
2. In a separate pot boil the parsnips in the salted water until they are almost fork tender, approx. 5 minutes.
3. Drain and immediately toss them in the semolina until completely coated with the semolina.
4. Deep-fry the parsnips in the fat and oil, in small batches, until golden.
5. Serve hot, as an appetizer or side dish for 4 to 6 people.

SERVES *10-12 PEOPLE*
COOK TIME *30M*

BARTOLOMEO SACCHI'S PARSNIPS & LETTUCE

De Cariota et Pastinaca
. . . Bis elixanda est pastinaca: prima decoctio abiicitur, secundo cum lactuca incoquitur, inde in patinam translata cum sale aceto coriandro pipere condita esui percommode datur;

On Carrots and Parsnips
. . . Twice boil the parsnips. The first boiled water should be thrown away. The second time, cook with lettuce. Next transfer to a "patinam" (pot or pan) and with salt, vinegar, coriander and pepper. And when it is composed (like this) it is very commendable to present.

INGREDIENTS

6 quarts	boiling salted water
2 pounds	parsnips, peeled and diced into 1 inch cubes
1 pound	red lettuce, chopped
1 t	salt (to taste)
1.5 t	ground coriander seed, (to taste)
1 t	ground pepper (to taste)
.25 cup	white wine vinegar

1. Place the parsnips and lettuce in the salted water. Bring back to boil and continue to cook until they are fork tender, approx. 10 minutes.
2. Drain the parsnips and lettuce. Return them to the pot. Add the rest of the ingredients. Over low heat mash the parsnips and cook for 10 minutes.
3. Serve hot, as a side dish for 10 to 12 people.

INGREDIENTS

SERVES *8-10 PEOPLE*
COOK TIME *3.5H*

TESSELLATIM CUCUMBERS IN VINEGAR & HERBS

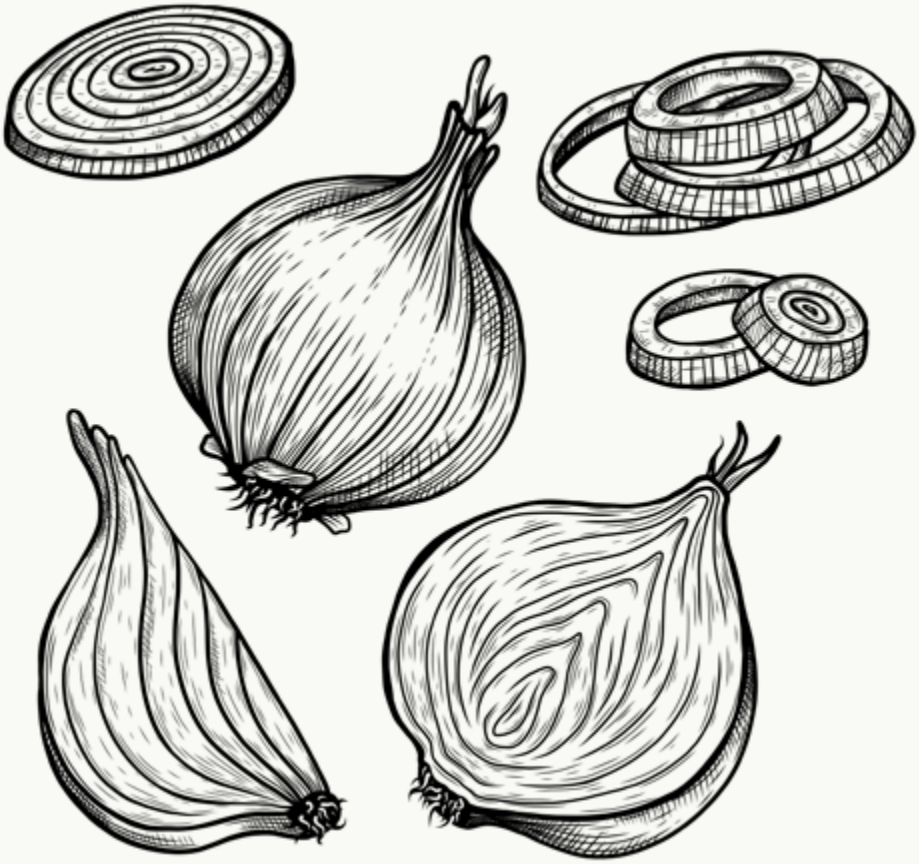
De Cucumeribus
Duo illa superiora genera ablata cute erutoque semine tessellatim consisa ex sale oleo aceto comeduntur sunt qui ad reprimendam frigiditatem aromata consisis ispergant.

On Cucumbers
. . . The two above kinds (of cucumbers are used). (Once) the skins are taken away, cut (the cucumbers) into pieces half the size of a tessellatim (small square mosaic piece). Let them stand in salt, oil and vinegar. Some sprinkle them with aromatics. They (must) stand (like this) to repress the cold.

INGREDIENTS

1	Cucumber
.5 cup 125ml	white wine vinegar
.25 cup 65 ml	olive oil
.5 t	salt
2 T	aromatic herbs, chopped

1. Peel the cucumber and cut it in half crosswise and lengthwise. If they are overly seedy, seed them. Dice each quarter into small pieces no bigger than a ½ inch. This should yield approximately 2 cups of diced cucumbers.
2. In a large bowl combine all ingredients and let them stand, in a cool place, for at least 3 hours. This "pickle" will keep for up to a week in the fridge. A good aromatic herb mix is parsley, thyme, marjoram and rosemary.
3. Serve chilled, but not cold, as a side dish



SERVES *8-10 PEOPLE*
COOK TIME *1H*

PLATINA'S ONIONS WITH SABA

De Conditura Ceparum
Coquitur et cepa sub cinere et carbonibus tandiu donec omne crudum exhalaverit. Ubi refrixerit minutatim concisa patinae inditur, sale oleo defructo vel sapa involvitur. Sunt qui et cepa piper aut cinnamum aspergant.

On Preparing Onions
Onion is cooked under (the) ashes and coals (for) as long a time as all the crudeness has been exhausted. When it has cooled, make it into small pieces. Put it in a "patinae" (pot or pan) and mix it with salt, oil, and "defructo" (new wine or must) or "sapa" (new wine or must that has been reduced to 1/3). On onion, some also sprinkle pepper or cinnamon.

INGREDIENTS

14 oz	frozen petite whole onions
1 T	olive oil
2 T	saba
.25 t	salt

1. Pre-heat oven to 450˚F.
2. Thaw and drain the onions.
3. Spread the onions evenly on a baking sheet.
4. Bake them in the hot oven for 45 minutes until they start to shrivel slightly, but are not mushy.
5. In a large sauté pan heat the oil over medium high heat. Sauté the baked onions in the hot oil for approximately one minute or until they start to caramelize. Add the saba and salt to the pan and continue to cook over medium heat until the onions are coated with the saba.
6. Serve hot as a side dish

EATING SHAKESPEARE

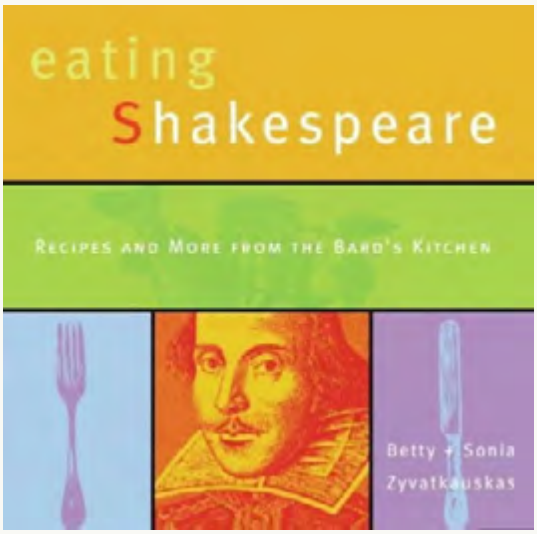
"Do you think because you are virtuous, that there shall be no more cakes and ale?"

Twelfth Night: Act 2, Scene 3

If this is true then I shall have to re-think my standards! Shakespeare's plays are full of quotes about food and eating and in this month's *Eat This Book* we will explore a cookbook that not only can you pick up and cook from immediately, but is also overflowing with facts, anecdotes and plenty of interesting tidbits of history.

Eating Shakespeare: Recipes and More from the Bard's Kitchen by Betty and Sonia Zyvatkauskas published in 2000 by Prentice Hall Canada is "inspired by the Bard's writing" and "brings to life the delights and dramas of Elizabethan cookery by mixing original period recipes with their delicious modern equivalents." The Zyvatkauskas, both writers from Toronto, Canada, used 8 different period cookbooks in creating *Eating Shakespeare* including Thomas Dawson's 1596 *The Good Huswifes Jewel* and Rosselli's *Epulario* from 1598 which is based on Martino's cookbook from the previous century.

The bulk of the 226 pages of the book are filled with recipes. Only 21 pages are non-recipe content including a chronology, an introduction, a section titled "The Cooks and Their Recipes", a glossary, a bibliography and an index. The layout of each recipe includes an introduction with details from the time period, the original recipe, including the source of the recipe, the author's redaction and a side-bar with tips, tricks, more fun facts and Shakespearian food related quotes.



This layout and the addition of the side-bars make the book easy and fun to read. There is also plenty of white space surrounding each recipe which is great to take your own notes and observations. Yes, I write in my books! You should too! It becomes part of the book's history.

The recipes are divided into 13 different sections. In Soups, stews and pottages, the first section, you should try the sweet "Cherry Soup" from *A Book of Cookery* by A.W. or the "Stewed Lamb with Carrots" that John Partridge included in his book *The Good Huswifes Handmaide for the Kitchen*.

The Elizabethans were known for their "composed" salads and section two of *Eating Shakespeare*, "Diverse Salads" includes 7 for you to choose from. I can't wait to try the "Parsnip and Watercress Salad" by Robert

May included in his book *The Accomplist Cook* and the "Chicken Salad with Apples", from Hannah Woolsey's *The Accomplisht Ladys Delight*, a light version of a modern Waldorf salad without the mayo or walnuts.

In the section titled "Flesh Days" you will discover recipes for "Baked Ham with Prune Sauce", a standard Roast Beef paired with a piquant mustard sauce, Pork Sausages flavored with sage, cloves and mace, a succulent "Lamb Meatloaf" flavored with currants, rosemary, cloves, mace and parsley and many other delicious meat dishes.

Eating Shakespeare continues with many more sections including "Good Roots, Good Worts" where we see the much earlier Italian recipe for "Turnips Baked with Cheese" from the Martino collection that has been re-imagined here in the 1598 English translation of *The Epulario*.

In the section titled "Fish Days" you will be tempted by the tasty, and light, "Poached Salmon with Lemon Butter Sauce" from *The Accomplist Cook* by Robert May or Thomas Dawson's "Boiled Mussels" steamed in white wine.

You will put your baking skills to the test with the recipes in the section on "Pies, Tarts and Pasties." Try the "Almond Tart" or the "Friday Pie" from *A New Book of Cookerie* by John Murrell, which includes beet greens, apples, and raisins, then is flavored with ginger, pepper, sugar and orange peel. It should be noted the Zyvatkauskas redaction uses beets instead of the greens and thickens the pie with arrowroot. Fortunately, they include the original recipe for comparison so you can create your own redaction.

You should also check out the three sections titled "From the . . . Dairy, Frying Pan and Orchard" filled with rich custards, rice puddings, fools, fritters, pancakes and recipes featuring pears, apples, apricots, cherries and other fruits.

When you get to section 12, "Sweet Endings" take this quote into consideration next time you see me at an event,

"I saw good strawberries in your garden there; I do beseech you send for some of them."

Richard III: Act 3, Scene 4

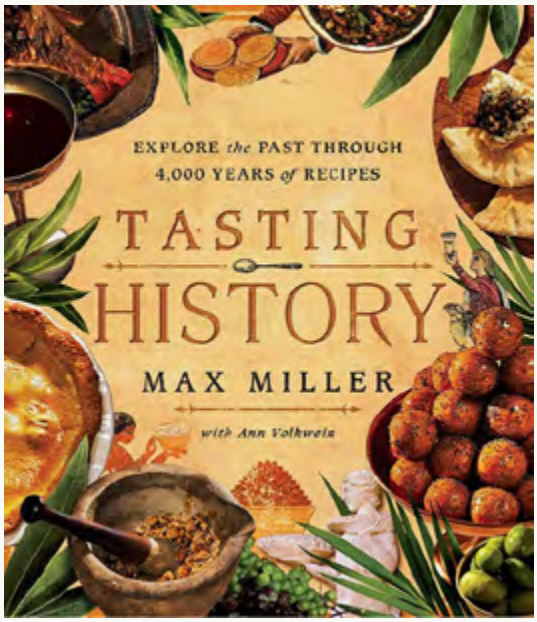
As you try the very simple Strawberry Tart recipe from *The Good Huswife's Jewel*. The modern redaction uses cornstarch to make more of a modern pie filling, but it is simple to remove this post period ingredient or, if you choose, make it with this anachronistic ingredient for a more familiar, modern, tart. You should also check out the sweet apple pot pie (no bottom crust) spiced with cinnamon, orange zest and a date, all mixed together with heavy cream and topped with a flaky pastry from *The English Housewife* by Gervase Markham.

The final recipe section of the book is titled "To Slake the Thirst" and includes only three recipes. "Buttered Beer", a warmed drink spiced with nutmeg, cloves and ginger, thickened with egg yolks and finished with some fresh melted butter. A white wine version of the ubiquitous spicy "Hippocras" and a "Posset" a creamy, warm drink spiked with some sherry and reminiscent of modern eggnog.

BREAKING NEWS!

Max Miller, from YouTube fame https://www.youtube.com/c/tastinghistory, made himself available for an interview with me for *Eat This Book*. We talked about his new book *Tasting History: Explore the Past Through 4,000 Years of Recipes* by Max Miller with Ann Volkwein, Simon Element, 2023.

I highly recommend it and hope that after reading this column you will share it with your friends and recommend it too! This book is an excellent addition to all re-enactor's libraries. *Tasting History*, the YouTube channel, has 1.71 million subscribers and 206 videos for you to explore. I would encourage you to use it as supplement to this new cookbook. *Tasting History* the book pulls from the Web series, but there is plenty of new information to warrant a purchase. The book was released April 18th and it already has more than 300 reviews and a star rating of 4.9 on Amazon. It is also #1 on Amazon in its category.



Tasting History has five sections which are organized by place: 1) The Ancient World 2) The British Isles 3) Continental Europe 4) the Near & Far East and 5) The New World. It includes 64 recipes and, lucky for those of us who love pre-1650 recipes, 49 of them fit the bill!

Each recipe includes the original text "from History", along with some very interesting contextual comments and a modern recipe produced with the help of Ann Volkwein. Mr. Miller told me that, "My patreon subscribers gave lots of feedback on the recipes I selected for the book and Ann would translate my notes, and their comments, into a cookbook style recipe."

The book also includes a preface and introduction with a brief, but good, guide to the more unusual ingredients from the recipes. All the recipes from the "Ancient World" section look delicious. The "Globi" recipe on page 34, adapted from Cato the Elder's *De agri cultura*, are cheesy dough balls with a honey and poppy seed coating. They are first on my list of must try. More than half the recipes in the "British Isles" section are pre-1600. The recipes include some standards such as "Gingerbread" from the 14th Century cookbook *Curye on Inglysh*, "Tart de Bry" from the 1390's cookbook *The Forme of Cury* and *Douce Ame* which is included below.

A good two thirds of the recipes in the "Continental Europe" section are pre-1600 and include many delicious recipes like the "Pumpkin Tourte" which is also included below. The 9 recipes in the "Near & Far East" are all from the time period we research and some of the first redacted recipes from this

place and time. Take some time and explore recipes from India, the Mughal Empire, China, Japan and more. Unfortunately, the "New World" section only has two pre-1600 recipes. But I will be trying the "Tamales" and the "Aztec Chocolate" immediately.

All the recipes in *Tasting History* are immediately accessible to the home cook. Mr. Miller told me he wants to make sure, "people will be able to make these dishes even if they don't have access to a pipkin or other equipment." He went on to say, "I want them to be able to make the recipes from ingredients from a modern grocery store. I want them accessible for a modern person, in a modern kitchen." He more than hit the mark. Even some of the more esoteric ingredients long pepper, galingale, garum, etc. are now easy to source on the internet or at your favorite spice store.

I would be remiss if I don't mention the illustrations which complement the material beautifully. Most of the recipes have full color, gorgeous photos of the finished dishes by Andrew Bui. Also included are photographs of pottery, marbles, paintings, woodcuts, etchings, manuscripts etc. which support the recipes included in the book. While *Tasting History* does not include a bibliography it does reference each original source used. The book also includes a comprehensive index which is helpful and easy to use.

During our discussion Mr. Miller said he started his YouTube channel as, "a creative outlet that was all my own." He was inspired by the likes of Alton Brown and Bill Nye because there is "nothing more influential as a good teacher."

It should also be noted that the SCA is acknowledged in *Tasting History*. Mr. Miller told me his "first interaction with the SCA was when I was a little kid." He writes in his book, "a huge thank-you to all of you wonderful fellow food history nerds" and he thanks the S.C.A. and other groups "who devote their life to keeping the past alive" and who "have done so much of the heavy lifting when it comes to research throughout the years." We also talked about his process for creating both his YouTube segments and the book. He says he almost always "starts with the history. I find an interesting character or story and then find a recipe that tells that story. History is the main focus for me and the food is the way to experience it." When the topic of where food history and historic cooking are going came up Mr. Miller said, "from the reception I have received I think food history is, and can be, more main stream. It can be just as interesting as tales of war and great men. Food history is more accessible and becoming more popular." Let us all hope so!

I am so grateful to Max Miller for allowing me to share with you two recipes from his cookbook. I am also grateful our editor, Kendryth Filia Gerald, has allowed for an expanded version of *EAT THIS BOOK* this month so there is room to include them! During our chat I ask Mr. Miller what advice he would have for people who want to do historic cooking and he said, "Just get started. Make mistakes! Sometimes with historic cooking things don't work out. Just do it, have fun." You surely will have lots of fun with the recipes in *Tasting History*.

The first recipe I am sharing is found on page 139 of *Tasting History*. It is from Bartolomeo Scappi's *Opera dell'Arte Cucinare* and is one of Mr. Miller's favorites. It is also one of the first recipes for a new world food product, pumpkin is a post-Columbus European product. One of the best things about Max Miller's *Tasting History* is he includes the original recipe and the source for each of the recipes. If you have been reading this column you will know this is one of my "most important" traits when I recommend a book for your library. Mr. Miller says, "Scappi's Recipes are great! You don't need to change much for a modern audience. He knew what he was doing!" Miller went on to say the, "flavor palate of the past is what is important. I don't mess with the quantities. Scappi, for instance, is spice heavy. I don't change that."

MAKES *ONE 9-INCH TORTE*
COOK TIME *6H 30M*

PUMPKIN TOURTE

To Prepare a pumpkin tourte without a shell. When the pumpkin is scraped, cook it in a good meat broth or else in salted water and butter. Then put it into a strainer and squeeze the broth out of it. Grind it in a mortar along with, for every two pounds of it, a pound of fresh ricotta and a pound of creamy cheese that is not too salted. When everything Is ground up. Put it through a colander, adding in ten well beaten eggs, a pound of ground sugar, an ounce of ground cinnamon, a pound of milk, four ounces of fresh butter and half an ounce of ginger. Have a tourte pan ready with ix ounces of very hot butter in it and put the filling into it. Bake it in an oven or braise it, giving it a glazing with sugar and cinnamon. Serve it hot.

PUMPKIN PUREE

2L	beef broth or water
2T	salted butter
1T	kosher salt
3-5 lb	pumpkin or squash see Cook's note

FILLING

1 cup	ricotta cheese
1 cup	mascarpone or cream cheese
6	large eggs
1.5 cup	light brown sugar
2T	cinnamon
4t	ground ginger
1t	kosher salt
1/2 cup	whole milk
4T	unsalted butter
2T	salted butter

TOPPING

1T	granulated sugar
1t	cinnamon

1. Preheat the oven to 350˚F/175˚C.

2. Make the pumpkin puree: Heat the beef broth or water with the butter and salt in a large pot over high heat. Chop the stem and bottom off the pumpkin, then slice the pumpkin in two. Peel each half and remove the seeds and any string bits, Cut the pumpkin into small pieces 1 to 1 1/2 inches (2.5 to 3.5 cm) square. Once the broth or water is boiling, add the pumpkin and boil for 20 minutes or until easily skewered with a knife.

3. Strain the pumpkin into a colander, then mash or blend the pumpkin into a smooth puree. Place a fine-mesh sieve over a large pot and transfer the puree to the sieve and let the liquid drain from the puree for 5 minutes. You can gently stir the puree to release more liquid, but do not press the puree through the sieve.

4. Make the filling: Once the puree is drained, put it in a medium bowl and mix in the ricotta and mascarpone until smooth. Whisk the eggs separately, then add them to the bowl with the pumpkin and mix until fully incorporated. Add the brown sugar, cinnamon, ginger, and salt and mix. Finally, pour in the milk and the 4 tablespoons of unsalted butter and beat the mixture until smooth.

5. Melt the salted butter in a small saucepan over medium heat, then pour it into a deep pie pan or cake pan and roll it around the pan to coat the bottom and sides. Pour the pumpkin filling into the pan. Mix the sugar and cinnamon, then sprinkle it on top of the tourte.

6. Set the tourte on the middle rack of the oven and bake until the filling has puffed up and there is a slight wobble in the center, about 1 hour and 15 minutes. Turn off the oven and allow the cheesecake to stay in the oven to slowly cool for another 45 minutes. Then remove it from the oven and set it on a cooling rack to cool completely, about 4 hours. Do not cut the tourte until it is fully cooled. If it is to be served warm, reheat it in a low over for 15 minutes.

Cook's Note: *The pumpkin will be used to make 2 cups of puree. Alternatively, use 2 cup (450 g) of canned pumpkin.*

MAKES *4 SERVINGS*
COOK TIME *1H*

DOUCE AME (Capon in Milk &Honey)

The second recipe is one I got to pick. It is from the Forme of Cury. It is a delicious and tasty chicken dish which will be familiar to the modern palate, is easy to make, but has a few twists that clearly anchors it as a Medieval dish. Again, the original and Mr. Miller's redacted recipe are included below.

