



**365 COOKING  
TIPS & TRICKS**

**EVERY COOK NEEDS TO KNOW**

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Tips are categorized into subject areas so that you can choose the ones you'd like for specific projects.

## General Cooking

1. Milk should never be boiled when you heat it for recipes. It needs to be “scalded” (heated over medium heat just until the milk around the edges of the pan start to bubble slightly). Boiled milk will leave you with a big, ugly gout of “skin” and will not taste half as good in recipes.
2. Don't add scalded milk all at once to your recipe. Cool it to just above lukewarm, and add a little at a time to avoid curdling your recipe.
3. If you are adding scalded milk to the liquid portion of a recipe that contains egg, add a tablespoon or two of your slightly cooled, scalded milk to the egg first, to prevent curdling.
4. Make sure your kitchen contains basic staples: Herbs, salt, sugar, flour, your favorite grain such as rice or couscous, apples, onions, carrots, potato, consommé or bouillon cubes, your favorite noodles, tomato sauce, beans, cans or packets of soup, butter or margarine, and a good quality cooking oil, such as virgin olive oil. With these basic ingredients, you can whip up a variety of accompaniments and sauces to go with meat or fish.
5. Make sure your kitchen contains these basic herbs and seasonings: Basil, thyme or marjoram, tarragon, black pepper, sea salt, oregano, dill, parsley, cinnamon, nutmeg and paprika. (These are the herbs most commonly used in recipes. Add curry powder, cumin and coriander if you love Eastern foods.)
6. Did you know that the herb saffron consists of the stamens of a certain type of crocus, harvested individually by hand? (That's why the price is so high.) Saffron gives a delicate flavor and a deep golden-yellow color to rice or potatoes.)
7. Store your herbs away from light or heat to prevent compromising the herb quality.
8. If a recipe calls for “de-glazing”, it means to take the juices and fats remaining at the bottom of a pan after you've removed the food you are cooking, and adding liquid. The idea is to scrape all remaining bits of food into this liquid and use it in another sauce, such as a gravy.
9. When a recipe calls for you to “simmer” a dish, the temperature shouldn't exceed 180°F. Simmering is done at the lowest heat possible that still allows a stew or sauce to bubble lightly around the edges.
10. To dissolve the thin glaze of juices and brown bits on the surface of a pan in which food has been fried, sautéed or roasted, add liquid and stir and scrape over high heat, thereby adding flavor to the liquid for use as a sauce.
11. When a recipe calls for “zest”, this means the freshly-grated rind of a citrus fruit. You can use a fine grater to quickly extract it, after washing and thoroughly drying the fruit.

## Holiday Cooking

12. When you plan your menu, plan what you're going to need to store in your fridge – and make sure there is adequate space and shelving. Then clear your fridge of all stale or leftover food the day before shopping for the holidays.
13. When preparing your holiday food shopping list, be sure to check that you have adequate supplies of hard goods such as parchment paper, wax paper, plastic wrap, foil, baking cups, paper towel and containers for leftovers.
14. Your kitchen can look (and feel) like a battleground when you are in the throes of preparing holiday feasts. It really helps if you first clear all your countertops of anything that won't be needed for holiday food preparation and give them a good clean. Then put out bowls, utensils, accessories, spices and small appliances that you will need.
15. When thawing turkey for the holidays, be aware of the bacteria zone – 40°F—140°F – where bacteria will multiply quickly. The outer layer of your bird will reach this temperature at around the 2-hour mark –even if the interior needs a day or more to thaw.
16. To avoid bacteria growth, always thaw your turkey in the refrigerator or in a tightly-sealed plastic bag placed in cold water.
17. You can thaw a turkey in your microwave – but if you can't follow the manufacturer's directions (e.g. your turkey exceeds the maximum recommended size), it's not safe to do so.
18. Allow 24 hours per 5lbs, when thawing turkey in the refrigerator – providing your refrigerator is set just below 40°F.
19. When thawing a turkey in cold water, follow the 30-minute rule: Change the water with fresh, cold water every 30 minutes and allow 30 minutes per pound.
20. If you soak your turkey in any sort of brine solution in the refrigerator, be aware that it may give the meat a pinkish look (but it's not undercooked!)
21. When thawing a turkey in the refrigerator, don't rely on its plastic bag: Put it in a bowl or on a baking tray to ensure nothing drips onto foods below.
22. Be on your guard against cross-contamination, when preparing holiday poultry. Never chop vegetables on any surface that has contained your turkey: Thoroughly wash and clean all cutting boards and utensils before preparing other foods.
23. Use a meat thermometer to ensure your turkey is properly – and safely – cooked at 165°F interior temperature. (Don't cook in an oven whose temperature is any lower than 325°F.)



