



Issue 13, Winter 2006

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### Editor's Note:

As we roll through the late autumn days of November, the food magazines crowding on the newsstands remind us all of our obligations as cooks to prepare the meal ascribed to our Puritan ancestors. What is missing is always any reference to the fact that not until the 1860s was the celebration of Thanksgiving a national holiday and that the first Thanksgiving is the stuff of myths. But it is a nice, comforting story and certainly a unifying factor for a country as diverse as ours.

In this issue, we examine some of the foodstuffs available to the early colonists. These foods represent some of those chosen by the chefs for our own Thanksgiving meal on April 21, 2007, as we celebrate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first permanent English settlement in North America at Jamestown, Virginia, "From Jamestown to the Blue Ridge: Cooking Up 400 Years of Culinary History in Virginia." We also ponder a brief examination of culinary historiography, really a short and as yet incomplete literature review. The last word concerns *The United States of Arugula: How We Became a Gourmet Nation*, by David Kamp, a delicious and somewhat irreverent rendering of our recent culinary history.

Cynthia Bertelsen

### A Jamestown Sojourn

[Ed. note: Jamestown is big on our radar right now, as we plan our Symposium. Kay Shaw Nelson, well-known food writer and author of several cookbooks, including the forthcoming *The Art of Scottish-American Cooking* (Pelican Publishing Company, 2007), has graciously permitted us to include the following article in this issue of the newsletter. To learn more about our symposium, or to register, please go to <http://www.cpe.vt.edu/culinary-va> .]

Kay Shaw Nelson, **A Jamestown Sojourn**. From Capital Cuisine column, *Washington Woman*, September 2006. Reprinted by permission from Kay Shaw Nelson.

*For some Washingtonians, an inspiring upcoming adventure will be a sojourn in Jamestown, VA. An eighteen-month-long celebration with many inviting activities, beginning in 2006 and extending through the spring of 2008, the sojourn will commemorate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first permanent English settlement in North America. In 2007, special programs based on monthly interpretive themes, including the Virginia, Indian and African-American heritage, will be presented at Jamestown Settlement, Historic Jamestowne and other locations. The premier event, America's*

*Anniversary Weekend, will take place on May 11 through May 13.*



Over 400 years ago, on December 20, 1606, three merchant ships, the Susan Constant, Godspeed and Discovery, filled with passengers and cargo, embarked from England on a voyage that would have a great impact on American history. After an arduous four-and-a-half month ocean voyage across the Atlantic, the ships arrived on May 13, 1607, in the southern part of what we now call the Chesapeake Bay. On the following day, 104 adventurers from the Virginia Company of London disembarked and started the task of building and establishing a colony on the banks the James River. The colony would lead to a series of events that helped shape America and the modern world.

Visiting these historic sites and participating in the varied activities is a great way to have fun with your family or friends and learn more about America's early history. It's also a place to explore the importance of New World foods. Heeding their mission to find silver and gold and a passage to the "great sea," the newcomers, while exploring the upriver lands and enjoying the hospitality of the Powhatan Indians, found that along the banks of the James River were wild fruits, poultry, game and rich variety of fish, banks of oysters, crabs and sturgeon.

Captain John Smith, responsible for survival of the settlers, reported that while exploring Chesapeake Bay he found such an abundance of fish "lying so thicke with their heads above the water, as for wants of nets...we attempted to catch them with a frying pan." Had it not been for the plentiful fish and shellfish in the inlets, bays and rivers of the Jamestown area and the food obtained from the Indians, the settlers may well have failed.

At Historic Jamestowne, the site of America's first permanent English colony, located at the westernmost point of Colonial Parkway and administered by the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA) and the National Park Service, one can start at the Visitor Information Center and watch a 15-minute film about the colony's history. Park rangers conduct guided tours of the town site from the Center, or you can stroll the quiet streets, imagining how the settlers lived 400 years ago. There are statues and monuments commemorating important personalities and events of Virginia's first capital.

Jamestown Settlement, a living-history museum of 17<sup>th</sup>-century Virginia, located about a mile from the original site, will have an important role in the statewide, year-long anniversary event too, featuring dynamic and expansive new permanent exhibition galleries and an expanded outdoor interpretive program. "The World of 1607," a special year-long exhibition opening in the spring of 2007, will showcase Jamestown in global context as part of an intellectual, social and economic "New World" of discovery, strife,

expansion, innovation, artistic expression and cultural exchange. Major artifacts from museums, libraries and private collections around the world will be featured.

Through living history film and gallery exhibits, the aspirations of the early settlers and the hardships they faced are vividly depicted at Jamestown Settlement. The visits starts with a short film that presents an overview of Jamestown's origins in England, followed by the first 20 years of the colony. Gallery exhibits detail the political, social and economic conditions in Europe that motivated exploration and settlement of the New World, and describe the land and lifestyle of the Powhatan Indians who inhabited coastal Virginia when the English settlers arrived. The exhibits also show the Africans who were brought to Virginia and the history of the colony in its first 100 years. You can learn about difficult times like the lack of food, disease and periodic hostilities with the Indians. While numerous profit-making enterprises were tried then, it was the cultivation of tobacco as a cash crop that ensured the colony's economic success.

Three outdoor history areas provide a glimpse of life during the early 1600s. In a Powhatan Indian Village, you are introduced to the world of the Pocahontas, the legendary Indian maid who befriended the English colonists and later married John Rolfe. You can also learn about the lifestyles of the Powhatan Indians who were dependent upon the seasons for growing more than half their food. Corn, squash and beans were the most important crops. Powhatans also hunted for meat, fished

and gathered roots, fruits, nuts and berries. The village, which consists of several houses, is based on archaeological findings, eyewitness drawings and accounts of the period. Costumed interpreters tend gardens, make bone and antler, weave baskets and make pottery.

