

THIS LIMITED-PRINTING, SPECIAL EDITION OF

Mastering the Art of SOUTHERN COOKING

is prefaced with sixteen pages celebrating Nathalie Dupree, leading up to the occasion of her 80th birthday. Essays by coauthor Cynthia Graubart and Chef Virginia Willis spotlight Ms. Dupree's career and singular influence on Southern cooking over the past fifty years. A selection of personal photographs highlight Nathalie's life and career.

In this James Beard Award-winning cookbook, Nathalie Dupree and Cynthia Graubart reveal the essence of food that delights, entices, and satisfies, celebrating the "Mother Cuisine" of American cooking with more than 750 recipes and 650 variations. Based on years of research, the authors embrace the cookbooks and recipes of the past, enhancing them with the foods and conveniences of today.

Teachers first and foremost, Dupree and Graubart help cooks conquer fears of flour and fat, writing clear techniques so home cooks can produce the lightest biscuits and flakiest piecrusts. With recipes like Lazy Girl Cobbler and Bubbly Butter Bean Soup, the beginning cook is brought along from basic skills to more involved techniques, such as mastering a soufflé, frying a batch of crispy squash blossoms, and butterflying a succulent pork tenderloin.

Vegetables, the music of the Southern table, are taught in both traditional and new ways, such as grilled asparagus, creamy grits, and okra chips.

This comprehensive book is the standard reference for cooks everywhere on how to prepare the South's most satisfying dishes, preserving the techniques and tastes of this beloved regional cuisine.



Mastering the Art of SOUTHERN COOKING



NATHALIE DUPREE & CYNTHIA GRAUBART

Forewords by VIRGINIA WILLIS & PAT CONROY

SPECIAL EDITION

LIMITED PRINTING WITH SIGNED AND NUMBERED BOOKPLATE



Mastering the Art of SOUTHERN COOKING DUPREE & GRAUBART



GIBBS SMITH

NATHALIE DUPREE has authored 14 cookbooks, three of which have won James Beard Awards. She has hosted more than 300 national and international cooking shows. She is past president of International Association of Culinary Professionals, founder and board member of Southern Foodways, and founder and co-president of two chapters of Les Dames d'Escoffier. She was the founding president of the Charleston Wine and Food Festival. She has been inducted into the James Beard Foundation's Who's Who of Food and Beverage in America. Along with *Mastering the Art of Southern Cooking*, her book *New Southern Cooking* was selected for the 2017 Southern Living 100 Best Cookbooks of All Time. She lives in Charleston, South Carolina.

CYNTHIA GRAUBART is a James Beard Award-winning cookbook author, cooking teacher, and former cooking show television producer. She has authored eight cookbooks, among them *Southern Biscuits* (with Nathalie Dupree) and, most recently, *Sunday Suppers*. Cynthia received an M.F.K. Fisher Food Writing Award for the introduction to her book *Chicken: A Savor the South Cookbook*. Cooking at the James Beard House, she has represented Georgia agriculture and also led a team of female chefs in a celebration of Nathalie Dupree's 80th birthday. She is a member of the Atlanta chapter of Les Dames d'Escoffier.

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NATHALIE DUPREE

BY VIRGINIA WILLIS



She's sitting in an elevated director's chair, her naked face in process of readying for the glare of television lights, brightly lit by the vibrant glow of the large glass bulbs framing the makeup mirror. The makeup artist is powdering and patting, teasing and spraying her voluminous hair. Me? I'm a hot mess and have been in the kitchen for hours supervising the mise en place and hero dishes for the cooking segments we're going to tape later that day. Glimpsing in her direction and seeing a line of people needing her attention, I keep working, chopping parsley. (All the herbs have to be chopped so finely that you can't tell what the herb is by appearance, only by taste.) It's been storming, the AC isn't working, and the morning is off to a terrible start. One of the beauty dishes for the first taping isn't ready and I don't have time to fix it. Eavesdropping, I continue to work, scrambling for time and listen to the director go over the day's schedule, as the makeup artist continues her ministrations. Then swoops in Rick, her dear friend and culinary producer, meeting to discuss the long list of food segments. "Psst. Psst." The stylist continues working on her hair as Rick lists out the various recipes and her talking points.

