

**MARY
RONALD**

**THE CENTURY
COOK BOOK**

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The Century Cook Book

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PREFACE

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In France various honors are awarded to cooks. Accomplished *chefs de cuisine* are by compliment called *cordons-bleus*, which is an ancient and princely order. A successful culinary production takes the name of the inventor, and by it his fame often lasts longer than that of many men who have achieved positions in the learned professions. Cooking is there esteemed a service of especial merit, hence France ranks all nations in gastronomy.

Although definite honors are not conferred on cooks elsewhere, good cooking is everywhere appreciated, and there is no reason why it should not be the rule instead of the exception. In large establishments it may be said to prevail, but in many moderate households the daily fare is of a quality which satisfies no other sense than that of hunger, the hygienic requirements and esthetic possibilities being quite unknown or disregarded. This is what Savarin designates as feeding, in contradistinction to dining.

The author believes that the women of to-day, because of their higher education, have a better understanding of domestic duties; that hygiene, economy, system, and methods are better understood and more generally practised. Children are not only more sensibly clothed, but they are more wholesomely fed, and households are directed with more intelligent care.

It is hoped that this book will inculcate a desire to learn the simple principles of cooking for the benefits which such knowledge will give, and that it will be of material assistance to any woman who wishes to establish and maintain a well-ordered cuisine. Receipts are given for

simple and inexpensive as well as elaborate and costly dishes, and they are intended to be of use to the inexperienced as well as to the trained cook. The rules are given in precise language, with definite measurement and time, so that no supervision by the mistress will be required for any receipt given the cook.

At the head of each chapter are given the general rules for the dishes included in that class. Economy, practicability, and the resources of the average kitchen have been constantly borne in mind.

The illustrations, it is believed, will aid materially in serving dishes, as they complete and demonstrate the receipts. Many of them are given to attract attention to very simple dishes, which might be selected as suited to one's convenience, but which might otherwise be overlooked in a hasty perusal of the text. The pictures are from photographs of dishes, many of which are not too difficult for a novice to undertake.

The author has fortunately been able to secure from Susan Coolidge a number of receipts of New England dishes; also a few distinctively Southern dishes from an equally experienced Southern housekeeper. These, she hopes, will enable many who have strayed from home to enjoy again the dishes associated with other times and places.

Much care has been taken to give a complete alphabetical index, so that anything in the book can be quickly found, even if the ordinary classification is not understood.

The chapters on etiquette, serving, etc., are meant to aid those young housekeepers who, from lack of observation or experience, find themselves at a loss to remember small details when the responsibility of an entertainment falls upon them for the first time.

The author, in speaking of this book to friends, has had various questions asked and suggestions given, by which she has endeavored to profit. Some of the questions have been the following:

“Have you given receipts suitable for a family of two or three?”

“Have you given expedients, so if articles called for in the receipts are not at hand others may be substituted?”

“Is your book only for rich people?”

“Is it not a mistake to use French names, which many do not understand?” etc., etc.

In deference to the last suggestion, she has explained the meaning of certain classes of dishes known only by the French names, and which would lose character if translated. A soufflé, for instance, has no special significance when called “inflated,” but the word soufflé defines the class of dishes which are inflated, and is so generally understood that it is almost an Anglicized word.

The terms Soufflés, Pâtés, Timbales, Hors-d'œuvres, Entrées, etc., are as distinctive as Stews, Hashes, Creams, etc.; hence there seems no other way than to learn the culinary nomenclature as one partakes of the dishes.

The author strongly urges the trial of new dishes, and breaking away from the routine of habit. The preparation of so-called fancy dishes is very simple. A little attention given to ornamentation and garnishing, making dishes attractive in appearance as well as taste, will raise the standard of cooking without necessarily increasing the expense.

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PART I

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DINNER-GIVING AND THE ETIQUETTE OF DINNERS

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“To feed were best at home;
From thence, the sauce to meat is
ceremony,
Meeting were bare without it.”—
Shakspeare

A DINNER party may be considered as holding the highest rank among entertainments. In no other social function is etiquette so strictly observed. There are prescribed rules for the form of the invitation, the manner of assigning each guest his place at the table, the manner of serving the dinner, etc.; and when these rules are followed there need be no embarrassments.

The Company. It should always be remembered that the social part of the entertainment is on a higher plane than the gastronomic one, though the latter must by no means be slighted. A sentiment expressed by the wit who said, “A fig for your bill of fare, give me a bill of your company,” is generally felt, and a hostess should bring together only such people as she believes will be mutually agreeable.

