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NATHALIE DUPREE'S STORIES & FAVORITE RECIPES

Southern culinary legend and four-time James Beard Award winner Nathalie Dupree collects her favorite go-to recipes for the home cook. These are the dishes that Nathalie longs for, dreams about, and keeps in her regular repertoire. Her variations on Southern staples plus tasty preparations from other cuisines will delight your palate—biscuits, shrimp and grits, greens and vegetables galore, meats, seafood, and well-perfected desserts, and a few classic French dishes as well.

Dupree's expert knowledge of Southern foods along with her ability to instill cooking confidence in others makes this a must-have book for everyone who has watched her on TV, read her articles in magazines or newspapers, or invoked her name in a conversation about Southern food. For example, do you want to learn how to make the perfect turkey? Nathalie not only gives you a recipe but teaches how to put Thanksgiving on the table with confidence and poise.

The absolute delight of this book is a selection of Nathalie's poignant culinary tales that reveal her cooking education, her kitchen secrets, her character, and her personality—warm, funny, and vulnerable. Using this book is just like having Nathalie alongside in your own kitchen.

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Dupree



GIBBS
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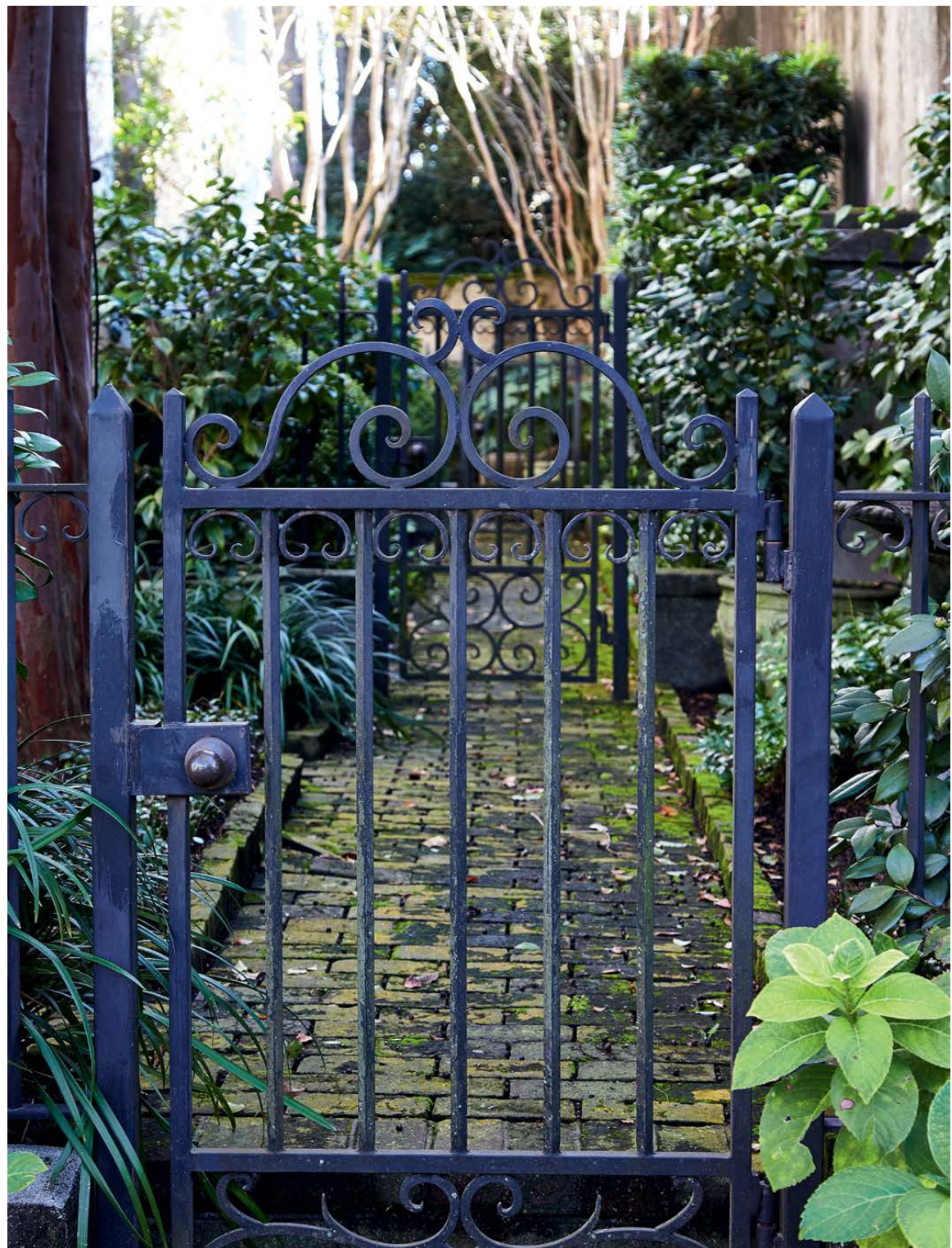
"The Queen of Southern Cuisine." —*Southern Living*



