

Magnolias Classic Southern Cuisine: Collected Recipes from the Heart of Charleston

Don Drake

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Gibbs Smith (Oct 24, 2023)

Hardcover \$35.00 (224pp)

978-1-4236-6400-0

Thirty years of Southern American cooking at Charleston's Magnolias Restaurant are relayed with panache by Chef Don Drake, with over 100 recipes for customer favorites and seasonal dishes, as well as kitchen secrets, food stories, and a wealth of color photographs.

Magnolias was developed in the wake of Hurricane Hugo in an eighteenth-century building that helped spur Charleston's revitalization and piqued renewed interest in Southern cuisine. Plenty of classic Southern dishes, including collard greens, sweet potato pie, barbecued pork, and fried chicken are here, all with Drake's uptown tweaks to down-home recipes. He boosts flavors with a variety of sauces, distinctive garnishes, side biscuits, and pickles—sometimes all four! A generous serving of Magnolias' signature dishes are also deconstructed here, including its famous Down South Egg Rolls, stuffed with chicken, ham, and greens and lathered with Red Pepper Puree, Spicy Mustard, and Peach Chutney; and the Original Simmons, a decadent sandwich of chicken, pimento cheese, spicy mayonnaise, sweet pickles, and jalapeno-peach coleslaw.

Fish and shellfish are the stars of Lowcountry cooking, and Drake breaks down cooking techniques and recipes for crabs, oysters, shrimp, and a passel of fish species, from tasso ham-spiked bouillabaisse to hardware store hacks for outdoor Cedar-Planked Salmon. South Carolina's rice and local produce are also featured throughout, with a handy sources list for out-of-town cooks.

Restaurant cooking tips and encouraging advice counter the time and labor-intensiveness of the recipes. They all seem eminently doable with Drake's clear and detailed instructions, though most recipes involve many ingredients and lots of stocks, sauces, and other recipe components to assemble. It is a great cookbook to linger over and plan for holiday, or to luxuriate over in the kitchen.

Magnolias Classic Southern Cuisine is a Southern cookbook to both savor and spatter.

RACHEL JAGARESKI (September / October 2023)

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