Douce Ame – Take good cow's milk and warm it in a pot. Take parsley, sage, hyssop, savory and other good herbs. Chop them and add them to the milk and cook them. Take capons, half roasted, and cut them in pieces and add pine nuts and clarified honey. Salt it and color it with saffron and serve it forth.

INGREDIENTS

2-3 lb 1-1.5 kg	Chicken (or capon) cut into large pieces (legs and wings whole, breast and thigh cut in two or three pieces)
3-4 T	extra-virgin olive oil or melted unsalted butter
2 cups 475 ml	heavy cream
1 cup 235 ml	light brown sugar
½ cup 80 ml	honey
3 T	fresh parsley
3 T	fresh sage
3 T	fresh hyssop or mint
1 T	dried savory
1.5 t	sea salt
Pinch	saffron
.5 cup 50 g	pine nuts

1. Preheat the oven to 300˚F/150˚C.

2. Lightly coat the chicken in the olive oil or melted butter, then place the chicken, a few pieces at a time, in a skillet set over medium heat until lightly browned. Repeat until all the chicken is browned, then set aside, keeping any drippings in the pan.

3. In a small saucepan, combine the milk, cream, honey, parsley, sage, hyssop, savory, salt, and saffron and set over medium heat until simmering. Simmer for 5 minutes watching to make sure it does not boil. Add the pine nuts and the drippings from the pan the chicken was fried in, stir, and let simmer for 2 more minutes.

4. Layer the chicken in an oven-safe dish and pour the milk and honey mixture over it. Cover and set in the oven to cook for 30 minutes, or until the chicken is cooked through.

5. Remove from the oven and serve the chicken in the sauce.

Before creating his "viral digital series" Max Miller was an employee of Walt Disney Studios where he worked in the marketing and the film distribution department. Born in California he earned a degree at California State University in History. He currently lives in the Los Angeles area with his husband, Jose, and their two cats.

Mr. Miller let me know that his passion for food and history will continue with more on his YouTube channel. If we are lucky there will be a second book too! Mr. Miller is still on his book tour. If you can catch him in person DO IT! He is scheduled to be in Tempe Arizona, San Francisco, New York and other East coast cities at the end of May 2023. He tells me, "The crowds have been great!" He also has a Patreon site where you can support his work on a monthly basis.

Check it out at https://www.patreon.com/tastinghistory. When I asked him about his favorite time and place in history he replied, "England and Normandy are my favorite from a history standpoint, but there isn't really enough food information. From a food perspective I love whatever I am reading at the moment. I bounce around. But I do love England in the 13th and 14th century."

EARLY FRENCH COOKERY

One of the most prolific and well-respected authors in the food history arena is Dr. Terence Scully. This month in Eat This Book we will explore his book, authored and illustrated with his wife and son, *Early French Cookery: Sources, History, Original Recipes and Modern Adaptations By Terence Scully, D. Eleanor Scully with illuminations by J. David Scully* published by The University of Michigan Press, originally publish in 1995, second edition published by the University of Toronto Press in 2002.

Early French Cookery consists of an extensive Introduction, Ten Chapters, full of translated original recipes with the Scully's redactions, a section on Menu suggestions and meals, as well as an appendix and an index. The authors have not included a bibliography, but most of their other works include extensive ones and although this is often one of my go/no-go decisions on a book the lack of bibliography in this compendium should not create any hesitation. The work is based on extensive historical research. The great news is that as a cook of any skill level you can pick up this book and cook from it immediately. The many black and white illustrations in the book, drawn by J. David Scully, are done in a Medieval manuscript illumination style and add a bit of whimsy to this information dense, and delicious book.

The first 50 pages of *Early French Cookery* are made up of the very comprehensive Introduction which includes eight separate sections. The first section of the introduction is titled *Early French Cookery* and it speaks to the culinary traditions from Apicius and Anthimus through the Middle Ages.

Section two details the three sources the work is based on. The Viandier of Taillevent, The Menagier de Paris and Chiquart's Du Fait De Cuisine – On cookery, are three of the most important early cookery books. The third section goes into Medieval Foods and Cookery – food stuffs and foods peculiar to Medieval France (Spices, colorants, sweeteners, fats and grease, grape products, etc.).

The fourth section of the introduction, simply titled "Cookery", includes discussions on chopping and grinding, binding agents and cooking techniques, as well as food supply and preservation in Medieval France. In the fourth section we are treated to an examination of beverages, including wines beers and ciders.

The fifth section, Kitchens and their physical features, along with the utensils you will find in them is an interesting view into Medieval cookery. Next, in the sixth section, the Scully's discuss the hall were foods were served and the banquets served in them. The seventh section outlines the roll of the cook and their assistants in the time period ,and in the different social classes.

And to complete out the Introduction we have a few pages on "Advice to the Newly Medieval Cook." This section outlines things to take into consideration, authenticity and adaptations to mention two, when you are starting down the road of medieval culinary exploration.

The bulk of the book, almost 250 pages consisting of 10 chapters, are filled with recipes for you to cook. These 10 chapters are organized in an accessible and modern manner for ease of use. In Chapter One, titled, Standard Preparations, you will find spice powders, almond milk, breads etc. that you will use in the many of the other recipes.

Perpignan, Pyrénées-Orientales, France - Selling honey at the medieval market. Wikimedia commons

Chapter Two consists of Appetizers, Three, is titled Sops and Soups. Chapter 4 is completely dedicated to Sauces, a most important component to serve along-side the ubiquitous roast joint or roast poultry. Chapter five, six, seven, eight and nine are your modern style mains of meat, poultry, fish, egg and vegetable dishes. And to end the recipe chapters we have chapter ten, desserts. The totality of the book, with almost 100 recipes, not including variations, it is hard to choose one or two to highlight here. Instead of me recommending a recipe to try write me and let me know which ones you make. The final two parts of the book consist of a fairly comprehensive section on Menu Suggestions and Meals and an Appendix titled "A Day in the Life of Master Chiquart Amicz, Chef to the Duke of Savoy (1416 A.D.)" Both of these sections will widen your knowledge of Medieval French Cuisine.

Dr. Scully received his undergraduate degree in French from Oxford University. He received his Ph.D in French literature from Harvard. His focus on French Medieval and Renaissance Food can be further explored in his first book "The Art of Cookery in the Middle Ages" and further investigated in "The Viandier of Taillevent" which is an academic, yet readable, comparison of all the existing manuscripts of Taillevent. He has also contributed to many academic journals, as well as being a guest speaker at numerous food and history conferences. Now retired from teaching Dr. Scully continues to research and write. Dr. D. Eleanor Scully is an art historian and scholar with a focus on Medieval and Renaissance Italian art of the 14th and 15th centuries. She holds a Ph.D from New York University in art history. J. David Scully is an artist who studied painting and illustration at the Rhode Island School of Design.

A SIP THROUGH TIME

This month the title of this column should be *Drink This Book* because I will be exploring Cindy Renfrow's *A Sip Through Time: A collection of Old Brewing Recipes* first published in 1995 by the author with a second printing in 1996, a third printing in 1997 and a fourth corrected printing in 2004.

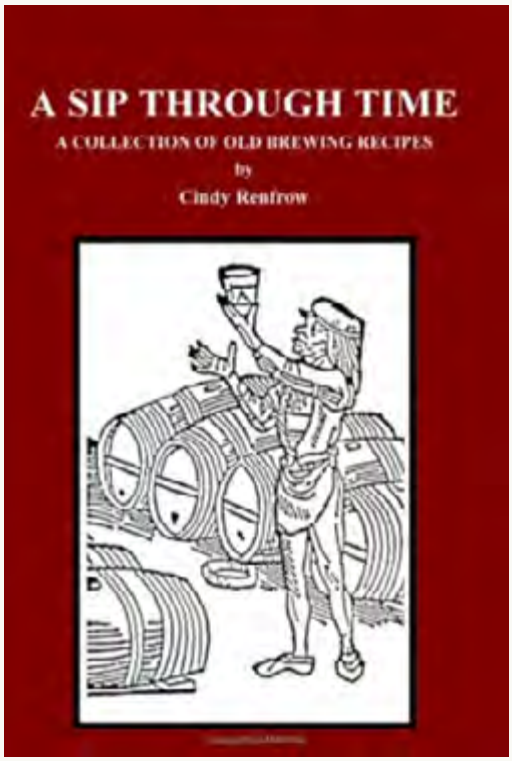
A Sip Through Time is "humbly dedicated to George, the Duke of Clarence, murderously drowned in a butt of malmsey wine, in the Tower of London, February 18th, 1478" Ms. Renfrow finishes her dedication with the exclamation, "What a way to go!"

For anyone interested in libations from history this is the book for you. *A Sip Through Time* contains "a representative sampling of brewing recipes from earliest times to the present." With "over 400 old brewing recipes for ale, beer, wine, cider, mead, etc." you will never be bored. Don't let "to the present" scare you away. At least half, maybe more, of the recipes are from pre-1600 collections.

The book also contains a great "glossary of unfamiliar terms; an Appendix of herbs and fruits called for in the recipes", a nine-page bibliography with both extant recipe collections and modern brewing sources, as well as a section on where to source "rare ingredients" which is somewhat out date since 2008, but is still a good place to start.

Each recipe included in the book has a title, and date, a brief introduction, a list of ingredients, culled from the original recipe, which is also included and closes with the source the recipe was found in. Directions for how to make the recipes are lacking, as Ms. Renfrew states "Modernized directions have been intentionally omitted in order to keep this book affordable; instructions may readily be found at any library, beer and wine-making supply store, or through the internet."

As a moderately experienced brewer I have made many of her recipes and with the ingredient list, the original instructions and a few books on modern brewing techniques I have had lots of success. Just remember that brewing takes time and above all CLEANLINESS! Bacteria is not your friend!



A Sip Through Time is divided into several different sections, which are not outlined in a table of contents. The first section is on Ales and Beers and includes sub-sections on Spruce Beer, Ginger Beer, and a generic sub-section titled Other Beers all of which are post 1600 (Maple, Nettle, Dandelion, etc.).

The next section is titled "Meads, Hydromels, & Metheglins" and starts with this warning about Mead from Andrew Borde's *The Regyment, or a Dyetary of Helth* published in 1542, "it preserveth helth: but it is not good for them the whiche have the IIyache or the Colycke." This section is large,

92 pages, and has some great recipes to explore.

Try one of the many mead recipes from *Martha Washington's Booke of Cookery* which was owned by the first, First Lady of the U.S.A. and likely originally penned between 1550 and 1625. Or any of the mead, hydromels or metheglins from *The Closet of the Eminently Learned Sir Kenelme Digby Kt. Opened* published after his death in 1669, but with the recipes collected pre-1650 and likely from earlier sources.

The third section of the book, Wines, is filled with lots of interesting recipes, but perhaps has the most post 1600-50 recipes. However, if wine making is more your style you will still have some to choose from like the "Birch Wine" on page 128, the "Cherry Wine" on page 134, the "Stepony" wine, raisin and lemon wine, on page 167, and several others. The "Blackberrie Wine" on page 132 is on my must try list. The next four sections, Caudles, Possets & Syllabubs, Brandies, Liqueurs, & Distilled Waters, Cider & Perry, and finally Hypocras, are smaller in size, but have many recipes you must try. The Caudle section will warm you up on a cold evening. The Brandies, Liqueurs, & Distilled Waters recipes are a bit harder to try. They require a home still. Remember laws on possessing a still vary for state to state and country to country. The Cider & Perry section is tiny and contains only a very few pre-1650 recipes. However, the recipes in the Hypocras section, which is almost as small as the previous section, will give you an excellent overview of Hypocras from the 1300's right through to the 1700's. The eighth and final section of the "A Sip Through Time" is titled "Methods & Cures" and while worth a look through might not appeal to everyone.

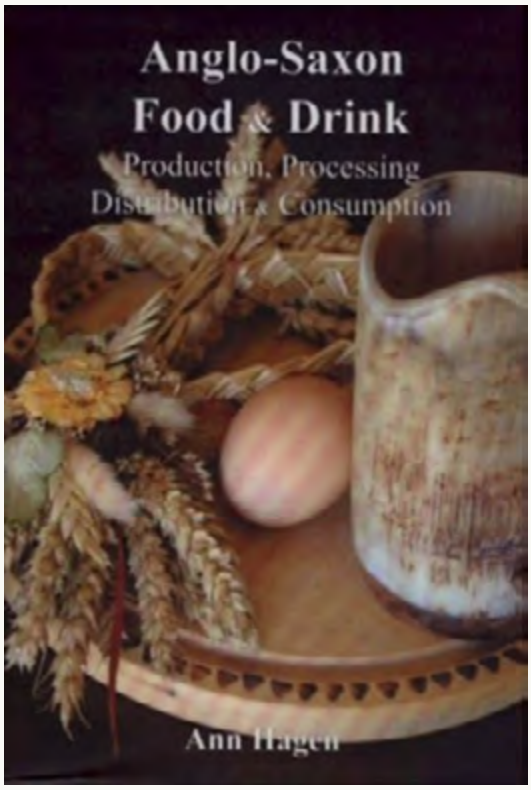
Remember, modern law around brewing, distilling and distributing your products varies from state to state and country to country. Please check them out with your nearest brewing club or store before you start down this road. And find a good mentor, coach or teacher to help you along this new and interesting path.

Besides A Sip Through Time Cindy Renfrow has written Take a Thousand Eggs or More which was reviewed in Eat This Book in 2022. "A Sip Through Time" has won several awards including the 1996 International Association of Culinary Professionals' Julia Child Cookbook Award.

ANGLO-SAXON FOOD AND DRINK

Sometimes, not very often, but sometimes, we are lucky enough to have a re-print of a classic food history book. This month *Eat This Book* explores one of these re-prints. *Anglo-Saxon Food and Drink* By Ms. Ann Hagen (2010) published by Anglo Saxon Books. This book is a reprint of Ms. Hagen's 1994 *A Handbook of Anglo-Saxon Food: Processing and Consumption* and the 1995 edition of *A Second Handbook of Anglo-Saxon Food and Drink: Distribution and Consumption* in one volume.

For many years these books were the only ones which addressed this time period in food history. "Hagen", as both are collectively known as, were the go-to books for any food after the Roman time period and before the 1100's. Since then a few books have come out addressing this era, but Ms. Hagen still has much to say, for us to learn from and many of the new books build on her shoulders.



Anglo-Saxon Food and Drink is not a cookbook, there are no cookbooks, at least as we think of them, from this time period and only few recipes scattered in letters, medical texts and other esoteric writings. In her short introduction of only 5 pages Ms. Hagen says, "the intention of this synthesizing study is to bring together for the first time information from various primary and secondary sources in order to build up a composite picture of the production, processing, distribution and consumption of the food during the Anglo-Saxon period." And she does just that!

We are given a detailed picture of the food stuff from the 5th to 11th centuries. How food was grown, processed, stored, consumed, cooked, etc. The introduction goes on to discuss the primary source materials she uses to fill out this study, "documentary and archaeological." Some of these sources are pure literary works from Anglo-Saxon literature. Others come from religious writings and laws and guild statues.

This documentary evidence "is heavily weighted to the end of the Anglo-Saxon period." Other documentary evidence used are illustrations such as the Bayeux Tapestry and late Anglo-Saxon manuscripts "valuable for showing animals, equipment and agricultural processes." Archeological evidence is also used and "is very valuable to supplement the evidence from the literature", although Hagen says that before the 1980's "planet remains were rarely recorded unless they were in the form of wood or nuts/stones/or charred/carbonized grains."

Archeological food stuff is now also being analyzed chemically and fragile plant and food remains are now considered part of the record. Hagen also uses the remains of animals to support her study and human remains show much about diet. Hagen also uses secondary

A medieval baker with his apprentice. Bodleian Library MS. Canon. Liturg. 99, fol 26 r. Wikimedia Commons

sources and the introduction goes into details regarding these sources. Both Primary and Secondary sources are cataloged in the extensive bibliography of twelve pages. *Anglo-Saxon Food and Drink* has a few illustrations scattered throughout the book, but sources are not noted and are generally unrelated to the discussion at hand.

In the 33 chapters in *Anglo-Saxon Food and Drink* Hagen focuses on specific crops, and food products such as: cereal crops, vegetables, herbs and fungi, fruits and nuts, cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, poultry and eggs, wild animals and birds, honey, fish and mollusks.

The book continues on and addresses: imported foods, tabooed food, provisions of a water supply and fermented drinks including beer, ale, wine and mead. Hagen's chapters on processing food includes discussions on: drying and milling grains, bread making, both leavened and unleavened, dairying, including fresh dairy products, butter, cheese, and dairy products uses as payment for rents and as remedies. Butchering, preservation and storage, including drying, smoking, pickling, and salting are also discussed.

Chapter twenty dives head long into the "methods of cooking" including over fire and the different fuels used, fire making, the direct and indirect application of fire, as well as ovens. In this chapter Hagen also discuss kitchens, cooks, preparation, cooking methods, including cauldrons, pots, both soapstone and earthenware, and cooking in leather vessels. And we are treated to boiling and stewing techniques, broths, pottages, baking, desserts, cakes, biscuits and sauces.

Part three of *Anglo-Saxon Food and Drink* is entirely focused on the "distribution" of food with chapters on administration, measures, theft, monastic and religious households, town and home supplies as well as hospitality and charity. The final section, before the conclusion, is all about consumption. The first section is on meals and discusses times, composition, regional and seasonal variation, courses and drinks. The second section focuses on a critical part of any study on food and drink in Christian Europe, fasting. This section speaks to the reasons for fasting, the periods of fasts, the Lenten fast, and fasting by laymen, monastics, saints, for penance and the ritual of the fast.

After fasting the section turns to feasting including the function and calendar of feasts, guild feasts, and a list of feasting activities to long to go into here, but which includes drunkenness, gluttony and entertainment. Hagen finishes this section with chapters on special regimens, shortages and diseases, and adulteration. In her conclusion Hagen speaks to the change of the (time) period, the role of women, and reviews the importance of many of the pervious sections and chapters. Please do not discount the extensive index the publisher has provided. It is a very detailed 33 pages!

Some reviews have said Ms. Hagen's writing is too academic and "smacks of a doctoral dissertation" and while that may be the case the writing, lay out and most importantly the content is extremely easy to engage with and these concerns should be ignored.

6000 YEARS OF BREAD:
IT'S HOLY AND UNHOLY HISTORY

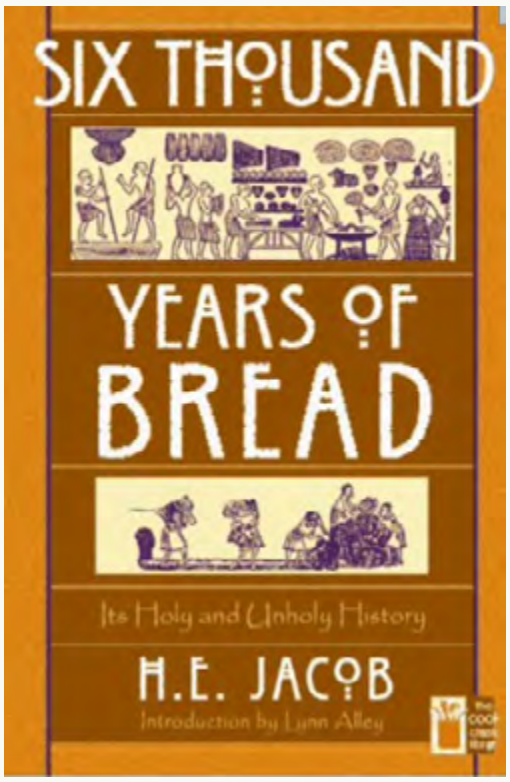
Now that the weather is getting cooler, at least in the Northern hemisphere, it might be time to think about baking. Baking can mean many things, but one of the most important baked products is bread, the staff of life. Unfortunately, pre-1650's bread recipes are few and far between.

There are some, as you will see below, but recipes for bread, one the most ubiquitous products on every table, for both high and low, were rarely written down. When they were they were not very modern, had only limited instructions and rarely outlined weights and measures.

This month *The Crier* editor has allowed *Eat This Book* the space for my regular cookbook review, along with some recipes. The book discussed this month is *6000 Years of Bread: It's Holy and Unholy History* by H.E. Jacob originally published in 1944 by Doubleday, Doran, and Co., and translated by Richard and Clara Winston. This new publication, with a forward by Lynn Alley, was published in 1997 by Lyons & Burford. Let me start by saying this book is a reference book, not a cookbook.

There are several other books on the history of bread that do include recipes, but *6000 Years of Bread* is the book that all others are built on. Also, it is not your "typical" read. Ms. Alley quotes Laurel Robertson's "Laurel's Kitchen Bread Book" in her introduction as saying it is "a passionately written and engaging idiosyncratic book." Passion and Idiosyncratic beautifully describe this work! I will leave engaging up each individual reader. *6,000 Years of Bread* was written after H.E. Jacob had been subjected to the horrors of both Dachau and Buchenwald.

Fortunately for him, and his eventual readers, "his wife Dora and an American uncle" sponsored Mr. Jacob for American citizenship and he was released in 1939. Escaping to New York he started work on *6,000 Years of Bread*. In her forward to the book Ms. Alley gives us many details on H.E. Jacob's life. He was a respected



editor and author with over 40 works attributed to him.

Since publication most reviews of *6,000 Years of Bread* have been positive, but one or two disparage the style and lack of scholarly notes. Some might take this as a fair critic, but given the time period, Jacob's intention of an approachable, not scholarly work and the included bibliography, these reviews are, as Ms. Alley writes, "for the interested reader to assess the validity." For more about Jacob's life and work I encourage you to pick up a copy of this book and dive into the fascinating forward.

Besides the forward *6000 Years of Bread* is divided into 6 "books" or sections. The ones of concern to pre-1650's cooks are the first

four sections. The first, "Bread in the Prehistoric Man" is short and discusses the start of gathering grains, the invention of the plow and the rise of different grain types. The second section, "Bread in the Ancient World", details bread and baking in Egypt, Israel, Greece, and Rome. "Bread in the Middle Ages", the third section speaks to millers, monks, bakers and much more.

