

Cookbooks and Recipes Published by Uncle Sam for Health, Nutrition, and Fun

By: Andrea M. Morrison

The U.S. government publishes many online cookbooks and recipes of interest to library users and librarians — both practical and fun! They tend to fall into the categories of health and nutrition, education, environment, agriculture and miscellaneous, and are often aimed at special audiences. Examples range from cookbooks for health conditions such as diabetes or high blood pressure to cookbooks for better health, nutrition, and fun for kids, parents, and seniors. Among the topics covered are cooking for crowds, holiday cooking, cooking with garden foods, and low-fat cooking with healthy foods such as fruits, herbs, and vegetables, etc. The government also publishes online information on basic and advanced cooking skills from baking to barbecuing and smoking meats. Handling food safely in the household kitchen, whether it is poultry, eggs, or leftovers, is another common topic. For many titles, recipes are provided in both English and Spanish language versions.

The format as well as the content of government cookbooks varies widely. Some digital titles contain a substantial number of recipes and sometimes recipes are scattered on a website or represent only part of a title. Often print pamphlets, kits, or CDs are published online. Government agencies also publish searchable databases and interactive websites on cooking. In addition, many historical print titles are now being digitized. For example, the National Agricultural Library (NAL) Digital Repository, <http://naldr.nal.usda.gov/>, provides access to historical USDA publications digitized either by NAL or partners and many titles are related to cooking. The *Agricultural Handbook* series, for instance, has titles about freezing, cheese, and cuts of beef, and the *Agricultural Information Bulletin* series includes a manual on canning. Whatever the format, government documents are materials chiefly free of charge, and because they are in the public domain, may be

reprinted without legal restriction.¹

In today's tight budgets, Uncle Sam's cookbooks and recipes are interesting, fun, educational, and available for library collections or individuals at no cost.

This article provides an introduction to U.S. government information on cooking, some tips for searching for online government cookbooks and recipes, and a summary of selected government digital resources on cooking and online cookbooks. An additional bibliography for digital and print titles is also included. Some of these titles may be ordered online for print delivery, even in bulk, to libraries. In addition, for access to individual print titles, users may search titles in U.S. federal depository library collections. (To find access to an Indiana library in the depository program, consult the Indiana State Library's *Federal Depository Program* Web page at www.in.gov/library/feddeposit.htm.)² Although the focus of this article is on federal government information, many of the Web portals and searches identified will lead to fun and informative online cooking information provided by state and local government agencies. Over the years, recipes have also been published in many government periodicals, but these topics are beyond the scope of this article. Explore the savory feast of U.S. online government information on cooking and bon appétit!

U.S. Federal Government Agencies Publish Online Cooking Information

For many years, some of the main federal agencies regularly publishing cooking information in print and online have been the Departments of Agriculture, Defense, and Health and Human Services. Today, other agencies publishing online recipes and cooking information are the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,

the Food and Drug Administration, and the National Institutes of Health. These agencies recognize the diversity of the U.S. population in their publications on cooking. Some of the cookbooks and recipes are also published in Spanish language, which may be useful for libraries with an increasing Hispanic user population. Some are aimed at diverse population groups: African-Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Native Americans. Even a cookbook on Cajun cooking was published. In addition, cookbooks on specialized themes were published from baking breads and desserts to entertaining and using specific food products, such as rice, fruits, or chocolate. Here is a sampling of the types of cooking information published by specific federal agencies.

Cookbooks and handbooks for cooks were routinely published by the Army, Air Force, and Navy. One early Navy title is the *General Mess Manual and Cookbook for Use on Board Vessels of the Navy*, www.history.navy.mil/library/online/genmessmanual.htm. Be warned that the recipe for potato salad calls for thirty pounds of sliced boiled potatoes! Prior to 1955, the U.S. War Department regularly published cookbooks, for example, the *Manual for Army Cooks*, 1910, and *Manual for Army Bakers*, 1916. Similar titles are available via Google Books, <http://books.google.com/books>, by title and keyword searching.

Today, many recipes published by the military may be discovered by an advanced search of Google U.S. Government search, www.google.com/unclesam, limited by the .mil domain. A variety of recipes appealing to military cooks, families, and a wider audience are available. Some examples of recipes found include low-fat, low-cholesterol recipes from the Walter Reed Army Medical Center's website, *Heart Health Home Cooking: African American Style*, www-nehc.med.navy.mil/downloads/healthyliv/nutrition/recipes/home_cooking_african_american.pdf, and traditional bulk baking powder biscuit and navy bean soup recipes from the U.S. Navy.

