

# • CULINARY HISTORIANS OF NEW YORK •

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CHNY encourages the submission to the newsletter of articles relating to culinary history, member news, and other pertinent information. The editor has the right to edit for length, clarity, accuracy, and punctuation.

## TRAVELER'S JOURNAL

### Ethiopia: Land of Culinary Contradictions

By Larry Litt

**D**ESPITE drought, famines, and wars, Ethiopians have always observed their sacred fasting days. Fasting in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church means to do without meat or dairy products for a given period of time, from one day to the 55 days of the Lenten season. In the old Julian calendar that Ethiopia's ancient church observes there are over 200 days where only vegetarian foods are prepared and served in homes, schools, the military, and restaurants.

The custom comes from the Orit, the Old and New Testaments written in Ge'ez, the ancient language of the historical kingdoms of Abyssinia, Kush, and Saba, now called Ethiopia. There is evidence that fasting rituals began in the West with Pythagoras' non-animal sacrifices at certain Greek temples and became a part of early Christian worship.

In Ethiopia fasting is only one of the important mainstream dietary themes. Conversely, and strange to outsiders, considering their dedication to religious fasting, on non-fasting days the majority of Ethiopians I met ate highly spiced and piquant raw meat to celebrate events like births, funerals, and weddings—and of course, only if these days don't coincide with fasting days. I was told that very fatty raw beef, goat, and lamb meats, with a side of spicy *awaze* sauce, (a mixture of red peppers, garlic, fresh ginger, red onion, rue seed, basil, cloves, cinnamon, salt, cardamom, red wine, and water), are the most popular dishes throughout Ethiopia.

According to Hagos Legesse, a representative of Ethiopian Airlines, *lemlem zign* (raw beef in spicy sauce), *kitfo* (ground beef), and *t'ire siga* (chunks or cubes of raw beef)

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### TO CHNY MEMBERS:

Contributors have been generous and timely in delivering their information. Unfortunately, I found it impossible to put everything together last spring. Thus, you are receiving a spring/fall combination.

—HELEN BRODY, EDITOR

## Ethiopia, from page 1

are the three most popular raw meat entrees cut from freshly killed, skinned, and racked animals, usually accompanied by many bottles of homemade *tej*, traditional high-alcohol-content honey wine.

A night of raw meat and *tej* is considered a celebratory feast even if there is no official cause for celebration. Legesse explained further that men get together to eat, drink, and talk until “they are full and feeling like warrior kings. It is very important for our physical and mental health.”

At a recent Lenten fast day breakfast in Addis Ababa, I ate buttered *t'iqur sinde dabbo*, a special whole wheat bread that had the consistency of a thick pancake. It was prepared fresh in the morning in a clay oven, somewhat like a *nan* bread from the Indian subcontinent. The evening meal consisted of five colorful vegetarian dipping pastes spread over a layer of *injera*, the renowned *teff* flour spongy pancake bread, on a single large painted metal tray. Everyone at the table shared from the tray and ate with their just-washed hands like our hosts.

Because many varieties of dried beans are donated as food aid from world aid programs, this meal was heavy on fava beans, spilt peas, and lentils. Fortunately, these beans are also much desired Ethiopian staples enjoyed in times of abundance as well.

When there is a drought, arable land is used to grow *teff* plants for *injera* flour. “This bread is a great part of our national identity. Along with coffee, we need these crops to feel like Ethiopians,”

Legesse said proudly. “We can buy food from around the world as long as we can sell coffee. During droughts, much food is donated. We are lucky there is so much extra in the world right now.”

Ethiopia is a beautiful and historic country filled with fantastic, magical sights and wonders, both ancient and modern. But for me there will always remain the reality of economic contrasts and struggles for survival. There is enough wealth in Ethiopia for Addis Ababa to have both Hilton and Sheraton premium luxury hotels, each with four or five restaurants serving well prepared international cuisines along with traditional Ethiopian dishes.

But as I walked outside the gates of my heavily guarded hotel grounds, I was struck by the

ravages of poverty, disease, and prolonged war on the neighboring streets. The political reality is that when food is donated there are ample funds for military budgets.

“You must understand, these luxury hotels exist to attract business people to my country so we can build a new economy and share in the wealth of the world,” said Legesse. “We have everything to offer, if only God and nature will cooperate.”

