



# American Cookbook: A History

*Carol Fisher*

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## **American Cookbook: A History** Carol Fisher

When colonists arrived in America, their knowledge of cooking sometimes had little in common with available ingredients. Eventually they adapted recipes from the old country for use with native foods and cooking methods. The resulting infusion nourished an enthusiasm for cookbooks, as cooks from all walks of life recorded and exchanged old and new recipes. This book serves up the American cookbook as a tasty sampler of history, geography and culture, revealing the influence of political events (e.g. wartime rationing), social movements (temperance), and technological change (new packaging and cooking methods). Skimming antiquity, the author whisks us through history to the first American cookbook, published by Amelia Simmons in 1796. Next she examines the cookbook revolution of the 1800s that was sparked by vigilant interest in household management and fueled by professionals and cooking schools. She heralds the charity and community cookbook, which has roots in the Civil War and thrives today. Regional and ethnic cookbooks merit discussion in their own chapter, which is followed by consideration of themes, product promotion, special collections and unusual formats. Cookbook aficionados will find familiar titles in the final chapter, "Most Influential Cookbooks of the Twentieth Century." Multiple bibliographies list notable American cookbooks, product cookbooks and booklets, alternative format cookbooks, and culinary books (books about food), as well as the author's research sources. A selected list of libraries and archives with significant cookbook and culinary collections is included, and a unique appendix reprints selected pie recipes from American cookbooks published from 1796 through 2000, demonstrating an evolving recipe format.

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