Finally, section four, "Bread in the Early Americas", would seem like it is not of interest, but the impact of maize and other new world food products, plus the impact of wheat in the America's is an important aspect of 16th Century bread. The last two sections, "Bread in the Nineteenth Century" and "Bread in our time" are just as interesting as the previous sections, but have a focus outside of our time period of interest. There are also 29 illustrations, all but a few are redrawn from primary sources.

As I have said above, but it is well worth repeating here, this is a different kind of read. It is from a time and place in the history of food ways, but still has much to offer. I hope you will enjoy the style and information.

MAKES *1 LOAF*
COOK TIME *3H-ISH*

Basic Bread

Recipe by Baroness Vasilisa Myshkina (mka Britta Hall)
Baroness Vasilisa says, "This is how I make bread most of the time, more or less. Almost all the ingredients can be changed depending on mood, what you have on hand or dietary restrictions. For example, I used large chicken eggs for this, but you could use duck or quail or none at all. If you skip the eggs, add extra moisture with more water, milk, or whey. For flour I used 4 c all purpose and ½ c rye, because I had it and like it; you could just as easily use another whole grain flour, wheat germ, et cetera. Caveat, if you use more whole grain flour than all purpose, you may need more liquid. This calls for olive oil in this but I have used butter; I suppose lard or bacon fat could be used, but I've never done it. And, unless you are in the middle of a salt war do not omit the salt! Happy baking!"

INGREDIENTS

1	Packet Yeast
1 t	tsp honey or sweetener (generous)
1 c	Warm water
4-5 c	flour
2	large eggs
.25 -.33 cup	olive oil
1 t	salt

- Take eggs out of fridge to let them come to room temperature. Put yeast in a mixing bowl, add water then honey. Let sit until the yeast blooms; it should have a nice smell.
- After the yeast blooms add 2-2 ½ flour and eggs. Mix for a bit with a wooden spoon. Add oil and more flour.
- Mix until you have a soft dough. Add more flour if needed and mix. Tip out onto lightly floured surface. Scrape out as many of the little bits that cling to the sides of the bowl as you can; sprinkle these on the top of your dough.
- Knead gently a couple times by folding over the top third of the dough and then turning 90°.
- Sprinkle the salt over the dough and knead some more. Continue kneading until it all holds together and pull it into a ball.
- Set dough into a greased bowl to rise, turn once to make sure top is also covered with oil. Cover bowl and let rise for about an hour or until double.
- Tip out onto floured surface and let rest for a few minutes.
- Whilst the dough is resting, pre-heat your oven to 375°F. If you are using a baking stone, put it in the oven to heat up.
- Shape the dough as it best pleases you and set it to rest in bread pan or on a paddle until the oven comes to temp. At this point, slide the dough onto the stone or put pan in the middle of the oven.
- Bake for 25-30 minutes or until done.
- Take bread out. Resist the urge to slice right into it. Let it rest for a few minutes, then enjoy.

Photos by Elena Karlovna (mka Molly Hall)

In Platina's *De Honesta Voluptate et Valetudine* (On Right Pleasure and Good Health translated by Mary Ella Milham) from the late 1400's in Italy there are two entries of interest to us. Book 1, Entry 14 is titled "De Pane" (On Bread). Platina talks the about barley and African winter wheat, then goes on to discuss how to grind and separate the wheat from the bran. One of the most interesting parts is the discussion on how "the people at Ferrara" make their bread in a baker's table with flour, warm water, salt and some leaven (yeast). He continues to speak about the kneading and how "Bread should be well-baked in an oven and not used the same day." Book 1, Entry 15 "De Placentis" includes 4 bun recipes, enriched buns with butter or lard and fennel seeds, plain fennel buns without the fat but with fennel, and a recipe for buns stuffed with figpeckers and/or other small birds. You can easily use or adapt, without the eggs, the above bread recipe provided by Baroness Vasilisa adding fennel seeds and/or lard or butter, and your favorite poultry. If you make these let me know how your Italian buns turned out!

MAKES 1 LOAF

TORIGLIONE RIPIENO

Translation by David Huffman-Walddon

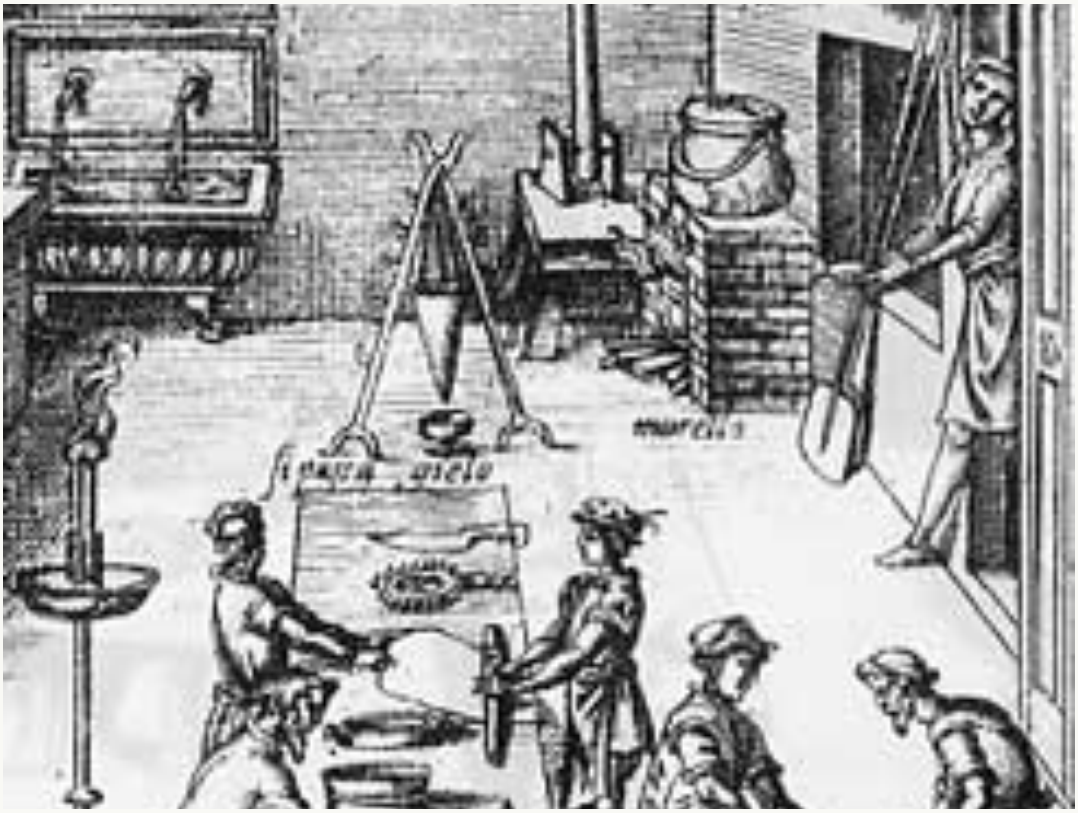
The below is a recipe for a stuffed fruit and cinnamon bread. This recipe is from Bartolomeo Scappi's cookbook "Cuoco segreto di Papa Pio V Opera Dell'arte del cucinare" published in Venice in 1570. The original Italian transcription I used for my translation comes from the Arnaldo Forni Editore, published in 2002. I have made this several times. It is delicious. I have yet to do a formal redaction, but with my translation and the pictures I have included I am sure you will be able to work it out! As always, I would love to hear how your redaction turned out.

To make all manner of diverse tortiglioni [with] puff pastry, and without puff pastry, stuffed, and hollow.

To make stuffed tortiglione
Cap. CXXII.

Knead two pounds of flour with six fresh egg yolks, and two ounces of rose water and one ounce of leaven tempered with tepid water and four ounces of fresh butter, or else suet, suet that does not have a bad odor, and sufficient salt, and for the space of half an hour blend the pastry well, and then fashion a thin sheet of dough and anoint with liquid butter, which is not too hot, or else suet, and with a spurred tool for cutting pastry turn and turn the edge, which is always much more bigger than the rest; dust the sheet of dough with four ounces of sugar, and one ounce of cinnamon, then take one pound of dried grapes of Corinto which have been left to boil in wine, and one pound of dates also cooked in wine, and chopped minutely, and one pound of raisins without stones which have been left to boil in wine, and all the said matter is gathered together and mixed together with sugar, cinnamon, cloves, and nutmeg, and somewhat carefully the said composition [is] spread over the sheet of dough, with some little morsels of butter and commence with the length [of] the sheet of dough rolling it like a wafer – take warning not to break the pastry, and this tortiglione should require no more than three rolls, so it may cook better, nor does it like to be pressed, anoint it all over with liquid butter not too hot, commence at one end rolling it not too tightly in the manner of the shell of a snail, or a labyrinth; then prepare the tart pan with a sheet of dough, some of the same pastry, somewhat large, anointed with liquid butter, and put it upon the tortiglione lightly without being pressed, and gently cook in the oven, or under a temperate fire, not forgetting at times [to] anoint with liquid butter, and when it is almost cooked scatter over it sugar, and rose water and serve hot. The tart pan in which you cook the tortiglioni should be broad and wide and with low sides.

Photos by David Huffman-Walddon



This woodcut is from Bartolomeo Scappi's cookbook. It doesn't take much imagination to see the cooks rolling out the pastry for a Tortiglione Ripieno. And the baker is standing by to put it in the oven!

Baroness Vasilisa Myshkina lives in the north of Russia and prefers to ignore the politics of the upstart princes of Moscow so that she can play with string and explore the cuisine of the areas once claimed by the Eastern Roman Empire.

Britta Hall is a 21st century cleric (it says so on her tax forms) who likes to play with string and may have too many cookbooks.

MEDIEVAL CUISINE IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD:
A CONCISE HISTORY WITH 174 RECIPES

Aromatic spices, glittering gold and silver dusted sweet treats, clove-studded unctuous lamb, exotic fruits, heaps of steaming rice bejeweled with saffron and pomegranate seeds – these images, smells and thanks to *Medieval Cuisine in the Islamic World: A Concise History with 174 Recipes* by Lilia Zaouali University of California Press, 2007, recipes, can be part of your medieval culinary repertoire.

Zaouali's book, translated by M. B. DeBevoise from both the original French and Italian edition with a foreword by Charles Perry will set you on a new or, for those of you already interested in cuisine of the middle east, deeper path. *Medieval Cuisine in the Islamic World* is just a taste, or a starter, of the delicious and full-flavored cuisine you will find from the medieval Islamic world. As Charles Perry says in his forward "Islam has the richest medieval food literature in the world – there are more cookbooks in Arabic from before 1400 than in the rest of the world's languages put together."

Medieval Cuisine of the Islamic World is divided into three main sections. Part one is titled "Cultural Background and Culinary Context." Part two, the largest section, "The Medieval Tradition" includes 143 of the 174 recipes. The final section, part three titled "Contemporary North African Cuisine", includes 31 modern recipes.

The rest of the book is made up of smaller sections including a foreword, a translator's note, the author's preface to the American Edition", a notes section, a glossary, an index of the recipes and a general index. This edition of the book does not include a bibliography, but the extensive notes section has full citations of the works referenced in each section.

Also included are 16 pages of colored plates comprised of beautiful manuscript illuminations of dinning in and around the region from the 10th, 11th and 12th centuries, gorgeous cookware, plate ware and serving

dishes from as early as the 9th century all the way through to the 15th century and one picture of a modern spice merchant from Cairo, Egypt.

In Part One: "Cultural Background and Culinary Context" Dr. Zaouali uses the cookbooks and literature from all over the Islamic world of the middle ages to explore the food and cooking of the time period. The details included in this section are some of best and most comprehensive information on a culinary tradition I have seen.

This easy to read and understand section outlines information on some of the earliest post-ancient Greek and Roman food ways, as well as the cultural context in which they are situated. The opening anecdote of the section, from the cookbook by Ibn Sayyār

al-Warrāq, "Kitāb al-tabílkh" written in the second half of the 10th century, outlines the importance of cleanliness of both the cooking utensils and the ingredients used in the recipes.

Later in the section we are told, "The codification of cooking recipes in the Muslim world began in Baghdad. The first books of recipes in Arabic were compiled in the eighth century." Stop for a moment and think about this statement. In the 700's, while Europe was in the midst of the so called "dark-ages", the Arabic world was collecting delicious dishes cooked in the palaces of the caliphates into manuscripts which would become the foundation of a deep and unique cuisine.

The Ancient Roman cookbook, commonly known as Apicius, would not be organized into the only edition we have for another 150 to 200 years in the 9th century! Section one also includes large sub-section on the sources used with biographies of each sources author.

Part Two: "The Medieval Tradition" is the largest section of the book and includes 143 original recipes translated into English. Each recipe is annotated with the source it comes from. M. B. DeBevoise has done an excellent job of translating this work. However, it should be noted that the translation is several steps from the original medieval Arabic first into French and Italian and then into English. There is likely to be some differences from the original. Also, there are no redactions included with these recipes. This section is divided into 14 sub-sections from Bread and Broth to Fish, Pasta, Sauces Meats, Poultry, Vegetable Stews and many others.

Each sub-section starts with an excellent introduction and the many recipes each have a note from the author as a header. Check out the first section on cold appetizers. The "Puree of Chickpeas with cinnamon and Ginger" sounds delicious.

Or try your hand at the truly delicious and easy recipe in the Sweet and Sour Dishes section for "Tabāhja: Beef with Pistachios." It includes mint, honey, pistachios saffron, pepper and a little vinegar. So many recipes for you to try. Let me know which are your favorites and how they turn out.

Part Three: "Contemporary North African Cuisine." These recipes should be used in a historic context VERY carefully as Dr. Zaouali has used modern ingredients in this section such as tomatoes, zucchini, summer squash, red peppers, potatoes, baking soda, etc. First on my list is "Lemon Chicken Stew." I will leave out the potatoes and tomatoes. Next up the "Lamb Stew with Fresh Apricots" or for a sweet treat "Maqrûd: Semolina Cakes with Date Paste."

Medieval Cuisine in the Islamic World is not only an important book because of how it outlines this important cuisine and culture of the middle ages but also because of the exchange and influence between the Islamic and European worlds. Unfortunately this book is currently out of but it can be found used for a good price on www.addall.com or of course your local library will either have it or be able to inter-library loan it.

Born in Tunisia Lilia Zaouali earned her Ph.D at the Sorbonne in Paris in Islamic Studies. She has taught at the University of Jussieu, also in Paris and the Sarah Lawrence American Academy.

FOOD AND FEAST IN MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

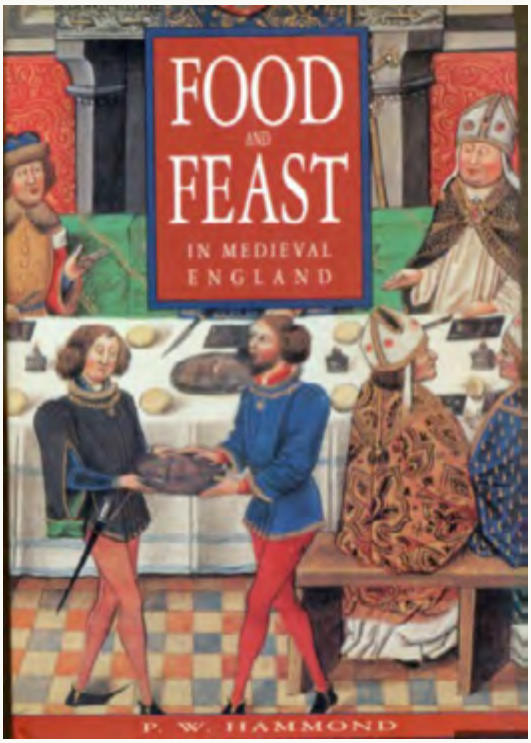
For the December column of "Eat this Book" I always like to find a festive holiday book or, at the very least, something that is a good generic gift book.

Food and Feast in Medieval England By P.W. Hammond 1998 Sutton Publishing, is both! It covers, among other things, festive events in England during the medieval period, including the Yule tide season, and also is filled with beautiful photos, marvelous illustrations and piles of detailed information making it the perfect gift for any on interested in food and food ways. *Food and Feast* is not a cookbook, it is a reference book, and does not include any recipes from the time period or modern redactions.

In *Food and Feast* Mr. Hammond discusses "the food eaten, who ate what, the manners of those that ate it and whether or not it would have nourished (or poisoned) them . . . from about 1250 to about 1550." The book is divided into 7 chapters: 1) Where Food Came From 2) Food of the Countryman 3) Food of the Town Dweller 4) Food of the Gentry 5) Adulteration and Nutrition 6) Table Manners 7) Feasts. Also included is a list of the 11 color plates, see below for more details, a very brief preface, a comprehensive and interesting notes section that should be explored in depth, a bibliography and an index.

In Chapter One, *Where Food Came From* Hammond speaks to the growing and processing of food in the Medieval Period. From the sowing of the seeds to the care and eventual butchery of the animals. The details are interesting and will broaden your knowledge of food ways in the time period. He also discusses the types of fruits and vegetables grown and how they differ from today's produce.

Chapters two, three and four are dedicated to three different groups of people, what they ate and the differences between the groups. Access to food stuffs in each group varied as did preparation, storage, and many other details. Hammond unfortunately leaves out two very important groups of people that the medieval literature covers in depth, the sick and the Royalty. Fortunately, much has been written about these two groups in other books and the Royalty aspect is touched on in the chapter on feasts.



Chapter five, Adulteration and Nutrition, starts by saying, "the quality of food in the Middle Ages, in the sense of its purity, is difficult to determine. It must have been very variable, much more so than at present, since there were no really effective quality control measures." He goes on to discuss the deliberate adulteration of food to make things go further, as well as the laws and fines for this and other food crimes. Later in the chapter the nutritional values of food and the health of the people is reviewed. Table manners, chapter six, from the time period distinguished each class of diners. "This was particularly true for the higher ranks of society who had more time to consider such niceties." Hammond describes the cutlery and tableware used during dinning and the decorum that diners were expected to engage in.

La scène du banquet de l'Ordre de l'Étoile dated between 1375 and 1380 Wikimedia Commons

Finally, in chapter seven, we find the organization, details and descriptions of the medieval feast. Hammond describes them as "the culmination of medieval meal preparation and eating . . . given by monarchs, princes and high-ranking prelates on suitable occasions." Pulling from household accounts, financial receipts, and menus of the time a picture of these sumptuous and elaborate occasions comes to life on the page.

The description of the planning and food stuffs for the wedding of Henry the Third's daughter Margaret to Alexander III on December 26th, 1251 has much detail. Included in the feast were 68,500 loaves of bread, 60,000 salted herring, 25,000 gallons of wine, 10,000 haddock, and boars and deer and eels and hens and . . . the list goes on and on!

As mentioned above there are 11 color plates included in "Food and Feast" starting with a full-page beautiful manuscript illumination of a sumptuous feast. This scene, from Duc de Berry's Tres Riches Heures, shows the lavish plate ware in use at the time along with depitions of salt cellars, poultry dishes, meat rolls and a servant carving some meat. The color section of plates continues with manuscript illuminations depicting bakers, bird traps, water wheels, and several other banquets.

We are also treated to photographs of pottery from the time period as well as an intricate gold beaker from 1475-1500.

Besides the color plates included in the book *Food and Feast* is literally filled with black and white illustrations the details of which should not be ignored. On page 5 we see how food stuffs begin with a 14th Century man, beautiful basket on his side, sowing seeds. Page 14 includes an early 13th Century depiction of Bees flying home to their bee hive encouraged by the keeper.

In Chapter Two, page 26 you will find a beautiful photograph of a three footed 15th Century earthenware pipkin and on the facing page a woman warming her feet by a fire with a pipkin and spoon in the fire and sausages and pigs' carcass hanging above likely being preserved by the smoke.

In Chapter Four, page 71 a photograph of an ornate cup from 1580 made finely crafted from silver and a coconut! In Chapter Six there are several photographs of cutlery, inspiration for your table settings.

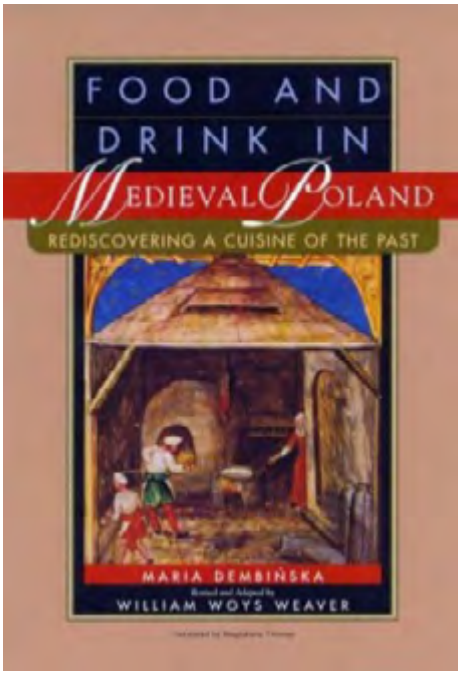
I cannot express how much information on food and food ways are captured in these illustrations. Let me know which ones are your favorites.

P.W. Hammond has written several books including "The Coronation of Richard III" with Anne F. Sutton, "Richard III: The Road to Bosworth Field" and "The Battle Barnet and Tewkesbury." He also edited the "BL Harleian Manuscript 433" with Rosemary Horrox.

FOOD AND DRINK IN MEDIEVAL POLAND:
REDISCOVERING A CUISINE OF THE PAST

Food and Drink in Medieval Poland: Rediscovering a Cuisine of the Past by Maria Dombinska, revised and adapted by William Woys Weaver, translated by Magdalena Thomas, 1999 University of Pennsylvania Press is an unusual book. Why is it unusual? Because there is little to nothing published on the topic of Medieval Polish food.

Sure, there are a few web resources, most of which quote this book's content, and if you search Google Scholar several papers from academic journals come up, but this book is the most accessible information on the subject. Weaver, in his preface, sums this up perfectly by saying, "The inaccessibility of Polish language sources, and perhaps the unduly complex nature of medieval society in the far reaches of Central Europe, provide natural barriers against the sort of cross-cultural exploration that has characterized similar research in England and Frances."



The foundation of Dr. Dombinska's book comes from archeological and ethnographic sources along with oral traditions. She also uses a limited number of written sources, but not many because in 1944 the Polish National Archives were destroyed in a fire and 75% of the contents were destroyed.