In the museum's re-created James Fort, a triangular-shaped palisade with three bulwarks at the corners for defense against attackers, you can visualize how colonists coped with unfamiliar environment of coastal Virginia and how they brought English customs, religion, dress, food and building styles to the New World. Several primitive structures, including the brick tower of a church built in 1639, a storehouse and a guardhouse, represent the town's earliest residence and public buildings. Costumed interpreters demonstrate gardening, cooking, carpentry and armor making. Visitors are encouraged to participate.

At the pier on the James River, visitors can explore the full-scale reproductions of the sailing vessels—Susan Constant, Discovery and Godspeed—that transported the first settlers to Virginia. Costumed interpreters discuss the boring living conditions of the 17<sup>th</sup>-century shipboard life, and one can examine a “see” chest on the pier or explore a sailor's bunk.

To launch an 18-month series of events marking the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of America's first permanent English settlement, a new replica of the 65-foot Godspeed, a three-masted square rigger, departed on a goodwill tour from its home berth at the Jamestown Settlement,

setting sail May 22, 2006 for an 80-day tour of six East coast ports. Beginning in Alexandria, Virginia, and heading to Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and Newport, R.I., each port is planning a free Land Party Festival featuring live music, family entertainment and historical and cultural displays about Jamestown. It is one of the “signature” anniversary events leading up to national observations.

“The Godspeed Sail presents Americans with the unique opportunity to re-connect with the foundations of our nation and shared heritage,” retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, honorary chairman of Jamestown’s 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, proclaimed. In addition, it “offers insight into the legacies of representative government, free enterprise and cultural diversity that first took root on our shores at Jamestown and continue to shape our lives today,” says O’Connor.

The Archaearium at Historic Jamestowne, a new 7,500-square-foot museum overlooking the James River, opened in May 2006 with exhibits of approximately 1,000 artifacts from coins and armor to wine bottles and medical instruments. It tells the story of Jamestown from its beginnings as a commercial venture in 1607 until 1699, when the capital of Virginia moved from Jamestown to Williamsburg. It is a remarkable story told through archaeology, and the museum was built over the foundation of the last Statehouse at Jamestown. Visitors can observe the ongoing archaeological dig.

For an additional visit, continue with a trip along the Island Loop Drive,

a five-mile, self-guided driving tour that explores the natural environment of Jamestown. Signs and exhibits along the drive explain how the early Jamestown settlers harnessed this environment to help them survive.

Re-creation of the 1607 Virginia Landfall and sail up the James River in April 2007 will retrace that route that led to Jamestown.

The Jamestown Settlement Café offers a varied menu with breakfast and luncheon fare including soups, salads, sandwiches, snack items and beverages, with seating indoors and outdoors.

Both Historic Jamestowne and Jamestown Settlement are open year-round.

Jamestown, in Virginia’s Historic Triangle, including Yorktown, is easily reached on Interstates 95, 64, and U.S. 17. Jamestown Settlement is on State Route 31, 10 minutes from Colonial Williamsburg. From I-64 take exit 242-A and follow signs to Jamestown Settlement. Yorktown, Jamestown and Williamsburg are all linked by the scenic Colonial Parkway.

An excellent book to read about Jamestown is *A Land a God Made It: Jamestown and the Birth of America*, by James Horn. It was published in 2005 by Basic Books and tells the epic tale “with keen insight and telling detail” of how Jamestown survived.



## **Foods Enjoyed by Early English Colonists**

### **Pan-Roasted Oysters**

1 pint (2 cups) oysters  
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted  
Salt  
Freshly ground black pepper  
Buttered toast

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Drain the oysters. Place in a buttered baking dish. Top with the melted butter. Season with salt and pepper. Bake in the preheated oven about 10 minutes or until the edges of the oysters begin to curl. Serve at once on buttered toast. Serves 6.

### **Corn Cakes**

1 egg  
1 ½ cups milk  
¾ cup stone-ground white cornmeal  
1 teaspoon salt

Preheat a lightly greased griddle or large skillet. In a medium bowl combine the egg and milk. Add the cornmeal and salt, stirring until the batter is smooth. With a large spoon pour the batter onto the hot griddle or into the skillet and cook until bubbles form and the edges are dry. Flip over and cook on the other side. Remove

with a spatula and serve at once. Makes about 20 thin cakes.

### **Baked Acorn Squash**

One of the essential “three sisters,” squash, along with corn and beans, was a valuable food the Indians gave to the Jamestown settlers. Treasured for its nutritious flesh and rich and oily seeds, acorn squash was grown in several varieties and cooked in many ways, sometimes sweetened with honey or syrup and baked in hot ashes.

Scrub one acorn squash weighing about one pound. Cut in half crosswise. Remove and discard seeds and fiber. Dot the inside with unsalted butter and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Place, cut sides down, in a shallow baking dish. Add a little hot water and cook in a preheated 400 degree oven 25 minutes. Remove from the oven. Brush the insides with a little butter and add maple syrup, brown sugar or honey, if desired. Serves 2.

Kay Shaw Nelson is a freelance writer and published author of several cookbooks. She is based in Bethesda, MD.

### **Crab Orchard Sheds Light on Lives of Early Colonialists: Notes on Daily Life**

Submitted by Anne Dumper

While at Crab Orchard Museum today, I found an old school text book, probably printed around 1930 or so. It was falling apart. No title page or publisher etc. The cover said, it was "Beginning of the American People and Nation" Author was Kaltia no other

name on the cover. Page 214 talked about food.

Chief food was corn and was called "turkey wheat". For human consumption it was ground and made into "johnnycake". The colonial people learned to make popcorn and they like to see it "turn inside out, all white and floury within". Fish and game were plentiful. Fish were salted or smoked. Deer was cooked over an open fire or cut into small pieces and boiled.

Pigs were similar to today, but cattle were small and tough.

Wild turkey were about 30# each.

There was no ice so fresh meat was eaten as soon as killed or salted or smoked to keep them from spoiling.

Wheat was grown in the hill country( location?), but was not very good.

Peas, beans and potatoes grew to giant sizes.

There was all kinds of fruit. (No varieties mentioned).

Wild honey was used for sweetening.

Spices had to be imported from the orient.

Breakfast for a wealthy planter consisted of tea, coffee or chocolate (imported), bread, butter and cold meat.

