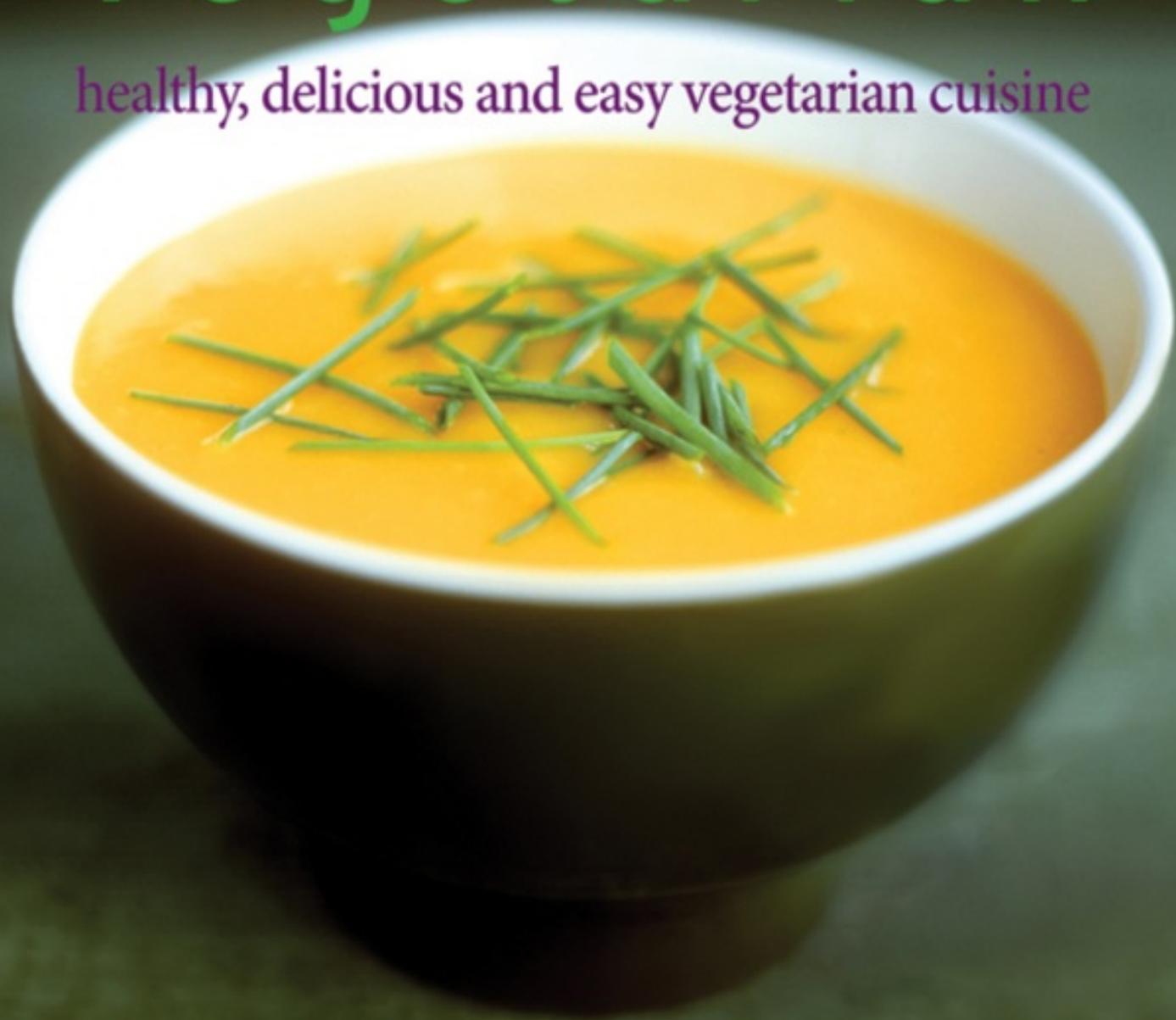


cooking vegetarian

healthy, delicious and easy vegetarian cuisine



Joseph Forest
Vesanto Melina R.D.

