

1954

Cook with a Book

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Recommended Citation

Metcalf, Rebecca (1954) "Cook with a Book," *The Iowa Homemaker*: Vol. 34 : No. 2 , Article 2.
Available at: <http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol34/iss2/2>

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Cook with a book

by *Rebecca Metcalf*

Technical Journalism sophomore

WITH A COLLECTION of almost 100 cookbooks, Dr. P. Mable Nelson, past Dean of Home Economics, has a hard time answering the question so often asked of her — "What is your favorite recipe?"

The collection includes an unusual assortment of books from various countries with such strange recipes as spinach pancakes and rhubarb porridge. One of the cookbooks even includes suggestions for the curing of insomnia, baldness and high blood pressure.

Dr. Nelson's advice to the young bride is to learn the basic steps of cooking before attempting the more difficult. She suggests for the bride the manual used in the Foods and Nutrition 204 and 205 courses as it gives detailed explanations of basic cookery which must be understood before going on to the more complicated recipes.

"When I buy a cookbook, it's almost always because of one recipe I want from the book," said Dr. Nelson. "Every book I have has at least one 'special' recipe. I bought the 'Congressional Club Cook Book,' put out by the wives of the congressmen, in order to try Bess Truman's recipe for Ozark pudding."

She went on to explain that this wouldn't be a practical way for a young bride to acquire cookbooks, but should be limited to older, more experienced cooks.

Dr. Nelson's books date from 1737, the year in which "Secrets in Physick and Chynurgery," a tiny 2 by 4-inch leather-bound volume, was printed. She says this book is chiefly a collector's item, as it is difficult to read the old style printing.

Not merely a reader of cookbooks, Dr. Nelson helped to write one put out by Iowa State College in 1926, in addition to being co-editor of the manual used in the two beginning food preparation courses at the college. Because of various college activities, Dr. Nelson's busy schedule allows little time to spend in the kitchen. Even so, her blackberry cake is always in demand, and her candied orange peel makes many mouths water.

The basic cookbook is a necessity for every young bride. After mastering simple procedures, the bride can go on to the recipes which will make her a cook to be envied.