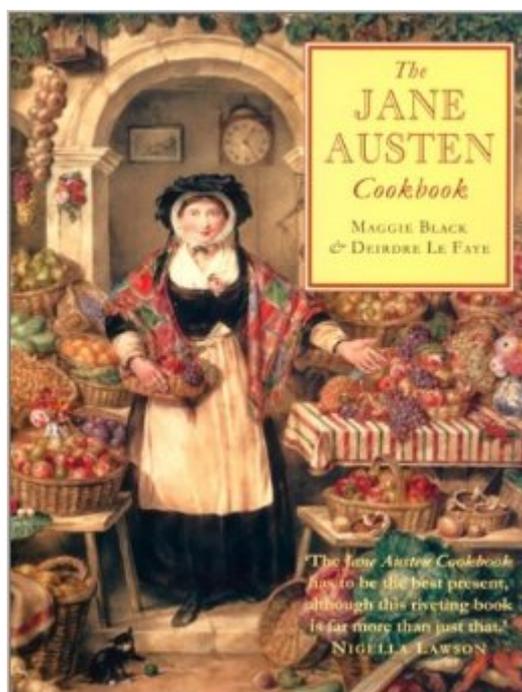


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The Jane Austen Cookbook



Synopsis

Jane Austen wrote her novels in the midst of a large and sociable family. Brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews, friends and acquaintances were always coming and going, which offered numerous occasions for convivial eating and drinking. One of Jane's dearest friends, Martha Lloyd, lived with the family for many years and recorded in her *Household Book* over 100 recipes enjoyed by the Austens. A selection of this family fare, now thoroughly tested and modernized for today's cooks, is recreated here, together with some of the more sophisticated dishes which Jane and her characters would have enjoyed at balls, picnics, and supper parties. A fascinating introduction describes Jane's own interest in food, drawing upon both the novels and her letters, and explains the social conventions of shopping, eating, and entertaining in late Georgian and Regency England. The book is illustrated throughout with delightful contemporary line drawings, prints, and watercolours. Authentic recipes, modernized for today's cooks, include: Buttered Prawns, Wine-Roasted Gammon and Pigeon Pie, Broiled Eggs, White Soup and Salmagundy, Pyramid Creams, Martha's Almond Cheesecakes

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a lovely and shortish introduction to cooking and culture of eating and entertaining for the late Georgian period when Austen was alive. I loved the fact that this was about cooking and eating rather than some of the less universally approachable subjects (letters, literary criticism). Maggie Black and Deidre Le Faye have both written Jane Austen style and culture type books before so both understand the period and are able to draw on a large resource of appropriate information. The

introduction is very much about how people ate - what was available, how it got to houses, and why this was so. There is some division by class (upper class, middle class and lower class are all discussed) but also the divisions by Geography - whether coastal with access to fresh fish, or inland - how food was transported, and even in terms of access to market towns. Even 5 miles away was almost impossible for those trying to get up a dinner from 'scratch' so to speak if someone was coming around. The introduction also talks about the types of food and dishes which were eaten, and that the whole culture of dining was completely different. Not only were meal times different, but how they dined. The explanations are simple and there is good use of quoted material throughout, the diaries and letters of the time providing a strong and occasionally humorous voice. Where possible leFaye and Black have used diaries and 'receipts' from Austen's friends and family and point out that in the days before recipe books were published these books of receipts would be handed down from mother to daughter and one family's speciality would be renowned - they were truly heirlooms. The last section of the book is a collection of recipes - these are taken from books of receipts.

A delightful 'cookbook' with a beginning of history and interesting bits of Austen, family, friends, and her life of the times, not to mention books and their characters and names and places. The 42 BW illustrations are often old woodcuts, photos, drawings, and sometimes paintings. It all reflects the period of Austen, complete with the recipes, which is the primary focus of this book. But Jane Austen lovers will enjoy the 38 pages prior to the 'receipts' equally. It is enough of a treasure; I'd recommend buying the HC version, as I did. It is worthy of placing on the buffet for display, or in the living room for a 'tea' gathering. Recipes are converted to modern needs, like oven temps and volume & weight measurements. But terms are intact making the reading fun. Curry Soup used a 'Knuckle of Veal', parching before a fire, beating in a Mortar, passing through a Sawn Sieve, Chyan pepper, and even so, turns out a delightful man-pleasing soup. A book for cooks, Austen readers, & men wanting to surprise the lady with a gift, or the lady wanting to surprise her gentleman with a fine meal.

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