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Exploring evidence of lost and forgotten Irish food traditions in Irish cookbooks 1980-2015

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ABSTRACT

A study by the Irish Food Board, Bord Bia, in 2008 outlined some lost and forgotten food traditions in Ireland based on the evidence from a pre-selected expert group. This paper explores the inclusion of traditional Irish foods within seventy-nine Irish cookbooks, published between 1980 to 2015. Extant academic and grey literature on food traditions and cookbooks, together with the content of the cookbooks, identified a gradual decline in the presence of certain traditional Irish foods, to the point where they could be deemed lost or forgotten. The study, however, also finds a re-emergence in the most recent period. A notable omission in both the corpus of cookbooks, highlighting their aspirational function, and the Bord Bia report, was bacon and cabbage, a traditional dish closely associated with Ireland. This paper outlines the importance of documenting food traditions in order to pass on this knowledge to future generations.

KEYWORDS

Ireland; cuisines; culinary traditions; heritage; cookbooks as sources

Introduction

There is a current global interest in foods that are artisanal, local, traditional, seasonal and sustainable, and that tell a story.¹ This may be seen, for example, in phenomena such as the Nordic Food Movement. However, this was not always the case. During the 1980s and 1990s ‘fusion’ and ‘ethnic’ foods were extremely popular, along with the dominant presence of French haute cuisine internationally.² In Ireland, the threat to ‘lost and forgotten foods’ and ‘traditional foods’ were clearly credible enough in 2008 for Bord Bia³ to carry out the in-depth study that included two hundred expert participants. The Bord Bia study group included representatives/experts from Teagasc (the Agriculture and Food Development Authority), The Irish Seed Savers Association, The Rare Breeds Survival Trust, The Irish Countrywomen’s Association, and Slow Food Ireland. The purpose of the investigation ‘was to build an authentic general picture of food production techniques in the era before the forces of modernisation would change Irish society fundamentally.’⁴ Lost and forgotten traditional foods and skills are distinguished and characterized as being food of Irish cultural identity, that have become neglected, are in decline or are extinct.

Lost and forgotten Irish food traditions were categorized as outlined in [Figure 1](#), and examples of products considered unique were documented within each section. These

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products are distinctive, focusing on the traditional method of production where ‘the craft aspect of production is emphasised.’⁵ They are foods and skills that are intrinsic to Irish food culture and heritage, where the aim should be that they would be preserved and passed on to the next generations. Referring to cuisine *bourgeoise*, food historian Barbara Ketcham Wheaton pointed out that without continuous documentation of such foods, future generations may not be able to tell the difference between authentic and manipulated food traditions, asking ‘who will complain when no one knows how to say what is wrong?’⁶

The period under discussion (1980–2015) encompasses the mass out-migration as a result of recession in the 1980s, the Celtic Tiger era (a term referring to Ireland’s rapid economic growth between 1995 and 2007), the growth and influence of mass media, and the growing phenomenon of Irish celebrity chefs. It coincides with a time when Irish cookbooks were more widely available (statistics began from 2002 onward).⁷ The period 1980–2015 also witnessed the introduction of a vast range of ethnic foods which have become part of the cultural fabric that defines modern day Irish life.⁸

This paper explores the presence of lost and forgotten foods and traditional foods and skills in seventy-nine Irish cookbooks published between 1980–2015. Although it is a substantial sample, it does not include every Irish cookbook published during this period. The selected number of cookbooks was evenly divided at time-intervals according to year of publication, assessing how food habits and trends developed over time. This avoided data saturation within a particular era. The intervals included 1980–1994 (pre-Celtic Tiger), 1995–2007 (Celtic Tiger), and 2008–2015 (post-Celtic Tiger). The cookbooks analysed were available in both the National Library of Ireland, and the libraries in Dublin Institute of Technology.

The chronological scope of the study was based on research which has found significant changes to Irish eating habits over the past three decades, due to modern transformation and mass migration.⁹ The project’s objectives include; (1) to evaluate academic articles, scholarly books, and grey literature to assess the impact actual events at that time had on the presence of traditional foods, (2) to evaluate the presence of traditional foods and skills in Irish cookbooks, (3) and to validate the claim that cookbooks mirror socio-historical events at the time of been published. Many food historians and scholars¹⁰ value cookbooks as sources of research when examining societal trends associated with food habits within a certain group of people at a particular point in time. They support the claim that cookbooks tend to reflect social and historical events that took place at the time of the cookbooks been published. Therefore, the rationale for reviewing the literature is to examine actual events that took place during the thirty-five-year-period that might have influenced the authors’ narrative or perspective. The grey literature includes the examination of consumer insight reports such as Bord Bia’s¹¹ ‘What Ireland ate last night’, a study representative of Irish eating habits, and also reports compiled by other advisory services such as Teagasc, Grant Thornton, and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland. This will assist in drawing valid conclusions at a later stage.

Defining the term ‘traditional Irish food’

Ireland has a wide diversity of food identified as being traditionally Irish. A 2009 Teagasc report included Salted Ling, the Waterford Blaa (a type of bap), Yellowman (a type of toffee), Bacon and Ham, Spiced Beef, Soda Bread, Boxty, Connemara and Wicklow Lamb, Mutton Pie, Brawn, Eels, Smoked Salmon, Kippers, Apple Tart, Cabbage,