24. Follow safe practices with your stuffing, too. Insert your stuffing mixture right before cooking, salting the body cavity interior first. And check your stuffing also with your thermometer: It, too, should reach 165 degrees.
25. Remember that stuffing your holiday poultry will increase cooking time. (Figure on a minimum of 3 hours for an 8lb bird; 3 ½ hours for a 12lb. bird; 4 ¼ hours for a 15lb, give or take 20 minutes – use your thermometer to ensure interior temperature has reach 165°F throughout.)
26. Never buy pre-stuffed birds – the stuffing is just too susceptible to bacteria.
27. Let turkeys and other large birds sit for 15 minutes before removing the stuffing.
28. Peel potatoes ahead of time! They won't discolor and turn brownish at the edges if you store them in a bowl or pan of cold water in your fridge. (They'll keep for up to one day.)
29. Instead of cooking hot green beans, consider making a festive bean salad with red, green and yellow beans – there are many wonderful recipes on the net. Make it the day before, cover and chill in your refrigerator to marinate. Introduce it as “Christmas Bean Salad” – and make it a tradition!
30. Prepare green beans easily by lining them up, side-by-side, on a cutting board, with the woody ends all at the same end. Take a large chef's knife and slice off all the ends in one go. Wash your beans and store in cold water until it's time to put them on.
31. For Brussels sprouts, chop off the ends and pull off the outer leaves (they will come off easily once the ends are chopped off). Make a cross with your knife in the cut end of each sprout (about ¼—½ inch deep, depending on the size of the individual sprout). Keep in mind that the smaller the sprout, the more tender and fresh it will taste – large ones tend to be “woody” or tough.
32. Buy squash cut and pre-packaged, to save work time and counter space. Wash cut pieces thoroughly before using. Dice down further to even pieces.
33. Be sure to thoroughly wash all salad greens in cold water before serving – even if the package says “pre-washed”. Pat dry with paper towel.
34. It's tempting to “just leave” all the dishes for “tomorrow” – but clean up after yourself in the kitchen as much as you can during the preparation process. Take the extra few seconds to put containers back in cupboards, jars left in the fridge, etc.
35. If you have trouble removing burned food or fat from the bottom of your roasting pan, scrape out as much as you can and let cool. Fill it with cold water, adding 4 tbsp. baking soda. Soak overnight. The next day, bring your pan of water and baking soda to the boil on the top of the stove and simmer at a low heat for half an hour. Your roast pan should magically come clean.
36. When carving your turkey, be sure to start with the proper, nicely sharp carving utensils. Check them right now – don't wait until the bird is ready to be served to discover they're dull!

37. Be sure to refrigerate all cooked, leftover food within 2 hours of serving. (Leaving food sitting out on the dining room table or buffet for too long is one of the major causes of holiday tummy troubles.)
38. When re-heating holiday leftovers in the microwave, be sure to let it sit, covered, for at least two minutes before serving. The microwave heats unevenly, so this will help ensure it finishes cooking without leaving areas at less than the safe 165°F temperature you need.)
39. To make sure Christmas cookies keep their shape, triple-chill your dough. After removing chilled dough from the refrigerator, roll it out on lightly flour-dusted parchment paper placed on cutting board. Put board with the cookies straight into your fridge and chill again (15 min.) Flour your cookie cutter, remove chilled cookies and cut out the shapes. Re-flour between each cut. Line your baking tray with parchment paper, place cookies – and chill for a final 15 minutes before baking.

