

Cooking with Politics, Technology, and Culture:

Book History and the *Joy of Cooking*



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Introduction

- America's most popular cookbook.
- *The Joy of Cooking: A Compilation of Reliable Recipes With a Casual Culinary Chat*. Self-published by Irma von Starkloff Rombauer in 1931.
- Book history affected by politics and economics; science and technology; society and culture.

A Brief History of the *Joy*

- **1931**: First *Joy of Cooking*, self-published.
- **1936**: First revision.
- **1943**: Second revision.
 - **1946**: Reprint of 1943 edition (with World War II rationing information deleted)
- **1951**: Third revision. Irma Rombauer and Marion Rombauer Becker.
- **1962**: Fourth revision.
- **1975**: Fifth revision.
- **1997**: Sixth revision. Irma Rombauer, Marion Rombauer Becker, and Ethan Becker.

1931: Great Depression



- Stock market crash in October 1929.
- The frugal cook.
- Canned soup bases.
- "Mock" dishes.
- Chicken is expensive.

1931: Technology

- 1916-1920: Electric refrigerator.
- 1920s-30s: Electric range.
- 1925: Oven with built-in thermostats.
- 1926: General Motors introduces the steel cabinet Frigidaire.

1931: Prohibition

- Prohibition starts in 1919.

"Most cocktails containing liquor are made today with gin and ingenuity. In brief, take an ample supply of the former and use your imagination."

1936: Prohibition Past

- Prohibition repealed in 1933.

"The day is past for cocktails made with gin and ingenuity only. We may now enjoy a multitude of more regular and less inspirational concoctions..."

1943: World War II

- World War II: 1939-45.
- Paper quotas.
- Mandatory food rationing.
- Canned, boxed, and frozen foods more readily available than fresh food.
- Home canning.

1943: World War II

- "Sugarless and Sugar-Saving Recipes for Cakes, Cookies and Desserts" chapter.
- "Meat Stretching, Meat Substitutes and Supplementary Dishes" chapter.
 - "Wartime Emergency Soups" (using dehydrated soups).
 - "Suggestions For the Use of Soybeans."
- War morale booster.

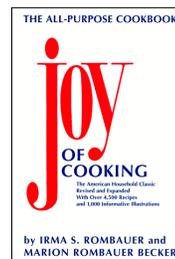
1951: Nutrition and Technology

- Marion becomes co-author.
- Focus on nutrition, healthful cooking, and healthful eating.
- "The Electric Blender" chapter.
- "Pressure Cookery" chapter.

1962

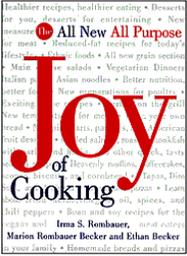
- Irma Rombauer dies in 1962.
- Marion becomes main contributor.
- *"to refashion Joy... into the one incontestably all-purpose cookbook, and to make its techniques and methods clear beyond the shadow of a tyro's doubt."*

1975



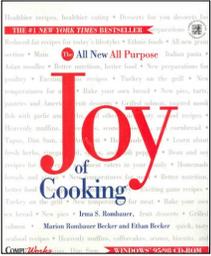
- Back-to-basics healthful eating.
- This edition not revised for over 20 years.

1997



- Completely revised and all recipes tested by many contributors.
- The Global Economy.
- Focus on authenticity.
- Microwave oven, bread maker, etc.

1998: CD-ROM



- Features:
 - Hyperlinks.
 - Search engine.
 - E-mail.
 - Recipe scaling.
 - Menu planning.
 - PalmPilot.
- Poor implementation.

Conclusion

- Book history affected by:
 - Politics and Economics
 - Science and Technology
 - Society and Culture
- Future of American cooking and eating.
- Future of the *Joy of Cooking*.
- <http://www.joyofcooking.com>
- <http://www.ece.umd.edu/~elainec/joc>

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