

A photograph of two young women in a kitchen. The woman on the left has blonde hair and is wearing a red t-shirt with a pineapple graphic. The woman on the right has dark hair and is wearing a pink t-shirt and a black apron. They are both smiling and looking towards the camera. In the foreground, there is a large white bowl filled with a chunky, orange-colored food. The background shows a window with a checkered curtain and some kitchen items on a counter.

The
COOKING
Experience

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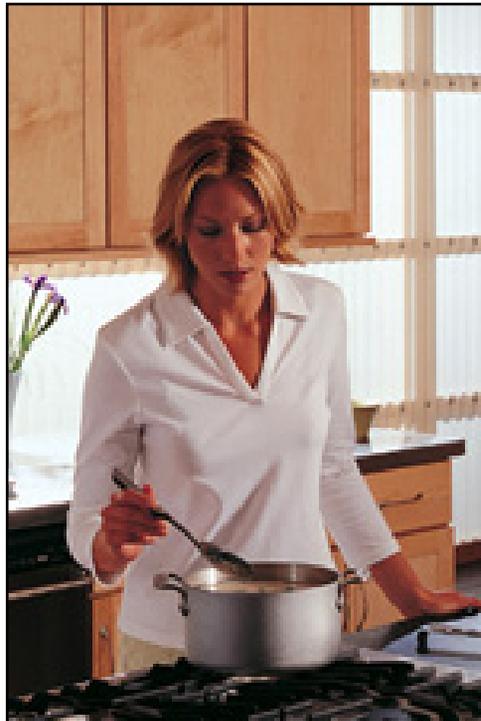


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Basics of Cooking

Cooking is the art of preparing food. For those just setting up housekeeping and for those seeking a refresher or primer in setting up for an enjoyable cooking experience, here are some back to basic guidelines for you and your kitchen.

Herbs and Spices

Make sure to have basic herbs and spices available and handy. Although most people store theirs in spice caddies of some type ranging from wood to durable plastic, the uppermost issue here is to make sure that the spices and herbs are in a cool area, not near direct heat or light.

If you have already had your herbs and spices for years on end, note they do have a shelf life. Most varieties should be used within six months to get the most flavors and used not more than a year from their purchase, as some turn bad like the seeds, sesame and poppy.

To garnish the most flavor from your herbs and spices, crushed dried varieties in your hands, then add to recipes. And when substituting fresh herbs for dried, as the fresh are more potent and flavorful, one tablespoon of fresh can be used in place of one teaspoon of dried.

In addition, make sure to have the basics on hand like:

Condiments & Refrigerator Staples

- Barbecue sauce
- Butter / Margarine
- Cheese (parmesan and hard kinds)
- Chili and tomato paste and sauce
- Eggs
- Honey
- Horseradish
- Ketchup
- Maple Syrup
- Mayonaise
- Milk
- Molasses
- Mustard
- Oils
- Olives / Pickles
- Soy and Teriyaki sauce

- Tomatoes, Lettuce, Onions, Mushrooms (basic salad fixings) & Potatoes
- Vinegar
- Worcestershire and Steak Sauce

Staples: Dry and Canned Goods

- Baking powder and baking soda
- Beans: cans of baked and bags of dried beans
- Broth: chicken and beef
- Cereal and oats
- Coffee, Tea, Hot Chocolate
- Cooking spray
- Commeal and Cornstarch
- Crackers
- Flour and Sugar
- Pasta, dried: spaghetti, linguini, angel hair, fettuccine, penne, noodles
- Peanut Butter and Jelly
- Rice and Canned Potatoes
- Soups
- Tomatoes: canned whole, crushed, chopped, puree, sauce, fresh
- Tuna, canned
- Vanilla
- Yeast

Cooking Styles & Techniques

Cooking styles and techniques are plentiful, offering many types of cooking experiences for people round the world. Here are some of the more popular styles and techniques, listed in no particular order of preference.

