

Great Food Writers: Philosophies Found in The Cookbooks

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Forward:

When I was a child my parents owned a restaurant on Highway 30 between Fort Wayne and Columbia City. I would watch my Mother and her small crew prepare and serve breakfast, lunch and dinner to what seemed an ongoing stream of people daily. On shopping days, which often included trips to Richard's Bakery for pies, cookies and cakes, I was sure to score a free cookie. I still love the sight of a bakery case full of Christmas cookies decorated with sparkling colored sugar.

Our restaurant was small and our house was right next door. We didn't have a kitchen in the house so we ate most of our meals in the kitchen of the restaurant or at one of the tables in the dining area when the restaurant was closed, which wasn't very often. This is where my fascination with food began.

I might add, that my father too, had a fascination with food and wanted nothing to do with having some kid doing anything in the kitchen. For most of my youth, I was banned from the kitchen other than to perform the tasks of setting the table and dishwashing.

It wasn't until I became the mistress of my own kitchen did I really start cooking many of Mom's special recipes and using the techniques that I had observed growing up. Having been nothing more than an observer in the kitchen as a teenager, I started collecting cookbooks in my early twenties and I haven't stopped.

Together, Mark and I have over 350 cookbooks including product recipe books from Proctor & Gamble, General Foods, Heinz, Ball and numerous notebooks of handwritten family and friend treasures. A 1910 Gold Medal Flour cookbook claims "This Book has been carefully revised, rearranged and amplified by the best talent obtainable."

Many cookbooks of yesteryear were product books published by the producers themselves.

Several of the books referenced in this paper offer wonderful mid-century recipes while providing insights and instructions for a happy husband and smart children, remedies for an outbreak of chickenpox, gout or flu along with the importance of a clean apron, fresh lipstick, and a smile when greeting your hard-working husband at the door, drink in hand.

I hope to invoke a bit of nostalgia along with an understanding of how our attitudes about food are influenced by our circumstances and history and to provide insight to the important role food has beyond life-giving nourishment and good health.

Noting that philosophies are the investigation of thoughts, ideas, knowledge and principles about particular subjects most often associated with the meaning of life or the understanding of our physical and mental selves. It should come, then, as no surprise that our relationship with food helps shape our future selves, and as we learn more and understand more about food we understand its significant impact on our daily lives and society.

Our relationship and thoughts about food are formed by our experiences, food availability and the environments in which we are raised. For many, thoughts of certain foods may invoke a feeling or sentiment of love and comfort, or bring a smile to our lips at the thought of a special person and their special recipe or dish shared with family and friends. For others food may trigger completely opposite reactions. The reason for this statement is simply to acknowledge that not all experiences or reactions to food may be positive.

For the purpose of this paper I have focused on the advice, beliefs, thoughts, perspectives and philosophies found in the selected books, with the realization that today's technology has opened up the world of food writing beyond food critics, cook book authors and recipe developers. I also made no attempt to select or feature specific food writers but chose to select and feature the authors of books from my own library. So let's get started.

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The New Dixie Cookbook, a wedding gift to my Great Grandmother in 1898, was first published in 1805, and offered this statement about the "carefully compiled" new edition:

“From the Treasured Family Collections of Many Generations of Noted Housekeepers: Largely supplemented by tested recipes of the more modern southern dishes, contributed by the well-known ladies of the south. The best is none too good.”

The book is dedicated “to the wives and daughters of the “Sunny South”, who have so bravely faced the difficulties which new social conditions have imposed on them as mistresses of southern homes, on whose courage, and fidelity in good or ill fortune, the future of their beloved land must depend.”

This book has over 1,286 pages of information, recipes and insights for running a successful household at the turn of the century. Appealing to the fact “that many of the books of the past several years were produced by good book makers, but unfortunately, poor bread makers and have failed to clearly describe the processes in clear and understandable detail and lacked the ordinary dishes suited to the tables of the middle class”.