<p>Specialised/Artisan/SME (Irish Small and Medium Enterprises Association)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fish smoking Cheese making Preserves Breads Cider, apple juice Blood puddings Seaweed Spiced beef 	<p>Ten of the best traditional recipes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boxty with apple and raisins Blood pudding served with potato cake and apples Traditional brown bread with dillisk Nettle and (heritage) potato soup Rare-breed bacon dish with Irish wildflower honey Dexter or moiled beef dish Smoked fish dish Blackberry and apple jam Recipes for lobster and egg platter Wild mackerel sautéed with seaweed, condiment and farmhouse butter
<p>Indigenous breeds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kerry Cow Moiled Cattle Dexter Cattle Galway Sheep 	<p>Rarer delicacies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brawn, a type of formed ham made from seasoned, minced meat from a well stewed pig's head 'Haddock' a type of pudding of pig intestines, oats and pork scratchings Goose blood fried with mushrooms Cider Homemade whiskey
<p>Regional specialities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boxty Seaweed Shellfish Spiced Beef <p>Almost extinct/Unquantifiable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Home killed and cured pigs Homemade blood puddings Farmhouse butter Poitin/farmhouse whiskey 	<p>Products with Protected Geographical Indications (PGI)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clare Island Salmon Connemara Hill Lamb Timoleague Brown Pudding Waterford Blaa <p>Protected Designations of Origin (PDO).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imokilly Regato Oriel Sea Salt

Figure 1. Key food traditions and skills categorized by Bord Bia (2008).

Buttermilk, Potatoes, Carrageen (*Chondrus Crispus*) and Stout in a list of traditional Irish foods.¹² Although Bord Bia's 2008 report did not include all of the traditional foods subsequently outlined by Teagasc in 2009, many food writers¹³ also consider the foods listed by Teagasc as being an integral part of Irish food tradition. In addition to the lost and forgotten Irish traditional foods, the FSAI (Food Safety Authority of Ireland) noted that traditional foods have legal status and they should be marketed in accordance with legislation. According to the FSAI, the Draft Code of Practice provides 'an agreed set of additional rules for the food industry use of the marketing terms on food.'¹⁴ These include such terms as Artisan, Farmhouse, Traditional and Natural, all of which are legal definitions. This study refers to the FSAI's code of practice by identifying terms associated with genuine traditional foods to determine what is considered 'traditionally Irish' in addition to the Bord Bia 2008 report which included indicators of lost and forgotten Irish traditional foods. This broadened the scope of identifying lost and forgotten Irish traditional foods, and what can be considered as traditional foods when analysing and employing cookbooks as sources.

Traditional Irish food 1980-2015

There is currently a growing interest in Irish traditional food-related research and study, using food as a way of exploring the past. Research undertaken, among others, included studies on 'Irish diplomatic dining' by Mahon; tracking 'the influence of French haute cuisine' on Dublin restaurants and 'recognizing food' as a part of Ireland's cultural heritage by Mac Con Iomaire; assessing Irish 'culinary manuscripts' by Cashman; and exploring 'local and typical' Irish foods by Cowan and Sexton.¹⁵ Cowan and Sexton suggested that the forces of 'modernization' might have had an impact on traditional foods prior to the 1980s. Comparably, Mac Con Iomaire, while acknowledging the influence French haute cuisine has had in Ireland, noted that the introduction of ethnic foods also dominated Irish food trends over the past number of decades. More recently, Ireland's food culture has been transformed.¹⁶ Today's 'Modern Irish cuisine' places Irish produce and ingredients centre stage, celebrates artisan producers on the restaurant menus, while also embracing global techniques and flavour combinations. However, when exploring this phenomenon, challenges included that some Irish food traditions remained overlooked and undervalued as part of Ireland's gastronomic image.¹⁷

For the past number of decades, Irish traditional foods and skills had a long-underestimated focus of attention. Ireland's traditional food culture was never quite as straightforward and simple as other internationally recognized food cultures. Irish food culture has always been quite complex although relatively lesser-known when compared to other food cultures. Fonte¹⁸ notes that from a case study of ten countries, many were found to have a solid local food culture, noting foodstuffs such as *Osyczpek*, a smoked cheese of salted sheep's milk from Poland, and *Utiel-Requena*, a wine produced in a biosphere reserve in Spain. Fonte's study differentiated patterns of local production of food across Europe. Ireland was found to have a local food culture of a lesser extent. Ireland exports 80%¹⁹ of its produce yet has one of the lowest incidences of protections extended to food names. For example, although the 2008 Bord Bia report categorized Protected Geographical Indication (PGIs) and Protected Designation of Origin (PDOs), these indicators are not really that representative of Irish traditional foods or lost dishes. Apart from

the Waterford Blaa, and the Connemara Hill Lamb, PGIs and PDOs do not really hold any value to this argument as they are predominantly used by large companies that do not reflect local or traditional Irish food practice, or in the case of whiskey/poitin appear later than the 2015 cut off of this research. Historically, unlike some countries that processed foods domestically for financial gain, following the rise of the cooperative movement in the late-nineteenth-century,²⁰ Irish people made little investment in traditional domestic food production other than for home consumption. Traditional domestic Irish food production included, among others, the practices of salting pork, smoking fish, making blood puddings, wild game stews, making butter, foraging and using seaweed, baking and frying breads. Many of these traditions are evident in the Schools' Folklore collection or in the poetry or Seamus Heaney as discussed in other papers in the special edition of *Folk Life*.²¹ Such food production, including the wide use of offal, was evident in cookbooks up to the 1980s. Cashman,²² citing authors Marnell et al., Lavery and Allen noted that it was not uncommon to see all parts of an animal utilized in recipes in cookbooks prior to the 1980s.

