

# COOKING WITHOUT A RECIPE

One of my greatest pleasures in life is cooking without a recipe. To simply take a look at what is in the cupboard and throw together a delicious meal without a glossy book in front of me is awesome. Now, the downside to this type of cooking is you'll never make the same meal twice, but everything you cook can be fantastic this way.

## FLIP OVER FOR YOUR NEXT CHALLENGE



### EARN THIS NUGGET

With your parent's oversight, cook three meals without using a recipe. Start small with the appropriate amount of food just for you and get used to being creative. Finally, cook a meal for the family, create a name for it, safe in the knowledge that you'll never be able to cook it the same again.

LEVEL 3

PERIOD 1

TASK 4

Let me try to get you started. I'm not going to give you a recipe, but I am going to give you some general structure that I use.

First of all, you need to start off with just a basic knowledge and have an idea of where you are heading. This can be as simple as "I'm going to make chili," or "I'm going to make something that is sort of Italian," that way you'll know what herbs and spices to reach for. In short, it's not a bad idea to have cooked a few recipes before, so you know what your general direction will be.

1. I start by adding oil to a frying pan or a wok. I want to add flavor, so I often cook garlic or maybe chili peppers, depending on what I want to make.
2. Next, I cook the meat if there is any. The meat gains the flavor of the oil that you've already started working with.
3. Now I'll add onions, if I am going to cook those; they add flavor, and are a good thing to add in at this point.
4. Probably about now, get some rice or pasta, if you will be having that as a side.
5. If you have spices and herbs to add, now is a great time to include those. Keep everything cooking together.
6. Now add in some vegetables. I use a lot of pepper stir-fries because I like them and they are easy. If I have more time and a bigger budget, I'll buy whole peppers or whatever else I'll need. The trick I find with veggies is not to cook them too much. Vegetables are better if they are not mushy.
7. Now, if I have a sauce that I will add, I will toss that in now. Canned tomatoes or a can of soup is also a great addition to include now.
8. Remember this is creativity, this is art in a skillet, and anything goes. Keep tasting as you go. Add a little at a time and give the flavor time to permeate. Sugar is good if it is too salty, add some salt if it is too sweet, and keep going until you have something that tastes great to you. My one caution is don't make the flavor too strong, it is easy to do that. And finally, a secret weapon to pull out of your back pocket, really a cheat, but who cares; adding cola, ketchup or Worcestershire sauce is a great way to add fantastic flavor if it needs that little something.

