

9-1-2022

Inside un libro de cocina: A mystery solved through collaboration

Roger Adams

Follow this and additional works at: <https://newprairiepress.org/ksulibraries>



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#), and the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)



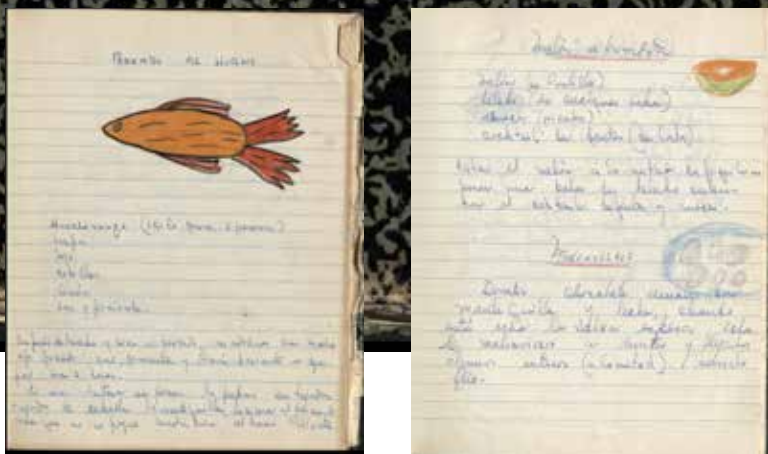
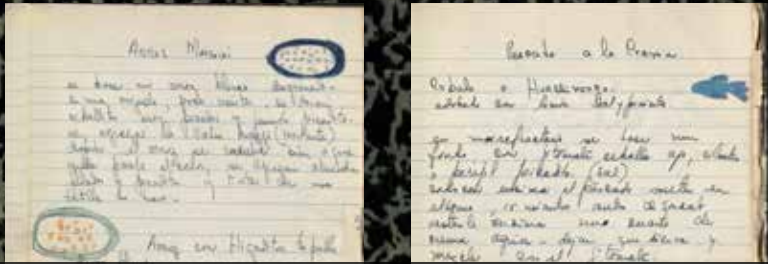
This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 4.0 License](#).

Recommended Citation

Roger Adams (2022) "Inside un libro de cocina: A mystery solved through collaboration," *Kansas State University Libraries*: Vol. 13.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by New Prairie Press. It has been accepted for inclusion in Kansas State University Libraries by an authorized administrator of New Prairie Press. For more information, please contact cads@k-state.edu.

Inside un Libro de Cocina A Mystery Solved Through Collaboration



BY ROGER ADAMS

The cookery collection in the Richard L.D. and Marjorie J. Morse Department of Special Collections originated in 1944 when Abby Lindsey Marlatt donated 800 rare cookbooks from her aunt, Abby Lillian Marlatt. But the development of the manuscript cookbook collection began much later, in 2000. At that time, the collection contained only four manuscript cookbooks which originated in England in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Today, the manuscript cookbook collection numbers more than 250 individual volumes—some of which date back to the 1600s—and represents works in many languages from several countries. Although most of the manuscript cookbooks were written anonymously by women for family use, they provide a wealth of angles for researchers to explore. In the spring of 2021, Laura Kanost, professor of modern languages, expressed interest in incorporating one of the collection's Spanish language manuscript cookbooks into a class project. Kanost's class

used From the Page, an online transcription and translation program, to review the transcription of the cookbook. The Morse Department of Special Collections is using From the Page to make manuscript cookbooks available online to a broader audience. Kanost said that editing the cookbook's transcription was a great opportunity for her Cultures of the Spanish Speaking World: Spanish America class to develop their vocabulary and learn more about Spanish food and culture. Throughout the semester, her class read a mix of literary texts, history and recipes from

Inside un libro de cocina: A mystery solved through collaboration

a diverse region. Teams of students also researched the preparation and sociological significance of a particular dish.

"Understanding the particular rhythms of the language and using context clues has really helped us understand the authenticity of each dish," said Rebecca Cannon, a senior studying architecture. "It's really neat to see how much work, energy and passion goes into each recipe."

Several of the dishes are quaintly illustrated in color, which indicates that the cookbook was an item that its creator treasured. But the origins of the cookbook are somewhat shrouded in mystery. Little clues such as the binding, paper, handwriting, the type of pen used and stray pieces of paper with telephone numbers can help researchers narrow down timeframes and identities.

Although the cookbook is written entirely in Spanish, Kanost discovered that it contains recipes from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

"It contains recipes such as Veracruz-style red snapper, almond chicken, curry, goulash, Japanese noodles, borscht, spaghetti with cream cheese, chocolate mousse and cheesecake," Kanost said. "When we limit ourselves to just one language, we're narrowing our perspective severely, so it's great that the Libraries collection includes cookbooks in languages other than English."

Staff with the Morse Department of Special Collections hope that the cookbooks will be used in a variety of courses as primary sources to enhance student learning experiences.

"I think handwritten cookbooks are culturally significant because they provide a snapshot of an individual's culinary repertoire, drawing on knowledge acquired from family, friends and magazines," Kanost said.

"We aren't planning to cook any of the dishes, but who knows, maybe someone will get inspired!"



Professor Kanost works with a student on the cookbook transcription.



Small clues in the cookbook indicate that the book was likely started in the early 1950s by a woman living in Denton, Texas.

Manuscript Cookbook 204

Facsimile

Transcription

RECADO A LA VERACRUZANA

4 Filetes de Salmón - sazonar con 1 sal, pimienta, limón picado por herbe y aceite - y colarlo en el germen sobre reducción de cebolla y caldo con la siguiente salsa.

Para 1 kilo de filetes se pone agua a hervir con sal en abundancia para la coladura.

Se le sacan los vollos interiores, se agregan pimienta 1 sal, pimienta 1 limón (2/3 partes), se hace a guisar por la coladura y se cubre al momento con salsa de alcaparras y aceitunas y chile serrano.

Preparado al día anterior y se sirve 20 minutos al horno antes de servir.

Help transcribe the Libraries' manuscript cookbooks at fromthepage.com/kstatelibraries.

In Morse Memos, the Richard L.D. and Marjorie J. Morse Department of Special Collections staff dig into the stories of our collections, which include archives and unique materials focused on the consumer movement, cookery, Kansas life and culture and more.