NATHALIE DUPREE has authored fourteen cookbooks, four 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, by whom she was awarded the honor of "Grande Dame." She was the founding president of the Charleston Wine and Food Festival. She was named the 2013 Woman of the Year from the French Master Chefs of America, and received Slow Food Charleston's 2016 Snail Award. Her books *New Southern Cooking* and *Mastering the Art of Southern Cooking* are on the 2017 Southern Living 100 best cookbooks of all time list. She lives in Charleston, South Carolina.



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THE SKINNIES AND THE ROUNDIES

Just before my high school reunion, it seemed to me the world was divided into two types of people—the skinnies and the roundies. As I talked to my high school friends on the phone or in person, I tried to determine: Were they more like a Modigliani or a Rubens? Did they jog, do aerobics, eat more than one meal a day? More importantly, what size were they? My mother always said comparisons were odious, but I found myself mentally weighing myself (literally) against my peers.

The last time I visited an old high school skinny friend (remembering her mother was a darn good cook), I nearly starved to death. Her mother is beautiful at 70, and so is my friend the skinny. She runs three miles a day, four days a week, and she was pointedly polite about my protruding stomach (although I thought I could hear her thinking “tsk, tsk” as she glanced at it). She doesn’t eat. She doesn’t feed her family more than one meal a day, either. She gets a high from running. I get a high from chopping. One day I was ravenous at noon. She was surprised, saying, “But I thought you ate breakfast!” I wondered, “What has breakfast got to do with lunch?”

You see, most of the skinnies don’t eat. They don’t like food, they don’t like to cook, and they don’t like to admit that food is a requirement of life. Not only do they not eat, they don’t cook or feed others, and they don’t have food spots on their clothes. Their nails are polished and unchipped. The skinny vogue has aided and abetted their aversion to food, encouraging it to become a fetish.

Nevertheless, a month before the reunion I decided I needed to lose weight. I was afraid all the boys in my class would remember me as a skinny, having weighed 110 pounds until just a few years ago. (How many was it, now?) First I tried the sensible things. A bowl of cereal with skim milk or a boiled egg for breakfast. Low-calorie cottage cheese with slices of tomato for lunch. Poached chicken with steamed broccoli and rice or a baked potato for dinner. I sprinkled

everything with herbs. Occasional fruit was my only dessert or snack. I hated it. I thought about the meals I was missing. I love food. I want to eat five times a day, if possible, small meals. I love slicing and chopping and cooking for others. I love the smells of the kitchen. I like breakfast in bed. I crave fresh food. I like to feed myself. Finally I found some recipes that satisfied my cravings and helped me lose a few pounds.

A long distance beau called, and I told him of my vows. “I,” I proudly announced, hoping the declaration would spur me on as a challenge, “will be ten pounds lighter when I see you again.” Instead of a crow of pleasure, I received a groan. “Oh, no,” he said, “I like you Romanesque!”

With that, I threw my diet out the window. By the time of the reunion, I fit into my favorite roundies dress. I felt very comfortable in it. I got there early, quivering with anticipation at seeing people I hadn’t seen for years. Like Rip Van Winkle, the years fell away. My high school sweetheart walked in the door. He’d been the high school football captain, and I suppose if you saw him today, you’d think he looked like Kenny Rogers, and that he might be considered a bit beefy—a roundy, even. I didn’t notice. In fact, I didn’t notice anyone’s looks in particular, can’t recall concentrating on their dresses or their shapes. All the women were beautiful, all the men handsome—just as I’d remembered them to be. The joy of being together overcame our mortality. We danced and laughed, and cried. I did notice one good thing, though, about the skinnies—you can’t tell they have lines in the dark.



TURKEY WITH GRAVY

Brining seems to be a necessary evil for the mass-produced turkey. Organic ones, however, seem to be fine without it, or with just a light rub of salt.

For many of us, carving a turkey at the table is a needlessly difficult task contrived by Norman Rockwell and Charles Dickens; I feel it should be done in the kitchen. Rather than stuff the turkey, which contributes to a dry breast, I flavor it with an onion, carrot, and a few herbs placed in the cavity. Sometimes I use a quartered lemon. If fresh herbs are not available, omit them. If a rack is not available, the onions and carrots can form a resting place for the turkey in the bottom of the roasting pan. I keep stock in the bottom of the pan to prevent burning of the juices and ensure a scrumptious gravy. This creates a bit of steam, so take care when opening and closing the oven.

