



MASTERCLASS

**THOMAS KELLER**

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TEACHES COOKING TECHNIQUES

# A LETTER FROM **THOMAS KELLER**

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Welcome to my MasterClass.

I'm honored to be here with you.

It's an opportunity to share some of the knowledge and experience that so many others have shared with me throughout the years.

Like anyone who ever learned to cook, I started from scratch. My first job was as a dishwasher in a Florida restaurant that my mother managed. It wasn't glamorous work but it taught me the importance of discipline and repetition, and of treating even the smallest details with the greatest care. Those lessons became the grounding principles of my work. They still are today.

As my career progressed, and I improved as a cook, I was also guided by invaluable mentors, their numbers too many and their influence too profound for me to possibly do full justice to them here. One small way for me to give back is to try serve as a mentor, too.

Cooking, after all, is about sharing. Anytime we prepare food, we aren't just making a meal. We're nurturing each other and making memories that are best enjoyed with others.

In that way, cooking is deeply personal, too. We put something of ourselves into everything we make.

As we move through this MasterClass, keep that in mind. The concepts we discuss are meant to provide you with a foundation. But I encourage you make them your own. Taste as you go. Adjust to your preferences. Practice your technique and embrace repetition.

Embrace the learning process. Enjoy the experience. Above all, have some fun!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TK', with a large, sweeping flourish above it.

## ABOUT

# THOMAS KELLER

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Thomas Keller's name is synonymous with quality and high standards. The chef and proprietor of The French Laundry, in Napa Valley, and Per Se, in New York, among other restaurants, he is the first and only American-born chef to hold multiple three-star ratings from the prestigious Michelin Guide, as well as the first American male chef to be designated a Chevalier of the French Legion of Honor, the highest decoration in France.

Chef Keller has earned countless accolades, including The Culinary Institute of America's Chef of the Year award and the James Beard Foundation's Outstanding Chef and Outstanding Restaurateur awards. In 2001, *Time* magazine named him America's best chef. In 2017, Chef Keller led a team from the United States to its first-ever gold medal in the Bocuse d'Or, a prestigious biannual competition that is regarded as the Olympics of the culinary world.



Chef Keller began his culinary career in his teens as a dishwasher in the Palm Beach restaurant managed by his mother. In 1983, he moved to France, where he apprenticed in several Michelin-starred houses. He opened his first restaurant, Raketel, in New York City in 1986, before relocating to California to serve as executive chef at the Checkers Hotel in Los Angeles. In 1994, Chef Keller took ownership of The French Laundry in Yountville, and soon brought it to national and worldwide acclaim.

Chef Keller's French bistro, Bouchon, debuted in 1998, followed by Bouchon Bakery five years later. Both are within walking distance of The French Laundry. Since then, Keller has opened outposts of Bouchon and Bouchon Bakery in New York City and Las Vegas. Another of his restaurants is family-style Ad Hoc, also in Yountville. Chef Keller is the author of five cookbooks, with more than one million copies in circulation.



Known for his leadership, Chef Keller has assembled a team that shares his philosophy in his restaurants, enabling him also to concentrate on interests outside the kitchen, including his Napa Valley wine label, Modicum, as well as a Yountville-based magazine, *Finesse*, and retail outpost of the same name. He has embarked on several innovative partnerships. In his newest collaboration, Chef Keller partnered with Armando Manni, an acclaimed olive oil producer, to develop a line of chocolates, K+M Extravirgin Chocolate, that is revolutionizing bean-to-bar chocolate production with its proprietary method of boosting antioxidant levels.

Chef Keller also cofounded Cup4Cup, a line of gluten-free flour blends and mixes that substitutes for all-purpose flour in home recipes. Chef Keller has a longstanding collaboration with All-Clad Metalcrafters, and has designed and consulted on various cookware lines for the company, including a unique All-Clad TK collection. Together with restaurant designer Adam D. Tihany, he created K+T, a collection of silver hardware and cocktail ware for Christofle silversmiths. Chef Keller's collaboration with Raynaud and design firm Level has led to a sophisticated collection of white porcelain dinnerware called Hommage. Chef Keller also consulted on the films *Spanglish* and *Ratatouille*, the latter winning in the 2007 Best Animated Feature Film category at both the Golden Globes and the Academy Awards.



## INTRODUCTION

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### MASTERCLASS COMMUNITY

Throughout, we'll encourage you to discuss elements of Chef Keller's lessons with your classmates in [The Hub](#).

You can also connect with your peers in the discussion section beneath each lesson video.

### YOUR FIRST ASSIGNMENT

Utilize [The Hub](#) and introduce yourself to your peers. Let them know your experience level, cooking styles you're most familiar with, and what you hope to learn from Chef Keller.

## ABOUT THIS WORKBOOK

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The MasterClass team has created this workbook as a supplement to Chef Keller's class. Each chapter is supported with a review, opportunities to take your learning further, and assignments.

Throughout this workbook, we've referenced recipes from Chef Keller's cookbooks, so that you can apply the techniques that you learn to specific dishes.

- *The French Laundry Cookbook*, Thomas Keller, 1999.
- *Bouchon*, Thomas Keller, 2004.
- *Ad Hoc at Home*, Thomas Keller, 2009.
- *Bouchon Bakery*, Thomas Keller, 2012.

We suggest that you obtain copies of these cookbooks, either from your local library or via purchase. If you choose to purchase, you can use MasterClass's exclusive promo code to receive a 30% discount. Go to [www.workman.com](http://www.workman.com) and use the code KellerMasterClass at checkout.



## THE IMPORTANCE OF MISE EN PLACE

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“Mise en place” means that you have everything in place prior to preparing a recipe. Chef Keller always has his tools, essential ingredients, and any pre-preparation necessary prior to initiating the recipe. As such, we’ve included a “mise en place” sidebar in each cooking chapter, which lists the ingredients and equipment you need in your work space to practice the technique you see on screen.

For Chef Keller, mise en place is about more than setting up your cooking space according to a checklist. It’s a reflection of his core philosophies as a chef. Preparation is essential to success in the kitchen. Being prepared before you begin a recipe allows you to have space to learn as you cook. It allows you to handle the unexpected.

Additionally, there are measurements provided in the mise en place and the cooking methods, but Chef Keller specifies that they should be used only as a starting point. As you build your foundation and practice the techniques he teaches you here, you should taste your food, and feel free to follow your own preferences for texture and flavor to create versions of these dishes that you’ll love.

1.

## INTRODUCTION

*“It is the technique. It’s the skills that you acquire through practice that’ll give you the opportunity or give you the ability to really to execute recipes to perfection.”*  
—Chef Thomas Keller

### SUBCHAPTERS

- The Equation of Cooking
- Master the Techniques
- Practice, Practice, Practice

### CHAPTER REVIEW

Great cooking depends on quality ingredients and proper execution. Start with the finest ingredients available, and be prepared to spend a little extra money on them. This is nourishment for our bodies; better quality is worth the price. Support the fishermen, farmers, gardeners, and foragers who provide the highest quality products, no matter where they are. Buying local and organic is an admirable goal, but don’t let geography or labels restrict you. You want the best-tasting ingredients you can find, and those ingredients might not necessarily be organic and they might not come from nearby. Once you have great ingredients, it’s your job to elevate them. That comes down to execution, and execution is about skills and tools. Familiarize yourself with all your kitchen tools, make sure they’re in good working order, and practice using them. When you’re done practicing, practice some more. The better your technique, the more delicious your results will be.



## 2.

# KITCHEN SETUP: ESSENTIAL TOOLS

*“I really have an aversion to useless tools. We tend to clutter our drawers with things that we don’t need. Gadgets—we feel we need to have them.”*

—Chef Thomas Keller

### SUBCHAPTERS

- Cutting Boards
- Knives
- Storing and Cleaning Knives
- Other Essential Tools
- Tools of Refinement
- Useless Tools

### CHAPTER REVIEW

In his overview of the tools you’ll be using throughout this class, Chef Keller introduces his kitchen essentials while delving into important details about them, covering such topics as the difference between wooden and composite cutting boards, the proper handling and care of knives, and more. He also discusses tools of refinement, like chinois, mandolines, and microplanes, which help with the subtleties and finishing touches of a dish. Chef Keller recommends sticking to essential and refining tools, and avoiding gadgets that only do one job. Another crucial point in this chapter is safety: you’re dealing with sharp implements and heat, so go about your work with mindfulness, awareness, and care.

### LEARN MORE

- Assess your cutting boards by material using this chart. Determine what kind of cutting board fits your needs and budget; perhaps a combination of two or just one will work. Replace any cutting boards that are not serving you well.

Material	Advantages	Disadvantages
Wood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Renewable resource</li><li>• Structurally sound</li><li>• Durable</li><li>• Knife friendly due to its soft nature</li><li>• Aesthetically pleasing (for display presentation)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Heavy</li><li>• Expensive</li><li>• Stains</li><li>• Requires more care and maintenance</li><li>• Absorbs unwanted bacteria and liquids (not recommended for raw protein)</li></ul>
Plastic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Durable</li><li>• Easy to clean</li><li>• Nonporous</li><li>• Inexpensive</li><li>• Versatile</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Light (slides around)</li><li>• Visually less appealing</li><li>• Sharp knives cause damage</li></ul>
Rubber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Self-healing</li><li>• Easier on knife blades</li><li>• Antimicrobial</li><li>• Will not crack, swell, splinter, or chip</li><li>• Will not absorb liquids or odors</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Warps with heat</li><li>• Expensive</li></ul>

2.

## KITCHEN SETUP: ESSENTIAL TOOLS

[LEARN MORE CONT.](#)

- Assess your kitchen tools and let go of anything that qualifies as a “gadget” or as a one-purpose tool to make space for Chef Keller’s essentials.

### ASSIGNMENT

Chef Keller explains that a honing steel is not a sharpener and that it is only meant to maintain the shape of a sharp blade. To prepare for heavy use throughout this class, gather your essential knives and have them sharpened, or take a class at a local knife shop to learn how to sharpen your knives at home.

Take stock of your essential and refining tools. Below are the essential and refining tools that Chef Keller references in this chapter and uses throughout the class.

- Some essential tools:
  - Cutting board
  - Scale
  - 10½-inch slicer
  - French knife (10-inch chef’s knife)
  - Serrated bread knife
  - Utility knife
  - Paring knife
  - Honing steel
  - Kitchen shears
  - Butcher’s twine
  - Peeler
  - Palette knife (also called a straight cake spatula)
  - Spatula
  - Plating spoons (variety of sizes for different applications)
  - Sauce whisk (variety of sizes)
  - Timer
- Some tools of refinement:
  - Drum sieve (also called a tamis)
  - Slotted fish spatula
  - Microplane
  - Offset palette knife (small and large)
  - Pastry brush
  - Tweezers
  - Small kitchen scissors
  - Chinois
  - Mandoline
  - Digital gram scale

### 3.

## KITCHEN SETUP: ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS

*“Let’s talk a little about some of the ingredients that we use to finish our recipes or our dishes with—things that enhance not only from a flavor point of view, but from a textural point of view.”*

—Chef Thomas Keller

### SUBCHAPTERS

- Essential Finishing Ingredients

### CHAPTER REVIEW

Salt and acid are essential in elevating flavors in food. Oil is used in different ways—as cooking medium (sautéing, frying, etc.), a functional ingredient (adding oil to mayonnaise for an emulsion), and a flavoring (extra virgin olive oil or nut oil for finishing). But each category is a world unto itself. Different kinds of salts have different tastes and textures. Oils vary in their flavor and their smoke point. Not all acids deliver the same bite. In this guide to proper seasoning, Chef Keller discusses key distinctions between utility salts and finishing salts, cooking oils and seasoning oils, distilled white vinegar and white wine vinegar, citrus juice, and more. He also offers guidelines for how and when to use each of these ingredients, with tips on timing and technique that will help you elevate your finished dish.

### LEARN MORE

- Chef Keller’s position on the usage of pepper has evolved, and he now advocates adding pepper only when the flavor of pepper is actually desired. He also recommends adding it only at the finishing stage, so as not to diminish the flavor of pepper with high heat.
- Purchase squeeze bottles for your cooking oils and vinegars. Make sure to label each.

## 3.

## KITCHEN SETUP: ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS

[LEARN MORE CONT.](#)

- For high heat, Chef Keller uses a plant-based oil with a high smoke point and a neutral flavor (e.g., grapeseed). Your budget and preferences will dictate your choice of oil. Use this chart comparing the smoke point of oils as a reference.

Type of Fat	Smoke Point		Neutral?
Safflower Oil	510°F	256°C	Yes
Rice Bran Oil	490°F	260°C	Yes
Light/Refined Olive Oil	465°F	240°C	Yes
Olive Pomace Oil	460°F	238°C	Yes
Soybean Oil	450°F	230°C	Yes
Peanut Oil	450°F	230°C	Yes
Clarified Butter	450°F	230°C	No
Corn Oil	450°F	230°C	Yes
Sunflower Oil	440°F	225°C	Yes
Vegetable Oil	400–450°F	205–230°C	Yes
Beef Tallow	400°F	205°C	No
Canola Oil	400°F	205°C	Yes
Grapeseed Oil	390°F	195°C	Yes
Pork Lard	370°F	185°C	No
Avocado Oil	375–400°F	190–205°C	No
Chicken Fat (Schmaltz)	375°F	190°C	No
Duck Fat	375°F	190°C	No
Vegetable Shortening	360°F	180°C	Yes
Sesame Oil	350–410°F	175–210°C	No
Butter	350°F	175°C	No
Coconut Oil	350°F	175°C	No
Extra Virgin Olive Oil	325–375°F	165–190°C	No

3.

## KITCHEN SETUP: ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS

### ASSIGNMENTS

- Begin a tasting notebook that you will use throughout the class. For your first entry, taste-test different utility salts such as kosher salt, iodized table salt, and various granulated salts, as well as finishing salts such as Maldon, fleur de sel (both white and gris), Himalayan pink salt, and Hawaiian black salt. There are literally dozens of salts from around the world to choose from, depending on your budget and their availability. Take notes on the flavor and texture of each.
- Taste-test various vinegars, including champagne, white wine, red wine, sherry, and distilled vinegars.
- Chef Keller explains that the olives in different finishing olive oils are pressed at different stages. Some oils made from still-green olives can be spicy and peppery whereas oils from more mature olives can be sweeter. Taste-test various olive oils and take notes on their flavor profiles.
- Compare two high-heat vegetable oils by executing the same recipe with two different oils. Make Chef Keller's recipe for Sofritto on page 263 of *Ad Hoc at Home*, using canola oil for one batch and extra virgin olive oil for the other. Record the differences in flavor in your tasting notebook.