*Larry Litt is a journalist who specializes in food and politics. He believes that “What we eat not only has cultural meaning, but political meaning as well. How we are persuaded to grow, process, market, and consume our food is one of the most important identity, survival and class issues of any society.”*

## COMMITTEES

Membership: Wendy Clapp-Shapiro (culhistny@yahoo.com)

*Send out welcome packets, welcome new members*

Newsletter: Helen Brody (hbrody2330@aol.com)

*Write book reviews, lead articles, new member news*

Nominating: Phyllis Isaacson (beardlib@interport.net)

*Assemble annual ballot for Steering Committee*

Program: Helen Studley (helentruly@aol.com)

*Engage interesting speakers*

Publicity: John W. R. Jenkins (jjenkins@tvfood.com)

*Establish contacts to publicize the organization*

# THE CULINARY BOOKSHELF

*Prairie Home Cooking*  
by Judith M. Fertig  
(Harvard Common Press, 1999)

REVIEW BY JEANNE LESEM

“We think the best cookbooks are story books, their purpose as much to document the communal draw of the meal table as to show the curious cook how to bake a gravity-defying biscuit or stir up a tasty kettle of Brunswick stew. When all the dishes have been cleared from the table, these recipes remain, a tangible link to a time, a place, a people.”

—John T. Edge

Edge’s insightful words introduce his own recently published (and wonderful) American regional cookbook, *A Gracious Plenty: Recipes and Recollections from the American South* (Putnam, 1999)—to be reviewed in the next issue of CHNY newsletter—but they also accurately describe Fertig’s cookbook about the Midwest, the American Heartland.

Between 1865 and 1880, Kansas attracted more immigrants than any other state in the United States. Homestead Acts in the last half of the 19th century brought Poles, Irish, Czechs, Bohemians, and Austrians to the Dakotas, Iowa, and Nebraska. The city of Cleveland, today, has one of the largest Hungarian populations outside of Hungary. With 400 recipes in 434 pages the author has recorded the flavors of the region and its people for posterity. In articles, recipe headnotes, and

chapter headings she tells us how and by whom the Midwest was settled, and how its settlers managed to reproduce their comfort foods by substituting locally available ingredients for the old, familiar ones. Hers is a story of courage, creativity, the immigrant work ethic, and the legendary friendliness and hospitality for which the Midwest and the South are famous. The Ohio-born author now lives in Kansas, where she writes a weekly food column for the *Kansas City Star*. Some of the recipes are her own contemporary versions of classics: potato salad with a parsley-pesto dressing or a winter vegetable salad whose dressing includes a bottled sauce (brand name *Maggi*) popular in the Heartland.

No native Midwesterner can read this book without salivating for the foods of her childhood, be they Pickled Watermelon Rind, Cracked Wheat Salad (originally, Middle Eastern tabbouleh), or a Strawtown Dutch Lettuce Salad that reads like a layered hybrid of the wilted lettuce and warm potato salads of my youth. Among the less familiar recipes is a rich homemade cheese made with two dozen eggs, salt, sugar, vanilla, and milk, a Hungarian Easter specialty traditionally made on April 4 in years when Easter falls in April.

The author writes that butcher shops and smokehouses in the Midwest still make a large array of homemade and home-smoked sausages that range from Czech *jaternice* to Swedish *potatiskorv* (beef, pork, onion, potato, and sea-

sonings) and *schwartenmagen* (beef heart and pork tongue, jowls, and skin) from the Amana Colonies, a mid-19th century religious communal sect in southeastern Iowa.

Peanuts, she tells us, became a household commodity because of a Midwestern physician who wanted a soft health food to give his patients. By 1910 an Ohio cookbook provided several recipes for homemade peanut butter, “which at the time was considered a kind of condiment like catsup or mustard.”

If you think Midwestern recipes lack sophistication, consider this: September means the start of pheasant season from the middle of Kansas north through Nebraska and the Dakotas. Then look at Marllys Yelton’s recipe for pheasant baked with heavy cream, garlic, and thyme. Yelton hails from a tiny town in central Kansas. “It seems as if everyone has at least a few pheasant recipes,” author Fertig writes. A lot of the morel mushrooms sold year-round in specialty markets and upscale supermarkets come from Midwestern suppliers. They are also sold at farmers markets and supermarkets throughout the Midwest. We were astonished on a visit to Indianapolis a few years ago to find affordable bags of dried morels in a supermarket there before they had begun to appear in supermarkets in the heart of Manhattan. Wild jackrabbit used to be the meat of choice for prairie cooks. They fried it like chicken or made a Bohemian sweet and sour roast with dumplings. Today, Fertig notes, you usually

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**Prarie**, from page 3

have to order rabbit from a specialty butcher. Northern Italian immigrants to Chicago and Milwaukee brought a taste for cornmeal mush and spicy stews. One polenta-crusting savory pie recipe reads like an Italian take on Tex-Mex tamale pie.

