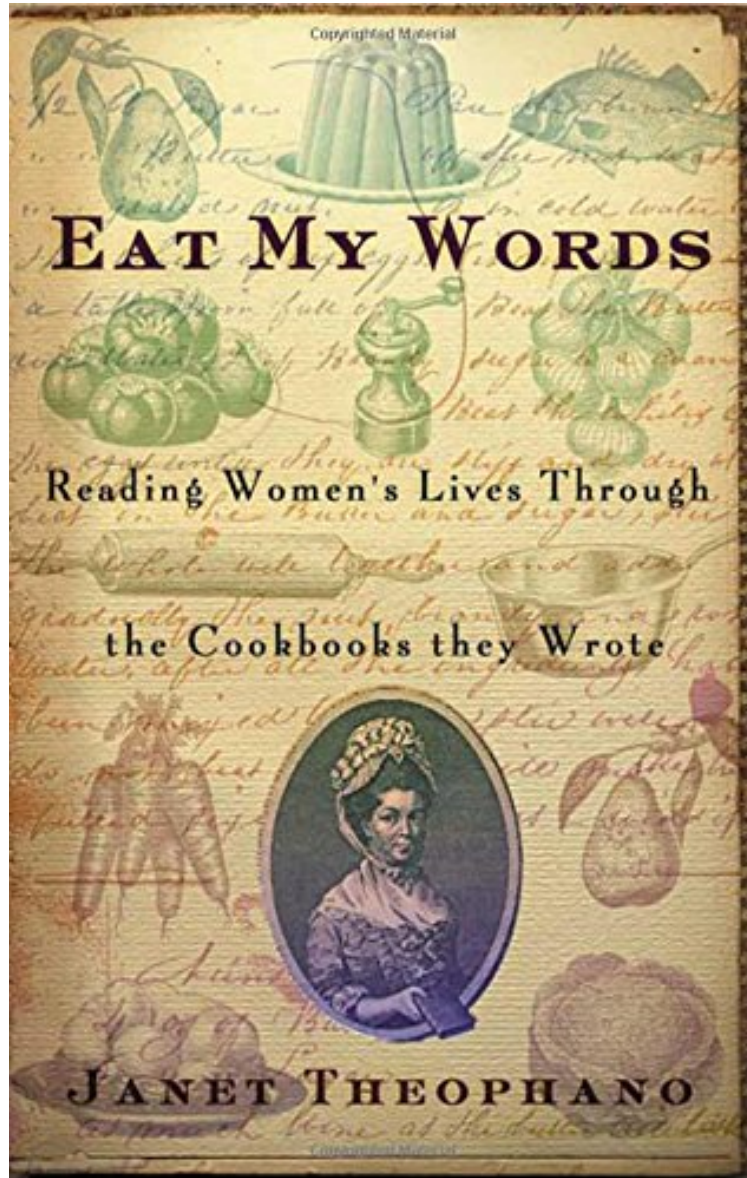


[Download] Eat My Words: Reading Women's Lives Through the Cookbooks They Wrote

# Eat My Words: Reading Women's Lives Through the Cookbooks They Wrote

Janet Theophano

\*Download PDF | ePub | DOC | audiobook | ebooks



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#727473 in Books Palgrave Macmillan 2003-09-01 2003-09-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.50 x .85 x 5.50l, 1.10 #File Name: 1403962936384 pages | File size: 28.Mb

**Janet Theophano : Eat My Words: Reading Women's Lives Through the Cookbooks They Wrote** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Eat My Words: Reading Women's Lives Through the Cookbooks They Wrote:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Adrian ColonExcellent.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very interesting and funBy KrsTeaI thoroughly enjoyed this book and reading the author comments. Good reading and great insight into the daily lives of it's heroins!0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. I liked the idea of the book but sometimes was difficult to stay with it. Very itresting but not an easy read.By BuddyBoyI like the book but found it hard to follow at times due to the old ideas and choice of words.

