

# Learning How to Cook; Secrets Unveiled



## I did not always know how to cook

Learning how to cook can be a bit overwhelming, especially for amateurs. If you are like me, I wasn't known to be the best cook; honestly speaking, I could not cook to save my life. I completely sucked at it. Then, it suddenly became necessary to learn how to cook because of this one incident.

The memories are still vivid in my mind. My uncles were visiting for a couple of days, so I decided to cook red stew, which is essentially an African version of tomato sauce. Who could get that wrong? You would think it was hands down the worst stew I'd ever tasted.

I was so ashamed and disappointed in myself, and the look on their faces when they finally tried the stew screamed yuk. The stew looked awful. I could tell, just looking at it, that It

was nothing like the customary African red stew.

Thankfully, I have now perfected my craft on this dish. It has become a staple in my household. It is true that the more you practice anything, the better you can become at it.

## **If I could do it, you can too**

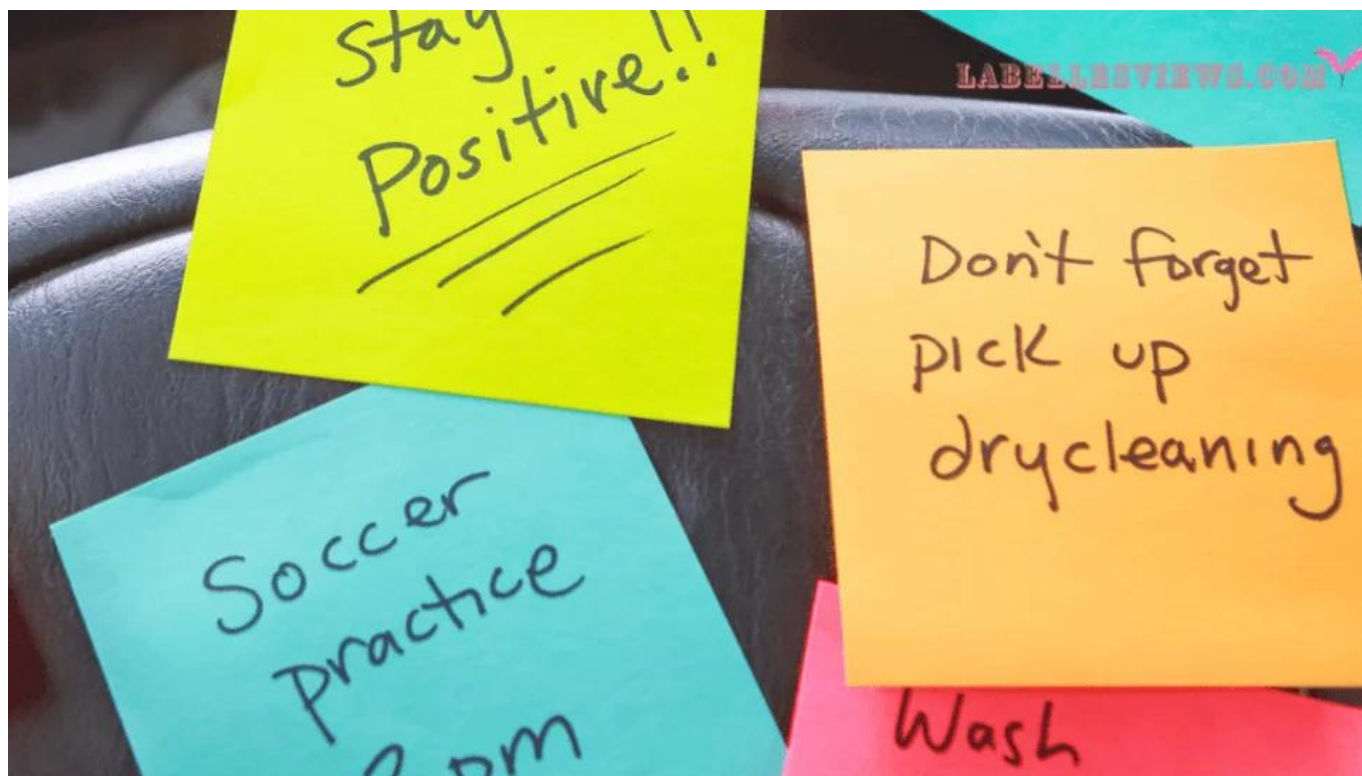
I tell this story to motivate the one person who thinks that they can't cook no matter how hard they try. Cooking can become overwhelming if you don't learn the basics before attempting to cook.