*Jeanne Lesem, a freelance journalist and author, was the first food editor of United Press International. Her most recent cookbook, Preserving in Today's Kitchen, won a James Beard Foundation Award when first published as Preserving Today.*

## *Madhur Jaffrey's World Vegetarian*

(Clarkson Potter, 1999)

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REVIEW BY JEANNE LESEM

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Another vegetarian cookbook? Bookstore and library shelves are already well-supplied—one might even say, over-supplied—with the genre. But this 758-page tome has much to recommend it. Although it contains more than 650 recipes, it is also a reference book in which the recipes are interwoven with nuggets of culinary history and insights into the consumption of meatless cuisine throughout the world. Fusion cookery, Jaffrey writes in her introduction, is softening the boundaries between all cuisines. “In a way this has always happened. There is no nation that has not absorbed, sometimes with ease and sometimes with great disquiet and fulmination, new produce and new cooking techniques from other worlds.” It’s

simply happening faster now than it did 500 years ago. London, for example, has a large restaurant that serves only Asian noodles. In Portland, Oregon, a simple coffee-shoplike eatery offers an inexpensive Japanese soup. Hotels in her native India, like hotels almost everywhere these days, serve foods of other nations with great pride, adapting to local tastes by adjusting the seasonings.

Chapter 1 is devoted to dried beans and peas, lentils, and nuts, the earliest cultivated crops. “Valued as nuggets of gold, they sustained ancient Vedic India, the biblical Middle East, the pharaohs of Egypt, and the royals who strolled in the gardens of Babylon.” Today this class of foods is widely recommended for its nutritional benefits; in the affluent western world, these basically cheap sources of protein have even become fashionable. In earlier days, they inspired an Armenian poet, Zahrad, to a 15-line composition called “A Woman Cleaning Lentils.”

In the vegetable chapter, we learn that an Iranian version of the French ratatouille contains, in addition to the usual suspects, fresh and dried fruit. Of grains, she writes: “Corn belongs to the Americas... I was once scolded by a college professor for suggesting that corn might have come, relatively recently, from another world. No, no, he insisted, corn was always here.”

Boiled peanuts have been popular as a vegetable (they are actually a leguminous annual herb, not a tree nut) in peanut-growing areas of the American South for generations. En route to a filming in the courtyard of an Indonesian temple the author found a street

food new to her, peanuts that had been boiled with salt and red chiles. She also found boiled peanut recipes that use Chinese flavorings (fresh ginger, scallions, soy sauce, star anise).

And so it goes. Evaluated as a cookbook, *World Vegetarian* is equally praiseworthy. The final chapter, “Equipment, Glossary, and Resources,” is exemplary in scope; the resource list of 11 shops in the United States has website addresses for 10 of them. Individual chapters contain explicit directions for buying, preparing, and storing basic ingredients.

*The multi-talented author is a world-famous stage and film actress/director, host of (so far) three television cooking series, and writer of seven other cookbooks, one of which was voted Best International Cookbook and Cookbook of the Year at the James Beard Foundation Awards in 1993. World Vegetarian was praised by Publishers Weekly as “an Asian-centered complement to Deborah Madison’s European-focused Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone.”*

*Food: A Culinary History*  
Edited by Jean-Louis Flandrin & Massimo Montanari, English editor, Albert Sonnenfeld  
(Columbia University Press, 1999)

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REVIEW BY SUSAN MILLER, M.S., R.D.

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This weighty tome, both in kilos and erudition, is a part of *European Perspectives: A Series in Social Thought and Cultural Criticism*, and is translated from the French. The

main editors teach at the Universities of Paris and Bologna; Dr. Flandrin is the founder of the review, *Food and Foodways*. These facts prepare the reader for the Euro-centric focus. The history does not include Asia, Africa, or the subcontinent. Nonetheless, the scope is obviously enormous.

