



Keys to Good Cooking: A Guide to Making the Best of Foods and Recipes

By Harold McGee

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The answers to many kitchen conundrums in one easy-to-use volume, from the author of the acclaimed culinary bible *On Food and Cooking*.

From our foremost expert on the science of cooking, Harold McGee, *Keys to Good Cooking* is a concise and authoritative guide designed to help home cooks navigate the ever-expanding universe of ingredients, recipes, food safety, and appliances, and arrive at the promised land of a satisfying dish.

A work of astounding scholarship and originality, *Keys to Good Cooking* directly addresses the cook at work in the kitchen and in need of quick and reliable guidance. Cookbooks past and present frequently contradict one another about the best ways to prepare foods, and many contain erroneous information and advice.

Keys to Good Cooking distills the modern scientific understanding of cooking and translates it into immediately useful information. Looking at ingredients from the mundane to the exotic, McGee takes you from market to table, teaching, for example, how to spot the most delectable asparagus (choose thick spears); how to best prepare the vegetable (peel, don't snap, the fibrous ends; broiling is one effective cooking method for asparagus and other flat-lying vegetables); and how to present it (coat with butter or oil after cooking to avoid a wrinkled surface). This book will be a requisite countertop resource for all home chefs, as McGee's insights on kitchen safety in particular—*reboil refrigerated meat or fish stocks every few days. (They're so perishable that they can spoil even in the refrigerator.)*; *Don't put ice cubes or frozen gel packs on a burn. (Extreme cold can cause additional skin damage)*—will save even the most knowledgeable home chefs from culinary disaster.

A companion volume to recipe books, a touchstone that helps cooks spot flawed recipes and make the best of them, *Keys to Good Cooking* will be of use to cooks of all kinds: to beginners who want to learn the basics, to weekend cooks who want a quick refresher in the basics, and to accomplished cooks who want to rethink a dish from the bottom up. With *Keys to Good Cooking* McGee has

created an essential guide for food lovers everywhere.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

No matter how creative the chef, every great dish relies on proven science, and this compendium of well-researched data is a textbook for proper food preparation. Curious Cook columnist for the New York Times and author (*On Food and Cooking: The Science and Lore of the Kitchen*), McGee will banish any romantic notions about cooking with his fast-draw expertise. *Keys* is a companion guide designed to be used in conjunction with cookbooks. With chapters devoted to Kitchen Tools, Heat and Heating Appliances, and Cooking Methods, McGee's 101 approach takes nothing for granted, but will surprise readers with lesser known insights, such as that salted water reduces the loss of flavorful and nutritious substances during boiling and that foil should not be used to wrap acidic foods or nonaluminum metal pans. McGee breaks down methods with basic tips--in pan-frying, for instance, warming meats to room temperature and drying food surfaces ahead are important factors for success that are often left out of recipes. Descriptions of foods from common fruits to cultured dairy products and seed legumes are detailed but not trivially so, with McGee summarizing the safe handling, purchase and storage, preparation, and basic characteristics. With an eminently pragmatic approach to cooking and a user-friendly précis of a lifetime's devotion to the kitchen, this is an invaluable addition to food literature. (Nov.)

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Review

"Mr. McGee might have called this encyclopedic work "The Kitchen Home Companion," since it offers **indispensable** information on how to make the most of any recipe—a user's manual that enables home cooks to achieve maximum results... the enjoyment it affords will be found on the table." — **Wall Street Journal**

"If you want to know virtually anything about the "why" of cooking, read Harold McGee. Along the way, he'll teach you the "how." — ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

"McGee's writing is **broad, yet detailed** at the same time, **scientific, but comprehensible.**"

— **CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR**

"A great addition to any cookbook library. It picks up where many cookbooks leave off. The "How's" and "Why's" of a dish's success - or failure - are often a mystery, but McGee sheds light on many of those mysteries to make us more informed in the kitchen and ultimately, better cooks." — **SEATTLE WEEKLY**

"McGee will banish any romantic notions about cooking with his fast-draw expertise... With an **eminently pragmatic** approach to cooking and a **user-friendly** précis of a lifetime's devotion to the kitchen, this is **an invaluable addition to food literature.**"

— **PUBLISHERS WEEKLY**

About the Author

Harold McGee writes about the science of food and cooking. He's the author of the award-winning classic *On Food and Cooking: The Science and Lore of the Kitchen*, and writes a monthly column, "The Curious

Cook," for *The New York Times*. He has been named food writer of the year by *Bon Appétit* magazine and to the *Time* 100, an annual list of the world's most influential people. He lives in San Francisco.

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