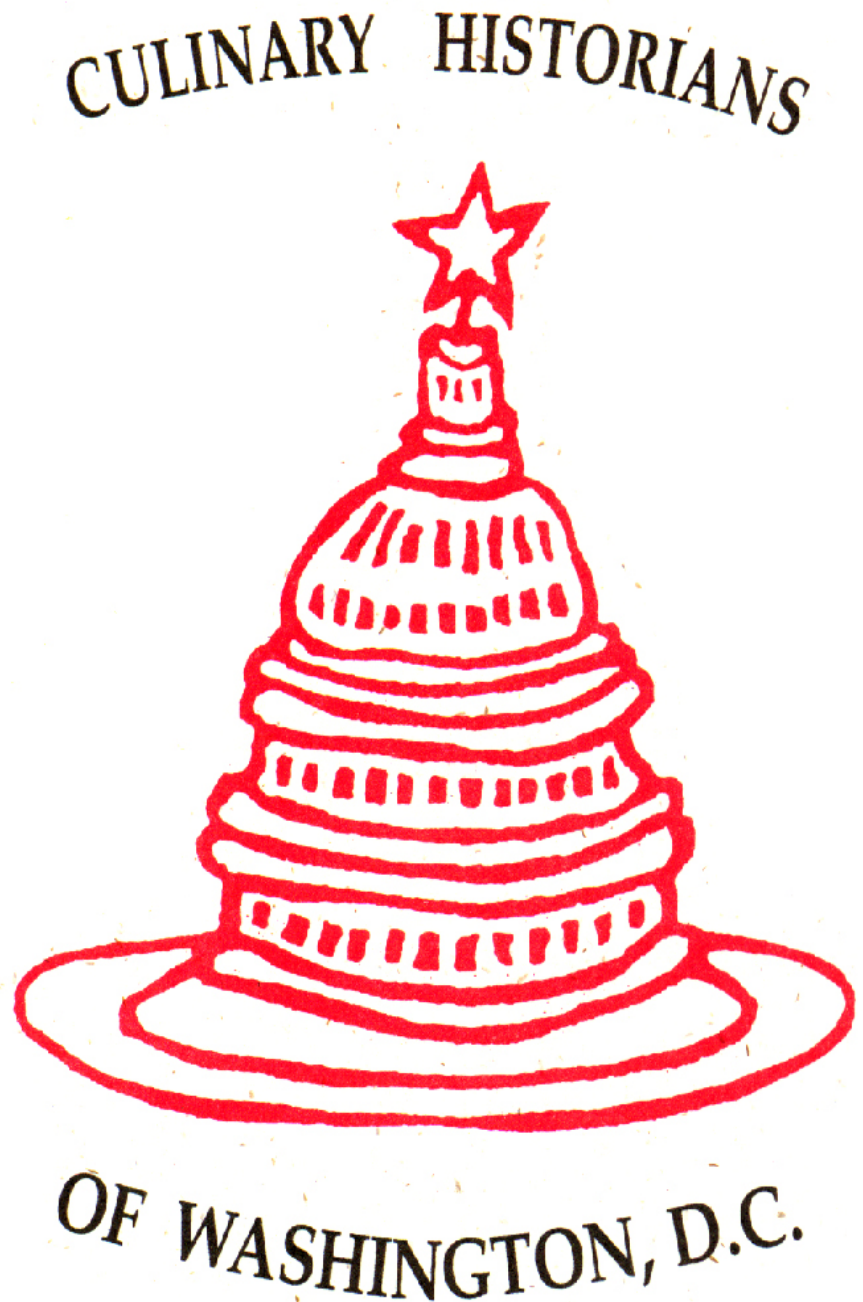


CHoW is the Culinary Historians of Washington, D.C., an informal, nonprofit, educational organization dedicated to the study of the history of foodstuffs, cuisines, and culinary customs, both historical and contemporary, from all parts of the world.

Since 1996, with speakers, on field trips, and at special events, CHoW has travelled the Silk Road, dined with kings and presidents, and learned how food has changed through ancient techniques and modern industrialization.

Join CHoW and learn the real meaning of what's for dinner.



What is
culinary history
anyway?

Culinary Historians of Washington, D.C.



*Kitchen of Governor's Palace,
Williamsburg, Virginia*

It could be
what you had
for dinner
last night...