Forty chapters and nearly 600 pages explore how, what, where, and why we ate and eat, from pre-history to microwave; from Paleolithic aurochs and rhinoceros hunters to “The McDonaldization of Culture.”

Ancient Egypt, the Classical societies, and Europe from the fifth through the 20th centuries are explored in detail with rich anecdotes, bibliographies, and footnotes. North African and Arab cuisines also receive a chapter, and the New World is discussed, but in less detail.

Chapters titled “Mediterranean Jewish Diet” and “Traditions in the Middle Ages” are the most fascinating treatment we’ve read on the subjects. Is the daily diet of a typical middle-class (Sephardic) Jewish family during the 14th and 15th centuries, described as consisting of grains, vegetables, olive oil, and wine, much different from the healthy Mediterranean diet so strongly recommended today? The writer compares this vegetable-based diet, well seasoned with garlic, saffron, and coriander, to the fatty, vitamin-poor diet of the contemporaneous European nobility and concludes that it was better balanced, as indeed it still is. The writers also offer their interpretation of the rationale for the Jewish dietary laws with intriguing views on that unending controversy.

This is a highly scholarly, yet totally readable, absorbing, and

often entertaining book. You can spend months, picking it up now and then to explore your area of personal interest. There is plenty of trivia and esoterica of course.

For example, we always understood harissa to mean the fiery chile and garlic paste used in Middle Eastern cooking—as evidenced in innumerable cookbooks and articles. But no, Bernard Rosenberg in “Arab Cuisine and Its Contribution to European Culture,” writes that “harissa” was a popular dish from the souk of Fes, “a mixture of pounded meat and soaked, crushed grains cooked slowly in the oven.” It would have been helpful to note that harissa means something totally different now, and to understand how this term came to designate hot chile paste, the currently accepted definition.

*Culinary History* very importantly traces ingredient migration. It answers many questions, but the nature of the study forcibly generates others. Why for instance didn’t tempeh, the highly nutritious, highly digestible, low-tech,

inexpensive soy food from Indonesia, travel beyond that island chain, when so many other foods from Asia have become standard pantry items in other cultures?

In general the few illustrations are dim, monochromatic, and unexceptional but do underscore certain points. One 15th century print shows, for example, that forks were rare and that fingers were used to debone and serve meats.

Anyone who thinks about what we eat, ate, or will eat in the future, would enjoy reading parts or all of these essays and follow the timeline of culinary history. They are certainly a major contribution to the study of gastronomy, defining the discipline as a major science.

*Susan Miller is a registered dietitian, who in finding the culinary arena more interesting and creative, made the switch from clinical to food service and business in 1989. The specialty of her company, La Table dans le Bon Sens, is formula and recipe analysis and product labeling.*

## Cookbook Preservation Committee: Campaign Update

Andrew Coe, Chairman

The project we began two years ago to encourage the New York Public Library to preserve its cookbooks is finally bearing fruit. On the evening of Sunday, October 15, the James Beard House hosted a fund-raising dinner to raise \$15,000 for cookbook preservation at the library. Hosted by Nina Griscom of *Food and Wine* magazine, the dinner featured the spectacular four-star cuisine of chef Rocco Di Spirito. Corporate donations that will allow the library to begin its preservation effort were also announced. Please read the Winter Newsletter for more details, or call Andrew Coe at (718) 797-0029.

# MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

## New CHNY Members

**March 1-July 14, 2000**

(Details listed in the 2000-2001 directory)

Leila D. Azima  
Beth Crossman  
Ms. Dana Gordon  
Kelly Charles Greeson  
Joan Haladay  
Claire Hartten  
Stacy D. Harwood  
Dorothy M. Kellogg  
Michelle Krell Kydd  
Mimi Martin  
Renee Marton  
Jamelyn McDuffie and Francyne  
Boxwill  
Lucy Norris  
Harry K. Panjwani  
Sam Rabinowitz  
Ms. Daragh C. Russell  
Laura Schenone  
Laura Shapiro  
Maxine J. Smith  
Grace Young

**New CHNY Members  
July 15-August 8, 2000**

**Mindell Dubansky**  
*Book Conservator*

Food as a creative medium and the role of food in ceremony and family life.

**Mr. Shaun Fletcher**  
*Administration*

Fascinated by almost anything that has to do with food; cookbooks are a passion.

