



America's Best Lost Recipes

Cook's Country Magazine (Editor)

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Thousands of home cooks from around the country participated in the "Cooks Country" Heirloom Recipe Preservation Project, sending in recipes that, in some instances, had been in their families for generations. The result is this collection of more than 120 old-fashioned recipes that deserve a place in home kitchens today. Americas Test Kitchen

America's Best Lost Recipes Details

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From Reader Review America's Best Lost Recipes for online ebook

Dixie Diamond says

I checked this out from the library but the jury is still out on whether or not I'll buy my own copy. **Amended: I did not buy it.**

It looks yummy and nothing in it appears to be difficult to make, but I sort of doubt I need another dessert-laden fat-sugar-carb cookbook. If I do end up getting it, I think I'll be penciling in a lot of reduced sugar and fat measurements.

In general, I'm suspicious of the "America's Test Kitchen" cooking philosophy. They tend to favor heavy, bland, Midwestern/Northeastern Food (sweet cornbread! Blargh!). They often interfere considerably with traditional ingredients and preparation methods, which is not a problem if you're going for taste but means that their authenticity is unreliable. So, really--these aren't the actual "lost" recipes; these are rediscovered-and-made-over recipes.

They also seem to feel that everything can be improved with butter and cream. I can't remember the last time I bought cream or sour cream, and yet they seem to use one or the other, or both, in every episode. Their hot milk sponge cake recipe is identical to the one my aunt gave us except that ATK's added a whole stick of butter, and my aunt's is the original version with no butter at all. We--my aunt, my mother, and I, who have been baking this for 30+ years--are of the opinion that the old recipe was fine without all that extra fat.

The tips were nice but it was pretentious of them to pretend that they were ATK innovations. Whipping cream in a chilled bowl with chilled blades is not an ATK discovery.

I also saw it noted somewhere (Amazon book reviews, maybe?) that the recipes in this are strictly WASP, which I thought was hilarious but accurate. The recipes are submitted from several regions but all of them are in the "nonthreatening" flavor range. I hope this means that Southwestern, Cajun, and Creole cooks just didn't submit recipes, rather than that they weren't deemed good or lost enough to be included.

Carina says

I've been having so much fun going through this recipe collection. The recipes are old-fashioned and highly connected to the immigrants of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. There are plenty of German, Polish, and other central European inspired recipes interpreted through the east coast and mid west portions of America. The recipes are delicious and the instructions clear. Each recipe contains a short history as well as specific pitfalls to avoid. I bought the book for the Runza recipe and kept the book for all the rest.

Nancy says

I received this book as a gift, and it was one of the best gifts I've ever received. Some of the recipes are intriguing, particularly the stories behind them. One recipe, in particular, is worth the entire book. My grandmother made a wonderful pound cake--the best pound cake I've ever tasted. However, when she died,

the recipe died with her. Until I opened this book and found the recipe for "Cold Oven Pound Cake". The picture looked just like my grandma's cake, but I couldn't be sure. Then, I screwed up my courage and made the cake. When I took the first bite, my eyes filled with tears. It was exactly like my grandma's cake. It was like she was there with me in the room.

Christabelle says

This is my favorite cookbook! From thousands of entries, America's Test Kitchen whittled the pile down to the most promising recipes to include in this cookbook. It holds heritage, having recipes from a group of people (immigrants from all over) or a time in history (there is a recipe for a cake from World War II era that is made with the limited rations they had at hand), and everything has a story. So far I haven't come across a recipe I have not liked and it makes me anxious to try more.

Andee says

Best cookbook ever! I LOVE the series of books they did - America's best lost suppers, desserts, pot luck recipes, etc., they are all exquisite! The personal stories from each of the family recipes is just phenomenal!

Cindy says

OK, I haven't tried Mile High Bologna Pie (and never will), but there are a few in here that sound yummy. Mostly desserts, of course, because that's what I like best. Also some interesting breads in here too. And fun stories to read. But an awful lot of fat in here, and no nutritional info. I do like that they explain why they change things and what works best. One to look at, maybe not one to buy.

Miriam says

Monica said noms.

Crystal says

I haven't tried any of the recipes in this cookbook yet, although I read through every recipe today as soon as I got the book, and bookmarked quite a few that I would like to try "at some point". This book is almost as much a book of history, cultural and culinary, as it is a cookbook. a lot of the recipes look delicious, and some of them are simple. But a lot of them look more complex, or at least more labor-intensive/ time-consuming than my usual quick fix cooking allows for. I WILL try some of these out, when I have both extra time and inclination. I'm glad I got it, no matter what--all the little paragraphs about each recipe were really interesting and even educational. Did you know that for its first seven years of sale, 7-Up was called Bib-Label Lithiated Lemon-Lime Soda? well, now both of us do. :)

Theresa says

I really enjoyed this cookbook! I checked it out of the local library and after reading and using some of the recipes, I decided to purchase the book!