The end of their conversation indicates it's my turn at audience. I take a deep breath, put down my knife on the cutting board, and walk to the doorway with trepidation, clutching a stack of folded, food-stained scripts under my arm, holding a platter with a golden brown puff pastry jam-filled jalousie in one hand and a plate of seeping, failed meringue kisses in the other. The spicy aroma of Constant Contact tea perfumes the slender room. She glances at me in the mirror. Her face lights up when she sees the flaky pastry and quickly turns to a scowl when she sees the meringues. Turning away from the mirror she reaches over and, with her perfectly manicured hand, she takes one of the sticky treats and pops it in her lipsticked mouth. Her eyes close briefly and smiling once again, she says, "You know, Virginia, it's nearly impossible to make a meringue when it's raining." It's a bit of a gentle reprieve, implicitly indicating that the failure is not one all of my own. "I want you to come over on Saturday for a meringue lesson."

Saturday morning arrives and I dutifully show up on time, as directed. Letting myself in the front door, I make my way to the kitchen, past the library with shelf upon shelf and teetering piles of cookbooks lining the floor, past the double-door closet filled with stacks upon stacks of dishes, and past the brightly colored pieces of tin and wooden folk art. I get to the open kitchen and she's cuddled upon the sofa, looking a bit tired. Without makeup, she's smaller somehow, more petite. She glances up, her tan forehead covered by a shock of blonde hair and smiles. "Oh, hello."

I think she's forgotten, but she smiles brightly and says, "You're here for a meringue lesson." Casting the throw blanket on the floor she shuffles towards the equipment cupboard. "Get the eggs out," she directs me as she pulls a large copper bowl and a giant balloon whisk from the shelf. First, she teaches me to scour the bowl with a combination of coarse kosher salt and halved lemons until it's glowing burnished chestnut. Then, for the next few hours, we whip and whisk countless egg whites.

Holding my arm, she guides my strokes and shows me to carefully add the sugar in a slow, steady stream so it's more likely to dissolve. She teases me by inverting the copper bowl filled with meringue



Virginia Willis, left, and Nathalie.

over my head. (When whipped properly, egg whites will cling to the bowl even when upside down.) One-on-one, we work our way through French, Swiss, and Italian meringues, plopping blobs of billowing snow-white meringue onto parchment paper lined baking sheets.

Nathalie and Paul Prudhomme.



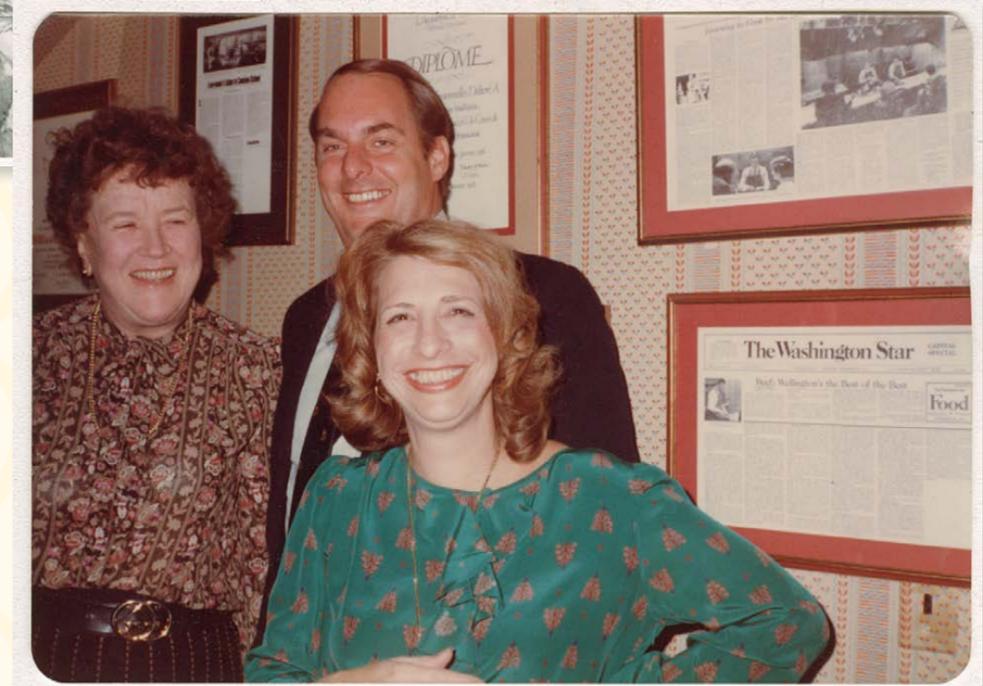
Jacques Pepin and Nathalie, Rich's Cooking School, 1970s.

Publicity photo taken on the set of her long-running PBS cooking show.



Filming a segment for TV. Finnish man is cooking in a hot box.