During this period, and many others in our history it was fashionable to economize even suggesting that “housekeepers will surely find pleasure and satisfaction in searching out ways to economize on household expenses, which careful and thoughtful women understand so well and practice so gracefully. Noting too, that “a well to do French family will live on what a similarly positioned American household throws away”, continuing to suggest that American housekeepers “might also learn the fine art of spending money wisely and dressing from our our neighbors across the water”. The “Dixie” as it is referred to promised to keep housekeepers from making the mistakes of others while addressing the issues and complexities of the “Woman’s Kingdom” - The Home.

Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of this book is the lack of detail in the recipes but the specifics with regard to the tools, pans and spoons needed to create the recipes. Specifically weights, measures and cooking temperatures are given little consideration with advice merely suggesting ‘cook through’ or till brown, bubbling or broth runs clear, perhaps a clear indication of a lack of modern technology than oversight.

The “Dixie” asserts “that there is no end to the arrangement of the kitchen, only that sunshine and fresh air are indispensable because it is the most important room in the house.

Oiled wood floors are best because dropped and splattered oil will not cause stains and painted or wall papered kitchen walls are unnecessary and that a good coat of white-wash is sufficient." A well appointed sink is a necessity with the kitchen being the epicenter of the whole household and next in importance is a well organized and stocked pantry.

In the section titled "Kitchen Wrinkles" the following household hints are offered.

- "Always stir caramel with a wooden spoon.
- If the oven is too hot, sprinkle a quarter inch of sand on the bottom.
- To reduce saltiness add one tablespoon of vinegar and teaspoon of sugar.
- Never add salt to porridge or gravies until the dish is prepared- it will curdle the milk.
- To clean windows, use the wing of turkeys, geese or chickens-it won't leave dust or lint behind like a cleaning cloth.
- Oranges and lemons are best kept wrapped in soft paper and laid in a drawer.
- Lemons may be placed in water that is changed twice a week.
- To tenderize meat add a spoonful of vinegar to the boiling pot.
- To clean bottles, save all broken or crooked carpet tacks, the sharp edges are better than shot for scraping off stains".

The "Dixie" offers many thoughts and tips for managing help and servants by winning them over through sympathy and attachment to the family to ensure that they regard themselves as members of the family.

Hints to the employed offers sage advice for success for workers and in particular those in service to the home. I might also add that I found this list in my Great Aunt's hand written notes and recipes in 1977.

- "Be neat in person and dress
- Keep your hands clean and your hair tidy
- Do not waste time gadding about and gossiping.
- Be quiet, polite, and respectful in your manners.
- Tell the truth always, but especially to children.
- Do not spend money foolishly in gee gaws of dress.
- Always follow your mistress' plan of work or explain why you do not.
- Keep your room neat and orderly and make it as attractive as possible.

- Do not waste anything. To waste carelessly is almost as wrong as to steal.
- Do not tell tales out of the family.”

Cookbooks of this era were instructions on accepted societal behavior for the household and home management. They covered almost every aspect of home management, health-care and topics to ensure a clean, happy and well managed household and family.

The medical section on caring for the sick and elderly included a special comment on babies and children. Declaring that every child’s first right is to be well born of parents of sound mind and body, with a long lineage of ancestors based on the the virtues of purity, chastity, sobriety and honesty.

The book sites John Lock, a philosopher, who supported the thought, “in his 1690 essay “Concerning Human Understanding”, that children enter the world as a blank piece of paper and can be influenced in any way the parents desire: In contradiction, the “Dixie” suggests that science has proven that idealists, like Descartes, often recognized as the first modern philosopher, was closer to the truth, citing that we each arrive with our own set of ideas and individualism and that the prenatal influences of parents does more to form character than all education combined.”

With detail on almost every aspect of home management and food preparation in the late 1800’s, it is easy to see how “the Dixie” became a resource of choice and popular with both urban and rural women.

During WWI, President Wilson appointed Herbert Hoover the United States Food Administrator. Food production was scarce all over Europe, food had become a weapon of the war and the United States was producing more food than any of the other allies. Americans were asked to voluntarily cut their food consumption to help feed the armies in Europe. Housewives were asked to economize and reduce waste as President Wilson did not want to formalize a food rationing program.