The preface to the English edition of the book is by William Woys Weaver. Dr. Weaver has done a wonderful job of revising and adapting Dr. Dombinska's original manuscript from the translation by Ms. Thomas. The original manuscript, available in several libraries in the original Polish, needed some culinary context for those unfamiliar with Polish food and drink.

He also revised much of the manuscript to make it more accessible to a modern, non-scholarly audience. For these, and other revisions, Dr. Weaver and Dr. Dombinska worked closely together, although not without some turmoil, confiscated papers, covert meetings at conferences and all the intrigue that went along with the cold war. In Chapter one, "Towards a Definition of Polish National Cookery" explores the culinary identity of Poland. Dombinska accurately opens the chapter with this quote, "Food, like language, is a transmitter of culture, a set of signals that define a people in terms of time and place." This quote centers the rest of her book, and beautifully describes one of the main reasons I write this column and am involved in food history.

Dombinska delves into the historic record of food of the region now known as Poland. She speaks to the identity problems between Poland and other regions in this area and breaks Polish culinary history into three distinct phases. Chapter two of "Food and Drink" continues with "Poland in the Mid-

dle Ages" which helps the reader understand the class and social groups, the political background, the people and their food, and the influence of other cultures on Polish cuisine. This chapter is a fascinating look at the region's history.

The academic title of chapter three, "The Dramatis Personae of the Old Polish Table" may give you pause, but jump in. Here Dr. Dombinska draws us a picture of the feasts and food stuffs at the tables of the Polish court and how they were served.

She even mentions a Polish etiquette manual by Lukasz Gornicki "Dworzanin polski" (The Polish Courtier). Chapter four "Food and Drink in Medieval Poland" is the largest chapter of the book. This chapter covers the details around "the Polish system of daily meals during the Middle Ages." It also speaks to the church's restrictive dietary laws. The rest of the chapter outlines specific topics and ingredients including the drinks consumed, which is broken into sub-sections on wine, beer, and mead, the ingredients used, both similar and different from other cuisines of the Middle Ages and food and ingredients with sub-sections on beef, pork, organ meats and veal, poultry, game, fish, grains, breads and baked goods, produce from the kitchen garden, and finally, fruits and nuts.

The last chapter of the book, "Medieval Recipes in the Polish Style" includes 35 recipes by William Woys Weaver. Many of the recipes are extrapolations from medieval Polish texts that hint at recipes, but are not complete Medieval recipes. For instance, in the first recipe, "Gruel of Mixed Grains (Kasza z Roznych Ziaren) Dr. Weaver tells us that "this genre of dish is often referred to in the Polish Latin Text as gruellum compostitum, with no clear indication of grain type or precise texture."

All the recipes are interpretations from mentions in records, menus or other documents of the time period. Occasionally Weaver pulls inspiration from cookbooks from the surrounding areas. In all cases the recipes are well thought through and excellent extrapolations you can be confident in making and serving.

The book also includes a notes section, a bibliography, acknowledgement and an index. All of the 40 Illustrations in *Food and Drink* are black and white and re-drawn from the original source. Each of the original sources are noted in the list of illustrations.

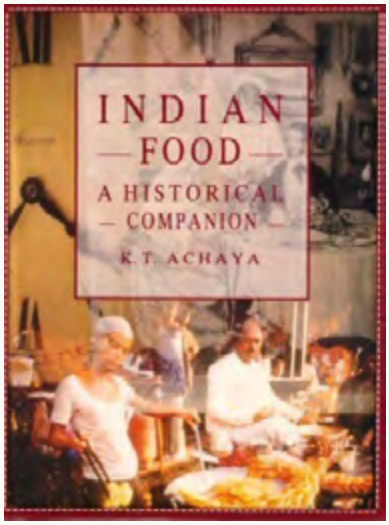
Maria Dembinska undertook this research for her PhD on "food consumption in medieval Poland" at Warsaw University and the Institute of Material Culture of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Her dissertation would eventually become this book. She has written "nearly two hundred articles and papers on medieval foods and food ways." She died in 1996. The publication of her manuscript had many hurdles to overcome in Communist Post-Stalin Poland.

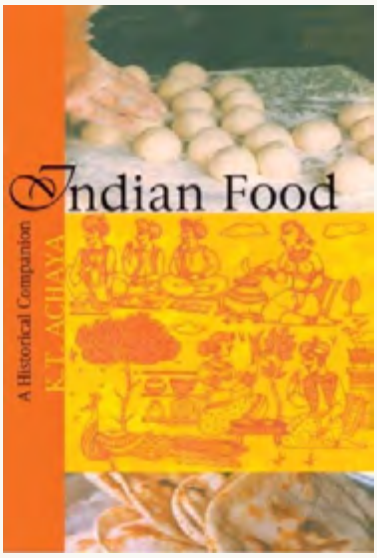
Dr. William Woys Weaver is the author of 20 books dealing with culinary history and heritage seeds. He received his PhD in ethnography from University College, Dublin. His passion around collecting and preserving old seeds can be explored on his website www.williamwoysweaverepicurewithhoe.com

Food and Drink in Medieval Poland is available used and in good condition at your favorite book store or check out it out at www.addall.com

INDIAN FOOD: A HISTORICAL COMPANION

As the SCA expands to include more cultures, counties/regions and time periods we need to think about the food and food ways unique to these new interests. One such region is the modern country of India which, during the pre-1600's, was divided into many different states and cultures.





Unfortunately, there has been very little written on the topic of food history in the Indian sub-continent. One exception is the excellent writing of Dr. K.T. Achaya. Among his writings on the topic is *Indian Food: A Historical Companion* by K.T. Achaya Oxford University Press, 1994. This book was funded by the Indian National Science Academy and is an "outcome of a research project on the history of science in India." Dr. Achaya tells us that "the book deals with the food materials and food practices of the Indian subcontinent." He also considers the regional cuisines "within a historical context whenever possible."

Indian Food: A Historical Companion is divided into 16 chapters. Chapter One, Ancestral Legacies, speaks to the tools and agricultural development of the food ways of pre-historic India. Dr. Achaya goes on to discuss the language development of food from the earliest references of food stuffs in Sanskrit through to Indian words that were borrowed into Greek, Latin and old Persian.

We also use some of these origin words in English today. Kari (curry), toddy, punch, and mulligatawny, which "literally means pepper-water in Tamil." I am sure you will enjoy chapter two, "Harappan Spread", chapter three, "Foods of the Gods", and chapter four, "The Foods of South India." These chapters cover topics such as: measurements, raising, storing and preparing crops, the fruits, vegetables, oils, and spices of the region, the foods found in Tamil literature, the importance of rice in the southern region, and trade foods from South India.

One of the most interesting parts of these chapters occurs in chapter three, box 4, pages 32 and 33, when Dr. Achaya lists many Sanskrit sources that include food references. I will not detail out every chapter, but of particular interest might be chapter 8 which delves into "Royal Fare", Chapter ten which outlines the "Regional Cuisines" of the Indian sub-continent.

The final chapter is titled "Bounty from the New World" which "the food and plants that were brought into India from South America and Mexico after the 15th century" are discussed. These food stuffs, including new seed oils, nuts, fruits and vegetables, have been tightly integrated in to modern Indian food and now it is almost impossible to think about Indian food without the spicy, chili rich, tomato sauces.

Indian Food: A Historical Companion includes many illustrations, all of which are annotated with the original source. The 35-line drawings all have a description of the original source. The 109 black and white photographs include photo credits and descriptions and the 56 color plates, taken by Sanjeev Saith and Mukul Mangalik add to the book and bring India to the reader.

Some of the food stuffs that interest me the most are the water-Ices and ice-creams found on pages 115 and 116. References to cooling and freezing technologies date back to the 7th century in India. Also, of interest, are the 31 different alcoholic drinks, on page 59, starting with the earliest reference for "Sura" a barley and rice drink which became a "generic word for a strong drink" and continuing on with fermented and brewed drinks made from flowers, fruits, such as mangos, jambu, palm, and black grapes.

For those interested in the more medical aspects of food you should immediately turn to the chapter seven. This short chapter outlines the humoral theory that was used in historic Indian cuisine with the "five states of matter . . . earth (prthvi), water (ap), fire (tejas), air or mind (vanyu) and sky, ether or space (akasha). And how they combine with the body to support health. Achya also writes about the "fathers of Indian Medical Science" and the manuscripts they produced throughout the time period.

Indian Food: A Historical Companion does not include a bibliography, but the extensive reference section, pages 239 through 259 is loaded with books to further your interest. It also includes "A Glossary and Index of Non-English Words", and "Index of Latin Names", an "Author Index" outlining writers included in the work, and a "General Index."

Although there are no recipes in *Indian Food*, it is a reference book, you can check out The Madrone Culinary Guild Pamphlet *The Silk Road* for a few interpreted recipes from the medieval period in India.

You could also do some of your own research and recreation of recipes based on some of the descriptions included in this book. If you do please share them with me!

I am sure you will enjoy the information on this unique and flavor-filled food which has thousands of years of history. *Indian Food: A Historical Companion* is easily available in both hard and soft cover from your local or online book seller.

Dr. Achaya was born in 1923 in the Southern India Princly State of Mysore, now the state of Karnataka. He became a chemist, food scientist and food historian after graduating from the University of Madras and doing his PhD work at the University of Liverpool.

Dr. Achya is well know for his research into cotton seed and castor oil. Of interest to this group is another book by Dr. Achaya, *A Historical Dictionary of Indian Food*. *Indian Food: A Historical Companion* is available in both hard and soft copies from your favorite bookseller.

THE GOOD HOUSEWIFE'S JEWEL

Some extant cookbooks, especially those in English, and from the later period of our interests, do not need much, if any, modern recipe redactions in order to cook from them. Often the ingredients even have weights and measures associated with them.

They are not as clear as modern recipes, but much easier to cook from than those of the medieval past. *The Good Housewife's Jewel* by Thomas Dawson with an introduction by Maggie Black, Southover Press, 1996 is one such book. Thomas Dawson's book was compiled "in 1596 and 1597 when English Society stood on the threshold of a new era." The emergence of a middle and upper-middle class spurred on the publishing of many different manuals, including cookbooks, that allowed this new wealthy class to emulate the upper class and the Royalty. World-wide trade was also on the rise bringing new products into England and allowing access to these products to a larger group of people.

This modern edition is structured completely differently from the original. The original editions, Parts One and Two, had chapters such as "Approued pointes of Cookerie, Approued pointes of Husbandrie, Approued Medicines for sundry diseases., etc." This edition has been re-formatted into a more approachable book for the modern reader. The recipes are sorted into boiling and stewing, roasting, frying, fritters and puddings, baking, eggs and cream, etc. This, in my opinion and for our use, was an unnecessary change. However if you would like to look at the original part one of *The Good Housewife's Jewel* can be found in Early English Books online here: https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A19957.0001.001?view=toc

The recipes in Dawson are incredibly varied. We see the use of bread in stuffing for meat, similar to the modern kind, for the first time. There are cordials and distilled products. Candies such as sugared violets and preserved cherries, lemons, oranges and more.

Sweet pies and tarts for the "Banqueting course" and savory ones for the other courses. You will also find many savory meat dishes boiled, roasted and fried and then served with scrumptious sauces. We also see, possibly, the first written recipe for Haggis! In Dawson's recipe it calls for bread crumbs rather than the traditional Scottish Oats. It doesn't call for nearly as many different offal parts as the modern recipe and adds cream, rosewater, pepper mace, nutmeg, winter savory parsley, thyme, pennyroyal and sugar. Quite the complicated flavor profile. Along with the culinary recipes there are also medical recipes, which the modern editors have categorized under "Remedies."

Some of the recipes are throw backs to a more medieval time including the recipe for "Triffle" and a recipe that is almost exactly the same as the medieval Blancmanger. Dawson also includes the first recipe in an English cookbook for the new world product of sweet potatoes. Besides the recipes this edition includes an Introduction by Maggie Black on the history of the book, an editor's note that speaks briefly about the changes made in this edition, a glossary and an Index.

As mentioned above *The Good Housewife's Jewel* contains the first recipe for "Trifle." Two years later, in 1598, Florio described a trifle in his Italian to English dictionary as "a dish composed of cream boiled with various ingredients, similar to a fool." This recipe, besides the heating, is very similar to a medieval fool. Modernly, trifle is a classic British cold pudding with custard, fruit, jam and day old-cake or sponge biscuits. Dawson's recipe for trifle is not a modern one. It adheres to Florio's description of a "Fool."

You can easily make this recipe from the description in Dawson's book. Just sweeten and flavor it with rosewater and some spicy powdered ginger to your taste.

BE CAREFUL with the rosewater. Every brand, and it seems every bottle, has a different strength. This is the same with powdered ginger. Start slow and add a ½ teaspoon at a time. To a pint of 35% heavy cream I used 3 tablespoons of white granulated sugar, 1 ½ teaspoons of powdered ginger and 1 tablespoon of Rosewater.

Put these ingredients into the cream before you start to whip it. Also make sure you don't turn the cream to butter!

To Make a Trifle

Take a pint of thick cream, and season it with sugar and ginger, and rose water. So stir it as you would then have it and make it luke warm in a dish on a chafing dish and coals. And after put it into a silver piece or a bowl, and so serve it to the board.

Elizabethan Sweet and Sour Chicken Sauce

This chicken sauce recipe is reminiscent of Chinese American Orange Chicken. The Title of the recipe is "To Boil A Capon With Oranges And Lemons." The first line of the recipe says to "Take oranges or lemons" "And" or "Or"? I choose to do AND for two reasons, first the title, second the oranges we have now are likely sweeter than ones in period. I have also substituted chicken for the capon. It is much easier to find in the grocery store. You could even make this sauce and serve it over warm Rotisserie Chicken for a very quick and easy potluck contribution.

INGREDIENTS

2 cups 500ml	Chicken Broth
1.5 cup 375ml	Semi-Sweet white wine
1 Medium sized	Lemon, quartered with peel
1 Medium sized	Orange, quartered with peel
7	Prunes
4	Whole Cloves
½ t	Peppercorns
4 T	Sugar (or to taste)
3 pieces	Whole mace
1T	Rosewater

In a small sauce pan place all ingredients. Bring to a boil, then simmer over low heat until the flavors combine.

Note: Modern diners will likely want a thicker sauce. You can thicken this sauce with your go-to thickener, but in period it was a thinner sauce and the chicken was served over sops with the sauce poured over it.

Not much is known about Thomas Dawson. We don't even know when he was born or died. We do know of two other popular recipe/household books are attributed to him *The good Hus-wifes handmaid for the kitchen* (1594), and *The Booke of Carving and Sewing* (1597).

Margaret "Maggie" Black was born in 1921, in London and died August 5th, 1999. She was a well-known food historian and food writer and also the author of several children's books and plays. She completed a Master's Degree at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa. Besides Dawson she was also the editor of Mrs Beeton's Favourite Cakes and Breads (1972). Her historic cookbooks Include Heritage of British Cooking (1977), Maggie Black. Food and Cooking in Medieval Britain (1985) with Peter Brears, The Medieval Cookbook (1996, 2012) reviewed previously in Eat This Book, and Medieval Cookery: Recipes and History (2003).

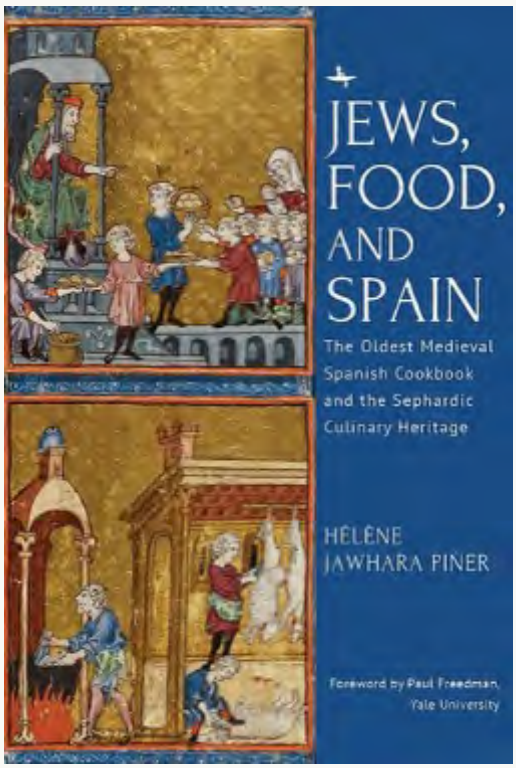
CHAG SAMEACH!
HAPPY PASSOVER!

In this month's Eat This Book we will explore two books instead of one! Why two? Because Hélène Jawhara Piñer has produced a very interesting, but academic book, *Jews, Food and Spain: The Oldest Medieval Spanish Cookbook and Sephardic Culinary Heritage* foreword by Paul Freedman from Yale University, Academic Studies Press, 2022 which follows up her practical, based in history book *Sephardi: Cooking the History. Recipes of the Jews of Spain and the Diaspora from the 13th Century to Today* Cherry Orchard Press 2021. The two go hand in hand and are excellent resources for Sephardic food in the middle ages.

Jews, Food and Spain emerged from her *2019 doctoral dissertation on medieval history.* Her dissertation, and the subsequent book, focuses on "the conditions under which Jews ate, what they ate, and why they ate it." The main source for this understanding comes from "the Kitab al-tabih's (the cookbook) a treatise on Andalusian cuisine" of the middle ages. The Kitab al-tabih is a complicated mix of Arab and Jewish dietary and food traditions, which Dr. Jawhara Piñer explores in depth throughout *Jews, Food and Spain*.

The book is divided into three parts. "Part One: The Jews' Place in the Construction of an Andalusian Cuisine (Twelfth to Fourteenth Centuries)" discusses the complex inter-relationships in the region, the "Jewish Stamp in the Kitab al-tabih", along with "the Jewish and Muslim Consumption and Cooking Practices in the Kitab al-tabih", and the importance of Eggplant as a cultural Jewish "marker."

Part Two speaks to "The Legacy of the Multicultural Cuisine of Al-Andalus (Fourteenth to Seventeenth Century): The evolution and Perception of Jewish Food." Finally, Part Three illuminates the Culinary heritage of the Sephardic Jews. It includes sections on "Dishes Common in Spanish Sephardic Cuisine" and dishes from the diaspora. It also includes a section with three recipes from the Kitab al-tabih, "A Stuffed Buried Jewel Dish", "A Jewish Dish of Eggplants Stuffed with Meat" and "A Jewish Dish of Chicken" and a section with three dishes from the Medieval Mediterranean Basin, "Harusa/Oriza" two different ways, a "Recipe for Murakkaba" a honey sweetened dough, and "Marqrud" a dough stuffed with Almonds and sugar. I am sure you will delight in the extensive bibliography that is also included.



Dr. Jawhara Piner's second book, *Sephardi: Cooking the History. Recipes of the Jews of Spain and the Diaspora from the 13th Century to Today*, is a modern cookbook, but as she says, "it is not based on family recipes, but on the history of the Jewish people from Spain." In her introduction to the book Jawhara Piner does a great job of contextualizing the recipes. She speaks to the "Origin" of the terms and words used in Jewish food ways, goes on to briefly describe the sources she uses, speaks to the Jewish holidays, dietary laws, the most famous Jewish Scholar of the middle ages, Moshe Ben Maimon (1135 – 1204), continues on with the impact of the

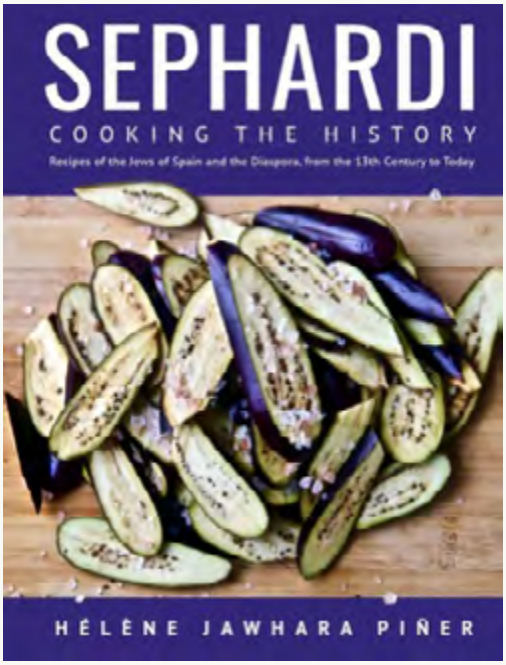
inquisition trials on the Jews and their food and finally wraps up the introduction with how she has adapted and created the recipes.

It should be noted, as Dr. Jawhara Piner points out, that "throughout the Middle Ages until the nineteenth century, only eight recipes have been found that are specifically identified as "Jewish" in their name." It should also be noted the research conducted for this book and for "Jews, Food and Spain" identify many, many more recipes based on in-depth analysis of the sources that speak to what Jews ate, the traditions, both culinarily, religious and food-ways perspective, and what they were forbidden to eat once "conversion" occurred. The 55 recipes included in *Sephardi* is introduced with some context for the recipe, if it comes from a specific recipe or reference, if it is conjecture, or if it is a modern recipe.

The recipes are broken into ten different sections. The book starts with "Breads and Snacks." The "Baked mugabbana Cheese pies" sound delicious and will be one of the first recipes I try from this book. The sections continue with "Vegetables and Eggs" and, because of the importance of the product in Jewish cuisine, a section of four recipes for Eggplant. The fourth section, "The Explicitly Jewish Dishes between the Western cookbook Kitab al-tabih and the Eastern cookbook Kitab al—at'ima al-mu'tada" which is a very long title for a section, but it includes seven recipes with Jew, or Jewish, in the titles.

The recipe for "Meatballs cursed by the Jews" with ground beef, parsley, celery leaves and mint are quick, easy and sound very tasty. The sections continue with "Meat and Fish", "Two Yom Kippur Menus of Conversos from Mexico", these recipes are from 1640 and 1650, "Soups", "Maimonides' Regimen of Health Menu", "Desserts and Pastries" and finally "My Recipes Based on Historical Sources."

It should be highlighted that the recipe for "The making of peot: The Challah from Spain in the thirteenth century" comes from the translation of the Kitab al-tabih by David Friedman who is known in the SCA as Duke Cariadoc of the Bow from The Kingdom of the West.



