VIRTUAL TRAVEL

PENNSYLVANIA

When you're in the western part of the state, you've gotta get a gob.

To a western Pennsylvanian, a gob by any other name just wouldn't taste as sweet. Though the rest of the world calls this cakey confection a whoopie pie, residents of Johnstown, Pennsylvania, and neighboring towns in the hills east of Pittsburgh have been gobbling up gobs for more than a century.

Why the unusual moniker? Some say the whoopie pie got its name when Amish farmers, overjoyed to find the sweet treats in their lunch pails, exclaimed "whoopie!" And one version of the gobs' origin story has a similar refrain: Pennsylvania coal miners were equally excited at finding this fine dessert in their lunches. However, to them, the frosting-filled chocolate snack cakes looked an awful lot like coal waste lumps known as "gobs" at mining sites. Thus, the regional nickname took hold.



Though gobs at many bakeries and bake sales in the area seem indistinguishable from whoopie pies, the gobs made by one western Pennsylvania bakery are distinct.

Since 1980, Tim Yost of Yost's Dutch Maid Bakery has made Johnstown's signature gobs, based on an early 20th-century recipe acquired from the neighboring Harris Boyer Bakery after it shut its doors. Whoopie pies are soft and sticky, Tim says, but a gob has a denser, drier crumb. "Not a cake and not a cookie, it's somewhere in between."

Neither big nor bite-size, with a hint of cinnamon in the devil's food-esque batter, an almost crunchy yellow frosting, and a cellophane package with a cartoon sailor, Yost's trademarked Dutch Maid Gobs are unique. And for many western Pennsylvanians, they have a taste that can't be replicated. One bite and, as the Dutch Maid packaging notes, "They eat 'em up!" —*Casey Barber*

where to get 'em

YOST'S DUTCH MAID BAKERY
Johnstown (which accepts mail orders at gobsrus@gmail.com or 814-269-3931)

SHEETZ AND GIANT EAGLE STORES
Select locations in western Pennsylvania

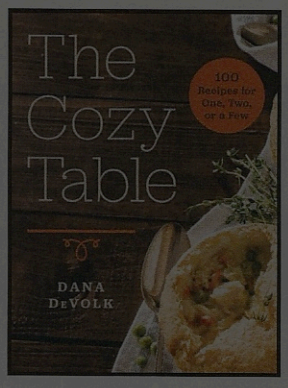
CLARK'S CORNER STORE
Johnstown

THE ORIGINAL PIE SHOPPE
Laughlintown

OFF THE SHELF

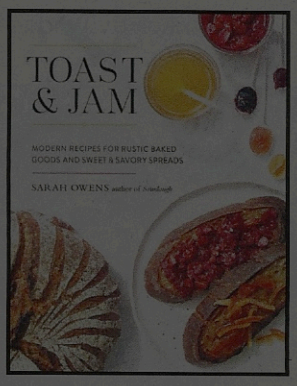
Cool-Weather Comfort

If chilly November has you hungry for comfort food, here are three cookbooks you'll want to cozy up to.



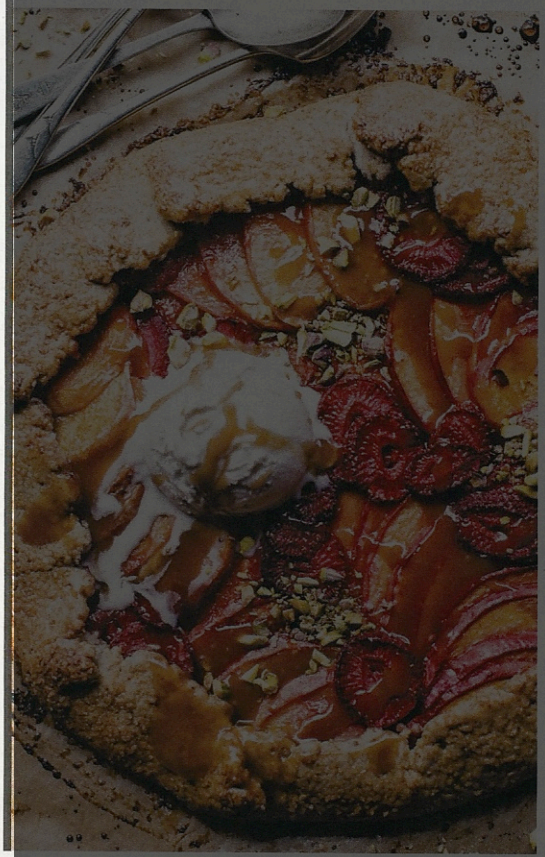
Dana DeVolk's scaled-down recipes serve up craveworthy food—and a welcome break from the leftovers parade—for singles, couples, empty nesters, or any small household.

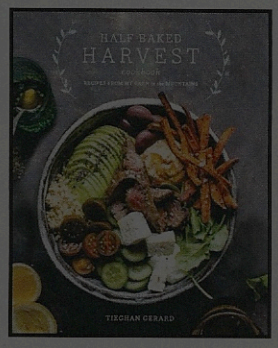
The Cozy Table **by Dana DeVolk** *(Countryman Press $25)*



This clever baking and preserving combo includes not just recipes for breads, crackers, cakes, biscuits, and scones, but also sweet, savory, and wonderful things (like gingered sweet potato butter) to slather them with.

Toast & Jam **by Sarah Owens** *(Roost Books, $30)*





In her first cookbook, Half Baked Harvest blogger Tieghan Gerard offers clever, strangely comforting combinations: Sweet potato fries in a salad? Why not! Pasta baked into a frittata? Don't mind if I do! She dreamed it all up in a kitchen in a barn in the Colorado mountains.

Half Baked Harvest Cookbook **by Tieghan Gerard** *(Clarkson Potter, $30)*