Dinner was at noon and included meat, vegetables, sweets and wine.

Supper was either a light meal or non existent.

Table lines were plain,

Napkins were an necessity as there were no forks.

Spoons were silver, iron, wood or horn

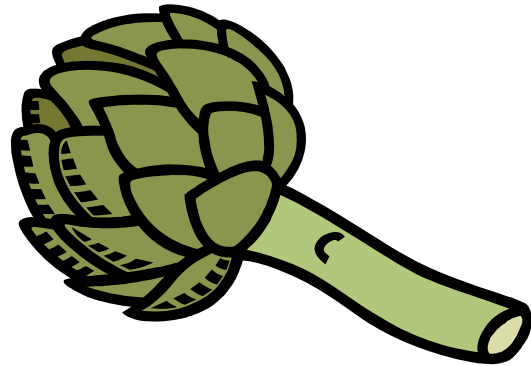
Dishes were wood and there was no glass for glasses.

Chairs unless it was a very wealthy

family were benches along each side of the table. They had no backs.

Tobacco was the major cash crop and the farmers focused on that, so they had to purchase flour, cheese and other foods.

## About the Artichoke



Submitted by Jean Robbins

Through history artichokes have been known to have many benefits. They were thought to be an aphrodisiac, a diuretic, a breath freshener, and even a deodorant. Some announced that artichokes could detox the liver and the skin. Today research is underway to examine the phytochemicals in artichokes and discover their role in health and prevention of disease.

Artichokes are known as a nutrient dense food, containing only 25 calories and 16 essential nutrients, such as potassium, phosphorus, calcium, chromium, magnesium, and some iron. Artichokes are a good source of fiber, vitamin C, and folate. Only a tiny part of the vegetable is eaten. One must peel off each leaf to get to the heart of the plant. A tiny amount of the bottom of the leaf is often dunked in sauces like special dips.

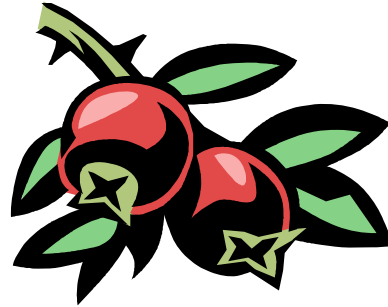
The artichoke was popular throughout Europe during the Renaissance. Hannah Glasse's cookbook, "The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy", 1805 (edition printed in Alexandria, Virginia), contained two recipes for artichokes. One of Mrs. Glasse's recipes was *To Dress Artichokes* and the other recipe was *Artichokes Preserved the Spanish Way*. Then Mary Randolph, Virginian and author of *The Virginia House-wife*, 1824, included the recipe, *Artichokes*, in her cookbook. Karen Hess, noted culinary historian, wrote of an article by William Byrd, founder of Richmond, (1737), describing the European fruits and vegetables grown by Virginians. Byrd's description read "...very large and long asparagus of splendid flavor...beautiful cauliflower, chives, artichokes ... ." Then another outstanding culinary historian, Damon Lee Fowler, wrote that Thomas Jefferson's menu notes mentioned Braised Artichokes with Fine Herbs, which was probably adapted from French cooking. Later there were notes that artichokes were grown in the Monticello vegetable garden.

### **Artichoke Appetizer for Today**

2 (14 oz.) cans artichoke hearts, drained and chopped  
1 ½ cups freshly grated Parmesan cheese  
1 ½ cups mayonnaise  
¼ teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce  
¾ teaspoon hot pepper sauce

Combine all ingredients, stirring well. (Do not use mixer.) Spoon lightly into oiled soufflé dish. Bake at 350

degrees for 20 minutes. Serve with crackers.



### **The Story of Cranberries**

Submitted by JoAnn Emmel

The cranberry, along with the Concord grape and the blueberry, are some of the few fruits native to North America. Native Americans used this tart little berry as a staple long before the Pilgrims landed. The earliest recipes made a popular winter survival ration called pemmican, which is made of a mixture of dried meat or fish and berries that was pounded into a pulp, shaped into a cake and dried in the sun. Hunters and traders carried it on expeditions. They were also the first to add maple sugar to the berries to produce a sweet sauce, and ate them raw or mashed with cornmeal and baked into bread. Because cranberries traveled well, colonial ships carried barrels of them on long voyages to prevent scurvy among the crew members. They were also exported to Europe on these sailing ships; packed in barrels and covered with water. Cranberries would remain in good shape through a long sea voyage. Some of the non-food uses included dye to color blankets, clothing and rugs, and a medicinal ingredient for treatment of arrow wounds.

Cranberries have had a variety of different names since their discovery. Eastern Indians called them "sassamanesh." Cape Cod Pequots and the South Jersey Leni-Lenape tribes named them "ibimi," or bitter berry. The Algonquins of Wisconsin called the fruit "atoqua." In Canada, cranberries are often referred to by their Amerindian name, *atoca*. Other names given to cranberries are *bounceberries*, because they literally bounce if dropped when fresh and *bearberry*, since bears also love them. It wasn't until German and Dutch settlers came up with the name "crane berry," because the vine blossoms resembled the neck, head, and bill of a crane. Cranes make their home in the berry bogs and are quite fond of the berries. Over time the word was shortened to "cranberry".

Native Americans taught the early settlers to use this wild fruit in many ways, and it became a staple along with salt cod and cornmeal. "The Indians and English use them much," wrote John Josselyn, who visited New England in 1663, "boiling them with Sugar for Sauce to eat with their Meat, and it is a delicate Sauce." The Pilgrims then began inventing cranberry recipes of their own. They made cranberry sauce, cranberry tarts, cranberry nog, and a jam made of cranberries and apples, sweetened with syrup from pumpkin pulp.