Over the years, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has been a prolific publisher of healthy and nutritional recipes, home gardening and garden produce recipes, and recipes for populations on government

assistance. Recipes for school lunches and snacks and recipes for populations on limited budgets are historical publishing themes of cooking titles from this agency. It is interesting to see the change in focus historically from an exclusive parent audience to one including kids with the publication of kid-friendly cookbooks, fun recipes and interactive websites geared towards children.

The USDA works in coordination with the state agricultural extension offices to publish and disseminate cooking information. Indiana's agriculture extension office, hosted by Purdue University, provides information about food, food safety, and recipes at its Consumer and Family Sciences Extension Office website, under the topic Food & Health, www.cfs.purdue.edu/extension/food_health/index.html.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service (FISIS), is an excellent resource for food safety and cooking tips. The agency publishes cooking guidelines on safe food preparation and storage for meat, poultry, eggs, and other foods. Its Food Safety Education website, http://origin-www.fsis.usda.gov/Food_Safety_Education, features a 24/7 interactive FAQ database on food safety questions (live chat during office hours) and *Be Food Safe* multimedia and downloadable kit materials.

The FISIS factsheet website at www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/index.asp includes a searchable database and an A-Z index with many interesting titles for safe food preparation and handling. Titles are mostly pamphlet length with some also available in Spanish. Topics include poultry and meat preparation — even hot dogs! A series called *From Farm to Table* includes recipes: titles such as *Game from Farm to Table*, *Beef...*, *Lamb...*, *Goat...*, *Rabbit...*, etc. Libraries serving college students may find this title of interest, *Food Safety Tips for College Students*, which advises students whether or not to eat that pizza left out overnight or how to microwave food or tailgate safely. Other fun fact sheets available at www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/ are *Keeping 'Bag' Lunches Safe*; *Mail Order Food Safety*; and *Food Safety While Hiking, Camping & Boating*.

Recipes for disease prevention is a theme of the publications of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). NIH has 27 individual institutes that focus on a variety of health topics and publish related recipes. Some of these institutes are the National Cancer Institute; the National Heart, Blood, and Lung Institute; the National Institute on Aging, and the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases; The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences Research centers under the NIH. One center is the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, which provides 'Herbs at a Glance,' a series of online fact sheets that provides basic information about specific herbs or botanicals such as ginger including common names, uses, potential side effects, and resources for more information at <http://nccam.nih.gov/health/herbsataglance.htm>. One Web cookbook of heart healthy recipes published by the National, Heart, Blood, and Lung Institute, National Institutes for Health, is *Stay Young at Heart: Cooking the Heart Healthy Way*, www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/other/syah/. Appetizers, soups, entrees, side dishes, and even dessert recipes are included. Printed copies may be ordered online or by print, telephone, fax, or mail.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has been a prolific publisher of recipes and cookbooks on health topics for audiences ranging from infants and children to adults. Health problems covered include such topics as diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity, allergies and more. Recipes for special diets include low-fat and low-salt diets and protein-restricted diets. One example is *Best Bones Forever! Recipes*, by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, www.bestbonesforever.gov/whatsbest/recipes/. Need calcium-rich recipes for kids? This site features recipes for smoothies, snacks, and party foods.

The Library of Congress website is an exceptional resource — for recipes! Even in 1991, in recognition of government publishing in cookery, the Library Congress published a bibliography entitled *Cookbooks and Recipes*. Currently, as part of its 'American Memory Project' classroom materials, Library of Congress provides *The Great American Potluck*, www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/

[immigration/ckbk/](#) which highlights recipes by title, category, and region. The cookbook includes recipes with roots from around the world, like the immigrant ancestors of Americans. The introduction to the Recipes by Region section states:

Residents of the United States trace their family origins to countries around the world. The traditions of our forebears are reflected in the diversity of our recipes. Some recipes list ingredients which are unknown in this country, or which are unusual and difficult to find. Don't miss this window to the world! Be sure to enjoy the stories behind the recipes, too. (U.S. Library of Congress, n.d.)

This resource is unique because it is presented as a spiral-bound cookbook online. The recipes and stories were collected from 2002–2006. The Library of Congress, however, makes a note that the recipes were solely collected for the purpose of illustrating the American immigration experience. Be aware that these recipes are not tested!

