



FUEL

The Open Source Cookbook:
for Fuel For Geeks

Version 0.4 – **Unfinished**. See the note in the
“Acknowledgements” section for the revision history.



GEEKS

By
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aka InspectorPraline

Imhoff Street Press
Norman, Oklahoma

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1. Acknowledgements and History,
2. Introduction,
3. and the subsection entitled "About the Author."

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Acknowledgements

First off, I want to thank my mother and father for giving me so many wonderful ideas to cook with – without their help, I wouldn't know a thing about how to cook short of "put it in the microwave and watch."

Another thing I've learned from my parents is to experiment. From my childhood, when "cooking" meant taking hot water and pouring a bunch of spices into the water to see what you liked, to now, when I experiment with everything from steaks to soups, I've learned how to test the waters so I learn about what I like. Hopefully, this book will help *you* maximize not just your budget, but your palate as well.

Additionally, I'd like to thank the folks at *slashdot.org* for the *bucket loads* of recipes they submitted to help beef up the size of the cookbook. You'll find nicknames for them in each recipe, and some have elected to include their email addresses in the recipes. Be sure to send them nice comments!!

I also want to thank all the folks who looked at the website and decided to send me recipes – without your submissions this book would be *awfully* thin.

I also want to thank my good friend Rob Marshall for the numerous design and layout hints he has given me. Also, **BIG, BIG** thanks to Harley of *Harleypig.com* for hosting not only the mirror but the forums as well! Thanks also to Ross Nelson of *randomdata.net* for providing additional hosting and the mailing list!

History

Revision 0.1, July 2002. Very disorganized, but at least I've got a bunch of good ideas thanks to the folks from Slashdot and the webpage viewers. This printing was rather rushed, as I've got quite a bit of recipes to try to put together. Put together from about 20 recipes along with the initial guide, this is *nowhere* near finished. Issued as a formatting example, with comments sought. Total length of this version: 35 pages @ Letter size.

To-Do:

- continue to add more recipes from emails/comments received
- add more geek toys
- add the meat purchasing guide
- categorize recipes (may be done, may not be. This isn't as big a priority.)

Version 0.2. Revised a few sentences, and added some comments from readers based on some incorrect/misleading statements made in version 0.1. Made a bunch of design changes, including typesetting changes and the addition of color facing pages for the individual chapters. Replaced standard screen colors with standard PANTONE™ colors to produce more accurate colors in printing. Re-typeset the book to look a little more interesting, and added foundational recipes. Added spice guide. 53 pgs @ letter size.

Version 0.3. Fixed a bunch of page flow problems that cropped up at the last minute. More recipes added. Fixed a few minor bugs in recipes. Added the GNU license to the end, and cleaned up a little of the legalese on page 2 to be in compliance with the license! ☺ Added a short "about me" blurb. Started the geek-kitchen toys section. Added images of the "stuff you should have" and the geek toys where I could find good-quality images. 74 pgs. @ letter size.

0.3a: point release, PDF only. Fixed some pretty irritating picture-alignment bugs.

Version 0.4. Still adding more recipes. I've still got a ton of emails with recipes waiting to be added, so hopefully I can get that done here within the next month or so. Added submitted articles section. Couldn't find a decent cross-section of meat-producing animals, so no meat-buying guide yet. 88 pgs. @ letter size.

About the Author

Matthew Balmer is currently a student of music education at the University of Oklahoma. In addition to being a trumpet player and cooking nut, he enjoys composition, tinkering with his computers, cartoons, and old game shows, especially Match Game, Password, and \$25,000 Pyramid. He also enjoys graphic design, typography, and typesetting, and has on more than one occasion been heard saying “if it wasn’t for the fact that I love my trumpet so much, I’d be doing graphic arts.” He is an enormously huge fan of the cooking show *Good Eats*, and would love nothing more than to spend an afternoon learning about cooking from Alton Brown (or to have him read this book and give constructive criticism).

Among Matt’s more memorable (for him, anyway) accomplishments include being an active member of the Kappa Kappa Psi national honorary band fraternity, and performing with the *Pride of Oklahoma* marching band for three years, including marching in the Orange Bowl Parade of 2000 during the Sooners’ championship title run.

My Geek Code and Good Eats code:

```
-----BEGIN GEEK CODE BLOCK-----
```

```
Version: 3.1
```

```
GMU/FA/PA d+ s:++ a-- C++>++++ UL>+ P>++ L>++++ E-> W++ N++ o? K- w---
```