Some people think that a cookbook is just a collection of recipes for dishes that feed the body. In *Eat My Words: Reading Women's Lives through the Cookbooks They Wrote*, Janet Theophano shows that cookbooks provide food for the mind and the soul as well. Looking beyond the ingredients and instructions, she shows how women have used cookbooks to assert their individuality, develop their minds, and structure their lives. Beginning in the seventeenth century and moving up through the present day, Theophano reads between the lines of recipes for dandelion wine, "Queen of Puddings," and half-pound cake to capture the stories and voices of these remarkable women. The selection of books looked at is enticing and wide-ranging. Theophano begins with seventeenth-century English estate housekeeping books that served as both cookbooks and reading primers so that women could educate themselves during long hours in the kitchen. She looks at *A Date with a Dish*, a classic African American cookbook that reveals the roots of many traditional American dishes, and she brings to life a 1950s cookbook written specifically for Americans by a Chinese migr and transcribed into English by her daughter. Finally, Theophano looks at the contemporary cookbooks of Lynne Rosetto Kaspar, Madeleine Kamman, and Alice Waters to illustrate the sophistication and political activism present in modern cookbook writing. Janet Theophano harvests the rich history of cookbook writing to show how much more can be learned from a recipe than how to make a casserole, roast a chicken, or bake a cake. We discover that women's writings about food reveal--and revel in--the details of their lives, families, and the cultures they help to shape.

.com Beyond their recipes, what can cookbooks tell us? Much, says Janet Theophano, whose *Eat My Words* explores women's history as revealed by the cookbooks they wrote, used, or in many cases created, and through recipes, family and historical memorabilia, and other clippings. Beginning in the 17th century and bringing us to the present, Theophano examines cookbooks as repositories of female identity. Whether focusing on early English estate housekeeping books, which served as both cookbooks and primers for self-education; a 19th-century cookbook whose list of servants' tasks reveals aspects of female domestic life; or 20th-century works like Freda DeKnight's classic 1948 *A Date with a Dish*, which limns black female culture, the book, at its best, fulfills the promise of its exciting premise. But Theophano is hampered by her choice of materials. Though works like the above do tell about women's lives, others, like that of an early 20th-century Pennsylvania housewife, yield little of consequence no matter how dexterously Theophano squeezes them for meaning. This leads her into a speculative freefall and from there to overgeneralized (and often redundant) conclusions. ("Mrs. Downing gave a lot of thought to the delectable and proper meals she would serve her guests" is one of many examples.) Nonetheless, most readers will find the book an engrossing window through which to glimpse much more than how to roast a chicken or bake a cake. --Arthur Boehm  
From Publishers Weekly  
Theophano, a folklorist teaching at the University of Pennsylvania, attempts to show that cookbooks can "dramatically expand and enrich our understanding of women's lives." Her discussion covers a select group of English and American cookbooks from the 17th century to the mid-20th, including many she found in antiquarian book shops and archives. Some of them do say a lot about women and their worlds for example, a 17th-century English receipt book where the writer lists all her worldly possessions, or the 19th-century recipe book containing lists of servants' tasks. In *A Date with a Dish*, published in 1948, the cooking editor of *Ebony* magazine pays homage to her cultural heritage. In *Memory's Kitchen*, written by Jewish women interned in Theresienstadt during the Holocaust and published in 1996, contains Central European recipes that represent a "lost world and its flavors." A number of cookbooks are included because their owners used them as scrapbooks, annotating the recipes and placing newspaper clippings, favorite poems, biblical verses and handwritten notes between the leaves, but here Theophano can only speculate, for the information about the cooks is often very limited and not particularly revealing of their social and cultural worlds. While the book is painstakingly researched, with copious footnotes and an extensive bibliography, its title promises more than it delivers. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.  
From Library Journal  
Theophano (folklore and religious studies, Univ. of Pennsylvania) here examines British and American cookbooks written from the 17th to the mid-20th centuries. While she is careful not to read too much into the historical context of these cookbooks or in the marginal notes she found in them, Theophano suggests a number of themes. For instance, the collecting of recipes helped maintain a sense of community and helped preserve a religious or ethnic group's history. Some cookbooks revealed the lives of the women who wrote them through the notes, poetry, or letters found inside. Cookbooks encouraged female literacy and authorship and offered social instruction in household management. Still others contained social and political commentary. This work is not a comprehensive history of cookbooks but rather a charming series of observations on women authors and users and the times in which they lived. Suitable for academic women's studies collections and for supplementing public library cookbook

collections. (Index not seen.) Patrica A. Beaver, Coll. of New Jersey Lib., Ewing Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.