

CANAL
HOUSE
COOKS
everyday

hamilton & hirsheimer

“Canal House is the 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue of the food world. I would move in tomorrow, if only my wife would let me. **They write beautifully, take photos wonderfully and cook effortlessly.** If Christopher and Melissa weren’t so generous with their love—and knowledge—of all things food, I’d be preposterously jealous.”

—*Adam Rapoport, Editor-in-Chief, Bon Appétit Magazine*

“We’ve long admired the work of Hamilton & Hirsheimer because their writing, recipes, and images conjure that magical realm of people who truly *live* through cooking—Edna Lewis and Richard Olney come to mind. The women of Canal House engage all the senses in the kitchen, finding transcendent grace in the artistry of trimmed scallions on an old board, the sound your favorite apron makes, the aroma of the mug of tea you poured on a gray afternoon as well as the moment the perfectly burnished lamb emerges from the oven. *Canal House Cooks Every Day* shows you how to inhabit this idyll; the book is not only a collection of recipes that **will inspire you to turn out simple, ravishing meals every season of the year** (and you will: make Treviso with Mustard Vinaigrette first, then Hoisin-ful Spareribs, then Vin Santo Roasted Pears), but also a manual on how to live more fully, more enjoyably.”

—*Matt Lee and Ted Lee, authors of The Lee Bros. Simple Fresh Southern*

“*Canal House Cooks Every Day* seamlessly marries food images and recipes in delicious combination. Portraits of food, both in its natural and prepared state say everything about what cooking, at its best, should be. The **recipes are classic but relaxed**, revealing a simplicity winnowed by way of careful attention and daily practice.”

—*Paul Bertolli, Founder & Curemaster, Fra’ Mani Handcrafted Foods*

“Everyday I have to cook and everyday I thank my friend Naomi Foner for **the gift that keeps on giving, Canal House Cooks.** All the people I feed think I’m a foodie when in fact I am a fraud-ie and a fool-ie with no discernible culinary talent except to follow these easy directions. The food is sumptuous, stylish and so simple to make. It is a rare occurrence, when using a cookbook, where the food actually looks like the photos in the book. Not so with this kitchen bible. Everything looks like the gorgeous photography promises it will. It is modern and manageable and magnificent. You remember Julie and Julia? Welcome to Curtis and Canal. I am on page 164, Corn, String Bean and Potato Succotash Salad. Want a seat at my table? Call my agent and get in line!”

—*Jamie Lee Curtis, Canal House devotee*

“When Christopher and Melissa created Canal House in their studio by the Delaware river, they instinctively knew it was a good idea, but not exactly what would emerge from their business partnership. Already acclaimed as world-class food experts, in demand by top chefs for photography and styling, who could predict they were about to become cooking stars in their own right, self-publishing their own recipe collections?

How these two can be so brilliant yet remain completely down to earth baffles me. They multi-task like crazy, work non-stop, but still manage to have fun and eat magnificently every day with home-style earthy dishes that are completely seductive and no-nonsense at the same time—along with the occasional extravagant or idiosyncratic treat, and a willingness to uncork a good bottle at a moment’s notice. This ethos and aesthetic translates to the page almost effortlessly. **Trust them. They are the real deal.**”

—*David Tanis, author, Heart of the Artichoke and Other Kitchen Journeys*

“My dear friends Christopher and Melissa, a very talented duo, have done the photography for six of my cookbooks. They now have poured their talent and passion into a cookbook all of their own “*Canal House Cooks Every Day.*” This cookbook is a collection of deliciously simple recipes, formatted according to seasons, and the extensive collection of **beautiful pictures—each one full of flavor and bold colors—is worth the price of the book alone!**” —*Lidia Bastianich*

“In a world where home cooks feel compelled to re-create the stainless steel sterility and vertical towers of excess that belong only in restaurant kitchens, one is ravenous for the kind of comfort, grace, and authenticity defined by the marriage of honest food to life in all its seasonal vagaries and delicious rituals large and small. Christopher Hirsheimer and Melissa Hamilton’s **glorious Canal House Cooks Every Day** satiates that hunger: it is delectable in its flavor, its warmth, and its heartfelt invitation to share a year of cooking, eating, celebrating with friends and family, and the pleasures of simple, real food.”

