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Mushrooms

If the caps are sealed to the stems of mushrooms, the mushrooms are fresh. If caps are open, look for another package with sealed caps. The whiter and smoother the mushroom cap, the better.

Because mushrooms are absorbent, don't immerse them in water when cleaning them. Instead, wipe them with a damp paper towel before using them.

Fill the Kitchen Spritzer with lemon juice and lightly spray mushrooms to prevent them from browning.

Onions

Lighting a candle in the kitchen when slicing or chopping onions should eliminate tearing. Other kitchen lore: work with the onion under water, keep your mouth open when chopping onions, hold a pencil or even a match in your mouth (I hope unlit!) to prevent tearing. Also, try cutting the onion opposite of the root end, which is the stronger portion. One of PC's famous products from years past were our Onion Goggles!

Apples

When handling apples that will be served raw, toss the apples with an acidic ingredient such as lemon juice, orange juice or lemon-lime soda. Even a light sprinkling of sugar will prevent browning.

Apples give off acid that ripens other fruit, so store apples in the refrigerator, away from other fruit. If you keep apples with potatoes, the apples will prevent the potatoes from growing eyes!

Lemons

A quick and easy way to clean your microwave is to slice a lemon into a bowl of water. Place the bowl in the microwave and cook on high for 60 seconds – everything should wipe right off!

Choose lemons with bright yellow smooth skin and no tinge of green. To get the most juice from a lemon, roll the lemon on the counter top or place it in the microwave on HIGH for 10 seconds before juicing (LIMES, too!) Zest lemons first, then juice them when using in recipes. You can freeze leftover zest to use later!

Apple Pie Kit

Make your own apple pie kit! Peel, core and slice 6 medium apples, then slice in half. Toss apples with _ to _ cup of sugar, 3 Tbsp. all-purpose flour and _ tsp. Cinnamon Plus® Spice Blend. Place in resealable plastic food storage bag and freeze. When ready to use, thaw apple mixture in the refrigerator, then place in a ready-prepared pie crust and bake.

Garlic

Pressing fresh garlic releases more of its essential oils and produces a sharper, bolder flavor than if the cloves are sliced or left whole. Look for plump bulbs with dry skins. Avoid heads with soft or shriveled cloves. Cloves with green-colored shoots indicate old garlic. Store at room temperature in open container.

To add just a hint of heat to Mexican-style dishes, place a small piece of jalapeno pepper into the Garlic Press. Press to release the juice and fine pulp. There's no chopping and this technique allows the heat to distribute evenly throughout mixtures.

Cheese & Grating

The softer the cheese, the lighter the squeeze! When using the Deluxe Cheese Grater, cheeses like cheddar, Swiss and Monterey Jack are easier to grate when you microwave for 5-8 seconds just before grating. Hard cheeses like Parmesan and Romano are easier to grate when at room temperature.

- 1 ounce fresh Parmesan cheese = _ cup grated
- When serving cheese, allow the cheese to stand at room temperature 30-60 minutes for maximum flavor.

(You can also grate brown sugar that has hardened in the Deluxe Cheese Grater.)

Cream Cheese

To improve the flavor of fat-free cream cheese, add vanilla extract. Do NOT add sugar to fat-free cream cheese, as this will cause it to separate into a watery, lumpy mixture – use reduced fat cream cheese if you are going to mix it with sugar.

Bell Peppers

Red bell peppers are simply vine-ripened green bell peppers. Because they have ripened longer, they are very sweet.

To roast your own bell peppers, place them on a broiler pan, 3-4 inches from the heat. Broil, turning as the skin blackens. When the peppers are charred, place them in a clean paper or plastic bag, seal and let stand 15 minutes to loosen the skin. Remove peppers from the bag and gently peel off the skin. Don't worry about any bits of charred peel that may remain on the peppers. Any unused peppers can be kept in the refrigerator for up to 1 week.

Broccoli

When serving broccoli florets for a vegetable tray, brighten their color by blanching for 1 minute in boiling water. Immediately plunge the florets into ice water to stop the cooking.

Salsa

Salsa is a great substitute for ketchup or barbecue sauce in recipes. It's fat-free and contains less sugar than many bottled condiments. Salsa makes an excellent topper for baked potatoes, grilled chicken, fish or steaks. Salsa is the #1 condiment in the US!

Measuring Flour

For best results when baking, do not just scoop flour into your dry measuring cup and level off – you will have almost 50% too much flour that way! Stir the flour, then spoon it into your measuring cup and level off. You'll love the results in your recipes!

Eggs

When whole eggs are called for in a recipe, you can reduce fat by substituting one egg white and one whole egg for two whole eggs.

