



Mrs. Porter's New Southern Cookery Book: And Companion for Frugal and Economical Housekeepers (American Antiquarian Cookbook Collection)

Mrs. M.E. Porter

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This down-to-earth kitchen companion “for frugal and economical housekeepers” was designed to help reconstitute the rich cookery traditions of the region that had been interrupted by the Civil War, and adapt them to the new requirements for thrift and “making do.” The cuisine reflects that time when a new generation of southerners began to reach out beyond their borders and incorporate other regional and foreign dishes into their homes. The hundreds of primarily southern recipes also include dishes from all over the United States—a new feature for a southern cookbook—that appealed to a mass audience rather than the elite class. Mrs. Porter appears to have been determined not to offend anyone, so “Yankee Fruit Cake” is joined by “Confederate Fruit Cake,” and “Wine Sauce” is balanced by “Temperance Foam Sauce.” The list of entrees confirms the promise of frugality, and indicates what ingredients were available at the time: fresh seafood was plentiful, as were beef, mutton, and game. The chapter on vegetables is diversified and long with many recipes for potatoes (another chapter contains what may be the first printed recipes for Potato Bread), tomatoes, eggplant, pumpkin, beets, turnips, and cucumbers. Half of the book is devoted to cakes, puddings, and sweets.

This edition of *Mrs. Porter's Southern Cookery Book* was reproduced by permission from the volume in the collection of the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts. Founded in 1812 by Isaiah Thomas, a Revolutionary War patriot and successful printer and publisher, the Society is a research library documenting the life of Americans from the colonial era through 1876. The Society collects, preserves, and makes available as complete a record as possible of the printed materials from the early American experience. The cookbook collection includes approximately 1,100 volumes.

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Jeannette Coleman:

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