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O? M>+++ V?> PS+ PE Y+ PGP@>+ t+ 5 X R+ tv+ b++ DI++ D++ G e>++ h>
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r-->+++ y-
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-----END GEEK CODE BLOCK-----
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-----BEGIN GOOD EATS CODE BLOCK-----
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Version: 1.0
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GE+++ AB++ W+ MB+ PM+ SC+ MFC+++ DD CR+ CH+ e++ sc+ pt+++ rec? tg+ tf- FP++ FTV YC YG
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```
-----END GOOD EATS CODE BLOCK-----
```

Introduction

Welcome, folks, to *The Open Source Cookbook*. This is my attempt at compiling an entire book of recipes and cuisine ideas from the Open Source software world – the kind of stuff that you’d cook before you sit down for a long night of coding, or the kind of stuff you prepare when you’ve got a LAN party in a few hours. Many of these recipes were obtained via the geek news website Slashdot (slashdot.org), where I am a proud member, and where many, *many* amateur cooks hide. Many more were emailed to me or posted via our forums – a big thank-you to all those who decided to submit recipes!

The whole book was created with the geek in the kitchen at heart, but with a bent toward the *college* geek. Suffice to say, most collegiate geeks have spent a fair chunk on their computer hardware (as I have) and may or may not have the money or resources to cook a 5-course dinner.

Now, of course, many of these recipes are much more difficult to prepare in the college dormitory, the primary reason being that city fire codes in just about every city I know of prevent you from having an open heating element in rooms that are smaller than a certain size, which means no range tops, no ovens, and not even a buffet range. Many of these recipes *require* a stove or oven, but there are others that can be done and can work just as well in a microwave.

There are two symbols I’ll use in this book:

①: **Information.** This can be information that’s pertinent to the particular recipe you’re making, good advice, or a little bit of trivia regarding the recipe itself.

☠: **CAUTION.** Information here usually regards your personal safety – if not that, it’s the safety of the dish you’re making! Heed well!

The last bit of information I’m going to include here is about *abbreviations*: In the recipes, I’ve used the standard notations of “tablespoon,” “teaspoon,” etc. For amounts that *could* have duplicate scales of measurement (considering people from all over the world could potentially read this) I’ve tried to convert the U.S. measurement standards to Metric where applicable. Thus, things like “1 lb ground beef” will read “0.5 kgs ground beef” as well. Here’s the list of abbreviations used throughout the book, along with some equivalents: (note: all the abbreviated volumetric measurements here are *U.S. format*. So, a cup is a U.S. cup, not a U.K. cup.)

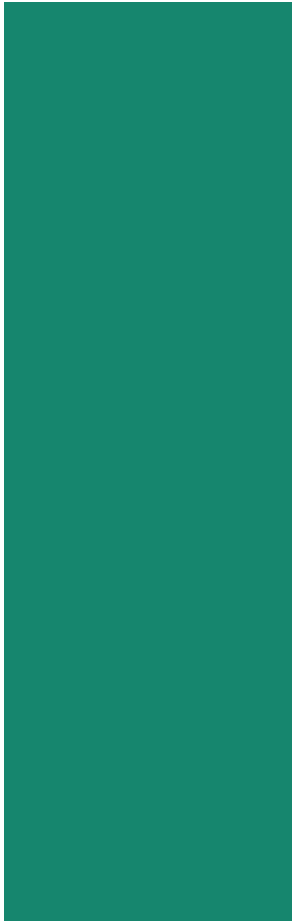
Common Abbreviations		Equivalencies	
cp	Cup	3 tsp	1 tbsp
tsp	teaspoon	4 tbsp	¼ cp
tbsp	tablespoon	5 tbsp + 1 tsp	⅓ cp
lb	pound	8 tbsp	½ cp
g	gram	2 cp	1 pt
oz	ounce	4 cp	1 qt
pt	pint	4 qt	1 gal
qt	quart	355mL	12 fl. oz
gal	gallon	474mL	16 fl. oz.
L	liter	16 oz	1 lb
g	gram	1 oz	about 30 g
pkt	packet	1 lb	455 g
pkg	package	Dash/Pinch	< ⅛ tsp

Oh, and one more thing: **HAVE FUN!**

Chapter



Stuff You Should Have What Belongs In Your Kitchen?



There's quite a large assortment of kitchen utensils out there, but for this book, you only *need* some of it. The recipes assume you have some basic cookware and utensils, but just in case, we'll go through the list here and you can make *sure* you've got everything. Yes, this has a bunch of no-brainers on this list, but I'm assuming that you're *literally* starting from scratch.

- ✓ **A 2 ½ quart pot, with a lid** (this is often referred to in cookbooks as a *medium pot* or *saucepan*). If you don't have one of these, you can find inexpensive saucepans at your local Wal-Mart for about \$12-15. Also – *avoid glass lids if you can!* Even the metal-rimmed ones tend to break, and broken glass isn't fun. The best kind of saucepan is the copper-clad kind, but these cost an immense amount of money, so spring for the stainless steel variety with an aluminum-layered bottom. These hold heat *very* well, and also heat evenly. If you buy a copper-bottomed one, be careful – they tend to get very hot very quickly, and can easily burn your food if you're not careful.



- ✓ **A 10" or larger skillet** – some stores refer to them as *sauté pans*, this is just a fancy name. These tend to be anywhere from \$10-20 depending on quality. Nonstick is fine, just make sure that you don't use metal utensils on it too often, and when you do, *be gentle* – the nonstick coating tends to flake off rather easily on these. Sometimes, sauté pans have curved walls to them, but this doesn't change how the pan heats – it just changes how much the pan can hold.



- ✓ **A microwave** of some variety. This is probably the most expensive thing in this list, and even then, it's only a convenience. A good microwave oven can be had for as little as \$70, if you get the right kind.



- ✓ **A spatula, metal or plastic**, it doesn't matter (if you have a plastic one, make sure it's rated to take high temperatures). Cheap – even the metal ones only cost about \$4. The ones shown here have silicone blades that can withstand temperatures of up to 500°F.



- ✓ **Basic silverware** (forks, spoons, etc.). Don't splurge on this unless you can. If you can't, buy the super cheap variety with plastic handles – often these come in sets which are labeled as "service for" and then a number, this means that you have that number of place settings – Service for 8 means eight place settings. I've found cheap "service for 12" sets that retail for \$12. If you can afford to splurge on this, *do it*—your silverware will hold up *much* longer if you do. When checking silverware, lift the box first. If it's a heavy box (for example, it feels like about 5 pounds but it's only service for 8), the silverware is of a good, solid variety. You can also tell by looking at the "representatives" in the window of the box – look for thick handles. A *good* set of silverware usually runs about \$30-40, but it pays for itself in the number of pieces you *don't* have to replace later. If you can't even afford the \$12 set, look for plastic silverware—but *make sure it's dishwasher safe!* Good plastic silverware can be had for about \$3-4 a bag.



- ✓ **A paring knife or utility knife** (paring knives have short blades that are usually 3" long or less, utility knives have blades from 4-6" long.) Paring knives are often sold in packs of four, usually for under \$1.50. In the picture at the right, the paring knife is the bottom knife. The "utility" knife is the 2nd knife from the bottom. Utility knives sold alone might be harder to find, but a set of knives will contain at least one utility knife, and sets can be as cheap as \$8. In most sets, you'll also get a paring knife or two, along with two or three other kinds of knives – a boning knife, which has a blade about as long as a utility knife, but is thinner so as to trim meat from bone; a chef's knife, which is a heavy-weight blade from 6-8" long that is a good all-around cutting tool; and a slicer, which is about 6-8" long, but is of a thinner weight than a chef's knife. Also, when buying a good set of knives, look for the kind that has a *full tang* – what this means is that the blade doesn't stop at the handle, it runs all the way *through* the handle. You can frequently see the blade run all the way through the handle in many kinds of knives. In knives where you can't



see the blade run down the handle, look for 3 rivets in the handle – this tells you that the blade runs all the way to the bottom of the handle.

- ✓ **A colander** – you’ll use this in draining pasta, for example, so you don’t throw out the pasta with the water it’s cooked in! Get a big one—at least 8” across. These are often sold for about \$3-5. The ones shown here are the über-expensive models, and one of these babies will run you at least \$12, but nobody needs a \$12 colander unless you just want to say you have a \$12 colander or you have scads of cash burning a hole in your pocket!



- ✓ **A cutting board**, at least 12” long. These are moderately expensive, running about \$7 for some of the larger sizes. If you can afford two, buy a 12” long one along with one that is about 7x10, and **always** buy boards that have a juice/blood gutter around the edge of the board! The last thing you want is meat juice all over the floor! The ones shown here are called “reversible carving boards,” and have not only a juice gutter but have an indentation in the center to secure your main dish.



☠: Wooden cutting boards, while “authentic” in feel, can sometimes have a nasty habit of splitting after repeated washings. The big disadvantage to wooden cutting boards is their high price – often, wooden boards can cost more than twice as the average polyethylene or glass board. Professional-quality boards (as in something Emeril Lagasse would use) are frequently made extremely thick, and some boards can cost as much as \$70 apiece, but this because they use a *lot of expensive wood* (such as redwood, pine, oak, or maple) to make the boards. However, according to Klaus, below, wooden cutting boards can last a lot longer if you don’t beat it to pieces by putting it in the dishwasher: **📌: Klaus writes this in** - Wooden cutting boards only split if you abuse them, like washing them in a dishwasher (which is what my parents did – ed.) or soaking them for a long time in water. Both of these are no-no’s when it comes to wooden tools. If you oil them from time to time they will last as long as you. If you want to run your boards through the dishwasher, use the glass or polyethylene kind. Klaus also writes that polyethylene boards can be breeding grounds for bacteria because knives leave tiny grooves in them when they are used, while wooden ones are less susceptible to bacterial growth because of natural chemicals in the wood. (editor’s note: polyethylene boards are nowadays treated with an antibacterial agent, and the myriad of antibacterial cleaning supplies can help combat microbes in the kitchen no matter what you have.)

- ✓ **A casserole dish or baking dish**. Usually these are made of glass or ceramic, and are specifically designed to withstand high-temperature situations. Sets are *very economical* here. Often a set of baking dishes will come with multiples of a single item, and the set will usually run you \$20, but if you take care of them, they’ll last forever. If you don’t do much baking, buy the cheap aluminum pans. These come in sets of 2-4, and usually sell for about \$1-2. However, if you make *anything* in the oven, such as a baked ham, you’ll need something that can withstand the heat.



- ✓ **A broiler pan**. Usually, ovens come with these, but if you live in an apartment where the previous tenant took *everything* but the kitchen sink, you may need to get one of these. They *can* be rather difficult to find.

- ✓ **A mixing bowl of some variety**. Stainless steel ones are the best kind to have because they can take a heavy beating, but they can be mildly expensive (\$5 or more apiece) so if you can only find plastic, that’s okay. Make sure it’s at least 4-6” deep in the center. The ones shown here are excellent examples of good stainless steel bowls, ranging from ¾-qt. bowls all the way up to 8-qt. bowls.



- ✓ **A cookie sheet or something similar.** Good quality ones can be had at your local Wal-Mart for anywhere from \$4-8, if you're only doing this kind of thing rarely, though, buy the cheap disposable aluminum ones. Usually these are sold in packs of 2 or 3, often for about \$1.50 a package. The ones shown here are coated in aluminum – this allows them to heat more evenly than steel ones and it also helps them resist rusting.



- ✓ **Two thermometers: one that is rated to withstand being inside an oven** (also known as a meat thermometer) **and an instant-read thermometer.** The meat thermometer can be placed inside a cut of meat to check its doneness during cooking. It can also stand being inside the oven. Instant-read thermometers can be used outside the oven to check temperatures. While electronic ones are nice (and accurate), don't feel that you have to spend the extra cash on one. Radial-scale thermometers are perfectly good utensils. A meat thermometer will run you about \$5, and a pen-clip style instant-read thermometer should be less than \$3. The meat thermometer is the one shown at the right. An instant-read thermometer will usually have a pen-clip sleeve and be much smaller.



- ✓ **A small scale.** The most *anyone* should need is a little one-pound kitchen scale (These used to be known as "postal" scales, because they'd have a 16-ounce gradation along with current postal rates). They typically only cost about \$4. Electronic scales are incredibly overpriced, costing upwards of \$30, and can be wildly inaccurate unless you buy scientific-grade scales, which cost even *more*. If you can afford to splurge on a scale, there are high-quality radial scales that will accurately measure up to five pounds, and these cost about \$25, but this is overkill for virtually *any* college cook. The one shown on the right here is a \$35 dial-read scale – again, overkill – but this one also weighs more, 6 lb. 9 oz. to be exact. It is also *extremely* sturdy, and will stand up to everyday use quite well.



- ✓ **A flour sifter.** You'll use this in any kind of baking – and any kind of gravy-making. It's also great for mixing dry ingredients together really well. These are usually pretty cheap, no more than about \$3-4. The one on the right is a 5-cup sifter. Most store-bought sifters only have about a three-cup capacity, but unless you're baking for huge quantities of people, you shouldn't need one that's huge. For the truly dedicated baker, there are even 8-cup varieties.



- ✓ **A wire whisk, small or large.** You'll use these kinds of things for beating eggs, and quickly blending things together. Whisks are perfect for making things like pudding, scrambled eggs, and all manner of sauces where stirring it just doesn't seem to blend things together in the right way. Whisks also work *wonders* in emulsions, such as vinegar-oil salad dressings and gravies. These are quite cheap, with the "spring-loaded" kind (the kind that looks like the handle is a spring) costing about \$2.



- ✓ **A slotted spoon.** This is another must. If you fry anything in oil, you'll need some way to get the food out of the oil. A slotted spoon will do this well, and you can separate solid foods from their liquid bases with these too. A good use for one of these is straining off solid fat from stocks. These are cheap too, about \$1.50 for one.

- ✓ **Measuring spoons.** You'll need these to measure out basic things, like flour and spices. A full set of these usually has a 1/4, 1/2, and 1 tsp spoon along with a 1 tbsp spoon. Some sets also have a 1/8 tsp spoon because this small measurement is becoming more common in recipes. For the truly silly, you can even find sets with "dash, pinch, and smidgen" measuring spoons.



✓

Measuring cups (both the glass kind and metal kind). When buying glass measuring cups, look for the kind that is either made by Pyrex™ or is *specifically* rated to withstand high temperatures. Metal ones can be any kind, and usually come in ¼, ½, ⅓, and 1 cup varieties. There is also an “odd-size set” with ⅔, ¾, and 1½ cp sizes, and some stores even sell 2 cp measuring cups. Shop around.



Glass cups start at the 1 cup size and commonly have 2 and 4 cup sizes.

Occasionally, you might see a set on a store shelf with a 6 or 8 cup glass, but this is rare. DO NOT buy plastic cups – while cheaper, they can’t withstand microwaves, extremely hot liquids, or anything else of that nature – the plastic will exhibit crazing after being put under this kind of stress – this is where the plastic gets many hairline cracks because the surface expands and contracts at a different rate than the rest of the cup – and eventually the cup will shatter completely.

☠: Glass measuring cups, while frequently more than able to take high heat, can’t stand the shock of taking a cold-water bath after having something really hot in them, **NEVER, EVER** place cold liquid into a hot glass container, because the shock may cause the container to shatter, and getting sliced to ribbons by an exploding glass cup wouldn’t make much of an obituary, now would it?

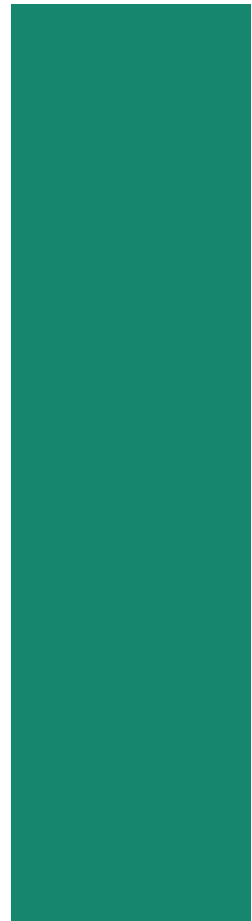
This is a *long* list, I know, but this is a good general-utensil list. You don’t necessarily have to have *everything* here, but it’s a good idea. Most likely, you’ll already have several of these items if your parents handed anything down to you. If you can’t afford to fully equip your kitchen yet, don’t worry – just buy utensils as you need them. For the geek in all of us, though, I’ve included a list of “cooking toys” at the back of the book.

Chapter



2

Pantry Check!!
Stock Your Kitchen



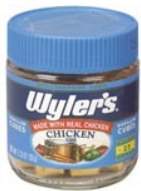
Here's where we'll look at the basic foodstuffs that *every* kitchen should have. Note that I haven't added a lot of perishables, like meats, to this list – largely, only things that are canned, bottled, or boxed are on the list. Also note that this list is *far* from exhaustive, you could literally stock your pantry full of thousands of dollars of food, with no two things being the same. This merely is a general list of things that you should probably have because they're things you'll use often.

All-Purpose Flour. Everyone should have at least a small amount of this on hand. You'll use it frequently in gravies and soups as a thickener, and it's used in large quantities in making dough, including cookie dough and bread dough. It's good to know what you can do with flour – which is almost anything. There are *numerous* kinds of flour, including all-purpose, cake, whole wheat, and other "flavors," but all-purpose is the good "general" variety, it can be substituted in equal amounts for most other varieties of flour **except** self-rising flour. Self-rising flour has a leavening agent added to it, and if you substitute all-purpose for self-rising your dough won't rise correctly. Same is true for substituting the other direction, but your dough may not rise enough or may rise improperly because the chemical balances are off.



Aluminum Foil. This stuff will greatly help you in cooking. One of the great campout tricks is to take food and wrap it in aluminum foil and then toss it into the fire for a short time. The foil keeps the food from being burned and also acts as a miniature broiler. If you have a toaster oven, wrapping a small piece of meat inside aluminum foil and then tossing it into the oven will broil the meat, and will let the meat cook in its own juices, as well as keeping the meat moist.

Baking Soda. This is the Swiss-army-chainsaw of the kitchen. It's been used as everything from a leavening agent (makes dough rise) to toothpaste, a deodorizer, a mouthwash, silver polish, and even a drain clog remover. It's also one of the few *raw* chemicals you'll find in your kitchen – Baking soda is known as *bicarbonate of soda*, or *sodium bicarbonate*, or for the chemistry students, NaCO_2 .



Bouillon (pronounced "bull-yun"), broth, or stock. This stuff is like having instant meat stock in a convenient form. It is available in several forms, because it is sold either dehydrated as cubes, granules, or powder, or in liquid form as either a concentrate or pure broth. It is sold in several varieties, but the most commonly found are beef, chicken, and vegetable. You may find exotic versions such as shrimp, fish, or tomato, but this is rare. Stores selling kosher items will sell packages of bouillon that are either chicken or vegetable, and specially prepared according to kosher guidelines.



Brown Sugar. Brown sugar is either sugar that is left after the refined white sugar has been extracted from the beet, or is made by mixing white sugar with molasses syrup. The darker the sugar, the more potent the flavor. Brown sugar is a good ingredient for glazes, and is a frequent member in anything involving dough. Brown sugar also melts differently than regular sugar, turning into a hard, sticky mass as it melts (due to the molasses).

Canned Foods. Everything imaginable, from vegetables to meats to rolls, are all available in cans. Stock up heavily on these, because they keep for *years*. A story is told about how a 4-pound tin of veal that Sir William Edward Parry had on him was carried on *two* journeys to the Northwest Passage in the 1820s – and the can was never opened. It was found and analyzed by scientists in 1938, over 100 years after it was originally sealed, and judged nutritionally and physically sound, and the contents fed to a cat, who ate hearty, and had no ill effects. In general, a can of food is only unsafe if it bulges, is dented, or spurts or sprays when opened (like a pop can would spurt or spray). Anyway, here are some ideas on canned foods to have in your cupboard.



Vegetables. ANY kind is a good idea here. Canned veggies are not only nutritious and cheap (ranging from 30¢ to 99¢, depending on the veggie and how much you're buying) but can be paired with almost any food, or simply eaten cooked in water.

Meats. Things in this category include canned ham, chicken, fish, and beef, and even things like Spam (spam spam spam spam). Seriously though, folks, canned meats are a good way to preserve your proteins. Canned hams are *excellent* ways to get tasty whole hams that will last next to forever without freezing and still taste like ham. Canned tuna is an excellent source of Omega-3 fatty acids, and the canning process may actually help bring out more of these nutrients.



Pastas. Canned pasta dishes (such as SpaghettiOs) are inexpensive, quick ways to eat decent food. Often, a 15oz can of SpaghettiOs costs anywhere from 98¢ to about \$1.50 apiece, and contains a hefty amount of fiber and carbohydrates, while being low in fats.

Sauces and Gravies. Tomato sauces, purees, juices, etc., and white and brown canned gravies are excellent ways to work with all kinds of foods. Canned tomato products are extremely high in *lycopene*, a cancer-preventing nutrient, and tomato puree and tomato sauce are excellent bases for many dishes. Tomato paste is also a great thickener, and imparts a slightly sharper tomato flavor to whatever you're working with. Canned gravies are an excellent way to liven up an otherwise bland piece of meat, especially if you buy cheap stuff.



Juices and Other Drinks. While these are frequently sold frozen, canned juices are also sold at room temperature. Additionally, milk products are sold canned. Evaporated milk is milk that has had about 60% of its water removed, homogenized, and is then quickly canned. This can be substituted for standard whole milk by merely adding an amount of water equivalent to the amount of evaporated milk in the can (similar to preparing condensed soups). Milk sold in this form is not necessarily cheaper than buying refrigerated milk, but it lasts infinitely longer.



Fats and Oils. There are numerous items that fall under this heading; we'll go over them individually. Any one of these will do as cooking oil, but there are certain situations that will call for specific fats or oils. Also, *fats are not evil, despite what some nutritionists would like you to believe.* Fats are essential to daily life, because they provide the fuel we burn every day in our lives. It's important to regulate fat, but some fat is necessary. Additionally, fats impart an enormous amount of flavor and richness to our foods, and to be truly honest, provides some of the greatest flavors! Be selective about the fats you eat, and eat in moderation, but *enjoy it!*

Butter. Butter is a saturated fat that is at least 80% butterfat, by USDA standards. It is truly the "original" cooking fat. Butter is sold in sticks, in tubs as a whipped spread, and in granular form. Note that granular butter is quite hard to find, but it is a convenient form. It is sold in salted and unsalted varieties, and the salted variety has a bit of a bite to it whereas unsalted butter will taste sweet. If you're baking, don't use whipped butter – it'll change the texture of the food because of the air beaten into the butter.



Margarine. Nowadays, the term *margarine* means a lot of things, but the real definition of *margarine* is this: It's an *unsaturated* butter substitute – also made of at least 80% fat, except that the fat is made from vegetable oils. To make it taste like butter, some dairy flavorings are added to give it an authentic taste. This stuff works in baking as well, and is sold in stick or tub form.



Cooking Sprays. Most frequently made of canola oil, this is also called a "non-stick cooking spray." This is used most frequently to keep foods from sticking to surfaces during cooking. Some varieties are flavored, and can be used directly on food to impart a burst of other flavors.



Olive Oil. Probably the most famous of the oils (with the exception of vegetable oil) this oil is used frequently in Italian cooking. Made from pitted ripe olives, the olives are ground into a mash, spread on mats that are stacked several layers high, and then pressed to remove the oils. The first pressing is done cold, with no heat or solvents to help draw out oils. The first press yields a dark, greenish, and highly flavorful oil called "extra virgin" olive oil. Extra virgin olive oil will *not* stand up to high heat, and is not well-suited for deep frying. The second press involves heat and solvents to draw out additional oils, and yields "virgin olive oil."



Virgin oil is the traditional golden color. Subsequent pressings yield lighter, less flavorful oils, and are often termed “light olive oil.” Olive oil is a superb oil that brings a wonderful flavor to anything it is cooked with. Olive oil has polyunsaturated fats and is high in monounsaturated fats, which, along with having zero cholesterol, and its wonderful flavor, makes olive oil a better cooking oil than most.



