

Cooking for the Utility Maximizer
(one economist's guide to the kitchen)

by

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Utility Maximizing Kitchen Tools Needed For These Recipes

The items below make up the simple set of tools required for the recipes to follow.

Wok

12 inch frying pan, with lid

Small saucepan, with lid

3 quart saucepan, with lid

Colander

Potato masher

Meat hammer

Garlic press

Flat cheese grater

Large whisk

Potato peeler

Wooden spatula

Pyrex mixing bowl set

Paring knife

Kitchen knife with narrow blade

Ladle

Set of measuring spoons

Pyrex measuring cup

Pepper mill

The wok is essential. The only requirement is weight—it must be heavy. A smaller 12 inch wok with a strong wooden handle is my personal favorite. To clean, use only water and scrub with a scouring pad. Don't bother to purchase the bottom or a lid. Set the wok right on top of the electric element or gas burner on the stove. If you don't have a gas stove try to get out of your lease. Use a wooden spatula for stirring food in the wok and always keep the heat high.

As an economist I seek to maximize within the constraints of scarcity. As a non-materialist, the latter often prevails. A tour of our kitchen confirms the inextricable links between simplicity and utility. Revere stainless steel copper bottom pans are inexpensive and great (still around \$75 for a basic 7 piece set consisting of: 1 quart and 1-1/2 quart covered saucepans, 4-1/2 quart covered dutch oven, and 9" open skillet. This set has been in production since the early 1940s, but the last domestic U.S. plant manufacturing Revere Ware in Clinton, Illinois was closed in 1999.

We used Teflon coated cancer pans for a year, ingested a good deal of whatever it is that eventually wears away, threw them out and purchased the Revere set with wedding money we got from exchanging a rainbow of fuzzy toilet seat covers. Our thirty years of marriage confirms their durability!

Most of the other tools needed to stock a kitchen can be obtained from ebay or a couple of Saturday mornings scouring good garage sales. My colander is made of aluminum, not steel, and I satisfy my sculptural urges when I reshape it from time to time. I also keep a smaller colander, with a handle, on hand. I use that one for small batches or pasta or for washing berries.

You can skip purchasing a meat hammer, but this is a tool with rapidly increasing returns. They're not always cheap, but after the second time you pound veal shoulder (@ \$5.49 per lb.) into veal scallopini (@ \$12.95 per lb.) it begins to pay *dividends*.

A potato masher is another tool to pick up at a flea market or garage sale. The older ones with the wooden handles never die, and the gauge of steel is often of a superb pre-Post WWII Pittsburgh vintage. Just make sure the paint on the handle doesn't contain any lead.

Do Not buy a garlic press produced off shore in a low income country. This is a high-tech tool and it must be precision made so that the garlic presses *through* the little holes and not out the side. Ours used to be terrible but the problem was fixed one Christmas when my repeated hints were heeded. Zyliss, a Swiss firm, makes the best.

A flat, washboard style, cheese graters is cheap and, unlike their useless boxy counterparts, take up little space and are easy to clean. The big side is best to grate

cheeses, and firm vegetables and fruits. The little side is perfect for freshly grated ginger, lemon zest, etc.

A large whisk is essential. Great for soups and whipping up cream sauces, be sure to spare no expense on this item and it will last forever.

I never understand why people hang on to their old dull potato peelers when a new one sells for a few dollars. But a good one is getting tougher to find. I've had to replace more peelers in three decades of cooking than any other tool in my kitchen.

We have the basic pyrex mixing bowl set. Great for baking, mixing and marinating, the small, medium and large sizes stack nicely and take up minimal space in the cupboard (unless it's my turn to empty the dishwasher rack and they end up randomly stacked).

I have always hated the thought of having a drawer full of useless knives cluttering space. Basically I use three knives procured from a trip to Germany: a good paring knife, a thin bladed meat knife (so it slices easily through vegetables too), and a serrated bread knife. You can't go wrong with Henckel a.k.a. Zwilling, and the one time expense will last a lifetime.

A good ladle is needed to move soup or other mushy stuff from pan to bowl. It also mounts nicely, with duct tape, on an old sawed off broomstick to fill the birdfeeder outside our kitchen window.

A simple set of measuring spoons and a pyrex measuring cup guarantee that the right proportions are added.

I like fresh pepper instead of salt. A pepper mill subconsciously takes away the urge to shake salt. Besides, since engineers haven't yet overcome all of the technological problems in food processing, ground pepper producers are allowed to include 6% "non-pepper" material in their final product. The allowed "non-pepper" component includes twigs, leaves, bugs and manure. I prefer to see the little balls freely casting about in the pepper mill (without the aforementioned) before I grind them into flakes.

Utility Maximizing Spice and Ingredient List for These Recipes

Cooking Sherry (either supermarket or liquor store varieties are fine)

Red wine vinegar (refrigerate after opening)

Rice wine vinegar

Chicken bouillon (to boost or cheat on stock, I prefer the newer paste varieties)

Cornstarch

Fresh ginger (peel skin, and store in a baggie in the freezer; grate when needed)

Garlic (store in open air)

Dried tree ear mushrooms (in the Chinese specialty aisle)

Tahini (in supermarkets or health food stores)

Mustard (I prefer brown or dijon)

Catsup

A-1 Sauce

Sugar, brown and white

Honey

Soy sauce or tamari

Vegetable oil

Olive oil

Sesame oil

Dried parsley

Oregano

Cinnamon

Cumin

Turmeric

Celery seed

Tarragon

Anise

Dill

Curry powder

Peppercorns

Thyme

Paprika

An Introduction to The Recipes

The roots of each recipe are designated, in parentheses after the title, by country or culture, “original” or “friend.” A named country or culture means that the dish has been traditionally prepared in certain parts of the world for centuries. My recipes of dishes from countries or cultures are, in every case, the result of experimentation and refinement by taste after having sampled the dish. A designation of “Original” means the recipe is entirely the playful outcome of experimentation and refinement. The “Friend” designation means the recipe was first given to me by a friend.

Applesauce Beef Loaf (Original)

In our house we rarely eat meatloaf, but when we do this version it is unforgettable.

