

Home Economics Kitchen Skills



*Becoming a daughter
with purpose.*

by Amy Maryon

Our society has lost the art of healthy living. The rise of obesity and health concerns are on the rise. This is partly due to the fact that women today have never learned the fine art of cooking or the benefits of nutrition. We have lost the simplicity of creating meals that are good for us. Our society has turned to a fast food mentality without realizing the consequences awaiting us. This book is written for the future homemaker, single woman, or career woman to encourage and help as you gain skills for your future. You will at one time in your life be responsible for the nutritional welfare of someone else why not start today.

The best way to learn how to do something is to learn from someone who has gone before you AND to practice it again and again. I hope you enjoy learning these skills and benefit from putting them into practice.

Introduction

A symmetrical education in today's world is rare. Many girls have gone out to educate themselves to the highest degrees. They are proficient at speaking in other languages, have spent numerous hours practicing musical talent, and have educated themselves in books to a higher degree. Those are all fine things to attain, but how many hours are actually spent learning and improving upon the skills that will get them through life the most?

People can go through life never speaking a foreign language, but EVERYONE needs to eat. Everyone I have ever known appreciates a good cook. Nothing tastes better than perfectly baked bread, homemade chocolate chip cookies, and a full course meal made from scratch. Plus, who doesn't love saving money by cooking from the basics, instead of relying on over-priced convenience foods? I can guarantee that if you were to get married, your husband would be ever so appreciative of a wife who knows her way around the kitchen and can help stretch his hard earned paycheck. Who would want a beautiful young bride who is placing burned dinners and harder than rock cookies in his lunch each day?? You can save yourself much embarrassment and wasteful hours by practicing your skills now and improving upon them before you get married.

The best way to learn is to start at the beginning, learn the basics, and from there build upon each foundation. Eventually, you will be producing meals that your family will enjoy and doing it with the satisfaction of independency.

This course is designed to help you with the basics of the kitchen and some lessons in simple cooking. It is designed to be completed in one semester. It is divided up into weekly lessons.

Table of contents

Week 1	Major kitchen appliances Small kitchen appliances Safety in the kitchen Hands on skill—using the blender	1 8
Week 2	Cooking terms Cooking abbreviations Cooking equivalents Measuring accurately Choosing recipes Hands on skill---using the food processor	10 15
Week 3	Practicing new skills Breakfast Hands on skill---making breakfast	17 22
Week 4	Baking cookies Ingredients Troubleshooting Tips and techniques Hands on skill---baking cookies	25 33
Week 5	How to chop vegetables Hands on skill---making soup	37 42
Week 6	Quick breads and muffins Tips and techniques Troubleshooting Flour and fat nutrition Hands on skill---making quick breads	45 51

Week 7	Salad and washing vegetables Vegetable nutrition Hands on skill—preparing a salad	52 56
Week 8	All about bread Tips and techniques Ingredients Steps to making bread Clean up Hands on skill---making bread	58 67
Week 9	Meal manners Conversation table starters How to set a table Hands on skill---putting it into practice	72 84
Week 10	Making lunch Hardboiled eggs Hands on skill---making lunch	85 91
Week 11	All about chicken Hands on skill—making a chicken meal How to cook rice How to cook pasta	94 98
Week 12	Cakes and cupcakes Tips and techniques Troubleshooting Hands on skill---making cakes/cupcakes	104 111
Week 13	All about ground beef Tips and techniques	114

All about making pies	120	
Tips and techniques		
Hands on skill---making a ground beef meal	125	
Week 14	Making dinner	128
	Hands on skill---making a dinner	130
Week 15	Easy cooking	138
	Benefits of a slow cooker	
	Hands on skill--preparing a quick fix and crockpot meal	141
Week 16	Nutrition	147
	Hands on skill—making an overnight breakfast	153
Week 17	Hospitality meal	158
	Common cooking substitutes	
	Hands on skill---making a frozen dessert	163
Week 18	Planning a family night	165
	Hands on skill---making a binder	170
Recipe index	173	

Week 6

Quick breads and muffins

Quick breads are not typically as sweet as a cookie, but more flavorful than plain bread. They make a great addition to breakfast and work great as a quick snack. If you become proficient at making them with good results, they are excellent to give as homemade gifts---who wouldn't enjoy eating a delicious tasting homemade treat??

Quick breads require a different process than your "knead and let rise bread dough" does. For most quick bread and muffin recipes, the dry ingredients and the wet ingredients are mixed separately first. Mix your dry ingredients together thoroughly to ensure even distribution since the liquid is only mixed in for a short time. Blend beaten eggs and milk thoroughly without beating up excessive foam. The two mixtures are combined quickly, mixing only until dry ingredients are moistened. Over-mixing causes toughness and tunnels.

