

SOME BOOKS NEED TO BE SHARED

by Fiona Lucas

Over the past few months I have read these three very different food books:

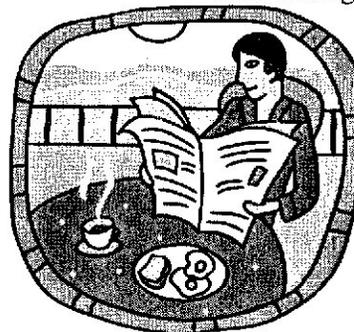
Eric Schlosser. *Fast Food Nation: the Dark Side of the All-American Meal.* Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001. This is an eye-opener. You owe it to yourself to read it in order to understand how fries and hamburgers come to be on your dinner plate in a fast food restaurant. In fact, if you read this book, you should never walk through the doors of a fast food restaurant ever again.

Schlosser writes in a blunt, straightforward, factual manner that horrifies, educates and depresses. *Fast Food Nation* is a severe indictment of the greedy, environmentally- and staff-unfriendly business ethics that support, promote and proliferate fast foods. Also convicted are consumers who choose to buy cheaply rather than ethically. Schlosser is writing about the United States, but Canada is implicated too. Do you know what that steer you just ate was fed? How quickly and possibly unhygienically it was slaughtered? Do you know that most independent potato farmers find it difficult to make a living wage because the enormous fast food and multi-national supermarkets refuse to pay it to them? Do you care that ill-trained and ill-paid teenagers and illegal migrant workers are the main employees of fast food chains and meat slaughterhouses in the States?

Ask about the source of meat and fish you buy at your fast food restaurant (if you ever go into one again), at your favourite eatery and your preferred supermarket. Request supermarkets label the origin of their produce, fish and meat. Patronize your local artisanal food producers, like butchers, bakers, grocers and farmers. Buy organic, local and seasonal when you can. Buy Ontario born and raised. If you can afford it pay extra for quality.

Austin Clarke. *Pig Tails 'n Bread Fruit: Rituals of Slave Food, A Barbadian Memoir.* Toronto: Random House Canada, 1999. A delightful read. Writing in a witty and poetic semblance of West Indian dialect, overlaid with the educated language of the privately-schooled, Clarke makes the link between historic slave food and the traditional Barbadian food he grew up with in the 1930s and 40s. It was "the food of the gods and the slaves of Barbados."

Part memoir, part recipe book and part cultural study, Clarke walks his urban Canadian readers through the steps to make meals like Meal-Corn with Cou-Cou, Split Pea Soup, and Oxtails with Mushrooms and Rice, just like his mother and aunts did. "My mother, and all those other women who surrounded me, ignored the hot-cuisine of France, convinced that what came out of their pots, resting on three rocks placed in the shape of a triangle, was superior to anything cooked in France." You know that this cultured and well-travelled Barbadian man doesn't disagree.

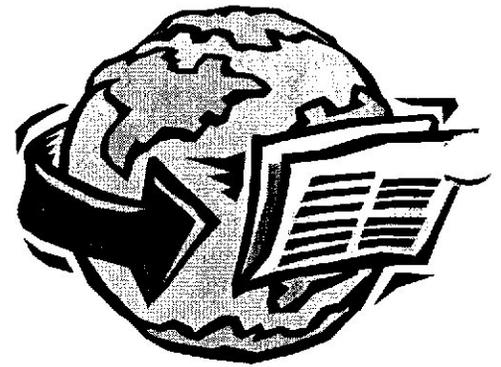


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CULINARY CONNECTIONS

by Christine Lupton



One of the most interesting developments arising from our recent "constitutional" talks has been the surprise of some old and new members of other "like-minded" culinary groups located around the world. In our autumn 1995 issue, we listed 7 American culinary historian organizations which CHO exchanged newsletters with at that time. Today, there are approximately 13 such groups, with only a few offering a newsletter to their members. This on-going column seeks to inform our members of the goings-on of these groups. Naturally the program dates are past due, but the information provided can stimulate discussion about what similar groups are organizing with their members.

PROGRAM NOTES

The Culinary Historians of Southern California *A Bowl and a Basket-- under the Stars*, Saturday, April 12, 2003, 10:30 a.m. at the Central Library, Mark Taper Auditorium.

