



GET OUT
OF
THE BOX!

By
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GET OUT OF THE BOX!

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A short sample from the "Salsa, Sauce, Pesto & Chutney" section of this book. There are over 250 more pages of wonderful recipes!

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Get Out Of The Box!

One of life's most immediate and fundamental pleasures is eating delicious food that you've cooked yourself. If you're living in a country that grows and imports a huge variety of the gifts of the earth, then there's no reason to eat foods from a box and deprive yourself of such a joyful daily experience. Let's face it: prepared foods just aren't the same as a real meal. And they don't give you the satisfaction you feel from making something well. The vegetables inside the sealed bag are often wilted, cooked into a pulp, chemically treated, and then machine-stuffed with other side dishes. And that fancy box has likely remained in the supermarket freezer cabinet longer than you have existed on this earth!

Sure, it can be intimidating to stand in the vegetable aisle, being sneered at by a large bunch of kale. You know that somewhere, in somebody's kitchen, some magical witch will be able to turn that big, dark bundle of greens into a yummy, heartwarming dish.

The good news is that you can, too. The powers necessary to make magic out of that kale are not so special, nor do they require a great deal of work. All that's necessary to get started is a friendly hand to open the door to one of the most fascinating skills: the art of cooking well!

This book will be that friendly hand. This selection of simple recipes was chosen to use a wide variety of affordable, healthy, and readily available ingredients. Its cuisine is a good mix of American and International delights. And it requires a nice range of basic techniques that will enable you to make endless variations – and to go on to create many of your own.

The Philosophy Of This Cookbook

What I look for in a cookbook is that it be practical, fun, and easy to use. It's a turnoff for me to see recipes that require techniques which are not immediately comprehensible; recipes that don't allow for freedom of experimentation; or dishes that require five hours of baking in a low-heat oven. (Even if I *had* the time, I couldn't afford to keep the oven running for that long!)

The recipes in this book are meant to be comfort foods – they're not “fu-fu” or delicate foods. And none are truly “authentic” – they have been adopted to fit ingredients that are commonly available in supermarkets, and are a play on traditional world and continental cuisines. The great advantage of this is that the recipes are hard to mess up, and they welcome further improvisation! So do not fear – for cooking is not an exact science.

After cooking a recipe and becoming familiar with it, feel free to change it and make it your own. By experimenting with the variations provided, you'll soon be able to survive without a cookbook. If something works different for you, write in notes over the recipe. The best thing this book can do is to give you ideas and to give you courage.

While creating this cookbook, I've kept the following principles in mind:

Time. We're not going to replicate our grandmothers' hefty work in the kitchen, for today, people are *busy*. (Although what we're busy doing may not always be worth all that effort...) But in only around thirty minutes – the time it would take to watch a sitcom episode on TV – you can make food that's more delicious and nutritious than anything in the frozen or boxed-food aisle.

Ease. Nothing in your daily cooking should require intricate technical knowledge or a degree from a culinary institute. With these recipes, you can achieve delicious results from only few basic techniques with which you'll soon become familiar (if you are not already).

Readily-available materials. Most ingredients can be found at your local supermarket. If a recipe calls for a spice you don't have or haven't tried, don't be shy about buying it – many of the ingredients are used throughout the cookbook, so it probably won't be the only time you'll use it.

Variety. There's nothing here that's terribly exotic that would frighten off people with timid palates, but this book contains a nice mix of continental flavors and faraway cuisines, traditional plates with a continental spin.

Cost. While I would hope that you can spoil yourself with expensive food every once in a while, this book focuses on delicious eating on a modest bank account. If you treat your potato like a king and cook it with respect, it will treat you likewise.

Variations. There are no unbreakable rules in cooking – therefore, I've listed many variation ideas for each recipe. These are provided so that you can try the recipes from different angles depending on your mood, taste, or ingredients at hand, and they're meant to tickle your imagination – feel free to come up with variations of your own!

How To Begin

For those of you who are just starting, it may at first feel a little like a mystery, but soon, even after just seeing ingredients and recipes, you'll instinctively know how much of an ingredient to use; what you'll have to do to prepare something; and even how to change a recipe to your liking. My hope is that this book will serve as a springboard to becoming creative and confident in improvising a life.

To gain confidence in your first efforts, try to keep the following principles in mind when planning a meal:

1. Make sure you have what you need before starting. Read through the recipe first, choose the variation you want to make, and be sure you have all of the ingredients.

2. Think about your audience. If any food in the book looks new or strange to you, give it a chance – but you may want to try it first yourself so that you feel more comfortable introducing it to others. Although the recipes are basic enough to please most palates, if you're making something like dried curried beef, be sure to plan a side dish that is sure to satisfy the taste buds of more conservative family members.

3. Once you've chosen a recipe to work with, become familiar with the cooking techniques used in it. Look at the ingredients to see if any need prior preparation. (Check for things like “butter, cubed” or “cookies, crushed.”) If you don't know what a term means, look it up in the brief Glossary of Cooking Techniques included with this book.

