



## Online Cooking Camp

Shopping

Grocery Shopping Shortcuts

## Grocery Shopping Shortcuts

### **Grocery shopping shortcuts**

One of the most time-consuming parts of cooking is the thinking element. The whole “what are we going to have for dinner” part. (You know . . . where you and your spouse stare at each other blankly, hoping the other is secretly hiding dinner behind his/her back?)

So, your first cooking shortcut is meal planning.

This simply involves sitting down on the weekend and looking at your upcoming week. Then, plot out your meals accordingly. For instance, if you have one day where everyone’s running in ten directions, that would be the day to plan a crock cooker meal.

When you have your meals figured out, look at your recipe list and build your grocery list.

That’s it!

Sounds simple, but this is going to save you hours and hours over the course of the month. (Not to mention money, as you’ll buy only what you plan on actually using . . . plus, you should be able to avoid those last-minute runs to the grocery store!)

Of course, we make this easy at [SavingDinner.com](http://SavingDinner.com) with our Menu-Mailer program, where we do the meal planning and list making for you!

## **Get help at the store**

The grocery store staff has gone to a lot of work to make things easier for you, so take advantage of that!

Take your list over to the produce section, and see which items you can get by way of freshly packaged produce. I'm talkin' about those sliced mushrooms, prepared stir fried veggies, peeled and cubed butternut squash, chopped and washed broccoli/cauliflower blends, cole slaw veggies, etc. This will depend on the store you shop at, but I've yet to walk into a major grocery store and not find a fabulous array of prepared veggies ready and waiting. (By the way, some frozen veggies are also fantastic for shortcut cooking!)

While you're in the produce section, check to see if you can find peeled garlic and jarred ginger. Those two items will save you a great deal of time if you do a lot of cooking.

You can also find help with dinner prep over at the butcher shop. Any good butcher will prepare your meat anyway you like. So, if you want sliced chicken breasts or beef, just ask . . . most times, you shall receive!

The time this prep will save in the kitchen can be very surprising.

## **Do some heavy lifting when you get home**

When you get your bags in from the car, take the time to do some extra work NOW so that you can speed up meal time later.

For instance, now's the time to soak that kale and any other hearty greens in a big bowl of water to remove the dirt. Spin them dry, and store in the fridge in a

plastic bag (tuck a paper towel inside the bag to reduce excess moisture) for quick and easy grab and go at mealtime.

You can take this one step further and actually make the salad (enough for two or three days) and store it in the fridge. This is JUST for those hearty greens, which will hold up in the fridge. When you take out enough for your family portion at mealtime, then you add your toppings.

When you get home from the store, this is also the time to wash and prep any veggies you did not buy previously prepared. So wash and chop the broccoli and cauliflower, peel and core the pineapple...those types of things, so that you don't have to do it at mealtime.

## **Sweet Potato and Kale Hash**

### **Ingredients:**

1 tablespoon coconut oil

2 cloves garlic, minced

1/2 medium onion, chopped

1 large sweet potato, diced

2 cups chopped kale

2 cups cubed ham steak

1 teaspoon dried oregano

Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

### **Directions:**

In a large skillet over medium heat, heat coconut oil. To the oil, add the garlic and onion and cook for 5 minutes then add the sweet potato and kale. Cook for 5 to 10 minutes, until sweet potato is tender and kale has cooked down.

To the skillet, add the remaining ingredients and stir. Cook for 5 minutes then serve warm.



## Online Cooking Camp

Shopping

Choosing Meat

# Choosing Meat

## **Meat and Poultry**

When you're faced with all of the options at the meat counter, it can be intimidating to make the right choice. The following tips will help ensure you get what you want - delicious, tender, and fresh protein.

Touch it. If the meat you're buying is rough and not tender to the touch, the animal was old when it was butchered.

Check for marbling. You want a good amount of marbling (that's the white stripes that go through a steak. It's fat, and it makes for a nice tender cut of meat.

Age is beauty. Aged beef will be nice and tender because the connective tissue has been broken down somewhat. Beef that's been aged at least 14 days will give you a wonderful meal.

Thick chops. Thicker chops are better than thin. The thick pork chop will be much tastier and more tender.

Think pink. Never buy brown meat. It should be red or pink. If the meat is brown, it may have already gone off.

Go dark. If you're slow cooking poultry, dark meat is best. I love skinless, boneless chicken thighs. They're tasty and easy to cook.

Smell it. Fresh poultry should have a very mild scent. If it isn't fresh, it's going to start to smell funky. You don't want to bring home a funky chicken.

## **Fish**

I hope you have a good source of fresh fish where you live. A fish shop should smell like the sea, not like rotten fish. As long as you know the fish is as fresh as possible, it's perfectly fine if you have to use your grocery store's fish counter.

If you're at the grocery store's fish case, where you have no fish monger to help you make your purchase, you'll need to do the sniff test. If fish smells fishy, don't buy it.

Fish should bounce back when you touch it. The flesh should not have any big gaps and it should be opaque in color.

You also should know where the fish came from. Choose wild fish over farmed, especially with salmon.



## Online Cooking Camp

Shopping

Choosing Meat

Worksheet

## Choosing Meat - Worksheet

Take this cheat sheet with you to the grocery store

### **Meat**

- Check the expiration dates
- Buy meat that is pink or red, not brown
- Meat should be tender to the touch
- Pork chops should be thick
- Beef should be aged at least 14 days
- Sniff the poultry to make sure it has only a mild scent

### **Fish**

- Check for firmness
- Conduct sniff test
- Look for wild caught fish over farmed



## Online Cooking Camp

Shopping

Choosing Produce

## Choosing Produce

### **Phase One - Packaged produce**

As long as you can read the expiration date on a package, you can master the art of buying bagged, ready-to-go salad greens. Eyeball the package and if it doesn't look like there's any slimy stuff inside, pop it in your cart.

I don't think you should be buying package apple slices, because they have additives you don't need. But go ahead and get some bagged slaw, stir fry veggies, or California blend (Cauliflower, broccoli, carrot mix). If it helps you out a bit, and it's good for you, there's nothing wrong with cheating. It's going to cost you more at the check out for that convenience, so keep that in mind.

### **Phase Two - Non-packaged produce**

I'm big on eating in season, and that's what I recommend for you, too. The price can't be beat when you buy what's fresh and local, and food tastes best when it's just been harvested.

You should be aware of which foods are best to buy organic and which conventionally grown foods are fine for human consumption. For instance, potatoes, strawberries, and apples are heavily treated with pesticides, so I only buy those in organic form. Cabbage, onions, and sweet potatoes are not as heavily treated as other produce items.

I could include a list here for you, but that list is ever-changing. For an up-to-date version of the Dirty Dozen and Clean Fifteen lists, visit [ewg.org](http://ewg.org).

Once you know which produce items you wish to buy, look for foods with no blemishes, bruises, or flaws. Your produce should have great color. Tomatoes should be bright red and green beans should be deep green.

Also smell the food to make sure it smells like it's supposed to smell. A peach should smell like a peach. In the video for this module, I'll show you how to conduct the sniff test.

### **Phase Three - Melons**

Yes, melons get their own phase. That's because it's incredibly difficult to choose the perfect one. But now, I'm going to teach you. (By the way, you will always get the best melons in summer.)

The heavier the melon, the juicier the melon. If you pick up two melons that are the same size, the heavier one is the one you want.

If you're looking for cantaloupe or casaba, the fruit will have a little indentation on its end where it was attached to the vine. The other end is the blossom end. There should be a slight softness at that end of the fruit.

Smooth skinned melons like honeydew should have a velvety touch to them and they should have a nice creamy complexion. Cantaloupes should look yellow underneath their netted skin and not green.

A good ripe melon will smell like a good ripe melon. If you sniff a cantaloupe and you can't smell it, it was picked too early.

Don't buy a watermelon unless it makes a hollow sound when you knock on it. A ripe watermelon won't have a white underside.

### Produce in Season Chart

<b>Fall</b> <b>(Sep, Oct, Nov)</b>	<b>Winter</b> <b>(Dec, Jan, Feb)</b>	<b>Spring</b> <b>(Mar, Apr, May)</b>	<b>Summer</b> <b>(Jun, Jul, Aug)</b>
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Apples	Avocados	Asparagus	Apricots
Broccoli	Broccoli	Avocados	Basil
Brussels sprouts	Brussels sprouts	Basil	Beans
Cabbage	Cabbage	Beans	Beets
Cauliflower	Cauliflower	Beets	Berries
Cranberries	Clementines	Berries	Cherries
Cucumbers	Fennel	Broccoli	Corn
Dates	Grapefruit	Cabbage	Cucumbers
Fennel	Greens	Chili peppers	Dates
Grapes	Oranges	Cucumbers	Figs
Greens	Pears	Lettuce	Grapes
Mushrooms	Spinach	Mangoes	Lettuce
Nuts	Sweet potatoes	Okra	Mangoes
Okra	Tangerines	Oranges	Melons
Pears	Turnips	Papayas	Okra
Persimmons		Peas	Peaches
Pomegranates		Rhubarb	Plums
Shallots		Shallots	Summer squash
Spinach		Spinach	Sweet peppers
Sweet potatoes		Sweet peppers	Tomatoes
Winter squash			Watermelon
			Zucchini

TIP: visit [ewg.org](http://ewg.org) and educate yourself about which of the above items should be purchased organic. Print the chart, and add an asterisk by any item you should be buying in its organic variety.



## Online Cooking Camp

Shopping

Choosing Produce

Worksheet

## Choosing Produce - Worksheet

Take this cheat sheet with you to the grocery store

### **Packaged produce**

- Choose the farthest off date for optimal freshness
- Look for signs of slimy rotten leaves
- Make sure the color is good

### **Non-packaged produce**

- Look for in-season items
- Check for good color
- Make sure foods have no bruises
- Conduct the sniff test

### **Melons**

- Choose the heaviest melon for its size
- Look for softness on the blossom end of the fruit (the end without the indentation)
- Cantaloupe should be yellow beneath its netting
- Honeydew should have a creamy complexion
- Conduct the sniff test to ensure the melon smells like melon
- Knock on the watermelon to ensure it sounds hollow
- Don't purchase a watermelon with a white underside



## Online Cooking Camp

Bonus Cooking

Meal Prep Shortcuts

## Meal Prep Shortcuts

After meal planning, it's the prep that tends to take the most time when it comes to getting a good, nutritious meal on the table.

With this lesson, I'm going to just spew out my absolutely favorite shortcuts for meal prep.