SERVES 8 TO 10

1 (12- to- 14-pound) turkey, fresh or thawed

3 onions, quartered, divided

3 carrots, divided

1 lemon, quartered, optional

Chopped fresh herbs to taste, such as rosemary, sage, thyme, optional

½ cup melted butter or oil, cook's preference

Salt

Freshly ground black pepper

4-6 cups turkey or chicken stock or broth

½-1 cup heavy cream, optional

BASTING LIQUID (optional):

1 cup white wine

½ cup butter

1 sprig thyme

1 sprig sage

1 bay leaf

1 large piece cheesecloth

Preheat oven to 450 degrees.

Defrost turkey, if frozen, in the refrigerator, which may take several days. Unwrap fresh or frozen turkey a day or several hours ahead in the refrigerator to dry the skin. Oil a large roasting pan and rack, if using, and set aside (I use a giant, round, flat-bottomed roasting pan, similar to a deep paella pan).

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SAUSAGE AND APPLES

Although this is the base for quiches, overnight casseroles, dressings, and other dishes, my husband, Jack, and I never tire of this for a casual supper. I like leaving the apple peel on, for color and nutrition, but of course it can be removed. All sorts of vegetables can be added to enhance this dish and clean out the fridge. I add onions, small quartered potatoes, spinach, and quartered Brussels sprouts

SERVES 4

1 pound sausage links or bulk sausage

2 Gala apples, or other cooking apples

Fry the sausage in a large skillet until cooked through, with no pink remaining. Meanwhile, core and slice the apples into 1/2-inch wedges. Add the wedges to the sausage, or just the sausage fat if there is no room, and sauté until apples are soft and caramelized but not mushy. Drain sausage and apples on a plate lined with paper towels, if necessary. Serve hot.

VARIATION: Add sliced onions, spinach, Brussels sprouts, mushrooms, or baby potatoes to the fat and cook until done.

COOKING SAUSAGE

- Links—Prick the skins before adding to a cold pan, turn up the heat and cook until deep brown; turn and repeat until brown all over. If more than 1/2 inch in diameter, add a bit of water to the pan after initial browning to keep links from burning before the sausage is cooked through. Cover if necessary to ensure they are thoroughly cooked. Save fat in pan.
- Ground sausage—Break up as much as possible. Add to a hot pan, reduce heat and cook until light brown, stirring constantly.
- If desperate, use patties. Add to a hot pan, cook until desired brown color, turn and cook on the second side. Patties should register at least 150 degrees on a meat thermometer when cooked.





ASPARAGUS SALAD

Asparagus was once a major crop in South Carolina, shipped straight up to New York and other northern cities. Somehow canned asparagus took over in my childhood and I hated it and its texture. Fresh asparagus is not only in my good graces, but I love it.

SERVES 2

6-10 asparagus stalks, preferably thin

¼-½ cup grated Parmigiano Reggiano cheese

¼-⅓ cup extra virgin olive oil

1-2 teaspoons sherry vinegar or lemon juice

Salt and pepper

Cut off any rough ends of the asparagus stalks. Peel asparagus, starting at the bottom of the flower. If the stalk is slender and young, save the peel. If tough, use for another purpose. Continue peeling around. Continue peeling the stalk, essentially making ribbons of asparagus. Gather them and any delicate outer peels into a small mound and toss with Parmigiano-Reggiano and olive oil. Add sherry vinegar or lemon juice. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

LEMON AND BERRY TART

Lemon curd and berries are a classic combination, with the curd made in advance and the berries added a few hours before serving. As a general rule, I taste any fruit I use in a recipe but especially berries, which can range in sweetness, adding powdered sugar if needed. Lemon juices vary in tartness.

If the curd is too tart, dust with powdered sugar before serving. When in a hurry, this can be made with a store-bought crust. I prefer the national brand that comes two rolled doughs to a box.

MAKES 1 9-INCH TART

1 recipe Lemon Curd, see page XXX

1 (9-inch) piecrust, rolled to 1/8-to-1/4-inch thickness

2-3 cups fresh berries, such as raspberries, blueberries, or strawberries

Parchment paper

Pie weights, dry beans, or uncooked rice

Confectioners' sugar, optional

Prepare the Lemon Curd as directed on page XXX, and chill.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Arrange the piecrust in a 9-inch tart pan, preferably with a removable bottom, cutting off any excess. Lightly prick the surface of the piecrust with the tines of a fork. Crumple a piece of parchment, waxed paper, or aluminum foil. Reopen, smooth out, and place into the piecrust and fill with raw rice, beans, or pie weights. Bake until the piecrust is fully cooked, about 25 minutes, covering edges as necessary to prevent burning. Remove from oven, scoop out the pie weights then remove paper, and cool on a rack. When cool, remove outer ring of tart pan, fill crust with lemon curd, smoothing the top with an offset spatula or knife. Arrange berries in a pattern on curd as desired. Chill before serving.

