



Fannie in the Kitchen: The Whole Story From Soup to Nuts of How Fannie Farmer Invented Recipes with Precise Measurements

Deborah Hopkinson , Nancy Carpenter (Illustrator)

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Marcia was *trying* to help her mama. So maybe balancing on top of a tower of chairs to dip candles wasn't such a good idea. And perhaps her biscuits worked better as doorstops than dessert. Still, does her mama *really* need to hire a mother's helper?

Then Fannie Farmer steps into their kitchen, and all of a sudden the biscuits are dainty and the griddle cakes aren't quite so...al dente. As Fannie teaches Marcia all about cooking, from how to flip a griddle cake at precisely the right moment to how to determine the freshness of eggs, Marcia makes a wonderful new friend. Here's the story "from soup to nuts" -- delightfully embellished by Deborah Hopkinson -- of how Fannie Farmer invented the modern recipe and created one of the first and best-loved American cookbooks. Nancy Carpenter seamlessly incorporates vintage engravings into her pen, ink, and watercolor illustrations, deliciously evoking the feeling of a time gone by.

Fannie in the Kitchen: The Whole Story From Soup to Nuts of How Fannie Farmer Invented Recipes with Precise Measurements Details

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Cheryl says

My library had this in general 'Easy' picture-books. It's a little long and advanced for tots, and also could be considered biography or even cooking/nutrition. I found it fascinating, and found the unique art style charming. I will check for more by both author and illustrator, even though I chose this because of subject.

Dolly says

Our girls love to help me cook in the kitchen and baking is especially a useful activity, as it involves math, precise measurements and following directions. I love that they are learning how math is used in everyday life and I love even more that they are learning to be good cooks. Perhaps one day soon they can cook a whole meal for me.

I thought this book was very well done and I loved the creativity of breaking the book up into seven 'courses.' I enjoyed learning about Fannie's life and the way that she transformed cooking as a whole. I love that she encouraged Marcia to cook and taught her the importance of following a recipe. The watercolor and pen-and-ink illustrations are very nicely detailed and give the impression of an older era.

I originally wanted to label this book as nonfiction, but I see that it's in the JFIC section of our library and the author put it in her historical fiction section on her website, so some of the story may be fiction. In any case, we really enjoyed reading this story together and our girls are eager to try her recipe for griddle cakes (copied below.)

This story was selected as one of the books for the June 2010 - Culinary Delights reads at the Picture-Book Club in the Children's Books Group here at Goodreads.

Fannie Farmer's Famous Griddle Cakes Recipe

Ingredients:

2 cups flour
1/4 cup sugar
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 tablespoon baking powder
1 egg
2 cups milk (more or less as needed)
2 tablespoons melted butter

Directions:

1. Mix and sift the dry ingredients.
2. Beat the egg slightly and add milk.
3. Pour slowly on dry ingredients, and stir vigorously, adding more milk, if necessary, to make the batter just thin enough to pour.
4. Add butter.

5. Drop by spoonfuls or pour from pitcher onto heated and greased griddle or frying pan using medium heat. When puffed, full of bubbles and the underside is browned, turn and brown the other side.

Serve with maple syrup and additional butter.

Serves 6-8

Jessica says

A picture-book about Fannie Farmer, known for her creation of one of the first modern recipes. The book is from the point of view of Marcia, the older daughter of the Shaw family, who gets to know Fannie when she moves in to cook for the family when a new baby arrives. Fannie ends up writing down her recipes to help Marcia learn to cook and finds that she has the ability to spread her cooking knowledge throughout Boston.

I don't know how historically accurate the actual story is - isn't that terrible, I can't even enjoy a kids book without questioning its historical authenticity - however, at the end of the book the author gives a little bio about Fannie Farmer and I got so excited talking to my daughter about an actual historical figure. Although I don't think I've gone very far in inspiring her toward the field of history as she won't let me read the bio page anymore.

The book also provides a Fannie Farmer recipe for 'griddle cakes' that we will be trying out tomorrow morning!

Brenda says

I was really surprised to see that this book has a copyright of 2001. From illustrations to story line this was my favorite of the three books I read. I found that even I use some of the hints and tips framed on the walls and discussed in the story. It reminded me a lot of cooking with my grandma especially when they were making pancakes. My grandma always used to tell me to look for the bubbles.

Kathryn says

Loved this little book! The illustrations really did it for me--apparently the illustrator took vintage (turn-of-the-century) illustrations and then manipulated them on her computer to personalize the faces to fit the story and make it more "picture-book" oriented. They are so much fun and I love the style! The story itself is engaging, too, especially for anyone who loves to cook--and is good encouragement for budding young chefs, too. It made me want to learn more about Fannie Farmer and add her cookbook to my collection. (The "Fannie's Tips" on each page are excerpts and what fun they are!)

Karen says

Going to try to make the griddle cakes recipe in the back of the book for breakfast tomorrow with Ellie..krb
3/13/16

2C flour, 1/4C sugar, 1 tsp salt, 1 1/2 tbs baking powder, 1 egg, 2C milk, 2 tbs melted butter. Mix dry ingredients; beat egg, add mik, and pour slowly on first mixture. Beat thoroughly and add butter.