As the editor writes, "Just because something is old doesn't mean it's any darn good. So when we approached the notion of seeking out 'lost recipes' from around the country, we were looking for the something special, recipes that tasted great but also recipes that told a story, that truly represented a window into the American experience. Each and every recipe had to be food we would be eager to make that night for dinner."

Each of the 121 recipes includes a background story along with additional notes from the test kitchen. Often photos accompany the recipe. Clear preparation directions are given. Additional cooking helps are featured at the back of the cookbook.

The chapters include Starters, Salads, Sides and Sauces; Soups, Stews and main Courses; Breakfast and Breads; Cakes; Pies, Puddings, and Fruit Desserts; and Cookies and Candies.

Betty says

I LOVE this book! I found many old recipes that I remember from my childhood. I was a little surprised that "Mock Duck" wasn't one that was submitted, we ate that a lot when we were young. A lot of the recipes have withstood time, such as Wacky Cake, which I think still shows up here and there. Having been subjected to such things as "Tripe & Onions" during the hard times (don't worry, this is one lost recipe that is not included), I'm not surprised that most of the recipes are sweet. Also, a lot of wartime recipes got "Lost" once sugar was once more available, and many of these recipes, though sweet, did not use a lot of sugar.

I found the Notes very helpful & consistently beneficial, and also loved the stories. Unfortunately, I have not made any of these recipes yet (not recently at any rate, but having made them in the past and comparing the recipes I have no doubt whatsoever that they will be excellent and turn out as expected). Since I reviewed an advance copy, I assume in the final printing those gorgeous photos will be in colour! And who would not be interested in a recipe called "Naked Ladies with their Legs Crossed"!

I am so thankful that there are conversion charts! As an older Canadian, I speak Fahrenheit, quarts, tablespoons and pounds much better than what I call "metricese"! And of course almost all my recipes are older than our metric.

Besides Wacky Cake, I remember having eaten: Chocolate Mayonnaise Cake, Red Velvet Cake (earlier recipe) and Hot Milk Cake. These were usually our birthday cakes. However, there are many more recipes that I have known about but never had.

Anxious to try: 7-Up Cake, Monkey Bread, Pioneer Bread, Just Chicken Pie, Glazed Pork with Caramelized Pears and Sweet Potatoes, ... Hmmm, guess I'll have to try most of them! Maybe not the Mile High Bologna Pie (but may substitute the meat! Maybe moose sausage? Keep it heritage...)

Samantha says

This book is so awesome. The recipes are wonderful (sometimes wacky -- want to add some Naked Ladies Crossing Their Legs to your next brunch menu?), the photos are crisp and attractive, and best of all, each recipe comes with an introduction explaining its origin. I would read this book even if I didn't love to bake, just to get the history of some of these amazing dishes in American culinary history. Cook's Country makes a habit of doing EXTENSIVE testing of the recipes they publish -- they try many permutations of a recipe to make sure that they find the best-tasting, most reliable way to make the dish. It's kind of a scientific approach to cooking and baking. I adore this book!

Kelly says

I agree with the criticisms I've read in the past that ATK uses entirely too much butter and fat in their recipes - which is quite annoying in a compilation such as this, where they took classic recipes and altered them to be what is perceived to be more appealing to the modern palate. But, this book is a good starting point; I found it at the library and showed it to my mother: she remembers many of the recipes from when she was young and we've had fun playing around with some of them.

Garrick says

This great cookbook comes from America's Test Kitchen, so you *know* the recipes work. That said, there are only a half dozen I'm going to copy before returning to the library. Sad thing is, a good many of these recipes have no holding time. I can't eat 36 cookies in three days, for instance (did I mention I'm a single guy?)

So, if you have a family or an event to attend, this cookbook is for **you!**

C says

An interesting book to peruse and see if anything looks good. To me, not much did. You may feel differently.

Kendra says

I liked reading this, but I may change my mind after I try making a few things. I only say that because I haven't much liked the Cook's/Christopher Kimball recipes I've tried -- they tend to be far too bland for my taste. But I'm willing to give it a shot!

Update: Still too bland, even for my kids.