Hoover created a voluntary food conservation program that Americans called “Hooverizing”, a program to reduce food consumption in the US to support shipping more food

abroad. A variety of tactics were used including programs like “meatless Mondays and wheat-less Wednesdays. Signs appeared in public places with the slogan “Food Will Win the War”. As a result of this effort, food consumption was reduced in the United States by 15%, resulting in a surplus of food in Europe that helped prevent a post-war famine throughout Europe and Russia. While Americans experienced food shortages and higher prices back home and housewives were giving careful attention to stretching food resources, and consumption being careful to waste nothing.

In 1931 as America was dealing with the shock of the Great Depression, a St. Louis woman, Irma S. Rombauer was grieving her husband's suicide and trying to give her life new purpose and direction. After spending the better part of a year writing and assembling her favorite recipes she introduced *The Joy of Cooking*, a cook book she self produced and sold out of her apartment for several years.

Irma was not a protege of any cooking school or student of a renowned chef, she was an amateur but believed that inexperienced cooks learned more quickly when learning with a friend. Rombauer was determined to be that friend. Her charismatic personality and wit made her a comfortable and welcome kitchen companion.

As “Joy” became more popular with American housewives, she adopted a novel format of writing future editions often incorporating anecdotal stories and comments that provided entertainment, wit and humor. With the assistance of her husband’s former secretary she introduced the new format in the 1936 revised edition of *The Joy of Cooking*, which was published by Bobbs-Merrill Company of Indianapolis. Her efforts were recorded as reasonably successful. The 1936 edition included many of the recipes in her 1931 edition but also paid homage to the new novelty kitchen resources like electric mixers, and refrigerators.

“Frosted” or frozen foods were making their way to home kitchens even though there were more ice boxes than refrigerators in American homes. Aluminum foil, plastic bags and wrapped butter quarters were not yet available.

In 1943, with WWII in full force, Irma introduced the next edition of “Joy”. For this edition she combined favorite old-fashioned dishes with more modern recipes. The book appealed to an even larger audience. With new developments like pressure cooking, kitchen herb gardens and war time rationing this edition included ingredients that were not rationed as substitutions for those that were rationed and she included an expanded section on nutrition. Her friendly down home approach made her every cook’s friend and assistant. In her books she provided personal insights, friendship and demonstrated her patriotism and commented on her favorite comic strips.

The Joy of Cooking became a bestseller.

In her 1946 revised edition Irma S. Brombauer wanted to complete a thorough revision of the book and engaged her daughter, Marion Rombauer Becker, to assist, creating a family business and legacy that would stand along side *The James Beard Cook Book*, *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, *The New York Times Cook Book*, and the *Michael Fields Cooking School Cook Book*.

Following Irma’s illness and death, Marion Rombauer Becker and her husband John, carried on the family business and legacy with an updated edition in 1963 and 1975 leaving behind much of what was embodied in that 1931 edition. Even so a few “Irmaisms” did survive the editors cuts, such as “A bit of tomato skin was once as out of place at a dinner table as a bowie Knife.” The 1975 edition of *The Joy of Cooking*, received the broadest and largest audience acceptance of all previous editions and continues to be the most successful edition published to date.

Upon Marion’s death in 1976 the family legacy and business was left to Marion and John’s sons, Ethan and Mark. With major shifts in the publishing industry and after years of sharing responsibilities, Ethan took control and produced the 1997 edition. This edition was a notable departure from the past more personal and friend-building and quotable earlier editions with commissioned recipes and material from other food writers. Still this edition provided invaluable services to American cooks with a focus on international foods and updated information on ingredients and foods.

The 1997 edition under the direction of Ethan, was published by Simon & Shuster, provided corrections to previous assumptions discovered by research and new knowledge and paid homage to the importance of new time-saving kitchen appliances like food processors, bread machines and microwave ovens. Also, in 1997 Ethan married Susan Copeland an artist and writer, and together they immediately set out to start the next revision, the seventy-fifth, which was published in 2006.