## 4.

# KITCHEN SETUP: COOKWARE

*“Execution is defined by your skill, your equipment, and your cookware.”*

—Chef Thomas Keller

### SUBCHAPTERS

- The Universal Lid
- Bonded Cookware

### CHAPTER REVIEW

What Chef Keller’s mother called “pots and pans” are known collectively today as “cookware.” That sounds more sophisticated, and it is. A basic cookware set includes a sauté pan, a saucier, a saucepot, a rondeau, a sautoir, and a stockpot. You can always add more pieces for specific techniques but this basic setup will provide you with great range. As with ingredients, the better quality your cookware, the better your results will be. If you can’t get a complete set right away, invest in quality pieces over time. Fine cookware is a marriage of form and function, each piece designed to serve a specific purpose. Chef Keller discusses the pieces in a basic cookware set while discussing the characteristics of different materials and designs.

Bonded cookware is made by bonding highly conductive metals together, in order to help increase conductivity. This increased exchange of heat helps cook your ingredients more quickly and thoroughly. Bonded cookware also helps recover temperatures quickly. When you introduce new ingredients to the cookware, the temperature drops, but quality cookware helps conduct the heat to allow it to recover to the correct heat quickly.

Chef Keller prefers to eliminate clutter by using a universal lid—one lid that covers all of your cookware—with a handle so you can hang it. The French have used this tool for generations. Using one lid helps you eliminate confusion and be more sustainable.

### LEARN MORE

- Throughout the class, you’ll see Chef Keller cooking on a gas range, which has advantages like instant, consistent heat, and a visible flame that allows you to make quick adjustments. If you are cooking on an electric range at home, pay special attention to how your cooktop conducts heat and how it responds to adjustments in temperature. If you are cooking using induction burners, be sure you have the compatible cookware. Most cookware manufacturers will indicate induction compatibility, but as a general rule, induction cookware must contain—full or in part—ferrous metal such as steel or iron. Some stainless steel alloys that are nonmagnetic will not work on induction. Pure aluminum will not at all.

## 4.

# KITCHEN SETUP: COOKWARE

## LEARN MORE

- Assess your cookware by material using this chart, and familiarize yourself with the proper usage for each type of cookware. There are also precious metal-plated cookware but these should be reserved for presentation pieces only.

Uses	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Pure Aluminum</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blanching</li> <li>Boiling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lightweight</li> <li>Affordable</li> <li>Scratch-resistant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not work on induction cooktops</li> </ul>
<b>Copper/ Copper Core (TK Line)</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simmering</li> <li>Braising</li> <li>Roasting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Best heat conductor to heat food evenly</li> <li>Adjusts to temperature changes quickly and does not require much preheating</li> <li>Copper cookware is by far the most visually appealing, when properly maintained</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very expensive</li> <li>Does not work on induction cooktops</li> <li>Requires regular polishing to maintain shine and appearance</li> </ul>
<b>Stainless Steel (All-Clad d5)</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sautéing and overall cooking</li> <li>High-heat items</li> <li>Frying</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nonreactive</li> <li>Durable</li> <li>Conducts heat well and evenly</li> <li>Less expensive than other options</li> <li>Dishwasher-safe</li> <li>Proven in restaurants consistently everyday</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires more fat to be applied when cooking</li> <li>Less forgiving than other surfaces (e.g., nonstick or cast iron)</li> </ul>
<b>Cast Iron</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open-fire cooking and baking</li> <li>One-pot cooking</li> <li>Frying</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Once hot, it stays hot, which is important when searing meats</li> <li>Extremely versatile; can be used to cook in any medium, from stovetop to open fire</li> <li>Can use any type of utensil; metal utensils will not scrape the surface</li> <li>Durable and inexpensive</li> <li>Nonstick if seasoned properly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heavy</li> <li>Requires time to preheat in an oven prior to use</li> <li>Can rust, chip, and crack easily if not properly cared for</li> <li>Reactive - Does not take well to acidic foods</li> <li>Requires effort to clean and maintain</li> </ul>
<b>Nonstick (All-Clad NS1 nonstick line)</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health-conscious cooking</li> <li>Eggs and delicate foods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allows cooking with less fat</li> <li>Easy clean up</li> <li>Nonreactive and nonporous</li> <li>Delicate foods such as fish or eggs will not stick to the pan or break apart</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must use plastic (e.g., nylon, silicone) or wooden utensils, as metal utensils will scratch the nonstick coating</li> <li>Cannot withstand super high heat</li> <li>Shorter lifespan due to nonstick coating</li> <li>May cause health risks if breakdown of coating occurs</li> </ul>

4.

## **KITCHEN SETUP: COOKWARE**

### ASSIGNMENT

- Take inventory of the cookware you already have and do what you can to build out the basics. If it's possible for you, we recommend that you upgrade to a minimal set of universal lids, which fit pots and pans of all sizes. This cookware will help you keep your kitchen organized and clutter-free.

## 5.

# SOURCING INGREDIENTS

*“Work with your gardeners, your suppliers, your grocery stores, to encourage them to continue to bring you fresher ingredients—ingredients where the sourcing is understood.”*  
—Chef Thomas Keller

### SUBCHAPTERS

- Ask Where Your Ingredients Come From
- Organic
- Sustainability
- Farm-to-Table
- Support Quality Producers

### CHAPTER REVIEW

Chef Keller stresses the importance of knowing where your ingredients come from and understanding the complexities of common labels used in markets and restaurants. “Local” and “organic” are culinary buzzwords, but what exactly do they mean? For Chef Keller, “local” is not about geography. It’s about quality. He believes in supporting the producers and purveyors who use best practices, regardless of location. Sometimes superior ingredients come from farther away. They can be more sustainable and taste better than an ingredient produced nearby. Organic farming is a fairly recent movement, beginning after World War II. Prior to the Industrial Revolution, all farming was organic. Now, in the United States, farms must be certified to use “organic” labeling. Many small farms choose not to go through the complicated and expensive process of applying for organic certification. Chef Keller recommends talking to purveyors at farmers’ market stands, getting to know them, and deciding if their practices are consistent with your ideas about sourcing.

Sustainability means using farming practices that are best for the land, the people who work it, and the surrounding community. One of Chef Keller’s seafood sources is on Deer Isle, Maine, which is across the country from The French Laundry. That’s not “local” in the geographic sense. But by supporting that town’s fishing industry, Chef Keller is also supporting their sustainable fishing practices and contributing to their local economy.

Farm-to-table has become a restaurant tagline, but what chefs in those restaurants are trying to convey is that they are sourcing sustainable ingredients, which chefs have been doing for hundreds of years. The phrase is relatively new but the practice isn’t. Regardless of what you call it, by sourcing sustainable ingredients, you can support farmers, gardeners, fishermen, and foragers who are doing right by the land and their communities.

5.

## SOURCING INGREDIENTS

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### LEARN MORE

- Read more about the complexity of [organic labeling](#) and how sustainable, seasonal, and local can relate to that label.
- Sustainable agriculture was addressed by congress in the 1990 Farm Bill. Read an in-depth definition of sustainable farming [here](#).

### ASSIGNMENT

- Go to your local farmers' market and talk to purveyors at three different stands that do not have a certified organic sign. Ask each about their farming practices, their favorite crops to grow, and the history of the farm. Take notes on the producers you meet and the best products and practices at each stand. Ask for recommendations from people at your favorite stands on how to source other quality ingredients they might not carry.

## 6.

# VEGETABLES: AN INTRODUCTION

*“Vegetables have individual seasons. A fava bean [season], for example, may be only three or four weeks; asparagus, five or six weeks. Even though we see some of these vegetables in our markets for longer, the most optimum time for those vegetables are when they’re young. And we love to work with those vegetables when they bring the most flavor to our palates.”*

—Chef Thomas Keller

## CHAPTER REVIEW

Chef Keller is often asked which ingredients he enjoys working with the most. While he loves them all, he finds vegetables at their seasonal peak particularly inspiring. Working with vegetables in this window allows us to maximize their flavors, but only if we treat those vegetables right. Throughout these vegetable chapters, Chef Keller will cover blanching, braising, glazing, roasting, and baking—each a technique for drawing out different flavors and textures. He’ll also give a primer on preservation techniques such as pickling and confit that will help you build a well-stocked larder, so you can enjoy fresh flavors even when a vegetable is not in season.

Chef Keller advises patience and precision. Don’t take any step in these processes for granted, no matter how simple they may seem, and practice them repeatedly. If you make a mistake, start over and do it until you get it right.

## LEARN MORE

- Here is a [seasonality chart](#) for produce in the region of Northern California where Chef Keller lives and runs The French Laundry, among other restaurants. Find a chart for your region and add it to your notebook. Familiarize yourself with which vegetables reach their peak in each of the seasons and ask around at your farmers’ market to learn about the individual seasons of vegetables in your growing region.



7.

## **BIG-POT BLANCHING: ASPARAGUS**

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*“We’re going to bring that beautiful  
green pigment to the surface.”*

—Chef Thomas Keller

## 7.

# BIG-POT BLANCHING: ASPARAGUS

## CHAPTER REVIEW

### MISE EN PLACE

#### Ingredient

- 1 pound asparagus
- Kosher salt

#### Equipment

- Cutting board
- Chef's knife
- Paring knife
- Loaf pan
- Parchment for trim
- Abrasive green scrub pad
- Peeler
- Butcher's twine
- Kitchen shears
- 12-quart stockpot
- Mesh skimmer
- Serving plate
- Ice bath

Blanching vegetables involves cooking them quickly in generously salted water to draw out their vibrant flavors and colors. The dull color you often see in raw green vegetables occurs because of the layer of gas that exists between the pigment and the skin. Blanching them releases that gas, allowing the pigment to reach the surface of the vegetable. If you overcook a vegetable, its acids and enzymes escape, and the pigment seeps into the water. This process dulls the color.

When blanching, your vegetables can go from bright to dull and overcooked very quickly, so the challenge is to cook the vegetables without losing color. These important steps will help you get this right: use a large quantity of water, and use a generous amount of salt (about a cup per gallon of water). If you are planning on serving the vegetables later, have an ice bath ready to top the vegetables from cooking and preserve its vibrant color.

Texture is a matter of personal preference. Chef Keller likes his blanched green vegetables with slight resistance to the tooth. To prepare vegetables for blanching, make sure you have a good L'Econome (French peeler), a Swiss peeler, or an abrasive green scrub pad, and read the blanching overview before you begin.

### METHOD

To trim, use a paring knife to peel off the spiky tips along the stalk of the asparagus, along with the woodiest leaves just below the tip. You also want to snap off the most fibrous bottom section of the spear. To do this, use one hand to hold the spear gently in the center of the stem and the other hand at the base and snap. It should break off cleanly where the tough, fibrous section meets the tender part of the spear. It is important to elevate the asparagus off the table while peeling or scrubbing by using a loaf pan. This preserves the integrity of the asparagus by avoiding unnecessary bending or breaking.

Determine whether to use a peeler or an abrasive green scrub pad on the asparagus. A green scrub pad is best used on asparagus with a narrow diameter, as this will prevent excess removal of the asparagus.

7.

## **BIG-POT BLANCHING: ASPARAGUS**

Fill the stockpot with water to within a few inches of the top. You want to use a generous amount so that the water retains its heat when you add the vegetables. Bundle and tie 6 to 7 asparagus (depending on the size); asparagus tips are fragile, and bundling helps protect them from damage during blanching. Add salt to the boiling water and take a minute to let it return to a boil. Make sure you add enough salt to the water—Chef Keller says your water should taste as salty as seawater. Place asparagus bundles in boiling water. Add only the amount of asparagus bundles to maintain the rapid boil. The blanching process may require several batches. After 2½ minutes, use the tip of a paring knife to check for doneness. If necessary, continue cooking until tender.

If you'll be working with the asparagus further—grilling it, for example, or preparing a sauce for it—shock in the ice bath to stop the cooking process and cool it enough for you to work with. If you're serving the asparagus immediately, simply cut away the twine and arrange the asparagus spears on a platter. Garnish as desired.

### LEARN MORE

- Read about blanching and a few recipes that apply the technique in pages 58–64 of *The French Laundry Cookbook*.

### ASSIGNMENTS

- After chilling your asparagus, plate it, and finish with olive oil and salt or with Chef Keller's suggestion of a simple vinaigrette. [Here](#) is his recipe for a vinaigrette he used at his bistro, Bouchon.
- Determine the texture you prefer for your asparagus. In your notebook, record the size of the stalks and number in your bundles since boiling time will vary accordingly. Build a chart to record the doneness of the asparagus after a 2-minute, 3-minute, and 4-minute blanch. Chef Keller recommends tasting throughout the process to discover your preferences.
- As you blanch other vegetables throughout your cooking, add to this section of your notebook by recording your preferred doneness for each vegetable in order to build yourself a set of customized guidelines for timing.



8.

## **GLAZING: CARROTS**

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*“We use all of our senses when we cook, certainly looking and appreciating the quality of what’s happening here in this pan—the smell, the aroma of beautiful cooking carrots, that sweetness on the nose.”*

—Chef Thomas Keller

## GLAZING: CARROTS

### CHAPTER REVIEW

#### MISE EN PLACE

##### Ingredients

- 454 grams (1 pound) sweet or fresh garden carrots, peeled, oblique cut
- 5 grams (approximately 1 teaspoon) room temperature butter
- 5 grams sugar (to start)
- water (enough to cover carrots)
- 2 drops white wine vinegar
- Small handful parsley, chopped (for garnish)
- Kosher salt

##### Equipment

- Cutting board
- Chef's knife
- Peeler or scrub pad
- 5-quart saucepot
- Serving bowl

Chef Keller recalls the syrupy glazed carrots of his childhood and assures us that these will not be those carrots. This technique will instead highlight the natural sweetness of the carrots, with only a small amount of added sugar. Glazing can be a challenging technique, even for professional cooks, but practice and experience will help you achieve the perfect glaze, which is a tight and shiny emulsion. One common mistake is to let the carrots cook beyond glazing and into caramelization (unless that is your explicit intention). Chef Keller shows you how to avoid that. He also demonstrates how to recover the dish quickly and recapture your glaze if your carrots begin to caramelize.

#### METHOD

Add carrots to the pan in a single layer and swirl the pan around to create an even amount of space between them. Add sugar—start with about 5 grams (approximately 1 teaspoon)—and enough water to barely cover carrots. Add butter and turn on the flame to high heat. Move the pan around throughout cooking to keep carrots evenly spaced so that each is individually glazed. Pay attention to aromas and sounds. The sound of the boiling water at the beginning of the process will become more intense. It will turn to a crackle as the water evaporates and the glaze reduces. When reduction is nearly complete, check for doneness. Chef Keller likes root vegetables to have very little resistance to the tooth without being mushy. If the vegetables are still too firm, you may add slightly more water and cook until the desired texture is achieved. Turn down the heat to medium and cook until finished. You're looking for the butter to emulsify and the liquid to form a shiny glaze. Cooking too much will result in oiliness. Cooking too little will leave the liquid milky-looking and watery.

