

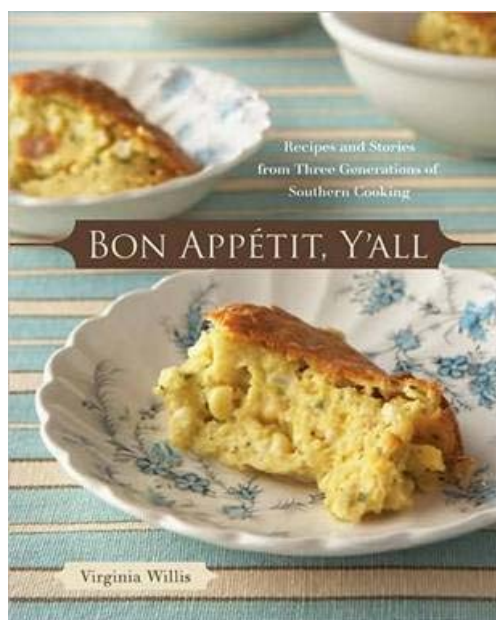
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Bon Appetit, Y' All:

Recipes and Stories from Three Generations of Southern Cooking

By Virginia Willis

A review by Marty Martindale



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Virginia Willis is a French-trained chef, television producer, food stylist, cooking teacher and food writer. A former Martha Stewart Living' kitchen manager, she now makes her home in Atlanta, Georgia. Over her 30 years' food experience, she has cooked for some greats: President Clinton, Aretha Franklin, Jane Fonda and Julia Child, to mention some.

Though Virginia Willis was born a child of the South and dedicated to the south, she knew she had to go out into the world to learn how to share her early world with those not of it. This was not enough. After she apprenticed under Nathalie Dupree, she went north to New York to study and work gathering more food experience. This was also not enough. She then went to France to study under Anne Willan. There, she graduated from L'Academie de Cuisine and Ecole de Cuisine LaVarenne. She returned to New York for more television production experience. Finally, it was time to return to Atlanta, her roots, her family and the foods from which she sprang. She brought it all together, it was ready, and it is stunning!

"These are recipes for your home kitchen, not restaurant-driven creations. They are recipes for families, for displaced Southerners yearning for a taste of home ... also for those who simply want to spend time in the kitchen working and playing with food," Willis states. This book is her statement which says, "Welcome to my Southern kitchen. Pull up a chair." So, let's do just that, and here's some highlights of just a few of Willis's recipes:

- **Classic Coleslaw:** She uses sugar, homemade mayo, buttermilk, lemon juice, cider vinegar, dry mustard, green cabbage, red cabbage, and shredder carrot.
- **Honey Figs with Goat Cheese and Pecans:** She prefers these by blended with Tupelo Orange Blossom or Sweet Clover Honey, also black pepper.
- **Coca-Cola-Glazed Baby Back Ribs:** She uses Classic, cider vinegar, brown sugar, Scotch bonnet chiles and seasoning.
- **Pork Chops with Dried Plums:** She simply adds canola oil, garlic, beef stock and fresh thyme.

- *Seafood Gumbo: Unsalted butter, flour, Vidalia onion, bell pepper, stock, jumbo shrimp or lump crabmeat, hot sauce and file powder*
- *Grits with Corn and Vidalia Onion: Canola oil, Vidalia onion, fresh sweet corn, milk, water, stone-ground grits, unsalted butter, Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, parsley and chives*
- *Horseradish Mashed Potatoes: Yukon gold potatoes, heavy cream, milk, unsalted butter and fresh-grated horseradish*
- *Toasted-Pecan Green Beans: oaricorts verts or thin green beans, olive oil, pecans, garlic and fresh basil.*
- *Spinach with Shallots, Pine Nuts and Golden Raisins: These just need chicken stock and freshly ground black pepper.*
- *Meme's Cornmeal Griddle Cakes: Just add baking powder, sea salt, an egg, some water and some oil for frying.*
- *Pecan-Basil Pistou: Fresh basil, garlic, pine nuts or walnuts, Parmigiano-Reggiano and extra-virgin olive oil*
- *Jalapeno Tartar Sauce: Homemade mayonnaise, sweet pickle relish, capers, lemon juice and zest, horseradish and hot sauce*
- *Georgia Pecan Brownies: Unsalted butter, sugar, flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, eggs, vanilla and semisweet chocolate*
- *Georgia Peach Souffles: Unsalted butter, lemon juice, vanilla, egg whites, sugar and some confectioner's sugar for sprinkling*

A cookbook's "headnotes" are the short paragraphs listed after each recipe title and before the ingredients and directions. And, it's a loving and careful cook who takes the time and shares her personal memories in a these headnotes, Here, Willis also uses this area to remove any doubt you might have as to your success with her recipe. Frequently, she may add a work-saving tip, sometimes some interesting history of the dish or its main ingredient.

Virginia Willis' website: [Virginia Willis](#)

Marty Martindale's website: [Food Site of the Day](#)