

Food Knowledge

This is more of food for thought than food knowledge...

My goodness there sure is a lot of information out there today on food. In fact many of you may look up your recipes online. I occasionally do that, usually my husband is known for it. I have a large enough library of food magazines and cookbooks that I don't generally look up recipes online. But I'm a book reader at heart and I trust that my cookbooks give me quality recipes. Of course we don't know until we try them though. Among some of my references below I will also list the cookbook I was published in 2011. One thing I've noticed over the years of my piles of magazines, recipes recycle themselves so I have started going through the endless stacks and ripping out the recipes I want and placing them in binders. Or I donate, gift, or sell the rest at our annual yard sale. I like to place the most recent recipes that I want to try on my recipe stand, which creates a quick reference for grabbing grocery store items, and I have something readily accessible when it's time to bake or cook. Since I love to do both sometimes by endless supply of food knowledge gets the best of me. A great way to organize info is by season or by what it is-veggies, beef, poultry, dessert, etc.*

Just because one doesn't have a lot of money to spend on food doesn't mean that they can't eat healthy off the slim budget that they have. It's all a matter of changing your perspective and shopping around for various food items, saving money when large protein items go on sale, buy more of them, and always price check. Buy produce in season from local farmers, markets or through CSAs that you want to support. Additionally SNAP offers double coupon vouchers to those who want to shop from a farmer that participates. Check with your closest farmers' market, county, or Human Services office to find out more about this program. They also allow you to utilize your vouchers for seeds so that you can grow your own food! So instead of \$10 on produce at the store, your

value increases to \$20. A lot of people order items online, especially if you live in rural or remote areas! Which is the cheapest way to buy [vanilla beans](#) by the way! You can have all your grocery items delivered to your door in some locations however this is an ongoing challenge with innovation and competition if you rely on customers to come to you.

Additionally raising your own livestock; especially goats and chickens is a great way to save money on eggs, chicken, and dairy. Plus if you take really good care of your animals and their diet and environment they live in, you will be healthier. The best food you can eat is your own; free from pesticides; sorry, I'm a firm believer in this. Gardening is a great way to reduce your footprint, eat healthier and save money. Seeds can be expensive but that's why you can also barter and trade, attend seed swaps, and order online for additional savings. Visit my blog for [seed companies to order from](#). I have a ton of others now that have become favorites and I didn't mention. Native American Seed Company, Johnny Seed Company, Territorial Seed Company, Southern Seed Exchange, etc. Plus seeds last as long as you properly store them, a wise farmer told me to store my seeds in the freezer and they will last indefinitely; he mentioned this was a method his parents used that had viable seeds 20 years later. I'm not sure how much the germination rate would be impacted so you decide. In some cases one vegetable will cost the same amount if not more, than one packet of seeds. Planting seeds to watch your food grow literally transforms the way you see the food that you eat and the way that you view our food system. I believe that everyone should grow their own food, but for many it isn't attainable. For those who can't, I encourage you to befriend, volunteer, or embrace a relationship with those who do grow or prepare local, seasonal food so that you can understand the importance of your foodshed.

MAGAZINES

Bon Appetit: This has been by far my longest subscription magazine of all(For at least 10 years I was able to get my annual subscription for \$10 yr). Great way to learn food trends and recipes from all over the globe. Also has unique articles of recommended go to restaurants worldwide. The recipes generally require special ingredients that may not be in your food pantry. If you don't have access to local cultural food markets then sometimes the items can be a bit more expensive than you are willing to spend on one dish. Save money by visiting Indian and Asian markets, the savings is profound on items like spices, flours, bulk items, and special sauces, vinegars, and pastes. You will be glad you did go to the market that specializes in what you are cooking because you can always learn about new ways to cook something and more authentic varieties. I get my tahini(sesame paste) at a lovely family owned market called **Sarah's**, the family named the business after their daughter; it's in one of the best neighborhoods in Austin; Allendale. Ingredients also sells organic tahini in bulk for a great price too, visit **weekly deals** near you. This magazine is for the trendy foodie, gourmet learner, world traveler, and even a beginner. This was my first gourmet magazine next to a few copies I bought from **Gourmet**. They have extremely well written cook books as well.