According to Colonial Williamsburg, American recipes containing cranberries date from the early 18th Century. Legend has it that the Pilgrims may have served cranberries at the first Thanksgiving in 1621 in Plymouth, Massachusetts. Cranberry sauce came into the picture

via General Ulysses S. Grant who ordered it served to the troops during the siege of Petersburg in 1864. A survey by researchers at Colonial Williamsburg of cookbooks published in England during the eighteenth century turned up cranberries. Elizabeth Raffald's *The Experienced English Housekeeper*, published in 1769, gives these directions for preserving them: "Get your cranberries when they are quite dry, put them into dry clear bottles, cork them up close and set them in a dry cool place." John Farley uses almost the same words in his *London Art of Cookery*, published thirty-eight years later. Prepared this way, they could be used to "garnish your dishes all the Winter."

Most cranberries were made into sauces, preserves, or tarts. To counteract the bitterness, cooks used sugar, maple syrup, honey, or whatever sweetener was available. In *American Cookery*, published in 1796, New Englander Amelia Simmons gives these directions for tarts—pies without a top crust: "Stewed, strained and sweetened, put into paste No. 9, and baked gently." A competent cook of that day would know exactly how much to sweeten, how to make pastry number 9, and how long to bake. Queen Victoria, who did not bake her own tarts but did write her own journals, noted in her 1868 book that a dinner in the Scottish Highlands had ended "with a good tart of cranberries."

## **SWEET POTATO & CRANBERRY CASSEROLE**

One of the recipes for the Food Network taping at The Cranbury Inn

Five (5) sweet potatoes, cooked and peeled  
One (1) orange rind-grated  
One half (1/2) cup of orange juice  
One quarter (1/4) cup dark brown sugar  
One eighth (1/8) tsp. salt  
One (1) cup whole cranberries cooked - either fresh, canned or frozen cranberries can be used in this recipe

Grease a 10" x 6" x 2" shallow baking dish. Cut potatoes in half (1/2) lengthwise and arrange on the bottom of the greased dish. Combine the rind, juice and sugar with salt and pour over the potatoes. Pour the cranberries over the potatoes. Place in a preheated 375° oven and bake for 30 minutes.  
Serves 8 persons.

From the Betsy Ross cookbook of colonial recipes; this is an authentic colonial New Jersey recipe!

### **CRANBERRY CAKE**

One of the recipes for the Food Network taping at The Cranbury Inn (Betsy Ross cookbook)

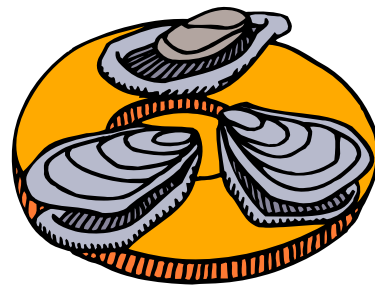
4 1/2 tbsp butter, softened  
1 1/2 cups sugar  
3 cups flour  
1 tbsp baking powder  
1/8 tsp salt  
1 1/2 cups milk  
3 cups whole fresh cranberries  
3/4 cup butter  
1 1/2 cups sugar  
18 tbsp heavy cream

Cream butter and sugar in mixer bowl until fluffy. Add mixture of flour, baking powder and salt alternately with milk, mixing well after each addition. Fold in

cranberries. Pour into greased and floured 11"-x-13" cake pan. Bake at 350° for 45 minutes. Cook remaining ingredients, butter, sugar and heavy cream in saucepan for 10 minutes, stirring constantly. Serve this hot sauce over cake. Yield: 15 servings.

Sources:

Ocean Spray Cranberries  
Colonial Williamsburg  
Cape Cod Provisions



### **Oyster Tales\***

Submitted by Cynthia Bertelsen

There's something intriguing about the oyster, you know. Maybe its looks? After all, as Jonathan Swift once said, "He was a bold man who first eat an oyster." How could something that ugly taste so good? One thing is for sure: men have been shucking and eating oysters for a long time. Shell middens throughout the world attest to that. In ancient Greece, voters used oyster shells as ballots in elections. The Romans first farmed oysters over 2,000 years ago, transplanting oysters from the Adriatic Sea to other parts of the Italian coast. And oysters have indeed sustained the lives of the poor throughout the ages.

A Frenchman, Coste by name, perfected modern methods of oyster farming, in response to a 1754 decree by

the French government prohibiting commercial oystering between April 1 and October 31. Problems of decreased oyster supplies are not new!

In Jamestown, oysters played a vital role in the diet of the settlers during the “starving times” of 1609-1611, and it is a pity that the settlers never learned to farm these creatures of the deep. The shells of the oysters eaten served as a source of lime for years in the Virginia colony, and Mark Kurlansky states very clearly in his latest book, *The Big Oyster: History on the Half Shell* (2006), that these mollusks saved the colonialists’ bacon, or lives, many a time.

Oyster farming continues worldwide today and the harvesting season begins in Florida on September 1. During summer months, oysters spawn and are not as succulent. Contrary to myth, oysters CAN be eaten during months without “R”, but the glycogen (a starch unique to animals) level is high. The glycogen causes the oyster flesh to look milky and taste watery. In days before refrigeration, the “R” rule was a practical solution to the problem of spoilage during shipping.

Today, producers ship oysters under stringent conditions and the most pressing problem for the cook is the cooking. Oysters are easily overcooked; a rule of thumb is to cook only until the edges of the oysters begin to curl slightly. Oysters on the half-shell require no cooking, but be careful to buy oysters only from a known source, as there have been some reports of hepatitis stemming from contaminated oysters. You can also scallop, deep-fry, broil, stew, bake, and pan-fry oysters. Serve breaded deep-fried

oysters on crusty French bread with tartar sauce and lemon juice for a wonderful lunch treat. Read Marjorie Kinnan Rawling’s account in *Cross Creek Cookery* [TX715 R26] of a moonlit-night oyster roast on the coals at Christmas in Florida. A hot oven will be welcome even there! Or pull out some of the old Virginia standbys, like Mary Randolph’s cookbook, *The Virginia Housewife* [TX715 R215], and experiment with her recipes for oysters: To Pickle Oysters, Oyster Soup, To Fry Oysters, (Oyster) Sauce, To Make Oyster Loaves, To Scollop Oysters, To Make a Sauce for Turkey (with Oysters), To Boil a Turkey with Oyster Sauce, and Oyster Sauce for Fish. Or you can fix an old-fashioned oyster dressing for your turkey, too.