Carol Merrill-Mirsky, Ph.D., Director of the Hollywood Bowl Museum, will take a look back over food and festivities at the Bowl. Seasoned picnickers, from the Los Angeles Philharmonic, will show how tastes and techniques have changed.

Culinary Historians of New York -*International Influences on Appalachian Cooking*.

Matt and Ted Lee, Thursday May 15, 2003. CHNY joins with Slow Food NYC to present this program. The Lee brothers have been researching Appalachian cooking for their forthcoming book. There will be a tasting of dishes representative of the region. This program also serves as an exchange of information between CHNY members and the members of Slow food.

Culinary Historians of Washington, D.C. *Reading Community Cookbooks: Recipes, History, Values, and More*, by Anne Bower, Sunday, May 18, 4-6 p.m. At the Eckles Library of the George Washington University at Mount Vernon College. Anne Bower who is the author of *Epistolary Responses*, and editor of *Recipes for Reading: Community Cookbooks, Stories and Histories* will address the group on reading community cookbooks.

CULINARY HISTORIAN ORGANIZATIONS

Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor

Contact: Randy K. Schwartz

Email: rschw45251@aol.com

Culinary Historians of Boston

Contact: Joe Carlin

Email: chob@foodbooks.com

Web site: www.foodbooks.com/foodlink

Culinary Historians of Ontario - *Annual General Meeting*

Sunday, September 21, 2003 - 10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Montgomery's Inn - 4709 Dundas Street West, (at Islington Avenue)

Toronto, Ont. Phone: 416-394-8113.

Discussion of Draft Constitution and First slate of Officers under New Constitution will be Elected! Please plan to attend and participate!

The Story of the Lamb

by Frances Hoffman



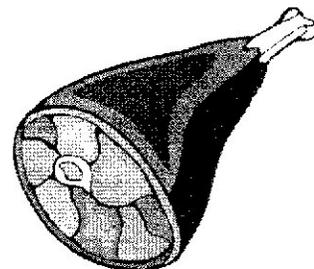
As Ryan Taylor and I commence research for a publication about Victorian cooking, we find ourselves occasionally taking on somewhat novel culinary tasks. To this end I'm presently elbow deep in lamb, having bought a whole one (10 months old) from a neighbouring farmer. As requested, he had killed, gutted and skinned it. He'd also removed the head. Since this was my first experience of "cutting up" I hadn't felt quite brave enough to tackle the head-removal part myself, but had, in an effort to save face, asked for the tongue, kidney and liver.

I was caught off-guard when the creature finally did arrive. I'd requested it several weeks earlier but because of his busy schedule, the farmer was unable to promise exactly when he'd get the job done. Now, here he was at my door with a large object covered in black plastic draped over his shoulder, and two little children in tow. Trying to sound as nonchalant as possible, I asked him to deposit it on my kitchen table. We dealt with the financial end of things, chatted about the weather and about the recent funeral in the neighbourhood. Then I rooted around for cookies for the two little ones. When no other delaying tactics could be found, I cautiously placed my hands upon the large black mound. It was still warm! Well of course it was, the farmer explained, he'd only killed it an hour since. Then off he went, leaving me to decide how best to begin. Removing the plastic was a good start.

It would be an untruth to say that I didn't experience a moment or two of mild panic at this point, wondering why I'd been foolish enough to let myself in for what seemed to be such a daunting task. As a young girl it often fell to me to pluck and eviscerate the hens which my father raised for the table, but I'd never had dealings with larger creatures. First things first: A good saw and a few sharp knives were needed. My husband, looking slightly paler than usual, made a quick retreat to search the garage for a suitable saw. Once it was found and delivered, he declared that the lane-way absolutely had to be ploughed out and he promptly disappeared for a couple of hours.