Baking – This method is popular for making bread and cakes. The process involves dry heat inside an oven. Heated stones work, too.

Broiling – This is when you reach the liquid's boiling point atop the stove on a burner. Some recipes call for food not to be added until after the liquid boils; other before. Variations here include steaming – like placing a colander of vegetables over boiling water to steam them, and using a pressure cooker with meat inside.

Crock Pot – People who enjoy mixing ingredients, then leaving while everything slow cooks will enjoy crock pot cooking. This is often the preferred method for two-career families on the go with little time to cook.

Flame / Fire / Kiln – These methods involve using fire or a kin to cook; for example, with shish kabob, flaming desserts and pizza cooked via a wood fire.

Frying – This popular method unfortunately isn't always the healthiest. Top fast foods today include cooking via variations of this method called deep frying; French fries, fish sandwiches, fruit pies, onion rings; and sautéing – frying in butter. However, healthy foods come from another cooking variation called stir frying; stir fry vegetables and chicken.

Lite – For the health-conscious, people who want to cook lite mainly opt for substitutions with lower fat content; like replacing applesauce for oil in brownie mixes.

Once A Month – Those who want to save money from eating out and also provide healthy meals for their families, often cook once a month. They cook huge batches of a variety of meals and then divide them up to store them in the freezer.

Microwave – Very popular especially with younger cooks, microwaves provide quick solutions for heating up leftovers and cooking frozen foods.

Barbecuing / Grilling – The choice for outdoor fun, dads often prefer this cooking experience.

Rotisserie – One of the latest gadgets out today, this is great for chicken and turkey.

Drying – Fruits and jerky-style meats are favorites here.

Toaster Oven – This method is perfect for smaller families and single people. The units take up less space, use less heat and often require less cooking time than conventional ovens.

Cooking Tips

If you could use a little help in the kitchen from time to time, try some of these cooking tips on for size. Print them out and share them with your friends, too.

Bacon – For less shrinkage when pan frying, place a flat metal weight (check cooking stores for this) over bacon to keep it from rolling up. For less fat and mess all over the stove, place individual strips on a wire rack then place the rack on a cookie sheet and bake your bacon.

Foil – When using cookie sheets, line them with foil for easy cleanup. Spray them with cooking spray and they're ready to use in a jiff.

Brown Sugar - Place hardened brown sugar in the microwave along with a cup of water beside the sugar. Microwave on high for a couple of minutes, and check it regularly. This will soften your sugar; however any remaining sugar will harden again. So you'll need to repeat this procedure for each use.

Eggs – Always crack an egg all by itself into a small bowl before adding it to your recipes. Otherwise if it is rotten, it will ruin your entire mix.

Company – Always be prepared for unexpected guests by having some extras on hand like: macaroni and cheese mix, canned tuna and Tuna Helper, canned fruit juices (frozen or not), crackers and cheese, dried fruits, bread sticks.

Clean Up – Don't wait until after the meal preparation or the meal itself to begin cleaning up. If you clean as you go along, this works best.

Scrapbook Cooking

Scrap booking is a favorite pastime today, so combine it with your cooking to make a unique cooking experience. Begin with a binder with pages or other book for your scrap booking contents. Set up monthly sections with seasons included. Then insert your favorite recipes throughout; featuring hot soups and breads during winter; salads, barbeque and grilled meals during summer time, etc. Sprinkle in favorite holiday candies, cookies, cakes, entrees and side dishes for your own self – and for crowds (like dips and cheese balls.)

Add snap shots of your cooking centered on color-coordinating napkin frames. Insert holiday napkins and other fun moments, notes and recipes in colored pencil and markers, and touch up throughout with fun food and cooking stickers.

Healthy Cooking That Tastes Good

Eating healthy isn't always fun. Bland foods and tasteless cuisine are nothing to look forward to at mealtimes.

But forget all that! There are ways to improve your diet without losing taste. Here are some helpful healthy cooking tips that do leave you wanting more.