Or that
mysterious jar in
the back of your
fridge



Culinary history is
a way to study
cultures and
people—
past and present
—using
foodways as a
framework

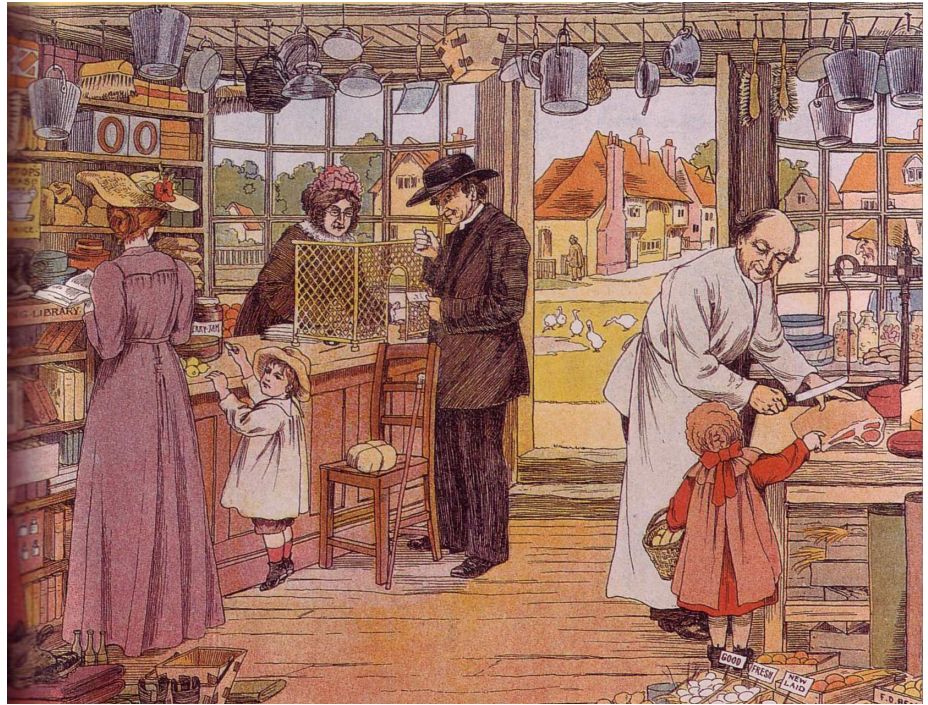
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Exploring the
sources and
speed of
changes in
agriculture...