1 egg

1 cup applesauce

Dijon mustard

Pepper to taste

1 tablespoon brown sugar

1 ½ cups fine bread crumbs

2 tablespoons minced onion

½ teaspoon salt

1 lb. ground beef

2 teaspoons red wine vinegar

Beat the egg and mix with the bread crumbs, ½ cup of applesauce, minced onion, 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard, salt and pepper. Add one pound of ground beef and knead thoroughly with your hands. Shape into a flat round loaf and put in a 9 inch deep dish pie pan.

Make a depression one inch deep by three inches in diameter in the loaf. Combine ½ cup applesauce, brown sugar, red wine vinegar and a teaspoon of Dijon mustard. Pour the mixture into the depression. Bake at 350 degrees for one hour.

Basic Chinese Vegetable Stir Fry and Sauces (Chinese)

These are great to use in a stir fry of bok choy, Chinese cabbage, broccoli, carrots, scallions, tofu, etc. No matter what you include by way of vegetables NEVER use onions or squash with Chinese cuisine (the one exception on the former is sweet and sour pork). Use 1 tablespoon cornstarch and 2 tablespoons water to thicken each.

Version 1

- 3 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon sherry
- 1 tablespoon grated ginger
- 1 chopped scallion
- 1 tablespoon corn oil
- 2 cloves crushed garlic
- 1 tablespoon water

Version 2

- 3 tablespoons soy sauce or tamari
- 1 tablespoon lemon
- 2 cloves crushed garlic
- 1 tablespoon corn oil
- 1 tablespoon water

A Chinese vegetable stir fry is always successful if you remember just six rules. One, always slice your vegetables attractively. Note the correct presentation of each vegetable when you dine at a Chinese restaurant. Two, use as little oil as needed in a wok over high heat. Three, add the hardest vegetables first, fry them for two minutes, then add the rest. Four, always stir continuously and add a dash of water now and then to steam the vegetables along. Five, do not overcook the vegetables. Let them retain some snap. Six, add the sauce just before serving, with one minute left in the cooking cycle. This gives the cornstarch time to thicken. Chinese sauce mixtures provide most of the flavoring by merely coating the vegetables at the conclusion of cooking.

Black Beans and Rice (Original)

A simple version of a traditional Mexican dish that we serve in our house for a quick, healthy meal.

- 1 (15 ounce) can black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 (15 ounce) can corn, drained
- 1/2 cup fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and diced
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon fresh ground pepper
- 2 dashes hot sauce

Prepare rice separately. Heat the beans and corn in a pot with a tablespoon of olive oil. When heated to taste, add the remaining ingredients and cook for five more minutes over medium heat, stirring periodically. Serve over the rice.

Boiled Beef (Original)

Words cannot describe the simple taste of this recipe.

Three to five lbs of beef

1 teaspoon thyme

2 cloves garlic, peeled whole

2 onions, chopped in half

3 carrots, cut into thirds

4 stalks celery, cut into quarters

Add all of the above to a large pot, cover with water and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer for 1½ hours. Remove from heat, let settle for five minutes, slice the meat and serve.

Boiled Beef and Green Sauce (Original)

A simple variation of the previous recipe.

3 to 5 lbs of roasting beef

¼ cup dried parsley

4 medium onions

1 clove crushed garlic

2 tablespoons white vinegar

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 teaspoon oregano

Linguini

Cover the beef with water and simmer on low heat for 1 ½ hours. Combine the remaining ingredients in a mixing bowl and let stand in the refrigerator until the beef is done. Separate the beef from the other items in the pot, slice thin and serve over linguini. Generously spoon the cold “green sauce” over the meat. Salt and Pepper to taste.

Bogracs Gulyas (Kettle Cooked Hungarian Goulash, serves 15 people)

This recipe is dedicated to Imre Toth. I spent an afternoon at his Water Club in Eger, Hungary watching him cook this dish for sixty people on Super Bowl Sunday in January 2000. Bogracs Gulyas is best cooked all afternoon over an open fire, in a kettle, on steady heat. It must be stirred and tended continuously. It is the richest, heartiest meal I have ever eaten. Caution is advised because consuming even modest amounts of Bogracs Gulyas will make you feel full for two days.

- 1 lb. bacon, sliced across in half inch pieces
- 5 to 6 ozs. vegetable oil
- 3 lbs. finely chopped onions
- 2 tbl. Fennel seed
- 1 head garlic, all cloves peeled and finely chopped
- ¼ cup instant soup (onion)
- 5 pieces celery, chopped (including leaves)
- 3 cans whole tomatoes, chopped, reserve juice
- 12 oz. jar of salsa (mild)
- ¼ cup paprika
- 8 to 10 lbs. beef, 1 inch cubes
- 1 bag carrots, peeled and sliced
- 1 dozen potatoes, peeled and diced into 1 inch cubes
- 1 bottle Bull's Blood (red wine from Eger, Hungary)
- Salt and Pepper to taste
- Add water as needed

Heat pot over open fire, cook bacon. Withdraw bacon to bowl, reserve fat in bottom of kettle. (Bacon can be served on fresh bread with a sprinkling of raw onions from the 1 lb. of onions held in reserve).

Add the fennel and garlic to the kettle, and cook for 5 minutes. Add the remaining onions to kettle, with 5 to 6 ozs of vegetable oil. Cook slowly, a half hour of more, until the onions are caramelized and fully obliterated.

Add the instant soup (onion), chopped celery, chopped whole tomatoes, 12 oz jar of salsa, and ¼ cup paprika. Cook and stir for 15 minutes. Add the beef, and just enough water to cover. Do not brown the meat. Cook for a minimum of two hours, adding water as needed to cover. Stir periodically

Add the carrots, potato and Bull's Blood. Cook over low heat for one half hour.

Brazilian Black Bean Soup (Brazil)

Dedicated to Carina, my Philadelphia neighbor from many years ago who couldn't say no to this soup, or to her husband.

2 cups black beans, rinsed
3 ½ cups chicken stock
2 diced onions
3 cloves crushed garlic
1 chopped carrot
1 teaspoon celery seed
Juice from 1 lemon
½ cup chopped cilantro leaves
2 tablespoons cumin
2 oranges, peel, section and seed
½ cup frozen orange juice unmixed
1 tablespoon sherry
Pepper to taste

Soak the beans overnight, or use (6) 15 oz cans of beans for quicker preparation. If you choose the cans, rinse the beans thoroughly in a colander. Pour off excess water. Place in pot with 3½ cups stock. Bring to boil, cover, lower heat and simmer the soaked beans for 1½ hours. Canned beans will simmer in 15 minutes.

