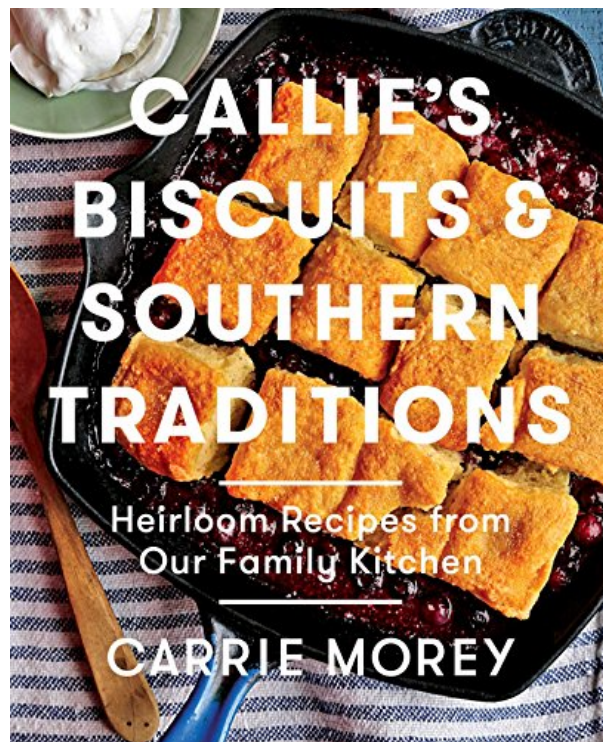
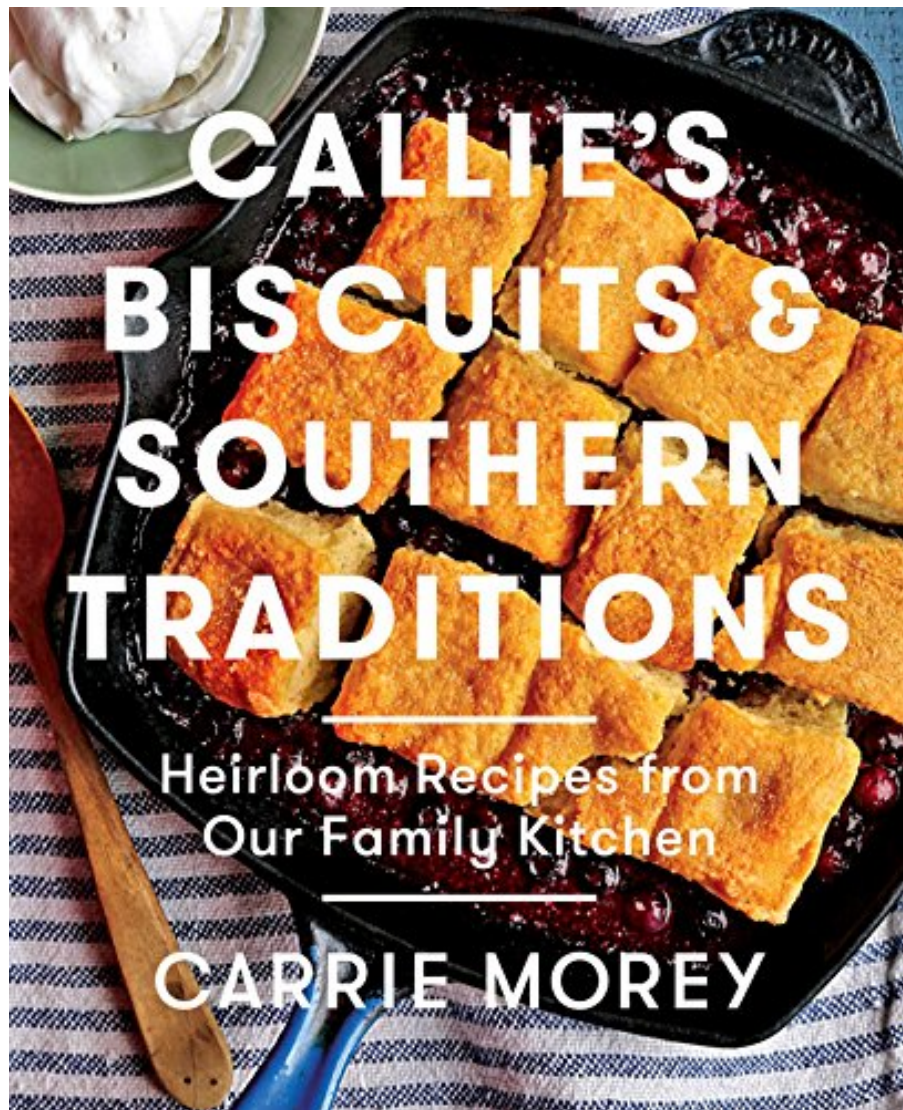


**CALLIE'S BISCUITS AND SOUTHERN
TRADITIONS: HEIRLOOM RECIPES FROM
OUR FAMILY KITCHEN BY CARRIE MOREY**



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Reading, once again, will certainly offer you something brand-new. Something that you have no idea after that revealed to be renowned with guide *Callie's Biscuits And Southern Traditions: Heirloom Recipes From Our Family Kitchen By Carrie Morey* notification. Some expertise or lesson that re obtained from reviewing publications is uncountable. Much more e-books *Callie's Biscuits And Southern Traditions: Heirloom Recipes From Our Family Kitchen By Carrie Morey* you review, even more knowledge you get, as well as much more opportunities to always enjoy reading publications. As a result of this reason, reading e-book must be begun with earlier. It is as just what you can obtain from the book *Callie's Biscuits And Southern Traditions: Heirloom Recipes From Our Family Kitchen By Carrie Morey*

Review

"Opening the oven on culinary secrets...full of charming asides, cooking tips, and always a story... A lifetime of dishes that have been the binding agent of one family, now shared with others." (Charleston Magazine)

About the Author

Carrie Morey, daughter of Callie White, founded Callie's Charleston Biscuits in 2005 with the goal of making her mother's delicious biscuits accessible across the country. Touted by the Today show, Saveur, Food & Wine, Southern Living, The New York Times, and Oprah, her biscuits and pimento cheese collection are sold at high-end retail stores all over the country. Chosen as one of Martha Stewart's "Dreamers into Doers" in 2008, Carrie has been a guest lecturer on entrepreneurship at the College of Charleston School of Business for more than five years.

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Callie's Biscuits and Southern Traditions

Introduction

I'd like to say right off the bat that I'm no natural-born biscuit maker. In fact, I never even made biscuits until I was in my thirties. So as you begin to delve into this book and into biscuit making, do not be intimidated by the idea of making amazing biscuits! I know it's a cliché, but in this case it's apt: If I can do it, you can do it.

Growing up, I watched my mother and her mother make biscuits from our family recipe, but I'd never made them myself until I twisted my mother's arm into starting a company with me called Callie's Charleston Biscuits. Baking was not even something I particularly enjoyed at the time, but I figured I could run the business and sales end of Callie's and she could be in charge of the baking. And that's how it went those first couple of years. I would occasionally help out with the biscuit making, but to be honest it was more like going through the motions and doing as I was told rather than putting my heart and soul into it or feeling all

that engaged in the process itself.

Then my mom decided to retire.

This had not been a part of my business plan! Suddenly the landscape of the business shifted, and I was going to have to redouble my efforts. But I was the kind of cook who never measured anything, who loved to improvise and experiment. Biscuits require accuracy, uniformity, and repetition. How in the world could I captain the ship when I didn't know how to sail?

So I dug in, scared as hell, and turned to my employees to teach me how to master every aspect of making the absolute best biscuits. With the business on the line, my previous ambivalence about baking turned into a determined passion. I had to become a baker, and so I did. And I found out I loved it. Almost more than running the business. Making biscuits became second nature to me and now it's as therapeutic as chopping onions and planning menus always have been. Running the business now, I do not get in there with the bakers as much as I'd like—but when I can, I do, and I fit right in. My hands know what to do. And I find myself making biscuits at home with my daughters as well. Before, the thought of making biscuits was daunting, but I now get the urge to make them.