Looks aren't everything, they say. The proof is in the oyster. Where else can you get a good meal, and maybe a pearl, too?

### **To Fry Oysters** (From Mary Randolph’s *The Virginia Housewife*)

Take a quarter of a hundred of large oysters, beat the yolks of two eggs, add to it a little nutmeg and a blade of mace pounded, a spoonful of flour, and a little salt; dip in the oysters and fry them a light brown; if you choose you may add a little parsley shred fine. They are a proper garnish for calveshead, or most made dishes.

### **Old-Fashioned Oyster Dressing** Makes enough for a 15-pound turkey

½ cup (8 T. butter)  
1 cup celery, finely chopped  
1 large onion, finely chopped

1 1/2 cups sliced fresh mushrooms  
 1/3 cup minced parsley  
 6 cups country-style bread, toasted and cut into small 1/4-inch cubes  
 1 cup chopped pecans  
 2 eggs, lightly beaten  
 1/2 cup (or more) milk or turkey broth  
 1-2 t. sage or to taste  
 1/2 t. thyme or to taste  
 Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste  
 2 cups shucked oysters, drained and cut in halves or quarters

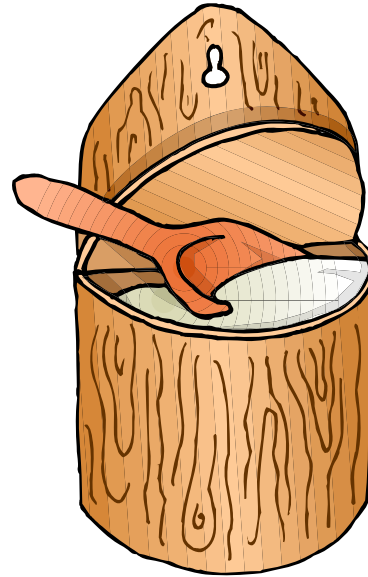
1. Sauté the onion and celery in the butter in a skillet over medium high heat until limp. Turn mixture into a large bowl. Sauté the mushrooms in the same skillet. Add mushrooms, parsley, bread cubes, pecans, eggs, milk or broth, and seasonings to the bowl and stir in well.

2. Sauté the oysters for 1 minute in the remaining 4 T. of butter and add to the stuffing mixture. Mix in gently. Place mixture in an air-tight plastic container, cover, and refrigerate overnight for flavors to blend. **DO NOT STUFF TURKEY UNTIL JUST BEFORE BAKING.** Use as you would any other turkey stuffing.

\*Ironically, today the cost of oysters is far beyond the cost of an everyday meal. Banquet fare, indeed!

#### Nutrition Notes

Oysters are high in iodine, which helps to prevent goiter. In addition, 1 cup of shucked, uncooked oysters yields 160 calories, 15.6 mg of iron (excellent source), and 20 grams of protein. One fried breaded oyster packs in 90 calories.



## **Sugar in the Colonies, According to Old Cookbooks**

Submitted by Ann Hertzler

### **COLONIAL SUGAR**

Food products of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century used to create “recipes” of the 1700 and 1800s are not comparable. Sugar, a luxury item, is one such example. More inexpensive local forms were maple sugar, molasses, honey, and sorghum. Sugar had great medicinal uses for “coughs, sourenesse and bitternesse”.

**Sugar Blocks or Cones** were available in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century in varying degrees of refinement. The cones weighing from 8 to 10 pounds were as hard as stone and wrapped in blue Indigo paper which women re-used to dye cloth. A rural family might have only one cone of sugar for the entire year.

**Sugar Nipper (also called Sugar Cutters or Sugar Shears)** was used by the grocer or the family to “nip off” the desired amount of sugar. Or the cones

could be chipped using a carving knife and hammer. Chunks for tea or coffee or for cooking were made smaller by the nippers, pulverized with a pestle and mortar, or pounded and rolled to power before using in a recipe. General Lee's family could buy whole, cut, and crushed, and brown sugar in Lexington. "**Loaf sugar** (20 cents/lb) cost about twice as much as "**Broken sugar**" (11 cents/ pound).

**Confectioner's Sugar** was white sugar pounded by hand "to the finest powder" and a little starch added to prevent clumping. A problem buying "pulverized" sugar was the amount of Plaster of Paris added to it.

*The Grocer's Hand-book* (1886) listed the introduction of granulated sugar into the US as about 1856 - the coarsest mesh sieve retained the **Extra-granulated** large grains; the next smaller mesh in size, "**medium granulated**; and the finest mesh, "**fine granulated.**" "A" sugar is thought to mean the finest grade, similar to granulated or superfine sugar. Powdered sugars were mostly made from the coarsest granulated sugar by smaller specialty shops.

**Triple Refined:** preserves and the table; most expensive; **Double Refined:** cakes; **Light brown, single refined (treacle):** and **Molasses**, the least expensive of the sugars. In the middle 1800s Mrs. Beeton suggested using the granulated instead of the hard loaf sugar.

**Augers** were used to "stick and twist" to separate stuck-together dried fruit from a keg or damp-stuck sugar.

**Clarified Sugar** Elaborate directions for clarifying sugar were important for double-refined sugar used in preserving: "Egg whites beaten to a froth were added to the water and sugar; and the mixture boiled, the egg whites rose to the top along with the dross and made it easier to skim off the black scum; after repeated skimming, the syrup was strained. When it was boiled again, a white scum rose and had to be skimmed off until the syrup was clear". Tyree said never use brown or clarified sugar in cake making except for gingerbread."

**Sugar firkin/bucket** (wooded), deep drawers, or tin flat- or raised Top Sugar Boxes were used in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to store broken sugar in to keep bugs out. Sara Joseph Hale recommended (*The Good Housekeeper*, 1839): "Crusts and pieces of bread should be kept in an earthen pot or pan, closely covered in a dry cool place.

