Here Are 20 Cool Kitchen Hacks to Help You Enjoy Cooking Again

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These kitchen hacks will help you get the job done faster — and maybe even relish spending time in the kitchen again!

Image via Amazon.com/Kitchen Gear

Whether you're a working mom, a stay-at-home dad or somewhere in between, you know that one of your most important duties is now that of "Chief Cook and Bottle Washer." And even though cooking can be a fun and rewarding hobby, it can also be a real pain in the ass. It can also start to feel like nothing more than a chore, and that's no fun at all.

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To help put the fun back in cooking, we've put together a list of 20 kitchen and cooking hacks that should make your meal prep a whole lot easier.

1) Panini Press Omelets — The New Breakfast Frontier

Omelets are a classic breakfast go-to, but they're admittedly one of the more annoying egg dishes to make, too. There's just so much folding and turning and sliding and flipping involved, and, of course, there never quite turns out as appetizing as you'd hoped they would.

But don't despair, egg-enthusiasts! According to Food Network's Alton Brown, you can make an easy — and tasty — omelet right on your panini press!

2) Soften Butter Faster

Need a bunch of butter in a hurry? You can soften a stick of butter by covering it with a bowl that's been heated in the microwave for 20 seconds.

Image via Stephanie Young

According to Reviewed.com/Kitchen.com, you can also soften butter by grating it.

Image via Reviewed.com/Kitchen.com

3) How to Save Thyme...and Other Herbs

The best thing about having fresh herbs on hand? They give your food an unbelievably crisp and vibrant flavor that you just can't replicate with their dried counterparts.

The worst thing about having fresh herbs on hand? They go bad inexplicably fast. Preserve your around-fresh herbs by storing them with olive oil in an ice cube tray, and then popping the mixture into the freezer. Then pull out the olive oil with the robust aromas of the herbs, and will add an instant burst of flavor to any future stews or sauces you make.

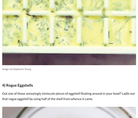

Image via Stephanie Young

4) Rogue Eggshells

Got one of those annoyingly miniscule pieces of eggshell floating around in your bowl? Ladle out that rogue eggshell by using half of the shell from whence it came.

Image via Stephanie Young

5) Don't Want Yolks? No Problem!

Say you want to make some scrambled eggs. You crack a bunch into a bowl and, just as you're about to start whisking, you remember that your doctor told you to cut down on your cholesterol.

"Wood," you think. "I should've separated the yolks from the whites. I'm going to have to toss these and start all over."

Not so fast, my friend. This is an easy fix, just take an empty plastic bottle, put the mouth over the yolk and squeeze. Squeezing the bottle will create a suction effect and suck the yolk right into the bottle. Easy-peasy!

Image via Stephanie Young

6) Get Garlicky Hands? Try Stainless Steel

If you've been feeling garlic-y as-of-late — or even for a minute — your hands are going to turn into a category-I-tornado-pretty fast. If you want to get that garlicky smell off your hands, here's a weird trick: vigorously rub your hands on the inside of a stainless steel sink for 30 seconds. It actually works!

Image via Stephanie Young

7) Constant Seasonings

If you really want to put some "Oomph" into your meal, try seasoning it at every stage of the cooking process. This will infuse the various elements of your dish with more lasting and powerful flavors.

Image via Stephanie Young

8) The Secret to Perfect Mashed Potatoes

For flavorful, non-watery mashed potatoes, let the excess water evaporate before adding the butter and cream. To do so, simply return the cooked, strained potatoes to the pot (hold off for now on butter).

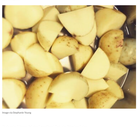

Image via Stephanie Young

9) Apple Slicers Make Excellent Potato Wedge Fries

Got a big French fry hunch — or two — in your hands? You can use an apple slicer to make the perfect potato wedge fries.

Image via Stephanie Young

10) Quick-Roasted Veggies

For perfectly roasted veggies, preheat the oven to the oven-first. When the veggies hit the hot pan, they'll begin to sweep immediately. This will help lock in their flavors.

Image via Stephanie Young

11) Nine Way to Save Avocados

There are a ton of certain tips and tricks for keeping your avocados fresh. (Fill 'em PG and 'em a bag? Or wrap with Saran? Preserve: the ones that seems to work the best — and the most consistently — involves brushing the cut side of the avocado with olive oil, placing it in a plastic bag, and then refrigerating it.

Image via Stephanie Young

12) How to Handle a Sticky Sponge

Dealing with a sticky sponge? Throw it in a full glass of water and nuke it for 2 minutes. Small be gone!

Image via Stephanie Young

13) Use "Julius" to Alter Dinner Odors

You can remove the lingering smell of last night's dinner by leaving out a bowl of coffee grounds, vinegar or baking soda overnight.

Image via Stephanie Young

14) Measuring Honey? Here's How to Keep It From Sticking

Keep sticky substances, like honey, syrup or molasses, from sticking to the measuring cup by first spraying it with a nonstick cooking spray.

Image via Stephanie Young

15) Easy-to-Cut Raw Chicken

Raw chicken isn't always the easiest thing to cut, especially when you need to make small pieces. To make this process a little easier, throw the chicken in the freezer for 15 minutes before you work with it.

Image via Stephanie Young

16) DIY Lunch Box Ice Pack

Does your kid lose his lunch box ice packs like it's his job? Don't have time to run out to the store to buy a new pack in his lunch? Never fear: you can make a cheap, easy ice pack for school lunch by freezing a sponge in a plastic bag.

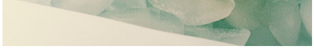

Image via Stephanie Young

17) Keep Your Salad Greens Crisp

Keep salad greens crisper for longer by placing them in a paper towel-lined plastic container. Loosely layer the contents in this order: paper towel, salad greens, paper towel, lid.

Image via Stephanie Young

18) Fully Ripened Bananas in 30 Minutes

Want to make banana bread, but your bananas aren't ripe yet? According to AwesomeInventions.com, you can speed up the process by heating them up in your oven. Just set the temperature to 300 degrees, and let your bananas heat up for about 30 minutes.

Image via Stephanie Young

19) Don't Rinse Your Pasta

What's the key to making amazing pasta? Don't rinse it.

Hear me out. When pasta cooks, it releases starches into the water, which is why "pasta water" always looks so cloudy. Those little starch molecules stick to the pasta and give the sauce a little extra something to cling to. If you add oil to the pasta water while it's cooking -- or rinse the cooked pasta afterward -- you're washing away all the little sauce-catching starches that help give the pasta a bolder flavor.

Image via Stephanie Young

20) For Evenly Cooked Burgers

Now here's a weird trick that works: If you're making burgers, AwesomeInventions.com says that you should press a hole in it, right in the middle. Don't believe us? Give it a try!

Image via AwesomeInventions.com

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