

# For a square meal

## Return with us now to those thrilling days of yesteryear

By Hugh Gallagher  
staff writer

"Square Meals," by Jane and Michael Stern, Alfred A. Knopf, \$17.95.

In these days of fast foods eaten on the run, low-cal salads and the exotic new cuisine, we often long for the satisfying bite of a square meal. Think of it — pot roast with sweet carrots and onions, roast pork with mounds of mashed potatoes, macaroni and cheese just like they used to serve at school and all topped off with a rich devil's food cake or a deep dish apple pie.

Jane and Michael Stern have gone back to find out what Americans have really been eating the last 50 years. "Square Meals" is a funny but affectionate look at American eating habits, covering everything from those solid square meals to the sinful varieties of Jell-O cuisine. The text is tongue-in-cheek but never disrespectful. The title is double-edged suggesting that the food is not only solid but also unsophisticated.

"Square Meals" is full of interesting recipes, but its main focus is on the way behind what we eat. The Sterns have scoured popular cook books, food company promotions, the backs of old boxes and women's club recipe collections to find out what Americans have been eating, not what Julia Child and James Beard have been telling them to eat. They have explored the sociology of food right down to the class structure of hot chocolate — rich kids drank Ovaltine, poor kids got Bosco.

Anyone who grew up in the 1950s or before will appreciate the fun the Sterns had and will have their memories as well as their appetites stimulated.

THE BOOK is divided in keeping with the main focus, by social themes rather than kinds of food. The Sterns remind us of how much we've changed and how much we've stayed the same in our eating and eating habits. They include a bit of history, a setting of time and place for each recipe.

The first section, "Ladies' Lunch," recalls the polite tearooms, the romantic candlelight dinners and afternoon high teas that were a part of another era. The food — light, delicate and fruity — is still with us but the setting has changed a bit. Men, even real men, eat quiche now and tearooms are about as dated as the leather-chair, smoke-filled men's clubs. Here you'll find recipes for cinnamon buns, ambrosia cake, tomato aspic and cheese and crab delight.

Liver and onions is dinner food. Diners, drug store lunch counters and ice cream parlors survive, but they aren't the essence of fast food they used to be. In the '30s, '40s and '50s, customers could get not only the classic American hamburger with fries but the above named liver and crater potatoes (thick, lumpy mashed potatoes with dark brown gravy erupting from the center). "Lunch Counter Cooking" recalls those great foods and advises that as accurate as the recipes are, you won't be able to recreate the true diner taste because your clean frying pan or grill is lacking in character. Here, also, you'll find recipes for school macaroni and cheese, Cincinnati five-way chili and numerous soda fountain favorites.

THE HEART of the book recalls that fine old ritual, the Sunday dinner. Here are the square meals of yesterday, the high calorie meals that were followed by a Sunday afternoon snooze. The recipes include "Monday's Best Pot Roast," country pan-fried chicken (eat your heart out Col. Sanders), roast pork with a rich bourbon-laden stuffing. Those were the days!

The Sterns save their wittiest writing and deepest thinking for a section on "Nursery Food." This is the soft, warm, comforting food of our childhood that we still yearn for in our middle-age and old age.

The Sterns write, "Alone or with a dear friend, cozy is the word. Every effort must be made to induce snugliness."

It is food that reminds us of mother and shuts out the bad old world. The Sterns give detailed instructions on how to butter toast and how to top it with cinnamon or sink it in milk. Banana puddings, oatmeal with brown sugar and after-school gingerbread are here. Also, a number of variations on hot chocolate.

The American cook learned to innovate during World War II when many basics were rationed. The Sterns pay tribute to this special '40s food and those hearty cooks in "Victory Dinner." In addition to the patriotic, staple-saving rookie cookies and military meatballs, the section also contains a recipe for every soldier's favorite breakfast — creamed beef on toast.

For some people,



tying them takes more than a few minutes.

arc  
ASSOCIATES FOR PERMANENT CURE

COUPON  
**SUPERIOR FISH CO.**

For Your Dining Pleasure

New Zealand Orange

Roughy Fillets

Reg. 3.99 lb.

With Coupon Exp. 10-15-84

**SUPERIOR FISH**

Headed by Quality  
327 4th Street  
Royal Oak • 841-8432  
MON-FRI 9-6 SAT 9-5

**MAPLE DRUGS**

FARMINGTON — DRAKESHIRE • 3191 Grand River

PHONE: 471-0136 PACKAGE LIQUOR

FARMINGTON — DOWNTOWN • 2105 Farmington Rd.

PHONE: 478-4132 BEER • WINE

WESTLAND — 3400 FORD RD. Between Veno & Wayne Rd.

PHONE: 779-2200 PACKAGE LIQUOR

WESTLAND — 31201 JOY RD. - Joy & Meridian Rd.