2nd Edition

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*I dedicate this book to the Spirit of Love,
and to my mother, Louise Forest,
who embodies this nourishing Spirit unconditionally.*

—Joseph Forest

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son Chris Crawford,
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and the vegetarians I meet all over the world.*

—Vesanto Melina

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A Word from Chef Joseph

The book you hold in your hands is a work of love from two friends who greatly appreciate food and its ability to impact health and well-being. I am delighted to work with my dear colleague and mentor Vesanto Melina in bringing to you this well-researched and tested guide to adopting more plant-based foods into your daily food regime. This book contains cutting-edge scientific information on vegetarian nutrition, along with over 150 recipes that are nutritious, tasty, and easy to prepare. The full spectrum of recipes will take you through the day, from breakfast to desserts, with choices that you can revisit time and time again as you discover how truly good these recipes are. But before you make your shopping list and fill your fridge and pantry with wholesome foods, let me tell you a bit about myself.

My career as a professional chef began 27 years ago, and by today's standard, that is a long time to stay in a single occupation. The more I deepen my knowledge of food, the further I experience its ability to nourish and heal the body, mind, and spirit, and the more I appreciate my vocation. Having found my right livelihood is a blessing, and this particular path bestows gifts that go far beyond the health that I experience along the way.

As a young adult I embarked upon formal chef training that opened doors into the world of fine-dining restaurants, where the focus was serving individual plates to appreciative audiences. Later I worked in the banquet kitchens of prestigious hotels such as the Four Seasons, where I learned to transfer the high standards of quality that I had learned in smaller settings to volume cooking. These skills were eventually transferred to the world of film catering, where I worked as a team member feeding movie crews.

Highlights of my livelihood include developing a whole food catering company, working as a consultant to several natural food manufacturers, assisting in the production and revision of two corporate cookbooks, and acting as a consulting chef for the opening of two natural food restaurants. Along the way I have had the honour of feeding international rock-and-roll personalities, political leaders, dignitaries, and numerous Hollywood celebrities.

However, my favourite achievement has been co-writing the Canadian bestselling cookbook, *Cooking Vegetarian*, with Vesanto Melina, Registered Dietitian. The book was launched in 1996 and subsequently released in the United States in 1998, where it also enjoyed widespread popularity. I met Vesanto in 1991 and over the last 20 years we have collaborated on numerous projects. The nutritional knowledge I gained from working with Vesanto has been invaluable, and I consider my working relationship with her to be one of the most rewarding associations of my professional life.

The roots of my love for food go back to my youth—to when I lived in Edmonton with my parents and five siblings. Mine was a large family, and my mother spent a good amount of time making sure we were well fed. My mom and dad came from big Prairie families; they were raised on farms, so they knew the value of planting vegetable seeds in the spring to reap a harvest that would feed active, growing family members.

Soon after my mom and dad were married, they bought their first home from a gardener. That property had a large garden plot in the backyard, along with fruit trees and plenty of flowering plants. Every spring I helped plant a vegetable garden that would yield produce well into the autumn. Two crab apple trees not only offered twisting branches for good climbing but also a secret hiding place at the height of summer. Come fall, the abundant fruit from those trees was turned into jams and jellies. They took their place in the basement pantry alongside canned peaches, pears, beets, tomatoes, and Saskatoon berry jam—what seemed at the time to be countless jars of bright, multicoloured, mouth-watering food. I never went hungry.

Growing up in a large family, most kitchen duties were shared among my brothers and sisters. My preference was always to help my mom after school with the preparation of dinner, rather than with the dishwashing afterward. I didn't know it then, but the seeds of a lifelong relationship with the nourishing properties of food were being planted in my psyche.

My first formal work experience with food began at the age of 13. I worked as a baker's assistant on a part-time basis during the school year and full time during the summer months. Although, as a teenager, the thought of a career in the arena of food was not a consideration, this destiny would continue to beckon me.