—*Elissa Altman, Poor Man’s Feast*

“Jonathan Waxman of Barbuto gave me my first copy of a Canal House cookbook and I was immediately struck by what was not in the book—all the noise, fuss and bother that complicates what is **a joyful, simple task—preparing food.** In *Canal House Cooks Every Day*, Hamilton and Hirsheimer have arrived at the point where all good cooks desperately hope to arrive—a kitchen in which the purity of recipe and style reflects the true essence of the ingredients and lives well-lived.”

—*Christopher Kimball, Founder, America’s Test Kitchen*

“Christopher Hirsheimer and Melissa Hamilton understand food so intuitively, cook it so superbly, and present it—whether in the form of words or images or (if you’re really, really lucky) an actual plate in front of you, straight from their kitchen—so accessibly that **sometimes you just have to wonder why anybody else even bothers.**”

—*Colman Andrews, Editorial Director, TheDailyMeal.com*

“I get goosebumps every time I receive a new seasonal Canal House cookbook. This collection is the consummate guide to cooking seasonally. The raw illustrations and photographs are exquisite. **Christopher and Melissa have come to define the immediacy of delicious food, made to order, now!**” —*Mario Batali*

“Combine kitchen stove commonsense with **food that’s drop dead gorgeous in its simplicity**, and you have *Canal House Cooks Every Day*, a book that gives us hope that we can cook like that, too!”

—*Dorothy Kalins, Director, Dorothy Kalins Ink, and founding editor Saveur*

“Any poseur can write six minutes of music so complex you can’t bear to hear it. Only a genius can take three chords and one hook and make a 3-minute rock classic. Melissa and Christopher’s recipes are the culinary equivalent of classic hits. You can dance to them. And you will. Year after year.” —*Jesse Kornbluth, HeadButler.com*

“... *Canal House Cooks Every Day* offers **recipes full of heart and simple goodness.** Melissa and Christopher create inspiring dishes with passion and a deep understanding of the simple pleasures in life.”

—*John Besh, chef & cookbook author*



CANAL HOUSE COOKS
everyday

Hamilton & Hirsheimer

**Andrews McMeel
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Melissa Hamilton and Christopher Hirsheimer are two of the most talented cookbook authors working today. Everything is just so simple and appealing and they never try to reinvent cookery.—*Sheryl Julian, The Boston Globe*

SOME OF OUR FAVORITE RECIPES FROM CANAL HOUSE COOKS EVERYDAY

— Spring —

braised chicken with garlic, caperberries & pancetta • fettuccine, peas & scallions bathed in cream & parmigiano-reggiano • pan-fried pork chops with roasted beets & escarole salad • braised breast of veal with green olives • fried risotto cakes with oil-cured anchovies • spice-rubbed chicken with cauliflower & chickpeas • spring onions roasted with balsamic vinegar & olive oil

— Summer —

hoisin-ful spareribs • cold corn soup with fresh chives • white peaches poached in lemon verbena syrup • poached chicken with homemade tarragon mayonnaise • dead-ripe tomato sandwich • fried chicken & cucumber salad • rice salad with peas, favas & ham • grilled salmon with lemon-anchovy mayonnaise • black-berry cobbler • strawberry pavlova • open-faced zucchini omlette

— Fall —

scrambled eggs with sautéed chanterelles • warm beet soup • stew of chickpeas, tomatoes & okra • lamb neck & green bean stew • roasted kabocha squash with preserved lemon • seared skirt steak, buttered spinach & french fries • day-after-thanksgiving turkey sandwich • spicy pork & veal meatballs • aunt agee's pecan pie • ginger spice cake