Always use an egg separator instead of using the "shell to shell" method of separating eggs, which is how salmonella can be introduced into your foods. Also, use a stainless egg separator instead of plastic, which can hold fat from contacting the egg yolks. If there is any fat in your egg whites, they will not whip properly!

Tomatoes

To easily seed a tomato, cut it crosswise in half. Holding cut side down, gently squeeze each half to release the seeds and watery pulp.

Technically, a tomato is a fruit, because it is the ripened ovary of a plant. However, in 1893, the Supreme Court ruled that legally, tomatoes are to be considered vegetables. Ok, now!

Forged Cutlery – Bread Knife

To safely slice a bagel, set it flat on a hard and stable surface. Place the hand not doing the cutting on top of the bagel to steady it. Slicing horizontally using the Serrated Bread Knife, carefully cut halfway through the bagel. Then place the bagel on end and finish slicing it in half.

Use a gentle sawing motion when using the Bread Knife to slice baked goods such as bread or angel food cake. Don't apply too much pressure to the knife – let the serrated blade do the work for you. The food won't be crushed under the weight of the blade this way.

Sour Cream

If a recipe calls for one cup of sour cream, you'll need to buy a 16 oz. container because 8 oz. will only give you about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of sour cream in your measuring cup.

Pizza/Pizza Dough

For a crispy crust, try putting a thin layer of shredded cheese over the crust before adding the sauce and toppings; top with more cheese. The bottom cheese provides a barrier between the crust and the moist toppings.

Lighten Up and Eat Healthier

Rely on fresh herbs and spices to boost the flavor of foods. Use pressed garlic, fresh snipped herbs, lemon juice and zest as natural and healthy flavor enhancers. Lemon zest is especially good in place of salt in recipes!

Only one-fourth of US adults eat the recommended servings of fruits and vegetables each day (www.healthierus.gov) - we can work on that!

March is National Nutrition Month!

Gingerroot

Gingerroot is a long, tropical root that has a gnarly, bumpy appearance. It is used in many Asian and Indian dishes and can be found in the produce section of most large supermarkets. Look for gingerroot with smooth, tan-colored skin. Simply break off the amount needed from a portion of the larger root. The skin should be removed before use. Use a paring knife to scrape away the paper-thin skin from the delicate yellow flesh. Finely chop with the Food Chopper, press with Garlic Press or grate with the Microplane® Adjustable Grater – great for any stir-fry! Dried ground ginger has a very different flavor – do not sub for fresh in recipes.

Forged Cutlery

The tip of the knife blade should be used for more delicate cutting, such as slicing mushrooms or strawberries. The base of the knife should be used to cut food that requires more force, such as onions or carrots.

Cutting round fruit and vegetables is often difficult because the food rolls easily. To prevent this, trim an edge of the fruit or vegetable to create a flat base. Then place the base on the cutting board and continue slicing, dicing or chopping safely.

May is National Strawberry Month!

When shopping for strawberries, look for medium to small berries, as they usually have a better taste. Store strawberries, uncovered, in a colander in the refrigerator. This allows cold air to circulate around them. Wash the berries just before you plan to use them. Leave the caps on to prevent berries from water-logged. To wash, rinse them under a gentle spray of cool water and pat dry with a paper towel. To avoid bruising and soaking the berries, wash only a few at a time.

Tomatoes

Store tomatoes stem side down so the skin of the tomato isn't touching anything, and doesn't bruise. Store at room temperature to keep from turning mealy and losing flavor, and away from direct sunlight so they don't ripen unevenly.

Fresh Mozzarella Cheese

Fresh mozzarella is a soft, unripened cheese that is usually sold in containers of brine (salted water) at the deli counter. This helps keep the cheese moist so the skin doesn't harden. Fresh mozzarella was originally made from water buffalo milk in Italy. Most fresh mozzarella now comes from cow's milk, both in Italy and in the US.

Fish

Purchase center-cut fillets whenever possible for even cooking. Be sure to select medium to firm texture varieties, such as catfish, salmon or swordfish to prevent fillets from falling apart. Lightly coat the grill grid with vegetable oil before placing over heat to prevent fish from sticking – also try placing fish on top of lemon slices to avoid sticking. Grill fillets over medium to medium-high heat, and turn fish only once (flipping fish back and forth will break fish apart). With fillets, you can tell they are ready to flip when the edges are flaky and opaque. Fish should flake easily and be opaque when done.

Meat Tenderizer

Flattening chicken to an even thickness ensures food cooks evenly. The flat side of the Meat Tenderizer is great for crushing nuts, crackers, cookies and candies. The toothed side can be used to tenderize inexpensive cuts of beef, helping to stretch your budget.

