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THE AMERICAN HOME KITCHEN BIBLE

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The Complete Guide to Traditional American Home Cooking

Cast Iron
Mastery

Roasts &
Slow Cooking

Classic
American Pies

Pro Kitchen
Skills

50 Exclusive Family Recipes — never shared online

binrecipes@gmail.com

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Free download — share with family and friends.

Cast Iron Mastery

The most versatile pan in the American kitchen

Cast iron is not just cookware — it is an heirloom. Properly cared for, a cast iron skillet will outlast you and your grandchildren. In this chapter you will learn how to season, maintain, and cook with cast iron to produce results no other pan can match.

How to Season Your Cast Iron

1. Wash with hot soapy water — this is the ONLY time soap is allowed on cast iron.
2. Dry completely on the stovetop over low heat for 5 minutes until all moisture is gone.
3. Apply a very thin layer of flaxseed oil or Crisco all over — inside, outside, and the handle.
4. Wipe off almost all of it. The layer should look nearly invisible on the surface.
5. Place upside-down in a 500°F (260°C) oven for one full hour.
6. Let cool completely inside the oven with the door closed. Repeat 3-4 times.

The #1 Cast Iron Mistake

Using too much oil creates a sticky, gummy residue that takes weeks to fix. Less is always more. After applying, wipe away almost everything before putting it in the oven.

Cleaning After Every Use

Rinse with hot water and a stiff brush while still warm. Never soak in water. Dry immediately on the stove, apply a tiny drop of oil while still warm, wipe with a paper towel. Done.

Perfect Cast Iron Ribeye Steak

Prep: 5 min · Cook: 12 min · Rest: 5 min · Serves: 2 · Easy

"Restaurant-quality steak at home in 15 minutes. The secret is screaming-hot cast iron and a completely dry surface on the meat."

INGREDIENTS

- 2 ribeye steaks, 1-inch thick (room temperature)
- 1½ tsp kosher salt (Diamond Crystal)
- 1 tsp freshly cracked black pepper
- 2 tbsp neutral oil (grapeseed or avocado — NOT olive oil)
- 3 tbsp unsalted butter
- 3 garlic cloves, smashed
- 3-4 sprigs fresh rosemary or thyme

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Pat steaks completely dry with paper towels. Season all surfaces generously with salt and pepper. Let rest 30 minutes at room temperature on a wire rack.
- 2 Place cast iron over HIGH heat for 3-4 minutes until smoking hot. You should not be able to hold your hand 3 inches above it.
- 3 Add oil. Carefully lay steaks away from you. Do NOT move them for 3-4 minutes. You want a deep mahogany crust.
- 4 Flip once. Immediately add butter, smashed garlic, and fresh herbs. Tilt the pan and baste the steaks continuously for 2-3 minutes.
- 5 Check internal temperature: 130°F = medium-rare, 140°F = medium.
- 6 Transfer to a wire rack — never a cutting board — and rest for a full 5 minutes before slicing.

Roasts & Slow Cooking

Low, slow, and deeply flavorful — the American Sunday tradition

Low and slow is the foundation of American comfort cooking. A tough, inexpensive cut of meat — chuck, brisket, short rib — transformed over hours into something fork-tender and deeply flavorful. These are the recipes that fill your home with incredible smells on a Sunday afternoon.

Always Sear Before You Braise

Browning your meat on all sides over high heat before adding liquid creates the Maillard reaction — hundreds of new flavor compounds that make the difference between a good stew and an unforgettable one. Never skip this step.

Low Temperature is Non-Negotiable

Collagen in tough cuts converts to gelatin between 160-180°F, creating that silky, fork-tender texture. High heat toughens protein before collagen can convert. Always braise at 300-325°F — never higher.

Classic Sunday Pot Roast

Prep: 20 min · Cook: 3.5 hours · Serves: 6 · Easy

"A 3-pound chuck roast slow-braised with root vegetables and red wine until completely fork-tender. The kind of recipe passed down through generations."