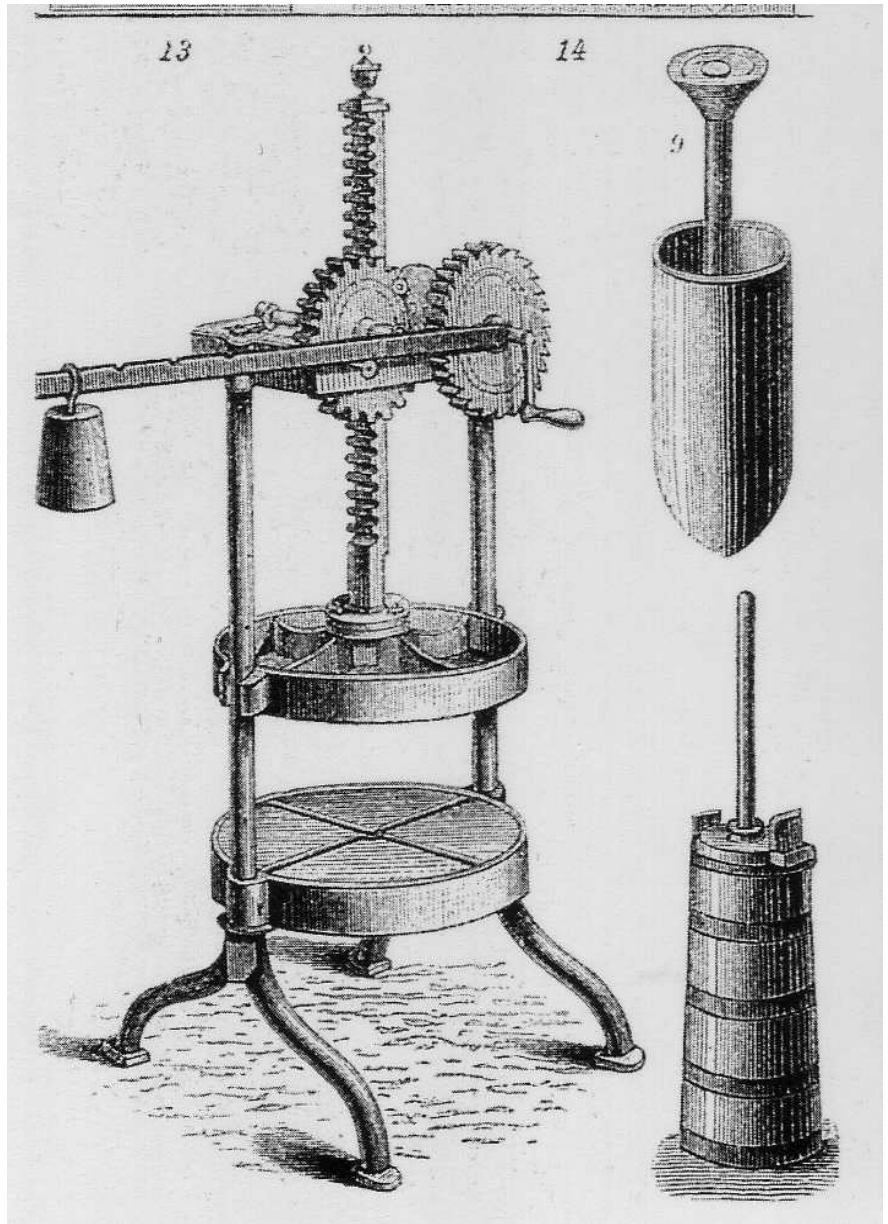


markets



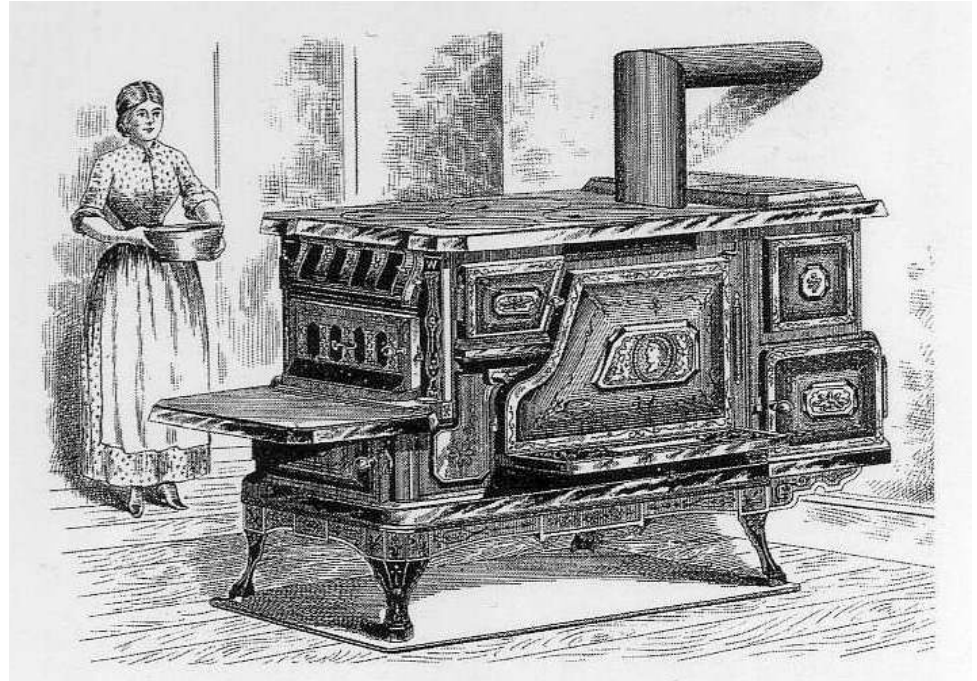
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tools



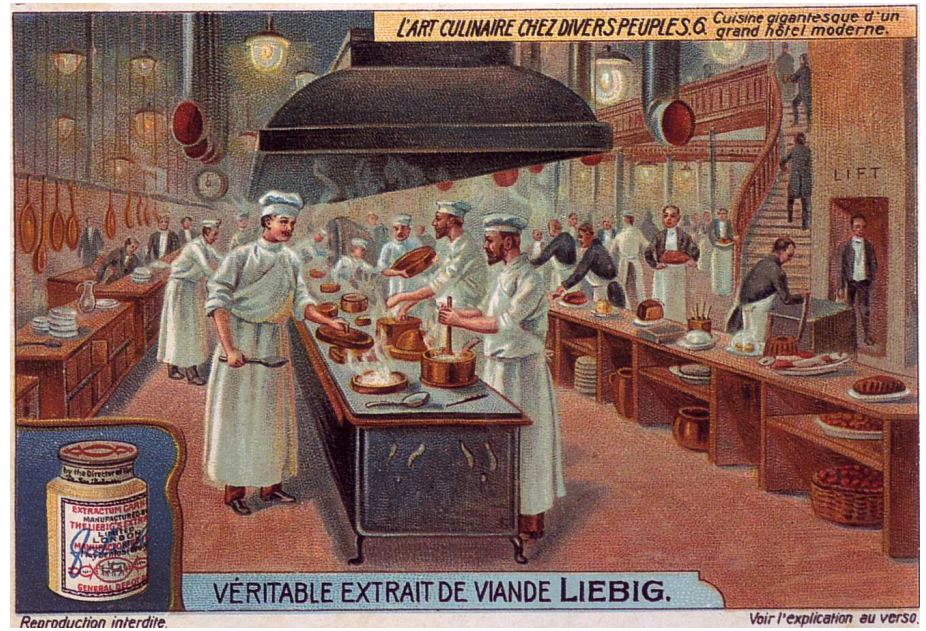
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technology



