

KIDS

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How to get kids started in the kitchen depends on a few factors, like their age, and your comfort with having them handle knives or use the stove.

In her cookbook for preschoolers, “Pretend Soup and Other Real Recipes,” Mollie Katzen explains how even the youngest child can handle a knife. One tip: Put a piece of tape on the handle, so the child knows which end to hold.

A new feature on Coborn’s website, called Kids Cook at Home, allows users to select recipes and videos by difficulty and whether knives and heat are required.

And there are cookbooks out there for all ages. Start with Katzen’s books for preschoolers, graduate to America’s Test Kitchen’s recent books for 5- to 8-year-olds (“My First Cookbook”) and ages 8 and up (“The Complete Cookbook for Young Chefs”) and onward to cookbooks written by teenagers (“Teen Chef Cooks”; “The Teen Kitchen”).

The pizza dough I assembled with Milo came from Liz Lee Heinecke of Edina, aka the Kitchen Pantry Scientist, who has written a series of books of experiments that use common household ingredients.

As explained in her book “Kitchen Science Lab for Kids: Edible Edition,” kneading pizza dough to form gluten strands is what makes the crust chewy.

Heinecke says all of her recipes teach mathematics, by having kids measure ingredients. They can also teach an important life skill: failing and bouncing back.

“When a recipe doesn’t turn out exactly as planned, it’s not the end of the world,” she said. “By making less than perfect food, kids learn to troubleshoot by asking themselves what went wrong, or how they can adjust a recipe to make it more to their liking the next time.”

Milo and I didn’t have to worry about that. Our pizza might have been a little thin and oddly shaped. But by making it together, it was perfect.

A SIMPLE ‘SOUP’

Everly, 3, Brooklyn Center, Minnesota

Everly loves to help her mom, Amy Parkin, in the kitchen. Her favorite pastime: cracking eggs. To make Pretend Soup, a spin on a yogurt and fruit bowl, Parkin let Everly use a knife for the first time. “I thought, all right, I’m going to try it, even though it made me cringe,” Parkin said. Everly did great slicing berries and apple wedges. “It was all symmetrical, too,” Parkin said. “I was so impressed.” Parkin swapped peach juice for the orange juice called for in the recipe. Bananas were scarce, so she worked in a mix of berries, apples and crushed pineapple instead. After Everly assembled the “soup,” “she was so proud of herself,” Parkin said.

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PRETEND SOUP

Serves 4.

Note: You can swap any kind of juice and fruit depending on your tastes. To help a young child measure juice, put the measuring cup in a pie pan or baking pan, put the juice in a small pitcher, and let the child pour it into the measuring cup from the pitcher. If spilling occurs, it goes into the pan. To help a young child peel a banana, cut it in half crosswise, then make a slit all the way down the side of the skin. Repeat on other side, and give the peel a little tug to start. Bananas are safe for even the youngest child to cut. Use a serrated dinner knife or a plastic picnic knife, and put a piece of tape on the handle so your child remembers which end to hold. From “Pretend Soup and Other Real Recipes,” by Mollie Katzen.

2 cups orange juice
½ cup plain yogurt
1 tablespoon honey
2 teaspoons lemon juice
1 small banana, sliced
1 cup berries (fresh or frozen and defrosted)

Place the orange juice in a bowl. Add yogurt, honey and lemon juice. Whisk until it is all one color.

Split banana slices and berries among the serving bowls. Ladle the soup over the fruit.

SNACKTIME BONANZA

Hannah, 2, and Sam, 5, Plymouth, Minnesota

As the writer of a food blog (twohappycooks.wordpress.com), Alli Hearne has often let her children help out on recipes. “We love to get our kids involved as much as we can. They like to scoop ingredients, drop them into the bowl, mix with a spoon,” Hearne said. Her trail mix is easily adaptable, calling for any combination of sweet, salty and crunchy things found in the back of the pantry, such as dried cranberries, sunflower seeds and crackers. In the family’s latest batch, the kids especially liked the chocolate chips. “It was a big mess,” Hearne said. “But you have to just go with it. Messes can be cleaned up. We all have more time these days.”

EASY TRAIL MIX

Makes a lot.

Note: This recipe does not require knives or heat. Ingredients are customizable; use whatever you like or have on hand. From Alli Hearne.



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3 cups cereal
Crackers (such as Ritz), broken, about 1 sleeve
Graham crackers, broken, about ½ sleeve
1 cup dried cranberries
1 cup chocolate chips
½ cup raisins
½ cup sunflower seeds

Add all ingredients to a large bowl and mix.

PIZZA MAGIC

Milo, 2, Minneapolis (See story.)

PIZZA DOUGH

Makes 1 large pizza or 3 to 4 small pizzas.

Note: Pre-bake crusts for 5 minutes if adding soggy ingredients such as fresh tomatoes or extra sauce. From “Kitchen Science Lab for Kids: Edible Edition,” by Liz Lee Heinecke.

