

**READING RECIPES**

**Anna** and **Bill** are excited. They are going to have a baby. They will need help with the baby. **Kay**, **Bill's** thirteen-year-old daughter, wants to help. She wants to learn to **cook**. **Bill** and **Kay** go to see **Ms. Lara**. **Ms. Lara** works at the **Cooperative Extension Service Office**. She taught the family how to read **food labels**. They ask her for help in reading **recipes**. **Ms. Lara** talks to them. She tells them what they need to know. The first step in **cooking** is to read the **recipe** from beginning to end. Reading the **recipe** helps to make sure you understand the steps. It also helps you know if you have enough time to prepare the **recipe** (including **cooking time**). You can also check to see if you have all the **ingredients** you need.

**PARTS OF A RECIPE**

**Ms. Lara** says **recipes** are similar in some ways. She doesn't mean they all make the same things. She means they have many of the same parts. Some parts are found in every **recipe**. Others are not. Sometimes the parts are in a different order.

**TITLE.** **Ms. Lara** explains that one part that all **recipes** share is a **title**. She says the **title** is like the **recipe's** name. The name usually includes the type of **food** or **beverage** the **recipe** makes such ***Onion Soup*** or ***Breakfast Egg Casserole***. **Kay** asks **Ms. Lara** about ***Snickerdoodles***, her family's favorite **cookie recipe**. **Ms. Lara** says that some **titles** don't tell the type of **food** or **beverage** the **recipe** makes. When this happens, **Ms. Lara** recommends looking at the list of **ingredients**. This helps you figure out what the **recipe**

makes. **Ms. Lara** also says that some **recipes** have pictures. These pictures show how the **food** or **beverage** should look after it has been **prepared**.

**INGREDIENTS.** **Ms. Lara** says all **recipes** list **ingredients**. These are the items needed to make the **recipe**. The **ingredients** are usually listed in the order they are used in the **recipe**.

**Ms. Lara** says some **ingredients** may be **optional**. She says this means they are not necessary for the **recipe**. They may add **flavor** or change the **recipe**.

**Ms. Lara** says most **recipes** list exactly how much of an **ingredient** is needed.

They use **measurements** like **one-half cup** or 1 **teaspoon**. Some **ingredients** don't have exact amounts. Instead, she says the **recipe** calls for adding the

**ingredient** “to **taste**.” This step allows the **cook** to add that **ingredient** to a point that **tastes** right. Be careful not to add too much **salt**.

**Kay** wonders how she will know what to do with the ingredients. **Ms. Lara**

explains that some **ingredients** include **directions** for **preparation**. For

instance, a **recipe** may call for “one **onion, chopped**” or “one **egg, beaten**”.

**Ms. Lara** shows **Kay** how the order of words that describe an **ingredient** also

affect its **preparation**. For instance, “1 **cup nuts, chopped**” is not the same as

“1 **cup chopped nuts**”. In the first case, **Kay** would **measure** the **nuts** and then

**chop** them. In the second, **Kay** would **chop** the **nuts** first and then **measure**

them. The total amount (or volume) of **nuts** in the first case would be less than

the amount in the second case.

**TIME.** Ms. Lara tells Kay that **time** means different things in different **recipes**.

For example, some **recipes** show **cooking time**. **Cooking time** is the amount of **time** needed in the **oven** or on the **stovetop**. Some **recipes** also show how much **time** is needed to **prepare** the **recipe**. This time may be called **prep time**, short for preparation time. **Ms. Lara** says **recipes** that don't need to be **cooked** or **baked** may not give a **time**.

When a **recipe** gives a **cooking time**, **Ms Lara** tells **Kay** to test for **doneness** at the end of the **time**. **Kay** should remove the **food** from the heat when the **food** is **done**.

**TEMPERATURE.** **Ms. Lara** says **food cooked** in an **oven** must be cooked at a certain **temperature**. The **oven's thermostat** is used to set the **temperature**.

