

kitchen stories  
**anyone can cook**



kitchen stories

# **anyone can cook**

**Our Favorite Recipes for Every Day**

PRESTEL

MUNICH · LONDON · NEW YORK



To home cooks, everywhere.



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# Our Story

It all began with a simple idea: Encourage more people to get cooking at home. Although eating is such an integral part of our lives, many people lack the time, inspiration, and kitchen confidence to make their own meals. So, to help others (and ourselves) overcome these obstacles, we founded Kitchen Stories – a cooking platform to inspire any cook, filled with a range of recipes from easy to more challenging, detailed step-by-step instructions, and engaging videos. Our motto? Anyone can cook.

As recent college graduates, we had limited work experience. Potential investors laughed at our idea: There were enough competitors on the market already – what exactly would we do differently? Nevertheless, we had faith. We decided to pursue our idea, selling our cars and borrowing money from friends and family to get it started. Using a rental home as our set, we produced the first 100 recipes in 14 days. Six months later, we released the first version of our app. Today, we have more than 17 million users worldwide.

Although our home is the digital world, we've always loved the idea of making a cookbook. In these pages, you'll find the same sentiment we've had from the beginning: "Anyone can cook." This cookbook is here to inspire you to make weeknight meals that are anything but boring. For many of the dishes, you'll need only 30 minutes, for some only 5 ingredients, and others only a single pot. Alongside our all-time favorite Kitchen Stories recipes, you'll also find new dishes developed exclusively for this very book.

Happy cooking!

Verena & Mengting

# About the Book

When we decided to go for it – to publish a cookbook for the first time ever – we grappled with our approach. Firsts are significant, and we wanted our debut to not only be memorable, but true to who we are as a brand and a community. So there were lots of questions about how to translate our tech-driven, digital mindset onto the printed page.

It turned out that it wasn't quite as complicated as we thought. After all, our mission is simple: To empower people to cook. So it was essential to us that our cookbook be as useful as possible – it should be as intuitive and easy to navigate as our apps, and filled with recipes that are both appealing and approachable, no matter the reader's entry point.

We settled on dinner as the theme for the same reasons. After all, it's the meal that's most challenging for home cooks – even we, a team of food editors and chefs, get into ruts of boredom and laziness. So with a special emphasis on dishes you can cook throughout a busy week, every recipe within these pages can be made in less than an hour, including prep and cooking time. There's no clever calculation to make it so, it's just how it's designed.

Flipping through the pages, you'll find ideas that will restore your faith in what a weeknight dinner can be: from staples of the quick-and-easy arsenal, like pasta bakes and stir-fries, to meals you'd be proud to serve at a dinner party and surprised to find out work just as well on a Tuesday night. Trust us, you've got this.

## Chapter structure

This cookbook is divided into six chapters, starting with an overview of a few foundational skills and terms we consider essential for the recipes included. You might be learning these for the first time, or perhaps you could simply use a reminder as you're cooking of the difference between mincing and dicing, or the right roasting temperature for root vegetables. Either way, you'll find Chapter 1 is a great foundation from which to dive into our recipes. Here, we'll also cover the basic tools and pantry ingredients we think every kitchen should be outfitted with for utility and variety, plus a few novel ideas from our chefs and editors.

The remaining chapters (2–6) are dedicated to our recipes. You might recognize some of them from the Kitchen Stories app, including recipes from our community, of which we feature one per chapter. We've made room for these time-tested favorites here because, to be honest, our first cookbook would be incomplete without them – they're classics. In addition, you'll find a range of new, cookbook-exclusive recipes mixed in throughout to ensure you'll never be short on ideas or inspiration when it's time to get cooking.

## Hero recipes

Each recipe chapter starts with a "hero" dish, so named because it's especially adaptable according to the ingredients you have on hand and your personal taste. We dedicate extra pages to these in order to go in-depth on the dish, its preparation method, and how to swap in other

ingredients as desired. The book's hero recipes will turn out to be the workhorses of your kitchen – think of them as formulas from which you can derive countless fantastic meals from one single foundation.

## Recipe instructions

For every recipe in this book, including our heroes, you'll find a chef's note that includes helpful information about how to prepare the dish successfully. We recommend you read these and the instructions in their entirety before starting the cooking process. This will ensure you're equipped with all the information you need to succeed and won't be thrown any curve balls along the way.

Recipe directions are matched with step-by-step photos, just like in our app, to guide you through and help you visualize the process. On the same set of instructional pages, you'll also find extra tips now and then, with quick bits of information on topics such as how to adapt, store, and swap in alternative utensils or ingredients for the recipe – or even a QR code from which you can jump to related content in our app, like videos and guides.

## Icons

If you're looking for a quick way to decide if a recipe is right for you, the best way is to refer to the icon key, found in the upper left or right corner of each recipe instruction page. The key will indicate basic information about the recipe in a simple, digestible way.