If you take glazing too far and begin to see slight caramelization on the bottom of the pan or notice the sheen of the glaze disappear from the surface of the carrots, add a little water and two drops of white wine vinegar, and quickly reduce again.

When reduction is complete, toss carrots in the pan with chopped parsley. Plate and sprinkle with a few grains of finishing salt for a little crunch.

8.

## GLAZING: CARROTS

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### LEARN MORE

- Practice and expand upon your technique by glazing one of the vegetables Chef Keller lists. His recipe for Honey Glazed Cipollini Onions in *Ad Hoc at Home* (page 203) is a great place to start.
- Try Chef Keller's technique for [whole glazed carrots](#).



9.

## **PEELING: TOMATOES**

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*"[Peeling] is not necessarily something that you have to do. But it's a technique of refinement."*

—Chef Thomas Keller

9.

## PEELING: TOMATOES

### CHAPTER REVIEW

#### MISE EN PLACE

##### Ingredients

- Assortment of tomatoes such as Roma, Green Zebra, and cherry and heirloom varieties

##### Equipment

- Cutting board
- Paring knife
- Chef's knife
- Bowl for trim
- 12-quart stockpot (if blanching a small amount of tomatoes, a smaller pot may be used)
- Slotted spoon
- Ice bath

We don't blanch tomatoes to cook them. We blanch them to prepare them to be peeled. The technique involves plunging them for a short time in unsalted boiling water and then transferring them to an ice bath until they're cool enough to handle. Chef Keller demonstrates these steps, along with several ways that blanched and peeled tomatoes can be put to delicious use.

#### METHOD

Fill your stockpot with water and bring to boil. Score the bottom of the tomatoes with your paring knife in a cross pattern. Avoid cutting deeply into the flesh. Use the tip of your paring knife to remove the woody, green stem of the tomato. Submerge the tomatoes in the boiling water. After about 10 seconds, remove a tomato and check to see if the skin can be removed easily from the flesh from where you cut the cross. If the skin remains firmly attached to the flesh, continue the cooking process for another 5–10 seconds and check again. Once the skin is easily removed, transfer the tomatoes into an ice bath to stop them from cooking further. A slight curl along the score lines is a helpful sign that the tomatoes are done. Once shocked, use slotted spoon to remove tomatoes from ice bath. Peel each tomato using your paring knife.

The peeled tomatoes may be used either whole, sliced, or seeded and cut into concassé (tomato that has been peeled and seeded). In order to prepare for concassé, slice the tomato in half on its "equator" and gently squeeze the seeds out from each half. Dice the seeded tomatoes to desired size. To dry the concassé further, the tomatoes may be placed in a strainer and allowed to drain. Reserve the flavorful liquid for another use.

9.

## PEELING: TOMATOES

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### LEARN MORE

- The dry tomato concassé in this chapter has the water strained out in order to be able to take in oil and vinegar. Search for a recipe to apply this dry concasse and post the recipe and your results in [The Hub](#).

### ASSIGNMENTS

- Chef Keller explains that we've all eaten plenty of tomatoes with the skin. Removing the skin is meant to elevate a meal. Practice blanching and peeling. Add slices of those blanched and peeled tomatoes to a familiar sandwich or salad recipe for which you would normally use raw, sliced tomato. How does the refined ingredient change the presentation and flavor?
- Practice this technique by making the simple cherry tomato salad in this chapter. After you've blanched and peeled your cherry tomatoes, finish with extra virgin olive oil and champagne or sherry vinegar. Season with a finishing salt, such as Maldon, just prior to serving to maintain moisture and integrity of the tomato.
- Apply this technique to Chef Keller's Tomato Tartare from page 57 of *The French Laundry Cookbook*.



10.

## **BRAISING: ARTICHOKE**

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*"I love artichokes. I love the way they smell  
when they're raw, the way they look."*

—Chef Thomas Keller

## 10.

# BRAISING: ARTICHOKES

## CHAPTER REVIEW

### MISE EN PLACE

#### Ingredients

- 2 lemons
- 150 grams second-press olive oil
- 120 grams carrots, chopped
- 150 grams fennel, sliced
- 300 grams onions, chopped
- 75 grams shallots, minced
- 10 grams garlic, minced
- 1 liter chicken or vegetable stock, or water
- 500 grams sauvignon blanc
- Bouquet garni: kitchen shears, butcher's twine, cheesecloth, 3 leek leaves, 5 Italian parsley sprigs, 5 thyme sprigs, 2 bay leaves
- 6 artichokes, turned and trimmed
- Parsley (for garnish)
- Chive blossoms (optional, for garnish)
- Kosher salt

#### Equipment

- Cutting board
- Chef's knife
- Paring knife
- Bowl for trim
- 8-quart tall rondeau
- Slotted spoon
- Lint-free kitchen towel
- Baking dish (large enough to accommodate the artichokes in a single layer submerged in their liquid)
- Bowl with acidulated water (lemon water)

There are multiple techniques at play in this dish: turning artichokes, sweating vegetables, braising. Chef Keller loves working with artichokes, and artichokes barigoule—an artichoke stew—is a classic recipe that can be served many ways, including on its own, as a garnish for chicken, or as a component in a salad.

### METHOD

#### For preparing artichokes:

Hold the artichoke with the stem toward you. Beginning with the small leaves on the stem, remove them by breaking off the larger leaves by pushing with your thumb against the bottom of each leaf as you snap it, pulling it down toward the stem. Work your way up the stem to removing the larger leaves surrounding the heart until you reach the more tender leaves. Do not use a twisting motion to tear off the leaves. Chef Keller emphasizes using this technique to avoid removing pieces of the heart along with the leaves. Make sure the bottom part of the leaves you pull off remains attached. Continue removing the leaves until the only ones remaining are tender and yellow. Using a paring knife, cut off the top two thirds of the artichoke, to the point where the meaty heart begins. Cut away the tough dark green parts of the leaves to expose the tender heart. Then, holding the knife with the tip at a 45-degree angle, trim the base of the artichoke next to the stem. Peel the stem and cut off the bottom. Remove the fuzzy choke of the artichoke using a spoon to scrape the heart clean. Squeeze lemon juice over the artichoke and submerge in acidulated water while you work on the remaining artichokes.

#### For bouquet garni:

Wrap leek leaves, Italian parsley sprigs, thyme sprigs, and bay leaves in cheesecloth and tie as you tied the asparagus bundles.

## BRAISING: ARTICHOKES

For artichokes barigoule:

Sweat the vegetables over low heat. Add the olive oil, carrots, fennel, onions, and shallots. The goal is to soften the vegetables while bringing out their sweetness. Avoid caramelization by using gentle heat. Once the vegetables have softened, stir in the garlic and cook until the raw flavor has dissipated and the garlic is fragrant. Place the artichokes heart-down on top of the vegetables. Add the bouquet garni, white wine, stock, and water to cover. Increase the heat to bring the liquid to a gentle simmer, and cover the artichokes with a clean kitchen towel to keep the artichokes submerged. After 30 minutes, test for doneness with your paring knife. You'll want very little resistance, similar to the glazed carrots. Use a slotted spoon to place artichokes into a storage dish in a single layer, spoon vegetables on top, and pour the braising liquid over to finish. Let the dish cool and the flavors mature. For a classic barigoule, cut the artichokes into wedges, serve with braising vegetables, and garnish with parsley or basil. Chef Keller often serves artichokes barigoule as a stew, as a side with chicken, or as a component in salad. As with most stews and soups, the flavors of artichokes barigoule will improve after a few days.

### ASSIGNMENTS

- Prepare a large enough quantity of artichokes barigoule for the week to allow you to prepare one or two of the dishes Chef Keller shows at the end of the lesson. How else would you apply these braised artichokes to some of your dishes? Share a serving idea in [The Hub](#) and see what applications your classmates are trying as well.
- Use some of the remaining braising liquid to make Chef Keller's Barigoule Vinaigrette from page 152 of *The French Laundry Cookbook*.
- Execute a recipe that brings together the big-pot blanching, glazing, and braising techniques that you have learned so far. Using the artichokes from this chapter, make the Salad of Globe Artichokes with Garden Herbs and Gazpacho from page 62 of *The French Laundry Cookbook*.



11.

## **PURÉE: POTATOES**

---

*"It's that sense of refinement, again, that the French have taught us so well."*

—Chef Thomas Keller

## PURÉE: POTATOES

### CHAPTER REVIEW

#### MISE EN PLACE

##### Ingredients

- 190 grams cream, hot
- 225 grams cold butter, cubed
- 50 grams clarified butter (optional)
- 750 grams Yukon Gold potatoes
- Warm water as needed
- Kosher salt
- Butter for finishing
- Maldon salt for finishing

##### Equipment

- Cutting board
- Paring knife
- 3-quart saucepot
- Slotted spoon
- Tamis, finest mesh
- Parchment
- Bowl scraper
- 4-quart copper core saucepan
- Stiff rubber spatula
- Serving bowl

Making a French potato purée starts with the right kind of potato. The best potato for this purée is the La Ratte fingerling, a dense French varietal that is renowned for its ability to absorb large quantities of cream and butter. Yukon Gold potatoes are a great substitute and are much more readily available in America.

This French potato purée is not to be confused with mashed potatoes. It is more luxurious and requires greater technical skills. Patience is a must, as it takes time to properly incorporate the fat into the potatoes.

#### METHOD

Place the whole, unpeeled potatoes in a 3-quart saucepot and cover by 2 inches with cold water. Slowly bring the water to a gentle simmer. The potatoes are cooked whole to prevent them from absorbing the water, and therefore, allowing you to incorporate more butter and cream. Cook the potatoes until they are extremely tender when tested with a paring knife. When ready, turn off the heat. Working one potato at a time, remove from the water, place on the tamis, split the potato in half, and press the flesh through the screen using a stiff bowl scraper, while leaving the skins behind. It is a good idea to place a sheet of parchment paper underneath to collect the passed pulp. Once all of the potatoes have been passed, transfer them to a 4-quart saucepan. Warm the saucepan over medium-low heat, use a stiff rubber spatula to incorporate  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the hot cream into the potatoes, and beat in a few cubes of butter with the rubber spatula until the butter is emulsified into the potatoes. Drizzle in a little clarified butter. Clarified butter adds a more intense butter flavor than whole butter. Keep adding the cream, butter, and clarified butter to develop a creamy purée. The ideal pommes purée should have a milky, creamy appearance. If the purée begins to look oily with the fat separating from the potatoes, the emulsion is breaking. To restore the emulsion, you may need to add hot water periodically, just as you would for mayonnaise or hollandaise. Additionally, regulate the heat to allow the butter to be incorporated without losing the emulsion.

Once you've achieved your desired texture, season with salt, transfer to a serving bowl, and top with a pad of butter.

## PURÉE: POTATOES

### LEARN MORE

- Learn the ideal uses for different varieties of potato.
  - Red Bliss potatoes, a waxy variety, have high moisture and sugar content. When roasted or fried, they brown very quickly but do not become crisp. They may be gummy when mashed and are instead best for boiling and steaming.
  - The Russet potato was originally hybridized in the 1870s and exploded into popularity in post-WWII America with the advent of fast-food and frozen french fries. Russets now account for 70 percent of potato sales in the United States. Russets are considered a “floury” potato with large starch granules; therefore, they are not ideal for mashing, as they will have a coarse texture. They are best for baking and frying.
  - Yukon Gold potatoes are a “jack of all trades” potato. They are suitable for frying, baking, puréeing, and boiling, but they may not be the best in each cooking method. Yukon Gold potatoes were developed in Canada in the 1960s, as a hybrid of ancient Peruvian golden potato varieties. Thanks to their fine texture, dry interior, and good flavor, they quickly found favor in the chef community when they became commercially available.
  - There are many varieties of fingerling potatoes you may encounter at your local market. Each may have different characteristics. We have highlighted the La Ratte fingerling potatoes as being the best potato to make pommes purée from. Their dry, finely textured flesh will produce the smoothest and most refined potato purée and will allow for the most fat to be incorporated.

## PURÉE: POTATOES

### ASSIGNMENTS

- Practice clarifying butter using the technique described on page 125 of *The French Laundry Cookbook* as well as the method described in the video. Compare the results.
- Chef Keller reiterates that salt and acid are for seasoning and that pepper is for adding flavor. Since potatoes have such a neutral flavor profile, try adding pepper to a serving of your potato purée to see how it adds flavor. Chef Keller recommends white pepper for a more subtle flavor. Try both white and black pepper for an even more detailed flavor comparison. Note your preferences in your tasting journal.
- Chef Keller's recipe for mashed potatoes is very similar to his recipe for potato purée but the texture of potatoes put through a ricer rather than a tamis changes the amount of fat the potatoes can take in, as well as the texture. Chef Keller's mother used an old-fashioned potato masher, which resulted in a more rustic texture. To get a feel for the differences between different techniques, make the more rustic mashed potatoes and taste side by side with your more refined potato purée.
- Although Chef Keller uses potato purée in his restaurants for many different applications, his first serving recommendation is to “serve as you would mashed potatoes and let your family have at it!” After you've served the purée in a simple preparation, try it as an element in a composed dish like Roasted Chicken with Vegetables on page 22 of *Ad Hoc at Home* or with the mushroom ragout on page 86 of *The French Laundry Cookbook*.
- Try adding crème fraîche to your potato purée at the end, and note the change in acidity and taste.
- Chef Keller specifies that there are measurements provided in this workbook but that they should be used as a guide. You should follow your own preferences for texture and flavor to decide when the purée is ready. Each time you practice this technique, record your measurements to help you refine and record your own recipe.



12.

## PICKLING

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*"Pickled vegetables—one of my favorite things to have on hand in my cupboard."*

—Chef Thomas Keller

## PICKLING

### MISE EN PLACE

Note: The quantity of vegetables is proportional to the size of pickling jar used; both can be varied according to your needs.

#### Ingredients

- 200 grams sugar
- 400 grams water
- 200 grams white wine vinegar
- Thyme sprigs
- Mustard seeds
- 4 cloves garlic, peeled and lightly crushed
- 85 grams cauliflower florets
- Red pearl onions, halved
- 100 grams cucumbers, oblique cut
- 75 grams radishes, quartered
- 35 grams jingle bell peppers or other small variety

#### Equipment

- Cutting board
- Paring knife
- Canning jar
- 3-quart saucepot

### CHAPTER REVIEW

During their peak season, Chef Keller likes to pickle vegetables so that they can be enjoyed throughout the year. Delicious by themselves, pickled vegetables are also a classic accompaniment as contrast to rich foods, such as charcuterie. Although Chef Keller uses traditional pickling flavors in this demonstration, he encourages you to experiment with a variety of spices, herbs, and vegetables to suit your personal preferences.