**Read your recipe through.** This is a basic cooking course, so I'm giving you the basics. Never start cooking without reading your recipe all the way through. Why? Because what if you have to marinate your meat for 8 hours before you cook it? What if you need melted butter? What if you don't actually have an ingredient it calls for? What if you need to spin around in a circle three times and say a Hail Mary before cutting the shallots in order for it to work? Read the recipe all the way through so you have no surprises and no disappointment.

**Practice measuring common amounts!** When I'm cooking in the kitchen, you will never see me pull out my measuring spoons to measure a tablespoon of oil or a teaspoon of lemon juice. I don't have to. I've been cooking for more than twenty years, and I can tell just by looking when I have a teaspoon of this or a tablespoon of that. (By the way, baking is different because there's more of a chemical element involved, so measuring precisely is a good idea.) Practice your measurements so you can eventually eyeball amounts!

Bonus trick: When a recipe calls for two tablespoons of lemon juice, that's roughly the juice from half of a fresh lemon.

**Press your garlic.** In the video for this module, I introduce you to the garlic press. There is no need to sit and fuss over mincing a clove of garlic. Ever. Pop it in the garlic press and away you go. Perfect mince, and no smelly hands!

**Learn how to dice an onion.** The video is also going to show you how to dice an onion within seconds. It is almost impossible to describe this in words, so watch the video.

**Grate your butter.** If you need softened butter for a recipe, it's going to take forever to let it come to room temperature. So what do you do? Grate the butter with a box grater and it will soften up in minutes!

**Put the lid on cherry tomatoes.** This is a neat little trick and I'm sure you've seen it on Pinterest or Facebook! If you have a bunch of cherry tomatoes to slice, put them in between yogurt container lids (or comparably sized lids). Then, take your serrated blade and give the little tomatoes a once through horizontal slice. Ta da! Done.

**Make a dressing jar.** If you're making homemade dressing (I'm so proud!), mix it up in a Mason jar with a lid! That way, you can simply shake up your combo of oil, vinegar, and flavorings, and then store it easily in the fridge. No need to whisk or stir!



## Online Cooking Camp

Bonus Cooking

Cook Time Shortcuts

## Cook Time Shortcuts

How are you feeling now?

Hopefully, pretty confident!

And now, it's the time to focus on what we can do to shave even more time off your meal prep. Who's excited?!

**Practice mise en place.** This is going to save your life. Mise en place is a French phrase for "to put in place." Can you tell what this means? You ever watch a cooking show, where the host has all of the spices and ingredients prepped and measured in pretty glass bowls, all ready to go? That's mise en place. If you've ever gone to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, and you took out the bread, the jam, and the peanut butter first, you've done mise en place, too!

This act is going to save you tons of time. Rather than doing each and every chop, and measure as you reach it in the recipe, do all of that work at once so that when it's time to cook, you're ready to rock and roll.

**Do your side before your main.** There are a couple reasons why this makes sense. First off, when you chop and slice your veggies before your meat, you don't have to switch cutting boards and wash equipment. (Huge time saver!) But, if your side is a great big salad, y'all will be ready to eat as soon as the meat comes off the stove!

**Freeze rice.** If you eat rice, cook off a huge batch all at once and freeze a bunch in portions. Then you just haul out what you need, and heat it up at meal time.

**Cook squash, pumpkin, and sweet potatoes in the skin.** Then, you have no need for wasting time peeling. The peeling comes right off as you scoop the flesh

out!

**Freeze portions of stock.** Use your ice cube tray to freeze portions of stock so you can quickly pop them in the pan at cooking time. Two cubes for 1/4 cup, four cubes for 1/2 cup. You can also spice things up a little bit and snip your fresh herbs in with the stock for a flavor boost!

**Cook in muffin tins.** Meatloaf cooks in a fraction of the time if you use a muffin tin to cook in! Muffin tins are also fantastic for cooking up eggs for quick breakfasts (add in whatever you like in your eggs and bake until set).

**Cook eggs in batches.** Why boil four or five eggs? Why not boil the whole dozen, so you're good to go?

**Clean as you go.** Possibly the most essential shortcut tip that I could ever give you. Miss Rachel Ray had the right idea with her garbage bowl! Keep a big bowl on the counter and toss all of your scraps in there, rather than running back and forth to the trash. Then, discard it all at once when dinner's in the oven. Have a sink of hot soapy water to wash up dishes as you go, too, so you aren't stuck with the entire mess after you've all eaten.

### **Leanne's Basic Vinaigrette**

Makes 1/4 cup

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar  
1 clove garlic, pressed  
Pinch of dried basil  
Pinch of dried oregano

Mix all together, use 1 tablespoon per salad.

### **Honey Mustard Vinaigrette**

1/4 cup apple cider vinegar  
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
3 tablespoons mustard  
2 tablespoons honey

Whisk together, until well blended.

## **Mini Meatloaf Muffins**

Serves 4 (3 meatloaf per person)

1 pound extra lean ground beef  
1 cup water  
1 (6 oz.) box stuffing mix  
1 1/2 teaspoons Italian seasoning  
3/4 cup spaghetti sauce  
Cooking Day  
3/4 cup mozzarella cheese

Thaw meatloaf muffins in refrigerator. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Lightly grease muffin pan.

Place muffin pan in the oven.

Bake for about 25-30 minutes or until meatloaf muffins are cooked through.

Sprinkle the cheese over the top of each meatloaf muffin. Put pan back to the oven for an additional 3-5 minutes or until the cheese has melted. Let the meatloaf muffins sit on counter for about 5-7 minutes before removing them from muffin pan.



## Online Cooking Camp

Meal Prep

Making a Timeline

## Making a Timeline

To figure out how to get everything on the table so the stuff that's supposed to be hot is hot, you need to be able to do two things:

1. Count
2. Know what is going to take longest to cook

Sounds simple enough, right?

The first thing you do when you get into the kitchen is read your recipe. Yes, I'm aware I've said this before. Many cooks skip this step, but it's one of the most important things you can do.

If you don't read through your recipe, you'll mess up your timing, and you could be in for some surprises when you get half way through your recipe.

After reading through the recipe, you have to figure out which item is going to take longest to prep and cook. If you have to peel and prep a couple of pounds of Brussels sprouts, you're going to want to get on that before it's time to serve.

Let's imagine, for the purposes of this lesson, that you're making a meal out of skillet chicken, baked potatoes, steamed broccoli, and a green salad. We're going to walk through the process and see if you can get the idea of how to time a meal.

1. Set the table and get all the pans ready that you'll be needing
2. Prepare the salad
3. Figure out which item needs the most cooking. In this case, it's the baked potatoes!
4. Those potatoes are going to need up to an hour (or more) in a 425 degree oven (more or less time, depending on their size). So wash them up, pierce them with a fork, and pop them in the oven.
5. Take the chicken out of the fridge so it's not cold when you put it in the pan.
6. Prepare your broccoli. Wash it and cut it into florets (unless you followed my advice in Module 4 and took care of that by either buying prepared broccoli or frozen broccoli, or doing the broccoli prep when you got your groceries home!) Put it in a steamer basket in a pot with a bit of water. Don't turn the heat on yet! But get it all ready. It's only going to need about five minutes to cook, so it's fine for a bit.
7. After the potatoes have been in the oven for 40 minutes, prep the chicken according to your recipe directions.
8. Cook the chicken. Around the time when you flip it from one side to the other (after about 6 or 7 minutes) put the heat on under your broccoli.
9. Check on your baked potatoes. They're done when you can put a fork through it. If they're done, turn off the oven. They'll stay warm in there while the rest of the meal cooks.
10. When the broccoli is done, drain the water and take it off the heat.
11. Take the chicken out of the pan and stir up a quick reduction or sauce (as we covered in Module 3).

For another example, let's look at a chicken stir fry, rice, and a green salad.

1. Set the table and take out all your required pots and pans
2. Prepare your salad
3. Prepare your stir fry sauce
4. Get the rice started (it's going to take the longest to cook)
5. Slice and dice your vegetables
6. Slice the chicken into strips
7. Add your oil to the wok and start cooking the chicken
8. When the chicken is no longer pink inside, take it out and toss in the veggies. When they're tender crisp, put the chicken back in and let it all cook together.
9. When the rice is ready, give it a fluff and let it rest until your stir fry is done.
10. Add the sauce to the stir fry and serve it up on a hot bed of rice.

And that's how it's done! This is how you create a timeline. No matter what you're cooking, it will always be the same.



## Online Cooking Camp

Meal Prep

Making a Timeline

Worksheet

## Making a Timeline - Worksheet

Practice creating a meal timeline. Print and save this list until you've got the timing of a meal completely nailed! (It will take a little time, but it will be worth it!)

1. Read your recipe
2. Mise-en-place
3. Determine which item will take the most time
4. Start on that item and prep the other dishes
5. Set the table and make your salad
6. Don't forget to clean as you go!

NOTES:



## Online Cooking Camp

Meal Prep

Mise En Place

## Mise En Place

### **Mise-en-place**

Mise-en-place is a great time-saving shortcut. This is such an important element of cooking that I want to give it an entire lesson.

Mise-en-place is a French term that means “to put in place” and that is exactly what it is.

All it involves is simply gathering all of the things you will need to make a particular recipe.

For instance, when I record my cooking videos for you, I am not reaching around into the cupboards for spices or into my refrigerator for my produce. I have everything chopped, measured, and sitting nicely in glass bowls all ready to go.

That’s my professional, “ready for my close up” mise-en-place. It looks great and it saves all kinds of time when I’m cooking.

You can do this, too, if you like, but let me tell you a little secret: this isn’t what I do when I’m cooking at home.

By all means, if this is the way you want to do your mise-en-place, have at it (warning: this is going to be a lot of clean up)! But when I'm home, I just get the stuff I am going to need, then I chop what needs choppin’, open the cans that need to be opened, get my skillets out, and then I’m ready to rock and roll. I don’t necessarily put all the ingredients in separate bowls. My chopped veggies are likely all on the one cutting board I reserve for vegetables, for example. It’s still all ready to go, and while it may not look as tidy as in those professional bowls, it sure involves fewer dishes to wash!

I’ve shown you how this is done in the video, so now you should be all good to go!



## Online Cooking Camp

### Knife Skills

### How to Sharpen Your Knives

## How to Sharpen Your Knives

### **Knife Care**

You want to take care of those knives and that means keeping them sharp. Dull knives cause more injuries than sharp ones because they can slip on you, and they are still going to be sharp enough to cut your skin.

