

# SIMPLE SOLUTIONS

## CCF Kitchen Hints and Tips



1) Did you know that **food cooked in a microwave** loses all its digestive enzymes, leaving it virtually void of nutrition? The best method of cooking vegetables, for example, is by steaming.

2) Always use **cold water when washing fruits and vegetables** at the sink or adding water to a pot for food that you want to cook. Otherwise, there may be a lot of sediment and possibly unwanted metals in your water heater that you don't want in your food.

3) **Broken cookies?** Crush them into coarse crumbs and mix with coconut and melted chocolate for a pie crust. Or, stir them into softened ice cream, top a rice pudding, or use in parfaits.

4) Keep **unpopped popcorn** in the freezer to minimize the amount of unpopped kernels when you prepare a batch.

5) Want a **simple, and delicious dinner** in a flash? Prepare servings of brown minute rice. Top with your favorite heated Chunky Soup. Serve with applesauce or salad.

6) Did you know that milk tends to make **scrambled eggs or omelets** watery because it doesn't blend well? Use water, instead, which makes eggs fluffy.

7) Peeling **onions** perfectly: cut off the bottom, then the top. Now, cut a slash in the side of the onion and remove the first outer peel (including the skin.)

1) Want to keep **cauliflower** white while cooking? Add a little milk to the water.

2) Want to keep **celery** crisp in the refrigerator? Put celery in a tall, narrow pitcher (plastic with a handle works great with kids) and fill with water.

3) **Scissors** are great for cutting lettuce, celery, green onions, cucumbers, mint, parsley, and so on.

4) And lettuce? **Lettuce** (with dry leaves) keeps better if you store in refrigerator without washing first. Wash before you're going to use and pat dry or put in a salad spinner.

5) Avoid cutting up **lettuce** with a stainless steel knife, which will more quickly cause the lettuce to brown. It's best to tear it apart with your hands. It also helps to not use metal bowls when mixing salads. Use wooden, a good plastic, or glass.

6) **Stews and soups** too salty? Drop raw potato (cleaned and much of skin removed) into the pot. When finished cooking, remove potato.

7) And, did you over-salt the **gravy**? Don't worry. Just stir in some instant mashed potatoes. It's that easy! Just add a little more liquid to offset the thickening.

8) Want to cut the time for **baking potatoes** in half? Soak them in salt water for 20 minutes before baking.

### Previous Kitchen Tips

1) Most canned goods from veggies to soda pop sit around in warehouses and who knows what has been crawling on top of them. Anything on top of the can (seen and unseen) can go into the can when you open it. Always wash off the **tops of cans** (and dry well) before opening them.

2) NEVER. NEVER. NEVER **heat foods in plastic** (bags, wrappers, containers, etc.) unless it's designated microwave safe. Even then, discard if the plastic material is starting to crack or peel. Toxins can leach into your food when heated and may cause a host of physical ailments, some serious. The box of plastic wrap I use even states to not let the wrap touch the food when microwaved. So, the next time you want to pop that bag of rolls into your microwave, don't. Transfer them to a glass container or paper plate and cover with waxed paper and heat safely.

## Previous Kitchen Tips continued

3) Did you also know you should **ALWAYS wash fresh fruits and vegetables** before cutting into them, including bananas? This is especially important for melons that have a porous outer layer. When you cut into fresh produce, your knife is taking any germs, bacteria, pesticides, etc. on the outside to the inside. There are a number of products on the market that do an excellent job, but I've been told that good old, plain Ivory dish soap does the job, too, for a lot cheaper. Just make sure to rinse really well.

4) Always **save the excess liquid** after cooking vegetables. Much of the vitamins from the vegetables are now in the water! The liquid can be later used to flavor soups. Pour the cooled liquid into ice cube trays. When frozen, remove from trays and store in plastic freezer bags. Then, when making soup (homemade or instant), use cubes in place of some of the water for added nutrition. Tip: taste the cubes first. If you salted the water you cooked the vegetables in, the cubes may be too salty for some soups.

5) Did you know? **Washing an onion** off after cutting it takes away most of the bitterness.

6) Want to freshen the air and **eliminate unpleasant odors** from your garbage disposal? Drop orange, lemon, or grapefruit rinds (or squeezed lemon) into the disposal.

7) Need to **unclog a drain**? Pour in a handful of baking soda. Then, follow with 1/2-cup vinegar. Let set for maybe five minutes and then rinse with hot water. Repeat if necessary.

8) Want to **cut more than 1/2 the fat** and 1/2 the sodium from condensed Chicken Noodle Soup? Both fat and sodium are WAY to high if you heat and eat as directed. Instead, pour the Chicken Noodle Soup from the can into a colander or large strainer. **DO NOT RINSE**. Just drain well. Pour the noodles into a pot and add only 3/4 can of water. (Depending on how much soup you want, you may want to cook two cans of the condensed soup and add 1 1/2 cans of water total.) It still tastes great and you're the healthier for it!

9) Before baking or cooking a big meal, **fill your sink** with warm soapy water. As you finish using bowls, utensils, beaters, etc., put in the water. By the time you've finished, these things will be ready to quickly wash, rinse and dry. Or, they'll be ready to be placed in the dishwasher. Quick and easy clean up!

10) Don't have all the latest "doo-dads" for quickly coring and **peeling apples**? Make it go fast with a good (longer) knife by:

- Wash apples
- Cut an apple from top to bottom into 6 parts.
- Then, it's REALLY quick to peel and cut out the "center portion" with a smaller paring knife.

11) There are MANY foods you can chop ahead of time and **freeze** (in individual packages) for easy access. Some of these are onions, peppers, tomatoes for soup, etc. Use the resealable **SNACK-SIZE** bags and put all into a larger quart-size (or larger) freezer bag. Label.

12) For most recipes, you can use **1/2 the sugar** called for and it will not affect the taste. Exception to the rule: do not cut the sugar in baked goods. It may alter the volume and/or browning.

13) **Keep a toothbrush** near the kitchen sink. You'll find it very useful in cleaning graters, rotary beaters, choppers and similar kitchen utensils. Toothbrushes are also great for those hard-to-get-to places to clean, like around the faucet.

14) When you are **creaming butter and sugar** together, it's a good idea to rinse the bowl with boiling water first. They'll cream faster!

