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NICK DIGIOVANNI

KNIFE DROP

CREATIVE RECIPES ANYONE CAN COOK

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MAX MILLA

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KITCHEN BASICS

EVEN THE BEST CHEF WILL STRUGGLE WITHOUT PROPER EQUIPMENT.

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MUST-HAVE EQUIPMENT

8-INCH CHEF'S KNIFE
KNIFE SHARPENER
BENCH SCRAPER
WOOD CUTTING BOARD
SMALL DISHWASHER-SAFE CUTTING BOARD

NESTING GLASS MIXING BOWLS
CAST-IRON SKILLET
STAINLESS STEEL SKILLET
LARGE NONSTICK SKILLET
LARGE DUTCH OVEN OR HEAVY-BOTTOMED POT
RIMMED BAKING SHEETS
WIRE COOLING RACK
SILICONE NONSTICK BAKING MAT
PRE-CUT PARCHMENT PAPER

MEASURING CUPS (DRY AND LIQUID)
MEASURING SPOONS
METAL WHISK
METAL SPATULA
METAL TONGS
RUBBER SPATULA
SILICONE PASTRY BRUSH
POTATO RICER OR FOOD MILL
FINE-MESH STRAINER OR CHINOIS
BOX GRATER
MICROPLANE GRATER
VEGETABLE PEELER
INSTANT-READ THERMOMETER
ROLLING PIN

FOOD PROCESSOR
HIGH-SPEED BLENDER
HAND MIXER OR STAND MIXER

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MUST-HAVE INGREDIENTS

HIGH-HEAT COOKING OIL
For deep frying or pan frying, choose a neutral-tasting, refined oil with a high smoke point. I recommend a good, flavorless vegetable oil, though peanut oil, corn oil, refined avocado oil, or several others work just as well.

OLIVE OIL
Choose a high-quality, extra-virgin olive oil and store it in a cool, dark environment. A good olive oil can be used both for cooking (low to medium heat) and finishing.

BUTTER
For cooking, I prefer unsalted, high-quality butter such as Kerrygold. If I'm using butter to finish a dish or for toast, I'll opt for salted. Always refrigerate butter in an airtight container; otherwise, it will take on flavors and odors from your fridge.

CLARIFIED BUTTER
If you're looking for that classic butter flavor but are cooking at higher temperatures, use clarified butter. It's butter without the milk solids that burn easily. It's a much better option for pancakes, for instance.

SALT
When it comes to salt, have one multipurpose kosher salt purchased in bulk, and one textured salt for finishing, such as flaky sea salt.

SEASONINGS
Buy a few high-quality spices based on your personal taste preferences. My favorites are smoked paprika, fresh peppercorns, ground sumac, garlic powder, onion powder, and seasoned or flavored salts. Some spices, such as pepper and nutmeg, should be freshly ground at the last minute.

PANTRY STAPLES
Invest in high-quality pantry staples, especially those that last a while, such as soy sauce, honey, tomato sauce, mayonnaise, ketchup, maple syrup, mustard, salsa, and dressings. They may cost a few dollars more, but they're worth the investment.

FRESH CITRUS
I love using lemon, lime, and orange zest to brighten up dishes. Make sure, however, that you're using organic or pesticide-free citrus fruits for those you're going to zest.

FRESH HERBS
Because of my Persian background, fresh herbs and spices are a must for me. There is simply no substitute for fresh herbs: dill, mint, basil, cilantro, parsley—you name it. Store herbs refrigerated, wrapped in damp paper towels and in a sealed plastic bag.

CHEESE
Always grate your own cheese. Pre-shredded cheese often contains added chemicals and preservatives. Freshly grated cheese is tastier, more cost-effective, and even melts better.

ROTISSERIE CHICKEN
It's delicious, versatile, and a total bargain. A humble rotisserie chicken is better than nearly any chicken dish you can order at a restaurant.

FEARLESSNESS
While this so-called "ingredient" can't quite be measured, it's the most important one in my pantry. Command your kitchen!

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QUICK PICKLING

YIELD
2 pint-size jars

PREP TIME
10 minutes

COOK TIME
3 minutes

In a pickle? My quick-pickle method is here to help. Along with extending the shelf life of food, pickling totally transforms the flavor of any given ingredient. Cucumbers and red onions are traditional, though I love pickling all sorts of fruits and veggies ranging from green beans to grapes and strawberries.

1½ cups (360ml) **white vinegar**
1½ cups (360ml) **water**
3 tbsp **granulated sugar**
2 tbsp **kosher salt**
seasonings of choice (such as citrus zest, spices, herbs, etc.)
1lb (454g) **vegetables** or **fruits**

1 In a medium saucepan over medium-high heat, combine the vinegar, water, sugar, salt, and seasonings. Bring to a boil and cook until the sugar has dissolved. Remove the saucepan from the heat.

2 Pack the vegetables or fruits into pint-size Mason jars and add the hot brine to cover. Allow the contents of the jars to cool completely.

3 Secure the lids and refrigerate until the pickles reach your desired flavor profile. Some vegetables are ready immediately upon cooling (for example, thin and porous produce, such as onions), while others might take longer. Most pickled vegetables can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 2 months.

TIP Which seasonings and herbs to use depends heavily upon the chosen fruits or vegetables, although I particularly love adding peppercorns, mustard seeds, lemon zest, or fresh dill.

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CRISPY BRUSSELS SPROUTS

YIELD
4 servings

PREP TIME
15 minutes

COOK TIME
15 to 20 minutes

For a long time, I couldn't be fooled into eating Brussels sprouts. That is, until I discovered crispy Brussels. The secret to crispy Brussels sprouts is preheating an empty pan in the oven before adding the vegetables to cook. Without this step, the sprouts will overcook before they reach maximum crispiness.

1lb (454g) **Brussels sprouts**
6 tbsp **extra-virgin olive oil**
kosher salt and freshly ground **black pepper,** to taste
2 tbsp **balsamic vinegar glaze**
1 tbsp **honey**
1 **lime,** to grate for zest

1. Place an unlined baking sheet in a cold oven. Preheat the oven to 450°F (230°C).
2. While the oven heats, trim off the bottoms of the Brussels sprouts and slice them vertically in half. (Do not wash the Brussels sprouts. Peel off the very outer layer if you want, but washing is unnecessary and will prevent crispiness. Rough them up a little bit and peel back some of the leaves to get them extra crispy.)
3. Carefully remove the hot pan from the oven and add the oil. Moving quickly and carefully, arrange the sprouts cut side down in the pan, ensuring each one is placed on some oil and that they're evenly spaced to prevent overcrowding. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
4. Return the pan to the oven and roast for 15 to 20 minutes or until the sprouts are crispy and golden brown on the bottom.
5. Remove the pan from the oven and transfer the sprouts to plates or a serving bowl. Before serving, drizzle on the balsamic vinegar glaze and honey, and grate some lime zest over the top.

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