

Cookbooks Show American Culture

今回は、アメリカの料理本に関するニュースです。料理本といえばレシピ集を思い浮かべる方が多いかもしれませんが、昔のアメリカの料理本は、単なるレシピ集ではなく、生活の知恵が詰まった「ガイドブック」のような存在でした。本文に登場する **publication** は「出版物」「出版」という意味の単語で、**online publication**（デジタル版の出版物）や **monthly publication**（月刊誌）などの形でも使われます。時代や暮らしが反映された料理本を通して、人々の生活文化をのぞいてみませんか？



1. Article

Read the following article aloud.

Are you interested in food, United States history, and the English language? If so, American cookbooks provide wide information in all three subjects. The first, published in 1796, started a market that continues in the 21st century with online [publications](#) of such works. And, the literature offers more than just recipes.

Megan Elias is the director of food studies at Boston University and the writer of Food on the Page: Cookbooks and American Culture. She says that cookbooks do help teach us how to prepare food. But they provide more than that, too.

“The concept of meals, how many meals a day that people expect to eat? What do they expect to have in those meals?” Elias said.

They also inform readers about discoveries, equipment and technology related to food making.

Elias said, “What are the objects that are necessary to make the things and what exists? So, are you being asked to do something over an open fire or are you being asked to use an electric stove? Is it something that can be done in the microwave? If you see a lot of recipes for things that are **preserved** for pickles, you know that you are looking at a time without refrigeration.”

Amy Bentley is a food historian at New York University. She said that cookbooks from the 1800s were used as lifestyle and household guides. They include food recipes, but they were not central to the books back then.

“So, there's some recipes for food, but it could be recipes for a cleaning solvent or what to do when your child has been poisoned, how to clean, how to get stains out,” Bentley said.

American Cookery by Amelia Simmons is the first cookbook published in the United States. Simmons wrote that her goal with the book was to improve the new generation of women in the U.S.

Megan Elias says that after the Civil War, cookbooks became more **diverse**. Writers started exploring local foods and customs in their work.

Elias said that Southern cookbooks tried to offer “... a beautiful version of the old South that will kind of heal over the wounds of the Civil War rather than dealing with the problems that caused the Civil War to begin with.”

Some communities would put together a group cookbook to raise money. These cookbooks provide a look into what the American middle class was eating throughout the years. Such works serve as a record of the traditions and interests of different neighborhoods and groups.

Throughout the years cookbooks have signified humanity's growth in knowledge, trends and **innovations**. During the last part of the 19th century, for example, many recipes were informed by the dangers of food containing bacteria. Then, in the 1930s, refrigerators became common objects in American homes. The threat of bacterial infection from food dropped, and very soon, cooks adapted to the new conditions. New recipes and new cookbooks resulted.

But cookbooks are not complete reflections of American life. Elias said publishing companies mostly control cookbook content. And, their main goal is to make money from book sales.

“The publishing world doesn't necessarily have the goal of representing the truth of Americans who made it. It tends to be upper middle class, white, Northeastern.”

In the 21st century, with the growth of social media and food websites, publishing companies have less control. These new ways to share recipes have led to more open discussions about food and cooking. This gives the public more choices and power.

Elias praised the new discussions around food.

“If you look at the comments on food blogs and on any kind of recipe site, you really get to see what people are cooking, and what they think of how they're cooking, and how they think of themselves as experts.”

Physical cookbooks are still highly [desirable](#) as well, Bentley says. “They're very good to give as gifts. They're very, very popular because they're sort of neutral. And everyone loves a cookbook, especially with beautiful pages,” she said.

I'm Faith Pirlo.

Dora Mekouar reported this story for VOA News. Faith Pirlo adapted it for VOA Learning English.

Source: Cookbooks Show American Culture

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2. Key phrases and vocabulary

First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

- 1. publication (n.)** the action of presenting writing, usually in print (such as books)

The publication of a novel is not as simple as it might seem.

- 2. preserve (v.)** to protect food from going bad

I would really like to preserve the Brandywine tomatoes from our garden for winter.

- 3. diverse (adj.)** mixed; varied

In spite of climate change, the birdlife in this country is still very diverse.

- 4. innovation (n.)** the creation of new ideas or new ways of doing something

Regarding technology, both Japan and the US have a long history of innovation.

- 5. desirable (adj.)** wanted or preferred

For most people, a sunny day is more desirable than a cloudy one.

3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. What can cookbooks tell us about history and culture? Please give examples.
2. What can cookbooks tell us about technology and trends? Examples?
3. How has the presentation and sharing of recipes changed in the 21st century?
4. Are there any recipes in your family that have been handed down from generation to generation?
5. If you made your own cookbook, which recipes would you like to include?