PHONE: 477-9100 PACKAGE LIQUOR

COUPON  
All 12oz CO-PAY PRESCRIPTIONS  
**49¢**  
LIMIT 1 COUPON PER FAMILY

COUPON  
All 12oz CO-PAY PRESCRIPTIONS  
**\$1.49**  
LIMIT 1 COUPON PER FAMILY

It was the 1950s that saw the emergence of modern America. The population shifted from central cities to the suburbs and a new "Cuisine of Suburbia" was born. This cuisine was promoted by Betty Crocker, Kraft cheese, Jell-O and other companies through gimmicks, cookbooks and television spots. It was a cuisine of TV snacks, casseroles and endless varieties of Jell-O salads.

The Sterns believe that Jell-O must be the most important of all American foods. Wherever they went in search of recipes, they found something new they could do with Jell-O. In tribute to this fact, the Sterns end with a section on the wiggly

treat. A highlight here is "Undescended Twinkies," the Hostess cupcake concoction nestled in Jell-O. They also cover patio parties, pizza burgers and cooking with corn flakes. They write that they found "a trove of forgotten flavors and a rumpus room full of fun" in suburbia.

The book is amusingly packaged to mock the Betty Crocker and Better Homes and Garden cook-

books. The illustrations are brilliantly selected — old ads, cartoons, cookbook and magazine illustrations. The effect perfectly matches the tone of the book — funny, a bit sarcastic but also warm and respectful.

This book is good for readers as well as cooks.

The Sterns believe that Jell-O must be the most important of all American foods.



## Pasties!

Beef or Chicken  
Delicious meal to satisfy a hearty appetite!  
**Only \$2.25 for 3**  
(Reg. \$2.55)  
Try our melt-in-your-mouth shortbread  
**PORK PIES • STEAK PIES  
MEAT PIES • PASTRIES**

### Ackroyd's

SCOTTISH BAKE HOUSE  
Birmingham 300 Hamilton Rd. 832-1181  
Redford 23566 Five Mile Rd. 540-3575

### CANADA DRY MIXERS

1 Liter Bottles  
**69¢** Plus Dep.

### MELODY FARMS MILK

Plastic Gallon  
**LO-FAT 1.59  
HOMO 1.89**

### 20% OFF CASE WINES

Mix or Match  
Any Day  
**STOCK UP FOR THE HOLIDAYS!**

### The Wine Chateau

2990 E. Long Lake Rd. • Troy  
Centerbury Square (Next to Shell Gas Station)  
689-8940  
Sunday Liquor Sales • Low Discount Beer Prices

MONDAY-SATURDAY 10-10 • SUNDAY 12-6  
**SPECIALS OF THE WEEK**  
Wednesday Beer Sale  
24 Pack Cans  
We Carry A Wide Variety of Import Beer  
Thursday Wine Sale  
10% Off All Wines  
Excluding Sale Wines  
Look Over Our Fine Selection of Imported Wines

### COKE

Reg. or Diet  
8 Pk., 1/2 liter, Bottles  
**1.99** Plus Dep.

### 7-UP

Reg. or Diet  
8 Pk., 1/2 liter, Bottles  
**1.99** Plus Dep.

### PEPSI

8 Pk., 1/2 liter, Bottles  
**1.99** Plus Dep.

### ORCHARD-10 IGA

24065 ORCHARD LAKE RD.  
Mon.-Fri. 9-9; Sat. 8-9; Sun. 9-5  
**We Feature Western Beef**  
Not Responsible for Errors in Printing

### DOUBLE COUPON

ORCHARD-10 gives you 100% more on all (cents off) manufacturer's coupons up to and including 50¢ face value. Other retailers and free coupons excluded. Limit 1 coupon for any one product. Coupon plus 100% bonus cannot exceed price of the item. All cigarette coupons at face value. Offer in effect now through Sunday, October 14, 1984.

## TRUCKLOAD SAVINGS

5 LBS. OR MORE  
**\$1.39** lb.

1/4 LOIN 7/11 CHOPS  
**\$1.29** lb.

**\$1.29** lb.

**49¢** lb.  
BACKS ATTACHED

**\$1.09** lb.

**\$1.69** 1 lb. pkg.

**\$1.79** 8 pk. 1/2 liter

**69¢** DOZ. CARTON

**88¢** 8oz. Pkg.

**93¢** 29 oz. Can

**59¢** 8 oz. Ctn.

**1.39** 12 oz. pkg.

**\$1.49** lb.

**\$1.39** 12 oz. pkg.

**99¢** 12 oz. jar

**30¢** 1 lb. bag

**50¢** 1 lb. bag

**1.09** 1 lb. jar

**59¢** 1 lb. bag

COUPON  
All 12oz CO-PAY PRESCRIPTIONS  
**49¢**  
LIMIT 1 COUPON PER FAMILY

COUPON  
All 12oz CO-PAY PRESCRIPTIONS  
**\$1.49**  
LIMIT 1 COUPON PER FAMILY