The idea, given by Goldsmith in his “Retaliation,” of looking upon one’s friends as so many pleasant dishes, is offered as a suggestion. He says:

If our landlord supplies us with
beef and with fish,
Let each guest bring himself, and
he brings the best dish:
Our Dean shall be venison, just
fresh from the plains;
Our Burke shall be tongue, with a
garnish of brains;
Our Will shall be wild fowl of
excellent flavour,
And Dick with his pepper shall
heighten the savour;
Our Cumberland's sweetbread its
place shall obtain,
And Douglas is pudding,
substantial and plain;
Our Garrick's a salad, for in him we
see
Oil, vinegar, sugar, and saltness
agree: ...
At a dinner so various—at such a
repast,
Who'd not be a glutton, and stick
to the last?

The Host and Hostess. The hostess should give her instructions for the details of the entertainment so explicitly that on the arrival of the guests she will have no care other than their pleasure.

If she is nervous, has wandering eyes, or shows constraint, it affects sensibly the ease of her guests. The spirit of pleasure is infectious, and upon the demeanor of the hosts the success of the evening largely depends. Much tact may be shown in placing the right people together at the table. If one is a great talker let the other be a good

listener; if one is dogmatic let the other be without positive views, and so on; for as every one is happiest when appearing well, it is wise to consider the idiosyncrasies of the guests.

'T is a great point in a gallery how you hang your pictures; and not less in society how you seat your party.

The Guests. The part of the hosts is thus well defined; but the guests, too, have their obligations, and in recognition of the compliment of being included in an entertainment where the number of guests is limited to very few, each one should make exertion to be agreeable, as a dull dinner companion is a recognized misfortune. At a dinner there is time, not given at most other forms of entertainment, for rational and sustained conversation, and this may be turned to durance vile if one victimizes by egotism or caprice the person who without power of withdrawal is assigned to his or her society for perhaps two hours or more. Also, if one finds oneself neighbor to some person for whom one has a personal antipathy, it must not be allowed to interfere with the general pleasure; and should such a situation occur, there is nothing to do but to make the best of it, and conceal from the hostess the mistake she has unwittingly made—

And do as adversaries do in law,
Strive mightily, but eat and drink
as friends.

Under these circumstances the discovery may possibly be made that an unfriendly person is more agreeable than was supposed, and a pleasanter relationship may be established.

Time. Two hours is the extreme limit of time that should be given to a dinner; one hour and a quarter, or a half, is preferable. Eight courses served quickly, but without seeming haste, require as much time as most people can sit

at the table without fatigue. Last impressions are as enduring as first ones, so it is important not to surfeit, for

When fatigue enters into so-called pleasure, failure begins.

Judgment shown in combination of dishes, the perfection of their preparation, careful serving, and taste in adornment, are elements of refinement that far outweigh quantity and ostentation.

Temperature. The temperature and ventilation of the dining-room should be given careful attention. The best of spirits and the brightest wit will flag in an overheated, ill-ventilated room. It is not always easy to maintain a fresh atmosphere where as many guests are seated as the size of the room permits, but at least the room can be well aired before the dinner is served. Windows opened a very little from both the top and bottom in an adjoining room, with a careful adjustment of screens to protect those who are sensitive to drafts, will do much to keep the air fresh, and will have a sensible effect upon the comfort and mental activity of the company.

The Invitation. Invitations are sometimes sent out a month or three weeks in advance, but ordinarily two weeks is sufficient time to secure the guests one wishes to entertain. Courtesy requires a dinner invitation to be answered at once, certainly within twelve hours, but better in less time. This enables the hostess to fill the vacancy in case the invitation is declined. Unconventional people are sometimes unmindful of this obligation, but as a rule those who are accustomed to entertaining recognize the importance of a prompt reply, and answer a dinner invitation immediately.

It is well, when convenient, to send the invitation as well as the reply by hand, so that there may be no uncertainty of prompt delivery; to send either of them by post is, however, permissible.

The answer should be definite, and where a man and his wife are invited, if one of them is unable to accept, the invitation should be declined for both. An invitation should be precise in expression, therefore the prescribed form given below should be exactly followed. It does not belong to the order of social notes; it is simply a formal invitation, and an acceptance should be of the same character. Any deviation from the prescribed form is uncalled for and likely to cause criticism. In declining the invitation, however, it is considered more gracious to answer the formal note informally, and, by stating the reason, show that the regret is not merely a perfunctory expression.

Verbal invitations or replies should never be given for formal entertainments. R. S. V. P. should not be put on a dinner invitation. Every well-bred person knows an answer is necessary, and it is a reflection upon good manners to assume that no reply would be given if the request for it were omitted.

