



**AMERICAN CULINARY TRADITIONS**  
BY BETH BROWNSON

There are two avenues of "culinary culture" in America. The first grew out of making use of the local natural bounty, and is flavored by the spices and traditions of those who have emigrated to the U.S. from around the world. The second strain is a product of America's love for outdoor recreation.

European settlers first came to America's eastern shores, where they found a wealth of clams and other seafood. New England Clam Chowder<sup>i</sup> and Lobster Bisque are trademark foods from the New England coastal areas. Blueberries and cranberries, abundant in the fields and bogs of Maine, made the region famous for its pies, muffins and jams. As settlers moved westward, they found the vast sugar maple forests of Vermont and learned that the sap of the tree that runs in early spring is very sweet and when thickened by hours of boiling, becomes the delicious treat of maple syrup that Americans use at breakfast on waffles and pancakes.

As waves of other immigrants came to the country, culinary traditions adapted to the tastes of the new immigrants. The Italians who came to what is now New York City, changed the clam chowder from a cream-based soup to a tomato-based soup and added Italian herbs for a completely different dish, Manhattan Clam Chowder<sup>ii</sup>, to warm the weary on cold winter evenings. The Amish from Holland, who came seeking religious freedom, settled



in the area that is now central Pennsylvania, and added their local flavor to foods, giving us Pennsylvania Dutch noodle chicken pot pie.

Possibly nowhere in the country is the influence of immigrant populations more pronounced than in "The Big Easy," the city of New Orleans. The Acadians, the French Canadians who migrated south to this city on the Mississippi River delta, brought with them flavors of French cooking, infused with thyme, cayenne pepper and chicken broth or wine to create food known as "Cajun." At the same time, Spanish and African immigrants from the Caribbean islands brought their own flavors and style of cooking that became known as "Creole." Jambalaya<sup>iii</sup>, a New Orleans staple of chicken and shrimp served over rice, can be found in the Cajun style, with a smoked sausage called *andouille*, onions, celery, and bell peppers, and a chicken broth-based sauce, while the Creole version has a tomato-based sauce and has more of a peppery kick to it. Situated in a region where pecan nuts are abundant, New Orleans area is also famous for pecan pie and pralines.



As settlers moved out to the west coast, their food was more influenced by the local harvests. The Great Plains region became famous for its beef and corn, and the food along the Pacific Ocean coast reflected the subtleties of the wine regions of the Sonoma and Napa valleys in California and the pinot vineyards in Oregon. Walnuts in California and hazelnuts further to the north also featured in many of the foods. Oregon and Washington State developed recipes around salmon, abundant off the coast and in the rivers. In Southern

(Continued on page 2)

**JULY**  
**2009**

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(Monday through Friday)

**HOLIDAYS**  
July 3: Independence Day  
(in lieu of July 4)

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## A WORD FROM THE CENTER

(Continued from page 1)

Dear Friends of the American Center,

Three years have passed like three minutes. I am deeply honored to have met many of you. You have expanded my understanding of the world with your outlook, creativity, and resourcefulness. Your hospitality, grace, and wisdom have added an emotional, sensory, and spiritual dimension to my understanding of India's rich culture. I will miss the rhythms of the Ganesh festival, the elegant arches of mosques and their calligraphy, the multilingual chatter of markets, the clatter of trains, the honking of taxis, the taste of savory dosas, the reverence of pilgrims, the multicolored drape of saris and the floral garlands. More than that, I will miss the earnest faces of children, the caring of teachers, and the idealism of India's youth.

We diplomats return periodically to the United States to refresh our grasp of our own culture as it adapts to new times and new immigrants, of whom Indians make up a growing part. We share so much – a belief in equal opportunity and service to society, a rejection of violent extremism, a reverence for the dignity of mankind and our natural environment, and an affirmation of the right of individuals to express themselves. Naturally we face obstacles – overcoming poverty, rescuing our planet from unsustainable impact, and living up to our ideals, among them. However, when we consider how far we have come together, and how much our cooperation matters to billions around the globe, we can be very optimistic about the future.

Though I will depart in July, part of my heart stays here with you, and part of your heart will be with me forever. Until we meet again.  
*Phir milenge.*

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Kauffman  
Director



California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas, the influence of Mexicans is unmistakable – the black beans, hot chili peppers and tomatoes star in many dishes, and tortillas, corn or wheat flour discs somewhat like roti, are often used to hold the meat or bean mixture to make a taco or burrito.