Many years later, when I finally made the decision to enrol in a year-long culinary arts program, my primary intention was to work in a kitchen to pay for my university education. During the course of my chef training, I had the very good fortune of being sent on a three-week practicum to the Vancouver Four Seasons Hotel. I was awestruck at the size of the kitchen, the high standards of excellence, and the sheer number of kitchen personnel. The staff included 47 people from all over the world filling all positions of a modern-day kitchen brigade, from the executive chef all the way down the chain of command to the apprentices. That experience changed the direction of my life, and after graduation I embarked upon my career path with enthusiasm and a new vision for my self.

For the next seven years I worked in fine-dining restaurants and hotels, and to my good fortune ended up back at the Four Seasons Hotel in the banquet kitchen. After working there for a year, I met Vesanto, and was drawn to her vast knowledge of nutrition. I began collaborating with her, and over the next two years we developed a series of popular vegetarian cooking classes that received national media attention. In those classes Vesanto offered practical vegetarian nutritional theory, and I led a hands-on cooking segment. We taught hundreds of people from all walks of life, from teenagers to grandmothers, and great fun was had by all. At the end of the day, our students went home better informed and richer for the experience.

After those two years of collaboration, Vesanto embarked upon her successful writing career, which began with the publication of her international bestseller *Becoming Vegetarian*, and then continued on to our first book together, *Cooking Vegetarian*. I also did private catering with an emphasis on natural whole food ingredients, and this led to work as a caterer for film crews and movie talent. In this capacity, I took an interest in providing specialty diets to those who requested them. It was a natural fit for me, since I was equipped with a wide range of nutritional knowledge.

Over the many years of working with food, in addition to my formal training in classical French cuisine, I have studied vegetarian, vegan, macrobiotic, Ayurvedic, and diabetic diets. Through all of this, three personal perspectives have emerged. First, transition from one dietary lifestyle to another can take years. For lasting results, this important process requires time, knowledge, and patience. Feeding the body is a lifelong process that can involve adjustments from one stage of life to another for myriad reasons. Second, since each person is constitutionally different, no single diet can be considered the ideal for everybody (or every body). Although we all require carbohydrates, protein, vitamins, and minerals, the combinations and the types of foods we choose to meet those needs vary between individuals and cultural groups. Third, we are all brilliantly tailored individuals, guided by a deep source of inner intelligence. If we pay attention to the wisdom of this intelligence, we will be led into the dietary pattern that best serves who we are as individuals.

I am very pleased to collaborate with Vesanto on this book. It is our sincere wish that you expand your nutritional knowledge and increase your culinary repertoire for the purpose of sustaining your health, or of regaining your health if it is compromised. As you work with and adapt this book to suit your lifestyle, may you find inspiration to eat well to be well.

Joseph Forest, Professional Chef

A Word from Vesanto Melina

Registered Dietitian

Welcome! This precious book is the creation of people in two food-related professions, though our perspectives have sometimes seemed worlds apart. My collaboration with Joseph Forest began in 1991 when we met at a presentation by vegan writer and inspirational speaker John Robbins. Joseph and I soon became co-hosts of a series of cooking classes that drew enthusiastic crowds and national media attention. Out of that grew our popular *Cooking Vegetarian*, the forerunner to this volume. As a dietitian, I was aware of the nutritional features of food but lacked the skills that a talented chef can bring to the table so that people lick their lips and their eyes light up. Thus, Joseph's gift of creating foods that appeal to the senses of sight, taste, smell, and touch drew me to new adventures in the world of food. I was intrigued when he shared with me experiences that he had gained during his chef training. For example, he recalled that in his apprentice cooking lab, 10 budding chefs at 10 separate work stations each followed a set of identical recipes each day. At the end of every class, all of the prepared food was brought forward for class evaluation. Invariably, the product created by each student tasted different from that of others, despite each having used the same recipe. Joseph's insights have helped to build my appreciation that although we use the same culinary map, we may each arrive at different destinations. Preparing food, including from a recipe, is truly a creative act that expresses the love and care that are part of the process. My cooking skills, along with my sensory appreciation of food, have flourished through years of association with my esteemed and capable co-author.

