

香港 Hong Kong

初中組 中一 (S1) ▶ 中三 (S3)
Junior Secondary

Chan Mei Po

Buddhist Tai Hung College

Topic : A New Challenge:
My Cooking Experience

This morning, my mum went into my bedroom and said, 'Hey, child! I think you should try to make a dish by yourself. Don't ask me to make dishes for you every day.' My mum wanted me to learn to be independent, so she persuaded me to make something myself.

There was no way that I could reject her because she is my dear mother. Therefore, I found a cookery book called *Kids in the Kitchen*, which includes many crazy-fun recipes. Then, I chose a dish I wanted to try to make and hoped that I could cook the dish successfully.

The dish I picked was Christmas Hot Chocolate Cupcakes with Peppermint Buttercream Frosting. As Christmas was near, I wanted to make a colourful and festive dish. Therefore, the ingredients must make the dish more colourful and exciting. There are so many ingredients needed to make this dish. We needed to have one box of chocolate cake mix, three tablespoons instant hot chocolate powder, one over two cup vegetable oil, one and one over four cups water, four eggs, one package of softened cream cheese, three cups powdered sugar, one or two tablespoons milk, two teaspoons peppermint extract, red food colouring and some candy to decorate the dish. This dish is hard to make at first glance. However, it is also difficult to make only by myself.

To make the dish, there are so many steps. First, I preheated the oven to 350 degrees and lined two 12-cup muffin tins with cupcake liners. That is easy. However, when I combined the cake mix, hot chocolate powder, oil, water and eggs in a mixing bowl with an electric mixer. I did not know how to turn on the electric mixer. I just pressed the button according to my wishes. Unfortunately, the electric mixer took the fastest mode, and the ingredients splashed out on my clothes. So I just cleaned up this mess and did it again. Then, I repeated the steps and continued.

After using the electric mixer, I poured the batter into the prepared muffin tins and baked for sixteen to eighteen minutes or until a toothpick inserted came out clean. However, the first time I took out the toothpick. The cake was scorched, and the toothpick fell. Therefore, I threw the failed product, did it again and tried to reduce the baking time. After repeating the steps continuously, I did more better than before! Then, I let the cupcakes rest on the counter in the pan for five minutes before removing them to a wire rack to finish cooling.

The other important part of this dish is to make the frosting. First, I whisked the cream cheese, powdered sugar and milk with an electric mixer until smooth. Having learned from previous lessons, I have already learned how to control the electric mixer. After the beating, I threw in the peppermint extract and a few drops of red food colouring until they were mixed well. Finally, I frosted the cooled cupcakes with peppermint cream cheese frosting and garnished them with my favourite Christmas candy.

This is an unforgettable cooking experience. I enjoyed the cooking moment and became interested in cooking something. After this wonderful cooking experience, I learned that even though there were so many minor accidents and misfortune when I made the dish. However, all will be fine and successful if I have the perseverance to hold on and keep trying more times. Therefore, I will be more positive and affirmative when I face problems. Just go ahead and don't give up!

The cooking is not too bad. It made me know how to take care of myself and see the importance of self-discipline. Moreover, cooking also can be entertainment. It can make us feel more relaxed and enjoyable. If I cook well, I will confidently show my cooking skills and experience. Finally, I would be more hard work to cook and learn more cooking skills. I hope that I can cook more tasty dishes after a few years!

Book Read

Book title : *Mix-and-Match Mama Kids in the Kitchen*
Author : Shay Shull
Publisher : Eugene Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, c2017.



Comments

- Well structured with some good points.
- The author started with the story of being asked by his mother to cook by himself one day, and described how he read the recipe and made the cup cake. Baking a delicious cake, he also feels that learning to be independent and not giving up is very important. The idea of the article is positive, and the sentences are fluent.

作品以原作展示並以獲獎者姓名排序。
Works are displayed in original form and arranged in the order of the winner's name.

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Dimapilis Aba Joys

Concordia Lutheran School – North Point
Topic : My First Cooking Experience

As I awakened from my slumber this morning, my mom told me to make lunch for my parents. I panicked, because I didn't know what to make for lunch, so I asked my mom for advice. She just giggled and said, "I don't want to stress about lunch! Didn't I ask you to make lunch for me and your dad?" And at the same time, an idea popped up in my mind, maybe I could just go to the public library and borrow a recipe. I could decide later on what I could make.

