

Samplings from *American Cookery*, 1812

AMONG the Society's small collection of recipes and menus is a slender volume published in Walpole, New Hampshire, in 1812. It has delighted two historically minded cooks of the twentieth century who feel parts of it deserve wider attention. In the preface and in the recipes themselves the anonymous author tells something about herself and about early culinary practices. Writing in 1812 she could assume most of her readers lived in a rural environment. Not unreasonable, then, is her method of preserving fruit "to sink it in the bottom of a living spring of water"; her syllabus required that you "milk your cow into your liquor." For roasting lamb without the convenience of the regulating dials and push buttons of modern stoves she instructs one to "lay down to a clear good fire that will not want stirring or altering."

The preface to *American Cookery* begins with a general essay "calculated for the improvement of the rising generation of FEMALES in America." In it the author stressed "an adherence to those rules and maxims which have stood the test of ages." Orphans, like herself, especially need "an opinion and determination," but this does not mean that they should have "an obstinate perseverance in trifles." In her recipes the author follows her own advice. Although she specifies amounts for the main ingredients, seasoning is left to individual preference. In their kitchens all women should "relish as they like and suit their taste."

The samplings chosen by Barbara G. Carson and Caroline C. Hollingsworth are presented here partly for entertainment and partly for insight into early nineteenth-century culinary practices. But more to the point, we feel that even after one hundred and fifty-four years a New England cookbook can still whet appetites. If a few substitutions for obsolete ingredients and occasional guesses about measurements are made, the recipes will, we hope, yield mouth-watering results.

PREFACE

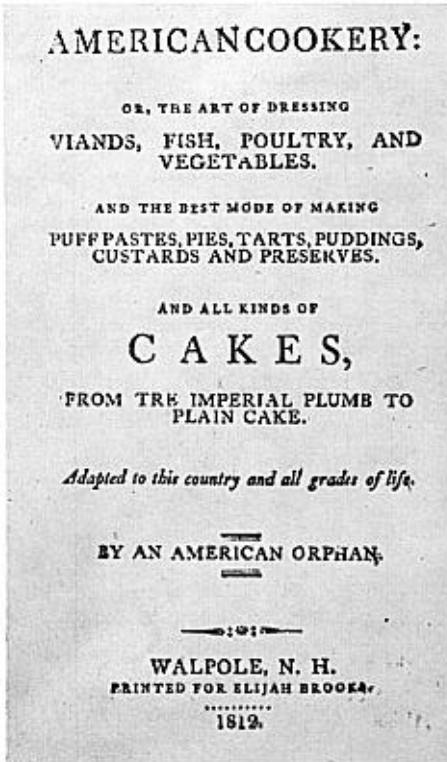
AS this treatise is calculated for the improvement of the rising generation of FEMALES in America, the Lady of fashion and fortune will not be displeased, if many hints are suggested for the more general and universal knowledge of those females in this country, who by the loss of their parents, or other unfortunate circumstances, are reduced to the necessity of going into families in the line of domesticks, or taking refuge with their friends or relations, and doing those things which are really essential to the perfecting them as good wives, and useful members to society. The orphan, though left to the care of virtuous guardians, will find it essentially necessary to have an opinion and determination of her own. The world, and the fashion thereof, is so variable, that old people cannot ac-

commodate themselves to the various changes and fashions which daily occur: *they* will adhere to the fashion of *their* day, and will not surrender their attachments to the *good old way*—while the young and gay, bend and conform readily to the taste of the times and fancy of the hour. By having an opinion and determination, I would not be understood to mean an obstinate perseverance in trifles, which borders on obstinacy—by no means, but only an adherence to those rules and maxims which have stood the test of ages, and will forever establish the **FEMALE CHARACTER**, a virtuous character—although they conform to the ruling taste of the age in cookery, dress, language, manners, &c.

It must ever remain a check upon the poor solitary orphan, that while those fe-

males that have parents, or brothers, or riches to defend their indiscretions, that the orphan must depend solely upon character. How immensely important, therefore, that every action, every word, every

cially the fat parts, let there be a brisk fire, baste it well; a loin weighing fifteen pounds requires two hours and a half roasting; garnish with green parsley and sliced lemon.



thought, be regulated by the strictest purity, and that every movement meet the approbation of the good and wise.

The candor of the American Ladies is solicitously entreated by the Authoress, as she is circumscribed in the knowledge, this being an original work in this country. Should any future editions appear, she hopes to render it more valuable.