VARIATION: Make into bite-sized or individual tarts or as a pre-baked, free-form tart (p. XXX)

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LOVE BLOOMED

She always wondered if they would have fallen in love if she hadn't brought the cold soup. It had been an unusually hot day when she was leaving the house, and it had come to her that he would like the soup. The sun beat down on the flat roof above his office in the sleepy Georgia town. It would be cool and soothing for him, in contrast to the energy that radiated from him.

So she packed the soup in a plastic container and put it inside a nondescript paper bag. An afterthought, really. She figured he wouldn't have eaten lunch. Even if he had, what would it matter, it was only a bowl of soup.

It changed her life, that bowl of soup. She had served it the night before and it had been good. As she climbed the dusty staircase, the container opened a crack, and a few drops fell out on her red sundress. She flicked them off with her hand, smudging the file folder she was bringing him to review.

He never commented about the spots on the file or on her dress when he recalled that day. She remembered how hot she had been, her shoulders nearly glistening, the cotton dress clinging to her back. She had opened her slightly soiled sack on his desk, first covering the desk with a paper towel from the tiny bathroom near his office. From his office window she could see the town's main street—a dog walking across the road, her own car with the windows rolled down (she wished the car had been air-conditioned). She could hear music from the offices below.

She hadn't known she would remember it forever, the way he looked at her—as if she was beautiful—when she opened the sack. She smiled at him, telling him she had something for him. He held the plastic bowl as though it were crystal, cupping it with his hands and drawing it to his lips. If she had known she was going to fall in love with him that moment, she would have brought him a spoon.

"See what she brought me," he exalted to his coworker, "a bowl of cold soup!" The other man didn't know the soup was mystical. "Ah, yes," he replied, "I've had it before. I liked it." He gave a small nod and a tiny smile, wondering at the tension before him over a bowl of soup in the middle of the day. "*Like it?*" her new love protested. "Like it? It's marvelous! I've never had anything as marvelous before. This is remarkable!"

A small, hard, untrusting part of her, deep inside, was touched, and opened to him. After he ate the soup, they worked together, she on one side of his desk, he on the other. The sun filtered through to her work in a golden beam, moving around the room as they worked. He taught her so much that the small, hard part of her soul became plump and tender, like a raisin soaked in wine. Without a touch or a word of love, they had each given the other a new world. She never made the soup again without thinking of him.

SOUTHERN BOUILLABAISSE

SERVES 8 TO 10

Here's a fish muddle, or stew, to dream about. It has a long list of ingredients, but that makes it easier rather than harder. It's written to elicit the best from the fish by adding the fish in a sequence to avoid overcooking. Since everything depends on a good, flavorful broth, call your local seafood seller a day or two ahead to reserve the fish and the bones. Hope for a fish head or two to enrich the broth, and lobster and shrimp shells are grand additions. If the bones or shells are frozen ahead of time they run a strong second to fresh but are better than none at all. The broth can be made ahead, strained and frozen up to three months, that morning or the day ahead and refrigerated.

Making a marinade is something I learned from the *Grande Diplome Cooking Course*, edited by Anne Willan, and I am grateful for it. Although the croûtes are best when life is perfect and there is time to make them, store-bought are fine. The same thing is true of the sauce. Store-bought mayonnaise can be used to save time. The Pernod or anise ups the taste but doesn't cause the broth to have a licorice flavor. The amount can be adjusted according to the broth, or white wine can be added if there is no liquor available.

BROTH

1-2 pounds of fish bones, heads, trimmings, etc.

Shrimp shells

1 fennel bulb, divided

2 heaping tablespoons fennel or anise seed

1-2 slices onion

1-2 garlic cloves

3 quarts water

MARINADE AND SOUP

½-¾ cup olive oil, divided

8-10 garlic cloves, finely chopped (about ½ cup), divided

2 tablespoons saffron threads, divided

3 pounds assorted fresh South Atlantic fish (snapper, grouper, flounder, mahi mahi, sea trout, or sheepshead)

1 pound raw shrimp, in shell

2 blue crabs, optional

3 onions, chopped

2 leeks, chopped, optional

1 pound diced fresh tomatoes or 1 (14½-ounce) can tomatoes

Grated rind of 1 orange, no white attached

Salt

Freshly ground black pepper

1 pound littleneck clams, optional

1-2 tablespoons Pernod or anise liqueur

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