Vegetable Oil. There are numerous varieties of this, involving anything from cottonseed oils, safflower oils, soybean oils, and numerous others, and this is the most common and one of the most inexpensive cooking oils. A pale gold in color, vegetable oil also has no cholesterol, and has very little saturated fat when compared with some other oils. Vegetable oil is also the most commonly found in fast-food restaurants.

Canola Oil. Canola oil is the most health-conscious oil available. Canola oil is high in polyunsaturated fats and monounsaturated fats, has *extremely* low saturated fat and no cholesterol. Canola also has a significant portion of its makeup devoted to alpha-linolenic acid, which is an Omega-3 fatty acid. This is an excellent frying oil, because canola oil will impart a similar flavor in fried foods (similar to vegetable oil), along with very little of the saturated fat.



Other Oils. Other oils and fats used in cooking include things like lard, beef tallow, palm oil, and coconut oil. Lard is solid fat rendered from pork, and is slightly soft in nature. Beef tallow is a fatty substance that is an extract from cattle’s fat, and is often used in the making of candles and soap, but is also occasionally used as a cooking fat. Palm and coconut oils are just that, oils pressed from palm leaves and coconut fruit, and are two of the most flavorful oils, but also the two vegetable oils that are the highest in saturated fats. Coconut oil is the highest in saturated fat overall, with 91% of its makeup being saturated fat.

Reduced-calorie or low-fat butter and margarine. These particular products have water and air added and contain no more than 60 percent fat. These don’t have enough fat in them to be suitable for baking, so only use these as table spreads.



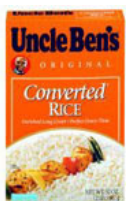
Shortening. These are vegetable oils that are hydrogenated to change their melting point so that they remain solid at room temperature. Shortening is also another word for “grease,” and the two terms are interchangeable. “Greasing” a pan involves taking a handful of shortening and rubbing it across a baking surface to prevent the baked items from sticking to the pan and to help the food remain flaky and tender.

Vegetable-Oil spreads. These are margarine-like products that have less than 80% fat. These are also frequently labeled as vegetable-oil spreads and not margarine. These products are also quite versatile, getting use as a table spread, cooking oil, and baking fat. Vegetable-oil spreads are sold in sticks, tubs, and squeeze bottles, and the sticks (if they have more than 65% fat) are suitable for use in baking applications.

Pastas. Pastas are also of the “long-life” variety, and these are excellent starch sources. Pastas will not only fill you quickly, but keep you going long too, and, given time, will blend well with whatever flavors you choose to mix with them. Several types of pastas are available, in a wide range of prices, but most varieties are under or about \$1 for a 16oz box. 16 ounces of pasta is about 8 servings (5-6 if you eat heavy) and provides a full dose of carbohydrates, in addition to whatever nutrients were added through benefit of your sauces. The only drawback to pastas is that they must be cooked in boiling water; microwaves are often ill-suited for this. It can be done, but it’s *messy*. We’ll get into how to prepare pasta in a microwave later.



Peanut Butter. Every college student should invest in at least one jar of peanut butter. It’s raw protein, practically, and when you can’t afford a whole lot of meat, peanut butter is an excellent way to get protein without the prohibitively high (sometimes) cost of meat.



Rice. Rice is another member of the grain family, which is also a great staple food. Rice is available in numerous forms and flavors, and is an excellent way to fill up. Rice blends are also good to have as well, and are frequently low in calories. Rice blends often have a little more flavor than plain rice, and are good complimentary dishes.



Soups. Soups are another important staple food, and the condensed ones are *cheap*. Every college student has had experiences with ramen noodles – available for 10-15¢ at your local grocery. Dime noodles are not the way to for *anyone* to eat on a consistent basis. Good, hearty soups can be found for as little as 69¢, and even the Campbell's brands can be had for as little as 85¢. Soups are also good ways to get servings from other food groups. Never quite outgrew hating to eat your veggies? Eat vegetable soup. A fully prepared can of condensed soup can have two servings of veggies.

Vinegar. Vinegar is a good all-purpose sauce base – it's used to make everything from salad dressings to barbecue sauces, and adds a tartness to anything it's combined with. Vinegar emulsifies with oils well too, and this is how Italian dressing works.



Wax Paper. This is an excellent way to store frozen foods and help prevent freezer burn. Freezer burn is where the moisture leaches out of food because the water in the food expands as it freezes. Wax paper can help



prevent this moisture from coming out by covering the food.

White Sugar. This one's kind of obvious. When you keep sugar stored, don't store it in its original packaging unless you haven't opened it yet. An unopened 4-lb. bag of sugar is okay, but if you've opened it to start using it, put it in a resealable container of some sort. This'll also help to keep the sugar from clumping.



Ziploc™ bags, or an equivalent. Make sure that these are the freezer-type bags, because if you buy for just yourself, and you buy meat, you'll likely be freezing things.

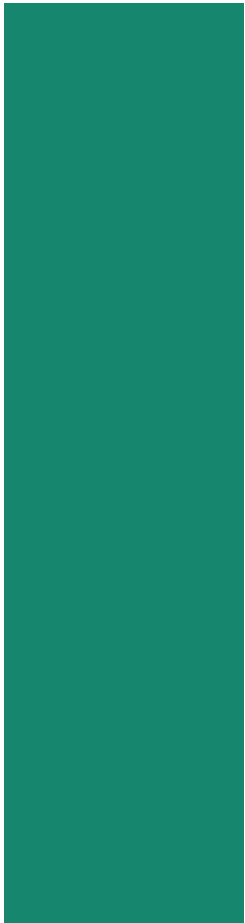
Chapter



3

Techniques and Terms

What does **this** button do?



Most people don't know it, but the list of "techniques" you need to know to cook effectively is really quite short. Several techniques are really quite similar, and others are really obvious, so while we'll mention everything, not everything will have a huge explanation of what it is. The more complex or esoteric processes we'll cover in the next chapter.

- **Bake.** Cooking in an oven using *dry* heat. To have crispness in the food you bake, bake it uncovered. To retain moisture, bake things covered.
- **Baste.** Pretty simple – spooning liquid over the top of cooking food to keep it moist.
- **Beat.** This is different from *stirring* in that you use an implement like a whisk, and usually involves two or more ingredients that need to be mixed until the whole is a uniform texture.
- **Blanch.** Dropping food into boiling water for a very short time in order to preserve color, texture, and nutritive elements, or a technique to remove skin on vegetables, fruits, or nuts.
- **Blend.** Combining ingredients using a spoon, whisk, or similar tool until the mixture is smooth and uniform. This may also involve a blender or food processor.
- **Boil.** This should be pretty obvious. A *rolling boil* is when the liquid has become so hot that the bubbles form quickly.
- **Braise.** Cooking food (usually meat or veggies) by initially browning them in fat or oil, then adding some liquid to the pot, and cooking, covered, at a low temperature.
- **Broil.** Cooking directly under or above an extremely hot element.
- **Brown.** This is cooking quickly over high heat for a short time, so that the surface of the food turns brown.
- **Caramelize.** This means one of two things: melting sugar over low heat until it turns into a golden brown syrup, or a technique for cooking vegetables, especially onions, until golden brown. When onions are caramelized, they typically turn clear.
- **Chop.** Cutting a food into coarse, irregular pieces.
- **Core.** Technique by which the center of a fruit is removed. A core is much more stiff and generally contains seeds.
- **Cut in.** This is a technique to distribute solidified fats (such as shortening) into dry ingredients by crisscrossing two knives, using the side of a table fork, a wire whisk, or cutting with a pastry blender in a rolling motion. You "cut" the mixture until the pieces reach your desired size.
- **Cube.** Chopping food into squares ½ inch in size or larger.
- **Dash.** Less than ⅛th of a teaspoon of a particular ingredient.
- **Deglaze.** This is a process by which fats and bits of food that are stuck to a frying pan are removed using a small amount of liquid. Popular deglazing liquids include broths, stocks, wine, and strong liquors, like whiskey.
☠: Deglazing with alcohols is mildly dangerous. If you deglaze with alcohols, remove the pan from the heat first, pour the alcohol in, and then replace the pan on the burner. Stand back as you do so, because the pan *will* flare up. Singing off your eyebrows isn't a fun thing.
- **Drizzle.** This involves taking a sauce or topping of some sort and pouring thin lines of that sauce all over a particular food.
- **Flake.** This involves using the tines of a fork to break away small pieces of food, for example, cooked fish.
- **Flute.** This involves squeezing the edge of a pastry with your fingers to make a finished, ornamental-looking edge. The resulting pattern should look like a sine-wave, which is the typical shape for the edge of a pie crust.
- **Fold.** Folding a mixture involves taking a spatula and scooping along the bottom of the bowl, and "folding" the lower material over the top. Do this in quadrants – in other words, fold ¼ of the mixture, turn the bowl a quarter turn, repeat. Continue *just* until the mixture is blended. The purpose is to combine without loss of air.
- **Grease, or Grease and Flour.** Greasing a pan involves taking shortening and rubbing it along the surfaces of a baking pan to keep the food from sticking to the pan. Flouring it involves throwing a small amount of

flour over the greased pan, shaking the pan to distribute the flour, then inverting the pan and patting off the excess flour by tapping the bottom of the inverted pan.

- **Hull.** Similar to coring, except that you remove the stem and leaves of things like strawberries. This can also be done to tomatoes, where the leaves and vine are removed along with the hard “divot” in the center of the tomato.
- **Julienne.** Cut into thin strips, using a knife or food processor. Good example: French fries.
- **Knead.** Work dough on a floured surface until it becomes a smooth, elastic mass. Kneading helps develop the gluten in flour and will result in even-textured breads, biscuits, and the like. Kneading by hand can take up to 15 minutes.
- **Marinate.** Allow a food to stand (usually refrigerated) in a highly flavorful broth or sauce to add flavor or to tenderize. Many marinades have vinegar in them to help tenderize the meat by dissolving connective tissue in the meat.
- **Mince.** Chop into very fine pieces, almost like confetti.
- **Poach.** Cook a food in a simmering liquid just below the boiling point.
- **Puree.** Mash or blend food until it becomes smooth and uniform in consistency, either by using a blender or food processor to get it to the correct texture or by forcing the food through a sieve. The latter technique involves quite a bit of elbow grease depending on the food you’re trying to puree. Also one setting short of “liquefy” on a blender.
- **Reduce.** Boil away water in a particular liquid mixture to concentrate its flavor. Over-reduction can easily be fixed by merely adding a little water to thin the sauce out.
- **Sauté.** This involves cooking a piece of food in hot fat over medium-high heat, turning the food frequently to prevent burning.
- **Scald.** Heat liquid to just below the boiling point. Tiny bubbles will form around the edge of the liquid when it is scalding. Scalded milk will develop a thin film over its top.
- **Score.** Cut into the skin of a food about ¼ inch deep, using a knife, to aid in cooking, flavoring, or tenderizing.
- **Sear.** Brown meat quickly so as to lock in juices and flavors. Do this to a large hunk of meat before roasting it to make good bits for gravy.
- **Simmer.** Cook in liquid just below the boiling point. Usually you do this after reducing the heat from a boil.
- **Skim.** This is a technique by which solidified fats are removed from broth, stock, or similar liquid food by using a skimmer, spoon, ladle, or spatula.
- **Soft or Stiff Peaks.** Beaten egg whites tend to harden as they are beaten. Soft peaks is when, as the mixer is lifted from the bowl, the egg whites leave “peaks” that curl over or are rounded. Stiff peaks is when the whites stand straight up as the mixer is pulled from the bowl.
- **Soften.** This involves taking a food that is a solid in the fridge and allowing it to come to room temperature or *very* lightly microwaving it, so that it is no longer stiff.
- **Tenderize.** This process is pretty simple: If you’re using meat tenderizer, dust the surface of the meat with tenderizer first. Pierce the meat deeply with either a fork or a tenderizing hammer. If you’re using marinade and *not* tenderizer, place the pierced meat in a plastic bag and let it marinate in the fridge.
- **Whip.** This involves beating air into a mixture so as to increase its volume; this also makes the mixture light and fluffy.
- **Zest.** This is really two things, a noun and a verb. As a noun it is the outer **colored** peel of a fruit, where much of the aromatic oils and flavors of the fruit are present. As a verb, it’s using a knife or citrus zester to remove the outer layer in thin pieces.

Okay: ON TO THE KITCHEN!

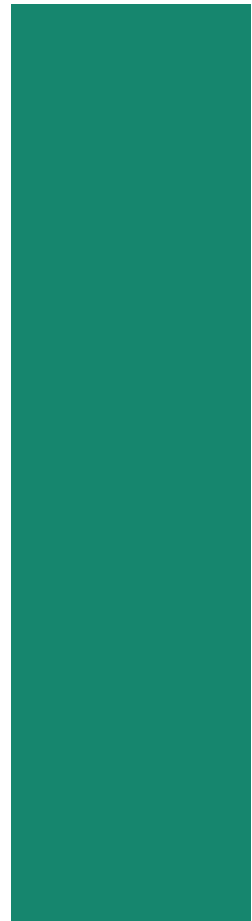
Chapter



4

The Basics

What Every Cook Should Be Able To Do



When I speak of the basics, I mean something that's so simple and taken for granted, that a kid could do it, but they don't know that it even exists. I'm talking things like how to cook a steak, or how to cook eggs, or how to make a roux, or even making stocks. Much of this is so simple that once you look at it, it'll be like, "Gee, I knew how to do that, but I didn't know how to do it!"

HOW TO MAKE STOCKS

from the basis-of-nearly-everything dept.

YIELD: about a gallon of stock

①: Stock is a fancy word for "broth." You'll find that these two terms are really interchangeable. Stock is used in everything from soups to gravies to sauces to marinades. The simplest form of soup is merely stock with a little salt added.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

- 1 large pot, 8-qt. or more. (large pots are referred to as *stockpots* for a reason)
- 1 large spoon

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

- at least 1 lb. any kind of meat, bones, scraps, and trimmings. See below for ingredients dependent on the kind of meat you have.
- water, enough to cover the meat
- 1 cp wine (use red for beef, veal, lamb, or pork, white for chicken, fish, or ham)
- 1 tsp per lb salt

OTHER INGREDIENTS:

Depending on the kind of meat you use, other ingredients can be added to the stock. All these are general guidelines, you'll have to try it yourself to get the flavor balance you like.

FOR CHICKEN:

- 1 large onion, coarsely chopped
- parsley with stems
- 3 stalks celery, cut into segments
- ¼ tsp cayenne pepper

FOR FISH:

- 2 large onions, coarsely chopped
- 5 stems parsley
- 1 small lemon or orange, quartered
- dill weed (optional)
- ⅛ tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp Louisiana hot sauce

FOR BEEF, VEAL, LAMB, or PORK (but not ham):

- 2 large onions, coarsely chopped
- ½ stalk celery, coarsely chopped
- 5 stems parsley
- 1 tsp crushed dried mint
- 1 whole cayenne pepper OR 1 tsp. ground cayenne
- 1 tbsp chopped garlic
- ¼ tsp basil leaves
- 2 bay leaves (once the stock is done remove these leaves!)

FOR HAM:

- 2 medium onions, coarsely chopped

1 cp	coarsely chopped celery
5 or 6	carrots, sliced
1 tbsp	garlic, coarsely chopped
1 whole	cayenne pepper OR ½ tsp. ground cayenne
2 whole	cloves

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. If you're making beef stock from meat, brown the beef lightly first in the pot. Otherwise, just place the meat or bones into your pot. If you have a chicken, make sure you've removed and discarded the giblets and neck. (usually these are inside a little pouch in the cavity of the bird, if it came with giblets.)
2. Fill the pot with just enough water to cover the meat completely add the wine, cover, and bring it all to a boil.
3. Reduce heat to low, and add the rest.
4. Simmer, covered, for **at least** 3 hours, more if you can. You can't really overcook this stuff. The longer you cook the stock, the more concentrated it will become. If you're using bones, allow it to simmer for about 3-4 hours. As for stewing chickens, put it on for 2 hours per pound.
5. Once it's been boiled to death, take the meat or bones out of the pot (slowly – you don't want to burn yourself or spill the stock) and set it aside on a cutting board or plate or whatever. If you used a chicken, make sure that the cavity of the bird is emptied as well. Remove the stock from the heat, and place the pot in the fridge.
6. If you used soup bones, remove what meat may have been on the bones and discard the bones. If you used a chicken, remove the meat from the bones – this is a *long* and tedious process, so it'll be awhile. If you used boneless meat, you can cut the meat into pieces and use it in soups, stews, etc.,

④: Beef soup bones make *superb* stock, because the marrow leaches out of the bones and dissolves into the water – the marrow is some of the most flavorful material. Best of all, soup bones are cheap (usually less than \$2/lb.).

HOW TO COOK A STEAK

from the choose-a-cow dept.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

broiler pan, frying pan, or barbecue grill, depending on how you want to cook it, see below.

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

a steak of about ½" thickness (pan-frying only), or ¾-1" thick (for pan-frying, broiling, or grilling)
salt **or** meat tenderizer (**not both!**) if you bought a cheap or tough cut

INSTRUCTIONS FOR BROILING:

1. Set your steak out on a cutting board. If it's got fat around the edges, use a knife to cut diagonal slits in the fat layer on the meat at about 1-inch intervals. This will keep the meat from shrinking up on you. Make sure that when you do this, that you don't cut into the meat – only the fat.
2. If you have a tough cut of meat, like a blade, plate, or skirt steak, dust both sides with tenderizer liberally and pierce the meat with a fork all across the surface to push the tenderizer down into the meat. If you have to tenderize the meat, *do not salt it before you cook it*. Otherwise, sprinkle salt over both sides of the meat.
3. Set your oven to broil. Wait until the oven comes up to the highest temperature on the dial (check by using an oven thermometer or by turning the dial back to the highest gradation on your oven. When the "oven on" light goes out it's up to temperature). Place the meat on the broiler pan and put the pan in the oven, following the chart below. Make sure you turn the steak over on your broiler pan after about half the listed time has elapsed. To check a steak for doneness, cut a small slit in it at its center for boneless cuts, or in the center near the bone for bone-in cuts. Medium-rare is very pink and has a slightly brown edge. Medium is light pink in the center and is more brown toward the edges. Medium-well is mostly brown, and has a very dull pink center. Well-done is brown all the way through. Anything further is charcoal.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR GRILLING:

1. If you are using charcoal (recommended), arrange the briquettes in a pyramid shape. This particular shape allows air to circulate freely in and around the briquettes, and we all know that fire *loves* air. Either an electric coil starter or a liquid fire starter will help make starting the fire easier. **⚠️**: BE EXTREMELY CAREFUL with liquid fire starter. You don't want to use too much, or your grill may go boom when you throw the match in.
2. The coals are ready when they're more than $\frac{3}{4}$ covered in ash. If it's dark, look for an even red glow. If it's bright red, the fire's too hot, if there's no glow, it's too cool, and if you have a mix of red and black, it's uneven and will not cook food evenly.
3. Check the temperature of the coals by holding the palm of your hand near to the grill rack – if you can keep your hand there for two seconds, the temperature is high, three seconds is medium-high, four seconds is medium, and five seconds is low.
4. To cook the steaks, you want medium heat. This should take about 40 minutes with a charcoal grill or 10 minutes with a gas grill.
5. Score the edges of the fat as described in the Broiling instructions above. Salt or tenderize it as above.
6. Place the steak on the grill. Turn the steak and cook until it reaches the desired level of doneness. Check the steak using the same procedure as described in the Broiling instructions above.

Timetable for Broiling and Grilling

Type of Steak	Inches from Heat	Approx. broiling time in minutes		Approx. grilling time in minutes	
		145° (med. rare)	160° (medium)	145° (med. rare)	160° (medium)
Porterhouse, T-Bone	3 to 4	10	15	14	19
Ribeye	2 to 4	8	15	7	12
Sirloin	2 to 4	10	21	12	16
Tenderloin	2 to 3	10	15	11	13

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PANFRYING:

1. If your steak doesn't have a whole lot of fat on it, coat your skillet with a little vegetable oil or a spritz of cooking spray. Or, use a nonstick skillet.
2. If the steak is more than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick, use medium-low to medium heat. For steaks that are thinner, use medium-high.
3. Place the steak in the skillet. *Do not add water or oil, and do not cover it.* Cook according to the chart below. If the steak has a lot of fat on it, it will render off into the pan – as it does, spoon the extra fat off into a bowl. For steaks thicker than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick, turn them occasionally, for $\frac{1}{2}$ inch or thinner steaks, turn *once*, until brown on both sides and until they reach the doneness desired. Check doneness using the guidelines in the Broiling section, above.

Timetable for Pan-frying

Type of Steak	Thickness (Inches)	Range-top temperature	Approx. Cooking Time (minutes)
Porterhouse, T-Bone	$\frac{1}{2}$	Medium	8 to 10
Ribeye	$\frac{1}{2}$	Medium-high	3 to 5
Sirloin	$\frac{3}{4}$ to 1	Medium-low to medium	10 to 12
Tenderloin	$\frac{3}{4}$ to 1	Medium	6 to 9

How to cook eggs (look below for the kind you want)

from the which-came-first dept.

①: Eggshells are porous, which means that the eggs inside will absorb odors from the outside air. Keep your eggs in their carton, which protects the eggs from outside odors. Also, eggshell colors depend largely on the diet of the hen and have no effect on the flavor, nutritive value or way the egg cooks.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

FOR COOKED EGGS:

1 saucepan, at least 3" deep

FOR FRIED OR SCRAMBLED EGGS:

1 skillet

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

FOR COOKED EGGS:

water

FOR FRIED OR SCRAMBLED EGGS:

margarine

salt and pepper

1 tbsp milk or half & half for each egg (scrambled eggs only and only if you like them creamy)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR HARD-COOKED EGGS:

1. Place eggs in the saucepan. Add enough cold water so that its surface is at least one inch above the eggs.
2. Heat, uncovered, to boiling over high heat.
3. Remove from heat, allow to stand 18 minutes.
4. IMMEDIATELY pour off hot water, run cold water over the eggs to halt the cooking process.
5. Crack the shell on the countertop, then roll the egg between your hands to loosen the shell. Peel the shell away. If it's hard to peel off, run cold water over the egg while you peel it.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SOFT-COOKED EGGS:

1. Cook as for hard cooked eggs, above, but after bringing to a boil, remove and let stand only 3 minutes.
2. Pour off hot water, run cold water over eggs to stop the cooking process.
3. Cut eggs lengthwise in half, scoop eggs from their shells.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FRIED SUNNY-SIDE-UP EGGS:

1. Heat enough margarine or butter so that it forms a layer $\frac{1}{8}$ inch deep in a heavy skillet over medium heat until it starts to sizzle. Break each egg into a small saucer, and ensure that no shell pieces are inside the egg. If there are, fish them out with a fork and discard.
2. Slip the eggs *carefully* into the skillet, and immediately roll the heat back to low. The eggs should continue to sizzle, if they stop, increase the heat a tad.
3. Cook, uncovered, 5 to 7 minutes, spooning the margarine over the eggs until the whites become firm, a film forms over the yolks and the yolks thicken.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR OVER-EASY EGGS:

1. Follow the directions for Sunny-Side-Up eggs as above, but after cooking 3 minutes, use a wide spatula to flip the eggs over carefully and cook another 1 to 2 minutes or until the yolks thicken.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SCRAMBLED EGGS:

1. Beat eggs and milk together in a bowl until well mixed. Add salt and pepper, mix. Melt about 1 tbsp of margarine for every 3 eggs in a skillet until the margarine begins to sizzle.
2. Pour the mixture into the skillet. The bottom and sides will solidify quickly, as this happens, use a spatula to fold over the solid parts onto the liquid so that the liquid flows to the bottom so that it can cook. Avoid constant stirring, but continue to lift up the thicker portions so that the thin uncooked material can flow to the bottom and cook.
3. Cook about 3 to 4 minutes or until the eggs have thickened throughout but are still moist and creamy.

HOW TO COOK PORK CHOPS

from the oink-oink dept.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

broiler pan, frying pan, or barbecue grill

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

pork chops, with or without bones

INSTRUCTIONS FOR BROILING OR GRILLING:

1. Set your oven's control to broil or preheat your grill. If you're grilling, heat the grill to medium heat, which will take about 40 minutes with a charcoal grill or 10 minutes for a gas grill.
2. For broiling, set the pork chops on your broiler pan and place them about 3 to 4 inches from the heat. If you're grilling, set them directly on the rack about 3 to 4 inches from the heat.
3. Broil or grill pork chops as directed below. Turn them *once* at about halfway through the listed time.