Helene Jawhara Piner has a doctoral degree from the University of Tours, France in Medieval History and History of Food. She has lectured on her main research interest, the medieval culinary history of Spain, at many academic institutions throughout Europe and the middle east. She states on her biography in "Jews, Food and Spain" that a "new historical cookbook is forthcoming in Winter 2023."

TASTES OF BYZANTIUM:
THE CUISINE OF A LEGENDARY EMPIRE

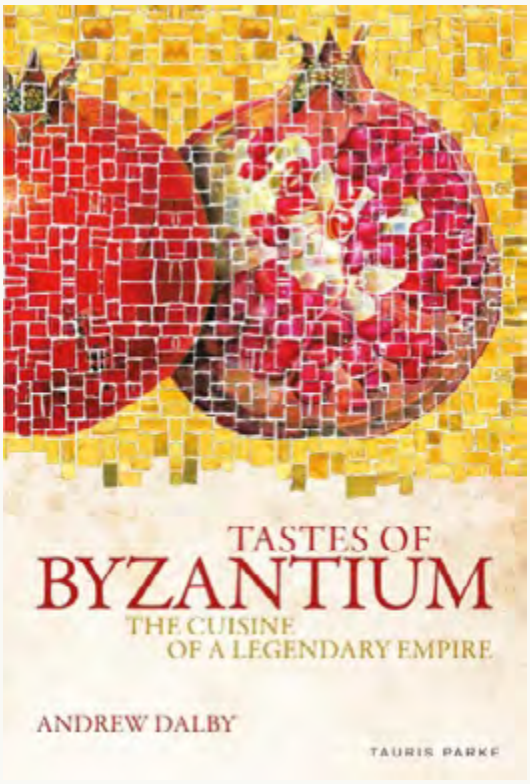
When thoughts of Byzantium come to mind perhaps you think of the Emperor Constantine the Great, his conversion to Christianity and the start of the Orthodox church.

Or maybe images of dazzling and detailed jeweled mosaics of Justinian and Theodora flickering in the candle light are the images you see. Or do you think of Byzantium's place at the cross roads of the silk road trading in aromatic spices, elegant fabrics and so many special products coming and going from the far east.

But what about the food? What did the Royals of this great Empire eat? Where did their food traditions come from? In *Tastes of Byzantium: The Cuisine of a Legendary Empire*, Tauris Parke, 2010, Andrew Dalby answers these and many other questions we have around the food and food ways of this important Empire and culture. Many scholars consider the Byzantine Empire the eastern continuation of the Roman Empire.

Byzantium continued the Roman legal and institutional traditions, as well as the cultural and scientific structures. Andrew Dalby makes the case that the food and food ways of Byzantium also mirrors the ancient world as it mixes "the spices of the Romans, with seafood and simple local foods of the Aegean and Greek world."

Unfortunately, as Dalby says in the preface to the book, "No single source can serve as our guide. There is no recipe book like the Latin Apicius" which the Ancient Roman's brought down through the centuries. However, Dalby relies on multiple sources to bring the mosaic of Byzantine food into focus. He consults "literary works (e.g. history, poetry, letters) and technical texts (e.g. pharmacology, dietetics)", as well as newly discovered sources on monastic food, a dietary calendar, ancient writers on food, such as Cato, Archestratus, etc. and other sources from throughout the region and time period.



In *Tastes of Byzantium* Andrew Dalby illuminates for us the who, what, where, when, why and how the people of the Byzantine Empire feasted. The book is divided into eight chapters. The first chapter, "An Introduction to Byzantium", sets the context the food exists in. We are regaled by the history of the Empire. He includes an excellent chronological chart of the Emperors and Empresses of Byzantium. Dalby also writes about the "Peoples, Languages and 'ethnic foods' of Constantinople" and the influence of the "Greeks and others" who were both brought their food traditions into and Byzantium and were influenced by it.

The next chapter, "Tastes and Smells of the City", weaves a delicious and sensuous tapestry of the most important city in the empire.

The spices, the seafood, the calendar and how it impacts the food, and most critically, the humoral theories, which impacted all aspects of life in the middle ages. Being at the apex of the silk road the book would be incomplete without chapter three, the "Foods and Markets of Constantinople." "Tastes of Byzantium" continues with chapters four and five titled "Water and Wine, Monks and Travelers" and "Rulers of the World."

Chapter 6 is a very important chapter that outlines "The Texts" from the time period used in the book. These four texts, "The Eight Flavors", the "Categories of Foods", the "Humoral and Dietary Qualities of Foods" and "A dietary Calendar" are "short handbooks" intended for physicians, the wealthy and the those preparing food. Translated into English these books are filled with important information about the food in the Byzantine period. Chapter seven, "Instructions and Recipes", is a short chapter which includes a "few recipes (that) have been selected because they are clearly linked to Byzantine Constantinople."

The simple recipe for a sauce combining "two parts honey to one-part vinegar" which you dip the meat of suckling pig in sounds delicious. Smoked sausages, called "Loukanika" in Byzantium can be found in Apicius under the recipe for "Lucanica" sausages. These sausages, which the recipe tells us to "stuff into intestines and hang in the smoke" are spiced with "crushed pepper, cumin, savory, rue, parsley, mixed herbs, bay berries, (and) fish sauce." Also included are "five recipes for table olives." I think I have a project for the next time olives are ready to harvest! There are also recipes for bread, 12 spiced wines, an egg dish and one for making "Garos" or fish sauce.

The final chapter, "A Phrase-Book of Byzantine Foods and Aromas" is not only an exceptional piece of research, but will be a valuable resource for other food historians to use in their own research. It will help to further the field in many ways. The phrase book is organized in alphabetical order starting with the word "Agelada, cow, Bos Taurus" and then cites the sources the word is found in. There are hundreds of entries all following the word and citation standard.

Bravo Andrew Dalby!

As in all of Andrew Dalby's books he includes an extensive bibliography for those who would like to explore the topic further. This bibliography has two different sections. The first section includes all the works used to create the phrase book both in Greek and then in other languages. This section is followed by a 10-page general bibliography. After the bibliography there is a 12-page index, which will help you navigate the book and dig out the tasty gems within this great work.

Andrew Dalby is well-known food historian and classical scholar. He also wrote the food history books "Siren's Feast", "Dangerous Tastes", "The Classical Cookbook" and "Empire of Pleasures" and a two "biographies" one on Bacchus and the other on Venus.

THE CLOSET OF THE SIR KENELM DIGBY, OPENED, *1669*

Occasionally we must venture slightly outside of the pre-1600 timeframe to find some recipes not specifically written down or captured during our period of study but we know existed in our time period. *The Closet of the Sir Kenelm Digby, Opened, 1669* edited from the first edition, with introduction, notes and appendices by Jane Stevenson and Peter Davidson, Prospect Books, 2010 is just such a book.

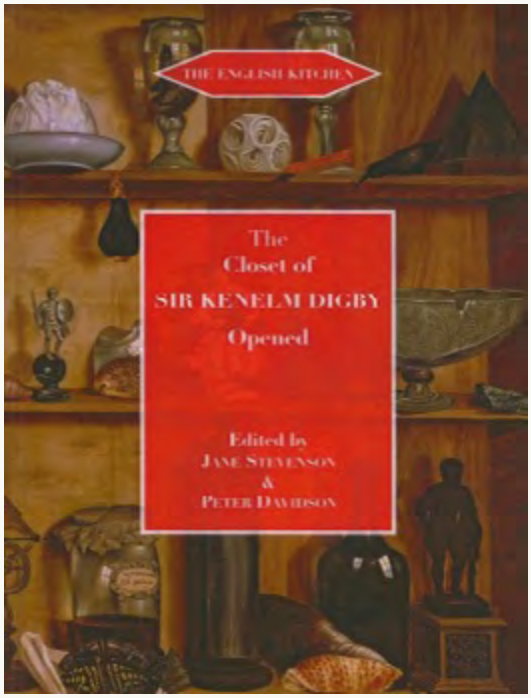
Filled with recipes for beverages, cheese and other, more traditional food recipes this book is an important early modern resource.

I must start out by saying there are many, many editions of this book. In printed format you can get used versions and new versions and print on demand versions. You can also get an electronic version of Project Gutenburg at: https://www.gutenberg.org/files/16441/16441-h/16441-h.htm.

I have specifically chosen this edition to review because of the availability and because Stevenson and Davidson have done such a great job of supplementing the original work with their research. Their introduction opens with 10 pages of a contemporary biography of Digby by John Aubrey. Written in 1669 a year after Sir Kenelm died, on June 11th, 1665 at the age of 61 in London, this work gives us a view into his life, family, friends and the context and times the book was written.

The introduction also includes a three-page chart titled "A Chronology of the life of Sire Kenelm Digby" starting with the birth of his wife Venetia, daughter of the 7th Earl of Northumberland, and finishes in 1665 when Digby went "To France, seeking a cure for gout and the stone. Returns and dies (of a fever) at Covent Gardens, June 11."

The editors start their part of the introduction by assuring us they will not take the easy way out and focus on Digby as just one of many English Catholic who is important "for writing a cookery book and poisoning his wife." Stevenson and Davidson go deep into the details of Digby's life and the publication of "The Closet." They tell us



about George Hartman, Digby's assistant, who "collected and roughly ordered" notes, correspondence and diary entries into the existing book "with his son's consent." It seems Digby never intended these musings to be compiled or published. If he had wanted these recipes published that would not have been a hard task since he was a well-known author of many books including the "Discourse Concerning the Vegetation of Plants (1661)" as well as the philosophical treatises, "The Nature of Bodies" and "On the Immortality of Reasonable Souls" and others. Digby, who spoke six languages, was a well-known and respected scientific mind of the time. He was friends with Descartes and Hobbs as well as many other lesser known intellectuals of the time.

The book itself contains 338 recipes, and this number does not include any adaptations mentioned within the recipes themselves. Most of the modern focus on "The Closet" are the 119 recipes for alcoholic beverages. Most of these are for meads of various strengths flavors and metheglin, which is mead made with spices and fruits.

Also included in the beverage section are recipes for wine, ale and ciders and some delicious recipes for possets and syllabubs. There is much to explore for the brewers in this book. Cooks will also have much to investigate in "The Closet."

Digby starts with recipes for pottages, broths, paps, and sops. With his scientific and medical background many scholars speculate these recipes are intended for the sick or the elderly. Mixed into these recipes is a one for "Cock-Ale", one for "Raspberry-Wine", and one "To Keep Quince All the Year", which is a honey sweetened quince paste. There are also two recipes for "plague water", which takes many different herbs, mixes them with white wine and then "still it for your use in a limbeck."

After these recipes there are many recipes for puddings, pies, cakes, roasted and stewed meats, vegetables, rice dishes and a few fish and seafood recipes. The recipe for "An Excellent Way of making Mutton Steaks" seasoned with salt, pepper and bread crumbs and then grilled is simple and delicious. For a sweet treat try "An Oat meal-pudding" with "sweet herbs", currants, sugar and eggs.

Digby also has recipes for cheese as well as several jellies, preserves, syrups and candies. Interestingly there is also a section with eight recipes on feeding and keeping chickens and wild partridges.

Stevenson and Davidson do not include a bibliography, but they do have a short list of "Suggestions for further Reading." They also include a "Table" of recipes alphabetically for easy searching. Appendix One includes all "textual variations and supplements from George Hartman."

Appendix Two lists the "Biographies of the donors of receipts and other persons noticed in the text" and it is very extensive with 93 different entries!

Appendix three is an "extract from the British Library . . . (of) an inventory of Digby's London house." This appendix is really interesting to peruse, especially the glassware and the found in the kitchen, the larder and the washhouse sections.

In appendix four you will find 6 modern recipes taken from the text. There you you will find a recipe for roast chicken or lamb, a peas porridge, parsnips cooked in milk, a bagged pudding and excellent small cakes. The perfect collection for a small meal.

Finally, an extensive glossary and index are included.

Jane Stevenson is a professor of Humanity at the University of Aberdeen with a focus on book history and women's studies. Besides Digby her academic works includes "Early Modern Women Poets: An Anthology" and "Women Latin Poets: Language, Gender, and Authority, from Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century." Professor Stevenson has also written several works of fiction.

Peter Davidson is a professor of Renaissance Studies at the University of Aberdeen. His interests include Renaissance and baroque literature, visual art, material culture; emblems and gardens. Professor Davidson has edited Clarendon's "The Poems and Translations of Sir Richard Fanshawe", "An Anthology of British and Irish Verse 1625-1660", and other books and articles on Early modern England.

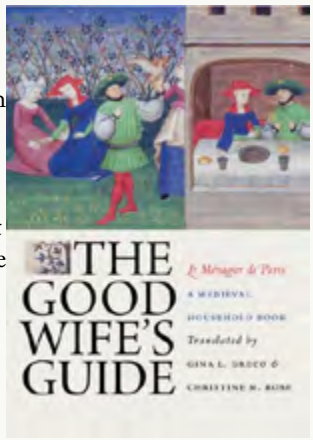
THE GOOD WIFE'S GUIDE LE MENAGIER DE PARIS A MEDIEVAL HOUSEHOLD BOOK

This month's book is not strictly a cookbook. It is considered one of the first household books. Written in the late 1300's, "probably compiled in 1392-94", in the voice of an older husband giving instructions to his 15-year-old bride on how he expects her to behave and how to run the household.

The Good Wife's Guide Le Menagier de Paris A Medieval Household Book was translated, with critical introduction, by Gina L. Greco & Christine M. Rose Cornell University Press 2009. In the introduction to the original work our author says, "This book will provide you with a great advantage, since other women never had such a guide." The author seems to have been "an aging wealthy Parisian bourgeois" with ties to the court of the Duke de Berry. The text reflects the management of a large Paris Household and a country farm and estate. As Greco and Rose tell us in their introduction to the work, "He possess a staff of servants, stables, farm animals, mews, ample gardens in town, and fields in the countryside for hunting and farming."

Greco and Rose provide us with a deep and interesting introduction to the translation which explores "The Book: Backgrounds, Narrator, Genre (and) Sources" in great detail. Also, in the introduction the "Context: Conduct Books and Household Books" details how "Le Menagier" relates to other works of the time period." They also dig deep into the "Tale of Griselda" which is "central to the theme and content of this householder's book." The final part of the introduction includes the "Translation Protocols" used by Greco and Rose.

Le Menagier de Paris starts with a prologue written by the husband instructing his young wife on why he wrote, or compiled, the advice included. After the prologue our author instructs the reader on many topics including "Prayers and Orderly Dress", "Behavior and Attire in Public", "The Mass, Confession, the Vices and Virtues", "On Chastity", "Devotion to Your Husband", "Obedience", "The Care of the Husband's Person", "The Husband's Secrets", "Providing our Husband with Good Counsel."



He goes on to describe "Horticulture" practices which outlines sowing and cultivation practices for many plants as well as grafting fruit trees and grapes. The author also includes a section titled "Hawking Treatise" where we are told of all the different kinds of hawks and how to feed, care and use them for hunting.

The final two sections of the book "Menus" and "Recipes" includes the main focus of *Eat This Book*. There are many recipes I am sure you will want to incorporate into your medieval cooking routine.

On page 317 we are treated to "Meatballs" shaped like apples and made from ground mutton and pork, flavored with ginger, grains of paradise, and cloves. They are roasted over hazel nut branches. We are also instructed to take the half-roasted meatballs and roll them in parsley and flour so they "turn quite green." I have included a simplified recipe for these later in the column. On page 320 we find a recipe called, "Pipefarce." You make a batter of egg yolks, flour, salt and wine then dip "slices of cheese in the batter and fry them in an iron skillet with lard."

This sounds delicious and reminiscent of our modern Fried Mozzarella sticks. Enjoy them using the cheese of your choosing, just don't dip them in marinara!

You might also like the rice pudding recipe on page 327. It is a simple and easy sweet treat flavored with almonds and saffron. The recipe for

pea pods with bacon on page 276 is identical to a recipe in the Martino corpus from 70 years in the future.

And Platina must have known of the millet cooked in cow's milk on page 296 because again it is almost identical to the one he describes in *De Honesta*. *Le Menagier de Paris* does not forget to describe vegetables. Besides the pea pods with bacon described above there is also, on page 279, a simple sautéed spinach recipe dressed with olive oil and verjuice and mushrooms simmered, mixed with oil, cheese and "powdered spices", then encased in pastry. For those who indulge in seafood there are plenty of good ideas from the simple oyster recipe poached in their own liquid and then fried. I would suggest butter or some lard for the frying.

If you are adventurous and can find some try the salt cod, page 305, shredded and topped with "spice powder", fried in butter and then eggs are poured over the fish until they are cooked.

For those experienced cooks who want a challenge piglet stuffed with egg yolks, chestnuts, cheese pork, saffron and ginger on page 297 will delight your guests. It is served with "yellow poivre" sauce, included on page 322, or a cameline sauce on page 321.

Le Menagier de Paris is also interesting in that it includes many recipes for rabbit. While other pre-16th century sources include one or two rabbit recipe *Le Menagier* includes many recipes. Besides the delicious recipes included in the text there are also household remedies and three handwashing liquids, one scented with sage, one with chamomile and marjoram, one with rosemary and orange peel and a final suggestion that "Bay leaves also work for this.

Dr. Gina L. Greco is a professor at Portland State University. She received her PhD. From Princeton University in Romance Languages and Literature. Christine M. Rose is a professor of English at Portland State University.

Photo of cooking set-up at
AnTir West War by the Author

MAKES *ONE 9-INCH TORTE*
COOK TIME *6H 30M*

LAMB AND PORK MEATBALLS

Here is my redaction of the Lamb and Pork meatballs. You can roast these over hazelnut branches and enrobe them in green paste, but I just mix, roll, fry and enjoy!

PUMPKIN PUREE

1 lb 450g	Ground Lamb
1 lb 450g	Ground Pork
1.5 t	Powdered ginger
1 t	Grains of paradise
1/4 t	Ground cloves
1 t	salt
2	egg whites
2 T	Olive Oil

In a large bowl thoroughly mix all ingredients, except the olive oil, together. Form into 1 ½ inch balls. You should have approximately 24 meatballs.

In a large cast Iron frying pan, or similar heavy-duty frying pan, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. Once hot fry your meatballs making sure they are not crowded and are browned all over. Cook until internal temperature reaches 160 degrees, approximately 15 to 20 minutes depending on heat and the size of your meatballs. I always use an instant read thermometer.

Serve hot with mustard or a sauce of your choosing.

PLEYN DELIT:
Medieval Cookery for Modern
Cooksquam fugit a doluptia

"For he was Epicurus owene sone,
That heeld opinioun that plyeyn delit
Was verray felicitee parfit"

From the "General Prologue"
To "The Canterbury Tales"
Chaucer

The Canterbury Tales are filled with delightful stories from the late 14th Century. Included among the 24 tales of pilgrims and priests, peasants and prelates are many references to food and drink from the time period expertly illuminating the time period of the book we will discuss in this month's column.

Pleyn Delit: Medieval Cookery for Modern Cooks, 2nd Edition by Constance B. Hieatt, Brenda Hosington and Sharon Butler University of Toronto Press 1996 is not only an important food history book, but it is also a SCA treasure. It was one of the first serious food history books we had to cook from in the early days of the SCA. The recipes and analysis included in *Pleyn Delit* are based mostly on the *The Forme of Cury* from the 14th Century.

The original manuscript has been lost to the ages, but one of the 9 transcribed manuscripts, also from the time-period, attributes the cookbook to the master chef of Richard II (reigned June 1377 to September 1399). Although written in French, the courtly language of the English Court, *Forme of Cury* is considered the oldest English culinary collection.

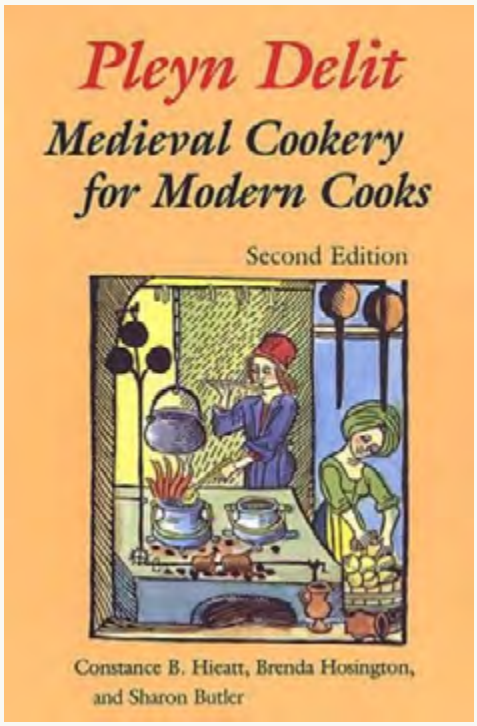
Pleyn Delit is divided into multiple sections. First, the "Preface" which explains the differences and additions between the first edition published in 1976 and this updated second edition. Dr. Hieatt, Dr. Butler and Professor Hosington "discovered several errors in the first edition" which have been corrected in this edition. Also, much more research into food history had been undertaken between 1976 and the second edition of the book in 1996.

Background Photo. English: Page from Forme of Cury, a cookbook from the Late Middle Ages. This manuscript is dated to the late 14th century and is part of the Rylands Medieval Collection as English MS 7 (previously Crawford MS 18).[1]

The field expanded tremendously not only in general, but specifically through the research and publications of *Curye on Inglysh* and *An Ordinance of Pottage* both by Hieatt and Butler. This new context has also been incorporated into the current edition.

The "Introduction" sets the stage for the recipes the book explores. Hieatt, Butler and Hosington speak to the use of "cooked dried peas" as thickening agents and the use of "fresh, seasonal ingredients." They also comment on the culinary collections from the time period noting that most are "of upper class or courtly origin."

A few of the collections, including *Forme of Cury*, which this book is based on, include recipes for "common pottage, including cabbage soups and basic bean dishes well known to every level of medieval society." We are also told that "most of our recipes are from English and French sources" however, we "have also included some from Italy, Catalonia, and Arabia."



The paragraphs in the "Introduction" that outline the redaction process are a small peek into Hieatt Butler and Hosington's process from page to plate. The introduction also speaks to several critical ingredients found in the medieval kitchen, "Almond Milk", "Bitter Orange Juice" as well as "Spices" and "Spice mixtures."