**Ms. Lara** says **Bill** should test their **oven's temperature** using an **oven thermometer**. She says **oven temperature** is **measured** in **degrees** from 250 **degrees F** to over 550 **degrees F**. **Temperatures** are often given at the beginning of a **recipe** to give the **oven time** to **preheat**. This **preheat time** allows the **oven** to reach the proper **temperature**.

**Ms. Lara** tells **Kay** and **Bill** that **temperature** used to **cook** on a **stovetop** is not as exact as **temperature** in an **oven**. A **recipe** may recommend that the **food** be **cooked** on high, medium, or low. **Stovetop** knobs may be labeled with those words. Or, notches on the knob may show different general levels of heat.

Medium heat is in the middle of the dial. Low heat is the bottom 1/4 of the dial.

High heat is in the top 1/4 of the dial.

**MEASUREMENTS.** **Ms. Lara** says that experienced **cooks** sometime add a pinch of this or a bit of that to a **recipe**. She said that new **cooks** like **Kay** should stick to the **measurements** given in the **recipe**. Following the recipe is especially important when baking **cookies, cakes, bread, and candy**.

**Ms. Lara** says that accurate **measurements** are the key to a successful dish.

When a **recipe** calls for a **teaspoon** or **cup**, **Ms. Lara** says that this means actual **measuring utensils**, not spoons and cups used for eating and serving.

**Ms. Lara** says they need a special set of **measuring spoons**. These spoons can be used for dry and liquid **ingredients**. **Ms. Lara** describes how to **measure dry ingredients** such as **baking powder**. First, **Kay** should stir in the container. Then, **Kay** should use the **measuring spoon** to lightly scoop out of

the container. She should use a **knife** to level the **ingredient** with the top edge of the **measuring spoon**.

**Ms. Lara** recommends that the family get special **nested measuring cups** to use with dry **ingredients** such as **flour** or **sugar**. They also can be used to **measure chopped nuts, vegetables, or fruit**. These usually come in several sizes including **1/4 cup, 1/2 cup, and 1 cup** sizes. **Ms. Lara** warns **Kay** not to use the **nested measuring cups** to scoop dry **ingredients** like **flour, sugar, or powdered sugar** from the container. Instead, she says **Kay** should lightly stir in the storage container or bag with a large spoon. Then, **Kay** should lightly spoon the **ingredient** from the container into one of the **nested measuring cups**. **Ms. Lara** tells **Kay** not to shake the **nested measuring cup** or pack down the **ingredient**. Instead, **Kay** should use the back of a **knife** to level the **ingredient**

with the top edge of the **nested measuring cup**. To **measure brown sugar**, however, **Ms. Lara** tells **Kay** to pack or press the **brown sugar** into the **nested measuring cup**. She says **brown sugar** should keep the shape of the **nested measuring cup** when it is added to the other **ingredients**.

**Ms. Lara** suggests that **Bill** also buy glass or clear plastic **measuring cup** with a pouring spout for **measuring** liquids such as **milk** or **water**. These **measuring cups** often come in either **2-cup** or **4-cup** sizes. **Ms. Lara** says that liquids should be **measured** at eye level. She says this means that after pouring liquid into the **measuring cup**, **Kay** should place the **measuring cup** on the counter and bend over so her eyes are on the same level with the **measuring** marks. **Ms. Lara** tells **Kay** that the liquid should be right at the mark, not above or below.

When **measuring ingredients**, **Ms. Lara** warns **Kay** not to hold the **measuring**

**cup** or **measuring spoon** over the bowl or pan used for the **recipe**. **Ingredients**

such as **salt** and liquids spill easily. Too much of an **ingredient** could spoil the

**recipe**. **Kay** should pour over the sink or another dish. She should add the

**measured** amount to the bowl or pan.

**Ms. Lara** notes that **measurements** are often **abbreviated** in the **ingredients**

list. She gives **Kay** a list of common **abbreviations** used in **cooking**.