Tips and techniques

- The amount of flour needed for breads can vary. This is why you will see in some bread recipes 2-3 cups of flour. Well which is it? It all depends upon how much moisture the flour already contained. Also, it depends on how the flour was handled and stored both before and after it was purchased and on weather conditions. Flour keeps best in a cool dry place. We store ours in the freezer, but bring to room temperature when it is ready to bake.

- If you do not have muffin tins, use cupcake liners placed inside regular canning jar rings to hold them in place. Place these on a cookie sheet. You can also make jumbo sized muffins with these and larger mouth rings. If you need to make many muffins, this is an excellent way to get many done at one time.
- To test for doneness on a quick bread or muffin, insert a toothpick into the center and pull it out. If it is clean, than your bread is done. If it is still gooey, than cook for a few more moments and then test again.
- To lower the fat in your recipe for muffins or quick bread, you can substitute some of the oil with an equal amount of almost any fruit puree (applesauce, pumpkin puree, mashed bananas)
- Muffins and quick breads freeze well. Take a day, and make a bunch to put in your freezer for when unexpected guests stop by or you want a quick and easy treat for the day.
- Muffins will release from pans more easily without tearing if allowed to cool a few minutes in the pans before removing. For nicely shaped muffins that don't have a rim around the top, do not grease the sides of the muffin tins. Grease only the bottoms.

Troubleshooting

Try these fixes to common problems:

Bread sticks to pan. Unless you're using high-quality nonstick metal or silicone baking pans, you should always grease the pans before you pour in the batter. The best thing to use for greasing the pan is shortening, because its melting point is higher than any other kind of fat, which helps maintain a "shield" between pan and batter while the bread is baking. A high-quality cooking spray--one that won't bake on to your pans and discolor them--is also a fast, easy fix. You can also prevent sticking by removing the bread from the pan sooner: let the

bread cool for at least twenty minutes in order to set before inverting the pan.

There are big holes and "tunnels" in the bread, and/or the bread is tough. These problems are usually caused by over-mixing..

There's a big crack down the middle of the quick bread loaf. The crack on top happens when top of the loaf "sets" in the heat of the oven before the bread is finished rising. Don't worry--it's normal for quick breads. Drizzle the loaf with icing or dust with confectioners' sugar.

My blueberry muffins look green! By reacting with the alkaline baking soda, the blueberries' pigments can turn green. Toss the berries with the flour mixture before combining the ingredients; the coating should help. If you're using frozen berries, don't thaw them before using them.

The bread looks done on the outside, but it's still raw in the middle. This is one of the most common quick bread problems, and it can be caused by a few different factors. The oven temperature could be too high. Try lowering the oven temperature and/or putting a loose tent of foil over the top of the bread, so it won't burn before the middle has time to catch up.

Flour and fat nutrition

This section is to inform you about the different types of flour and which are best for you to choose. Most of these recipes call for all purpose flour. Here we learn what flour is made of.

Wheat grains consists of 3 parts:

- **Bran:** This is the hard outer layer of the grain where the majority of the fiber lives.
- **Germ:** This part is the tiny bit in the middle of the grain, also known as the embryo. This part contains the greatest concentration of nutrients.
- **Endosperm:** This is what surrounds the germ. This is the largest part of the grain. It mostly consists of starch and contains almost no fiber or other nutrients.

Wheat grains are extremely nutritious in an unaltered state. There is much of a process to get from the wheat grain to the fluffy white powder we are accustomed to. There are typically 3 types of flour that are readily available:

Bleached white flour: Avoid

Bleached flour is made using only one part of the grain: the endosperm. As we know the endosperm does not have much nutritional value, but it also turns out it can actually be harmful to our health. To bleach flour, it is chemically treated with a chlorine gas. The same chemical used to clean swimming pools is treating bleached flour!! The flour is treated with chlorine because it makes it that perfect white color that we're accustomed to seeing. It also artificially "ages" the flour, which betters the taste.

Unbleached white flour: Use in moderation

Unbleached flour, just like the bleached variety, is only made from the endosperm so it contains very few nutrients. It is, however, allowed to age naturally, and isn't bleached with chlorine. It is a much better alternative to bleached flour. Typically when you buy all purpose white flour—this is it.

Whole wheat flour: Best choice

Whole wheat flour uses all three layers of the wheat grain: bran, germ and endosperm. It contains high amounts of nutrients and lots of fiber. Eating fiber-rich foods helps lower cholesterol and blood sugar levels. It also slows down digestion, which makes us feel full faster and for a longer period of time so we are less prone to overeating. There is a white whole wheat flour that tastes very similar to white flour, but with the benefit of it being whole wheat as to not lose any nutritional value. This is our choice for flour.

So what should you do if you are used to eating whole wheat flour, and you can't imaging leaving your white flour behind?? Try removing bleached flour from your diet altogether. Whole wheat flour is obviously the best choice, but if you're not used to the taste of whole wheat flour, start gradually incorporating it into your cooking.