It took a little more than a wee bit of gumption for me to free the carcass from the black plastic, but once this was accomplished I felt quite a bit better. "Try to think of it as a piece of sculpture, not as a dead animal" my daughter advised over the phone. Easy to say, thought I. My next task was to gather together a collection of suitable books to use as guides to cutting. Among them, Isabella Beeton, Eliza Acton and Mary Jewry told me everything I needed to know. After the first tentative cut, the work progressed quite satisfactorily. I was somewhat surprised at the amount of muscle power needed to cut through some of the bones. This was particularly so as I attempted to cut through the spine in an effort to produce perfectly formed chops. In the end I settled for simply trimming the meat free, rather than cutting through since I lacked equipment for doing this. Although they will taste every bit as delicious as professionally cut chops, mine appear to be ribs with medallions of lean meat dangling from the ends. During a recent conversation with my butcher, I learned two things. First, I ought to have allowed the carcass to cool. Cutting it while warm meant that it was rather squirmy, consequently much harder to manage. Secondly, I ought to have had a good meat cleaver to chop through the spine. Both good, old-fashioned commonsense suggestions. Next time I'll know better!

I ended up with about fifty-five pounds of meat. This consisted of an array of fairly decent-looking joints - shoulders, legs, neck. From the loin region I somehow managed to create a rolled, boneless joint which I plan to stuff prior to roasting. Mary Jewry cautions: "The loin is seldom roasted, on account of its small weight, but for families of two ladies or a single person it will be found very delicate."



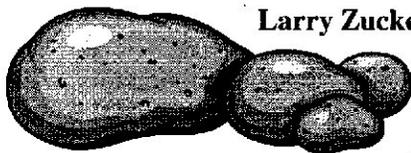
If this is anything to go by, that particular joint may not go as far as it looks like it should. Then there are braising ribs, assorted chops as well as bits of this and that for Irish Stews. To save my arms some level of discomfort, I decided to leave both sides of the higher loin connected, rather than separating them. This results in a joint shaped as a saddle, which takes its name from that very article. Mrs. Beeton had the following to say about it: "This joint is now very much in vogue and is generally considered a nice one for a small party." I must keep this in mind. I soaked the tongue in water for twenty-four hours, as per directions for ox tongue. I searched for lamb's tongue recipes but could find none. After long hours of cooking for such little return, I think I now know why no such recipes exist. I needed to simmer it for about two hours before I was able to peel the outer tough skin. I kept taking it out every half-hour to test. Once it was cooked and permitted to cool, I thinly sliced it. Next morning I fried it along with onion and the kidney, serving it up under the grand heading "An Old Fashioned English Country Breakfast." Unfortunately, neither Peter nor I enjoyed it, but then one lamb's tongue only results in about two mouthfuls so it was not too arduous a task to chew our way through it.

Following the advice of these old cookbooks, I managed to utilize just about everything. All scraps of meat and bones went into the stockpot and produced a truly excellent stock. Fat trimmed from joints was scooped up and slowly rendered. Anne Cobbett advises placing it in a pan by a warm fire, slowly allowing it to melt. I put the lot in a large pot on the lowest heat on the stove. After several hours I decided to raise the heat some because it wasn't melting very much. I suppose I could have accomplished the same by placing the pot right into a low oven, simply leaving it there for a few hours. Cobbett suggests the resulting fat "is good for peas soup, and for plain pastry." I wonder what an apple pie made with lamb fat will taste like? I rather think I'll test it in meat pie pastry first.

As I laboured at this task, and I don't use this word lightly, I thought of women from the past who did this sort of thing as a matter of course. I especially thought of my third great-grandmother who, in the 1840's and '50's, kept house for a bachelor farmer and his workers at a rather desolate farm high on the Yorkshire moors. According to information on census returns, she was the only woman residing there so there's no doubt that her life was one long grind of heavy-duty chores. Yorkshire, being famous for sheep rearing means she'd have served up many a lamb. I rather like to think that she may have helped to guide my hands as I went about cutting up my lamb, although I'm sure she'd have had a good chuckle had she observed my trial and error method. Never mind, as I write, the fragrance of roasting meat wafts throughout the house. Needless to say, I'm already having an enormous amount of fun preparing wonderful dishes.