**COOKING ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>WORD</b>	<b>ABBREVIATION</b>
<b>tablespoon</b>	<b>T or tbsp</b>
<b>teaspoon</b>	<b>t or tsp</b>
<b>ounce</b>	<b>oz</b>
<b>pound</b>	<b>lb</b>
<b>cup</b>	<b>C or c</b>
<b>pint</b>	<b>pt</b>
<b>quart</b>	<b>qt</b>
<b>gallon</b>	<b>gal</b>

**DIRECTIONS.** Ms. Lara tells **Bill** and **Kay** that the body of the **recipe** usually consists of sentences. These sentences explain how to combine, heat, or otherwise **prepare** the **ingredients**. These are the steps **Kay** needs to follow to make the **recipe**. Ms. Lara said that as a beginning **cook**, **Kay** should follow the **directions** as closely as possible. After **Kay** is familiar with a **recipe**, she can try changing it.

**STEPS TO READING A RECIPE**

**Ms. Lara** tells **Kay** and **Bill** that reading a **recipe** is not the same as reading other materials. She says that the first step is to read the **recipe** completely through. Next, **Ms. Lara** tells **Kay** to review the **ingredients**. **Kay** should think about how the main **ingredients** contribute to **healthful** eating for the family.

**Ms. Lara** said that some **recipes** show **servings**. This number is the number of people that the **recipe** will feed. **Ms. Lara** reminds **Kay** that not all **serving** sizes are the same. She advises **Kay** to look at the **serving** sizes in terms of those listed on **MyPyramid**. This information should help **Kay** figure out how much the **recipe** will actually provide. Now **Kay** will know how many people the **recipe** will really serve.

**Kay** also should think about the **staples** usually found in the kitchen. She should check to be sure she has enough of everything the **recipe** requires. If any **ingredient** is missing from the **refrigerator**, **shelf**, or **freezer**, **Kay** should make a **grocery** list. **Kay** also should make sure she has the correct kitchen **utensils** to **prepare** the **recipe**. Next, **Ms. Lara** suggests that **Kay** think through the **directions**. **Kay** should be sure she knows what each term means. Then she can **prepare** the **recipe** correctly.

**Ms. Lara** reminds **Kay** to see if the **recipe** includes **time** for **preparation** or **cooking**. This tip will help **Kay** know if she has enough **time** to **prepare** the **recipe**. She told **Kay** to keep track of the **time** it takes her to **prepare** different **foods**. As she gains experience, she can use this information to **estimate** the **time** she needs.

When **Kay** is ready to **prepare** the **recipe**, she should gather all the **ingredients**, pots, pans, bowls, and **utensils** she needs for the **recipe**. Next, she should recheck all the steps and **ingredients**.

Now **Kay** knows how to read **recipes**. She can start helping the family **prepare** **healthful meals**. She will learn skills that she will use when she has a family of her own.

Here is a **recipe** that Kay can **prepare** for the family. She can read the number of **servings** to see that the **recipe** makes enough for two **meals**.

## Baked Meatballs

4 servings, about 3 meatballs each, plus 4 servings for another meal.

Onions, minced	$\frac{1}{2}$ C
Vegetable oil	1 T
Lean ground beef	2 lbs
Eggs	2
Bread crumbs	$\frac{1}{2}$ C
Whole milk	$\frac{1}{2}$ C
Salt	$\frac{1}{8}$ tsp
Pepper	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp
Onion powder	2 tsp
Garlic powder	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp

PREPARATION TIME: 15 MINUTES

COOKING TIME: 10 TO 12 MINUTES

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Grease baking sheet lightly with oil.
2. Add 1 tablespoon oil and onions to small skillet. Cook over medium heat, until tender, about 3 minutes.
3. Mix remaining ingredients together in bowl; add onions. Mix until blended, using a large serving spoon.
4. Shape beef mixture into 1- to 2-inch meatballs; place on baking sheet.
5. Bake until thoroughly cooked, about 10 to 12 minutes.

*Note: Serve with spaghetti sauce and spaghetti.*