Sauté the onion, garlic, carrot, celery seed, and cumin in a little oil. When tender add to the soup and cook for ½ hour. Add the orange pieces, concentrated orange juice, sherry, pepper and lemon juice. Cook for ten more minutes and serve topped with cilantro and sour cream.

Chicken and Snow Peas (Chinese)

Best cooked in a wok over high heat. Tofu can be substituted for the chicken.

2 dozen snow peas

Four chicken breasts

¼ cup sunflower oil

2 tablespoons cornstarch

3 tablespoons sherry

10 dried tree-ear mushrooms

2 tablespoons soy sauce or tamari

2 teaspoons sugar

2 teaspoons water

Snap off the ends of the snow peas. De-bone the chicken, cutting into bite-sized pieces. Put the chicken into a mixing bowl, add one tablespoon cornstarch and one tablespoon sherry. Stir thoroughly and set aside.

Put mushrooms in a cup, pour in boiling water, let set 15 minutes, remove and pat dry.

Blend soy sauce, sugar, remaining sherry and remaining cornstarch in a cup. Set aside.

Heat oil in the wok, add chicken and cook for four minutes. Remove and add the mushrooms and snowpeas to the remaining oil. Stir and cook one minute over high heat. Stir in soy sauce mixture, return chicken to the wok add two tablespoons water, cook one more minute. Good with rice.

Chicken Satay (Indian)

A great starter course, or the core of a meal on the deck in summertime.

2 tbl peanut butter

3 tbl soy or tamari

1 tbl brown sugar

1 tbl curry powder

dash hot pepper sauce

dash of water

juice from 1 lemon

3 chicken breasts, sliced lengthwise into 3 inch strips

skewer sticks

Drizzle chicken strips in lemon juice, set aside in bowl.

Mix, until smooth, peanut butter, soy, brown sugar, curry powder and dash of hot pepper sauce with a fork in a mug. Add dash of water if sauce is too pasty. Skewer chicken lengthwise on sticks. Grill or broil until barely cooked. Serve immediately, and dip chicken into peanut sauce.

Cold Sesame Noodles (Chinese)

This recipe unleashes a vicious cycle. I guarantee you will prepare it the first time, then stick with it for two weeks straight. Then you turn someone else on to it.

- ½ box of linguini
- 2 tablespoons sesame oil
- ½ cup tahini or sesame paste
- 3 tablespoons brewed tea
- 3 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 3 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- ¼ cup corn oil
- 2 tablespoons pressed garlic

Cook the linguini until BARELY done. Drain in the colander, rinse thoroughly in cold water. After ten minutes put the noodles in a bowl, splash ¼ cup of oil over them. Run your hands through the oil and noodles as if you were caressing a full head of hair. Cover and refrigerate.

Put the tahini or sesame paste into a large cup. Add the tea and whip by hand with a fork until smooth. Add the sesame oil and whip until smooth. Add the sugar and whip until smooth. Don't even ENTERTAIN the thought of doing this all at once—I am sparing you the experience of starting over. Add the pressed garlic.

When you are ready to serve, pour the sauce over the noodles and stir thoroughly. NEVER add the sauce in advance.

Cold Vegetarian Pasta (Original)

At one time, this was our favorite road food to eat in the car, since it makes a tastier and healthier lunch or dinner than a bucket of KFC. But KFC is dead, except in China, where a new one opens every day of the year!

1 red pepper

Two small zucchinis

1 package pasta

2 tablespoons wine vinegar

2 cloves garlic

1 teaspoon sugar

One medium sized red onion

One small yellow squash

1/3 cup good olive oil

3 tablespoons water

Dash of salt

A few drops of tamari

Cook the linguini or another one of your favorite pastas. Split each squash four ways lengthwise, chop into little triangles and stir fry over high heat for two minutes with onions and red pepper. Remove and chill. Mix olive oil, rice wine vinegar, water, garlic, salt, sugar and tamari as a salad in a jar and shake. Thinly slice red pepper and red onion into 2 inch pieces. Combine sauce with chilled vegetables in a large mixing bowl. Drain and rinse pasta with cold water and chill. When ready to serve combine vegetables and pasta in a bowl, and mix in the dressing.

Corn Potato Chowder (Original)

Great in the summertime, when the corn is fresh. Use generous amounts of pepper.

3 medium potatoes, diced

1 onion, thinly sliced

½ teaspoon celery seed

Salt to taste

1½ cups corn

1½ cups milk

5 slices bacon

Slice the bacon into small bits. In a sauce pan, cook the bacon and onion. Drain off the fat, add ½ cup water, the potatoes, celery seed and salt. Cook for 15 minutes covered. Stir in the corn, milk and pepper. Cook for 5 more minutes on low heat and serve.

Fajitas (Mexican)

I was not fond of Mexican cuisine until I discovered this dish many years ago.

1 package flour or corn tortillas

1 onion

1 tablespoon soy sauce

2 tablespoons chili powder

1 tablespoon sherry

1 teaspoon sugar

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

Guacamole

1 green pepper

3 boneless chicken breasts

1 tablespoon A-1 sauce

2 cloves crushed garlic

4 tablespoons water

1 tablespoon cornstarch

Sour cream

Slice the chicken into bite-sized chunks. Chop the pepper and onion into ½ inch square pieces. Combine and mix the soy sauce, A-1 sauce, chili powder, garlic, sherry, 2 tablespoons water and sugar.

Heat the oil in a wok (high) and cook the chicken until done. Remove, reserving the remaining oil. Fry the pepper and onions for two minutes. Add the chicken and the sauce mixture, stirring constantly for two minutes. Combine the cornstarch and 2 tablespoons of water and add to the simmering meat and vegetables. Cook for one more minutes and put in a serving dish.

To prepare the fajita, place each tortilla wrapper on a plate. Spread about 1 tablespoon of sour cream and 1 tablespoon guacamole on the wrapper. Spoon the meat onto the wrapper. Fold per instructions on the back of the tortilla wrapper package and serve.