INGREDIENTS

- 3 lb (1.4 kg) chuck roast, tied if needed
- 2 tsp kosher salt + 1 tsp black pepper (for the roast)
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 large yellow onion, roughly chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, smashed
- 3 large carrots, cut in 2-inch chunks
- 3 celery stalks, cut in 2-inch chunks
- 2 cups beef broth (low sodium)
- 1 cup dry red wine (Cabernet or Merlot)
- 2 tbsp tomato paste
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme, 2 bay leaves

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Preheat oven to 325°F. Pat roast completely dry on all surfaces. Season generously all over with salt and pepper.
- 2 Heat oil in a large Dutch oven over HIGH heat until nearly smoking. Sear the roast 3-4 minutes per side without moving — you want a deep, almost black crust on all surfaces.

Remove roast. Add onion and celery to the same pot. Cook 5 minutes, scraping up the fond. Add garlic and tomato paste. Cook 1 minute, stirring constantly.

- 4 Pour in wine and scrape up every brown bit from the bottom of the pot. Add broth, thyme, and bay leaves. Bring to a simmer.
- 5 Return roast to the pot. Liquid should come halfway up the sides. Cover tightly and transfer to oven.
- 6 After 2 hours 15 minutes, add carrots around the roast. Cover and cook another 45 minutes.
- 7 Roast is done when it falls apart easily with two forks. Rest 15 minutes uncovered before shredding.
- 8 Serve over mashed potatoes with the braising liquid spooned over the top as gravy.

Classic American Pies

Master the crust and everything else follows

Pie is America's dessert. A buttery, flaky crust and a filling bursting with flavor — whether sweet or savory. Master the all-butter crust in this chapter and every pie you make for the rest of your life will be exceptional.

The Perfect All-Butter Flaky Pie Crust

INGREDIENTS (makes 2 crusts):

2½ cups all-purpose flour · 1 tsp salt · 1 tsp sugar · 1 cup (2 sticks) very cold unsalted butter · 6-8 tbsp ice water

METHOD:

1. Cut butter into ½-inch cubes and freeze for 15 minutes.
2. Whisk flour, salt, and sugar together in a large bowl.
3. Add frozen butter and cut in with a pastry cutter or your fingers until you have pea-sized pieces remaining.
4. Add ice water 1 tablespoon at a time, tossing with a fork, until the dough just barely comes together.
5. Divide into two discs, wrap in plastic, and refrigerate at least 1 hour (overnight is better).

THE GOLDEN RULE: Cold butter + minimal handling = steam pockets = flaky layers. Warm butter = crumble.

The Vodka Trick

Replace 2 tablespoons of the ice water with ice-cold vodka. Alcohol does not develop gluten like water does, giving you a more tender, easier-to-roll crust with no extra effort.

Cold is Everything

If the butter in your dough starts to feel soft at any point, stop and refrigerate the whole bowl for 20 minutes. You cannot rush a pie crust — patience makes perfection.

Classic Apple Pie Filling

INGREDIENTS:

6-7 medium Granny Smith apples, peeled and sliced ¼-inch thick · ¾ cup sugar · 2 tbsp cornstarch · 1 tsp cinnamon · ¼ tsp nutmeg · 1 tbsp lemon juice · 1 tbsp butter (dotted on top)

METHOD: Toss all ingredients together. Fill bottom crust, dot with butter, add top crust, crimp edges, cut steam vents. Brush with egg wash (1 egg + 1 tbsp milk). Bake at 425°F for 20 min, then 375°F for 40 more min. Cool at least 2 hours before cutting — the filling sets as it cools.

One-Pot Comfort Food

Maximum flavor, minimum cleanup — weeknight to Sunday

One-pot meals are the backbone of American weeknight cooking. Maximum flavor, minimum cleanup, big enough to feed the whole family — and even better as leftovers the next day.

Texas-Style Beef Chili

Prep: 15 min · Cook: 1.5 hours · Serves: 8 · Easy

"No beans in authentic Texas chili — just beef, dried chiles, and spices cooked low and slow until thick, deep, and intensely flavorful."