Puff Pastry

To quickly thaw pastry sheets, separate them, covering each one with a piece of plastic wrap. Thaw sheets at room temperature about 30 minutes. You can also thaw pastry sheets by placing them in the frig for about 4 hours. This method is preferred by chefs because it completely and evenly thaws the sheets. When shaping pastry sheets, work with one at a time and handle as little as possible. Keep others in the frig to prevent them from becoming too soft and difficult to work with. Unfold sheets on lightly floured board or countertop. Puff pastry will puff up to 6 times its original thickness when baked!

Fresh Basil

Basil is an important ingredient in Italian, Thai and Vietnamese cuisine, and is actually an annual herb of the mint family. Before using fresh basil, gently wash the leaves and blot dry with a paper towel. To store, wrap in a damp paper towel – this will preserve it longer. Then, place in a resealable plastic food storage bag and refrigerate up to one week. Air is the enemy here, so squeeze out as much air as possible from the bag.

Corn on the Cob

When purchasing, check that the husks are tight, green and moist, not yellowed or dry. To best enjoy corn, grill or cook it soon after purchasing. Keep unhusked corn in the frig until you're ready to cook it. To grill, pull back husks, remove silk and rinse with water. Pull husks back up to cover corn and grill for 20-22 minutes, turning occasionally. By rinsing with water instead of soaking in water, the husks will char more while grilling, giving the corn a more smoky flavor.

Rice

Cooked rice can be stored frozen for up to 3 months. Make a large quantity and divide it into resealable food storage bags. To reheat, place frozen rice in Rice Cooker Plus and heat on HIGH 2 minutes per cup. White rice and brown rice are actually the same grain. A layer of bran and husk surrounds un-milled rice grains. White rice has the bran and husk removed – only the husk is removed from brown rice. Bran makes brown rice very high in fiber and Vitamin C.

Grilling

People often use grilling and barbecuing interchangeably, but they're actually different. Grilling refers simply to cooking over hot coals. Also cooked over hot coals, barbecued foods are basted with seasoned sauce to keep them moist. Baste during the last 10-15 minutes of grilling to avoid burning.

Grilling Meat and Fish

Brush chicken, fish and steaks with oil before placing on the grill to prevent sticking. Cook larger cuts of beef at low to medium temperature. This keeps the exterior from cooking too quickly and maintains tenderness. Check doneness using a thermometer. For juicy burgers, avoid pressing or flattening while grilling.

Rubs

Rubs are highly concentrated blends of herbs and spices. They flavor the exterior of foods while grilling without the lengthy process of marinating. Rubs contain salt to add to and enhance flavors of other rub ingredients. They can be sprinkled right over the food before grilling. If you actually rub meat with seasoning, the meat will be juicier and less likely to char when grilling or roasting.

Braising

Covering a roast with a lid changes the cooking method from roasting to braising. Braising is a moist heat method of cooking. It is usually used for large cuts of meats, but not for turkeys. Braising a turkey can prevent browning and produce soggy skin.

Dicing Bell Peppers

When dicing a bell pepper, cut two sides from the pepper by cutting straight down from the stem to the bottom of the pepper, avoiding the seeds. The remaining pepper will keep fresh longer in the frig with the stem and seeds still intact.

Fun Fundraising!

Help your favorite organization or charity with a PC Fundraiser! Supporters will get real value for their dollar, selecting PC products at their regular (not inflated) prices, and can even choose to purchase Monthly Specials. The Pampered Chef® is the top brand name for kitchen products, and your group can offer a PC Fundraiser with confidence. Ask me how!

Marinades

Marinades are highly seasoned liquids that food is soaked in for several hours. They provide flavor and tenderize less tender cuts of meat. A marinade must contain an acidic ingredient (lemon juice, vinegar, wine) in order to penetrate meat fibers to help tenderize. Allow to cup of marinade for each 1-2 pounds of meat. Marinade comes from the French word that means “to pickle.” French mariners preserved food in marinades while at sea.

Roasting

Oven roasting is a dry-heat method of cooking where you don't cover the meat with a lid. Without a lid, hot air can circulate around the food, browning and crisping the skin. The rack that accompanies the Roasting Pan with Rack was specifically designed with feet to keep food suspended above its own juices. This allows the fat and natural juices to drip off, allowing food to brown easily and crisp from top to bottom. To prevent over-cooking, loosely cover a turkey with aluminum foil when it's about two-thirds done.

Turkey

Ounce for ounce, skinless, cooked turkey is lower in calories than cooked and trimmed beef, pork or lamb – even slightly lower in fat than skinless chicken. There is no quality difference between fresh or frozen turkey. Thaw a frozen turkey in its original wrapper in the frig, allowing 24 hours for every 5 pounds of turkey. Turkey is fully cooked when the thigh reaches 180° F. Allow roasted turkey to stand for 20 minutes – “resting” like this allows the natural juices to redistribute throughout the meat so it doesn't get too dry.