**Sugar Dredgers or shakers** for the table were appearing in the late 1800s.

**Sugar bowls, sugar jars and syrup pitchers** appeared in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

"**Sugar toys**" appeared in the mid 1800s in confectionary used in Christmas decorations. Old-time candymakers, called sugarbakers, used barley sugar for candy figures because it was cheap and available. The name **Clear "Toys"** refers to the miniature real life figures; "clear" because light shines through them. Humidity (moisture) causes the figures to fog and droop so production is best from October to March.

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## **Peanuts**

Submitted by Mary Rapoport

Peanuts are thought to have originated in Brazil or Peru and date back to about 950 B.C. They were probably carried to Africa, Asia and Spain by early explorers and missionaries. In Africa, peanuts were commonly grown in the western tropical region and the peanut was regarded by many Africans as a plant that possessed a soul.

Colonial traders used peanuts as food aboard ship as they were nutritious and inexpensive. When Africans were brought to the colonies as slaves, they brought peanuts with them. Slaves planted peanuts in the south, calling them goobers, the name originating from the Congo name for peanuts – *nguba*. Some research suggests peanuts were domesticated by American Indians as well.

During the 1700s, peanuts (called groundnuts or ground peas) were studied by botanists and regarded as an excellent food for pigs. The humble peanut was used extensively for food by both the Northern and Southern soldiers during the Civil War. In fact, the Civil War helped spread peanuts to other parts of the country, when Union Army soldiers took them home at the end of the war. During the 1800s peanuts were used for oil, food and a substitute for cocoa.

The land in Sussex County, Virginia, consisting of flat sandy soil, was especially good for growing peanuts. This is where the first commercial peanut crop in Virginia was grown in the early to mid 1840s. This area, just across the James River from the Jamestown settlement, made it a convenient food source for early settlers.

Peanuts did not become a significant agricultural crop until the early 1900's. These years saw the boll weevil destroy much of the South's cotton crop and farmers replaced it with peanuts. Today, Virginia produces 6 – 8% of the nation's peanuts, producing 250 to 350 pounds annually.

[www.aboutpeanuts.com/infohis.html](http://www.aboutpeanuts.com/infohis.html)  
[www.goodearthpeanuts.com/historyva.htm](http://www.goodearthpeanuts.com/historyva.htm)

### **The Time-Honoured Breadsauce of the Happy Ending**

Submitted by Karen Bateman

“If thou tastest a crust of bread, thou tastest all the stars and all the heavens.”  
Robert Browning (1812-1889) English poet

And from bread itself comes bread sauce.

Bread sauce is a quiet nonchalant sort of thing, generally most self-deprecating the year round as it awaits its seasonal turn to appear suddenly with an arrogant burst of self-confidence, brimming from fine china gravy tureens at holiday time.

Yet bread sauce holds in memory a long past, with paths meandering far and wide into other manners and means, perhaps related, perhaps simply co-existing. Yet each relation or close ally is made from the base form of bread, dashed into crumbs then set to gay dalliance with other good and warming things.

Bread sauce was known in Ancient Rome, and from there it travels

on forward through time, taking different forms of style. In this essay on a [1545 Remove for a Dinner Party](#) we find that the bread sauce has become green with herbs, similar to what we now might call [salsa verde](#).

A hop skip and a jump brings us to the equitable joys of [skordalia](#) from Greece; [gazpacho](#) (which of course is a soup, but still we might include it for the familiarity of the humble stale bread crumb base, blended with liquids to make a fine dish); and [ajo blanco](#), which is called the "original" gazpacho, showing a Moorish influence.

During the Civil War in the US, [roast partridge with bread sauce](#) must have been a treat, the hunters carrying home braces of partridge to roast over the coals of the fireplace or stove, the stale bread generously endowed with flavor and spice to enrichen and blend together the strong flavors of the game and the creamy sauce.

Fanny Farmer offers a recipe for bread sauce in her 1918 classic [Boston Cooking School Cookbook](#), and our interest and curiosity in finding ways to use bread as sauce today is shown in a rustic, delightfully mouth-watering sauce [povera for pasta from Italy](#) - [Little Cubed Bread Sauce](#) and in a lovely [minted bread sauce](#) from the Naked Chef, Jamie Oliver.

The classic bread sauce served today at many Christmas dinner-tables is soft, filled with scent of nutmeg and a gentle waft of onion, as in this [traditional bread sauce](#).

Indeed, we might need to call

this recipe (as Henry James would have it) - "the time honored bread sauce of the happy ending" - though surely more shapes and surprises will come.



## **Culinary Historiography, or, Methodology in Writing Culinary History**

Submitted by Cynthia Bertelsen

(The following comments are meant only as an introduction to this topic and I will write a good deal more on it at a later date.)

Culinary history as an academic field of study is not new. But incorporating it into the academy is something new. As with any subject worthy of academic perusal, culinary history needs to be examined, dissected, and tasted and digested to form general guidelines, standards as it were, to render the topic palatable to academic historians and others.

Ken Albala, author of -----, reminds historians working in the realm of food that there's a difference between food history and culinary history.

First, I would distinguish between the *History of Food*, which

includes just about everything: growing food, transporting and selling it, cooking it, eating it, and of course all the rich cultural associations people have with it from more narrow *Culinary History*. The latter I think should only refer to what goes on in the kitchen - which includes the ingredients, cooking technology, presentation and service and the history of recipes themselves. That is, the history of food is often about other things, ideas as much as things people eat, while the latter should be about cooking per se. I say this mostly because while the history of food (and ideas) has gained some respectability of late, culinary history still really hasn't. And I don't think many scholars give it the full attention it deserves. Obviously if so many people in the past spent time or earned their living cooking (not to mention eating), why shouldn't it be a proper field of study for the historian?