4. For loin or rib chops with bones in, broil 8 to 11 minutes, or grill 6 to 8 minutes for $\frac{3}{4}$ inch chops. For $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch chops, broil 19 to 22 minutes, or grill 12 to 16 minutes. For boneless loin chops about 1 inch thick, broil 11 to 13 minutes, or grill 8 to 10 minutes. For blade chops (blade chops always have bones) that are about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick, broil 13 to 15 minutes or grill 11 to 13 minutes. For $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch chops, broil 26 to 29 minutes or grill 19 to 22 minutes. Loin or rib chops should *always* be cooked to at least 160°F. Blade chops should be cooked to at least 170°F.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PANFRYING:

1. If the chop doesn't have much fat on it, coat your pan with a little oil or cooking spray, or you can use a nonstick skillet.
2. Preheat the skillet over medium heat, 1 to 2 minutes.
3. Place the chop in the skillet for the time listed below. Turn the chops occasionally, and if the chop has a lot of fat on it, spoon some of it away as it renders off. Check doneness by cutting a small slit in the center of boneless cuts or near the bone with bone-in cuts. Medium pork is slightly pink in its center. Well-done pork has no pink in its center.
4. Cook bone-in or boneless rib or loin chops that are $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick for 7 to 8 minutes. For 1 inch thick **bone-in** chops, cook 12 to 14 minutes. Boneless loin chops that are 1 inch thick should be cooked for 10 to 12 minutes. Blade chops do not fry well, so you should probably grill or broil these.

HOW TO COOK A CHICKEN BREAST

from the this-ain't-your-local-KFC dept.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

broiler pan, frying pan, or barbecue grill

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

chicken breasts, bone in or boneless
marinade of your choice (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR BROILING AND GRILLING:

1. Try to choose *whole* breasts that weigh about $\frac{1}{2}$ pound – you can cut these in half to make smaller $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. patties. Trim the fat away from the breast halves, using kitchen shears or a knife. Beforehand, if you choose, you can marinate the chicken. To do this, place your chicken in a plastic bag large enough to accommodate everything. Pour enough marinade to thoroughly cover the meat into the bag, close tightly, and refrigerate for up to 2 hours. Halfway through this time, flip the bag over so that everything in the bag gets covered with the marinade.

2. If you're going to broil the chicken, move the rack so that the meat is from 4 to 6 inches from the element for boneless cuts, 7 to 9 inches for bone-in cuts. If you're going to grill, preheat the grill to medium heat, which should take about 40 minutes for a charcoal grill or 10 minutes for a gas grill.
3. Place the chicken on your broiler pan in the oven set to broil, or place it on the grill rack about 4 to 6 inches from the heat.
4. If you're broiling, cook boneless halves 15-20 minutes turning once, 25-35 minutes for bone-in cuts.
5. If you're grilling, cook 15-20 minutes for boneless halves, turning frequently, or 20-25 minutes for bone-in cuts.
6. Check doneness by cutting the center of the thickest piece of meat open. If its juices no longer run pink, the chicken's done. Another way to tell is by using a meat thermometer – cook chicken to 180°F.

HOW TO MAKE A ROUX (pronounced "roo")

from the roux-is-to-sauce-as-CPU-is-to-motherboard dept.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

skillet or heavy pot

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

1 part oil or shortening. This can be nearly *anything*, like bacon drippings, lard, olive oil, etc.
 2 to 3 parts all-purpose flour, depending on how thick you want it. The more flour, the thicker the roux.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Mix the flour and oil in your skillet or pot.
2. Cook on medium heat *slowly* as the roux changes from a cream color to a dark chocolate color. Once the roux makes it past a medium brown, you need to stir it *constantly* to keep it from burning.
3. If you burn the roux, toss it, clean the pot, and start over.
4. For a *very* dark roux, it will take about 45 minutes to 1 hour to get the roux dark enough, while it may take only 15 minutes or less to make a light roux. Dark roux is great for gumbos, while a light roux is perfect for many white sauces and milk-based soups.
5. Once your roux is as dark as you like it, you can add all sorts of other things to the roux, like onions, chopped vegetables, peppers, etc. Note that bell pepper and celery have a tendency to kill other flavors, so use sparingly.
6. Once the vegetables have cooked and the onions have turned clear, add things like chopped parsley and green onions. You can add freshly chopped garlic at this point too.

Variation: White Roux

White roux is the base for many cream sauces and white sauces.

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

1 part margarine, butter, or shortening
 2-3 parts all-purpose flour
 stock or other flavorings, like fruit juices, milk, or cream

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Heat the shortening over medium heat. Add flour, stir to mix.
2. Cook, but do not allow it to get too brown.
3. Add the stock slowly to the mix, stirring all the while. Make sure that everything incorporates.
4. Bring the mixture to a boil, and stir until the mixture thickens. Season to taste.

HOW TO PREPARE PASTA IN A MICROWAVE

from the starch-in-a-box dept.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

- 1 microwave-safe bowl of at least 3-cup size
- paper towels

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

enough pasta to fill your bowl about 1/3 full
cold tap water
margarine, butter, or olive oil

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Fill your bowl with the pasta and pour enough water into it to cover the pasta with about 1-1½ inches of water if there's enough room at the top of the bowl. Tall bowls work best. Salt the water with a touch of salt if desired.
2. Place the bowl in the microwave with a layer of paper towels underneath the bowl and cook on HIGH for 15 minutes (note that microwave ovens vary in wattage, Your Mileage May Vary).
3. When it's done, pull the bowl out (IT'S HOT), and discard the paper towels (they should be sopping wet). Take a colander or a lid or some other form of device to keep the pasta from going down the drain and discard the hot water. Either coat the pasta with a little margarine or butter, or drizzle a little olive oil over the top. Toss, and serve.

How to make sweet-roll dough

from the ~~Just-Like-Mom-Used-To-And-Still-Occasionally-Makes-When-She-Has-Time~~ dept.

YIELD: enough dough to fill a 9x13 pan, or about 24 rolls

Cook and Prep Time: 1 hr for first rise, 20 min for second rise, 20-30 min for baking

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED (warning: it's LONG!):

- 9x13 cake pan
- 2 small bowls
- measuring cup & spoons
- whisk
- medium mixing bowl
- medium (4-qt. or larger) saucepan or pot
- wooden mixing spoon
- rolling pin
- flour sifter
- pastry brush
- instant-read thermometer
- dry towel

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

- ¾ cp lukewarm milk
- ¼ cp white sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 pkt (2¼ tsp) active dry yeast (NOT RAPID-RISE!)
- about ¼ cp water at 105° - 115°F (40°-43°C)
- 1 egg, beaten
- ¼ cp shortening
- 3½-3¾ cp all-purpose flour, sifted
- 1 stick cold butter

ⓘ: This recipe is **very** time consuming and can be considered rather tedious, but it's an excellent roll recipe. This recipe is also best started late at night, usually about 2 hours before you go to bed.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Heat the milk in your microwave for about 30-35 seconds on HIGH to get it warm. In a mixing bowl, combine the milk, sugar, and salt thoroughly.
2. Pour the dry yeast into a bowl and *slowly* add the warm water to it, stirring gently to break up any clumps. This can take anywhere from 5-10 minutes. You will begin to smell a scent not unlike stale air as you stir the yeast – this is because the microorganisms in the yeast are now waking up and producing carbon dioxide. Continue stirring in water *slowly* until the mixture has thoroughly dissolved (use a small spoon to break them up) and is an opaque brown liquid instead of a solid.

☠: Yeast is *extremely sensitive*. It is imperative that the water you have is from 105°-115°F, because this is the temperature at which yeast is happiest. Water that's too cold will not wake the yeast, and water that's too hot will kill it. **DO NOT ACTIVATE YEAST IN ROOM-TEMPERATURE WATER!!** Use the thermometer to ensure accuracy!

3. Add the yeast and egg to the milk mixture, incorporate.
4. Cut the shortening in to the mixture using 2 knives or a pastry blender. Make sure that when you've measured the shortening, you've packed it down into the cup and leveled it off. As you add, break up the shortening into bits of no larger than the size of a pea. You want to make sure that the shortening is uniformly broken up.
5. Slowly sift the flour into the shortening-liquid mixture. As you do, you'll need to stop sifting and keep stirring with a sturdy wooden spoon – the intent before was to have the shortening absorb the yeast mixture, now you want the flour to absorb the shortening mixture. Add flour slowly and evenly until the mixture takes on the appearance of a homogenous mass, almost cream in color. Work the dough around the bowl until ALL the flour is absorbed. Once about 3½ cp of flour has been added to the dough, it will become moist and stringy.

☠: At this point, the dough will be *very sticky* and will want to stick to *everything* it touches. To remedy this problem, flour your work surface, and most importantly, *your hands, and keep them floured*.

6. Remove the dough from the bowl and place it on a floured surface. Roll it into a big ball and begin to knead it with your floured hands. The best way to knead this kind of dough is to use the butt of your hands to press down and forward against the dough, then use your fingers to fold the flattened dough back upon itself, turn the ball 90°, and repeat. Another way to do it when your hands get tired is to pick up the dough with your hands and curl it into the cup of your hand using the tips of your fingers to dig into the surface of the dough. The intent is to break up any remaining pieces of shortening and to incorporate enough flour into the dough so that it no longer sticks to *you or your surface, but to itself*. This can take about 15-20 minutes. Remember, if the dough begins to stick to you or to your surface, throw a little sprinkle of flour on your hands or the countertop and work the dough over the flour. By the end, the dough should still feel somewhat sticky but should *not* come off in pieces on either the countertop or your hands, or peel away from the countertop or your hands, but should merely stick a little and come off with ease.
7. Once the dough has been kneaded enough it will look smooth, not lumpy on its surface. You should be able to see this change from when you started kneading and when you finish. Roll it into a big ball at this point.
8. Take your pot and the stick of cold butter and *completely* grease the inside of the pot with the butter. Leave no spot uncovered. Use your fingers to spread the butter around the walls of the pot. Take the ball of dough and put it in the center of your pot, skate it around the inside of the pan to grease the dough up (optionally, you can use your pastry brush and some melted butter (that's had a chance to cool!) to grease the dough), and stick the pot in the refrigerator *overnight*, covered loosely with plastic wrap. This is the 1st rise.

🕒: For a faster 1st rise, take a second pot and fill it ¾ full with water and bring to a boil. Immediately remove from heat, pour the water into a shallow dish and place it into a cold (as in **off**) oven on the bottom of the oven – **not on a rack**. Set your pot with the dough in the oven with the door closed and allow the dough to rise. The hot water will create a moist environment and raise the temperature inside the oven to about 75°-85°F (23°-29°C) and will allow the dough to rise in only a few hours. If you use this method, *do not put plastic wrap over the top of the pot*. A dish towel will work fine.

9. Remove the dough from the fridge or the oven when it has expanded enough to double in size. If you're using a 4-qt. pan, it should have expanded enough that it nearly fills the pan. Allow the pot to come to room temperature. (the warm, moist oven trick works well for this)
10. Punch the dough down *thoroughly* to knock the air out of the dough in the pot. Remove the dough from the pot, and use a floured rolling pin to roll the dough out on a floured surface into a flat, rectangular shape of about 6" (vertically) x 24" (horizontally).
11. Using a pastry brush, brush the surface of the dough with melted butter until you get a thick but even coating of butter. Make a cinnamon-sugar mixture (starting with at least ½ cup sugar) in a separate bowl and sprinkle the buttered surface with the uniform mixture liberally until the dough is completely covered and you can just see granules of sugar on the top over most of the dough.
12. Grab the dough at the back end and roll it forward upon itself to make a 24" long roll. Using a serrated knife, cut the dough into 24 slices – do this by dividing the dough in half to make 2 pieces, then in half again to make 4 pieces, then in half again to make 8 pieces, then divide the eight pieces into thirds.
13. You're almost done! Put the pieces, evenly spaced, into a 9x13 cake pan sprayed with cooking spray (you should get 4 rows of 6 pieces). If you want the rolls *really* sweet, line the bottom of the cake pan with brown sugar, melted butter, and chopped pecans. Lightly coat the tops of the rolls with melted butter. Drape a dry towel over the cake pan and let sit at room temperature to rise the 2nd time, about 2-3 hours or until the rolls have expanded to fully fill the pan (the colder your apartment is, the longer it will take to rise).
14. When the rolls are ready, place them in a 375°F (190°C) oven for 20-30 minutes or until golden brown on top. Pull them out of the oven and over a sheet of aluminum foil, flip the pan and dump the rolls out. They should come out easily, if they don't, use a plastic pancake turner to help lift them out of the pan. If you coated the pan with the sugar/nut mix above and it doesn't come out with the rolls, scoop the mixture out of the pan onto the tops of the rolls and spread over them.

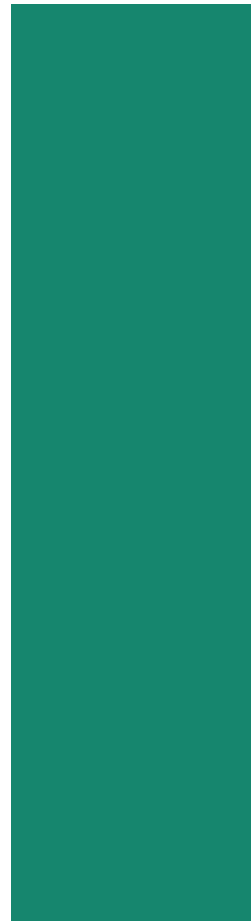
Chapter



5

Recipes

The REAL Reason We're Here



Inspectorraline's gastronomically volatile chili

from the yummy-yummy-fire-in-your-tummy dept.

YIELD: About 2-3 servings

Cook Time: about 20 minutes

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

- I 2.5 qt saucepan w/lid
- I sauté pan or skillet
- I spatula
- I strainer or colander

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

- 1½ lbs (680g) ground beef (sirloin works best)
- 2-3 tbsp chili mix (I use a brand called "Carroll Shelby's," that is more of a blend.)
- 4 8 oz cans tomato sauce
- 2 6 oz cans tomato paste
- I small whole yellow onion, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp olive oil or other cooking oil
- 2-3 tbsp creole seasoning (I like Tony Chachere's "More Spice" seasoning)
- ½ tsp cayenne pepper, more if you like it hotter
- I clove fresh garlic
- ½ tsp oregano
- ½ tsp onion powder
- I green bell pepper, diced (optional)
- ½ cp shredded cheddar cheese (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Place ground beef in saucepan over medium heat. Break it up thoroughly until it forms a layer on the bottom of the pan. Cook, covered, until meat is browned throughout and no pink remains in meat.
2. While the meat's cooking, sauté the onions and garlic over low heat, in the olive oil. Cook about five minutes or until the onions *begin* to turn clear.
3. Remove both meat and veggies from heat, drain away the grease on the meat. (Use the lid as a shield to stop the meat from falling down the drain if you don't have a strainer or colander.)
4. Turn heat down to low, put saucepan back on heat. Dump tomato sauce, tomato paste, and the chili seasoning into the pot. If you can't find chili seasoning that's fully blended, use about the same amount of chili powder combined with ½ tsp of cumin seed and 1 tsp of ground oregano. Stir vigorously until well blended. Mixture should look chunky.
5. Throw in sautéed onions and garlic, bell pepper, creole seasoning, cayenne, oregano, and onion powder until the mixture reaches desired spiciness. Taste frequently as you cook.
6. Let simmer, covered, 20 minutes. Remove from heat and enjoy.

Variation:

Prepare as above, except add 1 small peeled potato, diced, and 1 12 oz. can of red kidney beans. Add about ¼ cp of beef stock, then let simmer 2 ½ hours. Place in refrigerator and let it sit, covered, for 48 hours. Reheat and enjoy. Also, another idea is to substitute 1.5 lb. of stewing meat for the ground beef, undrained.

callamon's tuna casserole

from the yes-this-is-mom's-recipe dept.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

1 casserole dish

INGREDIENTS:

1 box Kraft Macaroni & Cheese
1 can Campbell's Cream of Mushroom soup
1 can chunk light tuna, in spring water, drained
¼ cp butter (more if you like it sweeter)
½ cp milk (more if you like it creamier)
crushed potato chips (Ruffles work best)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C). While you're waiting, boil and drain the noodles, but do not rinse them.
2. Mix in the cheese powder, milk, butter, tuna, and soup with the noodles and pour into a casserole dish. Make a layer over the top with the crushed potato chips.
3. Bake *uncovered* in the 350°F (175°C) oven 30-45 minutes.

Variation (submitted by Bobetov):

1 box Kraft Deluxe Mac & Cheese
1 can chunk light tuna
1 packet onion soup
½ bag frozen peas

Prepare Mac & Cheese according to box directions, but when adding cheese at final step, also add remaining ingredients. Mix thoroughly, serve and eat.

toqer's chili rellenos

from the single-guy-food dept.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

1 frying pan
1 wire whisk

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

2 tbsp all-purpose flour
1 egg white
1 can whole green chilies
½ lb (225g) cheddar cheese, Colby cheese, or cheese of your choice, cut into sticks

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Mix flour and egg white to form a batter.
2. Open up the can of chilies, and use a knife to split one side of them open so you can pull the sides apart. Stuff a stick of cheese inside the Chile. Re-close.
3. Dip the chilies in the batter, then fry in a pan until golden brown and the cheese is melted.

Tim's beefy beanee weenee

microwave ok!

provided by tim@wooferhound.com

from the so-simple-a-hot-dog-could-do-it dept.

Cook Time: 5 minutes

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

1 2.5 qt saucepan

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

1 can Campbell's Condensed Beef Soup

1 can Pork & Beans

3 hot dogs, cut into segments

hot sauce to taste

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. In the saucepan, combine all the ingredients. *Do not add water to the condensed soup.*
2. Heat in the pan over medium heat 5 minutes or until hot.
3. Remove from heat; enjoy.

Drkshadow's eggdrop soup

from the goes-good-with-laser-chicken dept.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

1 large (4-qt.) saucepan

2 small bowls

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

2 eggs

2 chicken bouillon cubes

1 tbsp corn starch

3 cp water

--OR--

enough water to fill a 9" diameter pan one inch full

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Fill pan with water as directed. Add the 2 bouillon cubes to the water, bring to a boil.
2. Crack open the two eggs into one of your bowls (make sure that no shell pieces get in it), and the cornstarch into another bowl.
3. Add a little bit of water to the corn starch and mix it until it looks milky.
4. Beat the eggs. The more you mix them, the smaller the "strings" of egg white will be.
5. Once the water is boiling and the bouillon cubes are dissolved, add the egg and corn starch at the same time to the water. Back the heat down to medium.
6. Stir constantly so you don't overcook the eggs. Make sure you don't splash the mixture!
7. Continue to stir over medium heat a few minutes. If it starts to froth up, lift the pot off the burner for a few seconds, and the froth will recede.
8. Once the eggs are done, remove from heat and add salt to taste.

REV. SIMON RUMBLE'S KANGAROO W/BEETROOT & PARSNIP CRISPS

from the what-the-heck-did-I-get-myself-into dept.

YIELD: 4 servings.

①: For our U.S. viewers, kangaroo isn't one of those meats you're likely to find in your average butcher shop. So, to help, www.exoticmeats.com is a shop in Seattle that will sell you kangaroo meat. For the folks in the UK, Hull Game (www.hullgame.co.uk) is a good supplier of kangaroo in the UK that's located in Lincolnshire.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

- 1 frying pan OR barbecue grill
- 1 medium saucepan
- 1 potato peeler

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

- 4 (100g) ¼ lb kangaroo sirloin steaks
- ½ cp beef stock
- ⅓ cp red wine
- 2 cp water
- ¼ cp red wine vinegar
- 1 tsp garlic, crushed
- 2 medium beets
- 2 tbsp soft brown sugar
- 1 large parsnip
- vegetable oil for frying

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Bring the beets, vinegar, and sugar to a boil in a saucepan. Reduce heat; simmer 30 minutes.
2. Remove the beets, and separate about 100ml of the "stock." Keep the beets warm by setting an oven to its *lowest* temperature setting (175°F or 80°C will do; if your oven goes lower, set it to its lowest setting)
3. Peel the beets and julienne them.
4. Peel the parsnip. Using the potato peeler, slice off strips as if peeling a potato. This is going to become your garnish.
5. Heat the frying oil and fry the parsnip pieces until golden brown.
☠: Be *extremely* careful with the hot oil! Oil *will* catch fire if it gets too hot. The oil is becoming too hot if you see it start to smoke and you don't have anything in it. If you have one, you might also use a candy thermometer to check the oil temperature. Don't let vegetable oil get too far above 400°F (205°C).
6. Heat the skillet or the barbecue up. Brush the roo steaks with olive oil. Sear the steaks on a medium-high heat until medium-rare, rare, or bleu for the blood-lovers 😊
☠: Kangaroo meat will turn to leather if you cook it any more than medium rare so you probably won't want your well-done friends around.
7. To serve, put the beets on the plate in an overlapping circular pattern. Place a roo steak in the center and pour over the sauce made from the beets. Scatter the parsnip crisps in a small pile on the top to create a little tower.
8. Serve with a green salad and mashed potatoes.

REV. SIMON RUMBLE'S CHOCOLATE SELF-SAUCE PUDDING

from the now-*this-is-death-by-chocolate* dept.

YIELD: 5 servings.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

- I medium mixing bowl
- I casserole dish
- I spatula

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

- 1 cp self-rising flour
- 2 tbsp cocoa powder (*not hot chocolate* – find this near the chocolate chips and baking chocolates.)
- ½ cp brown sugar
 - ①: When measuring brown sugar, pack it down until the material fills the cup completely.
- ¼ cp butter (this should be half a stick in the U.S.)
- ¾ cp milk
- 2 tsp vanilla extract (try not to use the imitation vanilla)

For the topping:

- 1 tbsp cocoa powder
- 1 cp brown sugar
- 1 ¾ cp boiling water

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Place all the dry ingredients into a mixing bowl and make a well in the middle. Add the remaining ingredients and stir until well combined.
2. Pour into a large, greased casserole dish.
3. Mix the extra cocoa powder and brown sugar together and sprinkle evenly over the pudding mixture. Pour boiling water over evenly and gently.
4. Bake at 180°C (350°F) 45 minutes. A sauce will form at the bottom of the pudding.
5. Serve hot, with cream or ice cream.

Variation:

Add fresh or canned raspberries, blueberries, or other fruit to the pudding mixture before baking. For that *extra* chocolaty flavor, try adding chocolate morsels.

Jay's un-fancy chili

from the low-heat dept.

YIELD: 4 – 8 servings.

Cook Time: 25-30 minutes

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

- I large (5-qt) pot with lid
- colander
- wooden spoon for stirring
- measuring teaspoon and tablespoon

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

- 1-1½ lb (½-¾kg) hamburger meat
- I 15 oz can tomato sauce
- I 8 oz can tomato sauce
- 3 tbsp instant minced onions
- 2-3 tbsp chili powder
- I tsp salt
- I tbsp garlic powder
- I or 2 #300 (13.5 oz) cans chili beans, without sauce or with mild sauce

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Brown hamburger meat in pot on stove set to high heat, breaking it into small chunks. Drain fat.
2. Return the meat to the pot, add remainder of ingredients. Fill the larger tomato sauce can with water and add to the pot. Stir well. Reduce heat to medium and return the pot to the stove, cover.
3. Simmer, 15-20 minutes, stirring occasionally. If needed you can keep it warm by setting the range top to its lowest heat setting.
4. Crank up the spice by adding more chili powder, or add more volume by adding more beans if you desire.

Deque's 7-Layer Dip

from the mexican-network-hub dept.

YIELD: serves 5-10 folks at your LAN party

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

- I 9-10" pie plate

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

- I 16 oz. can refried beans (if you want it to be a vegan dish, use lard-free beans.)
- I packet taco seasoning
- I 12-16 oz. can guacamole
- I 16 oz. tub sour cream
- I 4 oz can chopped green chilies, drained
- 2 cp shredded cheddar cheese, more if desired
- I 4 oz can sliced black olives, drained
- I medium tomato, chopped