Here you'll find a summary of all the icons featured in the cookbook. Recipes will always include a summary of the total preparation and cooking time first, followed by up to two more icons, for example diet (vegan, vegetarian, or low carb) and seasonality (the season in which a dish is best eaten according to its ingredient list).

"Make ahead" shows that a dish can be prepped in advance to finish later, while "Crowd-pleaser" and "Family-friendly" hint that a recipe scales well for a large group or is suitable for kids and adults alike. Lastly, "From the community" denotes that a recipe was originally submitted to our app by one of our community members, and has now become a tried and true weeknight favorite.



minutes



Vegetarian



Vegan



Low carb



From the community



Crowd-pleaser



Make ahead



Family-friendly



Winter



Spring



Summer



Fall





# Essential Utensils

## General Utensils

- 1 Cutting board
- 2 Knives (chef's knife, paring knife, bread knife, knife sharpener)
- 3 Box grater
- 4 Fine grater
- 5 Rubber spatula
- 6 Whisk
- 7 Metal spatula
- 8 Ladle
- 9 Slotted spoon
- 10 Tongs
- 11 Cooking spoon
- 12 Vegetable peeler
- 13 Colander
- 14 Measuring cups
- 15 Mixing bowls
- 16 Aluminum foil
- 17 Parchment paper
- 18 Kitchen towels

## Cooking Vessels

- 19 Frying pan, 10–12 in. (25–30 cm)
- 20 Heavy-bottomed, ovenproof pot
- 21 Pots and saucepans
- 22 Baking dishes
- 23 Baking sheets

## Appliances

- 24 Kitchen scale
- 25 Immersion blender
- 26 Food processor
- 27 Food thermometer





# Our Pantry Staples

## In the fridge

- Butter
- Milk
- Eggs
- Parmesan cheese
- Yogurt  
(or sour cream)
- Miso paste
- Condiments (mayo, mustard, hot sauce)
- Ginger
- Lemons (or limes)
- Something pickled (capers, olives, pickles, prepared horseradish)
- Fresh herbs (parsley, mint, dill, cilantro, basil)

## Staple vegetables and alliums

- Potatoes
- Garlic
- Onions  
(red and yellow)

## In the cupboard

- Sugar
- Flour
- Cornstarch
- Honey

## Sauces

- Soy sauce
- Worcestershire sauce
- Fish sauce

## Canned goods

- Crushed or whole tomatoes
- Coconut milk
- Beans or chickpeas
- Tomato paste

## Oil and vinegar

- Olive oils  
(one for serving, one for cooking)
- Vegetable oil
- One sweet vinegar (apple cider or balsamic)
- One sharp vinegar (rice, red, or white wine)

## Dried goods

- Beans
- Lentils
- Bouillon powder
- Pasta
- Noodles
- Rice
- Nuts
- Seeds





# 15 Essential Spices to Always Have on Hand

**ALLSPICE** Warm allspice adds a special something-something to a variety of dishes from stews and meaty braises to desserts.

**BAY LEAVES** Mild and herbal, bay leaves are great for long-simmering soups and stews. Always pull them out before serving, as the leaves themselves aren't edible.

**BLACK PEPPER** Sharp and pungent, black pepper is a ubiquitous seasoning often paired with salt to finish off just about any dish.

**CARAWAY** This slightly aniseed-like spice can be used whole or ground in sweet or savory baked goods, braises, and casseroles.

**CHILI FLAKES** Made of dried and crushed red chili peppers. Sprinkle chili flakes on dishes as a spicy garnish or let them linger in stews and sauces.

**CINNAMON** Sold ground or as whole sticks, cinnamon is often relegated to sweet baking projects but makes a delicious addition to savory dishes, too.

**CORIANDER** Citrusy and subtly sweet, use whole or ground in curries or on roasted vegetables and meats.

**CUMIN** Whether used whole or ground, this is a warm and nutty spice that works well in curries, soups, marinades, and sauces.

**CURRY POWDER** A spice mix typically composed of coriander, cumin, turmeric, and fenugreek, curry powder that can add a kick of flavor to roasted vegetables, simple fried eggs, and many other dishes.

**DRIED OREGANO** Unlike many other herbs, oregano retains its sweet and earthy flavor when dried. Add a pinch to salad dressings, pizza, or pasta sauce.

**DRIED THYME** Like oregano, thyme retains its slightly lemony, minty flavor when dried. If replacing fresh thyme with dried, use less, as dried thyme is even more pungent.

**FENNEL SEEDS** With a licorice-like flavor and subtle sweetness, fennel seeds are delicious when paired with roasted meats and vegetables, as their flavor really emerges when heated.

