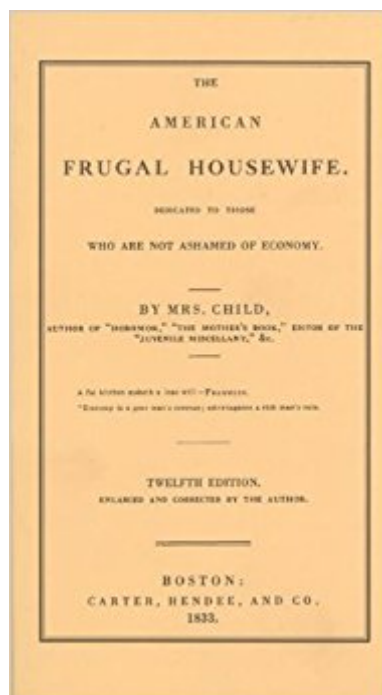




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# American Frugal Housewife: Dedicated To Those Who Are Not Ashamed Of Economy (Cooking In America)



## Synopsis

First published in 1828, Lydia Maria Child's *The American Frugal Housewife* was an extremely popular nineteenth-century manual for homemakers. Interesting recipes and remedies, advice on parenting and the myriad responsibilities of housekeeping are all put forth in straightforward, no-nonsense, Yankee prose. From 1832-1845, this popular book went through thirty-two editions.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Lydia Maria Child (1802-1880) was an American abolitionist, women's rights activist, Indian rights activist, novelist, and journalist. Her 1833 book *An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans* was the first anti-slavery work printed in America in book form, while her *American Frugal Housewife*, first published in 1828, was a wildly popular nineteenth-century manual for homemakers. Other works from Child, who is best remembered for her Thanksgiving poem "Over the River and Through the Woods," include *The Mother's Book*, *The Girl's Own Book*, and *The Family Nurse*.

Awsome book for those interested in homestead living. Lots of ideas how things were done almost 175years ago, with comments about the doctrine of living very frugally. The reason not 5 stars is because some of the jargon is so old that I am not sure what is being referred to, or some recipes call for a bucket of this or a mug of that; measurements are a guess in 2017 lingo.

Do I have anything in common with a Massachusetts housewife from 1832? This book is "Dedicated to those who are not ashamed of economy." Sounds like rural Maine where I live...

hmmmm....Nothing should be thrown away, neither TIME nor MATERIALS. Replete with Benjamin Franklin's sayings like "Time is money" "Nothing is cheap that we do not want" and "A fat kitchen maketh a lean will." "Self-denial, in proportion to the narrowness of your income, will be the happiest and most respectable course for you and yours." Can we "prove, by the exertion of ingenuity and economy, that neatness, good taste, and gentility, are attainable without great expense"? Keeping busy: knitting, "patchwork" (quilting), preparing and braiding straw for hats, making feather fans. "A child of six years old can be made useful...help[ing] others..." There are some religious overtones here. "Conduct [rather than means] is the real standard of respectability." Chapters include: making soap, simple remedies (some scary ones like ointment of ground worms and putting sugar of lead with one gill of rose-water for sore [nursing] nipples - !), common cooking (everything from whortleberry pie to beer), hints to persons of moderate fortune, furniture, education of daughters (a product of its times, about domestic education), traveling and public amusements, reasons for hard times, how to endure poverty. The Kindle edition of March 17, 2006 has a couple of editing errors (like "except in very rigid weather...") The margins are justified and really nice. This Kindle edition does have an interactive TOC and an interactive index, great features for the price (free : ) All in all, an interesting historical perspective of keeping house within a budget, but don't take all of its advice!!!

This isn't a novel--it's a cookery and home management book from a mid-19th century author with a developed and dry wit. Though 160 years old, the practical advice throughout is still useful to a modern homemaker, and with a little effort, you'll find things to implement in your own household. I firmly believe it's a must-have for anyone setting up housekeeping... I gave my daughter her own copy upon her marriage this summer, and she was tickled.