At nine-forty five a.m, I arrived at the Hong Kong Central Library, located in Causeway Bay. I asked a librarian on where I could find a book full of recipes. She told me to follow her into section C, then explained which shelves have the book I am looking for. I scanned the shelves and something red caught my eye. As I went to take the red book, I encountered my friend Amber! I asked her what was she doing there and she said she was only there to bring her little sister to borrow some picture books. She was about to leave because her little sister was almost done picking her books.

I said my goodbyes to her and I went back to take that red book that had caught me eye. I flipped through the pages and saw some recipes I have never even heard of! I was excited to try and make them! So I went to the counter and borrowed the book. After I left the public library, I called my mom using my phone and asked her to meet me at the supermarket so we could buy the ingredients.

I arrived at Fusion at ten-thirty a.m. My mom was already checking out the vegetables. The ingredients that I needed to buy were onions, butter, olive oil, risotto rice, chicken stock, sun-dried tomatoes in oil, mixed herbs, pine nuts and parmesan cheese. Altogether it cost \$299.05!

After shopping with my mom, I went back home with the groceries so I could start preparing. The bags were heavy!

First I chopped up some onions which made my eyes tear up. Then I heated the pan with olive oil and added the onions to the pan. I was very paranoid that I might not do the right steps so I was frantically walking back and forth from the kitchen to the dining table just to check the recipe. After waiting for the onions to look glassy, I poured the risotto rice into the pan and stirred the rice until every single grain was coated with oil. Next I poured the chicken stock in, all at once. I suddenly realised that I didn't follow the step properly! I was supposed to pour the chicken stock little by little so that the risotto could absorb the stock slowly. I got upset at my mistake and I cried to my mom. She just calmly told me, "don't sweat it, the risotto rice will absorb it naturally".

After that I finely chopped the sun-dried tomatoes. Quite frankly it made my hands super oily and took me quite a while to wash it off my hands! I put it on a dish and put it aside for later. Next I heated a small pan without any oil this time, so I could roast the pine nuts. I had to keep stirring the nuts otherwise it would burn and that's something that I wouldn't want. So I kept stirring until the nuts turned brown. The roasted nuts tasted really good! I turned off the heat. As I waited for the rice to cook, the aroma was so strong to the point that my dad who was in the bedroom could smell it. When the rice finally was ready to eat, I added the sun-dried tomatoes and roasted pine nuts on top of the risotto and mixed it all together.

I served to my parents and they both said it smelled really good! I nearly forgot to add the parmesan cheese for the cherry on top. Once we were done eating my parents couldn't stop complimenting on how good the risotto tasted. I was so happy but as I took our dirty dishes back to the kitchen to wash and looked at the kitchen I realised it was really messy! In the end, the risotto may taste really good, but it was not worth cleaning after!

Book Read

Book title : *The Culture and Recipes of Italy*
Author : Tracey Kelly
Publisher : Oxford: Raintree, 2020.



Comments

- Well structured and informative.
- The article describes in a more straightforward way that the author accepts his mother's instructions and cooks lunch for his parents himself, referring to books borrowed from the Central Library. Finally the author gets a successful cooking experience, and the article ends with him discovering that the kitchen has been a mess. It is recommended that students add more positive reflections, such as seeing the dirty kitchen and thinking about the hard work of the mother on weekdays, and feel the need to be filial to the mother.

香港 Hong Kong

初中組 中一 (S1) ▶ 中三 (S3)
Junior Secondary

Fong Chor Ling

St. Bonaventure College and High School
Topic : My Cooking Experience

The arrival of Christmas made many young people go out to celebrate, and my friend and I were no exception. We met up to go to the park for a picnic to celebrate Christmas. We agreed that each of us would each prepare a dish to bring to the picnic site. Since I don't have much insight or research on food, I had to go to the library to find a recipe. After searching for more than half an hour, I finally found a recipe called "love food" that I was satisfied with. I had a general look at it and was about to dig deeper when I heard the library closing bell ring. I had no choice but to borrow the book and take it home.

After I got home, I carefully looked through the cookbook, and after some tossing and turning, I chose sandwiches for my picnic. Because I think sandwiches are the best food in the world for picnics. After carefully reading the recipe, I dashed to the supermarket, afraid of forgetting the ingredients I had memorized in my head. At the supermarket, I carefully selected the ingredients I needed to make the sandwiches, which were very common, so I found them quickly. After paying for the sandwiches, I thought to myself: bread, ham, eggs and mozzarella are all very common ingredients, so the preparation method should not be too difficult. It wasn't until I got home and was overwhelmed by the sound of butter on the pan that I realized that making food is not as easy as I thought it would be. The recipe was rather concise in its description of how to make it. It didn't go into detail about how the omelette was fried, just the contents of the sandwich and which side the butter should be applied to.