Once you get the technique down, your hands, too, will begin to feel as if they're moving of their own accord. What at first may seem intimidating and infinitely messy will become ritual . . . and maybe a little less messy.

Whether I'm performing this ritual with my daughters, my mother, or the Callie's bakers (my other family!), the process always takes on a life of its own after a while. As we plunge our hands into bowls to work the wet dough and roll it out and line the biscuits across the pans, we're telling stories about our day, talking about everything from a recipe conundrum to whom we ran into at the grocery store, and sometimes even airing a grievance or two. When you get to that point with your biscuit making that it becomes almost automatic, you'll be able to concentrate less on each step and more on the conversation and togetherness with your family and friends in the kitchen. And you'll be able to add your own twist to the technique.

Above all, don't worry. If you follow the steps, you really can't mess up biscuits. Biscuits are forgiving. They will get better the more you make them and the techniques will get easier. They're not delicate like a pastry. It's okay if they're not perfectly round or they're a little on the big side. So don't put too much pressure on yourself! Enjoy the process and the taste. The presentation will improve.

I eventually felt ready to experiment with my mother's biscuit recipe, and my first success was my black pepper biscuits. Several of the recipes in the chapter on biscuit making are deliberate variations on the original technique passed down to me. Keep repeating the basic process and you can use the dough and the technique as your canvas to create your own family recipes based on your personal palate and favorite ingredients.

My hope for sharing the gift of biscuit making is to bring a little bit of the old-fashioned baking practices from my grandmothers and mother (those techniques I really never thought I'd master) to your kitchen counter. Even though you're busy, you can enjoy and share these delicious treats. A biscuit is such a tiny little thing, but it has brought a lot to my life, and I hope it can bring goodness to yours as well. There's nothing tastier than a hot one right out of the oven, and that taste is enhanced exponentially by the quality—not necessarily the quantity—of time spent preparing it. For me, there is something indescribably rewarding about creating something so wonderful from such simple ingredients. Something that brings a smile to those I love. It's what makes me want to do it over and over again.

Do I ever get sick of biscuits? No. Would it be an exaggeration to say my life revolves around biscuits? I don't think so. Because for me, biscuits are more than just the end product of the hand mixing, rolling, cutting, and baking. Biscuits are a living legacy of my family history and the women who've gone before me, and with each batch of biscuits I make I'm refining and passing along this legacy to my daughters. Biscuits and family are as inextricably linked in my life as butter and flour. Put them together and something magical happens.

You could even say that "family" is the secret ingredient to all my best recipes, not just the biscuits. I like to say, "It's all about the food." That "all the rest" is just extra. But as I thought long and hard about my favorite recipes and techniques and which ones to include in this book, I quickly realized it was people who popped inside my head even before the food. My mother's biscuits, my Mama's pineapple upside down cake, my grandmother's macaroni pie. Even plain boiled shrimp was Dad's boiled shrimp. And each recipe brought a story to mind with it. I really couldn't tell you about Dad's boiled shrimp without telling you about the time his boat and trailer rolled into the creek pulling my grandfather's station wagon with it, or about my mother's perfect tomato sandwiches without telling you about summers spent at the lake with her and her parents, and my grandfather singing Tony Bennett songs to my grandmother.

Rebecca Maxcey Bailey

This passing down of recipes and traditions, this legacy I've inherited, it turns out, is less about the food on the table and more about the people sitting around it—and you wouldn't serve just any food to your favorite people! I serve the food I love, the food I crave to taste and can't wait to make. And as I pass this food with pride down my table of family and friends, I pass along the stories and love of the people who gave it to me.

Caroline Macdowell Hartzog

So who are these people who give me inspiration, stories, and the best food I ever tasted? Well, they are far-flung but extremely tight, diverse in opinion but loyal to one another, and they all treasure gathering around the table for good food and lively conversation. I lived with my father after my parents split up when I was very young, and then both of my parents married wonderful people. My father and stepmother, Caroline, had a son, Alston, and my mother and stepfather, Tom, had two sons, Kinnon and Miles, so I have three amazing brothers who are a good bit younger than I am. And I have wonderful cousins, aunts, and uncles on all sides. My husband, John, is my perfect match, and we have three girls, Caroline, Cate, and Sarah. I have so many good friends who might as well be family and whose company, stories, and recipes are dear to me as well.

But the matriarchs whose recipes and talents started it all and who laid the foundation for the legacy I hope to build on are my two grandmothers: my father's mother, Mama (pronounced m?m?), and my mother's mother, Grandmama (pronounced grandmomma). They couldn't have been more different, and yet they nurtured me, taught me, and fed me with the same degree of love and wisdom.

Mama came from humble roots, but she was a queen in her kitchen. She was one of ten children and with her husband of sixty-six years had six herself: one stillborn baby girl followed by five boys. She never got her driver's license. With five boys and a husband, as my uncle says, it didn't matter whether it was because she loved to cook or there were so many mouths to feed, she was in her kitchen all the time. She was so proud of her boys and loved to watch them play football. Two even earned football scholarships, my father to the

University of South Carolina and his youngest brother to The Citadel. There wasn't a lot of money, but she made up for that with love—and plenty of good food. She was a gentle yet incredibly strong woman who was so proud of her children and grandchildren. I miss her.

Grandmama was a fabulous, fabulous cook. She was born and raised in Gaffney, South Carolina, married my grandfather when she was nineteen, and was married for fifty-eight happy years. She was extraordinarily beautiful, bohemian, sophisticated, and intelligent. She taught my mother how to make elegantly small Southern biscuits, and my mother passed her recipes and techniques down to me. Too many of her recipes remain in memory only, as she hardly ever wrote anything down, but I love that trying to re-create them has become a collaborative effort for my girls and me. Maybe in this case the continued conversation about them and the multiple attempts to replicate them makes her legacy even more alive.

My mother, Callie, is the namesake of my business, and her attention to detail and knowing just the right thing to do or fix set a high bar. She is a phenomenal cook, incredibly fashionable, and absolutely gorgeous. She is very liberal and feisty and deep down a true Southern woman despite her worldly ways. I am always asking her for advice on menus, recipes, and entertaining. She's creative and has amazing taste and makes fabulous beautiful food. Even a sandwich tastes better when she makes it!

My father, Donald, is incredibly driven and never takes no for an answer. He grew up in an extremely poor household, and it was only due to his considerable athletic talent that he was able to attend college. He has always taught me to think “I can” and “I will” and has always encouraged and supported me. He's my ultimate hero, and he touches everyone he knows in a positive light.

So as you can see, I come from two very different Southern families. While Grandmama hosted elegant parties, a special occasion at Mama's meant I got to eat at a TV table; I inherited Mama's cast-iron skillet and Grandmama's silver gravy boat. I treasure these women, their wisdom, and their culinary gifts in equal measure, and I hope I make a nice blend of both traditions.

In fact, the dichotomy of my mother's and father's family influences on me is an issue I laugh about almost daily. The other day I was making pickled shrimp for a Carolina tailgate, and sitting there peeling shrimp and deveining each and every one, I was thinking how my dad would no more think of deveining a shrimp than fly to the moon, and my mom would not even consider looking at a shrimp unless it had been deveined—and that about sums it up: my life in a shrimp shell!

My mom would probably say about my cooking and entertaining style that I don't put enough effort into the details. My dad would say I'm too fancy. Luckily, my husband thinks I'm the perfect mix. I try to take the best of all my influences—all my heirlooms—and make them my own to share with my friends, my husband, and my daughters. I think of myself as somewhere in the middle between fancy and basic, sophistication and salt of the earth: I give my oyster roasts a little flair and my cocktail parties an air of simplicity; I put out boiled peanuts right next to chilled Champagne; and once or twice I may have served Bloody Marys while I was still in my pajamas. I find that there's always a reason to make an ordinary meal a special occasion and always a way to give a special occasion the comfortable, laid-back feel of an ordinary family meal.

