



Baking 101 Video Script- Baking Tips Part One

We've gotten a lot of requests for specific tips and ways to make baking just a little easier. So, since you asked for them, this video is full of tips and secrets that we use here in the Nestlé test kitchen, and at home, almost every day.

The most important thing to do when preparing to bake a new recipe is to read the entire recipe completely before you start it so you know what you're getting into! Make sure you have all the ingredients that the recipe calls for, and that you have enough time for preparation and baking before you need the dessert. I know this sounds very obvious but I cannot tell you how many times I missed a major part of a recipe because I was rushing!

Also, the first time you make a recipe, make it as it was written. Once you get it to turn out the first time and are familiar with it, then you can experiment with it.

Here's one of my favorite rules of the kitchen...don't use expired ingredients. Once I was making biscuits for a family gathering and I used baking powder that was 6 months past its expiration date. The biscuits didn't rise....it was really embarrassing.

One thing that could be helpful to you is measuring or prepping ingredients ahead of time. When we can, we measure out our ingredients, chop things in advance...anything we can do to make the actual recipe a little easier to prepare and assemble. Dry ingredients like flour, baking soda, salt or dry spices can be measured out the day or night before you need them and placed in a re-sealable bag or container. Since we do a lot of baking here (laugh!), we even chop nuts in advance and store them in the freezer, so that we always have some ready and don't have to stop in the middle of a recipe to chop them. That can take up valuable time!

Equipment

Lemon, orange or lime zest adds a bright flash of citrus to many dishes...but have you found it hard to get the zest off the fruit? Well, you could use a fine cheese grater or small traditional tool, like this one. A microplane grater is an inexpensive piece of kitchen equipment that's easy to use and won't get any of the bitter pith of a lemon into your recipe. While it looks like it belongs in a wood shop, this handy little grater can zest citrus, grate fresh nutmeg and probably a million other things around the kitchen. This is a tool that I cannot live without here at work or at home.

Parchment paper is another essential here in the test kitchen...it's non-stick, super-strong and can withstand high heat. It can save you a lot of scrubbing. Just put a piece down on the bottom of a baking sheet when you make cookies, and any mess will stick to paper, not the sheet. You can find small rolls of parchment paper in most grocery stores, but if you want large sheets or rolls, you'll have to look at baker supply stores.

Wax paper is just as handy. It's paper that's been coated with wax on both sides, making it nearly grease and moisture proof. You can line the bottom of a cake pan with a circle cut from wax paper, and the cake should come out easily when removing it from the pan. But don't use wax paper under cookies instead of parchment paper. Anywhere the wax paper isn't covered, the wax will smoke in the direct heat of the oven.

Both wax paper and parchment paper make good work surfaces when measuring flour. This is a tip I learned back in my high school home economics class. Scoop your flour into a measuring cup on top of your paper and then level it off with a knife. Any excess flour can be poured back into the container.

Believe it or not, a damp kitchen towel, or even a damp paper towel, can be used for more than just clean up. Placed underneath, they can keep your mixing bowls from spinning or cutting boards from moving...this tip not only makes mixing and cutting easier...it makes the kitchen safer!

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