Fresh Lobster (Original)

This recipe is included because the preparation of lobster is a national disgrace. Basically the problem is two-fold: the slaughter and the cooking. Here we pay vast quantities of money for this delicacy and we destroy the essence of the flavor every time. Follow the directions once and you will enjoy lobster like never before.

Live Lobster

Store the live lobster in the refrigerator. Remove from packaging and rinse thoroughly in ice cold water. Use a hand towel to flip the lobster over on a cutting surface. Holding the lobster on its back with one hand, use a heavy sharp knife to split its head in half. The more adept you become at this the more humane will be your action.

Using the towel, twist and break off the tail and the claws. Clean any roe out of the tail. From the underside, split the soft shell of the tail so that it will be easily removed when cooked.

Boil one inch of water in a five quart pot on high heat. Put in a steaming tray and set the tails, claws and, if you desire, the bodies of the lobster on the steaming tray. (I reserve the bodies for stock.) Cover the pan tightly and set your timer for eight minutes, no more. When the timer goes off remove the lobster and serve immediately.

Fried Dumplings (Chinese)

Marx once wrote that he envisioned a society where he would toil in the morning, fish all afternoon, and read and write in the evening. This, of course, is predicated on there being a wife to cook for you. I envisioned a society with some of the same features, substituting the long preparation of the following dish for the fishing. (Since I cook in the household division of labor.)

One cup flour	1 tablespoon sugar
4 tablespoons water	3 chopped scallions
2 cups Chinese cabbage	Teaspoon fresh grated ginger
3-4 pork chops, ground up	
1 tablespoon sesame oil	
1 tablespoon sherry	
1 tablespoon soy sauce	

Combine the water and flour in a small bowl, using a fork, then kneading with the hands. Work the dough for about five minutes until it is an even consistency. Hand shape into a one inch roll, cut off $\frac{1}{4}$ inch disks with a sharp knife. Squeeze disks into silver dollar sized shapes. Dip each disk into a bowl of flour, and roll the disk into a three inch medallion with a rolling pin. Stack and set aside.

Grind the meat in a food processor. Put into a mixing bowl and add the scallions, sesame oil, sherry, soy sauce, sugar, and a teaspoon of fresh grated ginger.

Put a loving spoonful of the filling onto the flour medallion. Pull up the opposite sides (12 and 6 o'clock) and pinch in the middle. Jamb the edges (3 and 9 o'clock) into the seam and pinch. Now pinch along the entire seam and set aside. Repeat, repeat, repeat, go fishing, repeat, repeat. Alternately, invite your friends for a dumpling fest and get them all to help. That approach offers a great beer drinking activity.

Heat oil over a medium flame in enough frying pans to nestle all of the dumplings, or cook them in waves. There should be enough oil to thickly coat the bottom. Drop the dumplings into the heated oil, and be careful not to burn them. Cook two minutes, or until the bottom is brown. Pour $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water into the pan (a move quickly type job) and

cover tightly. Cover and cook for five minutes. Uncover the pan, allow any remaining water to steam off. Remove and Serve.

Fried Dumpling Dipping Sauce (Chinese)

Thoroughly combine the following ingredients in a small serving bowl, and use to dip dumplings.

2 tablespoons chopped garlic

4 tablespoons soy sauce

8 tablespoons red wine vinegar

1 teaspoon sugar

Ginger and Scallion Chicken (Original)

The dish that converted me to fresh ginger.

A whole chicken

6 tablespoons of corn oil

¼ cup shredded fresh ginger

3 scallions, chopped fine

2 tablespoon soy sauce or tamari

1 tablespoon sugar

1 tablespoon sherry

Cook the chicken according to the thermal cooked chicken recipe elsewhere in the book. Debone the chicken into elegant 2 inch long strips. Reserve the bones for stock.

Heat the oil in a small saucepan. When hot, add the ginger and scallions. Stir for 30 seconds, add the remaining ingredients and stir for 30 seconds more. Pour over the chicken. Serve at room temperature or cold.

Hot and Sour Soup (Chinese)

Hearty, quick, and prepared entirely in the wok.

8 dried tree ear mushrooms

1 tablespoon corn oil

¼ cup sliced pork

2 tablespoons soy sauce

½ bamboo shoots

5 cups chicken stock

4 tablespoons red wine vinegar

2 tablespoons cornstarch

3 tablespoons water

1 package tofu cut into strips

1 egg, slightly beaten

1 tablespoon sesame oil

2 chopped scallions

Ground pepper to taste

Pour hot water over the mushrooms in a cup, let stand for fifteen minutes and drain. Cut into smaller pieces.

Heat the wok, add the oil and sliced pork. Stir and add the soy sauce. Add the mushrooms and bamboo shoots. Stir for one minute and add the chicken stock.

Stir in the vinegar. Combine the cornstarch and water and add to the simmering soup. When slightly thick, add the tofu. Cook for five minutes, lower the heat and slowly add the egg, swizzling with a fork. Add the sesame oil and pepper. Sprinkle with the scallions and serve immediately.

Indian Chicken or Lamb—Hot Spicy Version (Indian, Friend)

This is a basic Indian recipe, originally prepared by an Indian friend of mine at the New School in his furniture-less high rise apartment in Newark, New Jersey.

Stew lamb or chicken thighs

Marinade with:

2 tablespoons ground cumin

2 teaspoons turmeric

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

½ teaspoon ground clove

Ground black pepper to taste

Chili pepper to taste

8 cloves garlic, sliced thin

4 teaspoons salt

Add during cooking:

6 tablespoons light sesame or vegetable oil

2 ½ cups onions, sliced thin

2 large tomatoes cut into small wedges

Shredded coconut

Skin the chicken (cube the lamb) and put into a mixing bowl. Add the ingredients for the marinade, and rub into the meat. Cover and refrigerate for at least one hour (best overnight or all day).

Put the meat in a shallow pan, add ½ cup water and bring to a boil. Cover, lower the heat and cook 15 minutes. Stir occasionally to prevent sticking; add more water if necessary. In a separate pan, add the oil and cook the onions for ten minutes, stirring frequently. When the meat is cooked stir in the onions and tomatoes. Cook for five minutes, serve with coconut on top.

Indian Chicken or Lamb—Mild Spicy Version (Indian)

This version is delightful if you want to appreciate the subtle flavor of the spices.

