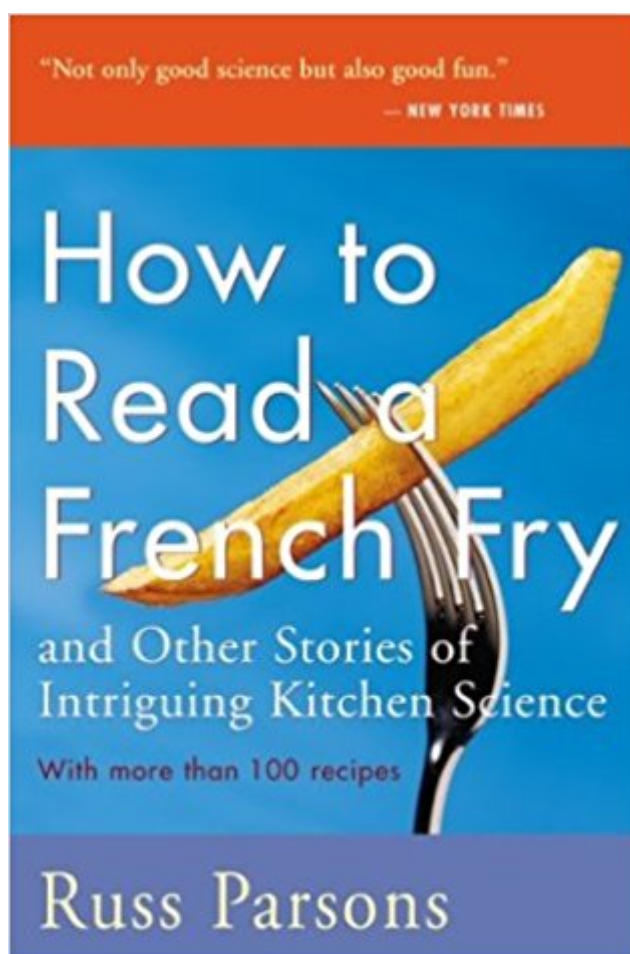


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# How To Read A French Fry: And Other Stories Of Intriguing Kitchen Science



## Synopsis

In a book widely hailed for its entertaining prose and provocative research, the award-winning Los Angeles Times food journalist Russ Parsons examines the science behind ordinary cooking processes. Along the way he dispenses hundreds of tips and the reasons behind them, from why you should always begin cooking beans in cold water, to why you should salt meat before sautéing it, to why it's a waste of time to cook a Vidalia onion. Filled with sharp-witted observations ("Frying has become synonymous with minimum-wage labor, yet hardly anyone will try it at home"), intriguing food trivia (fruit deprived of water just before harvest has superior flavor to fruit that is irrigated up to the last moment), and recipes (from Oven-Steamed Salmon with Cucumber Salad to Ultimate Strawberry Shortcake), *How to Read a French Fry* contains all the ingredients you need to become a better cook.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 9 and up

Grade Level: 4 and up

## Customer Reviews

In this unique book, Los Angeles Times food editor Parsons combines complex science (rendered accessible to lay readers), workable cooking techniques, and excellent recipes. Each chapter addresses a specific culinary-scientific process (e.g., deep-frying, the secret post-harvest life of fruits and vegetables), provides a list of rules to follow therein, then offers a range of recipes that use the technique in question. In a chapter titled "From a Pebble to a Pillow," for example, Parsons

explains the various ways in which grains, beans and other starches cook. He clears up myths about cooking beans and explains what makes an apple "mealy" (it's the pectin). The chapter ties up with some guidelines for preparing starch-thickened sauces, pasta, etc. Recipes include Smoky Cream of Corn Soup, a flour-thickened concoction, and a Gratin of Sweet Potatoes and Bourbon. The recipes are never gimmicky but are genuinely appealing, for instance Smoked Tuna Salad in Tomatoes and Lavender Fig Tart, and they are evidence of how a handful of techniques can turn out diverse results. Scientific information is handled in a light tone with plenty of examples. With his analyses of frying, roasting, and other processes, Parsons proves that the unexamined dish is far less rewarding than the meal we understand. (May 9)Forecasts: A truly valuable resource for the serious cook, with excellent recipes to boot, this deserves a wide audience, but its vague title may perplex potential readers. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Award-winning journalist and Los Angeles Times food editor Parsons offers this delightful book that is one part kitchen science, one part cookbook. Ever wonder why onions make people cry, or why some potatoes are better for boiling rather than baking? The author answers these questions and discusses other basic issues like cooking processes (e.g., frying, emulsifying, and roasting). Using the premise that an understanding of the basics enables people to become better cooks, the book uses science to explain process. It then demonstrates with more than 100 recipes, ranging from macaroni and cheese with green onions and ham to apricot-almond clafoutis. While the author's conversational tone simplifies complex scientific processes, it sometimes makes it difficult to glean information; thankfully, each section contains lists of cooking tips and advice for quick reference. Recommended for public and academic libraries. Pauline Baughman, Multnomah Cty. Lib., Portland, OR Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I heard an interview with the author on an NPR station and knew I had to have this book. If you have ever wondered why one ingredient just clumps up in your sauce & another works to thicken it and a bunch of other cooking questions, get this book. The writing is fun to read, and the information is invaluable to anyone who'd like to know why culinary ingredients combine and cook the way they do. He discusses everyday normal cooking, this isn't about esoteric or unusual foods, he de-mystifies a lot of very ordinary cooking methods. Has lots of recipes also, illustrating the information in each section. Must have for interested cooks.

I bought this book years ago, and now I buy copies for all my cooking or interested in cooking friends. I learned so much, and it's informed my explorations in the kitchen. Russ Parsons is a great writer; clear, interesting, and practical. I'm one of those people who usually cook without recipe books, and thanks to Russ, I've gotten better at what I can do in the kitchen. This is a great book for anyone interested in food and cooking.

This is an enjoyable book handling some complex food science with aplomb and in a light and enjoyable fashion. Frying, fruits, vegetables, and meats all get an interesting "popularized" survey of the science surrounding them and influencing food preparations, yet do not reduce you to groaning and trying to remember what you forgot in the college organic chemistry class. In short, the volume is long on practical-science based advice on techniques and subtleties. Each chapter contains numerous recipes to give one an opportunity for putting new knowledge of why something works into practice. I grew up on a farm, and thought I knew everything necessary about produce and fruits, but was I ever wrong. The writing is enjoyable and the recipes are practical. There are some very useful instructions on which fruits and vegetables should go in the refrigerator and which should never, which I did not know, but which are already making a difference in our kitchen habits and more satisfaction in our cooking. I found it odd it did not contain a great chapter on cheese and other dairy products, which was what I was looking for. Other than this curious omission, it's a very good "light reference book" (meaning you can enjoy reading it and skip around in it). **RECOMMENDED** for anyone who wants to understand how to prepare tastier and more nutritious dishes.

Fun reading for any cook or anyone who aspires to be. Kitchen science explained clearly and in an entertaining way. Also very good recipes.

Food science baby! Screw cookbooks get yourself this and CIA's textbooks on technique.

It set the standard for readable, understandable food science an average guy can relate to. I love this book.

If you seek a greater understanding of the science behind food preparation, this book is for you. It has interesting, practical information that can improve your cooking. I liked the intellectual

discussions more than the recipes, but it has something for everyone. If the detailed information is more than you want to know, you can just read the summary bullets at the end of the chapters and try the recipes.

Really a waste of money,,,sorry!

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