— Winter —

roast leg of lamb with cannellini • red wine-braised short ribs with fettuccine • quick shrimp pho • pan-grilled quail with chestnuts & squash • beef brisket braised on a bed of onions with pimentón & sherry vinegar • potato & chorizo frittata • avocado mash with aleppo chile pepper & meyer lemon • chocolate sponge cake • grapefruit marmalade cake

— Canal House Essentials —

preserved lemons • canal house vinaigrette • risotto • the egg primer • simple tomato sauce • bolognese sauce • lemon butter sauce • fresh ricotta • crème anglaise • tender cream biscuits



— WE COOK EVERY DAY —

WELCOME TO THE CANAL HOUSE—our studio, workshop, dining room, office, kitchen, lair, lab, and atelier devoted to good ideas and good work relating to the world of food. We write, photograph, design, and paint, but in our hearts we both think of ourselves as cooks first.

How did we get here? Neither of us set out to make careers in the food world. Actually, there wasn't much of a "foodie" world when we both started. But our deep interest in it led us down paths that unfolded before us.

We had worked with each other as food editors in the magazine world. We traveled the globe in search of essential and authentic recipes, sliding into banquettes in famous restaurants, meeting big deal chefs, and even cooking in far-flung home kitchens. It was great and exciting. But our work took us away from our families, our homes, and our gardens, away from what really matters.

We live in little towns across the river from each other, one in New Jersey, the other in Pennsylvania. So we decided to join forces. We share similar backgrounds, having both grown up in big families where food came first. In a time that now seems like eons ago, our aproned grandmothers nurtured us with wholesome, comforting food—butter milk pancakes drenched in salty butter and maple syrup. Our mothers were glamorous. They loved parties and cocktails and restaurants and brunch with Bloody Marys—food was exciting. Last night's Chinese takeout would show up at breakfast reheated with two poached eggs on top. Both of us have deep food memories and large legacies to uphold.



We found our loft studio in an old redbrick warehouse downriver from where we live. A beautiful, lazy canal runs alongside the building. One hundred years ago mules plodded along the towpath, hauling barges up and down the state. In warm weather, we throw open the studio's French doors and the voices of the people walking or fishing below float up to us. We plant herbs in our window boxes and grow tomatoes in pots on our wrought-iron balcony. In the winter we build fires in the Franklin stove to keep cozy when it's snowy and gray outside.

The Canal House has a simple galley kitchen. Two small apartment-size stoves sit snugly side by side against a white tiled wall. An old wooden carpenter's worktable with a little sink at one end is our long counter and pots hang from a rack suspended above it. We have a dishwasher, but we find ourselves preferring to hand-wash the dishes so we can look out of the tall window next to the sink and see the ducks swimming in the canal or watch the raindrops splashing into the water.

The town around us is a small American river town. A noon whistle still blows and church bells chime—no kidding! There is a drugstore around the corner. Across the street is an old hardware store, and the best bar in the world is right down the alley.

And every day we cook. Starting the morning with coffee or cups of sweet milky tea, we tell each other what we made for dinner the night before. We cook seasonally because that's what makes sense. We want stews and braises and rich thick soups in February when it's snowing and blowing. In midsummer, we buy boxes of tomatoes to dress as minimally as we do in the heat. And at the height of the season, we preserve all that we can, to save a taste of summer.

But this book really started because of lunch. We needed to eat. So we began making lunch for ourselves, simple meals that we could put together quickly, or that were an encore of last night's leftovers that we brought from home. We'd stop work in the middle of the day, set the long wooden table in the center of the studio with paper napkins, and take time to sit and eat together. The whole experience was so pleasing that we wondered why more people didn't do it. Then we got the idea to take a quick picture of what we were eating and we posted it on our website every day with no more than a descriptive caption. We just wanted to encourage people to cook. Those pictures and meals were the beginning of this book.