I hope that reading this cookbook, you'll be able to take what I share and make it your own, and that some of these recipes will find a place at your family table. And maybe it isn't all about the food or making tiny little biscuits, but good food and biscuits isn't such a bad place to start, either.

FAVORITE TOOLS

JUICE GLASS

At Callie's we use two-inch aluminum biscuit cutters, but at home my girls and I use a juice glass. Test some of your juice glasses or shot glasses to see which you like best. Dip the open end in flour to keep it from sticking, and then press out the biscuits from the dough. Not only does this save you from buying and storing yet another kitchen gadget—you're creating a family heirloom. Pretty soon that juice glass will come to be known as the biscuit glass.

ROLLING PIN

At Callie's we use French rolling pins with tapered ends, made from one piece of wood. At our house in Idaho, my rolling pin is the more traditional model with handles. But don't get hung up over this tool. In a pinch I've used a wine bottle. In fact, any cylinder will do. If you are using an improvised rolling pin, put parchment paper between the dough and the cylinder to protect the dough.

DIGITAL THERMOMETER

You only need one thermometer whether you're frying, cooking a roast, or making candy. But it needs to be a good one with a probe attached by a cable. This tool is worth it. It takes away so much guesswork and frustration. It is my best friend when I am frying—I consult it the whole time. With mine, I can set the desired temperature and then leave the temperature probe in whatever is cooking, and when the temperature is reached, it beeps. So much better than standing around holding a thermometer and watching the numbers move. I do not have time for that.

OVEN THERMOMETER

You'd be surprised how inaccurate most oven thermostats are. Especially with biscuits, piecrusts, and cookies, you want to make sure you're not sabotaging yourself with an oven that runs hot or cold. Use an inexpensive oven thermometer to keep tabs on the real oven temperature, and if the thermostat turns out to be pretty far off, call a repairperson to recalibrate it for you.

TONGS

I have maybe five pairs of tongs in different sizes, and I keep them within easy reach in a bin on my counter. I use them for everything from flipping fried chicken to picking up hot bacon to pulling meat out of its bag of marinade without making a mess. Get a nice pair that will last. The springs often break in the cheap ones.

CHARLESTON RICE STEAMER

Mama always had a pot of butter beans and a steamer full of rice on the stove—no matter the time of day or the meal being served. She put soup over rice, okra and tomatoes over rice, and served butter beans over rice with almost everything. Rice in her house was a constant companion to any dish. And even though Mama lived on rural Johns Island in a tiny house with chickens out back, the stovetop rice steamer was just as ubiquitous in the genteel homes of Charleston, with rice on every plate as an accompaniment and in dishes such as hopping john and all kinds of variations of pilau (pronounced pur-low in the South Carolina

Lowcountry).

I've had my stovetop rice steamer for ten years, and it delivers fluffy, nonsticky rice every time. The traditional models are aluminum and cost about thirty-five dollars. I have seen some fancier stainless-steel steamers, but the aluminum is just as durable as long as you don't let the water burn out of the bottom. Around Charleston you can find rice steamers in hardware stores and some specialty cooking stores, but you can also find them online. Once you have one, you will enjoy the luxury of mindless rice cooking. No more checking the rice, no more sticky clumps, and no more burning on the bottom. The steamer cooks the rice and then keeps it hot and fluffy until you're ready to use it. Do take note that in a rice steamer you use a ratio of 1 cup of liquid to 1 cup of rice.

VEGETABLE PEELER

A vegetable peeler makes a great cheese slicer for any hard cheese. If I'm grating a bunch of cheese, I use my food processor. If I need just a little, I pull out the peeler and slice or shave it as needed.

TWO KNIVES AND THE BEST SHARPENER IN THE WORLD

Chopped vegetables are a key ingredient for so many of the recipes in this book; even when they aren't the main event or flavor, they create the flavor base for everything from roast chicken to soups. I know a lot of people who avoid cooking just because they find chopping vegetables to be so tiresome, but try it with a really sharp knife and you will be amazed by how much quicker and more fun it is. It can even be meditative at times! In my experience, you only need two knives: a serrated knife for slicing bread and a Santoku-style knife. They don't have to be expensive brands.

The key to chopping is keeping the blade sharp. For this I count on my Chantry brand knife sharpener. I rely on this sharpener so much I pack it in my luggage when I travel and take it with me everywhere I go. I give my knife about twenty passes through the Chantry before I cut anything. I sharpen my knives in the Chantry every day just before I use them. It makes all the difference. You'll look for things to chop just for the fun of it.

WHISK

My whisk is one of the items that I keep on my countertop. It's a necessity for incorporating oil into salad dressings and marinades and for introducing flour into anything liquid. Lump-free gravy just isn't possible without a whisk.

KITCHEN SHEARS

There are times when using scissors is easier than cutting with a knife. I use my shears to cut roasted vegetables, snip fine herbs like dill and thyme, and make smaller bites of almost everything for my children: pizza, chunks of meat, and tortillas, to name a few. Do be sure to use your "food scissors" for food only, and keep them clean.

RESEALABLE PLASTIC BAGS

I go through enough plastic bags to send me to environmental hell. I use them to marinate meats. To store

prepped ingredients. To hold homemade pickles in the fridge. To tote snacks. To shake and coat chicken for frying. To keep things in the freezer. I know it's bad. As my penance I do not use any paper towels or paper napkins. And one day I'm going to give up baby wipes, too.

PAPER BAGS

When I don't have my reusable grocery bags, I always ask for paper. I drain bacon and anything fried on paper bags—the bags soak up the grease even better than paper towels. I put fried chicken in a paper bag and stick it back in the oven to keep it warm—and totable. You can shake anything in seasonings or breading in a paper bag. Rediscover these classics if you've forgotten about them; you'll even love their pulpy smell and the loud crunching sound they make as you handle them.

PARCHMENT PAPER

Parchment paper is essential to making my Cinnamon Stickies. I also like to use it to wrap sandwiches for picnics and other outings. It makes the sandwiches look like they came from a gourmet deli. I love the rustle of the paper as I unwrap one to take a bite! And you can spread the paper out under the sandwich like a placemat to catch the pieces that fall.

SALT CELLAR AND PEPPER GRINDER

Kosher salt. It's what to use. I use it in all my cooking and baking (I don't even buy any other kind of salt), and I use it to scrub my cast iron when reseasoning is necessary. I keep it in a salt cellar by the stove so it's at my fingertips. My husband likes to say I was raised on a saltlick. I love salt. Keep that in mind when you follow these recipes . . . they may be slightly on the salty side so you may want to adjust accordingly.

Grind your pepper from peppercorns in a pepper grinder. A grinder is not expensive, and it makes all the difference. If you'd rather do all of your grinding at once rather than grinding each time you need it, grind a bunch of pepper and keep it in a bowl or another cellar right next to the salt.

IMMERSION BLENDER

Not only is this little gadget hugely helpful for giving soups a smoother texture without having to handle hot liquids in and out of the pot and blender, but it's also handy for smoothies and milkshakes.

WIRE MESH STRAINER

This tool is sometimes called a "spider skimmer." It has a long bamboo handle and is used a lot in Asian cooking. I use it when frying to remove the food from the hot grease and, more often than not, when I need a colander. For small items this mesh strainer is just right, and there's no need to get out anything bigger that would take up sink space and give you one more thing to clean.

VOTIVE CANDLES

I have hundreds of clear glass votive candle holders in my "party closet." They are such an easy and inexpensive way to create a magical atmosphere. Make sure you have one of those long lighters for lighting them, and make sure you plan enough time before the party to light them. Depending on how many you set out, you'd be surprised how long it takes to light them all.

MASON JARS

I use these as glasses, vases, holders for utensils, containers for pickles and olives. I use the smaller wide-mouth four-ounce jars to serve condiments and dips. You can even put votive candles in the short ones. These are on my list of favorite things that I buy very inexpensively at the hardware store.