It is important also that the reply should repeat, in the same words as the invitation, the date and hour of the dinner, so, if any mistake has inadvertently been made, it may be corrected, thus establishing an exact understanding.

A dinner engagement is the most exacting of any social obligation, and no greater discourtesy can be shown than to break it except for serious cause.

Form of Invitation. *Mr. and Mrs. James J.
James
request the pleasure of
Mr. and Mrs. Smith's
company at dinner, on Monday,
December twenty-third, at
eight o'clock.*

99 West A Street,
Dec. 1st.

Envelop addressed to Mrs. John B. Smith.

Reply. *Mr. and Mrs. John B. Smith
accept with pleasure
Mr. and Mrs. James's
kind invitation to dinner on
Monday, December twenty-third,
at eight o'clock.*

66 West B Street,
Dec. 1st.

Envelop addressed to Mrs. James J. James.

*Mr. and Mrs. John B. Smith
regret that they are unable to accept
Mr. and Mrs. James's
kind invitation to dinner on
Monday, December twenty-third,
at eight o'clock.*

66 West B Street,
Dec. 1st.

OR,

*Mr. and Mrs. John B. Smith
regret that owing to a previous
engagement they are unable to accept
Mr. and Mrs. James's
kind invitation to dinner on
Monday, December twenty-third,
at eight o'clock.*

66 West B Street,
Dec. 1st.

Where an invitation is meant to be informal, a social form of note with formal phraseology is often sent, thus:

My dear Mrs. Smith:

Will you and Mr. Smith dine with us informally on Thursday evening, December twenty-third, at eight o'clock?

*Sincerely yours,
Mary James.*

99 West A Street,
Dec. 1st.

This form of invitation is sometimes misleading to strangers, as the word "informal" is open to different interpretations.

These dinners are generally quite as formal as the others, and require the same toilet.

A woman's dinner dress should be décolleté, and for a man evening dress is always *de rigueur*.

Dress. The butler wears a dress suit with white tie. The footman, or second man, wears the livery of the family, or, in default of that, a coat of dark color, with brass buttons, and a bright-colored striped waistcoat.

The dining-room maid wears a plain black dress, a white apron that covers completely the front of her skirt, a linen collar and deep cuffs, and a small white cap, with or without strings, but no crown. Everything in a well-ordered household is supposed to be clean, including the hands of

the domestics, and the use of white gloves is not permissible. First-class butlers and footmen do not wear mustaches.

Arrival. Guests are expected at the hour mentioned in the invitation, and should be as near that time as possible. In large cities, where distances are great and exact time difficult to calculate, a little grace is allowed, but the hostess is not expected to wait longer than fifteen minutes for a tardy guest. It is considered a breach of etiquette to be late, and the assumption is, when this occurs, that the delay is unavoidable and will be indefinite, and so the other guests should not be inconvenienced.

At large dinners a gentleman finds in the dressing-room, or a servant passes to him before he enters the drawing-room, a tray holding small addressed envelopes. He selects the one bearing his own name, and finds on an inclosed card the name of the lady he is to take to the table. The letter R or L in the corner of the card denotes whether he will find his place on the right or left of the table from the entrance. If he does not know the lady, he should tell the hostess, so that he may be presented to her. The hostess stands near the door to receive her guests, and such introductions follow as can conveniently be made. If general introductions are omitted, guests are expected to act as though acquainted, and speak to whomever they may be near. This rule holds good for all entertainments in some countries, but Americans continue a reserve except at dinners, where barriers to ease and pleasure must not exist. The hostess does not knowingly bring together people who object to meet one another, but in such an event the acquaintanceship need not extend beyond the evening, and good breeding requires a courteous recognition of the friends of the hostess while under her roof.

The butler keeps count of the arrival of expected guests, and announces dinner shortly after all are in the drawing-room. In case of a tardy guest he waits for the hostess to order the dinner served. **Announcement.** He then enters the room, and, looking at the host or hostess, says, "Dinner is served," or "Madam is served," or simply bows to the hostess.

The host then offers his right arm to the lady who is to sit at his right, and leads the way into the dining-room; the other couples follow in any order that is convenient. **Precedence.** The hostess, with the gentleman she honors with the seat at her right, are the last to leave the drawing-room. If a distinguished man is present, it is to him this courtesy is shown. Except in official and diplomatic circles, there is no other rule of precedence. If the President of the United States or a royal personage were being entertained, the hostess with this dignitary would then precede the others.

