

Good Housekeeping: Step-by-Step Cookbook

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Extract

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Foreword

I always say I learned to cook twice – first while watching my mum rustling up supper or more extravagant dishes in our kitchen at home and second when I went to train at cookery school. Both I count with equal value. The home kitchen was important as that was where most of the mistakes were made! And the school training was invaluable as I learned all the elementary rules of cooking.

In this book we've put together a winning combination of both. We start with the basics in each chapter, teaching you the step-by-step way to prepare and cook lots of different ingredients. The second part of the chapter puts those techniques into practice with gorgeous recipes, all of which have been rigorously tested in the Good Housekeeping Institute so they're guaranteed to work the first time you make them.

Since the Good Housekeeping Institute was set up in 1924, there's been a significant change in women's role in society with more of us going out to work than ever before. But knowing how to cook is still just as important as it was then. We hope you enjoy this book, learn from it and use it for many years to come.

Emma

Emma Marsden
Cookery Editor

Basic equipment and utensils

Chopping boards

These kitchen essentials come in two materials: wood and some type of plastic (usually polypropylene).

Having a range of sizes will give you more chopping options, with small boards for chopping or slicing small quantities. For most people, three boards should suffice, in sizes of: 15–23cm (6–9in), 20.5–30.5cm (8–12in) and 25.5–35.5cm (10–14in).

Wood Wooden boards are best made from a single plank of wood rather than several pieces glued together, as the joins may harbour bacteria. Some modern wooden boards nowadays are dishwasher-safe, although many of them are not. You should try to check beforehand if this is important to you.

Polypropylene These boards can be bought in colour-coded sets so that you can have separate boards for meat, fish, and fruit and vegetables. They are suitable for washing in the dishwasher.

Knives

Good knives are essential and there are three cardinal rules to follow when buying knives.

- Buy knives singly, rather than in a set: the different sizes chosen to represent one manufacturer's knife set might not suit you.
- Try them out before buying – you need to hold the knife to see if it

feels comfortable and balanced in your hand.

- Don't try to save money: knives are an investment, and good blades never come cheap.

At the very minimum, there are five basic types of knife, which will set you up for most tasks:

- A small paring knife.
- A carving knife suitable for filleting, slicing and boning.
- A large 'cook's' knife for general chopping and slicing.
- A bread knife with serrated edge.
- A utility knife.



Sharp blades

Keep your knives sharp or they will be difficult – and probably dangerous – to use. There are several types of sharpener available: the traditional steel or whetstone is adequate for most home cooks, but the best ones have a diamond coating that is particularly hard-wearing. Remember that, as a general rule to go by, it is best to sharpen knives little but often.



Scales

Accurate measurement is essential when following most recipes, particularly baking. Usually used to measure dry ingredients, the most accurate scale is the electronic type, capable of weighing up to 2kg (4½lb) or 5kg (11lb) in increments of 1–5g. Buy one with a flat platform on which you can put your own bowl or measuring jug and always remember to set the scale to zero before adding the ingredients.

Measuring jugs

These can be plastic or glass, and are available in sizes ranging from 500ml (18fl oz) to 2 litres (3½ pints), or even 3 litres (5¼ pints). Have two – a large one and a small one – marked with both metric and imperial.

Measuring cups

Commonly used in the US, these are used for measuring both liquid and dry ingredients. Cups are bought in sets of ¼, ½, ⅓ and 1 cups. A standard 1 cup measure is equivalent to about 250ml (9fl oz).

Measuring spoons

Useful for the smallest units, accurate spoon measurements go up to 15ml (1 tsp). These may be in plastic or metal, and often come in sets attached together on a ring.

Mixing bowls

For small quantities, the bowls you use for soup, cereals and so on will suffice. However, when mixing larger quantities, such as cake or bread mixtures, you will need at least two large bowls, including one very large one with a diameter of up to 38cm (15in).

Stainless steel bowls work best when you are using a hand whisk, or when you need to place the bowl into a larger bowl filled with iced water for chilling down or to place it over simmering water.



Easy slicing

- A mandolin offers the easiest way of making uniform, thin slices or shreds (see page 182). French metal ones are the best but also pricey.
- Smaller mandolins, which usually have a plastic frame holding the blades, are less versatile but also cheaper.
- A mezzaluna – a curved board and knife – is good for chopping herbs.





SAUCES, DRESSINGS AND ACCOMPANIMENTS

The addition of rich gravies and sauces can transform both savoury and sweet dishes – from the simplest drizzle of balsamic dressing over a salad, a spoonful of refreshing salsa served with grilled fish or chicken, a dollop of creamy mayonnaise for dunking chips into or fresh pesto tossed with pasta to lashings of custard poured over fruit pies or crumbles or a swirl of raspberry coulis or chocolate sauce with ice cream. This chapter is packed with recipes and easy-to-follow techniques for all the classic sauces and accompaniments you will ever want to make. There's essential advice plus variations and troubleshooting tips on saving a split or curdled sauce, and handy hints on freezing and ideas for creating stunning decorative effects for special meals.