MINT JULEP CUPS

I use these as the more formal version of mason jars—as glasses, vases, etc. These make a great item to collect. The sterling silver ones are very expensive, but you can find them at antique stores for less. And silver-plated julep cups are very reasonably priced. Both versions shimmer beautifully in candlelight.

LINEN NAPKINS

People give me linen napkins as gifts, and I look for them at flea markets—I love collecting linen cocktail napkins, dinner napkins, and hand towels. I use these at every party I host. They don't need to match—in fact, mixing different colors and embroidery makes the presentation look effortless and authentic.

ROLLS OF WHITE TWINE

Another hardware store staple. I tie it around mason jar vases for a little rustic charm. I wrap linen dinner napkins in twine with a snip of fresh herbs. You can tie a bottle opener to a cooler or tub with it. The possibilities are endless, and one roll will last you many, many parties.

GALVANIZED BUCKETS AND TUBS

You won't believe how much you'll use these indestructible, stackable, washable, charming workhorses. I know I'm repeating myself, but these are yet another hardware store special. Use them to hold ice and cold beer, ice and a bottle of Champagne, boiled peanuts, koozies for beer, kids' drinks, piles of whole fruit and vegetables, and potted plants for an outdoor centerpiece, and to haul things from inside to outside. And you'll find other uses, too. Trust me.

CALLIE'S BISCUITS AND SOUTHERN TRADITIONS: HEIRLOOM RECIPES FROM OUR FAMILY KITCHEN BY CARRIE MOREY PDF

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CALLIE'S BISCUITS AND SOUTHERN TRADITIONS: HEIRLOOM RECIPES FROM OUR FAMILY KITCHEN BY CARRIE MOREY PDF

The popular owner-entrepreneur of Callie's Biscuits reveals her modern approach to traditional Southern cooking, sharing charming stories and fabulous, accessible recipes in a Southern-style Make the Bread, Buy the Butter.

Carrie Morey started her company, Callie's Charleston Biscuits, with a simple goal: She wanted to make her mother Callie's delicious biscuits—unbelievably tender, buttery creations—accessible across the country. Carrie's handmade biscuits combine unique, brilliant flavors—sharp cheddar with fresh chives, cracked black pepper with cream cheese and green onions, and cinnamon biscuits so buttery they melt in your mouth. The biscuits are an iconic Southern staple, but they are just the beginning.

Now Carrie Morey shares her modern approach to traditional Southern cooking in more than one hundred recipes that pair classic Lowcountry fare with surprising twists, for incredible results. Carrie guides you through the foundational techniques of Southern cooking to reveal how she developed her new takes on favorite heritage dishes and how to take the fuss and huge time investment out of traditional preparations. She shares skillet recipes passed down through generations, including Lemon Zest Cast-Iron Fried Shrimp, Macaroni Pie, and Cast-Iron Herb Lamb Chops. She gives roasting and slow-cooking techniques for Beef Stew with Herbed Sour Cream, Spicy Black-Eyed Pea Salad, and Roasted Pimento Cheese Chicken. Her DILLicious Cucumber Sandwiches, BBQ Chicken Salad Biscuits, Fiery Pimento Cheese Deviled Eggs, and Summer Crab Salad will make any picnic or casual get-together a true Southern affair. And her desserts are to die for: Mama's Sour Cream Banana Pudding, Alex's Chocolate Chess Pie (so good that Carrie credits the pie for sparking her and her husband's whirlwind romance), and Blueberry and Peach Cobbler finish your meal on the perfect sweet note.

Carrie also shares her family stories behind each recipe—growing up in Charleston, learning to cook from great Southern matriarchs, and founding and growing her business. Fill your kitchen with the comforting aroma of home-cooked goodness with Callie's Biscuits and Southern Traditions.

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“Opening the oven on culinary secrets...full of charming asides, cooking tips, and always a story... A lifetime of dishes that have been the binding agent of one family, now shared with others.” (Charleston Magazine)

About the Author

Carrie Morey, daughter of Callie White, founded Callie’s Charleston Biscuits in 2005 with the goal of making her mother’s delicious biscuits accessible across the country. Touted by the Today show, Saveur, Food & Wine, Southern Living, The New York Times, and Oprah, her biscuits and pimento cheese collection are sold at high-end retail stores all over the country. Chosen as one of Martha Stewart’s “Dreamers into Doers” in 2008, Carrie has been a guest lecturer on entrepreneurship at the College of Charleston School of Business for more than five years.

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Callie’s Biscuits and Southern Traditions

Introduction

I’d like to say right off the bat that I’m no natural-born biscuit maker. In fact, I never even made biscuits until I was in my thirties. So as you begin to delve into this book and into biscuit making, do not be intimidated by the idea of making amazing biscuits! I know it’s a cliché, but in this case it’s apt: If I can do it, you can do it.

Growing up, I watched my mother and her mother make biscuits from our family recipe, but I’d never made them myself until I twisted my mother’s arm into starting a company with me called Callie’s Charleston Biscuits. Baking was not even something I particularly enjoyed at the time, but I figured I could run the business and sales end of Callie’s and she could be in charge of the baking. And that’s how it went those first couple of years. I would occasionally help out with the biscuit making, but to be honest it was more like going through the motions and doing as I was told rather than putting my heart and soul into it or feeling all that engaged in the process itself.

Then my mom decided to retire.

This had not been a part of my business plan! Suddenly the landscape of the business shifted, and I was going to have to redouble my efforts. But I was the kind of cook who never measured anything, who loved to improvise and experiment. Biscuits require accuracy, uniformity, and repetition. How in the world could I captain the ship when I didn’t know how to sail?

So I dug in, scared as hell, and turned to my employees to teach me how to master every aspect of making the absolute best biscuits. With the business on the line, my previous ambivalence about baking turned into a determined passion. I had to become a baker, and so I did. And I found out I loved it. Almost more than running the business. Making biscuits became second nature to me and now it’s as therapeutic as chopping onions and planning menus always have been. Running the business now, I do not get in there with the bakers as much as I’d like—but when I can, I do, and I fit right in. My hands know what to do. And I find myself making biscuits at home with my daughters as well. Before, the thought of making biscuits was daunting, but I now get the urge to make them.

Once you get the technique down, your hands, too, will begin to feel as if they’re moving of their own accord. What at first may seem intimidating and infinitely messy will become ritual . . . and maybe a little less messy.

Whether I'm performing this ritual with my daughters, my mother, or the Callie's bakers (my other family!), the process always takes on a life of its own after a while. As we plunge our hands into bowls to work the wet dough and roll it out and line the biscuits across the pans, we're telling stories about our day, talking about everything from a recipe conundrum to whom we ran into at the grocery store, and sometimes even airing a grievance or two. When you get to that point with your biscuit making that it becomes almost automatic, you'll be able to concentrate less on each step and more on the conversation and togetherness with your family and friends in the kitchen. And you'll be able to add your own twist to the technique.

Above all, don't worry. If you follow the steps, you really can't mess up biscuits. Biscuits are forgiving. They will get better the more you make them and the techniques will get easier. They're not delicate like a pastry. It's okay if they're not perfectly round or they're a little on the big side. So don't put too much pressure on yourself! Enjoy the process and the taste. The presentation will improve.

I eventually felt ready to experiment with my mother's biscuit recipe, and my first success was my black pepper biscuits. Several of the recipes in the chapter on biscuit making are deliberate variations on the original technique passed down to me. Keep repeating the basic process and you can use the dough and the technique as your canvas to create your own family recipes based on your personal palate and favorite ingredients.

My hope for sharing the gift of biscuit making is to bring a little bit of the old-fashioned baking practices from my grandmothers and mother (those techniques I really never thought I'd master) to your kitchen counter. Even though you're busy, you can enjoy and share these delicious treats. A biscuit is such a tiny little thing, but it has brought a lot to my life, and I hope it can bring goodness to yours as well. There's nothing tastier than a hot one right out of the oven, and that taste is enhanced exponentially by the quality—not necessarily the quantity—of time spent preparing it. For me, there is something indescribably rewarding about creating something so wonderful from such simple ingredients. Something that brings a smile to those I love. It's what makes me want to do it over and over again.