Cooks Illustrated: If you hate advertisements and want an intimate relationship with a cooking magazine, I highly recommend this publication. Everything is hand illustrated flawlessly, the recipes break down the process of what could be epic disasters in the kitchen by making things a little easier on you. This magazine is about \$20 a year but they offer \$10 specials, I received one. My favorite section is Quick Tips, they'll even pay you \$50 if they publish one of yours.

It focuses on other readers great ideas and tricks to food prep, and kitchen skills, I love this section! They give reviews on items that relate to the kitchen including various supplies and ingredients. They rate each product which eliminates the need for you to do your own experimentation. I've found that products I thought were the best weren't rated as high as I thought they'd be on the list. They have a free monthly newsletter available online. They add quick pointers on common food mistakes with the recipes which can be very helpful and there is an index on the last page.

Food Network: This is for the trendy cooking advocate. There are simple recipes and time consuming recipes in here by the various food network cooks. This magazine is also \$20 a year unless there's a **sale**. Pro's: Quick way to learn different styles of cooking from different chefs and bakers who are successful, tips from the pros, options; a colorful picture table of contents in the front; the handy tiny tear out 50 ways cookbook in every issue, contests, monthly meal plans, low fat recipes. Cons: Sometimes the ingredient amounts aren't accurate which can be a problem when you are baking, the 50 ways cookbooks doesn't indicate serving size which is irritating, the trendiness can sometimes go a bit overboard for simple minded people who don't want to spend a fortune on things(they don't get as unreasonable as other publications do generally) and don't care what the wealthy food network stars live like, but I must say that the pro's definitely outweigh the cons, and there is an ample supply of useful knowledge in every issue. I usually drool over their phenomenal kitchen layouts. My top fave things are the tiny tear out centerfold cookbook and the recipe at a glance index, I can easily circle all the recipes I'm interested in on the first couple pages of the book,

and have a thrifty, compartmentalized cookbook focused on the food of the month for storage.

Taste of Home: I simply love this magazine even though I haven't gotten it in a couple of years. It's affordable to buy(they often add 2 for one deals on subscriptions), the recipes are usually filled with ingredients you have at home, and they are easy to follow. Plus the majority of the recipes are from food experts who live at home throughout North America. You also have the opportunity to become a food writer yourself! Pretty cool right? There are regular food competitions, rewards, and opportunities for publications. It was in one of their cookbooks that I was published a few years ago. I was so thrilled to get a copy in my mailbox after having an extremely rough week, with a note on my entry inside. This magazine is perfect for kids learning how to cook, they have special contests for them, and also for families trying to cook healthier more affordable meals.

Clean Eating: Great simple recipes that help you prepare for your week and your lifestyle. I highly recommend this magazine if you want to transform your diet and living.

BOOKS

I'm only going to reference a few of my most favorites: I have many, but these are very helpful, like most cookbooks should be. Find these and other great ones at local used bookstores, from your nearest library, or online used or new.

CIA: *Culinary Institute of America Baking at Home*; makes the Best Baking Book Ever! In my humble opinion because it teaches a beginner baker how to be great and learn more than just basic elementary. It teaches you

more of the science and art behind it. There are a number of cookbooks available, I also have *Vegetables* and *Cookbook*. They are additionally considered one of the best cooking schools in the world if you want to learn to be one of the best, and most respected.

Betty Crocker's Cookbook: Ha, there ya have it. When I was a kid (under 10) my mom would let me make my own concoctions in the kitchen. I always tried making pancakes by scratch by guessing the ingredients, the mixture always smelled the same in the end, pretty funny right? Well one of the most traditional cookbooks in our family and probably in America, is this cookbook. I have one of the vintage copies. If you are someone who wants a classic, stand by cookbook to teach you how to make just about everything traditional; this is it! I found myself using a banana nut bread recipe just the other day-I'm still in search of the perfect recipe. Maybe someone can send me one, my loafs are always too dense...even when I follow the best directions from some of the greats, it isn't rocket science and even my Aunt Lisa makes better fluffy banana bread than I do, and she's a basic cook. I find that at times I struggle with some of the easiest recipes but do so much better with the more challenging ones. Is it because I use healthier ingredients? She also gives me frozen logs of chocolate chip cookie dough too, it always tastes better when someone else who loves you makes them, that's my theory anyways.