A discouraged friend once said she always gets it wrong, even when she follows a step-by-step recipe. Yes, it is frustrating trying to learn anything, especially if you keep getting it wrong.

My advice to anyone who wants to learn how to cook is simple: watch cooking shows on YouTube and television. There are so many options to choose from, but get started with the ones you enjoy the most.

Like anything else, learning how to cook requires time, so invest a little more of your time and watch yourself go from an amateur to an expert in your kitchen.

## **What if I don't have the time?**



We indeed live in a fast-paced world where it can be challenging to prioritize what is mandatory and what isn't. Having said that, we can always make time for the things we truly desire.

If learning how to cook is something you aspire to achieve, then make the time for it. Clear up some not-so-important things that are time, taking up your and begin your cooking journey. It will be worthwhile, I promise.

## Time-saving Ideas

I am a busy mom and often find myself multitasking, but I had to figure out how to make time to learn how to cook. One of the tricks I used to save time was recording cooking shows I enjoyed. Doing so meant that I could skip through commercials every time they came up.

This trick literally would save me half of the time recorded because, technically, these shows are only 30 minutes long, but because of commercials, they tend to last for a whole hour.

*Some of my favorite chefs I watched were Anne Burrell, Gordon Ramsey, Bobby Flay, Jamie Oliver, Rachael Ray, Ina Garten, Samin Nosrat, and the list goes on...*

Youtube and Pinterest are great platforms to explore. I used YouTube a lot when I was learning how to cook. Each time I found a channel that made the type of food I enjoyed, I hit the subscribe button. This way, I was notified when a new video was uploaded.

In addition to watching the cooking shows that will inspire you to want to put on an apron and get in the kitchen, I also read the book “Salt Fat Acid Heat” by the legendary [Samin Nosrat](#).

This book provides the necessary knowledge for amateur chefs. It is a stepping stone to becoming successful in the journey of learning how to cook. Another thing to watch out for is cooking terms. These tend to be confusing, especially for beginners. Check out the [beginner's guide to the most confusing cooking terms](#).

## **Learn How to Read Recipes**



Avoid going for complicated recipes. A well-written recipe is easy to read and straightforward. Typically, recipes are written in two parts: the ingredients and the method. The ingredients that are listed first usually mean they are used early in the cooking process.

It is crucial to adopt this step in order to follow a recipe correctly. Spend some time reading and understanding the recipe before attempting to cook. Not understanding the recipe will result in a failed endeavor. Some recipes require more time than others. For example, when I make a chicken dish, I prefer my chicken seasoned overnight or at the very least 2 hours before cooking.

This is just a preference because I find the chicken tastes a lot better when seasoned overnight. Now, if you do not have the time or cannot plan ahead of time, there is no need to worry. Having the right ingredients is very important as they can make or break a dish.



# The must-have ingredients



Ingredients are crucial in getting a dish right. Therefore, it is essential to stock up on a variety of ingredients. Typically, you are halfway done with meal prep when you have them available to you. Some of my absolute favorite ingredients that I probably use in most of my dishes, fresh or dry, are;

*Salt, Black pepper, White pepper, Onion, Garlic, Ginger, Parsley, Cilantro, Basil, Rosemary, Maggi cube, paprika, Cayenne pepper. Etc. Chicken or vegetable broth is also a must-have in the kitchen.*

My favorite salt-free pre-mixed herbs that I use in most of my dishes are Mrs. Dash's ingredients; they come in different flavors. I tend to go for salt-free ingredients because they help me control the amount of sodium I add to my dish.