Stew lamb or chicken thighs

Marinade with:

¼ cup olive oil

¼ cup white vinegar

1 tablespoon ground cinnamon

1 teaspoon sugar

1 tablespoon turmeric

1 tablespoon curry powder

1 tablespoon cumin

Salt and pepper to taste

Add during cooking:

3 tablespoons light sesame or vegetable oil

2 ½ cups onions, sliced thin

Frozen peas

Skin the chicken (cube the lamb) and put into a mixing bowl. Add the ingredients of the marinade and rub into the meat. Cover and refrigerate for at least one hour (best overnight or all day).

Put the onions in a shallow pan, add oil and cook until transparent. Add chicken or lamb and ½ cup water. Cover, lower the heat and cook 10 minutes. Stir occasionally to prevent sticking; add more water if necessary. Add the peas and cook for 10 more minutes, stirring frequently. Serve with rice.

Kibbeh Kebabs (Lebanese, Original)

The heart of a great backyard meal or tailgate.

2 lbs ground beef (lamb in Lebanon)

4 tbl tomato paste

½ cup minced onion

juice from one lemon

½ teas cinnamon

dash hot sauce

1 tbl allspice

¼ cup crushed nuts

skewers

pita bread for serving

Combine meat, tomato paste, minced onion, spices, and nuts in a bowl, and knead by hand as if you were creating a meatloaf. Moisten hand in water, take a handful of meat and create a long sausage-like shape into small 1 inch by 3 inch logs. Carefully slide onto a wooden or metal skewer. Grill the meat on a low flame as you would grill hamburger. Serve on half a pita, one or two kibbeh with Cucumber Lemon Garnish

Cucumber Lemon Garnish

1 cucumber, sliced into quarters lengthwise, discard seeds, dice into

¼ inch pieces

3 tbl olive oil

2 tbl lemon juice

salt and pepper to taste

Mix in a small bowl and serve with Kibbeh Kababs. Add ½ cup of yogurt if you prefer a creamier sauce.

Leg of Lamb (Original)

To be sure, simple. To be savored, to be sure.

One leg of lamb, patted dry

3 to 4 cloves of garlic, sliced into quarters

Flour

Salt to taste

Smother the leg with a dish towel and wring the life out of it. Stab it repeatedly with a paring knife and insert a slice of garlic in every laceration to ward off the lamb Geist. Rub completely with embalming flour and let the leg stand, at room temperature, for one hour.

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Roast for 1¼ to 1½ hours. Remove, let stand for ten minutes, slice and serve.

Linguini with Clam and Vegetable Sauce (Original)

Try this dish even if clams don't normally thrill you.

5 cloves of crushed garlic

5 tablespoons olive oil

2 stalks chopped celery

2 small zucchini, thin sliced

¼ lb. mushrooms

3 medium onions, diced

2 tomatoes, diced

3 tablespoons dried parsley

One can chopped clams

¼ cup white wine (or sherry)

Salt and pepper to taste

Linguini

Briefly sauté the garlic in the oil in a frying pan. Add the celery, zukes, onion, mushrooms and parsley. When the veggies are tender, add the clams (juice too), wine, salt, and a ton of fresh ground pepper. Simmer for a few minutes. Add a scant amount of cornstarch mixed with a little water to thicken if too watery. Add the tomatoes and serve over linguini.

Manhattan Clam Chowder, 30 Minute Version (Original)

The result of many experiments to get this down to a quick version for when the hankering strikes.

- 3 slices of bacon, chopped
- 2 onions, peeled and diced
- 2 carrots, peeled and diced
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 3 potatoes, peeled and diced
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- 14 oz can of tomatoes (reserve juice)
- 4 cups water
- dash thyme
- salt and pepper, to taste
- 2 cans (6 oz each) minced clams (reserve juice)

Brown bacon in soup pan over medium heat. Add onions, carrots, celery and green pepper. Stir continuously for 2 minutes. Add tomatoes, potatoes, water, and seasonings. Cook over medium heat for 15 minutes. Add clams and reserved juice, simmer for 5 minutes.

Manhattan Clam Chowder, Refined (Original)

I developed this recipe for our annual family gatherings to celebrate our exceptional parents.

2 dozen Fresh Cherrystone or Little Neck clams (reserve 5 cups broth)

4 cups water

3 slices bacon, chopped

2 carrots, peeled and chopped

2 onions, peeled and chopped

1½ cup chopped celery

4 potatoes, peeled and diced

(2) 14oz cans, chopped tomatoes (reserve juice)

salt and pepper to taste

½ teas thyme

Wash the clams well, and steam in a kettle with the water. Chopped the clams, and reserve 5 cups of the clam broth. In separate soup pan, cook bacon until brown. Add onions, carrots, and celery. Stir continuously for 2 minutes. Add the chopped tomatoes, potatoes, seasonings, and clam broth. Cook over medium heat for 15 minutes. Add clams and simmer for 5 minutes. Serves 6.

Manor House Farm Poolside Barbeque Sauce (Original)

Use for an overnight marinade with shish kabob. Beef and pork work well, but chicken is best. Originally developed many years ago, right after I finished graduate school. Works great even if you don't have a pool in the backyard.

1 or 2 shakes of salt

¼ cup sugar

¼ cup brown sugar

1 ½ cups beef stock

¼ cup mustard

1/8 cup white vinegar

¼ cup A-1 sauce

½ cup catsup

3 tablespoons sauce picante

Combine and simmer over low heat until all ingredients dissolve. Cool and add to your meat a day in advance.

Marinated Cucumber (Original)

This is a simple accompaniment for any meal that I developed after a three week journey to China. It should be prepared at least half a day in advance.

- 2 long European cucumbers
- 1 medium carrot, peeled
- 2 tablespoons white rice wine vinegar
- 10 cloves of Szechuan peppers
- 1 chili pepper, sliced
- 3 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon sugar

Scrub the cucumbers and rinse the skin well (do not peel). Cut the cucumbers lengthways into quarters. Cut crossways into finger-length pieces. Slice the carrot into matchstick-sized slivers. Sprinkle 2 teaspoons of salt over cucumbers and carrot. Mix in. Refrigerate for several hours.

