In Lebanon in the first half of the 20th century, as elsewhere, a growing bourgeoisie necessitated an emerging science of housewifery and the forging of particular modes of moral, national, and social conduct. The “mother of the nation,” and her skill and ease in managing and administering the home constituted the successful, but confined, modern national subject. Food, as well as its preparation and presentation, were central to the experiences and representations of new modes of proper national conduct. Cuisine, and its links to new bourgeoisie prescriptions of womanhood, motherhood, and citizenship are most powerfully articulated in girls’ schools. In these penultimate sites of inculcation, the preparation, presentation, and nutritional value of food was a key site for the discipline of tadbir al-manzil, or home economics. What can the pedagogical focus on food in the emerging science of housewifery tell us about rapidly shifting demarcations of taste, distinction, and subjectivity? How did the introduction of “western” ingredients, such as pasta for example, influence and interact with the imperative to forge and define an “authentic” local cuisine, and from there, form part of what was being hashed out as a “national education”? This paper examines the impact of the American Protestant missionaries on the "professionalization" of previously [informal] social practices in Lebanon from about 1911-1939. In particular, it focuses on the process of transforming cooking into an academic subject in girls' schools -- "home ec" -- by removing it from the homosocial female space of the home to the oversight of the institution of the school and the authority of the American mission. A “professional” teacher replaced the long-standing role of mothers and grandmothers. At the same new spatial norms of the ideal household reshaped the kitchen as a site of domestic authority and confinement. How did distinctly American notions of "time" and "efficiency" as they were evolving in the 20s and 30s play a particular role in the way that 'national cuisines' abroad were conceptualized and taught? Utilizing memoirs, cookbooks, recipes, oral history, and the press, this paper explores food as a lens to trace new formation of space, self, and society in the labyrinthine contours of a new citizenry.