



The Lady & Sons Just Desserts: More Than 120 Sweet Temptations from Savannah's Favorite Restaurant

By Paula Deen

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As Paula Deen will tell y'all, there's just no satisfying way to finish a delicious meal without a scrumptious, mouthwatering dessert!

In this beautiful hardcover edition of *The Lady & Sons Just Desserts*, Paula—author, restaurateur, and Food Network star—devotes her trademark southern charm to a tempting collection of more than 120 delightful recipes, guaranteed to indulge any sweet tooth. Whether you're baking for the holidays or an after-dinner treat, there are crowd-pleasers here for any occasion.

These are the classic down-home recipes that have made Paula beloved to her fans everywhere, from her signature Goey Butter Cake and Key Lime Grits Pie to Pecan Shortbread Bars, Hidden Mint Cookies, and Iron Skillet Brownies. Whether you're whipping up an Old South Jelly Roll Cake for a weekday treat or baking the Apple Butter Pumpkin Pie or Christmas Nut Pie for a holiday celebration, these treats are as easy to create as they are to enjoy. The Basic 1-2-3-4 Cake—in coconut (Jamie's favorite), caramel (Bobby's favorite), or chocolate—makes a wonderful birthday surprise, and the Tennessee Banana-Black Walnut Cake with Caramel Frosting is a southern favorite sure to become one of yours as well. There is also a wide array of cookies, bars, and candy, including Savannah Cheesecake Cookies, Orange Brownies, Chocolate Brickle, and Creamy Caramels. Even the most time-pressed cook will find it a snap to create these from-scratch recipes, using Paula's tips for reliable convenience ingredients and time-tested shortcuts that will impress and delight family and friends.

Filled with warm baking memories and family stories, *The Lady & Sons Just Desserts* is already a kitchen classic. There are also helpful baking tips for measuring ingredients, storing leftovers, and even cutting a few calories, as well as tasty flavor variations and unique serving suggestions throughout. So bring the folks together to create your own memorable meals and occasions and remember to save room for dessert!

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Warmly effusive and dear yet gritty, Paula H. Deen seems mythically Southern. But this cooking luminary, proprietor of Savannah, Georgia's Lady & Sons restaurant, is the real thing. *The Lady & Sons Just Desserts*, her all-sweets follow-up to *The Lady & Sons Savannah Country Cookbook* and *The Lady & Sons, Too!*, celebrates the Southern sweet tooth with 120 recipes, including traditional formulas for the likes of Brown Sugar Pound Cake and Lemon Chess Pie as well as best-loved restaurant innovations like Turtle Cake, Lemon Curd Pudding, and Goopy Butter Cake. ("These are very, very rich," Deen advises, "and a little goes a long way--even for piggies like me!") Lovers of the restaurant--which grew to prominence from \$200 and lots of determination--as well as those seeking easy-to-fix temptations should put this book to happy use.

Among its wide-ranging recipes, *Desserts* offers Carolyn's Jell-O Cheesecake, Lauren's Chocolate Drizzle Pie, and Hidden Mint Cookies--recipes based on cake mixes and other convenience foods. These creditable sweets are of course work saving, but are perhaps better viewed as solidly characteristic of their time and place. Equally particular are candies like Mamma's Divinity and Uncle Bubba's Benne Candy, and "other sweet things," as Deen dubs them, such as Banana Split Brownie Pizza, Easy Homemade Oreo Ice Cream, and Fresh Apples with Butterscotch Dip. With asides by Deen family members, including son Jamie's "Food Is Love" ("I am right this minute 20 pounds over-loved," he writes), useful tips (Deen provides an "emergency" recipe for sweetened condensed milk), and plenty of piquant anecdote (after Deen had rattled on endlessly to her grandmother about her intention to open a restaurant, the older woman paused and replied, "Paula, have you lost you damned mind?"), the spiral-bound book is not only full of delectable eating, it's lots of fun. --Arthur Boehm

About the Author

Paula Deen is the bestselling author of thirteen books and an Emmy Award-winning Food Network television star. She was born and raised in Albany, Georgia. She later moved to Savannah, where she started The Bag Lady catering company. The business took off and evolved into The Lady & Sons restaurant, which is located in Savannah's historic district and specializes in Southern cooking. She also co-owns Uncle Bubba's Oyster House with her brother. Paula publishes a bimonthly magazine, *Cooking with Paula Deen*, and is a regular guest on QVC, where she sells her books and food products.

