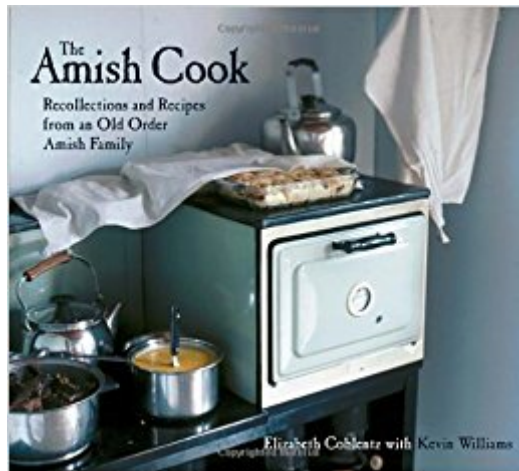


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# The Amish Cook: Recollections And Recipes From An Old Order Amish Family



## Synopsis

Ten years ago, aspiring newspaper editor Kevin Williams convinced Elizabeth Coblentz, an Old Order Amish wife and mother, to write a weekly cooking column called "The Amish Cook." Each week Elizabeth shares a family recipe and discusses daily life on her Indiana farm, spent with her husband, Ben, and their eight children and 32 grandchildren. THE AMISH COOK, a full-color cookbook based on Elizabeth's columns, compiles more than 75 traditional Amish recipes, photographs of the Coblentz farm, practical gardening tips, cherished family tales, and firsthand accounts of traditional Amish events like corn-husking bees and barn raisings. A truly unique collaboration between a simple Amish grandmother and a modern-day newspaperman, THE AMISH COOK is a poignant and authentic look at a disappearing way of life. "The Amish Cook" column is syndicated in more than 100 newspapers nationwide. Elizabeth wrote THE AMISH COOK in longhand by the light of a kerosene lamp. Elizabeth has been a writer for the Amish newspaper, The Budget, for 40 years.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Having been born and raised on the fringes of the Pennsylvania Dutch heartland in Lancaster County, and having grandparents who were close enough to the Pennsylvania Dutch lifestyle as to consider myself half 'Dutch', this book deals with a subject very, very close to home for me. The most important thing for a prospective reader to know about this book is that it is as much, if not more so a book of Recollections than it is a book of Recipes. In fact, one will get much more from

this book if they approach it as they would Jacques Pepin's book 'The Apprentice' rather than as they would a book of Pennsylvania Dutch recipes by Betty Groff or Mary Showalter. The book most similar to this that I have read recently is Sallie Ann Robinson's 'Gullah Home Cooking the Daufuskie Way'. Both books describe a subsistence farming way of life, with recipes that reflect that fact. In reviewing Robinson's book, I thought it was unlikely I would ever actually make any of the recipes in the book. The very same thing is true of the recipes by Elizabeth Coblentz. That is not because I don't like Pennsylvania Dutch cooking. I like it as well or better than Southern cooking or Spanish cooking or Irish cooking. Coblentz' recipes are pictures of how an Old Order Amish family lives. As such, they contain a lot of surprises for us 'English'. On the one hand, when a recipe calls for mayonnaise, it specifies homemade mayonnaise. No surprise there. But, on the next page is a recipe that calls for a can of condensed cream of mushroom soup and American cheese. Equally surprising is the use of margarine. Not surprising is the large amounts of white bread, bacon, potatoes, lard, processed cheeses, butter, and sugar in the recipes. Missing are recipes with oysters, recipes for chow-chow, and recipes for corn pie. All this means is that the book is about the Amish and how they actually eat and live. It is not especially about providing you, dear reader with yet another recipe for Snickerdoodles. The real reward from this book is in the stories of life in this Amish family. These people seem to be immensely wealthy with the riches that come from a very large, closely-knit family. Ben and Elizabeth Coblentz have eight children and, at the time the book was written, 33 grandchildren. Their daily life begins at 4:00 AM and that is accepted as a matter of course. They don't even have alarm clocks. That is just the time they naturally get up. Many Amish are no longer full time farmers. Several family members work at trades or in local factories because of rising land prices and falling farm produce prices. This leads to some odd twists in customs designed to keep technology at arm's length. But, it does not seem like hypocrisy, as the heart of the matter is that regardless of how close technology comes to their life outside the home, it is always kept outside the home. Much of the book is facsimile copies of Ms. Coblentz' columns published in some 90 newspapers around the country. Ms. Coblentz' sentence structure and choice of words in these columns is worth the price of admission. Sometimes it sounds like it is coming straight from the 16th or 17th century. Other times it is as drolly modern as you would not expect from an Amish pen. That must be the influence of the Bic ballpoint Elizabeth uses to handwrite each column. The book also contains many sidebars on various phases of Amish life. All are informative. Most are surprising to those with a conventional picture of the Amish. The story of how the co-author, Kevin Williams, enlisted Ms. Coblentz to do this column and how he managed to sell the column and create this book are nifty stories too. This is all genuine stuff. The photographs are all