- Microwave your meals and snacks. Eat lighter popcorn this way, but not lighter taste. And avoid so much fat by skipping grease and butter frying, but not taste as you microwave your choices instead. Substitute fat for fat here.
- Rack roasting your meats allows you to save on fat but not flavor. Plus instead of basting with butter, use meat drippings in the pan. Experiment with flavorful juices and wines, too. And remember to strain gravy to get rid of excess fat first.
- Cook with a wok or steam and enjoy healthy stir fry vegetables mixed in with your favorite meats, fish and poultry. Only a tiny bit of oil is needed. Then relish a dabs of teriyaki and soy sauce to taste.
- Bake, barbeque, grill, broil or use rotisserie tools for full-flavored low-fat cooking. Note: make sure to use a rack for fat dripping.
- Get rid of skins, fats and added salt by experimenting with meat coatings and seasonings. Look in your grocery store for packaged coating mixes in the baking aisle or ask a clerk there. Also look for recipes using oats or corn flakes.

- For healthier snacks and desserts, make fruit cobbler, jello and other snacks. Dry fruits and snack on dried apples, banana slices, apricots, berries and other sweets, to.
- Add nuts into snack mixes for healthy alternatives, too. Fruit and nut mixes are loaded with good taste. And fold chopped nuts into cake and cookie mixes to add protein for healthier snacks.
- Cook with your crock pot and add a rack inside for less fat but full flavor with slow cooking. You can also bake breads, cakes and other goodies in these, too, full of slow-cooking flavor and much less fat.

Fun Family Cooking

Old fashioned fun involved taffy pulls and bobbing for apples at parties. And old fashioned fun is still all around today and can be added into your cooking experiences. Here is a small sampling of fun family cooking times that lay ahead for you.

Ice Creams

BANANA ICE CREAM

- 1 quart of cream
- 6 large bananas
- 1/2 pound of sugar
- 1 teaspoonful of vanilla

Mix half the cream and all the sugar over low heat, stirring until the sugar is dissolved. Remove from heat and cool. Then add the rest of the cream and freeze the mixture. After frozen, add mashed bananas. Pour all into ice cream making machine, top with lid, add ice and rock salt (i.e. follow directions for your machine) and turn until recipe is frozen and hard. Serves ten people.

CHOCOLATE ICE CREAM

- 1 quart of cream
- 1 pint of milk
- 1/2 pound of sugar
- 4 ounces of grated chocolate
- 1 teaspoonful of vanilla or 1/4 of a vanilla bean
- 1/4 of a teaspoonful of cinnamon

Place chocolate in a double boiler. Stir in milk until hot. Mix in sugar, vanilla, cinnamon and half of the cream. Let cool then freeze. Remove from freezer and mix in the other half of cream, whipping the mixture to a stiff froth. Serve ten people.

Donuts & Gingerbread DONUTS

- 1 Egg
- 1 Cup Milk
- 1 1/3 Cups Sugar
- 2 Teaspoonfuls Cream of Tartar
- 1 Teaspoonful Soda
- Small pad of Butter
- 1/4 Teaspoonful Cinnamon or Nutmeg
- Salt and Flour enough to roll soft

Beat the egg and sugar together. Mix in milk and butter. Stir the soda and cream of tartar into the flour; dry; mix all together, with the flour and salt. Cut into rings and fry in deep fat. Lay them on wax paper when you take them from the fat.

GINGERBREAD

- 1 Cup Molasses
- 1 Cup Sour Milk
- ½ Cup Butter or Lard
- 1 Teaspoonful Ginger
- 1 Teaspoonful Soda
- ½ Teaspoonful Salt

Stir the soda into the molasses until it foams. Mix in sour milk, ginger, salt and melted butter. Then add flour to make a stiff batter. Bake at 350 degrees until brown. This makes one sheet.

And there are many more fun cooking experiences awaiting you. Get started enjoying your own cooking experiences right away by downloading your own copy of:

“The Cooking Experience”

Download the rest of this book for \$19.99

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