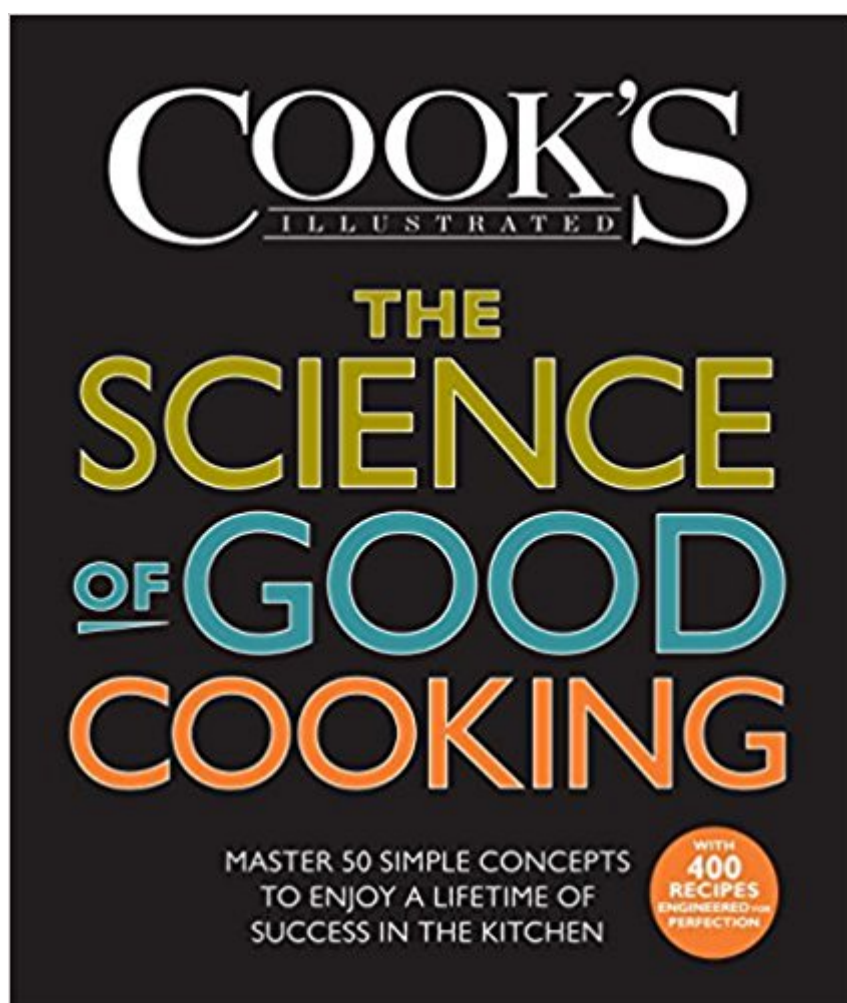


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# The Science Of Good Cooking: Master 50 Simple Concepts To Enjoy A Lifetime Of Success In The Kitchen (Cook's Illustrated Cookbooks)



## Synopsis

Master 50 simple concepts to ensure success in the kitchen. Unlock a lifetime of successful cooking with this groundbreaking new volume from the editors of Cook's Illustrated, the magazine that put food science on the map. Organized around 50 core principles our test cooks use to develop foolproof recipes, *The Science of Good Cooking* is a radical new approach to teaching the fundamentals of the kitchen. Fifty unique experiments from the test kitchen bring the science to life, and more than 400 landmark Cook's Illustrated recipes (such as *Old-Fashioned Burgers*, *Classic Mashed Potatoes*, and *Perfect Chocolate Chip Cookies*) illustrate each of the basic principles at work. These experiments range from simple to playful to innovative - showing you why you should fold (versus stir) batter for chewy brownies, why you whip egg whites with sugar, and why the simple addition of salt can make meat juicy. A lifetime of experience isn't the prerequisite for becoming a good cook; knowledge is. Think of this as an owner's manual for your kitchen.