SOME BOOKS NEED TO BE SHARED *continued from page 1.*



Larry Zuckerman. *The Potato: How the Humble Spud Rescued the Western World.* New York: North Point Press, a Division of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998. Zuckerman demonstrates that the

"humble spud" has a place in our Western society that is as epic as things more obvious, like the railway. His entertaining story proves

my point, the one I make whenever I train new cooks in the practice of culinary history in a period kitchen in an historic house museum. And that is: *every other topic you can possibly imagine has a food connection.* This book may ostensibly be about a single starchy and versatile vegetable, but it's actually about marriage customs, housework, cultural and religious identity, immigration patterns, fingernails, the workplace, agricultural adaptation, welfare policies, fishing for cod – you name it. And you thought potatoes were merely calorie-carriers.

Fiona Lucas, Co-Founder of CHO

HARRICO MUTTON SOUP

Original Receipt

Dr. William Kitchiner, *The Cook's Oracle*, (London: John Hatchard, Picadilly, 2nd edition, 1818), page 290, number 202.

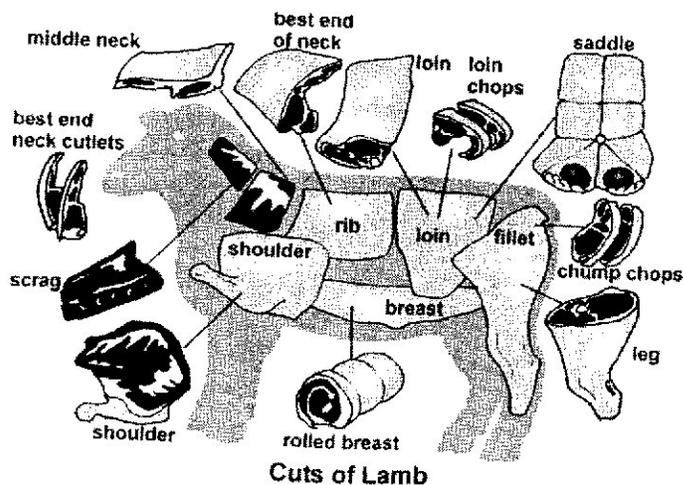
Divide a large neck of mutton into two parts, put the scrag end into a stewpan, with four large turnips, and two carrots, a large onion cut in two, and a gallon of water; let it stew gently over a very slow fire for two hours, till the mutton is done enough, but not till it is boiled to rags: then bruise two of the turnips, and one of the carrots through a cullender, and put them into the soup, to thicken it: cut the other part of the mutton into chops, fry them just to brown them, put them to the soup, and stew them very gently till the chops are tender, but take care not to do them to rags: cut the other turnips and carrots into shapes, and put them in the soup before you take it up. Send it up in a soup-tureen or dish.

Modern Equivalent

Have the butcher cut the lamb neck into the scrag end and four or five chops 2 to 3 cm (1") thick. (The original cooks would probably have butchered the meat themselves.) Mutton will be difficult to find, so substitute lamb. If you cannot get a neck, substitute another cut. Kitchiner did not call for salt, so we find the taste bland, add it if you wish. Certainly other recipes for harricot soup call for both salt and pepper.

| | | |
|-----|-----------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | neck of mutton OR lamb, butchered | 1 |
| 2 | large carrots | 2 |
| 4 | turnips, white and/or yellow | 4 |
| 1 | large onion | 1 |
| 4 L | water | 4 quarts |
| | salt and pepper (optional) | |

Soak scrag end in cold water for about an hour. Peel and chop carrots, turnips and onions into big pieces. Place vegetables and scrag end in water in a large pot. To reduce preparation/simmer time, you may want to brown the chops first and add them to the pot at this point, rather than later. Simmer for about 2 hours, to create a broth, add more water if necessary. Remove vegetables and scrag end from broth. Cut remaining vegetables into shapes (ie. circles, squares) and set aside. Brown chops, and add to the pot, if not done earlier. Simmer another two hours, or until the mutton chops are tender. Return shaped vegetables to the pot when mutton is completely tender and simmer a further 10 minutes. Serve in a tureen with pieces of toast. This recipe makes 8 generous servings.



Mutton is mature lamb; it was once very popular for its rich flavour. Today young lamb is preferred, so mutton is impossible to buy in a supermarket. Some specialized butchers can supply it. The scrag end is the part of the neck closest to the head, as shown in this "Cuts of Lamb" diagram.

