



Guide

Beginner's Cooking Toolkit

**Essential Skills &
Simple Strategies to
Make Cooking Easy**

@amyreneecooks

Welcome from Amy



Most women over 50 weren't taught how to cook—and then, we were too busy raising kids, managing a household, and working full-time. Cooking was often about getting something on the table fast, not about building confidence in the kitchen.

Fast forward to now, and our bodies need real food more than ever. The problem?

👉 Cooking feels confusing when you don't have the skills, tools, or a clear game plan. I get it.

As someone with a culinary background, I know that learning to cook doesn't have to be overwhelming—it's all about starting with the right basics.

This guide is your shortcut. You'll learn:

- ✅ The key cooking skills that make everything easier (without fancy techniques)
- ✅ The simple strategies that help meals come together faster
- ✅ Easy meal prep ideas so you spend less time in the kitchen but still eat well

Cooking isn't about doing it all at once—it's about building confidence step by step.



Why Kitchen Confidence Matters

If you've ever stood in front of your fridge, thinking, "What do I even make?"—you're not alone.

Many women over 50 feel stuck in the kitchen because they weren't taught the basics. But here's the good news:

- ◆ You don't need fancy techniques—just a few key skills.
- ◆ You don't need hours to cook—just a smarter approach.
- ◆ You don't need a huge kitchen—just a setup that works for you.

A little confidence in the kitchen goes a long way. Cooking more at home means:

- ✓ Less takeout & packaged foods – so you know exactly what's in your meals.
- ✓ More energy & better health – because you're fueling your body with real food.
- ✓ A simpler, stress-free approach – because cooking feels easier when you have a plan.

The best part? You don't have to do it all at once. This guide will help you take the first step to **take control of your health through food**—even if you've never really cooked before.

Essential Kitchen Skills for Beginners

Cooking doesn't have to feel frustrating. These simple strategies will make everything easier:

🔍 **Master the Basics** – The foundation of every great meal starts with understanding the essentials, like knife skills, proper seasoning, and simple cooking techniques.

🔥 **Understand Cooking Methods** – You don't need to be a gourmet chef. Learning how to roast, sauté, and steam will cover 90% of what you need to make delicious meals.

🕒 **Make Meal Prep Work for You** – Prepping ahead doesn't mean spending hours in the kitchen—it means setting yourself up for success with small, time-saving habits.

💡 **Pro Tip:** Most recipes rely on just a few simple techniques over and over again. Master these, and you'll feel 10x more confident in the kitchen.

👉 Inside this guide, you'll find easy-to-follow handouts to make these skills second nature.

Seasonings for Different Proteins

Using the right seasonings can elevate the flavor of your meals and make healthy eating more enjoyable. This guide provides easy-to-follow tips on which seasonings pair best with different types of protein.

Chicken

Seasonings

- **Herbs:** Thyme, rosemary, basil, oregano
- **Spices:** Paprika, garlic powder, onion powder, cumin
- **Others:** Lemon zest, black pepper, cayenne pepper

Tips:

- For a classic taste, try a mix of garlic powder, onion powder, and paprika.
- For a fresh and zesty flavor, use lemon zest and thyme.



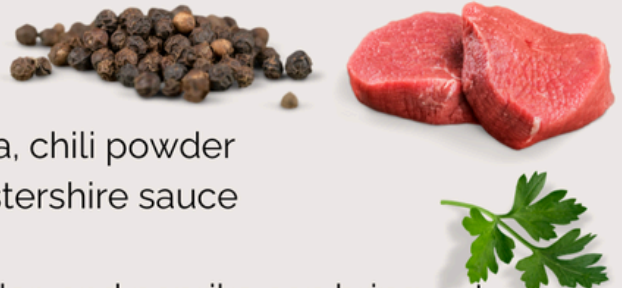
Beef

Seasonings:

- **Herbs:** Thyme, rosemary, parsley
- **Spices:** Black pepper, garlic powder, paprika, chili powder
- **Others:** Mustard powder, coriander, Worcestershire sauce

Tips:

- A simple blend of black pepper, garlic powder, and paprika can bring out the natural flavors of beef.
- Add a touch of Worcestershire sauce for an extra depth of flavor.



