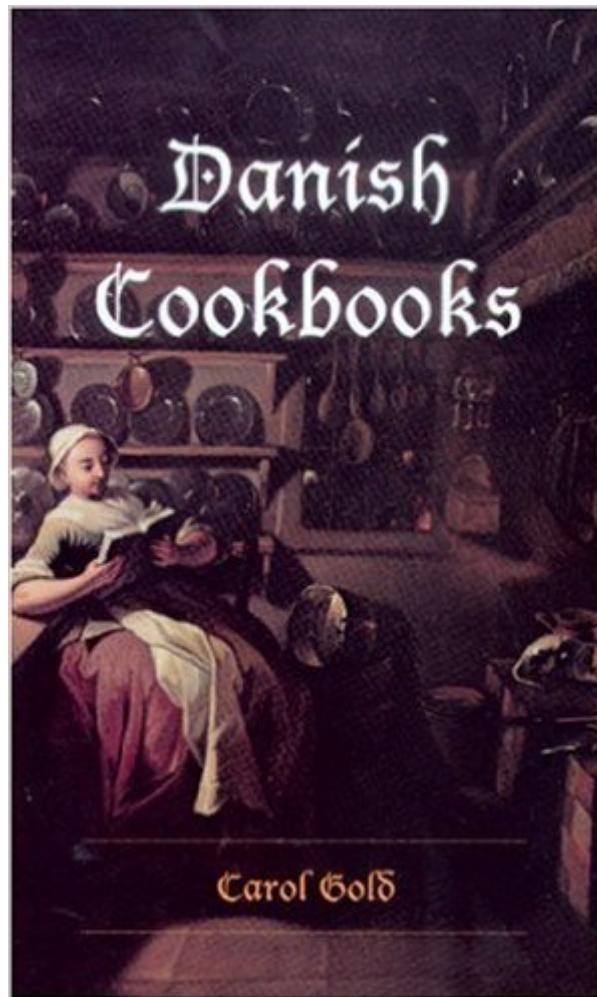


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Danish Cookbooks: Domesticity And National Identity, 1616-1901 (New Directions In Scandinavian Studies)



Synopsis

Cookbooks tell stories. They open up the worlds in which the people who wrote and read them once lived. In the hands of a good historian, cookbooks can be shown to contain the markings of political, social, and ideological changes that we conventionally locate outside the kitchen. Over time, cookbooks allow us to trace the course of empires, of social roles, and of new nations. Danish Cookbooks draws from three hundred years of cookbooks to trace the growth of a bourgeois consciousness, the development of domesticity and gendered spheres, and the evolution of nationalism and a specific Danish identity from the early seventeenth to the end of the nineteenth century. Like all prescriptive literature, cookbooks do not merely reflect the changes of the day but also constitute them. Historian Carol Gold reads recipes and cooking instructions for what they tell us about literacy levels, division of labor in the kitchen and in society, and changes in the gendered aspects of publishing and utilizing cookbooks. Gold explores the authors' instructions for economic and hygienic housekeeping, and their sentiments about Danish identity as spelled out in dishes and spices. Just as the Danish nation would manage the body politic, so women were exhorted to manage the house and ensure the family's physical and moral health. Through the pages of cookbooks-recipes, menus, and table settings-we can chart the growth of a nationalist Denmark and track the development of what it means to be a Dane. Carol Gold is professor of history at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. "A tasty menu of Danish cultural delights served up through an enchanting historical narrative." - Terje Leiren, University of Washington

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I must admit I bought this book because it was on sale (I couldn't care less about Danish food), but it turned out to be one of the best books on food history I'd ever read. Danish or otherwise. Well, if you think about it, the food issues tend to be international (I'm European, and I mean, similar things happened in similar times in different European countries).

Food history has a unique set of documents - cookbooks and recipes - but no canon or methodology by which they can be interpreted. A number of recent books, however, have attempted to redress this deficit. *Danish Cookbooks* is an account of the emergence of a Danish national cuisine. Gold does not think Danish national cuisine somehow bubbled up from the people, but rather it was imposed by nationalist elites of the early 19th century, the same class as issued the first dictionaries and began to identify national themes of folklore. The key chapter here is a brilliant account of how potatoes - a new world crop--came to become the lynchpin of a Danish national cuisine and enshrined national identity. In her analysis of cookbooks, Gold detects a shift, documented by other food historians too, in the mid-19th century from descriptive recipes aimed at chefs of the aristocracy to prescriptive recipes aimed at women. Prescriptive cookbooks, both standardized recipes and made it possible for anyone to cook. recipes document the literacy of ordinary women. Then as urban women learned to cook from books, technological innovations increased their capacity to cook at home. The enclosed stove of the late 19th--century, for example. made it possible both to bake at home and to increase the scope of roasting. This book is innovative and enjoyable, which addresses food history at its sources..

cookbook has good ideas in it

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