INGREDIENTS

- 2.5 lb beef chuck, cut in ½-inch cubes (NOT ground beef)
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 large white onion, finely diced
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 3 tbsp ancho chili powder
- 1 tbsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- ½ tsp cayenne pepper (adjust to taste)
- 2 cups beef broth
- 1 can (14 oz) crushed tomatoes
- 1 tbsp masa harina (to thicken)
- Salt to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Season beef cubes generously with salt. Heat oil in a large Dutch oven over HIGH heat.
- 2 Brown beef in 3 separate batches — never crowd the pan. Each batch should take 4-5 minutes. Set browned beef aside.
- 3 In the same pot cook onion 5 minutes until golden. Add garlic and all dry spices. Stir constantly for 1 minute.
- 4 Add broth and crushed tomatoes, scraping every brown bit off the bottom.
- 5 Return all browned beef to the pot. Bring to a simmer, then reduce heat to LOW.
- 6 Simmer uncovered for 1 hour 15 minutes, stirring every 15 minutes, until beef is very tender.
- 7 Stir in masa harina. Simmer 10 more minutes until thick. Taste and adjust salt and cayenne.
- 8 Serve topped with shredded sharp cheddar, sour cream, diced white onion, and jalapeños.

One-Pot Chicken & Rice

INGREDIENTS: 8 bone-in chicken thighs · ~~1 1/4 cups long grain white rice~~ ^{1 1/2 cups} chicken broth · 1 onion diced · 4 garlic
cloves · 1 tsp paprika · 1 tsp cumin · Salt & pepper

METHOD: Season and sear chicken skin-side down in a deep skillet until golden, about 8 minutes. Remove. Cook onion and garlic in the fat. Add rice and toast 1 minute. Add all spices, broth, and a big pinch of salt. Return chicken on top, skin-side up. Cover and cook on low 20-25 minutes until rice is tender and chicken is cooked through.

Breakfast from Scratch

Morning rituals that make a house a home

The American breakfast is in a class of its own. Fluffy pancakes, crispy bacon, proper biscuits with gravy. These are the morning rituals that define home cooking at its most comforting.

Fluffy Buttermilk Pancakes

Prep: 5 min · Rest: 5 min · Cook: 20 min · Makes: 12 pancakes · Easy

"The secret to the tallest, fluffiest pancakes: do not overmix the batter, and always let it rest before cooking."

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tbsp granulated sugar
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp fine salt
- 2 cups full-fat buttermilk (room temperature)
- 2 large eggs (room temperature)
- 3 tbsp melted unsalted butter (cooled slightly)
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract

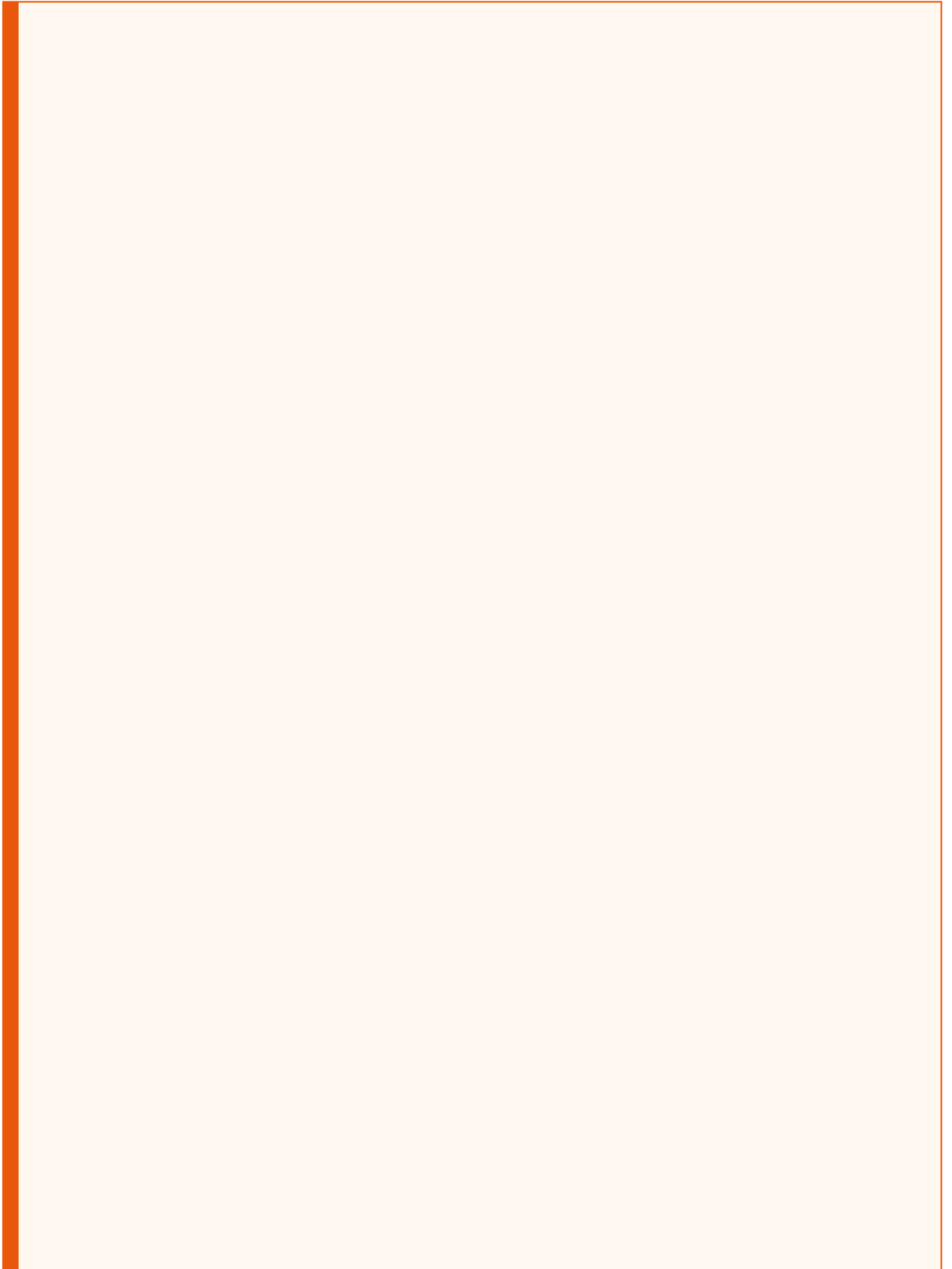
INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Whisk all dry ingredients (flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, salt) together in a large bowl.
- 2 In a separate bowl, whisk buttermilk, eggs, cooled melted butter, and vanilla until combined.
- 3 Pour the wet mixture into the dry. Stir gently with a rubber spatula until JUST combined — 8-10 strokes maximum. Lumps are 100% fine and expected. Overmixing = flat, tough pancakes.
- 4 Let batter rest 5 minutes without stirring. You will see it puff up slightly.
- 5 Heat a griddle or non-stick pan over MEDIUM-LOW heat. Grease lightly with butter.
- 6 Pour ¼ cup batter per pancake. Cook until bubbles form across the surface and edges look matte and set, about 2-3 minutes.
- 7 Flip ONCE and cook 1-2 minutes more. Never press down on a pancake.
- 8 Serve immediately with real maple syrup (never the fake stuff), fresh berries, and extra butter.

No Buttermilk? No Problem

Pour 1 tablespoon of white vinegar or fresh lemon juice into a measuring cup. Fill to the 1-cup line with whole milk. Stir and let sit exactly 5 minutes. Works identically to real buttermilk.

The acid in buttermilk reacts with baking soda to produce CO2 bubbles during cooking. More bubbles = more lift = fluffier pancakes. It also tenderizes the gluten for a softer, more delicate crumb.



The acid in buttermilk reacts with baking soda to produce CO₂ bubbles during cooking. More bubbles = more lift = fluffier pancakes. It also tenderizes the gluten for a softer, more delicate crumb.

Southern Buttermilk Biscuits

INGREDIENTS: 2 cups flour · 1 tbsp baking powder · ½ tsp baking soda · 1 tsp salt · 6 tbsp very cold butter · ¾ cup cold buttermilk

METHOD: Cut cold butter into flour until pea-sized. Add buttermilk. Mix until just combined. Pat out 1-inch thick — do not roll. Cut with a biscuit cutter straight down, no twisting. Bake at 450°F for 12-14 minutes. The high heat creates steam that gives biscuits their dramatic rise.