### METHOD

When preparing your vegetables, cut them to a size that is as uniform as possible for consistent pickling. Add the mixed vegetables to the canning jar. Combine water, vinegar, sugar, thyme, mustard seeds, and garlic in a saucepot and bring it to a simmer. Pour the hot pickling liquid over vegetables to submerge them and seal the jar. Chill and store the jar in the refrigerator.

### ASSIGNMENTS

- Try mixing it up. Execute 2–3 additional pickling recipes using the vegetables that are currently in season in your growing region. Pages 254–257 of *Ad Hoc at Home* offer pickling recipes for garlic, carrots, green beans, baby leeks, watermelon rind, and more.
- Design your own brining liquid flavor profiles. You'll want to use vegetables in season but you can use dried herbs and spices to capture flavors from another time of year. Label four canning jars as “spring,” “summer,” “fall,” and “winter.” For each jar, build a flavor profile for the season. You might do earthy flavors like oregano or rosemary and brighter flavors such as chili pepper or dill for winter. Share your ideas in [The Hub](#) and try out your classmates' flavor ideas.



13.

## **PURÉE: PARSNIPS**

---

*“Parsnips are a vegetable that many of us aren’t familiar with. It’s a root vegetable with a sweet, woody aroma.”*

—Chef Thomas Keller

## PURÉE: PARSNIPS

### CHAPTER REVIEW

#### MISE EN PLACE

##### Ingredients

- 150 grams parsnips, peeled, ½-inch dice
- 15 grams unsalted butter
- 250 grams cream
- 120 grams water (additional may be needed)
- Kosher salt to taste

##### Equipment

- Chef's knife
- Paring knife
- 3-quart saucepot
- Rubber spatula
- Blender with a 1-quart canister
- Serving bowl

Unlike potato purée, which calls for cooking the potatoes in water and then adding cream, the parsnips are cooked in the cream. Peeling and cutting the parsnips to a uniform size and cooking them in cream will allow you to make a beautiful, smooth, and creamy parsnip purée.

#### METHOD

Place the parsnips, cream, and water into the saucepot. You may need to add additional water to cover the parsnips. Bring the liquid to a simmer and cook the parsnips until they have no resistance when tested with a paring knife. Transfer the parsnips and thickened liquid to a blender. Begin blending on low speed and gradually increase the speed. With the blender running, add the butter and season conservatively with salt. Process until the purée is extremely smooth. Stop the blender and check the seasoning, adjusting with salt if necessary. Check the consistency and adjust with additional water if necessary to your preference.

#### LEARN MORE

- Chef Keller picked the fennel pollen that finishes this purée from his garden the day-of. If you have a garden, snip whatever herb you feel works with the flavors of parsnip, and garnish your dish.

#### ASSIGNMENTS

- Incorporate the parsnip purée into a composed dish such as Chef Keller's Black Sea Bass with Sweet Parsnips, Arrowleaf Spinach, and Saffron-Vanilla Sauce on page 146 of *The French Laundry Cookbook*.
- After you've made parsnip purée, practice your technique with other vegetables Chef Keller recommends for puréeing: rutabaga, carrot, celeriac, and sunchokes. Record alterations you make to the amounts of cream, water, and butter, or source a recipe to guide you.



14.

## **CONFIT: EGGPLANT & GARLIC**

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*“Vegetables are such a dynamic food group, one that I just adore—texturally, color, seasonality, flavor, and the transformation that goes on when we cook different vegetables.”*

—Chef Thomas Keller

## 14.

# CONFIT: EGGPLANT & GARLIC

## CHAPTER REVIEW

### MISE EN PLACE

#### Ingredients

- 3 Chinese eggplants
- 12 garlic cloves, peeled, stems trimmed
- 2 liters neutral-flavored plant-based oil
- Bouquet garni (see Braising: Artichokes)
- Aged balsamic vinegar
- Fresh oregano
- Kosher salt
- Maldon sea salt

#### Equipment

- Cutting board
- Chef's knife
- Baking dish
- Thermometer
- 4-quart saucepot for heating oil
- Ladle
- Nogent fish spatula
- Sheet pan lined with paper towels
- Wire cake rack (as needed)

A confit is a technique traditionally used to preserve meats by cooking them in their own fat. The best-known example is duck confit. But the term “confit” can be used to describe any ingredient, including vegetables, that has been slow-cooked in fat at a low temperature. In this chapter, Chef Keller uses oil to confit Chinese eggplant and garlic, a technique that will impart a creamy, succulent texture to both. The same technique can be used to preserve a variety of vegetables so that they can be enjoyed beyond their season.

### METHOD

Begin by removing the tops and bottoms of the eggplants and then cutting them in half lengthwise. Score their flesh in a crosshatch pattern and lightly salt them so that the salt can penetrate the flesh and draw out moisture and bitterness. Rest flesh side down 25 minutes on a paper towel-lined sheet pan. Lay eggplants flesh side down in the baking dish and add the garlic and bouquet garni. Heat oil to 250°F then carefully ladle the oil over the eggplants. If the eggplants float, you may add a wire cake rack over the eggplants to keep them submerged. Put the baking dish into a 300°F oven and check for tenderness after 45 minutes. The ideal texture of the eggplant should be creamy and have no resistance. For prolonged storage up to 1 week, keep the eggplant submerged in the oil in an airtight container inside the refrigerator.

If serving right away, remove the eggplants and garlic and allow them to drain on a paper towel-lined sheet pan. Chef Keller suggests using the remaining oil in vinaigrettes or in sautéing since it hasn't reached its smoke point and is still useable. Arrange the eggplants on a serving platter along with the confit garlic. Finish with a drizzle of balsamic vinegar, herbs of your choice, and a sprinkling of Maldon salt.

14.

## **CONFIT: EGGPLANT & GARLIC**

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### LEARN MORE

- After making the confit eggplant and garlic, use some of the leftover garlic confit as Chef Keller suggests for a snack of smashed garlic on toast.
- Reserve some of the eggplants and garlic in oil, store in the fridge. In your tasting journal, note how the flavors have changed compared to serving immediately.

### ASSIGNMENT

- Apply the confit technique to other vegetables Chef Keller recommends, such as the Mushroom Conserva on page 260 of *Ad Hoc at Home*.



15.

## **ROASTING: ZUCCHINI**

---

*“Zucchini is just a magnificent vegetable.”*  
—Chef Thomas Keller

15.

## ROASTING: ZUCCHINI

### CHAPTER REVIEW

#### MISE EN PLACE

##### Ingredients

- 3 zucchini, green and/or Goldbar
- 6–8 ounces neutral-flavored plant-based oil
- Vierge sauce
- Kosher salt
- Finishing salt

##### Equipment

- Cutting board
- Chef's knife
- 12-inch fry pan
- Spatula
- Paper towel-lined plate

#### For vierge sauce

##### Ingredients

- 125 grams tomato concasse
- 15 grams champagne vinegar
- 5 grams shallots, minced
- 35 grams extra virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt to taste
- Pinch of parsley, minced

So far in our vegetable techniques, we've covered purées, glazing, braising, and big-pot blanching. Now it's time to apply roasting to a wonderful summer vegetable: zucchini. You'll use canola oil in this technique, as roasting requires high heat and canola has a high flash point and a neutral flavor.

#### METHOD

##### For the pan-roasted zucchini:

Halve the zucchini lengthwise and score the flesh in a crosshatch pattern so that the salt can penetrate it. “Rain” or “snow” salt onto the scored side of the zucchini from a height that allows it to evenly distribute. Leave the zucchini for 10–15 minutes so that salt has time to draw out moisture, which will help maintain the density of the vegetable as it cooks. Pat the zucchini dry. Heat canola oil (use just enough to coat the bottom of the pan) in a 12-inch fry pan until it's shimmering and just beginning to smoke. Add the zucchini flesh side down in the oil, adjust the heat to allow the zucchini to sear and caramelize without burning. Cook about 5 minutes, then add herbs or garlic and immediately place the pan in a 450°F oven to roast for 25–30 minutes or until the zucchini are completely soft. Transfer zucchini to paper towel-lined plate to blot excess oil. Arrange the zucchini on a serving platter. Then spoon the vierge sauce over the top, following by a sprinkling of finishing salt.

##### For the vierge sauce:

While the zucchini is roasting, gently combine all the ingredients in a mixing bowl, and allow the flavors to blend together.

Note: The vierge sauce may be prepared up to a day in advance and stored in the refrigerator. If you refrigerate, allow the vierge to come to room temperature before serving so that the flavors unfold and the olive oil is not congealed.

15.

## ROASTING: ZUCCHINI

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### LEARN MORE

- Talk to your local vegetable purveyors or home gardeners about the differences between zucchini varieties. Return to them as a resource for any vegetable you are working with and for advice about seasonal substitutions appropriate for your local growing region.
- Chef Keller loves to cook with a vegetable at the height of its season and in this case, two summer vegetables—tomato and zucchini—capture the summer in one dish. What other dishes epitomize a season for you? Share them with your classmates in [The Hub](#).

### ASSIGNMENT

- Try this pan-roasting technique with different varieties of vegetables and notice how the differences in their sugar content affect their caramelization.



16.

## **BAKING: BEETS**

---

*“I remember people boiling beets—I don’t know why we would boil a beet when you can bake one and have such a beautiful result.”*

—Chef Thomas Keller

## BAKING: BEETS

### CHAPTER REVIEW

#### MISE EN PLACE

##### Ingredients

- 454 grams (1 pound) red beets, leaves and stems removed
- Kosher salt
- 15 grams canola oil
- 2 shallots, minced
- 15 grams aged balsamic
- Maldon sea salt
- 30 grams extra virgin olive oil
- 2 bunches chives, minced
- Kosher salt

##### Equipment

- Cutting board
- Chef's knife
- Paring knife
- Rectangular baking dish
- Aluminum foil
- Mixing bowl
- Serving bowl
- Parchment paper
- Gloves

Rather than boiling beets, which dilutes their flavor and color, Chef Keller likes to bake them, using the heat to draw out moisture and concentrate flavors. The cooking time will vary depending on the size of the beets, but Chef Keller assures you that it is very hard to overcook a beet. He recommends seasoning and marinating beets while they are still warm, which allows them to better absorb flavor. In marinades that call for balsamic vinegar, use true balsamic vinegar, produced in the Italian region of Modena or Emilia-Romagna, and certified by the European Union's DOP (Protected Designation of Origin). Baked beets are hearty and nutritious, and can be used in so many dishes that Chef Keller encourages you to bake and peel a large batch to use over multiple meals.

#### METHOD

Wash and dry the trimmed beets. Place beets on the aluminum foil with the shiny side of the foil up. Drizzle with oil. Season with kosher salt and fold the foil to form a pouch. Place the pouch in the baking dish with the folded side up. Bake at 350°F for about 45 minutes. Test for doneness using a paring knife, looking for no resistance. Beets easily stain cutting boards and hands, so peel while still warm under running water or wear gloves and work over parchment. Cut beets into wedges, or any shape you like, and take a moment to appreciate their beautiful, deep magenta color.

Add beets to your mixing bowl. Add the minced shallot to the beets, followed by Maldon salt, balsamic, extra virgin olive oil, and chives, reserving a sprinkle of chives. Spoon dressed beets into a serving bowl and finish with chives.

#### LEARN MORE

- While mincing the shallot, Chef Keller explains knife skills that are crucial to safety in your kitchen and says that the only way to get them is practice, practice, practice. Consider taking a knife skills class to form a solid (and safe) foundation for your practice.

16.

## BAKING: BEETS

### ASSIGNMENTS

- Try the same baking technique with golden or Chioggia beets. Use different vinegars to complement the flavor and appearance of the beets. For example, use an apple cider vinegar with the golden beets and champagne vinegar with the Chioggia beets. Compare their flavors and appearance in your tasting journal.
- Use your simple golden and Chioggia baked beets in a composed salad such as Chef Keller's Roasted Beet and Potato Salad on page 164 of *Ad Hoc at Home*.
- Make the red beet vinaigrette on page 239 of *The French Laundry Cookbook* and use in a simple salad; or, execute the complete recipe for Ashed Chevreux with Slow-Roasted Yellow and Red Beets and Red Beet Vinaigrette.

## EGGS: AN INTRODUCTION

*“The incredible edible egg certainly has to be my favorite ingredient and certainly one of my favorites to eat.”*

—Chef Thomas Keller

### CHAPTER REVIEW

Eggs are remarkably versatile. We eat them at breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Chef Keller has two hard-boiled eggs with olive oil every morning. Here’s a fun, related fact: the toque—the tall white chef’s hat—has 100 pleats, each representing a technique involving eggs.

It’s a common misconception that the color of an eggshell tells us something about the quality of the egg. It doesn’t. It is simply a reflection of the breed of chicken that produced the egg. Shell color is cosmetic and has nothing to do with quality or taste. In most regions of the United States, the majority of chicken eggs are white. But in parts of the Northeast, particularly New England, brown eggs are more prevalent. Such regional differences are a function of supply and demand. The same is true in many other countries.

The color of an egg yolk is directly influenced by the makeup of the chicken feed. Contrary to another common misperception, the color of an egg yolk does not reliably reflect the nutritional value of an egg.

For recipe preparations, a single large egg weighs about 53 grams. If you need to measure an amount of eggs beyond this amount, scramble multiple eggs—scramble two if you need 100+ grams, scramble three if you need 150+ grams, and so on. Pour into a bowl on the scale to measure out only what you need.

### LEARN MORE

- How much do you know about USDA egg grades? Here’s a primer:
  - **U.S. Grade AA:** The whites are thick and firm, the yolks are high and round, and the shells are clean and unbroken. They’re great for frying and poaching, and any other preparations in which appearance is important.
  - **U.S. Grade A:** This is the grade most often sold in stores. They’re similar to Grade AA, but their whites are not as firm.

## EGGS: AN INTRODUCTION

- **U.S. Grade B:** Their whites are thinner and their yolks wider and flatter than the whites and yolks of higher-grade eggs. You won't often come across them in stores because they're usually used to make liquid, frozen, and dried egg products, as well as other products containing eggs.
- Eggs used to get a bad rap as cholesterol bombs. The truth is that they're high in nutritional value and low in calories. Eggs have all nine essential amino acids, the building blocks in proteins, and their yolks contain choline, which promotes cell activity and liver function and helps in the development of memory functions in infants. All that, and they're delicious.

USDA sizing is based on egg weight per dozen:

Size	Weight (grams)
Jumbo	70.9
Very Large or Extra Large	63.8
Large	56.7
Medium	49.6
Small	42.5
Peewee	35.4

The biggest variable in egg size is the age of the chicken. Generally the older the chicken, the larger the egg. But egg size also tends to vary by breed and weight of the bird. Hatching environment is another important factor. Heat, stress, and overcrowding have all been shown to lower the size of eggs.

