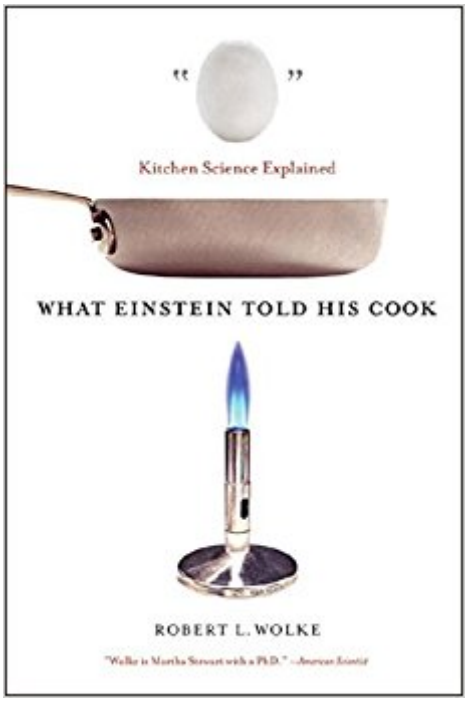
What Einstein Told His Cook: Kitchen Science Explained



Synopsis

"Wolke is Martha Stewart with a PhD." Ã¢â ¬â ¢American Scientist"Wolke, longtime professor of chemistry and author of the Washington Post column Food 101, turns his hand to a Cecil Adams style compendium of questions and answers on food chemistry. Is there really a difference between supermarket and sea salt How is sugar made? Should cooks avoid aluminum pans? Interspersed throughout Wolke's accessible and humorous answers to these and other mysteries are recipes demonstrating scientific principles. There is gravy that avoids lumps and grease; Portuguese Poached Meringue that demonstrates cream of tartar at work; and juicy Salt-Seared Burgers.... With its zest for the truth, this book will help cooks learn how to make more intelligent choices." Ã¢â ¬â ¢Publishers Weekly

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Customer Reviews

Why do recipes call for unsalted butter--and salt? What is a microwave, actually? Are smoked foods raw or cooked? Robert L. Wolke's enlightening and entertaining What Einstein Told His Cook offers answers to these and 127 other questions about everyday kitchen phenomena. Using humor (dubious puns included), Wolke, a bona fide chemistry professor and syndicated Washington Post columnist, has found a way to make his explanations clear and accessible to all: in short, fun. For example, to a query about why cookbooks advise against inserting meat thermometers so that they touch a bone, Wolke says, "I hate warnings without explanations, don't you? Whenever I see an 'open other end' warning on a box, I open the wrong end just to see what will happen. I'm still alive."

But he always finally gets down to brass tacks: as most heat transfer in meat is due to its water content, areas around bone remain relatively cool and thus unreliable for gauging overall meat temperature.Organized into basic categories like "Sweet Talk" (questions involving sugar), "Fire and Ice" (we learn why water boils and freezers burn, among other things), and "Tools and Technology" (the best kind of frying pan, for example), the book also provides illustrative recipes like Black Raspberry Coffee Cake (to demonstrate how metrics work in recipes) and Bob's Mahogany Game Hens (showing what brining can do). With technical illustrations, tips, and more, the book offers abundant evidence that learning the whys and hows of cooking can help us enjoy the culinary process almost as much as its results. --Arthur Boehm --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Wolke, longtime professor of chemistry and author of the Washington Post column Food 101, turns his hand to a Cecil Adams style compendium of questions and answers on food chemistry. Is there really a difference between supermarket and sea salt? How is sugar made? Should cooks avoid aluminum pans? Interspersed throughout Wolke's accessible and humorous answers to these and other mysteries are recipes demonstrating scientific principles. There is gravy that avoids lumps and grease; Portuguese Poached Meringue that demonstrates cream of tartar at work; and juicy Salt-Seared Burgers. Wolke is good at demystifying advertisers' half-truths, showing, for example, that sea salt is not necessarily better than regular salt for those watching sodium intake. While the book isn't encyclopedic, Wolke's topics run the gamut: one chapter tackles Those Mysterious Microwaves; elsewhere readers learn about the burning of alcohol and are privy to a rant on the U.S. measuring system. Sometimes the tone is hokey (The green color [in potatoes] is Mother Nature's Mr. Yuk sticker, warning us of poison) and parenthetical Techspeak explanations may seem condescending to those who remember high school science. However, Wolke tells it like it is. What does clarifying butter do, chemically? Answer: gets rid of everything but that delicious, artery-clogging, highly saturated butterfat. With its zest for the truth, this book will help cooks learn how to make more intelligent choices.Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