My diet evolved from a North American pattern that was centred on meat, dairy products, a few vegetables, and baked goods. My mother organized birthday celebrations that featured cookie-making as a party activity, and over the years these gatherings proved to be immensely popular with the neighbourhood children. She introduced me to the joy of cooking, both alone and with others. She also emphasized good nutrition as she understood it, as well as physical fitness. My mother taught early childhood education at the University of British Columbia and made life a great deal of fun. My father was a physiology professor. He did graduate work at the University of Toronto with the diabetes researchers who discovered insulin, Sir Frederick Banting and Charles Best. Later, my father's focus was on cancer research. The examples of my parents led me to value two facets of food and nutrition: the appetizing and the academic or nutritional.

Like my parents, I went on to teach in university settings; my subject was food and nutrition. After the birth of my children, Chris (Xoph) and Kavyo, I lived on an immense cattle ranch, travelled around the world several times, and lived in India and Nepal for four years. During this time I learned a great deal about the production and preparation of many cultural foods, particularly vegetarian dishes. My favourite cookbook was *The Spice Cookbook*, by A. Day and L. Stuckey (1964), and I loved

learning about the origins and history of ingredients from near and far that bring such delight to the senses. My first attraction to a plant-based diet came from enjoyment of the food itself.

In 1993 while writing the “Without Dairy” chapter for my first book, *Becoming Vegetarian* (with Brenda Davis), I came face to face with my own mistaken belief that dairy products were essential to human health. From a critical review of the scientific research, I soon learned that I could survive very well without any flesh or fluids of animal origin. Over time, I learned about the profound impacts of our food choices on the environment, health, human hunger, and the lives of animals. In doing the extensive nutrition research that is a foundation of our books, I came to see that a vegan diet could provide every nutrient that we need in recommended amounts, and that such a diet makes sense for reasons that become more compelling every year. I came to appreciate how many of us are voting with our grocery dollars for good health, compassion for animals, and sustainable agriculture. My own dietary transition gave me an understanding of the challenges and solutions that people encounter as they move along a continuum from non-vegetarian through to vegan.

In recent years I have seen a great shift in attitude regarding vegetarian nutrition among those at the forefront of the dietetics profession. When I first taught university nutrition, an attitude prevailed that vegetarian diets are nutritionally risky. Vegan diets were almost unheard of. With time, scientists have recognized that centring our diet on plant foods can significantly reduce our risk of chronic disease. After the publication of *Becoming Vegetarian*, my profession awarded me the prestigious ClinTec award for leadership in dietetics. I was invited to write sections on vegetarian nutrition for diet manuals and to co-author the joint position paper by the American and Canadian dietetic associations on vegetarian diets. My vegan nutrition books are now required reading for continuing-education courses for health professionals.

I love to share with others the joy and fulfillment that comes from preparing food.

It is a pleasure to see how, right from the start, young children enjoy ingredients that are good for them. When my son, Chris, was one and a half years old, he and I demonstrated a simple recipe on television. Chris, now a tree planter and regular traveller to India, has a great appreciation for the natural, healthful, and simple foods that are easily available throughout India, far more than is the case in North America. He appreciates the long tradition of nourishing food choices that are common to so many cultures around the world.

At an early age (and before I made a similar decision), my daughter, Kavyo, decided not to eat meat. As an adult trained in geography and environmental studies, she has a productive vegetable garden and considers it very important for people to grow, prepare, and eat vegetables that they have grown. Producing one's own food can be empowering and can also create deeper respect and understanding of nature.

High in the Himalayas, I have traded tips with a Nepalese cook and porter while we made [Lemon Tahini Dressing](#) as a sauce for our rice and spinach. It warms my heart to have my three-year-old neighbours (in our cohousing community) perched on a stool in the kitchen, with hands washed, enthusiastically putting the vegetables into a soup pot. I have enjoyed my role as a dietitian in Dr. Dean Ornish's San Francisco retreats, helping those with cardiovascular disease adopt diets that are both healing and

delicious. It's deeply fulfilling to help clients and friends adopt ways of eating that are health-supportive, and it is satisfying to reassure others that we have no need to subject animals to the tortured lives and deaths they undergo when they are categorized as food animals.

