



What's a Cook to Do?: An Illustrated Guide to 484 Essential Tips, Techniques, and Tricks

James Peterson

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From America's favorite cooking teacher, multiple award-winner James Peterson, an invaluable reference handbook.

Culinary students everywhere rely on the comprehensive and authoritative cookbooks published by chef, instructor, and award-winning author Jim Peterson. And now, for the first time, this guru-to-the-professionals turns his prodigious knowledge into a practical, chockablock, quick-reference, A-to-Z answer book for the rest of us.

Look elsewhere for how to bone skate or trim out a saddle of lamb, how to sauté sweetbreads or flambé dessert. Look here instead for how to zest a lemon, make the perfect hamburger, bread a chicken breast, make (truly hot) coffee in a French press, make magic with a Microplane. It's all here: how to season a castiron pan, bake a perfect pie, keep shells from sticking to hardcooked eggs. How to carve a turkey, roast a chicken, and chop, slice, beat, broil, braise, or boil any ingredient you're likely to encounter. Information on seasoning, saucing, and determining doneness (by internal temperatures, timings, touch, and sight) guarantee that you've eaten your last bland and overcooked meal.

Here are 500 invaluable techniques with nearly as many color photographs, bundled into a handy, accessible format.

What's a Cook to Do?: An Illustrated Guide to 484 Essential Tips, Techniques, and Tricks Details

Date : Published April 19th 2007 by Artisan

ISBN : 9781579653187

Author : James Peterson

Format : Paperback 432 pages

Genre : Food and Drink, Cookbooks, Cooking, Reference, Nonfiction, Food, Foodie

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Arlian says

It is such a shame that people in America do so little cooking that they find this book (or books like it) necessary. This book is hardly about *cooking* at all, but is partly about where housekeeping and cooking meet. That is, there is a lot of info about cleaning solvents (all of those mentioned are strong chemicals), how to sharpen a knife, clean a copper pot, etc.

The other info was all shit like how to cut an onion and peel garlic. I don't need a book this basic and it saddens me people are so incapable of basic life skills that they reach for books like this to help them.

P.S. If you REALLY want helpful, useful, and creative tips and techniques to help yourself in the kitchen, check out the magazine "Cooks illustrated". It has a 2 page spread every issue with new tricks that are reader submitted. The staff chooses the best 10-20 and publishes them, giving the submitter of the "best tip" a prize. I don't find every single one helpful for my lifestyle, but a fair number of them are incredibly useful, and further are things I wouldn't have thought of on my own and are pleased to implement in my kitchen/cooking.

Carey says

I read this from cover to cover in two days. Packed with must-know kitchen tips your mom didn't teach you.

Denise says

Excellent guide for both beginners and those well-versed in the kitchen. Useful techniques and thorough reference.

Amy says

A great book with a lot of helpful information. My mother bought it for me when I moved out, and I found that this book answered most of the questions I had in my first months of cooking.

Juraj Kubica says

Toto je jediná príručka, ktorú mám trvale odloženú v kuchyni. Nie sú v nej recepty na varenie, ale rady, čo robím v kuchyni. Od jednoduchých pekárskych a cukrárskych tipov po názorné návody, ako efektívne ošúpať rôzne druhy ovocia a zeleniny. Toto nie sú triviálne rady pre živela, ktorý vie variť, ale nie je v kuchyni

profesional.

Courtney says

Great reference tool.

Justin says

Many of the tips are too basic (e.g. how to grate cheese) and the useful ones usually don't have enough pictures

Justinia says

Bought this for my daughter for the good instructions in basic food prep, but this book is full of interesting tips.

Alli Inouye says

I think I could read this book forever... Thank god I cannot remember the correct way rescue flavorless fruits!

Jo says

This is packed with good stuff!

Aleks says

This book can be used as a go-to guide when you need assistance in a particular area but I think that YouTube would be a better source. After reading this I figured that I could really use a book that describes how to deal with particular vegetables and fruits that would describe how to work with them. There were bits and pieces of this type of information in this book and that was the only parts I actually enjoyed.

Dora says

I really like this book. It has answers to a lot of cooking problems. I believe that it deserves a place on most cooking enthusiasts' bookshelves.

Becca says

I absolutely loved this book. I'm a culinary student and I was kind of nervous about taking one of the classes and wanted to brush up on all of the basic techniques that I learned over a year ago. Reading through my text books was just too much. However, this book was amazing. It has detailed descriptions of all of the basic techniques as well as pictures. It even gives pointers and shortcuts in the kitchen. I really liked how easy it was to use. It's even a good book just to flip through and read. I highly recommend it for the home cook or someone who is interested in culinary.

Andrea James says

This book feels like it would be more useful if you already have a reasonable amount of experience with cooking and would like to fill in some gaps in your knowledge like "what to do with an octopus".

And more importantly you'd like to fill in those knowledge gaps with a quick snapshot tips rather than reading a big culinary school type of book.

Most of the 484 "essential" tips are quite short. I put essential in inverted commas because it's questionable as to how essential they are. I suppose it depends on the type of life one leads...maybe this is for people who grew up poor but now have a bit more money and are worried that they might look like a savage?

Tip number 484: How to eat bread

Don't serve yourself directly from the bread basket or plate; put a piece of bread on your butter plate. Tear off bite-sized pieces. The same goes for the butter: Don't butter your bread straight from the dish in the centre of the table. Transfer a piece of bread to your butter plate and then serve yourself, again a bite at a time, from your own butter plate

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In case you're worried, it's only the last few tips that are related to etiquette - I am being slightly facetious by picking that tip. The rest of the book contains cooking/food tips. The instructions are fairly clear but as I mentioned above, it helps if you're familiar with cooking techniques/terms in order to follow along with the steps.

Samara says

I love this book. I know a lot about cooking but it's nice to have something to turn to when I have a dilemma.
