

Title:

Cooking from the heart, and from bare essentials!

Word Count:

439

Summary:

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Here are some tips to take the stress out of cooking, whether you are stirring up supper for your mate or hoping to impress the new in-laws:

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Article Body:

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Dinners-in-a-Bag

Make these dinner bags involving glorious aluminum foil and write on them,

25 minutes at 425 F", for example, with a marker pen. Even though Jools didn't like cooking, she never had a problem with cooking the bags. I just program the "Favorites Cycle, in your microwave . Here's just one version, but feel free to vary the recipe with things like grated parsnip, smoked bacon or red wine.

Chicken Breasts Baked in a Bag

(Serves two)

2 7-ounce skinless chicken breasts

1 handful of dried porcini

9 ounces of mixed mushrooms, torn up

1 large wineglass of white wine

3 large pats of butter

1 handful of fresh thyme

2 cloves of garlic, peeled and sliced

Using wide aluminum foil, make your bag by placing two pieces on top of each other (about as big as two shoeboxes in length), folding three sides in and leaving one side open. Mix everything together in a bowl, including the chicken. Place in your bag, with all the wine, making sure you do not pierce the foil. Close up the final edge, making sure it is tightly sealed and secure on the sides, and slide it onto a roasting pan. Place the pan on a high heat for one minute to get the heat going, and then bake in the middle of a 425-degree oven for 25 minutes.

Bare-Bones Cooking Techniques

* If you invited friends to come round but they are running late, pop up to four plates of food in the separate warming oven. Your glorious food not only stays warm, but also keeps the kitchen smelling wonderful until they walk in the door.

* If your side dish is ready but you still have other things to cook, just slide the pot onto the middle of the cook top. The "warming zone" there acts like a fifth burner, keeping it warm and freeing up the other burners so you can finish cooking.

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