If a recipe calls for one cup of flour, use 3/4 cup unbleached flour and 1/4 cup whole wheat flour. Once you get accustomed to the taste, gradually increase the ratio of whole wheat flour to white flour. This will take time, but little by little you can increase your level of nutrition by taking some small steps.

Oil and fats (butter):

Butter is a traditional fat. It is made from a simple process that comes from separating the cream from the milk. This is a natural process that only takes a little patience. Once it has separated, all you need to do is skim off the cream and shake it until it becomes butter. It can be made in the blender in about 2 minutes.

Now let's talk about vegetable oils and margarines:

Vegetable oils are oils that have been extracted from various seeds. The most common include rapeseed (canola oil), soybean, corn, sunflower, safflower, peanut, etc. Unlike coconut oil or olive oil that can be extracted by pressing, these new-fangled oils have to be extracted in very unnatural ways.

The process of making canola oil is overall complicated. It is made from a hybrid version of the rapeseed and is genetically modified and heavily treated with pesticides. They then heat it at an unnaturally high temperature so that it can oxidize. It is then processed with a petroleum solvent to extract the oils from it. Then it is heated some more, and acid is added to remove any nasty wax solids that formed during the process. From there it is treated with chemicals to improve the color.

Sounds yummy?!? Now if you want to make margarine, you take it a few steps farther and hydrogenate it until it becomes a solid. Hmmmm...maybe something we should be avoiding.

You can actually make your own coconut oil and olive oil. If something can be made at home, don't you think it would be the best choice to use? Do an internet search as to how to make it. See the difference in these oils. I don't recommend doing it, I just want you to think about how those "vegetable oils" are made, and why it is a BETTER choice to use coconut oil and olive oil for cooking and baking.

The problem with these "bad" oils is that they are in every sort of convenience food. If you look on the back of any wrapper, you are sure to see one of them listed. This is all about choices. Try and choose the best nutritional product as possible. It won't always be possible, but for the majority of the time that you eat, let it be wholesome.

Week 6 hands on skill---making quick breads or muffins.

Try your skills this week at making either a muffin or bread out of these recipes. You can either make them in bread pans or muffin tins, your choice.

Pumpkin bread

1-15 oz can pumpkin
4 eggs
1 c oil
2/3 c water
3 c sugar
Mix the above thoroughly.
3 1/2 c flour
2 tsp baking soda
1 1/2 tsp salt
2 1/2 tsp pumpkin pie spice—mixture of cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger
Mix these ingredients until combined and then add them to the first mixture.
Place in 3 greased bread pans and cook 350 for 40

Donut muffins

½ c white sugar
¼ c margarine, melted
¾ tsp ground nutmeg
½ c milk
1 tsp baking powder
1 c all purpose flour
Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Grease 24 mini-muffin cups or 12 regular size muffin cups.
Mix 1/2 cup sugar, 1/4 cup margarine, and nutmeg in a large bowl. Stir in the milk, then mix in the baking powder and flour until just combined. Fill the prepared mini muffin cups about half full.
Bake in the preheated oven until the tops are lightly golden, 15 to 20 minutes.
While muffins are baking, place 1/4 cup of melted margarine in a bowl. In a separate bowl, mix together 1/2 cup of sugar with the cinnamon. Remove muffins from their cups, dip each muffin in the melted margarine, and roll in the sugar-cinnamon mixture. Let cool and serve

Cinnamon quick bread

1 1/2 c butter
3 c sugar
3 eggs
Cream the above and then in a separate bowl mix:
• 6 c flour
• 3 tsp baking soda
• 3 tsp salt
Alternatively add the flour mixture and 3 cups buttermilk into your creamed mixture and mix until combined.
Grease 3 bread pans and pour in half the mixture evenly into the 3 pans.
In a separate bowl combine:
2/3 c sugar
2 T cinnamon
Sprinkle half the mixture evenly over top of the batter in the pans. Pour the remaining batter evenly over the cinnamon mixture. Top with the remaining cinnamon sugar on 3 breads.
Bake 350 for 40 minutes.
**Don't have buttermilk—combine 3 cups milk with 3 T vinegar and stir. This will cause the milk to curdle within a few minutes. Substitute for the buttermilk.

Banana bread

1 ¾ c all purpose flour
1 ½ c sugar
1 tsp baking soda
½ tsp salt
2 eggs
2 medium ripe bananas mashed
½ c oil
¼ c plus 1 T buttermilk
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 c chopped walnuts—optional
In a large bowl, stir together flour, sugar, baking soda and salt. In another bowl, combine the eggs, bananas, oil, buttermilk and vanilla; add to flour mixture, stirring just until combined. Fold in nuts.
Pour into a greased bread pan. Bake at 325 degrees for 1 hour 20 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool on wire rack. Yield: 1 loaf.

