



Audio essayist: Tom Hudgens

Title: Cooking and eating tips

Duration: 3 minutes, 20 seconds

Wordpress episode

Introduction

If you are just learning how to cook, you are probably overwhelmed by the number of cookbooks, food blogs and eating philosophies competing for your loyalty.

In this Bookpod clip, Tom Hudgens gives a brief overview of the recipes and basic food philosophy that went into the production of *The Commonsense Kitchen: 500 Recipes and Lessons for a Hand-crafted Life*.

Presentation

The first two things that I remember learning, there were two things. One was to add salt until the food tasted good and the second was to turn the stove burner down.

[LAUGHTER] I think that beginning cooks tend to burn things and, and so I just kept those two things in mind: Add salt until the food tastes good. Turn the stove burner down. I think those were maybe a mantra in some ways. But that's



how basic it started.

I think that you can cultivate a taste for any good food and the sugar, salt and fat – the holy trinity [LAUGHTER] as it were – I think that those things characterize processed food more than they do home-cooked food.

And of course, there's plenty of recipes that call for all three in my cookbook, but I think that they are for the most part balanced and there is a sense of balance in the book that, yes, you can have a piece of pie. Maybe if you had one every single night, that would lead to a health problem. That's too much, but everything in moderation. And again, goes back to the title, *Commonsense*, that if you just approach it with common sense, you needn't avoid foods that you love entirely.

I agree with certain schools of thought in nutrition that there is no such thing as bad food. There's just bad quantities of food. Or there's quantities of food that will lead to ill health.

And so I have some very rich, decadent recipes in the book, but they're meant to be consumed on occasion and in



relatively small portions. And they're meant to be put into menus that balance them out.

The macaroni and cheese, for instance, is a wonderfully rich, very authentically Southern macaroni and cheese. And I always recommend that you serve it with just a simple green salad or a shaved vegetable salad, and leave it at that. You don't need much more in that menu. You don't really need a dessert after you've had the macaroni and cheese. And so that way it balances out. You have something that's very indulgent, very comforting, but it's in context that your body can take it, and it's going to be fine.

But if you had macaroni and cheese and fried chicken and mashed potatoes and pie and cake, like many Southern meals offer you, and you haven't been working out, you know, in the barn all day or riding horses all day, that's more calories than your body needs. So again, common sense.

Valedictory

For a longer audio essay by Tom Hudgens, see his Bookpod entry at bookpod.org.



Bookpod producer is Barbara Finkelstein. Music is by Kevin MacLeod.

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