17.

## EGGS: AN INTRODUCTION

### LEARN MORE CONT.

- Eggs play an important role in a great variety of recipes, savory and sweet. They provide structure and stability within a batter or meringue, naturally thicken and emulsify sauces and custards, add moisture to cakes and other baked goods, and can create a glaze or shine on certain baked items. Whether you use whole eggs, whites, or yolks will depend on the recipe and purpose.
  - **Yolks:** Recipes that use just the yolk typically do so for the yolk's fat content and emulsifying abilities. The fat imparts rich flavor and smooth texture. The yolk also binds liquids and fats together, creating an emulsion that prevents them from separating. Vinaigrettes, aioli, sauces, and custards all depend on yolks to bind and emulsify.
  - **Whites:** When egg whites are used alone, they perform an entirely different role from the yolks, especially when whipped. One of the best ways to use whipped egg whites is as a natural leavening agent, as in a chiffon cake, soufflé, or a fizz cocktail. In the heat of the oven, air trapped in the foam starts to expand, causing the recipe to rise without the need for additional leavening agents. Egg whites can also be whipped with sugar to make meringue, which can be used to top cakes and tarts, or baked into semi-dry meringues.

### ASSIGNMENT

- Locate the best source for fresh eggs in your community. That might mean talking to purveyors at your local farmers' market, or writing down the brands available at the grocery store in your notebook and doing your own research about their practices. Buy a few different brands and put them through the same test Chef Keller does. Crack onto a plate and look for whites that hold their shape and bright, healthy yolks.



18.

## **MAYONNAISE**

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*“When I think about the person who first made mayonnaise... the French must have been ecstatic to have something so wonderful, so versatile, so dynamic, so flavorful.”*

—Chef Thomas Keller

# MAYONNAISE

## CHAPTER REVIEW

### MISE EN PLACE

#### Mayonnaise

##### Ingredients

- 1 egg yolk
- 5 grams Dijon mustard
- 350 grams neutral-flavored plant-based oil
- 7 grams white wine vinegar
- 7 grams lemon juice
- Kosher salt to taste

##### Equipment

- Cutting board
- Paring knife
- Bowl for trim
- Damp towel for stabilizing bowl
- Mixing bowl
- Whisk
- Hand strainer for lemon juice
- Rubber spatula
- Serving bowl
- Glass jar for storing

Mayonnaise is so familiar to us, we sometimes forget how far it reaches into our cooking repertoire. It is much more than a dip or spread. It is the building block for a variety of wonderful sauces. Making a smooth mayonnaise is all about maintaining the emulsification. Chef Keller touches on the science of emulsification, which he first learned by reading *On Food and Cooking* by Harold McGee. McGee taught that a yolk can absorb an almost infinite amount of fat as long as you maintain the right amount of moisture. The desired thickness of your mayonnaise will depend on how you plan to use it.

Start by practicing making mayonnaise on its own, and then add the ingredients that transform it into remoulades, aiolis, salad dressings, and sauces.

### METHOD

#### For the mayonnaise:

Separate the yolk from the white and pull off the chalazae—the little white string hanging from the yolk. Dampen a kitchen towel and twist it into a turban shape, then wrap it around the base of your mixing bowl to secure the bowl while you whisk. Whisk the yolk and add the Dijon mustard, which will add flavor and help with emulsification. Continue whisking as you slowly drizzle in the oil. As the mayonnaise starts to thicken, add a little water, vinegar, and lemon juice, squeezing the lemon through a hand strainer to catch any seeds. If the mayonnaise breaks (separates), it means the oil has overwhelmed the proteins of the egg yolk. Add more Dijon mustard to help re-emulsify.

The speed of your whisking can increase as the volume of the emulsification increases. Continue to drizzle in canola oil as you whisk. Stop adding oil when you get to the viscosity (you'll want to see peaks forming) and quantity that you want. Taste and finish with salt and acid to suit your palate. Store in a glass jar in the fridge.

## MAYONNAISE

### MISE EN PLACE

#### Remoulade

##### Ingredients

- 400 grams mayonnaise
- 25 grams capers, minced
- 25 grams shallots, minced
- 25 grams cornichons, minced
- 10 grams fines herbes (equal parts parsley, chives, and tarragon, minced)
- 4 grams kosher salt

##### Equipment

- Cutting board
- Chef's knife
- Mixing bowl
- Rubber spatula
- Glass jar for storing

### METHOD CONT.

#### For the remoulade:

Starting with 400 grams of your mayonnaise, add capers, cornichons, fines herbes,\* shallots, and salt.\*\* Stir with a rubber spatula to combine.

\*If you cannot source fresh herbs, Chef Keller would rather you skip the recipe than used dried herbs.

\*\*Be aware that the capers are quite salty, so depending on the saltiness of your simple mayonnaise, you may need to adjust how much salt you add to the remoulade.

### LEARN MORE

- Read Harold McGee's *On Food and Cooking: The Science and Lore of the Kitchen*.

### ASSIGNMENTS

- Make the mayonnaise. If it breaks, restore the emulsification as directed, and then practice until you find the right whisking speed and pacing of adding ingredients. Make the remoulade and serve as a side sauce with fish or roasted chicken.
- Practice building out your mayonnaise with any of the following sauces:
  - Aioli, on page 33 of *Ad Hoc at Home*
  - Anchovy dressing, on page 183 of *Ad Hoc at Home*
  - A mayonnaise with your own herb blend



19.

## **HOLLANDAISE**

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*“Hollandaise sauce for me was... being able to do something that was so refined and had such history to it and to do that every day. I still find great joy in making hollandaise.”*

—Chef Thomas Keller

# HOLLANDAISE

## CHAPTER REVIEW

### MISE EN PLACE

#### Clarified butter

##### Ingredient

- 1 kilogram butter

##### Equipment

- Heavy-duty sealable plastic bag
- 12 quart stockpot half-filled with water, at a simmer
- Kitchen shears
- Bowl for trim
- Ice bath or container of water

#### Hollandaise

##### Ingredients

- 60 grams egg yolks (approximately 3 each)
- 25 grams water
- 15 grams lemon juice
- 250 grams clarified butter held at 165°F
- 4 grams kosher salt to taste
- For plating: 2 poached eggs and 1 slice toast
- Black pepper
- Finishing salt

##### Equipment

- Cutting board
- Utility knife
- Rubber spatula
- Damp kitchen towel
- 2-quart saucepot half-filled with water, at a simmer
- Mixing bowl
- Whisk
- Hand strainer
- Serving plate

Hollandaise holds special place in Chef Keller's career. When he started cooking in the mid-1970s, his brother, Joseph, was already an accomplished chef. He was also a mentor to Chef Keller. The first sauce Joseph taught him was hollandaise, which Chef Keller made over and over, day after day, learning how to fix and refine it, and how to save it for later service. Repetition was his path to perfection. Chef Keller urges you to practice, practice, practice. Hollandaise is what is known as a mother sauce, meaning it can be used to make a range of other sauces, including choron, maitaise, béarnaise, foyot, paloise, and mousseline.

### METHOD

#### For the quick clarified butter:

Place the butter in a heavy-duty kitchen bag and seal. Set into a stockpot of simmering water. Once butter has melted, transfer the bag to the refrigerator with one corner of the bag at the bottommost position. It is helpful to chill the bag in an ice bath or container of water to help maintain the position.

Once the clarified butter has solidified, take the bag out of the fridge, hold over a bowl, and snip the bottom corner to let the milk and solids drain into the bowl. Rinse the block of solidified clarified butter under a faucet for a few seconds; then dry to remove any remaining milk solids. Now you have clarified butter that can be cut into pieces for storage in the fridge or freezer, or melted down for immediate use.

#### For the hollandaise:

Fill a saucepot with approximately 1 inch of water and bring to a gentle simmer. Separate out 3 egg yolks and add them to the mixing bowl. Whisk in 25 grams of water to start (you may need to add more to maintain the emulsion). Then place the mixing bowl over the saucepot. Continue to whisk in a figure-eight motion, rotating the bowl and removing from the heat as needed, aiming for constant, gentle heat. Chef Keller's double-boiler process takes about 2½ minutes. Look for cooked egg yolks. They should thicken and have a fluffy, ribbon consistency with a pale yellow appearance. (If it is overcooked there will be little bits of egg that can be removed with a strainer.) Remove from heat and place the mixing bowl in a turban on the cutting board.

## HOLLANDAISE

### METHOD CONT.

#### MISE EN PLACE CONT.

##### Béarnaise Reduction

###### Ingredients

- 75 grams shallots, peeled and sliced thin
- 250 grams white wine
- 50 grams champagne vinegar
- 5 grams black peppercorn, coarsely ground
- 30 grams tarragon leaves, minced
- 1 bay leaf

##### Béarnaise

###### Ingredients

- 85 grams egg yolks (approximately 4 each)
- 85 grams béarnaise reduction
- 25 grams heavy cream
- 350 grams clarified butter
- 5 grams lemon juice
- 4 grams tarragon, minced
- 10 grams shallots, peeled and finely minced
- 5 grams kosher salt

###### Equipment

- 2-quart saucier
- Mixing bowl

##### Béarnaise mousseline

###### Ingredients

- Béarnaise
- Whipped cream

###### Equipment

- Mixing bowl
- Rubber spatula

While continuing to whisk, add juice of half a lemon and slowly drizzle in the warmed clarified butter. As with the process for mayonnaise, continue to add water and fat, and, for hollandaise, heat as needed to continue the emulsification process. As you reach a consistency you like, taste and season with additional lemon and salt. Set 2 poached eggs on top of toast and slowly spoon the hollandaise so that it envelopes each poached egg. Complete with a few grinds of black pepper and a sprinkle of finishing salt.

Note: If the sauce breaks, return it to heat to completely break it, making the yolks look like curd. Then add in a little bit of egg yolk, warm it, and slowly drizzle back in the hollandaise. Reasons a sauce would break: too much heat, too rushed, or not enough water.

#### For the béarnaise reduction:

Place all ingredients into a saucepan and reduce the liquids by one third. Remove bay leaf. Cool and reserve until needed.

#### For the béarnaise:

Place the egg yolks, cream, and béarnaise reduction in a 2-quart saucier and whisk over low heat until egg yolks have expanded and reached a ribbon consistency. Apply the same technique you used for hollandaise, constantly whisking and adjusting the heat as needed in order to not scramble the egg yolks. Slowly drizzle in the clarified butter while continuously whisking, making sure that an emulsion is forming. Once all the clarified butter is emulsified, whisk in the lemon juice, tarragon, shallots, and kosher salt. Serve warm in one of the suggested dishes below.

#### For the béarnaise mousseline:

Gently fold the whipped cream into béarnaise sauce to lighten the texture to your preference. Taste the finished sauce for salt and adjust if necessary.

19.

## HOLLANDAISE

### LEARN MORE

- In a restaurant, hollandaise is best made in a saucier over a graduated-heat flat top, but at home it is best to use a double boiler. This is also how Chef Keller first learned. Home stoves do not work well at a low setting, so a double boiler helps spread the heat evenly across the bottom of the pan, especially pans without a heavy bottom.

### ASSIGNMENTS

- Hollandaise takes a lot of patience and practice to master. Practice the technique until you can execute the sauce with confidence.
- Try serving each of the sauces with one of the dishes suggested:
  - Hollandaise on blanched asparagus
  - Béarnaise in eggs benedict
  - Béarnaise mousseline with steak and brussels sprouts
- Once you feel like you have a firm grasp on the techniques for hollandaise and béarnaise sauces, try transforming your béarnaise sauce into sauce choron with the addition of a couple of tablespoons of tomato purée. Warm 50 grams of tomato purée and whisk into approximately 500 grams of béarnaise sauce.



20.

## **CUSTARD: CRÈME ANGLAISE**

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*“Crème anglaise can be any flavor you want. It can be chocolate, it could be coffee, it could be caramel...but traditionally it’s vanilla.”*

—Chef Thomas Keller

## CUSTARD: CRÈME ANGLAISE

### CHAPTER REVIEW

#### MISE EN PLACE

##### Ingredients

- 1 vanilla bean, split and scraped
- 500 grams cream
- 500 grams milk
- 200 grams sugar
- 10 egg yolks
- Kosher salt

##### Equipment

- Cutting board
- Paring knife
- 2-quart saucier
- Ladle
- Rubber spatula
- Whisk
- Mixing bowl
- Ice bath
- Flat-bottom wooden spoon
- Thermometer
- Chinois

Crème anglaise is one of Chef Keller's favorite dessert sauces. Here he makes a traditional vanilla anglaise, though he notes that you can flavor the crème any way you want. Gently cooked egg yolks and sugar form a custard, which binds the crème anglaise. Chef Keller demonstrates a technique called "tempering"—slowly bringing the egg yolks up to temperature in the custard without cooking them. This technique should prevent curdling. But if your crème anglaise does curdle, you can recover it by putting it in a blender.

#### METHOD

Combine milk, cream, and the scraped vanilla bean and pod in a saucepot over medium-low heat and gently stir with rubber spatula. Bring to a simmer. Place the yolks in a mixing bowl, beat them until they are homogenous. Add sugar and a pinch of kosher salt and whisk until the mixture is combined.

To begin the tempering process, gradually ladle the hot milk and cream mixture into the mixing bowl one ladle at a time while whisking continuously. The aim is to gradually heat the egg yolks to the temperature of the warm milk and cream so as not to curdle the eggs. When the temperature of the yolks is similar to the temperature of the milk and cream (after about 4 ladlefuls), whisk the contents of the mixing bowl into the saucepot with the remaining vanilla cream. Swap your whisk for a flat-bottom wooden spoon and continue to stir as you cook to 185°F.

The crème anglaise will be thickened and should coat the back of a spoon. Test by swiping your finger across the back of the coated spoon. If the sauce is thickened, the swipe should remain and not be filled in by runny sauce.

Strain the crème anglaise through a chinois into a mixing bowl resting in an ice bath. Remove the vanilla pod and set aside for future use. Whisk to help cool to room temperature. Once cooled and thickened, your dessert sauce is ready.

## CUSTARD: CRÈME ANGLAISE

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### LEARN MORE

- Chef Keller says that once you've used a vanilla bean pod to flavor a crème anglaise, you can clean it and dry it for another use. For example, you could put it in your sugar to give your sugar a light vanilla aroma. Find a creative way to reuse your vanilla bean and share it with your classmates in [The Hub](#).
- Taste-test vanillas from different regions: Madagascar, Tahiti, Mexico, and the Caribbean. Recording your tasting notes in your journal.

