



# EATING DELANCEY

A Celebration  
OF  
JEWISH FOOD

Aaron REZNY ♦ Jordan SCHAPS

Introduction by JOAN RIVERS





Chubs

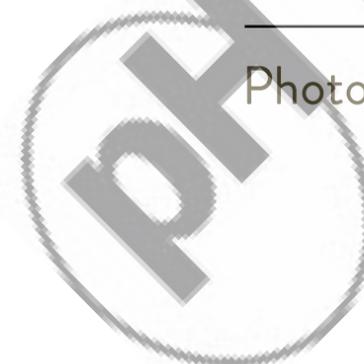
# EATING DELANCEY

A Celebration  
OF  
JEWISH FOOD

Aaron REZNY \* Jordan SCHAPS

Introduction by JOAN RIVERS

Photographs by Aaron REZNY



“So long as you have food  
in your mouth,  
you have solved all questions  
for the time being.”



FRANZ KAFKA



Pistachio Halvah

## A CELEBRATION OF JEWISH FOOD

BY JOAN RIVERS

**M**y mother was a very chic woman, very well read, a great hostess, and a horrible cook. She literally couldn't cook anything beyond just a few dishes. And we weren't kosher but she always went to kosher butchers. She thought the meat was better quality—not that it mattered since she didn't know what to do with it in the first place. You know how they butcher kosher meat, right? The cows aren't slaughtered. They're nagged to death.

There's an old joke: What does a Jewish woman make for dinner? Reservations. That was my mother. She did cook a few things: kasha varnishkes, eggele (or eyerlekh, which is Yiddish for "little eggs." These are creamy, flavorful unhatched chicken eggs, either cooked inside a chicken or in a soup), and gribenes, which I just loved until I was about 13 and realized how fattening they are. And we always had challah.

So how did I develop my love for good Jewish food when it wasn't on our table daily? I'll tell you. My father was a doctor with a huge ethnic practice in Brownsville, Brooklyn. Obviously, most patients paid him but some could not afford to, and so



Joan Rivers, age five.

they'd bring food in exchange for medical services. We got soups, blintzes. . .you name it. Stuffed derma was a big one for fixing a burst appendix. Oh my God, the food. . .it was just terrific and this is how I grew up—eating such food cooked with love and delivered by infirm and dying patients.

Let's talk knishes. We lived in Brooklyn on New York Avenue and President Street, which was known as "Doctor's Row." Every Sunday we drove into Manhattan to my "rich" aunt's apartment on Park Avenue. She had these very grand parties—musicales—guests in attendance had sung at the Metropolitan Opera, written the latest novels, and produced lavish Broadway spectacles. In other words, they were a very successful and artsy group. On our way to my aunt's place we'd drive over the Manhattan Bridge and stop at Yonah Schimmel's on Houston Street for a knish, because even though my aunt threw these extraordinary soirees, we knew the kind of finger foods she'd be serving didn't compare to a great knish. We'd show up on Park Avenue,

## THE HONORED GUEST

**F**ood is an honored guest at every significant event in each Jewish life.

Notwithstanding where we live, regardless of our race, irrespective of the God we believe in or deny, the solitary certainty that holds true for Jews is that no major moment is observed without a heaping helping of traditional dishes that nourish our bodies and souls.

I have been lucky enough, in my work as a Rabbi, to share in so many meaningful moments in people's lives. As I reflect on those experiences (eighteen years of which took place in New York), I realize it is more than religion and ritual—and even food—that unites these remarkable markers in the life of a Jew. I have come to learn that Smoked Salmon is omnipresent in Jewish life.

When we usher a new soul into the world, we Jews have a weird way of welcome: we circumcise the poor little boy in elaborate rite replete with shouts of “Mazal tov”. Perhaps the only thing an unknowing observer might find more peculiar than this strange ritual is that—moments after the ceremonial bloodletting—the whole family blesses bread with the words of hamotzi and then digs in to catered trays layered with lox and bagels.

Bagels and lox are the expectation at every bris and baby naming. Likewise, prepared platters of smoked fish are de rigeur for every synagogue social hall into which a famished congregation walks following a bar mitzvah service. As guests in black tie walk away from the wedding Huppah towards the cocktail hour, they are greeted by frozen bottles of vodka served astride caviar, blini, and gravlax. And, when mourners return home from the cemetery to observe seven days of shiva, the same catered trays once served at a bris greet them, letting them know the circle of life has come complete.\*

Food comforts. Food roots us in our past as we face our future. Food is inseparable from identity. This everyone knows is true.

My job is to persuade people the same can also be true with religion.

\*Lox is even purported to be our eternal reward: Our Sages of the Talmud imagined that smoked fish [specifically, Leviathan] was served to those who merited the World-to-Come

### RABBI SETH M. LIMMER

Senior Rabbi, Chicago Sinai Congregation  
[but born and bred in New York]



## HAMANTASCHEN



I prefer to make my hamantaschen dough the day before baking.  
The crust rolls out beautifully.

2 dozen cookies

### DOUGH

3 cups all purpose flour

Pinch salt

1½ sticks butter, softened

½ cup granulated sugar

1 large egg

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

### FILLING

1½ cups raspberry jam, apricot marmalade, poppy seed filling

1 egg, beaten

2 tablespoons milk

1. In a small bowl combine the flour and salt and set aside.
2. In an electric mixer, cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add the egg and vanilla and mix until well combined.
3. With the mixer on low, add the flour a little at a time until incorporated. The dough will be crumbly. Form the dough into a disk and chill at least an hour but preferably overnight.  
Heat oven to 375
4. Sprinkle your work surface with flour. Roll the dough to ¼ inch thickness. You can do this in two steps if you like, keeping half the dough in the fridge till you are ready.
5. Using a 2 & ½ inch fluted or non fluted biscuit cutter, cut out circles. Transfer the circles to parchment lined cookie sheets.
6. Place a teaspoon of filling in the center of each piece of dough. Carefully pull up three sides of the dough and pinch the corners together. If the corners are not sticking you can add a touch of milk or water and press closed. You will have a triangular shaped cookie. Finish all the dough.
7. Brush the dough with the lightly beaten egg mixed with the milk.
8. Bake for 25–30 minutes, until light golden brown.