Culinary Calendar

Please send CHO information about ANY upcoming food history or related events. We are pleased to include them. Events hosted by CHO are represented by ♥♥♥. Send to: Bridget.Wranich.malagonto@look.ca

August

Summer on the Farm

Gibson House Museum 416-395-7432
5172 Yonge Street, Toronto

Saturdays & Sundays in August 12 to 5 pm

Each weekend staff in the historic kitchen will be using seasonal produce from the garden to explore a variety of preserving techniques.

September

Annual Organic Corn Roast

Montgomery's Inn 416-394-8113
4709 Dundas Street West, Toronto

Thur. Sept. 4, Fri. Sept. 5 8 pm

Enjoy music by Maritime fiddler Sandy McIntyre- FREE! and an all-organic menu with tasty heirloom white corn, sausage & beverages. Refreshments \$2.

Summer in a Jar

Montgomery's Inn 416-394-8113

Sat. Sept. 6 9:30 am - 12:30 pm or 1:30 - 4:30 pm

Learn Canadian Methods of Jam making & take home samples. With culinary historian Liz Driver & home economist Amy Micallef. \$45

Best Tomato Sauce Ever!

Montgomery's Inn 416-394-8113

Sat. Sept. 13 9 am - 5 pm

Transform bushels of Ontario tomatoes into classic Italian tomato sauce for your pasta meals. Bring a brown-bag lunch. \$90

♥♥♥ CHO Annual General Meeting ♥♥♥

Montgomery's Inn 416-394-8113

Sun. Sept. 21 10 am - 12:30 pm

Discussion of draft constitution and first slate of officers under new constitution will be elected. Please plan to attend and participate. Just think what the next decade could bring to the development of the Culinary Historians! With your participation it will happen.

Harvest Festival

Todmorden Mills Heritage Museum And Arts Centre
Pottery Road (east of Bayview Avenue), Toronto
416-396-2819

Sun. Sept. 28 12 - 5 pm

Enjoy music, entertainment, arts & crafts, a bake sale & picnic fare. Free admission.

October

Canadian as Apple Pie

Montgomery's Inn 416-394-8113

Sat. Oct. 4 9 am - 12 pm

Prepare apple pies with a puff pastry crust, dried apples and more. \$45

Edwardian Tea

Spadina Museum: Historic House & Gardens

285 Spadina Rd., Toronto 416-392-6910

Sun. Oct. 19, 26 & Nov. 2, 12:30 pm, 2 pm & 3:30 pm

Enjoy tea, sandwiches & sweets made from Edwardian recipes \$15+ tax. Pre-reg. & pre - payment

The 19th Century Immigrant Kitchen

Mackenzie House 416-392-6915

82 Bond Street, Toronto

Sat. Oct. 18 & Sun. Oct. 19 12 - 5 pm

Enjoy cooking demonstrations and sample traditional foods from the diverse communities which called Toronto home in the 19th century. Presented in partnership with cultural organizations.

Spice Is Nice: Ketchup, Curry, and Cake

Montgomery's Inn 416-394-8113

Sat. Oct. 25 9 am - 12 pm

Make flavour-full food in the historic kitchen, using 19th-century recipes. \$55 one adult/one child or \$75 one adult/two children.

Bread from Mrs. Gibson's Kitchen

Gibson House Museum 416-395-7432

Sat. Oct. 25 10 - 2 pm

Create & bake breads using 19th century recipes under the guidance of master interpreters.

Pre-reg & pre-payment. \$40.

CULINARY HISTORIANS OF ONTARIO IS AN INFORMATION NETWORK FOR FOODWAYS RESEARCH IN ONTARIO. IT IS AN ORGANIZATION FOR ANYONE INTERESTED IN ONTARIO'S HISTORIC FOOD AND BEVERAGES, FROM THOSE OF THE FIRST NATIONS TO RECENT IMMIGRANTS. WE RESEARCH INTERPRET, PRESERVE AND CELEBRATE ONTARIO'S CULINARY HERITAGE.

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\$20 (Cdn.) annual subscription

Deadlines for entries for October 2003 issue — September 15, 2003

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Thanks for this issue go to Frances Hoffman.

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