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Introduction

Have you ever been sick and tired of being sick and tired? Well, this was the position I found myself in in 1989. I wanted to be able to act instead of react. I wanted to make choices for myself instead of taking what came my way through the actions of others. I wanted to be my own woman.

Back in 1965, after I had graduated from high school, my daddy -- so badly -- wanted to send me to school in Florida to study to be a dental hygienist. Yuck! I had just finished the most cram-filled fun social three years of my life at Albany High School and now I was supposed to be a dental hygienist? It was obvious a mad coon had bitten my daddy.

"I'm sorry, Daddy" I said, "I just can't bear the thought of spending the rest of my life smelling people's stinky breath. *But,*" I went on to say, "how about the Patricia Stevens Modeling School."

"Absolutely not!" he said. "I will not turn my eighteen-year-old daughter loose in Atlanta."

Since we couldn't agree on the education thing, *I* would just solve all the problems by marrying my high school sweetheart.

One night my mother slipped into my bedroom and sat on the side of my bed. The look on her face was sad and full of concern as opposed to the soft sweet smile she normally wore. "Paula, I want you to give careful consideration to the decision you've made, because this commitment should be for a lifetime. If there's anything that bothers you at all about the young man that you have planned to marry make sure it's something you can live with, because contrary to what you may think you don't have the ability to change people."

Well, I just couldn't believe it. My daddy wants me to be a dental hygienist and my mother is suggesting that my marriage might not be a perfect one. Of course, my fiancé *was* perfect, and I was going to be the perfect wife and mother.

So the wedding was held, and I think it took me all of three months to realize I would have made the perfect dental hygienist!

The dreams of a perfect life were shattered seven months after my wedding. My daddy died.

How could this charismatic, wonderful, forty-year-old man whom we all depended on be gone from us forever? The pain this brought to our family was devastating, and I thought that things could get no worse. But four years later my beautiful mother died. She was forty-four years old.

Besides myself, Mother left behind a sixteen-year-old son, my little brother, whom I adored. By this time I also had two little boys of my own under the age of three. The pain I felt for myself was riveting, but the pain I felt for my brother, Bubba, can't even be put into words. I have searched for them, but cannot find them. So, at the ripe old age of twenty-three I had the responsibility of raising two babies, and trying to continue the job that my mother had started with one of her babies. And don't forget the husband.

Over the years, I began to have symptoms of agoraphobia. At one point, I wondered if I would ever be able to leave my home again. Panic attacks became a way of life. I was at my lowest when I knew I could no longer leave the house to accompany my children to the activities they loved. If my boys couldn't walk, they didn't go.

So in spite of the deep love I had for my family, I found I was not the perfect mother. I was not the perfect wife. And I didn't have the perfect husband.

When I was forty, my husband announced that he was accepting a position in Savannah, Georgia. I had to leave behind everything that I knew and loved. I was barely able to function in the town in which I had been born and lived my whole life. How was I ever going to function in a strange new city on the other side of the state?

Well, after arriving in Savannah I handled the move by going to bed for two months. There seemed to be no end to the tears. I had to get out of bed to eat, but I did not have to get out of bed to cry. Albany, my home town, might as well have been two thousand miles away rather than two hundred, and because I couldn't make the journey back home alone, I was stuck.

Then one day I woke up and it was like turning on a light switch and I could see clearly. I decided at that moment I was going to get out of that bed and begin living life to the fullest.

I decided at that moment I would no longer let the fear of fear control my life, and I spent the next two years pondering how I could improve my life and the lives of my children. I wanted so much to give my sons wings either through education or a business, something that they could sink their teeth into. So in 1989, I finally made the decision to follow in my Grandmother Paul's footsteps.

My Granddaddy and Grandmama Paul were in the restaurant and lodging business. Granddaddy Paul knew he had a jewel in my grandmother because she was a fabulous southern cook. Grandma and I spent many years in the kitchen together, her teaching, me watching and learning, laughing together, and enjoying the fruits of our labor. I now realize that I was getting an education without going to school.

I'll never forget my grandmother's words the day I called to let her know what I had decided to do. I rattled on quickly, and when I finally ran out of breath and became quiet there was just silence on the other end. Just when I thought our call must have been disconnected my grandmother said, "Paula. Have you lost your damned mind!"

I busted out laughing, "Well, Grandmama, the apple doesn't fall far from the tree, does it?"

