



The Cooking Manual of Practical Directions for Economical Every-Day Cookery (American Antiquarian Cookbook Collection)

Juliet Corson

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Published in New York in 1877, this volume in the American Antiquarian Cookbook Collection was written by one of the “great ladies” of American cooking who founded the first cooking school in New York to help unemployed working-class women find work as domestics. This cooking manual is based on the school’s teachings, with heavy emphasis on preparing nutritious meals inexpensively.

This exceptional book by a remarkable woman in American culinary history was aimed at answering the question Corson posed in her manual, “How well can we live, if we are moderately poor?” She dedicated her life and her career to providing the answer in this book and others, to suggest recipes for “the most wholesome and palatable dishes at the least possible cost.” Her basic concept involved the principles of using everything available and wasting nothing; avoiding expensive cuts of heavy meat and substituting several dishes such as soup, vegetables, fish, and bread; using lentils, peas, and macaroni as nutritious alternatives to meat; exploring gardens and fields for new delicious greens, such as dandelions, sorrel, chicory, and others to liven up meals; adding herbs and spices to make dishes more palatable.

Corson’s recipes also explore the cuisines of many countries to find dishes with inexpensive but tasty ingredients, and her chapters on cheap dishes with and without meat are a model of culinary creativity. This important book in the American culinary canon expanded the cooking philosophies of many lower- and middle-class women of the day.

This edition of *The Cooking Manual of Practical Directions for Economical Every-Day Cookery* was reproduced by permission from the volume in the collection of the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts. Founded in 1812 by Isaiah Thomas, a Revolutionary War patriot and successful printer and publisher, the society is a research library documenting the lives of Americans from the colonial era through 1876. The society collects, preserves, and makes available as complete a record as possible of the printed materials from the early American experience. The cookbook collection comprises approximately 1,100 volumes.

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