

ESSENTIAL BEETON

Recipes and tips from the original domestic goddess



ISABELLA BEETON

Essential Beeton
Isabella Beeton
Edited by Alastair Williams

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PREFACE

I must frankly own, that if I had known, beforehand, that this book would have cost me the labour which it has, I should never have been courageous enough to commence it. What moved me, in the first instance, to attempt a work like this, was the discomfort and suffering which I had seen brought upon men and women by household mismanagement. I have always thought that there is no more fruitful source of family discontent than a housewife's badly-cooked dinners and untidy ways. Men are now so well served out of doors,—at their clubs, well-ordered taverns, and dining-houses, that in order to compete with the attractions of these places, a mistress must be thoroughly acquainted with the theory and practice of cookery, as well as be perfectly conversant with all the other arts of making and keeping a comfortable home.

In this book I have attempted to give, under the chapters devoted to cookery, an intelligible arrangement to every recipe, a list of the *ingredients*, a plain statement of the *mode* of preparing each dish, and a careful estimate of its *cost*, the *number of people* for whom it is *sufficient*, and the time when it is *seasonable*. For the matter of the recipes, I am indebted, in some measure, to many correspondents of the "Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine," who have obligingly placed at my disposal their formulas for many original preparations. A large private circle has also rendered me considerable service. A diligent study

of the works of the best modern writers on cookery was also necessary to the faithful fulfilment of my task. Friends in England, Scotland, Ireland, France, and Germany, have also very materially aided me. I have paid great attention to those recipes which come under the head of "COLD MEAT COOKERY." But in the department belonging to the cook I have striven, too, to make my work something more than a Cookery Book, and have, therefore, on the best authority that I could obtain, given an account of the natural history of the animals and vegetables which we use as food. I have followed the animal from his birth to his appearance on the table; have described the manner of feeding him, and of slaying him, the position of his various joints, and, after giving the recipes, have described the modes of carving Meat, Poultry, and Game. Skilful artists have designed the numerous drawings which appear in this work, and which illustrate, better than any description, many important and interesting items.

I wish here to acknowledge the kind letters and congratulations I have received during the progress of this work, and have only further to add, that I trust the result of the four years' incessant labour which I have expended will not be altogether unacceptable to some of my countrymen and countrywomen.

ISABELLA BEETON

INTRODUCTION

The original, and almost certainly unrivalled, domestic goddess Isabella Beeton brought the art of successful home management to the Victorian masses. She worked tirelessly during her short life to provide the nineteenth century middle classes with what were considered to be essential domestic management skills of the day.

The first edition of the mammoth tome *Beeton's Household Management* was published in 1861 by her husband Samuel. This culinary and domestic bible, for which Isabella Beeton is still celebrated today, is the amalgamation of 24 monthly editions of the *English Woman's Domestic Magazine*, produced between 1859 and 1861.

Her mission was to educate people to live, as she put it, 'economically, tastefully and well'. Mrs Beeton's guide is crammed with numerous ideas, from how to employ and treat the servants to knocking together a prawn soup or hashed goose. Taste and etiquette are accounted for in the form of helpful instructions on how to make a pomade for the hair, renew velvet and clean jewellery. The economics of household management are also meticulously detailed; for a nineteenth century readership, the apparently lavish recipe and entertainment suggestions in fact successfully combined good living with economy.

Although twenty-first century society appears to have learnt little from Isabella Beeton's wise words when it comes to manners and etiquette, many of her tried and tested recipes can still be enjoyed today. The advent of the celebrity chef and subsequent cookbooks pay little heed to traditional recipes for practical, everyday foods such as cakes, pies and gravies. In this collection you will find the very best of Isabella Beeton's recipes and tips, offering useful advice, such as how to make the perfect stock, as well as fun and downright absurd suggestions, including how to dress a sheep's head. Britain's archetypal agony aunt even presents some age-old health and beauty hints; for example, the unmissable sections on how to apply leeches and how to promote hair growth.

For a timeless manual on all things domestic, Mrs Beeton's book continues to reign.

ALASTAIR WILLIAMS

GOLDEN RULES FOR THE KITCHEN

Without *cleanliness* and *punctuality* good
Cooking is *impossible*.

Leave nothing *dirty*; *clean and clear as you go*.
A time for everything, and *everything in time*.

A good Cook *wastes nothing*.

An hour *lost in the morning* has to be run after *all day*.

Haste *without hurry* saves worry, fuss and flurry.

Stew *boiled* is Stew *spoiled*.

Strong fire for *Roasting*; *clear* fire for *Broiling*.

Wash Vegetables in *three* waters.

Boil fish *quickly*, meat *slowly*.

EXPLANATION OF
FRENCH TERMS
USED IN MODERN
HOUSEHOLD
COOKERY



ASPIC.—A savoury jelly, used as an exterior moulding for cold game, poultry, fish, &c. This, being of a transparent nature, allows the bird which it covers to be seen through it. This may also be used for decorating or garnishing.

ASSIETTE (plate).—*Assiettes* are the small *entrées* and *hors-d'oeuvres*, the quantity of which does not exceed what a plate will hold. At dessert, fruits, cheese, chestnuts, biscuits, &c., if served upon a plate, are termed *assiettes*.

ASSIETTE VOLANTE is a dish which a servant hands round to the guests, but is not placed upon the table. Small cheese soufflés and different dishes, which ought to be served very hot, are frequently made *assiettes volantes*.

AU-BLEU.—Fish dressed in such a manner as to have a *bluish* appearance.

