A Patchwork of Recipes. A look into a domestic recipe scrapbook c1967 - c1973

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It's an ordinary school exercise book with faint blue lines on each page. The covers are missing. It's thick with pasted and sticky taped recipes – grown to thrice the size. It's ragged at its edges and they have turned brown as are some of the pages. The recipe collector takes the unusual step of collecting all the recipes for cakes/desserts etc. at one end of the book and then turning the book upside down and collecting all the meat and vegetable recipes at the other end. There are some blank pages between these two sections. The pages aren't numbered. There is no index

It's difficult to date it exactly as most of the items don't have a date. Australia went metric in 1971. Most of the recipes are pre-metric with a handful giving both the imperial and metric measure. Australia adopted decimal currency in 1966 and recipes that show what it costs to make the dish are in decimal currency. There is one recipe which bears a date of 1967. The last dated recipe is in 1973. If the boundaries are 1967 and 1973 the collector did a lot of pasting and sticky-taping in six years.

Most recipes are cut out of newspapers and magazines. Some are promos for products. For example, Red Salmon Cocktail and Red Salmon Dip use John West Red Salmon; Vienna Cream Pie uses White Wings Vienna Coconut Slice Mix; Osso Bucco uses Leggo Tomato Paste; Cheddar Macaroni advertises Kraft Chedder Cheese; Fruit Salad Surprise advertises Golden Circle; General Electric promoted its electric fry pan with an illustrated step by step how-to-make an Egg Combo. Sixteen cakes/dessert recipes are brand promotional and 25 meat/fish/vegetables. The single greatest number of recipes, 10 of them, are promos for Golden Circle pineapple products.

Like a patchwork the recipes on a page are of different sizes, different fonts and lay-outs. For example, Oriental Fried Rice, Rice Country Style, Mini Meat Loaves, Mexican Fiesta Rice Bean and Casserole, Glazed Ham Steaks With Pineapple and Ham and Apples crowd a single page. Most pages are black and white but several dishes have full colour pictures. Four promoting Golden Circle Tropical Fruit Salad are so garishly yellow it hurts the eyes. Some recipes spill out of the page and are folded back in. The collector doesn't comment on any of the recipes as some recipe book makers do, so there is nothing to tell us which recipe(s) she particularly liked. The collector also hasn't amended any recipe's ingredients or method.

So, for what did she collect recipes? Two hundred and eleven are for meat/fish/vegetables, 52% of all recipes. Of these just 16 are solely vegetable preparations. Nine of them are for fish and seven for prawns. This reflects Australian

meat consumption which in 1965 - 1966 was 217 lbs.(98 kilos) per head.[1] There are no recipes for soup. There is only one recipe for a salad.

There are 198 recipes for cakes/desserts. That is, 48% of all recipes. Were this a published cookery book of the time like the 1960 edition of *The Commonsense Cookery Book* this would a much higher percentage – 63%.[2] There are 16 recipes for pies, 13 for cakes, 22 for biscuits, and the others are a mixed bag.

Twenty-five of the cakes/desserts recipes are handwritten as are 12 of the meat/vegetable recipes in slanting cursive. They appear among the print recipes. Their contents are not notably different to the print recipes. Just one ascribes a recipe to someone – Lil's Scones.

There is little cuisine diversity among the meat/fish/vegetable recipes collected. That can be down to her choices or the diversity of recipes being published in her sources or both. The source of the recipes cannot be determined as they have been cut off. However, searches in *Trove*, the digital repository for newspapers, magazines and journals shows recipes from other cuisines were being published, for example Hungarian, Polish and Austrian. In the book there are two Italian recipes for cannelloni, two for Lasagne, (also with a step by step illustrated entry) two for Spaghetti Bolognese and one for Pizza. There are six for Indian curries including three for prawn curry. There are eight recipes for Chinese Sweet and Sour, two for Chop Suey, three for Oriental Rice, and one for Sweet and Sour Fish Strips With Formosa Fried Rice. Chinese and Indian cuisine have a long relationship with the Australia table. There is one Indonesian recipe, one 'Continental', one Moroccan and one cross cuisine dish Chinese Curried Beef. There was one I hope is uniquely Australian – Beef in Beer.

The lack of diversity is reflected in most recipes being bland. There are exceptions. Eleven that use curry powder not all of which are curries, for example, Cheddar Macaroni. Eleven use soy sauce, ten call for garlic, eight call for mustard, one uses paprika, one uses chilli powder, and one uses cayenne.

The sweets/desserts fare no better. There is one recipe for Greek Shortbread, one Continental Shortbread, one for the Vienna Cream Pie, one Peach Kuchen, and one Apple Strudel.

There are no recipes for native plants or animals which is not unexpected, native foods having been absent from the Australian table for decades. But there are three recipes that are distinctly Australian. One is for a 'One-Stage' Dinkum Damper, the iconic unleavened bush bread here promoting Stork Margarine. Another is the Pavlova (four

[1] Canberra Times 15 March 1967 p.24
[2] Public Schools Cookery Teachers' Association of N. S. W. *The Commonsense Cookery Book* Angus and Robertson 1960

recipes) the meringue dessert, the New Zealand claim to its origin notwithstanding. One Chocolate Crackles promoting Kellog's rice bubbles and one for Vanilla Slice. Curiously she didn't collect a recipe for the iconic Anzac biscuits named for the Australian and New Zealand forces in World War One.

Loose in the book is a 1973 4-page article from the *Australian Women's Weekly* 'Good Cooking With Herbs' with eight herbs and recipes for their use. Also loose is a six-page illustrated article on How to Carve with advice on knives and an advertisement for Wiltshire Chef's knives. There are also four pages of diagrams of the various cuts of beef, lamb, veal and pork.

There is a seven-page Calorie Counter. There is also a loose typed page for the Mayo Clinic Diet which involves eating a lot of grapefruit, with note number two being - At each meal you must eat until full.

Coda: This has been a brief look into an anonymous recipe scrapbook which may have been compiled at least in the years c1967 – c1973. It is unusual in having close numbers for meat/fish/vegetable as for cakes/desserts. There is little cuisine diversity and a consequent blandness of the diches. There are a handful of recipes that are distinctly Australian.