Defining terms, then, is the beginning. Andy Smith, author of ----, discusses food history in his introduction to *Culinary History*, ed. by Barabara Santich and ---- and published by a small press in Australia. Unbrellaing and juxtaposing culinary history under the term food history seems the most logical tact to take. Smith goes farther, by devising a classification scheme for culinary history. He says,

Culinary history is a set of interrelated topics that can be approached in a variety of ways. One way to

approach these diverse works is through a simple two-dimensional model: *processes* and *contents*. Similar to the list offered by Goody [Jack Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine, and Class: A Study in Comparative Sociology* GT2855 G6 1982], this system encompasses five interconnected culinary processes: acquired, stored,

prepared, eaten and disposed. [...] At the core of these processes is eating, which should be the central focus of culinary history.

Smith goes on to describe the “content” of the model, which includes “who, what, where, when and why” and relate to the processes in the following manner (read the table as sentences):

Who	acquired	What	When	Where	Why
	stored				
	prepared				
	eaten (ate)				
	disposed				

Like Albala, Smith believes that only by actually cooking and checking the material found in old cookbooks and other similar records can culinary historians really do their job. “Much can be learned from the past by trying to re-create it. Culinary historians must be able to analyze, reconstruct and evaluate the results of the recipes. This includes preparing, serving and consuming food. [...] The purpose of writing about culinary history is not just to describe what happened in the past. It is also to discuss the historical consequences of culinary activity.”

Cookbooks, however valuable as primary sources, must be taken with the proverbial grain of salt. According to Tom Jaine, of Prospect Books, there’s a gap between what the cookery books portrayed versus what people actually

ate every day. This trend has been around since the beginning of cookbook printing and continues to this day with monthly glossies that readers drooling on the pages of glorious photographs of dishes that no one will make more than once, if ever.

Rachel Laudan, in her brochure “How to Do Food History” written for the IACP culinary historians’ meeting in 2003, proposes the following general categories for food history. Note that “culinary history” is just a subset of “food history”:

- Culinary history
- History of nutrition
- History of dining and manners
- History of theories of diet

## History of foodstuffs

There are lots of other genres: histories of food businesses, important individuals or groups, culinary literature, effects of migration on food habits.

Laudan goes on to say that approaching the past actually extends beyond history, via memory, legend, antiquarianism, and nostalgia.

Dr. Laura Jane Harper, in a class given during the Spring Semester at Virginia Tech, attempted to get her students to think about frameworks for studying food in culture. Out of that endeavor came a dissertation that, sadly, is virtually unknown because of the death of the author, Maryellen Spencer, a few months after she received her Ph.D. "Food in Seventeenth-Century Tidewater Virginia: A Method for Studying Historical Cuisines" presents a clear method for the study of cuisines for which much written material is non-existent.

Spencer used unique primary sources, much of it archaeological and based on the pioneering work of archaeologists Ivor and Audrey Noel Hume, who worked in the area around the original Jamestown settlement and Williamsburg. Audrey Noel Hume's book, *Food* (1978) provides much information of interest to culinary historians attempting to reconstruct conditions about which the written word sheds little light.

Before we get into a major discussion of the methodology proposed by Spencer in her dissertation, a listing of the usual primary sources for the culinary historian might be useful: Letters, diaries, cookbooks, recipes, oral

history, travelers' accounts, interviews, photographs, paintings, artifacts (kitchens, gadgets, buildings, markets) garden diaries (like that of Thomas Jefferson in his *The Garden and Farm Books of Thomas Jefferson*, Fulcrum Press, 1987 [SB451.34 V8 J44 1987]), and as Albala and Smith suggestion, hands-on kitchen experience. There's nothing like a fallen soufflé or badly written recipe to let the culinary historian know that a source can't be trusted.

Secondary sources talk about primary sources. But using secondary sources exclusively as references makes for history that might include a lot of what Andy Smith calls "fakelore," or perpetuation of certain myths and misconceptions about foods and cooking practices.

Spencer begins her work with as detailed a literature review as was available at the time, citing various authors whose names have receded into the past as much as the cuisines they studied. Then she moves into an outline of methodology that bears repeating here, beginning with establishing a framework of research questions, much the same was Laudan suggests: the questions are the most important utensil in the culinary historian's *batterie de cuisine*. Recall that Spencer's methodology is geared toward the study of a society's cuisine, not individual dishes or the like. In this, she is indebted to K.C. Chang's seminal study, *Food in Chinese Culture*, as well as work done by Margaret Mead in *Food Habits Research*.

The questions begin always with attention to the following two major contexts. And these groupings apply equally well, I think, to the subset of culinary history, with its focus on kitchen processes, cooking techniques, and recipes.

The large historical context, with sub-groupings:

1. The political context
2. The physical context
3. Aesthetic context

The next grouping of questions concern the cuisine itself:

1. Catalog of available foods (including identification of varieties, forms, and sensory properties)
2. Food production
3. Food choices and preferences
4. Physical facilities for food preparation and storage
5. Cooks and food-preparers
6. Food preparation
7. Food storage
8. Food preservation
9. Feeding patterns (food habits)
10. Food style and aesthetics
11. Dining: Presentation and Serving of food
12. Culinary heritage
13. Beliefs and values
14. Ideology of food

Once the questions have been determined, then comes the search for material that will illuminate the subject. Spencer lists the following as possible sources, the tools of many historians, and especially culinary historians:

Printed sources:

Cookbooks and “ladies manuals”  
Books on farming, husbandry,  
etc.  
Trade and shipping records  
Agricultural records  
Government records (laws and judgments relating to food, agriculture, and trade)  
Journalists’ accounts where available  
Histories, especially local histories  
Published diaries, journals, correspondence, travelers’ accounts  
Biographies and autobiographies  
Literature: novels, poetry, songs  
Newspapers and periodical literature  
Catalogs and advertisements for cooking equipment and table wares  
Broadsides  
Almanacs and handbooks

Manuscript sources:

Manuscript cookbooks and recipe collections  
Court records: wills, inventories, judgments  
Personal legal documents  
Personal and commercial accounts, ledgers  
Letters, diaries, journals

Iconographic sources:

Illustrations in books, periodical literature, catalogs  
Paintings and drawings (household, genre and dining scenes, still lifes, country and farm scenes)