Searching Online Government Information for Recipes and Cookbooks: Web Portals and Search Hints

Government Web portals may also be easily searched for online recipes. USA.gov, the main search portal of the U.S. government, includes food and cooking information under the category Government Information by Topic: selecting the topic Health and Nutrition. From the home page, users can search 'recipes,' 'cookbooks,' or type of recipe, such as 'quick recipe' or 'world recipes' and be linked to numerous recipe collections. A Spanish version of this portal is available. Users should be aware that state and local government publications are also included, for example, Connecticut Food Policy Council's *Farm Fresh Summertime Recipes* at www.ct.gov/ctnutrition/lib/ctnutrition/cookbook_x1a-rev1_12-30-07.pdf. (Check out the easy gourmet salad dressings and entrée recipes.) Also, tribal governments are included in the search and link users to a variety of Native American recipes. See the Choctaw Persimmon Cake and other recipes available from the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma at www.choctawnation.com/Culture/dsp_Recipes.cfm.

Kids.gov, the official kids' portal to the U.S. government, includes recipes and food information for kids and educators, but it's best to search the websites instead of selecting the educational categories. Be aware that non-governmental websites may meet criteria for being included in the search. A bonus — look for state government recipes, for Indiana, Maine, and Montana. A search for 'recipes' on Kids.gov yields the following fun website: Peace Corps {teens} Get More: Recipes and Foods, www.peacecorps.gov/teens/more/recipes/ features world recipes by region. Users may also watch Peace Corps videos and listen and download world music for a cultural experience. (As a surprise, see under Niger for the recipe Crunchy Spicy Locusts.)

Once again, Google U.S. Government, www.google.com/unclesam, may be used in general searching of U.S. federal, state, and local websites and some related non-governmental sites that meet the criteria. Under advanced searching, users may limit searching to domains such as .gov, .mil, and in.gov. Recipes from the White House may be found by limiting the search domain to whitehouse.gov and from INShape Indiana may easily be found by limiting the search to in.gov.

The *Catalog of U.S. Government Publications*, <http://catalog.gpo.gov/F>, may also be searched for born-digital publications on cooking. Under the advanced search option, the Internet Publications may be selected as a catalog choice. Library of Congress Subject Heading 'cookery' may be searched or 'recipes' as a keyword.

When searching any online catalog it is useful to remember that the Library of Congress is going to modernize the subject headings treatment for cooking and cookbooks. The general subject heading for cooking in bibliographic records is 'Cookery.' However, this year, the Library of Congress is going to revise the term Cookery to Cooking by officially revising the *Subject Headings Manual*, Section H 1475, *Cooking and Cookbooks*. Most headings with 'cookery' in them will also be revised to include 'cooking,' for example 'Mexican American cooking' or 'Quick and easy cooking.' However, headings for 'Recipes' and headings for special types of diets, such as 'Low-fat diet' will be unchanged. Finally, the heading 'Cookbooks' will be established as both

a topical subject heading and a genre/form heading. The latest news about this change is available in January 8, 2010, *Revision of Headings for Cooking and Cookbooks: Library of Congress Decisions*, at www.loc.gov/catdir/cpsocooking3.pdf, and the final version will be made available at the time of implementation of the new cataloging practices. The target date for implementation of these decisions is late May/early June 2010.

Pamphlets on cooking may be searched and ordered from the Federal Citizen Information Center, www.pueblo.gsa.gov/, which makes titles available online and for bulk purchase of print titles for free or minimal costs. Search the database for keywords or select the categories: Food, Espanol, Family, Health, Money. Under the category Food, titles listed such as *Diabetes Recipes*, *Food Safety for Seniors* (one of the most popular titles) and *Keep Your Food Safe* are available in both English and Spanish. Select the category More Books on this Topic for titles (some in English only) such as *Cooking for Groups: A Volunteer's Guide to Food Safety*; *My. Pyramid.Gov: Steps to a Healthier You*; *Let's Talk Turkey*; *Fabulous Fruits...Versatile Vegetables* (quick and simple snack recipes), and *Kitchen Companion: Your Safe Food Handbook* (also includes specific preparation and cooking methods for slow cooking, microwave cooking, marinating, smoking, and barbecuing). Only some titles contain recipes; other titles have food safety and health guidelines used in cooking.