Jalapeno Peppers

To determine the heat of a jalapeno pepper, cut off the stem and taste the end. Judging by the heat on your tongue, you'll be able to determine how much or little of the pepper you want to use.

Wedding Registry

Start married life right with a Pampered Chef® kitchen, and put more love and less labor into your cooking and entertaining! Just imagine the great meals and great memories you'll create when you have all the right cookware, tools and tips from The Pampered Chef®. We make it easy with our Online Wedding Gift Registry, and the happy couple can even earn up to \$200 in FREE products of their choice, plus half price and discounted items to complete their kitchen after the wedding. PC Wedding Showers are another great option, too!

Organizing a Fundraiser?

When your group hosts a Pampered Chef® Fundraiser, the chairperson is also eligible to purchase one Monthly Host Special offered at that time as a thank-you for organizing the Show. These Specials are offered at amazing 60% discounts!

Turn Your Dreams into Reality

Imagine having your life, your way! Want more control over your time? More satisfaction from what you're doing? Need extra income for retirement, education, mortgages, or vacations? Like being rewarded for your achievements?

We have an apron to fit every dream? Ask me for more information – I'd be happy to help!

Apple Peeler/Corer/Slicer

According to Pampered Chef folklore, if an unmarried guest takes the apple peel strip and wraps it around her forehead three times and throws it over her left shoulder, it will fall to the floor and curl into the initial of the man she's destined to marry. (Unmarried guests are *not* allowed to check if they really found Mr. Right!)

Dicing Onions with Forged Cutlery

Cut the onion in half from root to stem. Peel onion, keeping root end intact; place cut side down on Cutting Board. Using Santoku Knife, carefully slice onion into equal slices from root to stem at an angle toward the center (do not cut all the way through the root). Hold knife vertically and cut crosswise into slices of even thickness. The pieces will fall away from the onion in an even dice. Finish dicing the onion, discarding the root end. Repeat with the remaining onion half.

National Pasta Week – 2nd week in October!

Every year, Americans eat about 14 pounds of pasta per person. Although this may seem like a lot, it's less than of Italy's consumption. Pasta is a great meal for any occasion – it's versatile, inexpensive, quick to prepare and kids love it!

We Offer Three Services with The Pampered Chef®

1. You can earn money with The Pampered Chef®, just like I do. I love what I do!
2. I'd love to help you save money, because our hosts never pay full price – for one year!
3. I'd be delighted to have you as a Preferred Customer – let me know so that I can add you to my contact list.

New Home???

If you've just moved into a new house, having a Cooking Show is a great way to show it off to friends and family! Get to know your new neighbors by inviting them, too. Drop an invitation by their home and introduce yourself!

More About Brides...

More than bridal fairs, bridal magazines or the Internet, the majority of brides seek advice from their family and friends (American Weddings 2005). The #1 factor brides consider when registering is convenience for themselves and guests. 37% of brides want to manage their registry online (American Wedding Study 2006).

The Pampered Chef® has just the registry they're looking for!

Round Up from the Heart

For every annual Trivet purchased, a \$2 donation will be made to America's Second Harvest, and guests may round their order up to the next dollar or more to help the hungry right in their own community. Every penny goes to help those in need – PC administers this program at its own cost. Funds are distributed according to the host's zip code, so *neighbors are helping neighbors*. \$1 = 20 pounds of food, and \$4 feeds a family of four for a week!

"Haunting" Halloween Facts

90% of parents admit to sneaking a few goodies from their children's trick-or-treat bags. I think it's because we're just too big to trick-or-treat ourselves! A great way to avoid "candy overload" and make it last longer is to chop some of the candy with the Food Chopper and store it in the freezer to top ice cream or make ice cream flurries in the future.

Irish immigrants brought the tradition of pumpkin carving to America. They originally carved turnips, but found pumpkins to be more plentiful in their new country and easier to carve.

Presidential Pardon

Each year, the President of the United States pardons a turkey at a White House ceremony. After its reprieve, the pardoned turkey lives out its remaining days at the unfortunately-named Frying Pan Park, a petting zoo in Virginia. The tradition's origin is uncertain, being attributed to both Harry Truman and Abraham Lincoln.

An estimated 95% of all Americans do eat turkey with their Thanksgiving dinner!

September is National Rice Month

It was initiated by an act of Congress in 1991. According to the USDA, rice is a staple in more than half the world's population and its popularity has risen dramatically in the US in the last 5 years. Now 85% of Americans enjoy rice dishes at least twice a month, with annual consumption rising to more than 25 pounds per person!

