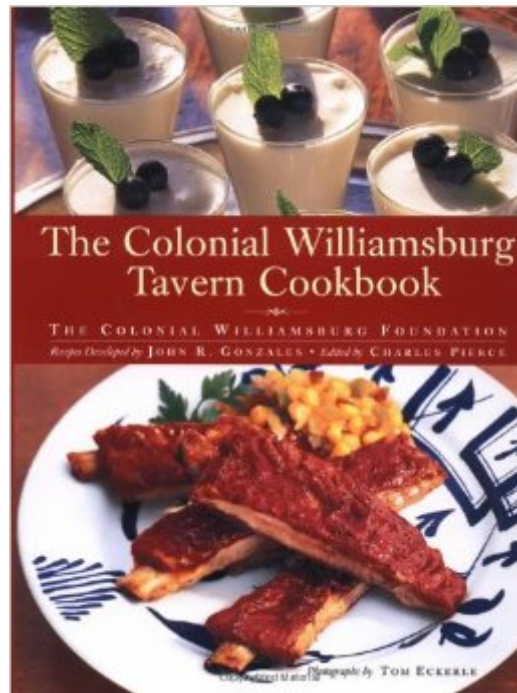


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# The Colonial Williamsburg Tavern Cookbook



## Synopsis

The Colonial Williamsburg Tavern Cookbook Every year, millions of people visit Colonial Williamsburg's re-creation of eighteenth-century America for the ambience, the education, and the unparalleled experience of glimpsing our prerevolutionary past. Williamsburg's fascinating form of time travel encompasses not only the architecture and the artisans, but all the details of our rich cultural heritage, including the food. And The Colonial Williamsburg Tavern Cookbook presents that food, our nation's culinary heritage: from stews and slaws and soups to puddings and pies and pot pies--nearly 200 recipes in all. Focusing on Williamsburg's Southern roots and coastal proximity, the dishes owe their inspiration to the distant past, but their preparations have been tailored for contemporary palates--no need to run out and get some suet in which to cook your mutton over the open hearth. Here are perennial standbys such as Brunswick Stew, Standing Rib Roast with Yorkshire Pudding, Virginia Ham with Brandied Peaches, and Cream of Peanut Soup, as well as Spoon Bread, Lemon Chess Pie, and Mulled Apple Cider. There are also unexpected twists on age-old favorites, such as Oyster Po' Boys with Tarragon Mayonnaise, Oven-Braised Gingered Pot Roast, and Carrot Pudding Spiced with Cardamom. Just as the historic town of Colonial Williamsburg is a singular adventure in understanding our nation's history, so too this cookbook is a unique appreciation of our culinary history. In April 1772, George Washington, writing about one of the taverns in Williamsburg, noted, "Dined at Mrs. Campbells and went to the Play--then to Mrs. Campbells again" --twice in a single week. The hearty fare that George found so enticing is enjoying a profound renaissance, and The Colonial Williamsburg Tavern Cookbook will enable home cooks to relive the great American culinary tradition--the ultimate in comfort food.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

With recipes developed by John R. Gonzales, *The Colonial Williamsburg Tavern Cookbook* brings the flavors and aromas of colonial Williamsburg's four taverns (Christiana Campbell's, Chowning's, the King's Arms, and Shield") and traditional cuisines to the modern family dining table. From Meat Patties in Crust; Celery Root Slaw; and Pot Likker Greens with Dumplings; to Broiled Bluefish with Whole-Grain Mustard Sauce; Yorkshire Pudding; and Buttermilk Pie, *The Colonial Williamsburg Tavern Cookbook* offers two hundred wonderfully presented, highly recommended recipes which, while modified for the modern palate, owe their inspiration to our colonial history.