Ireland became a member of the European Union (EU) in 1973, and from the mid-1980s onwards, the food hygiene legislation enacted in Ireland became more robust.²³ The domestic slaughter of animals, in one's home or in abattoirs, and the sale or consumption of the associated by-products was forbidden without conforming to 'stringent regulations and licensing procedures.'²⁴ By the 1990s, Ireland began to experience the consequences of newly enforced food hygiene laws.²⁵ Stricter legislation and associated costs put many food businesses, including abattoirs, craft butchers, cheese-mongers, and other specialist food manufacturers at risk of closure.²⁶ Traditional practices began to decline, which led food historian Regina Sexton in 1994, to predict the extinction of drisheen (a local County Cork blood pudding) over the course of the following twenty years.²⁷ This judgment was based on the rapid decline in the demand for offal evident at the time. Fourteen years later, the production of drisheen was effectively documented by the Bord Bia 2008 report as being almost extinct. Although still produced in County Cork today, quantities are very limited. As McNally noted in the *Irish Times* in 2019 'even in the era of globalization, drisheen does not seem to have travelled much, except in the occasional suitcase.'²⁸

Over the past three decades, various other traditional foods and skills have been in decline. *Ballach buí*, a salted ballan wrasse speciality of the Aran Islands and Connemara, has declined in popularity.²⁹ Additionally, Doorley suggests that haslet or *hazlett*, a traditional sausage meat loaf, arguably both Irish and British (the latter apparently due to its popularity in Lincolnshire), was only common in 'drab and difficult times.'³⁰ Some cooked meats such as corned beef and hazlet are still popular in certain locations (Plate 1). Sexton points out that 'far from being simple, the story of Irish food is layered with complexities and contradictions where the themes of rejection, continuation, fusion and integration sound a strong presence.'³¹ In the past three decades we have witnessed an influx of behaviours and attitudes that have influenced what we eat. Traditions that were once considered ordinary are now deemed more complex in practice, such as the home preparation of blood puddings.³² According to Doorley, health awareness is among the factors that influenced eating habits, which he suspects might have begun 'at the dawn of the health-conscious 1980s.'³³ In 1994, Sexton³⁴ also suggested that health, diet and nutrition affected the sales of offal, pointing out that open stalls in her native County Cork had drastically disappeared since the 1970s due to hygiene regulations and the

influence of marketing on the public's food-making decisions. A survey by the FSAI³⁵ in 2012, found that 45% of small food businesses believed that food safety standards were stricter than they needed to be, while a survey by Bord Bia³⁶ in 2012 found that up to 30% of people in Ireland claimed to have changed their eating habits in order to be healthier. Furthermore, a Bord Bia consumer insight report 'What Ireland ate last night', a study into evening meal consumption, suggests that Ireland has experienced socio-economic and technological changes which have significantly impacted the general public's attitude on food choice. Although the report notes that the 'classic' meat and two vegetables remains the most frequently eaten evening meal, other dishes of ethnic origin such as Italian, Chinese and Indian, are commonly consumed.³⁷ Consumer choice was influenced by cost and health awareness, but also by globalization and increased domestic technology which resulted in certain food traditions and skills becoming neglected.³⁸



Plate 1. Hazlet on sale in Brooks Market, Riverchapel, Co. Wexford. Source: Máirtín Mac Con Iomaire

Some suggest that the decline in certain food traditions has also transpired due to neglect.³⁹ For example, in 1998, the Mid-Western Health Board published an Irish cookery textbook, *101 Square Meals*, aimed at young people of low income and offering advice on the purchasing and preparation of healthy food.⁴⁰ However, the book does not contribute anything relating to Irish food heritage specifically. As Allen⁴¹ suggests, the home economics curriculum at the time was weak and lacked government and public support in developing a more robust and relevant content. According to Allen, the government and public have encouraged people to concentrate on academic career paths to such a degree that over the past three decades, domestic traditional skills, including food preparation and production have been overlooked. Allen argues that certain food traditions and skills have never received the honour or recognition they should compared to countries such as France, Italy, or Spain, although recently, she adds, the situation is said to have improved. According to Bord Bia⁴² in 2014, 70% of Irish people agreed that it was important to buy local products to support the economy, even if this meant paying a premium price. This suggested a growing interest in Irish and artisan products for a 'combination of reasons like health, provenance, quality as well as a wish to support local enterprises.'⁴³ Farmers' markets began to see higher turnovers in excess of €10 million per annum, and almost 150 farmers' markets were listed compared to less than 100 markets in 2006.

In Ireland, travel, media, diet trends, globalization and industrialization, urbanization, immigration and emigration, and advanced technology have all played an influential role, and have resulted in changing food trends and tastes, which ultimately threatened certain food traditions and skills. Although this research demonstrates patterns and trends associated with traditional foods during the period under study (1980–2015), it also illuminates how eating habits and food trends have altered from the 1980s and the consequences for traditional foods.

Cookbooks as sources for research

Cookbooks have long been recognized as valid sources for culinary researchers, ethnographers and social historians. Mitchell argues that cookbooks are not only culinary manuals, they also reflect eating habits, highlight major historical events, and document change in technology within society.⁴⁴ Although Mitchell claims these cannot always be taken at face value, she affirms cookbook content is often a true depiction of 'response to historical events' that took place. According to Willan et al., cookbooks are 'a collection of recipes – blueprints for a cook to create a dish,' that reflect upon the time in which they were written.⁴⁵ Cookbooks do not generally reflect what people eat, rather they reflect aspirations of what people would like to cook, mirroring wider life experiences, expectations and perspectives at the time of the cookbooks been published.⁴⁶ This is also comparable to the views of Hörandner and Driver who note that the analysis of cookbooks provides socio-historical information.⁴⁷ From past to present, timeless use of recipes, equipment and technology in cookbooks has also been linked to the social class of the author, the audience and their possessions.⁴⁸ Research suggests that many food historians and scholars, including Wheaton and Gold, have demonstrated that cookbooks contain tangible markers of past or present events.⁴⁹ Research conducted by the aforementioned food historians and authors implies that cookbooks can relate to or signify an association with customs, practices, attitude, beliefs or behaviour that exists or

existed within a population over a given period. Cookbooks are therefore valued as sources of research in food studies. More than just a collection of recipes, they reflect broader themes and ideologies in the culture of food and diet associated with a particular group of people at a specific point in time.