Culinary Historians of Washington, D.C.

industry



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fashion



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Culinary
history often
reveals the
things we
share...



Culinary Historians of Washington, D.C.

and the things
that set us
apart



It is a way to
understand
cultures by reading
cookbooks as
cultural artifacts or
recreating historic
cooking



CHoW has been
featured in
Cooking Light
magazine,
Bethesda
Magazine...



Francine Berkowitz's
"whatzit" is a bonbon
server from the 1900s.

Hungry for History

At the local culinary society
CHoW, members indulge
a taste for the past

By Nevin Martell | Photos by Chris Rossi

Culinary Historians of Washington, D.C.

and the *Washington Post*



Want to Go?

CHoW/DC's next meeting is on Feb. 13 at 2:30 p.m. at the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Services Center, 4805 Edgemoor Lane, Bethesda, Md. Mark McWilliams will be discussing the birth of the American restaurant. Chowdc.org.

An Extra Helping Of History

A D.C. club bites into the culinary past via old-time recipes and new-filled meet-ups

Then and Chow

At the December meeting of the Culinary Historians of Washington, D.C., members started their gathering in the usual way — by engaging in culinary show-and-tell. Congregating in the decidedly unappetizing surroundings of a government conference room in Bethesda, the cadre of chefs, foodies and history buffs passed around what seemed to be the tiny stone club of some bloodthirsty pygmy and a small, white, plastic device that resembled those three-legged alien spaceships in “War of the Worlds.”

After lots of exclamations of “What they heck?” and handling of the oddities, club vice president CiCi Williamson, 66, a writer from

McLean, Va., revealed that the club would’ve been used in Micronesia to pulverize breadfruit, and that the UFO was actually a hard-boiled egg peeler from the 1950s. “That looks like more trouble than it’s worth,” Williamson said as she passed the egg peeler back to its owner.

History may be written by the winners, but it’s what denizens of past decades had for dinners that concerns the Culinary Historians of Washington, D.C. (ChoW/DC for short). For 16 years, the group has met monthly to hear speakers, compare old recipes and, of course, eat a combo of retro foods and modern dishes. “Having a bite gets people talking,” said Shirley Sherkasky, 83, a retired sociology professor who is the group’s founder.

At the December meeting, folks snacked on candied pumpkin slices inspired by ancient Mexican customs, corn bread made from one member’s old family recipe and Southern-style hummus made from black-eyed peas.

Once a year, the group gets together for a history-themed dinner. The last feast starred Native American dishes such as bison stew, cactus salad and cornmeal hotcakes with prickly-pear syrup.

But it’s the lively appetite for knowledge that really keeps members showing up. In Decem-

vegetable filled pasties not unlike empanadas) favored by stay-at-home moms.

“Food provides a window into what peoples’ day-to-day lives were like back then,” Turner said. Other talks have covered morsels from the invention of the hamburger (probably in the 1880s in the U.S., FYI) to the origins of chop suey (it, too, was created in the United States, not China, back at the end of the 19th century).

“The average American doesn’t know where their food comes from and the story behind it,” Williamson said. “But if you look back at history, you can find out how we got to where we are today.”

It’s no surprise that, as the

“The average American doesn’t know where their food comes from and the story behind it. But if you look back at history, you can find out how we got to where we are today.”