In the 1930's when "Joy" was first produced many American families were in despair, looking for relief from the daily burden of Depression life. In her book, Stories and Recipes of the Great Depression of the 1930's, published in 1986, Rita Van Amber, shares stories of what life was like during the Great Depression. It was a time when America had only two classes, the haves and the have-nots and the little darling of stage and screen, Shirley Temple, was helping the American people forget their daily hardships. Walt Disney's Mickey Mouse, previously Mortimer Mouse, and other Disney characters helped ease everyone's troubles, if only briefly. Meals were made out of almost nothing but gave us the foundation of what we call comfort food today, those so-called economy meals that became childhood favorites.

Its likely that many of us in this room have memories of favorite meals that were the product of economizing and talented mothers and grandmothers. As young women, they learned how to produce magical meals from almost nothing from their mothers and grandmothers. Everything was recycled to survive. Dresses were made from flour sacks, and old worn out jeans were cut down and sewn into pants for toddlers and boys. Patterns were made from old newspapers and old flannel nightgowns and pajamas became baby clothes and lining for mittens, with worn out socks providing the necessary binding for the wrists. Waste was non-existent, frugality was vogue and security was a life-time goal.

When gardens quit producing due to the effects of the great drought of 1933, women canned dandelions and lambs quarters for the winter's pantry shelves. Farmers traded eggs and milk for salt, sugar and vinegar. When the cow quit producing milk or the hen quit laying eggs they became fast, fresh and delicious meals. Most children didn't know they were poor because adults didn't talk about it and it didn't matter anyway, everyone

was poor. One unidentified contributor to this book declared, “the good old days would kill off this generation in a week’s time.”

Elly Kelly of WREW radio in Eau Claire Wisconsin advised listeners to “be pleasant until 10 o’clock in the morning and the rest of the day will take care of itself.” Perhaps some advice for all of us today.

As I continued my cookbook journey, I found it hard not to get caught up in the stories and recipes of the past. It got me thinking about how much my parents and grand parents may have been influenced by the Depression. Even though they owned a restaurant and my Mother was an excellent cook, and even mastered the art of the omelette, she didn’t have any formal training. Like so many, their success and grit was the result of circumstance and necessity.

Reflecting on the stories and recipes found in this book, I realized how abundant by comparison my own childhood had been and how much my parents had learned from the Depression and how that had translated to the traditions, favorite recipes and beliefs for our own family.

I’m convinced that for many of us, our fondest family memories and special recipes and traditions are due in some part to the Great Depression and other circumstances of society. Our parents and grandparents persevered but soon, our country was once again battling for freedom at home and abroad.

The American Women’s Cook Book of 1942 was re-published as the Victory Cookbook Binding of the American Woman’s Cook Book, Wartime Edition in 1945. This book might well be responsible for ushering in a new era of cook books. In the introduction the producers devote several pages of praise and credit for the color plates that made the full-color illustrations possible. Declaring that these illustrations have “captured with striking clarity the tempting texture of nicely browned chicken, the appetizing hue of roast beef done to a turn and the verdant crispness of leafy salads”. The illustrations provided the everyday cook with a picture of how a correctly prepared dish should appear when served. Credit is given to the Carnation Company for producing the first natural

color pictures and appreciation for permission to reproduce the color plates in the American Woman's Cook Book".

The book advises that it is simply not enough to be able to follow the instruction of the recipe, which is often realized when several cooks using the same instruction produce vastly differing results, and then claim luck as the basis for the successful outcome. The book simply states, "Happily, luck causes neither the success or failure of a product. Believing instead, that good cooks have gained general knowledge of foods and the importance of skillful manipulation to get them to respond successfully to the desired result, cautioning that the skills of a good cook are learned over time and not just by following the recipe".

Continued instruction in the art of menu selection includes attention to the entire days' menu which the book declares is the real measure of good planning and nutrition. A food selection chart helps to determine the right foods but it is the art of combining foods into wholesome meals that is the art of menu making.

Cooks are further advised "to plan meals to first meet the needs of the youngest and perhaps weakest members of the family, claiming that food that is good for children is also good for adults but foods good for adults may be very bad for children."