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Spread all the above ingredients in layers in the order of the list above, inside a 9-10" pie plate. Toss into the fridge, let chill. Once cold, serve it up with your favorite chips and beverage.

deque's quick 'n easy chili con queso

MICROWAVE OK

from the serious-hacking-fuel dept.

YIELD: 1 serving as a meal, 2 if it's a snack

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

1 bowl, big enough to hold a can of chili with a little extra

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

1 15oz can of your favorite chili
1 8oz package of shredded cheddar cheese

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Put the chili in the bowl and heat in the microwave according to package directions.
2. Remove from the microwave, and stir in about ½ the cheese. Microwave on HIGH again about 30 seconds.
3. Remove, add the remaining cheese, nuke again for 30 seconds. Remove, let it cool a bit, and enjoy!

inspectorpraline's cajun cornish hen

from the worth-waiting-for dept.

YIELD: Serves 1. For the lighter eater, this may make two meals.

Cook Time: 1hr 20 mins

①: Cornish hens are smaller, single-serving hens that are perfect for a single-person dinner. Most Cornish hens weigh anywhere from 18 to 24 ounces, and some come with giblets. Try to get the kind with the giblets removed for this recipe, as most people just throw the giblets away.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

1 small casserole dish, about 5" x 7"
turkey baster
cutting board

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

1 rock Cornish hen, giblets removed
2 tbsp cajun seasoning blend
½ cp butter or margarine
salt and pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Provided you've thawed the chicken (if you haven't, place the bird in a cold-water bath for 2-3 hrs.): Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Unwrap the bird and ensure that the bird's had all of the feathers removed. Occasionally you may find a feather or two still on the bird, just pluck them off with your fingers. Thoroughly rinse the bird under cold running water, and pat dry with paper towels.
2. Place the bird breast-side up on your cutting board. Pat the surface with the cajun seasoning, on both sides of the bird. Make sure all exposed skin is covered. Don't worry about the cavity of the bird.
3. Melt the ½ cup of butter. Place the bird in the casserole dish, and slowly pour the butter over the top of the bird. If the seasoning washes off into the butter, that's okay, just sprinkle a little extra over the uncovered parts of the bird.
4. Place the bird in the oven, uncovered. Bake at 350°F for 1 hr 20 mins, using the turkey baster to baste the bird with the butter about every 10-15 minutes. The surface of the bird should be crisp when done.
5. Upon removing the bird from the oven, set the bird on a plate and let rest five minutes. Enjoy!

masato's Lunar Rhubarb cake

provided by larriveem@yahoo.com

from the what's-a-rhubarb dept.

YIELD: 10-12 servings

Prep time: 10 mins.

Cook Time: 45 mins.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

- 2 medium mixing bowls
- 1 9x13 (22.5cm x 32.5 cm) cake pan
- wire whisk

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

For the cake batter:

- ½ cp (120mL) margarine
- 1 ½ cp (340mL) sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 cp (455mL) all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 cp (240mL) buttermilk
- 2 ¼ cp (515mL) chopped rhubarb

For the topping:

- ¼ cp (60mL) margarine
- 2 tsp cinnamon
- 1 cp (240mL) brown sugar

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Cream the margarine and sugar together in a bowl until smooth.
2. Beat in the egg and vanilla extract.
3. In a second bowl, sift the flour, baking soda, and salt. Add this to the creamed mixture along with the buttermilk.
4. Take the rhubarb and chop it into about ½" pieces. Toss the pieces with 1 tbsp flour, then add into the batter mix. Pour the batter into a greased 9x13 pan, spreading evenly.
5. For the topping, blend together all the ingredients, and sprinkle evenly over the batter.
6. Take the whole mess and put in it a 350°F (175°C) oven 45 mins, or until the cake comes away from the edge of the pan and a toothpick inserted into the center of the cake comes out clean.

newtroot's easy healthy fajitas

from the heavily-tweakable-food dept.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

- I quart-sized Ziploc bag or equivalent
- I medium skillet

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

- I lb boneless, skinless chicken breast OR chicken tenders
- 2 green bell peppers (less if you want it sweeter)
- I red bell pepper (more if you want it sweeter)
- I yellow pepper (more if you want it sweeter)
- I medium yellow onion
- I cp fat-free Italian dressing
- enough tortillas to suit you

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Cut the chicken into thin strips. Place it into the Ziploc bag and pour the Italian dressing over the top of the chicken. Close the bag, and as you do, squeeze out as much air as you can without spilling dressing all over the place. Toss it in the fridge for 1-2 hours. Go code for a bit. Remember to turn the meat over in the fridge about halfway through the marinating time.
2. When the chicken is about finished marinating, cut the peppers and onions into strips, set these aside.
3. Take the chicken out of the fridge and dump the whole thing into a skillet and cook thoroughly. You should have plenty of liquid to cook with. If not, add a tiny amount of olive oil to the pan to help the chicken cook. *Be careful when you do.*
4. Remove the chicken from the skillet and set aside on a plate. Put the slices of pepper and onion right into the skillet and cook until they soften up. If you added oil during the previous step, do not do so here.
5. Warm the soft tortillas up in the microwave, and pile on the chicken, peppers, and onions. Add salsa or fat-free sour cream if you so desire.

mike's chocolate cream w/peanut butter & banana pie

from the works-well-at-bible-study dept.

YIELD: Two pies, 16 slices total.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

- 2 pie tins (see the ingredient list below to see if you need these)
- 1 medium bowl
- 1 spatula

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

- 2 graham cracker pie crusts (pre-made ones are okay, if you use these, omit the 2 pie tins above)
- 2 large packages chocolate pudding (should produce 2 ½ to 3 cups per box)
- 5-6 cp milk (for the pudding)
- 4-6 bananas, peeled and sliced
- 2-3 cp creamy peanut butter
- 1 tub cool whip
- grated bar chocolate or chocolate sprinkles (for a garnish, optional)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Make the crusts if you didn't buy pre-made ones. If you bought the pre-made kind, check the label – they should tell you how to crisp them up by baking them alone for a few moments.
2. Heat the peanut butter, about 40 seconds in the microwave.
3. Pour 1 to 1 ½ cp of the peanut butter into each pie crust. Use the back of a spoon or spatula to spread it around and coat the inside of the pie crust (this includes the side walls).
4. Prepare 1 batch of pudding according to the package directions for *pie filling*. Pour about ⅓ of the pudding into the crust over the peanut butter.
5. Take one banana's worth of slices and distribute them evenly in a layer across the top of the pudding.
6. Add the second third of pudding, add another layer of banana slices, then dump the remainder of the pudding on top.
7. If you want, add another layer of bananas on top of the pie. Repeat steps 4-7 for the second pie.
8. Put the whole pie in the fridge and let the pudding set up. Should take only about 5-10 minutes. Serve with whipped cream on top, and grated chocolate shavings or sprinkles.

⚠️: The graham cracker crusts and the aluminum pans don't have a whole lot of structural strength and if you don't handle them carefully the pie *will* fold up on you. The easiest way to do it is to use a plate to carry the pies around.

steff's gimlet

from the five-drink-maximum dept.

①: Steff writes: "Include a credit to Raymond Chandler – I first saw the drink described in one of his novels."

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

- 1 12 oz. glass

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

- about 70 ml gin (author recommends Tanqueray and Bombay Sapphire brands)
- about 70 ml lime juice (use a little less if desired)
- ice to fill the glass ¾ full
- 1 slice lime (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Place the ice in the glass. Add the gin and lime juice. Agitate gently to ensure that they mix, but be careful not to mix it too much so that the ice starts to dilute the drink.

⚠️: The author suggests that you not drink any more than 5 of these in a 24-hour period. Really.

John's easy boneless hot wings

from the ~~type-with-one-hand-eat-with-the-other~~ dept.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

- I gallon-size Ziploc bag
- I medium pot with lid
- I medium or large frying pan OR a deep-fryer

INGREDIENTS:

- 4 tbsp butter
- I (½ L) 16 oz bottle of cayenne pepper sauce (author recommends Frank's Red Hot Sauce)
- 1½ lbs boneless chicken breasts
- ½ cp all-purpose flour

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Remove the chicken from its wrapping and cut the breasts into pieces about as big as chicken McNuggets. Remember to cut the tough piece of cartilage off the end of the breast (it's a big white hunk).
2. Pour the flour into the Ziploc bag, and throw the chicken in with it. Close the bag and shake like crazy to thoroughly cover the chicken.
3. In the pot, pour the *entire bottle* of pepper sauce into the pot, and place the ½ stick of butter into the pot. Melt the butter over medium-low heat into the pepper sauce. Cover it and let it cook for a moment. Keep an eye on this, though: don't let it boil. Bubbling a little bit is ok, but if it begins to boil, lower the heat.
4. While the sauce is heating, take your frying pan and start to heat ½ cp vegetable oil in it over medium-high heat. If you're using a deep fryer, preheat the fryer to 350°F (175°C).
5. If you're frying in a pan, you can test the oil by sprinkling a tiny bit of flour into it. When it sizzles, it's hot enough. Open your bag of chicken and add the pieces of chicken one at a time into the oil until your frying pan or the fryer's basket is full. If frying in a pan, place the pieces about ½ inch apart, and flip the pieces over after about 5 minutes. If you're deep frying, this should take about 4½ minutes. Make sure you shake the basket so that none of the chicken sticks together.
6. Once the chicken has browned, cut a piece open to ensure that it is done – you should see *no* pink in the meat – it should be white all the way through.
7. Once it's cooked, transfer it to the pot with the sauce in it for safe-keeping. Repeat steps 5 and 6 for any remaining chicken in the bag. You can use additional oil to replenish the frying pan if you need to. If you're using a deep fryer, *do not* add oil. As the chicken cooks, add it to the saucepan.
8. Once all the chicken is cooked, put the cover on the pan (it should now have all the chicken, the sauce, and butter in it). Hold the cover on tight, pull the pot from the heat, and, being careful not to burn yourself or spill it, shake the pot to coat the chicken. Serve with ranch or bleu cheese dressing and celery sticks.

Andy's lazy bachelor vegetable bean soup

from the ~~just-as-fast-as-condensed-soup~~ dept.

YIELD: 2-3 servings.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

- I medium saucepan

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

- I 15 oz can beans (any variety)
- I 16 oz jar salsa (any variety)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. In the saucepan over medium heat, combine all ingredients, stir well. Heat for about 5-7 minutes, or until hot. Serve.

ace's cheap buzz

from the caffeine-in-sucrose-milk-solution-administered-intravenously-dept.

Ⓢ(editor's note): No, this not your average recipe – but what geek cookbook would be complete without a heavily caffeinated breakfast?

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

- I bowl
- I spoon

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

- 2-3 cp Cocoa Crispies
- I cp milk
- I can Pepsi, or your favorite caffeinated drink

INSTRUCTIONS (as if you need it):

1. Make the cereal like normal. Devour ravenously and quickly.
2. Down the Pepsi *quickly*.
3. Enjoy about 1 hr of caffeine buzz followed by 2 hrs of sugar high from the sugar plug you just took.

james' mexican chicken wraps

from the girlfriend's-south-of-the-border-favorite dept.

YIELD: 8-12 wraps depending on the size of tortilla you choose

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

- I large skillet
- I 1-qt measuring cup or medium mixing bowl

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

- 1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into strips or cubes
- 2 cp water
- I cp salsa (any variety)
- I pkt (¼ cp) taco seasoning
- 2 cp instant white rice
- tortillas, any style

OPTIONAL INGREDIENTS:

- grated cheese
- sour cream
- guacamole

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. In the skillet, brown the chicken until cooked.
2. In the bowl or measuring cup, mix the water, salsa, and taco seasonings together.
3. Add the salsa mixture to the skillet; bring to a boil.
4. Stir in the rice, so that it covers the mixture.
5. Reduce heat; simmer 10 mins. or until the rice absorbs the liquid.
6. Spoon mixture over the tortillas. Add grated cheese, sour cream, or guacamole if desired. Enjoy!

Inspectorraline's easy beef vegetable soup

from the better-than-Campbell's dept.

YIELD: About 2.5 – 3 cups soup, enough to feed two

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

- I medium (2.5-qt) saucepan
- measuring spoons
- I 1-cp measuring cup

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

- 3 cp water
- 3 tsp beef bouillon
- 4 oz beef stew meat
- I 8.25 oz can mixed vegetables
- I tbsp ketchup
- I 8 oz. can tomato sauce
- 3 oz uncooked egg noodles OR alphabet noodles
- I tsp instant minced onions, reconstituted
- pinch garlic powder
- pinch basil leaves
- pinch cayenne pepper
- pinch parsley flakes

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. In the saucepan, bring the 3 cups of water to a rolling boil. Add the bouillon to the boiling water *slowly*, as it will foam up greatly when it is added to the water.
2. Back the heat down to medium, and add the noodles and beef. Let cook 3 minutes to soften the noodles.
3. Add the ketchup, tomato sauce, vegetables, and spices. Stir thoroughly to incorporate all of it.
4. Add ¼ cp additional water, and continue to boil, covered, 15 minutes, stirring occasionally.
5. Remove from heat and enjoy, or refrigerate 48 hours if you want the flavors to mingle further.

Therrez's pico de gallo

from the mexican-network-hub-continued dept.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED

- I mixing bowl
- I medium (about 9x12) cutting board
- I utility or chef's knife
- I paring knife
- I citrus juicer (if you don't have bottled juice, see below)

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

- 2 large tomatoes
- ½ large onion
- 8-10 stalks fresh cilantro
- ①: Fresh cilantro can usually be found in the produce section of most supermarkets.
- juice of one lime OR one fresh lime
- 2 large jalapeño peppers

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Remove the cores from the tomatoes. Do this by taking your paring knife and slicing into the top of the tomato at an angle, and cut a divot out of the tomato. This removes the tough part of the tomato where it was connected to the vine.
2. Take the cilantro stalks and pull the leaves off. Set these on your cutting board with the tomato. Discard the stalks. Get your onion and peppers and put them on the cutting board as well.
3. If you have a fresh lime, take your citrus juicer and put a bowl underneath it, if it doesn't already have one. Cut the lime in half, and press each half of the lime over the top of the juicer. Discard the pieces.
4. Dice your tomato, onions, and peppers. Mince the cilantro leaves. If you have a food processor, you can use it to shred the leaves.
5. Combine all ingredients in a bowl, mix well. Serve with nacho chips.

kristin's poor man's goulash

from the el-cheapo dept.

YIELD: 4 servings

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

1 medium saucepan

1 medium skillet

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

1 pkg (8 oz) medium or mild sausage

½ lb ground beef

1 10 oz. can tomato sauce

1 fresh diced tomato (if you prefer canned tomatoes, that's okay too)

1 diced onion

1 16 oz box pasta (ziti, penne, etc.)

2 tbsp olive oil

To taste:

oregano

salt

pepper

garlic (fresh or powdered, note that powdered is significantly more potent)

cheese of your choice

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Prepare pasta according to package directions.
2. While pasta is boiling, brown sausage, beef, onions, and garlic. Add salt & pepper to taste here. Drain fat.
3. Add tomato sauce, diced tomato, and oregano to mixture. Simmer while pasta cooks.
4. When pasta is done, drain, toss with olive oil & oregano.
5. Spoon the sausage mixture over the top of a bed of pasta for each serving.

Inspectorraline's creamed chicken with Long grain rice

from the talk-about-a-Sunday-dinner dept.

YIELD: About 4 servings

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

1 3 qt. covered sauté pan

①: Note that this is different from a regular sauté pan. A covered sauté pan has a flat bottom but does not have curved walls like a skillet. It's kind of like a stockpot that's had half its height taken away.

☠: Make sure that the handle of the pan you use to do this with is a solid steel handle – plastic handles *will* melt in the oven!

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

2 lbs.	boneless, skinless chicken breasts, trimmed of fat
1 stick	butter, or enough butter to fill your pan about 1/8" – 1/4" deep
1/3 cp	chopped onions
1 small	clove garlic, minced
3/4 cp	chicken broth
1 pt.	heavy whipping cream
1 1/2 tsp.	salt
1/8 tsp.	pepper
2 tsp.	Worcestershire sauce
1 box	Uncle Ben's Original Long Grain & Wild Rice

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Cut the two breasts each into two pieces. In the skillet, melt the butter, and brown the chicken thoroughly. Salt and pepper both sides as you fry them.
2. Preheat your oven to 325°F (160°C).
3. Just before the chicken gets really browned, toss in the chopped onions and the garlic. Continue to cook until the onion turns clear. Don't worry about getting the chicken cooked all the way through – that happens later.
4. Add the chicken broth (if you don't have any chicken broth, you can use a heaping tablespoon of bouillon and about 1/2 cp water), then the pint of cream, and the Worcestershire sauce. Stir the mixture until the liquid becomes uniform.
5. Place a lid on the pan and carefully place it in your 325°F oven. Allow to cook for 1 hour.
6. About 20 minutes before the chicken is ready to come out of the oven, prepare the rice according to the box directions. It should take about 25 minutes to complete.
7. Remove the pan from the oven and place on a cool burner. Using a fork, pull the individual pieces of chicken out of the sauce and set on plates.
8. Take a large measuring cup or gravy boat and fill it with the sauce from the pan.
☠: The pan will be **EXTREMELY** hot – be **very** careful!
9. Pull the rice off the burner. Serve one breast half with a healthy serving of rice for each person, and serve the sauce in a measuring cup or gravy boat. Pour a goodly amount of sauce over the chicken and rice.

peter's south indian Lamb saag

from the halfway-round-the-world dept.

YIELD: Serves 2 to 3

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

wok or another deep frying pan
wok spoon or metal ladle
rice cooker, or a saucepan for the rice

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

250g (½ lb) lamb meat, diced (you can substitute chicken if you so desire)
200g (7 oz) spinach, coarsely chopped (frozen, canned or fresh, doesn't matter)
200ml (6¾ oz) coconut milk
1 jar Korma paste
①: Korma paste should be available in most international grocery stores or in the ethnic section of some local groceries.
salt and pepper
peanut oil (if you can't get peanut oil, olive oil is OK)
1 bag boil-in-bag rice, or about 2 cp dry rice

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Begin to prepare rice according to box directions. Place a wok/skillet onto a hot burner (medium-high heat) or wok ring, and put a little oil into the pan and heat it until it begins to slowly evaporate.
2. Throw your lamb pieces into the wok, and agitate frequently to sear the lamb.
3. Add about 2-3 tbsp. of your Korma paste. Stir frequently, making sure that the lamb is evenly coated.
4. Add spinach, and stir until cooked and well integrated.
5. Add coconut milk. Back the heat off to about medium-low and simmer it for about 5 minutes or until the whole mixture thickens.
6. Add about a teaspoon of salt to the mix, then pepper to taste.

gadgetman's chicken-noodle soup

provided by martin@gadgets.co.nz

from the resource-pipelined-to-reduce-cooking-time dept.

YIELD: 4 servings.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

1 medium (4-qt) saucepan
1 large cutting board

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

1 rotisserie cooked chicken (buy from your local supermarket)
2 pkgs ramen noodles, chicken flavor
2 large red bell peppers (also known as a *capsicum*)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Place about 8 cp (about 1⅞ L) water into a saucepan. Put this on the stove on high heat.
2. Wash the peppers, cut in halves. Cut into pieces. Place into the water.
3. Get the chicken, and cut enough meat off to fill 4 soup bowls about half full.
4. Place both cakes of ramen noodles in water, cook about 2 minutes. Put the seasoning packets into the water, and put in your chicken pieces. Give it about 30 sec – 1 minute for the chicken to warm up. Mix well. Portion out into 4 bowls and serve.

jeff's "peanut-butter halitosis" sandwich

from the Ripley's-believe-it-or-not dept.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

knife
a daring palate

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

2 slices bread
peanut butter (chunky or creamy, doesn't matter)
red or Vidalia onion, enough make a layer on the bread
garlic salt
mouthwash (choose your favorite brand) (ⓘ: No, he's *not* kidding.)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Cover both slices of bread with a thick coating of peanut butter.
2. Place onions on the bread.
3. Sprinkle with garlic salt.
4. Devour the sandwich.
5. Gargle with mouthwash.

redox's omelette sandwich

from the half-a-brain dept.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

spice grinder or mortar & pestle
skillet
toaster

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

3 eggs
2 oz sliced ham
2 oz deli style pastrami
1 hot link, cooked and cut into pieces
handful shredded cheese, any style
½ tsp paprika
¼ tsp coarse black pepper
¼ tsp basil leaves
½ tsp cayenne
⅛ tsp salt **or** garlic salt
2 slices sourdough bread
butter (for the bread, optional)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Grind the paprika, black pepper, basil leaves, cayenne, and salt together in your grinder or mortar.
2. Cook the hot links, and cut into small pieces.
3. Start the omelet by first scrambling them as per the directions in "How to Cook Eggs" in Chapter 4. Pour them into the skillet and start cooking them.
4. Add the spices to the eggs as they cook, while they are still liquid. Fold the spices in.
5. As the eggs begin to stiffen, add the ham, pastrami, cheese, and hot links to the eggs and fold them into the mixture.
6. Toast the two pieces of bread, and place the omelet between the bread and eat like a sandwich.

spike's snacky tuna salad

from the who's-Charlie? dept.

YIELD: about 4 sandwiches

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

mixing bowl

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

1 can (12 oz.) white albacore tuna, packed in water
3 tbsp sweet pickle relish
4 tbsp mayonnaise
1 tsp fines herbes
salt
ground black or white pepper

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Drain the tuna and add it to a mixing bowl.
2. Add remaining ingredients – if you so desire, you can substitute chopped celery for the pickle relish.
3. Fold together if you like large chunks of tuna, or mix well if you like it finer in texture.
4. Serve on toasted onion sandwich rolls with potato chips.

medge's bean chili

from the we-never-really-called-it-anything dept.

YIELD: about 2 servings

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

sauté pan

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

2 large onions, diced
1 tsp minced garlic
1 tsp minced ginger
1 whole red bell pepper, diced
1 tbsp basil leaves
1 tbsp mixed herbs
1 can (10 oz) tomatoes
1 can (10-14 oz) kidney beans, drained

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Fry peppers, garlic, and onions in a sauté pan until the onions begin to turn soft.
2. Add tomatoes (with juice), beans, and herbs.
3. Reduce heat, and simmer for at least 30 mins (more is better)
4. Serve with rice, yogurt, and corn chips (or all of these), and Alacante, any clear dry white wine, or even frontinac.

jason's "burn your ass" chips

Contributed by dumlerjason@netscape.net

from the gastronomic-napalm-development dept.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

1 baking pan, large enough for as many Doritos as you want

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

1 med. bag Doritos (any flavor)

1 8 oz. bag shredded sharp or mild cheddar

1 bottle sliced jalapeños or banana peppers packed in vinegar (sometimes called "pepper sauce")

①: For that extra-hyper-insane punch, try habañoero peppers!

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Preheat your oven to 300°F (175°C) – just enough to melt the cheese.
2. Spread the Doritos evenly around a flat pan. Sprinkle the cheese over the Doritos.
3. Put *one* slice of jalapeño or banana pepper on each chip. Really. Don't throw them in the pan – you'll get chips without peppers or chips with several and a bunch of them will just fall to the bottom of the pan.