Canal House Cooks Every Day captures a year of cooking at Canal House. The recipes reflect the seasons and what inspires us to cook for ourselves, our families, and our friends every day. It may be that asparagus just came into season, or a craving we have, or what happens to be languishing in the fridge; and sometimes, like everyone else, we're motivated purely by what we can quickly pull together. Lunch and dinner can be as simple as spreading crackers with preserved lemon butter and adding silky smoked salmon and fresh chives, or floating delicate little meatballs in a rich chicken broth with a big handful of tender spinach leaves. But we also make time to cook seriously delicious food like braised chicken and wild mushrooms with fine egg noodles, or beef brisket smothered in onions for dinner—which we'll serve the next day for lunch, sliced on a soft potato roll. And we always cook for the holidays: Easter lunch, a Fourth of July picnic, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Saint Patrick's Day.

It came naturally to write down what we make. As you cook your way through a few of the recipes in this book, you'll see that who we are comes right through in these pages. It is a collection of our favorite recipes—home cooking by home cooks for home cooks. With a few exceptions, we use ingredients that are readily available and found in most markets in most towns throughout the United States. All the recipes are easy to prepare (some of them a bit more involved), and all are completely doable for the novice and experienced cook alike. We want to share with you, as fellow cooks, our love of food and all its rituals. The everyday practice of simple cooking and the enjoyment of eating are two of the greatest pleasures in life.

Christopher & Melissa



November begins the holiday season. Those long golden afternoons of October have disappeared along with the sun that now sinks behind the hills by four o'clock. It's officially cold, and a whole new round of rituals begin.

We order wood for our Franklin stove, politely but firmly requesting good dry wood with some weight. The last cord was too green and wouldn't burn, and the time before that, the wood was so light and dry it burned up like kindling. This time it's just right. Every morning, the first one to work builds the fire and it adds sweet cheer to the place. We are thrilled with our cozy studio.

All summer we drank glass after glass of water. "Hydration!" we reminded each other. Now we brew pots of dark, delicious Pu-erh from Yunnan, China for our well-being, so mugs of tea start the day. Our five o'clock cocktails have morphed from white wine or gin to bourbon, scotch, or a glass of something red. We are happily hunkering down.

In early November, Thanksgiving discussions begin. We signed up for our turkeys back in October, from a local farm that raises the most beautiful birds. Their chickens are the Marilyn Monroes of the avian world—big, plump, and full-breasted, with smooth creamy skin. Their pasture-raised turkeys are just as handsome and delicious. After work the Monday before the holiday, we go to pick up our birds from the farm. We drive across winding country roads, and by the time we peel into the gravel farmyard it's after dark. It's first come, first choice, and we are last, so both of us stagger home with 26-pound birds.

Last year, we decided to have a turkey dinner a day ahead of the holiday. We invited the Canal House cast of characters—friends, colleagues, and neighbors. We dubbed it "Thanksgiving With No Tears" since the whole affair would be free of tricky family dynamics. Everyone was to bring their essential Thanksgiving dish, food that resonated in his or her memory. The meal was a hodgepodge. We roasted one of the giant turkeys, stuffed with chestnut and cipolline dressing, and made lots of giblet gravy. We served everything set right down the center of the long dinner table, family style: Brussel sprouts with bacon, mashed potatoes, sweet potato casserole with miniature marshmallows, creamed onions, green beans with slivered almonds, pineapple bread pudding, two kinds of cranberry sauce and more. Perhaps there even was a Jell-O salad with nuts! We did however, drink beautifully. Someone brought elegant Italian whites that made up for all our culinary indiscretions.

The whole evening was fun, funny, happy—the vibe was so spontaneous, and not a single tear was shed. It would be hard to recreate. But why not try? Maybe it will become our ultimate November ritual.





KABOCHA SQUASH PIE

makes one 9-inch pie

We prefer the sweet flavorful flesh of the kabocha squash over any other pie pumpkin. The chestnutlike texture of this pie makes it especially toothsome.