Finally, the introduction ends with four "Sample Menus": A "Dinner for 4-6", "A Buffet for 20", "A Menu of Dishes Served to Henry IV at a June Supper" and "A Feast of Dishes Chaucer's Franklin Might Have Served." After the introduction there is a small section, only one and a half pages, titled "Weights and Measures." This section is not about period weights and measures, but modern equivalent measurements from the US standard to both Canadian and UK measurements.

The bulk of the book is included in the section titled "Recipes." These recipes are categorized into sub-sections mostly organized into a "modern" concept of a meal.

The first section of the seven is "Hors d'oeuvres, Eggs, and Cold Dishes." It includes the much loved and much served SCA classic "Tart de Bry" a quiche-like pastry with eggs, brie, ginger and sugar. Another classic SCA recipe, also included, is the "Tart in Ymbre Day." Hieatt, Butler and Hosington tell us "On 'Ember Days' (outside of Lent) meat-was forbidden, but dairy products – like the cheese, eggs, and butter here – were permitted. Check out both of them.

The Hors d'oeuvres section also includes recipes for several different types of fritters and pancakes, three noodle recipes including "Ravieles" stuffed with cheese and herbs, more egg recipes besides the tarts, two fish recipes, a vinegar chicken liver and herb recipe served cold, and even a green "Salat" recipe.

Next, we find "Soppes and Potages." The 26 recipes found here include a soup with onions and green herbs, greens in almond milk, fried spinach, fennel soup with ginger and saffron, mussels and leeks in almond milk, an oyster stew, and many other delicious soups and side dishes.

The sub-section on "Sauces" includes 13 sauces to serve with roast and boiled meats and fish. Cameline Sauce, Green Sauce, several pepper sauces, mustard, and garlic sauce are just a few of the sauces that would become the ubiquitous in cookery collections throughout the next two centuries.

For main courses we are treated to two sub-sections. The first, "Bruets, Stews, and Other Boiled Fish, Poultry and Meat Dishes" and the second, "Broiled, Baked and Roasted Dishes." "Bruets . . .." "Bruets, . . ." starts off with two scrumptious Salmon recipes poached and served cold with parsley and vinegar. The second is served hot with leeks, almond milk and bread crumbs, to thicken the sauce, for a medieval creamed salmon dish. The chicken, or fish, in an elderflower sauce sounds like a winner. And the chicken stuffed with grapes, garlic, herbs (parsley, sage, and thyme) will make a succulent roast chicken that can be paired with any of the sauces in the previous chapter.

The section includes more poultry recipes, beef stew, beef with chestnuts, pork recipes, eggplant and lamb meatballs, and many more. Continuing on the "Broiled . . ." section has more fish, poultry and meat recipes you will want to explore in detail.

The penultimate section, "Desserts", will tempt your sweet tooth with "Wardonys in Syryp", pears in a sweet ginger wine sauce, strawberry, plum, apple, cherry, fig, and rice puddings, sweet tarts of fruits and custards, fritters, dumplings, a sticky, spicy, and sweet medieval ginger bread, wafers, sweet cakes and bread, and so much more.

Finally, in the sub-section titled "Subtleties", we find recipes for "ingenious device(s) or contrivance(s)" and "elaborate edible constructions." Meatballs that look like Hedgehogs is a favorite of SCA cooks, as is the castle made of pastry. *Pleyn Delit* also includes a short bibliography and an index.

THE SENSIBLE COOK:

DUTCH FOODWAYS IN THE OLD AND NEW WORLD

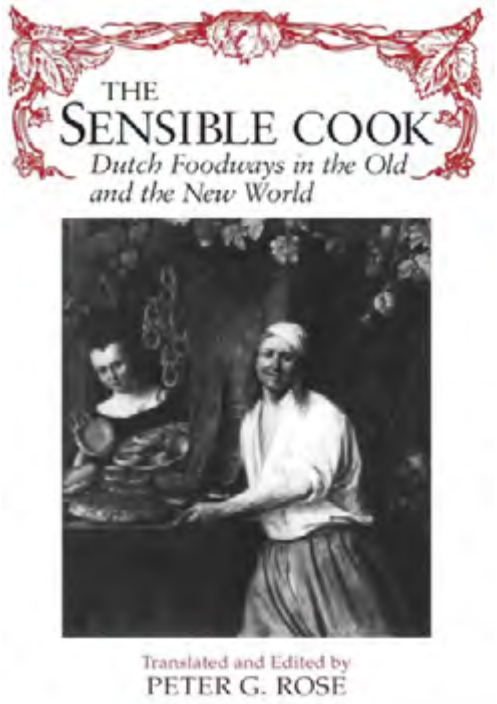
I struggled with including *The Sensible Cook: Dutch Foodways in the Old and New World* by Peter G. Rose Syracuse University Press, 1989 as a part of *Eat This Book*. Most of the books included in this column are centered in a pre-1600 time-period.

Occasionally I will include a book slightly out of the time period, but usually only if they have a direct and specific link to pre-1600. *The Sensible Cook* was originally published in 1667, however it owes much to the more than 10 Dutch cookbooks published between 1510 and 1598 such as *Een Notabel Boecxke van Cokerije* (*A Notable Book of Cookery*) by Tomas vander Noot (1510) and *Eenen Seer Schonen ende Excellenten Coc-boeck* (*A beautiful and excellent cookbook*) by Carolus Battus (1589).

Neither these two books or any of the other eight have been translated or studied in English or are readily available to the general public in case you read old Dutch. Fortunately, Ms. Rose's book includes in her introduction, as well as scattered throughout the book, abundant material relevant to a pre-1600 Dutch kitchen.

She has also included information from modern Dutch sources not accessible to us such as Lambertus Burema's *De Voeding in Nederland van de Middeleeuwen tot de Twintigste Eeuw* (*Food in the Netherlands from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century*) published in 1953. Burema's book gives us much information, including menus, ingredients, recipes, and cooking methods from the time period we study, all of which Ms. Rose uses in *The Sensible Cook*.

Also, in the introduction are many interesting tidbits about flour and bread in the Dutch world. Dutch ships were especially important in transporting Baltic grain into the European markets. Rose calculates the Dutch transport of the yearly exports of "68,500 last" to be about 70%. When we think about Dutch food pancakes, waffles and wafers come immediately to mind.



The imported Baltic grain was used to produce these staple Dutch products which can be found among the recipes included in *The Sensible Cook*. You will also find 24 period paintings, photographs of dishes used in period, woodcuts of manuscript pages, etc. Many of these are pre-1600 and illustrate the rich and flavor-filled tables of the Dutch people.

After the 36-page, information packed, "Introduction" the book continues with the translation and editorial comments of *The Sensible Cook* which is sub-titled "or Careful Housekeeper." The title page goes on to tell us you will find instructions "to cook, stew, roast, fry, bake and prepare all sorts of Dishes . . . with the appropriate Sauces."

The Sensible Cook also shows us how "to prepare many kinds of CAKES and PASTRIES" and this version of the book is "Enlarged, with the DUTCH BUTCHERING TIME" and "the SENSIBLE CONFECTIONER, instructing how to prepare and preserve good and useful confections from many kings of Fruits, Roots, Flowers, and Leaves, etc."

Interestingly the book is written "To all cooks, male and female", which we see more and more of after the turn of the century and the rise and cementing of the middle classes.

The first 16 recipes in the cookbook are all vegetable preparation. Artichokes, radishes, salads, sugar peas, turnips, and others are detailed in their preparation with herbs, spices, butter and other tasty additions.

After the vegetable recipes the book continues with a huge variety of recipes for meat. Mutton, Veal Knuckles, Hens, one served with Cauliflower, pigeons, ducks, and the new import from the Americas, turkey all have recipes on how to prepare them in delicate and delicious ways. There are also many recipes for hare and rabbit.

Many earlier cookbooks have one or two recipes for rabbit, hare or coney, but not nearly as many as included in "The Sensible Cook." Try the "Pepper-sauce for roasted Hare" with toasted rye bread, sweet wine, pepper and cloves. On page 62 you will find two of the first recipes for stuffing made with bread. The first one is made with white bread crumbs, prunes, currants, cloves, nutmeg, cinnamon and is stuffed into a suckling pig.

The second has grated white bread, hard boiled egg yolks, bacon, smoked meat, mace, pepper, ginger and saffron and is stuffed into a young hen then stewed with butter wine and water. The broth is then finished with verjuice and saffron.

There is also a whole section on preparing fish and seafood. The roasted sturgeon basted with butter and then stewed with "Rhenish wine" vinegar, cinnamon and nutmeg sounds delightful. "The Sensible Cook" itself also has some sweet treats such as a "Kandeel (drink)", which we know as a caudle, made with "Rhenish wine" sugar, mace, nutmeg, cinnamon and cloves. There are many custards including plain milk custard, apple custards, and lemon custard.

The final recipes in "The Sensible Cook" portion of the translation are for all sorts of tarts, sweet and savory, meat and fruit, vegetables and herbs. There are also two recipes for tart crusts. One with wheat-flour, butter, rosewater, sugar and eggs and the other that is enriched with cream. Pastry recipes are not unusual in post-1600 cookbooks, but are extremely rare pre-1600.

The next two sections are "enlarged" or included as extras in "The Sensible Cook." 'The Dutch Butchering Time" is an excellent resource on how to prepare your space, salt and smoke your meat, and how to prepare all parts and pieces of the animal.

"The Sensible Confectioner" goes into details on preserving with honey, how to make candied walnuts, apples, pears, and quinces, and all sorts of other sweet treats. It also includes four marmalade recipes, and several recipes for syrups and fruit sauces. Ms. Rose also includes 24 "Recipes for Modern Kitchens." Twelve of these are from "The Sensible Cook" and twelve are "Recipes from the Dutch Colonial Past." A short glossary, a fairly extensive bibliography and an index are also included.

Peter G. Rose, born 1939, is a food historian and author of eight books mostly on Dutch food in the Hudson Valley during colonial times. She was born in Utrecht, Netherlands and immigrated to the United States in the early 1960's. Besides her publications Ms. Rose has given presentations at the Smithsonian Institution, the National Gallery of Art and the Culinary Institute of America.

LE VIANDIER

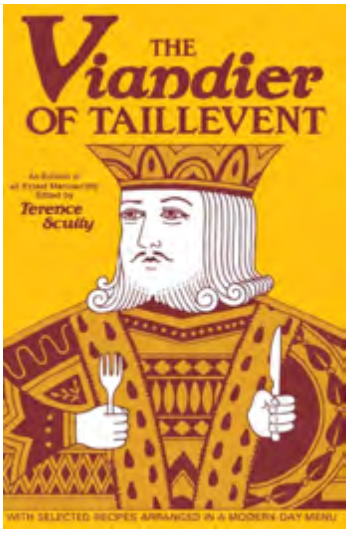
Le Viandier, which is often called *Le Viandier of Taillevent*, which was the author's pen name, is an early French cookery manuscript attributed to Guillaume Tirel. *Le Viandier* directly translates to *The meat maker*, but is commonly translated as *The Cookery*, or as James Prescott, see below, translates it *The Food Provider*.

The earliest version of the manuscript was written sometime right around 1300. This date is about 10 years before Tirel's birth, but that didn't stop him from claiming it as his own, expanding it and publishing under his own name once he was an acclaimed chef! Guillaume Tirel was born in 1310 in Pont-Audemer, France, which is North-West of Paris, not quite on the coast. Guillaume was an ambitious young man.

As a boy he worked in the kitchens of Queen Jeanne d'Évreux, the third wife of Charles IV. In 1326 he went on to work as head chef of Philip VI. He continued to serve other royals, the Dauphin de Viennois, the Duke of Normandy, who would become Charles the V and Charles VI, as their cook, squire and serjeant-at-arms. Tirel is considered, by most food scholars, as the first professional chef, or at least the first that can be identified with any certainty, apologies to Apicius or the three unknown cooks who make up the composite chef Apicius.

There are four remaining copies of the Viandier manuscript a fifth that was burned in the bombings of June 1944 and a sixth, mentioned by Pichon and Vicaire, in a manuscript that contains other works. This sixth copy has also disappeared, but it is unclear if it was destroyed, mis-catalogued or mis-identified. The first manuscript, according to Terence Scully, is an actual "parchment roll from the second half of the thirteenth century."

It is housed in the archives of Sion, Switzerland. The second manuscript is "in-folio", on paper and is housed at the Bibliotheque Mazarine in Paris, it is dated to the 15th century. The third manuscript, also in Paris, but at the Bibliotheque National, is "vellum, bound in parchment." And the final manuscript is in the Biblioteca Vaticana, in Vatican City. This fourth manuscript has been dated to the first half of the fifteenth century and has 85 paper folios. The Vatican edition of the manuscript contains 206 recipes. This number excludes variations appended to the recipes such as those which say things such as, "you can also make this with . . ." or "in fast days use almond milk instead of broth."



The first section of the book, which consists of 8 recipes, starts with instructions on how to "de-salt" your pottage, continues with instructions on how "to remove the burnt taste of scorched pottage" and then speaks to boiling, larding and roasting, mutton, deer, boar and capon.

The other 16 sections of the book have recipes for pottages, both with and without meat, roast meats of all kinds, fresh water, "round" saltwater, and "flat saltwater fish, both boiled and un-boiled sauces, and desserts.

There are so many wonderful recipes to make and explore. Try recipe #193 Norse Pies which contain chopped meat, pine nut paste, currants, harvest cheese, sugar and salt. Or recipe #141 for Sole served with a

simple green sauce, recipe #155, or with verjuice. For the more ambitious recipe #67 is a take on the ubiquitous Peacock redressed in its feathers only this recipe is for a swan!

So where is the book recommendation? Well in this month's *Eat This Book* I would like to recommend two books based on *Le Viandier*. The first is an excellent translation of the Vatican edition of the manuscript with 17 additional recipes not in the Vatican edition, but from the Bibliotheque National manuscript.

Le Viandier de Taillevent is translated, edited and commented on by James Prescott, known in the SCA as Master Thorvald Grimson, originally published in 1987 with a second edition in 1989 by Alfarhaugr Publishing Society, Eugene, Oregon. The Prescott translation, in my opinion, is the best translation of *Le Viandier de Tailevent* available. It is hard to find, but so worth the search. Prescott tells us in his Introduction this "is not intended to be a cookbook, but rather a source document about cooking in in France in the years 1375-1390."

Besides the translation it also contains an excellent and approachable bibliography, both an English and French glossary and a very well put together index. This edition does not include the medieval French for comparative purposes, but we will forgive Prescott, and his editors, this fault since the translation, when compared to the original French is so well done. Perhaps we can convince Alfarhaugr Publishing Society or Mr. Prescott, to do another reprint!

The second recommendation *Le Viandier of Taillevent*" by Terence Scully, University of Ottawa Press, 1988 is a comparative analysis with detailed commentary of all four manuscripts. The first part of the book, the side by side comparison of the texts, is not an easy read, but it is worth the effort.

The footnotes are packed full of fascinating information and Scully has done a truly amazing, almost Herculean, job of truly uncovering the similarities and differences in the texts. The introduction to the book outlines the manuscripts in detail and then

Illustration from Wiki commons - Le Viandier de Taillevant, from a 15th-century edition

goes on to discuss editorial considerations, the traditional cooking of the time period, culinary theory and practice that is critically important to the understanding of the recipes, and much more. Besides the analysis Scully also includes his own, very workable, translation a section on how to modernize the recipes included in *Le Viandier*, an extensive bibliography and a glossary and index.

Guillaume Tirel died in 1395 at the ripe old age of 85. You can visit his tombstone at the church of Église Saint-Léger de Saint-Germain-en-Laye, just outside of Paris. On the tombstone he is dressed in armor and carrying three cooking pots.

The following recipes were redacted by James Prescott and he holds the exclusive copyright on this material. We are grateful he has shared them with us here in *Eat This Book*.

MAKES *4 SERVINGS*

FRIED PERCH IN YELLOW SAUCE

Note 1: If you can't obtain verjuice, fresh lemon juice diluted 50/50 with water is a suitable alternative.
Note 2: North American cinnamon is actually cassia. Use true cinnamon if available. Cinnamon is not mentioned in the particular original recipe, but is mentioned in other related recipes from similar dates, so I added it.
Note 3: Fishes mentioned in Le Viandier de Taillevent as suitable for frying include pickerel, loach and tench (both related to the carp), perch, and sole.
Note 4: I use unrefined turbinado cane sugar.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup	verjuice (see Note 1)
½ cup	white wine
¾ t	ginger
¼ t	cloves
¼ t	cinnamon (see note 2)
¼ t	Grains of paradise
1/8 t	Spanish saffron
½ cup	ground almonds
¼ cup	olive oil
1 lb	perch fillets, not too thin, see note 3
1/8 cup	pine nuts
1/3 cup	fresh parsley
2 T	sugar see note 4

1. Mix the verjuice and white wine.
2. Finely grind the ginger, cloves, cinnamon, grains of paradise, and saffron. Mix the ground spices with 1/4 cup of the verjuice and white wine mixture, and leave them to steep in the refrigerator for at least an hour, preferably overnight.
3. Finely grind the almonds. Mix the almonds with the remainder of the verjuice and white wine mixture, and leave them too steep in the refrigerator for at least an hour, preferably overnight.
4. Remove any scales or bones from the perch fillets. Fry the perch in a frying pan with most of the olive oil over a low-medium heat about four minutes per side, drain, and refrigerate.
5. Fry the pine nuts in a frying pan with the remainder of the olive oil over a very low heat until golden brown, drain, and set aside. Be very careful, as they can go from golden to burnt in seconds.
6. Parboil the parsley for a few seconds in a saucepan of boiling water, drain, and set aside.
7. To make the sauce, take the almond liquid, sieve (to remove large lumps or almond skin), and put into a saucepan. Bring to a boil over gentle heat, stirring occasionally, then remove from the heat.
8. Take the spice liquid, sieve (to remove any large lumps), and add it to the sauce. Add the sugar. Simmer over gentle heat for fifteen minutes. Remove from the heat. If it begins to solidify and form a very soft custard as it cools, it has been heated enough. If it isn't doing so, simmer for another five minutes. Check the taste, and add more sugar if it is far too sour for you (but it should be sour).
9. Pour a thin layer of sauce into the serving dish, arrange the fried fish fillets on top, and pour the remaining sauce on top of the fish.
10. Arrange the pine nuts and parsley leaves as a garnish to the dish. It may be served at once, or covered and refrigerated overnight.

MAKES 6 SERVINGS

CHICKEN IN COLD SAGE SAUCE

Original recipe is number 68 in James Prescott's translation of Taillevent

Note 1: The original recipe presumably referred to dried cassia flowers (buds). I found the cassia flowers in brine in a Chinese supermarket. The tin contained mostly cassia leaves, so I carefully picked out all of the cassia flowers, and then added smaller cassia leaves until I had the full measurement.

Note 2: Modern tastes may not enjoy this recipe if full strength vinegar is used. If so, take 1/2 US cup of white vinegar and cut it with 1/4 US cup of water or chicken stock.

Note 3: If you don't have a large mortar then use a blender or food processor.

Note 4: If you happen as I do to like sauce with texture, do not strain it, but do inspect it carefully to remove large lumps.

Note 5: The original recipe is confused about what is to be done with the egg yolks. I interpret them as a garnish. If after garnishing you feel that the dish needs one final touch, sprinkle it with some paprika (though this was unknown in Europe in 1390).

INGREDIENTS

1 4lb or	Chicken
2 t	fresh ginger
2 t	grains of paradise
2 t	whole cloves
¼ t	Spanish saffron
1/3 cup	Cassia flowers in brine (see note 1)
1/3 cup	Fresh sage leaves
1 cup	Fresh parsley leaves
3 cups	Best quality fresh bread crumbs crusts removed
¾ cup	white vinegar (see note 2)
2	Egg yolks hard boiled

1. Place the chicken in sufficient simmering water, cover, and simmer very slowly for 2 1/2 hours. Skim during the first 15 minutes. Cool the chicken, dismember, and arrange the pieces on the serving dish.
2. Finely chop the ginger. Grind the ginger, grains of paradise, cloves, and saffron in a mortar. Set aside.
3. Soak the cassia flowers in several changes of cold water to remove the excess salt taste.
4. To make the sauce, finely chop the cassia flowers, sage, parsley, and bread. Crush in a large mortar (see Note 5), adding the vinegar as you go.
5. Add the ground ginger, grains of paradise, cloves, and saffron to the sauce. Crush and mix thoroughly, and strain through cheesecloth (see Note 6).
6. Pour the sauce over the chicken on the serving dish. Garnish with thin slices of hard-boiled egg yolk (see Note 7).

SERVES 4-6

VEAL RAGOUT

Original recipe is number 28 in James Prescott's translation of Taillevent
This next dish was selected because it could be prepared in advance and served cold, as it would have been in period. All ingredients were refrigerated immediately after cooking, and transported 3.5 hours to the event in a cooler with ice. The sauce was put in a jar and covered with a thin layer of olive oil (a period ingredient) to slow oxidation. The olive oil was poured off prior to serving.
Note 1: North American cinnamon is actually cassia. Use true cinnamon if available.
Note 2: If you can't obtain verjuice, fresh lemon juice diluted 50/50 with water is a suitable alternative.
Note 3: Garnish if you wish with some sprigs of fresh parsley and with some golden bread crumbs.