## Foreign Cooking Terms

40. A la creole: With tomatoes added.
41. Al dente: (Italian) Refers to pasta. Firm “to the tooth”; not soft. But there should be no hard center.
42. Al forno: (Italian) Literally “to the oven”. Cooked in an oven.
43. Allemande: (French) If you see a sauce designated as “Allemande”, it will most likely contain veal stock, cream and egg yolk (as well as lemon juice).
44. Au gratin: (French) Most people think this means “with cheese” – but in the culinary world, it is used to signify a topping of breadcrumbs, butter and grated, fresh cheeses.
45. Au jus: (French) Meat roasted and served in its own juices, with no other moisture added.
46. Au tour: (French) “All around”. Sauce is poured round a dish; not all over it.
47. Bain-marie: (French) A container of hot water into which you insert and cook food that you don’t want to curdle. (The principle is similar to double boiling.)
48. Béarnaise: A light hollandaise sauce variation, flavored with tarragon, and meant to be served with roasted meats.
49. Béchamel: (French) Basic white sauce made from a roux (butter and flour bubbled over a low heat till slightly browned) and milk. Many cream sauces start with a béchamel.
50. Bisque: A hearty soup, usually fish – but when the term is applied to desserts, it refers to a macaroon/ice cream mixture.

51. Blanch: (French) Immersing fresh vegetables very briefly in water that has been brought to a rolling boil. (Stop the cooking process by straining them and cooling them briefly under ice-cold, running water.) Keeps crispness for salads without the vegetable being bitter or indigestible; and retains/enhances color.
52. Bordelaise: A brown gravy containing shallots and red wine.
53. Bouillabaisse: (French) French fish stew or soup.
54. Bouquet Garni: (French) Fresh parsley, thyme, celery and a bay leaf wrapped in layers of leek and tied with string into a firm parcel. One end of the string is often kept long, as your bouquet garni is inserted into pots of stock (water plus meat bones), and removed at the end of cooking.
55. Bouillon: Similar to stock, but meat is simmered in water, rather than bones and seasoning is traditionally more robust. Makes a clear broth that can be used as the base for soups – or drunk on its own.
56. Canapé: Finger-food appetizer served with drinks, before people sit down at the table and while they mingle.
57. Caramelization: heating substances with carbohydrates slowly up to 300°F on the stove top, which causes substances such as sugar or onions to turn brown, syrupy and slightly thickened.
58. Chiffonade: (French) A way of feathering leafy vegetables for decoration.
59. Chinois: (French) Inverted-cone-shaped, fine metal strainer for stocks, sauces and soups. Usually hangs on chains. (With sauces, it is meant for ensuring lumps are strained out and often a pestle is used to work these through the mesh.)
60. Choux: (French) A rich pastry made of eggs, butter, flour and water or milk. Most often used for cream puffs, profiteroles and other light, airy desserts.
61. Concassé: (French) Coarsely-chopped vegetables in chunks.
62. Consommé: (French) Clear meat broth.
63. Coulis: (French) Finely puréed fruit, resulting in a thin, smooth syrup or sauce.
64. Crepe: French) Very thin pancake, usually rolled around a sweet or savory filling.
65. Croustade: (French) A loaf or bun that has been hollowed out and lightly toasted, so that the centre can be filled with a savory, hot filling such as a stew.
66. Crudités: (French) Another term for fresh or blanched vegetables served in sticks or chunks as a go-with or appetizer.