When I was in elementary school, we would drive 800 miles to Colonial Williamsburg for spring break every year. I fell in love with the 18th-century costumes, architecture, ornate silverwork, and Baroque music. We dined at several of Colonial Williamsburg's taverns: Shields, King's Arms, and Christiana Campbell's. My mom has a first-edition copy of *The Williamsburg Cookbook: Traditional and Contemporary Recipes* from the 1970s, which I would pore over for hours, soaking up the line art and gross-sounding recipes (turtle soup! calf's head!). The only recipe she ever made regularly was the Bourbon Balls (although she had also tried the cream of peanut soup and the chicken and dumplings). So when I saw that there was a new edition, "*The Colonial Williamsburg Tavern Cookbook*," I was interested to see how the book stacked up against its predecessor. The first (and most obvious) difference is the color photos, both of finished dishes and of Colonial Williamsburg itself (the original Colonial Williamsburg cookbook was sorely lacking in photographs, and was illustrated with line art). The book opens with a brief discussion of colonial dining habits and "Tavern of Colonial Williamsburg Today" (circa 2001) before launching into appetizers, many of which prominently feature Virginia ham (melon balls, biscuits) and seafood (smoked trout, crabmeat, shrimp). Similarly, "Soups" also owes a debt to seafood, including chowders, crayfish soup, crab soup, and oyster bisque, with the occasional peanut, bean, or pea soup. The Kings Arms Tavern Cream of Peanut Soup was also featured in the original cookbook and in a flyer handed out in Colonial Williamsburg; it was one of my family's favorites during our visits to Williamsburg, and the home version tastes every bit as good as the original. The texture is almost like a thick gravy, made by softening vegetables in stock, then straining the mixture and mixing in smooth peanut butter and cream over low heat. In fact, many of the recipes in the *Colonial Williamsburg Tavern Cookbook* are

taken verbatim from the first edition, right down to the sidebars. Many of the dishes are identical: King's Arms Tavern chicken pot pie, Chowning's Tavern Brunswick stew, Sally Lunn bread, and tenderloin of beef stuffed with oysters, for example. Others have been updated for the better: the bourbon balls now call for melted chocolate in place of cocoa, and have doubled the bourbon (the original called for a scant ½ cup). The Shields Tavern carrot pudding spiced with cardamom has swapped cardamom for the original nutmeg, ditched the cream sherry and halved the sugar. The most striking addition to this new version is the number of vegetarian-friendly vegetable and egg dishes, including grilled polenta, carrots glazed with two gingers, bean and corn succotash, mushrooms in cream sauce, and spinach pie. Southern staples such as grits and pickled watermelon rind also make appearances. The most noticeable absence is the lack of any nutritional information about the included recipes; no statistics on calories, fat, sugar or sodium are to be found. Like their forebears, these recipes are quite generous with butter, cream and shortening at times. Also, some of the ingredients may not be readily available in your area (fresh rabbit, scuppernong wine, chutney, cardamom, arrowroot). Overall, this is a worthy souvenir for those who have dined at one of Colonial Williamsburg's taverns, or for those who enjoy collecting cookbooks. The beautiful photography adds to the experience, although not all photographs are labeled. The historical notes make for interesting reading, and the recipes themselves are fairly straightforward and easy to follow. However, if you already own the original "The Williamsburg Cookbook," be aware that many of the recipes here are direct copies, with few if any tweaks or adjustments.

The reason I gave this 4 stars is that not all of the dishes are photographed and not all the photographs match the directions in the dish. I have tried a few of the recipes and have found them tasty, though I question the accuracy of some of the measurements. I was also wanting reference to a historically correct recipe along with the modernized version (there are some references just not as much as I wanted).

The meals were well defined and instructions precise. There were suggestions for side dishes to accompany the described recipe. Most of the ingredients were available in most food stores. Pictures showed presentation and preparation methods. I would recommend these recipes for the experienced cook familiar with cooking from scratch ingredients. Anyone who has visited Williamsburg, VA or would like to, would very much enjoy this cookbook.

This recipe book is great. After visiting Colonial Williamsburg, I feel in love with the tavern food and

was anxious to make some of my own. This book has all the great recipes, I have made several already and they were easy and very enjoyable.

Wonderful cookbook with historical notes included. Good recipes and good reading. My only concern is that I'm pretty sure that the Hoppin' John recipe used at Christiana Campbell's Tavern has another ingredient... maybe sausage or something? Nice reminder of our time in Williamsburg.

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