Do I ever get sick of biscuits? No. Would it be an exaggeration to say my life revolves around biscuits? I don't think so. Because for me, biscuits are more than just the end product of the hand mixing, rolling, cutting, and baking. Biscuits are a living legacy of my family history and the women who've gone before me, and with each batch of biscuits I make I'm refining and passing along this legacy to my daughters. Biscuits and family are as inextricably linked in my life as butter and flour. Put them together and something magical happens.

You could even say that "family" is the secret ingredient to all my best recipes, not just the biscuits. I like to say, "It's all about the food." That "all the rest" is just extra. But as I thought long and hard about my favorite recipes and techniques and which ones to include in this book, I quickly realized it was people who popped inside my head even before the food. My mother's biscuits, my Mama's pineapple upside down cake, my grandmother's macaroni pie. Even plain boiled shrimp was Dad's boiled shrimp. And each recipe brought a story to mind with it. I really couldn't tell you about Dad's boiled shrimp without telling you about the time his boat and trailer rolled into the creek pulling my grandfather's station wagon with it, or about my mother's perfect tomato sandwiches without telling you about summers spent at the lake with her and her parents, and my grandfather singing Tony Bennett songs to my grandmother.

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This passing down of recipes and traditions, this legacy I've inherited, it turns out, is less about the food on the table and more about the people sitting around it—and you wouldn't serve just any food to your favorite people! I serve the food I love, the food I crave to taste and can't wait to make. And as I pass this food with pride down my table of family and friends, I pass along the stories and love of the people who gave it to me.

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So who are these people who give me inspiration, stories, and the best food I ever tasted? Well, they are far-flung but extremely tight, diverse in opinion but loyal to one another, and they all treasure gathering around the table for good food and lively conversation. I lived with my father after my parents split up when I was very young, and then both of my parents married wonderful people. My father and stepmother, Caroline, had a son, Alston, and my mother and stepfather, Tom, had two sons, Kinnon and Miles, so I have three amazing brothers who are a good bit younger than I am. And I have wonderful cousins, aunts, and uncles on all sides. My husband, John, is my perfect match, and we have three girls, Caroline, Cate, and Sarah. I have so many good friends who might as well be family and whose company, stories, and recipes are dear to me as well.

But the matriarchs whose recipes and talents started it all and who laid the foundation for the legacy I hope to build on are my two grandmothers: my father's mother, Mama (pronounced m?m?), and my mother's mother, Grandmama (pronounced grandmomma). They couldn't have been more different, and yet they nurtured me, taught me, and fed me with the same degree of love and wisdom.

Mama came from humble roots, but she was a queen in her kitchen. She was one of ten children and with her husband of sixty-six years had six herself: one stillborn baby girl followed by five boys. She never got her driver's license. With five boys and a husband, as my uncle says, it didn't matter whether it was because she loved to cook or there were so many mouths to feed, she was in her kitchen all the time. She was so proud of her boys and loved to watch them play football. Two even earned football scholarships, my father to the University of South Carolina and his youngest brother to The Citadel. There wasn't a lot of money, but she made up for that with love—and plenty of good food. She was a gentle yet incredibly strong woman who was so proud of her children and grandchildren. I miss her.

Grandmama was a fabulous, fabulous cook. She was born and raised in Gaffney, South Carolina, married my grandfather when she was nineteen, and was married for fifty-eight happy years. She was extraordinarily beautiful, bohemian, sophisticated, and intelligent. She taught my mother how to make elegantly small Southern biscuits, and my mother passed her recipes and techniques down to me. Too many of her recipes remain in memory only, as she hardly ever wrote anything down, but I love that trying to re-create them has become a collaborative effort for my girls and me. Maybe in this case the continued conversation about them and the multiple attempts to replicate them makes her legacy even more alive.

My mother, Callie, is the namesake of my business, and her attention to detail and knowing just the right thing to do or fix set a high bar. She is a phenomenal cook, incredibly fashionable, and absolutely gorgeous. She is very liberal and feisty and deep down a true Southern woman despite her worldly ways. I am always asking her for advice on menus, recipes, and entertaining. She's creative and has amazing taste and makes fabulous beautiful food. Even a sandwich tastes better when she makes it!

My father, Donald, is incredibly driven and never takes no for an answer. He grew up in an extremely poor household, and it was only due to his considerable athletic talent that he was able to attend college. He has always taught me to think "I can" and "I will" and has always encouraged and supported me. He's my

ultimate hero, and he touches everyone he knows in a positive light.

So as you can see, I come from two very different Southern families. While Grandmama hosted elegant parties, a special occasion at Mama's meant I got to eat at a TV table; I inherited Mama's cast-iron skillet and Grandmama's silver gravy boat. I treasure these women, their wisdom, and their culinary gifts in equal measure, and I hope I make a nice blend of both traditions.

In fact, the dichotomy of my mother's and father's family influences on me is an issue I laugh about almost daily. The other day I was making pickled shrimp for a Carolina tailgate, and sitting there peeling shrimp and deveining each and every one, I was thinking how my dad would no more think of deveining a shrimp than fly to the moon, and my mom would not even consider looking at a shrimp unless it had been deveined—and that about sums it up: my life in a shrimp shell!

My mom would probably say about my cooking and entertaining style that I don't put enough effort into the details. My dad would say I'm too fancy. Luckily, my husband thinks I'm the perfect mix. I try to take the best of all my influences—all my heirlooms—and make them my own to share with my friends, my husband, and my daughters. I think of myself as somewhere in the middle between fancy and basic, sophistication and salt of the earth: I give my oyster roasts a little flair and my cocktail parties an air of simplicity; I put out boiled peanuts right next to chilled Champagne; and once or twice I may have served Bloody Marys while I was still in my pajamas. I find that there's always a reason to make an ordinary meal a special occasion and always a way to give a special occasion the comfortable, laid-back feel of an ordinary family meal.

I hope that reading this cookbook, you'll be able to take what I share and make it your own, and that some of these recipes will find a place at your family table. And maybe it isn't all about the food or making tiny little biscuits, but good food and biscuits isn't such a bad place to start, either.

FAVORITE TOOLS

JUICE GLASS

At Callie's we use two-inch aluminum biscuit cutters, but at home my girls and I use a juice glass. Test some of your juice glasses or shot glasses to see which you like best. Dip the open end in flour to keep it from sticking, and then press out the biscuits from the dough. Not only does this save you from buying and storing yet another kitchen gadget—you're creating a family heirloom. Pretty soon that juice glass will come to be known as the biscuit glass.

ROLLING PIN

At Callie's we use French rolling pins with tapered ends, made from one piece of wood. At our house in Idaho, my rolling pin is the more traditional model with handles. But don't get hung up over this tool. In a pinch I've used a wine bottle. In fact, any cylinder will do. If you are using an improvised rolling pin, put parchment paper between the dough and the cylinder to protect the dough.

DIGITAL THERMOMETER

You only need one thermometer whether you're frying, cooking a roast, or making candy. But it needs to be a good one with a probe attached by a cable. This tool is worth it. It takes away so much guesswork and frustration. It is my best friend when I am frying—I consult it the whole time. With mine, I can set the desired temperature and then leave the temperature probe in whatever is cooking, and when the temperature is reached, it beeps. So much better than standing around holding a thermometer and watching the numbers move. I do not have time for that.

OVEN THERMOMETER

You'd be surprised how inaccurate most oven thermostats are. Especially with biscuits, piecrusts, and cookies, you want to make sure you're not sabotaging yourself with an oven that runs hot or cold. Use an inexpensive oven thermometer to keep tabs on the real oven temperature, and if the thermostat turns out to be pretty far off, call a repairperson to recalibrate it for you.

TONGS

I have maybe five pairs of tongs in different sizes, and I keep them within easy reach in a bin on my counter. I use them for everything from flipping fried chicken to picking up hot bacon to pulling meat out of its bag of marinade without making a mess. Get a nice pair that will last. The springs often break in the cheap ones.

