How to Play with Your Food

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Lesson 1: A Food For All Occasions

"Good Morning! And Welcome to the first lesson of Introduction to Food Play with Professor Irene MacIntosh. Please call me Irene. First I'd like to ask you all to check your schedules to ensure this is where you are supposed to be. Remember, we switched classrooms with My Bunt Cake, Myself, which is now down the hall in room 302. Next let’s take a few minutes to get acquainted. As I come around to learn your names, I would like you to take the time to explore your new kitchen. You will each find it fully equipped with the tools you will need to complete this course. To the left of the classroom you will find the walk-in coolers with the fresh produce you will need. All dry ingredients and spices are located in the cabinets at the rear of the classroom.

"Great! Now that we are all acquainted, I’ll jump right in to the nitty-gritty. This three-week class is about challenging your skills and knowledge about food so that you may explore the realms of food play uninhibited. It is my personal philosophy, as well as that of this school, that rigidly learning recipes and committing ordered exacting skills to memory inhibits a true understanding of a student’s personal relationship with food. I will not directly teach you how to make anything specific. I will show you recipes, but I will expect original submissions. This is to guide you to an understanding of how various ingredients function in the dishes you enjoy most. It is to lead you to a full comprehension of your personal ability to create a delicious meal without relying on someone else's recipe. Each week there will be a challenge given during lecture time on Monday. Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday will be given to you for experimentation and play time in your kitchens. Friday will be presentation day. In the morning you will cook and create your submissions, in the afternoon they will be presented and discussed. Are there any questions? None? Great! Let’s get started!

“This first challenge may seem a bit difficult, but let’s remember, we are here to push the limits. One of the largest difficulties experienced by many new cooks is constructing a full, well-balanced meal. Typically, a new cook will learn how to make only one or two types of food well. Many limit themselves to pastas or soups. But what many don’t realize is how flexible that one simple dish can be. Adding sautéed vegetables to pasta or cream to soups can change it to a completely different meal. The idea behind this challenge is for you to experiment with procedural skills instead of learning the exact formula.

Here is an example from last year's class:
Perfect Pancakes to Please Yourself
Tired of plain old pancakes from a package? Use this recipe and the tips that follow to create a perfect pancake for any palate!

- 1 1/2 cups flour
- 2 1/2 - 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 cup white sugar
- 1 1/2 cups milk
- 1 egg
- 4 tablespoons butter, melted
- 2 teaspoons vanilla

Sift together flour, baking powder, salt, and sugar. Form a well in the center of the dry ingredients. Pour in milk, egg, and butter. Mix until smooth. Warm the milk slightly and have the egg at room temperature for perfectly lumpless pancakes. Drop by 1/4 cup onto a lightly oiled skillet or griddle.

Variety is the Spice of Life!
Try adding cinnamon or another 1/8 cup sugar and serve with cut fruit for brunch or a snack.

- Leave out the sugar and vanilla and add some herbs like rosemary or thyme—then wrap up some mashed potatoes with roast or corned beef inside. Top with horseradish and cheese then bake until cheese is toasted. Very Tasty!