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. But what are ponnukokur? An accompanying recipe solves the mystery. Ponnukokur are a variation of the American pancake and the European crepes. 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 “Grandpopp’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:

- Applesauce:

- Strawberry Shortcake:

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


Welcome to the world - the Pig and Pepper Deli. Bread Angel Laura Cheattle and her husband realised their dream of owning their own food business in 2017! Welcome to the world - the Pig and Pepper Deli in Buxton. Before taking the microbakery course with Bread Angels, Laura had a successful career in social housing policy/strategy in London. After 10 years she wanted to find a better balance in her life and wanted to see if she could earn a living doing something personally fulfilling in the food industry. She did a summer school at the School of Artisan Food and really enjoyed the bread parts of it. Sign Up For Free Recipes, Specials and Updates Your Email is Kept Private. Photos on flickr. Latest. Simple recipe for the most delicious brioche in the world.


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The Looking Glass: new perspectives on children’s literature

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