The Essential Cuisines of Mexico by Diana Kennedy; if you are only going to get one authentic cookbook for Mexican food, get this one. A gift from my mother in law Bev, this book is the greatest ever! She focuses on different regions in Mexico which allows you to learn different styles of Mexican cooking. In Texas where

Tex-Mex is prolific, it's hard to find which Mexican restaurants are made for you; one truly has to know their preferred styles of Mexican cuisine, and how and where to find them. Usually they are mom and pop hole in the walls, with the best inexpensive meals ever! Best place to find them, is just like **Anthony Bourdain** and **Andrew Zimmern** teach. Here's Andrew on **Austin** and **Detroit** video links. He mentions Uchiko which we recently went to with my cousin Tabitha and another friend in Michigan, 18,000 licenses for food trucks in Austin! Holy cow!

Hollyhocks & Radishes, Mrs. Chards Almanac Cookbook by Bonnie Stewart Mickelson-My dad gave me this book which is great for hunters and gatherers. It's organized by various games of meat and by the season. It's wonderful and has helped me learn a lot more about country cooking. Lovely illustrations and quotes throughout. Homesteaders would love this cookbook!

Joy of Cooking-Around forever, and has been updated several times. A ton of knowledge, sometimes a bit confusing to read, a lot of skipping around but a great encyclopedia all on it's own. No pictures, only recipes.

Everyday Food: Great Food Fast, a Martha Stewart publication, I have a few of hers, very simple recipes from a variety of different kinds of cuisines, easy to follow, broken down by season, my friend Erica gave this to me years ago.

The Classic Italian Cookbook by Marcella Hazan and *Taste of Italy* by Biba Caggiano-man do these books steal my passion for Italian food heart, hands down. Biba's book was another gift from Bev, LOVE IT! Stories about the regions and authentic recipes that are easy

to follow. Both are masterpieces in their own rite.

The Intercourses Aphrodisiac Cookbook by Martha Hopkins & Randall Lockridge-Cookbook for the Aphrodisiac, centers around recipes selected from aphrodisiac foods like honey, pine nuts, chocolate, basil, strawberries, oysters, and more!

*The Taste of Home Cookbook**-regularly updated, they have one just for baking too. This book even breaks down different types of meat with charts. Very detailed has small portion recipes and a variety for someone who wants one cookbook; I don't know that that's possible to want one cookbook, but for the minimalist it comes in handy especially since it also has pictures, but is slightly bulky and binder bound.

**2011 Holiday & Celebrations Cookbook* by Taste of Home: my sizzling green beans recipe picture on page 109 and listed on page 112 was part of the Traditional Thanksgiving Dinner chapter. I will post this recipe in my recipes for you section, :).

The book of Curries & Indian Foods by Linda Fraser-You will need to hit up an Indian market for these ingredients; specialty flours like gluten free ones; garbanzo bean; almond flour; etc. This book is sleek, has descriptive pictures and teaches you how to make large batches of Indian seasonings like Nut, Tandoori, Moghul, and Garam Masalas. Also tells you how to make naan, chapati, flaky oven bread, parathas, poori, dosa, green pea kachori, and nimki. I love my cookbook and have enjoyed most of the recipes in it.

The Breath of a Wok by Grace Young and Alan Richardson-I need to boost up my Asian varieties since I love all of the different styles. This is a Chinese Wok Cooking

and history book. Please recommend some great authentic books that are must haves. We would really appreciate it!

Quick & Easy Thai by Nancie McDermott- you will need special ingredients that can be found fairly inexpensively at a local Asian market.