Never stir rice while it cooks because it will crush the rice grains, releasing starch and make the rice gummy.

Everyone Loves to Barbecue!

According to the Barbecue Industry Association, 75% of US households own a grill. The #1 reason we grill is for a fast, healthy meal, and the #2 reason is easy clean-up. 62% of men are more likely to cook on the grill – I think they love to cook where danger and fire are involved!

The US Census Bureau expects Americans to eat 150 million hot dogs on the Fourth of July!

June Bride?

2.4 million couples get married in the US each year, according to theknot.com. Contrary to popular belief, June isn't the most popular month to get married – it's tied with August. Another emerging trend is autumn weddings. After June and August, the next most popular month for weddings is May, followed by September and October.

If someone you know is engaged, encourage her to register with The Pampered Chef®. Stainless Cookware is actually the #1 item most couples register for these days!

Executive Cookware

Titanium is added to the hard-anodized aluminum in our Executive Cookware to make it extra strong, yet lightweight, and stable at high temperatures. Titanium is not present in the nonstick coating.

High quality cookware is commonly referred to as heavy gauge, referring to the thickness of the aluminum. The lower the gauge number, the thicker the aluminum and the "heavier" the gauge. Although the pans are thicker overall, the sidewalls are slightly thinner than the bottom, allowing heat to transfer up the sidewalls and heat food quickly.

What is Forged Cutlery?

"Forged" refers to the process where the steel is hammered, heated and cooled to increase the hardness, density and flexibility of the blades.

Santoku means "three good things" in Japanese, referring to slicing, dicing and mincing. The hollow sides (grantons) on the side of the Santoku Knife create fine air pockets between the blade and food so you can work without foods sticking. "Full tang" construction means the steel runs the entire length of the handle, providing strength and balance.

Sharp versus Dull?

A sharp knife is a tool and goes where you want it to; a dull knife may need to be forced to cut and can be dangerous. Honing our Forged Cutlery with the Honing Tool can be done as often as you like and will keep the blade aligned for best results. Professionally sharpen these knives no more than once every one to two years – try fabric stores or hardware stores for this when you do want to sharpen them. (An old knife with divots or little chunks missing from the cutting edge is one in dire need of sharpening or replacement!)

Cooking with Kids

Cooking is not only an invaluable skill to teach children, it's also a great boredom buster for summer vacation. Kids can have fun while learning math concepts and following directions with the *Let's Eat Cookbook*. Ask me for more kid-friendly ideas like Octopus Hot Dogs, Apple Smiles, Toothpick Kabobs, and even how to make your own uncrustable sandwiches! You'll love our Cut-N-Seal and Creative Cutters if you have children.

Mother's Day

Mothers wish they could spend Mother's Day in one of the following ways: being with family (23%); a nice dinner (13%); relaxation/sleep (13%); or a day trip (9%), according to a survey conducted on behalf of WishList, Inc.

They also report that the worst Mother's Day gift is to receive nothing at all!

Executive Cookware

Soft-grip handles, a combination of silicone and stainless steel, are riveted directly to the pan to provide the ultimate in strength, durability and comfort. The added "thumbprint" area guides your hand and gives you a more comfortable feel. The handles are oven-safe to 400°F, so you can use Executive Cookware on the stovetop and in the oven. A cast-steel hanging loop makes for simple storage – they will look beautiful hanging in your kitchen!

Executive Cookware

Flared rims: liquid poured from this cookware won't drip down the sides – less mess and easier pouring!

Autograph II® is the latest in nonstick technology. Both the inside and outside are coated (but not the exterior bottom), providing easy cleanup and durability.

Storage: if stacking the pieces for storage, place a paper towel on each piece before placing another piece on top to prevent scratching.

Super Bowl

It's the biggest game of the year – some love the competition, others love the commercials, but *everyone* loves the food. Americans consume more food on Super Bowl Sunday than any other day of the year, except for Thanksgiving!

Tapas

In Spain, the largest meal of the day is lunch. Because dinner generally is eaten much later in the evening, tapas bars are busiest just after the workday, as people satisfy their hunger between meals and gather with friends. Tapas are synonymous with hospitality, friendship and conversation. You can learn more about tapas at a Tempting Tapas Cooking Show!

All About Chocolate

Chocolate should be tightly wrapped and stored in a cool (60-70°F), dry place. Do not store chocolate in the refrigerator. Damp or cold places can cause gray sugar crystals to form on the surface.

Create an instant icing by sprinkling semi-sweet morsels over brownies or bar cookies immediately after removing them from the oven. Let stand until slightly melted and spread with the Large Spreader.