Your knives will become dull from use, so you should run them along your knife steel when you feel them getting less sharp. You probably have a steel that came with your knife set. If not, go out to the kitchen store and buy one. A steel is long and thin and has a handle. It sort of looks like a sword, as you can see below.



To use it, hold the knife in the hand you normally cut with. In the opposite hand, grip your steel, upright like a flagpole. Holding the knife at a 25-degree angle (no

need to get out your protractor, this doesn't have to be exact), move your blade down one side of the steel, making sure that you have the whole knife moving. Now do the other side of the knife. Do this a few times, but be sure to do both sides evenly.

Using your steel is more of a maintenance thing than a sharpening thing. If you really need a good sharpening, take them to a professional. It's good practice to get your knives professionally sharpened once a year. Ask around for a referrals to someone who handles blades in your neck of the woods.



## Online Cooking Camp

### Knife Skills

### How to Sharpen Your Knives

### Worksheet

## How to Sharpen Your Knives

### Worksheet

1. Practice using your knife steel with your existing knives, as per instructions in the video.
2. Find out who in your area handles blades, and contact that person to find out how to go about booking a good sharpening of those knives you've had for years but have never sharpened before.

Practice makes perfect when it comes to knives, and you really have to get good and comfortable with your new skills. Keep on practicing and before you know it, you'll be chopping like a pro!



## Online Cooking Camp

### Knife Skills

### How to Use Your Knives

## How to Use Your Knives

Now, we need to teach you the very most basic of lessons. Knife skills! More importantly, skills that will keep you safe while using knives.

The video is going to be essential for you here, but I'm giving you some notes that you can hang on to for reference.

### **How to use your knives**

**The chopping knife.** First of all, you need a sturdy cutting board. If you're using an acrylic board that slips on the counter, place a slightly dampened kitchen cloth underneath to keep it steady for you.

Now, use both hands when chopping. One is going to hold whatever you're cutting, and the other will do the chop chop work. The hand you're holding with is going to turn into a claw. You have to hold the food in a clawlike fashion (see video) to protect yourself from slicing off your fingers. When your hand forms a claw, the worst that will happen if the knife gets too close, is that you'll shave a bit of skin off your knuckle. That's way better than cutting off a digit.

To get chopping like they do on the Food Network will take some practice. The idea is to "rock" the blade lightly as you chop. This builds a rhythm and will eventually help you speed up your chopping.

Pay attention to the chefs chopping onions and carrots on the Food Network. They are pros so they go quickly, but you'll notice they have their claw happening and they're rocking and chopping effortlessly. With enough practice, you can get there too! But take your time for now—it's not a race.

## WHAT NOT TO USE A CHOPPING KNIFE FOR

- Peeling
- Slicing bread
- Opening a package
- Cutting a steak
- Slicing a tomato
- Carving a chicken

**Paring knife.** That little paring knife takes a bit of practice, too. You're going to use your paring knife mostly to remove the peeling from fruit or vegetables. Use whatever size knife you're comfortable with. Put your knife at a slight angle. Don't move the knife—just remove the food you're peeling. If it's an apple, as in the video, just turn the apple while keeping a good grip on the paring knife.

## WHAT NOT TO USE A PARING KNIFE FOR

- Chopping
- Slicing bread
- Opening a package
- Cutting a steak
- Slicing a tomato
- Carving a chicken

**Serrated knife.** The serrated knife is mostly used to slice bread and tomatoes. When cutting bread, don't put your hand on the other side of the bread because if it slips, you will go into your hand. A serrated knife can make a nasty jagged cut, so protect your hands. Put your hand on top of the item you're slicing to stabilize it, and keep it there. A sawing motion is what you use for a serrated knife. (But not with other knives.)

### **WHAT NOT TO USE A SERRATED KNIFE FOR**

- Anything other than cutting tomatoes, citrus fruit, or bread

Other knives (like your carving knife) we'll get into in later lessons. Those are not going to be used everyday like your chopping, paring and serrated knives likely will be.



## Online Cooking Camp

### Knife Skills

### How to Use Your Knives

### Worksheet

## How to Use Your Knives

1. Practice your chopping skills. Get comfortable using your chopping knife. Carrots and celery are good items to practice on. Don't forget to use a cutting board, as I showed you in the video!
2. Peel an apple and a potato. Put that paring knife to work and get peeling. See if you can get better at the amount of flesh versus peel that you're left with!
3. Slice a piece of bread or a tomato with a serrated knife. Safety first! Keep those fingers out of the way of that jagged blade!

## #7 Pico De Gallo

### **Ingredients**

2 large red onions, chopped  
12 Roma tomatoes, chopped  
2 cups fresh chopped cilantro leaves  
2 medium jalapenos, seeded and chopped  
2 large limes, juiced  
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

### **Directions:**

Mix together all the ingredients and serve with tortilla chips.



## Online Cooking Camp

Kitchen Set Up

Gathering Your Tools

## Gathering Your Tools

### **Gathering your tools**

Next to the oven, your knives are your most essential tools in the kitchen. This is not a place to skimp. Buy high-quality, sharp knives. Henckel is my favorite brand. I've been buying them for over 20 years, and they are worth the investment. But there are plenty of quality brands out there. Ask some questions at the kitchen store and get the best knives you can in your price range.

### **What kind of knives do you need?**

The first knife you need is your chopping and cutting knife. You will want a 6- to 8-inch chef knife (also referred to as a French knife) or the same-sized santoku knife, which is the Japanese version of the chef knife. I'll teach you how to hold it and chop with it, so don't let this large knife scare you. It's going to be much safer to use than a little dull knife that wasn't designed for the job you're trying to do with it.

Next up on the knife wish list is the paring knife. This is a good-quality knife, not something from the dollar store. You need to invest in a good paring knife because you're going to use it every single day. A paring knife has a small blade, 2 1/2 to 3 inches long. You're going to use this knife to peel an apple, section a grapefruit, or trim the ends off of your brussels sprouts.

Now you need a serrated knife. This is going to go through tomatoes and bread with ease. That toothy blade is going to do a lot of the work for you. I have a big serrated knife and a small one. The larger one is designed for bread and the smaller one is perfect for going through citrus fruit and tomatoes. (If you try to use a paring knife on a tomato, you end up with tomato juice.)

A carving knife and fork set will help you handle turkeys or roasts. The blade on a carving knife is generally quite long and flexible so you can carve neatly and negotiate corners. I received my carving knife and fork set more than 20 years ago as a gift, and I don't imagine I'll ever need another. I would never bother with

an electric carving knife.

You do not need a filleting knife or a boning knife. That's because your butcher can fillet or bone your meats and fish for you so you don't have to.

In our next module, we're going to teach you how to actually use and care for your knives, so watch for that!

## **Other Essential Tools**

Now that we've gotten knives out of the way, we have some other items you need to stock your kitchen with. Some you already have, some you may not.

**Cutting boards.** You need one cutting board for vegetables and fruit and a dedicated cutting board for meat, poultry and fish. You can get color-coded cutting boards at kitchen stores or discount stores. Your cutting boards need to be replaced from time to time because those little cuts your knives make can harbor all kinds of nasty bacteria.

**Flat-bottomed wok.** I use my wok all of the time. It can prepare veggies just for me or enough for a crowd. I would not be without this kitchen tool.

**Dutch oven.** The ideal vessel for braising, stewing, or making a quick soup, (more about cooking methods in Module Three, be patient!) a good dutch oven will be like a trusty old friend in the kitchen.

**Vegetable steamer.** This little stainless steel kitchen item cooks your vegetables without turning them to mush. It will help save the nutrients in the veggies, too, rather than boiling all the goodness into the cooking liquid. You may have seen one of these before. It blooms open like a flower and then retracts into a little round bun-looking thing. Veggie steamers are inexpensive and every kitchen needs one.

**Stainless or non-aluminum cookware.** Get some decent stainless-steel pots and pans. I love Caphalon stainless-steel cookware, but don't get caught up on brand names—just find a great set within your price range. Look for stainless-steel pots and pans with heavy bottoms so your food doesn't burn easily. You want well-built handles (larger pans should have a secondary handle for easy ... handling). Try to avoid pans with plastic handles because you won't be able to put them in the oven.

**Soup pot.** Go big or go home. You want a pot big enough that you can cook a huge vat of soup without worrying about it boiling over onto the stove on you.

**Sauce pans.** You'll need a stack of sauce pans in different sizes for a variety of jobs. One will be your go-to for steaming veggies and making sauces, but you want to have at least three so you're never left wanting.

**Non-stick skillet.** You will need one non-stick pan. I would not get an entire set, and I would avoid Teflon coating, but one ceramic coated non-stick pan is an essential kitchen item.

**9x13-inch baking dishes.** I like Pyrex baking dishes because they are so durable. The only reason I've had to replace my Pyrex dishes over the years is because I forgot them at parties where I've brought a dish. You'll use these baking dishes for all sorts of things, like roasting, baking and popping meals in the freezer.

**Jelly roll pans.** Those flat baking pans with the ridge around the sides? They are commonly referred to as cookie sheets, but they're actually called jelly roll pans. Whatever you want to call them, you'll need a few of these in the kitchen. I use mine all of the time.

**Mixing bowls.** You must have a set of three or four graduated stainless steel bowls. You should have one small enough to whisk a couple of eggs and one large enough to mix up a meat loaf.

**Kitchen timer.** You must have a kitchen timer. It has to be loud enough that you can hear it from anywhere in the house, even when you're vacuuming. No point in learning to cook if you burn everything because you forget it's in the oven. (Trust me. It happens a lot!) Many ovens have a timer function, and that's great. But make sure you can hear it all over the house!

**Instant read thermometer.** You should pick up a couple of meat thermometers; one big oven-safe guy you can stick into a roast so you know when it's ready to come out, and a smaller one that you can use to check the doneness of things like chicken breasts and pork chops.

**Wire whisks.** You must have good quality wire whisks, not the dollar store variety. I have three: a huge one for big jobs, a very hard-working medium one, and a smaller whisk that pitches in for small jobs, like whisking eggs or a quick little pan sauce. I also have one plastic-coated whisk for my nonstick skillet. The wire whisk can scratch my nonstick coating, but the plastic coated whisk can melt in my stainless pots.

**Wooden spoons.** Every cook has his or her favorite wooden spoon, and I encourage you to take some time to find one that feels just right in your hand. I have a few wooden spoons in different sizes, but there's one in my countertop crock that I reach for time and time again. It just looks like a basic wooden spoon, but it's engineered just perfectly for stirring. Find a spoon that makes you happy and then buy a couple of that type in different sizes for the many different uses you'll have for these kitchen basics!