CHARLESTON RICE STEAMER

Mama always had a pot of butter beans and a steamer full of rice on the stove—no matter the time of day or the meal being served. She put soup over rice, okra and tomatoes over rice, and served butter beans over rice with almost everything. Rice in her house was a constant companion to any dish. And even though Mama lived on rural Johns Island in a tiny house with chickens out back, the stovetop rice steamer was just as ubiquitous in the genteel homes of Charleston, with rice on every plate as an accompaniment and in dishes such as hopping john and all kinds of variations of pilau (pronounced pur-low in the South Carolina Lowcountry).

I've had my stovetop rice steamer for ten years, and it delivers fluffy, nonsticky rice every time. The traditional models are aluminum and cost about thirty-five dollars. I have seen some fancier stainless-steel steamers, but the aluminum is just as durable as long as you don't let the water burn out of the bottom. Around Charleston you can find rice steamers in hardware stores and some specialty cooking stores, but you can also find them online. Once you have one, you will enjoy the luxury of mindless rice cooking. No more checking the rice, no more sticky clumps, and no more burning on the bottom. The steamer cooks the rice and then keeps it hot and fluffy until you're ready to use it. Do take note that in a rice steamer you use a ratio of 1 cup of liquid to 1 cup of rice.

VEGETABLE PEELER

A vegetable peeler makes a great cheese slicer for any hard cheese. If I'm grating a bunch of cheese, I use my food processor. If I need just a little, I pull out the peeler and slice or shave it as needed.

TWO KNIVES AND THE BEST SHARPENER IN THE WORLD

Chopped vegetables are a key ingredient for so many of the recipes in this book; even when they aren't the

main event or flavor, they create the flavor base for everything from roast chicken to soups. I know a lot of people who avoid cooking just because they find chopping vegetables to be so tiresome, but try it with a really sharp knife and you will be amazed by how much quicker and more fun it is. It can even be meditative at times! In my experience, you only need two knives: a serrated knife for slicing bread and a Santoku-style knife. They don't have to be expensive brands.

The key to chopping is keeping the blade sharp. For this I count on my Chantry brand knife sharpener. I rely on this sharpener so much I pack it in my luggage when I travel and take it with me everywhere I go. I give my knife about twenty passes through the Chantry before I cut anything. I sharpen my knives in the Chantry every day just before I use them. It makes all the difference. You'll look for things to chop just for the fun of it.

WHISK

My whisk is one of the items that I keep on my countertop. It's a necessity for incorporating oil into salad dressings and marinades and for introducing flour into anything liquid. Lump-free gravy just isn't possible without a whisk.

KITCHEN SHEARS

There are times when using scissors is easier than cutting with a knife. I use my shears to cut roasted vegetables, snip fine herbs like dill and thyme, and make smaller bites of almost everything for my children: pizza, chunks of meat, and tortillas, to name a few. Do be sure to use your "food scissors" for food only, and keep them clean.

RESEALABLE PLASTIC BAGS

I go through enough plastic bags to send me to environmental hell. I use them to marinate meats. To store prepped ingredients. To hold homemade pickles in the fridge. To tote snacks. To shake and coat chicken for frying. To keep things in the freezer. I know it's bad. As my penance I do not use any paper towels or paper napkins. And one day I'm going to give up baby wipes, too.

PAPER BAGS

When I don't have my reusable grocery bags, I always ask for paper. I drain bacon and anything fried on paper bags—the bags soak up the grease even better than paper towels. I put fried chicken in a paper bag and stick it back in the oven to keep it warm—and totable. You can shake anything in seasonings or breading in a paper bag. Rediscover these classics if you've forgotten about them; you'll even love their pulpy smell and the loud crunching sound they make as you handle them.

PARCHMENT PAPER

Parchment paper is essential to making my Cinnamon Stickies. I also like to use it to wrap sandwiches for picnics and other outings. It makes the sandwiches look like they came from a gourmet deli. I love the rustle of the paper as I unwrap one to take a bite! And you can spread the paper out under the sandwich like a placemat to catch the pieces that fall.

SALT CELLAR AND PEPPER GRINDER

Kosher salt. It's what to use. I use it in all my cooking and baking (I don't even buy any other kind of salt), and I use it to scrub my cast iron when reseasoning is necessary. I keep it in a salt cellar by the stove so it's at my fingertips. My husband likes to say I was raised on a saltlick. I love salt. Keep that in mind when you follow these recipes . . . they may be slightly on the salty side so you may want to adjust accordingly.

Grind your pepper from peppercorns in a pepper grinder. A grinder is not expensive, and it makes all the difference. If you'd rather do all of your grinding at once rather than grinding each time you need it, grind a bunch of pepper and keep it in a bowl or another cellar right next to the salt.

IMMERSION BLENDER

Not only is this little gadget hugely helpful for giving soups a smoother texture without having to handle hot liquids in and out of the pot and blender, but it's also handy for smoothies and milkshakes.

WIRE MESH STRAINER

This tool is sometimes called a "spider skimmer." It has a long bamboo handle and is used a lot in Asian cooking. I use it when frying to remove the food from the hot grease and, more often than not, when I need a colander. For small items this mesh strainer is just right, and there's no need to get out anything bigger that would take up sink space and give you one more thing to clean.

VOTIVE CANDLES

I have hundreds of clear glass votive candle holders in my "party closet." They are such an easy and inexpensive way to create a magical atmosphere. Make sure you have one of those long lighters for lighting them, and make sure you plan enough time before the party to light them. Depending on how many you set out, you'd be surprised how long it takes to light them all.

MASON JARS

I use these as glasses, vases, holders for utensils, containers for pickles and olives. I use the smaller wide-mouth four-ounce jars to serve condiments and dips. You can even put votive candles in the short ones. These are on my list of favorite things that I buy very inexpensively at the hardware store.

MINT JULEP CUPS

I use these as the more formal version of mason jars—as glasses, vases, etc. These make a great item to collect. The sterling silver ones are very expensive, but you can find them at antique stores for less. And silver-plated julep cups are very reasonably priced. Both versions shimmer beautifully in candlelight.

LINEN NAPKINS

People give me linen napkins as gifts, and I look for them at flea markets—I love collecting linen cocktail napkins, dinner napkins, and hand towels. I use these at every party I host. They don't need to match—in fact, mixing different colors and embroidery makes the presentation look effortless and authentic.

ROLLS OF WHITE TWINE

Another hardware store staple. I tie it around mason jar vases for a little rustic charm. I wrap linen dinner napkins in twine with a snip of fresh herbs. You can tie a bottle opener to a cooler or tub with it. The possibilities are endless, and one roll will last you many, many parties.

GALVANIZED BUCKETS AND TUBS

You won't believe how much you'll use these indestructible, stackable, washable, charming workhorses. I know I'm repeating myself, but these are yet another hardware store special. Use them to hold ice and cold beer, ice and a bottle of Champagne, boiled peanuts, koozies for beer, kids' drinks, piles of whole fruit and vegetables, and potted plants for an outdoor centerpiece, and to haul things from inside to outside. And you'll find other uses, too. Trust me.

Most helpful customer reviews

12 of 12 people found the following review helpful.

Incorrect measurement in recipe for black pepper biscuits

By G Clifford

I bought this book because of her black pepper biscuits, and then I discovered from another reviewer that the amount of black pepper was wrong in the book. It should read TEASPOON not TABLESPOON. Be warned before you make the recipe. I thought the biscuits were delicious and worth the price of the book just to have the recipe.

17 of 18 people found the following review helpful.

Foolproof biscuits!

By Pteri

I have always had trouble making tasty, fluffy biscuits before now. The Callie's buttermilk biscuit recipe is easy and foolproof. I even froze a batch and used them a week later for cobbler. They were just as good. The rest of the recipes are a mix of family meals and celebration sized menus. The layout is well done, pictures useful, and text easy to read. Looking forward to more from Carrie Morey!

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Great cookbook for everyone!

