

TANUSHREE PODDER

1000 *plus* Household Hints



KITCHEN BEAUTY GARDEN INTERIORS
COOKING HEALTH HYGIENE CLOTHES
JEWELLERY FIRST-AID & ...MANY MORE



V&S PUBLISHERS

1000^{PLUS} Household Hints

1000 PLUS

Household Hints



On Kitchen, Beauty, Garden, Interiors,
Cooking, Health, Hygiene, Clothes,
First-aid, Jewellery & many more

Tanushree Podder



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Published by:



V&S PUBLISHERS

F-2/16, Ansari road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002

☎ 23240026, 23240027 • Fax: 011-23240028

Email: info@vspublishers.com • *Website:* www.vspublishers.com

Branch : Hyderabad

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ISBN 978-93-505720-1-6

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Publisher's Note

Management has pervaded every sphere of modern life, so how could the home front remain exempt from its purview? Every homemaker is a manager irrespective of whether the setting is rural or urban. She manages to perform the household chores with such clinical efficiency that it seems to be a very easy job. But a little insight into the daily chores of a homemaker would reveal the enormity of the task. One cannot but appreciate the meticulous planning which goes behind the smooth functioning of a home. In spite of so many modern gadgets meant for easing the task, the onus still rests on the homemaker to streamline all activities so that the home front rolls on well oiled wheels, smoothly and efficiently.

Pustak Mahal, in keeping up with its tradition, has been making great endeavour to publish 'House-keeping series' to lessen the burden of the Indian women. This book, *Over 1000 Household Hints*, is one such effort in that direction. The underlying principle of the book, written in a simple language, is to help young women with the innumerable problems which she faces when she first sets up her home. This book becomes all the more relevant to the working women who don't have the required time to learn through the 'trial and error' method.

It is hoped that the book will prove useful and worth preserving.

—*Publishers*

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Introduction

Many books are written on different subjects but not many books have been written on solutions to the common problems faced by a young home-maker when she first sets up her home. The young woman is totally nonplussed about the myriad little problems that crop up every day. How to store the greens in the fridge, how to turn out soft 'chapatis' which will be appreciated by her husband, and how to make the resources last a little longer?

As a young bride, I faced a lot of problems and did not know where to look for the answers. Since I had always been a tomboy who had no interest in entering the kitchen or doing any household work, I was totally clueless about running the house. And when I faced the problems, I would sit and cry because I did not know how to deal with them. I would spend hours trying to prepare a dish, as given in a recipe book and land up with an inedible stuff just because I had put some extra teaspoons of salt in it. In my endeavour to become a perfect cook and a housekeeper, I pored over many books, contacted many people and maintained a diary with all the tips and hints given to me by my mother, aunts and grandmother. Those were hard times and I learnt it the hard way. I must have wasted a lot, thrown a lot, to learn my lessons. It was a perfect case of learning through 'trial and error'. It took me years to learn all the tricks and yet I am far from being perfect. And then I realised that there must be hundreds of young women, like me, who do not have the patience and the opportunity to learn through advice or 'trial and error'.



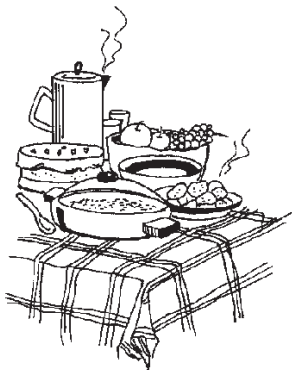


The book becomes more relevant in the present era because most young women are working and have neither the time nor the opportunity to go around, hunting for hints and making notes of them. They have to learn through trial and error method of learning. This method can be pretty time consuming and one incurs a lot of wastage, too. And wastage in the modern times will just not do.

This book has taken many years to be compiled. I wanted my daughters to have an easier time than me, when they grow up and take to home making. This book took shape when I dreamt of handing over the thousands of hints collected by me, over the years, to my daughters and the other young girls of this country. I hope this book comes handy for all those who are struggling to cope with the sudden demands made on them.

Although a lot of care has been taken while compiling the ideas and tips into neat sections, there may be certain areas, which are not clearly demarcated, mainly because the matter is common to two or more situations.