At each cover is laid a card on which is distinctly written the name of the person who is to occupy that place. Confusion is thus avoided in seating the guests. It has been a fashion to have these cards artistic and elaborate in design, but at present plain gilt-edged cards stamped with the family crest or monogram are more generally used.

Departure. When the dinner is finished, the gentlemen return to the drawing-room with the ladies, and then withdraw to the smoking-room for half an hour. Shortly after their return to the drawing-room the guests take their leave. If guests of honor are present, they are the first to go.

MANNER OF SERVING DINNERS

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THE custom of serving dinner *à la Russe* (dishes passed) has supplanted the form known as the English style, where the joints are carved on the table. This is for good reason, as the host cannot well fulfil his social part if he has to do the carving; therefore, unless on very informal occasions, when the number of servants may be insufficient, the carving is done on the side-table, or the garnished dishes are cut in the kitchen. The portions, whether carved or otherwise, are placed on dishes to be passed, and should be so arranged that each guest may remove a part easily and without destroying the symmetry of the whole. This need not preclude attractive garnishing, but such complicated constructions as are sometimes seen, which embarrass one to find how to break them, should be avoided.

Sometimes a dish is placed on the table to be shown, and then removed to be served.

The dishes are presented on the left side. **Passing the Dishes.** Those of the first course are passed first to the lady sitting on the right of the host, and then in regular order to the right around the table. The dishes of each following course are started at some distance from the place where the preceding one was presented. In this way the same person is not left always to be served last.

Number of Servants. At least one servant is needed for every six persons, otherwise the service will be slow and tedious, and the portion placed on one's plate becomes cold before the accompaniments of sauce or vegetable can be passed.

Many dishes may be garnished with the vegetable or sauce, thus obviating in a measure this difficulty. For large dinners two or more dishes should be arranged to pass on opposite sides of the table, so that every one may be served at about the same time. Plates, vegetable, and other large

dishes are held in the hand of the servant. Small dishes, like hors d'œuvres, bonbon dishes, etc., are passed on a tray.

Wines. When the wines are served, the servant should name the wine offered, so that it may be refused if not wanted; the glasses should not be filled entirely full.

Plates. When a plate is removed it should be immediately replaced by another one holding a fork or any piece of silver or cutlery which is needed for the next course.

Plates should be removed with the left and replaced with the right hand.

Care should be taken that plates for the hot dishes are warm, but not hot, and that for the cold dishes they are not lukewarm.

The plate holding the shell-fish is placed upon the one already on the table; this under plate is used also to hold the soup plate, but double plates are not again used until the end of the dinner, when the dessert plate holding the finger-bowl plate is put on. In case a hot sweet dish is served, the double plates, being intended for ices, fruits, and bonbons, are not put on until after that course. Silver serving-dishes are much used; lacking these, all the china used in the same course should match when possible.

A different set of plates may be used with each course. **China.** In the matter of china the greatest latitude of taste and expense is possible, some china being more valuable than its weight in silver. When handsome china is being used, which demands great care in handling, it is well to have a table in the pantry reserved for its use, where it can be carefully piled and left until the following morning to be washed. **Care of China.** With daylight and ample time, it can be given the care it might not receive if washed after the fatigue and late hours of a long dinner. This need not

necessarily mean leaving a disordered pantry for the night, although that would be of less consequence than the extra risk of having valuable china nicked or broken. The same care is recommended for handsome glass.

Clearing the Table. Before the dessert is served, all the plates, the small silver, the salt- and pepper-boxes, the hors d'œuvres, and such glasses as will not be again used are removed; the crumbs are then taken off, a silver crumb knife and a plate being used for this purpose. The dessert and finger-bowl plates are then put on. Under the finger-bowl is placed a small fancy doily, and beside it on the same plate such small silver as will be needed. If peaches, or any fruit which will stain, are to be served, a fruit doily should also be given at this time and laid beside the place. The finger-bowl should be filled one third with water, and have a thin slice of lemon, a scented leaf, or a flower floating in it.

The Service. The service should be entirely noiseless, and the machinery of the household as invisible as possible. There should be no rattling of china or silver, no creaking boots, or heavy tread, or audible speech among the servants.

Ordering the Dinner. When entertaining one should not attempt more than one is sure of being able to attain, bearing in mind the capabilities of the cook and the range, and remembering that the quality of the dishes rather than the number of them is what pleases. Experiments should be made at times when failure is of less consequence. In arranging the menu, each course should be in pleasing contrast to the preceding one, and in the same course only such dishes should be served as go well together. Butter is not served at dinner.
