



JULIA CHILD A RECIPE FOR LIFE

EXHIBITION OVERVIEW



Julia Child

A Recipe for Life



Photo of Julia Child's kitchen at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, featuring a variety of hanging copper and metal pans.



EXHIBITION OVERVIEW

“Julia Child: A Recipe for Life”, explores the key ingredients in Julia’s personal journey, which became part of America’s culinary revolution, through a series of immersive experiences.

Julia’s insatiable curiosity and tenacious spirit drove her to endlessly try, test, and teach how to make delicious food. Learning to cook empowered Julia, and she empowered others, profoundly transforming American cuisine and food culture in the process

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Key Experiences

- Interactive “The French Chef” studio kitchen
- La Couronne restaurant immersive experience
- Larger-than-life “Mastering the Art of French Cooking”
- Vignette of 1960s television
- “Dear Julia” interactive
- Convert a recipe from metric to imperial measurements
- Photo Ops throughout the exhibition

Key Exhibition Themes

Julia's Persistence & Tenacity

Overcoming challenges and embracing failure. Throughout her life, especially in a male-dominated culinary industry, Julia faced many obstacles. However, through her perseverance, Julia found success and enjoyment in her career.

A Lust for Life

Going boldly where curiosity takes you. When Julia's spark was lit, whether it was in pursuit of adventure or knowledge, she discovered joy in the diverse experiences that life brought her way.

Authenticity

Embracing authenticity and staying true to oneself. During a time when society had rigidly defined expectations for women's domestic roles, Julia defied conventions and shattered societal norms to pursue her dreams.

Relationships

Despite becoming a culinary icon through her own efforts, Julia always acknowledged and valued her family, friends, and colleagues as crucial pillars of support throughout her career.



ans grew to adore the warm and charismatic figure
"The French Chef" throughout her four decades on
in her personal life, Julia Child was an authentic
lex woman who overcame challenges and was driven
ssions.

ved in living boldly and pursuing her dreams while
intimate relationships with family, friends, and
es. Despite finding her love of French cuisine and
ater in life, she embraced a career of continuous
and teaching. Julia shared her ideas on screen and
her writing, inspiring generations of people to
eir dreams.

Child Recipe for Life



Julia's Early Years

As visitors step into the first exhibition section, they will meet Julia McWilliams, a young woman born into a privileged family with clearly defined societal expectations.

This section will delve into Julia's early life, her family background, and her college years. It will provide visitors with insights into Julia's conventional upbringing, while also foreshadowing the adventures and inspirations that would shape her future.