4. Become familiar with the look of various food measurements. If a recipe calls for 1-2 tablespoons of something, put it on your palm and try to feel what it looks like so you can instantly gauge it in the future. Or try to see how much space a half-cup of liquid takes up in your favorite glass. Or study what two teaspoonfuls of olive oil look like in a pan. This way you may find that you often won't need multiple measuring cups when cooking a simple recipe for a quick dinner, and you'll have much less to wash!

Salsa, Sauce, Pesto and Chutney



Use these recipes on broiled or grilled meat, chicken, fish, soup, pasta, bread, and pizza; in potato salads and sandwiches; or as dips on the side. Pesto is an easy topping for pastas and toasted baguettes and will make pizza more interesting if you just dollop some over the pizza sauce. Chutney is a wonderful accompaniment and an excellent way to lighten up a spicy meal. Salsa and sauces have so many uses that I can only say this: Just try it on whatever you like!

Almond Dip, Turkish

Servings: 4

1 cup almond, slivered
2 cloves garlic, chopped
1/2 cup water
2 cups stale bread
3 tablespoons lemon juice
salt, to taste

Soak the bread in a bowl with just enough water to cover for a few minutes and squeeze them dry in your palm.

Put almonds into a non-stick pan over medium heat, constantly shaking the pan or stirring with a spoon, until they get a light golden color.

Combine all the ingredients and blend in a food processor until smooth.

Let it rest for a few hours for the best taste.

Serve with grilled or broiled meats and fried seafood.

Variation Ideas:

-Omit almonds; use walnuts instead.

-Omit almonds; use pine nuts instead.

-Omit lemon juice; use white vine vinegar instead.

Basil Pesto, Italian

Servings: 6

Serve on pastas, bread, salads, pizzas and soups.

2 cups basil leaves, coarsely chopped

1/2 cup olive oil

4 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped

10 tablespoons pine nuts

1/2 cup parmesan cheese, grated

Place the pine nuts on a non-stick pan over moderate heat and, shaking the pan constantly, toast them until they are light golden brown.

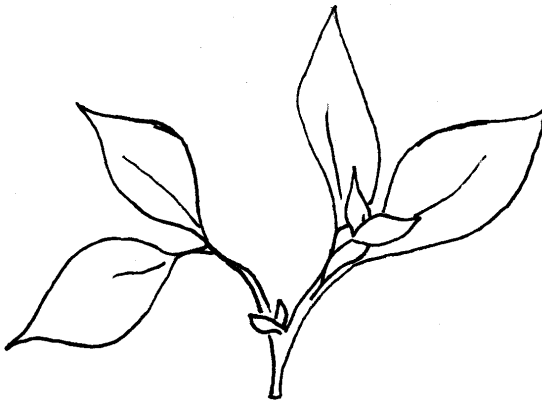
Put all the ingredients except for the oil into a food processor; blend for a minute.

Adding the oil slowly, keep processing until the mixture turns into a paste.

Variation Ideas:

-Omit pine nuts; use walnuts or almonds instead.

-Use 1/2 cup parsley and 1 1/2 cups basil leaves.



Béchamel Sauce, French

Servings: 4

Serve on boiled vegetables, egg dishes, fish, veal and chicken.

3 tablespoons butter

5 tablespoons flour

2 cups milk

a pinch of nutmeg

salt and pepper, to taste

Melt the butter and add the flour, whisking constantly for 2 minutes over medium heat.

Whisk in the milk, bringing it to a boil without stopping whisking.

Season with nutmeg, salt and pepper. Simmer for 8 minutes, whisking constantly to prevent the sauce from sticking to the saucepan. Serve immediately.

Variation Ideas:

-Whisk 2 egg yolks, adding a tablespoon of Béchamel to temper the eggs, and then mix with the rest of the Béchamel Sauce. Bring to a boil over medium heat and cook for 1 minute, constantly mixing. Remove from heat and stir in 4 ounces grated Gruyere cheese.

-Omit milk and use chicken broth. Add 1 cup heavy cream or crème fraiche and simmer for 10 minutes longer.

Beer and Mustard Sauce, British

Servings: 4

Serve with broiled or grilled beef.

1 cup broth
1 can (12 ounces) beer
1 tablespoon molasses
1 1/2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
2 teaspoons garlic powder
2 teaspoons cornstarch
salt and pepper, to taste

Whisk ½ can beer with cornstarch.

Combine broth, the rest of the beer, and garlic powder and bring to a boil.

Simmer for 8 minutes or until it evaporates to half.

Add mustard and mix well.

Add the beer-starch mixture and thicken over low-to-medium heat.

Season with salt and pepper.

Serve immediately, drizzling over meat.

Variation Ideas:

-Omit molasses and use honey instead.

-Omit molasses and use maple syrup instead.

End of Sample

Please visit www.elifsavas.com to get the complete version of “Get Out of the Box!”, with over 250 more pages of fabulous recipes that will change the way you eat!