Contextual framework

Although some research on historical Irish cookbooks exists,⁵⁰ initial research for this project suggests that modern Irish cookbooks have focused more on a propagation of good cooking of Irish ingredients, and less on the examination of traditional dishes. Food historians and academics who have analysed cookbooks, included the analysis of historical cookbooks by Cashman, historical manuscripts by Mac Con Iomaire and Cashman, feminist discourse by Theopano, Gold and Inthorn, social history by Mitchell, printing by Lehmann, and diet and nutrition by Notaker.⁵¹ Cashman⁵² applied Wheaton's structured approach as a framework for her analysis of three old cookbooks from Ireland. This method is often favoured in the research into historic cookbooks. It is an extensive approach to analysing different meanings in the cookbook, including the lifestyle and social class of the author, its audience and level of technique applied. Wheaton suggests that cookbooks reveal 'secrets', referring to them as being similar to 'magician hats', they reveal more than they seem to contain.⁵³ Wheaton's methodology along with the comparable work of Driver, Mitchell and Gold⁵⁴ have guided this study. Seventy-nine cookbooks published between 1980–2015 were analysed to ascertain the significance that the past three decades have had on eating habits in Ireland throughout an era of modern advancement and mass migration.⁵⁵ The division of cookbooks at time-intervals is discussed in chronological order (see [Figures 2–4](#)). The qualitative cookbook content analysis included the socio-cultural, economic, and political change which emerged from the books' content. It also considered changes and trends that occurred during that period, including those from the food writers' own perspective. Content analysis identified the following five categories: (1) Traditional Irish Recipes, (2) Artisan Produce, (3) Regional Specialities, (4) Rarer Delicacies, and (5) Almost Extinct and/or Unquantifiable Products and Skills.

Findings

Traditional Irish recipes

The literature suggests that the presence of traditional Irish recipes in cookbooks declined from the 1980s onward. During the mid-1980s when the sharpest decline occurred, Ireland was in financial difficulties. It was a period when rural population decreased, and urban population increased. It was also a time when stricter food hygiene laws endangered small business and speciality producers. Gradual decline in presence remained constant throughout the following three decades. There are several reasons for the initial decline in the 1980s, most commonly cited being, health and diet trends and an increased awareness of ethnic foods⁵⁶ all of which influenced a food writer's content.

The frequency of traditional recipes which appeared in the cookbooks were analysed to determine whether they were reflected in the diet of the general Irish population. For

this purpose, the cookbooks' ten most frequently featured recipes were compared with the most frequently eaten dishes featured in a Bord Bia⁵⁷ report on the eating habits of the Irish general public. The Bord Bia report featured evening meals consumed, and therefore did not include dishes popular at other meals of the day such as breakfast. However, it did contribute to comparisons being drawn for the purpose of this research. The ten most popular traditional recipes in the cookbook analysis, in descending order were black pudding, traditional brown bread, smoked salmon, colcannon, carrageen blancmange, Irish soda bread, champ, spiced beef, Irish stew, and boxty.⁵⁸ Bord Bia notes that the meals most frequently consumed at home included the 'classic' meat and two vegetables, various chicken dishes, or pasta, fish or shellfish dishes, 'diner-style' foods, 'Italian', stews, 'Chinese', pie or pastie dishes, and stir fry with meat. The findings from the analysis of cookbooks, when examined closer, did contain certain recipes that reflected the meals most frequently consumed at home. These included such recipes as Irish stew, corned beef and cabbage, and spiced beef. Although the Bord Bia report did not mention the dishes by name within each category such as the variety of 'classic meat' or of 'stew', the results cannot guarantee to what extent traditional food was consumed during this period. Additionally, Bord Bia⁵⁹ acknowledged that 65% of Irish people believe that bacon and cabbage is the dish most synonymous with Ireland, yet this appears to be 'hidden in plain sight' when a clear lack of presence of this national dish is evident in Irish cookbooks. This reinforces what food historians have argued; that cookbooks do not generally reflect what people cook, rather they often reflect aspirations of what people would like to cook.⁶⁰

Artisan produce

In contrast to traditional recipes, artisan produce featured consistently in the cookbooks. Several authors such as Abbott, Crowley, Allen and Campbell,⁶¹ made substantial reference to this category during the periods 1987–1989 and subsequently 2004–2010. Although there were a number of cookbooks analysed between 1989–2004; they contained significantly fewer references to artisan produce. The most frequently referenced artisan products were cheese, traditional bread making and preserves. This was followed by fish smoking and blood puddings. Reference to speciality products in Irish cookbooks revealed a balance, indicating that their presence did not significantly change over the period.

Regional specialities

Reference to regional specialities was well-documented up to the mid-1980s. Thereafter, a gradual decline in presence occurred. Although continuous documentation of regional specialities was evident throughout the last three decades, the rate at which they appeared in cookbooks steadily decreased, most notably from the mid-2000s onwards. Many authors⁶² extensively documented local and regional specialities. There was evidence to suggest that not all cookbook authors were equally receptive. Notably, some high-profile chef-restauranteurs such as Rankin and Rankin, and Gallagher, who published cookbooks during this time, made little or no reference to regional specialities, although paradoxically, they did highlight the importance of sustainability and locality.⁶³ Regional

specialities documented by authors across the seventy-nine cookbooks, from most frequent to least frequent, included Dublin Bay Prawns, Dublin Coddle, Galway Native Oysters, Wicklow Lamb, Kerry Hill Lamb, Killary Bay Mussels, Inishmore Eel, Lough Neagh Eels, Donegal Dulse and Ulster Champ.⁶⁴

Rarer delicacies

Rarer delicacies relate to lost and forgotten traditional Irish foods, such as brawn, cider or homemade whiskey/poitín, as outlined by the 2008 Bord Bia report. These delicacies were evident in recipes by authors, notably Tinne, Fitzgibbon, Allen, Kavenagh, Sexton, and White Lennon.⁶⁵ These items feature predominantly in the cookbooks published between 1980–1995. In the cookbooks from the latter part of the study rarer delicacies are not as evident by name nor in practice. Some food writers⁶⁶ have, however, continued to document their existence. Allen notes that brawn is still produced at Ballymaloe Cookery School. The most commonly documented rarer delicacies, in their respective order, included brawn, collared pig head, sheep head broth, calves' brain, calves' liver with marrow, bodice, and goose blood pudding with neck and oats.⁶⁷ A traditional dish named 'Haddock', described as a pudding of pig's intestines, scratching, and oats was documented in the Bord Bia report. This dish did not feature in any of the selected cookbooks, nor was it found in the other primary sources selected for this study suggesting that the existence of such a rare delicacy might have become extinct, remains undocumented, or more likely was a misspelling of 'haslet' or a mistake. Bord Bia could not shed any light on this.