### ASSIGNMENTS

- Make Chef Keller's traditional vanilla crème anglaise; then make a variation. For chocolate-flavored crème anglaise, add chocolate to the mixing bowl and strain the hot crème anglaise into it to melt the chocolate. For coffee-flavored crème anglaise, add coffee grounds to the saucepot as you cook to 185°F, and then strain out the grounds through the chinois.
- If you have an ice cream maker, make ice cream with your crème anglaise by following Chef Keller's method on page 319 of *Ad Hoc at Home*.



21.

## **MERINGUE**

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*“This will be a baked meringue that’ll have a very crispy exterior and a very soft, almost marshmallow-like interior.”*

—Chef Thomas Keller

# MERINGUE

## CHAPTER REVIEW

### MISE EN PLACE

#### Macerated Strawberries

##### Ingredients

- 1 pint strawberries, quartered
- Sugar
- ¼ lemon, juiced

##### Equipment

- Mixing bowl
- Immersion blender
- Strainer
- Beaker (or any tall, narrow vessel)

#### Meringue

##### Ingredients

- 150 grams egg whites
- 150 grams granulated sugar
- 150 grams powdered sugar, sifted
- 1 gram kosher salt
- 1 vanilla bean
- Crème anglaise
- Macerated strawberries
- Strawberry purée
- 1 lime, zest for garnish
- Whole strawberries, for garnish

##### Equipment

- 4-quart saucepot half-filled with water, at a simmer
- Mixing bowl
- Whisk
- Digital thermometer
- Rubber spatula
- Stand mixer with whisk attachment
- Half sheet pan with silpat
- Quenelle spoon (large, deep spoon)
- Kitchen torch
- Microplane
- Serving plate

When we prepare recipes that require only eggs yolks, such as hollandaise, mayonnaise, and crème anglaise, we wind up with leftover egg whites. One option is to use them to make meringue. There are three basic techniques for making meringue—French, Swiss, and Italian—each with different advantages and applications. French meringue is the least stable prior to baking. It is made by beating egg whites until they form soft peaks, then adding sugar, resulting in a light, airy meringue that is often piped into pastry shells, layered into cakes (as in a dacquoise), or incorporated into batters. Stiffer Italian meringue, which is made by adding hot sugar syrup to whipped eggs, is often used in ice cream and mousses, or as a topping on pies and cakes. Swiss meringue is silkier than its French cousin, but it is also very stable. It is commonly used in buttercream frosting. It is made by gently beating egg whites and sugar over a double boiler or bain-marie. Here, Chef Keller works with Swiss meringue, which he bakes into a dessert with a light, crispy shell and a soft, almost marshmallowy inside.

## METHOD

### For macerated strawberries and coulis:

Add quartered strawberries to the mixing bowl and mix in sugar. The amount of sugar you use depends on the ripeness and sweetness of the strawberries; start with 25 grams and add more as needed. Place half of the macerated strawberries and lemon juice (to heighten the flavor) into the beaker and blend using the immersion blender. Strain the purée and reserve. Set aside the remaining half of the macerated strawberries, which will be used to garnish the plated, finished dish.

### For meringue:

Add egg whites, granulated sugar, and vanilla to the mixing bowl and whisk to combine. Place the mixing bowl over the simmering water and heat to 150°F, whisking constantly. Transfer the egg white mixture into the bowl of the stand-up mixer. Start on low speed and move to medium-high. Add in confectioners' sugar and increase the mixer speed to high.

## MERINGUE

### METHOD CONT.

While the meringue is whipping in the mixer, arrange the baking sheet and set your quenelle spoon and rubber spatula into the hot water leftover from the double boiler. After whipping for about 15 minutes, the meringue should be glossy and hold stiff peaks. The quenelle technique will take some practice but cleaning your spoon in the hot water bath after each scoop will help the very sticky meringue to slide off of the spoon. Form 6 meringues and bake at 180°F for 45 minutes.

When finished baking, break into one of the meringues to feel the crack of the exterior crust and check for a soft, creamy interior. Use a kitchen torch to lightly caramelize the meringue peaks and dust with confectioners' sugar. Plate with macerated strawberries, strawberry purée, and whole strawberries for garnish or feel free to use any other fruit you like. Finish with crème anglaise and a bright pop of lime zest.

### ASSIGNMENTS

- Make the meringues and focus on perfecting your shaping technique. Be patient, work cleanly, and post a photo in [The Hub](#) of your best final result.
- Use meringue to top Chef Keller's Lemon Meringue Tarts on page 152 of *Bouchon Bakery*.



22.

## **BOILED EGGS**

---

*“Eggs, eggs, and even more eggs!”*  
—Chef Thomas Keller

## BOILED EGGS

### CHAPTER REVIEW

#### MISE EN PLACE

##### Ingredients

- 3 eggs
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Maldon salt

##### Equipment

- Paring knife
- 4 quart saucepot
- Timer
- Cool water bath
- Serving plate

Surfing the internet or flipping through cookbooks, you'll find countless methods for boiling an egg. This is Chef Keller's way. It's very straightforward, but take note: cooking times vary depending on egg size, pot size, burner strength, and other factors, including the quantity of eggs you're cooking. Chef Keller prepares a soft-boiled egg, a hard-boiled egg, and an over-cooked egg to show the differences in taste, texture, and appearance.

#### METHOD

Place the eggs into a saucepot, cover with cold water by at least a 1/2 inch, and bring to a gentle boil. Once the water boils, turn down the heat to a level that still maintains the boil, and start a timer for 5 minutes. After 5 minutes, run cold water over the eggs until the eggs are just cool enough to handle—it is generally easier to peel the eggs while they are still warm. Remove eggs from water and peel in a cool water bath. When peeling, be sure to remove the thin skin right underneath the eggshell. To serve, top the perfectly boiled egg with extra virgin olive oil and finishing salt, such as fleur de sel or Maldon.

\*As noted above, times will vary. If 5 minutes doesn't yield a perfectly hard-boiled egg for you, experiment to find the right amount of time that you need to achieve your perfect egg.

#### ASSIGNMENT

- Chef Keller encourages everyone to find the timing for their perfectly cooked egg. Boil eggs for 4, 5, 6, and 7 minutes, recording the results in your tasting notebook. Which yolk do you prefer?



23.

## **SCRAMBLED EGGS**

---

*“I cannot stress this enough—always  
treat your eggs gently.”*  
—Chef Thomas Keller

# SCRAMBLED EGGS

## CHAPTER REVIEW

### MISE EN PLACE

#### Equipment

- Small bowl
- Mixing bowl
- Whisk
- Chinois

#### American style

#### Ingredients

- 6 eggs
- Brioche toast
- Butter
- 25 grams crème fraîche
- Italian parsley, minced
- Kosher salt
- Maldon salt

#### Equipment

- 8-inch nonstick fry pan
- Rubber spatula
- Serving plate

#### French style

#### Ingredients

- 4 eggs
- Brioche toast, cut into soldiers
- Butter
- Crème fraîche
- Parsley, minced
- Kosher salt
- Maldon salt

#### Equipment

- 2-quart saucier
- Whisk
- Serving bowl

Chef Keller shows you two techniques for scrambled eggs—the way his mother made them and the technique he learned in France. In both, cooking over low heat is essential.

### METHOD

#### For both styles:

Crack each egg into a small bowl so that you can remove any shell, if necessary, then transfer to a mixing bowl. Repeat with the remaining eggs. Season with kosher salt. Whisk. (While it is perfectly fine to beat the eggs using a fork, Chef Keller prefers using a whisk.) For further refinement, blend the eggs using a blender or immersion blender and pass the blended eggs through a chinois.

#### For American style:

Set the nonstick pan over very low heat. Add butter—start with 2 tablespoons (approximately 32 grams), but use as much or as little as you like—and pour in the eggs. As the eggs start to set, gently scramble using a rubber spatula. Remove the pan from the heat before the eggs are completely done, or they will continue to cook. Stir in the crème fraîche and immediately spoon onto a serving plate. Complete with Italian parsley and Maldon salt.

#### For French style (oeufs brouillés):

Set saucier over low heat. Add 3 tablespoons (approximately 48 grams) of butter to the saucier and pour in the eggs. Begin whisking slowly and continuously to emulsify in the butter and to gently cook the eggs. As eggs are still semiliquid but are beginning to resemble porridge, turn off the heat. Look for small curds beginning to pull away from the bottom and sides of the saucier. Whisk in about ½ tablespoon of butter, 1 tablespoon of crème fraîche, and parsley, adjusting to your preference for richness and consistency. Spoon the eggs into a serving bowl, finish with Maldon salt, and serve with brioche toasts.

23.

## **SCRAMBLED EGGS**

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### ASSIGNMENT

- Chef Keller suggests you try blending the eggs after passing through the chinois for further refinement. Compare how this step affects the final results in each recipe.
- Make both recipes and taste side by side, as Chef Keller does. Take notes on the differences in texture and flavor, and record your preferences.



24.

## **POACHED EGGS**

---

*“The result of a beautifully poached egg is something that is not only very elegant but very satisfying.”*

—Chef Thomas Keller

## POACHED EGGS

### CHAPTER REVIEW

#### MISE EN PLACE

##### Ingredients

- 2 eggs
- 100 grams (¼ cup) distilled white vinegar
- Brioche, sliced

##### Equipment

- 4-quart saucepot
- 2 small bowls
- Ice bath
- Slotted spoon
- Small kitchen scissors
- Serving plate

People are often apprehensive about poaching eggs but it's a simple technique. Start with a deep saucepot that will hold enough water to create a vortex. The swirling water will help the egg white envelop the yolk evenly as the egg white proteins set, creating a nice natural shape. Adding distilled vinegar to the boiling water is essential to help set the egg white.

#### METHOD

Bring water and vinegar to a gentle simmer. Taste the water for a slightly acidic taste. Crack each egg into separate small bowls. Begin to create a vortex in the water by vigorously swirling the water around the edge of the pot. One at a time, slip the eggs into the center of the vortex. As the egg drops into the water, the egg will set into a teardrop shape. Gently, reinvigorate the vortex and repeat with another egg. It is best to poach only 2–3 eggs at a time. After 2 minutes, gently lift out an egg with a slotted spoon and check that the yolk is soft to the touch. If the yolk is too soft, return it to the simmering water. Once the egg has finished cooking, drain the egg on a paper towel. Use small kitchen scissors to trim off the stringy parts of the egg white. One way to serve the poached eggs is on sliced brioche.

#### ASSIGNMENTS

- If you're making a larger volume of poached eggs, you can poach them ahead of time, leave them in an ice bath, and reheat them in simmering water for 30–45 seconds. Practice Chef Keller's technique for reheating poached eggs.
- Practice poaching until you get your perfect shape and your preferred doneness.
- Apply your poached eggs as part of a composed dish. Try the grilled asparagus recipe on page 156 of *Ad Hoc at Home* which uses techniques you've already practiced for big-pot blanching and for making hollandaise sauce.



25.

## **OMELET**

---

*“We want our omelets to be beautiful, silken, of a consistent color which is that beautiful golden egg.”*  
—Chef Thomas Keller

25.

## OMELET

### MISE EN PLACE

#### Ingredients

- 3 eggs
- 100 grams beurre pommade\*
- 25 grams crème fraîche
- 2 tablespoons fines herbes (equal parts parsley, chives, and tarragon, minced)
- Kosher salt
- Maldon sea salt

#### Equipment

- Small bowl
- Mixing bowls
- Immersion blender and beaker
- Chinois
- Rubber spatula
- Pastry brush
- 8-inch nonstick fry pan
- Serving plate

\*Butter brought to room temperature so that it is soft, almost like the texture of mayonnaise.

### CHAPTER REVIEW

Chef Keller's mantra for cooking eggs is slow, slow, slow. Here, he applies that to the omelet.

### METHOD

Crack each egg into a small bowl so that you can remove any shell, if necessary, then transfer to a beaker. Use an immersion blender to blend and pass the mixture through a chinois. Brush the pan with beurre pommade and set over the lowest possible heat. Pour the eggs into the pan until the eggs begin to set at the edge of the pan. Transfer to the 250°F oven until the egg begins to set and thickens but not fully set, about 3–4 minutes. Spread crème fraîche down the center of the omelet, followed by a sprinkling of fines herbes and finishing salt. Begin by rolling one edge of the egg to the center. Continue rolling until you are able to slide the omelet out of the pan onto a serving plate with the seam side down. Brush lightly with beurre pommade for sheen, and complete with additional fines herbes and finishing salt.

### ASSIGNMENTS

- Omelets can be made with endless variations of fillings. Try adding sautéed mushrooms, melted leeks, or diced bacon, always making sure your ingredients are warmed before adding.
- Make an omelet on a regular basis to polish your technique. Note each filling you use in your tasting journal, and mark your favorites.

## PASTA: AN INTRODUCTION

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*“Pasta has a place in my heart from childhood.”*

—Chef Thomas Keller

### CHAPTER REVIEW

For Chef Keller, cooking is about emotions, memory, and the gratification of making meals for ourselves and others. Few foods fill that role for him more beautifully than pasta. Pasta can be made on the spot or ahead of time so you can enjoy the benefits of your work throughout the week. With a few simple ingredients—eggs, flour, oil, salt, and milk—we can make a variety of stuffed, shaped, and cut pastas. Although making pasta dough is relatively simple, forming pasta can be challenging, but deeply rewarding and almost magical as your work takes shape.

Potato gnocchi isn't technically a pasta. But, like pasta, it can be made ahead of time for convenience. You can make it on a weekday when you're craving a fresh meal born from your own skills, knowledge, and love.

Chef Keller challenges you to spend time mastering the skills needed to make great pastas and light, tender gnocchi.



27.

## **PASTA DOUGH**

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*“Pasta is something I really enjoy making because it gives me an opportunity to kind of play with the food.”*

—Chef Thomas Keller

## PASTA DOUGH

### CHAPTER REVIEW

#### MISE EN PLACE

##### Ingredients

- 500 grams Tipo “00” flour
- 250 grams egg yolks (ideally from Jidori hens)
- 1 whole egg
- 15–30 grams milk
- 25 grams extra-virgin olive oil

##### Equipment

- Large cutting board or pasta board
- Bench scraper
- Sealable plastic storage bag

Chef Keller makes a simple egg pasta dough that can be used for a variety of filled and cut pastas. He also uses “00” flour, which is milled to the finest consistency and has the right amount of protein for pasta-making. He urges you to do the same. Achieving the right consistency in your dough is more important than following exact measurements since there are so many variations in the moisture of the flour and in the air around you, as well as in the quality of the eggs. When Chef Keller worked in Italy, he made pasta with an Italian grandmother who knew the dough was done when it had the same suppleness of her earlobe. She would touch the pasta dough, and then touch her ear to compare.

