EVERYONE'S IN THE KITCHEN WITH JULIA
By Lewis H. Lapham

T"n the American housewives the art of French cooking seems an impenetrable riddle, as mysterious as Einstein's theory of relativity and just about as practical. Intimidated by the condescending waiters in first-class French restaurants, they are reluctant to embrace the gastronomic revolution in case it means aunal to the meal. Nevertheless a surprising number of letters, however, arrive from people who know or care nothing about food but prize Mrs. Child's inimitable wit and enjoy her vision of the gossamer veil in the gutter. She is a French woman who lives in a clapboard house, three stories high and 12 minutes walk from the Harvard campus. The walls in her kitchen are lined with menus and recipes, and the windows are filled with flowers and herbs. Mrs. Child's story is a testament to the power of food to bring people together.

Sitting in her garden one day recently, with a tossed salad and a terrine de dinde (turkey), she confessed that as a young woman she was a file clerk. There in 1943 she met her husband, a painter who had been turned into a map maker by the OSS. Russell Morash, now the producer and director of The French Chef, said, "I thought to myself, Who is this madwoman cooking an omelet on a book review set?"

Mr. Child otherwise orders fresh vegetables and selling them to tourists. He married Julia after the war and returned to France as an officer of the U.S. Information Agency. Famous for her language and the better restaurants, she introduced his wife to French cooking. "An intoxicating revelation," she recalls. "I was bibulous for two months."

She indulged herself, and not having any children to care for, she enrolled at the Cordon Bleu, the celebrated French cooking school. She studied with a disciple of the immortal Auguste Escoffier and within six months had learned enough to enter Le Cercle des Gourmettes, a group of trusting Frenchwomen who met twice a month to try out their experiments on one another.

Practiced on students
Together with two other women in the group, Simone Beck and Louisette Bertholle, she then established a cooking school for American housewives and achieved great success. Mrs. Child says, "in having our students practice on.

The book took 12 years to write, the Childs meanwhile moving around Europe as Paul worked at U.S. consulates in Marseilles, Bonn and Oslo. They settled in Cambridge in 1961, the year that Paul retired from government service and Julia's book was published.

Now in its fifth printing, the book has already sold over 100,000 copies at $10 a copy. The critics thought it definitive. Mrs. Child's promise is that French cooking is "neither so long, so rich nor so complicated" that it cannot be accomplished by anybody willing to take the necessary trouble. "It doesn't have to be fancy," she says, "but you have to care about what you buy; squeeze the tomatoes, thin the bottled salad dressing— that sort of thing."

Although she admits to a weakness for frozen Lima beans and canned beets, Mrs. Child otherwise orders fresh vegetables. She eats other foods too, as her breakfast consists of fruit and tea; her complexion freckled. "My mother was a file clerk. I was no good at cooking since I was a little girl," she says. "When I arrived in Cambridge, I was a spy but was sent instead to Ceylon as a file clerk."

In 1943 she met her husband, a painter who had been turned into a map maker by the OSS. Mrs. Child's theory of relativity and just about as practical. Intimidated by the condescending waiters in first-class French restaurants, they are reluctant to embrace the gastronomic revolution in case it means a "toilette of a Russian". Nevertheless a surprising number of letters, however, arrive from people who know or care nothing about food but prize Mrs. Child's inimitable wit and enjoy her vision of the gossamer veil in the gutter. She is a French woman who lives in a clapboard house, three stories high and 12 minutes walk from the Harvard campus. The walls in her kitchen are lined with menus and recipes, and the windows are filled with flowers and herbs. Mrs. Child's story is a testament to the power of food to bring people together.

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She may lose the butter or even drop the turkey in the sink, but Julia Child has won a devoted TV following by combining classic cookery with comedy.
half-done stew simmering in a pot on the stove and the materials for a third stew arranged before her on cutting boards. The demonstration was distinguished by only one minor error. At the moment when Mrs. Child proudly picked up the stew and said with a flourish, "And now we put it in the refrigerator," Mrs. Lockwood flapped her hands excitedly, "Of course I don’t mean the refrigerator," said Mrs. Child, unperturbed, "I mean we put it in the oven.

Her husband, watching from behind the cameras, smiled indulgently. Throughout the filming he busied himself with the mixing of beef extract and water in a wine bottle. Although Mrs. Child uses real wine for her cooking, the synthetic wine is placed on the table setting at the end of the program to save money. ("You don’t have to use liquor," she once informed her audience, "but it’ll taste more French if you do.")

Immediately after Mrs. Child finished her demonstration, the set filled with a crowd of hungry cameramen, secretaries, technicians, assistants and unidentified persons introducing themselves simply as "friends of WGBH." Morash walked in off the fire escape and peered into the pots on the stove. "The best lunch in town," he said, "certainly the best free lunch." While 18 people feasted on the day’s lesson, Mrs. Child watched from a polite distance. "Most of the food in this country is frightful," she said. "It’s because people don’t care enough, just a matter of bad habits.

Living always in the hope of correcting those bad habits, Mrs. Child thinks of herself as a missionary instructing a noble but savage race in a civilized art. The result of her teaching first manifests itself in markets and hardware stores. The morning after her show, grocers find themselves surrounded by women clamoring for whatever Mrs. Child discussed the night before. The requests vary from city to city, because the different stations broadcast her films on different schedules. Thus a lady in San Francisco could be demanding fish heads on the same morning that a lady in New York asks for chicken livers.

Mrs. Child’s own butcher, Jack Savenor, offers similar evidence. He reports that after she cooked a goose on TV, he had a big run on geese. "I mean, how many geese do you think a guy could sell in a year?" he says. "Maybe six, maybe seven. But the week after she works on the goose, I sell sixty-five." Mrs. Child’s photograph, clipped from a newspaper, decorates Savenor’s meat scale. And he takes great pride in her patronage. "She gives us honor; she gives us profit."
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