"The "staying quality of food" should be considered when planning meals. Does it leave the stomach too quickly or too slowly? For healthy, active adults food with staying quality is perhaps beneficial however for children and more sedentary individuals this may be the wrong choice.

For example foods rich in fat have staying qualities while watery foods like fruits and meat broths encourage little staying power. The good cook is cautioned about too much sweet food and that meats and eggs should not dominate the menu as it is not good for the digestive system. "

The appearance, texture and flavor of food is important to civilized man, claiming beautiful color and arrangement are a big part of a successful meal. The flavor of food is impor-

tant however one is advised not to select food on the basis of flavor, but suggests one's main diet should include bland, flavorless foods like milk, bread, cereal and vegetable varieties claiming that bold highly flavored foods like meat, fruit, condiments, herbs and spices should provide accent to the primary menu.

“Table setting or dressing the dinning table is equally important. The dressed table, formally or casually, represents the social life of the household concluding that “every accessory, the silver, china, glass and linen furthers the art of gracious living in the household.”

The American Woman's Cook Book advises “the less refined of us, that even though there are numerous patterns for every occasion, one should not use brightly colored breakfast china for dinner, because dinner china requires a fine pattern that showcases the food while china used for lunch may include a seasonal theme or a whimsical pattern chosen by the hostess for the occasion.”

Also in the '40's many well-dressed tables gave way to the appeal and charm of colored glass, selected to compliment the hues and colors of the china. While popular among middle-class households, formal dinners still required etched, cut, engraved or gold trimmed crystal glassware.

With more than seven possibilities for quenching one's thirst at a formal table, this writer opted to skip the individual glass descriptions to note that the most refined hostesses presented their guests with finger bowls accompanied with a matching under plate.

It was during the 1940's French cooking was popularized by American cooks. A introduction to a special chapter dedicated to French recipes states: “The institute secured these excellent recipes directly from French kitchens. They have been selected for those who are interested in real French dishes. The secret of French cooking (except for sweets) is the use of a whiff of garlic. Even when it does not appear in the recipe, the bowl or baking dish is usually rubbed with it.”

The *American Woman's Cook Book* gives a special nod to international awareness more than previous books, perhaps as appreciation to American War allies. It includes special sections on international recipes and a good deal of attention to various coffees and teas. Six full pages are devoted to the purchase, storing, grind and types of coffee and recipes for brewing breakfast coffee, after dinner coffee, Vienna Coffee, Cafe Au Lait, Turkish Coffee and Iced Coffee, brewing and preparing tea and cereal beverages, for those who do not like the taste of coffee or cannot drink coffee.

This encyclopedic size cook book includes thoughts on cooking for two, food equivalents, a list of foreign words and phrases and a special section devoted to entertaining as a means of training children in the social graces and amenities, cautioning that this can be problematic if not well thought out in advance and suggesting that training and reminders be provided before the event and not as a training course in the presence of guests.

These early instruction guides advise that entertaining should be well planned. Sideboards and drop leaf tables were designed to assist the hostesses who lacked house servants or maids and defines a well planned dining event, as one that the hostess does not have to leave her chair till it is time to clear the table and serve dessert and start the coffee.”

Instruction for the coffee service includes the importance of convenient placement and a screen for the dining table. “As guests leave the table for the living room, the hostess enters with the coffee while the host attends to placing the screen. By the time all have lighted fresh cigarettes, the coffee is being poured and the dining table has been forgotten.”

First published in 1901, the twenty-seventh Edition (1945), of *The Settlement Cook Book*, compiled by Mrs. Simon Kander notes that the book includes tested recipes from the Milwaukee Public School Kitchen, Girls Trades and Technical High School, and Authoritative Dietitians and Experienced Housewives. The recipes in the book are planned for 4 to six persons depending, of course, on the individual serving size. Cooking is defined by this book simply as “the art of preparing food by the aid of heat for the nourishment of the human body.”

