

What Einstein Told His Cook: Kitchen Science Explained

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Finalist for the James Beard Foundation Book Award and the IACP Cookbook Award

"[A]s good a read on the science of cooking as there is." -Mark Bittman, author of How to Cook Everything

"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." -Publishers Weekly

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

Robert L. Wolke, a professor emeritus of chemistry at the University of Pittsburgh, received his doctorate in chemistry from Cornell University. He lives in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, with his wife, noted food writer Marlene Parrish.

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👉 👉 👉 👉 👉 . Top with diced pineapple , then with another 1/ 2 tablespoons of cereal . For Alton Brown's accompanying French Toast recipe , visit FoodNetwork.com/kids . Measuring cups

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and spoons are a great tool for kids to learn fractions ."