Almost extinct or unquantifiable products and skills

The products and their associated skills, as defined by Bord Bia as being 'almost extinct' or 'unquantifiable' were foodstuffs and skills that were known to only a small number of producers or were practiced so rarely that they did not warrant being documented. They include farmhouse butter, wild sloe gin, homemade mead, homemade *scailtín* (a hot drink made with milk, Irish whiskey and spices), drisheen, home-killed and cured pigs, home brewing and /or homemade cider, homemade blood puddings and homemade sausages. Some of these products and skills were well documented by Fitzgibbon, Allen, and Curtin.⁶⁸ More recently authors including Purcell, Bowers, Allen, and Armstrong and Hagedorn referred to some of these 'almost extinct' products and skills required for home killing.⁶⁹ The products and skills which featured most frequently were home-killed and cured pigs, followed by drisheen and homemade blood puddings. It should be noted that drisheen only refers to a sheep or a cow's blood pudding whereas homemade blood puddings generally refer to the home preparation of all blood puddings, regardless of which animal's blood is used. Other foodstuff and skills, in order of most commonly featured included homemade cider, homemade *scailtín*, farmhouse butter, homemade mead, home brewing in general, homemade sausages and homemade wild sloe gin. Overall, it is evident that extinct and unquantifiable products and skills featured to a far lesser extent in the published cookbooks from the second half of the 1990s. It is only in recent years (from 2008 onward) that some of these products and skills have re-emerged in Irish cookbooks.⁷⁰

Chronological evaluation of the findings

Over the thirty-five-year period, the results indicate that lost and forgotten traditional Irish foods as well as traditional Irish foods in general, gradually featured less in the cookbooks from which the data was extracted.

1980-1994 (see *Figure 2*)

Legislative factors including the introduction of stricter food hygiene laws from the 1980s following Ireland's membership of the EU might have discouraged food writers from documenting some practices, notably the production of blood puddings. As previously outlined, it seems likely that the progressive growth of a global culture increased the demand for ethnic-influenced recipes and foodstuffs. Health and diet trends also influenced what cookbook authors wrote. As Ireland entered an era of modernization, people dined outside the home more regularly, and cookbooks written by chef/proprietors or associated with particular restaurants were increasingly published during this period.

During the early part of the 1980s, a meaningful and personal narrative is evident in the texts, with a reference to folklore. In addition, traditional recipes, regional specialities, and artisan produce were also well documented. From the late 1980s up to and including the early 1990s, changes began to occur due to legislation, economic growth, emigration, migration, technology, and globalization. The introduction of new foods, and culinary practices such as stir-frying, and changing food habits had a continuous and increasing presence in cookbooks. As a globalized culture evolved, a new food culture developed, but the changing food trends also threatened certain food tradition and skills being documented in Irish cookbooks. Authors began to apply the terms 'new Irish cuisine' and 'modern Irish food' to describe their style of food. The increased rate of production of convenience foods was becoming evident, yet it was frowned upon by some cookbook authors such as Darina Allen. During the mid-1990s authors such as McQuillan, and Allen,⁷¹ published cookbooks that provided an insight into Irish traditional cooking and skills that were said to be neglected, or falling into disuse. However, a gradual decline in the presence of traditional food continued on a downward trend overall.

1995-2007 (see *Figure 3*)

It was evident that the progressive decline in the presence of traditional food picked up momentum during the Celtic Tiger years. This trend suggests that an aggressive 'enterprise culture' during the latter part of the 1990s increased the dilution of traditional food presence. A variety of reasons may account for this, such as the increased concentration on materialism and the reification of academic degree qualifications at the expense of more traditional apprenticeship or vocational courses, as pointed out by Allen.⁷² From the latter part of the 1990s onwards, many authors continued highlighting the importance of sourcing and using Irish ingredients including Gallagher in 1997 and Rankin and Rankin in 1997,⁷³ but many stopped short of elaborating on this and naming actual indigenous ingredients. The content of Irish cookbooks began to look a little less personal and less meaningful as a result of a growing globalized culture.

1980-1994 (pre-Celtic Tiger)

Year	Title	Author
(1980)	<i>Irish cooking in colour.</i>	Abbott, V.
(1980)	<i>Traditional Irish recipes.</i>	Murphy, J. and Batt, M.
(1980)	<i>Irish country house cooking.</i>	Tinne, R.
(1981)	<i>The Ballymaloe cookbook.</i>	Allen, M.
(1983)	<i>Irish Traditional Food.</i>	Fitzgibbon, T.
(1984)	<i>The Irish Heritage Cookbook.</i>	McLoughlin, M. and McSpirtt, M.
(1986)	<i>The Joyce of cooking.</i>	Armstrong, A.
(1987)	<i>Irish cooking.</i>	Abbott, V.
(1988)	<i>A Cook's Tour of Dublin.</i>	Berwick, G
(1989)	<i>Simply delicious.</i>	Allen D.
(1990)	<i>Simply delicious 2.</i>	Allen D.
(1990)	<i>Kinsale good food circle.</i>	Crowley, R.
(1991)	<i>Highdays and Holidays.</i>	Bristow, J.
(1992)	<i>Meals for all seasons: The best of contemporary Irish cooking.</i>	Campbell, G.
(1992)	<i>The Drimcong food affair.</i>	Galvin, G.
(1993)	<i>A Trifle, a Coddle, a Fry: An Irish Literary Cookbook.</i>	O'Mara, V. J. and O'Reilly, F.
(1994)	<i>The Irish country house table.</i>	McQuillan, D.
(1994)	<i>Taste of Ireland; In Food and Pictures.</i>	Fitzgibbon, T.