Hamantaschen

“Sex — like eating Jewish foods  
such as chopped liver  
and gefilte fish — should always  
be a totally private matter.”



MEL BROOKS



Ratner's Moch Chopped Liver

## HUNTING THE GREAT WHITE PIKE

**M**y Brooklyn of the 1950s was a magical place. The Dodgers were still a home team, the iceman still cometh, and kosher butchers had live chickens which they ritually killed before your eyes. The knife sharpening truck still rode the streets. In addition to sharpening knives, this craftsman could also repair umbrellas. Can you imagine that an umbrella could be so valuable as to warrant this type of maintenance and repair? Belmont Avenue was lined with pushcarts selling every type of good that could be hawked: clothes, fruit, furniture, pots and pans—our stores were these pushcarts. Retail did not exist, or at the very least, it was a sacrilege. It was another time, another place.

One of my favorite places was Patsy's, the fish store on Sutter Avenue. Patsy's, as the name implies, was owned and operated by a burly Irishman named Patsy, a dark haired, blue-eyed Irishman planted in the middle of this Jewish enclave. The fish store was totally covered, floor to ceiling, in what is now fashionably referred to as "subway tile." Patsy was an imposing figure, perched on a platform overlooking his tray of iced fish, and in the middle of his throne was a huge porcelain tank, approximately eight feet by three feet, containing the live catch of pike and carp. These are of course the principal ingredients of gefilte fish.

Gefilte fish was not only a staple of the Shabbos Friday night dinner, making it was a Jewish household ritual. True gefilte fish is not easily found these days. The name gefilte means "stuffed." Carp or pike steaks were stuffed with ground fish, carrots, matzo meal, and spices. The stuffed fish was then simmered in a fish stock, along with carrot slices, until perfectly cooked, the bones creating a gelatinous aspic.

The fish had to be fresh, and the fresher the better. Going to Patsy's was an event. Friday morning crowds resembled those on Christmas Eve at the local shopping center, minus some of the gentility. There were no numbers taken at Patsy's which might have preserved an orderly ascent to the throne. It was survival of the fittest, with Patsy being the final arbiter of who was served, and when. When an audience with Patsy

was finally granted, you would have a very short time in order to choose your fish—one carp, one pike—time was money at Patsy's. Patsy would then scoop the fish up in a large poled net, slam the fish on the cutting board in front of him, stun them with a wooden mallet, and then decapitate and clean them. After being wrapped in yesterday's newspaper, the fish were bagged and ready to be taken home to be processed.

You would think that this would provide fish that was fresh enough. For most households, yes. For my mother, no. The fish would be stunned at Patsy's, then wrapped to be brought home still alive, to be placed in our family's bathtub—already filled with water, awaiting their arrival. While both pike and carp are rather large fish—approximately 18 inches or more as I recall—carp, a relative of the goldfish, is somewhat docile. Pike on the other hand is a vicious sharp toothed creature, a force of nature to be reckoned with. The image of these two creatures swimming in the family bathtub on a weekly basis is eternally imprinted on my mind. I continue to feel a mixture of joy, curiosity, and fear when I recall this weekly ritual—the joy of a child who has the largest "pets" in the neighborhood, combined with a child's curiosity about the behavior of the wild creatures swimming in the bathtub, and the anticipation and fear of the upcoming events that culminated in their capture and final processing.

My mother was a hunter. While Patsy required a net, my mother caught the fish bare-handed. She would grab a fish with both hands and then whisk it over to the kitchen sink where her knife was awaiting its mission. With one hand on the flapping fish and the other on the blade, within seconds the deed was done and the fish was finally ready to be cleaned, sliced, ground, and seasoned into the ultimate weekly delight. Times are different now. The gefilte fish we now serve may taste somewhat like the fish that I remember my mother preparing; however, it lacks a certain freshness—and it certainly lacks the drama which unfolded each Friday in the Brooklyn home of my childhood.

**MALCOLM S. TAUB**

Attorney/partner, Davidoff Hutcher & Citron LLP



A Jewish woman in London, approaches the counter of Harrod's (prestige) Foot Hall:

**Counterman** ("CM," distinguished, with a very proper English accent): May I help madam?

**The Jewish Woman** ("JW," with a distinct "accent,"); Certainly. I'd like half a pound of belly lox.

**CM:** Oh, no, madam, you mean Nova Scotia smoked salmon.

**JW:** Sure, why not!

**CM:** Will there be anything else?

**JW:** Yeah, gimme half a dozen bagels.

**CM:** Oh no, madam, you mean curvilinear yeast rolls

**JW:** Sure, why not!

**CM:** Will that be all, madam?

**JW:** No. Gimme two fingers cream cheese.

**CM:** Madam, you mean a half pound of Philadelphia processed cheese.

**JW:** Yeah—dats what I mean.

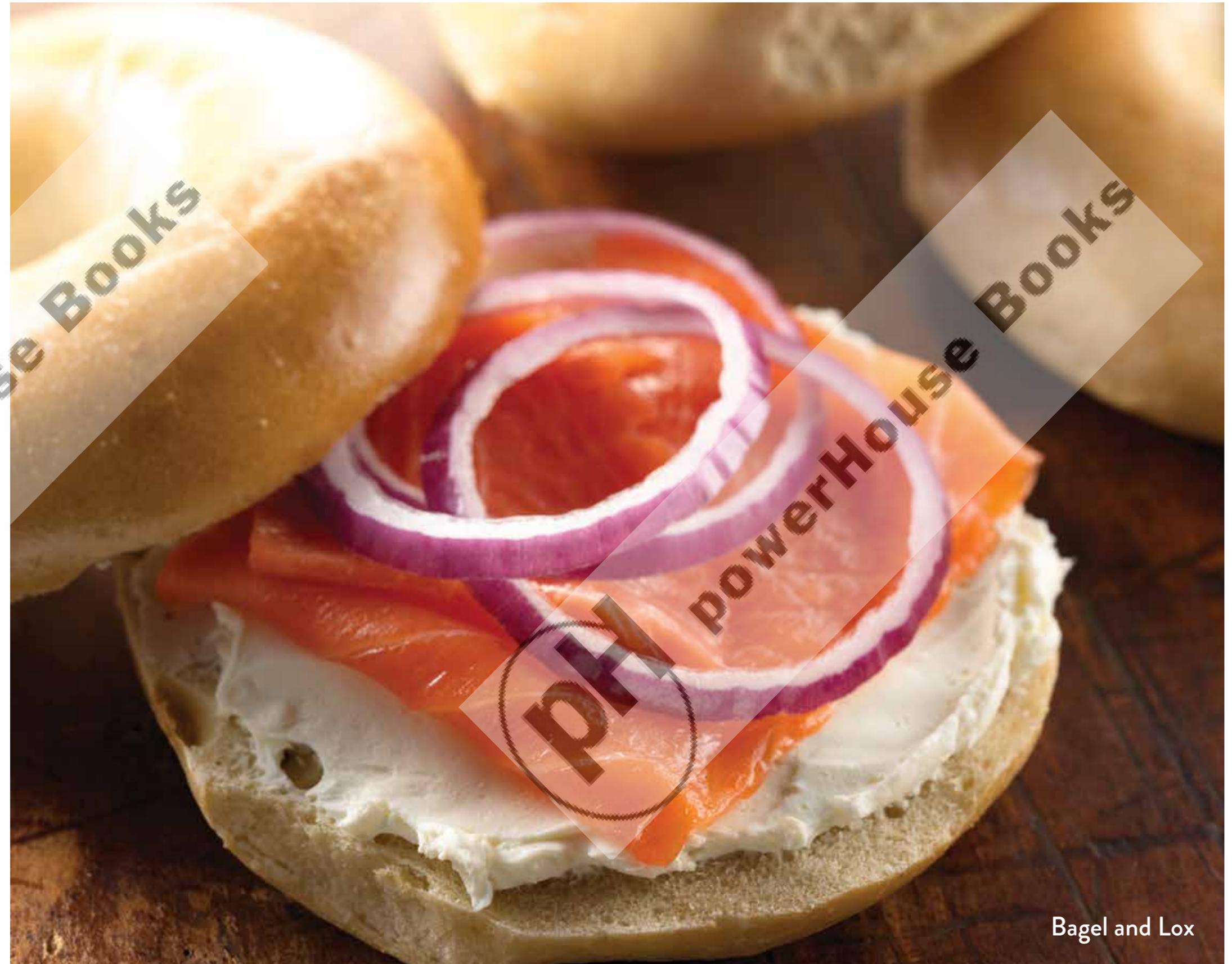
**CM:** Will there be anything else for madam?

**JW:** No, that's it.

**CM:** And where would madam like this sent?

**JW:** Oh no. Just wrap it up and I'll take it with me.

**CM:** Madam! Surely you're not going to schlep this around the store!



Bagel and Lox

themselves, while identical in construction, have individual personalities that cause differences in the appearance of the end product. If you hand a worker a piece of matzo, he can tell you in an instant in which oven it was baked. To keep the bake as consistent as possible, the workers at one end of the oven communicate with those at the opposite end through a system of bells, indicating that the belts in the oven need to be slowed or quickened, or that the temperature on one side of the oven has gotten too high or too low. Matzo that emerges from the oven too burned or undercooked is thrown into bins, which are trucked out of the factory to New Jersey, where they are used as cow feed.

Those matzos that pass the test are sent via the conveyor system to the second floor packing room. Here, they are taken by hand from their baskets, packed into boxes, and wrapped with the ubiquitous pink Streit's Passover labeling. They are then sent to the oldest machine in the factory, the bundler, a massive piece of 1920s mechanical art, whose sole purpose is to take five one-pound boxes of matzo and wrap them into the five-pound bundles that have been the core of the Streit's business for the last century. Today, though, the five-pound bundle has become their greatest challenge.

While many of the Lower East Side's Jewish businesses closed due to a declining Jewish population and rising rents, these changes have affected Streit's less than one might expect. The vast majority of their business has been their national distribution for most of their history, so they are not as dependent on local sales as many other businesses are. Their forbearers also had the means and good sense to purchase their buildings during the Great Depression, meaning they are not beholden to the rising rents faced by other businesses in the area. But the very factors making moving such a rational choice are the very ones that make it such a difficult decision to make. For the time being, Streit's is here to stay.

#### MICHAEL LEVINE

Documentary filmmaker,  
*Streit's: Matzo and the American Dream*

### SAM SCHAPS' MATZO BREI



Makes 4 servings\*

4 matzos

4 large eggs

$\frac{3}{4}$  stick (6 tablespoons) unsalted butter

2 tablespoons milk

1 teaspoon salt, or to taste

Take each matzo sheet in both hands, and hold it under running water, turning a couple of times. After about 15 seconds, you should feel the matzo get "tender." Remove from water and pat dry. You don't want the matzo to crumble or get soggy—just a bit soft.

In a large bowl, break matzo sheets into pieces, about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inches square. Add eggs, milk, and salt, and mix gently with a fork.

Heat butter in a 10–12-inch skillet over moderately high heat. Add matzo mixture and cook, stirring constantly, until eggs are scrambled and matzo has begun to brown a bit.

Either stand over the frying pan and eat, or serve immediately.

\* While this recipe makes 4 portions—those would be what we might call "refined Gentile" portions. For hearty Jewish fressers, this is a two-person breakfast! Especially on a Saturday morning, when you can nap after and not have to go to work.



Matzo Brei

## Yonah Schimmel

She sits at the first table, facing the door. That first seat at that front table is her office. Her desk items consist of a cordless landline and a cell phone. The day I interviewed her, also an ice pack wrapped in plastic—she'd had some dental work done that day.