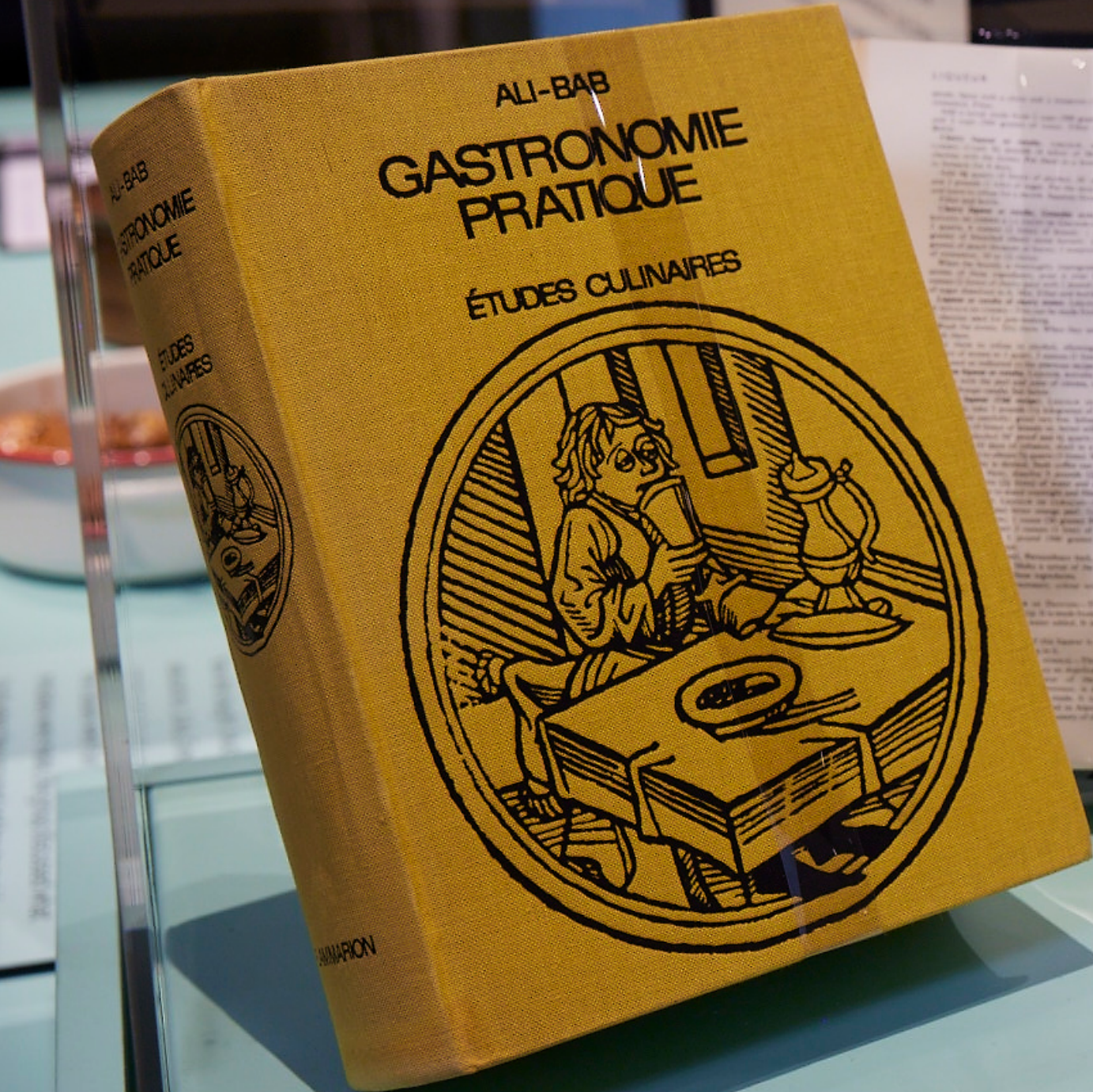
A Taste of Adventure

Julia faced adversity when her application to join the WAAC was rejected. However, she persevered and went on to join the OSS to contribute to the World War II effort. Visitors will gain insight into how Julia cultivated her passion for global culture and intellectual pursuits through this part of her story.

Visitors are introduced to Paul as a pivotal part of Julia's awakening. Much like Julia, Paul shared a deep appreciation for intellect and creativity, which he expressed through his art and photography.

This initial introduction to Paul serves as a foundation for visitors to understand not only as Julia's husband but also as a significant partner and supporter of her career.





La Courounne

Visitors are transported to La Couronne in France where Julia consumed what she would later call “the most exciting meal of her life.” From that very first day in the country, Julia’s love of all things French was sparked.

This area offers visitors an intimate glimpse into Julia’s first experience of eating a French meal, Sole Meuniere. The modest setting of the restaurant is recreated to help visitors appreciate the emphasis on the act of tasting and savoring food rather than dining in an elegant setting.

An audio/visual vignette of the moment in Julia’s own words enhances the experience.

Falling in Love with France

Visitors are immersed in the sights and sounds of Paris, experiencing the city from Julia's perspective and Paul's photographs.

Beginning with Julia's early adventures in Paris, visitors will see some of her favorite spots including, the historic Les Halles marketplace.

Along this journey, visitors will witness Julia's growing connection to her new home and pivotal moments in her career.

Visitors will learn about the role of Julia's relationships, both romantic and platonic, in shaping her life and contributing to her successful career.



Bathtub Valentines

Hop into one of Julia and Paul's most iconic Valentine's Day cards!

This bubble bath scene is the perfect photo opportunity for visitors to remember their exhibition visit.



“Mastering the Art of French Cooking”

As visitors are drawn into the space by a giant version of “Mastering the Art of French Cooking,” they will enter an area dedicated to decades of Julia’s work in “Cookery Bookery.” Here, they will gain insights into the meticulous process of recipe writing and testing, the dedicated team behind it, and the significant achievement of publishing a groundbreaking cookbook.

In addition, visitors will have the opportunity to glimpse Julia’s cherished “Batterie de Cuisine,” which includes her beloved culinary tools of the trade.



L'École des Trois Gourmandes

After connecting over their shared love of French cuisine, Julia, Simca, and Liselette recognized a unique opportunity to share their knowledge with others.

In 1951, they formed the L'École des Trois Gourmandes, or School of the Three Hungry Women, as a way to educate American women in classic French cuisine. The school was successful, and after they were teaching others, the three women were planning to relocate. So they met a group of friends and the most brilliant way to distribute lessons and recipes, which would become their later endeavor as cookbook authors.