I think that the introduction cannot be complete unless I thank all the people who have been involved with me in bringing out this book. Bringing out a book requires a lot of effort and this book has been created solely by the united efforts of my family. A large and heartfelt chunk of thanks goes to my husband and my daughters who have made their precious time available for the book. They have come up with very constructive ideas and helped me with the editing. I would like to thank my husband, especially, since he has been with me through the birth pangs of this book. He has held my hand when I despaired, given me the moral courage when I felt like giving it up, supported me when I faltered and made himself available when I needed his presence.

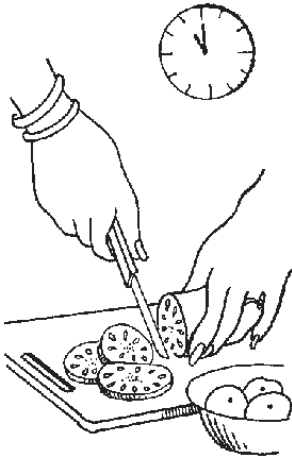


—*Tanushree Podder*

Kitchen

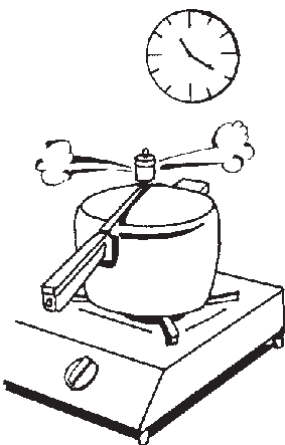


Kitchen



The most expensive commodity in today's world is time. Gone are the days when women worked in the kitchen and spent their entire time planning the meals and sweating over their stoves. In the fast moving world that has no place for wastage of time or money, it is necessary that people make the best of their resources.

Apart from the time factor, there is a lot of wisdom required in maintaining the family budget within the available resources. This requires good planning and knowledge of cutting corners wherever possible. Economizing is an essential factor for the homemaker. In the coming millennium, it would be imperative for everyone to become more prudent and avoid wastage of every kind. Be it the energy resources, the food material or the natural products, conservation will be the key to survival.



Kitchen is one place where health becomes the casualty when one panders to the taste buds. It is also the place where a balanced diet and common sense play a very important role. There are hundreds of tried and tested methods to save time, fuel, and money. These methods have been discovered by wise women who knew where their priorities lay. By sharing the valuable tips with the others, they have done a good turn to the society.

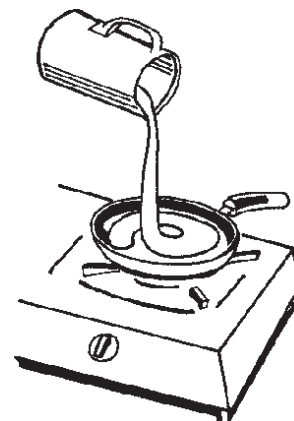
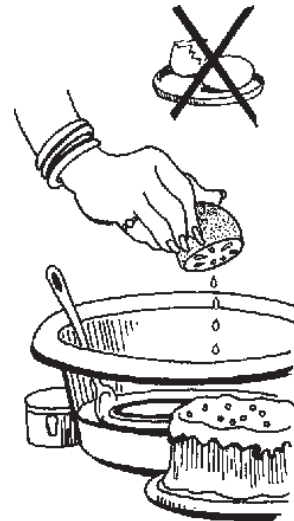
The kitchen tips are divided into several parts, cooking tips, cleaning tips, economy tips, storing tips, gadget tips, anti-pest tips and practical tips.

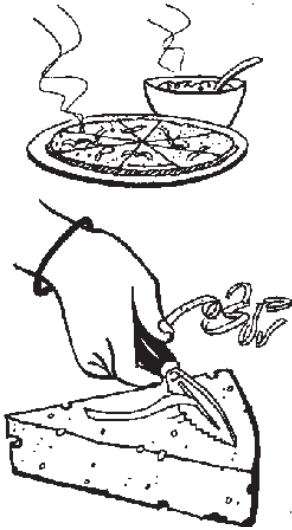
COOKING TIPS

Cooking can be a pleasure for some but a painful experience for many modern women. With lesser time at hand, she is always in search of short cuts and substitute methods. For the inexperienced cook, an excess of salt or burnt rice can become an embarrassing experience. It is at times like this, one wishes for tips that could take care of the problems. Here are some very valuable tips to help the harassed homemaker.