This book is written by Robert L. Wolke and is a good book if you are looking to learn the chemistry behind cooking and how your food is made in the kitchen. The author teaches the reader with real life examples how food reacts with different types of water temperature and more. I would recommend this book to someone that wants to get into what goes on behind the cooking and more in depth with the food and how it is prepared. Throughout the book he makes jokes and pun that

keeps the reader engaged with the book the whole time. This book related to me when in part he talks about chocolate which I love and explains how the beans are dried out then shipped to Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory. And another argument that I had on why this is a great read is that it has so many examples that it has to relate to something that you are interested in. To wrap it up I would recommend this to a friend if he/she was into this field or just liked food.

What Einstein told his cook is a book about the science of cooking, using chemistry. Robert L. Wolke accomplishes this by relating chemistry to food and cooking. Throughout the book, he does a good job making chemistry fun and easy to remember and keeps the reader engaged.Robert L. WolkeÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s book makes chemistry fun, and somewhat easy to relate to. Since, I rarely cook, I don't know much, but it was fun to read between the lines and find things that I actually do know. I also enjoyed this book a lot, since I have an interest in cooking, and want to cook more as I become a young adult. Overall, the book made chemistry fun, and easy to remember.The author, through teaching chemistry through cooking, kept the reader engaged. The book made me want to read his work more. He speaks how chemistry is used in cooking, how it was used in our daily lives, etc. This kept me engaged, and, once again made chemistry fun and easy to remember.In conclusion, What Einstein Told his Cook helped me remember random cooking and chemistry facts and kept me engaged throughout the book.

I read this book for Chemistry class because it was assigned reading by our teacher. The author wrote this book to reveal that a lot of mysteries of cooking and food are easy to explain when we look at the chemistry behind it. I think this book is very interesting and it changed my view about the food that I eat by examining food at a molecular level and explaining chemical reactions.The author divides up the book into nine chapters, each of which seek to explain the mysteries behind particular foods, cooking methods and drinks. The first two chapters deal with basic tastes of sweet and salty, and sources of sweetener and salt. Then he describes different types of fat, meat and fish. He also explains the effects of heating and freezing on food, interesting facts about drinks, how microwaves work and how to maximize use of tools in the kitchen by better understanding how they work. He begins the book with a general explanation of the science behind taste and smell that affects the experience of everything we put in our mouth to drink or eat. What I found most interesting is that eighty percent of flavor is based on smell, not taste. That explains why I have lost my sense of taste when I get a sinus infection. Another section of the book I found interesting was about salt. My mother has four to five different kinds of salt in our kitchen. I thought she was crazy

and never knew why, but now I understand after reading WolkeÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s explanation. Salt is sodium chloride, but it gets its flavor from both its taste and texture. Personally, I could relate to what the author was explaining because my mother buys a really good dark chocolate that has salt sprinkled on it. When you bite into it, the salt cracks in your teeth and gives a good contrast to the bittersweet chocolate. The author devotes a section of the book to Fire and Ice, which is basically heating and freezing food. He both debunks and supports a lot of theories. For example, you cannot cook over a candle or fry an egg on the sidewalk on a hot day. However, he proves that putting a lid on a pot of water to boil speeds up the process what causes food to get freezer burn after sitting in the freezer too long (loses water molecules if the food wrapper is not tight enough). This section answers a lot of common questions about cooking and freezing, and it is interesting and practical.I found What Einstein Told His Cook helpful to understand chemistry in the larger context of everyday life. By looking at cooking as a chemical reaction, it helps me understand some of the concepts in chemistry better by providing practical, everyday examples. Overall, it was an interesting book and it answered many of my questions about food and cooking.

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