

Wines down South

2009-2010

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NEW COOKBOOKS FROM SOUTHERN LEGENDS

Great Summer Reading For Deep South Gourmets

By Doc Lawrence

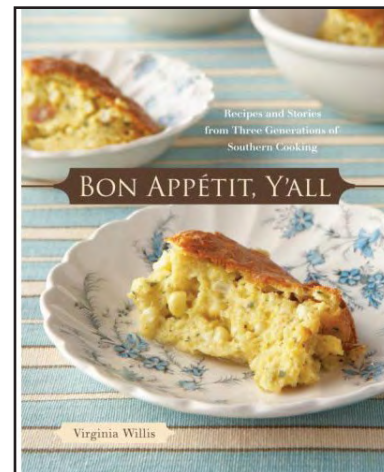
Virginia Willis, one of the region's most respected and accomplished chefs, has a red-hot book out and two copies should be bought now: one for your kitchen and the other for a holiday gift later in the year. The daughter and granddaughter of consummate Southern cooks, Ms. Willis, who is well-known in the South's gourmet culture, inherited their love of fresh, home-cooked food and unconditional hospitality before going on to become a classically trained French chef. These divergent influences are the foundation for her truly remarkable *Bon Appétit, Y'all: Recipes and Stories from Three Generations of Southern Cooking*, Virginia Willis's passionate homage to her culinary roots.

The book embodies all the glamour, grit, and soul of the Southern kitchen. Virginia Willis's part in the old and complex story of Southern food began in her grandmother Meme's country kitchen, with its walls made of heart-of-Georgia pine. From the time she was in a high chair, she says she loved to hear stories of milking cows and making butter and cheese, filling a root cellar, and curing hams in the smokehouse.

With her "simple-is-best" philosophy, Virginia, a French-trained chef, food writer, cooking teacher, and television producer, uses the finest ingredients, relies on traditional French techniques, and lets the food shine through in a style she calls "refined Southern cuisine." She makes this Deep South haute cuisine approachable, with recipes for crispy fried chicken; soft, buttery yeast rolls; old-fashioned butter beans; turnip and mustard greens with salty, smoky pot liquor; light and fluffy pound cake; and homemade jams and jellies.

With more than 100 lush full-color photographs and 200 recipes, *Bon Appétit, Y'all* is a unique collection of time-honored Southern and timeless French dishes (pork chops with dried plums as well as fried pork chops with pan gravy, pot roast and boeuf bourguignonne; hearty, tried-and-true favorites like black-eyed pea and ham hock soup and beautifully simple country food that would be equally at home here and in France like Vidalia onion quiche, coq au vin, and buttermilk cornbread.

These recipes are meant for the family home kitchen, displaced Southerners (I occasionally am among this group) yearning for a taste of home, aspiring cooks, and anyone who appreciates good food. Brimming with stories, photos, tips, and techniques, *Bon Appétit, Y'all* seamlessly blends Virginia's noble Southern and French roots into a thoroughly modern cookbook.



Blueberry Cobbler



Brown Sugar Short Cakes

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THE FINEST NEW SEAFOOD COOKBOOK

Ralph Brennan's New Orleans Seafood Cookbook is a highly collectible 432-page masterpiece that includes recipes by chefs at four Ralph Brennan restaurants: Red Fish Grill, Bacco, Ralph's on the Park and Ralph Brennan's Jazz Kitchen at Disneyland. It belongs on your cookbook shelf near the stove.

Five years ago, Brennan brought together these chefs, writer Gene Bourg, photographer Kerri McKaffety (whose Obituary Cocktails adorns my coffee table) and recipe tester Paulette Rittenburg to compile the first-ever cookbook issued under his name. The result is a definitive guide to the preparation, cooking and serving of local seafood.

Already a kitchen classic, Ralph's book features 170 recipes ranging from Trout Amandine, Oysters Rockefeller and Shrimp Creole to Crawfish Spring Rolls, Barbeque Oysters, Grilled Redfish and Crabmeat Lasagna. Included are easy to use instructions, a seafood cook's manual, expert tips and illustrations, a glossary of Creole and Acadian food terms and a lagniappe, wine pairing suggestions.