#### METHOD

In the center of a large cutting board or pasta board, place the flour in a mound. Use a bench scraper in hand, set aside about  $\frac{1}{6}$  of the flour. This flour is reserved for if your dough is too wet, as it is easier to add flour to a wet dough than to add liquid to a dry dough. Make a large well in the center of the mound. Pour in the yolks, the whole egg, milk, olive oil, and salt. With two fingers, begin swirling the ingredients together, incorporating in flour a little bit at a time, until it becomes a thick paste. Use the bench scraper to fold flour over the paste and cut in the flour. Once the flour has been incorporated, knead the dough until it resembles a smooth ball. If the dough is very sticky, add a small amount of the reserve flour as needed. It takes practice to know when the dough has reached the right tightness. Put dough into a sealable plastic storage bag and refrigerate at least 4–5 hours so that the gluten has time to relax before rolling out the pasta. The dough can also be made a day ahead.

#### ASSIGNMENT

- Every time you make pasta dough, note the conditions that affect your dough, such as the temperature in your home and the weather. Then note how your dough turned out. Refer to your notes in order to achieve consistent results.



28.

## **AGNOLOTTI**

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*“The Italians were brilliant in the way they made pasta—and the idea that their pastas would have sauces and that they needed somewhere to trap the sauce in the different shapes. In the agnolotti, it’s in that little pocket that’s formed when you roll it together.”*

—Chef Thomas Keller

## AGNOLOTTI

### CHAPTER REVIEW

#### MISE EN PLACE

##### Pea farce

##### Ingredients

- 300 grams frozen peas
- 50 grams brioche crumbs
- 150 grams mascarpone cheese
- 4 grams kosher salt

##### Equipment

- Food processor
- Tamis

##### Agnolotti

##### Ingredients

- 1 recipe egg pasta dough
- Tipo “00” flour for dusting

##### Equipment

- Pasta roller
- Large cutting board or pasta board
- Piping bag
- Piping tip,  $\frac{9}{16}$  inch
- Kitchen shears
- Fluted pasta wheel
- Large offset palette knife
- Sheet pan, parchment-lined and dusted with semolina
- Sealable plastic storage bag

Agnolotti are pasta pillows filled with a “farce”—or filling—that can be made of cheese, meat, fish, or a combination of those ingredients. The pasta style originated in the Piedmont region of Italy.

When making agnolotti, work in small batches so that your dough doesn’t dry out.

#### METHOD

##### For pea farce:

Trim crust from brioche, cut it into cubes, and process in the food processor to make fine crumbs. Scale out the necessary amount for the recipe and freeze the rest.

Bring a large pot of water to a rapid boil and season it heavily with salt. Blanch the peas until they are soft then drain them through a strainer. While they’re still warm, gently squeeze out the excess water from the peas by wringing them out in a lint-free towel. Place the peas in the processor and process until smooth. Add the mascarpone and brioche crumbs and continue blending until the mixture is homogenous. Taste and add additional salt if necessary.

Pass the farce through a tamis into a shallow container. Cover the farce with plastic wrap and gently press the wrap onto the surface of the farce to prevent a skin from forming. Chill the farce as quickly as possible. Store covered and refrigerated if not using right away. Insert piping tip into the piping bag and snip the plastic to the edge of the piping tip. Fill the piping bag with the farce, taking care not to overfill the bag, as it makes it difficult to handle.

##### For agnolotti:

Cut off a piece of dough slightly smaller than a stick of butter. Flatten the dough into a rectangular piece to approximately  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch. Run the dough through the pasta machine at its widest setting. Then fold the dough in half and run it through the machine once again feeding it into the machine at its folded edge. Repeat this process 3 to 4 more times. This process helps develop a smooth, supple texture.

## AGNOLOTTI

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### METHOD CONT.

After the initial folding and rolling process, decrease the pasta roller width to the next setting and roll the dough through twice. Repeat this process, progressively reducing the thickness each time until the dough is very thin and translucent. While rolling, try to use as little flour for dusting as possible, as this will dry the surface of the pasta and prevent the pasta from adhering.

Lightly dust the pasta board with flour. Lay the sheet of dough down on dusted board. Pipe a bead of the pea farce down the length of the center of the pasta sheet. Do not pull on the farce; let it fall out of the bag by applying equal pressure around all sides of the bag. Fold the dough over the top of the farce. Use your thumb to compress the dough around the farce. Repeat the compression once again, further tightening the dough against the bead. Pinch the bead between the forefingers and thumbs of each hand to compress it into “pillows” about  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch wide. Compress once again to pinch the dough together to form a tight seal. Use the fluted pasta wheel to trim along the dough, leaving  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch of dough at the edge of the pillows. If you’re right-handed (if you are left-handed, work in the opposite direction), start at the leftmost pillow. With a quick and decisive motion, use the fluted pasta wheel to cut the end of the dough adjacent to the pillow. With your left hand, gently hold the pillow in place while using the fluted pasta wheel to roll through the middle of the pinched area between the next pillow. Repeat all the way down until all of the agnolotti have been cut. Inspect your agnolotti to make sure they are sealed at the edges, and pinch together as needed.

Line up the agnolotti on an offset palette knife and use it to transfer the pasta to the sheet pan and line up the pasta in evenly spaced rows to be refrigerated or for prolonged storage. Freeze the pasta on the tray and transfer the agnolotti to a sealable plastic storage bag and freeze until you’re ready to use.

### ASSIGNMENTS

- Make the agnolotti and cook a fresh portion to taste, then freeze the remaining pasta until you’re ready to cook the recipe in Chapter 29: Agnolotti With Peas and Bacon.
- Make a different version of the agnolotti using one of the versions of farce from pages 80–83 of *The French Laundry Cookbook*.



29.

## **AGNOLOTTI WITH PEAS AND BACON**

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*“Be patient. As cooks we always want to be playing with the food and sometimes we do that before it really has to be done and end up diminishing our ability to let the food cook.”*

—Chef Thomas Keller

## AGNOLOTTI WITH PEAS AND BACON

### CHAPTER REVIEW

#### MISE EN PLACE

##### Ingredients\*

- Kosher salt
- 8–10 agnolotti
- 20 grams frozen peas
- 20 grams bacon, diced and rendered
- Parmesan cheese
- 75 grams chicken stock
- 50 grams butter
- Champagne vinegar to taste

\*Note: This recipe is for 1 portion; however, if you are preparing more than 1 serving, the quantity of chicken stock and butter will not increase in direct proportion to that number of portions. It will most likely be significantly less. Increased portions also may require cookware with a larger diameter.

##### Equipment

- 12-quart stockpot, water brought to a boil
- 8-inch nonstick fry pan
- 10-inch sauté pan
- Skimmer
- Serving bowl

This is a very quick-cooking dish, so begin cooking just before you are ready to serve. When it's time to remove your pasta from the cooking water, gently scoop it with a skimmer to protect the shape and appearance that you put so much effort into making. You'll add the peas at the last minute to preserve their color and delicate flavor. With the delicate parmesan crisp, Chef Keller demonstrates how to transform a mistake into something beautiful. Don't ever let a setback prevent you from making a great dish.

#### METHOD

##### For parmesan crisp:

Just before making the parmesan crisps, finely grate the parmesan on a rasp grater. It is important to use freshly grated parmesan to make sure the cheese knits together. Heat the nonstick pan over medium heat. Sprinkle the parmesan cheese in an even layer covering the bottom of the pan by about  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch. Cook the parmesan until it forms a lacy pattern and becomes golden brown. Use a small offset palette knife to remove the crisp from the pan. While it is still hot, drape the crisp over a small cup. Allow the crisp to cool. The crisps may be made up to 1 hour ahead of time and stored in a dry area.

##### For agnolotti:

Fill the stockpot with water, bring it to a simmer, and season with salt. Heat sauté pan over medium heat. Add the chicken stock and water mixture to the sauté pan and bring to a simmer. Add butter to the sauté pan and season with salt and champagne vinegar. The champagne vinegar will cut through the fat and elevate the flavor.

Drop agnolotti in the pasta water and stir gently to prevent the agnolotti from settling on the bottom and sticking. Cook the pasta until the agnolotti float to the surface. The time depends on the size of the pasta and whether it has been frozen. The pasta will finish cooking in the sauce. While the pasta is poaching, the butter will be emulsifying into the chicken stock to form the sauce. Once the agnolotti float to the surface, use a skimmer to transfer them to the sauté pan.

29.

## **AGNOLOTTI WITH PEAS AND BACON**

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### METHOD CONT.

Swirl the agnolotti in the sauce to coat them. Adjust the consistency with more stock, if necessary. Add a little more butter to form a tight emulsion. Spoon in the peas and bacon, and cook until they are heated through. Remove from heat and spoon the agnolotti, garnish, and sauce into a serving dish. Finish by placing the parmesan crisp on top.

### ASSIGNMENTS

- Try the crisp technique with different hard cheeses, noting successes and failures in your tasting journal.
- Chef Keller encourages you to use this simple sauce as a base for the endless combinations of flavors you can use instead of bacon and peas. Create your own version of this dish and share in [The Hub](#).



30.

## **SPAGHETTI ALLA CHITARRA AND CAVATELLI**

---

*“This is something that takes a bit of time but I always find that there is great gratification in making my own food and certainly pasta.”*

—Chef Thomas Keller

30.

# SPAGHETTI ALLA CHITARRA AND CAVATELLI

## CHAPTER REVIEW

### MISE EN PLACE

#### Equipment

- Chef's knife
- Cutting board
- 2 parchment-lined baking sheets

#### Spaghetti alla chitarra

#### Ingredients

- Pasta dough, rolled to  $\frac{1}{16}$  inch
- Chitarra
- Tipo "00" flour for dusting

#### Equipment

- Rolling pin
- Bench scraper

#### Cavatelli

#### Ingredients

- Pasta dough, rolled to  $\frac{1}{16}$  inch
- Tipo "00" flour for dusting

#### Equipment

- Gnocchi paddle
- Butter knife

A chitarra, which translates to “guitar” in Italian, is a piece of equipment developed in the late 1800s to cut spaghetti. It’s shaped somewhat like a guitar, with fine steel strings through which you push the pasta dough. The strings cut the dough into thin spaghetti noodles. Note the difference in shape between these noodles and boxed spaghetti, which is round because it is made with an extruder. Most boxed pasta is only made with water and flour.

Cavatelli is a small, curled, ridged pasta. The ridges help capture the sauce. Chef Keller shows you how to make cavatelli using a small, ridged, wooden board—called a gnocchi board—and a butter knife.

### METHOD

#### For spaghetti alla chitarra:

Roll the pasta sheet to slightly less than the thickness of a spaghetti noodle. Trim your sheet of pasta dough so that it fits over the strings of the chitarra. Allow the pasta sheet to dry for a few minutes before rolling—this will help keep the strands separated. Roll the rolling pin over the pasta sheet to push it through the steel strings. Spread noodles out on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper and set aside to dry.

#### For cavatelli:

Roll the pasta dough into  $\frac{1}{16}$ -inch thick sheet. Cut your sheet of pasta dough into  $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch wide ribbons. Then cut the ribbons into 1-inch long pieces. Place one of the rectangles of dough onto the ridged side of the gnocchi paddle and with the edge of the butter knife, apply pressure to the edge closest to you. Push down on the knife with your thumb and roll forward, to curl the dough off of the paddle and into the cavatelli shape. The side profile of the cavatelli should resemble a tightly rolled “C.”

30.

## **SPAGHETTI ALLA CHITARRA AND CAVATELLI**

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### LEARN MORE

- Your options for storing your fresh pasta depend on the shape and thickness of the pasta. For cut pasta like spaghetti alla chitarra, you can dry or freeze the pasta. You can dry on a sheet pan, which allows the pasta to stay straight and makes for easy handling; or, you can dry as nests on a sheet pan, for more compact storage—but take care, as the noodles can dry unevenly and clump together. Your dried pasta will keep for up to one month. You can also freeze on a sheet pan and store in a plastic bag, which allows you to keep the short cooking time and properties of fresh pasta, but it requires refrigeration space. Frozen pasta will keep for up to two weeks.

### ASSIGNMENT

- Chef Keller prefers to dry his pastas so that he has more time to perfect the cooking to al dente when he is using pasta in a composed dish. After making your spaghetti, try drying your noodles, as well as freezing them. Compare the differences in their textures in your tasting notebook.



31.

## **SPAGHETTI AGLIO E OLIO**

---

*“In the restaurants, we typically just blanch our pasta, whether it’s dry, [or] whether it’s agnolotti.”*

—Chef Thomas Keller

31.

## SPAGHETTI AGLIO E OLIO

### CHAPTER REVIEW

#### MISE EN PLACE

##### Ingredients

- 60 grams dried spaghetti alla chitarra
- 20 grams garlic confit, puréed
- 20 grams garlic confit cloves (6–8 medium garlic cloves)
- 1 pinch Italian parsley, émincer
- Extra virgin olive oil with a spicy flavor profile
- 1 lemon
- 1 piece bottarga di muggine
- Kosher salt

##### Equipment

- 7-quart pasta pentola, water brought to a boil
- 2-quart saucier
- Ladle
- Pasta fork
- Microplane
- Serving bowl

Aglione olio, meaning garlic and olive oil, is a simple dish, though here Chef Keller elevates it by finishing it with garlic confit and bottarga. This preparation uses dried spaghetti alla chitarra from Chapter 30.

#### METHOD

Bring water to a simmer in the pasta pentola and lightly season the water with salt. Take care not to over-season the water, as the water will form the basis of the sauce. Blanch the dried pasta for a few minutes until the pasta bends but is still very al dente. Lift the pasta from the water using the strainer basket and transfer to the saucier. Ladle enough of the pasta water to cover the spaghetti and bring the liquid to a simmer. Spoon in the garlic confit purée and stir with the pasta fork to evenly distribute it. Continue to cook the pasta to glaze it in the liquid to sauce consistency. Taste the pasta for doneness. If it requires more time, add more pasta water and continue to cook.

Once the pasta is cooked to your liking, add the confit garlic cloves and heat through. Finish by drizzling in extra virgin olive oil and sprinkling in the parsley. To serve, twist the pasta on the pasta fork and transfer to the serving dish. Spoon the remaining garlic cloves and sauce over the noodles. Finish the dish with more extra virgin olive oil, lemon zest, and grated bottarga. If you cannot source bottarga, the dish is beautiful with only the garlic confit and lemon zest to finish.



32.

## **FETTUCCINE AND LINGUINE**

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*“It’s a process of making sure that there’s still moisture in your pasta that allows it to be pliable, easily cut, and then unwound.”*

—Chef Thomas Keller

32.

## FETTUCCINE AND LINGUINE

### CHAPTER REVIEW

#### MISE EN PLACE

##### Ingredient

- Partially dried pasta sheets, 1 millimeter thick (translucent when held to a light)

##### Equipment

- Chef's knife
- Cutting board
- Parchment-lined baking sheet, semolina-dusted

Noodles were originally hand cut, so noodle width wasn't always precise. Chef Keller demonstrates the width of cut for fettuccine and linguine using sheets of partially dried pasta.

