



### **CHICKEN CROQUETTES AND TOMATO-BUTTER SAUCE**

Featured on March 18, 2017, for the program “The Women behind America’s First Cookbooks”

*What was the first cookbook written by an American for Americans, and how did the recipes differ from other volumes at the time? The earliest American home cooks frequently used English cookery books, if they used books at all, to prepare meals. But in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and through the 19<sup>th</sup> century, American women documented the nation’s changing culinary culture in their own cookbooks. These books paint a portrait of early American life, the changing palate of the nation, and the unexpected patriotic work of maintaining the home kitchen. On March 18<sup>th</sup> we were joined by chef Angie Lee of Sur La Table, who prepared a few recipes from cookbook authors such as Amelia Simmons, Mary Randolph, and Catharine Beecher, and we discussed how these women had a profound influence on American culinary history.*

*Cookbooks on early American cuisine were about more than just how American food was different than European food—they also showed the emergence of American regional culinary traditions. Mary Randolph’s book *The Virginia Housewife* (1838) is widely considered the first Southern cookbook, featuring recipes that used classic French and Spanish techniques but featured ingredients that had become staples of American cooking. Foods that came to the United States by way of the African slave trade regularly appear in Randolph’s book, including field peas (black-eyed peas), eggplant, and “ochra.” Enslaved people in Randolph’s household prepared the refined dishes captured in her recipes, incorporating both African ingredients and new foods such as tomatoes (brought northward from Central America) into French butter sauces and Spanish rice dishes. Taken together, these Randolph recipes show how regional American cooking emerged from the contributions of many peoples and the mingling of disparate continental cuisines. Below is our modern-day version of Randolph’s chicken croquettes and tomato-butter sauce, followed by her original 1838 recipe.*

### **CHICKEN CROQUETTES (2017)**

Courtesy of Chef Angie Lee, Sur La Table

Makes 12 croquettes

#### **For the croquette filling:**

- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 small onion, finely diced
- 1 stalk celery, finely diced
- 2 cloves garlic, finely diced
- 4 cups cooked chicken, finely chopped (pulled from a rotisserie chicken; skin and bones discarded)
- ½ cup panko bread crumbs
- 3 eggs
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 3 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 teaspoon chopped thyme
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon finely ground black pepper

**For dredging:**

3 cups panko bread crumbs  
3 eggs, beaten  
Olive oil, for frying

**For serving:**

Tomato butter sauce (recipe below)

**Directions:**

Melt the butter in a small skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and celery and cook, stirring, until the vegetables are softened and translucent. Add the garlic and cook, stirring, until fragrant. Transfer the cooked vegetables to a large mixing bowl with the cooked chicken and bread crumbs. Mix to incorporate.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the eggs, mustard, tomato paste, herbs, salt and pepper. Pour the wet ingredients into the bowl with the chicken mixture and thoroughly mix to combine. Divide and form the chicken mixture into 12 patties and place them on a sheet pan.

Place the bread crumbs and beaten eggs into two separate shallow dishes or pie plates. Take each of the patties and dip them in the eggs, then coat them in the bread crumbs.

Preheat the oven to 200°F. Prepare a baking sheet with a wire rack set over it, and set aside.

Pour enough olive oil into a skillet to reach a depth of about ½ inch. Heat over medium heat until a bread crumb dropped into the oil sizzles. Working in batches, place the coated patties into the oil and gently fry until golden brown on each side, turning once. Transfer the cooked patties to a rack set over a sheet pan, and place in the oven to keep warm until ready to serve.

Spoon a puddle of tomato butter sauce onto the center of a plate and top with a croquette. Serve immediately.

**TOMATO BUTTER SAUCE (2017)**

Courtesy of Chef Angie Lee, Sur La Table

Makes about 2 cups of sauce

**Ingredients:**

1 stick unsalted butter  
2 shallots, finely diced  
One 32-ounce can San Marzano whole peeled tomatoes  
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

**Directions:**

Melt the butter in a skillet set over medium heat. When melted, add the shallots and cook, stirring, until the shallots are softened and translucent. Add the tomatoes with their juices to the pan, breaking up the tomatoes with a spoon. Bring the mixture to a simmer and cook, stirring occasionally and continuing to break up the tomatoes, until the sauce is thickened, about 15 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper.



### **“TO MAKE CROQUETS” (1838)**

By Mary Randolph

Originally printed in: *The Virginia Housewife: or, Methodical Cook*. Stereotype Edition, with Amendments and Additions. Baltimore: Plaskitt, & Cugle. 1838. Page 85.

Take cold fowl or fresh meat of any kind, with slices of ham, fat and lean—chop them together very fine, add half as much stale bread grated, salt, pepper, grated nutmeg, a teaspoonful of made mustard, a tablespoonful of catsup, and a lump of butter; knead all well together till it resembles sausage meat, make them in cakes, dip them in the yolk of an egg beaten, cover them thickly with grated bread, and fry them a light brown.



### **“TO STEW TOMATOES” (1838)**

By Mary Randolph

Originally printed in: *The Virginia Housewife: or, Methodical Cook*. Stereotype Edition, with Amendments and Additions. Baltimore: Plaskitt, & Cugle. 1838. Page 101.

Take off the skin, and put them in a pan with salt, pepper, and a large piece of butter—stew them till sufficiently dry.



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