By Loving Granma

Whether you are a seasoned old cook (like me) or a new one, this is a great book to use for traditional foods with a new twist. Callie brings the best of both to her recipes. They are the old favorites with her special touch to them. Great for new and old. I gave this to my 17 yo dgd and she was tickled pink. Now I plan to order one for myself. Have to get a new cast iron frypan too as this is a necessary item for most of these goodies. If you like food, and if you want to learn to make new things, give this a try for sure! Arrived in plenty of time also. Great service!

See all 89 customer reviews...

CALLIE'S BISCUITS AND SOUTHERN TRADITIONS: HEIRLOOM RECIPES FROM OUR FAMILY KITCHEN BY CARRIE MOREY PDF

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Review

"Opening the oven on culinary secrets...full of charming asides, cooking tips, and always a story... A lifetime of dishes that have been the binding agent of one family, now shared with others." (Charleston Magazine)

About the Author

Carrie Morey, daughter of Callie White, founded Callie's Charleston Biscuits in 2005 with the goal of making her mother's delicious biscuits accessible across the country. Touted by the Today show, Saveur, Food & Wine, Southern Living, The New York Times, and Oprah, her biscuits and pimento cheese collection are sold at high-end retail stores all over the country. Chosen as one of Martha Stewart's "Dreamers into Doers" in 2008, Carrie has been a guest lecturer on entrepreneurship at the College of Charleston School of Business for more than five years.

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Callie's Biscuits and Southern Traditions

Introduction

I'd like to say right off the bat that I'm no natural-born biscuit maker. In fact, I never even made biscuits until I was in my thirties. So as you begin to delve into this book and into biscuit making, do not be intimidated by the idea of making amazing biscuits! I know it's a cliché, but in this case it's apt: If I can do it, you can do it.

Growing up, I watched my mother and her mother make biscuits from our family recipe, but I'd never made them myself until I twisted my mother's arm into starting a company with me called Callie's Charleston Biscuits. Baking was not even something I particularly enjoyed at the time, but I figured I could run the business and sales end of Callie's and she could be in charge of the baking. And that's how it went those first couple of years. I would occasionally help out with the biscuit making, but to be honest it was more like going through the motions and doing as I was told rather than putting my heart and soul into it or feeling all that engaged in the process itself.

Then my mom decided to retire.

This had not been a part of my business plan! Suddenly the landscape of the business shifted, and I was going to have to redouble my efforts. But I was the kind of cook who never measured anything, who loved to

improvise and experiment. Biscuits require accuracy, uniformity, and repetition. How in the world could I captain the ship when I didn't know how to sail?

So I dug in, scared as hell, and turned to my employees to teach me how to master every aspect of making the absolute best biscuits. With the business on the line, my previous ambivalence about baking turned into a determined passion. I had to become a baker, and so I did. And I found out I loved it. Almost more than running the business. Making biscuits became second nature to me and now it's as therapeutic as chopping onions and planning menus always have been. Running the business now, I do not get in there with the bakers as much as I'd like—but when I can, I do, and I fit right in. My hands know what to do. And I find myself making biscuits at home with my daughters as well. Before, the thought of making biscuits was daunting, but I now get the urge to make them.

Once you get the technique down, your hands, too, will begin to feel as if they're moving of their own accord. What at first may seem intimidating and infinitely messy will become ritual . . . and maybe a little less messy.

Whether I'm performing this ritual with my daughters, my mother, or the Callie's bakers (my other family!), the process always takes on a life of its own after a while. As we plunge our hands into bowls to work the wet dough and roll it out and line the biscuits across the pans, we're telling stories about our day, talking about everything from a recipe conundrum to whom we ran into at the grocery store, and sometimes even airing a grievance or two. When you get to that point with your biscuit making that it becomes almost automatic, you'll be able to concentrate less on each step and more on the conversation and togetherness with your family and friends in the kitchen. And you'll be able to add your own twist to the technique.

Above all, don't worry. If you follow the steps, you really can't mess up biscuits. Biscuits are forgiving. They will get better the more you make them and the techniques will get easier. They're not delicate like a pastry. It's okay if they're not perfectly round or they're a little on the big side. So don't put too much pressure on yourself! Enjoy the process and the taste. The presentation will improve.

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Grandmama was a fabulous, fabulous cook. She was born and raised in Gaffney, South Carolina, married my

grandfather when she was nineteen, and was married for fifty-eight happy years. She was extraordinarily beautiful, bohemian, sophisticated, and intelligent. She taught my mother how to make elegantly small Southern biscuits, and my mother passed her recipes and techniques down to me. Too many of her recipes remain in memory only, as she hardly ever wrote anything down, but I love that trying to re-create them has become a collaborative effort for my girls and me. Maybe in this case the continued conversation about them and the multiple attempts to replicate them makes her legacy even more alive.

My mother, Callie, is the namesake of my business, and her attention to detail and knowing just the right thing to do or fix set a high bar. She is a phenomenal cook, incredibly fashionable, and absolutely gorgeous. She is very liberal and feisty and deep down a true Southern woman despite her worldly ways. I am always asking her for advice on menus, recipes, and entertaining. She's creative and has amazing taste and makes fabulous beautiful food. Even a sandwich tastes better when she makes it!

My father, Donald, is incredibly driven and never takes no for an answer. He grew up in an extremely poor household, and it was only due to his considerable athletic talent that he was able to attend college. He has always taught me to think "I can" and "I will" and has always encouraged and supported me. He's my ultimate hero, and he touches everyone he knows in a positive light.

So as you can see, I come from two very different Southern families. While Grandmama hosted elegant parties, a special occasion at Mama's meant I got to eat at a TV table; I inherited Mama's cast-iron skillet and Grandmama's silver gravy boat. I treasure these women, their wisdom, and their culinary gifts in equal measure, and I hope I make a nice blend of both traditions.

In fact, the dichotomy of my mother's and father's family influences on me is an issue I laugh about almost daily. The other day I was making pickled shrimp for a Carolina tailgate, and sitting there peeling shrimp and deveining each and every one, I was thinking how my dad would no more think of deveining a shrimp than fly to the moon, and my mom would not even consider looking at a shrimp unless it had been deveined—and that about sums it up: my life in a shrimp shell!

My mom would probably say about my cooking and entertaining style that I don't put enough effort into the details. My dad would say I'm too fancy. Luckily, my husband thinks I'm the perfect mix. I try to take the best of all my influences—all my heirlooms—and make them my own to share with my friends, my husband, and my daughters. I think of myself as somewhere in the middle between fancy and basic, sophistication and salt of the earth: I give my oyster roasts a little flair and my cocktail parties an air of simplicity; I put out boiled peanuts right next to chilled Champagne; and once or twice I may have served Bloody Marys while I was still in my pajamas. I find that there's always a reason to make an ordinary meal a special occasion and always a way to give a special occasion the comfortable, laid-back feel of an ordinary family meal.

I hope that reading this cookbook, you'll be able to take what I share and make it your own, and that some of these recipes will find a place at your family table. And maybe it isn't all about the food or making tiny little biscuits, but good food and biscuits isn't such a bad place to start, either.

FAVORITE TOOLS

JUICE GLASS

At Callie's we use two-inch aluminum biscuit cutters, but at home my girls and I use a juice glass. Test some of your juice glasses or shot glasses to see which you like best. Dip the open end in flour to keep it from sticking, and then press out the biscuits from the dough. Not only does this save you from buying and storing yet another kitchen gadget—you're creating a family heirloom. Pretty soon that juice glass will come to be known as the biscuit glass.

ROLLING PIN

At Callie's we use French rolling pins with tapered ends, made from one piece of wood. At our house in Idaho, my rolling pin is the more traditional model with handles. But don't get hung up over this tool. In a pinch I've used a wine bottle. In fact, any cylinder will do. If you are using an improvised rolling pin, put parchment paper between the dough and the cylinder to protect the dough.

