Food for Thought: Books and their Recipes
by Gabi Kupitz

There's nothing more exciting for a child than to be connected to a good book. An added bonus is a good book with an accompanying recipe. Not only is the reader given a supplemental hands-on experience that guarantees almost immediate satisfaction, but an appropriate accompanying recipe in a book can reinforce and cement the story's theme. Additionally, the recipe provides yet another opportunity for a parent and child to connect by creating something in a joint effort. Abstract concepts and words can then take on a literal meaning for children. For example, one reads so often of potato latkes and applesauce, but what are latkes and how does applesauce come about? Aside from recipe books for children, there are picture books and novels for children and young adults which contain recipes.

The recent picture book, Cook-a-doodle-doo! by Janet Stevens and Susan Stevens Crummel tells the story of the Rooster who heads for the recipe book of his great-grandmother, Little Red Hen, when the urge for creative cooking takes hold of him. He is pleasantly surprised to note that LRH's baking repertoire included not only the bread, for which she is noted, but also a strawberry shortcake which sounds so good (on the printed page), that he invites his friends to help him recreate this family recipe. The story, accompanying illustrations, and baking how-to sidebars combine for a delightful reading experience. But the added bonus of an accompanying recipe makes Cook-a-doodle-doo! a picture book that will be picked up and experienced again and again.

In W.D. Valgardson's picture book, Winter Rescue, illustrated by Ange Zhang, Thor, the protagonist, devours ponnukokur, a traditional Icelandic-Canadian dessert. They contain sour cream, are sprinkled with brown sugar, and are rolled up into a tube shape. Use your fingers to eat this delicious treat. The book, originally published in Toronto under the title Thor, gives metric and U.S. standard recipe measurements in the American edition.

Bat 6, Virginia Euwer Wolff's novel about post-World War II reactions among a group of sixth-grade girls who play an annual softball game features a Mrs. Rayfield who bakes a mouth-watering "Apple Spice Cake." What a nice surprise to find the recipe in the book! And, in Grand Fathers: Reminiscences, Poems, Recipes, and Photos of the Keepers of our Traditions edited by Nikki Giovanni, the recipes for "Papa's Fresh Beet Horseradish" and "Grandpop's Macaroni and Cheese" remind readers that they too, have culinary treasures peculiar to their family.

In short, recipes in books for children can serve to bridge the abstract and the literal; story and recipe nurture the spirit and body.

The following links offer recipes similar to those found in the books mentioned here:

Latkes:
http://www.jcn18.com/holiday/hanukkah/recipe.htm

Applesauce:
http://www.augusthome.com/cooking/cuisine/RECIPES/appsauc.htm
Strawberry Shortcake:
http://www.recipe.com/whatcook/recipes/shortc.htm

A sampler of books and their recipes, for children and young adults


Some recipes call for chicken bones or pork bones but I like to keep the soup on the lighter side so I normally skip the bones. I also use peanuts to give the soup a little nutty flavor. Similar to the Ribs and Chines Yam soup and Pork Bone Radish soup, Cantonese soup I shared before, traditional Cantonese soup is best slow cooked for a long time. So feel free to cook this soup in a slow cooker if you have one! Print Recipe. Make this traditional Cantonese Pig Stomach with White Peppers Soup following this step-by-step recipe at www.yireservation.com. Ingredients: 1 pig stomach, about 1.5 lb.


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