67. Florentine: (Italian) Usually signifies a dish cooked with spinach.
68. Fondant: (French) A mixture of sugar and water simmered and reduced to the “soft-ball” stage. Poured fondant is used to fill candies. Hard fondant usually has gelatin or marshmallow added, and can be rolled out to use as the middle layer of sandwich cookies; or used to cover and decorate a cake.
69. Frappé: (French) Semi-frozen. Still liquid but thick with ice particles.
70. Fricassee: (French) stew made with meat that has not first been browned.
71. Glacé: (French) Glazed or covered with icing. Refers to the shiny surface glazed dishes or food items have.
72. Gremolata: (Italian) Fresh parsley, garlic and lemon zest added at the end of cooking to stews.
73. Hors d’oeuvres: (French) Fancy appetizer served at the start of your meal.
74. Julienne: Raw vegetables such as carrots and celery that have been chopped into fine “matchsticks”.
75. Meuniere: (French) Flouring fish or meat and sautéing it in butter.
76. Mirepoix: (French) Chopped onion, carrot and celery mixture.
77. Roux: (French) Butter and flour cooked over low heat together to form a thickening agent.
78. Velouté: Stock mixed into a roux. Can stand alone, or act as the base for other sauces and gravies.
79. Vinaigrette: (French) Dressing made from oil and vinegar, with added seasonings.
80. Vol au vent: (French) Cylinder of puff pastry no more than 2” high, filled with savory fillings. Before serving, remove the “lid” from the centre of your vol au vent, fill and replace “lid” if desired.
81. Zabaglione: (Italian) Also known as “Sabayon” (French). Custard made with egg yolks and sweet wine.
82. Zwieback: (German) Twice-toasted bread.

## Breads and Quickbreads

83. Bread technically always contains a yeast agent. Quickbreads are simulated bread recipes that don’t contain yeast (and are usually quicker as a result of not having to wait for rising time).
84. About to make bread but you’ve just discovered you don’t have any yeast? Don’t panic: You can make incredibly delicious quickbread by adding a cup of beer or sparkling wine. (If you use beer, add a few herbs to your recipe as well for a wonderful, savory treat.)

85. Bread will not rise as well if you use cold milk: The whey contains proteins that damage gluten, so scald your milk first.
86. When adding scalded milk to a bread recipe that contains yeast, make sure it is cooled to lukewarm. If it is too hot, it may kill the yeast. If it is too cool, it won't help the yeast rise.
87. Use a heavy, stoneware bowl when making bread dough. Cover dough with a clean linen tea towel while setting it to rise.
88. Try setting your bowl of dough on the top of your refrigerator while waiting for dough to rise. The warmth from the fridge can often create the perfect rising temperature. (Bread dough must rise in a slightly warm place)
89. Dough that is too stiff can prevent yeast from activating properly.
90. Baby your bread machine – contrary to popular belief, you can easily break them if you don't respect their parameters. Use recipes meant specifically for bread machines (especially the ones that come with your model of machine) – and avoid super-heavy doughs and artisan breads.
91. All-purpose flour is best for quickbreads.
92. If you want to avoid a milky taste to white bread and boost the flavor, replace half the water with yogurt, according to bread expert Dan Lepard.
93. Place a pan of water on the bottom rack of your oven, if you want your loaf top to rise and crack artistically for that farm-baked look.
94. Make sure the water or milk you add to your bread mixture is lukewarm to the back of your wrist. If it is too cold, it won't activate the yeast: If too hot, it will kill the yeast.
95. Add a spoonful of honey or sugar to your liquid while it is still hot, before cooling to lukewarm. Mix well to dissolve thoroughly.
96. When adding cereal-type grains such as oatmeal, first soak them in just enough boiling water to moisten them for at least 10 minutes.
97. Always lightly toast seeds or nuts before adding to bread. Doing so will help them be much more digestible (and appetizing).
98. Lightly coat your hands with olive oil before kneading bread dough.
99. Make sure there are no draughts where you set your dough to rise.
100. If you want your freshly-baked bread to slice without crumbling, first let it cool completely.

