



New Book Features Recipes and More

Patrick Henry didn't care for Thomas Jefferson's taste in food. Henry once disparaged his fellow Virginian for having "abjured his native victuals" in favor of French cuisine.

Jefferson did become extremely fond of French cooking during his five years as a diplomat in Paris. But the foods he favored after his return from Europe weren't exclusively French, and he never abandoned conventional Virginia fare. Jefferson's menus combined Continental cuisine with "native victuals," and this innovative blend of cultures, traditions, methods, and ingredients was widely praised by his guests.

To celebrate Jefferson's culinary contributions, and to coincide with the opening of Monticello's refurbished Kitchen, the Thomas Jefferson Foundation has published *Dining at Monticello: In Good Taste and Abundance*. Combining recipes, background essays, and more than 120 illustrations, the book presents a complete picture of the renowned hospitality offered at Jefferson's table.

Edited by noted culinary historian and food writer Damon Lee Fowler, *Dining at Monticello* was published in May.

"*Dining at Monticello* beautifully represents the culinary passions of America's third president," Walter Staid, chef and proprietor of the City Tavern in Philadelphia, said after previewing the book. "The elegance with which Thomas Jefferson married French and American cookery and dining traditions continues to inspire us. Historians, home cooks,



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Monticello



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and chefs alike are sure to enjoy and learn from this comprehensive work.”

The book features approximately 80 recipes. Many were selected from Jefferson family manuscripts, with some written in Jefferson’s own hand. Others are from collections assembled by his granddaughters and great-granddaughters, including recipes attributed to Martha Jefferson Randolph, Jefferson’s daughter; Etienne Lemaire, Jefferson’s maitre d’hôtel during his presidency; and James Hemings, the first of Jefferson’s enslaved cooks to be trained in French cookery. Updated by Fowler, author of the critically praised *Classical Southern Cooking: A Celebration of the Cuisine of the Old South*, the recipes are authentic to the period yet accessible to today’s home cook.

The book’s 10 introductory essays, written by Monticello staff members and outside experts, provide background context for the recipes. The essays illuminate all aspects of food and drink at Jefferson’s home, ranging from the groceries, kitchenware, and wines imported from Europe to the enslaved African Americans who participated in this rich food culture at every step. In addition to addressing larger issues related to cuisine and hospitality at Monticello, the book also answers frequently asked questions (“Was Jefferson a vegetarian?”) and addresses in authoritative yet lively fashion such food lore as Jefferson’s interest in or promotion of tomatoes, ice cream, french fries, and pasta.

Dining at Monticello is heavily illustrated with color photographs that showcase the Dining Room and its tableware; the recently renovated Kitchen, Cook’s Room, and Beer Cellar; and the restored gardens and orchards that supplied Jefferson’s table. The book also shows some original documents that shed light on Jefferson’s hospitality, including one of his bi-weekly calculations of the cost of serving dinner to guests at the President’s House (computed per person) and his famous recipe for vanilla ice cream.

“This book beautifully describes the vital relationship between



11 / Photo: Lisa Orndorff

Beef Soup Monticello, one of the more than 80 recipes featured in “Dining at Monticello.”



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the garden and the table,” said Alice Waters, owner of the Chez Panisse Restaurant, in Berkeley, Calif. “It is enlightening to read about a president who understood and elevated agrarian values and the beauty of seasonal food.”

Dining at Monticello (hardcover, 208 pages, \$35) is available in bookstores, at the two Monticello Museum Shops, by telephone at (800) 243-1743, and online through the Web site monticello.org.

The Thomas Jefferson Foundation regularly publishes both scholarly studies and general-audience books about Monticello, Jefferson, and his life and times. Beth Cheuk is the Foundation’s publications coordinator. The University of North Carolina Press of Chapel Hill, N.C., is the exclusive trade distributor for all Foundation publications.

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