**Corinna Hawkes**

**Ewa A. Ojarovska**

**CHNY Member Address  
Changes**

**Deidre D'elia**

**Phyllis Isaacson**

## REMINDERS!



CHNY Renewals due: If you did not receive a notice or the 2000-2001 directory, please e-mail Wendy Clapp-Shapiro at [culhistny@yahoo.com](mailto:culhistny@yahoo.com) or call (212) 826-7052.

Deadline: For Winter Newsletter submissions is December 18.

## PRESENTERS WANTED

 **Smithsonian  
Folklife Festival**

**Annie Hauck-Lawson** is calling for presenters for 2001 *Smithsonian Folklife Festival* with theme of "New York Food Voices" and "Only in New York City." **See member news for details.**

# MEMBER NEWS

**Elizabeth Andoh** is one of the featured panelists in the Japan Society's program "Rice in Asia: The Grain that Shapes Cultures" on Saturday, December 2. (See Area Events Calendar, page 9.)

**Leslie Brenner's** book, *American Appetite: The Coming of Age of a National Cuisine*, was originally published in hardcover in 1999 by Avon Books and is now out as a 370-page soft cover published by HarperCollins Perennials. Leslie presents her argument for the development and existence of an American cuisine in an entertaining and convincing manner, with historical research and quotes from such food authorities as Julia Child, Alice Waters, and Chuck Williams.

She provides us with many examples of American originality. (Did you know that early American housewives made many flavored vinegars, way ahead of the recent rage for these?) Leslie points out that the development of the rail system changed American eating habits as milk, meat, vegetables, and fruits were transported to the cities from outlying areas. The invention of the refrigerated boxcar made possible the shipment of fresh fruit from California to the East Coast in 1869, and in 1894 the W. Atlee Burpee Company introduced iceberg lettuce. Unlike earlier types of lettuce, it was hearty and could be transported great distances, and became available to the general public.

French was "best" for many years. French chefs had migrated

to the United States and presided over many of the more expensive restaurants. Menus were written in French because it was considered the language of haute cuisine. In the 1960s Julia Child made French cooking accessible to the American housewife and James Beard validated American cooking as a cuisine.

The Immigration Act of 1965 brought a flood of immigrants to the United States, and with them their ethnic cuisines. American cooks absorbed the techniques and concepts of these cuisines, adapting them to American foodstuffs and tastes.

With thorough research and many strong opinions, Leslie has developed her thesis that American cuisine continues to evolve.

**Helen Brody's** weekly column on seasonings in *The Hour*, Norwalk, Connecticut, now appears monthly on the website [cheftalk.com](http://cheftalk.com). She recently completed a project on seasonings for [hungryminds.com](http://hungryminds.com).

**Jayne Cohen** has recently published *The Gefilte Variations: 200 Inspired Re-creations of Classics from the Jewish Kitchen, with Menus, Stories and Traditions for the Holidays and Year-Round* (Scribners, 2000). It is a personal cookbook, referred to by Jayne "as the autobiography of one palate written in my culinary mother tongue, Jewish." In the book she offers new takes on old favorites, and while playful, they are firmly rooted in tradition and remain faithful to its spirit. Along with the family stories, there is a

great deal of food and cultural history. She tells stories of chasing after a recipe in southern France, looking for the long-forgotten community called the Popes' Jews (Jews from the four cities in Provence who were allowed to remain under the Pope's jurisdiction after they had been expelled from the rest of France).

**Bunny Crumpacker** has recently published *Old-Time Brand-Name Desserts: Recipes, Illustrations, and Advice from the Recipe Pamphlets of America's Most Trusted Foodmakers* (Smithmark, 1999). (See photo page 11.) It follows *The Old-Time Brand-Name Cookbook*, which sold 50,000 copies. Amazon.com describes *Brand Name Desserts* as a "comprehensive, nostalgia-rich collection of recipes, advice, and illustrations derived from the author's extensive collection of recipe pamphlet books that were published between 1875 and 1950." Organized around desserts, updated for today, the recipes and accompanying tips are culled from sources as diverse as Hershey's, Davis Baking Powder, Sealtest, Sunkist, and Maxwell House Coffee. Gorgeous authentic artwork complements vintage facts and recipes.