Cookery Classes



When the first class of L'École des Trois Gourmandes opened in January 1952, it was a success. The women were not only passing on their own recipes, but they were also teaching others how to cook. This was a significant moment in the history of French cuisine in America. The school was a place where women could learn from the best and share their own knowledge. It was a place where women could find a community and a sense of purpose. It was a place where women could learn to cook like professionals. It was a place where women could learn to love cooking. It was a place where women could learn to master the art of French cooking.



Monsieur et Madame, The Pouilly Fumé

Le Cordon Bleu

Le Cordon Bleu was founded in 1895 by two women, Madame and Monsieur. It was a place where women could learn to cook like professionals. It was a place where women could find a community and a sense of purpose. It was a place where women could learn to cook like professionals. It was a place where women could learn to love cooking. It was a place where women could learn to master the art of French cooking.



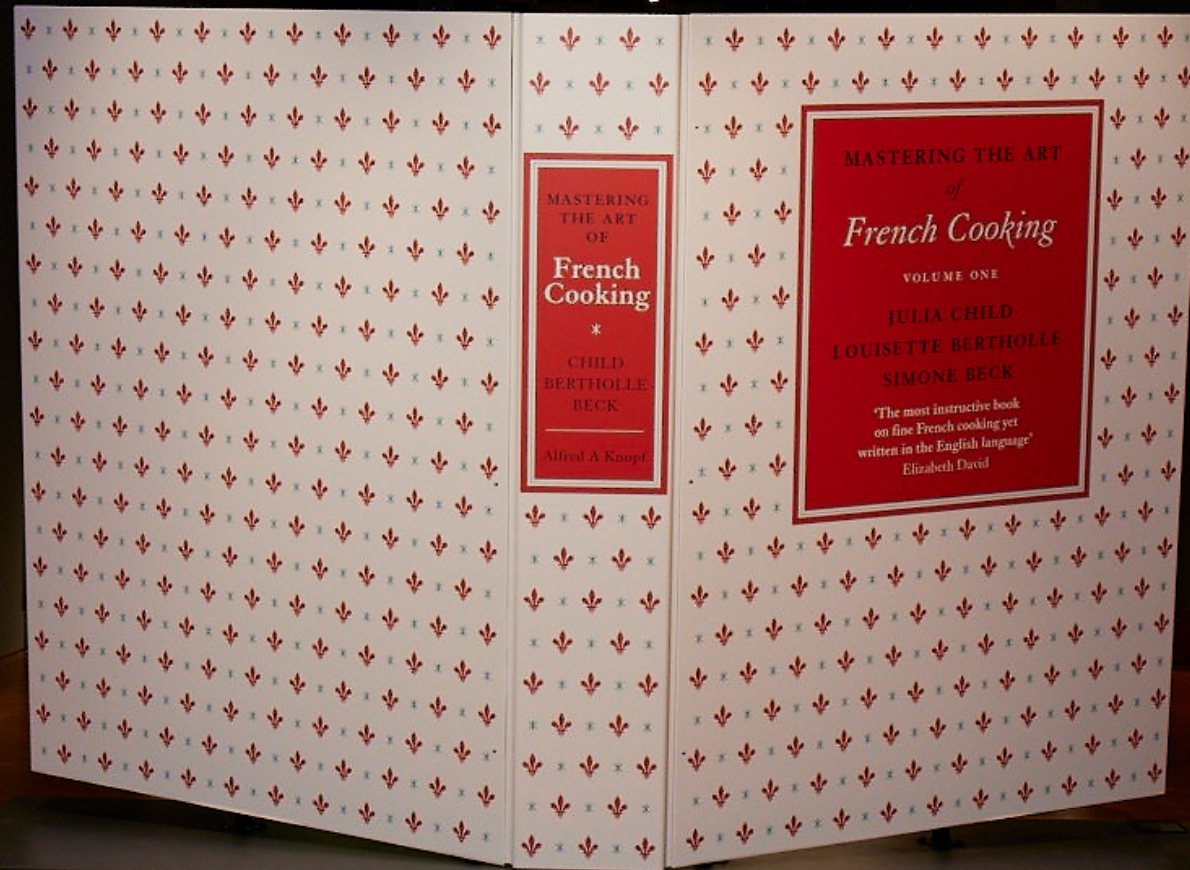
The Cordon Bleu

Cookery Bookery

Visitors get an up-close view of “Mastering the Art of French Cooking” with a larger-than-life copy that comes to life with animated text and illustrations.

Recipe Conversion

Take a shot at converting recipes from metric to imperial units as Julia did for her readers.