Love chocolate? Ask about our Chocolate Bliss Show!

World's Largest Christmas Stocking

According to the Guinness World Records, the world's largest Christmas stocking measures 28.21 x 6.23 feet, and has a volume of 361.97 cubic feet. It was created by the Smith Family charity, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia on Dec. 14, 2000. Luckily, most stockings are smaller than that! A great stocking stuffer idea from PC: iSlice® (super for opening the CD's and DVD's that Santa left under the tree!)

St. Patrick's Day

St. Patrick's Day is a time to celebrate Irish heritage. More than 34 million Americans can claim Irish descent! Did you know it was the Irish who brought oatmeal to America? Ireland was also the first European country to grow potatoes on a large scale – try adding green food coloring to children's mashed potatoes or milk to enjoy the holiday. Other ideas: bake shamrock cookies with the Cookie Press, and decorate Simple Additions pieces by brushing the edges with light corn syrup and then shaking green-colored sugar crystals over those edges.

Tailgating

There are several stories regarding the origins of tailgating. One version dates back to the very first college football game between Rutgers and Princeton in 1869, when fans traveled to the game by carriage, grilling sausages and burgers at the "tail end" of the horse. However, Yale claims that in 1904, football fans who had to walk from the train station to the stadium were so hungry and thirsty by the time the game started, they decided to bring a picnic hamper of food for the next game. Tailgating.com recommends that you 1) dress in team colors; 2) plan your menu; 3) make a list of the items you want to bring along; 4) arrive early and decorate your tailgate spot; and 5) meet your tailgate neighbors. Be sure to pack your barbecue tools!

Garlic Day – April 19th

A special day just to honor garlic! There are 3 major types of garlic available in the US: the white-skinned, strongly flavored American garlic, Mexican and Italian garlic, both of which have mauve-colored skins and a milder flavor, and white-skinned elephant garlic, which is a relative of the leek and not a true garlic. Nutritionally, it's a valued source of potassium, phosphorus, B and C vitamins, calcium, protein and selenium. Garlic holds medicinal qualities, too. The compound that gives garlic its distinctive odor and taste is what makes it effective for fighting bacteria, viruses, molds, yeasts and other organisms. Now you know!

National Pancake Week - 4th Week of February

We can always find reasons to celebrate – something! Try making Alphabet Pancakes on your Griddle: take a small portion of your pancake batter and tint with food coloring. Draw some of the colored batter up into the Baster and draw a reverse of your child's first initial. After that has a moment to set, pour regular pancake batter over it all. When you flip it, your child will enjoy his own personalized pancake!

Hanukkah

Hanukkah is celebrated, in part, with traditional dishes. Many start with potatoes, so the Apple Peeler/Corer/Slicer and Ultimate Mandoline are essential helpers, along with the Family Skillet for golden potato pancakes and the Rectangular Baker for baking kugel.

Kwanzaa

Established in 1966, Kwanzaa is a relatively new holiday, yet 10 million people celebrate it in the US alone. Known as “first fruits of the harvest”, this African-American and Pan-African holiday celebrates family, community and culture. Food plays an integral role in the festivities, and traditional stews can be prepared in our Cookware. Also, Kwanzaa gifts should be homemade – quick breads are wonderful in our Stoneware Loaf and Mini Loaf Pans.

Soups, Stews and Chilis

People who have soup as their first course in a meal consume an average of 100 fewer calories in that meal than those who do eat soup. When preparing a cream based soup, substitute evaporated milk for whole milk to reduce calories without sacrificing flavor. Easily remove excess fat from soups and broths by placing several ice cubes into the hot soup. As the ice melts, fat solidifies around it. Carefully skim off the fat with our Skimmer. Soup too salty? Toss in a peeled potato that has been cut into wedges with our Apple Wedger, and simmer for 10-15 minutes

Health Benefits of Fish

Want to reduce the risk of a heart attack or stroke and lower your blood pressure? Eat fish! The American Heart Association® recommends at least two 3-ounce servings of fish per week for a healthy diet. Fish is low in calories, saturated fat and cholesterol and is also a good source of protein. A 4 ounce uncooked halibut fillet has 2.5 grams of fat and 0 grams of saturated fat, compared to a 4 ounce uncooked top sirloin steak, which has 8 grams of fat and 3 grams of saturated fat.

Nuts

Two healthy nuts that are making the news are walnuts and almonds. Walnuts are heart-healthy, and they may be “brain food”, too. They are high in omega-3 fatty acids, which help the brain to function properly. cup of almonds has almost as much calcium as cup of milk, and they’re a good source of fiber. When eaten in moderation (1 serving = 1 oz. or cup, about 180 calories), nuts can help curb hunger because of their fat, fiber and protein content. Nuts are also rich in Vitamin E, iron and calcium – “mopping up” free radicals, boosting the immune system and helping maintain strong teeth and bones. Toasting brings out their natural flavor!