4. Put them in the oven until the cheese melts – up to 5 minutes.
5. Devour.

princess firefly's vegan fudge brownies

from the who-said-vegetarians-can't-have-chocolate?? dept.

YIELD: one 9" x 9" panful, about 16 pcs.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

1 9" square baking pan

2 small saucepans

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

2 $\frac{1}{3}$ cp (585 mL) all-purpose flour

2 cp (500 mL) white sugar

$\frac{2}{3}$ cp (170 mL) cocoa or carob bean powder (*not hot chocolate!*)

2 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp (12 mL) baking powder

1 tsp (5 mL) salt

1 cp (250 mL) water

$\frac{1}{2}$ cp (125 mL) margarine

1 tsp (5 mL) vanilla extract

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Mix about $\frac{1}{3}$ cp of the flour with 1 cp of water in a small pot. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until thick. Remove from heat and stick in a fridge to cool.
2. Melt margarine in a second pot and mix in cocoa powder. Cook, stirring constantly until smooth. Remove from heat and cool.
3. Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C). Beat sugar, salt, and vanilla into the flour mixture, making sure to remove most of the lumps. Add the cocoa mixture to the pot. Add remaining flour and the baking powder, mix. It should be thick and similar in texture to chocolate ice cream.
4. Spread batter into a 9" square pan, and pop in the oven for 40 minutes. Cut into squares and enjoy!

Inspector Praline's Herb-Crusted Ham with Apple Butter

from the feed-your-cubicle-farm dept.

YIELD: about 6 servings

①: This also makes a great Christmas dinner.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

baking sheet or cookie sheet
small mixing bowl
potato masher
meat thermometer

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

For the Ham:

2-3 lb. (1-1⁴/₁₀ kg) boneless fresh ham or pork leg
basil leaves
garlic powder
salt

Also: 2 bags boil-in-bag white rice

For the Apple Butter:

8 whole red Rome apples, peeled, cored, and diced
1 tbsp. cinnamon
1 cp. white sugar
½ cp. unsalted butter (if you use salted butter, add 2 extra tbsp sugar to counteract the saltiness.)
6 sprigs fresh mint

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. First, preheat your oven to 325°F (160°C). Take the entire ham and place it on a baking sheet sprayed with a little nonstick spray. Liberally dust *only its top* with basil and a little garlic powder. Give it a light dusting of salt.
2. Insert a meat thermometer into the thickest section of the meat and place the roast in the oven. Set your timer for two hours and 45 minutes (you may or may not need all of it). After you've peeled and cored your apples and diced them up, place them in a bowl in the fridge with plastic wrap over the bowl. Go compile a kernel or two, but keep an eye on the thermometer.
3. Once your meat has reached about 140°F (65°C) get your bowl of apples, and potato masher. Pour the cinnamon and sugar over the top of the apples and toss. Use the masher to make a coarse applesauce – don't mash it too much. By now your meat should have reached **at least** 160°F (70°C).
4. You have the option of letting the ham cook about another 20 minutes to get the ham up to about 170-180°F (75-80°C), depending on your tastes.
5. When your meat reaches the desired temperature, pull the meat out *but leave the oven on!* Reduce the heat to 275°F (135°C) and wait a few moments for the oven to cycle. *Do not carve the meat yet.*
6. Once the oven cycles, brush some of your butter over the inside of 6 serving-size dishes. Spoon the apple mixture into the dishes and brush the top of the apple mixture with a moderately heavy coating of butter. Lightly dust the top with a *little* cinnamon and sugar. Place the 6 dishes into the 275°F oven for 5-10 minutes. Prepare the bags of rice according to the box directions.
7. Pull out your apple butter dishes and set them on potholders or a towel to cool. Garnish with a sprig of mint. Carve your ham, cutting off two ½" thick slices for each serving. Save the remainder for additional servings or leftovers. Serve two ham slices over a small bed of rice with the apple butter.

utsav's no-bake peanut butter squares

from the ooey-gooey dept.

YIELD: Enough batter to fill a 9x13 cake pan

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

9 x 13 cake pan

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

1 cp crunchy peanut butter
2¼ graham cracker pie crusts
1½ tbsp icing
¾ cp melted butter
1 bag (6 oz.) semi-sweet chocolate chips

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Crush pie crusts. Mix peanut butter, icing, and butter.
2. Press mixture into a 9x13 cake pan.
3. Melt the chocolate chips and spread over the peanut butter mixture.
4. Score the tops into squares and pop the pan in the fridge. Leave it until the chocolate sets.
5. Serve.

bevan's nachos

from the I-can't-think-of-a-catchy-dept. dept.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

deep frying pan or wok

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

1 small onion, diced
250g (½ lb) ground beef
 olive oil
1 can chili beans or red kidney beans
1 whole green bell pepper, julienned
 assorted spices (chili powder, cajun seasoning, etc. - something hot or flavorful)
 corn chips
 cheese of your choice (melted Velveeta works well for nachos)
 salsa

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Sauté the onions in some hot olive oil for about 30 seconds.
2. Toss in the ground beef and cook until the meat is browned.
3. Add spices to taste.
4. Add beans and jalapeño strips, stir.
5. Simmer for a few minutes, to combine the flavors.
6. Serve on a bed of corn chips with cheese and salsa.
7. Variations include using sour cream on top, melting the cheese, using bacon or spiced meats in addition to the ground beef, using other colors/kinds of peppers, using fresh tomatoes instead of salsa.

Russ' Instant Pizza

from the lazy-man's-food dept.

YIELD: 3 "pizzas"

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

toaster oven

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

3 slices bread
1 10 oz can tomato puree
cheese of your choice

Toppings:

leftover meat (ham, pepperoni, whatever works)
fresh pepper slices
sliced onion
virtually any kind of fruit except strawberries

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Toast 3 slices of bread in a toaster oven on one side (if the oven has a "broil" setting, this is the one to use)
2. Once browned, spread a generous layer of tomato puree on the untoasted side of each slice.
3. From the topping list above, add what you want to the top of the bread. Sprinkle with cheese, add a little black pepper, and a dash of oregano.
4. Place the bread back under the heat, topping side up, until the cheese is hot and bubbling.
5. Munch away.

newtroot's healthy taco soup

from the this-ain't-your-Taco-Bell-dinner dept.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

1 large saucepan w/lid OR crock-pot

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

3 15 oz cans diced tomatoes
3 15 oz cans beans (any variety, author prefers black beans, kidney beans, and navy beans)
1 15 oz can kernel corn
2 cp water
1 pkg taco seasoning (2 if you want it extra spicy)
1 pkg dry ranch dressing or ranch dip mix (2 pkgs if you want extra flavor)
1 lb lean ground beef or ground turkey (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. If you're adding meat, cook it throughout and drain the fat.
2. Mix everything together (don't drain the cans) and heat thoroughly on a stove or in a crock pot. On the stove, heat it to a slow boil, reduce heat, and let cook at least 30 minutes, but not more than 3-4 hrs, or else the tomatoes break down too much and you'll lose the texture. If you cook in a crock-pot, put it in on low for about 3 hours, or if you want it fast, cook it on high for 1 hour and then switch to low. The longer it cooks, the better it gets – and it tastes even better the second day. This stuff also freezes well – you can make up extra and freeze it for a quick snack – just toss it in the microwave!

peter's escalopes de poulard sauce citron

from the prissy-waiter-not-included dept.

YIELD: main course for four people

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

rolling pin or steak bat (known as a meat tenderizer in the US)
wax paper
sauté pan
citrus zester

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

4 ½ lb. boneless chicken breasts, trimmed of fat
2 large lemons
½ pint chicken or vegetable stock
 butter
 brandy (or Coke if you can't afford brandy)
 flour
 parsley
3 tbsp heavy whipping cream

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Flatten the breasts with your rolling pin or steak bat between two pieces of wax paper. You should end up with four pieces of thin meat about 8" in diameter.
2. Flash-fry the breasts in a little butter, until they are white on both sides but not quite cooked (about 1 minute per side). Put them in a warm place while you make the sauce.
3. Deglaze the pan with some brandy (**be careful**) and then pour the juice into a cup or bowl to keep it while you make a roux.
4. Melt a large hunk of butter into the pan, and sprinkle a tablespoon of flour into the butter and cook about 30 seconds, mixing it until it is a slack goo (see *How to make a roux*, in Chapter 4). Pour in the brandy mixture and stir well.
5. Add stock. Bring to a gentle boil so that it thickens into a gravy. Add the zest of one lemon. Take the other and slice four thin slices to use as a garnish. Juice the remaining lemon.
6. Put the meat into the sauté pan, cover, and simmer 4-5 mins to finish cooking. *Make sure the chicken is cooked!*
7. Add the cream to the sauce just before serving, with a slice of lemon and a sprinkle of finely-chopped parsley.
8. When putting it all on a plate, good side items include potatoes, broccoli, or carrots.

eric's hot chocolate

Contributed by neilsen@ntsource.com

from the high-altitude-internal-humanoid-warming-device dept.

YIELD: about 5 hot mugs

Cook time: about 15-20 mins.

①: This particular recipe was made at a professional astronomical observatory – when you have scientists working at altitudes of 9000+ ft., in frequently windy conditions. At those heights, it gets pretty cold, and add the wind and you have a natural icebox, and it's easy not only to get cold but also to get quite tired. The author developed this drink as a way to not only keep warm, but also to stay awake despite the conditions. Just don't drink too much, as you may get a little *too* warm and energetic ☺

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

4-qt. saucepan
large whisk
pancake turner or large stiff spatula (not rubber spatulas!)

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

8 oz 225g sweetened condensed milk

11.5 oz 325g bittersweet (or unsweetened) chocolate chips.

①: Getting good chocolate is *very* important. Either go to a chocolatier, or buy something of high quality. Ghirardelli chocolate is a good starting point. Hershey's is not.

1/3 gal. **whole** milk (*not* 2%!!)

2 tbsp. allspice

6 oz. 170g honey

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Pour the 8 oz. of condensed milk into a saucepan over medium heat. Stir it with the spatula just until it reaches the boiling point. You'll be able to tell when it's about to boil because its viscosity will drop.
2. Add the chocolate chips. Stir constantly to keep the chips from burning to the bottom of the pot.
3. Once the sweetened condensed milk has incorporated itself into the chocolate and you have a lumpy chocolate glop, begin to add the whole milk, a few cups at a time, to the mix. Use the spatula to clean off the sides of the pan and use the whisk to incorporate the milk in faster.
4. Once you get a uniform liquid, add the remaining milk, allspice, and honey. Don't add the milk so fast that the mixture cools, as the chocolate may condense. Stir it all in and serve in tall mugs.

mart's quick & yummy T.V.P. chili

from the more-flavorful-than-you-think dept.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

colander
small (2-qt. or less) saucepan
4 qt. saucepan
medium mixing bowl

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

1 cp dry T.V.P. (textured vegetable protein)
1 cp boiling water for reconstituting TVP
1 15 oz. can red kidney beans
1 15 oz. can black beans
1 15 oz. can crushed tomatoes
3-4 tbsp hot chili powder
½ tsp ground cumin seed
1 tsp dried oregano
1 tsp dried basil
1 8 oz. jar hot all-natural salsa
2 stalks celery, diced
2 medium carrots, diced
1 large large onion, diced
2 tsp chopped or ground
1 tsp canola oil
½ cp cold water

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Drain and thoroughly rinse the canned beans. Reconstitute the TVP by placing it in your bowl and pouring boiling water over it and letting it stand for 5 mins.
2. Heat the canola oil in a large soup pot, then briefly sauté the onions, carrots and celery together with a pinch of salt & pepper. Add the beans, TVP, crushed tomatoes, and water. Stir in the spices, and bring to a boil. Add salsa, S&P to taste. Simmer, stirring occasionally, for 30 mins. or more.
3. Serve with rice, lettuce, tomato, and cheese, or wrap in a warm flour tortilla with lettuce tomato and grated cheese, sour cream, or plain yogurt.

David's easy teriyaki sauce

from the kikkoman-it's-not dept.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

saucepan

glass jar – a cruet or mason jar will work too. Sobe bottles also work well.

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

1 part soy sauce

1 part sugar, brown or white

ground ginger

chopped garlic

sesame seeds

INSTRUCTIONS:

Note that this is all to taste. It all depends on how sweet, salty, garlic-ish, or spicy as you want it.

1. In your saucepan, combine the soy sauce and sugar and stir well. Bring to a simmer, reduce heat.
2. Avoid getting the mixture too hot – you'll know it's too hot when a film shows up on the surface. It can be skimmed off, but it's better to not get it too hot in the first place.
3. Add ginger, garlic, and sesame seeds. Author's recommended amount is about 1 tbsp. of each per cup of soy sauce, but YMMV, and YTMV (your taste may vary).
4. Reduce the sauce over medium-low heat, about 20 mins., less if you like the sauce thinner, more if you like it thicker. *Be careful not to overcook the sauce as it WILL burn.*
5. Remove from heat, allow to cool 10 mins. Pour into glass jars and let cool *completely* before putting the lid on. Store in the fridge.

Suggested uses:

1. The obvious: stir fry, oriental dishes, laser chicken, etc.
2. Use as a glaze for meats – works wonders as a marinade for leg of lamb. Let it marinate overnight and grill the leg of lamb over an open fire and pour the sauce over it on occasion.

Inspector Praline's "warm milk"

from the good-first-mixed-drink dept.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

double old-fashioned glass (14 oz.)

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

8 oz freezing cold milk, over ice

1 oz. Kahlúa

1 oz. Irish Cream liqueur

dusting cinnamon

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Pour milk into a glass $\frac{1}{3}$ full with ice. Pour Kahlúa and Irish Cream into milk. Dust top with cinnamon, stir. Enjoy – but this is a *sipping* drink. Do *not* chug this.

anna's easy chinese salad

from the cheap-but-filling dept.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

large bowl
fork & spoon

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

3 bunches bok choy (if you can't find this, lettuce will suffice)
handful cashew nuts
3½ oz. (100 g) thin fried noodles (one pack of ramen sans-broth-mix should do)
13½ oz. (375 g) fried tofu
sesame oil to taste
soy sauce to taste

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Shred the bok choy or lettuce into a large bowl.
2. Drench the leaves in sesame oil and soy sauce (to your taste)
3. Break the noodles into pieces about 2 inches long.
4. If you have tofu, cut it into about 1 inch cubes.
5. Add noodles, cashews, and tofu to salad.
6. Mix. Allow it to sit for a few minutes after you're done to let the dressing soften the noodles.
7. Serve and eat.

andrew's macaroni with bacon & green onion

from the artery-clogging-goodness dept.

YIELD: serves 1

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

skillet or frying pan
medium pot

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

1 cp macaroni
3-4 strips bacon, cut into ½" pieces
1 large green onion, minced
1 egg, beaten
water
(optional) milk and parmesan cheese

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Prepare macaroni according to box directions. Fry the bacon up while the macaroni cooks, drain, if desired, but keep the bacon on the heat. Add the onions and, if desired, salt and pepper. Optionally, add a little bit of milk to the beaten egg.
2. Once the macaroni is cooked, drain and add to the bacon. Add the beaten egg and mix together, top with parmesan if desired.

Tony's "exit-wound" chili

from the take-aspirin-before-eating dept.

①: Tony writes in: "This chili has won awards in Florida and Texas. I call it "Exit Wound Chili" because it hurts as bad leaving as it does going in. 😊"

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

- 12" or larger seasoned cast-iron skillet or dutch oven
- 1½ or 2-gallon crockpot
- large strainer
- 3 medium or large bowls

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

- 2 lbs. coarse-ground delmonico (ribeye) steak
- 1 large white onion, finely chopped
- 1 head garlic (15-20 cloves), peeled and sliced
- 8 fresh habañero peppers, seeded and finely chopped
- 4 fresh jalapeño peppers, seeded and finely chopped
- 3 cans stewed tomatoes
- 1 can tomato paste
- ¼ cp olive oil
- 1 cube beef bouillon dissolved in 1 cp water
- 2 tbsp black pepper
- 2 tbsp ground cumin seed
- 2 tbsp whole cumin seed
- 2 tbsp chili powder

⚠: **DO NOT** handle the peppers barehanded! Put latex gloves on when working with the peppers. Also, do not rub your eyes/face or touch sensitive areas of the skin after handling raw peppers.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Pour the olive oil into the bowl, add the peppers and garlic. Place the ground steak into a large bowl. Add about half of the cumin (whole and ground), chili powder, and black pepper, and about ¼ of the bowl of garlic-pepper-oil mixture to the meat. Mix thoroughly. Cover both bowls and store them in the refrigerator overnight to flavor the oil and meat.
2. When you're ready to cook, put the stewed tomatoes, tomato paste, and bouillon in the crockpot and turn it on high. Add the other half of the seasonings and another ¼ of the bowl of garlic, peppers, and oil.
3. Take the remaining garlic, peppers, and oil, and place in a cast iron skillet with the onions. Cook over medium-high heat, stirring constantly, until the mixture has cooked down and the onions are clear and brown. Take the cooked vegetables and add it to the crock pot leaving the bits stuck at the bottom of the skillet. This will add great flavors when you cook the meat.
4. Add the meat to the remnants in the cast iron skillet and cook over a medium heat, stirring constantly. After browning the meat thoroughly, drain off excess oil using the strainer. Add the meat to the crockpot and stir in. Add additional seasoning to taste.
5. Serve with crackers, sharp cheddar cheese, and beer.

The Great Killfile's shrimp gumbo

from the I-garontee dept.

YIELD: about 7-15 servings

Cook time: about 40 mins.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

- large pot, 5-qt. or more
- slotted spoon
- 2 1-qt bowls (for re-serving)
- set of measuring spoons
- measuring cup
- knife

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

- ¼ cp olive oil
- 1 lb. (455 g) sausage (mild italian or polish kielbasa)
- 1 lb (455 g) shrimp (smaller is better)
- 1 large onion
- 3 cloves garlic, diced
- 1 each red and green bell pepper, diced
- 1 green chile pepper, seeded and diced
- 1 lb (455 g) tomatoes (canned crushed ones work best)
- 1 lb (455 g) corn (frozen works fine)
- 2 bay leaves
- ½ tsp. each dried thyme and dried savory
- salt/pepper to taste
- 1 qt. water
- 1 tbsp. filé powder

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Heat oil in a large pot over medium-high heat. Brown the sausages on all sides, then remove and set aside. Once cooled, slice into 1" pieces and set aside.
2. Add shrimp to the oil and cook thoroughly. Remove shrimp, set aside.
3. Add onions & peppers, cook until soft. Add in tomatoes, corn, bay, spices, shrimp, and water. Allow to simmer until heated through. Add cooked sausage back and allow the water to boil off until the desired consistency is reached. Remove from heat, stir in the filé powder and serve over hot rice with a lemon wedge.

Variation: Use andouille sausage instead of italian sausage.

Ben's Arroz y Frijoles Negros con Cerdo a Limón

from the that's-rice-and-black-beans-with-lime-pork-if-you-don't-habla-español dept.

YIELD: 4 servings. **Time to Serve:** 1 hr 45 mins – 2 hr

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

good-sized cutting board
large mixing bowl
large (10" diameter or greater) skillet
2-qt. pot

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

4 ¼-½ lb. pork chops, boneless (about 1" thick are perfect)
1 large onion
3 cloves garlic
 extra virgin olive oil
 balsamic vinegar
1 whole lime
 salt/pepper
 water
3 cp cooked rice (not of the instant variety)
 saffron (optional)
 cashews, whole or halved (omit if you don't have saffron)
1 can 8 oz black beans, your favorite brand, *unseasoned*.
1 can 16 oz chicken stock (optional)
 powdered allspice
 Tabasco, or your favorite hot pepper sauce

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. For the marinade, take the onion, cut half of it into ¼" slices. Save the rest for the other part of the recipe. Cut the slices you just made in half. Mince a clove of garlic. Pour about 6 oz of the olive oil into a large mixing bowl, pour in a splash of balsamic vinegar, put the onions and garlic into the bowl.
2. Trim the excess fat from the pork chops, dispose. Add the chops to the bowl, and juice the lime into the marinade as well. Cut the rind from the lime into 8 large pieces and add it to the marinade as well. Add about 2 tsp of salt, and ½ tsp of pepper. Mix with a fork, cover with plastic wrap, and stow it in the fridge for 2 hours *minimum*. 1-1½ days marinating is even better. Once it's done marinating, cook it.
3. For the rice, put ¼ cp of olive oil into a 2-qt pot, or something big enough to cook the rice in. Take the remaining half of the onion and make 3 very thin slices. Mince very, very finely and toss it in the pot. Mince 1 clove garlic and add to the onion. Add 1 tbsp salt, and a pinch of pepper. Heat over medium low heat until the garlic turns gold.
4. Add enough water for your particular variety of rice, then enough saffron to make the water fairly yellow – just remember not to use *too* many threads. Add about ¼ cp of cashews, more if you desire. Add additional salt to taste. Bring the water to a boil, add rice, and cook according to directions.
5. For the beans, chop the remaining onion, place into a pot. Mince your last clove of garlic, add to the onion. Add 2 tsp. salt, and a little pepper. Cook on medium-low heat until the garlic turns gold. Add the can of beans (including the liquid, or if you'd rather use the chicken stock you can drain the can of beans), then add ⅛ tsp of allspice and a few drops Tabasco. Simmer 30 minutes.
6. Stick it on plates and enjoy.

1000monkeys' "allon kohns"

from the cheap-filling-and-bad-puns dept.

YIELD: 2 – 4 servings (3-5 individual "cones" will fill one person)

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

knife

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

12 flour tortillas
1 package Philadelphia cream cheese (Roasted Garlic or Jalapeño flavors also work well)
1 bag Herr's Ketchup Flavored potato chips (available through your grocer or www.herrs.com)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Spread the cream cheese over the tortillas – as much as you want.
2. Cover with a layer of chips.
3. Fold the tortilla up 1" from the bottom, then fold inwards in thirds from both sides.
4. Eat up.

smokesLikeaPoet's cheap & easy guacamole

from the mexican-desktop-theme dept.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

a bowl

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

1 ripe avocado
①: the easiest way to tell if an avocado is ripe is to look at its skin – if it's almost black and it is soft when squeezed. If the avocado is bright green it is not ripe.
1 tbsp fresh salsa – from the deli section – *not the canned/jarred stuff*.
1 tsp lime or lemon juice
or
juice of half of a lime
salt to taste.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Peel and pit the avocado. Put all ingredients except salt into a food processor or blender, or if you prefer the low-tech solution, mash it in a bowl with a fork. Add a dash of salt to each portion, taste, add more if desired. Serve with tortilla chips.

brendan's black siberian

from the power-outage-so-I-couldn't-play-Quake dept.

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

1 part vodka
1 part Kahlúa
1 scoop ice cream (any flavor)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Mix, serve in a double-old-fashioned glass.

slightlymadman's french style and czech style absinthe

contributed by slightlymadman@slightlymad.net

from the where's-the-green-fairy dept.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

pitcher (or carafe, you need one that allows for a very slow trickle of water without spilling ice)

absinthe spoon

①: An absinthe spoon looks like a long, flat spoon with holes in it.

wine glass (French style) or medium glass

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED: (French Style)

2 oz. Spanish absinthe

ice

3 oz. water

1 cube sugar

INSTRUCTIONS: (French Style):

1. Put ice and water in the pitcher. Pour the absinthe into the glass – the Absinthe should *not* be Hills', Absente's, or *anything* blue.
2. Place the spoon over the glass. Put a sugar cube on the top of the spoon where the holes are, and *slowly* pour a trickle of water over the cube. The water should slowly dissolve the sugar cube so that it all falls into the glass, and mixes together. If the entire sugar cube does not dissolve, you poured too fast.