So at the age of forty-two, I turned to my stove and began a business called The Bag Lady. The sum total of my starting capital was two hundred dollars. I spent fifty dollars on groceries, about forty dollars on a cooler, and the rest on a business license and incidentals. This girl was off and running!

It was just a good thing that I didn't know how far and how long I was gonna have to run, 'cause I might not have made it if I'd known how long the track was. It wasn't unusual for me to work a sixteen- or twenty-hour day. I prepared fresh meals daily for people who were stuck in their offices and to be delivered by my sons, Jamie, twenty-one, and Bobby, eighteen, and their girlfriends.

While my children were running their daily routes I cleaned the kitchen from top to bottom and then immediately, began the next day's preparations. It was a never-ending cycle, but determination would not allow me to tire of it.

Before I knew it, two years had passed, and I found myself moving into a bona fide restaurant space in the Best Western Central hotel on the south side of Savannah. I would remain there for five years, and I found out that running The Bag Lady was like a day in the park compared to running a full-service restaurant.

My hours were governed by the Best Western's policies, which required me to serve three meals a day, seven days a week. And I continued to maintain The Bag Lady. I decided that the restaurant would be named The Lady, hoping people would associate The Lady with The Bag Lady and bring us instant credibility.

The lack of revenue would require all the work to be done by my sons, their girlfriends, and me. Thank God for those two pretty girls! They were wonderful on the dining room floor. Before we knew it we'd made lots of friends and were serving many Southside business people. My newfound independence brought along the ability to ask for the inevitable. My marriage of twenty-seven years was finally over.

Now that I had settled my personal life, my every thought was about my next business move. My cooking style was southern plantation cuisine, reminiscent of the Old South. Downtown historic Savannah was the place for me.

I'll be forever grateful to Michael Brown. A downtown developer, one day he walked into The Lady and informed me that he had the perfect location for us. We met on the corner of Congress and Montgomery streets. As we leaned against an old building and chatted, Michael pointed across the street to the old Barnett's Educational Supply Building. It *was* perfect. That afternoon, Michael and I consummated the deal

with a handshake. Talk about naive! I had just committed myself to a twelve-year lease in an old building that would require \$150,000 worth of work.

Being turned down time after time by different financial institutions almost discouraged me. But my passion would not allow me to quit, and I was determined not to stop until someone listened and would agree to help me. Doug McCoy, a local banker, was the man who finally listened. He felt that I could make it, but that I still didn't have enough collateral in spite of the money I'd managed to save.

A couple of local businessmen had spoken with me about the possibility of backing me, but I really wasn't looking for a partner. Just when I thought I might have to seriously reconsider that prospect, my Aunt Peggy and Uncle George stepped forward and agreed to put up a certificate of deposit as my collateral.

How does one thank someone for giving them a new start on life? I'll forever be grateful to my Aunt Peggy and Uncle George.

We still had many obstacles to overcome -- the biggest one being almost a year of downtime with no income except what my catering brought in. As construction dragged on I became poorer with each passing day. I'll never forget one day my younger son, Bobby said, "Mama, I'm hungry but I don't have any money."

I said, "Well, son, I've got one more little change box. Let's go back here and see how much is in it."

As I was sifting through the coins I got a glimpse of something green hidden down in the bottom of that box. It was a fifty-dollar bill! Bobby and I stood there and laughed our heads off and quickly headed to McDonald's and ordered two number threes!

Opening day, January 8, 1996. We opened to the public with not one but *two* overdrawn accounts. My sons and I were full of apprehension, but we were dedicated to serving the best meal to our guests. We were capable of preparing.

I'll never forget that day. How our old guests from the Best Western knew we were open I'll never know since we couldn't afford advertising. But they showed up, and I spent that lunch shift crying and hugging everybody's neck and thanking them for not forgetting us. This business was truly built for and by my Savannah friends.

It wasn't long before our guest list grew to include people from all parts of the world. And they all seemed to have one thing in common -- they loved cheese biscuits, hoecakes, fried chicken, and collard greens. I saved up enough money to self-publish my cookbook. Can you imagine my surprise when on its second week's birthday my book was bought by a big publishing house and became *The Lady & Sons Savannah Country Cookbook*, followed in two short years by a second cookbook, *The Lady & Sons, Too!*

The Lady & Sons restaurant quickly became a destination for residents and tourists alike. One of these people was Jerry Shriver, food critic with *USA Today*. He and his guests were so cute, smiling and gobbling everything down we brought to them. I knew he enjoyed it, but I had no idea he enjoyed it enough to honor it as the "Most Memorable Meal" for 1999, in the December 19 issue of *USA Today*, putting us number one over restaurants in places like Paris, New York City, and Chicago! Thank you, Jerry. What a difference you made in my life!