The other categories offer cooking-related information. Under the category Family, for example, a title addressing a current issue is *Helping Your Overweight Child*, which gives healthy snack ideas and resources that link to more recipes.

U.S. Federal Government Websites with Recipes

Healthfinder.gov, by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, www.healthfinder.gov/, offers information and tools for healthy living and links to additional resources from government and non-government sources. Aimed at providing tools and encouragement for personal health and caregivers, this website also locates recipes. It provides an A-Z searchable list on health topics and features

a tour for librarians to learn the resource. Its Quick Guide to Healthy Living includes tips on vegetarian diets, diets to prevent diabetes and obesity, and meal portion sizes. The category Personal Health Tools features a menu planner.

The English and Spanish-language recipe finder database, the SNAP-Ed Connection Recipe Finder at <http://recipefinder.nal.usda.gov/>, was created by nutrition educators working with populations eligible for the USDA governmental program Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The searchable database also provides alphabetical browsing by recipe and rating. (Try searching 'cookies' for some healthy cookie recipes!) Each recipe submitted was reviewed and analyzed by a Registered Dietitian at the Food and Nutrition Information Center. Costs are included.

BAM! Body and Mind, www.bam.gov, by the Department of Health and Human Services, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, answers kids' questions about health, including physical activity and nutrition, and features a category under Food and Nutrition called Cool Treats with kid-friendly recipes. The website is designed for kids to enjoy, but educator information is offered in the 'Teacher's Corner.'

Nutrition.gov, by the National Agricultural Library, U.S. Department of Agriculture, www.nutrition.gov, is an excellent resource for nutrition, cooking information, and recipes. It also links users to shopping, cooking, and meal planning information, weight management, information on food assistance programs. Use the advanced search feature to search for recipes, for example 'recipes' and keywords such as 'bread' or 'Latino.'

Fruits and Veggies—More Matters is a joint initiative from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Produce for Better Health Foundation to encourage Americans to eat more fruits and vegetables. The initiative's website offers nutritional information, recipes, and tips at www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov. The Recipes database allows users to search and select recipes by fruit, vegetable, and meal type, in order to create their personalized cookbook.

Also sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control, is *A Healthier You*, a cookbook

with almost 100 healthy recipes. Nutrition information such as calories, total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium is included for all recipes. The recipes are categorized by total time to prepare and cook: 30, 60 or 90 minutes. Kid-friendly recipes are also highlighted, and the site links to other government Web resources that readers can use to access up-to-date information, advice, and tips for maintaining your progress at www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/healthieryou/html/recipes.html.

An interactive tool that replaces the Food Guide Pyramid is the online government MyPyramid website, www.mypyramid.gov. It features information to help adults and kids make healthier food choices and to find a balance between food and physical activity. It provides sample meals and snacks for age groups based on calories and a menu planner. The website also has fun and educational materials and activities just for kids. Searching the website for recipes links the user to many interesting recipes and cookbooks, usually published on other government websites, such as *Recipes and Tips for Healthy Thrifty Meals*, by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Conclusion

The U.S. government publishes online cooking information and recipes for health, nutrition, and fun. As the resources in this article illustrate, there are many types of online cookbooks and websites worth investigating. These are available at no cost and some of the federal agencies also offer the print title for sale at a minimal fee. The following bibliography gives some additional government print and online cookbooks titles of interest. Government Web portals are also a good way to find recipes, especially since more are being published every day by federal, state, and local governments to our benefit!

Notes

¹ "Title 17, Section 105, United States Code, provides that: Copyright protection under this title is not available for any work of the United States Government ...

The intent of the section is to place in the public domain all work of the United States

Government, which is defined in 17 U.S.C. § 101 as work prepared by an officer or employee of the United States Government as part of the person's official duties.

By virtue of the foregoing, public documents can generally be reprinted without legal restriction. However, Government publications may contain copyrighted material which was used with permission of the copyright owner" (U.S. Government Printing Office, Public Domain & Copyright Notice, n.d.).

² To identify depository libraries, users may also consult the *Federal Depository Library Directory* online at <http://catalog.gpo.gov/fdlpdir/locate.jsp?ItemNumber=552-A&SYS=000353702>.

Bibliography of Selected Online and Print Cookbooks

Although not all of these titles are available online, they are all likely to be digitized eventually, and they do give the reader an idea of what type of online government information on cooking is available. Some libraries have made displays of government information on cooking, health, and nutrition using these and other titles. Furthermore, any print title of interest may be requested through interlibrary loan.