## Gluten-Free

101. The most common cause of heaviness in gluten-free baking is too much potato, tapioca or cornstarch.
102. Buy only products that are certified as “Gluten-Free”.
103. Substitute sorghum flour for rice flour and make sure rice doesn’t constitute a major portion of your diet. Because rice is grown in flooded paddies, it may contain a higher than acceptable percentage of inorganic arsenic.
104. Don’t expect gluten-free flours to behave like wheat flour. You will have to re-learn how to bake through reading directions carefully, checking out anything you don’t understand (Google it online) and following said directions. And after all that, you’ll need to experiment to adapt recipes to your own unique conditions (your oven, heat type and consistency, climate, elevation above sea level, and so forth).
105. Pay attention to the weight of the flour you want to replace with a gluten-free substitute. Replacing a light flour with a heavy flour (and vice versa) would significantly affect your baking results.
106. Don’t forget to ensure your starches and thickeners are gluten-free too: Use potato, corn starch, arrowroot or tapioca starch for thickening or baking.
107. Oats are not always gluten-free. When purchasing oats or oatmeal, be aware of the possibility of cross-contamination with other grains and grain substances. Always choose the best quality – and check labels carefully.
108. Amaranth, buckwheat, pure cocoa powder, cornstarch, millet, oats, rice, quinoa, sorghum and teff are all gluten-free.
109. Spelt is absolutely not gluten-free: It is a grain related to wheat.
110. Barley and rye contain gluten.
111. Teff is an African grain with a nutty quality. It is rich in vitamin C and the highest of all the grains in calcium content.
112. Watch out for foods and cosmetics (yes, cosmetics) that unexpectedly contain gluten. (Look for ingredients like maltodextrin, dextrin and monodiglycerides.)
113. Common culprits containing “hidden” wheat: Soy sauce, corn flakes, instant coffee, canned soup and flavored snack chips of any sort. (Bottom line: Read the labels!)
114. If it doesn’t have a label, don’t eat it.
115. If you want your bread to taste more “whole grain”, add ground flax meal.
116. If you want your bread to have a more chewy texture, try adding Xanthan gum.

117. To prevent bread from collapsing in the middle, bake it in heavy bakeware with a lid. (The lid helps keep in moisture and lets the bread bake more evenly.)

118. If your bread dough is too stiff, add a spoonful of water. (Good gluten-free bread dough should resemble muffin mixture. It should not be leathery or smooth.)

119. If you want to thrill a gluten-free cook for Christmas, give her a heavy Pyrex loaf pan or deep casserole dish with a lid.

120. If you plan to do gluten-free baking, be sure to purchase a good instant-read thermometer to test the center of your loaves and cakes. (The temperature should read about 205°F minimum for done-ness.)

## Desserts

121. When a recipe specifies separating your cake mixture into two pans, you can just bake a single layer in one pan – but be sure to increase your baking time for 7-10 minutes.

122. To see if your cake is perfectly baked, slip an ordinary dinner knife straight down into the cake center and pull up the same way. If any batter sticks to the knife, your cake is not yet done.

123. When frosting a cake, make sure you cool it completely and brush loose crumbs from its surface with a soft pastry brush. Always frost the sides before the top.

124. To keep your plate clean when frosting a cake, slide strips of wax or parchment paper under the edges. The strips will be easy to pull away from the cake when you have finished, and you won't disturb the cake.

125. Want an easy way to produce perfectly frosted cupcakes? Dip the cupcake top in your frosting, turn it and twist it out again. This will give you a professional-looking swirl on top, eliminates messy spatulas – and takes seconds.

126. When making a chocolate ganache, be sure to use equal parts chocolate and cream. If using it as an exterior glaze, add a spoonful of olive oil and stir completely, to give a nice sheen to your glaze.

127. Vary your liquid ratio slightly, when making chocolate ganache. The basic ratio to start with is equal parts chocolate and cream – but a truffle filling will take less liquid and a glaze slightly more.

128. When making a stiffer ganache for truffle fillings, use a chocolate with a cacao percentage as low as possible – they emulsify a lot more easily than chocolate with a high cacao percentage.

129. Always use a recipe that specifies the cacao percentage: To do otherwise is to run the risk of making a recipe created for a different cacao percentage than the chocolate you are using – and this can seriously affect your ganache.