Savoury sauces

Sauces and gravies add the finishing touch to many dishes, adding moisture to roast meats or a smooth texture and contrasting flavour that complements grilled meats, fish and vegetables.

White wine gravy

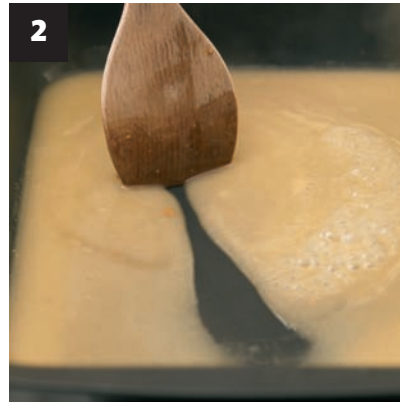
Perfect served with roast chicken.

To serve eight, you will need 4 tbsp plain flour, 500ml (18fl oz) chicken stock, 150ml (¼ pint) dry white wine, 2 tbsp redcurrant jelly, salt and ground black pepper.

1 When the chicken is cooked, skim the fat from the juices in the roasting tin. In a bowl, mix 3 tbsp of the juices with the flour to make a paste.

2 Pour the chicken stock, white wine and redcurrant jelly into the roasting tin and scrape the residue from the base of the tin using a wooden spoon.

3 Return the roasting tin to the heat and whisk in the flour mixture. Simmer gently for 5–10 minutes, then season to taste with salt and pepper and pour into a jug to serve.



Rich red wine gravy

This rich gravy goes well with roasted chicken or meat such as beef.

To serve eight, you will need 4 tbsp plain flour, 300ml (½ pint) red wine, 1.1 litres (2 pints) chicken or beef stock, salt and ground black pepper.

1 When the roast is cooked, strain the juices from the roasting tin into a bowl and skim off any fat, reserving 3 tbsp of the fat.

2 Return the fat to the tin and whisk in the flour. Cook over a medium heat until the flour browns. Remove from the heat, stir in wine or port until smooth. Bubble for 2–3 minutes.

3 Stir in the chicken or meat juices and the stock, then bubble for 10–15 minutes until reduced by half and the gravy is smooth. Skim off any fat and season.



Shallot and mushroom sauce

To serve six, you will need 375g (13oz) shallots, peeled, 1 tbsp olive oil, 300ml (½ pint) red wine, 225g (8oz) quartered button mushrooms, 1 halved celery stick, 4 thyme sprigs, 40g (1½oz) butter, 1 tsp sugar, 15g (½oz) flour.

1 Chop 2 shallots and fry in the oil until golden. Add the wine and bubble to reduce to 2 tbsp.

2 Add the mushrooms and cook for 3 minutes. Add 600ml (1 pint) water, the celery and thyme; simmer for 20 minutes. Heat 25g (1oz) butter in another pan, add the whole shallots and sugar, cover and cook gently for 20 minutes. Remove the thyme and celery, pour sauce over the shallots and reduce by half. Blend remaining butter and flour, whisk into the sauce and simmer for 1–2 minutes. Season.



Bread sauce

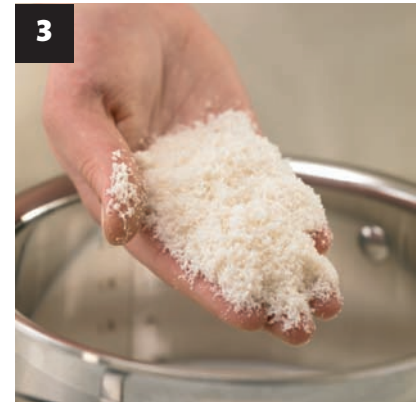
To serve eight, you will need 1 quartered onion, 4 cloves, 2 bay leaves, 450ml (¾ pint) milk, 175g (6oz) fresh breadcrumbs, 50g (2oz) butter, 200ml (7fl oz) crème fraîche, salt and ground black pepper.

1 Stud each onion quarter with a clove, then put in a pan with 1 bay leaf and the milk. Gently heat on the lowest setting for 15 minutes.

2 Remove the pan from the heat and discard the onion quarters, cloves and bay leaf.

3 Stir the breadcrumbs, butter and crème fraîche into the milk. Season with salt and black pepper and serve garnished with a bay leaf.