#### METHOD

Roll the pasta dough to the same thickness as described for the agnolotti. Cut your pasta sheet to the desired length of noodles. Hang the sheets on the pasta rack and allow it to dry just until the surface forms a light skin and is no longer tacky. Place the pasta sheet on a lightly floured surface and very lightly dust the sheet of pasta with flour. Roll the pasta sheet, press down lightly to flatten, and slice into ribbons of the desired width, approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch for fettuccine and  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch for linguini.

#### ASSIGNMENT

- Practice cutting fettuccine and linguine, then try executing other ribbon cuts, such as pappardelle, tagliatelle, and lasagne.
- Apply your linguine to Linguine with White Clam Sauce (omit the canape steps) on page 25 of *The French Laundry Cookbook*.
- Pappardelle with Mushrooms translates well to a fettuccine cut. Try Chef Keller's recipe on page 214 of *Ad Hoc at Home*.



33.

## **GNOCCHI**

---

*“The best way for you to get a handle on making gnocchetti is to continue to make it.”*

—Chef Thomas Keller

# GNOCCHI

## CHAPTER REVIEW

### MISE EN PLACE

#### Ingredients

- 2 russet potatoes, approximately 11 ounces each
- Kosher salt
- 75–100 grams flour
- 35 grams egg yolks

#### Equipment

- Pasta board
- 12-quart stockpot, water at a simmer
- Baking sheet
- Ricer
- Bench scraper
- Gnocchi paddle
- Sheet pan, lined with paper towels

In this lesson, Chef Keller makes Italian-style gnocchi from potato, egg, and flour. There are many varieties of Italian gnocchi, each made from different starchy ingredients. This variety originates from the Lombardy region in Northern Italy, and is the most common and well-known variety of gnocchi. It is extremely versatile in preparation and saucing. Potato gnocchi is a dumpling best made with starchy, fluffy, russet potatoes. There are different kinds of gnocchi, including French Parisienne gnocchi, which is made from *pâte à choux* instead of potato.

### METHOD

#### For the baked potatoes:

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Pierce the potatoes with a fork to allow moisture to escape while baking. Pour a generous mound of salt onto the center of a baking sheet to stabilize the potatoes and set the potatoes on top. Bake for one hour and use a paring knife to test for doneness. They should be soft and completely cooked. Brush off the excess salt and begin the process for making gnocchi while the potatoes are still hot.

#### For the gnocchi:

Scoop the potato flesh out of its jacket while still hot and moist, and push through the ricer onto your working surface. Form a well with the riced potato, much as you would for pasta dough, and sprinkle with flour. Add the egg yolks, season with salt, and sprinkle with flour; then use the bench scraper to mix in the ingredients. Begin to form a ball of dough, working gently. Do not knead—this will activate the gluten and make gummy gnocchi. The finished ball of dough should be soft to the touch and hold the imprint of your finger.

Use your fingers, not your palms, to roll and stretch the dough out to a rope the diameter of your preference. Cut the roll into pieces the size that you'd like your gnocchi to be, and then roll each piece into a ball. Gently roll each ball onto the gnocchi paddle to form an ovular-shaped gnocchi with ridges, letting each piece fall from the paddle onto the sheet pan. Season the simmering water with salt and add a gnocchi. Test for texture.

## GNOCCHI

### METHOD CONT.

If the gnocchi falls apart, it may need a little more flour and working of the dough. If the gnocchi is heavy and dense, there is not much you can do other than make observations and use this information to prevent this from occurring in subsequent batches.

As with any dumpling, the gnocchi will float to the top when done. Skim the gnocchi into an ice bath then drain on a paper towel-lined sheet pan. If you plan on freezing the gnocchi, transfer them to a parchment-lined sheet pan that has been lightly sprayed with vegetable oil. You can either serve your gnocchi right away, refrigerate and use within two days, or freeze and store in an airtight freezer bag for future use.

### LEARN MORE

- The Italians aren't the only ones making dumplings. French gnocchi is made from *pâte à choux*—flour, butter, and egg—no potato. This style is made by piping and cutting the paste into simmering water. Other cousins of the Italian potato gnocchi are the German *spätzle* and *knödel*, the Polish *pierogi*, and Chinese dumplings.

### ASSIGNMENT

- Learn about other types of gnocchi by making the *Gnocchi à la Parisienne* on pages 156–157 of *Bouchon*.



34.

## **GNOCCHI WITH POMODORO**

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*“One of the things I love about being a chef today is that chefs get to share with one another. We get to learn from one another. There is this great opportunity to collaborate.”*

—Chef Thomas Keller

## GNOCCHI WITH POMODORO

### CHAPTER REVIEW

#### MISE EN PLACE

##### Ingredients

- 325 grams gnocchi
- Parmesan cheese
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Basil sprigs

##### Equipment

- Cutting board
- Chef's knife
- 12-inch sauté pan
- Bowl for trim
- Box grater
- Microplane
- Palette knife
- Serving bowl

##### For pomodoro sauce

##### Ingredients

- 200 grams tomato, grated
- 10 grams garlic, grated
- 35 grams light olive oil
- 6 basil leaves
- Kosher salt, to taste
- Champagne vinegar, to taste

Pomodoro is a quick, fresh sauce that is perfect to cook with your frozen gnocchi for a beautiful meal of convenience. Chef Keller learned the box grater technique for tomatoes from Chef José Andrés. Use canned San Marzanos when tomatoes are out of season.

#### METHOD

Cut tomatoes in half on their equator, gently squeeze out the seeds, and use the fine side of a box grater to grate seeded tomatoes into a bowl, leaving the skin behind.

Heat sauté pan over high heat, add enough oil to barely coat the bottom of the pan. Once you start to see faint wisps of smoke, carefully add the gnocchi to the pan and give them a gentle shake to prevent them from sticking. Allow the gnocchi to lightly caramelize. Use the sloped edge of the sauté pan to make the gnocchi “jump,” which will help them caramelize evenly. Season with salt. Remove the pan from heat and grate in the garlic. Take the pan back to the heat to lightly sauté the garlic. Add the grated fresh tomatoes. Season with more salt as needed to taste and a bit of vinegar. Remember that the parmesan will also add saltiness when you're finishing the pomodoro so account for that when seasoning. Remove the pan from heat and top the gnocchi with torn basil. Spoon the gnocchi and sauce onto a serving dish, and use the microplane to finish with parmesan cheese.

#### ASSIGNMENTS

- Try the technique of first blanching the gnocchi and then adding to a complete sauce. Which do you prefer? How does the flavor profile differ from that of frozen gnocchi cooked in hot oil? Take notes in your tasting journal.
- Pomodoro can be used for any type of pasta. Try it with a pasta that you've been wanting to practice making.
- Pomodoro is a quick sauce with fresh, bright flavors. For a tomato sauce with more concentrated flavors, make Chef Keller's Oven-Roasted Tomato Sauce on page 333 of *Ad Hoc at Home*.

## SIX DISCIPLINES OF SUCCESS

*“Without understanding at that time, I learned six disciplines which were critical to me becoming a really good cook, and then a really good chef. Those six disciplines I learned in front of the dishwasher.”*

—Chef Thomas Keller

### SUBCHAPTERS

- Organization
- Efficiency
- Critical Feedback
- Repetition
- Rituals
- Teamwork

### CHAPTER REVIEW

Chef Keller’s mother not only taught him invaluable lessons, she also gave him his first job: washing dishes in a restaurant she managed. During that time, he learned six disciplines of success—organization, efficiency, critical feedback, repetition, rituals, and teamwork.

Organization is not only about organizing your kitchen but about organizing yourself, so that you’re ready for your tasks and ready to lead. Taking care to build templates and perfect your mise en place will make you more efficient and better prepared. Chef Keller designs his restaurants for efficiency, with an eye toward eliminating unnecessary steps and finding ways to carry out tasks more efficiently.

Critical feedback—from colleagues, from those who are eating your food, or from yourself when you notice a mistake you’ve made—is vital. We all make mistakes. What’s important is knowing when we’ve made them and learning to correct them. Embracing criticism is crucial to improving.

Cooking is all about repetition. Practice doesn’t always make perfect. But it will make you a better cook. Repetition will bridge the gap between having a skill and being able to teach somebody that skill. That is when you know you’ve truly mastered your craft.

When Chef Keller was a dishwasher, he found pleasure in rituals, even menial tasks performed at the same time every day, like taking out the garbage, cleaning the washing machine, and sweeping the floors. For restaurant staff, rituals ensure that every detail is taken care of consistently. They establish a sense of calm before service begins. Chef Keller practices rituals in his personal life, like his two daily morning eggs, and embraces the rituals that nourish him throughout his day.

Everyone in Chef Keller’s restaurants is part of a unified team. He believes that if anyone makes a mistake, then they’ve all made the mistake. In your home kitchen, your friends and family are your team. Get them involved in a recipe and have fun!

35.

## SIX DISCIPLINES OF SUCCESS

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### LEARN MORE

- Refer to Chef Keller's six disciplines throughout your cook's education. Be thoughtful about the way you move in the kitchen, your mise en place, and your personal readiness. Which discipline are you most drawn to? Which do you feel is your greatest challenge? Record your thoughts in your notebook.

### ASSIGNMENTS

- Embrace repetition by making the same dish every Sunday for the next month.
- Make a ritual around preparing food. Begin a preserving tradition during your favorite growing season.
- To practice teamwork, make cavatelli or gnocchi with your family or friends.

## ESSENTIAL PHILOSOPHIES

*“Chef Henin took me aside one day. He was explaining to me why cooks cook, whether you were the short-order cook down the street, or whether you were the private cook for a family, or whether you were a chef in one of the finest restaurants in the world. And he said to me, ‘Cooks cook to nurture people,’ and at that moment, that very moment, July 1977, is when I decided to become a professional chef.”*

—Chef Thomas Keller

### SUBCHAPTERS

- Cook to Nurture People
- True Creation: Be Aware, Be Inspired, Interpret, and Evolve
- The Law of Diminishing Return
- Choose Words as You Would Ingredients
- Sayings to Work By
- Stand on the Shoulders of Masters
- Parting Words

### CHAPTER REVIEW

Whether you cook for a family or are a chef in one of the finest restaurants in the world, cook to nurture people.

Chef Keller’s creativity is driven by awareness. If you condition your awareness for what is going on around you, it will help you be able to embrace a moment of inspiration—a rare and special moment that could otherwise easily pass you by. In New York City in the early 1990s, Chef Keller was at a Baskin-Robbins and when a young server put up an ice cream cone in a stand on the counter, Chef Keller saw the cornet and interpreted it into what became a very famous and replicated recipe. The next part of the creative process is evolution, which manifests by continuously trying to improve upon a dish’s significance.

The law of diminishing return as applied to cooking means that the more you have of something, the less you’ll like it. Palette saturation and flavor fatigue occur. Chef Keller strives to compose dishes that when you’re finished eating your first reaction is, “I’d like to have one more bite of that.”

Choose language that shows respect for your craft, your coworkers, your tools, and your ingredients. In Chef Keller’s kitchens he and his staff use the phrase “it’s all about finesse” to remind themselves and each other that there are a lot of chefs who are able to do what Chef Keller and his staff are doing but it is the little bit extra, the slight extension that makes their dishes the best.

Chef Keller feels that the opportunities he has today are because of the chefs that came before him. The French Laundry is about that. It doesn’t carry Chef Keller’s name. It opened in 1977 and when he took it over in 1994 he continued its legacy. He feels that if he does his job correctly, he will fulfill his duty to continue that legacy by passing on his skills to future chefs.

### LEARN MORE

- Inspiration can happen anywhere. Begin the practice of carrying your tasting journal with you on your outings so that you can record an idea on the spot.

## ESSENTIAL PHILOSOPHIES

### LEARN MORE CONT.

- Continue your education by reading cookbooks that have had a profound influence on Chef Keller. He recommends the following:
  - **For inspiration:** *Ma Gastronomie* by Fernand Point and *Cooking with the Seasons* by J.L. Palladin
  - **On technique:** *La Technique* by Jacques Pépin and *La Methode* by Jacques Pépin
  - **On French cuisine:** *Le Répertoire de la Cuisine* (guide to Escoffier), *Larousse Gastronomique*, *The Great Chefs of France: The Masters of Haute Cuisine and Their Secrets* by Anthony Blake and Quentin Crewe
  - **On pastry:** *Baking Bible* by Rose Levy Beranbaum and *Taste of Bread* by Raymond Calvel
  - **In general:** *How to Cook Everything* by Mark Bittman; *Joy of Cooking* by Irma S. Rombauer and Marion Rombauer Becker; and *On Food and Cooking* by Harold McGee

### ASSIGNMENT

- Use the fundamental cooking techniques that you've learned in Chef Keller's class to nurture your friends and family. Interpret the techniques that you learned and express yourself. Continue to practice, practice, practice to refine your techniques.

# APPENDIX: COMPLETE LIST OF KITCHEN TOOLS AND COOKWARE

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## 1. Essential tools

- Knives
  - Chef's knife
  - Paring knife
  - Slicing knife
  - Bread knife
- Cookware
  - 8-inch sauté pan
  - 10-inch sauté pan
  - 2-quart saucepot
  - 4-quart saucepot
  - 8-quart stockpot
  - Nonstick sauté pan (10-inch and 8-inch)
  - Roasting pan with rack
  - 10–12 inch cast iron skillet pan
  - Half sheet pans
  - Accessories
    - Mixing bowls
    - Trivets
- Digital gram scale (Escali or OXO)
- Cutting board
- Pepper mills
- Ladle
- Spoons (variety of sizes for different applications)
- Wooden spoon
- Rubber spatula
- Stiff rubber spatula
- Palette knife (also called a straight cake spatula)
- Strainer
- Cheese grater
- Whisk (small and large)
- Scissors and shears
- Towels (kitchen and lint-free)
- Pastry card or bench scraper
- Paper towels

## 2. Tools of refinement

- Chinois
- Tamis
- Rasp grater (microplane)
- Mandoline (Rösle and Benriner)

## 3. Nice-to-have tools

- Fish spatula (Peltex)
- Slotted spoon
- Mini-spinner for herbs
- Baking mat (Silpat)
- Bain-marie
- Citrus reamer
- Bench scraper / dough cutter
- Meat mallet / paillarde
- Oyster knife

## 4. Situational tools

- Tongs
- Meat fork
- Spatula with thin blade
- Spider
- Salad spinner
- Pastry brush
- Rolling pin
- Tweezers
- Wire cake rack

## 5. Electronic appliances

- Blender (Vita Prep)
- Food processor (Cuisinart)
- Immersion blender (All-Clad)
- Coffee grinder (Krupps)
- Stand mixer (KitchenAid)



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