

Fresh off the presses, here it is, just in time for summer, **CANAL HOUSE COOKING VOLUME N°1**. It is a collection of our favorite summer recipes, ones we cook for ourselves all through the long lazy months.

We are home cooks writing about home cooking for other home cooks. Our recipes are easy to prepare, and completely doable for the novice and experienced cook alike. We make jarfuls of teriyaki sauce for slathering on chicken. We love to cook big paellas outdoors over a fire for a crowd of friends. We are crazy for ripe melons in late summer. And we churn tubs of ice cream for our families. Take a peek at some of the pages to the right and see what we are up to.

CANAL HOUSE COOKING VOLUME N°1 Summer, launches the publication of our seasonal recipe collections. We'll publish three volumes a year: Summer, Fall & Holiday, and Winter & Spring, each filled with delicious recipes for you from us.

Cook all summer long with **CANAL HOUSE COOKING!**

Christopher & Melissa

CANAL HOUSE



COOKING

VOLUME N° 1



Christopher Hirsheimer and Melissa Hamilton in the Canal House kitchen

CHRISTOPHER HIRSHEIMER served as food and design editor for *Metropolitan Home* magazine, and was one of the founders of *Saveur* magazine, where she was executive editor. Christopher has cowritten four cookbooks, the award-winning *Saveur Cooks* series and *The San Francisco Ferry Plaza Farmers' Market Cookbook*. She is a writer and a photographer. Her pictures have illustrated more than thirty cookbooks for such notables as Julia Child, Jacques Pépin, Lidia Bastianich, Mario Batali, Rick Bayless, and Frank Stitt. Her photographs have also appeared in such magazines as *Saveur*, *Instyle*, *Food & Wine*, *Country Home*, *Metropolitan Home*, and *Town and Country*.

MELISSA HAMILTON cofounded the restaurant Hamilton's Grill Room in Lambertville, New Jersey, where she served as executive chef. Following her tenure there, she embarked on a career in food styling, and recipe testing and development for cookbooks and food magazines. This included stints at *Martha Stewart Living* and *Cook's Illustrated*. Melissa joined *Saveur* first as director of the test kitchen, and then became food editor. Her styling work has appeared in numerous cookbooks for such well-known chefs as David Tanis, Joyce Goldstein, Roberto Santibañez, and Michael Psilakis.

Christopher and Melissa opened their own studio, Canal House, in 2007. They now self-publish *Canal House Cooking* and continue to collaborate, photographing and designing cookbooks.

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CANAL HOUSE COOKING



Grilling in the fireplace at Canal House on a rainy summer 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 interests led us down paths that unfolded in front of 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 both away from our families, our homes, and our gardens, away from what really matters, after all.

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 grown up in big families where food came first. In a time that seems like a million years ago now, 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 plodding along the tow path hauled provision-laden barges up and down the state. In warm weather, we throw open the 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 wood stove to keep cozy when its 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 drug store 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. In the middle of the day we stop our work, set the table simply with paper napkins, and have lunch. 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 mid-summer, we buy boxes of tomatoes to dress as minimally as we do in the heat. And in the height of the season, we preserve all that we can, so as to save a taste of summer.

So it came naturally to write down what we cook. The recipes in this book are what we make for ourselves all summer long. If you cook your way through a few, you’ll see that who we are comes right through in these pages: that we are crazy for melons in late summer, that we love to cook big paellas outdoors over a fire for a crowd of friends, that we make jarfuls of teriyaki sauce for slathering on roasted chicken, and tubs of homemade ice cream for our families.

Canal House Cooking Volume n°1 is our first effort. It is a collection of our favorite summer 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), all 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

MELON WATER

Consider the melon: a big juicy orb of sweet, perfumed rainwater. Cookbook author Niloufer Ichaporia King turned us on to yellow watermelon (but any variety or combination of melons will do). Make sure that you work over a bowl to catch every drop. If you are using a watermelon, you might want to save the rind for Watermelon Pickle (page 116).

Crack open a **ripe melon**. Scrape or pick out the seeds and cut off the rind. Put the chunks of melon and any accumulated juices into a blender and purée until smooth. Strain the purée through a sieve into a pitcher, pushing the juice through with a rubber spatula. Discard the pulp. Add some **Simple Syrup** (page 9) to sweeten it, if you like.

Serve the **melon water** in a glass over ice with a **big squeeze of lime**, a **big sprig of mint**, and a **shot of white rum** (though the drink is perfectly delicious without the rum as well).







HOW MANY WAYS CAN YOU USE OLIVE OIL & LEMON ?





ROASTED TOMATOES STUDED WITH GARLIC

serves 4

Our friend and great chef and salumi wizard, Paul Bertolli, of Berkeley's Fra' Mani, suggested that we make this for a dinner in honor of esteemed writer Coleman Andrews and his wife Erin. We were flying back to New York from California just in time to make the party so Paul wrapped up some of his private stash of garlic and tomatoes, which flew across the country in the overhead compartment. We spun up the recipe a little (the nerve!), but his idea remains central—everyone gets a soft luscious tomato to crush into the nest of pasta.

½ cup diced pancetta	2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for the pasta	Small handful fresh thyme, parsley, or basil leaves, chopped
2 anchovy fillets	Salt and pepper
1 cup coarse fresh bread crumbs	½ pound spaghetti
4 tomatoes, tops sliced off, seeds scooped out	

Preheat the oven to 350°. Fry the pancetta in a skillet over medium heat until browned and crisp around the edges. Use a slotted spatula to lift the pancetta out of the skillet to a plate. Leave the rendered fat in the skillet. Add 2 tablespoons of the olive oil and the anchovies to the same skillet. Use a wooden spoon to mash the anchovies until they dissolve. Add the bread crumbs and cook, stirring often, until they are golden.