skillfully taken, however, many photographs of cooking tableau are obviously staged. The remaining photographs are of farm buildings, hanging laundry, birdhouses, and growing crops, all under a bright blue sky. The Amish do not allow themselves to be photographed. Shirley Corriher gets it exactly right in her blurb on the dustjacket when she says 'This is a beautiful and moving book that you will remember for more than just down-to-earth recipes'. Put this book next to your Showalter volumes and read it to warm your insides with words. Recommended. I give four stars to be sure you stop and look a bit at these thoughts before buying something with a mistaken impression of what this book is about.

This book gives such a delightful insider's view of Amish life that it far surpasses most of the books about Amish life in print. Then you get the bonus of the recipes! You will find yourself laughing and mourning with Elizabeth as she journeys this life plainly.

Not only is this book a great read about the personal day to day going ons of Mrs. Coblentz, it is also a great help in the kitchen. Without meaning to, the book seems to pull you into their lives and culture. We are already using many of the recipes in our own home. The pictures are beautiful and leaving you wanting to peek more into their lives. If you are interested in the Amish, as I am, I found this book to be a nice way to be that "fly on the wall"

When I lived in New Jersey, I got a chance to go to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and visit the Amish settlement there. It's beautiful countryside, with acres and acres of green farms. I loved the food, most of which seemed to come from the family's farm or the neighbor's farm. When I saw this book was highly lauded, I made sure to get a copy. Boy, was I disappointed. Maybe my idea of Old Order Amish is wrong. These are certainly not the things I had in Pennsylvania. In fact, these recipes strongly remind me of the kind of things you see in the Better Homes & Gardens or Betty Crocker cookbooks. Not much in the way of going back to the original technique, and more modern foods than I thought would be represented. I get that the Amish do most of the things we do, but I already have enough recipes for pizza. However, I would love more recipes for traditional Amish pies, roasts, and side dishes. This is not that book. I'm still looking for that book, unfortunately. The pictures are beautiful though.

I was looking for the Beverly Lewis cookbook when I spied this on a shelf at the book store. I looked through it and saw that it was a mix of recipes, stories, and respectful photos. I bought it right then,

and have tried several recipes two of my faves are for Oatmeal Pie and homemade bread. I saw that some people were disappointed in the recipes, (with some appearing to be very "English") But I have noticed that in many of the Amish cookbooks, the truth is that they do eat some of those dishes and they do use some premade items depending on their district. Overall I was very delighted in this book, it is much more than a cookbook, and I love the stories and information in it too

This book is packed with great recipes, but what makes it even more unique are the little narrative commentaries included with each recipe about the Amish way of life. I really love this book!

This book is very pretty, with lots of huge photos. It's really more than a cookbook - it includes many columns about the author's Amish life. Made me want to live on a farm!

I found the book lovely, restful, funny, and full of wonderful tips. Elizabeth, her family and her community really come to life on the pages. I very much enjoyed this book.

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