

黃金法則

It is easy > but you need to be observant

I am happy to live in this age of readiness.

I started my cooking career in 1972 and during those times, a lot of ingredients are not readily prepared. I have to do everything from scratch. I remembered I have to get a pork shoulder and learn to take the skin off, and the fat off, and the shoulder-blade bone off just to get to a piece of meat to do char siu. I was swearing up and down to the person who invented this Cantonese delicacy.

"Why people do not have the decent sense to use a piece of tenderloin or something". Then I discovered to get to a piece of tenderloin means I have to get into the ribs of the animal. But I came out alright, through numerous questions and practices; I become one who knows a bit rather than one who knows nothing.

I have knife marks on my hand to prove.

The following are just some rules I observe that help in making cooking easy. Rules are never complete but I digress.

Cooking principles

There are no absolutes just preference

Like "there is no bad food, just bad cooks"

There is no definite recipe so to speak. The cooking utensils, the stove, the food, the volume of your food; all contribute to the outcome of food produced. Your personal preference is of big importance.

Hopefully you would not reach the stage like my wife who reminds me every time I cook: "you make it, you eat it! Boy". My wife is an excellent cook when she was young. 2 things went wrong here. She is old now and she is no long excellent. You can never please.

I am one who forgets recipes but I observe well of knowing what I should do to produce quality food. I use ratios.

Cooking is the first step; smelling good and looking good should follow. This is what Chinese people generally believe in > so do I

Always find a nice dish to compliment on the color of the food. That does not mean you can produce a dark mess and choose a black plate to cover it up. The food arrangement and distribution on the plate have to be complimentary. You are producing art; so do not lower your standard. The most difficult thing to control is the smell. The aroma of the dish can be difficult to achieve. "If it smells good, it should taste good"

Always know your temperature and timing of cooking. Using 500 to roast for 10 minutes is quite different from 400 and roast for 20 minutes >

Cooking has to be efficient and yield in reasonable time.

Put a pot of water on the stove and try to identify what is

Simmering

A rolling boil

A roaring boil

All these techniques have different usages

The taste is less important than the timing. There is big argument about this.

Temperature

Low temperature would yield clear soup

High temperature would yield cloudy soup

Start with low and move to high [unless you invented the process]

Knife work

Choosing of the knife

Learn how to sharpen the knife >

Learn to respect the knife > use it for its worth > do not abuse

Respect all your tools / they can help you produce food that goes to your tummy. You would feel good after that.

All spices should be toasted before you use them

Toasting spices is a way to release the fragrance and the oil in the spices.

After the spices are toasted you can store them in air-tight containers.

Here are enough rules to follow and let me hear your comment and experience and you can truly tell yourself: "I know something about cooking"

My wife is making the sign of the cross as I am writing this > Lord; why do I have to suffer so.