

FOREWORD

Not everyone gets a chance to write a second cookbook. That's the reason I feel so grateful that this book came about. After the success of "Cooking Down East," I guess another book sort of became inevitable.

One of the main reasons it seemed justified was the recollection of how hard it had been to select the recipes for "Cooking Down East" when so many favorites were available. Many readers of my Maine Sunday Telegram column had urged me to write a book and be sure to include their favorites.

Space limitations made it impossible to include them all. And since then, dozens and dozens more have appeared in the column to add new favorites to the list. For those who like my first book and want more of the same, this book is the answer.

You know, we all have a special way of telling the Maine story. Happily, for 25 years my way has been through writing the "Cooking Down East" column in the Sunday Telegram.

Actually, it dates back longer than that for me. Like growing up down on the New Meadows River and learning at an early age what Down East cooking is all about.

Maine cooking is a way of life. It is evident as you use these recipes. You will find all kinds; they came from our family and they came from yours. If you felt proud enough of your family recipes to share them in my column, then they have deep meaning for all of us. They are cherished recipes.

Some of these recipes are old, making us aware that our forebears made do with what was at hand. They have been up-dated so amounts are definite and directions are clear, for that is the way we like to cook.

You will find your favorite contemporary recipes, too. They will have significance for you as they do for me, and you will agree they represent life in the Pine Tree State.

It is like opening a treasure chest to share a recipe. In Maine, we like to build our recipes around foods for which we are noted. We enjoy using recipes that show off our Maine food products to their best advantage. We like to think that as Maine cooks so do a lot of other people in the country, for this exchange of recipes is far-reaching.

Amazing as it seems, we still cook "from scratch," for it is our heritage. Of course, we like the convenience foods and all the short cuts. They are not exactly new to us; think of all the years we've been opening a can of soup. Now there are new and exciting ways we can produce a meal quickly when time is short.

Hopefully, this cook's tour I am taking you on that combines the old with the new will furnish you with reading and recipes to keep you cooking—the Maine way.

September, 1973

*from Keys Cooking the Maine Way,
Marjorie Standish*

Foreword

The very words "Maine cooking" start our memories flying backward. No matter how modern our kitchen, many recipes used there are ones handed down from one generation of Maine family to another.

For a number of years, I have been collecting recipes that are representative of the delicious food served in Maine. These recipes come from many sources, many have not appeared in any published cookbook, though these are all "tried and true" and have been used in "Cooking Down East", the newspaper food column I have written for 20 years.

Some of these recipes I learned from my mother who got them from her mother, others came from family members, neighbors, friends or acquaintances. Many were used by me in cooking schools when I worked for the Central Maine Power Company. Others were given to me by Maine housewives while I gave a range demonstration in their homes. Many have been sent from all over Maine by column friends. Or the telephone rings and someone has a recipe to share.

Yes, "Cooking Down East" has been a melting pot for Maine recipes. It has been a way of sharing. It is in answer to your many queries, "When are you going to write a cookbook?" that "Cooking Down East" is being published.

There is something special about a Maine recipe. It is remembering the smell of beans baking or seeing yeast rolls rising in their pans in a warm place. It could be the bubble of brown bread steaming in its kettle.

Our thoughts hover around the cookie jar and we remember sugar cookies, ginger snaps, brambles, hermits, filled cookies and hard gingerbread.

We open our old tin cake boxes and see ribbon cake, applesauce cake, dried apple cake, sponge cake, walnut cake. They may be frosted, more often they are not.

A heavy iron soup kettle may hold a Maine fish chowder or a lobster stew mellowing. A beef stew may have dumplings, but don't you dare to lift the cover 'til time is up.

Even sounds are remembered: of your mother chopping red flannel hash in a heavy black spider; the clank of the metal spoon as she cleaned out the last of the frosting; the rattle as the lid was removed from a jar of pickles just brought from the cellar.

When a State of Mainer thinks of apple pie he sets his belt buckle forward a notch. He remembers the flaky pastry of his grandmother's day and the Northern Spies sliced into that pastry for his favorite pie.

Yes, a goodly heritage is ours and we still share the joy of passing recipes along from one generation to another. It is being done today just as always, perhaps a little more carefully. The recipes in "Cooking Down East" have definite amounts, specific temperatures and times, a help especially to young cooks.

The choosing of these recipes has been done with care, for I believe others will prize them as I do, not only for their description of the good, plain and nourishing food that is traditional in Maine but because they represent life in the Pine Tree State.

November, 1968

from Cooking Down East, Marjorie Standish