Put the tomatoes, cut side up, in a baking dish and slip some garlic into each tomato. Mound some bread crumbs into each tomato and scatter pancetta and herbs on top. Season with salt and pepper and drizzle the remaining 4 tablespoons of oil over all. Roast the tomatoes in the oven until they have browned a bit and the interior is supple but the tomatoes haven't collapsed, 1–1½ hours.

Cook the spaghetti in a large pot of boiling salted water. Drain. Return the pasta to the pot and stir in some olive oil and some of the oily tomato juices from the bottom of the tomato roasting dish.

Serve the spaghetti with the roasted tomatoes and their juices spooned on top.

PORK LOIN COOKED IN MILK

serves 4

We went on a tear over this recipe. You see it often but it never really works when you make it. After eight tries we figured it out and it was worth it!

Serve it hot or cold, as you would vitello tonnato.

One 2-pound boned and tied pork
sirloin loin roast or loin end roast

Salt and pepper

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

2 tablespoons butter

3 bay leaves

2–3 cloves garlic

Zest of one small lemon, in a long
ribbon or several large pieces

1 quart organic whole milk

Preheat the oven to 300°. Generously season the roast all over with salt and pepper. Heat the oil in a heavy enameled cast-iron pot with a lid over medium-high heat. Brown the roast on all sides. Lower the heat to medium and add the butter, bay leaves, garlic, lemon zest, and milk. Bring the milk just to a boil. Partially cover the pot with the lid, and transfer it to the oven. Cook until the internal temperature of the roast reaches 145°–150° (use an instant-read thermometer), 45–60 minutes.

Remove the pot from the oven. Remove the roast from the pot. Set the meat on a cutting board and cover loosely with foil. On top of the stove, with the lid set on the pot about three-quarters of the way, simmer the milk over medium-low heat until it has reduced by half and soft curds of milk have formed, 60–90 minutes.

Strain the milk through a fine mesh strainer into a bowl. Use a rubber spatula to push the milky solids through the mesh. Whisk until the sauce is smooth.

Remove and discard the strings from the roast. Thinly slice the meat. Arrange the meat on a platter, spooning a little of the sauce on each slice before layering the next. Spoon remaining sauce on and around the meat. Serve warm, at room temperature, or chilled.





PLUM TART

serves 6

Italian “prune” plums are the perfect variety for making tarts. They are small and meaty, and baking intensifies their flavor. We use frozen store-bought puff pastry and pull it out of the freezer. Then we prepare the plums. By the time we are ready to roll out the pastry, it has defrosted. Baked puff pastry gets soggy after it sits for a while, so make this tart the same day you plan to eat it. If you have some marzipan (or almond paste) on hand, crumble some over the tart when dotting it with butter. — MH

1 sheet (about 10" x 10") puff pastry, defrosted	2 pounds Italian prune plums, halved lengthwise and pitted
¼ cup flour	4 tablespoons cold butter
4–6 tablespoons sugar	2 tablespoons heavy cream

Preheat the oven to 400°. Roll the puff pastry out on a lightly floured surface to a ¼-inch-thick rectangle. 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 the tines of a fork to prevent it from puffing up too much during baking. Slide the dough onto a parchment paper-lined baking sheet.

Sprinkle the dough evenly with a few tablespoons of the sugar. Arrange the plums cut side up in the center of the pastry, then sprinkle them with the remaining sugar. Dot the tart with butter and brush the ½-inch border with the heavy cream.

Bake the tart until the pastry is deeply browned around the edges (it's fine—even delicious—if the edges burn a little bit in places) and the plums are soft and jammy and their juices are bubbling and syrupy, 30–40 minutes.

PLUM GALETTE

serves 6

This pastry is a little old-fashioned, but mixing the fats makes a very flaky crust. Don't worry if the edges are a little raggedy—it gives the galette character. Sometimes I use my well-seasoned pizza stone as a baking sheet. I transfer the rolled-out pastry to the cold stone, arrange the fruit on top, and put the stone in the oven. The bottom of the galette is always crisp and golden, never soggy. — CH

FOR THE PASTRY

1¾ cups all-purpose flour, plus more for rolling the dough
1 teaspoon salt
10 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
2 tablespoons vegetable shortening

5 tablespoons ice water

2 tablespoons heavy cream

FOR THE FRUIT

½ cup sugar
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
2 pounds Italian prune plums, halved lengthwise and pitted

For the pastry, sift together the flour and salt into a large mixing bowl. Add the butter and the shortening and cut them into the flour using a pastry blender, two knives, or even your fingertips. Work the fat into the flour until the mixture resembles very coarse corn meal. Add the ice water tablespoon by tablespoon, sprinkling it over the flour and mixing it in lightly with your hands. Press the mixture together until it forms a mass. Then shape into a flat disc, wrap in plastic, and chill in the refrigerator for about 1 hour.

For the fruit, whisk together the sugar and flour in a large bowl. Add the plums and use your hands to mix them into the sugar until they are well coated. Set aside until you are ready to use them.

Preheat the oven to 375°. Roll out the chilled dough on a floured surface into a 12-14-inch round. Roll the pastry around your rolling pin then unfurl it onto a large baking sheet or a cold pizza stone.

Starting in the middle, arrange the plums on the pastry in a tight circular pattern to about 3 inches from the edge. Fold the edge over the plums, pleating the dough as you go. Brush the pastry with the heavy cream. Bake until the plums are juicy and the pastry golden, 45–55 minutes.



PRESERVING LEMONS

Counterclockwise from top left: A small batch of just-made preserved lemons; packing salt into an almost quartered lemon; Meyer lemons; two jars of preserved lemons. The one on the left has just been prepared and the one on the right has been curing for two months. See recipe on page 120.



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