**Kitchen linens.** Matchy matchy dish towels from the department store? Not in my kitchen. I prefer quality to looks. I go to the restaurant-supply store and buy good utilitarian terry and muslin towels. I use them for drying dishes, cleaning up spills and taking hot pans out of the oven. (I don't do oven mitts!)

**Pizza stone.** This is not what I would consider an absolute essential for the kitchen, but it's a "nice to have" if you enjoy making pizza for a nice crisp crust.

**Kitchen scissors.** Get yourself two sets of kitchen shears. You can use these to snip up herbs, cut through chicken bones, chop bacon and dice canned tomatoes. You don't need to go high-end with these. A set of kitchen shears is a set of kitchen shears. Use one set for meat, and the other for everything else.

**Can opener.** I don't really need to say much here except that you should buy a can opener that is manual (electric can openers aren't worth the amount of space it takes up in your kitchen) and feels good in your hand. A dollar store can opener is all you need.

**Veggie peeler.** Another dollar store item for you to pick up. A veggie peeler is essential for peeling, but it also makes lovely carrot and cucumber ribbons to pretty up a salad!

**Garlic press.** You might be surprised to see this listed on my "essential items" list, but I've saved countless hours in the kitchen over the years by not having to mince garlic with a knife. And my fingers don't permanently smell like garlic!

**Box grater.** Another basic you can grab at the dollar store. You'll need a box grater to shred up a block of cheese or to quickly grate up a zucchini or sweet potato.

**Microplane.** A microplane is a great, inexpensive little grating tool that will help you zest citrus or grate up a piece of nutmeg or dark chocolate.

**Pepper grinder.** When you cook with us, you're going to notice that many of our recipes call for freshly ground pepper. You can't have freshly ground pepper

without a pepper grinder or pepper mill. Once you start using a pepper mill, you will not go back to that black pepper dust you've been using!

**Measuring scoops and cups.** I have a couple sets of metal measuring scoops. These are for dry measurements, for things like flour and sugar. You also need a good set or two of measuring spoons. The reason I recommend two sets of scoops and two sets of spoons is quite simple. I keep the 1 cup measure in with my most measured item (these days, that's coconut flour), the 1/2 cup measure is in with my coconut sugar, and so on and so forth. I do the same with my measuring spoons. The tablespoon is in with the coffee, the teaspoon is with the baking powder, and so on and so forth. The second set of each set is in the drawer waiting to spring into action when needed. You will also want one good glass liquid measuring cup. There is a difference between measuring wet and dry. Trust me.

**Zipper bags.** You need lots and lots of zipper bags in different sizes. You want the good kind for the freezer (yes, they are worth the extra money). You'll use these for marinades, storing soups, making meatloaf . . . all kinds of things. You're also going to need a good Sharpie for labeling the bags so you know what is inside and when you froze it. (Tip: Hide the Sharpie in the plastic wrap roll so it doesn't walk off on you!)

**Storage containers.** Look for "disposable" plastic storage containers (BPA free!) at the grocery store and use those to store your leftovers in. I'm not into the expensive ones. How often do those storage containers get pitched because the lid was lost or a science experiment started growing in it at the back of the fridge?

**Kitchen paper.** You never want to be caught without aluminum foil (regular for reheating leftovers and heavy duty for using on the grill), parchment paper (you'll use this to line your pans for easy clean up—it can even line muffin tins in a pinch!) and plastic wrap.

**Rolling pin.** I don't do much baking anymore, but I would never toss out my rolling pin! (A rolling pin is also a great tool for pounding chicken breasts, or crushing walnuts.) I love a good solid wooden rolling pin made from one piece of wood.

**Potato masher.** Another kitchen basic you shouldn't be without. It's nice to have a big masher for a pot of potatoes or other veggies, but it's also good to have a small masher for taking care of a boiled egg or turning a small bowl of avocados into delicious guacamole.

**Colander.** You're going to use this all the time, whether it's for draining pasta, rinsing beans or thawing shrimp. I prefer stainless to plastic.

**Fine mesh strainer.** My mesh strainer works hard in my kitchen. I use it for rinsing quinoa, which is too tiny to put through a colander, and I also use it to sift cocoa powder and flour into my baking.

**Salad spinner.** You need to get as much water out of your lettuce leaves as possible to make a good crisp salad, so you need a good salad spinner.



## Online Cooking Camp

Kitchen Set Up

Gathering Your Tools

Worksheet

## Gathering Your Tools

### Knives

- Chopping knife (6- to 8-inch French knife, santoku knife or Chef knife)
- Paring knife
- Two serrated knives (one small and one large)
- Carving knife and fork set

### Other Essential Tools

- Two cutting boards (one for vegetables and fruit, one for meat, poultry, and fish)
- Flat-bottomed wok
- Vegetable steamer
- Stainless or non-aluminum cookware
- Soup pot
- Sauce pans
- Non-stick skillet
- 9x13-inch baking dish (at least one)
- Jelly roll pans (at least one)
- Graduated stainless steel mixing bowls
- Kitchen timer
- Wire whisks of various sizes (at least one plastic and one metal, one large and one small)
- Wooden spoons (at least one)
- Kitchen linens
- Pizza stone
- Kitchen shears (two pair)
- Can opener
- Veggie peeler
- Garlic press
- Box grater
- Microplane

- Pepper grinder
- Measuring spoons (two sets)
- Measuring cups (two sets)
- Zipper bags in various sizes
- Storage containers (the disposable grocery store variety)
- Parchment paper
- Aluminum foil
- Plastic wrap
- Wooden rolling pin
- Potato masher
- Stainless steel colander
- Fine mesh strainer
- Salad spinner



## Online Cooking Camp

Kitchen Set Up

Pantry Preparation

## Pantry Preparation

### **Pantry Preparation**

The contents of your pantry are going to be different from my pantry and your neighbor's pantry and your mother's pantry. That's because what you put in your pantry will depend on what types of food you eat. For instance, because I follow a Paleo diet, I don't do canned soup, packaged foods, wheat flour, oats, sugar, or beans. So, my staples are going to be much different than for someone following the Standard American Diet.

When we talk about priming the pantry (which refers to the goods in your cupboards if you don't have a traditional closet-style pantry), I'm also talking about the fridge and the freezer, too.

Now the first thing you have to do is toss everything you don't plan on ever using. I'll bet there are half-eaten boxes of cereal, stale crackers, cans with missing labels, hearts of palm you bought but have no idea what to do with, outdated stuff that you don't know why you have or when you'll use. Toss everything that's outdated or half eaten. If you have edible things, take them to the food bank, but everything not fit for human consumption should be tossed.

Now, clean the shelves and start restocking everything. Put like things with like things. All baking things together, all spices together, all canned tomatoes together, chicken broth with chicken broth. Don't just put all of your canned stuff in one place because you won't be able to find your coconut milk among your tomato paste.

Before you know it, you'll know exactly where to reach for exactly what you need. Think grocery store lay out but on a smaller scale.

And with the freezer, same thing goes. Put meats together, berries together, veggies together. Imagine! You'll be able to find stuff!

Overtime, when you open your pantry, you will smile at how organized it is.

Now, I do have a basic list that you can use to help get yourself going. But I don't know what you need because I don't know what you eat!

### **Canned and jarred items**

- Tomatoes: Diced tomatoes, whole tomatoes, tomato paste, pizza sauce, pasta sauce, salsa
- Beans: Black beans, kidney beans, garbanzo beans, whatever beans you eat
- Seafood: tuna, crab, salmon, clams
- Fruit and vegetables: Whichever you eat. Peaches, pineapple, apple sauce, pears, pumpkin, roasted red peppers, olives, pesto, chilies, tomatillos, capers
- Broths and soups: Low sodium broths, bottled clam juice, etc.

### **Milks**

- Evaporated
- Coconut milk
- Sweetened condensed milk
- Almond milk

### **Condiments**

- Ketchup
- Mustard
- Pickles
- Relish
- Mayo
- Worcestershire sauce
- Tabasco
- Soy sauce
- Horseradish sauce
- Cocktail sauce
- NOTE: Once opened, condiments go in the fridge!

## **Oils and vinegars**

- Olive oil
- Sesame oil
- Coconut oil
- Red wine vinegar
- White wine vinegar
- Balsamic vinegar
- Apple cider vinegar

## **Nut butters and jelly**

- Peanut butter
- Almond and cashew butter
- Jelly, jam
- Honey
- Maple syrup
- NOTE: I use natural nut butters, which need to be refrigerated after opening.  
Always check your labels!

## **Herbs and spices**

Go to the bulk store and stock up on spices. This is the most economical way to go, and you get the freshest spices this way. You'll want basil, thyme, marjoram, rosemary, dill, garlic powder, onion powder, cayenne, red pepper flakes, cumin, chili powder, paprika, oregano, ginger, dried mustard, cinnamon, peppercorns, nutmeg, cardamom, coriander, cloves, allspice, curry powder, bay leaves, kosher salt, sea salt. I use all of these things, so I have them. If you don't plan on using them, then leave them at the store!

## **Baking supplies**

- Baking powder (check the expiration date)
- Baking soda
- Sugars
- Flours
- Chocolate
- Vanilla
- Cocoa
- Baking mixes

## **Grains, pasta, rice**

Whatever you use. lasagna, spaghetti, mac and cheese, split peas, dry beans, lentils, couscous, barley

## **Cereals and bread**

Whatever you use. If you don't use bread right away, keep it in the freezer.

## **Miscellaneous**

- Coffee, teas, dried fruit
- Potatoes, squash, onions



## Online Cooking Camp

Kitchen Set Up

Pantry Preparation

Worksheet





## Online Cooking Camp

### Kitchen Set Up

### Where To Put Everything

## Where to Put Everything

### **Where to put everything**

Now that you have everything you need to start cooking, where the heck do you put it all?

I can't see your kitchen from here, so I can't tell you exactly where to put your stuff. But there are some things that are pretty standard in all kitchens, and they are standard because they are efficient.

### **In the cupboards and drawers**

Keep your glassware and dishes near the silverware for easy table setting. Glasses on one shelf, mugs on another. (I put the coffee maker near the cupboard where I keep the mugs.)

Keep baking gear together, the pots and pans together and the utensils together. It just makes sense.

Spices should go near the stove. (See a pattern here?) I keep my spices in little jars in a drawer near the stove. I label their lids with a sharpie, so when I open the drawer, I see what I need at a quick glance. Also, near the stove is a crock with my most reached-for cooking utensils like whisks, wooden spoons and spatulas.