Chapter 1, titled Household Rules, starts with the table of weights and measures, which according to Mrs. Kander is essential to good cooking. The book provides detailed descriptions of steamers, boilers and all types of pots and pans and their specific use and insists proper kitchen attire is void of all jewelry, requires a cotton dress and a overall apron, preferably with buttons on the waistband to which one can attach a small towel and pot holders. The hair should be covered and just for good measure hands should be washed and one should never lick your fingers during preparation or lay a handkerchief on the table or keep it in hand while working. Never dry hands on the dish towel. Do not taste from the mixing spoon, don't drink from a glass used by another person and for goodness sake do not blow on food to cool it.

Chapter 2 addresses “the amount of food required to provide growth, revitalization of energy and regulation of body processes. A published chart provides exactly what is needed for a moderately active man, which by the way, is defined as one who works 8 hours a day, perhaps as a carpenter or laborer. A moderately active woman is described as someone who does her own housework.”

The Settlement Cook Book provides recipes, details and methods for food preparation and advice for caring for the the refrigerator and stove, the primary resources and tools of the kitchen. Chapter 45, entitled “Menus”, provides a resource guide to serve 40 people. It does not explain why 40 and why the items listed range from coffee to peas, one can only assume that during this era families tended to stay in close proximity and that gatherings generally included family, friends and neighbors and were perhaps larger.

Food pairings, as previously mentioned, provide guidance for successful menus and suggests that venison be served with currant jelly, baked potatoes, green beans and sweet pickles whiled broiled lobster be paired with French fries, pineapple salad and baking powder biscuits. Unlike the earlier cook books menus are included for special occasions and Holidays including Easter, Passover, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Celebration menus were also included for Valentine's Day and Washington's Birthday Luncheon which of course included cherries.

The Settlement Cook Book, gave little note to a changing country, kitchen innovations of the 1940's or America's interest in French cooking and cuisine, unlike my next study which was published just two years later.

Dione Lucas, the author of *The Cordon Bleu Cook Book* in 1947 and five more after, was the first female graduate of the famous Le Cordon Bleu cooking school in Paris. Lucas was instrumental in establishing the London Cordon Bleu extension in the 1930's and later opened a Cordon Bleu restaurant and cooking school in New York. "She was one of the earliest TV cook show hosts and was featured on "To the Queen's Taste" in 1948 and '49 and on the Dione Lucas Show in 1950. Lucas is credited for introducing the American public to the omelette and was a predecessor in the art of French cooking" and perhaps a major influence to Julia Child.

In the forward of her 1947 book, *The Cordon Bleu Cook Book*, Lucas declares, "The preparation of good food is merely another expression of art, one of the joys of civilized living." Lucas first arrived in the United States in 1942, with her two sons by way of Canada. She opened the Cordon Bleu in New York at 117 East Sixtieth Street, combining the rigors of the lunch only restaurant with morning and evening cooking classes and management of Bloomingdale's Egg Basket restaurant. She was indeed a woman of indomitable energy and a love of her work. She looked upon the kitchen as her canvas and the dishes as her creations. The recipes in the *Cordon Bleu Cook Book* are designed to inspire the creator and she insists seasoning and tasting must be done throughout the entire cooking process.

Cooking was her art, an art that she tried to instill in her students. In America she was amazed at the abundance of good food which was never the case in Europe. She was puzzled by the tendency of American cooks to rush in and out of the kitchen, lured by the recipes, shortcuts and dishes that could be made quickly, but often resulted in bland and unfavorable presentations. Lucas believed that good food required time, skill, and patience and would result in the difference between eating to exist and the sheer joy and satisfaction derived by one of the major pleasures of life, noting, "there can surely be nothing more uplifting to the soul or more joyful to the spirit than well-flavored, well-prepared food."

In the fall of 1961, Louisette Bertholle, Simone Beck and Julia Child introduced to the American kitchen *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*. This book was and is believed by many to be the one instructional book that provides complete information on the techniques, and ingredients necessary to produce authentic French Food in American kitchens.

In 1961 the Kennedy's were in the White House. They employed a French Chef by the name of Rene' Verdon and with the public's interest in the Kennedy's private lives, what they were eating was often in publications and the news. Americans became more interested in European travel with the growing availability of air travel and as a result craved more adventurous foods, and took pride in home cooked meals and entertaining.