Roast Veal.

As it is more tender than beef or mutton, and easily scorched, paper it, espe-

Roast Lamb.

Lay down to a clear good fire that will not want stirring or altering, baste with butter, dust on flour, and before you take it up add more butter and sprinkle on a little salt and parsley shred fine; send to table with an elegant sallad, green peas, fresh beans or asparagus.

To stuff and roast a Turkey or Fowl.

One pound soft wheat bread, three ounces beef suet, three eggs, a little sweet thyme, marjoram, pepper and salt, and some add a gill¹ of wine; fill the bird therewith and sew up, hang down to a steady solid fire, basting frequently with butter and water, and roast until a steam emits from the breast, put one third of a pound of butter into the gravy, dust flour over the bird and baste with the gravy; serve up with boiled onions and cranberry sauce, mangoes, pickles or celery.

2—Others omit the sweet herbs, and add parsley done with potatoes.

3—Boil and marsh three pints potatoes, moisten them with butter, add sweet herbs, pepper, salt, fill and roast as above.

To smother a Fowl in Oysters.

Gill² the bird with dry oysters and sew up and boil in water just sufficient to cover the bird, salt and season to your taste; when done tender, put it into a deep dish and pour over it a pint of stewed oysters, well buttered and peppered, garnish a turkey with sprigs of parsley or leaves of cellery: a fowl is best with a parsley sauce.

¹ Gill, a liquid measure equal to $\frac{1}{8}$ quart.

² "Gill the bird," to eviscerate.

To dress a Bass.

Season fish with salt, pepper and cayenne, one slice salt pork, one of bread, one egg, sweet marjoram, summer savory and parsley, minced fine and well mixed, one gill wine, four ounces butter; stuff the bass—bake in the oven one hour; thin slices of pork laid on the fish as it goes into the oven; when done pour over dissolved butter: serve up with stewed oysters, cranberries, boiled onions or potatoes—The same method may be observed with fresh Shad, Codfish, Blackfish and Salmon.

How to keep green peas till Christmas.

Take young peas, shell them, put them in a cullendar to drain, then lay a cloth four or five times double on a table, then spread them on, dry them very well, and have your bottles ready, fill them, cover them with mutton suet fat when it is a little soft; fill the necks almost to the top, cork them, tie a bladder and a leather over them and set them in a dry cool place.

Beef stake pie.

Take slices of beef stake half an inch thick, lay them three deep in paste No. 8, adding salt, pepper and slices of raw onion between each laying, dusting on flour at the same time, together with a sufficient quantity of butter—add half a pint water; bake one and a half hour. This must be put in an earthen vessel and covered with a crust, as for a chicken pie.

A paste for sweet meats.

No. 8. Rub in one and half pound of suet to six pounds of flour, and a spoon full of salt, wet with cream, roll in, in six or eight times, two and half pounds butter—good for a chicken or meat pie.

Observations.

All meat pies require a hotter and brisker oven than fruit pies; in good cookeries all raisins should be stoned. As people differ in their tastes, they may alter to their wishes. And as it is difficult to ascertain with precision the small articles of spicery; every one may relish as they like and suit their taste.

Minced Pie of Beef.

Four pound boiled beef, chopped fine salted; six pounds of raw apples chopped, also, one pound beef suet, one quart of wine or rich sweet cyder, mace and cinnamon, of each one ounce, two pounds sugar, a nutmeg, two pounds raisins, bake in paste No. 3, three fourths of an hour.

Puff paste for tarts.

No. 3. To any quantity of flour, rub in three fourths of its weight of butter, (whites of eggs to a peck) rub in one third or half, and roll in the rest.

Dried Apple Pie.

Take two quarts dried apples, put them into an earthen pot that contains one gallon, fill it with water and set it in a hot oven, adding one handful of cranberries; after baking one hour fill up the pot again with water; when done and the apples cold, strain it and add thereto the juice of three or four limes, raisins, sugar, orange peel and cinnamon to your taste, lay in paste No. 3.

A buttered Apple Pie.

Pare, quarter and core tart apples, lay in paste No. 3, cover with the same; bake half an hour; when drawn, gently raise the top crust, add sugar, butter, orange peel, and a sufficient quantity of rose water.

A sick bed Custard.

Scald a quart of milk, sweeten and salt a little, whip three eggs, and stir in, bake on coals in a pewter vessel.

Cramberry Tart.