**Millie Delahunty** attended the June conference held by the Culinary Historians of Chicago titled "Grits and Greens and Everything In-Between: The Foods of the African Diaspora and American Transformations." **Andrew Smith**

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## Member News, from page 7

was a featured speaker. His topic, "Tomatoes, Peanuts and Okra: The African-American Influence on Mainstream Cookery," held a great deal of interest for the participants and led to much discussion.

**Annie Hauck-Lawson** is the Foodways Curator of the 2001 *Smithsonian Folklife Festival*. Using the themes of "New York Food Voices" and "Only in New York City," she is looking for people who prepare food in special, performative, traditional and/or expressive ways and who would like to be considered for roles as presenters in the festival which takes place over several days in late June and early July 2001 in Washington, D.C. The Smithsonian pays travel and lodging expenses and presenters receive an honorarium. If you or someone you know might be interested in being considered for participation, please contact Annie at [ahlawson@Brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:ahlawson@Brooklyn.cuny.edu) or (718) 499-0919.

**Joanne Lamb Hayes'** book, *Grandma's Wartime Kitchen: World War II and the Way We Cooked*, will be published by St. Martin's Press in October. It is an affectionate, historical look at the thrifty, patriotic way America cooked during the days of war rations and Victory menus. In collecting the recipes for the book, Joanne spoke to women who had cooked for their families during those trying times and they were unanimous in their feeling of pride in their contribution to the cause and their certainty that it was their responsibility to produce and provide as much food as possible for our allies in Europe. The more than

150 recipes are translated and tested for today's ingredients, but are still just as delicious, nourishing, and time-saving as they were fifty years ago. Surprisingly, many have come to be considered comfort foods today. Hayes, who has also just completed editing the 2000 issue of *Woman's Day Holiday Baking*, is food editor of [MyFoodDirectory.com](http://MyFoodDirectory.com) and [EverydayKitchen.com](http://EverydayKitchen.com), and is co-host of "The Everyday Kitchen" from noon to 2 p.m. on Talk-America Radio.

**Ben Kinmont** received a mention of his catalogues devoted to antiquarian gastronomy in the following publications: the December, 1999 issue of *Saveur*, ("A Menu of Food Books" written by Margo True and reproducing Brillat-Savarin's *Physiologie du Gout*, 1826 [1825], and Bruyerin's *De Re Cibaria*, 1560); *The Wall Street Journal*, December 31, 1999, ("Cooking into the Past" by Robert J. Hughes and reproducing the 1498 edition of Platina's *De Honestate Voluptate*, Parmentier's *Le Parfait Boulanger*, 1778, and the 1819 American edition of Rundell's *Domestic Cookery*); and, lastly, in *The Book Collector*, Winter 1999. Interested members who have not received a copy of the catalogue can write or e-mail him for a complimentary copy: Ben Kinmont, P.O. Box 2007, Church Street Station, NY, NY 10008-2007, [bkinmont@aol.com](mailto:bkinmont@aol.com)

**Judith Krall-Russo** is presenting a series of programs titled "The Apple Core of the Community" beginning November 11 at the Metlar/Bodine House Museum, Piscataway, N.J. (see area events calendar, page 9).

**Sheryl and Mel London's** eleventh cookbook together, published in April, celebrates the Gourmet Garage, a specialty foods wholesaler that made history in New York City 10 years ago by opening its doors to retail customers after its wholesale customers (chefs and restaurateurs) had finished their daily shopping. *The Gourmet Garage Cookbook* (Henry Holt, 2000) contains 200 recipes developed by the Londons especially for the book. They use familiar ingredients as well as ethnic and exotic foods that a decade ago were rarely obtainable outside of major metropolitan areas. It is a basic cookbook arranged by ingredients, with easy-to-follow recipes supported by charts whose content is tailored to the type of ingredient in question. Hundreds of useful shopping, storage, and cooking tips are interspersed with the recipes. *Booklist*, a trade publication, recommends the book for "...cookery reference collections, for its useful guides to all sorts of foodstuffs that early generations picked up by osmosis from older relatives and friends."

**Anne Mendelson** has been selected as a fellow at the New York Public Library's Center for Scholars from September 2000 through May 2001. She will be doing research at the center for her next book, a history of food in New York City from its earliest settlements to today.

**Marie Simmons**, in her recently published book, *The Good Egg: More than 200 Fresh Approaches from Soup to Dessert* (Houghton Mifflin, 1999), celebrates the versatile egg. Good cooks have always

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## Member News, from page 8

known that when you have an egg you can make a perfect meal at a moment's notice. Now nutritionists are confirming what our mothers told us: the egg is good food. The book is filled with new tips and techniques for scrambled, fried, baked, poached, and hard boiled eggs and reinterprets classics like quiche and custards. It includes extensive information about the egg and includes snippets of lore.