FOR THE PIE CRUST

1 cup all-purpose flour, plus some for rolling out the dough

1 tablespoon sugar

Small pinch salt

6 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, cut into small pieces

1 tablespoon cold vegetable shortening

FOR THE FILLING

3 pounds kabocha squash, to measure about 2½ cups when baked

¾ cup packed light brown sugar

2 tablespoons molasses or sorghum

3 egg yolks

½ cup heavy cream

1 teaspoon ground ginger

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 teaspoon ground mace

Pinch of salt

1 tablespoon granulated sugar

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Freshly whipped cream

For the pie crust, whisk together the flour, sugar, and salt in a mixing bowl. Work the butter and shortening into the flour using a pastry blender or 2 knives, until it resembles coarse cornmeal. Sprinkle in 3 tablespoons ice water and toss together lightly until the dough comes together. Shape the dough into a flat disk; don't overhandle. Wrap the dough in plastic wrap, and chill for at least 1 hour.

For the filling, preheat the oven to 400°. Cut the squash in half horizontally. Scoop out and discard the seeds. Place the squash cut side down on a baking pan and add a splash of water to the pan. Bake the squash until tender when pierced with a knife, about 1 hour. Remove from the oven, set aside, and allow to cool. Reduce the oven temperature to 375°.

When the squash is cool enough to handle, scoop out enough flesh to measure 2½ cups. Discard the skins. Put the flesh into a large bowl. Add the brown sugar, molasses, egg yolks, cream, ginger, cinnamon, mace, and salt, and mix together until the filling is smooth.

Roll out the dough into a 12-inch round on a lightly floured surface. Roll the dough loosely around the rolling pin, then unfurl it into a 9-inch pie pan. Lightly press it into the pan. Leave 1 inch of dough hanging over the edge. Trim any excess off with a sharp knife. Tuck the dough under itself, then use your thumb and forefinger to crimp the edge.

Pour the filling into the unbaked pie crust and smooth the top with a rubber spatula. Bake for 1 hour. Mix the granulated sugar and cinnamon together in a small bowl. Sprinkle the top of the pie with the cinnamon sugar. Serve with dollops of the whipped cream.

PUMPKIN CHIFFON PIE

makes one 9-inch pie

Even people who aren't big pumpkin pie fans will like this genteel version. Light, delicate, and sweet, it is a recipe from a kinder, gentler time. Its very name—chiffon—evokes a sheer and floaty fabric, a long way from today's sturdy Spandex. Even after a hearty holiday meal, we find there's always room for a small slice of this lovely pie.

FOR THE CRUST

2 cups crumbled ginger snaps

¼ cup sugar

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

6 tablespoons butter, melted

FOR THE FILLING

1 tablespoon powdered gelatin

3 eggs, separated

¾ cup sugar

1¼ cups fresh cooked or canned pumpkin

½ cup whole milk

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

¼ whole nutmeg, grated, or
½ teaspoon ground nutmeg

¼ teaspoon salt

Freshly whipped cream

For the crust, preheat the oven to 350°. Put the crumbled cookies into a large resealable plastic bag and seal, pressing out the air. Roll back and forth over the bag with a rolling pin until the cookies are ground into fine crumbs. (Or alternately, finely grind the ginger snaps in a food processor.) Transfer the crumbs to a large mixing bowl and stir in the sugar and cinnamon. Drizzle the melted butter over the crumbs and stir to combine. Pat the mixture evenly into a 9-inch pie pan and bake for 5 minutes. Remove from the oven and set aside to cool.

For the filling, soak the gelatin in ¼ cup cold water. Put the egg yolks, ¼ cup of the sugar, the pumpkin, milk, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt in a saucepan and cook over medium heat, stirring until thickened, about 10 minutes. Stir in the softened gelatin, then transfer to a large mixing bowl and allow to cool.