Manuscript drawings and sketchbooks

Maps

Scenes and still lifes on ceramics and fabrics, decorations on wood and metal

Spencer's prescient work provides us with a detailed and practical model on which to build future explorations of culinary history topics. A number of published works also contribute to our understanding of the need to deconstruct kitchens and cookery books. Perhaps the most fruitful of these works are Karen Hess's examination of the Martha Washington manuscript cookbook, *Martha Washington's Booke of Cookery*, and Mary Randolph's *The Virginia Housewife*. In the annotations to these books, and especially in the Martha Washington book, Hess provides a handrailing for modern readers to grasp when navigating through the abbreviated recipes of the times. This what she gives us with Martha's recipe "[To] Make a Leach of Cream":

Take a pinte of cream, 6 spoonfuls of rose water, 2 greyns of musk, 2 dropps of oyle of mace or a piece of large mace; let it boyle with 4 ounces of Ising glass, & y<sup>n</sup> let it run through a Jelly bagg & when it is cold, slice it. This is y<sup>e</sup> best way to make leach.

The earliest meaning of leach in English cookery was the same as that of Old French *lesche*, a long thin slice. Very early, it came to mean almost anything that could be sliced, so that the OED [Oxford English Dictionary] is able to define

leach as a dish of meat, eggs, fruits, and spices in jelly, or a gelatine of almonds. The medieval gingerbreads were dry leaches, for instance.

The mention of the OED illustrates the reliance that culinary historians have on a number of different reference sources, as well as on primary sources. Without the first, interpretation of the primary sources, as in the case of leach, would be impossible, since the word "leach" carries with it very different meanings in English today! See the various "pathfinders" provided by libraries such as the New York Public Library (<http://www.nypl.org/research/chss/grd/respguides/culinary/>), the Library of Congress (<http://www.loc.gov/rr/scitech/tracer-bullets/foodhistorytb.html>), or the University of Adelaide (<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/library/guide/hum/history/Gastronomy.html>). And how about this glossary of medieval and Renaissance food terms? (<http://www.thousandeggs.com/glossary.html>)

The following selective bibliography is an attempt to furnish writers of culinary history with other "handrailings" as we maneuver through this exciting, "new" subject. [Books in Newman Library are denoted between brackets.]

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## **Annual Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association Conference**

Southwest/Texas region  
Albuquerque, NM February 14-17,  
2007

<http://www.h-net.org/~swpca/>

### **How Do We Do Food Studies?: A Series of Methodological Conversations**

The field of food studies continues to grow both within the academy and in popular journalism, bringing together scholars from diverse disciplines who each use food and eating as a lens through which to examine social life, history, literature, technology, film and much more. This interdisciplinary communication is productive but also brings up complex questions about how food research is (and ought to be) approached.

At the upcoming Food and Culture Area meeting of the Southwest Popular Culture/American Culture Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico, we are creating a series of panels and papers that focus on the central question: how do we do food studies? By foregrounding our methods—the rationale behind them as well as their benefits and drawbacks—we can all gain insight into the diversity of our field. In addition, these cross-disciplinary conversations can also help us to think about the future of food studies as not

only a research topic but also an academic practice.

To this end, we invite papers that discuss food studies from a methodological perspective. For example, papers could take on the methodological tensions between the interdisciplinary nature of food and the disciplinary constraints of academia; "unpack" a specific methodology often used in food studies (e.g. feminist food-centered narratives & life stories, the food voice, material and cultural analyses, media studies, single food-specific studies, historiographies, literary critiques, and/or image-based research); and/or propose new methodologies or directions that would benefit the field of food studies.

Melissa Salazar  
UC Davis School of Education

## **Announcements**



## **Hertzler Collection**

**250 historic children's cookbooks and nutrition literature** publications are now available through the Virginia Tech library's online catalog, Addison

(<http://addison.vt.edu>). Largely housed in Newman Library's Rare Book Room, this unique archive seeks to develop through donations of books published before 1960. It also strives to be unique, in part, by preserving publications. To help preserve the record of children's cooking and nutrition, we welcome the donation of your historic publications to the *Ann Hertzler Children's Cookbook and Nutrition Literature Archives*. Please contact Gail McMillan ([gailmac@vt.edu](mailto:gailmac@vt.edu)) or Special Collections, University Libraries, Virginia Tech, P. O. Box 90001, Blacksburg, VA 24062-9001.

## Book Reviews



Kamp, David. *The United States of Arugula: How We Became a Gourmet Nation*. Broadway Books, 2006.

In this comprehensive portrait of the modern American food scene, David Kamp starts out with a brief, but factual commentary on the culinary heritage of the United States. Trotting out Mary Randolph and Amelia Simmons and even Thomas Jefferson, Kamp remarks on how modern Jefferson's list of fruits and vegetables from the Washington, DC market sounded. Jefferson kept track of what was sold at that market

throughout his presidency and the variety was indeed impressive and very Farmers' Market, which of course it was: "sorrel, broccoli, strawberries, peas, salsify, raspberries, Windsor beans, currants, endive, parsnips, tomatoes, melons, cresses." Kamp likens Mary Randolph's vegetable love as being very Alice Waters-ish. *The United States of Arugula* presupposes, it seems, a little bit of a priori knowledge about the biggies in the American food renaissance that transpired in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but anyone who can turn on a TV and channel surf to find Good Network will savor this book for its, frankly, gossipy, "People Magazine" tone. Sometimes Kamp portrays many of the food world's large, looming personalities, for instance Alice Waters and Craig Clairborne in rather unflattering terms. But Julia Child comes off well, especially when she had to contend with the jealousy of Madeleine Kamman; however, St. Julia was heard once to say in public about a "certain woman," and people in the know knew who she was talking about: "I will grind her alive, piece by piece, in my food processor." Aside from the asides, *The United States of Arugula* serves up a pretty tasty history that captures that momentum of the whole/gourmet/fresh/organic food movement and the changes that have occurred in American kitchens since Mary Randolph wrote her far-seeing, seeric book, *The Virginia House-wife*.

Submitted by Cynthia Bertelsen