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THE DOMESTIC

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**DOM is the mother lode.**

**As you complete 14 core lessons, each taking no more than 20 minutes of prep (for our total of roughly 4 hours), you will learn the principles needed to cook thousands of dishes. Furthermore, “gear” (pots, pans, etc.) is severely restricted and introduced slowly, making costs gradual. As chef Tom Colicchio, famed restaurateur and head judge on *Top Chef*, has said: almost anyone can become a great cook with unlimited time and budget.**

**We’ll constrain both and learn to do the absolute most with the least. What follows are the 80/20 keys to the culinary kingdom.**

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Practice cooking without cooking (clockwise from top left): sautéing dry beans, hotel cutting practice, watching “the pass” in restaurants.

## RETHINKING RECIPES

**“Do you really believe the Babbo cookbook when it tells you that a linguine with eels takes four garlic cloves, that a lobster spaghetti takes two, and that the chitarra takes three? No. It’s the same for each: a small pinch.”**

—BILL BUFORD, *HEAT*

**“Do not be afraid of cooking, as your ingredients will know and misbehave. Enjoy your cooking and the food will behave.”**

—FERGUS HENDERSON, CHEF/CO-OWNER OF ST. JOHN<sup>1</sup>

Imagine that you are driving, which requires serious multitasking.

Now imagine that you are handed the below driving directions to read while avoiding telephone poles, old ladies, and people texting on iPhones:

First, put the transmission into first gear. On a standard “H” manual transmission, it’s to the top left. Facing northwest, look into your left mirror to ensure there’s no oncoming traffic, and pull out of the parking lot at no more than 15 miles per hour onto Bosworth Road, taking a 90-degree right-hand turn. Past the Osha Thai restaurant, look for your first right-hand turn after the BART subway station, which will be an entrance ramp for Interstate 280 South. Entering this ramp, you will accelerate gradually, keeping right, to 55 miles per hour and . . . [it continues]

Now, in contrast, consider the following, where (R) is “right” and (L) is “left”:

280S  
(R) N De Anza<sup>2</sup>  
(L) Mariani Ave.  
(L) Infinite Loop<sup>3</sup>

Which set of directions is easier to follow and less stressful? Something closer to the second, of course.

Recipes, alas, are often written like the first set of driving instructions. This is how you end up standing at your counter, rereading a Godzilla ‘graph for each step, smelling burning on the stove, and shaking a fist at the sky.<sup>4</sup>

In this DOMESTIC section, we will start with in-depth instructions, all intended to teach principles and vocabulary. As you

1 Voted “Best British Restaurant”; Henderson originally trained as an architect.

2 Note that this automatically means you exit on De Anza Boulevard.

3 These short driving directions are from San Francisco to Apple World Headquarters in Cupertino. It’s the only place you can find official Apple swag: limited-edition gear and products. Japanese tourists, among others, make the pilgrimage by bus precisely for this reason. Save it for your next trip to Nor-Cal.

4 Here is a real-world single step, taken from a source that shall remain nameless. I’ve removed the ingredients: *In a large saucepan, melt 2 tablespoons of butter. Add the A, B, C, diced D and E and cook over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Add the F and cook, stirring, for about 2 minutes. Add the G and cook, stirring occasionally, until completely absorbed, about 5 minutes. Add half of the broth and cook, stirring occasionally, until completely absorbed, about 12 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Add the remaining X and cook, stirring occasionally, until completely absorbed, about 12 minutes longer. Discard the Y. Stir in the Z along with the Q and the remaining 2 tablespoons of . . . And it continues!* One step, my ass.

progress to subsequent sections and internalize things (just like [R] for “right” on the previous page), the instructions will be compressed. By the end of the book, instead of 3–5 pages of explanation, all you will need to create delicious dishes is shorthand like this:

Cauliflower Bites: toss cauliflr florets/3T  
olvoil/2t cumin&garlc/T currypdr/s+p. Roast  
on bkgsheet~20m@400F; turnix.<sup>5</sup>

Once you graduate to this, you’ll be ready to tackle practically any cookbook and any recipe in the world, including our Appendix of nearly 200 shorthand recipes: one flagship dish for every country of the world.

Cool, right?

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<sup>5</sup> Recipe by the brilliant Maureen Evans of [eat-tweet.com](http://eat-tweet.com).