



**"Your Neighborhood Appliance Specialists"**

### A HELPFUL COOKING HINT

*Do onions really make you cry?...*

*...ASK YOUR LACHRYMAL GLANDS!*



No, *lachrymal glands* is not a naughty word. Let us explain:

Do you really cry when you're peeling and chopping an onion?

Onions induce tears because of their noxious gases and chemical interactions. Raw onions produce a chemical vapor that converts to a sulfuric acid in the air, irritating the lachrymal glands in your eyes and causing tears. **REJOICE!** - You can reduce your sobbing by changing your preparation and cutting method. Try these tear-reducing techniques:

1. Chill onions in the refrigerator for 30 minutes before peeling or chopping them. Sulfuric vapors move more slowly in the cold -- think about how garbage smells worse during hot weather.
2. Leave the onion root intact until the last possible minute to prevent irritants from escaping into the air. The root contains the largest concentration of sulfuric compounds in an onion.
3. Chop or cut the onion with a sharp knife. Fast, clean slicing puts less pressure on the onion tissue and minimizes the release of sulfuric compounds. A sharp knife also allows you to get done faster and reduce your exposure to the onion fumes.
4. Open a window or light a scented candle close to your chopping station. The hot flame of a candle attracts tear-causing vapor and reduces the amount of vapor circulating in the air.
5. Wear gloves and a painter's mask if you experience particularly strong reactions to onion vapor.



### POP QUIZ CORNER

Let's talk **GARBAGE!**  
(answers on back page)

Are you ready for a quiz about garbage? Wait a minute – let's call it a quiz about what will be (or is already) garbage, but shouldn't be.

This is a quiz about the vast amounts of food we throw away and should get you thinking about how to reduce this cycle of food waste:

1. What percentage of foods are grown but never harvested?
2. What percentage of foods are lost in transit on the way to where you would purchase?
3. What percentage of foods do supermarkets throw away?

**BONUS:** What percentage of foods purchased are thrown away by American households?

4. In restaurants, what percentage of major leftovers are **NOT** taken home? You know – the old "doggie bag" routine, but you really don't own a pet!
5. Where do food scraps rank in terms of a component in the national waste stream?





## AUTOMOBILE FYI...

### Dealing with the CHECK ENGINE light!

(...and what this has to do with your major appliances.)

This has probably happened to you at one time or another. The CHECK ENGINE light all of a sudden illuminates on the dashboard of your car. What do you do?

There's lots of different advice on how to deal with this warning light, because many times your car continues to run perfectly. Some sources just say forget about it - others say get it fixed.

Auto repair expert Jonathan Welsh, "...recommends having the vehicle checked when its check engine light comes on because the cause is often a mystery. Faulty sensors, loose wires and gas caps that need tightening can trigger the light. But it can also mean low oil level or a serious problem with electronics that can harm the engine."

And now here's some advice about your appliances from major appliance repair expert Mike Staats alias Captain Toolhead:

*"Think of major appliances just as you would a car. Since there is no check engine light on major appliances (yet), problems frequently show up as noises. And just as the auto repair expert suggests you check out the engine light, you should check out those unfamiliar noises your appliances are making, as well. Respond to appliance noises just as they occur. Don't wait. That noise is your appliance saying, 'fix me now, fix me now' and you can identify the problem*

*and fix it now or wait until more significant damage occurs and more expensive repair bills follow.*

*And while we are on the subject of repair bills...don't be tempted to junk a major appliance automatically when something goes wrong. Explore the repair options first so that you have something to compare to the cost of a new appliance. In general, most repairs cost less than 20% of the total cost of replacement."*

NBC's *Today Show* correspondent Jeff Yeager, The Ultimate Cheapskate, suggests using the 50% RULE. Whether it's a roof or a refrigerator, if the repair cost is less than half of the replacement cost, go for the repair. And don't forget TOTAL replacement cost including delivery, installation, parts and labor, sales taxes, old appliance haul-off and on and on. A replacement cost is generally much more than just a lowball price you may see in an advertisement. You need both pieces of information to make a sensible decision - a complete repair estimate AND a total replacement cost.

Every appliance failure represents a dilemma. Call us and we will assist you in providing quality information to make an educated and informed repair vs. replace decision.

## The Chef's Mailbox \*



**Q.** Why does my pan-fried food come out soggy and greasy?

**A.** Believe it or not, you are not using enough oil! Before shallow-frying, pour oil into a pan that is equivalent to nearly half of the depth of your food. Heat it well and fry the food. When done, drain on a rack and blot excess oil with paper towels. The food will be crisp and less greasy than if you had skimmed on the oil.

**Why?** When food heats, water escaping from the food creates a tiny layer of steam that lifts the food off the bottom of the pan. If there is not enough oil in the pan, the food will not make full contact with the oil. You need to allow the food to "float" somewhat. If not, the food is steaming instead of frying and merely absorbs the oil, sponge-like, upon contact. With a thick enough layer of oil, the food will have full surface-contact with the oil and will fry nicely. Properly fried food does not actually absorb much oil.