Pork

Seasonings:

- **Herbs:** Sage, thyme, rosemary
- **Spices:** Garlic powder, onion powder, paprika, cumin
- **Others:** Brown sugar, mustard powder, apple cider vinegar

Tips:

- For a sweet and savory combination, use brown sugar & mustard powder.
- Sage and rosemary work well with pork, especially when roasting.



Seasonings for Different Proteins

Fish

Seasonings:

- **Herbs:** Dill, parsley, thyme
- **Spices:** Paprika, garlic powder, onion powder, black pepper
- **Others:** Lemon zest, lemon juice, capers

Tips:

- A mix of dill, lemon juice, and black pepper pairs perfectly with most fish.
- For a Mediterranean twist, try parsley, garlic, and lemon zest.



Turkey

Seasonings:

- **Herbs:** Sage, thyme, rosemary
- **Spices:** Paprika, garlic powder, onion powder, black pepper
- **Others:** Lemon zest, cumin, chili powder

Tips:

- Sage and thyme are traditional herbs that complement turkey well.
- For a bit of a kick, add some chili powder and cumin.



Tofu

Seasonings:

- **Herbs:** Basil, cilantro, parsley
- **Spices:** Garlic powder, onion powder, paprika, cumin
- **Others:** Soy sauce, ginger, turmeric

Tips:

- Tofu absorbs flavors well, so marinate it in soy sauce, garlic, and ginger for a delicious result.
- For a more vibrant dish, add turmeric and cumin.



Internal Temperatures of Animal Proteins

165 ° F

- Poultry- chicken, turkey, duck
- Casseroles
- Leftovers
- Fully cooked ham



160 ° F

- Ground meats- beef, turkey, chicken
- Ostrich meats
- Marinated meats
- Eggs to be hot held



145 ° F

- Fish & shellfish
- Veal
- Pork
- Lamb
- Roasts
- Eggs to be served immediately



135 ° F

- Ready to eat and prepared foods, reheated
- Prepared fruits, vegetables, and grains intended to serve hot



Build a Grain Bowl

Base

Greens [2/3]

Romaine
Spinach
Arugula
Mixed greens
Radicchio
Endive
Bibb lettuce

Grains [1/3]

Quinoa
Black Rice
Wild Rice
GF Pasta

Protein [pre-cooked]

Chicken	Ground turkey
Shrimp	Beans
Tofu	Edamame
Hard-boiled eggs	Canned fish

Vegetables/Fruit

Pre-cooked

Broccoli
Brussels sprouts
Asparagus
Butternut squash
Delicata squash

Raw

Tomatoes
Cucumbers
Carrots
Apples
Pears

Texture

Walnuts	Hemp seeds
Pecans	Sesame seeds
Slivered almonds	Pepitas

Flavor Boosters

Fresh herbs	Dressings
Citrus juice	Yogurt
Salt and pepper	Hummus



How to Build a Sheet Pan Dinner

Carbohydrates

Starchy

Sweet potatoes
Regular potatoes
Winter squash

Sweet

Grapes
Apples

Non-starchy

Zucchini
Peppers
Brussels sprouts
Asparagus

Cauliflower
Green beans
Broccoli
Carrots

Protein

Chicken
Shrimp
Tofu

Salmon
Scallops
Turkey

Fat

During cooking

Olive oil
Avocado oil
Pistachios

After cooking

Pumpkin seeds
Chopped peanuts
Crushed walnuts

Flavor Boosters

During cooking

Dried herbs
Garlic
Ginger

After cooking

Fresh herbs
Citrus juice
Salt and pepper



Anatomy of a Stir Fry

Stir fry is a versatile cooking technique popular in many Asian cuisines that involves quickly frying ingredients in a small amount of hot oil while stirring briskly. It's a fantastic method to create meals that are not only quick and delicious but also packed with nutrients. The beauty of stir fry is its adaptability to different ingredients and flavors, making it a perfect dish for creativity in the kitchen.

Protein

Chicken	Tofu
Beef	Tempeh
Shrimp	

Vegetables

Peppers	Carrots
Broccoli	Onions
Snap Peas	Bok Choy

Aromatics

Garlic
Ginger
Green onion

Oils/Sauces

Peanut Oil	Soy Sauce
Canola Oil	Oyster Sauce
Sesame Oil	Hoison Sauce

Carbs

Brown Rice
Rice Noodles
Quinoa

