1994

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Readermakers: Cookery and Crafts Books

by Gabi Kupitz

Juvenile Literature Cataloger and Manuscripts Processor

The gloomy winter months of January and February lend themselves to the discovery of culinary and crafts skills. Children who are homebound (and parents who are climbing walls) can experiment with wonderful gastronomic delights! Even if these gourmet attempts don't quite resemble the pictures in cookbooks, take heart. They are wonderful to eat, to share with family and friends, and to give children success experiences.

Likewise, craft projects can instill a sense of achievement in every child, regardless of ability. Cooking and crafts can motivate even the reluctant reader to scan the brief instructions without becoming bogged down. Simple math is used in a practical setting, with tangible results. Creativity is fostered, kids are kept from endless television watching, children and parents bond, friendships can be deepened, self-esteem can be enhanced and winter will go by quickly.

The book descriptions in the next few pages contain the author's name, title, publisher, year of publication, ISBN (International Standard Book Number useful in bookstore and library requests), age level, pagination, price, and a brief annotation. These books can be found in most libraries and bookstores. Creative suggestions for their use are not included here because the books themselves are full of creative ideas.

COOKERY


All recipes in this book have been made by kids. Each recipe lists the ingredients and equipment needed; instructions are clearly written; and serving sizes, skill level (i.e., novice to gourmet chef), microwave alternatives, and an extensive index are provided. The back of the book presents nutrient analysis for each recipe. This is a serious book for health-conscious parents and their offspring, and yet the recipes are a lot of fun: "slumber party french toast" which is baked rather than fried, is just one example.
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Creasy, Rosalind. *Blue Potatoes, Orange Tomatoes* Illustrations by Ruth Heller. Sierra Club Books for Children (730 Polk Street, San Francisco, California 94109), 1994. ISBN 0-87156-576-5. Ages 2 and up. 40 pp. $15.95. This unique recipe book shows parents and children how to grow the fruits and vegetables for the recipes in the book. The book contains colored illustrations of blue potatoes (to be used in the red, white, and blue potato salad), orange tomatoes, yellow zucchini, red chard, purple string beans, multicolored radishes, red popping corn, and yellow watermelon. Addresses of seed companies that stock these special varieties of seeds are included. Also covered: how to make a happy home for plants, how to start plants indoors and how to coexist with animals that love these particular plants.

Dahl, Felicity. *Roald Dahl’s Revolting Recipes*. Illustrated by Quentin Blake, with photographs by Jan Baldwin. Recipes complied by Josie Fison and Felicity Dahl. Viking (Division of Penguin, Penguin Books USA Inc., 375 Hudson St., New York, NY 10014), 1994. ISBN 0-670-85836-6. All ages. 61 pp. $15.99. This book contains hysterically funny (and revolting) recipes for parents and kids to try. The idea for a recipe book was proposed to Dahl shortly before his death. All the edible recipes come from Dahl’s stories, books and personal preferences. His wife, Felicity, pressed on with this project, and the result is fabulous! Not only are the recipes delightfully original, but create in the reader
a desire to read or reread Dahl’s books. Recipe results are depicted in color photographs with accompanying quirky illustrations by Quentin Blake. Revolting recipes include “candy-coated pencils for sucking in class” and "lickable wallpaper" from Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, "Hansel and Gretel spareribs" from Rhyme Stew, "the enormous crocodile" centerpiece made with frozen, chopped spinach (skin), artichokes (scales), a hard-boiled egg (eyeballs), . . . you get the picture?


Colored illustrations and brief text. Each picnic comes with a featured menu. Fun ideas for children of all ages who love teddy bears and like to include them in picnics and tea parties.


Memorable and affordable, this cookbook’s black and white illustrations depict Anne in delightful situations. L. M. Montgomery’s granddaughter, a home economy graduate from Ryerson Polytechnical Institute in Toronto, wrote the recipes and tested each one with a twelve-year-old friend. Measures are in cups and ounces as well as metric, and recipe captions stem from Anne of Green Gables books.


Illustrations with mylar overlay for cleaning and creative interpretation. The book features only one recipe, and the process of creating the cake is demonstrated not in steps, but in overlays. Filling and decorating the cake is left to the imagination, with a few hints from the overlays, which feature many types of berries. Adult help and supervision is required in this unusual process.