\* in-depth answers and (sometimes counterintuitive) explanations are from Nathan Myhrvold's 2400-page, 47-pound, six-volume *Modernist Cuisine: The Art and Science of Cooking*.



## 2011 Food Trends

The Food Channel ([foodchannel.com](http://foodchannel.com)) has released their 2011 Food Trends Forecast – the Top Ten Trends for all things FOOD! for the coming year. Here are some of the top trends you'll see:

- *The Canning Comeback:* They used to call it 'putting up,' as in putting up tomatoes or corn for the winter ahead. Maybe your grandmother still refers to it that way. What it means of course is canning, pickling, and preserving—and more and more folks will be getting into it for a number of reasons. One major one is the concern for food safety. The recent scares over contaminated tomatoes, peanut butter, and eggs have driven people to take more control over what they put on the table.
- *Men in Aprons:* The slumping economy has hit men harder than women, with job losses in traditionally male fields such as finance and construction. Women, on the other hand, are employed in fields that are expected to flourish in the years ahead. Many couples have a new balance of power: female breadwinner, male bread buyer (and baker). The rise of the *Sheconomy*, as TIME magazine calls it, is expected to last for a while. For every two guys who graduate from college, three women do. The recession is only part of it. Men have been influenced by macho chefs on TV's cooking shows, where it's all about culinary competition, achievement and triumph. Plus, what guy doesn't love a cool new gadget or tool? And there are lots of those in the kitchen these days.
- *Fresh Every Day- Rediscovering the butcher, baker and cheese maker:* We see American food shoppers going about their marketing a bit more like our European counterparts in the coming year. People will be returning to the neighborhood butcher shop to pick up fresh meats and grabbing their specialty breads and pastries at the corner bakery or bakery-café, and shopping on nearly an everyday basis for the evening meal. Yes, the large supermarkets and everything-under-one-roof big box stores will still get the lion's share of our grocery dollars, but the increased popularity of farmers markets has whetted our appetite for locally-sourced foods and one-on-one personal attention.
- *Local somewhere:* Politicians say that all politics is local. It's becoming more and more evident that the same is true for food. This trend understands that mindset—that it's all about eating local, but that local goes beyond a geographical definition. The new local is really about the independent spirit that causes entrepreneurial people to develop new food products, open new restaurants, and bring new food ideas to life. In other words, local has moved and it didn't leave a forwarding address.

GOOD TO KNOW!



Hold the lemon verbena and add some ginger yuzu!

Lavender  
Lemon verbena  
Geranium  
Basil blue sage  
Ginger pomelo  
Sea salt neroli  
Sandlewood riceflower  
Pink grapefruit  
Sea minerals  
Cucumber  
Ginger yuzu  
Blue eucalyptus  
Orange citrus  
Aloe and green tea  
Tangerine  
Water lily

Are these flowers? New perfume fragrances? New body-wash scents? Nope. These terms refer to fragrances available in upscale household cleaning products.

We've come a long way from the scent options of yesteryear – pine and citrus.

We've also come a long way in cost—where upscale cleaners can demand a price premium of 30%-40% over mass-market household cleaners.

Now, go pamper yourself *AND* your countertops, sinks, floors, woodwork, showers, bathtubs and toilet bowls!



1. Though the percentage of grown food that is never harvested varies widely by type of food, one thing is certain: not everything makes it out of the field. For machine-harvested crops like corn and wheat, about 9% is not harvested. Handpicked fruits and perishable vegetables incur losses that are higher. Lettuce, for example, has an average harvest rate of between 85%-90%.

2. An average item in the produce section of a supermarket travels about 1500 miles. This journey takes a toll of about 10%-15% of the most fragile produce like tomatoes, leafy greens and grapes. Of course, the loss is much less when the transit distance is shortened. Buy produce that is grown locally!

3. Supermarkets toss out about 8% of fresh fruit and vegetables, 5% of their fresh meat and poultry and about 9% of fresh seafood. While some gets composted or donated, most ends up in landfills. BONUS: Americans discard about 25% of the food they purchase. If your average grocery bill is \$400/month, that is like leaving a \$20 bill on top of your garbage every week!

4. While diners will leave an average of 17% of their meals uneaten, 55% of major leftovers are not taken home.



5. Food scraps are the second-largest component (19%) of the national waste stream. It is estimated that 2% of all U.S. energy consumption goes into producing food that is ultimately thrown out. Seattle and San Francisco have made household composting mandatory. Norway has banned foods and biodegradable waste from its landfills. THINK ABOUT COMPOSTING!

There's an APP for that...



Online  
Confessional?

There's an app for that!

The Roman Catholic Church has given its OK to an iPhone application that keeps a record of sins committed. We really don't know what else to say, except what is next?

### Quote of the Day

"The truth of the matter is that you always know the right thing to do. The hard part is doing it."

-Gen. H. Norman  
Schwarzkopf