

The American Frugal Housewife
Lydia Maria Francis Child

This book is interesting as a piece of early Americana - how we lived two centuries ago.

It does not seem relevant today. Our tastes, ingredients and equipment have all changed vastly. The first page of the table of contents conveys to the reader immediately that this is from a different world:

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You appreciate how self-sufficient our ancestors were. There were no canned, processed or packaged foods. Everything was simple and in bulk. There are recipes for making your own pickles and beer. No sauerkraut, however. Leave that to the Germans.

I cannot imagine coaxing my kids to eat many of these recipes. Not because they would not be tasty and nutritious, but because they are quite different from what they have been used to. Perhaps a good use of the book would be to let kids themselves try the recipes when they are studying colonial America in school. Finding the right equipment and ingredients would make a fine scavenger hunt, and they just might eat what they cooked themselves.