**Andrew Smith's** latest book, *Souper Tomatoes: The Story of America's Favorite Food*, is published by Rutgers University Press.

Tomato soup is near to being a symbol for America, and Andrew gives a detailed look at its history, beginning with its origin in prehistoric times and continuing up to the 19th century, when homemade soup had become an important American dish. The development of containers for the boiling of soup is a voyage of discovery. From pits to shells to bark containers and beyond, it makes an intriguing story.

Introduction and adoption of the tomato in Europe and America is thoroughly covered, as is the origin of homemade tomato soup in America. With the rise of the canning industry and the popularity of this form of preservation and storage, tomatoes were canned. Then the commercial canned tomato soup was developed, and as we say, the rest is history.

Those addicts of sun-dried tomatoes will be surprised to learn that in 1834 a traveler to Turkey returned with sun-dried tomatoes which had been concentrated to a thick paste, of which a small piece would flavor a batch of soup. Use

of tomatoes had become common by then and their inclusion in soup was quite usual.

The section called "Historical Recipes" whets the appetite. Its period ranges from 1770 to 1970 and includes not only soups, but also recipes using tomato soup as an ingredient. Remember the Tomato Spice Cake (which actually was not too bad)? Most interesting of the recipes is an 1867 one which explains in great detail the procedure for canning tomatoes in tin

cans at home. It even has soldering directions for can closure. The very complete notes, bibliography, resources, and index make it easy to find one's way through so many facts.

**Grace Young** won the International Association of Culinary Professionals award for best cookbook in the international category for her book, *The Wisdom of the Chinese Kitchen* (reviewed by Susan Miller in Winter, 2000 newsletter).

## AREA EVENTS

### Through May, 2001

Exhibition: *Dining In, Dining Out*  
The New Jersey Historical Society  
52 Park Place, Newark, NJ  
(973) 596-8500

Explores how diners, ethnic communities, and local produce growers have spawned a culture of dining traditions that have knit New Jersey's ethnic communities together. Along with the diners, the importance of church suppers, firehouse dinners, and taverns are examined. The interactive exhibition features historic and contemporary photographs, oral history recordings, video clips, and hands-on activities to draw visitors into these areas of dining experience that are germane to New Jersey's culinary landscape.

### November to March

*The Apple Core of the Community*  
The Metlar/Bodine Museum,  
Piscataway, NJ

A series of programs exploring the history, folklore, uses, and social

impact the apple has had on American life. For information call Hara Durkin, (732) 463-8363.

### November to December

Lectures: *Apples of Gold in Settings of Silver*  
Sotheby's Institute of Art, 1334 York Avenue at 72nd Street, New York, NY  
(212) 894-1111

Carolin Young discusses the evolution of French dining from the 17th to the early 19th centuries describes banquets intended to impress, seduce or astound, and explores out universal compulsion to dine elegantly. The dinners will be examined as complete works of art, that appeal to all five senses, and as a piece of theatre, in which the diners enact their given role. \$25 per program.

### MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13

"Seduction: Casanova's *Souper Intime*"

Writer, adventurer and seducer Giacomo Casanova lived in pur-

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## EVENTS, continued

suit of sensual pleasure, equally admiring elegant French cuisine and beautiful women.

### MONDAY, DECEMBER 11

“Diplomacy: Talleyrand at Table”

As the bombastic Emperor Napoleon set out to conquer Europe, Talleyrand appeased German and Spanish princes through the elegance of his dinner table where matters of seating and precedence were of utmost diplomatic importance.

### November to December

Lectures: *Rice and Rituals*

The Japan Society, 33 East 47th Street, New York, NY  
(212) 752-3015

### TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 28 6:30 p.m.

“The Way of Rice:  
Sushi and Beyond”

Naomi Duguid and Jeffrey Alford, author of *Seductions of Rice* followed by sushi and sake reception. \$10.00, students \$5.00.

### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2 10:00 a.m.

“Rice in Asia: The Grain that Shapes Cultures”

One day symposium exploring the culture of rice and its role in traditional foods prepared for holidays, festivals, and ceremonies in Japan, China, and southeast Asia. Buffet lunch and tastings \$45.00, Student \$15.00.