4 Alternatively, store in the refrigerator for up to two days.



Béchamel sauce

For 300ml (½ pint) sauce, you will need 1 slice of onion, 6 black peppercorns, 1 bay leaf, 1 blade of mace, 300ml (½ pint) semi-skimmed milk, 15g (½oz) butter, 15g (½oz) plain flour, a pinch of freshly grated nutmeg, salt and ground black pepper.

1 Put the onion, peppercorns, bay leaf, mace and milk in a pan. Bring almost to the boil, then remove from the heat, cover, and leave to infuse for 20 minutes. Strain.

2 Melt the butter in a pan over a low heat. Add the flour and cook, stirring, for 1 minute; do not colour.

3 Remove from the heat and slowly pour in the milk, whisking. Season with salt, pepper and nutmeg.

4 Return to the heat and cook, stirring, until the sauce is thickened and smooth. Simmer for 12 minutes.



Variations

- **Simple white sauce** Omit the seasonings except salt and pepper.
- **Thick binding sauce** Increase the butter and flour to 25g (1oz) each.
- **Cheese sauce** Stir in 50g (2oz) grated Cheddar or Gruyère cheese and a pinch of powdered mustard.
- **Parsley sauce** Stir in 2 tbsp finely chopped parsley.
- **Onion sauce** At step 4, stir in a large, finely diced, sautéed onion.



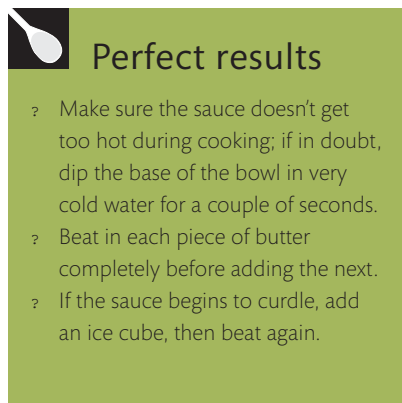
Hollandaise sauce

To serve six, you will need 4 tbsp white wine vinegar, a blade of mace, 1 slice of onion, 1 bay leaf, 6 black peppercorns, 3 medium egg yolks, 150g (5oz) unsalted butter, a little lemon juice, salt and white pepper.

1 Put the vinegar, mace, onion, bay leaf and peppercorns in a pan. Bring to the boil and reduce to 1 tbsp. Cut the butter into ten pieces.

2 Put the egg yolks in a heatproof bowl with one piece of butter and a pinch of salt. Beat, then strain in the vinegar mixture. Place over a pan of hot water, making sure it doesn't touch the water. Whisk for 3 minutes until pale and starting to thicken.

3 Add a piece of butter and beat until absorbed. Repeat with the remaining pieces of butter. Season and add lemon juice to taste. Serve.



Béarnaise sauce

To serve four to six, you will need 4 tbsp white wine vinegar, 2 finely chopped shallots, a few sprigs of fresh tarragon, 6 black peppercorns, 2 medium egg yolks, 75g (3oz) unsalted butter at room temperature, 2 tsp freshly chopped parsley or chervil (optional), salt and white pepper.

1 Put the vinegar, shallots, tarragon and peppercorns in a pan. Bring to the boil and reduce to 1 tbsp.

2 Cut the butter into ten pieces. Put the egg yolks in a heatproof bowl with one piece of butter and a pinch of salt. Beat, then strain in the vinegar. Place over a pan of hot water. Whisk for 3–4 minutes until pale and starting to thicken.

3 Add a piece of butter and beat in until completely absorbed. Repeat with the remaining butter. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Stir in the herbs, if using. Serve.



Simple tomato sauce

To serve eight, you will need 2 chopped Spanish onions, 4 tbsp olive oil, 2 crushed garlic cloves, 2 × 400g cans chopped plum tomatoes, 2 tbsp torn basil leaves, salt and ground black pepper.

1 Gently fry the onions in the oil for 10 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for a further 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until very soft.

2 Add the tomatoes and season. Bring to the boil and simmer gently for 30 minutes or until the sauce is thick and pulpy. Add the basil and check the seasoning.



Pesto

Use on pasta or in salad dressings, mixed into crème fraîche for dips, or spread on toasted ciabatta and topped with cheese and tomato.

To serve four, you will need 50g (2oz) fresh basil leaves, roughly torn, 1–2 garlic cloves, 25g (1oz) pinenuts, 6 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, 2 tbsp freshly grated Parmesan, salt and ground black pepper, lemon juice to taste (optional).

1 Put the basil leaves in a food processor with the garlic, pinenuts and 2 tbsp olive oil. Process to a fairly smooth paste.

2 Gradually add the remaining oil and season with salt and pepper.

3 Transfer to a bowl and stir in the Parmesan. Check the seasoning and add a squeeze of lemon juice if you like. Store in the refrigerator for up to three days, cover with a thin layer of olive oil and seal tightly.

