# Chapter 3: Meal Evaluation

Here is a chapter on meal evaluation.

## Why is meal evaluation important?

Meal evaluation helps you determine whether or not you want to add the meal you made to your repertoire. After you finish your meal, take some time to think about what you just ate. Here are some questions you can ask:

* Did you like the meal?
* Did your family like the meal?
* Did your dog like it? (I was surprised once when my dog snubbed a piece of shrimp.)
* What, specifically, did you or others not like? (The spicing, the texture, the mushrooms, the potatoes, the overall meal…?) Identifying the specifics can help you decide if you want to try and tweak the recipe or just ditch it altogether?
* Did you enjoy making it?
* Was the process worth the outcome? (Some meals are really complicated, and the final meal just isn’t great. It’s not worth the effort.)
* Was the time spent cooking worth the outcome?
* In general, would you want to make and eat that meal again?

You can consider all of these questions while you’re eating, but my family prefers that I wait until after dinner to bring out the clipboard and survey questions. (I’m kidding, of course. I don’t have a clipboard. I’m left-handed, and they’re awkward to use.)

## Meal Evaluation Over Time

I could have amassed a large collection of recipes over the last ten years. The meal evaluation process helps me curate my recipe files so that I don’t keep recipes that I know I’ll never make again. It also helps me better understand likes and dislikes so that I can choose new recipes that are likely to make it into the regular rotation. Evaluating the meal can also help highlight areas of cooking strength and areas that could use improvement. My vegetable chopping skills have definitely improved. Chopped pieces are more uniformly sized and therefore cook through more evenly. I’m not sure if I will ever understand how to cook cube steak.

## Recipe Examples

And now for the part you might have expected all along: A couple of recipes. This book is, afterall, about cooking.

### Shopsky Salad

[INSERT IMAGE: “(Shopsky salad)” shopsky.jpg]

### Crispy Pork Tacos

[INSERT IMAGE: “(Crispy pork tacos)” tacos.jpg]