— CICI WILLIAMSON, 66, WRITER AND MEMBER OF CHOW/DC

ber, Katie Leonard Turner, a visiting assistant professor of history at Philadelphia University, chatted about turn-of-the-20th-century convenience foods, from the hot dogs that working-class Philly men enjoyed in saloons to the pre-made pastries (meat and

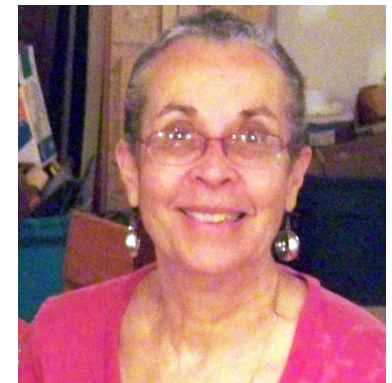
members of CHoW/DC wandered out of their December session, they were talking about food trucks and the roots of Caribbean cuisine, a sure sign that they’re making the sort of tasty history members will be pondering at meetings far in the future. NEVIN MARTELL

Culinary Historians of Washington, D.C.

Our speakers are
authors, scholars,
chefs, museum
curators,
restaurateurs,
journalists, and
historians

William Woys Weaver, Joan Nathan
Monica Bhide, Leni Sorensen
Bee Wilson, Michael Krondl

Culinary Historians of Washington, D.C.



Our projects include
developing CHoW's
Culinary History
Collection
of the Smithsonian
Libraries

Culinary Historians of Washington, D.C.



Smithsonian Libraries

Our monthly newsletter, *CHoWline*, covers meetings and includes book reviews, local food events, travel stories, news of our members, and research tips

CH W *Line*



Burmese Cuisine: On the Road to Flavor



"Medieval Arabs Ate Sandwiches, Too: Bazmaward and Awsat for the Record"



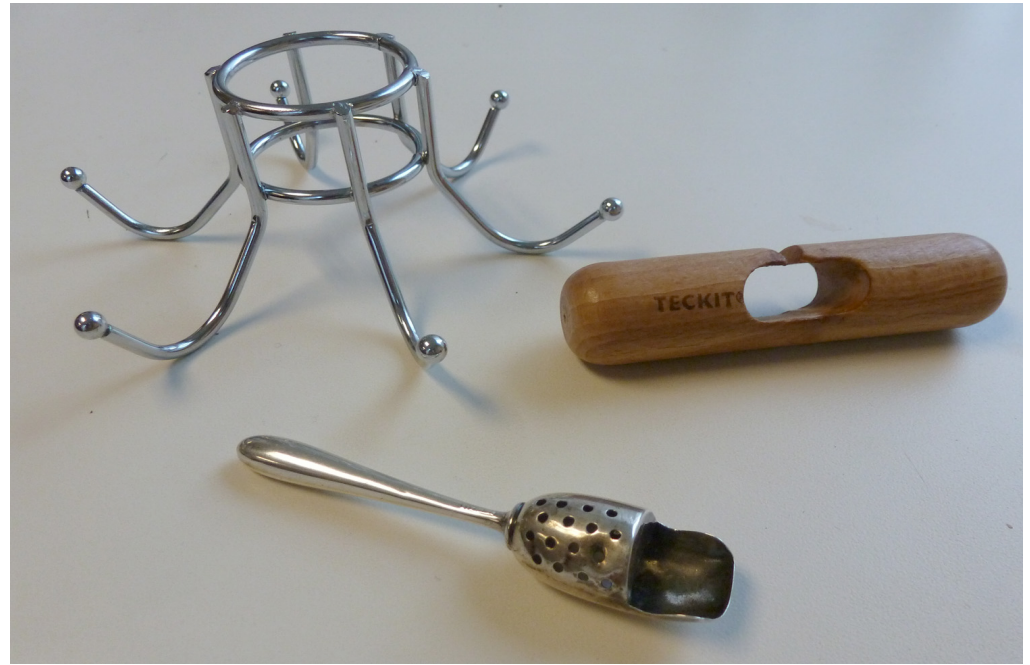
A Revolution is Not a Dinner Party: The Cultural Revolution and the Cultural Revolution Cookbook



Civil War Bake Ovens in the U.S. Capitol Building



Members share
news, latest work,
research findings,
events information,
and “whatzits”



top: cider cup holder, bag carrier, and ?
bottom: shrimp peeler

Culinary Historians of Washington, D.C.



Along with monthly speakers, we sponsor field trips, special events, and an annual cooperative supper on a historical theme

Culinary Historians of Washington, D.C.



Membership is open
to anyone interested in
learning about
foodways,
culinary history,
and gastronomy

Everyone's
contribution is
welcome, and we
benefit from a wide
variety of viewpoints
on culinary history

Culinary Historians of Washington, D.C.



www.chowdc.org

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Join us and explore your life and the
world through the kitchen