I carefully cracked a hole in the egg so that it would be easier to pour the egg into the pan intact. As I was frying the first egg, I raised my hand very high, afraid that the butter in the pan would splash on my hand. My dad stood next to me with a frown on his face and kept repeating, 'Keep your hands low or the egg will fall apart. But I couldn't overcome this fear. The egg was poured into the pan intact and my hands were not splattered with oil, but the eggs, as my dad described, all fell apart and had to be made into scrambled eggs. Given my very unskilled hands, Dad had no choice but to demonstrate to me once. I saw my dad skillfully pouring the eggs into the pan and waiting patiently with a confident look on his face. After a while, dad gently tilted the egg with the spatula and turned it over. Looking at the perfect omelette, I was a bit dumbfounded and even thought that dad was a prophet, otherwise how could he know when the omelette should be turned over? The rest of the day I just stared in awe at how my dad fried an egg in a way that I couldn't afford to eat. Until dad asked me to get a plate to put the fried egg on.

After carefully watching my dad's demonstration, I wasn't as rusty as the first time, and I wasn't afraid of splashing oil on me anymore. Eventually I was able to make a pretty good omelette. Although my technique was not as skilled as dad's, and the omelette did not look as good as dad's, I was satisfied that I had made it myself and did not rely on anyone. With the experience of frying eggs, I was no longer afraid of the rattling butter, and my movements were significantly less unskilled. I finished the rest of the steps smoothly and got a delicious sandwich. On the day of the picnic, I woke up early and made the sandwich in the kitchen with a lot of smooth movements. I wrapped the sandwich in plastic wrap to keep it from falling apart like the first one. It looked much better.

My Christmas 2022 was different because of a sandwich. This cooking experience also taught me that there is a first time for everything, and that after trying, something you thought was difficult becomes less difficult.

Book Read

Book title : Love Food
Author : Tina Bester
Publisher : London: Pavilion, 2012.



Comments

- Nicely presented.

- The tone of the full text is natural. It tells the author and his friends to prepare their own food for a Christmas picnic, so the author referred to the recipe and made sandwiches. Although the cooking process is simple, the writing feels realistic. The idea is not complicated, and it clearly explains the truth that success comes from trying.

Leung Yu Fung Christie

G.T. (Ellen Yeung) College
Topic : The Long Journey of Making
the Majestic Bucatini Dome

I'm not a big fan of cooking. It's just not something that I do. I prefer the eating part. However, I tried cooking this "Bucatini Dome" with my family recently and it turned out pretty well, with the experience not being as bad as I thought.

The journey started where we embarked on a search for the ingredients. Of course, the dish is filled with different ingredients, but the star is undoubtedly the pasta, which is called Bucatini, long thick pasta which looks like a hollow cylinder. This type of pasta is rare, resulting in a long hard hunt over three different supermarkets in different areas of the city. Since most of the pasta types were thin and fat, they couldn't be used. Pieces of yellow pepper and carrots with some cheese were used for this dish. We used a small bowl for the coiling of the bucatini so that we would still have pasta left for another try if we fail. The bucatini was cooked and the carrots and yellow peppers were chopped beforehand. Then we started with the actual making of this architecturally magnificent dish.

Firstly, I filled the whole bowl with butter, so that the pasta wouldn't stick to the bowl when being flipped to reveal the dome. It was as if the bowl had changed from white to a yellowish colour, a very pretty colour. It also smelled good. Then we slowly coiled one string of bucatini after another. Not long after, the bowl was completely filled with bucatini round and round. It was one of the tidiest things I've seen, given that I'm not the tidiest person. My parents then suggested we coil another layer to ensure the sturdiness of the dome, after putting some big pieces of cheese. After completing another tidy layer of the outer part of this dome, we packed it up with lots of carrots and yellow peppers. Afterwards, we put some more large pieces of cheese onto the mixture. It looked really delicious! Since we don't have an oven, we used a microwave instead, microwaving the half-done dome for five minutes. After the five minutes we took out the bowl. What used to be a clear mixture with every piece of carrot and yellow pepper distinguishable now was mashed together under the cheese. Surprisingly, the whole thing had shrunk! So we stuffed more pieces of carrot and yellow pepper inside and microwaved for five more minutes. We then took it out, put a plate above the bowl and turned it around to reveal the dome.

It slumped! The second after we lifted the bowl, it collapsed onto the plate like melted jelly.