Beat the reserved egg whites in a large mixing bowl on medium speed until foamy. Continue beating, gradually adding the remaining ½ cup sugar until egg whites are thick, glossy, and hold soft peaks. Fold the whites into the filling, taking care not to deflate the whites. Pour into the baked pie crust and smooth the filling with a spatula. Chill until set, about 2 hours. Serve with dollops of the whipped cream.



BREAST OF VEAL BRAISED WITH GREEN OLIVES & TOMATOES

serves 4–6

Breast of veal is an often overlooked cut of meat. It looks complicated, with layers of meat interspersed between layers of fat, rib bones, and cartilage. Today's busy cooks tend to grab packages of skinless, boneless chicken breasts—no muss, no fuss—and often steer away from anything that might take longer than 15 minutes to prepare. We understand the feeling, we too want to get dinner on the table lickety-split! But we know there is a big payoff from slow roasting flavorful, inexpensive cuts until they are tender and juicy. It's actually pretty simple, a little stove top preparation, then into the oven it goes where it cooks itself. After cooking, the fat can be removed, and the bones and cartilage are easily pulled off from the tender meat. We urge you to try it, you're up to the challenge.

One breast of veal, 5 to 6 pounds

Salt and black pepper

3 tablespoons olive oil

3 cloves garlic, minced

6 anchovies

2 medium onions, coarsely chopped

One 28-ounce can plum tomatoes

1 cup green olives, pitted

Preheat the oven to 325°. Rub the veal breast all over with a generous amount of salt and pepper. Heat the olive oil in a heavy large pot with a cover over medium-high heat (if the roast is too big, use a heavy roasting pan and cover it with foil). Put the veal in the pot and brown it well on both sides, about 10 minutes. Remove it from the pot and set aside.

Reduce the heat to medium and add the anchovies and garlic to the pot, stirring to melt the anchovies, about 1 minute. Add the onions, stirring and scraping the bottom of the pot to get all the browned bits up, and cook until softened, about 5 minutes. Add the tomatoes and olives to the pot, crushing the tomatoes with your hand. Put the veal, bone side down, into the pot. Cover and cook in the oven until the veal is very tender, about 2 hours.

Remove the pot from the oven and turn off the heat. Transfer the veal to a cutting board. When it is cool enough to handle, remove and discard the rib bones, connective tissue, gristle, and any large pieces of fat. Fish out the olives and set aside. Skim off the fat from the top of the sauce. If the sauce looks a little thin, return the pot to the stove and cook over medium-low heat until it reduces and thickens slightly. Strain the sauce through a fine-mesh sieve. Add the olives back to the sauce and keep warm.

Just before serving, thinly slice the meat on a cutting board, then arrange it on a platter. Spoon the sauce with the olives over the meat.



TOMATO TART

serves 4–6

We usually make this simple tart with large ripe tomatoes in season, tucking some halved supersweet cherry tomatoes in between the slabs. But even those hothouse varieties can be quite delicious too. Eat this tart warm or at room temperature, but definitely, the same day you make it, for the crisp, delicate crust becomes limp if left to sit too long.

1 sheet puff pastry, defrosted
2–3 tomatoes, cored and sliced
2–3 branches fresh thyme

Really good extra-virgin olive oil
Pepper
Maldon salt or other crunchy sea salt

Preheat oven to 375°. Lay the sheet of puff pastry out on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet. Using the tip of a paring knife, lightly score a border about ½ inch from the edge of the pastry. Prick the dough inside the border all over with a fork to prevent it from puffing up too much during baking.

Arrange the tomatoes on the pastry in a single layer (crowding or overlapping the tomatoes will make the puff pastry soggy). Strip the branches of thyme and scatter the leaves over the tomatoes. Drizzle the tart with some olive oil and season with pepper.

Bake the tart until the pastry is crisp and deeply browned on the bottom and around the edges, 30–40 minutes. Season the tart with salt.