I didn't notice this set up when I walked in the door. By instinct, I turned to the left to the tall glass bakery counter. Behind the glass were no-nonsense knishes, behind the knishes, two no-nonsense young people—college-age “yingsters” as my Bubbe Ethel would refer to them—tending to the customers with efficiency and dispatch, and with more warmth the better they knew you. The customer orders were—and I like this—“I'll TAKE:” “I'll take a potato with a Cel-Ray.” “I'll take a dozen cheese to go.” No one said “I'd like,” or “I want.” It was “I'll take.” I got into it in a second. “I'll take a spinach knish with a Dr. Brown's Black Cherry Soda.”

On this occasion I was there to interview Ellen Anistratov, the latest generation of family owner/descendants of Yonah Schimmel—the ORIGINAL Yonah Schimmel. I asked the guy, a lad of perhaps Latino heritage, and a black-haired looker with delicate oval rhinestone earrings, where I could find Ellen. The guy gestured to the back dining room. I went. It was pretty empty—Monday, 3 p.m.—not what you'd call a “high-traffic day/hour” in a knishery. I sat and waited. The yingster came over with a place mat and menu. Some mistake. I told him I was there to meet with Ellen. OK. He goes back to the front. Then the dark cute female yingster comes to me, and I tell her I'm here to meet with Ellen. “I'm Ellen!” Surprise! On closer inspection, she did look older than I originally thought. But as our meeting/interview went on, she alternately appeared like an enthusiastic, stylish (black skirt and sweater over black tights) girl, and a savvy, straight-shooting businesswoman.



**Jordan Schaps: Who was Yonah Schimmel and how did this knishery come to be?**

Ellen Anistratov: Yonah Schimmel was a scribe—a Torah scholar—and his dream was to teach people spirituality, but at that time nobody had money. So his wife started to make knishes and they were selling them from a push cart at Coney Island. That's how they started.

**JS: What's exactly is a knish? Who “invented” the knish?**

EA: A knish is a Yiddish word that means dumpling, and Yonah Schimmel was the first knishery that came to the United States. This type of a knish was invented in Eastern Europe. There are different kinds of dumplings—kreplach, pirogen—because the knish, which means a dumpling, can be baked, fried, whatever you like. But kreplach and pirogen come with a lot of dough on the outside and very little on the inside! That's what a dumpling or pirogen is. So what Yonah did was reverse it. They made a lot of stuffing and very little dough. It was the first knish that came to the United States. It was the “Granddaddy of all knishes” for a reason, the “king of knishes.”

**JS: I did research on the knish. The knish can be made with very little eggs, oil, and baking powder. Is it possible a knish**

**is like “health food?”**

EA: It is health food!

**JS: We're talking about 114 years ago.**

EA: I call it gourmet food. We put a little oil in the dough, but the dough is like a paper dough, so I tell people if you don't want to have any flour, just take away the crust. The crust is very special, but some people can't eat white flour.

**JS: Gluten.**

EA: Gluten, yes, so they can still eat the knish. You don't have to eat the outside, you can eat what's inside and it's delicious. But for those that can eat both, it's double the pleasure.

**JS: Double pleasure, that's exactly right. I can't imagine eating a Yonah Schimmel knish without the crust. So Yonah Schimmel went from a pushcart to a store not far from here.**

EA: Across the street on Houston, right there where the park is. They opened up a store there in 1890, and in 1910 they moved here.

**JS: One hundred and fourteen years ago. This is the headquarters. What is your relationship to Yonah?**

EA: It's not direct family. We are a family, but it's not direct family. From my father's side.

**JS: You came here in 1979?**

EA: Yes. We came here and the second day he started to work

Yonah Schimmel,  
East Houston Street,  
New York, 2014.



here. He came here and he was working as a bus boy because he didn't speak any English. He would do all the dirty work and then he worked his way up.

**JS: How come it took so long?**

EA: I guess we were the last ones to come out of the Ukraine.

**JS: Who's the boss?**

EA: The people that come and buy from us, they're the boss.

**JS: I love where you're sitting.**

EA: Yes, I observe everything.

**JS: And you face the door.**

EA: Everything, yes.

**JS: So when the “boss customer” comes in, they get taken care of. I love that. That's great.**



EA: And the biggest boss is my father.

**JS: What generation are you? Fourth, fifth?**

EA: My kids are sixth generation.

**JS: Six? Do you imagine them going into some kind of work here?**

EA: When they are on vacation, they come and they help me out.

**JS: Do you cook knishes?**

EA: I can.

**JS: You can?**

EA: Yes. A boss should know how to do everything. If not, don't do it.

**JS: These knishes, they're baked?**



Kasha Knishes

YONAH SCHIMMEL'S  
KASHA KNISH



WHAT'S IN A KNISH?

Kasha

Mashed potato—  
just enough to hold the kasha together

Onion—

CRUSHED, so they're invisible.

“When it comes to Yonah Schimmel’s knishes  
—what you see is what you get. There’s nothing  
else, chemicals or fancy.”

—Ellen Anistratov, Owner, Yonah Schimmel



Pigs in a Blanket

## SHABBOS GOY

**C**onfession: I've always wanted to be Jewish! When I was in the fifth grade, I raised my hand and told Sister Joyce I could not participate in religious education class that day. When she sternly asked me why, I responded, "I'm really Jewish." What precipitated this revelation was watching *Yentl* the night before with my grandfather on the pullout couch in our living room. I was hooked!

You see, my grandfather was actually my first Jewish enabler. Papa worked in SoHo and lived in Bushwick, so he drove over the Williamsburg Bridge every day to work, and on his way home he would always stop at Katz's for either a pastrami or tongue sandwich and a bottle of Cel-Ray soda.

I must have been seven years old when he took me out for this, a fine culinary meal, and if *Yentl* didn't have me at hello, that first well-done hot dog, square knish, and root beer meal changed my life!

I come from a VERY Italian family that treasured three

things equally: Jesus, meatballs, and al dente spaghetti. However, it was my very Italian parents that decided to move from Bushwick the year I was born, to a town on Long Island called Great Neck. Population: 99% Jewish. The migration of my mom, dad, sister, and grandparents made up the other 1%.