Maryland Crab Chowder (Original)

Dedicated to my son Theo, who introduced our family to Barack Obama. This recipe was inspired by my visit to a Crab House in Baltimore, Maryland the night after Obama was elected in 2008.

1 onion, sliced fine	4 cups water
4 tbsp. vegetable oil	14 oz. can diced tomatoes, & juice
1/2 medium cabbage, finely chopped	1 lb. crab legs, crab separated
3 pieces celery, chopped	3 potatoes, thin sliced
3 carrots, chopped	salt and pepper to taste

Boil crabs for 10 minutes in 4 cups of water. Strain broth and save. Separate crabmeat from shells and save.

Heat soup pot over medium heat with 2 tbsp. vegetable oil. Sauté onions until limp. Add carrots, celery, and cabbage, simmer and stir continuously for 10 minutes.

Add crab broth to the vegetables, cook covered, over low heat, for 30 minutes. Add additional water as needed.

Add tomatoes and juice, potatoes, crabmeat, and 2 tbsp. vegetable oil. Simmer for 30 minutes, over low heat. Salt and pepper to taste. Serve.

Oven Braised Spareribs (Original)

If you eat pork once in a while this is the perfect dish.

- 2 cloves garlic
- 3 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons sherry
- 1 teaspoon fresh grated ginger
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- ½ teaspoon anise
- ½ teaspoon fennel
- 1 tablespoon hoisin sauce
- 1 tablespoon catsup
- 2 to 3 lbs pork spareribs

Combine all of the ingredients in a large mixing bowl. Add the ribs and marinate in the refrigerator for at least two hours.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Crowd the ribs and the sauce into a small cake or roasting pan and bake for one hour. Turn the oven temperature up to 400 degrees and brown for an additional 15 minutes. Serve immediately.

Pea Soup (Original)

A simple, cheap alternative to methane. Dedicated to my mom, who makes great pea soup. Be careful, though, because Global Warming and Climate Change are REAL.

2 cups of pea splits

3 diced onions

3 diced carrots

Pork bones

Salt and pepper to taste

Rinse the peas, combine with two quarts water, pork bone, sautéed onion, salt and pepper. Bring to boil, cover and simmer for 1½ hours. Stir occasionally. Add the carrots, cook uncovered for ½ hour. Serve.

Petrovoselo Pasta (Original)

This recipe was inspired by life in Petrovselo, Croatia in the Summer of 1989. From our perch at 3,000 feet above the ancient city of Dubrovnik we watched and listened to the events which changed the “e” in eastern Europe from upper to lower case. In the evening, I used meats and vegetables made in Petrovselo (our village of sixty people, which was destroyed in the civil war by shelling) to prepare the following dish.

1 cup shredded mozzarella

1 medium sized red onion

1 package linguini

2 tablespoons wine vinegar

2 cloves garlic

1 teaspoon sugar

Red pepper

½ lb. hard salami or prosciutto

1/3 cup good olive oil

3 tablespoons water

Dash of salt

A few drops of tamari

Cook the linguini or another favorite pasta. Chop salami or prosciutto into bite sized pieces. Mix olive oil, rice wine vinegar, water, garlic, salt, sugar and tamari as a salad dressing in a jar and shake. Combine the sauce with the meat, red pepper (thinly sliced into 2 inch pieces) and onion (thinly sliced into 2 inch pieces) in a large mixing bowl. Drain and rinse the pasta with cold water until chilled, transfer to bowl and mix in with other ingredients. Serve topped with the mozzarella cheese.

Pittsford Pasta (Original)

My efforts to create this dish were inspired by a visit to a restaurant in Pittsford, New York several years ago. A great meal, in an old tavern alongside the Erie Canal, started a three day quest to replicate the taste.

- 1 box spinach pasta
- 3 oz sundried tomato, chopped fine
- 8 oz chopped artichoke hearts (fresh cooked or canned)
- 1/3 lb feta cheese, crumbled into small pieces
- 4 scallions, chopped fine
- 12 oz fresh spinach leaves, preferably baby spinach
- 4 tbs fresh cilantro, chopped fine
- Juice from 1 lemon
- 12 black olives, chopped
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 3 tbl vegetable oil
- salt and pepper to taste

Cook pasta, al dente. Combine olive oil and lemon juice, and mix well. Combine remaining ingredients, except spinach, in a small bowl. Dress ingredients, as salad, with the olive oil and lemon mixture.

Drain, rinse and set aside the pasta. In large pan, heat vegetable oil. Add and toss the pasta. Add and toss the spinach until limp, and add and toss the ingredients in a small bowl. Salt and pepper to taste. Serve immediately.

Red Meat Takes its Knocks, but this is So Good (Friend)

A steak, or red meat for kabobs, prepared this way is irresistible. I owe this one to Shelley Wallace, one of the best cooks I know.

½ bottle of cheap Italian dressing

¼ cup tamari (soy sauce)

Steak or tender red meat chunks (for kabob)

Mix the Italian dressing and the tamari in a large mixing bowl. Insert steak. Refrigerate for six hours. Grill or skewer or broil. Serve, and prepare to never make red meat any other way.

Salad Dressing (Original)

My Pfl (Partner for Life) Eva makes most of the salad dressing in our house, but this is the basic version I use when called upon. The key ingredient, which most everyone omits, is good old water. Simply mix it all together, and Voila!

1/3 cup good olive oil

3 tablespoons water

Dash of salt

A few drops of tamari

2 tablespoons rice wine vinegar

2 cloves garlic

1 teaspoon sugar

Schwein Schnitzel (Original)

I developed this dish after frequent trips to Germany when I was much younger. Up to that point I had thought schnitzel was made with high priced veal. Substituting pork brings one of Germany's classic meals to the working class.

4 pork cutlets

Pre-fab bread crumbs

2 eggs

1 lemon

½ stick butter

Flour

Salt and pepper to taste

Use pork chops or boneless pork, medium thickness, for this recipe. Cut into two inch by two inch pieces. Use a meat hammer to pound and stretch the meat into very thin scallopini.

Prepare three bowls; one with flour, one with the two eggs beaten and one with the breadcrumbs. Dip each piece of meat in the flour, then the egg and, finally, the breadcrumbs. Melt the butter in a frying pan over medium heat. Drop the meat into the butter and cook for four minutes. Turn and cook for four more minutes. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve with lemon wedges to squeeze over the schnitzel before eating.

