

THE ILLUSTRATED BEGINNER'S COOKBOOK

Kitchen MADE EASY

218 FOOL-PROOF RECIPES

Step-by-step recipes for people who have never cooked before – with simple measurements, clear heat settings and a picture for every dish.

Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner | Burgers | Braai | Salads | Desserts

- A picture for every recipe
- Heat & oven made simple
- Braai, pap & SA classics



BREAKFAST · LUNCH · [illegible] · SALADS · DESSERTS

FREE SAMPLE

Welcome to your kitchen!

Never cooked before? **Perfect.** This book was written for you. Every recipe assumes you are starting from zero – so nothing is skipped, every step is explained, and every tricky word, measurement and heat setting is spelled out in plain language.

Start with the **Kitchen Basics** pages (they are short and full of pictures). Then pick any recipe marked **Easy** and give it a go. Cooking is a skill like riding a bike – the more you do it, the easier it gets.

How to read a recipe page



1. **The picture** – shows you roughly what you're aiming for.
2. **The info chips** – tell you how many people it feeds, how long it takes and how hard it is.
3. **Ingredients** – with a tick-box for each. Gather and measure EVERYTHING before you start.
4. **You will need** – lists the pots, pans and tools so you can get them out first.
5. **Method** – Follow the numbered steps in order. Read them all once before you begin.
6. **Top tip** – helps you avoid the most common beginner mistake for that dish.

Symbols you'll see in the steps

Stove heat
A small dial shows how far to turn the knob – LOW, MEDIUM or HIGH (page 7).

Oven temperature
Normal oven °C, with the fan-oven, °F and gas settings next to it (page 8).

Simmer or boil
Small lazy bubbles = simmer. Big, fast bubbles = boil.

Braai coals
How hot the coals should be, using the easy hand test (page 9).

Easy
Great first recipes

Medium
A few more steps

Project
Takes time – worth it!

FREE SAMPLE

What's inside

218 recipes, 7 chapters

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KITCHEN BASICS 5

Stove heat: low, medium, high

Recipes say "medium heat" – here's exactly what that means on YOUR stove.

Stove dials are all different – some go 1–6, some 1–9, some have pictures of flames. So in this book we describe heat by **how far you turn the dial**. Whenever a step says a heat level, you'll see the little dial picture next to it.



LOW

Dial ¼ of the way



gas flame size

Melting butter or chocolate, keeping things warm, gentle simmering, scrambled eggs.



MEDIUM-LOW

Dial just under halfway



gas flame size

Cooking onions slowly, pancakes, toasted sandwiches, sauces with milk.



MEDIUM

Dial halfway



gas flame size

Most everyday frying: eggs, bacon, mince, softening veg. When in doubt, use medium.



MEDIUM-HIGH

Dial ¾ of the way



gas flame size

Browning meat, stir-fries, golden chicken, mushrooms.



HIGH

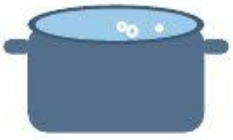
Dial almost all the way



gas flame size

Boiling water for pasta, searing steak. Never walk away on high!

Simmer or boil? Learn to read the bubbles



Gentle simmer

A few small, lazy bubbles that pop now and then. Used for soups, stews and sauces – so they cook without burning or splashing.



Simmer

Steady small bubbles over most of the surface. For cooking rice, potatoes and lentils.



Rolling boil

Big, fast bubbles that keep going when you stir. For cooking pasta and boiling eggs.



Pro tip: Electric plates take a few minutes to heat up and cool down - so turn them down a little BEFORE food is ready. Gas changes instantly. Is your pan hot enough? Flick a drop of water in: if it sizzles and dances, it's ready.

FREE SAMPLE

KITCHEN BASICS 7

Braai basics: fire & coals

The secret to a great braai is patience: cook over glowing coals, never over flames.

Lighting the fire

1 Build



Put 2–3 firelighters in the middle of the braai. Pile charcoal or briquettes in a pyramid over them (or stack wood in a small tent shape).

2 Light



Light the firelighters with a long match or braai lighter. Never use petrol or paraffin.

3 Wait



Let the flames burn down. Charcoal takes about 30–40 minutes; wood takes 45–60 minutes.

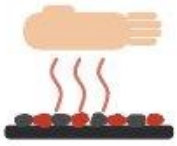
4 Spread



When the coals are glowing and covered in white-grey ash, spread them out with a spade or tongs. Now test the heat.

The hand test: how hot are the coals?

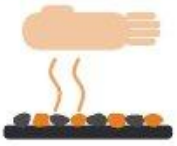
Hold your hand flat, palm down, about 10 cm above the grid (where the meat will be). Count "one-thousand, two-thousand…" until it's too hot and you have to pull away.



HOT

2–3 seconds

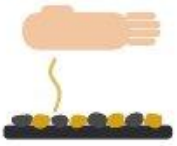
Steaks, chops, burgers, prawns, halloumi – quick searing.