Julia Child, Bill Bergman, and Nathalie when all were serving on the board of IACP.



NATHALIE DUPREE

BY CYNTHIA GRAUBART



In defiance of a mother who told her “a lady doesn’t cook,” Nathalie has turned her ability to cook into a rich, rewarding, and well-honored life-long career. She found her calling by accident after enrolling in a class at London’s Cordon Bleu cooking school in Great Britain, where she had moved in the late 1960s with her then-husband David Dupree. That one class led to a year and half of study, which culminated in being awarded the school’s most prestigious advanced certificate. She returned to America in the early 1970s, settling in Social Circle, Georgia, where David opened an antique shop and she a small restaurant at the rear. With a menu that changed each day depending on the fresh ingredients from her garden (a novel concept at the time), she soon became a sensation around the region and grabbed the attention of an executive at Rich’s, who hired her to start a cooking school at the prestigious Atlanta department store. Rich’s Cooking School opened in the early 1970s and attracted more than 10,000 students over the next decade, many of whom have gone on to culinary careers.

With her experience teaching home cooks, she carved her niche in the cookbook world by addressing their needs, encouraging them every step of the way with what she calls “do-able” recipes. And while both she and her recipes have always been approachable, she used her training from the London Cordon Bleu to introduce classic techniques to novice cooks in easy-to-understand language. About her drive to bring Southern food to the national stage, she says, “It’s just that no one ever bothered to say that making Southern biscuits was a technique worth learning.”

I’ve always been impressed that Nathalie never fell into the trap of representing the South in caricature. Nathalie’s South has always been diverse and inclusive, honoring those that do the hard work of raising our wonderful food and bringing it to market and honoring the history of our culinary foodways.

She mixes her china patterns and cooks meals ahead. She drops things, drips things, and makes mistakes in the kitchen—all of which have endeared her to her fans. She says, what happens to me in the kitchen also happens to you, so I’ll show you how to fix it. With Nathalie, what you see is what you get: funny, charming, and real.

By 1985, Nathalie Dupree was well established in the culinary world, having been the chef at two restaurants, written a cookbook, and directed the South’s largest participation cooking



Cynthia Graubart and Nathalie on set of *New Southern Cooking*.



Nathalie and Marie Meyer in front of Nathalie's restaurant.

Right: At home in Social Circle with cat Minou.



Wedding to Jack Bass, Jamaica, April 1994.



On board a cruise ship to Alaska, 1994.



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PEACH OR MANGO AND CREAM CUSTARD WITH CARAMEL PECAN TOPPING

Serves 6

THIS IS A RECIPE ANN BYRN AND I made up that I've revised over a period of years. I've learned many tricks along the way—using a tea towel to insulate, for instance, and adding water as needed. Plan ahead, as the custards need to be refrigerated overnight. The peaches and mangos can be caramelized as performed in the Peach or Mango Omelet (page 277).

Custard

2 cups heavy cream
4 large egg yolks
4½ tablespoons granulated sugar, divided

½ cup sliced peaches or mangos, fresh or frozen, plus slices for garnish
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Topping

1 cup granulated sugar
½ cup water
1 tablespoon light corn syrup
1 cup pecan pieces, finely ground

Preheat oven to 325 degrees.

Slowly heat the cream until there are bubbles around the side of a heavy saucepan, taking care not to burn it.

Beat the egg yolks with a wooden spoon or whisk in a large bowl, gradually adding 2 tablespoons sugar. Stir several tablespoons of hot cream into the egg mixture to raise its temperature while cooling the remaining cream slightly. Add the remaining cream, stirring constantly.

Purée the peaches in a food processor or blender with the remaining sugar. (This can be done ahead of time.) Add the vanilla and the puréed fruit to the cream mixture, stirring until just blended.

Ladle into 6 small custard cups, filling three-fourths full; do not overfill. Make 6 rounds of parchment or waxed paper to create tops for the custards. Butter each one lightly on one side and put buttered side down on the custards. This will prevent a skin from forming. Fold a tea towel on the bottom of a large roasting pan and place the custard cups on top of the towel. Pour boiling water into the pan so that it reaches halfway up the sides, being careful not to get any water in the custard. Bake uncovered until the custard barely moves when shaken, about 30 minutes, and registers approximately 180 degrees on an instant-read thermometer. The water bath keeps the custard from overcooking, as long as the water in the pan does not boil or evaporate, while the tea towel insulates the bottom of the custard from the bottom of the hot pan. (If the water evaporates, add more.)