INGREDIENTS

¾ t	Ginger
¾ t	Cinnamon (see note 1)
¾ t	Cloves
1.5 t	Grains of paradise
¼ t	Spanish saffron
1/3 cup	verjuice (see note 2)
1/3 cup	Red wine vinegar
2 lbs	Veal shoulder blade roast
8	large onions
¼ cup	butter
6	thick slices of the best quality white bread

1. Finely grind the spices, and combine with the verjuice and vinegar in a container. Leave them too steep in the refrigerator for at least an hour, preferably overnight.
2. Preheat the oven to 450° F (230° C), then roast the veal for 60 minutes (30 minutes per pound) at 325° F (165° C). Remove from the oven and leave to cool. When the roast is cool enough to handle comfortably, cut the meat into cubes about 3/4 of an inch on a side. Refrigerate the cubes until needed.
3. Put the veal bones, gristle and fat into a saucepan. Scrape all of the drippings from the roasting pan into the saucepan as well. Add water, cover and simmer over very, very low heat. I simmered mine overnight. Remove and discard the bones, gristle, and fat. Save the veal stock.
4. Cut the onions into slices and separate all the rings. Melt the butter in a large saucepan, add the onions, cover and cook over a very, very low heat for an hour until the onions are well cooked. Drain, and save the onions on one side and all the onion cooking juices on the other.
5. Combine the veal stock and the onion cooking juices to get about 6 cups of stock. Add water or other stock if necessary. Refrigerate until needed.
6. Remove and discard the crusts from the bread slices. Turn the slices into medium crumbs (a blender does this in a jiffy). You will need about 4 cups of crumbs. Set the oven to 350° F (175° C). Spread a layer of bread crumbs on a tray and put it in the oven to turn golden brown. This may take 15 minutes. Peek frequently towards the end, since the crumbs can go from almost golden to smoking charcoal in an amazingly short time. Repeat, or use several trays at once, until all the bread crumbs have been browned. Set the crumbs aside until needed.
7. Heat a quantity of lard in a deep-fryer to 375° F (190° C). Deep-fry the veal cubes about ten at a time. Any more, and the lard will bubble all over the stove. Each cube should be nicely crisped and browned on the outside, which doesn't take long. They should not be fried long enough to become crunchy or burnt. Drain them. Put the veal gobbets and the fried onions into a container and refrigerate until needed.
8. When ready to assemble the ragout, start heating the stock. When near boiling, add the veal and onions, and then the bread crumbs, and simmer for 30 minutes. Add the spice, verjuice, and vinegar mixture, stir well, and bring the pot back to the boil. Serve at once (see Note 3).

January 2025

THE OLDEST CUISINE IN THE WORLD:
COOKING IN MESOPOTAMIA

The book we will explore this month IS NOT A COOKBOOK, it is a research book about *The Oldest Cuisine in the World: Cooking in Mesopotamia* by Jean Bottero, translated by Teresa Lavender Fagan, The University of Chicago Press, 2004, originally published in French by Editios Louis Audibert, 2002.

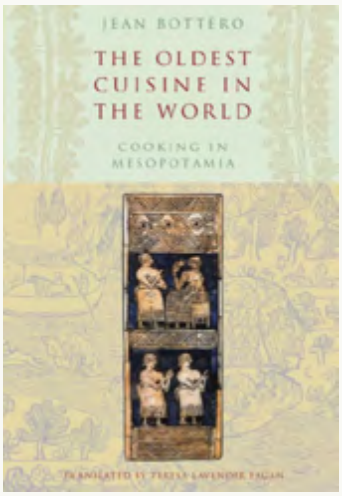
But even though it is not a cookbook I have to tell you right from the start I took more notes, was more fascinated and wanted so much more on this topic by the end of this book. Jean Bottero frames his exploration into Mesopotamian cuisine by saying, "There is nothing more commonplace than eating and drinking. And certainly nothing can acquaint us better with the representatives of a culture than joining them for a moment or two in these activities."

We might not all cook, but we all, everyone on the planet now and for millennium into the past, eat and drink. It connects us to the history and the people who lived before us in a very immediate way. Bottero goes on to comment about the people of Mesopotamia, "everything in their daily lives, including their religious behavior, their concepts of life and death, were necessarily, and strongly, integrated into the cycle of eating and drinking." A very bold and overarching statement, but we can look to many different cultures and find a similar sentiment.

The ancient and modern Jewish cultural practices are similar. What would Passover Seder be without the ritual food products incorporated into the ceremony, and of course, the family feast afterwards. Or Purim without hamantashen (Haman Hats or Ears), or donuts and other fried foods for Hanukkah?

The sources Jean Bottero's uses to support his work in "The Oldest Cuisine" start with the Yale tablets. It is unclear how long these clay cuneiform tablets have been in possession of Yale University, but in the 1920's these tablets were thought to have been medical in nature and were not discussed in much detail at the time.

In the 1940's, Marry Hussey, a researcher studying the tablets, thought they might actually be recipes and not medical texts. Her research was disregarded. It wasn't until Jean Bottero started his research and translation efforts on these and other tablets that the Yale tablets were confirmed



to include over 40 culinary recipes. Before the Yale tablets were "re-discovered" there was only one brief Mesopotamian recipe "dating from around 400 B.C.E. for a sort of court-bouillon."

Bottero also uses many of the more than half a million cuneiform tablets in public and private collections around the world to enhance the information in the book. These tablets contain "news items about people's lives, private or public; their customs; facts and events in social, economic, administrative, political, juridical, and military history; but also, about their multiple creations in literature and the arts, their knowledge of technical matters and technology, as well as their folklore, morality, mythology, and religion. And, of primary importance here, these documents can provide information about eating and drinking." Bottero brilliantly weaves together these details along with the recipes included in the Yale tablet to tell the story of this interesting culture and their food ways.

The modern, popular, press including NPR, BBC, the NY and LA Times, and others seems to be all over Mesopotamian Cuisine since the first three cuneiform tablets were uncovered in the Yale Babylonian Collection. A group of Yale scholars published three recipes they had redacted and those along with the many mention of beer in

the existing Mesopotamian corpus set off a press frenzy! But these articles only touched on the full and rich food ways of the Mesopotamian people which makes up "The Oldest Cuisine." One quote from the book is especially enlightening:

"The House where beer is never lacking:

She is there!
The house rich in soup:
That is her place!
The house where there is bread in abundance:
She is the one who cooks it!"

The history of the Mesopotamian region, modern day Iraq, Iran and the surrounding area, was one of huge advances. The fertile soil along with the invention of irrigation converged to create an agricultural bonanza. Communication evolved into a written language and produced the cuneiform tablets discussed earlier. And economics started to evolve first as a barter economy then developing rapidly into an exchange economy.

The agricultural advances produced many products inumbrated in "The Oldest Cuisine." This list is just some of the products: pistachios, bread, both leaven and un-leaven, flour, course and fine, semolina, bean flour, barley, groats, fish, shell fish, fish sauce, beef, mutton and lamb, other meats, both fresh and salted, beer, wine, vinegar, oil, honey, sesame seeds, salted meat, liver, heart, geese, ducks, wild pigeons, turtledoves, onions, garlic, leeks, dates, figs, raisins, flowers, apples, peas, lentils, milk, cumin, coriander, watercress, cucumbers, mint, dill, rue, butter, blood, etc. There is no pork listed and one tablet says, "The pig is not clean."

Disregarding the translator's short note, the abbreviations chart on manuscripts, tablets and archives, the notes section and the bibliography "The Oldest Cuisine" has 18 chapters or sections of the book. These include an overview of "the pleasure of the table in Ancient Mesopotamia", the "Food and Eating" the importance of "Fire, "Culinary Traditions", "Drinks", and much more.

On page 11 and 12 you will find a wonderful chart on the history of Mesopotamia from the six millennium Prehistoric era through to the end of the Mesopotamian era and the beginning of the Parthian era in 130 C.E.

Unfortunately, the translator's note does not give us any insight into her methodology or approach to the work. Bottero on the other hand speaks several times about how he has translated the ancient Sumerian and Akkadian as close as possible to the original text and layout of the recipes and that he approaches this work from an anthropological standpoint, not a historical or textual perspective. This approach lends itself well to exploration in cooking, but in one or two cases engaging more from a historical cook's perspective would have helped. For instance, more could have been made of the link between this ancient cuisine's use of fish and seafood sauce with the Ancient Roman condiment garum and the Southeast Asian fish sauces used today. Or the use of coals and embers to cook root vegetables instead of assuming vegetables are far to tender to cook in the fire and can only be boiled. But in the grand scheme of things these are minor nits.

Most of the recipes found in the Yale tablets are for meat and vegetable broths. There are also several different poultry pies, some roasted poultry, a few porridges, and other recipes, both simple and very complex. This recipe for a lamb stew is very easy to re-create. "Samidu" is likely fine semolina. "Suhutinnu" is a root vegetable of some sort, probably a turnip, parsnip or an early carrot.

Tuh'u beet broth

Lamb meat is used. Prepare water; add fat. Peel the vegetables. Add salt; beer; onion; arugula; coriander, samidu; cumin and the beets. Assemble all the ingredients in the cooking vessel and add mashed leeks and garlic. Sprinkle the cooked mixture with coriander, and suhutinnu.

Jean Bottero (1914 – 2007) was a noted scholar on all things Mesopotamian. He was the chair and director of Assyriology at the École pratique des hautes études in Paris. Besides "The Oldest Cuisine" Jean Bottero also published several other books that were translated into English by Teresa Lavender Fagen and published by The University of Chicago press. They are "Ancestor of the West: Writing, Reasoning, and Religion in Mesopotamia, Elam, and Greece" (2000), "Everyday Life in Ancient Mesopotamia (2001), "Religion in Ancient Mesopotamia" (2001) and one, "Birth of God: The Bible and the Historian" translated by Kees W. Bolle and published by Penn State Press posthumously in 2010.

THE MOST EXCELLENT BOOK OF COOKERY

For many years' exploration of French Medieval and Renaissance cookery consisted of just a few cookbooks. Mainly, *Tallivent*, (see December 2024 *Eat This Book)*, from the early 1300's, *Le Ménagier de Paris*, (see September 2024 *Eat This Book)*, from the late 1300's and then a huge jump to *La Varenne*, coming up in May 2025 of *Eat This Book*, from the mid-1600's

This myth of a gap in French cookery has been, and continues to be, perpetuated by the Larousse Gastronomique published in 1938. With new scholarship in the 1980's and '90's, as well as some ground-breaking analysis in the new millennium, we were starting to see a crack in this myth. With the publication of this very important French cookery book, *The Most Excellent Book of Cookery (Livre fort excellent de Cuysine* – 1555) edited and translated by Timothy J. Tomasik and Ken Albala, Prospect Books 2014, we continue to see the rest of the cracks in this myth starting to crumble.

The bulk of Tomasik and Albala's book is the translation of the manuscript with a transcription of the original French on each facing page. However, don't just jump right into the recipes, spend some time reviewing the extensive Introduction, the section on "How to use this book", and the bibliography which is placed at the beginning of the book emphasizing the importance of this tool rather than it being an afterthought appended to the end. It should also be noted that there are two indexes, one in English and the other in French.

The Introduction has much detail describing the gap in cookery study in the French corpus. It also discusses the scholars, and the research being conducted, into this period in food history. The introduction goes on to describe the specifics around the manuscripts associated with "Livre Fort" and how they are related to each other. The section of the introduction, "Transcription and Translation" speaks to the objectives and methodology the authors used to anchor their work. The section on "How to use this book" starts by saying "As a cookbook, this work was not meant to sit on a bookshelf to be admired."

Books at the time of *Livre Fort* were becoming more accessible to a much larger part of the population and cookbooks, as our authors say, were starting to be used not just in the library, but in the kitchen.

You should take the advice of these translators and editors and use this book in the kitchen or at the campfire. The next part of the introduction goes into "Renaissance Cooking Techniques." These techniques will help you understand how to approach the recipes and will inform your redactions. We are very lucky when Tomasik and Albala approached their translation they understood the context, methods and day-to-day necessity of food and cooking during this time period. They have cooked these recipes using Renaissance and modern methods which makes their translation richer and deeper.

As mentioned above the French transcription and English translation take up the bulk of this book. The translation starts on page 33 with the title page and is followed by a "Table of Contents" that is organized in alphabetical order by the French recipe title.

This section of the book will seem very familiar to the modern reader. The first "recipe" included in the book isn't for food, but is a dinning spectacle. "Water Fountain in a basin or plate on the table" describes an elaborately gilded fountain surrounded by flowers and herbs. We are told you can also add some "serpents and lizards." The fountain spouts water, rosewater and "wine or whatever you wish."

The index indicates there are 256 recipes in *Livre Fort*. There are no new world ingredients included in the book. The recipe section of the book starts with "Boiled Capon" and "Another version of boiled capon." It continues with two recipes for "Jacobin Soup" a rich soup of partridge, chicken or pigeon, red wine or white wine, cinnamon and beef marrow. There are so many recipes I have marked for further exploration. The recipe for "Rendered Fat" gives you three recipes in one. The first is for spiced pork lard with ginger and sugar, the next for herbed pork fat with marjoram, fennel seed, hop shoots, saffron, ginger and sugar and the final one is for "red rendered fat" that includes red wine, vinegar, cinnamon, pepper clove "and a copious amount of sugar." All of them are boiled and sieved and served in a dish. We are not told if they are for cooking or for spreading on bread, but I would slather any of the three on a delicious slice of focaccia.

The book also includes many recipes for jelly, candies, confits and sweet treats. Try your hand at the medlar recipe on page 153 that is sieved and mixed with red wine, sugar and cinnamon. They are then fried and topped with "Duke's Powder", page 129, which is a mélange of sugar, cinnamon, ginger, and cloves. I can't wait for An Tir West War to try the three oyster recipes, stewed, fried and in the shell. There are also some recipes, like the gourd soup, several sausage recipes, elderflower fritters and others that seem to come from earlier sources like Martino. Also included is a "Redressed Peacock" that spits fire for its mouth which can also be found in earlier culinary collections.

Tomasik and Albala remind us that "(d)irectly tasting food from the past is no different from appreciating a 500-year-old building or listening to classical music on period instruments." I hope *Livre Fort* as well as *Eat This Book* helps you recreate, taste, and enjoy food from history.

Timothy J. Tomasik is a Professor at Valparaiso University, Indiana. He is Chair of the Department of World Languages and Cultures. He received his Doctorate from Harvard University where the title of thesis was "Textual Taste: The Invention of Culinary Literature in Early Modern France."

Ken Albala is a professor at the University of the Pacific where he teaches courses on the history of food and medicine. He is featured in the Great Courses series in "Food: A Cultural and Culinary History" and "Cooking Across the Ages." Dr. Albala is a prolific author and editor with over 20 books to his credit. He is a regular at the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery and can be found exploring food (not just historical) on his social media feeds. Ken also was the guest speaker at a previous West Coast Culinary Symposium.

INDIGENOUS AMERICAN CUISINE

In the last few years research into indigenous American cuisine, especially the cuisines of central and south America, has dramatically increased with the publication such as *Pre-Columbian Foodways: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Food, Culture, and Markets in Mesoamerica* (2010).

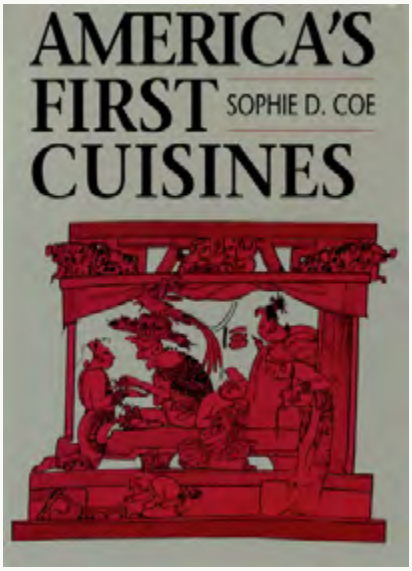
Andean Foodways: Pre-Columbian, Colonial, and Contemporary Food and Culture (2021) and *Foodways of the Ancient Andes: Transforming Diet, Cuisine and Society* (2023). But previously to these new explorations we had ground breaking works like *America's First Cuisines* by Sophie D. Coe, University of Texas Press, 1994.

Sophie Coe first came to academic attention when she translated, from Russian, several chapters of Yuri Knorozov's "The Writing of the Maya Indians". Knorozov based his study on the original work by Diego de Landa Calderon (1524-1579) a Spanish Franciscan Bishop who was in charge of the Catholic Archiocese of the Yucatan and is credited with breaking the Mayan phonetic alphabet code.

While De Landa is credited with overseeing the burning and destruction Mayan manuscripts on the religion, history and cultural context of Mayan civilization. He is also credited with documenting, although through a catholic, colonial mind-set, much of what we now know about pre-conquest Mayan culture. Coe's translation of Knorozov's work was instrumental in wider exposure of these theories.

America's First Cuisines is not a cookbook. It is an overview of the food-ways of the Aztec, Mayan and Incan cultures. In the first sentence of this book our author describes the book as, "the first culinary history of pre-Columbian Latin America" Dr. Coe tells us that "(t)his is a book written to celebrate the contribution made by the original inhabitants of the New World."

Coe divides these contributions into two categories, first, ingredients and secondly the unique botany and zoology of the region. Her focus is that of central and south America. She does not discuss anything further north than modern day Mexico. The book is based on years of research by Dr. Coe as well as "original accounts by Europeans and native Americans."



Dr. Coe's introduction is short and to the point. The following 18 chapters in "American's First Cuisines" includes "descriptions of food preparation techniques, methods of preservation, and even the ever-elusive recipes, as well as the manner of serving the food and the etiquette of eating it."

In chapter one, "Domestication", Coe digs into the importance of domestication on the food-ways of the indigenous Americans. She tells us it takes care and a "lengthy and continuous process" that takes "millennia of patient observations, considered economic decision, and hard physical work." Chapters two and three, "New World Staples" and "New World Produce" go into specifics on the cultivation, history, dietary and preparation of maize, manioc, potatoes, sweet potatoes and yams, beans, peanuts, squash, pineapples, avocados, tomatoes, chocolate, vanilla, and chili.

Chapters four, five and six specifically explore the Aztec Empire. The first of these three chapters discusses how we know what we know about the Aztecs, the foodways that were encountered in the early contact period, the hospitality, feasts and etiquette of the Aztecs, as well as the cosmological and religious aspects that impacted the food-ways. The next

chapter goes into the specific ingredients and how they were used by the Aztecs.

The section on chocolate and cacao is fascinating. Dr. Coe describes "four different varieties of cacao." This small section would later be expanded into a book, co-authored by her husband Michael Coe. In the final Aztec chapter is titled "Aztec Cooks and Menus." The next five chapters are on the Maya. The first titled "The Maya and the explorers" discusses the differences the Europeans encountered between the Aztecs and the Mayan.

The next chapter is titled "Diego de Landa" the problematic Franciscan who Coe describes as a "two Faced figure." The third chapter on the Maya is titled and speaks to "Solid Maya Breadstuffs" including tortillas, tamales, etc. The chapter titled "Maya Flesh Food" discusses the "meat, fish (and) fowl that Coe refers to as "flesh" through the rest of the chapter and their preparation and nourishment and status. The final Maya chapter is dedicated to "Maya Produce."

These five chapters hint at recipes we might be able to recreate with a bit more research, but there is nothing that could be considered a modern recipe. The chapters on the Inca are titled "The Inca: Animal and Mineral", "The Inca: Vegetable", and "The Inca and the Europeans." Coe starts these chapters with the statement, "Peru is different. The deserts are drier, the mountains are higher, the chili peppers on your plate are a different species."

The next 59 pages details these differences. Chapter 16 explores "The Occupation", and the impact the European conquest. Chapter 17, titled "The Final Banquet", is "(f)or the reader interested in culinary things." This chapter speaks to two meals described in Bernal Diaz del Castillo's "Historia verdaldera de la conquista de la Nueva Espana."

The first meal is an account of the banquet of Motecuhzoma (1466 – 1520) and the second describes a European banquet that takes place in modern Mexico City in 1538. While there is much in this chapter to delight those "interested in culinary things" the entirety of "American's First Cuisines", including the "Finale", a conclusion or wrap-up chapter, the bibliography, of course and the index will "delight" those who are not only interested in indigenous American cuisine, but those who want to excavate and understand this complex, rich and delicious food culture.

Sophie Coe (1933 – 1994) graduated from Radcliffe College with an undergraduate degree in anthropology as well as studying Russian and Portuguese. She has a Ph.D from Harvard, also in Anthropology. An early version of "America's First Cuisines" was published in three parts in Petits Propos Culinaires (PPC) in 1985. She also published three other papers in PPC. The first titled "Inca Food: Animal and Mineral." (1988), the second "Inca Food: Vegetable." (1989), and the third "Peru: The Inca and the Spaniards." (1991). She also published, with her husband Michael Coe, "The True History of Chocolate" in 1996 (re-printed in 2003 and 2013). Shortly after her death the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery and her husband established the Sophie Coe Prize which is awarded yearly at the Symposium for an essay or article under 10,000 words on any food history topic.

Aztec men sharing a meal. Florentine Codex, late 16th century. Wiki Commons.

An Aztec woman blowing on maize before putting it in the cooking pot, so that it will not "fear the fire" since it is considered a god. Florentine Codex, late 16th century. Wiki Commons

SCENTS AND FLAVORS: A SYRIAN COOKBOOK

In this month's *Eat This Book* besides exploring *Scents and Flavors; A Syrian Cookbook* edited and translated by Charles Perry New York University Press, 2017, we are also lucky to have a few recipes redacted by Urtatim Al-Qurtubiyya from this amazing book.

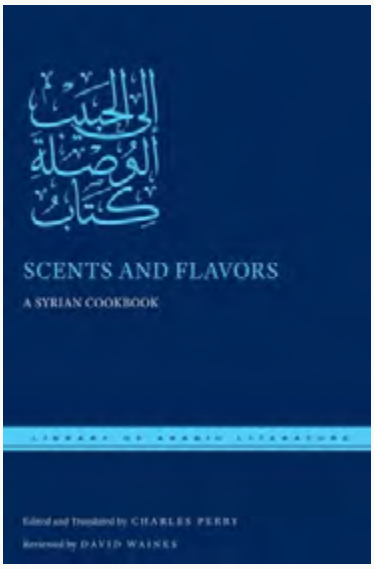
Urtatim is from the Kingdom of the West, a member of the Order of the Laurel, and is an expert on Persian and Middle Eastern cuisine. She teaches and cooks across the known world and is especially known for her cooking classes at Pennsic and the West Coast Culinary Symposium.

Scents and Flavors is a recipe book from the middle of the 13th Century. Perry presents his translation with a side-by-side transcription in the original language. Something I always like to see in any culinary translation even though this is not one of the languages I can read. *Scents and Flavors* starts with an excellent table of contents that includes all the recipes in the ten chapters that follow.

Perry starts with an introduction that sets the stage for *Scents and Flavors*. He speaks to the "sudden explosion of cookbooks in Arabic" that occurs in the 10th through 13th century. These cookbooks are the earliest codified recipe books we have after the ones from antiquity. They were "intended for practical household use" and were inexpensive. He goes on to briefly describe the "characteristics of the cuisine" noting that "fresh fish are completely absent and even salt fish play only a small part." He also has a great section dedicated to the translation of the text and the conventions he uses in his translation.