Olives and Pesto

Green (or Spanish) olives are picked while young; brined, then pitted and stuffed with pimientos. Kalamata olives are almond-shaped Greek olives, dark purple in color with a rich, fruity flavor. They can be found in the deli section or in jars in the condiment section of most supermarkets. Pitted, ripe olives can be substituted for kalamata olives.

Basil pesto is made with basil, garlic, pine nuts, Parmesan cheese and olive oil. It can be found near refrigerated pasta in grocery stores.

Shopping done yet?

Contrary to popular belief, the busiest shopping day of the holiday season is not the day after Thanksgiving. According to the International Council of Shopping Centers, that honor belongs to the Saturday before Christmas. Around 1/3 of holiday purchases are made on this day, compared to 9% on Thanksgiving weekend.

Did you know that the very first Christmas card originated in England in the 1840's? Our *Season's Best Recipe Collection* makes a great card, too. Write a message inside the cover for holiday and birthday greetings!

Purchasing Fish

Use your senses to purchase the freshest fish. Fresh fish should smell like the ocean, and should appear moist, not flaky. Avoid fish with a yellowish or brown cast. This may mean the fish is going bad. Fillets and steaks should look solid, not soft. If you prefer a robust, distinctive flavor, choose salmon or swordfish. For a milder, sweeter taste, try halibut, sole or orange roughy. For the best flavor, plan on cooking and eating fresh fish the day you purchase it. Store fish in the frig – fish that has not been previously frozen can be stored in the freezer for up to 6 months. Do not re-freeze.

Whole Grains

Whole grains can trim your waistline! Studies have shown that people who eat whole grains as part of their normal diet have a lower body mass index (BMI) than those who don't. Name your whole grains: brown rice, whole wheat, oatmeal and ...popcorn! Introduce whole grains to your family in stages. For example, mix equal parts of cooked white and brown rice together and eventually build up to a whole portion of brown rice.

Chocolate Fun Facts

Chocolate was a drink long before it was an edible treat. The first chocolate brew, concocted by the Mayans, consisted of cocoa beans, water and spices. We've only been eating chocolate in solid form for about 150 years. In 18th century Europe, chocolate houses that served hot cocoa were as popular as coffee houses today. In London, there was one on almost every street corner. Today, it's estimated that the average American adult consumes nearly 12 pounds of chocolate per year – Europeans consume even more!

Which kind of apple to use?

Select types of apples based on how they will be used: raw (for eating out of hand and adding to salads); cooked (for applesauce, pies and other desserts); or baked whole. All-purpose apples can be used for both eating raw and cooking: Braeburn, Cortland, Fuji, Gala, Golden Delicious, Granny Smith, Jonathan, and McIntosh. Red Delicious apples are strictly for eating raw and Rome Beauty apples are best for baking whole.

Baking the Best Muffins

For the most tender muffins, measure your ingredients carefully and mix just enough to moisten them. Overbeating can make muffins tough. Don't worry if the batter still has a few lumps.

Herbs

A general guideline when using fresh herbs in a recipe is to use 3 times as much as you would use of a dried herb. When substituting, you'll often be more successful substituting fresh herbs for dried herbs, rather than the other way around. For example, think potato salad with fresh vs. dried parsley! For most recipes, mince herbs into tiny pieces with the Chef's Knife or Kitchen Shears. Large leaves, such as basil, may be cut into thin strips "chiffonade-style." Stack several leaves, roll into a tight roll, then cut into thin strips with a sharp knife. Chopping herbs can bruise them and make them bitter!

It's Easy to Get Your PHD!

When you host a Show with The Pampered Chef®, you'll earn your PHD (Past Host Discount)! Past Hosts get 10% off all of their purchases for one year after their show, and even get to use that discount on the Monthly Specials. Now *that's* higher education!

Kitchen Spritzer

After using your Kitchen Spritzer, be sure to loosen the cap and release the air that remains pressurized inside. This will allow the oil in the tube to drain back out and help prevent clogging!

Food Chopper

Did you know that we spend *more than half our time* in the kitchen getting ready to cook? The Food Chopper will be your new best friend!

Banana Tip

The best way to peel a banana is from the bottom, like monkeys do. You pinch the bottom, and it peels easily, taking the membranes with it, and giving you a natural handle to hold the banana.