130. When adding fruit or nuts to any cake recipe, sift the fruit or nuts lightly with a tablespoon or two of flour, using a fine-mesh strainer or sieve.

131. For a quick, impressive dessert, tear up any cake into chunks and line the bottom of a glass bowl or in individual parfait glasses. Spread loosely with strawberry jam. Garnish liberally with whipped cream. Congratulations! You have just made Emergency English Trifle. (Add a can of Devon Custard between the jam and the cream, if you have any in your pantry.)

132. Purchase meringue powder as a staple item in your kitchen, if you make a lot of frostings. Add a teaspoon if you are using more than ½ cup of sugar in any frosting or icing.

133. When making pumpkin pie, you can cook the filling in the top of a double boiler and add it to a perfectly-baked pie shell, if you prefer. (Chill pie before serving.)

134. When making muffins, stir only till liquid and dry ingredients are barely mixed. The batter should be lumpy – not smooth.

135. For crisp cookies, store in a loosely-covered container. (Cool completely first!)

136. Reheat muffins by wrapping them in tinfoil (you can put them all in the same tinfoil “package” and heat in a 400°F oven for 15 minutes.

137. Restore crispness to cookies that have inadvertently gone soft by putting them on an ungreased baking sheet and heating in a 300°F oven for 3-5 minutes.

138. For soft, chewy cookies, store in an airtight, completely-sealed container. (Cool completely first!)

139. If you want to become a dessert maven, learn the classics such as fondants (heavy sugar and water pastes, used in fillings or as an icing layer on a cake) and Chantilly creams (heavy whipping cream, sweetened). Of the two, Chantilly cream is particularly useful for beginner cooks and bakers, being easy to whip up in seconds. (The key is to make sure you use fine fruit sugar, well-dissolved so there is no gritty texture.)

## Pastry and Dough

140. When making pastry, chill hands first under icy cold, running water for as long as you can stand. Dry thoroughly. Dust your hands lightly with flour before handling your dough. Then handle as little as possible!

141. Chilled dough is always easier to handle – but make sure it is covered tightly so that it doesn’t dry out – and don’t store it too long, or it will shrink.

142. Chill your water in the freezer for at least 15 minutes before adding it to any pastry recipe. (Water used in pastry recipes should always be ice-cold.)

143. To make easy, stick-free pastry, sprinkle flour on two sheets of parchment paper and spread lightly. Roll or press out your dough as you normally do. Place on one piece of parchment or wax paper and cover with the

other. Roll out. (Don't over-roll!) Lift top layer of paper every few rolls and at the first sign of sticking, sprinkle the top of your pastry with flour before replacing parchment paper. You can keep your dough between the sheets of parchment paper and chill them in the fridge till you make your pie filling, if making pie.

144. Sprinkle flour over your rolling pin and rub in gently before rolling out pastry or cookie dough, if not using the parchment paper method. It will help prevent your pastry or dough sticking to the roller. (Re-flour the rolling pin as often as necessary during the process.)

145. No matter what type of flour you use in your cookie or pastry recipe, always use all-purpose flour to sprinkle on your rolling surface or on your rolling pin.

146. How can you tell when chocolate cookies are done, since they are already "brown"? Look for a matte finish – they shouldn't look shiny.

147. Chill your dough in the refrigerator for an hour or two, if you are planning to roll out cookie dough. You won't need to use so much flour to prevent them from sticking to the rolling pin.

148. Always knead chilled cookie dough for a moment or two after removing from the refrigerator to relax the butter. (This will prevent your cookie dough from cracking when you roll it.)

149. If you are re-working the remaining dough after cutting out shapes and find that the dough becomes too rubbery, simply wrap it in plastic wrap and set it back in the refrigerator for fifteen minutes to relax it. Then continue rolling.

150. When making pierogy dough, add beaten eggs to the dough for a more pliable, thinner pastry. Place strips of wax or parchment paper between each rolled circle to prevent sticking.

151. Keep pierogy dough (and rolled-out pierogy circles) covered with damp paper towel, to prevent them drying out as you are working.