DIGITAL THERMOMETER

You only need one thermometer whether you're frying, cooking a roast, or making candy. But it needs to be a good one with a probe attached by a cable. This tool is worth it. It takes away so much guesswork and frustration. It is my best friend when I am frying—I consult it the whole time. With mine, I can set the desired temperature and then leave the temperature probe in whatever is cooking, and when the temperature is reached, it beeps. So much better than standing around holding a thermometer and watching the numbers move. I do not have time for that.

OVEN THERMOMETER

You'd be surprised how inaccurate most oven thermostats are. Especially with biscuits, piecrusts, and cookies, you want to make sure you're not sabotaging yourself with an oven that runs hot or cold. Use an inexpensive oven thermometer to keep tabs on the real oven temperature, and if the thermostat turns out to be pretty far off, call a repairperson to recalibrate it for you.

TONGS

I have maybe five pairs of tongs in different sizes, and I keep them within easy reach in a bin on my counter. I use them for everything from flipping fried chicken to picking up hot bacon to pulling meat out of its bag of marinade without making a mess. Get a nice pair that will last. The springs often break in the cheap ones.

CHARLESTON RICE STEAMER

Mama always had a pot of butter beans and a steamer full of rice on the stove—no matter the time of day or the meal being served. She put soup over rice, okra and tomatoes over rice, and served butter beans over rice with almost everything. Rice in her house was a constant companion to any dish. And even though Mama lived on rural Johns Island in a tiny house with chickens out back, the stovetop rice steamer was just as ubiquitous in the genteel homes of Charleston, with rice on every plate as an accompaniment and in dishes such as hopping john and all kinds of variations of pilau (pronounced pur-low in the South Carolina Lowcountry).

I've had my stovetop rice steamer for ten years, and it delivers fluffy, nonsticky rice every time. The traditional models are aluminum and cost about thirty-five dollars. I have seen some fancier stainless-steel

steamers, but the aluminum is just as durable as long as you don't let the water burn out of the bottom. Around Charleston you can find rice steamers in hardware stores and some specialty cooking stores, but you can also find them online. Once you have one, you will enjoy the luxury of mindless rice cooking. No more checking the rice, no more sticky clumps, and no more burning on the bottom. The steamer cooks the rice and then keeps it hot and fluffy until you're ready to use it. Do take note that in a rice steamer you use a ratio of 1 cup of liquid to 1 cup of rice.

VEGETABLE PEELER

A vegetable peeler makes a great cheese slicer for any hard cheese. If I'm grating a bunch of cheese, I use my food processor. If I need just a little, I pull out the peeler and slice or shave it as needed.

TWO KNIVES AND THE BEST SHARPENER IN THE WORLD

Chopped vegetables are a key ingredient for so many of the recipes in this book; even when they aren't the main event or flavor, they create the flavor base for everything from roast chicken to soups. I know a lot of people who avoid cooking just because they find chopping vegetables to be so tiresome, but try it with a really sharp knife and you will be amazed by how much quicker and more fun it is. It can even be meditative at times! In my experience, you only need two knives: a serrated knife for slicing bread and a Santoku-style knife. They don't have to be expensive brands.

The key to chopping is keeping the blade sharp. For this I count on my Chantry brand knife sharpener. I rely on this sharpener so much I pack it in my luggage when I travel and take it with me everywhere I go. I give my knife about twenty passes through the Chantry before I cut anything. I sharpen my knives in the Chantry every day just before I use them. It makes all the difference. You'll look for things to chop just for the fun of it.

WHISK

My whisk is one of the items that I keep on my countertop. It's a necessity for incorporating oil into salad dressings and marinades and for introducing flour into anything liquid. Lump-free gravy just isn't possible without a whisk.

KITCHEN SHEARS

There are times when using scissors is easier than cutting with a knife. I use my shears to cut roasted vegetables, snip fine herbs like dill and thyme, and make smaller bites of almost everything for my children: pizza, chunks of meat, and tortillas, to name a few. Do be sure to use your "food scissors" for food only, and keep them clean.

RESEALABLE PLASTIC BAGS

I go through enough plastic bags to send me to environmental hell. I use them to marinate meats. To store prepped ingredients. To hold homemade pickles in the fridge. To tote snacks. To shake and coat chicken for frying. To keep things in the freezer. I know it's bad. As my penance I do not use any paper towels or paper napkins. And one day I'm going to give up baby wipes, too.

PAPER BAGS

When I don't have my reusable grocery bags, I always ask for paper. I drain bacon and anything fried on paper bags—the bags soak up the grease even better than paper towels. I put fried chicken in a paper bag and stick it back in the oven to keep it warm—and totable. You can shake anything in seasonings or breading in a paper bag. Rediscover these classics if you've forgotten about them; you'll even love their pulpy smell and the loud crunching sound they make as you handle them.

PARCHMENT PAPER

Parchment paper is essential to making my Cinnamon Stickies. I also like to use it to wrap sandwiches for picnics and other outings. It makes the sandwiches look like they came from a gourmet deli. I love the rustle of the paper as I unwrap one to take a bite! And you can spread the paper out under the sandwich like a placemat to catch the pieces that fall.

SALT CELLAR AND PEPPER GRINDER

Kosher salt. It's what to use. I use it in all my cooking and baking (I don't even buy any other kind of salt), and I use it to scrub my cast iron when reseasoning is necessary. I keep it in a salt cellar by the stove so it's at my fingertips. My husband likes to say I was raised on a saltlick. I love salt. Keep that in mind when you follow these recipes . . . they may be slightly on the salty side so you may want to adjust accordingly.

Grind your pepper from peppercorns in a pepper grinder. A grinder is not expensive, and it makes all the difference. If you'd rather do all of your grinding at once rather than grinding each time you need it, grind a bunch of pepper and keep it in a bowl or another cellar right next to the salt.

IMMERSION BLENDER

Not only is this little gadget hugely helpful for giving soups a smoother texture without having to handle hot liquids in and out of the pot and blender, but it's also handy for smoothies and milkshakes.

WIRE MESH STRAINER

This tool is sometimes called a "spider skimmer." It has a long bamboo handle and is used a lot in Asian cooking. I use it when frying to remove the food from the hot grease and, more often than not, when I need a colander. For small items this mesh strainer is just right, and there's no need to get out anything bigger that would take up sink space and give you one more thing to clean.

VOTIVE CANDLES

I have hundreds of clear glass votive candle holders in my "party closet." They are such an easy and inexpensive way to create a magical atmosphere. Make sure you have one of those long lighters for lighting them, and make sure you plan enough time before the party to light them. Depending on how many you set out, you'd be surprised how long it takes to light them all.

MASON JARS

I use these as glasses, vases, holders for utensils, containers for pickles and olives. I use the smaller wide-mouth four-ounce jars to serve condiments and dips. You can even put votive candles in the short ones. These are on my list of favorite things that I buy very inexpensively at the hardware store.

MINT JULEP CUPS

I use these as the more formal version of mason jars—as glasses, vases, etc. These make a great item to collect. The sterling silver ones are very expensive, but you can find them at antique stores for less. And silver-plated julep cups are very reasonably priced. Both versions shimmer beautifully in candlelight.

LINEN NAPKINS

People give me linen napkins as gifts, and I look for them at flea markets—I love collecting linen cocktail napkins, dinner napkins, and hand towels. I use these at every party I host. They don't need to match—in fact, mixing different colors and embroidery makes the presentation look effortless and authentic.

ROLLS OF WHITE TWINE

Another hardware store staple. I tie it around mason jar vases for a little rustic charm. I wrap linen dinner napkins in twine with a snip of fresh herbs. You can tie a bottle opener to a cooler or tub with it. The possibilities are endless, and one roll will last you many, many parties.

GALVANIZED BUCKETS AND TUBS

You won't believe how much you'll use these indestructible, stackable, washable, charming workhorses. I know I'm repeating myself, but these are yet another hardware store special. Use them to hold ice and cold beer, ice and a bottle of Champagne, boiled peanuts, koozies for beer, kids' drinks, piles of whole fruit and vegetables, and potted plants for an outdoor centerpiece, and to haul things from inside to outside. And you'll find other uses, too. Trust me.

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