The Top 10 Quick Tips that will save common household recipes!!!

Here are some tips that will help make common recipes even better. Learn to make your biscuits more fluffy, buy the right cookware, make amazing french toast, and much much more. 1. Making great biscuits: biscuits are great from scratch because most recipes use only 5-6 ingredients. My personal recipe uses only baking soda, baking powder, flour, buttermilk, salt, and butter. The most important thing to remember to ensure that your biscuits come out fluffy is to make sure that you use cold butter and that you leave the butter in small chunks throughout the mixing process. A common error is to mix the butter smoothly into the mixture. If you leave the butter in chunks, as your biscuits cook, the butter will form layers in the dough and the result will be more rise and fluff. This also works for making any puff pastry from scratch. Another great idea is to take the dough and put a thin layer over the top of a bowl of soup, then to bake the whole bowl in your oven. This will give your soups a beautifully fluffy top. Of course, make sure that your bowl is oven safe before baking it. 2. Get a really good non-stick skillet: if you're tired of having food stick to the bottom of your cookware, then you really need to invest in a great non-stick skillet. The one that I have only set me back $30 and I can cook an egg on it over easy without any oil and not break the yolk . I'm very partial to Caphalon's commercial lines, but definitely check out Anolon, T-Fal, and Farberware as well. Some other very important features are whether the skillet comes with a cover, whether or not the handle gets hot when it cooks, and how long other buyers have found that the non-stick surface lasts for. Make sure that you don't confuse non-stick with hard anodized. Hard anodized is definitely not non-stick and you'll get very frustrated if you get the two mixed up. The additional bonus of a non-stick pan is that cleaning is really easy. Run your pan under water and most extraneous food will slide off easily. 3. Grilling or pan frying chicken without getting it stuck in the pan: one of the biggest problems with cooking chicken is trying to move it off the grill or pan. The key is to be patient. Use a spatula and wait for the chicken to release, because it will. Of course, if you didn't use any oil then the chicken will most likely get stuck anyway. But all proteins reach a certain temperature where they will release and it's just a matter of being patient and waiting for this. 4. It's never too late to marinate: a lot of people end up eating bland food because they think that they don't have time to marinate their food. Even if you only have less than an hour, you can make a great marinade. Just make the marinade twice as strong, and use strong flavors. Here's a few quick marinades that have worked for me - balsamic vinaigrette, soy sauce and minced garlic, or lemon juice/zest and white wine. Also try using dry rubs such as crushed red pepper and garlic powder. 5. Use kosher salt to season: kosher salt is the what every professional cook uses and there's good reason. Regular iodized salt breaks down right away when added to water. In contrast, kosher salt breaks down slower and delivers a more pronounced flavor to whatever you are cooking. If you want your steaks to taste like steak house quality, all you need is kosher salt and coarse ground black pepper. 6. Extra virgin olive oil is pasta's best friend: after cooking pasta, make sure that you mix the pasta with some extra virgin olive oil immediately. Otherwise, you'll find that the pasta will start to stick together after a short amount of time. Don't ever refrigerate plain pasta without adding olive oil. If you do, you'll end up pulling a big pasta block out of the fridge. Also, when you boil pasta, make sure you add a cup of kosher salt per gallon of water. This is what will give the pasta its flavor. 7. Making amazing french toast: the best way to make amazing french toast is to avoid using regular bread. Extraordinary french toast is made with cakes or specialty breads. Try slicing a pound cake from your local grocery store and turning it into french toast the same way you'd usually do it with bread. Another great idea is to make french toast out of banana bread. 8. Making icing for pastries. Making icing for pastries is one of the simplest secrets in the pastry world. To make icing, all you need is water and powdered sugar. Start with the powdered sugar in a bowl and add water slowly until you get the consistency that you desire. Then just use the icing to make danishes, cakes, and other pastries even more delicious. 9. Keep your kitchen knife sharp. A common misconception is that people cut themselves in the kitchen because their knives are too sharp. The reason for most kitchen cutting accidents is actually the total opposite. When you use a blunt knife, the knife will slide off whatever you're cooking and this when the knife usually cuts your hand. To keep your knife sharp, use a diamond steel and bring your knife down the steel at an 18 degree angle. 10. Cracking an egg without getting shells in the mixing bowl. This seems easy enough, but it's surprising how many experienced cooks still experience the annoyance of getting egg shells in their favorite foods. The way to avoid this is to first gently hit the egg's middle against a hard surface. Then, use two hands to do the rest. If you're right handed, hold the egg with your left hand, and use your right thumb to push the middle in and then pull the egg apart with both hands. If you are left handed, just switch the directions above. Good luck with your culinary adventures!

About the Author

Essays, charts and links illustrating predicted environmental and economic trends including oil reserve depletion, food production, and population.

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