Stewed, strained and sweetened, put into paste No. 9, add spices till grateful, and baked gently.

Royal paste.

No. 9. Rub half a pound of butter into one pound of flour, four whites beat to a foam, two ounces of fine sugar; roll often, rubbing one third, and rolling two thirds of the butter is best; excellent for tarts.

Gooseberry Tart.

Lay clean berries and sift over them sugar, then berries and sugar, till a deep dish be filled, intermingling a handful of raisins, and one gill of water; cover with paste No. 9, and bake somewhat more than other tarts.

Grape Tart.

Must be cut in two and stoned and done like a gooseberry.

A tasty Indian pudding.

Three pints scalded milk to one pint meal salted; cool, add two eggs, four ounces butter, sugar or molasses and spice sufficient: it will require two and half hours baking.

Pumpkin pudding.

One quart stewed and strained, three pints milk, six beaten eggs, sugar, mace, nutmeg and ginger, laid into paste No. 3, cross and chequer it, and bake in dishes three quarters of an hour.

Orange pudding.

Put sixteen yolks with half a pound of butter melted, grate in the rinds of two

Seville oranges, beat in half pound of fine sugar, add two spoons orange water, two of rose water, one gill of wine, half pint cream, two York biscuits or the crumbs of a fine loaf, soaked in cream, mix all together, put it into rich puff paste, which let be double round the edges of the dish; bake like a custard.

Marlborough pudding.

Take twelve spoons of stewed apples, twelve of wine, twelve of sugar, twelve of melted butter, and twelve of beaten eggs, a little cream spice to your taste; lay in paste No. 3, in a deep dish; bake one hour and a quarter.

A plumb pudding boiled.

Three pints flour, a little salt, six eggs, one pound plumbs, half pound beef suet, half pound sugar, one pint milk; mix the whole together; put it into a strong cloth floured, boil three hours, serve with sweet sauce.

To make a fine syllabub from the cow.

Sweeten a quart of cyder with double refined sugar, grate nutmeg into it, then milk your cow into your liquor, when you have thus added what quantity of milk you think proper, pour half a pint or more, in proportion to the quantity of syllabub you make, of the sweetest cream you can get all over it.

A whipt syllabub.

Take two porringers of cream and one of white wine, grate in the skin of a lemon, take the whites of three eggs, sweeten it to your taste, then whip it with a whisk, take off the froth as it rises and put it into your syllabub glasses or pots, and they are fit for use.

To make a fine cream.

Take a pint of cream, sweeten it to

your palate, grate a little nutmeg, put in a spoonful of orange flour, water and rose water, and two spoonfuls of wine; beat up four eggs and two whites, stir it altogether one way over the fire till it is thick, have cups ready and pour it in.

Raspberry cream.

Take a quart of thick sweet cream and boil it two or three wallops,³ then take it off the fire and strain some juices of raspberries into it to your taste, stir it a good while before you put your juice in, that it may be almost cold, when you put it to it, and afterwards stir it one way for almost quarter of an hour; then sweeten it to your taste and when it is cold you may send it up.

A trifle.

Fill a dish with biscuit finely broken, rusk and spiced cake, wet with wine, then pour a good boiled custard (not too thick) over the rusk, and put a syllabub over that; garnish with jelly and flowers.

Plain cake.

Nine pound of flour, three pound of sugar, three pound of butter, one pint emptins,⁴ three pints milk, nine eggs, one ounce of spice, one gill of rose water, one gill of wine.

A rich cake.

Rub two pound of butter into five pound of flour, add eight eggs (not much beaten) one pint of emptins, one pint of wine, kneaded up stiff like biscuit, cover well and put by and let it rise over night.

To two and a half pound raisons, add one gill brandy, to soak over night or if new half an hour in the morning, add them with one gill rose water and two and half pound of loaf sugar, one ounce

³ Wallop, a vigorous and noisy boil.

⁴ Emptin or emptins, homemade yeast.

cinnamon, work well and bake as loaf cake, No. 1. (Heat the oven with dry wood for one and a half hour, if large pans be used, it will then require two hours baking, and in proportion for smaller loaves.)

Independence cake.

Twenty pounds flour, fifteen pounds sugar, ten pounds butter, four dozen eggs, one quart wine, one quart brandy, one ounce nutmeg, cinnamon, cloves, mace, of each three ounces, two pounds citron, currants and raisins, five pounds each, one quart yeast; when baked, frost with loaf sugar; dress with box and gold leaf.