3. The absinthe should turn cloudy as the water hits it. If it does not, *DO NOT DRINK IT*, it's probably Czech absinthe. If it's pretty and cloudy, though, drink up! The clouding is known as a *louche* – it's a property of the anise in the absinthe.

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED: (Czech Style)

2 oz. Czech absinthe (the way to tell: it's blue, fumes will make your eyes water)

3 oz. cold water

1 tsp. granulated sugar

a match

INSTRUCTIONS (Czech Style):

1. Pour some water into a pitcher – you might want to pour some extra water in just in case you catch something else on fire ☺
2. Pour the absinthe in the glass. Usually, Czech absinthe is blue, and there may be a picture of Napoleon on the label. Take a scoop of sugar and *dip* it in the glass, and let it sit for a second or two, then pull the sugar back out. You should have a lump of wet, blue sugar.
3. Strike a match, and light the lump of sugar. Watch the caramelization process for a moment. Think about how nasty it would be to make candy out of Windex.
4. Tilt the spoon over the glass so the sugar will drip into the glass as it melts. Let this continue until the sugar either all melts into the drink or until it caramelizes on the spoon. As the burning sugar drops into the absinthe, it'll catch the drink on fire. *DON'T DRINK THE ABSINTHE YET*, you'll burn yourself!
5. Pour in the water to put the fire out. The absinthe should be cooled down now.
6. Take a sip.
7. Gag.
8. Chug the remainder, and try not to taste it.

Turner's cheese dreams

from the pork-fat-rules-and-stuff dept.

Time to Serve: about 7 minutes (5 min. prep, 1-2 to cook)

YIELD: serves one

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

cookie sheet
sharp knife
oven broiler (*not a toaster oven!*)

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

4 slices bread
2 slices processed cheese
2 rashers bacon

①: A "rasher" is a *cooked* serving of something like ham or bacon – it could be two slices, it could be four, it all depends on how much you want. Just remember: it's *cooked*.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Set your oven to broil. Put the bread on your cookie sheet. Cut the cheese into 4 strips per slice.
2. Cut the rashers of bacon into 16 pieces.
3. Put two strips of cheese on each slice of bread in an X. Take the pieces of bacon and put them in the corners of each slice.
4. Put the cookie sheet under the broiler for about 1-2 minutes, just long enough for the exposed areas of bread to toast lightly.
5. Eat.

Muddy's little pizzas

from the "liberated"-from-a-coffeehouse-bookstore-theater-thingy dept.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

a good oven
something to put the pizzas on so they don't fall into the oven heating element and burn your house down
sharp knife

INGREDIENTS:

bagels of your choice
cream cheese
sliced provolone cheese
sliced tomatoes
black olives, pitted and sliced (drained if you bought them canned)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 350-400°F. Cut bagels in half, if not pre-sliced.
2. Spread some cream cheese on each bagel, then cover with a slice of tomato, then black olives. Top with a slice of provolone. Make sure you've trimmed the cheese so it doesn't droop too far over the edge of the bagel.
3. Add any other toppings you like, like pepperoni, mushrooms, etc.
4. Throw your concoction into the oven until the cheese melts. Keep a good watch on it.
5. Devour.

Brody's ancho pork chops

from the food-experimentation-labs dept.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

cast iron skillet (if you only have steel, that's okay)

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

2	thick-cut pork chops (bone in is okay)
½ cp.	oil (anything with a high smoke point, like olive or vegetable)
1 bunch	chopped green onions
4	dried ancho chilies, stems removed and seeded
½ cp	water
1 cp	white wine

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Pour the oil into the skillet, heat. Add about a third of the onions to flavor the oil.
2. Place the chops into the oil, sear about 1 minute per side.
3. Remove the chops from the oil, pat dry with paper towels.
4. Drain the oil from the pan. Keep the onions.
5. Deglaze the skillet with a little wine. *Remove the pan from the heat first, then pour in the wine, or else it'll catch fire!*
6. Put the chops back into the pan, then add the rest of the wine and onions, along with the water, chilies, and salt/pepper.
7. Reduce heat to medium, cover. Cook 20 minutes. Serve with mashed potatoes and dinner rolls.
8. Feel free to adjust liquid amounts if you want more sauce, or substitute different chilies if you want a spicier punch.

grandpa jack's mexican beans

from the malagueña-merry-go-round dept.

Time to Serve: 20 mins. prep, 3-4 hrs. on the stove (beans need extra time, see below)

YIELD: 5-10 servings

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

large pot
large spoon/paddle
utility knife/carving knife

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

2 lbs small red beans, dried
 water
1 tbsp salt
1 tbsp pepper
1 lb *mexican-style* (not Cuban/S. American/Spanish) chorizo sausage (beef or pork)
1 lb ground beef (you can also use "chili-grind" beef, or diced stew meat or steak.)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Wash beans. Put them in a large cooking pot, fill with water, let beans soak overnight. For same-day preparation, wash beans, put them in the pot, bring the water to a boil then turn off heat, let stand for 1-2 hrs.
2. Drain water from pot and refill with enough water to cover the beans by about 1 inch. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to slow boil. Add salt/pepper. Cook beans for about 1-2 more hours, stirring occasionally.
3. Cut open the chorizo casing and squeeze the sausage into the pot. Stir until the meat dissolves into the mixture, then reduce heat. Simmer for about 1 hr, stirring occasionally.
4. Crumble ground beef into the pot. Stir in, let cook for another hour or so, stirring frequently to prevent clumping/burning. Add water as necessary, but let it thicken. Can be left cooking for *many* hours, as long as you keep stirring and adding water so it doesn't burn.
5. Serve hot as a main dish (e.g. w/chopped onions and grated cheese) as a side dish (e.g. with hamburgers, fried/scrambled eggs, etc.) or as a burrito/sandwich filling. Can be refrigerated/frozen. Easily turns into a bean dip by running it through a food processor and adding things like cheese, chopped onions, jalapeños, hot sauce, etc., but this doesn't refrigerate as well.

①: Mexican chorizo typically comes in a plastic casing and is squeezed out – it should also dissolve into the bean mix and not clump, if it does clump, you bought Cuban/South American/Spanish chorizo. Also – don't read the ingredients list. Chorizo's good, but you don't want to know what's in it 😊

cameron's spice stew

from the 12-hour-programming-fuel dept.

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED:

large pot (preferably a stockpot)
a coffee cup
big spoon

INGREDIENTS YOU NEED:

340 g (¾ lb.) stew meat (beef, pork or chicken – whatever you want)
1 L (4 cp) water
2 beef bouillon cubes
375 mL (1½ cp) potatoes, cubed
375 mL (1½ cp) carrots, chopped
150 mL (¾ cp) chopped onions
3 mL (½ tsp) each: salt, parsley, tarragon, black ground pepper, dill weed
2 mL (¼ tsp) each: celery salt, basil, dill weed, garlic (powder or salt)
1 bottle beer (author recommends Molson Canadian. Wine/vodka/whiskey can be substituted.)
15 mL (1 tbsp) corn starch

INSTRUCTIONS:

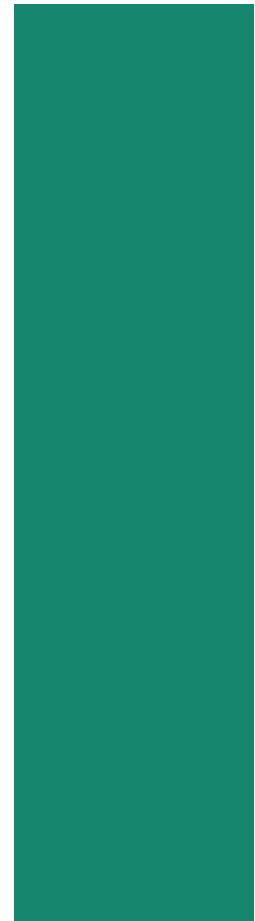
1. Pour half of the bottle of beer into a large pot.
2. Brown the meat in the pot with the beer. Drink the remainder of the beer if you want.
3. Put everything except the corn starch in the pot, then fill the pot with water until everything is covered. Bring to a boil, then simmer 45 minutes, stirring often.
4. Mix the corn starch in a coffee cup with a little water, stirring until there are no clumps. Dump this into the pot about 5 minutes before serving.
5. Serve with garlic toast, beer, etc. For an interesting change of pace, try mixing in 1 cp of medium to hot salsa or some macaroni when you add the cornstarch.

Chapter



Submitted Articles

A funny thing happened on the way to the kitchen...



All About Chocolate

submitted via the forums by eggman

(ed. note: part of this article has been paraphrased at the author's request.)

In this article, Eggman describes the care and origins of one of our favorite candies.

Chocolate is, in many respects, a congealed liquid, processed from the cacao bean. It derives from the cacao tree, which grows only within 20 degrees of the equator. There are two basic types of bean, the *criollo* from the Americas and the *forastero* from West Africa and Brazil. Forastero makes up the bulk of the world's production but has less delicate flavors and is therefore less expensive. Like coffee, the making of chocolate is an art that depends on the careful selection and blending of beans, although even more from careful roasting to impart the best flavors.

Roasted cacao beans are crushed and ground, releasing fats from the heat with friction. The fats are liquefied into chocolate liquor. (ed. note: Note the wording: He does not speak of chocolate *liqueur*, which is the alcoholic version of chocolate syrup. ☺) Cooled, the mixture is sold as bitter baking chocolate. Some chocolate goes through a second refining process called "conching" (after the shell-like machines originally used in the process). Mixed with sugars and flavorings – vanilla, among others – cacao beans are ground under pressure in heated tanks, and aerated to make the chocolate smooth. Conching can take from two to six days, and the finest chocolates are said to take longer.

The cocoa butter content determines the quality standard: the higher the fat content, the finer the quality. European chocolates list the content, American ones rarely do; Scharffen Berger, being in my opinion the finest, lists its contents proudly, with 70% cacao and 15gm./per 50gm. serving.

Bittersweet and semisweet chocolates are required to contain at least 35% chocolate liquor. Different amounts of sugar and flavorings are added, and sometimes lecithin is used for smoothness (lecithin being an animal- or soy-derived fat, cheaper than cocoa butter) to increase its viscosity and fluidity; sometimes lecithin's addition is responsible for straw-like off-flavors in milk chocolate. Milk chocolate must contain at least 10% chocolate liquor.

Couverture (Fr. *cover*) is a type of chocolate used for glazing, hence its name. It has a high percentage of cocoa butter and is excellent for dipping. It is usually only available in bulk at wholesale; you can make your own by melting 1½ oz. of cocoa butter (available from pharmacies) into 1 lb. of dark sweet chocolate.

White chocolate can't be legally labeled chocolate because it contains no chocolate liquor. Marketed as "pastel coating," it's still called chocolate. Made of cocoa butter, sugar, milk solids, flavorings, and sometimes, vegetable fats, it's sold in pastel colors or white.

Cocoa has about 75% of the fat removed. Breakfast cocoa must contain at least 22% fat; other cocoas have considerably less. They have no sugar content (unless so specified on the label, like Ghirardelli cocoa). Dutched, or processed, cocoa has an alkali to neutralize its acidity and make it more digestible. This makes it darker, less bitter, and more soluble. Using it in place of natural cocoas requires more leavening since it has less acid to react with baking soda. Substituting cocoa or Dutched cocoa for chocolate requires 3 tbsp. of cocoa plus 1 tbsp. of fat (butter, for instance) for every ounce of chocolate in the recipe. Substituting chocolate for cocoa means you will need 8 oz. of chocolate for every 5 oz. of cocoa, and you will have to reduce the shortening by half the difference in weight between the chocolate and the cocoa (if the recipe called for 5 oz. of cocoa, you would use 8 oz. of chocolate and reduce the shortening by 1½ oz.; it's easier not to substitute).

Chocolate storage should be dry between 65°-70°F, where it will keep for a year or two. Foil is its best wrapper since moisture can break it down. Milk chocolate will keep for six months or so, and white chocolates don't keep well at all, and both go rancid quickly when exposed to light. Chocolate ages very well, actually improving in its first three months of aging; bought in the fall when it is likely to be new, it should be aged before using.

Chocolate has temper, but not the kind of temper that your curmudgeonly old grandmother has. In good temper, it behaves and will do what you want, but in bad temper, it is less willing to work with you. Tempering changes the consistency of the chocolate and especially its brittleness, and is important whenever you use it alone in a recipe without other fats. Bitter chocolate (as most baking chocolates are) is not tempered in its manufacturing, as the gray streaks throughout the chocolate will tell you, but all sweetened chocolates are tempered at the plant. Even if the chocolate does reach you already tempered, you'll lose it when you heat it; so you have to temper it yourself when melting.

The cocoa butter is the critical element in tempering chocolate. All fat crystals have the capacity to align themselves in an unstable or stable fashion. If unstable, it is *out of temper* – the chocolate will have a dull gray color and will have what is called “fat bloom” on the surface and inside, in streaks. If stable, the chocolate will crack easily and will have a high gloss and deep color.

The tempering process depends on heat, and it *must* be applied in a slow, methodical manner. The temperatures given here are specific for a reason – chocolate is *very* temperamental and you can spoil a batch if you’re not careful. Classically, you melt 5 lbs. of chocolate in a double boiler with the water at 120°F. No water should touch the chocolate until it is melted and heated to 110°F to 120°F; then, change the water in the double boiler to 95°F and put the chocolate back over the water, stirring the chocolate until cooled to about 95°F. Put about an eighth of the chocolate over a bowl of 70°F water and cool the chocolate to 80°F; add some of the 95°F chocolate, a spoonful at a time, until the mixture reaches 88°F, the ideal temperature.

A simpler way of tempering chocolate is to heat two-thirds of your chocolate, chopped up, over hot water to 115°F and remove it from the heat. Then, add the remaining chocolate until the mixture of hot and cold comes out to 80°F and reheat the batch to 88°F. The longer classical procedure is the only one to properly restore temper to chocolate having grey streaks through its middle or surface; such chocolate has completely lost its temper and can be re-tempered only when all of it is reheated to 120°F. The *only* time to discard chocolate that won’t temper is when moisture has come into contact with fat bloom chocolate.

Temperature is also a key to the condition known as “bloom,” although there are two kinds of bloom on chocolate. Fat bloom makes the chocolate look grey, streaked and dull and when you touch the chocolate with your finger, the streak disappears and the chocolate feels greasy. Fat bloom results from improper heating, too high a temperature, incorrect cooling, warm storage, or pouring the chocolate over cold candy centers or onto cold pastries – cold profiteroles, for instance. It occurs most easily at temperatures between 70-75°F.

Sugar bloom is the result of the moisture on the sugar crystals in chocolate; it looks similar to fat bloom but the streaks do not disappear when touched by a fingertip, and the surface feels granular or frosty, not greasy. Sugar bloom occurs when storing chocolate in damp conditions, when low-grade or brown sugar has been used, or when the chocolate was not properly covered when removed from cold storage, allowing moisture to condense on the surface of the chocolate.

For these reasons, chocolate should be carefully watched when cooling as with melting. When dipping candy centers into chocolate, they should be at 75-80°F to avoid bloom; after dipping, the candies should be cooled to 55-60°F with air circulating around them for proper set. If you refrigerate them, you run the risk of moisture condensing on the surfaces.

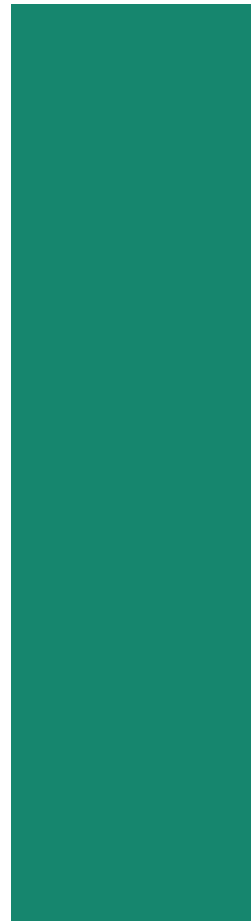
Similarly, pastries to be covered with chocolate should be at 75-80°F, and so should any molds into which you pour chocolate. They should also set in the open with air circulating around them, preferably at 55-60°F. Chocolate can’t be set in a kitchen full of steam or on a hot, humid day.

Chapter



Spice Guide

What The Heck Is Asafoetida??



The Kid In the Candy Store

Walking into a spice aisle can be a lot like being a kid in a candy store. You know you want **something**, but you don't have any earthly idea what it is. Here, I hope to give you a good idea of exactly what you would use, along with some of the more exotic things.

Allspice

Allspice is, despite its name, really only a single berry. It is typically made from the extract of the bayberry tree, which grows on the island of Jamaica. Its flavor is where it inherits its name, with allspice taking on the flavors of cinnamon, cloves, and a touch of nutmeg. It has a sweet but heavy flavor to it, and is very popular because of this. Frequent uses include using the whole allspice in stocks, fruit pickles, and baking with wild game. Ground allspice is found in spice cakes, puddings, cookies, gravies, and is an absolute necessity in Caribbean jerk dishes.

Anise

Anise is a frequent member in Mediterranean cooking, and is known for its powerful licorice-like flavor. In ancient times, the Romans used the spice as a digestive aid, ending their great feasts with cakes made with anise. Anise is popular in many cakes, breads, cookies, liquors, and candies.

Arrowroot

Arrowroot is one of several spices that has a "true" and "less expensive" version – true arrowroot is known as *maranatha* root, a root that is cultivated on the small island of St. Vincent in the West Indies. Typical store-bought arrowroot is known as *cassava* root, which is a significantly less expensive version of a similar root, found in either Brazil or China. Arrowroot is common as a gravy or sauce thickener.

Asafoetida

This particular spice is drawn from a particular species of giant fennel. Asafoetida is one of numerous "love it or hate it" spices, almost exclusively due to its exceedingly overwhelming stench before it is cooked. Once cooked however, the smell dies away and produces a rather pleasant onion/garlic flavor blend. Asafoetida is a very popular component in Indian cooking, and goes very well with vegetable dishes.

Basil

Basil is an increasingly popular spice in America – primarily because basil combined with garlic and tomatoes form a trio that is unmatched. Sprinkle some basil leaves over tomato soup and you'll understand. When buying basil, you may find that some of it is sold as *domestic* and some sold as *imported*. Domestic is generally the better buy and is a bit stronger, but some like the flavor of imported basil better.

Balsamic Vinegar

Balsamic vinegar is a specialty-use item. Most store-bought balsamics are really merely red wine vinegar with a little caramel added for color. Bottles of balsamic vinegar made this way tend to run about \$4-6. True balsamic vinegar is something significantly rarer and is made in a *very* time-consuming process – balsamic vinegars are aged in barrels much like wines, and the best vinegars come out a *minimum* of 25 years later. Their consistency is much like molasses, being very thick and syrupy. They are slightly sweet, and often come in multiple grades. For example, Cavalli balsamics are graded Red, Silver, and Gold, with Red being aged 25 years, Silver being aged 50, and Gold being aged 75 years. They are *extremely* expensive, with the oldest bottles costing upwards of \$200 for a 3½ fl. oz. bottle. Some "young" balsamics are only aged a few years, and are significantly cheaper as a result.

Bay Leaves

Again, this bay leaves are another spice that are available in two versions. California bay leaves tend to have a significantly more powerful flavor than their Turkish brethren, and are excellent in tomato dishes, stews, pickling mixtures, fish dishes and chowders, and tomato dishes. The ancient Greeks used to use bay to crown their victorious heroes. Bay adds a slight bitterness to the dish it is mixed with, and is an excellent addition to sauces and

stocks. However, the plant is derived from the laurel plant, whose leaves are poisonous, so once you've cooked the flavor out of them, *discard the leaves*. The bay leaves themselves are mildly poisonous (can cause an upset stomach).

Bouquet Garni

Literally, this is French for *bouquet for garnish*, and can literally mean just about any group of fresh herbs tied together with string, cloaked in cheesecloth, and tossed into a boiling pot of water to act like a tea bag made of spices. However, *bouquet garni* tends to follow a pattern. A good pattern is basil, marjoram, rosemary, cloves, thyme, oregano, parsley, etc. Be creative. Just about any fresh herb works well in a *bouquet garni*.

Caraway Seeds

Caraway seed is a tangy seed hailing from Holland, and is a member of the parsley family. Caraway is known for giving rye bread its distinctive bite, and is a popular addition to rolls, cakes, and cheeses. They are also good in cottage cheese, sauerkraut, and coleslaw. A variant, the *black caraway seed*, is sometimes known as *charnushka*.

Cardamom

Cardamom is one of those spices where there doesn't seem to be a word in the English language that describes it. Yeah, you could be silly and say "cardamomy," but that would take all the fun out of it. Cardamom is very strong but delicate, sweet but powerful, and has a freshness about it that is indescribable. Popular uses include pickling spice mixtures, as a coffee flavoring, as a baking spice, and a savory spice for curry mixes. Other uses include poached fish, meat loaf, fish stews and sweet potatoes.

Celery Seed

This spice is a popular one for use in pickling spice mixes, sauces, salads, salad dressings, coleslaw, potato salads, fish, and vegetables, and imparts a slight parsley-nutmeg flavor to whatever it is added to. Also great sprinkled on cheese, crackers, or rolls.

Chervil

Really a close relative of the parsley family, chervil is a somewhat sweeter version of the same herb. Chervil is a common component in *fines herbes* blends, and is also popular in soups, sauces, salads, and poultry and fish stuffings. However, unlike its more common cousin, chervil does *not* like heat and can not take long periods of being cooked.

Chili Powder

Not to be confused with *chili pepper*, chili powders typically are made of ground chilies, cumin, garlic, oregano, and other spices. Level of heat depends on where you buy it.

Chile Peppers

There are so many varieties of Chile pepper that it would take another book to describe them all. However, in a nutshell, the most popular variety of Chile pepper is the *cayenne*, which is a slim red colored pepper named after an area of South America known for its unbelievably hot peppers. Cayennes are quite hot (about 40,000 scovilles), but a fair number of people can stomach the punch this spice packs. The second most popular variety of pepper is the *jalapeño*, which at only about 20,000 scovilles, is pretty mild form of pepper, and most everyone enjoys the zip that the jalapeño brings. For those with asbestos lining their mouths, the *habañero* is the hottest legally available natural pepper in the United States. These little fireballs pack anywhere from 200,000 to 300,000 scovilles inside them – and if you can get past the heat, you'll notice a fruity flavor to them. Another popular variety of Chile is the *chipotle*, which is essentially a jalapeño that's been roasted over a fire. These particular peppers add a nice smokiness to their dishes, in addition to the heat. The Scoville unit is named after a researcher at the Parke-Davis labs who did a study of how hot individual peppers were. It is measured on how many sprays of a sugar solution is required to neutralize the heat of the pepper – one spray equals 100 units.

Chives

Chives are a member of the wild onion family and tend to grow rather freely during warm Midwestern summers. When you can smell onion in the air and you're driving by a big grass field, chances are, there's chives in that field. Chives are a true multipurpose spice; they can be used on everything from potatoes to soup to fish to cheese.

Cilantro

Cilantro is one of three things: Chinese parsley, the Mexican version of coriander, or cilantro. These three terms all point to the same spice. Cilantro often "grows up" to be coriander, but they don't have quite the same flavors. Its flavor is distinctive, and is a taste where you either love it or hate it. Its flavor is quite popular in Mexican, Chinese, Indian, Egyptian, and Mediterranean cooking.

Cinnamon

Cinnamon is a spice which has come into such common use, it goes into nearly everything nowadays. Virtually all the cinnamon sold in the U.S. is known as *cassia bark*, which has a spicier flavor than cinnamon taken from the island of Ceylon. Ceylon cinnamon has a much more delicate flavor. Cinnamon is popular for everything from pickling spice mixes to puddings to coffee, tea, and wine, to pastries, and even toast. And of course, what apple pie would be complete without cinnamon?

Cloves

Cloves come from one of two places – the island of Zanzibar, or the island of Ceylon. Zanzibar cloves are a little less oil in them than the Ceylon cloves do, Cloves are perfect seasonings for hams, pickled fruits, spicy syrups, and meat gravies. Ground, they work in baked goods, chocolate pudding, stews, and vegetables.

Coriander Seed

Coriander seed is what the cilantro leaf grows from, and the seed's sweet odor with a hint of lemon is one of the most essential flavors in any Mexican, Middle Eastern, or Indian dish.

Cream of Tartar

Many people have this in their spice racks and have no idea what it does. Cream of tartar is derived from the crust of wine casks, which is where the tartaric acid in the grapes has precipitated out. Cream of tartar also makes good baking powder: combine $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. baking soda and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. cream of tartar. It also helps maintain the fluffiness of meringues (whipped egg whites) and is a good copper cleaner.