"In New Orleans, cuisine is a great leveler—home cooks can be just as passionate about our food culture as the high-profile chefs in a fine-dining establishment," Ralph Brennan said. "This book was created to demystify seafood and provide every person passionate for our indigenous cuisine with the tools necessary to conquer the challenges of preparing New Orleans seafood at home."

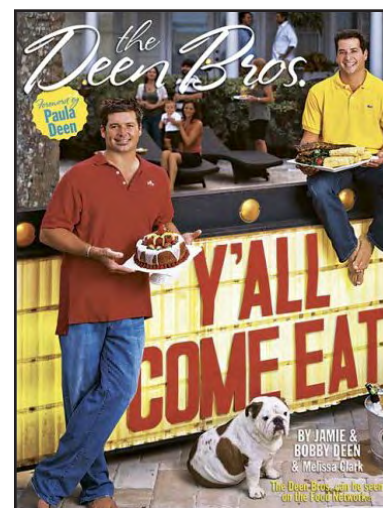
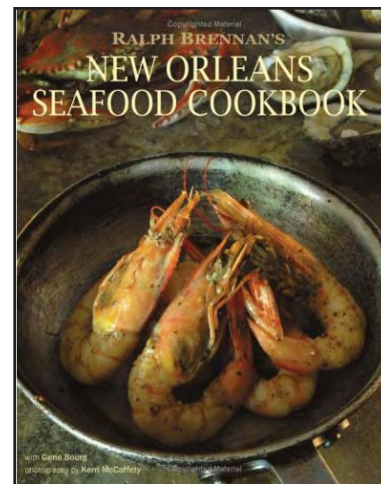
To achieve this goal, each detailed recipe was painstakingly prepared and triple-tested in home kitchens to ensure dishes come out accurate and delicious, every time. This comprehensive cookbook is destined to become a classic guide to preparing seafood for cooks nationwide.

ANOTHER DELIGHT FROM THE DEEN FAMILY

Y'all Come Eat, the fabulous new collection of Southern recipes is by Jamie and Bobby Deen and Melissa Clark. Jamie and Bobby Deen know the recipe for any good time starts with good food. In their latest cookbook, the Deen Brothers share their easiest, all-time favorite recipes, as well as a glimpse into their lives. With friends and family by their side the Deen Brothers have recipes ready for any occasion, from Sunday dinners to tailgating.

Jamie and Bobby have been promoting their new cookbook with television appearances on major network shows plus making signing appearances throughout the South and nation. By now, the public is beginning to catch on to the fact that they are Paula's sons, and her pride and joy. In addition, these guys can really cook.

The book, in a typically Southern fashion, is loaded with stories that seem to





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breathe fresh air into the recipes inspired by their recollections. Tales about fresh pole beans, red potatoes and other vegetables grown in their great-grandmother's garden are followed by fascinating stories about their personal favorites like the meatloaf sandwich and signature goulash. "I'm not a chef. I'm just a cook," Jamie says. But, he and his brother have staked out a significant niche in the culinary world of Dixie, adding their special touches including simplicity in ingredients and preparation.

The Deen brothers, as they are increasingly being introduced, do not shy away from their famous mother and are comfortable with her fame and life's story in her New York Times' best selling tell-all. They still pitch in with the operations of the family restaurant, The Lady & Sons in Savannah, avoiding, though, most of the pain of cooking and cleaning common during the early days.

Their dining philosophy is stated in their book: "At the end of the day when you sit down with us for some all-out delicious eats, we're sure you will agree that nothing tastes better than your own cooking."

Doc Lawrence writes about the culture and heritage of the South and regularly reviews exceptional cookbooks. His skills as a food and fine dining journalist are widely admired. Contact Doc by email: doclawrence@docsnews.com.



Cherry and Peach Cobbler