

A Traveler's Library

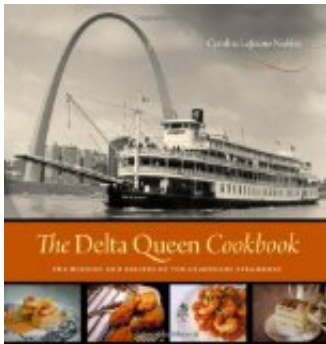
Books, Movies, and other Travel Inspirations

A Riverboat Culinary Adventure

🕒 October 4, 2012 📁 Art, Cookbook, Food, Travel, United States 💎 American Queen, BlogSherpa, boat travel, cookbook, Delta Queen, guest post, Mississippi River, review, riverboat, Southern United States, USA 👤 Brette Sember

Tasty Travels

Destination: The Mississippi River



Book: *The Delta Queen Cookbook: The History and Recipes of the Legendary Steamboat* (NEW Sept. 2912) by Cynthia LeJeune Nobles

Lazy River Meals

by Brette Sember

I vividly recall seeing a paddlewheel steamboat on the **Mississippi** in **New Orleans** when I visited as a teen. It was elegant and stately, yet it had an air of flamboyance about it. The giant paddlewheel in the back turned

slowly and gently, moving the boat through the muddy water. Passenger steamboats began cruising the Mississippi in the 1700s, providing a relaxed and luxurious way to travel the river and see the beautiful towns and lands of the south. In addition to the sumptuous accommodations, the boats became known for their fine dining.

The Delta Queen Cookbook by **Cynthia LeJeune Nobles** lets us revisit those days of relaxed river meals on the Delta Queen, which was retired in 2008. Some happy news, though, is that the Great American Steamboat Company has recently rechristened sister ship the **American Queen** (click through and you will see guest rooms and other parts of the ship that closely resemble what was on the Delta Queen) and she is sailing the rivers of the America once again.



Dining Room on steamboat

The Delta Queen sailed for eighty-two years and all the meals were prepared in a tiny galley (which had no refrigeration of any kind, even ice, until the 1890s) and served in one dining room (the Orleans Room). Unlike most cruise ships, most of the guests on the Delta Queen were repeat visitors. At any time, about 75% of

guests on board had previously sailed on the ship. You can be sure that no one returns time and time again to a ship with bad food, which speaks well of the cuisine on the Delta Queen, and in this cookbook!

Steamboats are important not only for the food they served but for the role they played in educating Americans about foods of other regions. The boats sailed up and down the heart of the country, and exposed passengers to foods and dishes from every possible area along the way, as the cooks brought on board local foods and the passengers sampled fare on shore along the way. A trip on the Delta Queen, and other steamboats, was a culinary travel adventure.

The Delta Queen Cookbook takes us on a virtual journey of the lands and foods of this section of the country. The recipes have a slightly old-fashioned feel to them (they truly are dishes you would expect to eat aboard a steamboat) and also feel like a trip through the center of the country. Chicken and Andouille Gumbo, Mock Turtle Soup, Pork Chop Suey, Cherry Roll, Hush Puppies, Calas (similar to beignets), Kentucky Chicken-Rice Chowder, Steamboat Pudding, Scarlett O'Hara cocktail, Speckled Trout Pecan, Minnesota Wild Rice Soup, Crawfish *en Croute*, Chicken New Madrid, and more are all dishes once served on the ship and which the reader can now make at home with this delightful cookbook.

Laid out in chronological order, this beautiful book traces the history of the Delta Queen throughout its lifespan, with each chapter detailing an era. I was particularly interested in the description of President Carter's voyage on the ship and the food that was served to him and his group. Throughout the book, in addition to the recipes, you will also find menus from different eras in time, which really shed some historical light on the times the ship sailed through (fresh Pig's Knuckles, anyone?) and provide a complete picture of what dining aboard the ship was like.

There are plenty of photos of the food, but there are also photos of the dining room at different points in time, chefs, buffet tables, views from the boat, the boat in various ports, as well as many of the paddlewheel itself.

Reading this made me long to check into a stateroom, pull up a rocking chair to the rail, and watch American pass by as I float down the river. And I could do with a piece of Missouri Blackberry Custard Pie (from the book) as I enjoy the view.



Deck of Mississippi Riverboat



*Missouri Blackberry Custard Pie, from
Delta Queen Cookbook*

Missouri Blackberry Custard Pie

Yield: 1 10-inch pie

1 unbaked pie shell

1 cup sugar

4 eggs

4 tablespoons flour

1/3 teaspoon vanilla extract

¼ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon almond extract

2 ½ cups milk, scaled

1 ½ cups fresh blackberries, rinsed and well drained

Freshly grated nutmeg

Prepare pie shell and keep in freezer while making filling.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit. In a medium bowl, beat together sugar, eggs, flour, vanilla, salt, and almond extract. Add milk and whip gently with a wire whisk until blended.

Place berries in pie shell. Pour custard over berries and sprinkle liberally with nutmeg. Bake 55 to 60 minutes or until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool 1 hour at room temperature, then chill thoroughly.

*Disclaimers: I was provided with a review copy by the publisher of this book with no expectations or requirements. Photos were provided by the publisher. Links to Amazon are affiliate links, which means that although it costs you no more, when you shop there you will be supporting **A Traveler's Library** and **Putting It All on the Table**.*

Brette writes often about travel, food, and home arts and is the author of more than 40 books about



food, law, health, family issues, business, finance and textbooks. She blogs at [Putting It All on the Table](#) and her personal web site is [Brette Sember](#).

[Brette Sember](#) – who has written [27](#) posts on [A Traveler's Library](#).



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4 thoughts on “A Riverboat Culinary Adventure”



October 4, 2012 at 11:40 am

Brette, Thank you so much for the fantastic review of The DELTA QUEEN Cookbook. Writing it was a true labor of love; I love food history and and during the writing

Cynthia
Nobles

process I grew to love the majestic DELTA QUEEN steamboat. This boat is a true American icon, and I hope that my research will spur everyone to learn about her fabled past. Thanks again for your kind words. — Cynthia Nobles



October 4, 2012 at 11:44 am

Thanks for this lovely book which is a true celebration of a time gone by. I hope to take a ride on another similar boat someday.

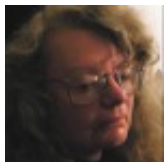
★ Brette
Sember



October 4, 2012 at 10:11 am

YUm, yum, yum, yum. for the history and delicious recipes, i can't wait to read this. thanks for the great rec!

wandering
educators



October 4, 2012 at 9:59 am

I always enjoy cookbooks that connect food with place and history. Thanks for telling the story of this one.

Kerry Dexter

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