It was there that incredible people like the Levinsons, the Balkins, and the Gads entered my life. While Sundays were for meatballs and spaghetti at my house, Friday nights were for brisket and gefilte fish at the Gads. Diggy and Hal took me to my first aufruf and my best friend Lauren allowed me to attend Hebrew school with her so often that by the time I turned 13, I was able to recite the Haftarah.

And the boys. . .there was Ivan Goodstein, Andrew Finkelstein, Derek Silberstein, and Josh Rothstein. If there wasn't a "stein" at the end of his name, I wasn't interested.

Their mothers were less than interested in me and I'll never forget standing in line at the bagel buffet at Andrew Finkelstein's Bar Mitzvah when I overheard his mother's friend point and say, "You're OK with your son dating that shiksa?" I of course went home that night and asked my Papa what "shiksa" meant. After a brief tutorial in the words shiksa and goy, he then divulged that he was in fact a Shabbos goy himself. A very proud moment in our family history indeed.

It was also at the 130+ B'nai Mitzvahs that I attended where I developed a deep love for the pig in a blanket, so much so that I have gone on to devote my career to that hors d'oeuvre. And I continue to love all things Jewish: there is not a knish I do not cherish, kugel makes me kvell, and Barbara Streisand will blast loudly and proudly from my iPod until the day I die.

Shiksa, goy, Shabbos goy. . .I wear it as a badge of honor. Call me what you want! As long as you save a space for me in the hora circle and bring me a blintz or a warm slice of challah, I'll be putty in your hands.

### MARY GIULIANI

Caterer to the stars, "I'm Your Little Shabbos Goy"

### MARY GIULIANI'S INFAMOUS PIGS IN A BLANKET

16 sheets of phyllo dough

8 all-beef hot dogs (Sabrett or Nathan's are my favorite)

1 cup mustard

Lay out 2 sheets of dough for each full hot dog.

Brush mustard on inside of phyllo and roll tightly around hot dog.

Place on baking sheet, seam down.

You can brush the outside of the phyllo with melted butter for a little extra taste and color.

Bake according to phyllo package directions until golden.

Slice into bite sized pieces.

Serve with more mustard for dipping.

## RATNER'S GEFILTE FISH RECIPE



### STOCK

Fish bones and heads,  
1 cup sliced celery  
Removed from fish  
½ cup chopped parsnips  
3 quarts water  
1 large onion, sliced  
4 carrots, sliced  
1 tablespoon salt

### FISH

2 pounds boneless yellow  
½ cup water  
pike  
1 teaspoon white pepper  
2 pounds boneless carp  
1 tablespoon salt  
2 pounds boneless whitefish\*  
4 eggs  
1 large onion  
½ cup oil  
6 slices challah  
Lettuce  
Horse radish (optional)

In a large kettle combine all stock ingredients and bring to a boil.

Grind or chop finely the pike, carp and whitefish several times with the onion and challah.

Beat in water, pepper, salt, eggs and oil. Mixture should taste peppery.

With wet hands, shape 1 cup of the fish mixture into an egg-shaped ball. Drop into simmering stock. Repeat using remaining fish mixture.

Cover and simmer for 1 ½ hours. Remove fish and place in shallow bowl.

Top with carrots in stock.

Strain stock over fish. Chill.

Serve on lettuce topped with some of the jellied fish broth and carrots. Serve with white or red horseradish.

\*Instead of 2 pounds each of the three listed fish, 6 pounds of any assortment of them may be substituted depending upon their availability.



Gefilte Fish

How can you tell  
the gefiltwe fish  
from the other fish  
in the sea?

**A**  
The gefilte fish is  
the one with  
a slice of carrot  
on its back.



Stuffed Cabbage

They tried to kill us.  
We survived. Let's eat.



PASSOVER PROVERB

## ARTHUR SCHWARTZ'S STUFFED CABBAGE



Makes about 15 pieces, serving about 6

You can call them holishkes, or holipchess, or halubchas, golbztzes, or prakkes. It's stuffed cabbage all the same, one of the most beloved dishes in the whole Jewish-American repertoire, made from Germany and eastward through Poland, Ukraine, and Belarus, south to Hungary and Austria. However, the idea of stuffing a cabbage leaf most likely comes from the Ottomans, who, after all, controlled parts of Eastern Europe for a couple of centuries. At any rate, most stuffed cabbage today is made with a sweet and sour tomato sauce, with or without raisins or other dried fruit, which is the taste from the Pale. Hungarian, Czech, Slovakian, and Romanian cooks, on the other hand, usually keep the tomato sauce strictly savory, sometimes with a touch of sour from sauerkraut. German Jews often make brown gravy. Ginger snaps, which season as well as thicken the gravy, are an American addition, but the taste of ginger is from the old country.

1 4- to 5-pound head green cabbage

### FOR MEAT FILLING

2 pounds ground chuck or ground neck and tenderloin

2 eggs, beaten together

$\frac{1}{3}$  cup long-grain rice, parboiled for 3 minutes

1 cup fresh breadcrumbs from challah  
or 2 slices quality supermarket white bread (with crusts),  
processed into crumbs in a blender or food processor

1 6-ounce onion, grated on the coarse side of a box grater

2  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoons salt

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon freshly ground pepper

### FOR SAUCE

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

1 medium onion, finely minced

1 28-ounce can imported Italian tomato puree

$\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup dark brown sugar

$\frac{3}{4}$  to 1 teaspoon sour salt (citric acid crystals),  
or the juice of 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 lemons

1 teaspoon salt

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup dark raisins

6 ginger snaps, soaked in  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup water (optional)

To blanch the cabbage, select a pot that will hold the whole head of cabbage almost submerged in water. Fill half way with water and bring it to a rolling boil.

Meanwhile, with a small sharp knife, cut out the core out of the cabbage. When the water is boiling, put the cabbage in the water. Using a two-tined kitchen fork, hold the cabbage in one hand and with the other peel off the outside leaf. Return the head to the water for another few seconds, and remove the next loose leaf. Continue until the leaves become too small to easily stuff. You should have 12 to 15 leaves that are big enough to use.

Shred the remaining cabbage and make a layer of it on the bottom of a large, wide casserole or something like a lasagna pan that will hold the cabbage rolls in one layer.