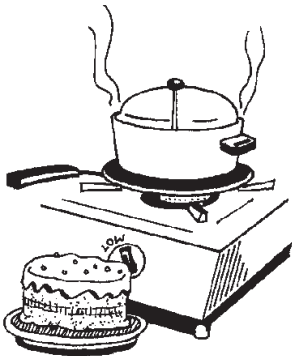
Of Cakes and Cookies

- ◆ Are you one of those cooks who despair over their cakes, which fall flat and refuse to rise? There is no need to lose hope. Try this tip for a deliciously soft and spongy cake - add 2 tablespoons of any aerated cola to the cake batter for a delicious cake.
- ◆ And just in case you happen to be a vegetarian who refuses to use eggs but likes to bake a cake, here is a tip for you. To make an eggless cake spongier, add the juice of 1 lime to the batter just before pouring the batter into the baking tray.
- ◆ With the jet set age, most of us do not have the time to bake a leisurely cake, yet we like to have our cake and eat it too. If you are one of those who are always rushing about, there is no need to go into the long rituals of mixing the batter. If you want to bake a cake in a hurry, just mix all the ingredients together with a level tablespoon of limejuice. No beating is required. The cake will be as good and fluffy as when you beat it well.
- ◆ From cakes to pancakes is nothing like being thrown from the pan into the fire. It is quite a simple process. Here is a tip to help you along. While making pancakes, pour the batter from a jug instead of ladling, for an easy and even spread.



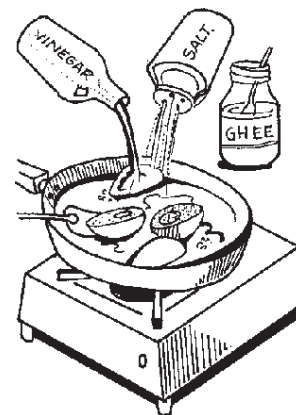
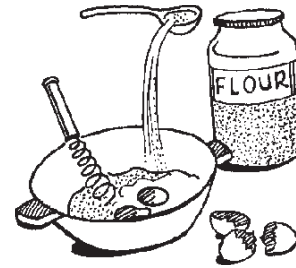


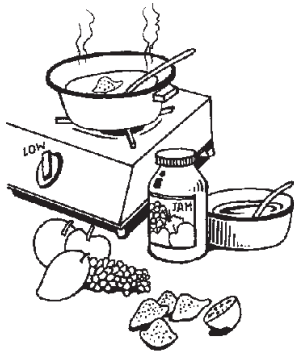
- ◆ To make professional looking chocolate leaves, to decorate your cake, just melt a little milk chocolate in a bowl over a double boiler. Using a small brush, smear the chocolate on the dull side of fresh, clean rose leaves. Leave in a cool place to harden and then carefully peel away the real leaf.
- ◆ If you cannot get perfect chocolate curls to use on your dessert, or the cheese curls to go with your pizzas, just use your potato peeler to grate cheese or chocolates for making chocolate curls.
- ◆ Sometimes, we land up with a cake batter that is as thick as a cement mix. Thick batter does not result in soft cakes. To thin the batter, use water instead of milk. The cake will turn out much softer than you expected. (See Annexure-1)
- ◆ If you are one of those who thought glycerine is only for softening the skin, think again. A teaspoon of glycerine added to the cake batter can give you a spongy and soft cake, too.
- ◆ Professional cake makers swear by this secret tip. Try adding a little lemon juice to your cake batter, the next time. You will be surprised at the light and spongy effect.
- ◆ The soda water has many qualities. It can help you make a lovely, light pastry. Just use soda water instead of tap water for kneading the dough.
- ◆ Those cake lovers, who have yet to buy their first oven, can still bake their cakes and enjoy the same. To bake a cake without an oven, use your 'roti tava' on which the cake dish can be placed. Cover it with a lid and turn the gas on slow for the same period of time as you would, an oven.