## Book Information

Series: Cook's Illustrated Cookbooks

Hardcover: 504 pages

Publisher: Cook's Illustrated; First Edition edition (October 1, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1933615982

ISBN-13: 978-1933615981

Product Dimensions: 9.1 x 1.3 x 10.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 876 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #9,434 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #29 in [Books > Reference > Encyclopedias & Subject Guides > Cooking](#) #29 in [Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Cooking Education & Reference > Reference](#) #33 in [Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Baking](#)

## Customer Reviews

Cook's Illustrated is a widely renowned America's Test Kitchen brand that is the work of over 60 passionate chefs based in Boston, Massachusetts, who put ingredients, cookware, equipment, and recipes through objective, rigorous testing to identify the very best.

America's Test Kitchen brands are well-known for top-rated television shows with more than 4 million weekly public television viewers, bestselling cookbooks, magazines, websites, and a

cooking school. Discover, learn, and expand your cooking repertoire with Julia Collin Davison, Bridget Lancaster, Jack Bishop, Dan Souza, Lisa McManus, Tucker Shaw, Bryan Roof, and our fabulous team of test cooks!

Having relied on Cooks Illustrated recommendations for many of my favourite kitchen tools, buying this book was a no brainer. Needless to say I had high expectations going in, and this book did not disappoint. I'm an avid cook, and while I've had great success with certain types of food, I've been frustrated by inconsistent results in others. (I can't seem to get a consistently moist pot-roast -- reason: my cooking temperature was probably too high; wrong cut of meat + oven braising is better than stovetop since it heats more evenly in more directions) The Science of Good Cooking breaks down why food cooks a certain way, and which techniques are best for what purpose. The book is organized into 50 concepts with recipes reinforcing each concept. There's a section called "why this works" following each recipe, which breaks down the science behind each step -- for instance why use a certain type of marinade, cooking technique, take extra steps, etc to achieve a desired outcome. It's nice that it's not just a list of recipes. Experiments back each concept. Meats were weighed, measured, smashed to determine tenderness, and moisture loss. They came up with a range of ideal resting times for various meats based on actually measuring the amount of juices lost at various times, and they sent food to the science lab to analyze their structure. They even stuck bones on mashed potatoes to test out whether keeping bones on makes food taste better. This book debunked some assumptions I had (acid does not actually make food more tender), and helped me understand other ones better - why salt directly applied on skin makes it more crispy, but if you brined the skin you'd get a different outcome. I also learned that the direction you cut your onion affects its taste - obvious in retrospect, but I never thought about that! I was disappointed I couldn't see a table of contents before purchase, so here are the 50 concepts you will find within the book -

1. Gentle Heat Prevents Overcooking
2. High Heat Develops Flavor
3. Resting Meat Maximizes Juiciness
4. Hot Food Keeps Cooking
5. Some Proteins Are Best Cooked Twice
6. Slow Heating Makes Meat Tender
7. Cook Tough Cuts Beyond Well Done
8. Tough Cuts Like a Covered Pot
9. A Covered Pot Doesn't Need Liquid
10. Bones Add Flavor, Fat, and Juiciness
11. Brining Maximizes Juiciness in Lean Meats
12. Salt Makes Meat Juicy and Skin Crisp
13. Salty Marinades work best
14. Grind Meat at Home for Tender Burgers
15. A Panade Keeps Ground Meat Tender
16. Create Layers for a Breading That Sticks
17. Good Frying is All About Oil Temperature
18. Fat Makes Eggs Tender
19. Gentle Heat Guarantees Smooth Custards
20. Starch Keeps Eggs from Curdling
21. Whipped Egg Whites Need Stabilizers
22. Starch Helps Cheese Melt Nicely
23. Salting