Cut the white central rib out of each cabbage leaf.

To make the meat filling, in a large bowl, mix all the ingredients together and mix very well.

Use  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of meat mixture for each leaf, depending on the size of the leaf. Place the meat along the uncut green end of the leaf, shaping it into a thick oblong patty. Roll the meat in the leaf, tucking in the sides of the leaf to completely enclose it. If you have a little extra leaf, cut it off. Place the stuffed leaves, seam-side down, packed fairly tightly, on top of the shredded cabbage.

To prepare the sauce: In a small saucepan, heat the oil over medium heat and sauté the onion until beginning to brown, about 10 minutes. Add the tomato puree, brown sugar, sour salt, salt, and raisins. Bring to a simmer and simmer 5 minutes.

Pour on the prepared sauce. Shake the casserole to encourage the sauce to seep to the bottom. Cover—with foil if using a roasting pan or lasagna pan or baking dish.

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Bake for about 2 hours. If using the ginger snaps, after about an hour of cooking, spoon some of the sauce out of the baking pan and blend with the soaked snaps. Add enough pan sauce to make the ginger mixture liquid enough to blend easily into the remaining pan sauce. Shake the pan to blend.

Serve hot. Stuffed cabbage reheats beautifully. Some would say it improves.

## EGG CREAM

When I was a young man, no bigger than this  
a chocolate egg cream was not to be missed  
Some U Bet's Chocolate Syrup, seltzer water mixed with milk  
you stir it up into a heady fro, tasted just like silk  
Egg Cream

You scream, I steam, we all want egg cream  
You scream, I steam, we all want egg cream

Now you can go to Junior's, Dave's on Canal Street  
and I think there's Ken's in Boston  
there must be something in L.A.  
But Becky's on Kings Highway, was the egg cream of choice  
and if you don't believe me, go ask any of the boys

You scream, I steam, we all want egg cream  
You scream, I steam, we all want egg cream

The only good thing I have to say about P.S. 92  
was the egg cream served at Becky's, it was a fearsome brew  
For 50 cents you got a shot, choco bubbles up your nose  
that made it easier to deal with knife fights  
and kids pissing in the street

You scream, I steam, we all want egg cream  
You scream, I steam, we all want egg cream

So the next time you're in Brooklyn, please say hello for me  
at Totonno's for Pizza and ice cream at Al and Shirley's  
But mostly you go to Beckys, sit in a booth and say hello  
and have two chocolate egg cream, one to stay and one to go

You scream, I steam, we all want egg cream, ah  
You scream, I steam, we all want egg cream  
You scream, I steam, we all want egg cream