The introduction of *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* to the American public, was as unique as the book. Simone Beck had been teaching Americans in Paris for many years, both she and Childs had many friends around the country. Beck suggested that they engage their friends to help and go city to city to bolster sales. A rather bold move at a time when book tours were unique, even too the best known and widely read authors let alone cook book authors.

Their first stop was Chicago then on to Detroit, San Francisco, and Child's home town of Pasadena and finally ending in New York with a meal at Dione Lucas' Cordon Bleu restaurant. Their meal of course was was her famous omelette. Lucas, who was considered the country's most well known and respected teacher of French cooking offered to host a dinner party for the whose-who of New York. Everyone was invited including, Craig Claiborne, food editor and restaurant critic for the *New York Times*.

In his review, Claiborne declared "Mastering was probably the most comprehensive, laudable and monumental work on French cuisine published this week, and it will probably remain as the definitive work for nonprofessionals. ...It is a masterpiece".

Their book was successfully launched with a positive review in the *New York Times* and a visit to NBC's *Today* show. Even the popular American cook book author James Beard was credited with saying, "I only wish I had written it myself."

"*Mastering the Art of French Cooking*" was written for American cooks and kitchens to simplify French Cooking for all cooks. It is dedicated to "the art and taste of the food and not to budget, diets, schedules or children's meals." It is intended to be a collection of delightful and instructional recipes for anyone who loves to cook. The purpose and philosophy of the book is to provide enough instruction to understand the fundamentals and with practice and growing confidence be able to set aside the reliance on recipes and prepare appetizing and delicious food instinctively.

Even so, one is advised to read the recipes carefully and thoroughly to eliminate surprises and understand what to expect. Most recipes in the book are calculated to serve six. I note this simply because it is important to understand the quantity of food and its pairings to complete large or small meals, noting quantities usually depend on the number of side dishes.

The fortieth anniversary edition of *Mastering* rightfully notes its significance and influence over many famous and accomplished chefs over the past 50 plus years. "Mastering" has influenced cookbook authors, chefs, restaurateurs and an army of American cooks. Julia Child is credited with taking the mystery out of French cooking and connecting the American public to the art of fine food, its fearless preparation and as Thomas Keller of the French Laundry Restaurant and cook book author, noted "she has elevated our consciousness to the refined pleasures of dining" and she has done so with intelligent instruction, superb technique and her humor has kept me in stitches."

Emeril Lagasse, Emeril's Restaurant, declared Childs as the grand dame of cooking while Alice Waters author of *Chez Panisse Fruit* credits Childs for elevating American ingredients and giving cooks the confidence to cook in pursuit of flavor.

From the earliest books to the more recent researched for this paper, there is a thread. Food writers perhaps more than others see food as more than a requirement for life but as

a cultural necessity and connection to our history, culture and to society. We all know food is essential to life, it is without a doubt our largest industry and probably the largest industry of many nations. Food is the basis for alliances, wars and religion and is perhaps the most widely written about topic that exists.

Food is indulgent, calming, comforting and at times naughty. Everyone engages in the consumption of food. It is our need for food that forces us to realize our relationship to climate, agriculture, ecology, family, friends and enemies and cultures. Food is about memory, tradition, love, hate and our need to be accepted. Too much or too little is our biggest cause for disease and death and yet the preparation, sharing and consumption, writing and talking about food is one of our biggest delights.

Food writing is generally topic centered and comes in many forms from magazines to blogs and from experts and novice alike. Recipes, travelogues, tourist and cruise bulletins, poetry, fact and fiction. Food writers tell stories, write cook books, provide critical observation and review and advise us on accepted behavior in society. Food writers grab our imaginations and remind us of the adventures that await us as we seek adventure in foreign lands. Their writing often sweeps us off to far away places without leaving the comfort of our easy chairs.

Food writers remind us of the joy and satisfaction that accompanies a fine eating experience and of our good fortune. They also remind us that many people face despair and hunger for the lack of it.

Food, security and love are among our basic needs. These needs are entwined in our daily lives and are part of the human psyche. Whether writing about food, hungering for food, or loving food, we instinctively connect food to love, security and acceptance.

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