Across the nation, passion for the outdoors has influenced a uniquely American, but yet widely divergent class of foods: barbeque (BBQ), the cooking of meat over hot coals on a backyard grill. As with other American gastronomic delights, barbeque styles and flavors vary from region to region. Barbequed chicken in the northeast often has a salty/vinegary marinade<sup>iv</sup>, while the City of St. Louis, along the upper Mississippi river, is famous for beef ribs slow cooked over an open fire with a sweet/spicy red sauce. In the Carolinas, along the mid-Atlantic coast, BBQ means pork slow cooked then pulled into little shreds, mixed with a vinegar-based sauce. In Texas, BBQ means meats cooked in a smokehouse for half a day or more. BBQ on the Pacific coast, though, is often salmon or other seafood cooked on a wooden plank over open coals<sup>v</sup>.

Far from just hot dogs, hamburgers and potato salad, American fare is as diverse as its people. It is rich in the flavors of the various cultures that make up America, superimposed on the local bounty found in each region.

*Beth Brownson works at the American Consulate General, Mumbai*

<sup>i</sup>New England Clam Chowder: <http://gonewengland.about.com/od/morerecipes/r/recclfhschowder.htm>

<sup>ii</sup>Manhattan Clam Chowder: <http://www.cooks.com/rec/view/0,1628,157167-224204,00.html>

<sup>iii</sup>Cajun Jambalaya: <http://www.cooks.com/rec/view/0,1626,157170-255203,00.html>

<sup>iii</sup>Creole Jambalaya: <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/emeril-lagasse/cajun-jambalaya-recipe2/index.html>

<sup>iv</sup>Cornell Chicken Marinade: <http://allrecipes.com/Recipe/Cornell-Chicken-Marinade/Detail.aspx>

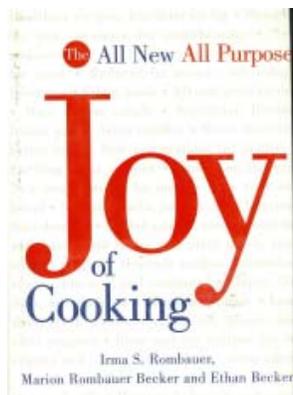
<sup>v</sup>Cedar Plank Salmon: [http://www.madeinoregon.com/recipe\\_cedarmaplesalmon.aspx](http://www.madeinoregon.com/recipe_cedarmaplesalmon.aspx)

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## NOTES FROM THE AMERICAN LIBRARY

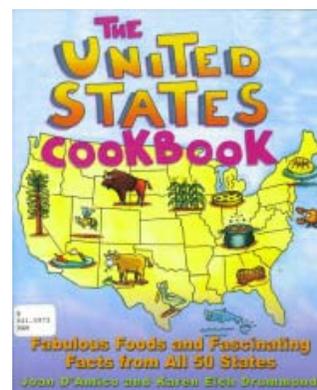
Select Resources on American Food and Traditions Available in the American Library



*Joy of Cooking*  
by Irma S. Rombauer et al  
Scribner, 1997

In its sixth revision, America's classic cookbook reflects the country's changing tastes and lifestyles. It contains 2500 recipes that reflect mainstream American cookery. Some of its unique features include microwave instructions for preparing beans, grains, and vegetables; as well as recipes for people who are lactose intolerant and allergic to gluten.

*The United States Cookbook – Fabulous Foods and Fascinating Facts from all 50 States*  
by Joan D'Amico and Karen Eich Drummond  
John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2000



This book takes the reader on a journey across the United States, discovering and learning how to make fabulous foods from every part of the country. It is a mixture of fun food trivia, fascinating tidbits about each state's history and traditions, and recipes you can cook yourself.



eJournal USA: Americans at the Table – Reflections on Food and Culture

The July 2004 issue of *eJournal USA* celebrates America's amazing culinary diversity through different types of cuisine. It shows how the United States draws upon the traditional cooking of its many different immigrant groups to create a unique, vibrant, and ever-changing scene. The journal also provides insightful and nostalgic reflections on that most American of holidays, Thanksgiving, the celebration of which culminates at the dinner table.