I felt really bad. All that time and effort, for nothing? I really wanted to give up then but my parents persuaded me to try again. We ate what was our first attempt at this recipe and discussed how to avoid this mistake. Since failure was in our expectations, we started again, repeating the same steps, with only two differences: adding two beaten eggs to the mixture and using metal spoons to squish everything down and pushing air out as much as possible. It reminded me of packing a backpack when you have way too many things to put in. You simply squeeze all the air out and stuff everything as far inward as possible. The good thing about adding the eggs is that it helped stick the bucatini together so nothing would crumble during the revelation of the dome.

After taking the bowl out from the microwave, some cheese was squished out of the bowl, so we wiped it off and hoped that we would succeed to make a dome this time.

At the moment of truth, it was like a movie scene. We didn't flip the bowl and reveal the dome as fast as last time so it was like a slow-motion process, as if this moment was edited to build up the suspense. Finally the bowl was fully lifted and I let out a sigh of relief. It was beautiful. It might've been a mere eighty percent of the photo on the cookbook, but I was part of the team making it and it felt awesome. It didn't survive the cutting though so we couldn't replicate the photo on the cookbook, but my family had an amazing time digging in this delicacy that we made.

Reflecting on this experience, I learnt that the best thing about making a dish is the process of cooking, not eating. I also learnt not to give up too easily. I could compare this to an artwork, a project that requires patience and some thinking. Both had failure written over their faces, but when we step back to admire our succeeded handiwork, it's very exquisite and we feel great.

Book Read

Book title : Pasta Modern : new & inspired recipes from Italy
Author : Francine Segan
Publisher : New York: Stewart, Tabori & Chang, 2013.



Comments

- Good illustration that captures the audience. In-depth thoughts and reflections.

2023年



4·23 World Book Day 創作比賽
Creative Competition in 2023

閱讀好滋味

Tasty Reading

香港 Hong Kong

初中組 中一 (S1) ▶ 中三 (S3)
Junior Secondary

Li Tsz Ching Marisa

Kowloon True Light School

Topic : Our Tremendous Cooking Experience

Last week, my classmates and I followed a recipe in Chinese Heritage Cooking from My American Kitchen by Shirley Chung. The book was published in 2018. We decided to make Mapo Tofu. A tangy main dish which is very popular in Sichuan. All three of us like spicy food. Mapo tofu is the most suitable dish for us three chilli lovers.

The main ingredients of the dish are: tofu, ground beef, doubanjiang, some chilli, garlic and spring onion. The whole dish is quite undemanding. With the help of the recipe book, we were able to figure out everything by ourselves. This really taught us how to be independent.

To start off, we marinated our ground beef. We used two tablespoons of soy sauce, a teaspoon of sugar and a pinch of cornstarch. As we set aside our beef, we cut our tofu into bite size. It was a bit challenging as the tofu is so soft and breakable. We were very careful at that time. We also ran the tofu in cold water after boiling it. Nevertheless, we've noticed that we've made a completely wrong idea. The tofu we bought was silken tofu and it does not require cooking. Luckily, the tofu didn't shatter much after what we've done to it. Maybe we've made a flaw but we learnt to avoid the mistakes in the future. Next, I chopped up the garlic. To be honest, it was a fun experience. The chopping sound was really satisfying. We also chopped up some chilli. We agreed to remove the seeds inside the chilli. After all of the preparation, I gave all the prepared items to one of my group mates. "According to the recipe, we need to add in the garlic chilli and spring onion." Another group mate suggested saving up half of the spring onion for decorating our masterpiece in the end. We all agreed and started to use the wok. We first add in the garlic and chilli. The time required to stir fry the chilli and garlic was really quick, it only takes 5 to 6 seconds! Sadly, we burnt our chilli which is very smoky and irritating. As we reflected on ourselves afterwards, we realised that we should not overheat the ingredients. Also, we need to be alert and careful.

After that, we stir fried our marinated ground beef. "It already smells so good. I can't wait to try it!" Said one of my friends. I smelled that aromatic smell. It looked delectable too! We added the tofu and stir fry it. We were extra careful this time as we don't want to break the tofu. We later added the most important ingredient of all Doubanjiang. We didn't add water to it as the tofu had already started to sweat. This made the tofu wet enough for the Doubanjiang to dissolve in the dish and turn into the broth.

After a few minutes, the broth began to thicken. It was ready to serve! We were so exhilarated to try. However, because of the pandemic, we were not allowed to eat in the classroom. Therefore, we rushed back into our classroom and tried our masterpiece. It was still a little bit too watery and too salty. Our prediction was that we add too much soy sauce to the meat.

From this cooking experience, not only have I learnt how to cook Mapo tofu, as well as, communicating with our teammates and learning from our mistakes.