Figure 2. Cookbooks consulted 1980 to 1994. Source: researcher compiled (2015).

From 2000 onwards, traditional Irish food presence continued to be documented at a slightly increased rate. *Traditional Irish Cookery* by Kavenagh in 2001⁷⁴ contains many recipes such as drisheen and boxty, foods which are culturally unique to Ireland. The author offers advice and historical background to certain foods, including spiced beef which was 'a traditional Christmas dish.' Other authors highlighted recipes that reflected dishes that renowned eateries throughout Ireland were offering on their menus at the time, such as Ó Catháin in 2004.⁷⁵ Some were distinctly traditional while others highlighted a growing trend towards modern adaptations of traditional foods. Many authors documented contemporary foods in their cookbooks during the same period. An example of this is seen in *Avoca Café* by Arnold and Hayes who state that 'We Irish have always been in touch with the land and sea [...] informed by contemporary influences is absolutely the core at Avoca Café philosophy.'⁷⁶ Arnold and Hayes' introduction to the cookbook includes a discussion about using traditional ingredients and methods, yet there is clear lack of traditional recipes, regional specialities, artisan produce and indigenous foods within the publication. It may be argued that foods referred to in this book are informed by 'contemporary influences' but many dairy, meat and vegetables originate from far afield. *Avoca Café* is one of many Irish cookbooks published during this period that emphasizes the use of 'Irish ingredients', yet, upon closer examination, discrepancies appear. During this period (1995–2007) a significant number of published cookbooks have titles that might be considered as misleading or misrepresentative of Irish food. For example, according to Mac Con Iomaire and Gallagher⁷⁷ there are 'a number of quintessentially Irish potato dishes including boxty, champ, and colcannon,' yet *Irish Potato Recipes*,⁷⁸ published in 2002, containing more than one hundred potato recipes, does not include boxty. The few national dishes presented in this book are greatly outnumbered by ethnic recipes including 'hot hot aloo potatoes', 'potato pizza' and 'French fries'. The recipes focus more on the variety of the potatoes grown in Ireland than on traditional Irish potato dishes.

1995-2007 (Celtic Tiger period)

- (1995) *Irish traditional cooking.*
 (1995) *Irish stews.*
 (1995) *Gourmet Ireland.*
 (1997) *A year at Ballymaloe Cookery School.*
 (1997) *Irish food and folklore.*
 (1997) *New Irish cooking: recipes from Dublin's Peacock Alley.*
 (1997) *Gourmet Ireland two.*
 (1998) *101 Square Meals.*
 (1998) *Savouring Ireland: cooking through the seasons.*
 (1999) *The Irish heritage cookbook.*
 (2000) *Avoca Café cookbook.*
 (2000) *Myrtle Allen's cooking at Ballymaloe House.*
 (2001) *Ballymaloe cookery course.*
 (2001) *One pot wonders.*
 (2001) *Traditional Irish cookery.*
 (2001) *A little history of Irish food.*
 (2002) *Irish potato recipes.*
 (2002) *Roly's bistro: the restaurant and its food.*
 (2002) *Best of Irish potato recipes.*
 (2002) *Best of Irish traditional cooking.*
 (2003) *An Irish Adventure with Food: The Tannery Cookbook.*
 (2003) *Take 6 ingredients*
 (2003) *The new Irish table: 70 contemporary recipes.*
 (2003) *Neven Cooks 2.*
 (2003) *Paul and Jeanne Rankin's new Irish cookery.*
 (2004) *Light: Taste the Good Life.*
 (2004) *Cooking for Family and Friends.*
 (2004) *A taste of West Cork: a collection of recipes.*
 (2004) *Around Ireland with a pan food tales and recipes.*
 (2004) *Irish oyster cuisine: cuisine oisri.*
 (2005) *Irish country house cooking: the blue book recipe collection.*
 (2005) *Full on Irish: creative contemporary cooking.*
 (2005) *At home in Renvyle.*
 (2005) *Best of Irish festive cooking.*
 (2006) *The Irish cookbook.*
 (2006) *Smart cooking 1: for Junior Certificate, Transition Year and Life.*
 (2006) *Best of Irish meat recipes.*
 (2007) *Darina Allen's Ballymaloe cookery course.*
 (2007) *Smart cooking 2: for Leaving Certificate, Transition Year and Life*
 (2007) *Nevins Real Food for Families*
 (2007) *Jenny Bristow's Cookery Collection.*
 (2007) *Creators: individuals of Irish food.*
 (2007) *The Eden cookbook.*
- Allen D.
 O'Connor, A.
 Rankin, P. and Rankin, J.
 Allen D.
 Connery, C.
 Gallagher, C.
 Rankin, P. and Rankin, J.
 Burke, N. and Foley-Nolan, C.
 Cullen, N.
 Johnson, M. M.
 Arnold, H. and Hayes, L.
 Allen, M.
 Allen, D.
 Gallagher, C.
 Kavenagh, C.
 Sexton, R.
 Cullen, N., Moon, R. and Walden, H.
 O'Daly, C. and MacDougald, N.
 White Lennon, B.
 White Lennon, B.
 Flynn, P.
 Gallagher, C.
 Johnson, M. M.
 Maguire, N.
 Rankin, P. and Rankin, J.
 Bristow, J.
 Maguire, N.
 McCutcheon, I.
 Ó Catháin, É.
 Uí Chomáin, M.
 Campbell, G.
 Dundon, K.
 O'Sullivan, T. and Crowley, R.
 White Lennon, B.
 Blake, C.
 Cribben, C. and McGeady, M.
 White Lennon, B.
 Allen, D., Main, R. and Cassidy, P.
 Cribben, C. and McGeady, M.
 Maguire, N.
 Bristow, J.
 Curtin, D.
 Walsh, E.