152. Re-roll individual pierogy circles a couple of quick passes with the roller, before filling. Your pastry will be thin and delicious.

153. When baking pie shells, prick uncooked pastry with a fork, to help it bake evenly on the bottom.

154. Give pie edges a decorative touch before popping them in the oven. Press the back of a fork evenly all around the rim for meat pies; scallop the edges with a small teaspoon or preserve spoon held upside down, making sure each scallop just touches the next, for desserts.

## Lunches

155. When making large batches of sandwiches, make all fillings first and refrigerate. (Leave tuna or salmon till last.)

156. Garnish sandwiches with radish flowers or fresh vegetable slivers for extra visual appeal.



When making large batches of sandwiches, prepare these garnishes ahead of time and store in jars of ice-cold water till serving time. Drain and let sit on paper towel for a few minutes before garnishing plate.

157. You can freeze many types of sandwiches but avoid freezing those whose fillings contain egg, mayonnaise, lettuce or tomato.

158. When freezing sandwiches, wrap individually – don't let flavors mingle.

159. If you run out of freezer bags, you can freeze sandwiches effectively and safely by wrapping them in waxed paper; then in aluminum foil. (Make sure all seals are tight and complete.)

160. When making sandwiches in advance, wrap them in waxed paper; then cover with a slightly dampened linen tea towel.

161. If you plan to cut the crusts off party sandwiches, by all means make your sandwiches in advance – but cut off the crusts right before serving, to prevent dried-out edges.

162. If using a fresh, whole loaf for sandwiches, chill it in the refrigerator before slicing (and use a very sharp knife). You won't have those uneven torn bits, if you follow this advice.

163. You can make fancy-looking sandwiches really easily. Try ribbon sandwiches – three slices of bread, with the outer slices being white and the inner slice, brown (or vice-versa). Spread interior slices with soft fillings – cream cheese, jam, hazelnut spread, chocolate spread or the like. Wrap in wax paper and chill for at 1-2 hours. Cut off all crusts before serving.

164. Another type of party sandwich that looks impressive: Pinwheel sandwiches. Use really fresh bread, trim crusts first. Roll out bread with rolling pin. Spread with cream cheese or other soft filling. Place pitted olives or sweet gherkins in a line at one end of rolled-out slice. Roll up from the garnish end, as tightly as possible. Wrap tightly in foil or waxed paper, twisting each end to make a strong seal. Refrigerate for a minimum of 2 hours. Cut into thin slices with a very sharp knife right before serving.

165. Rolled sandwiches are looser than pinwheels, and served in one piece. For an added touch, toast them by baking in a very hot, 450°F oven for 5-7 minutes.

166. Remember to take your butter out of the fridge a couple of hours before making sandwiches, if using butter. Whip it slightly when it has softened, to make it even more spreadable.

167. For the best, most consistent garlic bread, mince a fresh garlic clove or two (to taste) and add to room-temperature butter. Whip or beat together, until minced, fresh garlic is utterly dispersed through the butter. Let sit for at 15-20 twenty minutes, to blend the flavors.