Eggy Tips

- ◆ Are you envious of the tastier and fluffier omelette made by your friend? You can make an equally good one by adding a little gram flour while beating the eggs.
- ◆ If you are unable to make a poached egg to perfection and have the white spreading all over your pan, try this tip. Add a few drops of limejuice or vinegar to the water to prevent the whites from spreading and watch the look of wonder on the faces around you.
- ◆ Most of us love the delicious drink called 'eggnog' but have to wait for someone to make it for us. Making it is quite simple, really. Beat one egg thoroughly. To this, add a cup of milk and grated nutmeg, vanilla essence or brandy. Stir it up well and your drink is ready.
- ◆ Adding 1-tablespoon water to the egg before beating it will also result in a much larger and fluffier omelette.
- ◆ Most of us hate the sight of the black colour on the yolks of our boiled eggs. To prevent the discolouration of the egg yolk in boiled eggs, immerse them in cold water immediately after removing them from hot water.
- ◆ What happens when you want to boil the eggs and land up with a cracked one? You have two options, bear with a boiled egg with its white spilled into the water or try this tip - add a teaspoon of vinegar to the water in which you want to boil the egg. You will manage to get a perfectly boiled egg.
- ◆ I always found it difficult to take the fried eggs out of the pan. They would disintegrate and run all over the pan. This happened till I found the solution to the problem. While frying eggs, adding a little vinegar and salt to the ghee helps in quickening the coagulation and prevents disintegration, too.

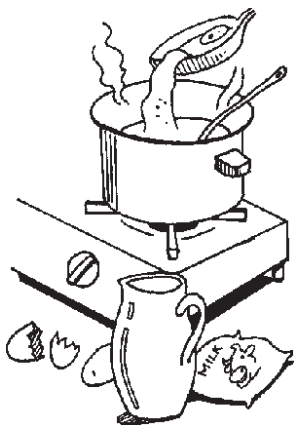




- ◆ For a delicious dish of scrambled eggs, use a dollop of cottage cheese instead of the usual milk and butter.
- ◆ To make a soft and fluffy omelette, heat a non-stick pan and add a little more butter than usual. Now beat the egg and stir briskly (even while frying) with a fork. This way, more air goes in your omelette, making it light and fluffy. Fry till done and serve hot.

Jams, Ice Creams and Desserts

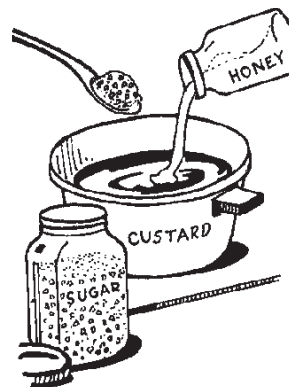
- ◆ Have you ever wondered why the branded jams have a nice and delicious flavour? While the home made ones are not quite so good. Add a couple of lemon peels and simmer for 5 minutes and then compare the two. You will not be disappointed.
- ◆ Making jams and marmalades at home can be economical and you can be assured of genuine ingredients. If you use sugar made from sugarcane rather than sugar beet it will give you a better set and more jam.
- ◆ Sometimes preparing a new type of dessert can become a real problem, especially if you do not have time to spend in the kitchen. Here is a recipe for a quick and novel dessert. When jelly is almost set, churn it lightly with a little fresh cream in a mixer and let it set again. A fluffy and unusual sweet dish is ready for the children.

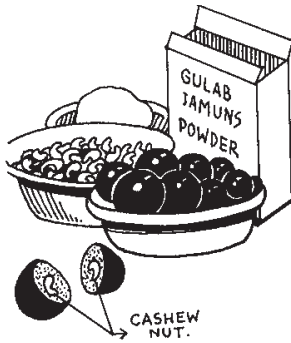


- ◆ Children love anything that has a little fizz in it. The ordinary jelly can be made to fizz with a littler improvisation. To make fizzy jellies, heat only a little quantity of water to melt the jelly crystals. For the remaining quantity, substitute water with sparkling wine, ginger ale or lemonade.
- ◆ Come summertime and everyone is ready for the ice cream. But they do not want the homemade ones because they are not as good as the one available in the parlours. Don't despair if the family rejects your

efforts. Next time; try this hint for soft, home made ice creams. Add stiffly beaten white of an egg to the thickened milk, just before removing it from the heat and stir well.

