



# **Danish Cookbooks: Domesticity and National Identity, 1616-1901 (New Directions in Scandinavian Studies)**

*Carol Gold*

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Cookbooks tell stories. They open up the worlds in which the people who wrote and read them once lived. In the hands of a good historian, cookbooks can be shown to contain the markings of political, social, and ideological changes that we conventionally locate outside the kitchen. Over time, cookbooks allow us to trace the course of empires, of social roles, and of new nations. *Danish Cookbooks* draws from three hundred years of cookbooks to trace the growth of a bourgeois consciousness, the development of domesticity and gendered spheres, and the evolution of nationalism and a specific Danish identity from the early seventeenth to the end of the nineteenth century.

Like all prescriptive literature, cookbooks do not merely reflect the changes of the day but also constitute them. Historian Carol Gold reads recipes and cooking instructions for what can they tell us about literacy levels, division of labor in the kitchen and in society, and changes in the gendered aspects of publishing and utilizing cookbooks. Gold explores the authors' instructions for economic and hygienic housekeeping, and their sentiments about Danish identity as spelled out in dishes and spices. Just as the Danish nation would manage the body politic, so women were exhorted to manage the house and ensure the family's physical and moral health. Through the pages of cookbooks-recipes, menus, and table settings-we can chart the growth of a nationalist Denmark and track the development of what it means to be a Dane.

**Carol Gold** is professor of history at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

"A tasty menu of Danish cultural delights served up through an enchanting historical narrative." - Terje Leiren, University of Washington

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