Joseph and I have had such fun creating this book. It has been a pleasure to test and retest the recipes so that each one is a gem. Welcome to a recipe collection that will support your well-being, satisfy your appetite, and inspire you to enjoy cooking.

Vesanto Melina, MS, Registered Dietitian
www.nutrispeak.com

Part One

Making Sense of Food Choices

Chapter 1:

The Art and Science of Cooking

by Chef Joseph Forest

Cooking Is an Art

In any type of art, there are unlimited ways of assimilating, blending, and combining materials—whether musical notes, water colours, oil paints, or food ingredients—to produce an end result that satisfies in new ways. Fuse together food with creativity, motivation, and passion, throw in a bit of culinary science, mix it with an understanding of technique, and you can produce unforgettable culinary experiences.

During my apprenticeship years, I had the good fortune of working in a fine-dining restaurant in Edmonton called Walden's. At the time I worked there, it was considered one of the top restaurants in Canada. It was named after Walden Pond in Massachusetts because of its atmosphere of serenity—and the sheer number of plants and trees it housed. Walden's was a large, 180-seat garden restaurant with enormous skylights that nourished hundreds of fully grown plants, which sprawled from one end of the restaurant to the other. A fixed menu changed twice a year, and there were numerous opportunities to create daily specials to complement the main bill of fare. The emphasis on presentation was paramount and was the motivation of the kitchen team. Each plate was a little masterpiece—delicious works of art delivered to hundreds of satisfied customers every day.

The early part of my career was also completely focused on food artistry. I had the opportunity to successfully participate in provincial culinary art competitions, as well as to observe the inner workings of the most prestigious culinary art competitions at the highest international level. The culinary thinking that surrounded me in the late 1980s was that food was a medium for eye appeal and taste. Our attention centred on new ingredients, colour combinations, textures, novel ways of fusing flavour, and building artistic pyramids of food on the plate. Nutritional considerations were peripheral.

Cooking Is a Science

Cooking is not only an art but also a science. Have you ever been curious about why a pinch of salt makes a raw apple taste sweeter, or why flour thickens a sauce? What about why it takes longer to cook potatoes in Jasper, Alberta, than in Vancouver, or why the best way to cook rice is to boil the water first, then add the grain? The answers to these questions lie in the well-documented science of cooking. Every

process and technique used in the kitchen today can be understood and explained by science.

Yes, it is true that you don't need to have a PhD in order to make a pot of spicy soup or a tangy vinaigrette. However, understanding culinary technique can go a long way toward improving cooking skills and eliminating the margin of error in the kitchen.

There are usually good reasons why recipe ingredients are not all combined at once in a bowl or saucepan, stirred together, and then served. There are steps to assembling most recipes, and these procedures are based on sound culinary principles that ought to be followed before moving on to the next step. Think of cooking as a process of building layers, where one technique is followed by another. For best results, each layer ought to be developed and brought to a stage of completion before laying down the next layer.

The Science of Nutrition

In addition to the science of cooking, there is a science of nutrition. Nutrition can be summarized as the study of nourishment, or the act of taking nutrients into the body for the purpose of building and maintaining health. Nutrition proponents have been advising humans how to eat for hundreds of years. In 400 BC, Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine, told his students, “Let your food be your medicine, and your medicine be your food.” And furthermore, “A wise man should consider that health is the greatest of human blessings.”

Science has expended a great deal of energy in analyzing the nature of food to discern its components: how much or how little of a particular nutrient is present in any given food, why we need specific nutrients, and the amounts of those nutrients needed to maintain physical, mental, and emotional health, or to regain it if lost. Knowing what nutrients your body needs and familiarizing yourself with their food sources can be a foundation for well-being.

This book is designed to assist vegetarians, and others who are interested in adding more plant-based foods to their diet in pursuit of optimum health. Ensuring that your dietary choice is well balanced and provides all the nutrients you need will keep you and your family in excellent health and also serve to inspire others and let them know that this is a viable choice.