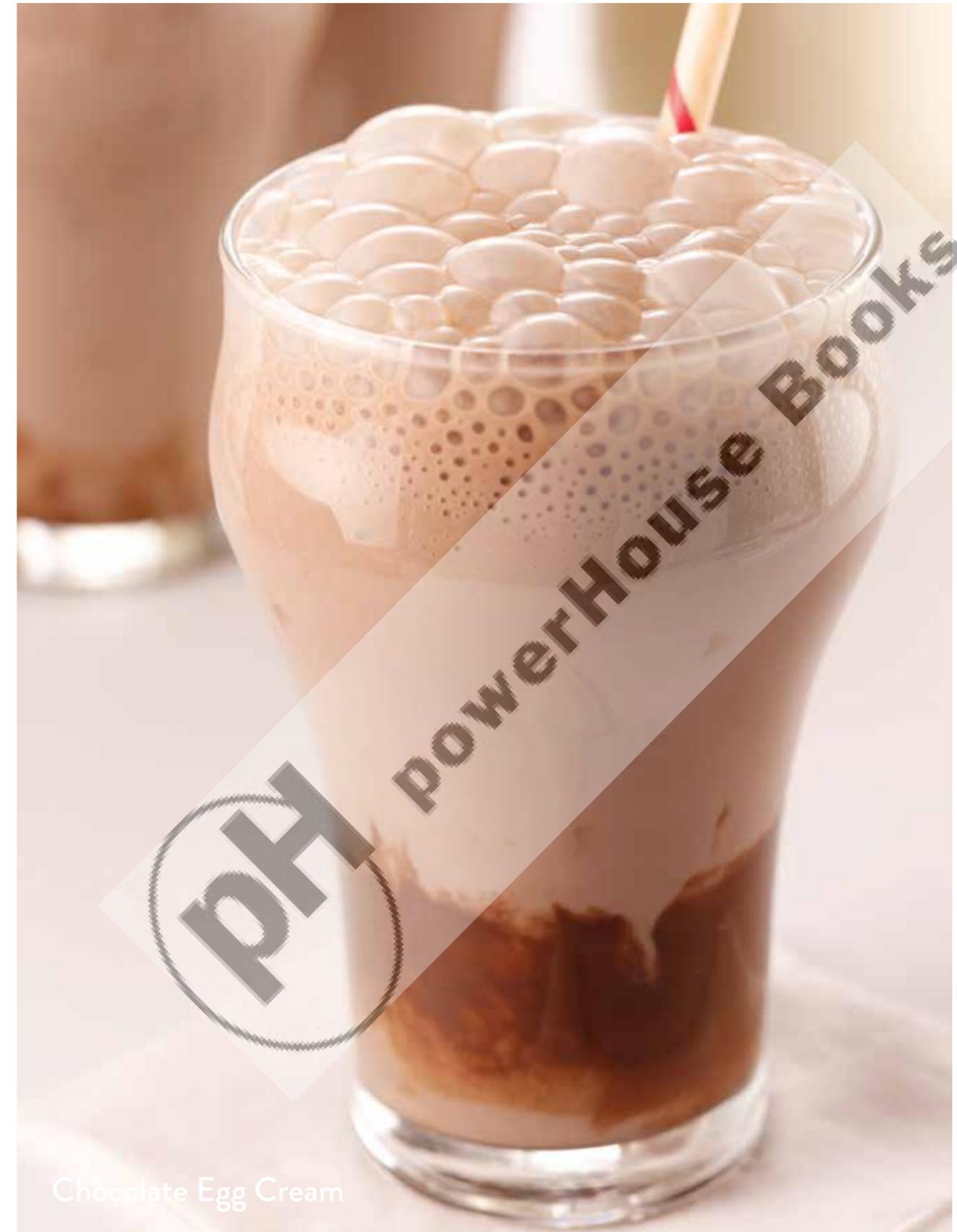
LOU REED

## KATZ'S DELI EGG CREAM



Jake Dell, Owner

Alright, so the perfect Katz' egg cream is really simple. There's the oldest recipe in the book for egg creams, it's a little Foxes U Bet chocolate syrup, although if you're kinda a chocolate wuss you can use a little vanilla syrup instead, although let's be honest, chocolate egg creams are infinitely better in my humble opinion. So a little bit of Foxes U Bet, you fill that up about an inch or so and then you put an equal amount of milk in there and then you top it off with a little bit of seltzer and as your pouring the seltzer you stir vigorously and that'll get you the nice head on the top of an egg cream, and violà you have the per-



Chocolate Egg Cream

## BUBBE AND A BISSEL

**M**y Bubbe Esther made the best cookies! My Aunt Francine so wanted the recipe but Bubbe never wrote anything down—for a good reason; she didn't know how! She was Russian. She couldn't read or write Yiddish or English but could speak both fluently. I recall when she didn't want me to understand something she would speak to my father, her son-in-law, in Yiddish, I got conditioned to think that “Jewish” was something “naughty.”

In shul, she knew all the prayers but couldn't read a lick of it. She could sign her name but I am surprised (now) that she never bothered to learn how to read or write. She shopped, cooked, sewed, and cleaned all day as I recall. She called anybody who was funny, “Charlie Chaplin” and she referred to the Three Stooges as the Three Meshuggahs.

One day my Aunt Francine (my mother's sister) decided to get the recipe for her sugar cookies. These were thick as I recall, and round. They were kinda yellowish on the outside and kinda white on the inside. So as my Bubbe is putting this together, my Aunt has paper, pen, various spoons, and measuring cups.

Bubbe cooked with her hands: a pinch of this, a fist of that, etc. My Aunt would then put the same amount in Bubbe's hands or fingers and then dump it into a spoon or measuring cup so she could list it. Bubbe worked fast and her daughter causing her to repeat her actions didn't slow her down.

Finally, it was all in the bowl. My Aunt, exhausted, checked what she wrote while my Bubbe started adding things! “Ma, what did you add?! I need to add it to the recipe.” And she said, “A bisseel of this, a pinch of that. . .” It hadn't looked just right to her so her eyes told her what to add. My Aunt never got it right. . . but I'll always remember eating those cookies in her kitchen on Friday nights. Delicious memories. . .

**BOB GREENBERG**

Comedian; actor; friar

## A SWEET TASTING VIOLIN

**M**y enduring love for rich, delicious tasting desserts started in childhood. I developed a sweet tooth when I first moved to the United States to study at Juilliard. I wasn't aware of fountain drinks or even assorted fresh pastries while I was growing up in Israel. Something as common as ice cream was so rare back then that it was only served on special occasions.

In Israel, my family didn't go out to eat. For dessert, my mother used to bake a two-layer cake with yellow cake, chocolate butter cream filling, and chocolate butter cream frosting on top—it was delicious.

My mother's cake was probably the reason why I wandered into Cake Masters on the Upper West Side. Cake Masters made cakes for Liberace, President Kennedy, and Elizabeth Taylor and was known by its slogan, “where baking is an art.”

Cake Masters made the best seven-layer cake that I ever had. It tasted just like my mother's! Their seven-layer cake was layers upon layers of yellow cake and butter cream frosting. Each layer had a nice soft texture and wonderful taste. I still remember how they used to sell it by the slice with each slice separated by wax paper. Cake Masters was close to my parents' home so I would stop by again and again. (Coincidentally, many years later I found out that my wife, Toby, who also lived on the Upper West Side loved their seven-layer cake too!!)

We didn't have soda fountains back in Israel either. I remember going to my first soda fountain on the Upper West Side. I quickly fell in love with milkshakes: chocolate malteds and chocolate frosted.

Years later my sweet tooth made the headlines! Nestlé presented me with a violin made out of Kit Kat bars after I hosted the PBS concert series, “In Performance at the White House” with First Lady Nancy Reagan. I'm telling you, it was the most delicious tasting violin that I ever ate!!

**ITZHAK PERLMAN**

Violinist; conductor



Jell Rings



Flanken

## ARTHUR SCHWARTZ'S SWEET AND SOUR FLANKEN



Serves 4 to 6

Flanken is short ribs cut across the bone instead of between the bones. So each slice of flanken will have several small bones across its length. When flanken is fully cooked, however, it should be falling off those bones. Here, the beef is braised in a subtly sweet and sour tomato sauce, a flavor profile that is very popular among Ashkenazi Jews. It's great to top kasha or mashed potatoes, or noodles, or for dunking bread. (Make mine challah.) Brisket or a chuck roast can be cooked this way, too. And beef cheeks, a cut popular among Orthodox Jews who use them to make chollent—the meat, beans, barley and potato casserole that is cooked overnight at low heat. I use that slow-cooking technique here because it results in extremely tender meat.

This recipe can easily be doubled or tripled. And, like most Jewish meat recipes, it is best served the day after it is made, when the flavors will have melded and when it is easy to remove the solidified fat.

Salt

- 1 to 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 pounds relatively lean beef flanken (preferably the meatier breast flanken, not fattier plate flanken, but either is delicious)
- 1 15-ounce can Hunt's tomato sauce (it's kosher)
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- Juice of ½ lemon or ¼ teaspoon sour salt (fine citric acid crystals)

Preheat the oven to 250 degrees.

Generously salt the meat.

In a heavy stove-top casserole just large enough to hold the meat—for instance, an enameled cast iron casserole—over medium-high heat, heat the oil until very hot but not smoking. Brown the meat well, a few slices at a time, on all sides. Remove the slices to a platter as they are browned. Be careful not to burn the oil or any of the film on the bottom of the pan. If you see a spot getting too dark, put the next piece of raw meat on it.