Kathryn says

The story of Fannie Farmer and how she wrote her cookbook told with delightful illustrations. There is even a recipe on the last page for griddle cakes!

Christy says

Marcia was trying to help her mama. So maybe balancing on top of a tower of chairs to dip candles wasn't such a good idea. And perhaps her biscuits worked better as doorstops than dessert. Still, does her mama really need to hire a mother's helper?

Then Fannie Farmer steps into their kitchen, and all of a sudden the biscuits are dainty and the griddle cakes aren't quite so...al dente. As Fannie teaches Marcia all about cooking, from how to flip a griddle cake at precisely the right moment to how to determine the freshness of eggs, Marcia makes a wonderful new friend. Here's the story "from soup to nuts" -- delightfully embellished by Deborah Hopkinson -- of how Fannie Farmer invented the modern recipe and created one of the first and best-loved American cookbooks. Nancy Carpenter seamlessly incorporates vintage engravings into her pen, ink, and watercolor illustrations, deliciously evoking the feeling of a time gone by.

Relyn says

This was a terrific book. The art was wonderful and so was the story. I love the peek into a piece of history most of us don't know about. I plan to use it to introduce a mini-unit on biographies. It's that good.

Ann says

This was an insightful book into the development of the first cookbook (funny, I'd never really thought about them not existing). I liked the story of how the young girl grew from her dislike of the new chef, Fannie (since Fannie would take over her duties of helping the mom) to realizing that she could learn something from Fannie, and maybe Fannie wasn't so bad after all.

The illustrations were fun and whimsical (though the girl herself I found a little too old looking) and the text was fun, too. I especially liked "Fannie's tips" on cooking throughout.

Crystal Marcos says

I really enjoyed this book. I was transported into the 1800's in a matter of seconds. I found the story fun to read and quite charming. I especially enjoyed Marcia's character. I think it was great how the artist started and finished the book with a licking of a dish showing Marcia learns to cook as wonderfully as Fannie. I learned a few things. My parents just got chickens recently and I also started going to the farmer's market. It is great to have additional ways to check for good eggs. I have to say, I am more of a waffle girl myself. I did find the pancake recipe at the end a recipe I would try for my husband.

Kari says

I forgot how much I liked this picture book biography of Fannie Farmer until I reread it to Little a. This is a fun look into the life of the woman credited by most with the creation of the modern recipe. I also enjoy the bonus story of Marcia woven into the beginning of the cookbook.

Karol says

Fannie Farmer is a name I've known my entire life, but I didn't know much about her, other than a vague association with cooking and baking. I believe I have seen Fannie Farmer cookbooks a few times . . .

What I loved about this picture book was how the story of something relatively mundane (learning to measure ingredients) was made quite interesting through the viewpoint of a little girl experiencing sibling jealousy towards a brand new baby.

The little girl learned that cooking was not "magical", but could be learned and could be relatively scientific with precise measurements. She gained self-esteem by learning new skills that the entire family enjoyed. And in the process, the reader learns about who Fannie Farmer was, and how she was inspired to teach others to cook.

The author's afterward gives some interesting context, and the pancake recipe will most definitely be given a try.

Lisa Vegan says

Now I'm wondering if Fannie Farmer's cookbook is one of the cookbooks my mother used.

This is a charming book. It's funny and informative too. Getting to know Farmer via the daughter of the house where she's arrived as a mother's helper makes this woman and her cooking especially interesting for children.

The illustrations are perfect. They look vintage. They're funny: Marcia sitting on a very dangerous pile of things to make long candles, Marcia sulking about Fannie coming into their house with her disapproving facial expression reflected in several pieces of glassware on the table, the cat with a pancake on its head, etc. etc. The details in each picture are fun to view.

The story (despite the appreciated author's note at the back, I'm not sure how much of this is non-fiction vs. historical fiction) rings so true, from Marcia's jealousy of Fannie and of the new baby, to Fannie's cooking

and decision to write down precise instructions for her recipes, to Fannie's teaching, first in Marcia's house where she's a mother's helper, then going on to become a cooking teacher at the Boston Cooking School, then on to writing her landmark cook book.

I love how each short "chapter" in this short picture book has meal related titles. Six chapters: First Course (The Soup), Second Course: A Small Success, Third Course: The Griddle Cake Mistake, Fourth Course: The Egg Disaster, Fifth Course: An Excellent Idea, and Sixth Course: Marcia Shaw, Mater Chef. And, in an informative note at the end: Seventh Course (The Nuts): More About Fannie Farmer. There's also a recipe in the back for Fannie Farmer's Famous Griddle Cakes.

This is a delightful book and I'm very grateful to the Children's Books group; it's one of the June selections for its Picture Books Club. I'd most likely never have read it otherwise and I'm so glad that I did.

Casandria says

Interesting and fun and beautifully illustrated! I put Fannie's cookbook on hold already.