If you have a bank of drawers, use one for silverware and utensils. Put your silverware in a plastic divider tray. These dividers are not expensive. If you have room for two trays, get a second for serving utensils. You need another drawer for miscellaneous utensils, like your potato peeler, grater, garlic press, etc.

In another drawer, store your kitchen paper, plastic wrap, plastic bags, and your rolling pin.

I use another drawer for kitchen linens. This is where my dishrags and towels go.

If you don't have a proper pantry, choose a cupboard to use for your pantry items. I place canned items on one shelf (again, like goes with like!). I put dried goods on another shelf. Baking supplies on another shelf, spices on another. I like using little plastic baskets for bags of dried beans, envelopes of spice blends and other things that don't do well sitting by themselves.

In your lower cupboards, you should have a bin to store onions in, and another for potatoes and sweet potatoes.

If you have lots of vitamins kicking around, you can put them in a basket in the pantry.

### **In the refrigerator**

There is a reason why your fridge has all of those drawers and shelves. Certain areas of your fridge have different temperature and humidity controls, and that's why different types of food are intended to be stored in specific places.

Who wants to send their produce into the dark recesses of the refrigerator to die? Nobody! So, let's learn how to use that fridge.

You know how sometimes you'll find a floppy zucchini at the bottom of your fridge? Or a bunch of carrots that have gone limp after a day or two? That's because you let them become dehydrated.

To keep your produce fresh longer, you need a certain amount of water vapor in the air or a good level of relative humidity, depending on the type of vegetable or fruit.

A good way to remember which produce requires more humidity is to think about which ones wilt the fastest. Foods that require the highest levels of relative humidity are your celery, grapes, zucchini, cucumber, beans, leafy greens, asparagus, avocado, pears and berries. Things like citrus, tomatoes, melon and sweet potato can handle medium level humidity, while dried garlic, squash, onions and pumpkins are more suited for lower levels of relative humidity (and they don't really even need to be stored in the refrigerator).

You know that crisper drawer at the bottom of the fridge? That's where the most humidity is generally found. If there's a little sliding tab on the front of the drawers for adjusting the humidity levels, use it! That feature closes the vent and keeps dry air from getting to your produce, so it can stay nice and hydrated down there. Keep the relative humidity set at 90% or 100%, the setting where most of that produce will be happiest.

Speaking of that crisper drawer, some types of produce don't play nicely with others and should be stored separately. The ones to watch out for are the fruits that produce ethylene gas.

See, as vegetables and fruits are harvested, they will most often continue to ripen. When this happens, the food produces ethylene gas. This gas can negatively affect other fruits and veggies. It can cause green vegetables to yellow, potatoes to sprout, carrots to turn bitter and asparagus to toughen.

Common ethylene producers include apples, pears, plums, peaches and cantaloupes.

Keep veggies in one drawer and fruits in the other, and you should be fine.

## **Storing meat and eggs**

Your fridge probably has a meat keeper drawer. That is the coldest part of your fridge, so use it for your meat (which is likely the most perishable item in there anyway). You can keep fish in there, too, as long as you don't forget about it. Fresh fish really should be eaten the day you bring it home, so you shouldn't have to worry about keeping it fresh for more than a couple of hours.

Fridges used to come with little egg holders on the door—some still do! But you should never store your eggs there. Why not? You should never store anything highly perishable or items that are sensitive to temperature changes in the door of the fridge. That's because each time the door of the fridge is opened, a blast of warm air hits that area. Eggs need to stay deep inside the fridge where they'll enjoy a nice, even cold temperature. Bonus tip: you should always bring eggs up to room temperature before you cook them. This will help prevent your yolks from breaking, and it will help them cook more evenly in general.

## **Condiments**

Use the door of the fridge to store those condiments you may use on a regular or semi-regular basis.

And there you have it!



## Online Cooking Camp

### Kitchen Set Up

### Worksheet

## Kitchen Set Up - Worksheet

- 1. Go through your kitchen and assess the situation.** If things don't make sense in your kitchen, remove everything from their current storage spots and start fresh! Dump out those drawers, take those dishes out and put them in a spot that increases efficiency. Yes it will take a couple of hours but it will be worth it. (This is a great time to start a box for a yard sale, too, and get rid of the items you're not using.) Here's a little cheat sheet to double check:
  - Baking gear is all together
  - Pots and pans are stored together
  - Glasses and mugs are near the silverware
  - Most-used utensils are stored near the stove
  - Spices are near the stove
  - Baking supplies are stored together
  - Kitchen papers and foils are in one drawer
  - Kitchen linens have a home in a drawer
- 2. Clean out you refrigerator.** Take out all of the food. Toss all outdated items and wipe down the surfaces and shelves in the fridge. Put everything back, according to the instruction you've been given in this module!
- 3. Enjoy our newly organized kitchen!** You now have an ideal space for cooking!

## **C School Recipes**

### **Citrus Chicken Marinade**

### **Asian Pork Marinade**

### **Tasty Beef Marinade**

### **Leanne's Basic Vinaigrette**

### **Honey Mustard Vinaigrette**

### **Mini Meatloaf Muffins**

### **Pumpkin Cheesecake**

Marinade 1 –

### **Citrus Chicken Marinade**

Ingredients:

1/2 cup orange juice  
1/4 cup lemon juice  
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard  
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce  
1/4 cup olive oil  
3 cloves garlic, pressed  
1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley  
1 teaspoon dried oregano  
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Instructions: In a glass bowl, airtight container or blender, combine first 4 ingredients (orange juice through Worcestershire); add a little of the olive oil at a time then add remaining ingredients; blend well. Marinate chicken for at least 3 hours, turning occasionally.

Marinade 2 –

### **Asian Pork Marinade**

Yields 1 1/4 cups

Ingredients:

1/4 cup oyster sauce  
1/4 cup hoisin sauce  
1/4 cup low sodium soy sauce  
1/4 cup honey  
2 tablespoons minced gingerroot  
2 tablespoons sweet sherry, optional  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1 tablespoon Chinese chili paste  
2 teaspoons Asian peanut oil

Assembly:

In a large bowl with a lid, whisk together all ingredients, (oyster sauce through peanut oil). Add in pork and seal the bowl with lid. Refrigerate overnight up to 2 days, turning occasionally.

Marinade 3 –

### **Tasty Beef Marinade**

Ingredients:

2 large cloves garlic, pressed  
1/4 cup low sodium soy sauce  
1/4 cup Dijon mustard  
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
1 cup olive oil  
1/4 cup Worcestershire sauce  
1/4 cup lemon juice

Instructions:

In a glass bowl, airtight container or blender, combine all ingredients; blend well. Marinate beef overnight, turning occasionally.

### **Leanne's Basic Vinaigrette**

Makes 1/4 cup

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar  
1 clove garlic, pressed  
Pinch of dried basil  
Pinch of dried oregano

Mix all together, use 1 tablespoon per salad.

### **Honey Mustard Vinaigrette**

1/4 cup apple cider vinegar  
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
3 tablespoons mustard  
2 tablespoons honey

Whisk together, until well blended.

### **Mini Meatloaf Muffins**

Serves 4 (3 meatloaf per person)

1 pound extra lean ground beef  
1 cup water  
1 (6 oz.) box stuffing mix  
1 1/2 teaspoons Italian seasoning  
3/4 cup spaghetti sauce  
Cooking Day  
3/4 cup mozzarella cheese

Thaw meatloaf muffins in refrigerator. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Lightly grease muffin pan.

Place muffin pan in the oven.

Bake for about 25-30 minutes or until meatloaf muffins are cooked through.

Sprinkle the cheese over the top of each meatloaf muffin.

Put pan back to the oven for an additional 3-5 minutes or until the cheese has melted. Let the meatloaf muffins sit on counter for about 5-7 minutes before removing them from muffin pan.

### **Pumpkin Cheesecake**

Serves 8

1 1/4 cups gingersnap cookie crumbs, crush about 20 cookies in a plastic bag with a rolling pin

1/4 cup unsalted butter, melted

3 (8-oz.) packages cream cheese, softened

1 cup sugar

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 teaspoon ground ginger

1 (16-oz.) can pumpkin puree, NOT pumpkin pie filling

4 eggs

3/4 cup chilled whipping cream (whip with 2 teaspoons sugar and a teaspoon of vanilla)

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

In a large mixing bowl, use a fork to mix the cookie crumbs and butter.

Press evenly on the bottom of a 9-inch spring form pan with your fork. Bake 10 minutes, then let cool. Reduce oven temperature to 300 degrees.

In another large bowl, beat the cream cheese, sugar, the cinnamon and ginger on medium speed until smooth. Add pumpkin puree. Now add in the eggs, one at a time on low speed.

Pour into the cookie crumb pie shell. Bake your cheesecake until center is firm, about 1 1/4 hours.

Cool to room temperature. Cover and refrigerate at least 3 hours. Meanwhile make your whipped cream. Loosen cheesecake from the sides of the pan, unbuckle the side and carefully remove. Serve a dollop of whip cream on the cheesecake.



## Online Cooking Camp

Cooking Basics

Basic Cooking Terms

## Basic Cooking Terms

**Bake:** Cooking in the oven. That basically sums up baking.

**Baste:** I don't baste and I never tell you to in Saving Dinner recipes. That's because I'm not a believer in basting. But even though I don't like basting, I feel obligated to tell you what it means. Basting means moistening while cooking, by sucking up the cooking juices (after opening the oven door and letting out precious cooking heat) with a giant-sized eyedropper looking thing and squirting that liquid over the meat you're cooking.

**Beat:** Quickly mixing ingredients together in a circular motion using a whisk, fork, or an electric mixer.

**Blend:** Gently mixing ingredients together using a fork or spoon, just until combined.

**Boil:** Boiling is when you heat up a liquid hot enough that bubbles rise up and break the surface. Boiling is used for cooking things like pasta, potatoes, and eggs.

**Braise:** I love braising my kale, collards, and chard. Braising describes a method of cooking slowly, using a small amount of liquid, in a covered pan or pot.

**Broil:** Broiling is cooking in the oven, quickly under direct, high heat. (You use the "Broil" setting on your oven.) Never use glass pans for broiling.

**Brown:** To brown something means to cook over medium to high heat until the food darkens.

**Chop:** This is what you do with your great big knife. Chopping means cutting your food in pieces that are large, medium, or small. If no size is indicated in a recipe, go with medium. Chopping really is not an exact science. You just want to cut something up. You don't have to fuss over having each piece perfectly uniform, just try not to have giant pieces mixed with tiny pieces.