Spraying Oil in Nonstick Cookware

Good quality nonstick cookware, like our Executive Set, does not need oil added unless you want it for flavor. If you want to spray an oil, use the Kitchen Spritzer – NEVER use an aerosol oil spray, as the additives will create an invisible film on the cookware and hurt the nonstick finish, making it gummy. (Think about how they made your old aluminum muffin pans brown and sticky.) Aerosol oil sprays are NOT fat free, contrary to popular view – the serving size on the can is so small, like 0.4 second, that you can't measure any fat, but those sprays will have just as many calories as any other oil you use, depending on how much of it you spray.

Booking Benefits

Each month, Pampered Chef offers a Monthly Host Special at 60% off to our Hosts. When a guest at your Show books their own Show and holds it within six months, you can order one of the Monthly Host Specials at their Show, too!

Pizza Cutter

Spray your Pizza Cutter with oil from the Kitchen Spritzer to make clean cuts through all of your food – no more food sticking to the cutting wheel!

Un-crustables

If you have children, the Cut-N-Seal® will make lunchtime fun again. Make crust-free pocket sandwiches, either full circle (my kids called them Flying Saucer Sandwiches) or half moon. Use leftover bread to make PB&J's, grilled cheese, or even taco meat and cheese pockets. Then freeze for future use, to tuck into lunches, or brush with butter and toast in the oven for quick snacks.

Did you know that the average child eats 1,500 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches before graduating high school???

The worse they look, the better they cook.

Stoneware turns a deep brown color the more it's used – this is called seasoning and creates a natural nonstick surface.

Just like women, Stones get better with age!

They go in the microwave, too???

Baking Stones are terrific in the microwave! While they don't brown foods when used there, you can create cakes in your Fluted Stone or roast a whole chicken in 30 minutes, barbecued ribs in 20 minutes, and even pork tenderloin in 10!

National Watermelon Day – August 3rd

Celebrate with watermelon sliced with the Crinkle Cutter! Watermelon is fat-free, low in calories and high in lycopene, an antioxidant that may help reduce the risks of cancer and other diseases.

May Day

A popular May Day (May 1st) tradition is filling “may baskets” with flowers and goodies. Try filling our Simple Additions Caddy and Small Bowls with spring surprises for a neighbor, teacher or friend. It's also the perfect gift to customize for Mother's Day.

Stainless Cookware

Our Stainless uses tri-ply clad construction. A heat-conducting aluminum core is sandwiched between two sheets of stainless steel. It extends through the entire pan including the walls, unlike others which have an aluminum or copper disc attached to the bottom only. If heat is only distributed on the bottom, the pan is prone to uneven heating and hot spots at the edges of the disc. Our new Stainless Cookware will give you optimal cooking performance! It's the #1 item on bridal registries now!

What you see is what you get...

Baking Stones absorb moisture (never any food particles!) and produce an even heat from side-to-side. Cookies, breads and pizza are always perfectly golden and evenly baked – when your biscuits are a beautiful brown on top, that's what you'll see on the bottom, too. No more Cajun-style, blackened bottoms!

Without changing a thing that you do, Baking Stones will make you a better cook!

Omelets in a bag

If you are having a brunch, try this easy omelet idea. Have guests write their name on a quart-size bag with permanent marker. Crack 2 large eggs into the bag (no more); shake to combine them. Put in a variety of ingredients such as ham, cheeses, onion, green pepper, tomato, cooked hash browns, salsa, etc. Shake to combine. Make sure to get all the air out of the bag and zip it up. Place the bags into rolling, boiling water for exactly 13 minutes. You can usually cook 6-8 omelets in a large pot. Open the bags and the omelets will roll out easily!

Pink Lemonade

Always a summer favorite, it's said that pink lemonade was invented by circus lemonade vendor Pete Conklin in the mid-1800's, when he used a bucket of water in which a performer had soaked his red tights!

My favorite lemonade recipe: Sparkling Lemonade – mix 1 12 ounce can of frozen lemonade concentrate (I like to use raspberry flavored – it's great!), 2 liters of chilled ginger ale, 1 lemon – scored and sliced, and 1/3 cup raspberries. The Quick Stir Pitcher makes it easy to enjoy often in summer!

Bacon in the Bar Pan

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Line Stoneware Bar Pan with Parchment Paper. Place 10-12 slices of bacon on parchment without overlapping. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until crisp. Drain immediately.

No turning required so you're not tied up at the stove. You'll get attractive, long, evenly cooked strips. The Parchment Paper absorbs the excess grease so clean up is a breeze!

Make your own muffin sandwiches

Use our Prep Bowls to make your own breakfast sandwiches and skip the drive-thru! While your English muffin is toasting, scramble an egg with cheese, ham, etc., and microwave in one of our Prep Bowls. Invert on top of your toasted muffin, add a slice of cheese if desired, and top with the other half of the English muffin. Enjoy!

