



pilot light
Greg Melikov

Observation is one way to improve your cooking prowess.

How many times have you whipped cream into butterhard or found egg whites too stubborn to peak?

I know the sinking feeling — I've whipped cream into submission. Chilling the bowl, beaters and cream will help; keeping your eye on the cream at all times won't hurt.

But if you fall to stop whipping before the cream plops in soft dollops from a spoon, continue beating until it's butter, add herbs and seasonings, chill and use on vegetables or fish.

Not so with egg whites. If your whites refuse to beat to volume, it's even money a speck of yolk or a bit of grease has gotten in the bowl or on the beaters and you better start from square one with fresh eggs.

I've learned much from observing family and friends in action as well as watching the multitude of expert cooks on television.

FOR INSTANCE, when our family had an abundance of meatballs and sausage after an Italian repast, my daughter-in-law the next day spread slices of mozzarella on rolls filled with the meat and warmed the sandwiches in the oven until the cheese melted.

My wife turns her rice cooker into a vegetable steamer. She produces tasty fresh pole beans by adding some tomato sauce and seasonings to the water.

One friend showed me a step-saver when handling flour. Mattie simply mixes the flour in its container with a spoon to remove air, leaving the sifter in its drawer. However, another friend, Angie, turns the sifter into a sieve when purifying beans for soup.

Season skinned chicken breasts, cover with their skin before cooking in the oven and discard the skin before eating. The skin protects the chicken during cooking while discarding it reduces your calorie intake 25 percent.

Bake the skin separately, spreading it out in a shallow pan, cooking 30 minutes in a 375-degree oven on one side, 15 minutes on the other. Then cut up the results and use as topping for salads or casseroles.

While I prefer to braise beef or deep fry chicken, my wife loves both cooked in the oven. Anita discovered that oven cooking bags keep meat and poultry moist. I must admit that her bagged beef roasts, chicken and pork chops are as tender and juicy as anything I've cooked on top of the stove.

BAGGED POT ROAST

1 tbsp. flour
5-lb. beef roast
salt
black pepper 1 large onion, sliced
3 celery ribs, sliced
5 medium potatoes, halved
5 carrots, cut up

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You don't have to have a cocktail to enjoy the taste of a Margarita. Serve your guests this popular drink in the form of a Margarita Pie.

MARGARITA PIE

½ cup butter or margarine
1½ cups finely crushed pretzels
¼ cup sugar
1 can (14 oz.) sweetened condensed milk
¼ cup fresh lime juice
2 tbsp. tequila
2 tbsp. Triple Sec
Grated rind of 1 lime
1 cup whipping cream, whipped
2-3 drops green food color

Heat butter in small saucepan over low heat until melted. Stir in pretzel crumbs and sugar. Mix well. Press crumb mixture into buttered 9-inch pie plate. Chill.

Mix milk, lime juice, tequila, Triple Sec and lime rind in medium bowl until well mixed. Fold in whipped cream and food color. Pour into crumb crust. Freeze until firm, about 4 hours. Let stand 5 minutes before cutting. Garnish with whipped cream, pretzels and mist leaves. 6 to 8 servings.

Who's pushing the grocery cart these days? Four times out of ten, it's a man, according to a recent Food Marketing Institute study.

It was found that 30 percent of today's supermarket shoppers were males shopping alone (28 percent) or males shopping in groups of two or more (2 percent). Ten percent of the shoppers were male-female couples.

How differently do men shop? It was found that males spent less time on their shopping trips and less money (per trip and per week) than females. Also, men planned for shopping less, used supermarket information less and grabbed secondary items less than women. It was found that men had more brand loyalty.

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