## Eggs and Egg Dishes

168. Whatever size and type of egg you choose to buy, make sure it is graded AA or AAA.

169. Store eggs in the container carton you bought them in – not loose in your refrigerator-door egg bay.
170. Don't buy unrefrigerated eggs – no matter how “fresh” the grocer insists they are. Eggs need to be maintained at 40°F or slightly colder.
171. Fresh eggs can be safely kept in your refrigerator for 3-5 weeks.
172. If you want a perfect poached egg, use a fresh egg.
173. Treat uncooked eggs the same as any other food you serve, if they are out of the refrigerator – observe the 2-hour rule. (“Put leftovers away within 2 hours of serving.”)
174. Refrigerate cooked eggs straight away – and use within 3-4 days.
175. Yes, you can freeze raw eggs – but not in the shell. Freeze whole eggs in a container, and label it with the date. For mixed white-and-yolk, pour into ice cube trays. Freeze, remove, put in a container and label. (Raw eggs will keep up to a year in a chest freezer.)
176. To freeze cooked eggs, use the yolk only – the white of a cooked egg will turn unpleasantly rubbery. To prepare: Separate your raw eggs, and place each yolk carefully in a small saucepan, without breaking. Slowly add cold water to just above the yolks. Cover and (barely) bring to a fast but not rolling boil. Remove carefully with a slotted spoon onto layers of paper towel. When your eggs are well-drained, place in a container, date and freeze.
177. To make a mock Hollandaise sauce, first chop ¼ cup of butter into pieces (it doesn't have to be room temperature and will cut better if chilled). Set aside. Then make a basic white sauce -- bubble and slightly brown a tablespoon or two of flour in 2 tablespoons of butter (NOT your chopped butter!) over medium-low heat; then turn heat down and slowly add 1 cup of milk, stirring constantly.
- Add a dash of cayenne and black pepper. Mix a tablespoon or two of the sauce into 1-2 egg yolks. Pour egg yolk mixture back into your mock Hollandaise sauce, stirring constantly for a minute or two. Add your reserved, chopped butter, piece by piece, to your sauce, stirring in between each addition. Remove from heat. Add 1 tablespoon of lemon juice.
178. When you bake eggs, do so in heat-proof individual dishes, lightly greased. (2 eggs to a dish.) Cover them with 1 tbsp. milk or cream.

## Sauces and Gravies

179. You can thicken sauces with more than one thickening agent – useful to know if anyone has allergies: Flour, cornstarch, rice flour, ground arrowroot, guar gum and tapioca starch. (Choose one thickening agent per sauce – don't combine!)
180. Have problems with lumpy gravy? Next time try thickening your gravy with a few instant potato flakes, stirring them in slowly and constantly.

181. Guar gum is extremely potent, so don't use anywhere near the amount you would use with flour or corn starch.
182. Use highly refined flours such as cake-and-pastry flour for thickening gravy. (It will be less likely to form a "skin" while cooling.)
183. Don't use aluminum pans for gravy prep: Use No-Stick, copper or stainless steel. (Aluminum will turn your gravy an un-appetizing grey color.)
184. Don't just stir your liquid into your flour-and-butter roux: Whisk it vigorously, without stopping, as you pour. This will help keep your gravy smooth and lump-free.
185. Your roux should be bubbly and brown lightly round the edges. The moment it starts to do this, turn the heat down to low and start adding your liquid.
186. If you discover your gravy is too heavily salted, adding a little sugar will help neutralize the salty taste.
187. Gravy too mild? Add a couple of packets (individual serving size) of Oxo or Knorr powdered bouillon (chicken or beef) and stir thoroughly.
188. Out of flour, arrowroot and cornstarch, both cornstarch and arrowroot have twice the thickening power (with arrowroot topping the list).
189. Should you refrigerate leftover meat in gravy or separately? If you want the meat for sandwiches, the answer is "separately" – but if you simply plan to reheat it; store your meat in the gravy. (This will keep your meat tasty, moist and tender.)
190. If you need to add acidity to your gravy or sauce, add wine.
191. You can add wine to a marinade. If you use your marinade as a base for your sauce, be sure to bring it just to the boil and reduce it down during the cooking process.
192. You can half the oil in any marinade and replace it with wine.
193. Always use a good quality wine when cooking. It will make a noticeable difference to your final dish. Don't buy wine designated as "cooking" wine or sherry off the supermarket shelves – it is full of sodium, deliberately added to make it undrinkable. (Chef's rule: If you wouldn't drink it, don't cook with it!)
194. It is permissible to use raw wine (young wine with stronger acidity or tannin) in cold dishes – especially if you add sugar or fruit.
195. When you soak fruit in wine without heating, this is called "maceration" (from the Latin macerare, "to sweeten and soften"). It is a technique to bring out the fruit's natural juice. (You are also macerating when you sprinkle sugar over your strawberries and let them sit for a couple of hours in the fridge.) Used in this context, maceration has nothing to do with chewing!

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