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## How To Cook Like A TV Chef

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The sauteed John Dory with fennel confit you had at that fancy restaurant may have been fabulous, but you think you could never recreate it at home, right? While cooking may be an art, it's not magic. With a few tips, the right tools and a few "insider" techniques, you can cook like the celebrity chefs you see on TV.

A fan favorite from Bravo's "Top Chef: Chicago," chef and restaurateur Richard Blais is known for his global ingredients and modern cooking methods. He offers his tips, tricks and must-have ingredients for at-home cooks to prep like the pros:

### ***Get organized and keep a clean kitchen***

A great shelving system is an easy way to get your kitchen space organized and make cooking a more enjoyable experience. "Many people don't like to cook at home because it's not always easy to find key ingredients and cleanup can be daunting at times," says Blais. "It's so important to be organized so you can find the ingredients you need and be meticulous about cleaning as you go - it makes a big difference and you can enjoy your meal even more knowing a sink full of dishes doesn't await you when you're done."

### ***The kindest cut***

"You get more of a feel for what you're working on when you're working off a wooden board versus a plastic or aluminum board," he says. Use separate cutting boards for meats and produce, and never put a wooden cutting board in the dishwasher or into a sink of water. Instead, scrub the surface with all-natural soap and hot water and let it dry completely.

### ***The right appliances***

Blais says the must-have elements in a well-functioning home kitchen include a handheld immersion blender and food processor. He recommends the **LG** gas cooktop, like the one he uses at home. The appliance features high performance and a center burner offering a powerful 19,000 BTU output (usually only seen in professional-grade cooktops), along with versatility, easy cleaning and a sleek look. It's one of many built-in appliance options that individuals can choose from based on their cooking style and kitchen layout.

He also encourages home chefs to take advantage of the convenience of the microwave, which he believes may be the most underutilized piece in the kitchen. "Warm and reheat tender braises, use it for fruit purees and jams, and rest roasts in it," adds Blais, noting that some new models now feature a warming lamp to keep dishes hot until mealtime.

### ***Surf and turf***

Blais goes on to note that high-powered gas cook tops are perfect for searing protein, advising home chefs to always start their meat or seafood by searing in a hot pan to get good browning and finish in a lower temperature oven.

**Pantry staples**

And what items are always on hand in the chef's pantry and refrigerator?

- Seasonal vegetables
- Great olive oil
- Mild cooking oil
- Fresh herbs
- Sea salt
- Fish sauce
- Chili sauce or Sriracha (Thai hot sauce)
- Sherry and balsamic vinegars
- Mustard
- Mayonnaise

Blais offers his signature "Blaised Beef" recipe and encourages all inspired home cooks to get into the kitchen and start making magic.

**Blaised Beef**

Serves two

**Ingredients:**

- 1 pound beef tenderloin, trimmed
- 1 sprig fresh rosemary
- 1 sprig fresh thyme
- 2 cloves fresh garlic
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 tablespoons butter or bacon fat
- Salt and black pepper to taste

**Instructions:**

- Dry the filet with paper towels and season aggressively with salt and black pepper.
- Heat olive oil in an oven-proof pan and sear the meat.
- While browning all sides of the filet, add herbs, garlic and butter or bacon fat.
- Baste the filet with the butter/oil mixture until all sides are browned.
- Place pan in a 325 F oven and cook until the meat reaches an internal temperature of 135 F.
- Remove from the oven and rest for 10 minutes.
- Serve with roasted potatoes and seasonal vegetables.

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