**Cube:** When a recipe asks you to cube something in a recipe, that means you need your chopped bits to be about 1/2 inch in size. By the way, I rarely ask you to "cube" things in Saving Dinner recipes, so this is an FYI, if you happen to use other cookbooks ;-)

**Dice:** This means you cut food into smaller pieces than cubing, usually roughly 1/4 inch in size. Don't fuss over making it perfect. Just cut small pieces!

**Drain:** Removing liquid from an item using a strainer or colander.

**Fold:** This is a method of gently incorporating an ingredient into a dish, usually a batter, using a rubber spatula.

**Fry:** This describes cooking food in hot fat, over moderate to high heat.

**Grate:** Scraping food against the holes of a box grater into thin pieces. That's grate ;-)

**Grease:** When a recipe asks you to grease your pan, you're going to lightly coat that pan with butter or oil.

**Grill:** When a recipe recommends grilling, you will use your outdoor or indoor grill.

**Julienne:** This French term means that you will cut things into very thin strips. Sort of like a matchstick. The strips should be fairly even but please don't fret over making them identical. You won't come across this term very often because it's a pain in the butt to do.

**Knead:** This is where you use the heels of your hands to fold and stretch dough until it's smooth and uniform.

**Marinate:** Soaking food in liquid to tenderize or to add flavor. Generally this requires a good deal of time. Always check your recipe in case you are instructed to marinate your food for several hours.

**Mash:** Squashing food with a masher. But I bet you didn't need me to tell you that ;-)

**Mince:** This means cutting up superfine, itty-bitty pieces of food. Don't try to make everything uniform in size but do make sure it's teeny tiny incy-bincy small.

**Mix:** Stirring ingredients together with a fork, whisk, or electric mixer until well combined.

**Preheat:** When you read a recipe and it instructs you to preheat the oven, that means you are going to turn the oven on ahead of time so it's at the temperature you need when you put the food in. Generally it takes 5 to 10 minutes to preheat your oven.

**Reducing or Reduction:** A reduction means taking a sauce and making it thicker and more flavorful. You will do this by simmering slow or boiling rapidly. Either way, you end up with a tasty rich broth known as a reduction.

**Roast:** Roasting means that you're cooking with a dry heat in the oven.

**Sauté:** This is the cooking method you will use most often, and I will describe it in more detail in another lesson. But in essence, sautéing food means cooking it quickly in a bit of fat.

**Sear:** Searing means placing meat or poultry in a pan at high heat to seal in juices and add a nice brown crust to the exterior of the protein. (Searing good. Basting bad.)

**Simmer:** Simmering is cooking things just below the boiling point. A simmer uses tiny bubbles to do the cooking. You would use a simmer to poach an egg. When the bubbles get bigger and more aggressive looking, you have a boil.

**Slice:** You're cutting your food into slices rather than pieces here. So you know how tomato or onion looks on top of a burger? That's what your slices should look like.

**Steam:** Steaming describes a method of cooking with steam (usually with a steamer), rather than putting the food directly in water.

**Stew:** Stewing is cooking (usually a tough cut of meat) in liquid for a long time. You'll do this when making beef stew or pot roast. Stewing can be done on the stovetop or in the oven.

**Stir Fry:** Stir frying means to cook small, uniformly chopped bits of food over a high heat, usually in a wok, until crisp and tender.

**Truss:** This is where you use cooking twine to tie up a chicken in order for it to keep its shape after being roasted. The poor thing is already dead and you're going to eat it. Who cares what kind of shape it has when it comes out of the oven? I don't bother with trussing, personally.



## Online Cooking Camp

Cooking Basics

Cooking Source

## Cooking source

The first thing we need to talk about is what type of stove you have and whether you're cooking with gas or electric.

If you have the luxury of choosing between gas and electric, choose gas! Gas is the preferred choice of professional chefs for a reason. Gas gives you much better control over your heat, and that makes cooking easier.

But if you're stuck with electric, don't worry. You can still turn out fabulous meals if you know how to handle your stove.

### **Tips for coping with electric stoves:**

- Match the size of the pan to the element. If you're using a pan that's too small for the element, you're wasting energy, and you're also opening yourself up to a potential burn! If you use a pan that's too big for the element, you have an uneven heating situation on your hands.
- Keep burners clean. This also goes for gas stoves, by the way! Not only do you want to keep your stove looking nice, but dirt in the burners is a bit of a fire hazard. Try to clean spills as they happen, as soon as the element cools down.
- Only cook with flat bottomed pans. This ensures even heat distribution. You don't want to be cooking on a wobbly pan.
- Turn the heat off well before cooking time indicates. That's because electric stove tops take awhile to cool down. If you don't turn your heat off earlier than the recipe indicates, you might end up overcooking your dish.
- Cook with cast iron or copper coated pans. Heat is more difficult to regulate on an electric stove, and these types of pans will help you out as they conduct heat well.

**Tips for cooking with gas:**

- Use good time management. Gas stovetops heat up faster than electric stovetops, so you have to be aware of how you're managing your dishes.
- Air things out. Gas ovens can give off fumes, so it's not a bad idea to have a good fan or a window nearby.
- Be safe. Keep a propane detector in the home in case of leaks. But not too close to the stove because it will go off all the time.
- Experiment. You will need to practice to get used to flame level. A lower heat setting is generally required as compared with electric. Medium heat on an electric stove might be a 3 or 4 on a gas stove, for instance.

## Mexican Stuffed Shells

Day 3 - Serves 6

### **INGREDIENTS:**

1 (16-ounce) jar medium salsa  
2 (8-ounce) can tomato sauce  
3/4 cup water  
1 1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika  
1 1/2 pound lean ground beef, browned and drained  
2 small onion, minced  
2 (4-ounce) can diced green chilies, drained  
1 1/2 cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese, divided  
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste  
12 large pasta shells, cooked according to package directions  
Aluminum foil wrap

### **COOKING INSTRUCTIONS:**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In a medium bowl, combine salsa, tomato sauce, water and paprika. In a large bowl, place the cooked ground beef; stir in 1/2 cup of salsa mixture along with the onion, green chilies, 1/2 cup of shredded cheese, salt and pepper.

Pour half of remaining salsa mixture into 8- x 12-inch baking dish. Carefully stuff the cooked shells with the beef mixture then arrange them in the prepared baking dish. Pour remaining salsa mixture over the stuffed shells. Cover with foil and bake for 30 minutes. Remove foil; top with remaining cheese and bake for an additional 5 minutes.



## Online Cooking Camp

Cooking Basics

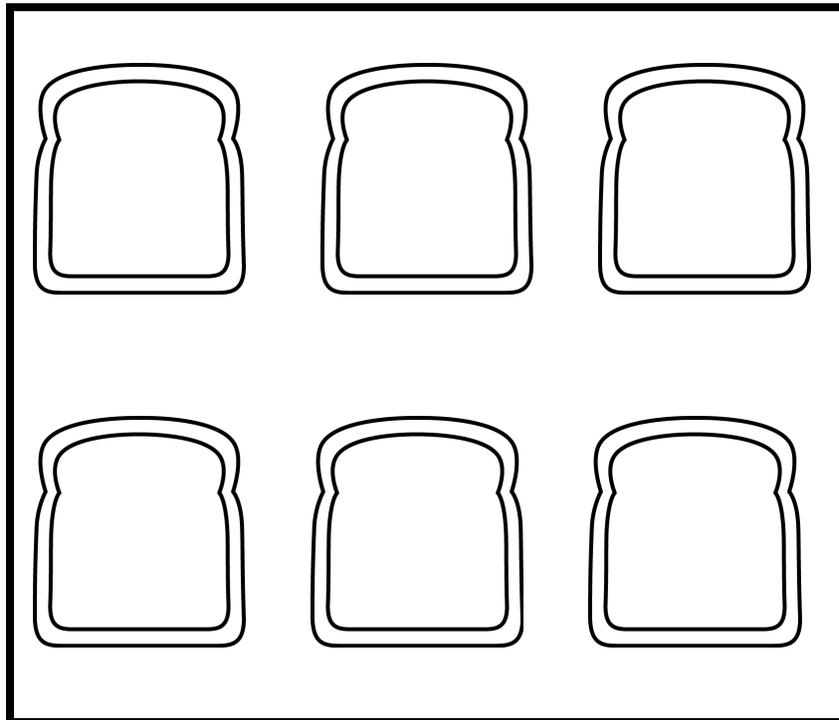
Cooking Source

Worksheet



2. Find the hotspots. If you don't cook much, you might not yet be intimately familiar with the way your oven cooks. Most ovens have hotspots. To find them, get two baking sheets and put a few slices of white bread on each (in my opinion, this the only thing store bought white bread is good for!). Turn your oven to 350, and place the pans in for a few minutes. When you take them out, you'll see which pieces of bread have browned, and which are still light. Tada! Now you know your hotspots. You'll keep these in mind when baking, so you flip your pans to cook your food evenly.

Note the results of your oven bread test here (mark hotspots with an "x"):





## Online Cooking Camp

Let's Get Cooking

How to Braise

## How to Braise

### **Braise**

If you always seem to end up with stringy, tough meat that you can't get a knife through (let alone your teeth), you can only blame the animal and/or the cut for so long! I firmly believe that with the right cooking method, you can turn the most humble of cuts into a star.

Braising is a very important cooking method to learn. You might remember the term "braise" from your high school home economics class as a cooking method involving liquid, but I want to help you really master this technique. Once you do, you'll always be able to save a bit of money in your meat budget (braising makes even the cheapest, most leathery cuts tender), and you'll be able to impress everyone around the dinner table.

The types of meat that are most suited for braising are the ones that are most fibrous with a fair amount of fat. Think of the body parts of an animal that would get the most exercise (and therefore be the most tough) as being best for braising: shoulders and legs.

Lean cuts of meat aren't suited well for braising. Also, dark meat is better than white for this cooking method.

### **My favorite meat cuts for braising:**

- Bone-in chicken legs and thighs
- Pork shoulder
- Pork butt
- Chuck roasts
- Brisket
- Ribs
- Veal shanks
- Lamb shanks

You can also braise vegetables. Tough, fibrous ones would be the best options here, too. Think:

- Celery
- Carrots
- Parsnips
- Cabbage
- Onions
- Beets

No matter what you choose to braise—cabbage, chicken or pork—you'll follow the same series of steps.