We shouldn't blame others when they may have made some mistakes. Everyone makes mistakes and we shouldn't be scolding them. The most important thing is to solve the problem together.

We should also be well-communicated with each other. Communication is very important. Without communication, we would be very chaotic as we have no idea what to do.

I really enjoyed this experience and I would like to join activities like this in the future with our fellow friends!

Book Read

Book title : Chinese Heritage Cooking from My American Kitchen : discover authentic flavors with vibrant, modern recipes
Author : Shirley Chung
Publisher : Salem: Stewart, Page Street Publishing, 2018.



Comments

- The author directly stated the cookbook and started sharing his cooking experience at the beginning of the article. It reserved more content to describe the cooking process and reflections in detail. The author cooperates with friends to make mapo tofu, and the author can cooperate with the team members to overcome the difficulties encountered in the process. The description is careful, the structure is neat, and the sentences are also very fluent.

Liu Xiao Ying

Pui Kiu Middle School

Topic : My Cooking Experience

With the development of science and technology, more and more young people like to order delivery on the Internet. It can be said with certainty that it is challenging for young people to cook in this fast-paced world.

One day, I was going to take out my phone to order delivery. Suddenly, an idea popped into my head - how about I try to cook a dish by myself? I went to an online library and borrowed a cookbook immediately. I had never cooked a dish by myself, so I chose a simple dish called potato in tomato sauce.

I prepared the necessary ingredients and cut the potatoes, tomatoes and red peppers into small pieces. I read the cookery book carefully and started to do this dish. First, I had to heat two tablespoons of the oil in a skillet, add the potatoes and mix well. I was a little scared that the hot oil would splash on my skin. I followed the directions in the cookery book. After fifteen minutes, potatoes turned golden brown. I thought cooking for me was a difficult thing but so far so good.

Second, I heated the remaining oil in another skillet, added the onion, and cooked gently for five minutes. This step was a piece of cake for me. Third, I added the garlic and sherry, then simmered for one minute to burn off the alcohol. I was baffled by the fact that I needed the sherry for cooking. Suddenly, I shouted, "I forgot to prepare the sherry!" I didn't know if there was one at home. I was in a hurry to find the sherry since the freshly fried potatoes were going to be cold! I opened the locker. The sherry was in it! I followed the steps in the cookery book.

And then, I reduced the heat and added the tomatoes, chillies, orange zest, sugar, parsley and bay leaf. Although the dish was not yet finished, it already smelled nice. After ten minutes, I added water to stop the mixture from further thickening.

Last, I transferred the cooked potatoes to a serving bowl, poured over the tomato sauce, and mixed well. The dish was done, and I gained a sense of achievement. The tomato sauce made this dish extra flavorful. It smelled nice to me and my mouth was watering! I picked up a potato and put it in my mouth. I think it was flavorful. Although this dish was just an ordinary dish, it was extra delicious because it was made by myself.

Actually, there are many benefits for young people to learn to cook. On the one hand, if we order delivery on Internet, we don't know the conditions of this store, whether the ingredients are fresh, or whether too much oil, salt, and sugar are added to make this dish more delicious. Cooking by ourselves can ensure the freshness of ingredients, the intake of oil and salt, and let us maintain a healthier life. On the other hand, in the past, there were many people who could not eat enough because of poverty. Now, the living conditions are getting better and better. We no longer live a difficult life as before. The young people don't know the price of food, or how to cherish food. After learning to cook, know how much time and energy we spend on cooking, the young people will be more grateful and cherish food. It can also enhance their awareness of saving grain and encourage them to cherish the achievements of farmers and cooks. In addition, cooking enables us to exercise our hands-on ability and thinking ability. Not everybody can make a delicious dish. How can we deal with ingredients? How can we make this dish taste better? How can we make this dish look more appetizing? These are all the aspects that can be studied when cooking.

All in all, this cooking experience has taught me a lot. Cooking by myself allows me to eat healthier food, gain a sense of achievement after cooking a dish, and exercise my hands-on ability. In the future, I will cook more by myself to make my life healthier.

Book Read

Book title : Easy Tapas : Spanish snacks to serve with drinks
Author : Julz Beresford
Publisher : London; New York, NY: Ryland Peters & Small, c2004.



Comments

- Coherent with clear focus.

- From the fact that people of this generation live in affluent environments and are accustomed to ordering takeaway food in their daily lives, the author writes that he makes food by reading recipes, and brings out the benefits of young people cooking their own food. The context is clear, and it is especially appreciated to be able to cherish food and mention healthy eating from a simple cooking activity.

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