Honey cake.

Six pounds flour, two pounds honey, one pound sugar, two ounces cinnamon and one ounce ginger, a little orange peel, two tea spoons pearl ash,⁵ six eggs; dissolve in milk, put the whole together, moisten with milk if necessary, bake twenty minutes.

New Year's cake.

Take fourteen pound flour, to which add one pint milk, and one quart yeast, put these together over night, and let it lie in the sponge till morning, five pounds sugar and four pounds butter, dissolve these together, six eggs well beat, and caraway seed; put the whole together, and when light bake them in cakes, similar to breakfast biscuit, twenty minutes.

Christmas cookey.

To three pounds of flour, sprinkle a tea cup of fine powdered coriander seed, rub in one pound of butter, and one and half pound sugar, dissolve one tea spoonful of pearl ash in a tea cup of milk, knead all together well, roll three quarters of

⁵ Pearl ash, potassium carbonate.

an inch thick, and cut or stamp into shape and size as you please, bake slowly fifteen or twenty minutes; though hard and dry at first, if put in an earthen pot, and dry cellar, or damp room, they will be finer, softer and better when six months old.

N.B. In all cases where spices are named, it is supposed that they be pounded fine and sifted; sugar must be dried and rolled fine; flour dried in oven; eggs well beaten or whipped into a raging foam.

Diet bread.

One pound sugar, nine eggs, beat for an hour, add to fourteen ounces flour, spoonful rose water, one of cinnamon or coriander, bake quick.

Molasses gingerbread.

One table spoon of cinnamon one spoonful ginger, some coriander or alspice, put to four tea spoons pearlash, dissolved in half pint of water, four pound flour, one quart molasses, six ounces butter, (if in summer rub in the butter, if in the winter, warm the butter and molasses and pour to the spiced flour) knead well till stiff, the more the better, the lighter and whiter it will be; bake brisk fifteen minutes: dont' scorch; before it is put in, wash it with whites and sugar beat together.

Butter drop.

Rub one quarter of a pound butter, one pound sugar, sprinkled with mace, into one pound and a quarter flour, add four eggs, one glass rose water, bake fifteen minutes.

Rusk.

Three quarters of a pound butter, one pound sugar, twelve eggs, one quart milk, put as much flour as they will wet, a spoon of cinnamon, gill emptins, let it stand till very puffy or light; roll into

small cakes and let it stand on oiled tins while the oven is heating, bake fifteen minutes in a quick oven, then wash the top with sugar and whites, while hot.

The American citron.

Take the whole of a large watermelon (seeds excepted) not too ripe, cut it into small pieces, take two pounds of loaf sugar, one pint of water, put it all into a kettle, let it boil gently for two hours, then put into pots for use.

To preserve Peaches.

Put your peaches in boiling water, just give them a scald, but don't let them boil, take them out, and put them in cold water, then dry them in a sieve, and put them in long wide mouthed bottles; to half a dozen peaches take a quarter of a pound of sugar, clarify it, pour it over your peaches, and fill the bottles with brandy, stop them close, and keep them in a close place.

A new method of keeping apples fresh and good, through the winter and into summer.

Take a quantity of pipins, or other good winter apples; take them from the tree carefully when ripe, and before frost, make a hole through each one with a goose quill from stem to eye, fill this with sugar, lay them on a linen cloth in a chamber, let them lay in this position two weeks, till they are a little wilted, then put them in a tight cask, and keep them from freezing.

To preserve plumbs and cherries, six months or a year, retaining all that bloom and agreeable flavor, during the whole of that period of which they are possessed when taken from the tree.

Take any quantity of plumbs or cher-

ries a little before they are fully ripe, with the stems on; take them directly from the tree, when perfectly dry, and with the greatest care, so that they are not in the least bruised—put them with great care into a large stone jug, which must be dry, fill it full, and immediately make it proof against air and water, then sink it in the bottom of a living spring of water, there let remain for a year if you like, and when opened they will exhibit every beauty and charm, both as to the appearance and taste, as when taken from the tree.

For brewing spruce beer.

Take four ounces hops, boil half an hour, in one gallon water, strain it, then add sixteen gallons warm water, two gallons molasses, eight ounces essence spruce dissolved in one quart water, put in a clean cask, shake it well together, add half pint emptins, let it stand and work one week, if very warm weather less time will do, when drawn off add one spoonful molasses to each bottle.

FINIS.