- Preheat the oven to 350.
- Season ingredient with pepper and salt.
- Sauté the ingredient in a cast iron pan or Dutch oven on medium heat in oil or butter. If it's meat, you want a sear on all sides.
- If it's meat you're braising, remove it from the pan and deglaze the pan by adding wine, juice or stock and scraping those golden brown bits from the bottom of the pan. If you're braising a vegetable, this step can be skipped.
- Return the meat to the pan and add cooking liquid (wine, stock, broth, water or a combination) so that the ingredient you're braising is half covered in liquid.
- Cover the cooking vessel and put it in the preheated oven.
- Cook it until your main ingredient is perfectly tender. Depending on what you're braising and its size, this could take anywhere from 1 hour to 5 or 6 hours.
- Remove your ingredient from the pot and keep it warm. Skim excess fat from the cooking liquid.
- Reduce your sauce by cooking it down over low heat until it reaches your desired thickness.

From this point, you can make a gravy from the juice and serve that with your meat if you so desire.

I like to braise meats and vegetables together for a nice and hearty one-pot meal. If you do that, too, remember that veggies will braise more quickly than a large, tough piece of meat, so add them to the pot during the last couple hours of cooking time.

Experiment with combinations of meats, vegetables and liquids to see what you like best. Think of flavors that taste good together. When I think pork, I think apple cider. When I think beef, I think red wine, mushrooms, onions and tomatoes. With chicken, I think white wine.

## **Braised Shrimp and Collards**

Serves 4

### **Ingredients:**

3 tablespoons coconut oil  
2 large shallots, chopped  
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste  
1 pound trimmed collards  
1 pound peeled and deveined shrimp  
2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar  
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin  
1 1/2 cups low sodium chicken broth

### **Directions:**

In a large skillet over medium heat, heat oil. To the skillet, add the shallot and cook for 5 minutes, until shallot is caramelized. To the shallot, add the remaining ingredients and stir. Cover with a lid and cook for 10 minutes, until shrimp are no longer raw in the center and the collards have absorbed all the liquid. Serve warm.

## **Herby Bacon and Parm Broiled Tomatoes**

### **Ingredients:**

2 cups Panko breadcrumbs  
1 cup grated parmesan cheese  
1/2 pound bacon, cooked and crumbled  
2 tablespoons fresh chopped rosemary  
3 large tomatoes, cut in half crosswise  
8 tablespoons ghee, melted  
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

### **Directions:**

Preheat oven to broil.

In a medium bowl, toss together the breadcrumbs through the rosemary.

On a parchment lined sheet pan, place the tomatoes, cut side up. Evenly distribute the breadcrumb topping on each tomato. Drizzle over the ghee and season with salt and pepper to taste. Broil the tomatoes in the oven for 6-8 minutes, or until the topping is golden and the cheese melts. Serve hot.

Grilled Pork Chops with Fruit Salsa  
Serves 6

**INGREDIENTS:**

1 (8-oz.) can pineapple tidbits in unsweetened juice  
1/3 cup plus 1 tablespoon low sodium soy sauce, divided  
2 cloves garlic, pressed  
6 (4-oz.) center-cut pork chops, trimmed

Salsa:

1/2 cup chopped fresh strawberries  
1 medium nectarine, chopped  
2 tablespoons sliced green onions  
2 tablespoons chopped cilantro  
1 tablespoon sugar  
1 tablespoon vinegar

**COOKING INSTRUCTIONS:**

Drain pineapple, reserving liquid; set pineapple aside.

In an ungreased 13- x 9-inch baking dish, combine reserved pineapple liquid, 1/3 cup of soy sauce and garlic; blend well. Add pork chops; turn to coat. Cover and refrigerate for 2 to 3 hours, turning occasionally.

Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, combine pineapple tidbits and all remaining salsa ingredients; blend well. Cover and refrigerate while pork chops are marinating.

Preheat indoor or outdoor grill. Remove pork chops from marinade; discard marinade. Grill over medium-high heat for 10 to 14 minutes or until no longer pink in the center, turning once.

Serve salsa with pork chops.

## **Salmon with Roasted Brussels Sprouts**

Serves 4

### **Ingredients:**

4 medium sockeye salmon filets  
1 cup halved cherry tomatoes  
1 cup chopped Brussels sprouts  
1/2 medium onion, chopped  
1/2 cup ghee, melted  
1/2 cup fresh lemon juice  
3 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley  
3 tablespoon apple cider vinegar  
1 large clove garlic, minced  
2 teaspoons chili powder  
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

### **Instructions:**

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

In a large baking dish, add fish, tomatoes, Brussels sprouts and onion.

In a medium bowl, mix the remaining ingredients (ghee through salt and pepper).

Pour sauce over fish and vegetables and cover. Roast in the oven for 15-20 minutes, until fish flakes with a fork and the vegetables are tender.



## Online Cooking Camp

Let's Get Cooking

How to Sauté

## How to Sauté

### **Sauté**

Anything you cook, whether it's meat or veggies, chicken or fish, is going to taste better when you've given it a good sauté.

Sautéing is a bit like frying, but it's not.

You use a medium heat and little bit of fat to sauté. Frying requires a higher heat and more fat.

Ideally, you're going to sauté in a heavy-bottomed skillet with sloped sides, and you want a good healthy fat. Regular olive oil, butter, or coconut oil.

Some cooks prevent to heat up the skillet before adding the fat, others add the fat while the pan is heating. It doesn't matter which you do, I do tend to heat and add the oil at the same time.

When the oil is hot and has coated the bottom of your pan (don't let it smoke on you, that means the temperature is up too high), you're ready to get cooking.

Do not crowd your pan. This will not get you the results you want. The item you're cooking should not cover the entire surface of the pan. If there's room for four chicken breast halves, that doesn't mean you should put them all in.

So your food is in the pan and it smells delicious (hopefully you've treated whatever's in that pan with a good sprinkle of sea salt and freshly ground pepper). It's time to move things around a bit so the food doesn't burn. You want a bit of browning, but you don't want to get too far over to the dark side.

It's also important not to move the food too soon, especially if it's protein you're cooking. If it hasn't had a chance to sear a bit, meat or poultry can turn into a sticky mess if you try to move it before it's ready.

You'll move the food around with a set of tongs, or a spatula, until all food is browned nicely.

The browning makes the flavor. And the little bits that are left behind on the bottom of the pan are going to turn into a beautiful sauce. (We'll get into that in a minute.)

This is a good time to talk about caramelization. Caramelization is when your food just keeps browning and browning while the heat is on a consistent, medium-high temperature. Caramelizing is going to release the natural sugars of veggies and fruits. That's why caramelized onions are so sweet!

Now back to that sauté!

You've sautéed your chicken and veggies. Everything is cooked beautifully. It's time to take everything out of the pan and attempt a sauce! Keep the food warm by putting it in the oven on its lowest temp with a loose foil hat over it.

Do not make a tight seal with the foil, otherwise your sauté will steam. Just a loose hat.

Now the bottom of your pan has lots of browned on stuff. **DO NOT THROW THAT IN THE DISH WATER.** Those yummy brown bobs are pure concentrated flavor and you are going to turn it into a helluva sauce.

All you need is a little liquid.

I use chicken broth or a bit of wine, rather than water. It's all about adding flavor!

While the pan is hot (not too hot), add a bit of liquid and start whisking that brown stuff up off the bottom, into the liquid.

Keep on whisking and you'll notice something starts happening. A sauce is emerging!

Add a bit more liquid if you need to, and if you have too much liquid, simply turn down the heat to a simmer, and your sauce will start to reduce for you. If it's just right as is, simply pour it over your chicken and veggies.

And now you're cooking!!

## **Quick Beef and Broccoli Sauté**

Serves 4

### **Ingredients:**

2 tablespoons coconut oil  
1 large red chili, seeded and sliced thin  
1 cup chopped green onion  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
2 teaspoons fresh grated ginger  
2 1/2 cups broccoli florets  
1 1/2 pounds flank steak, sliced thin  
1/4 cup coconut aminos  
1/4 teaspoon ground dried ginger  
sea salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

### **Instructions:**

Heat coconut oil in a large wok or large skillet. Add chili, onion, garlic, ginger, and broccoli. Sauté for 2 to 3 minutes, stirring regularly, then add remaining ingredients (steak through salt and pepper). Cook for about 10 to 12 minutes or until cooked through.



## Online Cooking Camp

Let's Get Cooking

How to Sear

# How to Sear

## **Sear**

Cooking meat well is something that takes practice. There's a knack to getting that perfect golden color on a chicken breast and to making those dark grill marks appear on a steak. While a nice color on a piece of meat looks nice, more importantly, that color basically translates to flavor.

A good sear is required to form that beautiful crust on a roast, and searing should be the first step when preparing meat for a one-pot meal, including a braised dish, which we'll get to in a minute.

When you sear a piece of meat, the sugars in the meat are caramelized. The result is delicious and that sear on the meat also helps to keep the moisture inside.

The good news is that searing meat is easy as pie and it involves a few universal steps which you're about to discover.

## **How to get a perfect sear on pork or red meat**

- Take the meat out of the refrigerator and bring it to room temperature before cooking it. Don't leave it out more than an hour.
- With a paper towel, pat the meat dry to remove any moisture from the surface. That moisture can interfere with the searing process.
- Drizzle the surface of the meat with a small amount of regular olive oil or melted coconut oil and season with pepper and sea salt.
- Give the meat a nice little massage so that the surface is evenly coated.
- In a dutch oven or oven-safe pan, heat your butter, ghee or coconut oil to medium high. When a drop of water sizzles when it hits the surface of the pan, you're ready to add your meat.
- Put your meat in the pan, fattest side down.

- Don't make the mistake of flipping your meat too soon. That's what makes it stick to the pan, as I mentioned in our sauté lesson. Leave the surface of the meat on the hot pan until the meat is nice and deeply colored, and it doesn't stick when you move it. Sear all sides of the meat, including the ends and sides if you're dealing with a roast.
- For a beef or pork roast: when the crust has formed, go ahead and add your liquid or any other ingredients you add to your recipe.
- For a steak: searing a steak properly may cook it enough for your preference if you like a rare steak. Leave it in the pan a little longer if you like it cooked more, or finish it in the oven at 400 degrees.
- For pork chops: searing alone probably won't cook the meat thoroughly. Finish in the oven at 400 degrees or keep it in the pan until it's done.