# Different Types of Fat



When it comes to choosing the right fat for a dish is dependent on the type of dish you are cooking. Typically, I tend to use olive oil more than the other oils, but that's not to say that the other oils aren't as good.

*"Like salt, fat is a flavor enhancer. However, salt and fat enhance flavors in different ways. Salt reinforces flavors, while fats enable you to fully taste them."*

*Samin Nosrat*

Imagine cooking anything without adding any sort of fat; I can't imagine that, as it will be flavorless. Though fat has been made out to be the bad guy who isn't fair to the waistline, it really isn't if consumed in moderation. Also, depending on which fat you consume, some fats are actually good for your health.

# Practice makes perfect



Now that you have watched and learned about the dishes you love, it's time to actually play chef and get to practice what you've learned. Do not beat yourself up if things don't work out the first time. As a matter of fact, it is almost impossible to get things right the first time, but as you continue to practice, cooking will begin to seem more and more natural.

And just like in everything else we strive to learn, consistency will get you your end goal. Staying consistent will be key as you continue in your cooking journey. Here are some recipes that may help the [50 most saved recipes on Food Network](#).

## Add your own touch to it

Another thing you should know about learning how to recreate other people's recipes is that there are no rules. Once you get the hang of things, begin to experiment by adding or



subtracting ingredients to make the dish yours.

Personally, I never follow recipes to the T. I would often add my own touch to it. Do not worry if you find it difficult in the beginning. With more practice, you will surely become a master in your kitchen.

## Make it simple



A grilled chicken dish is my go-to when I am in a rush. Typically, I prefer the skinless bone-in or bone-out chicken thighs because I find them to taste better than the chicken breast. Season these with salt, pepper, garlic, and Mrs. Dash seasoning, and off to the grill or sautéed in a pan. This could take approximately 15 minutes, and dinner is ready.

Chicken dishes are best marinated overnight or at least two hours ahead of time. But it can also be seasoned and cooked right away. It just may not taste as good.

The cooking business (Mise en place) is a very crucial phase in the delivery of what is on the menu to the customers. This

is the process where the chef prepares everything ahead of time that is needed on the menu. Preparing ahead of time can make your cooking journey a lot less overwhelming.

Some people make their lives unnecessarily difficult when it comes to cooking something up that is fast and healthy for the family. Some of these dishes are pretty straightforward to make. Try prepackaged frozen vegetables. Typically, they are as healthy as the fresh ones, and the best part is you can throw them in the microwave and then viola.

## **Frozen vegetables are your friend**



Frozen vegetables may need a little more seasoning, but don't you worry. This is what I do; after microwaving them, move them to a pot or pan and cook until the water is completely dry, then add some olive oil or unsalted butter, preferably grass-fed butter, and season as needed.

Believe me when I tell you, it works great. Pair with some rice and chicken breast or your preferred protein.

# Did You Know...

*Did you know that some dishes may appear to be easy to cook but, in reality, require specific techniques to get them right? For example, Though scrambled eggs need the least amount of time to cook, it is often so easy to get them wrong. Here is, in my opinion, a perfect way to [scramble eggs](#) by Gordon Ramsey.*

*Spaghetti is supposed to be easy to cook, but it requires a step-by-step process to get it right. Some people like their spaghetti al dente; this is a fancy way of saying half-done. Here's a [perfect technique to cook pasta](#).*

Learning how to cook is a journey that can become enjoyable if you follow the right steps. The goal is to focus more on the foods that you enjoy and, most importantly, try not to make things complicated.

Pick dishes that aren't difficult to make, especially at the beginning of your cooking journey, as getting yourself overwhelmed with complicated dishes may have you quit before you even begin. Here are some easy dinner recipes that you may find enjoyable to learn.

My cooking journey has been truly incredible, and when I look at how far I've come, I am absolutely amazed at my progress. I have pretty much perfected my craft in the kitchen. Of course, I am still learning new recipes, but overall, I am happy with where I am as a cook in my kitchen.

***If you found this article helpful, please don't hesitate to let me know below.***