

A Traveler's Library

Books, Movies, and other Travel Inspirations

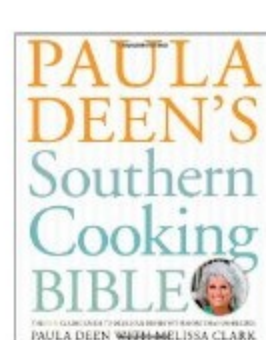
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Paula Deen Writes the 'Good Book' of Southern Food

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A Taste for Travel



Destination: Southern United States

Cooking Books: [Paula Deen's Southern Cooking Bible](#) and [Paula Deen's Kitchen Classics](#)

Post By Brette Sember

One summer we rented a condo on Hilton Head for a week. It sounded perfect – wide beaches, warm water, and an island that caters to vacationers. Unfortunately there were jellyfish in the water, too many people in the pool, and nothing at all to do on the island if you don't golf. This was a gift in disguise though because it meant we had lots of time to explore the surrounding area, especially Savannah and Charleston.

The result was I fell in love with the South. The tidal creeks, **pluff mud**, and Spanish moss were not only beautiful, but they had a deep, rich smell that gets in your bones.

Then there was the beautiful Battery in Charleston with its dignified and staid mansions, contrasted with the slave market, today a shopping mecca in what was once a place that scars American history.

Savannah is a lyrical city, with hidden squares, fountains, and the riverfront shopping area, tucked down below sight. Everything about this area spoke to me. And the shopping got an A+. I brought home a sweet grass basket, a rag rug basket, a sweet sourdough starter, and some specialty rice. If you're in Savannah, be sure to stop in at the **SCAD (Savannah College of Art and Design) gift shop** on Bull Street for original crafts and works of art by Savannah students.

One of the highlights of our trip was dining at **The Lady and Sons**, Paula Deen's Savannah restaurant. We did more than dine. We stuffed ourselves in a very undignified manner. We repeated this behavior at another Savannah Southern classic **Mrs. Wilkes' Dining Room** (formerly the dining room of a boarding house). As a result, I came home with a list as long as my arm of amazing Southern dishes I wanted to replicate. Real lemonade, sweet tea, biscuits, hoe cakes, fried chicken, creamed corn, stewed tomatoes, red rice, peach cobbler, pimiento cheese, and much, much more. Although I have some Southern roots (Button Gwinnett, Savannah native, who signed the Declaration of Independence, is in my family tree), my family cooking roots are firmly in the North.



Brette's hoecakes

When I came home, I ordered **Paula Deen's Kitchen Classics: The Lady & Sons Savannah Country Cookbook and The Lady & Sons, Too!**

a compilation of her recipes that included some of things I was craving. Now, though,

she has just come out with

Paula Deen's Southern Cooking Bible: The New Classic Guide to Delicious Dishes with More Than 300 Recipes, which has everything you could ever need to cook like a true Southerner. The book not only showcases the Savannah classics and Paula's restaurant recipes I enjoyed so much, but it aims to offer a well-rounded view of all Southern cooking, so you'll find recipes like Texas Sheet Cake, Kentucky Walnut Pie, Mississippi Mud Cake, Tennessee Whiskey Bundt Cake, Memphis Dry Rub Ribs, and just about every other Southern classic you could ever want (the book is biblically thick at 455 pages and more than 300 recipes). I just loved paging through it and finding recipes for only-in-the-South foods like "dumplings," gumbo, benne seeds, hush puppies, spoon bread, grits, ambrosia, divinity, okra, bog, and even burgoo.

Deen knows Southern food and if anyone is going to create the definitive bible on it, it should be her. Her recipes are easy to follow, as long as you stock plenty of butter in your fridge (Deen's recipes are notoriously rich and over the top)! With this cookbook, you can enjoy a taste of the South without leaving home.



Brette's lemonade



Brette's fried chicken

Here's my recipe for southern fried chicken, adapted from Paula Deen.

Fried Chicken

One cut up whole chicken, or 4 split (bone-in) chicken breasts

3 cups buttermilk

Salt and pepper to taste

3 eggs

1/3 cup water

2 cups self-rising flour

1/4 teaspoon paprika

1/4 teaspoon garlic powder

Peanut oil for frying

Mix buttermilk with salt and pepper and soak chicken in it, refrigerated, for 2-4 hours, or overnight. Mix eggs with water in a large bowl. Mix flour with salt and pepper to taste, and paprika and garlic powder. Heat peanut oil in a deep fryer (I use an electric fryer but you can use a cast iron pan if you prefer) to 360 degrees. Pat the chicken dry, dredge in egg, then flour, then egg, then flour again. Fry for about 15-20 minutes (smaller pieces such as wings or legs take less time, but bone-in breasts take the full amount of time), flipping halfway. Set chicken on a rack in a warm oven. The chicken tastes best if it is allowed to sit for at least half an hour. It's excellent cold the next day as well.

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Brette asks: Is there a Southern food YOU love?



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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