Your First Step: Prep!

The first great rule of a great meal is to be prepared. Stock your kitchen with these simple standbys to help keep cooking smart, safe, and speedy.

**COOKING TOOLS**

- **nail brush**
  - **USE TO:** Scrub root vegetables, like carrots and potatoes.
  - **TIP:** Keep clean between uses, and replace every 3-5 months.

- **cutting board**
  - **TIP:** Never put raw meat or fish on the same board as raw produce without first cleaning with soap and water.

- **wooden spoon**
  - **TIP:** It's worth investing in a wooden spoon or two. Because they won't melt, they are the perfect kitchen companion for any cooking, stirring, or sautéing needs.

- **peeler**
  - **USE TO:** Remove potato and carrot skins. Make thin strips of zucchini and cucumber.

- **baking tray**
  - **USE TO:** Roast your vegetables in the oven.
  - **TIP:** Find a tray with slightly raised sides for cleaner cooking.

- **colander or steam basket**
  - **USE TO:** Rinse fresh fruit and veggies, or thaw frozen ones. Drain pasta. Steam vegetables.

- **non-stick skillet**
  - **TIP:** Why non-stick? You can use less oil, which keeps meals healthier. But don't use metal spatulas with non-stick surfaces, as they will scratch.

- **scissors**
  - **USE TO:** Cut up lettuce and greens. Trim outside leaves and stems.
  - **TIP:** Make sure you buy the thick, sharp scissors found in the kitchen aisle; school scissors won’t get you too far!
USE TO: Cook easy-cleanup veggies on the grill or in the oven. In the oven: Spread foil flat onto a baking sheet, then roast veggies at 350°. On the grill: Place foil over grill grates, poke holes, and cook veggies at medium or low heat. Both: Wrap veggies into a bundle and roast away! It’s quick, easy, and keeps foods low-fat: no extra oil needed.

USE TO: Store dry greens inside. Fill with wet greens and spin overhead to shake off water outside.

TIP: Choose a thin case. Make your own bag by sewing up sides of muslin / cheese cloth.

TIP: Never underestimate the importance of precision! One half-cup off can turn a dessert into a disaster. Always use proper measurements found in recipes (from cooks who learned the hard way!).

3 BASIC KNIVES

chef’s knife
USE TO: Cut, chop, slice, and dice.

TIP: Use side of knife to crush, and the heel (the bottom edge near the handle) to puncture hard veggies, like pumpkin.

paring knife
USE TO: Trim leaves, flowers, stems, and roots.

TIP: Use for more control if chef’s knife feels awkward.

serrated (bread) knife
USE TO: Slice tomatoes. Peel or segment citrus or pineapple. Cut melons.

HOW TO HOLD A KNIFE:
For grip and control, hold tightly on handle near the blade, placing thumb on one side of metal and inner edge of bent index finger on other.

Sharp Knife = Safe Knife
A dull knife requires more force to cut, making accidents more likely.

Kiddos should never cook or use knives without adults nearby!