MEDIUM

4–5 seconds

Boerewors, chicken pieces, sosaties, ribs, fish, veg.



LOW

6–8 seconds

Braaibroodjies, roosterkoek, warming bread, potjie.

Braai like a pro

- Make a "two-zone" fire: lots of coals on one side (hot) and fewer on the other (cooler). Move food to the cool side if it's browning too fast.
- Cook the slowest things first: potatoes, then chicken, then wors, then chops and steak, and braaibroodjies last.
- Turn meat with tongs, not a fork – forks let the juices escape.
- Flames from dripping fat? Move the meat and sprinkle a little water on the flames.

Braai safety

- Braai outside, away from the house, trees and anything that can catch fire.
- Never use petrol, paraffin or spirits to start or "boost" a fire.
- Keep children and pets away from the braai.
- Keep a bucket of water or sand nearby.
- Coals stay hot for hours – put them out with water or sand when you're done.

FREE SAMPLE







Rise & shine

BREAKFAST

Start the day right. From two-minute toast toppings to lazy weekend pancakes, fry-ups and smoothies – these are the easiest, tastiest ways to wake up.

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FREE SAMPLE

Fluffy Pancakes

Thick, soft, golden pancakes – the easiest weekend treat there is.



SERVES	PREP	COOK	LEVEL
4	10 min	20 min	Easy

Ingredients

- ☐ **1½ cups (190 g)** cake flour
- ☐ **2 tsp** baking powder
- ☐ **2 tbsp** white sugar
- ☐ **¼ tsp** salt (a small pinch)
- ☐ **1¼ cups (310 ml)** milk
- ☐ **1** egg
- ☐ **2 tbsp** butter, melted, plus a little extra for the pan

TO SERVE

- ☐ Golden syrup or honey, butter and fresh berries

YOU WILL NEED

Mixing bowl, whisk or fork, measuring cups and spoons, non-stick frying pan, spatula (egg lifter), ladle.

Method – step by step

1. Put the flour, baking powder, sugar and salt in the mixing bowl and stir with the whisk.
2. In a jug, whisk the milk, egg and melted butter together with a fork until the yolk disappears.
3. Pour the milk mix into the flour and whisk gently until just mixed. A few small lumps are fine – too much mixing makes pancakes tough.
4. Heat the pan on **MEDIUM heat** (dial about halfway). Rub a little butter on the pan with a piece of paper towel.
5. Pour in about ¼ cup of batter (half a ladle) per pancake. Leave space between them.
6. Cook for about 2 minutes, until small bubbles pop on top and the edges look dry. Slide the spatula underneath and flip.
7. Cook the second side for 1 minute, until golden. Move to a plate and keep warm under a clean tea towel.
8. Repeat with the rest of the batter. Serve with syrup, a knob of butter and berries.

Top tip: The first pancake is always the "test" one. If it browns too fast, turn the heat down a little; if it stays pale, turn it up a little.

FREE SAMPLE

Easy Chicken Curry

A mild, fragrant curry that's perfect for beginners.



SERVES	PREP	COOK	LEVEL
4	15 min	35 min	Easy

YOU WILL NEED

Large pot with lid, wooden spoon, knife, chopping board.

Ingredients

- ☐ **2 tbsp** oil
- ☐ **1** onion, chopped
- ☐ **3 cloves** garlic, chopped
- ☐ **1 tbsp** grated fresh ginger (or 1 tsp ground)
- ☐ **2–3 tbsp** mild curry powder
- ☐ **1 tsp** turmeric and 1 tsp ground cumin
- ☐ **800 g** chicken thighs (boneless), cut in bite-size pieces
- ☐ **1 tin (400 g)** chopped tomatoes
- ☐ **1 tin (400 ml)** coconut milk or ½ cup water + ½ cup cream
- ☐ **1 tsp** salt and 1 tsp sugar
- ☐ Fresh coriander, rice and naan bread, to serve

Method – step by step

1. Heat the oil in the pot on **MEDIUM heat** (dial about halfway). Cook the onion for 6–8 minutes until soft and golden.
2. Add the garlic, ginger and spices. Stir for 1 minute – add a splash of water if they stick.
3. Add the chicken and stir until it is coated in spices and no longer pink outside, about 4 minutes.
4. Add the tomatoes, coconut milk, salt and sugar. Bring to **a rolling boil** (big, fast bubbles), then turn to **a gentle simmer** (small, lazy bubbles).
5. Cover and cook for 20 minutes, stirring now and then, until the chicken is tender and the sauce is thick.
6. Taste, add more salt if needed, and sprinkle with coriander. Serve with rice.

Top tip: Like it hotter? Add 1 chopped fresh chilli with the garlic, or a pinch of cayenne pepper.

MY NOTES Date cooked · who loved it · what I changed …

FREE SAMPLE

Perfect Braaied Boerewors

South Africa's favourite sausage, cooked the right way – juicy and golden.



