

= The Modern Cook =

The Modern Cook was the first cookery book by the Anglo-Italian cook Charles Elmé Francatelli (1805 ? 1876) . It was first published in 1846 . It was popular for half a century in the Victorian era , running through 29 London editions by 1896 . It was also published in America .

The book offered elaborate dishes , described with French terminology such as bisque , entrées , entremets , vol au vent , timbale and soufflé . It included bills of fare for meals for up to 300 people , and for a series of eight- or nine -course dinners served to Queen Victoria ; one exceptional royal dinner in 1841 had sixteen entrées and sixteen entremets , including truffles in Champagne .

The Modern Cook was the first to mention filling wafer cones with ice cream . The book , written for upper middle -class housewives , is illustrated with 60 engravings , often showing how to present carefully decorated centrepiece dishes such as " Salmon a la Chambord " for large dinner parties .

The book influenced households in Britain and America to aspire to more complex , French -style dinners in imitation of the Queen , and resulted in a change in eating habits , including the modern two -course approach for both lunch and dinner .

= = Context = =

Charles Elmé Francatelli , from an Italian family , was born in London in 1805 , and learnt cookery in France . Coming to England , he worked for various aristocrats before becoming chief chef of Crockford 's club and then chief cook to Queen Victoria in 1840 . He went on to work at Crockford 's again , at the Coventry House and Reform Clubs , St James 's Hotel , and for the Prince and Princess of Wales . This made him a celebrity cook of his time .

= = Book = =

= = = Approach = = =

Apart from the preface and Francatelli 's advice on serving wine , the body of the book consists almost entirely of recipes without any kind of introduction . There is no guidance on choice of kitchenware or advice on the layout of the kitchen .

The recipes are presented entirely as instructions , generally without illustration . Quantities , where stated , are incorporated in the text ; ingredients are never listed explicitly . Quantities are sometimes named , as in the " Cream Bechamel Sauce " , which begins " Put six ounces of fresh butter into a middle -sized stewpan ; add four ounces of sifted flour , some nutmeg , a few peppercorns , and a little salt ; " . In other cases only the relative proportions are indicated , as for the " Salmis of Partridges with Aspic Jelly " , where the only hint of quantity in the recipe is " must be mixed with one -third of its quantity of aspic jelly " . This recipe also indicates the style of cross -referencing , with the starting instruction " Prepare the salmis as directed in No. 1078 " .

The Modern Cook is the first published record in England of filling wafer cornets , which Francatelli called gauffres , with ice cream . He used them to garnish his iced puddings .

= = = Contents = = =

The following apply to the 28th edition of 1886 . The Table of Contents did not have page numbers .

= = = Illustrations = = =

The 28th edition is illustrated with 60 , mostly small , engravings . There is a full -page

frontispiece of the author , drawn by Auguste Hervieu and engraved by Samuel Freeman (1773 ? 1857) . Freeman is known for working mainly in stipple , and the portrait here is no exception .

All the other engravings are of completed dishes , showing the serving @-@ plate with the food arranged on it and often elaborately garnished . The artists and engravers of the food illustrations are not identified .

= = = Bills of fare = = =

Francatelli provides " A Series of Bills of Fare for Every Month Throughout the Year " , including dinners variously for 6 , 8 , 10 , 12 , 14 16 , 18 , 20 , 24 , 28 and 36 persons (though not all of these in every month) . The bills of fare for dinners for 6 persons thus represent the simplest menus in the book . All the dinners are divided into a first and a second " Course " , but each course was divided in turn into three or four servings , in most cases with a choice of two or more dishes . Thus there might be one or two soups , two fishes , two " removes " of meat , and two savoury " entrées " in the first " Course " , with a second " Course " of one kind of game , followed by a choice of three " entremets " which included both savouries , generally vegetables , and desserts .

There is a single bill of fare for a " Ball Supper for 300 Persons " , and one for a " Public Dinner " for the same number .

There are 13 bills of fare for " Her Majesty 's Dinner " , each with an exact date in 1841 and the words " (Under the control of C. Francatelli .) " . Each of the royal dinners has either eight or nine courses (including a buffet or sideboard) , except for that of 30 June which is divided into two " Services " and has 11 courses .

The royal dinners are described almost entirely in French , with the exception of the heading , the phrase " Side Board " , and a few specifically British dishes such as " Roast Mutton " and " Haunch of Venison " . There are usually two soups , two fishes , two removes , six entrées , two roasts , two more removes , six entremets , and between two and seven dishes on the sideboard . The exceptional royal dinner of 30 June 1841 had sixteen entrées and sixteen entremets . Some of these entremets used the most costly ingredients including truffles in Champagne .

= = = Publication = = =

The Modern Cook was first published in 1846 . It reached its 29th edition in 1896 . Francatelli presented a copy of the 8th edition to Queen Victoria on 4 June 1853 .

Editions included :

1846 , First edition . Richard Bentley & Son , London .

1846 , Lea and Blanchard , Philadelphia .

c . 1855 , T.B. Peterson and Brothers , Philadelphia .

1858 , 11th edition . Richard Bentley & Son , London .