Figure 3. Cookbooks consulted 1995 to 2007. Source: researcher compiled (2015).

Cultural and societal changes also fed into cookbooks used as textbooks within a pedagogical context in schools and colleges printed within the same period. Few featured Irish recipes in comparison to recipes of ethnic origin. *Smart Cooking 2*,⁷⁹ aimed at the home economics curriculum in Irish secondary schools, includes questions linked to the Leaving Certificate (the final senior cycle examination in the Republic of Ireland's secondary school system) written paper. The book aimed to raise students' awareness and become more conscious of food related issues and life skills. There is a substantial focus on healthy eating, but the recipes represent Irish food heritage and skills poorly. Chapter six is entitled 'fish', chapter seven titled 'meat', both with an abundant number of recipes of ethnic origin. Chapter eight in *Smart Cooking 1*⁸⁰ is entitled 'microwave cooking'. Similar to the findings of *Smart Cooking 2*, there is a clear lack of Irish cuisine and food heritage being taught in contrast to previous home

economics textbooks including *All in the Cooking*⁸¹ (a core source of reference across the 1950s and 1960s and into the 1970s). Although some advice in the book might seem dated today, *All in the Cooking* had an emphasis on local ingredients, classical dishes and applied the fundamental principles of cookery. It suggests that the home economics curriculum of more recent times may need further review for this foundation level.

2008-2015 (see *Figure 4*)

Similar to the previous years, a rhetoric praising local traditions that effectively omitted local recipes emerged in the works selected. For example, Mulligan in *The Irish B&B Cookbook*⁸² remarks that the cookbook includes ‘recipes handed down from my grandmother and mother.’ The title could be seen to mislead the reader, given that at a closer inspection, there are few Irish traditional recipes in this book, and one might even be surprised at the offerings available at some of Ireland’s select guest houses. These include all-American meatloaf, Asian roasted pork loin, Bourbon pork chops, Mojito pork loin, and Chinese pot stickers. In saying that, it reflects how a global culture was evolving and how Irish food writers were part of this development. Although it may not reflect what Irish people ate, it demonstrates the impact of globalization and the increased awareness, access and availability of foreign foods. According to 2020 Bord Bia’s consumer insight report on ‘What Ireland ate last night’ there was a notable decrease in the ‘classic meat and two veg’ (–7%), and a slight increase in ‘light meals’ (+3%), Italian meals (+2%), Asian meals (+1%), and ‘diner-style’ meals such as burger and chips (+1%) from the previous period the reports were conducted in 2011.⁸³

Moving into the latter part of this period, various authors increasingly highlighted traditional foods, regional specialities and artisan produce. McCourt’s (2013) *Feast or Famine*⁸⁴ takes a closer look at the North West of Ireland’s food heritage. The author documents many traditional foods including wild blackberry and crab-apple jam, hand-made farmhouse butter and wild sloe gin. The recipes are introduced with an emphasis on folklore and history from local people and producers. Similarly, as its title suggests, *Ireland: A Culinary Journey In The North-East* by Seberry,⁸⁵ published in 2013, contains recipes collected from various restaurants, local eateries, hotels, and country houses in County Louth.⁸⁶ Although the book contains recipes, it has a strong focus on, and an extensive guide to, local artisan producers, seafood suppliers and indigenous breeders. This supports Goldstein’s⁸⁷ and Fáilte Ireland’s⁸⁸ theory that Ireland was witnessing an increase in awareness of and demand for artisan and speciality produce. This has been identified as a broader global phenomenon, such as the decline in hegemony of French haute cuisine, and the re-emergence of local food traditions and food cultures such as the rise of the Nordic Food Movement.⁸⁹ Several other authors were promoting Ireland’s regional specialities during the same 2010–2015 period including *Ireland for Food Lovers* by Campbell⁹⁰ which contains a regional guide to sourcing artisan foods, regional specialities, traditional foods, and rarer commodities. The cookbook *My Irish Table: Recipes From The Homeland and Restaurant Eve* by Armstrong and Hagedorn, contains recipes that include traditional, modern and some complex dishes from his restaurant, such as the preparation of homemade blood puddings and sausages. However, the author does note ‘you are pretty much on your own finding pig blood unless you know a farmer

2008-2015 (post-Celtic Tiger)

(2008) <i>Avoca Soups.</i>	Arnold, H.
(2008) <i>Celtic cuisine.</i>	Davies, G.
(2008) <i>The Irish B&B cookbook.</i>	Mulligan, A.
(2008) <i>Our Grannies' recipes.</i>	Purcell, E.
(2008) <i>Irish Cooking.</i>	White Lennon, B.
(2009) <i>Keeping it simple.</i>	Clarke, D.
(2010) <i>Ireland for food lovers.</i>	Campbell, G.
(2010) <i>Homemade.</i>	McKenna, C.
(2011) <i>Restaurant Patrick Guilbaud: the first thirty years.</i>	Ryan, S.
(2011) <i>The Ard Bia cookbook.</i>	MacNamara, A.
(2012) <i>Irish Cooking.</i>	White Lennon, B.
(2012) <i>Let's go disco: Martijn Kajuitier at the Cliff House Hotel.</i>	Kajuitier, M.
(2013) <i>Real Irish food: 125 classic recipes from the old country.</i>	Bowers, D.
(2013) <i>Chapter One: an Irish food story.</i>	Lewis, R.
(2013) <i>The Nation's Favourite Food.</i>	Maguire, N.
(2013) <i>Feast or Famine: A Culinary Journey of the North West of Ireland.</i>	McCourt, E.
(2013) <i>Ireland: a culinary journey in the North-East.</i>	Seberry, D.
(2014) <i>My Irish table: recipes from the homeland and Restaurant Eve.</i>	Armstrong, C. and Hagedorn, D.

