First published in 1927 to educate French housewives in the art of classical cooking, LA BONNE CUISINE DE MADAME E. SAINT-ANGE has since become the bible of French cooking technique, found on every kitchen shelf in France. A housewife and a professional chef, Madame Evelyn Saint- Ange wrote in a rigorous yet highly instructive and engaging style, explaining in extraordinary detail the proper way to skim a sauce, stuff a chicken, and construct a pâté en croûte. Though her text has never before been translated into English, Madame Saint-Anges legacy has lived on through the cooking of internationally renowned chefs like Julia Child and Madeleine Kamman, setting the standard for practical home cooking as well as haute cuisine. In this momentous translation by Chez Panisse cofounder and original chef de cuisine Paul Aratow, Madame Saint-Anges culinary wisdom is available in English for the first time. Enveloped in
charming intricacies of even the most fundamental cooking techniques are 1,300 authentic French recipes for such classics as Braised Beef, Quiche Lorraine, Cassoulet, and Apricot Soufflé; original illustrations of prepping and cooking techniques; and seasonal menus for every meal of the day. An indispensable culinary encyclopedia and an absorbing historical document, LA BONNE CUISINE DE MADAME E. SAINT-ANGE is the definitive word on French cooking for food lovers, dedicated cooks, culinary professionals, and Francophiles alike. Reviews: “[A] book that I adore and that was my mentor in my early days in France. . . . It was a carefully thought-out, very personal book, and one had complete confidence in what she had to say. . . . I still love it.”—Julia Child (Simple Cooking, “Reminisces,” 1989) “It would be difficult to overestimate the service rendered to monolingual English and American cooks by the translation of this massive, instructive, and, in its way, very funny book.”—Gourmet “This warhorse of French cookery . . . is a proudly hidebound volume on the (Thoroughly French) Right Way to Cook. . . . The book reads like The Joy of Cooking for the dominatrix set. Still, its hard not to love a writer with such dramatic flair.”—Bon Appetit “If you want to add one new definitive cookbook to your larder, we suggest the English edition of LA BONNE CUISINE. . . . This is the tome that got Julia Child cooking as a postwar bride in Paris.”—Los Angeles Magazine “[T]his magisterial translation offers a window into a bygone moment in French life and is a testament to the enduring joy of cooking with cookbooks.”—Publishers Weekly “The gift for the serious cookbook lover who has everything. . . . [T]he go-to manual of the French home kitchen.”—San Francisco Chronicle “[A] tidy how-to treatise on traditional (and ambitious) home cooking by a working mother in Paris in the first half of the 20th century.”—New York Times Magazine “[A] fascinating work, at once an encyclopedia of the basic techniques of cooking and a snapshot of French cuisine as it existed in the early 20th century.”—Los Angeles Times “[A]n important book for both food lovers and cooks, with fine explanations of exactly how to prepare the classic French dishes we Americans already love (and a few not yet discovered).”—Traditional Home “A lasting feast for your foodie friends.”—Budget Living “One of the most detailed, interesting, well-written, and technically proficient books for the French home cook. . . . I learned one hundred times more from it than I did from Escoffier and other great chefs.”—Madeleine Kamman “Julia Child . . . had been much influenced by Mme. Saint-Ange, who in the 1920s wrote step-by-step instructions that guided French women through the intricacies, and also the simplicities, of cuisine bourgeoise.”—Corby Kummer, The Atlantic “Finally, this great book has been translated. My French edition has lost its cover from thirty years of almost constant use. LA BONNE CUISINE DE MADAME E. SAINT-ANGE is filled with good sense, logic, and boundless information about the worlds best home cooking, and it is deeply grounded in the traditions and techniques that define a great cuisine. Its not just a book of recipes, but helps us master a subtle and immensely satisfying art.”—James Peterson, author of Sauces"
and a depth of culinary knowledge that have rarely been equaled. At first glance her book appears inordinately long, but she carries us without faltering. Some recipes may take a couple pages of dense print to explain, but at the end you know you will emerge triumphant, with perfection on the plate.”—Anne Willan, founder of École de Cuisine La Varenne

“Among its many treasures, this marvelous book offers as clear a picture as we can ever hope to get of the workings of the French home kitchen at a time when the meals that came from it were justly the pride of France. The supernaturally knowledgeable Madame Saint-Ange was to her country what Fannie Farmer was to America, but she had the better tools and the better cuisine to work with, and she possessed a forthright Gallic charm entirely her own. For decades, the absence of this book in English translation has been a culinary embarrassment. Paul Aratow has now decisively changed all that, for which he has my endless thanks.”—John Thorne, author of Simple Cooking and Pot on the Fire

“With his masterful translation of LA BONNE CUISINE DE MADAME E. SAINT-ANGE, Paul Aratow has done a great service to lovers of food, food lorists, and curious cooks everywhere. Its a Joy of Cooking and a Mastering the Art of French Cooking stitched together with dishes from the French family home—all wrapped into one comprehensive volume that will entice and intrigue anyone interested in one of the major foundations of our new American cooking.”—Victoria Wise, former chef of Chez Panisse

“Styles of cuisine may change, but the fundamentals are forever. There is more commonsense basic cooking instruction in this book than in most libraries.”—Russ Parsons, Los Angeles Times food columnist and author of How to Read a French Fry from

**Personal Review: La Bonne Cuisine de Madame E. Saint-Ange: The Original Companion for French Home Cooking**

Well, what can I say. I'm a sucker for a good historical cookbook, and this may be the greatest one I've reviewed.

In retrospect, I'm seriously disappointed it took me this long to get a copy. I've wanted it for a while, ever since I first saw it on the shelf, and it is pretty much everything it claims -- the best of the early 20th century French kitchen, and so obviously the spiritual forebear of Mastering The Art of French Cooking that it's easy to see how Child, Beck, and Bertholle got so carried away in the early manuscripts. Though its teaching value is somewhat limited by virtue of the fact that 21st century American kitchens simply aren't that much like their French counterparts of 80 years ago,
Saint-Ange's technique is still solid, if outdated. Her food science is a bit lacking -- "sealing in the juices" when grilling meat appears here, as it has in a great many other cookbooks despite its inaccuracy -- but when you allow for the age of the text, this really isn't so big a deal as all that.

The historical aspect is very important in one regard though -- the baking recipes may prove to be borderline useless for a modern cook, since the ovens St-Ange worked with didn't have temperature controls. (In that regard, modern books on hearth cooking like The Bread Builders or The Old Sturbridge Village Cookbook would be a little better, so that you can learn the necessary skills first before trying the recipes.) Those reviews telling you that it's not a book for beginners -- this is very true. It's a book for kitchen geeks, especially the historically minded.

All that said, there’s a lot of odd and cool recipes in here that are definitely worth a look, and unlike a lot of other cookbook translation projects, Aratow left the original metric measurements in the text, so you don't have to mess around with awkwardly-converted US measurements. (Not that this is going to come up much, but you steampunks out there might find this one particularly useful for themed dinners.)

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