CHILLED POTATO & CELERY SOUP

serves 4–6

This cold refreshing soup is the very thing to cool things down on a hot summer day.

2 bunches celery, including leaves, chopped
(reserve a few celery leaves for garnish)

6 cups chicken stock
Salt and pepper

1 large russet potato, peeled and chopped

Freshly whipped cream

1 large leek, trimmed, washed, and sliced

Chopped chives, for garnish

Put the celery, potato, leek, and chicken stock in a heavy large pot and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to medium low, cover, and cook until the vegetables are very soft, about 20 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Set aside and allow the soup to cool slightly.

Working in batches, purée the soup in a blender or food processor until very smooth. Strain through a fine-mesh sieve into a bowl. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until well chilled.

Serve garnished with a dollop of whipped cream, a sprinkling of chopped chives, and finely chopped celery leaves.

APPLE TART

serves 6–8

Over the years we have used various recipes for pastry dough but we always come back to this one. We believe that mixing several fats produces the flakiest crust.

FOR THE PASTRY DOUGH

1½ cups pastry flour

¼ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon granulated sugar

4 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, diced

4 tablespoons cold salted butter, diced

2 tablespoons cold vegetable shortening

3–5 tablespoons ice water

FOR THE FILLING

6 apples of your favorite variety, peeled, cored, and thickly sliced

3 tablespoons demerara or brown sugar

1 teaspoon cinnamon

¼ cup heavy cream

For the pastry dough, whisk the flour, salt, and sugar in a mixing bowl. Cut in both butters and the shortening with a pastry blender or a fork until crumbly. It should resemble coarse cornmeal. Sprinkle in 3 tablespoons ice water and toss together lightly until the dough comes together (add more water if you need to); shape the dough into a flat disc (don't overhandle). Wrap dough in plastic wrap and chill for at least an hour.

Preheat the oven to 375°. Roll out the dough into a large rectangle on a lightly floured surface. It should be about ⅛ inch thick and fit into a 9 × 13-inch baking sheet. Roll the dough loosely around the rolling pin then unfurl it into the baking sheet. Lightly press the dough into the pan, leaving ½ inch of dough hanging over the edge. Trim any excess off with a sharp knife. Tuck the dough under itself to make a nice edge.

For the filling, mix 2 tablespoons of the sugar and the cinnamon together in a small bowl. Put the apples into a large mixing bowl, sprinkle with the cinnamon sugar, then add the cream and toss everything together. Arrange the apples in an even layer on the pastry. Bake until the apples are soft, 45–55 minutes. Remove from the oven and sprinkle the apples with the remaining 1 tablespoon of demerara sugar.

— APPLE TALK —

In September hard fruits replace soft fruits in our markets. We even see local apples as early as August, but September's their true arrival. Local Golden Delicious is our apple of choice—a little low on acid, but we love its sweet perfume. Our friend Karen Bates of the renowned Philo Apple Farm in California taught us this...