2 teaspoons yeast
3 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for kneading
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon olive oil
Choice of cheese, sauce and toppings

Add yeast to 1 cup warm water and let sit for 5 minutes.

In a large bowl, mix flour with the salt, then stir in the oil and the yeast mixture to create the dough.

Briefly knead the dough and then put it back in the bowl.

Cover with plastic wrap or a damp dish towel and let it rise for 30 minutes.

Punch the dough down and preheat an oven or grill to 400 degrees. Flatten and stretch the dough. Add your toppings and bake in an oven or on a grill.

FINGER-LICKING GOOD

Ben, 10, and Maddy, 15, Arden Hills, Minnesota

Stephanie Harms’ two children like to get creative in the kitchen. “The kids are both fairly independent,” she said. “I let them kind of just go.”

For this recipe, however, they followed instructions to the letter, even seeking out ingredients like buttermilk and paprika that they’d usually find substitutes for. Maddy, who is a vegetarian, still got to put her spin on the dish, using cauliflower in place of chicken.

Ben had fun removing chicken skin for the first time. “That was kind of squishy,” his mom said. “We laughed a lot when we were doing it.” He wants to make the chicken again, but with a twist: Instead of a cornflake crust, he’d like to use Cheez-Its.

Harms said cooking together gave the family a way to pass the time “in a really



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meaningful way,” she said. “It reinforces for the kiddos and the whole family that we’re safe, and it’s going to be OK.”

CRISPY OVEN-FRIED CHICKEN

Serves 4.

Note: If you don’t have buttermilk, combine 2 tablespoons lemon juice or cider vinegar with 2 cups milk (or plain yogurt) and allow the mixture to stand for 5 to 10 minutes before using. In place of chicken, use cauliflower as a vegetarian substitution, but dip cauliflower in a beaten egg before dipping in the cornflake mixture to help the crust adhere. From “The Complete Cookbook for Young Chefs,” by America’s Test Kitchen Kids.

2 cups buttermilk (see Note)
2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
Salt and pepper
1 teaspoon garlic powder
3 pounds bone-in chicken pieces (split breasts, drumsticks and/or thighs)
Vegetable oil spray
4 cups cornflakes
1 teaspoon poultry seasoning
1 teaspoon paprika

In a large bowl, whisk together buttermilk, mustard, 2 teaspoons salt, ½ teaspoon pepper and garlic powder.

Use paper towel to grasp skin on 1 piece of chicken, then pull off and discard skin. Repeat with remaining pieces. Add chicken to buttermilk mixture and turn to coat well. Wash your hands. Cover bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes or overnight.

Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 400 degrees. Line rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil and set cooling rack inside baking sheet. Spray rack with vegetable oil spray.

Place cornflakes in a large zip-top bag. Add poultry seasoning and paprika. Seal bag and shake to combine. Use rolling pin to crush cornflakes into

small pieces. Pour cornflake mixture into second large bowl. Remove 1 piece of chicken from buttermilk mixture, add to bowl with cornflake mixture, and toss to coat. Use your hands to gently press crumbs onto all sides of chicken. Place chicken on greased rack in baking sheet. Repeat with remaining pieces of chicken. Wash your hands. Spray chicken all over with vegetable oil spray until each piece is shiny. Place baking sheet in oven and bake until chicken breasts register 165 degrees on an instant-read thermometer and drumsticks/thighs register 175 degrees, 35 to 45 minutes. Use oven mitts to remove baking sheet from oven (ask an adult for help). Place baking sheet on second cooling rack and let cool for 5 minutes.

LOTS OF CHOCOLATE

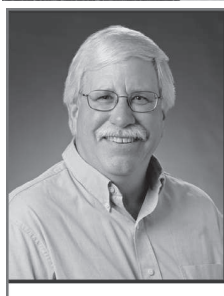
Kristiana, 11, and MaryKate, 10, Arden Hills, Minnesota

Sarah Lundgren and her husband are both educators, so having extra time to cook with their four children has felt like “an early summer,” Lundgren said. Her 12-year-old son was so excited, he made a Google Doc with 20 dessert recipes he plans to try. The children have to rotate making treats each day, “but I haven’t given them too many restrictions, since there have been so many other restrictions,” Lundgren said. Two of her children teamed up to make this recipe. They noticed early in the process that it was not going to yield enough cookies for a family of six, so they doubled it. MaryKate mixed everything together, and Kristiana helped her scoop the dough into balls. Since they only have one cookie scoop, Kristiana used her hands. “She, of course, washed them first,” Lundgren said. The hand-scooped cookies came out rounder, and the crispy-on-the-outside-soft-on-the-inside cookies impressed everyone. “They were gone within 24 hours.”



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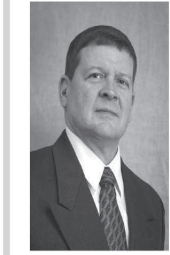
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