BAIN-MARIE.—An open saucepan or kettle of nearly boiling water, in which a smaller vessel can be set for cooking and warming. This is very useful for keeping articles hot, without altering their quantity or quality. If you keep sauce, broth, or soup by the fireside, the soup reduces and becomes too strong, and the sauce thickens as well as reduces; but this is prevented by using the *bain-marie*, in which the water should be very hot, but not boiling.

BÉCHAMEL.—French white sauce, now frequently used in English cookery.

BLANCH.—To whiten poultry, vegetables, fruit, &c., by plunging them into boiling water for a short

time, and afterwards plunging them into cold water, there to remain until they are cold.

BLANQUETTE.—A sort of fricassee.

BOUILLI.—Beef or other meat boiled; but, generally speaking, boiled beef is understood by the term.

BOUILLIE.—A French dish resembling hasty-pudding.

BOUILLON.—A thin broth or soup.

BRAISE.—To stew meat with fat bacon until it is tender, it having previously been blanched.

BRAISIÈRE.—A saucepan having a lid with ledges, to put fire on the top.

BRIDER.—To pass a packthread through poultry, game, &c., to keep together their members.

CARAMEL (burnt sugar).—This is made with a piece of sugar, of the size of a nut, browned in the bottom of a saucepan; upon which a cupful of stock is gradually poured, stirring all the time a glass of broth, little by little. It may be used with the feather of a quill, to colour meats, such as the upper part of fricandeaux; and to impart colour to sauces. Caramel made with water instead of stock may be used to colour *compôtes* and other *entremets*.

CASSEROLE.—A crust of rice, which, after having been moulded into the form of a pie, is baked, and then filled with a fricassee of white meat or a purée of game.

COMPÔTE.—A stew, as of fruit or pigeons.

CONSOMMÉ.—Rich stock, or gravy.

CROQUETTE.—Ball of fried rice or potatoes.

CROUTONS.—Sippets of bread.

DAUBIÈRE.—An oval stewpan, in which *daubes* are cooked; *daubes* being meat or fowl stewed in sauce.

DÉOSSER.—To *bone*, or take out the bones from poultry, game, or fish. This is an operation requiring considerable experience.

ENTRÉES.—Small side or corner dishes, served with the first course.

ENTREMETS.—Small side or corner dishes, served with the second course.

ESCALOPES.—Collops; small, round, thin pieces of tender meat, or of fish, beaten with the handle of a strong knife to make them tender.

FEUILLETAGE.—Puff-paste.

FLAMBER.—To singe fowl or game, after they have been picked.

FONCER.—To put in the bottom of a saucepan slices of ham, veal, or thin broad slices of bacon.

GALETTE.—A broad thin cake.

GÂTEAU.—A cake, correctly speaking; but used sometimes to denote a pudding and a kind of tart.

GLACER.—To glaze, or spread upon hot meats, or larded fowl, a thick and rich sauce or gravy, called *glaze*. This is laid on with a feather or brush, and in confectionery the term means to ice fruits and pastry with sugar, which glistens on hardening.

HORS-D'OEUVRES.—Small dishes, or *assiettes volantes* of sardines, anchovies, and other relishes of this kind, served to the guests during the first course.

LIT.—A bed or layer; articles in thin slices are placed in layers, other articles, or seasoning, being laid between them.

MAIGRE.—Broth, soup, or gravy, made without meat.

MATELOTE.—A rich fish-stew, which is generally composed of carp, eels, trout, or barbel. It is made with wine.

MAYONNAISE.—Cold sauce, or salad dressing.

MENU.—The bill of fare.

MERINGUE.—A kind of icing, made of whites of eggs and sugar, well beaten.

MIROTON.—Larger slices of meat than collops; such as slices of beef for a vinaigrette, or ragout or stew of onions.

MOUILLER.—To add water, broth, or other liquid, during the cooking.

PANER.—To cover over with very fine crumbs of bread, meats, or any other articles to be cooked on the gridiron, in the oven, or frying-pan.

PIQUER.—To lard with strips of fat bacon, poultry, game, meat, &c. This should always be done according to the vein of the meat, so that in carving you slice the bacon across as well as the meat.

POÊLÉE.—Stock used instead of water for boiling turkeys, sweetbreads, fowls, and vegetables, to render them less insipid. This is rather an expensive preparation.

PURÉE.—Vegetables, or meat reduced to a very smooth pulp, which is afterwards mixed with

enough liquid to make it of the consistency of very thick soup.

RAGOÛT.—Stew or hash.

REMOULADE.—Salad dressing.

RISSOLES.—Pastry, made of light puff-paste, and cut into various forms, and fried. They may be filled with fish, meat, or sweets.

ROUX.—Brown and white; French thickening.

SALMI.—Ragout of game previously roasted.

SAUCE PIQUANTE.—A sharp sauce, in which somewhat of a vinegar flavour predominates.

SAUTER.—To dress with sauce in a saucepan, repeatedly moving it about.

TAMIS.—Tammy, a sort of open cloth or sieve through which to strain broth and sauces, so as to rid them of small bones, froth, &c.

TOURTE.—Tart. Fruit pie.

TROUSSER.—To truss a bird; to put together the body and tie the wings and thighs, in order to round it for roasting or boiling, each being tied then with packthread, to keep it in the required form.

VOL-AU-VENT.—A rich crust of very fine puff-paste, which may be filled with various delicate ragouts or fricassees, of fish, flesh, or fowl. Fruit may also be inclosed in a *vol-au-vent*.

CHAPTER ONE

RECIPES FOR
SOUPS