Vegetables Removes Liquid<sup>24</sup>. Green Vegetables Like it Hot -- Then Cold<sup>25</sup>. All Potatoes Are Not Created Equal<sup>26</sup>. Potato Starches Can Be Controlled<sup>27</sup>. Precooking Makes Vegetables Firmer<sup>28</sup>. Don't Soak Beans -- Brine 'Em<sup>29</sup>. Baking Soda Makes Beans and Grains Soft<sup>30</sup>. Rinsing (Not Soaking) Makes Rice Fluffy<sup>31</sup>. Slicing Changes Garlic and Onion Flavor<sup>32</sup>. Chile Heat Resides in Pith and Seeds<sup>33</sup>. Bloom Spices to Boost Their Flavor<sup>34</sup>. Not All Herbs Are for Cooking<sup>35</sup>. Glutamates, Nucleotides Add Meaty Flavor<sup>36</sup>. Emulsifiers Make Smooth Sauces<sup>37</sup>. Speed Evaporation When Cooking Wine<sup>38</sup>. More Water Makes Chewier Bread<sup>39</sup>. Rest Dough to Trim Kneading Time<sup>40</sup>. Time Builds Flavor in Bread<sup>41</sup>. Gentle Folding Stops Tough Quick Breads<sup>42</sup>. Two Leaveners Are Often Better Than One<sup>43</sup>. Layers of Butter Makes Flaky Pastry<sup>44</sup>. Vodka Makes Pie Dough Easy<sup>45</sup>. Less Protein Makes Tender Cakes, Cookies<sup>46</sup>. Creaming Butter Helps Cakes Rise<sup>47</sup>. Reverse Cream for Delicate Cakes<sup>48</sup>. Sugar Changes Texture (and Sweetness)<sup>49</sup>. Sugar and Time Makes Fruit Juicer<sup>50</sup>. Cocoa Powder Delivers Big Flavor

The only thing I would have loved was a trouble shooting / Q&A section - e.g. How do you keep meat from cooling too much when you rest it? Overall a great book if you want to improve your cooking technique, and also if you just want to learn more about why things behave the way they do! Update: Looks like "Look inside" is now available for this book so there's finally a table of contents! :) Since I've been cooking with the new concepts in mind, I'm happy with how my meat dishes (especially the stews) are turning out. I also tried using vodka instead of water to make pie crust (with the tip of putting a heated pan under the pie pan) and the pie crust turned out flaky and delicious as promised.

If you are a cooking nerd, you will probably love this. It isn't something you would sit down and read from cover to cover, but more of a grazing experience. I've already picked up several good tips, along with validation some of my cooking practices are actually the best way of going about the process. Others have been more along the lines of, "Why did I never think of doing this procedure this way?" Things that are a bit jarring is the good information tends to be in different parts of the book. So, you are happily reading along and are then redirected to the back of the book for more information. This can happen multiple times in a single chapter/lesson. Reason for the 4 star rating is due to not seeing any recipe I actually cared to try. So far, they either have been eerily similar to the way I have always done things to just not provoking any interest. But, that is me, and I have not yet gone through the entire book.

This is a really interesting book for people who love to cook and want to know a little more of WHY things happen with different cooking methods. Even if you don't plan to cook, anyone with a

scientific background will find the book equally fascinating and they will then probably get activated to try some of the tricks and tips when they do get into a kitchen. Salt brining meats was one of the things I tried and I swear on a stack of bibles that a short 1 hr treatment resulted in the best chicken and pork chops I have ever cooked. The book makes you want to try out new things and these methods usually result in a realization that you CAN cook and produce foods that are really, really good. Recommend for people who want to understand different cooking methods and looking for more than just a typical cookbook that has colored pictures of food and thousands of recipes of things you will probably never make and will not likely duplicate with typical abbreviated instructions in those books.

This is hands down, the greatest cookbook I own. The 50 concepts presented in this book are fascinating and make the process of cooking more interesting and successful for me. I've cooked the best hams, turkey, chicken and beef of my life using the concepts in this book and I've only owned it for one year. I cannot recommend it highly enough - I recommend it to friends, family and my meat, fish and vegetable sources at the local Farmer's Market up the street from my house. This book really should be a 6 (if that were allowed).

Amazing book ! After watching Masterchef series, I wanted to understand cooking techniques. This book clearly explains how certain ingredients react with others - in a scientific way. For example I used to soak rice before cooking. But the author shows you the results if you do so and what should be done instead - rinsing. Highly recommended to any amateur cook!

I love science and I love cooking and love the way they have blended the two subjects together. I love the recipes they have for us and knowing the science behind cooking (times temps), flavors (best way to combine them), how to serve them for maximum impact. I'm still reading this book but I love everything I've read (and applied) so far. I will recommend this book to anyone that loves to cook and wants to know the scientific reasons for doing what they are doing. Armed with this information I can start to make some adjustments on my own as I need to so I can turn out a great meal every time.

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