Barbecue and food safety (2007). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service. Retrieved from <http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS106821> [SuDocs Number: A 110.2:B 23/2007]

Celebre la cocina hispana: Healthy Hispanic recipes. (2000). Institutos Nacionales de la Salud, Instituto Nacional del Cáncer. (NIH publication no. 95-3606(s)). [SuDocs Number: HE 20.3152:R 24/3/2000]

Cooking for groups: A volunteer's guide to food safety. (2001). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service. [SuDocs Number: A 110.20:C 77] CD-ROM also available from <http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS15976>

Down home healthy cookin': Recipes and healthy cooking tips (1999). Bethesda, MD.: National Institutes of Health, National Cancer

Institute. (NIH publication no. 99-3408SV) [SuDocs Number: HE 20.3152:C 77/999] (Summary: Cajun and Creole recipes)

Eat smart, live strong activity kit: Nutrition education for older adults. (2007). Alexandria, VA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. [SuDocs Number: A 98.2:EA 8/2/KIT] (Summary: Kit includes CD-ROM)

Food safety for moms-to-be: Practicing good food safety behaviors before, during and after your pregnancy. (2005). Washington, DC: Food and Drug Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. [SuDocs Number: HE 20.4002:F 69/KIT] (Summary: In English and Spanish with food-safety video.) See related website: www.cfsan.fda.gov/pregnancy.html

Free recipe and meal planner guide. (2007). Bethesda, MD: National Diabetes Education Program. [SuDocs Number: HE 20.7008:R 24]

Haffner, M. E. *The admiral loves to cook*. (1997). Bethesda, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service. [SuDocs Number: HE 20.2:AD 6] (Summary: Practical recipes for entertaining by a U.S. admiral)

Heart-healthy home cooking African American style: With every heartbeat is life. Retrieved from www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/other/chdblack/cooking.pdf [SuDocs Number: HE 20.3202:H 75/2008]

In answer to your query: Recipes. (2004). Washington, DC: U.S. Copyright Office. Retrieved from <http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS4889> [SuDocs Number: LC 3.4/2:FL-122] (Summary: Copyright of recipes.)

Keep the beat: Heart healthy recipes from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. Retrieved from <http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS76404> [SuDocs Number: HE 20.3502:H 35/21] (Summary: Diet therapy for heart disease.)

Lacto-ovo vegetarian cuisine. (2007). Bethesda, MD : U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Heart, Lung, and Blood

- Institute. Retrieved from <http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS83187> [SuDocs Number: HE 20.3202:L 11] (Summary: This single sheet diet list gives ideas for vegetarian cookery and obesity prevention.)
- Mancino, L., & Newman, C. (2007). *Who has time to cook: How family resources influence food preparation*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. Retrieved from <http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS97671> [SuDocs Number: A 93.73:40]
- Mayer, D. C. (1991). *Dining with the Hoover family: A collection of reminiscences and recipes*. West Branch, IA: Herbert Hoover Presidential Library. [SuDocs Number: AE 1.102:H 6/1x] (Summary: American cooking during the time of President Hoover)
- Nautical notions for nibbling*. (1967). United States. Department of the Interior; Washington, DC: U.S. Government. Printing Office. [SuDocs Number: I 49.2: N 51] (Summary: Seafood recipes)
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- Our family cookbook*. U.S. Air Force, Space Division. [SuDocs Number: D 301.2:C 77] (Summary: Collection of recipes associated with Los Angeles Air Force Base)
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- Your guide to lowering blood pressure with DASH*. (Rev. ed.) (2006). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services National Institutes of Health, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. (NIH Publication No. 06-4082). Retrieved from www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/hbp/dash/new_dash.pdf
- U.S. Government books to keep you better informed: Cooking & gardening*. U.S. Superintendent of Documents. [SuDocs Number: GP 3.22:C 77] (Bibliography)

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About the Author

Andrea M. Morrison is an Associate Librarian at Indiana University Bloomington, Herman B Wells Library, with an interest in working with government information. In addition to writing numerous articles on the topic, she co-wrote *International Government Information and Country Information: A Subject Guide* (2004) with Barbara J. Mann, and edited *Managing Electronic Government Information in Libraries: Issues and Practices* (ALA GODORT book, 2008). She is an active member and past chair both of the state organization that promotes government information, INDIGO, and of ALA Government Documents Round Table (GODORT).