



Seeking the Historical Cook: Exploring Eighteenth-Century Southern Foodways

Kay K. Moss

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Seeking the Historical Cook is a guide to historical cooking methods from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century receipt (recipe) books and an examination of how those methods can be used in kitchens today.

Designed for adventurous cooks and "foodies," this volume is rich with photographs, period images, and line art depicting kitchen tools and cooking methods. Kay K. Moss invites readers to discover traditional receipts and to experiment with ancestral dishes to brighten today's meals.

From campfires to modern kitchens, Seeking the Historical Cook is a primer on interpreting the language of early receipts, a practical guide to historical techniques, and a memoir of experiences at historic hearths.

Scores of sources, including more than a dozen unpublished personal cookery books, are compared and contrasted with a new look at southern foodways (eating habits and culinary practices). A rather strict interpretive and experiential approach is combined with a friendly and open invitation to the reader to join the ranks of curious cooks. Taken together, these receipts, facts, and lore illustrate the evolution of selected foods through the eighteenth century and beyond.

After decades of research, experimentation, and teaching in a variety of settings, Moss provides a hands-on approach to rediscovering, re-creating, and enjoying foods from the early South. The book begins by steeping the reader in history, culinary tools, and the common cooking techniques of the time. Then Moss presents a collection of tasteful and appealing southern ancestral receipts that can be fashioned into brilliant heirloom dishes for our twenty-first-century tables. There are dishes fit for a simple backwoods celebration or an elegant plantation feast, intriguing new possibilities for a modern Thanksgiving dinner, and even simple experiments for a school project or for sharing with a favorite child. This book is for the cook who wants to try something old . . . that is new again.

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