The ten chapters, which compose the bulk of Perry's book are jam packed with so many amazing, delicious and often simple recipes to try out. It should be noted that of the 635 recipes included in the book chapters one, nine and ten consist of recipes for perfumes, hand-washing powders and perfumed soaps, distilling waters, and perfuming the breath.

The other seven chapters are for food and drink. Chapter two, "Beverages" includes 14 recipes. The stand-outs in this chapter are a "Citron drink", "Spiced oxymel", a "sugar and lemon drink" and a "sour orange drink." Chapter three expands on the beverage chapter with 8 recipes



on "How to make various kinds of fruit juices." Chapter four is a very short chapter with only three recipes on "several varieties of tail fat", essential in the cooking of this cuisine.

Chapter five, with 74 recipes on "Chicken Dishes – Sweet, Sour and other Varieties" is a cornucopia of deliciousness. Here you will find recipes for "bread-crumb stuffing", chicken sausages, and a section on "sweet chicken dishes" which includes recipes for chicken with pistachios, one with rose jam, and the two recipes included below for sour cherry chicken and yogurt chicken. This chapter also has many recipes for "masus" which Perry describes in his glossary as "a recipe for stewing meat with vinegar, saffron, sesame oil and herbs originally a treatment for suckling kid", but here the original author substitutes chicken.

The "sour orange chicken" and the chicken with rhubarb are on my list to redact. Chapter six, the largest chapter, has recipes for "Egyptian kebabs", "Georgian Kebab(s)" and many recipes for roast meats, eggplants, cucumbers, cauliflower, spinach, etc. I am sure you will want to explore "The many kinds of sweets, baked goods and the like" included in chapter seven.

Chapter eight, the last of the food chapters, includes many different kinds of pickles. Pickles, a generic word for preserved foods, spreads and dips, are made from all sorts of ingredients. There are pickles made from turnips, eggplants, lemons, quince, capers, olives, bottle gourds and many other products. This is a chapter you will really want to read in-depth. Perry also includes a brief notes section, a glossary, a section on weights and measure and an extensive bibliography.

The second kind is green olive paste (Zaytûn Akhdar Marsûs)

Green olives. Remove their pits. Pound for them peeled, roasted walnuts and dissolve in lemon juice. Add to it aṭrâf al-ṭîb, tahini, salted lemon pieces chopped small, parsley leaves stripped from their stems, mint, and rue. Knead together in order that it can be removed to be put on bread. Add to it dried coriander [i.e., seeds], caraway, and a little pepper.

INGREDIENTS

.5 lb 215g	Green olives pickled in salt
4 T	Ground roasted walnius
1 T	Lemon juice
¼	Salted lemon (see substitute)
2 T	Finely chopped flat leaf parsley
1 t	Finely chopped rue (optional)
¼	Ground Caraway
¼	Ground Coriander seeds
¼	ground black pepepr
1 T	Tahini
3 T	Water

1. Wash and pit olives, and grind in food processor. [“pound”]
2. Lightly roast walnuts, rub to remove skin, then grind in food processor. [“pound”]
3. “Dissolve” roasted walnuts in lemon juice
4. Rinse, then finely chop the salted lemon.
5. Finely chop herbs. [doesn’t say to mince, but seems probable]
6. Dissolve tahini in water.
7. Thoroughly combine all the ingredients.
8. Mix caraway seeds with ground coriander seeds & pepper, and sprinkle on top of olive paste in serving dish. I prefer to toast the caraway seeds in a dry pan just until they become fragrant, a very brief time. Serve as dip or spread.

Salted Lemon substitute
Take a nicely ripe lemon. Cut into quarters and remove seeds. Remove peel from one quarter and cut into 1/2” wide strips. Put the peel and the flesh into a small saucepan with 1-1/2 tsp. non-iodized salt and cover with juice squeezed from the remaining lemon. Simmer on a low fire until the peel becomes tender. Cool, drain, and use in the recipe.

Note: The typeface in the recipe is different to accommodate for special characters unique to the language

An iran Herbarge Spice Shop in the Esfaha. Wikimedia commons

Atrâf al-Tîb

The original recipe calls for the inclusion of long pepper, mace, betel leaf, spikenard (Nardostachys jatamansi), and elm tree seeds (from Nawal Nasrallah, who said they are still used in Iraqi cooking). These are of varying degrees of difficulty to obtain.
If you have long pepper, use 1/4 tsp. each ground black pepper and ground long pepper. If you have mace, use 1/4 tsp. each ground nutmeg and ground mace.

INGREDIENTS

¼ t	Cardamom
¼ t	Cloves
¼ t	Ginger
½ t	Black pepper
½ t	Nutmet
¼ t	Bay leaf
½ t	dried rose buds

Grind small quantities of the whole ingredients individually.

Then measure and mix together the specified amounts of ground ingredients. S

hould make 2-3/8 tsp. total.

The first two recipe, redacted by Urtatim Al-Qurtubiyya, can be found in Chapter 8, “How to make various types of sour and salty pickles." The fifth type is olive pickles, of which there are several kinds. It can be found on page 209 of hardcover edition of “Scents and Flavors." These two recipes are delicious, have many ingredients and, although not complicated in cooking techniques, will take some time and care to prepare. I have also included two simple recipes that have far less ingredients and are easy to prepare. These recipes come right from the translation and need little to no directions to make.

The second kind (Ibn al-cAdîm, Kitāb al-Wuṣlah ilā al-Ḥabîb fî Waṣf al-Ṭayyibāt wa'l-Ṭîb)

Substitute for rue: Chinese celery works as a substitute for rue, although it is less bitter. Other possible substitutes are leaves of arugula, chicory, dandelion, or endive. Herbalists sell dried, chopped rue leaves, but, as Gernot Katzer wrote, "dried leaves are a poor substitute."

Note: This recipe, which doesn't have a name, is very similar to Eggplant Muhassa, for which there are recipes in ibn Sayyar al-Warraq's compendium of 9th and 10th century recipes and the 14th century Kitab Wasf al-At'imah al-Mu'tadah, Book of the Description of Familiar Foods. In both those books the eggplant is "cut small", which is why I said to chop it coarsely.

INGREDIENTS

1 T	Dried sumac berries [or bottled sumac liquid]
1/2 c.	walnut pieces
1 T	Red or white wine vinegar or fresh lemon juice
1/2 t	granulated cane sugar
4	Eggplants, long skinny Asian variety, or one globe eggplant
As needed	Olive Oil (not EVOO) eggplants absorb a lot of oil
2 T	fresh lemon juice
3/4 t	Ground cinnamon
1.5 t	ground coriander seeds
1/2 t	caraway or cumin seeds
1/4 t	ground white pepper
1/2 t	salt, or to taste
2	cloves garlic, or to taste, crushed
1 T	minced flat leaf parsley
2 t	minced fresh mint leaves
1.5 t	rue leaves substitute (see note)

1. If bottled sumac juice is not available, soak dried sumac in warm water to cover for a minimum of 15 minutes, but preferably longer. Then drain, saving juice. Put sumac into a clean muslin cloth and squeeze out the remaining liquid into the bowl with the rest of the juice.

2. Toast walnuts. Rub in a clean cloth to remove some of the skins. Chop finely and then pound to paste with wine vinegar and sugar.

3. Cut off the tops from the eggplants, then halve. If using a globe eggplant, cut in quarters. If very seedy, remove seeds as much as possible without depleting the meat. Cut in half again.

4. Put olive oil in a frying pan and heat on medium. When hot, add eggplant pieces, stirring to coat well with olive oil. The goal is for the eggplant to become soft and somewhat translucent, so it may be necessary to reduce heat so they don't burn. When done, remove eggplant from pan, but do not drain - the oil will help make it pleasantly unctuous. Chop the eggplant coarsely.

5. Mix sumac juice and lemon juice together, pour into eggplant, mashing well.

6. Stir together walnuts, garlic, cinnamon, coriander, white pepper, and ground caraway or cumin. [I prefer to lightly toast the caraway seeds first.] Then stir in half of the minced parsley, mint, and rue substitute.

7. Pour seasonings over fried eggplant. Toss so eggplant is well-seasoned. Let sit a bit for flavors to meld before serving. Add salt if needed.

8. Put into serving dish and sprinkle the top with remaining minced herbs.

Note: The typeface in the recipe is different to accommodate for special characters unique to the language

Both of the next recipes can be made with fresh chicken you cook up yourself or a quick substitute is fresh or leftover rotisserie chicken. They are so simple and delicious they don't even need a redaction. Use your best judgement when it comes to the ratio of chicken to flavoring ingredients. For a whole chicken you might us one can of sour cherries or a cup to a cup and a half of yogurt. Your taste buds will guide you. Let me know how your version turns out!

Village-style chicken with sour cherries - recipe 5.72 page 71

Boil ripe sour cherries with a little water. Strain and thicken on the fire with mint and fried chicken.

Jurjan Chicken - recipe 5.70 page 71

Take sour jug yogurt and strain through a woolen wrapper. Dissolve white mustard in the sour yogurt, using enough to make distinctly hot. If it is not hot enough, add some finely pounded white mustard. Pound white sugar and add; mix in very well. Fry a chicken. Put into the yogurt, and add fresh peeled pistachios. Mound the yogurt on the chicken and garnish with fresh pistachios and sour pomegranate seeds.

I have used both Greek yogurt in this recipe as well as goat yogurt. The goat yogurt can be an acquired taste and is harder to find than Greek Yogurt. Use what you have available and like. I also used yellow mustard powder since white mustard is not readily available.

Charles Perry is a well-known culinary and food historian with a focus on medieval Arabic Cuisine. He spent 18 years as the staff writer for the Los Angeles Times food section. He is a long time contributor to The Oxford Symposium on Food and Cooking as well as to Petits Propos Culinaires (PPC). He co-founded the Culinary Historians of Southern California and has been a guest speaker at the West Coast Culinary Symposium.

Urtatim al-Qurtubiyya bint ʿabd al-Karim al-hakam al-Fasi was born in 10th century Fas (called Fez by the Franj) where her father teaches at the University of al-Qarawiyyin, founded in 857 by Fatima al-Fihri. Urtatim moved to Qurṭubah (called Córdoba by the Franj) in al-Andalus during the reign of Abd al-Rahman III, where her profession is arranging for books to be copied for her clients.

In the SCA Urtatim was a feast cook until she became disabled, but she continues to teach culinary history classes and hands-on cooking classes. She translated a circa 1430 manuscript of Ottoman palace recipes into English. She is also known for her extensive research on clothing of the medieval Islamic world. She was recognized as a Laurel at Pennsic LI, in August, 2024.

Ellen Perlman was born in Chicago Illinois. She taught herself to cook beginning in 1968 using cookbooks featuring cuisines of different countries. She especially enjoys cuisines of North Africa, Southwest Asia, and Southeast Asia.

LA VARENNE COOKERY:
THE FRENCH COOK; THE FRENCH PASTRY CHEF; THE FRENCH CONFECTIONER

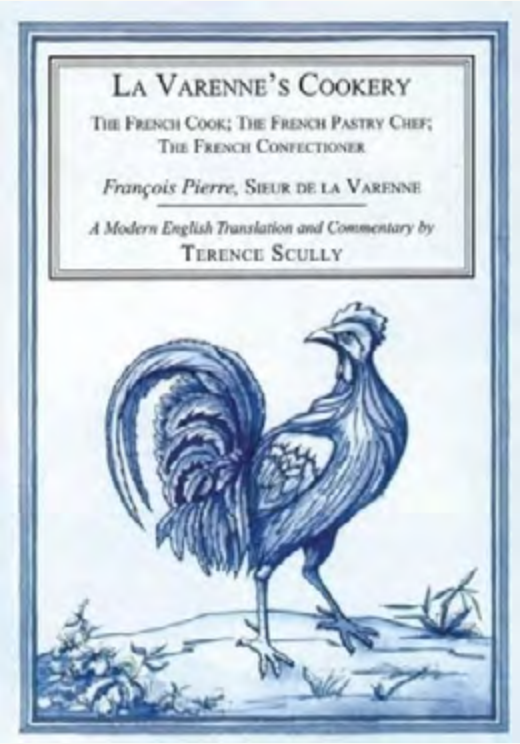
Eat This Book has featured many cookbooks by Terrance Scully. Dr. Scully's main focus is French Medieval and Renaissance Cookery. This month we will explore another of his books that continues his focus.

The book we will look at this month has a very long title and is a very hefty book running 626 pages. *La Varenne Cookery: The French Cook; The French Pastry Chef; The French Confectioner by Francois Pierre, Sieur de la Varenne A Modern English Translation and Commentary* by Terence Scully 2006, Prospect Books. It is composed, as the title suggests, of three separate books.

The first section of this book, The French Cook, was published in 1651. The recipes included in this section were likely collected in the two decades before when Francois Pierre worked in the kitchens, and eventually became Master Cook, for the Marquis d'Uxelles. His publisher, Pierre David, had low expectations for sales of the book, but *Le Cuisiner Franscois* was a popular hit and "sales exhausted an astounding 30 editions over 75 years."

The second section, *The French Pastry Chef*, was published by a second publisher J. Gaillard in 1653. Scully tells us that, "The baked goods presented in the treatise range from the standard pies and tourtes to waffles, fritters and biscuits through to macaroon and marzipan." Many of the pastry items included in this book are published, in a complete form, for the first time. Scully goes on to say the *The French Pastry Chef* is "an original undertaking in its aim to give a broad and detailed exposition solely of the craft of pastry-making." It is an expectational work.

The third, and final section, *The French Confectioner* was published in 1660 by a third publisher, Jean Ribou and bears the attribution of "La Varenne", but scholars, including Scully, believe the publisher was capitalizing on the name and that "(t)here are only very tenuous grounds for suggesting



that the book ever had anything at all to do with *La Varenne*." *The French Confectioner* is also a book that contains many recipes that have previously only been mentioned in passing or are incomplete in the medieval French corpus. *The French Confectioner* does pull from previous Spanish and Italian works, but definitely expands the recipes for candies, jams, jellies, etc. Besides these sweet treats *The French Confectioner* also has a section on napkin folding.

The Publisher of *The French Cook*, Pierre David, also published "*Le Maistre d'Hotel*. *Le Maistre d'Hotel* also includes a section on napkin folding, as well as a second section titled *Le Sommelier*. Some of the content included in the napkin folding section in *The French Confectioner* are similar to those in *Le Maistre d'Hotel*.

Scully tells us that *The French Cook* continues along the lines of other period cookbooks. He says, the "dining table has always been a means of demonstrating an exceptional refinement of taste that is directly related to an exceptional social position." He also suspects that Francois Pierre "is writing in order to help colleagues whose memory may not be wholly dependable but who have no close professional mentors to who they can turn without embarrassment for help."

It is interesting that even at this late date there are still many references and associations that started hundreds of years before between food and medicine. Scully also believes that the title, *The French Chef* or in French, *Le Cuisinier françois* is pun on the authors name. Should the title be *The French Chef* or *Francois the Chef*. Either way *The French Chef*, the first of the three books included in this work, is filled with tasty recipes you will want to try.

Francois Pierre divided *The French Chef* into three major subdivisions "dishes for meat days, those for lean days and those for Lent." The last two sections were essential for any cook. Lean days and lent could take up approximately 178 days of the year. Lean days were "generally three in every week of the year: Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays." Lent consisted of the forty days before Easter. Normally I would describe the sections of the book, but with three full works there is not enough space to include these details. I will say that Scully has placed the bibliography at the beginning of the work, emphasizing the importance instead of the end. Also, it should be noted that there is no side by side French with the English translation which would have been a plus to me.

Francois Pierre was likely born into "a respectable bourgeois or middle-class family" in the early 1600's, likely 1615. He started working in kitchens at a very early age and rose through the ranks to a well-respected chef. It is not clear when he took the nickname *La Varenne* which was used in the by past chef de cuisines in France. He claimed the name was "inherited." Francois Pierre La Varenne died in 1678.

You might also be interested in *The French Cook* 2001, Southover Press. With an introduction by Philip and Mary Hyman this transcription of the 1653 English translation by "I.D.G." is a great addition to your library if you are really interested in this time period of cooking. It only includes the first book of the three *La Varenne* works, but can be used in tandem with the above to check how an English translator from the time period represented the work.

Madrone Culinary Guild Feudal Gourmet also has a pamphlet which uses *La Varenne* as one of the sources. *French Food in The Renaissance* is described as "(a) collection of tasty recipes from France of the 14th to 17th century. Our Guild has studied many recipes of *La Varenne*, and you'll find a banquet's worth here. The pamphlet has 19 recipes, including the indispensable Sauce Robert ("good on almost anything") and Tourt of Pear." You can purchase the pamphlet here: https://mcg.antir.sca.org

June 2024

A HISTORY OF COOKBOOKS:

FROM KITCHEN TO PAGE OVER SEVEN CENTURIES

This month *Eat This Book* serves up another important book that is not a cookbook. *A History of Cookbooks: From Kitchen to Page over Seven Centuries* by Henry Notaker University of California Press, 2017 "un"-constructs the cookbook from "the middle ages up to the present."

However, the things you will learn by reading this fascinating book about books will directly impact and inform the redactions you create from your favorite period cookbook. The book discusses how and why cookbooks and recipes are structured the way they were and are. It speaks to the evolution of recipes and cookbooks and what they are trying to accomplish in different time periods and places.

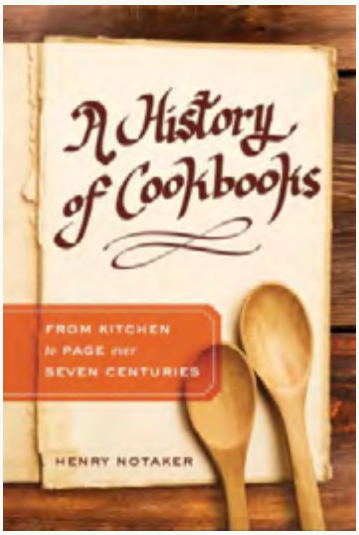
The information is presented in each of the sections starts with the earliest medieval cookbooks and then continues on through to the modern day. Some might expect that this would not be of interest to the recreationist cook, but seeing the evolution and how you bring your modern perspective to each dish you recreate is invaluable.

The History of Cookbooks is divided into three distinct sections. "Part One – Food and Text – Cook and Writer" discusses "the one who invents or develops the recipes and the one who gives them a written form."

Part one starts with a prologue that sets the stage. This prologue is fascinating and I assure you it did not influence me in the least in choosing this book! The prologue uses Platina and Martino to illustrate the partnership between the cook, Martino, and the writer, Platina. This part of the books draws on modern research around the two and the relationship that created both the Martino manuscript *Libro de Arte Coquinaria* and the first printed cookbook based on Martino's work, *De Honesta* by Platina.

Part one continues with a section, on "Literacy and Cooks" and why writers were essential in the production of cookbooks. There is also an interesting section on "Why people wrote cookbooks" and a small section on the "Publishers and Compilers."

In "Part Two – The Text and Its Form" Notaker "examines the form and contents of the text of cookbooks." It includes eight sections starting with "The Origin and Early Development of Modern Cookbooks" which discusses how cooking instructions went from an oral tradition to a written tradition.



You should think about this process as an interpretation or translation from physical to written word.

This process, and the access to cookbooks, picked up very quickly with the invention of the printing press and the rise of the middle classes. Part Two also includes a section on the "diffusion, translation and plagiarism" of the cookbook. A most important part of the cookbook tradition.

The rest of part two speaks to "Organizing the cookbook", "Naming the Recipes", "Pedagogical and didactic approaches", one of the most important intentions of a cookbook, "Paratext in cookbooks", "The Recipe Form", and finally a section on "The Cookbook Genre."

"Part Three – The Text and Its World" contextualizes the cookbook and "discusses the different values and ideas governing cook-

book texts: social and economic considerations, religious taboos and ideological convictions, national and regional attitudes, medical and nutritional theories and aesthetic and artistic aims.."

Cookbooks, or any art or social concept does not exist in a vacuum. The world in which they are created impacts and effects the nature of the art and it is critical to understand when, where and what was happening in society to truly understand the cookbooks from different eras. Part three has nine sections plus an epilogue. It starts with "Cookbooks for the rich and the poor." Original cooking manuscripts were intended for the very wealthy or for Royalty, although they occasionally mention what to feed to the sick and the poor it was unusual. This part of the book continues with a section on "Health and Medicine in Cookbooks."

If you all have been reading *Eat This Book* and some of the recommended books you will understand that this is truly an important part of any recipe or cookbook from the Medieval and Renaissance. Food was considered medicine and how it was combined and the nature, or humors, of the person eating the food was critical to the health of your master.

Another important consideration in cookbooks is included in the next section "Recipes for fat days and lean days." The church decreed that the year was divided into days of fasting, or lean days and days of feasting, fat days. The rules on what could and could not be eaten on the fast days varied from decade to decade and there were exceptions for the sick and aged. Continuing on the remaining sections include "Vegetarian cookbooks", "Jewish Cookbooks", "Cookbooks and aspects of Nationalism", "Decoration, illusion and entertainment", "Taste and pleasure" and finally "Gender in Cookbooks and Household books."

I am sure you will also be delighted at the 32 illustrations that supplement the text. Many of them are woodcuts form Marx Rumpolt, 1537 *Kochbuch* which are filled details from the German kitchen. Pots and pans, barrels and pottery, pastries, vegetables, salted and dried hanging meats, and so much more fill these beautiful illustrations. They not only supplement the text in a beautiful way but they also help you understand the kitchens, tools, and environment that the Medieval and Renaissance cook inhabited.

Besides the illustration *The History of Cookbooks* also includes an extensive notes section. This is included at the back of the book instead of as footnote which I always prefer, but it is incredibly comprehensive and supports the extensive research that Notaker undertook in the writing of this book.

Finally, the bibliography in this book is referred to as "References." Notaker culls the "important cookbooks, works describing or analyzing culinary literature and food history, and studies of literary theory, book history and special studies of nonculinary subjects." It is a joy to read and of course as always one of my favorite sections.

Henry Notaker is a Norwegian who spent most of his career as journalist. Besides "The History of Cookbooks" He also wrote "Printed Cookbooks in Europe 1470-1700 A bibliography" Oak Knoll Press, 2010, and "Food Culture in Scandinavia" Greenwood Press, 2008. On his website, www.notaker.com, you will find links to extensive bibliographical information, culinary texts on line, and a section on Norwegian food culture.