Developing a Healthy Relationship with Food

For individuals at one end of the spectrum, food is a central theme in enjoying life. Sometimes referred to as “foodies,” they have a deep affinity to discovering new ingredients, eating, and cooking. There simply aren't enough meals in a day to prepare all the food they want to try. Their kitchens are full of staples and gadgets, and their fridges are overflowing with items for the next dinner party. Travel plans to exotic countries centre on culinary tourism. In visits to the marketplace, the abundance of colours, aromas, and sounds take culinary imaginations on wild-carpet rides.

For many people at the other end of the spectrum, food is just another commodity;

preparing and eating it is a chore, a task that interrupts the more important things they have to do. They consider themselves inept at cooking, and their refrigerators sit empty most of the time—save for a few bottles of sauce, just in case they are forced to make a meal. For these folks, cooking is a struggle that includes a good dose of chaos and ends in frustration, disappointment, and another promise to eat prepackaged entrées for dinner starting tomorrow. Those who can afford it eat most of their meals in restaurants.

If you fall into the first camp, this book may serve you by extending your love of food into the vegetarian arena. If you struggle with the idea of preparing food and it is nothing more than a utilitarian act for you, or if you fall in between these two groups of people, what we offer in this book will help to broaden your interest in cooking, enhance your relationship with food, and establish an appreciation for preparing most of your meals at home.

The Science of Perception: The Physical Senses

When approaching your culinary experiences, consider how your five senses might be more consciously engaged in expanding your awareness, skills, and confidence in the kitchen. Sight, smell, touch, hearing, and taste are the physical means by which you perceive and navigate through the physical world. Think of your eyes, nose, hands, ears, and tongue as extensions of your kitchen tools. They all have a role to play in your deepening relationship with food and will lead to unlocking opportunities that include a deeper appreciation of food preparation, improved cooking dexterity, expansion of kitchen wisdom, enhanced timing, greater creativity, and an improved sense of your intuitive abilities. As a result you will create wholesome food for yourself, family, and friends. Enter the kitchen without paying attention to your senses and you are more susceptible to disorganization, frustration, mistakes, and perhaps even injury.

Awareness Starts in the Marketplace

Your senses play a significant role long before your ingredients are assembled on the kitchen counter. Think of when you shop for food. The common expression “We eat with our eyes first” reflects the strong affinity we have for artistic presentation. Look at the showcase in popular delicatessens, where a good deal of time and energy is spent arranging the food. Packaging is designed to make food visually appealing to consumers. We choose fresh ingredients according to its quality (sight) and avoid foods that are wilted, dull, or bruised.

We handle (touch) avocados, lemons, and peaches to determine how ripe they are. You may have tasted an olive at a Greek grocer, or been offered a sample that led to a purchase. A whiff (smell) of coffee or freshly baked bread in the market may have spurred you to buy a pound of roasted beans or a loaf of bread. Perhaps you smell melons and tomatoes to determine if they are ripe. On the other hand, a bad food odour may repulse you, in which case you steer away from it. You may buy fresh green beans or baby spring carrots because of the crisp snap (hearing) they make, or tap a

watermelon with your knuckle in search of the right thud before taking it home.

Expanding Sensory Awareness in the Kitchen

Sight: Learning how to look for signs before proceeding with a recipe can help reduce your reliance on the recipe's timing instructions. Often the directions will ask you to use your eyes when assembling a dish. For instance, the instructions to cook the onion “for 3 minutes or until transparent” and to cook the pancake “for 3 minutes or until the bottom is crispy brown” are visual cues. By looking for and becoming familiar with these indicators, you can relax and not be fixated on your clock, timer, or recipe instructions. This step alone will go a long way toward building your kitchen intuition.

Smell: Smell is a great way to connect with food. Think of garlic cooking in a skillet, freshly brewed coffee in the morning, or the scent of cinnamon and vanilla emanating from the oven when you bake a cake. As foods heat up, their volatile oils are released into the atmosphere, giving clues to what stage of cooking they're at. Kitchen aromas change as food shifts from one form to another. Some of these changes are obvious, though many are more subtle, but they can be identified if you pay attention to the fragrances in the air, which can guide and prompt you into taking the next step.