## WEBSITES OF INTEREST

### [www.foodbooks.com](http://www.foodbooks.com)

Joe Carlin's site is both an advertisement for his Food Heritage Press, which specializes in out-of-print cookbooks, and a provocative guide to food and culinary history links. There's an extensive list of reference books for the culinary historian, brief listing of libraries with notable culinary collections, and a number of links that would be useful to researchers and writers interested in the food industry.

—JEANNE LESEM

### [www.nyfoodmuseum.org](http://www.nyfoodmuseum.org)

Local history through food was the focus of the New York Food Museum's opening exhibit last April. Entitled “How New York Ate 100 Years Ago,” the exhibit is now on-line at [www.nyfoodmuseum.org](http://www.nyfoodmuseum.org). The site paints a picture of food production, consumption and economics at the point in time that Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island, Manhattan and the Bronx were consolidated into New York City.

Our town throbbed with food activities a century ago. Many streets that we walk today with our children were part of flourishing farms. The Newtown Pippin apple, a popular import in England grew in orchards near Greenpoint. Brooklyn was the brewing capital of the United States and New York was the oyster capital. Our shorelines teemed with oystering, clamming, crabbing, and fishing. Seeded oyster beds off the coastline of Staten Island yielded abundantly.

Two-tiered houseboats, where shellfish were brokered from the eager New York market, moored on the East and West sides of Manhattan. Turn of the century menus from restaurants like the Plaza, Delmonico's, and Louis Sherry's featured all types of seafood. Fishbones and bivalve shells were among the food artifacts recently recovered at two archaeological digs in Brooklyn—Weeksville in Bedford Stuyvesant and the Hendrick I. Lott House in Marine Park.

Massive immigration occurred in the early 20th century. Rural areas in New York City were quickly urbanized. Immigrants adapted foodways to new settings—newcomers sprouted vegetable gardens along Park Avenue railroad tracks, caught birds to eat in makeshift traps near Hunts Point Avenue, foraged for mushrooms and bitter greens in neighborhood parks, and fattened hens and pigs in their backyards. As tenements were built and overfilled in neighborhoods like Brownsville and the Lower East Side, pushcarts parked on curbsides. Carts, pushed by hand or drawn by horse, plied city streets with edibles—bread and cake, fish, locally grown fruits and vegetable, hot corn and penny ice. Along the Coney Island shoreline, Charles Feltmann rigged a pie cart with a steam kettle, selling hot sausage in a split milk roll, a prelude to today's hot dog cart. Enjoy these and other tasty morsels at the New York Food Museum on-line.

—ANNIE HAUCK-LAWSON



Adapted from "Be an Artist at the Gas Range" (1935),  
in *Old-Time Brand-Name Desserts* by Bunny Crumpacker

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## Give to a Friend: A CHNY Membership Application

At monthly meetings, the Culinary Historians of New York explore the historic, esoteric, and entertaining byways of food. These events are led by noted historians, authors, anthropologists, and food experts, many of whom are CHNY members.

Membership benefits include advance notice of all events, a membership directory, and the CHNY Newsletter with culinary history articles, news of members, events, and book reviews.

Individual – \$40 per year    Household – \$60 per year  
Corporate – \$125 per year    Student/Senior – \$20 per year  
Senior Household – \$30 per year

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Profession: \_\_\_\_\_

Culinary Interests (12 words max.– information to appear in the next CHNY directory)

Willing to help with: Programs: \_\_\_\_\_ Membership: \_\_\_\_\_ Newsletter: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to CHNY and send with completed form to: The Culinary Historians of New York, Wendy Clapp-Shapiro, PMB, 388 1173A Second Avenue, New York, NY 10021.

# UPCOMING PROGRAMS

**Tuesday, October 17**

Linda Lowry — “Wines of Thomas Jefferson”

**Thursday, November 16**

Raymond Sokolov — “Old World in the New:  
Food introduced to the Americas from Europe”

**Monday, December 18**

Stephen Schmidt — “Christmas Plum Pudding”

**Looking ahead to 2001:**

Olga Rigsby — “At Home in Cuba,”

Jayne Cohen — “The Gefilte Variations” – Updated Jewish Cuisine

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• **CULINARY HISTORIANS OF NEW YORK** •

c/o Wendy Clapp-Shapiro