### Webliography

Frontier Culture Museum: <http://www.frontiermuseum.org/index.html>

Key Ingredients – America by Food: <http://keyingredients.org/>

Native Tech – Indigenous Food and Traditional Recipes: <http://www.nativetech.org/recipes/>

Nutrition.gov: <http://www.nutrition.gov>

The Library of Congress – Local Legacies – Celebrating Community Roots:  
<http://www.loc.gov/folklife/roots/>

USA.gov – Culture and Ethnic Groups:  
[http://www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/History\\_Culture.shtml](http://www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/History_Culture.shtml)

Note: To access eJournal USA, please visit <http://www.america.gov/publications/ejournalusa.html>  
Ask a Librarian: Please write to the American Library at [libref@state.gov](mailto:libref@state.gov) for research queries related to information on U.S. international relations, education, law and legislation, English language, and literature.

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## MUMBAI MONDAYS

### Variety in American English Discussion led by Cheryl Hipp

Monday, July 27  
American Center Auditorium 6:00 p.m.

English is spoken by more than 500 million people around the world. Although the U.S. does not have an official language, a large majority of the population speaks English as a native language. While most Americans speak English and can communicate with other English speakers, we do not all sound the same. July's Mumbai Monday will explore regional English differences in the United States. Do you know where to park a car in Boston? Can you ask for a pen in Texas? Is there a difference between a writer and a rider? Come and find out!

Cheryl Hipp joined the Foreign Service in September 2008, and is currently serving her first tour. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, Cheryl worked as a legal assistant at a Los Angeles law firm. She earned a B.A. in Linguistics from the University of California, Los Angeles, in 2007. She grew up overseas, living in India, Indonesia, and Thailand. Her hobbies include reading, and she has a special affinity for fiction.

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## FILMS THIS MONTH

Friday, July 17 *Days of Wine and Roses* (1962, 117 mins)

Friday, July 24 *Diner* (1982, 110 mins)

American Center Auditorium 3:30 and 6:30 p.m.

*Days of Wine and Roses*: First seen as a TV play, Blake Edwards' searing film features Jack Lemmon as a successful adman who meets pretty Lee Remick at a party. The two marry and have a child, but their lives spiral downward when they begin drinking too much. With their marriage threatened, Lemmon and Remick attempt to quit their boozing and get their lives back on track. With Jack Klugman and Charles Bickford. Henry Mancini's title tune won a Best Song Oscar.



*Diner*: Director Barry Levinson's warm, heartfelt comedy about life in fifties Baltimore, centering around a group of young men, their favorite eatery hangout, and the choices they face as they enter adulthood. The talented ensemble cast includes Steve Guttenberg, Mickey Rourke, Daniel Stern, Kevin Bacon, Timothy Daly and Ellen Barkin.

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## Holiday Recipes

### Plum Pudding

Combine 1 cup sifted flour, 3/4 pound raisins, 1/3 cup candied fruits, 1/2 cup chopped almonds, 1/2 cup sugar, 1 teaspoon baking powder, 1/2 teaspoon each of allspice, cinnamon, ground cloves, and nutmeg, and 1 teaspoon salt. Blend well, and then add 1 cup molasses, 3 beaten eggs, 1 cup chopped suet, and 1 cup brandy or rum. Pour into buttered pudding mold, cover, place in kettle of boiling water, cover, and cook slowly for 6 hours or until set. Serve with hard sauce. This pudding is often doused with warmed brandy or rum and ignited at the table.

Source: *The Dictionary of American Food & Drink*  
by John F. Mariani  
Ticknor & Fields, 1983

### Roasted Turkey Breast

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Rinse and pat dry 1 whole turkey breast (4 to 7 pounds). Season both the skin and the bone sides generously with salt and ground black pepper to taste. Arrange the breast skin side up on a baking sheet or in a shallow roasting pan. Brush the skin with 2 tablespoons melted butter. Roast until the meat releases clear juices when pricked deeply with a fork and registers 160°F on an instant-read thermometer, 15-20 minutes per pound. Let stand for 20 minutes before carving.

Source: *Joy of Cooking*  
by Irma S. Rombauer et al  
Scribner, 1997

Note: Internet sites included in this issue of the bulletin, other than those of the U.S. Government, should not be construed as an endorsement of the views contained therein.

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**Admission to all American Center programs, restricted to persons over 16, will be on a first-come, first-served basis. The auditorium doors will open 30 minutes before the start of the program.**