I have a dear friend in Savannah named Carol Perkins, who moved to Savannah from New York City, where she had lived a very full and exciting life as a Victoria's Secret model. During her years in New York, Carol met Gordon Elliott, a TV personality on the Food Network, and told him she wanted him to meet me. Well, in walks Gordon, and we hit it off from the start. Before Gordon left he asked if I would be a guest on his

show, "Gordon Elliott's Door Knock Dinners." With some reservations, I accepted.

Before I knew it, Gordy had my sons and me on a plane to Las Vegas. I'll never forget Gordon and me at the craps table until five o'clock in the morning, screaming and cheering!

But we soon had to cut the fun; work called us at 11 A.M. to begin taping an episode of "Door Knock Dinners." After work we were soon back to playtime, enjoying a fabulous meal at Le Cirque.

After dinner Gordon treated us to the fabulous "O" show at the Bellagio, then it was right back to the tables; we didn't leave them again until 8 A.M. the next morning! What a trip, Gordy. A million thanks and much love to you for the good times you showed Jamie, Bobby, and me!

We filmed several other "Door Knock Dinner" episodes. Gordon is directly responsible for introducing me to the Food Network. I've appeared many times on "Ready...Set...Cook!" with Ainsley Harriott (speaking of great guys, Ainsley's another one of them) and "Food Finds" with Sandra Pinckney, who's also quite a lady.

I'm still enjoying my regular visits to Pennsylvania to appear on the QVC network with recipes from my two previous cookbooks. I have finally arrived at the stage of life that I never dreamed possible for my family or me.

I live in a beautiful home on the water shared with a blue-and-gold macaw, Lady Bird, an umbrella cockatoo named Dixie, a one-eyed cat named Popeye, and two wonderful Shih Tzus, known by the entire neighborhood as Otis and Sam. Toward the end of the writing of this book, Otis and Sam ran over to the computer where I was sitting and started jumping up and down and barking. This was the signal that they had to go potty. As we made our way out the back door on that summer day, it was hotter than a June bride, and definitely not a day I wanted to have to run all over Wilmington Island. Well, the boys immediately pulled a jailbreak, running the opposite of the usual way. They made their way around the big brick wall that surrounds my neighborhood at the edge of the water. Naturally, I'm dressed in old jeans, an old T-shirt, a hat, and sporting no makeup. My book, not my look, was at the top of my priority list.

I chased those dogs around that wall and ran straight into a big burly man I'd never seen, propped on his fence, talking on his cell phone. He bore a strong resemblance to Ernest Hemingway. I quickly apologized for my dogs' invasion of his yard and he just as quickly assured me it was all right. He seemed to be a man that wanted to be left alone even though I heard him mumble, "Let's go have a drink sometime."

Once Otis and Sam tasted that little bit of freedom, they were ready to go back on the other side of the wall. A couple of weeks later it was jailbreak time again. Once again, there stood Ernest Hemingway. This time we made a date to go boating.

Michael Anthony Groover is a fifth-generation Wilmington Island boy with a deep love for his roots and his family. One look at him and you know without a shadow of a doubt that he belongs on the river.

Michael and his world have certainly enriched mine. And his world is his family, his life on the river, his faith, and his ability to care for others. I love the man, I love his family, and I love all that he stands for.

As I sit here completing this introduction, my mind races over the last thirty-five years of my life. It's hard for me to believe that life can be this good. I have learned that I should always keep my head held high and my eyes wide open so that I won't miss the gifts God may have in store for me.

My life is so very full and sweet, surrounded daily in the restaurant by the people that I love so very much: my sons, Jamie and Bobby; my brother, Bubba; my cousin Don; my manager, Lori; my kitchen manager,

Rance; my assistant kitchen manager, Aaron; my head cook, Dora; along with Lisa, Charles, and Jelly Roll and our entire restaurant family. Together we all work daily on sharing our food, our traditions, and our love with our guests.

In this cookbook, I hope that y'all enjoy the simple but delicious recipes I've chosen to share with you. I also hope this cookbook will provide a reason for you and your family to come together in the kitchen, forming your own traditions that will make memories that last a lifetime.

Until next time, best dishes from Savannah, Georgia!

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