**NUTMEG** Too much nutmeg can overwhelm a dish, so err on the scant side. Rather than going for ground, try buying whole nutmeg and grating it fresh when adding to dishes.

**PAPRIKA** Ranging in flavor from sweet to hot, paprika can be used to add a subtle or strong spiciness and smoke to soups and stews.

**SALT** A fundamental seasoning found in every kitchen around the world. We recommend using kosher or fine sea salt for everyday cooking, and a fancier, flaky salt for garnishing.

## Pantry Items We Couldn't Live Without



“In my kitchen, I find a dash of flavored olive oil can never hurt. My favorites are lemon- and garlic-infused olive oils for pesto, gremolata, chimichurri, and other herby sauces.”

KRISTIN

“Bonito flakes are an important part of Japanese cuisine – one of my favorites to cook at home. As a natural flavor enhancer, they’re great for seasoning dishes and for making dashi, a stock that’s the basis of many Japanese dishes.”



CHRISTIAN



“In my kitchen, you’ll always find Thai chilis and chili flakes, which I toss through pasta sauces, over roasted vegetables, and into pots of beans. I like to freeze fresh Thai chilis to make them easier to keep on hand.”

DEVAN

“Nutritional yeast is always stocked in my kitchen. It’s not an active yeast, but a seasoning that gives food more flavor and depth. I use it in sauces and soups, and even sprinkle it over pasta dishes.”



JULIA



“I’m addicted to tinned anchovies packed in olive oil. I layer them onto sliced tomatoes and sourdough, drop them into pestos or Caesar dressings, blend them with olive oil to make an umami-punched pasta sauce, or eat them solo, late at night.”

**RUBY**

“Fried onions can provide texture to almost any dish – plus, a little sprinkle can even save dishes that may not have turned out perfectly.”



**LISA**



“My security in cooking comes from a jar of chili crisp. I eat it with almost everything, from cucumber salad and boiled eggs to pasta, rice, and dumplings.”

**XUECI**

“Since a vacation in Styria (southern Austria) where they make really high-quality pumpkin-seed oil, I can’t do without it. This creamy, dark green, and nutty oil enhances any salad and is amazing with a scoop of vanilla ice cream.”



**JOHANNA**



“I almost always have preserved lemons in the pantry, which lend an intense citrus flavor and mild tartness to pasta sauces, roasts, stews, salads, and dressings. A little goes a long way, so I start by mincing a quarter lemon and adding more as needed.”

**JULIE**





# The Foundations

# Master the Foundations of Everyday Cooking

*In this chapter we've pulled together the knowledge of our chefs and editors to give you concrete and helpful step-by-step instructions for everything from holding a kitchen knife properly to how (and why) to blanch vegetables. Read through the tips and tricks found within the coming pages anytime you feel you need to build or balance out your foundational home-cooking techniques.*

## **Basic knife skills every home cook should know**

Many a weeknight meal begins at the cutting board. Our essential set of knives is short and sweet: a chef's knife, a smaller vegetable or paring knife, a serrated bread or utility knife, and a knife sharpener. Each knife has its own benefits and you'll want to choose a different one depending on what you're slicing and dicing.

A chef's knife is perhaps the most versatile and important knife in your arsenal and makes a quick job of everything from chiffonading herbs to chopping an onion or slicing a steak, whereas a smaller vegetable or paring knife is more suited to tasks like hulling strawberries, peeling tough fruit or vegetable skins, or scoring meat. A serrated knife is more versatile than you might think, and should by no means be relegated only to slicing bread. Use it for slicing tomatoes, sandwiches, melons, or heads of lettuce.

## **How to roast**

Consider a pan-fried chicken breast, blanched broccoli, or boiled potatoes. While all taste perfectly good just as they are, they take on new, crisped-up dimensions when finished with a roast in the oven. Countless other ingredients benefit similarly from being roasted until cooked through and golden-brown. The ideal time and temperature depend as much on the ingredient as the consistency and taste you want to achieve. Our introduction and suggested recipes are a great starting point to help hone your skills.

## **How to pan-fry and sauté**

So many recipes begin with pan-frying or sautéing. Put simply, both techniques deal with cooking ingredients in a small amount of fat – typically oil or butter. Pan-frying usually means dealing with larger portions – say, a whole chicken breast or long spears of asparagus –



whereas sautéing tends to refer to smaller pieces of ingredients cooked over a higher heat and stirred frequently (think a diced onion, ground beef, or sliced mushrooms). Despite the slight variation in method, both approaches are commonplace and easy to master.

### How to blanch

For the novice cook, the prospect of blanching can seem daunting. However, the word simply refers to the process of briefly submerging ingredients (especially fruit and vegetables) into boiling water. This flash-cooking method helps to draw out their flavor and intensify their color, while allowing them to retain their crisp-tender bite. It's also helpful for other applications like peeling tomatoes, making the skins far easier to slip off. Though not suited to all fruits and vegetables, blanching is an excellent technique

for snow peas, carrots, green beans, broccoli, and – as you'll see in the pages that follow – many more.