Upbeat text and colored photographs of real kids in the kitchen cooking up breakfast, snacks, dinners, kitchen projects and gifts. Cooking is viewed as a positive alternative to television. Healthy recipes are not boring; each comes
with a short sentence or two explaining the reasons for choosing this healthy alternative. For example, the best way to eat oatmeal, if you hate mush, is to make oatmeal pancakes. In addition, oven temperatures are given in Fahrenheit and Celsius, and the weights and measures equivalents are a helpful addition.


A Martha Stewart-type of cookbook for children, this book is part of the series *The Young Gourmet*. It features recipes for puff pastry, chocolate and pear tarts, a cake house, brownies with M & M’s, flower cookies, vanilla custard and other elegant but simple-to-assemble delights. Colored photographs demonstrate the process and give an overview of the projected outcome. Illustrations from historical sources chronicle the gourmet process and sidebars include tips and interesting insights.


Photographed instructions are numbered and in logical order so as not to confuse the chef and supervisor. Chapters are divided according to the food groups and an index takes the chef from eggs and cheese to vegetable dishes with a party, picnic and menu planner included. A picture glossary of kitchen basics such as "folding in," "kneading," and how to pipe icing from homemade waxed paper icing bags is included in the back of the book. The author tested recipes on her young children and published an earlier book, *My First Cook Book*, which also features wonderful colored photographs to introduce kitchen tools, recipes, and techniques for speedy pizzas and bread bears on a less comprehensive scale.

**NOTE:** A book that should soon be in bookstores is *Midnight Snacks, the Cookbook That Glows in the Dark*, by Carol Schneider and her son, Andrew. The cover glows in the dark to facilitate easy location by late-night kitchen sneaks. In hardcover by Clarkson N. Potter for $15.00 and paperback by Crown Trade Paperbacks for $10.00. ISBN for the paperback edition is 0-15788-107-1.

**CRAFTS**

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Divided into models, textiles, paper, print and paint, with colored illustrations. Projects include marzipan monsters, armor, cross-stitch and pop-up cards.


Questions, fill-in-the blank, activities, puzzles, historical background in short readable format and recipes complement the beautiful art reproductions in this workbook. Each chapter is an adventure. The book also includes a glossary and answer page.


Approximately fifty things to do with Mother Nature’s help. Colored photographs illustrate projects from a wormery to scented soap. The book is divided into spring, summer, autumn and winter projects. Also includes "what you’ll need" and "what to do" lists for each project.


The author of this book is a Georgia-certified educational consultant. Each project lists the appropriate age, skills to be taught, materials list, directions and outcome. Black and white illustrations along with some colored photographs.


Design your own home or recreate the Taj Mahal. This box, which contains thirty-five rubber stamps and an ink pad, architecture guidebook and architectural hints, has a magnetic closure. This activity will spark imagination and creativity.

From the series The Young Artisan, this is a classy approach to crafts that are usable. Projects use newspaper, nature, sand and shells, cardboard, plaster strips, stencils and stamps. Practical crafts include cardboard drawers, nature pots and flower presses. Colored photographs describe the materials, process, and projected outcome, with sidebars offering additional hints and historical perspective.


Colored illustrations and photographs demonstrate over thirty-five projects, including a leaf lady and raffia napkin rings. A guide is included for making practical gifts and projects, as is a list of uses for the finished projects.


From the series, Art & Activities for Kids, these projects are intended to stimulate the imagination of kids and to encourage them to use supplies and materials that are found in most homes. Projects are shown in colored photographs and include jointed clay puppets, picture frames and woven placemats. Other titles in this series include Make Costumes! Make Prints! Make Clothes Fun! Paint! Make Prints! and Make Gifts!


Winner of the 1993 Parents' Choice Award, this is a hands-on approach to appreciating the cultures of Native Americans of North America, Hispanics of Mexico and Central America, Africans and Asians of India, the Far East and the Southeast. Black and white illustrations cover more than one hundred projects with short paragraphs on all the items to be created explain how they tie into each particular culture. The book is from the series A Williamson Kids Can! Series. Other titles in this series include Kids Create! Art and Craft Experiences for 3-to 9-Year Olds and EcoArt! Art & Craft Experiences For 3-to 9-Year Olds.

There are so many worthwhile cookery and crafts books in your library and bookstores that it merits a trip. This is just the tip of a wonderful iceberg of possibilities. Remember, kids need supervision with these projects. Happy reading and creating!