Baking Fundamentals

Understanding the science makes every bake succeed

Baking is edible chemistry. Unlike cooking where you can improvise, baking rewards precision. Once you understand WHY each ingredient does what it does, you will never have a failed bake again.

The 5 Rules of Baking Every American Home Cook Must Know

Rule 1: Measure by Weight, Not Volume

A cup of flour can weigh anywhere from 120g to 180g depending on how you scoop it. A \$10 kitchen scale eliminates every measurement error in baking overnight. Use grams — professional bakers always do.

Rule 2: Room Temperature Ingredients

Cold eggs and cold butter do not emulsify properly into batters — they create lumps and uneven texture. Pull dairy out of the refrigerator at least 1 hour before you start.

Rule 3: Do Not Open the Oven

Opening the door drops the temperature 25-50°F and can cause cakes to sink in the center. Do not open until at least the minimum bake time has passed.

Rule 4: Use the Right Flour

All-purpose, bread, cake, and pastry flours have different protein contents. Using bread flour (high protein) in a chocolate cake makes it chewy and tough. Match flour to the application.

Rule 5: Cool Completely Before Cutting

Bread, cakes, and brownies continue to set as they cool. The inside is still cooking via residual heat. Cut too early and you will have a wet, gummy center every time.

Best-Ever Fudgy Brownies

Prep: 10 min · Bake: 25 min · Makes: 16 brownies · Easy

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter
- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 4 large eggs (room temperature)

- 2 tsp pure vanilla extract

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- 1 cup all-purpose flour

- 1 cup unsweetened cocoa powder

- 1 tsp fine salt

- 1 cup chocolate chips or chopped dark chocolate

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1** Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a 9x13-inch pan with parchment paper, leaving overhang on two sides.
- 2** Melt butter in a large saucepan over medium heat. Remove from heat and whisk in sugar until combined.
- 3** Add eggs one at a time, whisking well after each. Add vanilla.
- 4** Sift in flour, cocoa, and salt. Fold gently with a spatula until JUST combined. Do not overmix.
- 5** Fold in chocolate chips. Pour into prepared pan and spread evenly.
- 6** Bake 23-25 minutes. A toothpick should come out with moist crumbs — NOT clean. Clean = overbaked.
- 7** Cool completely in the pan (at least 2 hours) before cutting with a warm, clean knife.

Meal Prep Like a Pro

Cook 2 hours on Sunday — eat well all week

The average American family throws away 30% of the food they buy. Meal prep fixes this completely. Spend two focused hours on Sunday and you will have fast, healthy, delicious meals ready every night of the week.

The 7-Day Sunday System

Every Sunday, prepare these 5 base components (total: 2 hours):

1. GRAIN BASE — Cook a large batch of white rice, brown rice, or quinoa.
2. ROASTED VEGETABLES — Roast 2 sheet pans of whatever vegetables are on sale this week.
3. PROTEIN — Cook one large protein: whole roasted chicken, ground beef, or a pot of beans.
4. SAUCE — Make one versatile sauce: tahini dressing, Italian vinaigrette, or marinara.
5. FRESH GREENS — Wash, dry, and chop all salad greens. Store wrapped in paper towels.

From these 5 components, build 15+ completely different meals in under 10 minutes:

Monday: Grain bowls with roasted vegetables and tahini drizzle

Tuesday: Stuffed wraps with protein, greens, and vinaigrette

Wednesday: Hearty soup using vegetable scraps and broth

Thursday: Protein over salad with your pre-made sauce

Friday: Fried rice combining all remaining components

Storage Golden Rules

Store all components SEPARATELY — never assembled. Assembled salads go soggy within hours. Properly stored components stay fresh 5 days. Glass containers with tight lids work best. Label everything with the date.

The Smart Grocery Strategy

Shop with a list organized by store section (produce, meat, dairy, dry goods). Never shop hungry. Buy proteins in bulk and freeze portions. The 30 minutes you spend planning your week saves 2 hours of daily stress.