### How to cook classic pantry staples

In the many recipes within this book, you'll find us circling back to a few staples served up in different ways – they might feature in soups, as sides, or as key components of a dish. To help you succeed every time, you'll first need to familiarize yourself with some basic knowledge: What does the ratio of rice to water need to be, do you need to rinse drained noodles, and how exactly do you cook dried beans? Our overview shows you eight foundational tips for pasta, polenta, quinoa, rice, rice noodles, dried beans, and lentils, as well as methods for toasting seeds and nuts, so you can feel confident preparing them any which way.







# The Basic Knife Skills Every Home Cook Should Know

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### 1 How to stabilize a cutting board

Before any ingredient hits your cutting board, you need to make sure it's stable. Some cutting boards already have little plastic feet on them so they won't slip, but for those that don't, here's the easiest way to make sure they are secured: Dampen a paper towel and lay it flat underneath your cutting board.



### 2 How to hold a knife properly

You will have more control if you hold a knife with your thumb touching the blade and the rest of your fingers pressing against the edge of the handle. It's also important to use your free hand in the correct way. To protect yourself from cutting your fingers, curl the fingers of your free hand into a claw to secure the ingredient you're cutting. Press your knuckles up against the blade and treat them as a guide for the knife.



### 3 How to slice

To slice a tomato, hold it against the cutting board with your free hand and use a serrated knife to make thick or thin slices. To slice a potato, hold it against the cutting board with your free hand and use a chef's knife to cut a thin slice off it. Turn the potato with your free hand so the sliced edge meets the cutting board and stabilizes the potato as you slice it length- or widthwise, thickly or thinly.



### 4 How to chop

Whether you refer to the end product as chopped, cubed, or diced, every variation of a "chop" starts with slices. To dice a stalk of celery, for instance, use your knife to halve the stalk lengthwise, then turn the stalks perpendicular to your knife and, using your free hand to hold them, chop the celery into small cubes. A "rough" chop generally means that it's not important for all the pieces to be the same size.



## 5 How to chiffonade

Chiffonading herbs will give you beautiful long strips of aromatic greenery to thread through dishes or garnish them with. To chiffonade basil, pluck all the leaves and stack them directly on top of each other. Roll them lengthwise, then turn the roll so it's perpendicular to your chef's knife. Slice the roll into thick or thin lengths all the way through. Use your hands to zhuzh them up and separate the pieces before using.



## 6 How to mince

To mince ingredients like garlic or ginger, start by slicing, then roughly chop into pieces using a chef's knife. Place the palm of your free hand on top of the knife near the tip and rock the knife back and forth over the chopped pieces. Use the edge of the knife to gently scrape the pieces into a pile and rock the knife back and forth over and over again until the pieces are very small. You can also use this technique with fresh herbs.



## 7 How to julienne

To julienne something is simply to cut it into long, thin pieces – like a matchstick. For an onion, this would be as simple as halving and slicing it thinly, but for something like a carrot or cucumber, a julienne is a much more demanding type of cut. To julienne a carrot, peel it and then use your knife to slice it thinly into long rectangles. Stack the rectangles, then slice lengthwise into thin strips.



HERE'S HOW TO SHARPEN  
YOUR KNIVES AT HOME.



# How to Roast

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Loaded roasted potatoes	276



**1** The process of roasting should begin with a hot oven, so choose your temperature – for vegetables, aim high at around 400°F (200°C); for meats, try a slower, lower roast at around 325°F (160°C) – adjust the oven rack as needed, and set the oven to preheat. Prepare your ingredients by chopping them into equal-size pieces so they roast evenly, or simply leave them whole for a longer roast.



**2** Toss or place your prepared ingredients onto a baking sheet with a low rim (ideal for vegetables) or into a baking dish (well suited for large hunks of meat). Make sure that the ingredients have enough room around them, as ingredients that are too tightly packed next to each other, or the rim of a dish, will steam, not roast.



**3** Drizzle with oil or another high-heat-tolerant fat and season with salt, pepper, or various spices to your taste. See our list of 15 essential spices on page 17 for inspiration.



**4** Transfer your cooking vessel and ingredients to the oven and roast until golden or mahogany-brown on the outside and tender and cooked through on the inside, tossing and rotating as needed for more even browning. If you're not sure how long your ingredients will take, just keep a close eye on them, checking them visually (or with a food thermometer for meats) every 5 minutes after they've been roasting for 15 minutes.

# 5 Things to Roast



CARROTS



CHICKEN LEGS



CAULIFLOWER



BRUSSELS  
SPROUTS



BUTTERNUT  
SQUASH