Smashed Eggplant (Chinese)

My Pfl (Partner for Life) Eva can't get enough of this, her favorite of all dishes.

6 dried tree ear mushrooms

1 red bell pepper

3 to 4 tablespoons of garlic

Chili powder to taste

2 tablespoons soy sauce

½ cup water

2 tablespoons sherry

2 tablespoons red wine vinegar

1½ tablespoons sugar

1 medium eggplant

Put the mushrooms in a cup, pour in boiling water, let set fifteen minutes, remove and pat dry. In a cup blend the garlic, chili powder, soy sauce, sherry, vinegar, and sugar. Trim the ends of the eggplant and discard. Cut it widthwise into thirds. Take each third and cut lengthwise into pie shaped slivers. This is necessary to preserve the skin, which cooks to a brilliant purple in this dish. Wash the slices, and let them drip dry in a colander.

Heat ¼ cup oil in the wok. Add the eggplant wedges. Stir continuously and cook for five to eight minutes over high heat. Periodically press the frying eggplant with a potato masher as it cooks to a limp consistency. Remove the eggplant.

Add 2 tablespoons of oil to the wok and cook the mushrooms and red pepper (chopped into ½ inch cubes) for two minutes. Return the eggplant to the wok and cook, stirring continuously for five more minutes. Smash the mixture periodically. Add the water, stir briefly, then add the soy sauce mixture. Cook and stir for five more minutes. Serve hot. Also excellent cold the next day.

Spaghetti with Beef Chunks (Original)

I love spaghetti as a kid. My dad told me beef chunks worked great at the volunteer firehouse dinners that he used to help cook, so I gave it a try. See for yourself.

One lb. stewing beef, cut into 1 inch chunks

Tomato sauce

One small can tomato paste

2 medium onions, diced

4 cloves garlic, thin sliced

¼ cup orange juice

Salt and pepper to taste

¼ cup vegetable oil

1 carrot, finely grated

1 green pepper, diced

Linguini

Brown the meat in a frying pan with 2 tablespoons of oil. Remove.

Brown the onions and peppers with 2 tablespoons of oil in a three quart saucepan. Pour the tomato sauce into the onions and peppers. Add the tomato paste, carrot, garlic slices, orange juice, remaining oil, and beef chunks.

Cook on low heat for one hour. Serve warm, not piping hot.

Sweet and Sour Pork (Chinese)

Better than the restaurant version because this one has less of a fat fried taste.

4 pork chops, cut in cubes

1 tablespoon soy sauce

1 tablespoon sherry

3 tablespoons cornstarch

8 tree ear mushrooms

1 red or yellow pepper, cubed

1 carrot, sliced thin

1 onion, cube sliced

¼ cup bamboo shoots

½ cup chunk pineapple

2 scallions, chopped

2 cloves garlic, crushed

2 tablespoons grated ginger

1 ¼ cups water

¼ cup sugar

1/3 cup red wine vinegar

1 tablespoon soy sauce or tamari

Sunflower oil

Put the chunks of pork in a mixing bowl, add 1 tablespoon soy sauce, the sherry, and the cornstarch. Mix until evenly coated.

Place the mushrooms in a dish, pour in hot water and cover for fifteen minutes. Combine the pepper cubes, carrot, onion, bamboo shoots, pineapple, scallions, mushrooms, garlic and ginger.

Heat $\frac{1}{4}$ cup oil in the wok. Add pork and cook for 5 minutes, stirring frequently. Remove to the original bowl. Add a little more oil to the wok and dump in the vegetable mixture. Cook, stirring frequently, for 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a small saucepan combine 1 cup water, the sugar, vinegar, soy sauce, and salt to taste. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Blend 2 tablespoons cornstarch with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water and stir into the simmering sauce. Add two tablespoons fresh oil to glaze, remove from the heat and set aside.

Return the pork to the wok with the vegetables, stir until heated, pour the sauce over the dish and serve immediately.

Tarragon Chicken (Original)

Best cooked in a three quart saucepan. This recipe was developed while the leaves were changing and the melancholy of winter was setting in many years ago in Upstate New York.

One whole chicken, or breasts

1 cup chicken broth

2 tablespoons cornstarch

2 tablespoons sherry

1 teaspoon tarragon

¼ cup dried parsley

3 large cloves garlic, crushed

2 tablespoons lemon juice

1 teaspoon sugar

1 teaspoon soy sauce

¼ cup sour cream

Salt and pepper to taste

Linguini

Thermal cook the whole chicken (see recipe elsewhere in the book). De-bone the chicken by pulling it apart into bite-sized chunks. Boil the bones for fifteen minutes in 2 cups of the remaining broth. Put ¾ cup of the broth into a three quart saucepan. Add the tarragon, dried parsley, garlic, and soy sauce. Salt and pepper to taste.

After ten minutes on low heat, add the chicken to the simmering sauce. Cook for 5 minutes and add the sherry and cornstarch mixed into 4 tablespoons of broth in a separate cup.

Add the sugar and lemon juice with the sour cream just prior to serving. This dish is terrific over linguini.

Thermal Cooked Chicken (Original)

This is the ONLY way to cook tender chicken. If baked, the chicken dries out. If boiled, the flavor disappears. Here we obtain the middle ground. If only our politicians could do the same.

One whole chicken

Completely skin and clean the fat off the chicken. If you work from the rump to the front the skin comes off just like pajamas. In a large pot, boil enough water to cover the entire chicken. Set the chicken in the boiling water. When the water comes to a rolling boil again, cover the pot and turn off the heat. After one undisturbed hour the chicken is done.

This thermal cooked bird can be served right up as it is. It also makes great chicken salad, when chilled, or the deboned meat can be used for other recipes (including several in this book). Save the bones for stock and cook with the water left over.

Tofu and Kale in Coconut Milk (Original)

Dedicated to my son Luke, and our first father and son road trip to Atlanta to camp for three days at the one off Echo Project. A local food vendor at that festival served me something similar, and three days of Trial of Error, after returning home, resulted in this dish.

1 lb. firm tofu, sliced into 1 inch chunks

kale, ½ bunch, steamed and chopped

2 tbsp. fresh grated ginger

12 oz. can coconut milk

2 tbsp. tamari

1/2 8oz can bamboo shoots

2 tbsp. vegetable oil

steamed rice

Prepare 1 cup of (uncooked) rice separately, according to your preferences.