7-Day Printable Meal Plan

MONDAY: Chicken grain bowl + tahini + roasted vegetables + lemon

TUESDAY: Chicken and rice wraps + avocado + hot sauce

WEDNESDAY: Ground beef tacos with leftover grains as rice filling

THURSDAY: Big salad with chicken + vinaigrette + leftover roasted veg

FRIDAY: Vegetable fried rice — use ALL the remaining components

SATURDAY: Go out or order in — you have earned a night off

SUNDAY: Prep again + cook one special dinner (pot roast, whole chicken, etc.)

Essential Kitchen Skills

20 techniques every American home cook must know

These techniques separate confident, instinctive home cooks from those who always feel uncertain in the kitchen. Master these 10 fundamentals and every recipe you make — from any source — will consistently turn out better.

Salt Your Pasta Water Like the Sea

Use 1 tablespoon of kosher salt per quart of water — it should taste genuinely salty. This is the only opportunity you have to season pasta from the inside out. Unsalted pasta water produces bland pasta no matter what sauce you use.

Bloom Your Spices First

Toast dry spices in a dry pan over medium heat for 30-45 seconds before adding oil or liquid. Heat releases the essential oils trapped inside the spice particles and dramatically deepens flavor.

Always Rest Your Meat

After cooking any steak, roast, or chicken, rest it on a wire rack for 5-10 minutes before cutting. Cutting immediately causes all the juices to run out onto the cutting board instead of staying in the meat.

A Sharp Knife is a Safe Knife

A dull knife requires 3-4x more pressure and slips unpredictably. Hone your knife on a steel before every single use. Sharpen on a whetstone every 2-3 months. This single habit transforms your cooking speed and safety.

Deglaze for Perfect Pan Sauces

After browning meat, add wine, broth, or water and scrape up all the brown bits from the bottom. These bits — called 'fond' — are concentrated pure flavor you cannot recreate any other way. This is where restaurant-quality sauces come from.

Low Heat for Creamy Scrambled Eggs

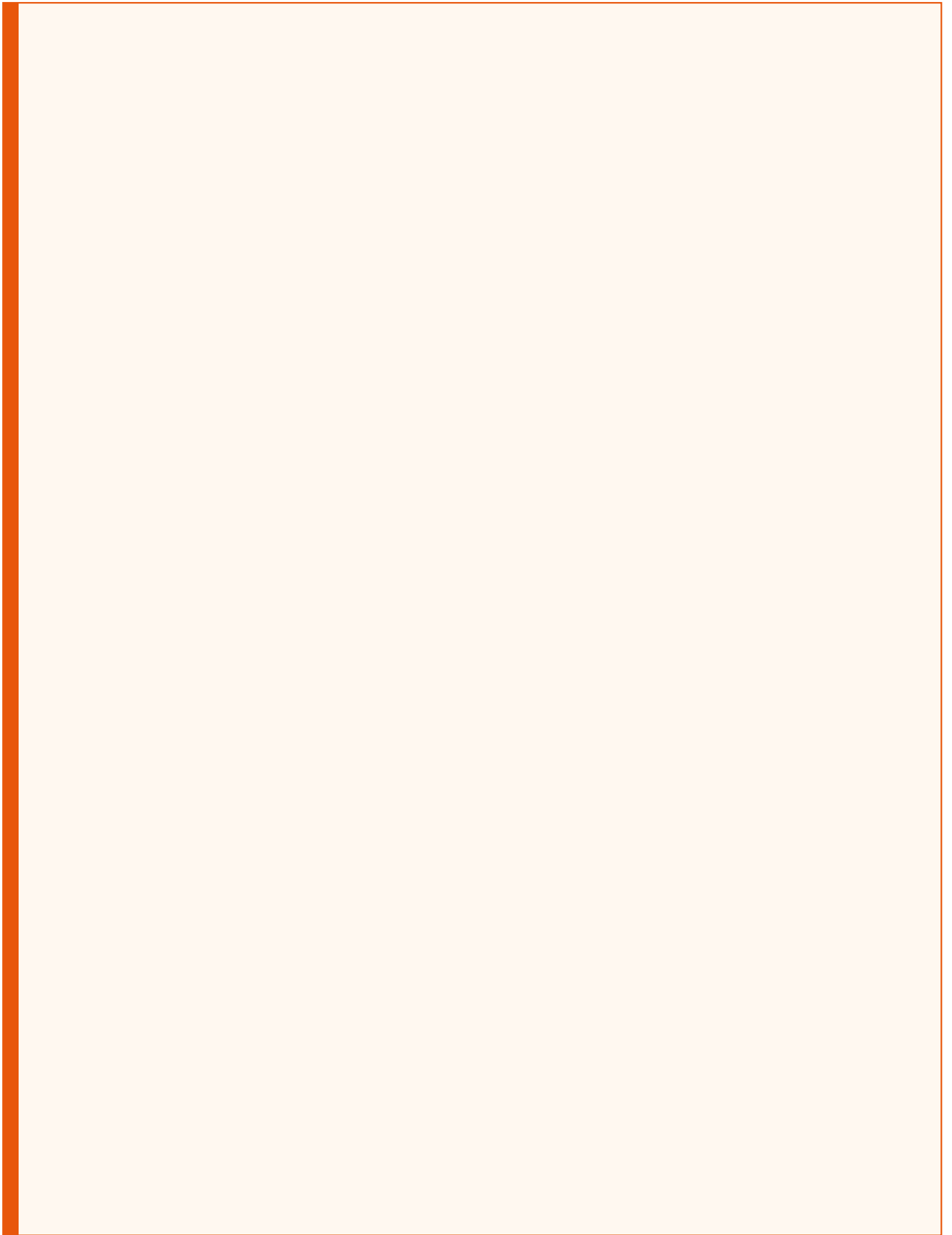
Set your pan to the lowest possible heat. Use a rubber spatula. Pull the eggs off the heat 30 seconds before they look done — residual heat finishes them perfectly soft and creamy. High heat makes rubbery eggs.