### **How to get a perfect sear on a chicken breast**

- Wash your chicken breast and pat it dry. Drizzle a bit of melted coconut oil or regular olive oil on the chicken and season with pepper and sea salt.
- Follow the same directions as above, with regards to heating the oil in the pan.
- When the pan is hot, put the breast in and keep the surface of the chicken in contact with the pan until it's nice and brown. Do not flip it before it's ready!
- When a crust has developed and the meat no longer sticks, flip it over.
- The searing process won't necessarily cook the chicken through, so if you need to give it more time in the pan, turn the pan to low and add a little bit of liquid before covering the pan. That heat will continue cooking the meat without burning it or drying it out. You could also finish it in the oven at 400 degrees.

Practice makes perfect! Before you get cooking, let's talk about the pan you're using. Teflon pans are toxic. Do not use them. If you heat them too high, the fumes could actually kill a small bird in your kitchen. Use a stainless skillet, preferably one with a copper bottom for best heat conduction. Cast iron will work too.

## **Salsa Topped Seared Tuna Steaks**

Serves 4

### **Ingredients:**

1 (14.5-oz.) can diced tomatoes with green chilies, drained  
1 medium red onion, chopped  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
1 medium green bell pepper, seeded and chopped  
3 large avocados, cubed  
1 tablespoon fresh lime juice  
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste  
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
4 (6-oz.) tuna steaks  
1/2 teaspoon onion powder  
1 tablespoon ghee, or use coconut oil

### **Instructions:**

In a large bowl, combine the first 6 ingredients (tomatoes through lime juice) along with half of the salt and the olive oil for slaw; blend well and set aside.

Season fish evenly with remaining salt, pepper and onion powder. Melt the ghee (or coconut oil) in a large skillet over medium-high heat; add the tuna steaks and sear for 2 to 3 minutes per side or until fish reaches the desired doneness. Serve topped with slaw and enjoy!



## Online Cooking Camp

Let's Get Cooking

Stewing

## Stewing

What hits the spot on a cold day better than a nice steamy hot bowl of thick beef stew?

By definition, stew is not a dish—it's a cooking method that involves simmering meat and vegetables in a rich flavorful liquid.

*Now, Leanne, you're thinking, that sounds an awful lot like braising.*

And it does (gold star for you)—there are only a couple of differences between a braise and a stew:

- With a braise, the meat is generally left in its whole form; with stew, the meat is generally cut into pieces
- With stew, the cooking liquid usually covers the meat and the vegetables; in a braise, the liquid comes up to the halfway mark of the item you're cooking

Very small differences, yes, but apparently enough to define each of them as their very own method of cooking!

### **What to stew**

The best things to stew are hardy vegetables and tough cuts of meat. (Did I mention stewing is a dirt cheap way to feed your family?)

The best protein to stew would be:

- Brisket
- Chuck
- Oxtail
- Round
- Shank
- Pork shoulder
- Chicken thighs
- Mutton

You can stew fish, but you don't want to cook it very long or your fish will just cook down into a pot of mush. Sea bass, cod, halibut and shark are good options for fish stew.

And when it comes to vegetables, the following are prime candidates:

- Potato
- Carrot
- Celery root
- Leek
- Cabbage
- Celery
- Eggplant
- Tomato

Tough greens handle stewing well, too, but you might want to add them closer to the end of your cooking time. Kale, chard and collard greens are good in a stew.

The following is the basic method you'll follow, no matter what you're stewing:

- Prepare your protein by dredging in some flour seasoned with salt and pepper. This step will help your stew to thicken later in the process
- Take your dutch oven (perfect vessel for stewing) or other heavy pot and sear the meat in some butter or coconut oil
- When your meat has a nice dark sear on it, remove it from the pot and add some diced onions, carrots and celery, and stir until golden brown
- Toss in any herbs and spices you would like to use to season your stew and deglaze the pot with wine, beer, stock, water, or a combination of liquids
- Put your meat back in the pan and add enough liquid to just cover the meat
- Bring to a simmer
- Cover and place in the oven at 300 degrees for a couple of hours, depending on your protein (fish will only take fifteen or twenty minutes, while a tough cut of beef will need at least two hours)
- When there's 30 minutes or so left in the stewing process, add vegetables

At the end of the process, if your liquid isn't as thick as you would like, you can thicken it with a roux, which is a mixture of flour dissolved in water and butter. You'll then need to bring the stew to a boil on the stove top so that the starch can go ahead and do its work to thicken that cooking liquid.

And there you have it. A delicious and nutritious stew.

## Asian Beef Stew

Serves 4

### Ingredients:

1 tablespoon coconut oil  
2 pounds beef stew meat, cubed  
1(14-ounce) can full fat unsweetened coconut milk  
1/3 cup tomato paste  
1/4 cup red curry paste  
2 tablespoons coconut aminos  
2 tablespoons fresh lime juice  
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
3 cups low sodium beef broth  
1 cup baby carrots  
2 cups fingerling potatoes  
1 large bell pepper, chopped  
1/2 cup chopped fresh cilantro

### Instructions:

In a large skillet over high heat, heat coconut oil. To the skillet, add the beef and brown for 5 to 10 minutes.  
To a large crock cooker add the beef and the next 11 ingredients (coconut milk through pepper). Stir and cover.  
Cook on LOW for 6 to 8 hours, until beef is very tender. Sprinkle cilantro over stew and serve warm.

**Menu:**

**Dessert #1: Summer Peach Thyme Tart**

**Dessert #2: Citrus Sugar Cookies**

**Dessert #3: Earl Grey Tea Cake**

**Dessert #4: Baked Chocolate Pie**

**Dessert #5: Pumpkin Cheesecake**

**Dessert #1**

**Summer Peach Thyme Tart**

**Ingredients:**

1 cup unsalted butter, room temp and divided

1 teaspoon orange zest

1 teaspoon minced fresh rosemary

1/3 cup powdered sugar

1 teaspoon sea salt, divided

1 3/4 cups flour, divided

4 cups frozen peaches

1 cup sugar

1/4 cup cornstarch

1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme

2 tablespoons fresh orange juice

1/2 cup rolled oats

1/4 cup brown sugar

1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

**Directions:**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In a food processor, pulse together 3/4 cup butter, orange zest, rosemary, powdered sugar, 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1 1/2 cups of the flour until it forms a ball. Take the dough and press evenly into the tart shell. Chill until filling is ready.

In a medium saucepan over medium heat, stir together the peaches, sugar, cornstarch, thyme, remaining salt, and orange juice. Cook until the mixture starts to thicken and bubble. Remove from the heat and set aside.

Spoon the slightly cooled peach mixture into the tart shell and set aside.

In a medium bowl, mix together the remaining butter, flour, brown sugar and cinnamon. Sprinkle the mixture over top of the tart filling and bake for 30-40 minutes, or until the filling is bubbling and the crust and top are golden brown. Remove from the oven and let cool before slicing and serving.

## **Dessert #2**

### **Citrus Sugar Cookies**

#### **Ingredients:**

3 1/2 cups all purpose flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

1 1/2 cups sugar

1 tablespoon fresh lemon zest

1 tablespoon fresh orange zest

1 cup unsalted butter, room temp

3 large eggs

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

pinch sea salt

#### **Directions:**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In a medium bowl, sift together the flour and baking powder and set aside.

In a large stand mixer, cream together the sugar, lemon zest, orange zest and butter. Once the mixture is light and fluffy add in the eggs, one at a time. Once the eggs are fully combined add in the vanilla and salt and continue to cream.

Into the creamed butter and sugar mixture add in the flour mixture and mix until just combined, but do not over mix!

On a parchment lined sheet pan, scoop out the dough mixture into 1" balls and then flatten with the palm of your hand, leaving space in between each cookie dough ball to bake. Bake for 6-8 minutes, or until the cookies no longer look wet on top and are only slightly golden brown on the bottom. Let cool before serving.

### **Dessert #3**

#### **Earl Grey Tea Cake**

##### **Ingredients:**

3 cups cake flour

1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder

1/2 teaspoon baking soda

pinch sea salt

1 teaspoon fresh lemon zest

1 teaspoon Earl Grey tea leaves

1 cup unsalted butter, room temp

1 1/2 cups sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

3 large eggs, beaten

1/2 cup strong brewed Earl Grey tea, cooled

1/2 cup powdered sugar

##### **Directions:**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In a large bowl, sift together the flour through salt. Stir in the lemon zest and tea leaves and set aside.

In a stand mixer, cream together the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add in the vanilla and eggs and then cream it all together again. Last add in the brewed tea and stir until combined. Add in the flour mixture and then mix until just combined.

In a greased bundt pan, spoon in the batter in an even layer. Bake the cake in the oven for about 1 hour, or until a toothpick comes out clean when inserted. Let cool slightly and then un-pan the cake. Place on a cake plate and then sprinkle with the powdered sugar and then slice and serve.

#### **Dessert #4**

##### **Baked Chocolate Pie**

##### **Ingredients:**

2 large eggs separated

1 cup sugar

1/2 cup unsalted butter, melted

1/2 teaspoon sea salt

1/3 cup all purpose flour

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

2 ounces melted chocolate

1 bottom piecrust

##### **Directions:**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In a large bowl, whisk together the egg yolks, sugar and butter. Mix in the vanilla and melted chocolate. Fold in the flour and salt and set aside.

In a medium bowl whip the egg whites until stiff peaks form. Fold the egg whites into the chocolate mixture and then pour into the piecrust. Bake the pie for 20-25 minutes or until the pie is cooked through. Remove from the oven and cool slightly before slicing and serving.

## **Dessert #5**

### **Pumpkin Cheesecake**

Serves 8

1 1/4 cups gingersnap cookie crumbs, crush about 20

cookies in a plastic bag with a rolling pin

1/4 cup unsalted butter, melted

3 (8-oz.) packages cream cheese, softened

1 cup sugar

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 teaspoon ground ginger

1 (16-oz.) can pumpkin puree, NOT pumpkin pie filling

4 eggs

3/4 cup chilled whipping cream (whip with 2 teaspoons sugar and a teaspoon of vanilla)

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

In a large mixing bowl, use a fork to mix the cookie crumbs and butter.

Press evenly on the bottom of a 9-inch spring form pan with your fork. Bake 10 minutes, then let cool. Reduce oven temperature to 300 degrees.

In another large bowl, beat the cream cheese, sugar, the cinnamon and ginger on medium speed until smooth. Add pumpkin puree. Now add in the eggs, one at a time on low speed.

Pour into the cookie crumb pie shell. Bake your cheesecake until center is firm, about 1 1/4 hours.

Cool to room temperature. Cover and refrigerate at least 3 hours. Meanwhile make your whipped cream. Loosen cheesecake from the sides of the pan,

unbuckle the side and carefully remove. Serve a dollop of whip cream on the cheesecake.