Figure 4. Cookbooks consulted 2008 to 2015 Source: researcher compiled (2015).

like we do.’⁹¹ Comparably, Bowers⁹² notes that his cookbook contains ‘regional differences and classic dishes’ which are accompanied by anecdotes from his early years in Ireland and suggests that Ireland should continue to promote its regional specialities further, similar to Périgord or Provence in France. This was agreed by various authors⁹³ throughout the past two decades who note that Ireland must continue to document and promote its food culture to be in a better position to recognize and maintain our cultural food identity.

Conclusion

This paper has availed of An Bord Bia’s 2008 report to provide a context for the exploration of the presence of traditional Irish foods in cookbooks published between 1980–2015. The focus rested especially on foods whose presence had decreased to the point where they could be considered ‘lost or forgotten.’ By evaluating relevant literature, this research assessed the impact actual events at that time had on the presence of traditional foods. The paper also benefitted from the growing use of cookbooks as sources for research in the field of food studies. It identified and developed a structured approach to reading a selection of Irish cookbooks. The approach helped establish the presence or lack of presence of lost and forgotten foods and Irish traditional foods. It also validated the claim that the analysis of cookbooks provides socio-historical information that exists or existed within a population over a given period, by drawing comparisons with literature around the time the books were published.

For the purposes of this study, cookbooks were valued as sources for exploring patterns and trends associated with social history, food habits and cultural identity. Examining cookbook text in terms of rhetoric, critical analysis and critical reasoning, the main findings suggest that the evidence from the cookbooks backs up what food historians and writers have said about the

decline in production of traditional Irish food from the mid-1980s onward. The era of modernization and the influence of globalization had an impact on traditional food presence and cookbook authors' topics. Rising immigration, and a demand for ethnic foods and recipes resulted in 'new Irish' food being portrayed in cookbooks. The Irish economy grew and people became accustomed to dining out and travelling abroad. Arguably, a culture of modernization embraced new and different eating habits that enabled both active and passive forgetting of traditional food ways. 'Modern Irish food', 'new Irish cuisine' and 'Irish ingredients' became a novel term adapted by many cookbook authors, notably well-known chef-restauranteurs.

Traditional foods were either neglected or at best adapted to suit modern taste. Arguably, this period of thirty-five years gradually resulted in a lack of traditional foods being promoted accurately in Irish cookbooks, although this trend has shown signs of reversal in recent times. The Celtic Tiger years had a profound impact on what are termed 'lost and forgotten' traditional Irish foods and on traditional Irish foods more generally. However, conversely, some cookbooks illustrated renewed interest in these foods and skills during bleak times including the early part of the 1980s and from 2008 onward. There is evidence of a recent revival of traditional foods and associated skills as documented in cookbooks, linked to the current interests/enthusiasm for sustainable, seasonal, local, and artisan foods. The Covid-19 pandemic also increased demand to buy local, cook at home, grow your own and an enthusiasm for recipes.⁹⁴ Only time will tell whether these trends will become permanently established.

Some food for thought

Government agencies and the hospitality sector can show an interest in assisting and supporting local food production, through investment in and innovative promotion of traditional foods, to contribute to our food heritage, tourism, and local economies, such as linking traditional foods with sustainable tourism.⁹⁵ Government departments integrating with the food industry and suppliers, to work on development plans in strengthening our food culture and heritage, is a desideratum in this regard. It could also be suggested that a way forward lies in developing a deeper appreciation and understanding of our food culture and heritage, by re-visiting curriculum design relating to food studies from primary schools, through home economics at secondary level and on to third level, such as the recent inclusion of the Masters programme 'Gastronomy and Food Studies' offered by Technological University Dublin. Although foodways are constantly changing and evolving, it is imperative in terms of our food culture and heritage to ensure a proper understanding of the past traditions among the next generations in order not to lose and forget Ireland's traditional food identity.

Notes

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63. C. Gallagher, *New Irish cooking: recipes from Dublin's Peacock Alley* (Dublin: A and A Farmar, 1997); P. Rankin and J. Rankin, *Gourmet Ireland two* (London: BBC Books, 1997); C. Gallagher, *Take 6 ingredients: 100 ingenious recipes to create simple, delicious meals* (London: Kyle Cathie, 2003).
64. Note: The most frequently identified regional specialities, reflecting their presence as a percentage in all cookbooks analysed, included Dublin Bay Prawns (10.3%); Dublin coddle (5.9%); Galway native oysters (5.1%); Wicklow lamb (2.3%); Kerry Hill lamb (2.3%); Killary Bay mussels (1.9%); Inishmore eel (1.8%); Lough Neagh eels (1.2%); Donegal Dulse (0.9%); and Ulster champ (0.9%). 'Dublin Bay Prawns' – although the term refers to a species of prawn also known as langoustine, and not specifically to prawns caught in Dublin Bay.
65. R. Tinne, *Irish country house cooking*; Fitzgibbon, *Irish Traditional Food*; Allen, *Irish traditional cooking*; C. Kavenagh, *Traditional Irish cookery* (London: Foulsham, 2001); Sexton, *A little history*; B. White Lennon, *Best of Irish meat recipes* (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 2006); Allen, *Forgotten skills*'.
66. Sexton, *A little history*; Allen, *Forgotten skills*.
67. Note: The most commonly documented rarer delicacies, ranked in order within their own category included brawn (50%); collared pig head (20%); sheep head broth (10%); calves brain (5%); calves liver with marrow (5%); bodice (5%); and goose blood pudding with neck and oats (5%).
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85. D. Seberry, *Ireland: a culinary journey in the North-East* (Drogheda: FoodEducators, 2013).
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