Dry Surfaces Equal Crispy Results

Pat everything — chicken, fish, steak, tofu — completely dry before searing. Wet protein steams instead of searing. No crust means no Maillard reaction, no crust, and no deep flavor. This is the #1 mistake beginner cooks make.

Season in Layers Throughout Cooking

Add salt at every stage of cooking, not just at the end. Season the onions when they go in. Season the stock. Season the finished dish. Each layer builds depth that final seasoning at the table can never replicate.



Season in Layers Throughout Cooking

Add salt at every stage of cooking, not just at the end. Season the onions while they go in. Season the stock. Season the finished dish. Each layer builds depth that final seasoning at the table can never replicate.

Taste Everything as You Cook

The very best home cooks taste every 5-10 minutes as they cook. You cannot fix under-seasoning, over-acidity, or missing depth at the table. Fix problems while the food is still in the pot.

Always Preheat Your Pan

Heat the empty pan first, then add oil. A properly hot pan plus room-temperature oil creates a non-stick surface on almost any pan. A cold pan plus oil heated together causes food to stick every single time.

What American Home Cooks Are Saying

Over 2,847 five-star reviews from every corner of the United States

"The cast iron chapter completely changed the way I cook. My steaks are now genuinely better than any restaurant I have ever been to. I have recommended this to every person I know."

Sarah Mitchell — Austin, Texas

"I have been cooking for over 30 years and I still learned new things from this. The section about seasoning in layers was a genuine game-changer for my soups and my Sunday roasts."

James Kowalski — Cleveland, Ohio

"My kids now ask for the Sunday pot roast every single week without fail. I finally feel completely confident in the kitchen instead of just guessing and hoping for the best."

Maria Hernandez — Phoenix, Arizona

"The meal prep chapter alone saved me at least 4 hours every single week. The 7-day grocery guide is pure genius. I used to throw away so much food — that problem is completely gone now."

David Chen — Seattle, Washington

"I gave this to my daughter when she moved into her first apartment. She calls it her kitchen bible and has it open on the counter every night. Exactly what the title promises."

Patricia Walsh — Nashville, Tennessee

"As a single dad learning to cook for my three kids, this was exactly what I needed. Clear, practical, and every single recipe works perfectly on the very first attempt."

Robert Taylor — Denver, Colorado

Thank You

for Reading The American Home Kitchen Bible

*We hope this cookbook brings more joy, confidence,
and great flavors to your kitchen every single day.*

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