SERVES	PREP	COOK	LEVEL
4–6	5 min	20 min	Easy

Ingredients

- ☐ **1 kg** boerewors (a coil)
- ☐ Rolls, pap or chakalaka, to serve

YOU WILL NEED

Braai with grid (or hinged grid), braai tongs, a cutting board.

Method – step by step

1. Light your fire and wait until the coals are ready: **MEDIUM coals** (hand test: 4–5 seconds). Flames will burn the wors.
2. Take the wors out of the fridge 20 minutes before cooking.
3. Lay the coil flat on the grid. A hinged (closing) grid makes turning much easier.
4. Cook for 8–10 minutes per side, turning only once or twice, until both sides are dark golden.
5. It's done when it feels firm (not squishy) when pressed with tongs and the juices run clear.
6. Rest for 3 minutes on a board, then cut into pieces.

Top tip: Never prick boerewors with a fork. The juice runs out and it goes dry.

MY NOTES Date cooked · who loved it · what I changed …

FREE SAMPLE

Classic Milk Tart

South Africa's beloved custard tart with a cinnamon-dusted top.



SERVES	PREP	COOK	LEVEL
8–10	25 min	40 min	Medium

YOU WILL NEED

23 cm pie dish, saucepan, whisk, bowl, rolling pin (or press by hand), oven gloves.

Ingredients

BASE

- ☐ **1 roll (400 g)** shortcrust pastry, or 1 packet (200 g) Tennis or Marie biscuits crushed and mixed with 100 g melted butter

FILLING

- ☐ **4 cups (1 litre)** milk
- ☐ **1 tbsp** butter
- ☐ **3** eggs
- ☐ **¾ cup (150 g)** sugar
- ☐ **3 tbsp** cake flour and 3 tbsp cornflour (Maizena)
- ☐ **1 tsp** vanilla essence and a pinch of salt
- ☐ Ground cinnamon for dusting

Method – step by step

1. Biscuit base: press the buttery crumbs firmly into the pie dish and chill in the fridge. (Pastry base: line the dish, prick all over with a fork and bake at **200 °C** (fan oven 180 °C · 400 °F · gas 6) for 15 minutes until golden.)
2. Heat the milk and butter in the saucepan on **MEDIUM heat** (dial about halfway) until steaming (small bubbles at the edge). Don't let it boil over.
3. In a bowl whisk the eggs, sugar, flour, cornflour, vanilla and salt until smooth.
4. Pour a cup of hot milk into the egg mix while whisking, then pour it all back into the saucepan.
5. Stir constantly on **MEDIUM-LOW heat** (dial a bit less than half) for 5–8 minutes until it thickens like thick custard. Keep stirring the bottom so it doesn't burn.
6. Pour into the base. Dust generously with cinnamon.
7. Cool, then chill for at least 3 hours until set.

Top tip: Adding a little hot milk to the eggs first ("tempering") stops them turning into scrambled eggs.

FREE SAMPLE

Stick me on the fridge!

Kitchen cheat-sheet

Measures

1 cup	250 ml
½ cup	125 ml
⅓ cup	80 ml
¼ cup	60 ml
1 tbsp (tablespoon)	15 ml
1 tsp (teaspoon)	5 ml
1 cup cake flour	125 g
1 cup sugar	200 g
1 tbsp butter	15 g
1 litre	4 cups

Oven temperatures

100 °C normal	fan 80 °C · 210 °F
160 °C normal	fan 140 °C · 325 °F
180 °C normal	fan 160 °C · 350 °F
190 °C normal	fan 170 °C · 375 °F
200 °C normal	fan 180 °C · 400 °F
220 °C normal	fan 200 °C · 425 °F
Always preheat	15 minutes
Grill	top element only

Stove heat (turn the dial…)

LOW	¼ of the way
MEDIUM-LOW	just under half
MEDIUM	halfway
MEDIUM-HIGH	¾ of the way
HIGH	almost all the way
Simmer	small lazy bubbles
Boil	big fast bubbles

Braai coals – hand test

HOT	2–3 seconds
MEDIUM	4–5 seconds
LOW	6–8 seconds
Hand height	10 cm above grid
Charcoal ready in	30–40 min
Wood ready in	45–60 min
Cook over	coals, not flames

Is it cooked?

Chicken	juices clear · 75 °C
Mince & sausages	no pink · 71 °C
Pork	63–70 °C
Fish	flakes easily · 60 °C
Cake	toothpick comes out clean
Steak, medium-rare	soft, a little spring

Golden rules

Read the whole recipe	first
Get everything out	before you start
Wash hands	often
Taste as you go	adjust salt
Never leave hot oil	alone
Leftovers in fridge	within 2 hours

Kitchen Made E… Happy cooking!

FREE SAMPLE

That's the end of the free sample

Hungry for more? The whole book is waiting.



- **218 fool-proof recipes** on 243 illustrated pages
- Kitchen Basics, Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, Burgers & Sides, Braai, Salads, and Desserts & Treats
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