Cumin Seed

Also known as *comino*, cumin seed has its origin in Indian and Arabic cultures. Its flavor is crucial in Indian curries, and its earthy flavor lends itself well to homemade chili dishes. Mexican cultures also use cumin seed heavily, with nearly every meat dish having a dose of cumin seed in it. Swiss and Dutch countries use cumin in cheeses, and some European countries use it to flavor their breads. It's also a popular ingredient in things like deviled eggs, meat loaf, and some soups.

Creole Seasoning

Creole seasoning is something that is quickly gaining popularity, due in no small part to Emeril Lagasse's "kicked-up" style of cooking. Many brands of Creole seasoning are used like salt – when it's salty enough, it's seasoned properly. Most Creole seasonings start with a blend of salt, garlic, onion, black and red pepper, oregano, and thyme, and it's all to taste from there. Creole seasoning is one of those "good on everything" spices that just seems to work well on everything.

Curry Powder

Curry powders are frequently found in two varieties: hot and hotter. The lower-heat version is sometimes known as "sweet" curry, and is also called a "Western" or "Occidental" blend of curry. All curries are known for the wide palate of flavors they give, and some are made with as many as 20 spices. They're great for salt-free cooking too,

and add a great depth of flavors to whatever it's combined with. Some of the best curries can be found in international groceries or groceries that specialize in ethnic foods.

Dill Seed or Dill Weed

Dill is where hamburger pickle slices get their tangy zip. Their mildly pungent flavor adds a wonderful complexity to breads, soups, vegetables, and sauerkraut. German pork roasts use about 1 tsp. of dill seed per pound of meat for their characteristic flavor.

Epazote

Epazote is a popular Mexican herb – it is frequently found in bean dishes, Mexican soup dishes, and molés. Epazote pairs well with other herbs, like cilantro and parsley.

Fennel Seed

Fennel seed has a very long history, and was believed by ancient cultures to be one of 9 “sacred” herbs. The Chinese and Hindus used it to cure snake bites, and medieval cultures hung it over doorways to ward off evil spirits. Fennel's flavor is similar to anise, but more delicate, light, and sweet. It is used frequently in breads, rolls, and pastries, and is great for sweet pickles, and works well with tomato dishes, and even in curing brines for salmon or bluefish. Fennel is also a requirement for Italian sausages.

Fenugreek

Fenugreek is another one of the ancient spices thought to have additional properties. Fenugreek was also a part of the ancient Egyptian embalming rituals. It is not typically found in homes, but it is a crucial component in curries and chutneys.

Fines Herbes

Fines Herbes is a common blend of a few basic herbs. One combination is chervil, parsley, thyme, and tarragon. The flavor is light, and works well in place of parsley in dishes. Its delicate flavor won't overwhelm, either.

Filé

Filé is an important component in Creole cookery, and is typically made from powdered sassafras leaves. Many Creole seasoning blends have some of this in it, and its biggest use is in gumbos. Filé has a sweet, fruity scent to it, and has a most unusual flavor. It also acts as a thickener when added to liquid.

Garlic

Garlic is one of those spices which *everybody* uses. Other than its almost universal use in cooking, garlic was used as a ward against evil spirits, and of course, everyone knows that vampires *hate* garlic. Garlic's pungent flavor is found in everything from soups to pastas to meat dishes, and is one of only a few truly “universal” spices. Garlic powder is a convenient form of the spice, and powdered garlic is also available as “high bulk index” garlic, which is ideal for quick-cook recipes. Garlic is also sold in “fresh minced” form, where it is bottled with some water and vacuum-sealed, in an instant minced form, and as a juice – where the flavor of garlic is desired but the texture is not. Garlic is also potentially the most popular spice in the world next to salt, and in 1999, Americans consumed a record-breaking 3.1 million pounds of the stuff.

Ginger

Ginger is a spice that is one of the oldest spices in existence – it has been cataloged in manuals of science and medicine as far back as the 5th century BC. Even the Koran mentions ginger in its pages as the basis of a drink which is shared amongst those in Paradise. Hindu cultures viewed ginger as a medicinal aid, and Middle Eastern cultures used ginger in nearly everything. For the Chinese, ginger has a long history, in part because of its medicinal uses and also because of the spiritual part ginger played in early religious ceremonies. Ginger's major uses include pickling mixtures, cookies, spice cakes, and meat and poultry dishes.

Horseradish

Horseradish is an excellent flavor, and is known for its exceedingly powerful heat. Horseradish is sold several ways. Prepared horseradish typically is a paste or spread, and is made with only a small amount of ground horseradish to keep the heat down. Raw horseradish can be a bit difficult to find, and is sold packed in either a vinegar brine or water-based brine.

Lemon Grass

Lemon Grass is a spice that is coming into more popularity as Asian and Thai foods gain popularity here in America. It is so named because of its lemony flavor, and adds a wonderful citrus scent to everything. Thai cultures use lemon grass as Western cultures do parsley, and it is seen in nearly every kind of soup in Thailand. Unless you have ethnic Asian groceries in your hometown or you live in China or Thailand, fresh lemon grass may be hard to come by, so dried lemon grass will work well.

Mace

Mace is made from the dried lacy-looking shell around the seed of a nutmeg tree. Initially a bright scarlet color, when it is dried, it fades to a light brown. Mace is a good addition to fish and meat stuffings, peach and cherry pies, fruitcakes, oyster stew, creamed eggs, whipped cream, and even barbecue sauces. Interestingly enough, most American hot dogs contain ground mace. Its flavor is similar to nutmeg, but lighter, and can be substituted for nutmeg in most recipes. This substitution also goes the other way.

Mahleb

Mahleb is one of the more exotic spices in our list. Greek in nature, it is made from the pits of sour cherries and is a frequent ingredient in Mediterranean and Middle Eastern dishes. Its common uses include breads, cakes, and pastries. The best way to buy this particular spice is whole, then grind it up as you need it. Its flavor is nutty but somewhat bitter.

Marjoram

Marjoram is loosely related to oregano, and in Italy, is frequently used where Americans might use oregano, with the exception of pizzas. England's kings ordered fresh herbs to be scattered about to help prevent the clothing of noble guests from being dirtied, and marjoram's highly aromatic qualities led King James II of England to have *eighteen* bushels of the leafy herb to be strewn about before his coronation! Marjoram's uses include meat dishes such as lamb, mutton, sausages, meat loaf, and many processed meats, such as liverwurst, Polish sausage, head cheese, and bologna. Marjoram is also a great herb when used in stuffings for turkey and chicken. Marjoram is also delicate – it is recommended that it be added to the mixture during the last half of cooking to help preserve its flavor.

Mint

Mint is an extremely popular flavor, but the only kinds of mint that we use frequently are spearmint and peppermint. Most mint is used fresh, but you can sometimes get it dried. When I was a lot younger my uncle had a mint patch out behind his house and we'd pick a few mint leaves and suck on them for a few hours. Peppermint leaves can be made into tea, and it can be used to flavor sweets, candies, or liquors. Spearmint is the mint flavor most frequently found in cooking, and is the version of mint used in mint jellies that are served with roast lamb. Mint only really combines well with lamb or duck in terms of meats, but it goes well with fruits and most vegetables, too.

Monosodium Glutamate

Monosodium glutamate is by itself flavorless – but it is known for being able to boost the intensity of flavors that it is added to. It has had some bad press because of allergic reactions in some, but is otherwise a very useful additive. Be sure you know if you're allergic to it or not.

Mustard

Mustard is typically available in three varieties: whole, ground, and prepared. Whole mustard is the entire seed, and there are three varieties: yellow, Oriental, and brown. Yellow mustard seeds are the most common variety, and are frequently used in pickling spice mixes, potato salad, and cabbage dishes. Oriental seeds add a pungent, hot flavor to dishes, and the brown (sometimes called black mustard) seeds are also hotter than their yellow brethren, and are frequent members in Italian cooking. Ground is essentially the same stuff, but brown mustard is not typically found ground. What is frequently found in stores is the yellow powder, oriental powder, and a blend, like Coleman's English mustard.

Nutmeg

The scent of nutmeg often brings out memories of sitting at home during the Christmas season with a cup of eggnog with a light sprinkle of nutmeg over the top, by a warm fire. Nutmeg *does* have other uses, though. Ground nutmeg is really quite strong, and is used sparingly – but its list of uses is immense. Nutmeg goes extremely well with vegetable recipes, just about anything that's baked, and in cream soups. It's also a popular flavoring for pork or bratwurst sausages.

Onion

Onions are about as common as it gets. They're exceedingly inexpensive, and add a *ton* of flavor. Onions are available in several forms – the most common of which is the yellow onion. Yellow onions are slightly sweet, and have a light yellowish covering on them. Red onions are a little more tart, and have the characteristic purplish covering. White onions are smaller than yellow onions, but are otherwise not much different. Scallions and green onions are essentially the same thing, and have a very mild onion flavor. Shallots are miniature white onions, and have a flavor that lies in between the yellow onion and the scallions.

Orange Peel

Orange peel is the same thing as the zest of an orange, without the pith (the white covering around the flesh of an orange). Usually, this is added to give a citrus flavor to a dish, and is quickly becoming very popular. Orange peel is a frequent ingredient in marinades, and it has also been an ingredient in one of the most popular steak sauces around, A.I.

Oregano

Oregano is yet another staple spice. Available in two varieties, Mediterranean and Mexican, each having a distinctly different flavor. Mediterranean oregano has a milder flavor which is the typical flavor included in Italian dishes. Mexican oregano has more bite and is earthier, and it blends well with spicy, south-of-the-border style dishes. The ground or dried leaves versions go well with just about anything that has tomato in it, and fresh leaves work well in vegetable dishes and salads.

Paprika

Paprika is a spice which carries some confusion with it. Paprika is really a ground pepper, and it is available in two varieties – sweet, and hot. It is frequently used as a garnish with deviled eggs, potato or pasta salads, baked chickens and fish, It's a good addition to colorless foods, and the hot variety will add a great little punch to foods.

Parsley

Parsley is another dual-purpose spice: a garnish, and a flavoring. Parsley's sweet flavor is a great addition to chicken dishes, and powdered soups frequently have dried parsley in the spice packet. Parsley's deep green color also adds a lovely color contrast to dishes as well, hence its use as a garnish.

Peppercorns

The most common variety of peppercorn is the black peppercorn, taken from the Malabar coast of India. These peppercorns are picked from their plants just before the peppercorns turn red, and as they dry, the berries turn black. The best pepper is ground fresh from the corn as you need it. Black pepper is so popular, it has actually been nicknamed "The Master Spice." Whole peppercorns are also popular in meats, sauces, gravies, and other

dishes. White pepper is essentially the same thing as black pepper, only it's white in color. It has exactly the same flavor, but is good for sauces and dishes where the color of black pepper would mar the appearance.

Poppy Seed

These tiny seeds hail from the shores of Holland, Poland, The Netherlands, and Turkey, and have a delightful nutty flavor. Poppy seeds are great as a topping on breads and pastries, and the spice works well as addition to noodles and salad greens.

Rosemary

Rosemary is steeped in legend as the symbol of marital fidelity and remembrance – an old custom was for bridesmaids to present the groom with a bunch of aromatic rosemary leaves on the morning of his wedding so he would remember to be faithful. Rosemary is a popular spice in lamb and chicken dishes, as well as tomato dishes. The spice is available as whole needles, cracked needles, and ground. Defoliating a rosemary sprig is relatively simple – simply hold the sprig between your thumb and forefinger and tug the sprig in the opposite direction of the needles – they'll fall right off.

Saffron

Saffron has the distinction of being oldest and the most expensive spice in the world – fortunately, you only need a few threads to bring the healthy flavor and distinctive yellow color to dishes. Saffron is believed to have been harvested as early as 1700 BC! Made from the dried stigma of a plant in the crocus family, true saffron costs so much because of the intensive labor required to harvest it. It takes about one acre of land and over 75,000 flowers to harvest one pound of saffron – and what's worse, the flowers must be picked during a one-week window where the flowers bloom. Saffron threads range in color from a deep yellow to a bright rust-red, with the redder the threads, the more intense the flavor. Saffron is imported from Spain and costs over \$1,100 a pound if you really felt the need to buy that much. One gram of saffron is much more economical, costing about \$7-15, and has several hundred threads in a package. Try to avoid supermarket saffron if you can because it is usually marked up several times over. For example, I saw a jar of saffron selling for \$15 that only had about 20 or 30 threads in the little vial inside the jar. Saffron is perfect for chicken soups, rice dishes, and even saffron breads.

Sage

Sage is yet another spice steeped in history. Sage's medicinal qualities are well-known, believed to counteract the indigestion caused by such foods as sausage or fowl dressing. The flavor is pungent and just a little bitter, and its popular uses pork and poultry, and is a great spice for sausages. Sage is available whole or "rubbed," which means that the leaves have been essentially shredded.

Savory

Savory comes in two varieties, summer and winter. Summer savory has a sweeter flavor than the winter savory, it is similar to thyme with a peppery touch. Savory is a good substitute for sage in poultry stuffing and sausages. It is imported from France and Spain.

Tarragon

Tarragon has an elusive flavor, and is a spice of relatively recent origin. It came into heavy use in the 17th century in France, and it is commonly found in many French sauces. It is a good addition to herbal butters, chicken, rabbit, or veal dishes.

Thyme

Thyme is an herb with a long history – long thought to be aphrodisiac in quality, hosts would cover their palaces with enough thyme so that the aromatic herb would be smelled by the ladies. Thyme was also thought to enchant faeries, and is an ingredient in a concoction thought to give humans the ability to see them. Thyme works well in any heavy dish, like soups, stews, chowders, stuffing, gumbos, and roast chicken or pork. It is also an essential ingredient in the *bouquet garni*, and is a good general-use spice.

Turmeric

Turmeric is an ingredient essential in curry powders, and is what gives it its characteristic yellow color. In ancient times, the highly expensive saffron stigma was used as a yellow dye for clothing. It was later discovered that turmeric gave the clothing the same brilliant color and saffron was quickly placed aside for special culinary dishes. Turmeric's flavor has a light, almost musky flavor, and is an ingredient in prepared mustards and pickling mixes.

Vanilla

Vanilla is available in two forms, as a bean, and as an extract. Vanilla extract is what most people are familiar with, as it is a crucial ingredient in cookies. Vanilla extract is where many cakes and pastries get their breadth of flavor. Vanilla beans on the other hand, need to be cut open to get the flavorful seeds out. Single beans can get quite expensive, being as much as \$4 for a single bean. Vanilla extract is just that – the flavorful extract from the vanilla beans, and is usually tempered with about a 10-12% alcohol solution to keep the extract from growing all sorts of nasty things.

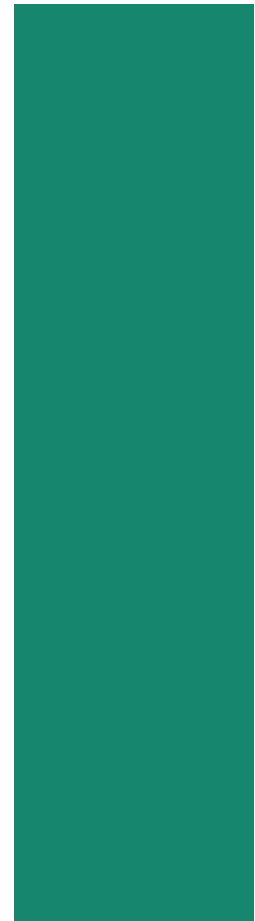
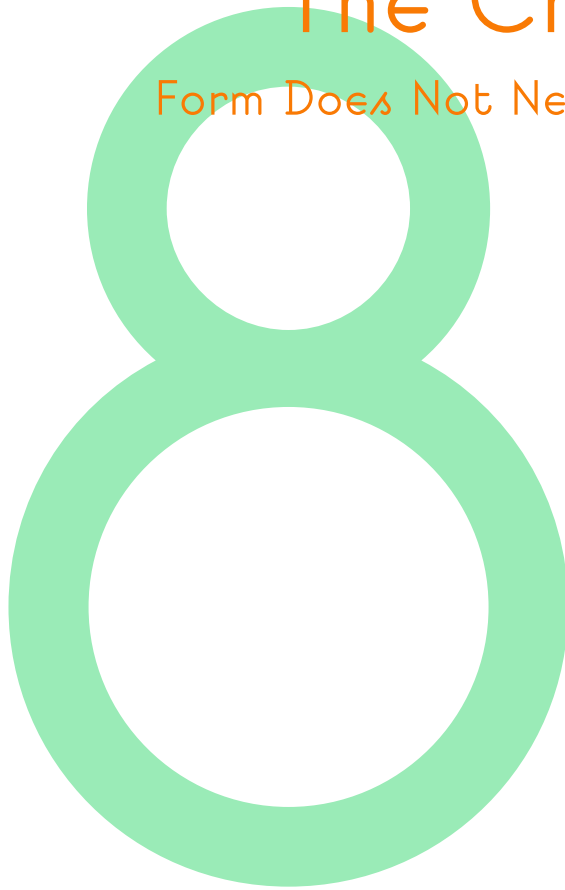
Wasabi

Wasabi is a strain of horseradish found only in Japan – the powder has a sharp flavor and is hotter than traditional white horseradish. Wasabi provides an herbal heat rather than the powerful punch packed by chilies. Wasabi powder can also be turned into mustard – mix equal parts powder and water. Wasabi mustard is the bright greenish mustard commonly seen in sushi dishes.

Chapter

The Chef's Toy Box

Form Does Not Necessarily Follow Function



Toys, Stuff, and Other Thingies

In general, the idea with cookery is to be functional – not stylish. However, combine things like the Food Network, Emeril Lagasse’s dramatic popularity, Alton Brown and *Good Eats*, Chairman Kaga and *Iron Chef*, and the idea that it’s okay for people to be fervent about cooking in the home, and you get a whole new market for stylish gadgets. Kitchen gadgets are now quite widespread, and are as cool to look at as they are functional. Granted, many of these items are duplicates of items seen on Alton Brown’s *Good Eats* television show, but let’s be honest – how many cooking shows have *you* seen where the host is considered a geek?



Citrus Juicer

This particular tool is rather handy for those who like their fruit juices exceedingly fresh. The one shown at the left has a 550-watt beast of a motor and acts as a centrifuge would, separating the juice from the stringy bits. This kind of juicer is the kind that is favored by juice bars across the country. Incidentally, the one “advertised” at the left is the Acme Supreme Juice Extractor, if you’re the type that buys by what you see in the book. This \$260 monster also accepts filters if you don’t like pulp in your juice.



Telescoping Fork

This is just a fun implement to have. Truly meant for a long-distance food relationship, this fork extends to 21” long at its fullest length. Gives a whole new meaning to “I’ll have what he’s having.” Amuse your friends, annoy your enemies and bother your family. Cost? About 8 bucks + S&H from the “kitchen” section of Archie McPhee (www.mcphee.com, just look for the “freeloader fork”).



Coffee Grinder

These little gems are perfect for grinding a lot more than coffee. Whole spices can be ground conveniently in these. 20 bucks later, you’ve got a great little all-purpose tool that will be of good use in your kitchen.

The Perfect Beaker

The Perfect Beaker is truly perfect because it is one of the only measuring tools that will measure ingredients in six different units of measure at once – ounces, cups, tablespoons, teaspoons, milliliters, and pints. Available for \$7 + S&H from www.containerstore.com. Look in the “food prep” area.



Stick Blender

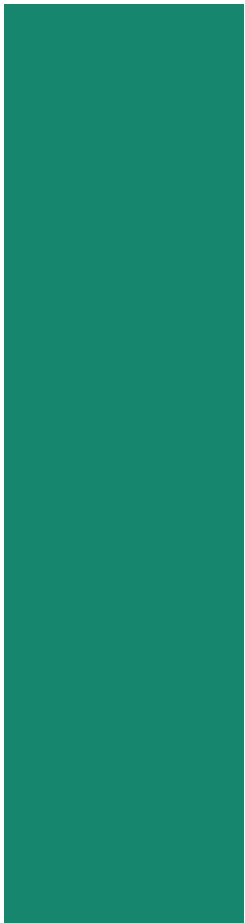
These are available in numerous styles and shapes, including really cheap \$2.99 battery-powered things that really don’t work, but the *real* deal works just as well as a blender does, it’s less messy, and with the appropriate attachments it will work just as well as a real blender does. The nice thing about the stick blender is that it can go directly in the pot – meaning you don’t have to wash the blender’s pitcher, and it allows you to continue cooking food as you blend it.

Chapter



9 Suppliers' Guide

Where'd the goods come from?



So who do I talk to to get what I need?

It's really rather simple to find most of the items used in the recipes you'll find in this book – just about any grocery store has everything you'll need. However, here's my list of where I went to get my ingredients:

General Groceries

Wal-Mart (you should be able to find one in your community!)

Spices

Wal-Mart – great resource for general stuff, like garlic, salt, etc.

Albertson's Markets: A bit pricey, but otherwise very comprehensive in its selection, offering many brands.

The Spice House: Two locations in Illinois, one in Milwaukee, they sell nearly every spice known to man at *good* prices and will ship anywhere in the U.S. Also my source for a large amount of the background information on spices.

Evanston, IL:
1941 Central Street
Evanston, IL 60201
(847)-328-3711

Chicago, IL:
1512 N. Wells St.
Chicago, IL
(312)-274-0378

Milwaukee, WI:
1031 N. Old World 3rd St.
Milwaukee, WI 53203
(414)-272-0977

Meats

Some of the meat I bought came from local suppliers – so unless you live in the area of Norman, OK, you're going to be a little hard-pressed to shop there. My recommendation to you is to look in your phone book under "butchers" and find a local butchery (or *boucherie* if you live in some parts of Louisiana, New York, or Canada) and make *good friends* with the butcher. He or she will take *great* care of you if you make good friends with them. And one other thing about butchers: *Ask questions about what he or she'd take home and about what cuts of meat are good for what kind of dish.* Not only do they usually know, they're often more than forthcoming with good information.

Anyway, my meats came from three places:

Wal-Mart's meat dept: While this is often the *last* place most gourmets would look, the Norman Wal-Marts have a surprisingly good selection of *good-quality*

meat. One of the best t-bone steaks I ever had came from the Interstate Drive Wal-Mart.

Homeland Markets: An excellent place to buy meat – especially when they have their "20% off everything you can fit in this sack" sales. Also a good place to get smaller quantities of things when the Wal-Mart only sells the huge and economy size packs. (US east-coast people: try Kroger.)

Midway Grocery & Market: This is the local joint. *Literally* the corner store sitting at the corner of Chatauqua Avenue and Eufaula St., the place has been around for more than 50 years and it hasn't changed a bit – the meat's still stored in a poorly-lit meat case, the produce is in crates, and the beer's kept in 1930's style steel refrigerators. Quite expensive, but they *will* do custom cuts for you if you call it in early enough. Not a full-service butcher, but about as close as I can get without driving 200 miles. Doesn't do poultry outside of turkeys, unfortunately.

Produce

Wal-Mart's produce dept.: Duh. I get everything else there, right? Seriously, though, good selections, decent prices, and of course, off-season veggies and fruits.

Local Farmers' Market: It's surprising how *few* people know about farmers' markets – or think that they're a good place to get what they need. Norman's Farmers' Market isn't very big, but the prices and the *quality* can't be beat. Home-grown tomatoes for only \$1 a pound, fresh cayenne peppers (not dried – most supermarkets sell their chilies dried) for 35¢ a bundle, and exceedingly fresh (as in "we pulled it out of the ground yesterday") garlic for 35¢ a bulb. For produce, I *strongly* encourage you to find out when and where your local farmers' market meets (fairgrounds are popular meeting places) and attend, and *buy* regularly from them. Not only does it support your local farms, but the prices are unbeatable (even compared to the big supermarket chains) and they're the freshest veggies you'll ever find. At the barest minimum, your farmers' market will have vegetables. Some even carry home-grown canned goods, and the largest ones even have meat markets! And just because you didn't find what you were looking for at one meeting doesn't mean

someone won't have a crop of that particular veggie ready by the next meeting. Only drawback to a farmers' market: *cash only*. They don't have credit-card readers and checks aren't popular either.

Cookware (including utensils)

Wal-Mart: Yes, Wal-Mart even has decent cookware. My cookware set is a Tramontina Stainless-Steel 10-pc. set, with an aluminum-layered bottom. It came with a 1½ qt., 2½ qt., and 4 qt., saucepan, an 8 qt. stockpot, a steamer insert, and a 10" sauté pan (all pots have lids) and cost me \$90.

Williams-Sonoma: There's one of these in the mall north of Oklahoma City. Many of the kitchen-gadget ideas came from their catalog, and they also cater to *professional* chefs. While *exceedingly* expensive, the

materials they sell are truly top-notch, carrying cookware from companies like All-Clad (the same company that services most major restaurants and the Food Network) and Calphalon. An example: an All-Clad 10-pc. set containing a 2 qt. and 4 qt. sauce pan, an 8" and 10" sauté pan, a 3 qt. covered sauté pan, and an 8 qt. covered stockpot is \$599. However, these pans are designed to last longer than you and your parents combined!

Kitchen Furnishings

All my major appliances were furnished by the university – I live in university apartments.

Appendix A: Bibliography

Spice information paraphrased from www.thespicehouse.com's descriptions of some individual spices.

Images for kitchen utensils obtained from www.williams-sonoma.com, www.mcphee.com, www.braun.com, www.goodeatsfanpage.com, and www.containerstore.com.

Images of foodstuffs in chapter 2 obtained from www.albertsons.com.

Some basic recipes based on recipes/methods from Justin Wilson's Homegrown Louisiana Cookin' book and Betty Crocker's Cooking Basics book.

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