1859 , from 9th London edition . Thomas L. White , New Orleans .

1880 , 13th edition . Richard Bentley & Son , London .

1886 , 28th edition . Richard Bentley & Son , London .

1895 , from 26th London edition . D. McKay , Philadelphia .

1896 , 29th edition . Richard Bentley & Son , London .

1911 , Reprint of 1st edition . Macmillan , London .

1973 , Reprint of 1880 edition (T.B. Peterson and Brothers , Philadelphia) . Dover , New York

= = Reception = =

= = = Contemporary = = =

Kettner 's Book of the Table of 1877 , describing Francatelli as " a type of all the great French cooks " , asserted that he " gives a most elaborate recipe for aspic jelly ; and he is so satisfied with it that ,

having to prepare a cold supper for 300 people , he works it up in every one of his 56 dishes which are neither sweet nor hot . The book further argues that " this is the result of science ? this the height of art . It produces , with such elaborate forms and majestic ceremonies , an aspic jelly without aspic , that , exhausted in the effort , it can proceed no further , and seems to think that here at last , in this supreme sauce , we have a sure resting @-@ place ? the true blessedness ? the ewigkeit . "

George H. Ellwanger wrote in his Pleasures of the Table in 1902 that Francatelli 's Modern Cook was " still a superior treatise , and although little adapted to the average household , it will well repay careful study on the part of the expert amateur . ' The palate is as capable and nearly as worthy of education as the eye and the ear , ' says Francatelli ? a statement which his volume abundantly bears out . " He added that " one sees , accordingly , an ornate observance of decoration in his grand army of side @-@ dishes . These are excellent throughout , but generally very elaborate , while his sauces and recipes for pastry are especially good . The same may be said of his quenelles and timbales . A competent hand will find his work a valuable guide from which to obtain ideas ; it is not a practical book for the majority . "

The New Zealand Herald of 1912 commented that Francatelli was " an earnest and gifted worker in the cause of gastronomy " and that The Modern Cook faithfully reflected Victorian dining habits . " Everything was good and solid of its kind , even if tending towards complication rather than simplicity . " The review opined that the great joints of meat " decorated with their silver hatelet skewers bearing cock 's combs and trufflets , were attended by the most appetizing ragouts and garnishes . " Despite the gloss , there was " nothing meretricious or deceptive in the savoury promises held out by Victorian comestibles . " The reviewer notes , however , that even while Francatelli was describing this elaborate fare , the " excessive meat @-@ eating " was being replaced by a diet richer in vegetables , and meals were becoming simpler , so that " now , in the 20th century , much that Francatelli wrote about ... is no longer needed . "

= = = Modern = = =

M. F. K. Fisher , writing in The New York Times , stated that millions of American women in the 19th century organised " every aspect of their lives .. as much as possible in imitation of the Queen " , and that The Modern Cook sold almost as well in America as it did in England . Admitting that few American kitchens could " follow all its directions for the light Gallic dainties Francatelli introduced to counteract the basic heaviness of royal dining habits " , she argued that all the same his two @-@ course approach eventually shaped the way Americans now eat both lunch and dinner . She observed that at Windsor Castle , Francatelli and other royal chefs were assisted by 24 assistant chefs and two " Yeomen of the Kitchen " , not to mention a multitude of " servers and lackeys " . This did not deter American housewives " as far west as Iowa and then beyond " from doing their best to follow his instructions .

The Historic Food website notes that Francatelli provides two recipes for mincemeat , one with roast beef , the other containing lemons but no meat .

C. Anne Wilson , introducing Women and Victorian Values , 1837 @-@ 1910 . Advice Books , Manuals and Journals for Women , states that Francatelli was writing for the " upper middle @-@ class housewife " in The Modern Cook , explaining to her how to serve the " socially important " dinner in English , French and " à la Russe " styles . In contrast , his 1861 Cook 's Guide is for " more ordinary " households , advocating " traditional two @-@ course dinners " .

Nick Baines writes on LoveFood that Francatelli included " a whole collection of lavish pies " in the book .

Panikos Panayi , in his book Spicing Up Britain , writes that Francatelli 's book for the middle classes definitely recognised differences between British and foreign foods , even in its full title which ran " ... Comprising , in Addition to English Cookery , the Most Advanced and Recherché Systems of French , Italian and German Cookery " . Panayi notes that Francatelli 's preface to the first edition was scathing about ignorant " English writers on gastronomy " , comparing them unfavourably to the " great Professors " of cuisine in France . Panayi observes further that while

most of Francatelli 's chapters are not grouped by national origin , he does distinguish English , Foreign , and Italian soups . He notes that it would have taken years to eat all the dishes listed , and that it is impossible to tell how often middle class families may have eaten " fillets of haddocks , à la royale " . He considers it likely that only the wealthiest could have aspired to eat the sort of food described by Francatelli , but concedes that his bills of fare for dinners for six persons (by month) do indicate that the middle classes could afford the best meat and vegetables , and indeed that they had domestic staff able to prepare dinners of that complexity described in Francatelli 's French terminology . Panayi concludes that Francatelli represents " perhaps the most extreme example " of the nineteenth century British habit of giving dishes French descriptions .