Meanwhile, prepare the topping. Melt the sugar with water and corn syrup in a heavy pan. When the sugar has dissolved, bring the syrup to the boil and boil steadily

until it turns a golden caramel color. Remove carefully from the heat, being careful not to spill it. Pour onto a greased rimmed baking sheet and set aside to harden. When hard, pulse in a food processor or by hand to make caramel crumbs. Stir in the pecan pieces and keep in a covered jar until ready to use.

Remove the pan with the custard cups from the oven. Sprinkle each custard with some of the topping and run under the broiler for 2 to 3 minutes, watching carefully, until the topping is browned; or carefully brown custards with a torch. Remove the custard cups from the pan and refrigerate overnight. Serve cold. Garnish with fruit slice just before serving. Pass extra caramel and pecan topping at the table.

Note: To make more like a crème brûlée, sprinkle the custard with brown sugar and use a propane torch or broil just before serving. In this case, move the cool custards to an ice bath to prevent breaking the dishes or overcooking while browning.



PEACH GINGER FLAN

Serves 8 to 10

FLAN—THE SPANISH WORD FOR A THICKER AND DENSER CUSTARD than the French crème caramel—needs a long, slow cooking time in a bain-marie. It is important to keep the water below the boiling point so little “pock marks” won’t mar the custard at the bottom and sides. This custard is flavored with peaches. We use canned because they are sweetened and cooked, but fresh sweetened and cooked will also work.

1 cup canned peach halves (one 17-ounce can)
1½ cups granulated sugar, divided
1 tablespoon light corn syrup

⅓ cup water
2⅔ cups milk
Rind of 1 lemon, peel off strips with vegetable peeler, no white attached

3 large whole eggs, beaten to mix
5 large egg yolks, beaten to mix
2½ teaspoons vanilla extract
¼ cup chopped candied ginger

Preheat oven to 325 degrees and move the oven rack to the center of the oven. Select a soufflé or other baking dish where the custard will fill the dish within an inch or so of the rim. Much fuller than that increases the odds the custard will crack when turning out onto the serving plate.

Drain the peach halves. Purée the solids in a food processor or blender until smooth and set aside.

Dissolve 1 cup sugar with the corn syrup and water in a heavy pan over low heat without boiling. When dissolved, brush the insides of the pan with a wet pastry brush to remove the sugar crystals. Turn up the heat, bring to the boil, and boil until the liquid turns a golden caramel color, about 10 minutes. (For more about working with caramel, see page 629.)

Meanwhile, warm a 1½-quart ovenproof soufflé or other heatproof dish in the oven for 15 minutes (this makes it easier to move the hot caramel around the dish). Using oven mitts, remove the dish from the oven, pour in the hot caramel, and tilt the dish from side to side to coat the bottom and lower sides with the caramel.

Add the milk and lemon strips to the original caramel pan and heat until small bubbles form around the side. This flavors the flan further by removing any caramel clinging to the pan. (It also makes it easier to clean the pan.)

Gently whisk together the eggs, yolks, and remaining ½ cup sugar. Pour the hot milk into the egg mixture all at once, stirring constantly. Strain the mixture into another bowl and stir in the vanilla, peach purée, and candied ginger. Pour or ladle the custard carefully into the prepared soufflé dish; it will foam if not poured slowly. Make a round of parchment or waxed paper to create a top for the custard. Butter lightly and put buttered

side down on the custard. This will prevent a skin from forming on the top.

Fold a tea towel and put in the bottom of a large roasting pan; place the soufflé dish on top of the towel. Pour boiling water into the pan so that it reaches halfway up the sides of the dish, being careful not to get any water in the dish. Place the roasting pan in the center of the oven and cook approximately 1¾ to 2 hours, or until the custard is set and a knife inserted in the center comes out clean. Do not let the water boil, as the boiling will overcook the custard and make holes in it; if necessary, add cold water to the pan to prevent bubbling.

Remove the pan from the oven; remove the soufflé dish from the pan. Cool slightly then cover and refrigerate at least 3 hours.

When the flan has chilled completely, run a knife around the edge, then pull the custard lightly away from the sides. Place a shallow serving plate on top and then invert the dish to unmold the flan. The caramel forms a topping and sauce. If there is still a good deal of caramel in the bottom of the dish, heat briefly in the microwave or add a little boiling water to melt the caramel. Spoon over soufflé. Serve chilled.

Variation: Substitute apricots for the peaches.

Candied ginger may be found in the spice section of the grocery store or in Asian grocery stores in boxes, where it is much less expensive.