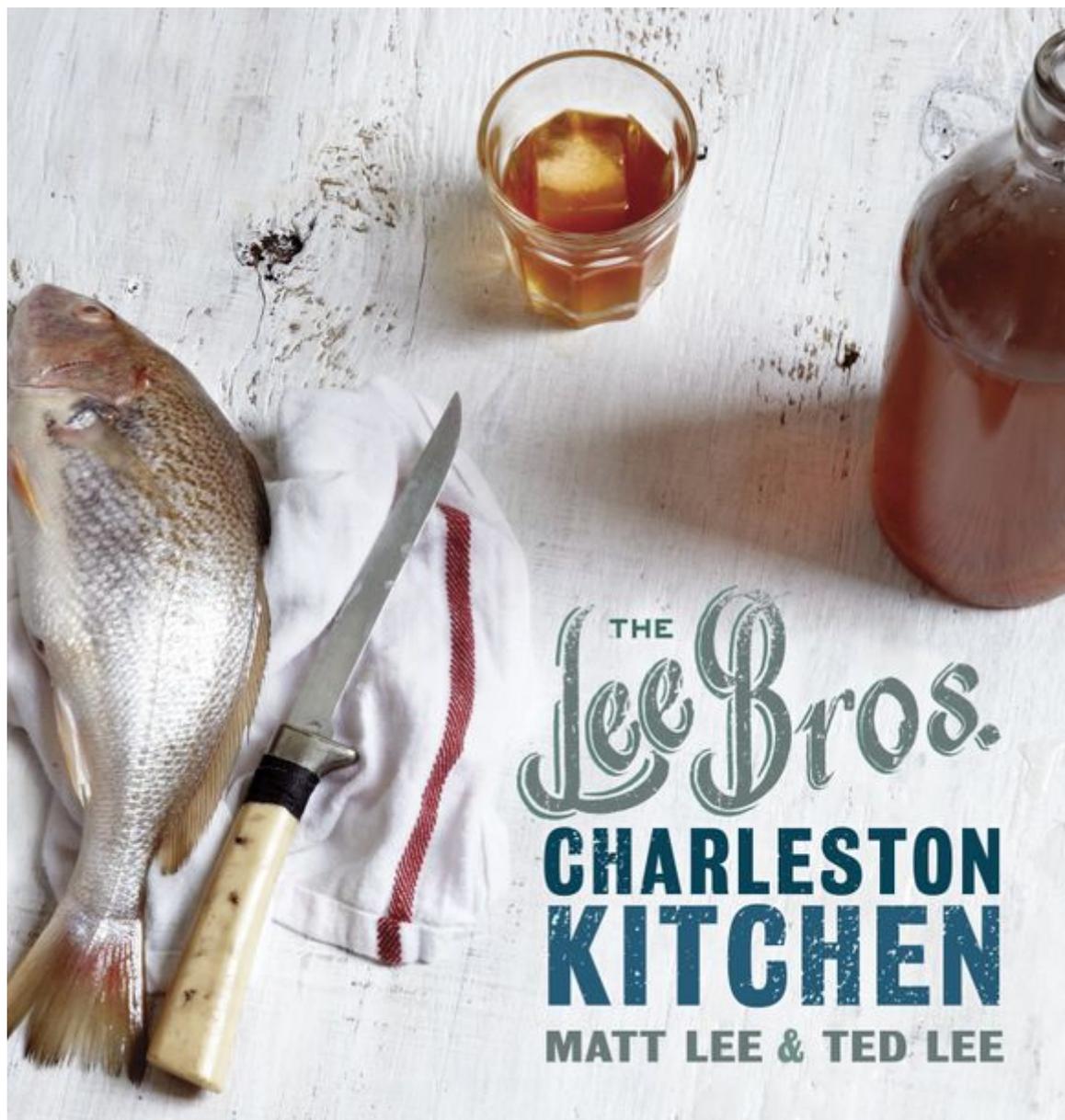


# Cook the Book: 'The Lee Bros. Charleston Kitchen'

KATE WILLIAMS



As a cook with strong South Carolina heritage, I was immediately drawn to [Matt and Ted Lee](#)'s new cookbook, [The Lee Bros. Charleston Kitchen](#). Their book, much like the cuisine that it covers, has an elegant simplicity and a definitive sense of place. When reading their recipes, I could almost hear my grand-relatives speaking to me in their long, soft Southern drawl; it transported me back to hot summertime family reunions on James Island.

Yet unlike the particularly polite conversation at those family events, the text of the Lee brothers book doesn't shy away from the complicated history of Charleston. They weave together narratives that acknowledge the city's Confederate roots while celebrating its contemporary diversity, describing one of the most vibrant food cultures our country has to offer. Documenting a wide array of dishes and meals, *Charleston Kitchen* spans everything from elegant fine dining to backyard oyster roasts.

As befits a coastal city, the Lee brothers place a great deal of emphasis on seafood. They feature local specialties like shad and shrimp throughout the book, in addition to an extensive seafood chapter. And much like the more famous Southern chefs working today, the Lee brothers also make use of a prolific amount of regional vegetables. The usual suspects—collards, green beans, and sweet potatoes—make appearances alongside less familiar plants, like chainey briar and salsify.

In addition to the excellent, easy to follow recipes, there are essays and extended headnotes on Southern topics as disparate as [Edna Lewis](#) and the joys of boiled peanuts. These vignettes make the book just as enjoyable a bedside read as it is a kitchen companion.

This week, we'll cook up a full dinner party of spring Charleston favorites. We'll start with **Henry's Cheese Spread**, an appetizer dip full of savory spice. Next, we'll stew a mess of **Four-Pepper Collards** and dress a simple side of **Butter Beans** with copious amounts of butter. For our main attraction, we'll plate up the South Carolina classic, **Shrimp and Grits**. Finally, no trip to Charleston would be complete without a stiff cocktail, so we'll shake up the **Hugo**, a zesty and potent take on a dark and stormy.

## Win 'The Lee Bros. Charleston Kitchen'

Thanks to the generous folks at Clarkson Potter, we have five (5) copies of [The Lee Bros. Charleston Kitchen](#) to give away this week. All you need to do to win is tell us about your most quintessential Southern dining experience in the comments section below.