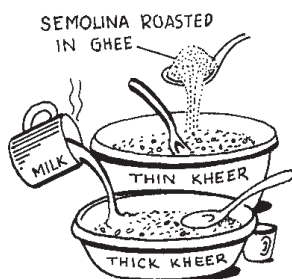
- ◆ One of the problems we face while making ice creams is the formation of crystals in them. To make crystal free and creamier ice creams, use creamless milk or fresh milk. Add the cream later, while churning the mixer.
- ◆ For an added crunch and taste, sprinkle leftover biscuit or cake crumbs over vanilla ice cream. Children love its delicious taste.
- ◆ Caramel puddings are a perennial favorite of most families. Sometimes, however, the pudding becomes a little soft and doesn't set so well. There is an easy solution to combat this problem. While making caramel pudding, mix some custard powder to the egg-milk mixture. The pudding will be firmer and tastier.
- ◆ Honey is not just for the bees. It can be used for various desserts and drinks. It is light and nutritious besides containing several healthy elements. To get tastier custard, add a little honey along with the sugar.
- ◆ For those of you who love Indian desserts but find it a little difficult to cope with the complexities of making one, here is a simple tip. Making 'moong dal' or 'urad dal halwa' becomes very easy if you add 1 teaspoon of wheat flour to the heated ghee before adding the 'dal' paste. It will not stick to the frying pan at all.
- ◆ Come festival time and we are inundated with the lot of sweets brought by well-wishers, friends and relatives. If the sweets are not consumed within a couple of days, they harden up in the fridge. Hard and stale 'pedas' and 'burfees' can be used to make fresh sweets. Mash them and put them in a heavy



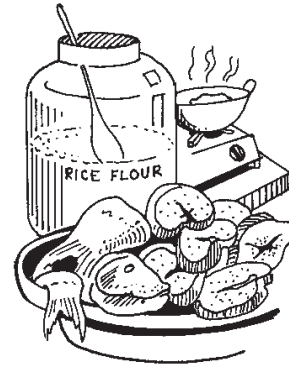


bottom pan along with a little milk and grated coconut. Keep stirring on low heat till the mixture leaves the sides of the pan. Pour in a greased plate and cut into pieces.

- ◆ For delicious shrikhand, place the curd in a small-perforated vessel covered with a muslin cloth. Place this in a larger vessel to collect the drained water. Keep both these vessels in the fridge, overnight. Powder sugar and a few cardamoms and mix with thickened curd. Garnish with a handful of chopped cashewnuts and almonds.
- ◆ If you have been wondering about the size and softness of the 'gulab jamuns' sold at the shops, you can make an equally good one at home. While making 'gulab jamuns', put a cashew nut inside each one while shaping them. They will look bigger and taste better.
- ◆ If you want to whip up a quick dessert, which is both nutritious and delicious, try this. To make tasty banana bread in a jiffy, beat 250 gm flour, 250 gm sugar, 60 ml oil, 3 bananas and $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of baking powder and bake till done.
- ◆ If homemade gulab jamuns have not turned out soft and fluffy, steam them in a pressure cooker (with the weight) along with the syrup for about ten minutes. Voila! You will be surprised at the softness when you bite into them.
- ◆ Most first timers have problems with their 'kheer'. Either it turns out to be too thick or too thin. I remember making it the first time. It turned out so thick that I had to keep adding milk to get the right consistency and then I had to add sugar to make it sweet. Turning the thick 'kheer' into an acceptable consistency is quite easy; one just adds a little more milk to it. And to thicken 'kheer', you could add a little semolina roasted in ghee.



- ◆ For a tasty dessert, boil 2 cups of milk with 3 teaspoon of sugar. Add small pieces of bread, a little butter, 2 beaten eggs and a few drops of vanilla essence. Mix well and bake for about 45 minutes.
- ◆ With the growing awareness about the ills of using too much 'ghee', one is hesitant while using the stuff. Wise people always have a solution; you could try it, too. While preparing 'burfees' and 'laddoos', roast the gram flour in an oven. You will need less ghee and the sweets will taste better, too.
- ◆ If you are a health conscious person, make a health packed 'laddoo' for the family. Mix 'ragi' flour, gram flour, and wheat flour in the proportion of 2:1:1 and make 'laddoos'. They are nutritious and children love the taste, too.
- ◆ For a special type of milkshake, take 3 tablespoons of any fruit jam, add a glass of milk and beat in a mixie. Chill and serve. It tastes delicious. I don't know so much about the adults but children definitely love all kinds of milk shake.



Fish and Chicken

- ◆ During my initial years in the kitchen, I tried to live with the broken and burnt pieces of fried fish. You need not suffer the embarrassment if you coat fish pieces with rice flour before frying. This trick will prevent them from sticking to the frying pan. (See Annexure-2)
- ◆ I also had to suffer the pain of burns after the ordeal of frying fish. It took me years to find a solution. Before frying fish, add a pinch of turmeric to the oil. This prevents the oil from spluttering out of the pan on to your hands.
- ◆ How often have you cooked the meat for hours and discovered it to be tough. The trick is to make it tender. One or two pieces of betel nut or unripe papaya are excellent meat tenderizers.