Do you have an abundance of feathers? Tired of your kerchiefs fading? Are your children full of shenanigans? Well, this is the book for you! Okay, modern American women may not be able to relate (because we aren't just housewives anymore and because of technology), but Mrs. Childs does have matter-of-fact advice that many of us need to pay attention to. For example, she speaks positively of education being the foundation for all children, and she also speaks of assigning children chores (what are those?) to complete with their brothers and sisters (because other

children can or may be bad influences if they have nothing to occupy their time). I enjoyed how she spoke of living under our means, which is something that we rarely do in a world full of credit cards and 0% financing for blah, blah number of months. She believes that sickness should be the only "extra" spent out of the strict budget. With this being said, I would have enjoyed reading this better if the information was better organized (I read about preserving eggs and her trip to the mechanic all in one paragraph). Perhaps I could absorb the information better if it had bullets? I don't know, but I do know that this is worth reading, especially since it is free on Kindle!

"The true economy of housekeeping is simply the art of gathering up all the fragments, so that nothing be lost. I mean fragments of time as well as materials. Nothing should be thrown away so long as it is possible to make any use of it. However trifling that use may be; and whatever be the size of a family every member should be employed either in earning or saving money." This is for the most part, the only proper "Introduction" that the reader encounters when starting "The American Frugal Housewife, for Ms. Lydia Maria Francis Child plunges right in and begins dishing out advice left and right, providing a veritable flood of information. She advises, for example, that children not be allowed to frolic about until 13 or 14 years of age. "This is not well. It is not well for the purses and patience of parents; and it has a still worse effect on the morals and habits of the children. Begin early is the great maxim for everything in education. A child of six years old can be made useful and should be taught to consider every day lost in which some little thing has not been done to assist others." Other advice consists of how to economize and how to keep what you have in good repair. Everything from stockings to hearths, from apples to sausages. In addition, there is medical advice, and instructions on how to cook a variety of foods. Everything from porridges to cows brains, herbed wines to pies. STEWED PRUNES. Stew them very gently in a small quantity of water till stones slip out. Physicians consider them safe nourishment in fevers. BEANS AND PEAS. Baked beans are a very simple dish, yet few cook them well. They should be put in cold water, and hung over the fire, the night before they are baked. In the morning, they should be put in a colander, and rinsed two or three times; then again placed in a kettle, with the pork you intend to bake, covered with water, and kept scalding hot, an hour or more. A pound of pork is quite enough for a quart of beans, and that is a large dinner for a common family. The rind of the pork should be slashed. Pieces of pork alternately fat and lean, are the most suitable; the cheeks are the best. A little pepper sprinkled among the beans, when they are placed in the bean-pot, will render them less unhealthy. They should be just covered with water, when put into the oven; and the pork should be sunk a little below the surface of the beans. Bake three or four hours. THE SKINNY::: To be perfectly honest, there is some sound

advice here. Some of it inspired by Ben Franklin, and some of it coming from friends and articles read by the author. I found this an absolutely fascinating book that gives some wonderful insight into the daily life of early American families. We get to see what the concerns of housewives were, and how life was lived amongst a class of people -- the less well-off -- that is frequently overlooked by historical studies. Ms. Child was born in 1802. She was raised by a strict Calvinist father and later she married a lawyer who proved to be an improvident dreamer who at times was imprisoned for his debts. As a consequence she knows frugality quite well. *The American Frugal Housewife* is extremely well written, and was extremely well received at the time it was first put up for sale. In fact, it was republished 27 times between 1835 and 1841. I HIGHLY recommend this work to students of history and those who are interested in early American life. As for the "Kindle" format, I must say that this particular version comes with 'highlights', some of which are definitions. These are easy to access or ignore. (Which is why I can't tell you what they all are.) Being a FREE book it's hard to complain, but I should note that there are images from the original book that don't appear in the Kindle copy. They pertain to the parts of animals -- rumps, chops, etc.-- and aren't particularly valuable. But if you are curious you can find them at GoogleBooks and Archive-dot-org, both of whom have their own free copies. ASIN: B002RKTKXOPam T~pageinhistory

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