Don't be afraid to get your nose close to the cutting board and smell the food as you work with it. Smell your freshly chopped garlic and discern how it smells raw versus when it is heating up in the skillet. Slow down and smell freshly cut herbs, ground spices in your grinder, or that zest of lemon peel. Bend your head over a skillet or soup pot and take a deep whiff. Make friends with your ingredients.

Touch: Handling raw ingredients is an excellent way to familiarize yourself with food's consistency, texture, and other qualities, and it is a great way to connect with the process of cooking. Get your hands in there: don't be afraid to get them wet, sticky, oily, or messy.

People who love to bake their own bread often say they love it because of the kneading process. They enjoy the feel of the dough as they knead it, and the way the texture changes over a short period. Professionals often talk about “mouth feel” when describing the interaction a food has in the mouth. (Wine tasters use this term to discern the qualities of a wine.) This is a form of touch that can help you to evaluate food characteristics.

The next time you pierce a food with a sharp knife to test for doneness, feel the resistance or, alternatively, the ease in which the blade passes into the food. Bite into a green bean or spaghetti to check for al dente. These methods of using your sense of touch are ways to deepen the interaction with your nourishment and enhance your cooking skills.

Hearing: Here's an exercise in developing your kitchen awareness: spend time making meals without any background noise, such as the television, radio, or a CD, and see how this helps you connect with your food experience. Listen. Pay attention to the sounds around you as you cook. Listen to the sizzle of onions cooking in the skillet, the turbulent sound water makes as it comes to a boil, the

popping of pumpkin seeds

roasting in the oven. The sound of a lid rattling on top of a saucepan most likely means the liquid is simmering too strongly and needs a decrease in temperature for the food to cook with less vigour. Take note of the distinctive sounds liquid makes as it fills a jar or soup pot. Sounds in the kitchen are loaded with information and can indicate the need to engage with the next step of your recipe. Setting a timer is a valuable practice, but listening to your intuition is even better, as it can prompt you to check on the food before the buzzer rings.

Taste: As humans, we derive great pleasure and satisfaction from the taste of food and beverages. Taste is the ability to detect flavour and is perhaps the most prominent sense used in the kitchen. Taste is a component of flavour: although the terms “taste” and “flavour” are often used interchangeably, they have different meanings.

Taste is detected by approximately 9,000 elongated taste buds located on the upper surface of the tongue, throat, pharynx, and soft palate. Each taste bud has minute hairs on its surface, a barrel-shaped “bud” in the middle, and 15 to 20 taste receptors at the base, which are attached to nerve fibres that carry taste impulses to the brain. Taste buds are specialized cells in that they detect six basic tastes: salty, sweet, sour, bitter, pungent, and astringent. (Western science recognizes only the first four primary tastes listed here, whereas Eastern schools of thought recognize the other two as well.) Let's take a look at these tastes.

Six Tastes

Have you ever had a meal that leaves you with an overwhelming sense of satisfaction? Many factors go into experiencing such a meal. The location, setting, atmosphere, occasion, company, your mood, and, last but certainly not least, the food all play important roles in the overall experience. Seasoning food to perfection always involves more than just adding salt and pepper. All six tastes play very important roles in bringing each dish into balance on its own or in relationship to the whole meal. It can be said that a dish or meal is well balanced when all six tastes are activated during the course of eating. The ideal proportions for balance vary from one individual to another and can depend on personal preference. In some cases, genetics play a role in determining inclinations toward taste.

In Appendix 1 you'll find a list of foods specific to each taste category. Examining these lists will deepen your understanding of how the tastes can interact to produce harmonious agreement when mixed together. You'll notice that some foods are found in more than one category. Foods found in more than one list typically have a predominant taste, with another taste coming through as a secondary quality.

Salty: There are two main sources of salt: sea water and rock salt. Sea water is evaporated to obtain the mineral, whereas rock salt is mined from enormous underground mineral deposits that were once large bodies of salt water. Salt has long been utilized as a preservative, but more commonly today it is used as a seasoning to enhance and bring out underlying flavours in food. Salt is nature's true and original flavour enhancer. It adds vigour, depth, and strength to food and stimulates the appetite by stimulating saliva and digestive juices. Used in excess,