Boil kale leaves for 15 minutes, discarding stems. Drain, press, and chop into 1 x 1 inch squares.

Fry tofu in a wok with 2 tbsp. of vegetable oil, until browned. Add bamboo shoots and chopped kale, and stir fry for 5 more minutes.

Add ginger and tamari, stir fry for 3 minutes. Add coconut milk, and stir fry until the entire dish is nicely heated.

Serve over the rice in a bowl, and salt and pepper to taste. Feel free to add your favorite hot red pepper sauce, as well.

Turkish Chicken Kebab (Turkey)

My Pfl (Partner for Life) Eva was born in Istanbul, and this dish takes her Scottish roots back to Turkey.

2 tbl olive oil

juice from one lemon

salt and pepper to taste

3 bay leaves, crumbled

1 tbl crushed oregano leaves

1 ½ lbs boneless chicken (dark, white, or both), cut into kebob size chunks

wooden skewers

Combine olive oil, lemon, bay leaves, and oregano in a mixing bowl. Add salt and pepper to taste, and mix well. Add chicken chunks and stir. Marinate from 10 minutes to overnight. Skewer chicken, grill for four minutes over medium flame, turn and grilled four more minutes. Serve with rice.

Veal Stew (Original)

A simple winter dish developed many years ago.

Stew veal

2 pieces of bacon

Carrots

½ cup sherry

Dash red hot sauce

1 ½ cups water

2 cubes bouillon

Onions

Cornstarch to thicken

½ stick margarine

Salt and pepper to taste

Saute the onions and brown the veal in a frying pan. Add all the ingredients to a pot and simmer over low heat for at least 2 hours. Serve over linguini.

Vietnamese Spring Rolls (Vietnamese)

This dish can also be prepared using the ten inch round rice paper wraps found in Asian specialty markets.

Package of egg roll wrappers (or rice papers)

Fresh cilantro leaves

1 doz shrimp

Three scallions

1 tablespoon soy sauce

½ cup vegetable oil

Small package of bean sprouts

Fresh mint leaves

Two or three medium sized pork chops

1 pack thin rice vermicelli noodles

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

Chop cilantro, mint and scallions into separate piles. Rinse the bean sprouts. Steam the shrimp in shallow saucepan with one inch of water for two minutes. Cool and remove the shells. Chop each shrimp into four pieces. Cook vermicelli rice noodles for four minutes in frying pan with one and a half inches of boiling water. Remove, drain in colander, rinse and set aside. De-bone and cube the pork and put the cubes into food processor with mint, scallions and one tablespoon soy sauce. Blend for two minutes. Add 2 tablespoons of oil in hot pan and fry (stirring continuously) the ground pork mixture until it is just cooked.

Assemble all ingredients. Note the folding instructions on the package of eggroll wrappers. Combine the pork, vermicelli noodles, a little chopped cilantro, bean sprouts and shrimp into the lower third of the eggroll wrapper. Roll and seal with a little water. Cook each roll in frying pan with ½ cup of vegetable oil on medium heat. Turn frequently, one minute a side. Place on paper towel and serve.

For the fresh, uncooked, rice paper version substitute the rice papers for the egg roll wrapper. These are immersed in water for five seconds, and patted on a nearby clean dish towel. Add the ingredients, fold up bottom side (6 o'clock) then fold over one side (3 o'clock) and roll over to 9 o'clock).

Vietnamese Spring Roll Dipping Sauce (Vietnamese)

This sauce is used to dip the Spring Rolls in as you eat them. The Vietnamese fish sauce can be found at an oriental specialty shop. It is the decisive ingredient for all Vietnamese recipes.

2 cloves garlic, crushed

2 tablespoons lemon juice

¼ cup Vietnamese fish sauce

2 tablespoons sugar

¼ cup rice wine vinegar

Combine all of the ingredients and stir until the sugar dissolves.

White Meat with White Sauce (Original)

Best prepared in a wok, even though it's vaguely Italian in taste. This dish is quick, and a delight.

Chicken meat or stew veal

1/8 cup sherry

1 tablespoon cornstarch

¼ cup sunflower oil

Juice from ½ lemon

3 medium onions

½ lb. mushrooms, sliced

½ cup sour cream

Salt and pepper to taste

De-bone the chicken and cut into one inch cubes. If veal is used, buy stewing chunks, cut fat and grizzle, cube and hammer into medallions.

The meat should be marinated in the sherry for as long as you like (the longer the better). To marinate, add the cornstarch to the meat and sherry and stir to coat. Grind in plenty of fresh pepper and cover in the fridge.

When you are ready to cook, heat the oil in the wok. Stir in the meat and cook for 3 to 4 minutes. Remove, leaving as much oil as possible behind.

Stir the onions (sliced whole and thin) in the remaining oil and cook for one minute. Add the mushrooms and cook for 2 minutes, stirring constantly.

Return the meat to the wok, squeeze in the lemon juice, add salt and pepper (plenty of the latter) to taste. After one more minute of cooking add the sour cream, stir thoroughly and serve. Great on its own, but especially nice over linguini.

Wicked Woked Shrimp (Chinese)

Every so often, when I have a lousy day or, alternately, receive great news, I turn to this dish. My extended family testifies that this is their All Time Favorite Recipe from my collection. It's fitting, after all of these years and many versions of this book, that this recipe comes at the end.

2 dozen shrimp

1 tablespoon cornstarch

¼ cup white vinegar

4 cloves minced garlic

6 scallions, white part only

1 ½ tablespoons fresh ginger

2 tablespoons soy sauce

5 teaspoons sugar

Corn oil

Shell and clean the shrimp. Pat dry with a towel, place in a mixing bowl and add the cornstarch. Work with your fingers until all are lightly coated. Combine the vinegar, soy sauce, and sugar in a cup. Combine the garlic, scallions, and ginger on a small plate.

Heat ¼ cup of oil in the wok, add the shrimp. Cook for two minutes and remove. To the remaining oil add the spice mixture on the plate. Stir, then add the liquid ingredients in the cup. When it boils, return the shrimp to the wok, stir until well coated with sauce. Serve immediately.