When all the meat has been browned, pour off the fat in the pan. Add ½ cup water to the pan, and scrape up the browned film and bits on the bottom of the pan. Let the water evaporate by about half.

Add the can of tomato sauce, rinsing out the can with another ½ cup of water. Stir in the brown sugar and the lemon juice or sour salt. Arrange the meat in the pan with the sauce. Add any meat juices that may have accumulated on the platter. There should be enough liquid to almost but not completely cover the meat.

Bring the liquid to a gentle simmer, then cover the pot and place it in the oven for 1 ½ to 2 hours, possibly up to 3 or 4 hours, depending on the meat and the amount. When done, the meat should be fork tender.

If serving immediately, let the meat rest for at least 30 minutes, then tilt the pan and skim off any fat that has risen to the top. Better, however, is to serve the meat the next day: Refrigerate it when it comes to room temperature. The next day you can pull off the hardened fat on top. Reheat gently to a simmer, and serve very hot.

## GRANDMA LILLIAN'S COOKIES

I didn't see my dad for a long time after he and my mother divorced. One day she told me he wasn't coming home, and I saw him only one time again in the next five years. I remember seeing his car down the street where we lived when he was visiting the woman he left my mother for. But he didn't visit us. I must have missed him, but I don't remember thinking about it much. My father stopped paying his alimony and child support so my mother had to take him to family court to get him to pay. My mother took my little brother and me to court with her, and I got all dressed up because I wanted to look nice when he saw me. I wore an orange and pink dress with puffy sleeves and white rubber boots and I remember

feeling both excited and nervous about facing him. We waited and waited but he never showed up and we went home without ever seeing him. Then my mother met a new man, and shortly thereafter they got married.

Everybody loathed my stepfather except my mother. Her mom and dad—my grandparents—disliked him so much they moved to North Miami to be as far away from him as possible. This devastated me, as my grandmother was my favorite person in the world. Grandma Lillian was a feisty little lady with



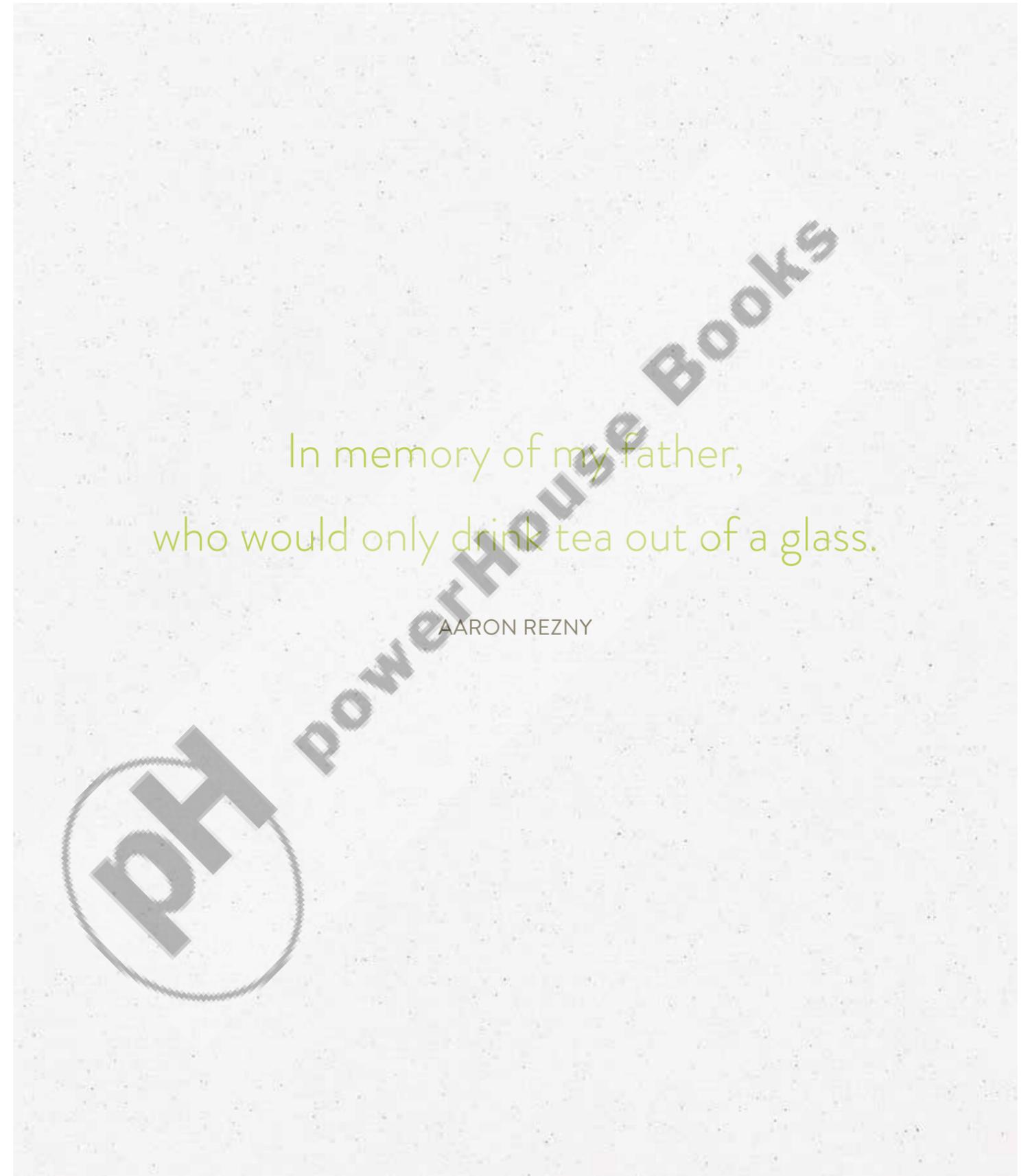
Debbie Millman, age 10 with her Grandma Lillian, summer 1972, Long Island.



Black and White Cookies



“Un a Glazele Tey”



In memory of my father,  
who would only drink tea out of a glass.

AARON REZNY