"We miss you... It doesn't seem that less than you were all on paper. It did not th... on paper w... into love in... certainly di... all-embraci... for good. W... creatures. Y... putting us t... introducing... sitting, ice-... letting us sh... while was h... And we felt... you. You we... though now... 'Dear Avis,'... -Julia Child to Avis"

Julia's New America

Visitors can trace Julia's journey back to the United States following Paul's retirement and gain insights into how she and Paul felt about leaving their life abroad. Compare the daily life of average 1960s Americans, marked by television and convenience food, to that of the international life of Julia and Paul, which prioritized adventure, intellect, and meaningful relationships.

A wall of vintage televisions showcases television shows, commercials, and news clips from the era when "The French Chef" first premiered. This provides a glimpse into the television landscape that American viewers watched during that same period.





“The French Chef”

Julia welcomes visitors onto a kitchen set for “The French Chef” show where they may explore the kitchen cabinets, drawers, and appliances to find hidden stories, fun facts, or audio/visual elements about the series. Although Julia made the show look seamless, she and the film team had to overcome budget and logistical challenges. Her dedication and enthusiasm led to the creation of an educational series that would go on to inspire generations.

Visitors will also discover how Julia’s genuine personality challenged traditional gender roles in television as they move between the kitchen and dining room sets.

The Full Set

The fully interactive kitchen set invites visitors to play and explore. They will even have the chance to use a vintage video camera to see how footage of Julia’s cooking was creatively captured.

Bon Appetit!

At a touchscreen dining table, visitors will be dished up some of Julia's finished meals and learn how she would have served them, from garnishes and sides to the perfect wine pairing.



Dining in Kunming

Julia often stated that her second favorite cuisine was Chinese, though she didn't cook it often. Her love of this cuisine began when she was stationed in Kunming, China during her time in the OSS. Julia and Paul would often dine out together and even wrote home about the food they enjoyed.

A reproduction of one of Julia and Paul's final meals in China, including Peking duck, Yunnan ham, cabbage, and mushrooms. Lift the lid of the copper pot to smell some of the spices in the Chinese cuisine Julia and Paul enjoyed.

An American Icon

As visitors follow a circular path around the last exhibition section, they will encounter an array of cookbooks and VHS/DVD collections showcasing the various stages of Julia's later career.

These items will be presented in display cases, some of which will also feature pop-culture memorabilia. In addition, there will be videos and images that spotlight significant moments, achievements, and life milestones from Julia's remarkable life.



Dear Julia

Visitors have the opportunity to view fan letters from people of all ages and backgrounds from across the country, expressing their gratitude for Julia's work.

Additionally, they can take a moment to reminisce about their own memories of "The French Chef" and their cooking experiences. Then, they can share their own heartfelt "Dear Julia" message.

Exhibition Partners



FLYING FISH

About Flying Fish

A leading creator of traveling exhibitions, Flying Fish collaborates with top museums and science centers to produce extraordinary and influential experiences. Flying Fish exhibitions have impacted millions of visitors, from Melbourne to New York, generating sustainable income for their clients and inspiring fans worldwide.

For Museums. By Museums.

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About Napa Valley Museum Yountville

Napa Valley Museum Yountville offers a three-part cultural experience of art, nature, and history through exhibitions, educational programs, and creative activities. With hands-on participatory exhibits including world premieres like “France is a Feast” and “Lucy Liu,” plus explorations of iconic artists from Walt Disney to Picasso to Frida Kahlo, the Museum engages visitors of all ages, languages and interests, 58% of whom are from outside the Bay Area.

napavalleymuseum.org



THE JULIA CHILD FOUNDATION
for Gastronomy and the Culinary Arts

About The Julia Child Foundation for Gastronomy and the Culinary Arts

The Julia Child Foundation for Gastronomy and the Culinary Arts was created by Julia in 1995 and became operational in 2004. Its mission is to honor and further Julia’s legacy, which centers on the importance of understanding where food comes from, what makes for good food, and the value of cooking

juliachildfoundation.org

About Schlesinger Library

Schlesinger Library is the leading center for scholarship on the history of women in the United States. As part of Harvard Radcliffe Institute, they are devoted to catalyzing new research and to sharing it broadly with scholars and an engaged public.



Harvard
Radcliffe
Institute
SCHLESINGER LIBRARY



Specs

SPACE REQUIRED:
3,000 - 5,000 sq. ft.

TARGET AUDIENCE:
Adults, families with children,
culinary enthusiasts

PRODUCTION TIME:
Ten (10) days for installation;
seven (7) for deinstallation

FREIGHT:
Two (2) 53 ft. trailers

Booking

June - Sept 2026
Feb 2027 and beyond
Inquire for availability

Contact

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Photos of Julia Child - The Schlesinger Library, Harvard Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University.