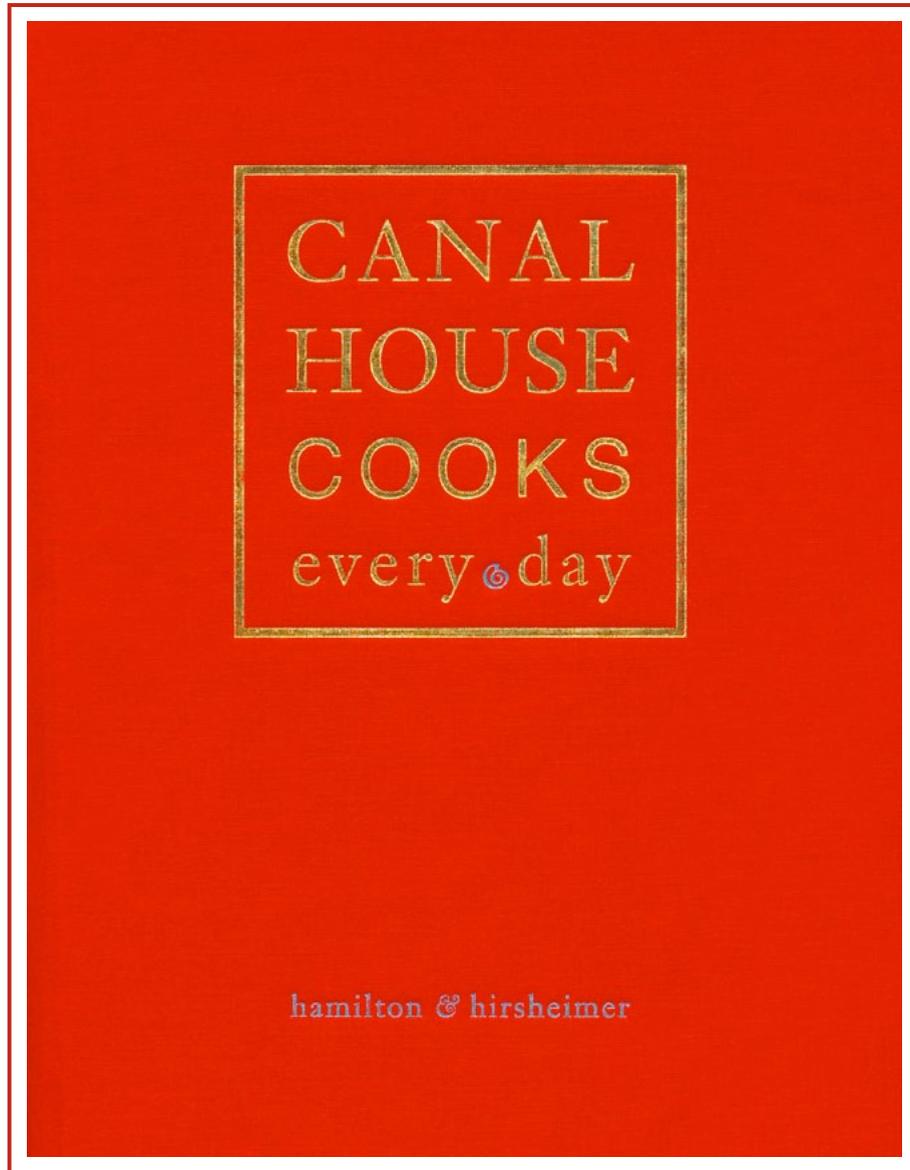
Early apples tend to break down very easily—great for applesauce and very tender juicy pies, but the apples lose their shape. *Midseason apples* generally cook up fairly tender and hold their shape with more integrity, so the choice is mostly about flavor. *Late season apples* can border on being a little too firm with much less juiciness. So make your applesauce early in the season and keep your late apples as long as you can—they store beautifully all winter long.





So everyday we cook lunch for ourselves. We make it as simple or as involved as time will allow. And no matter what, we stop—even if it's only for 15 minutes, and eat together. Our mental health relies on this. Clockwise from top left: Cold Corn Soup with Fresh Chives; Orecchiette with Ham and Bread Crumbs; Poached Chicken Breasts with Homemade Tarragon Mayonnaise; Roasted Kabocha Squash with Preserved Lemons and Thyme; Shrimp Risotto; Stoned Wheat Thins with Irish Butter, Smoked Salmon, Fresh Chives, Ground Pepper, and a Meyer Lemon. Opposite page, top: Fettucine with Bolognese Sauce; bottom, Red Wine-Braised Short Ribs with Fettucine.

The everyday practice of simple cooking and the enjoyment of eating are two of the greatest pleasures in life. — Christopher & Melissa



Announcing a new cookbook from *Canal House Cooking*, published by Andrews McMeel, brimming with 250 new, simply delicious recipes and 150 beautiful photographs; in fine bookstores October, 2012.