**How to Read a Recipe**

About 30 percent of the dishes prepared from written recipes go wrong because the cooks didn’t actually read the recipe. Here are a few **simple guidelines** to prevent this from happening to you.

1**. Read the recipe…Sit Down:** That’s right … sit down and simply read the recipe all the way through. Don’t make notes, don’t make lists, just read.

2. **NOW** **read it again**: Highlight any special procedures or write sidebars that might change your timeline, i.e. bringing butter to room temperature or chilling the cookie dough before baking.. Be careful to note punctuation. For instance, “1 cup chopped nuts” is not the same as “1 cup nuts, chopped.” Nor is 6 ounces of brown sugar the same as 3/4 cup brown sugar.

3**. Underline terms or techniques:** Make a side note on what the terms or technique means and what it should look like. It the recipe tells you to fold-in the beaten egg whites into the batter and you don’t really know what that means - ASK.

4. **Circle the time and temperature**: It will be easy to find when you do make your food. Be sure to circle any additional time that might be required such as resting time for bread, etc.

5. **Draw a Square around the sizes:** This will help you quickly find the proper sizes of pans, the diameter of rolls, the size of cookies, etc. **Get a ruler** if you need to check the size of the pan or cookie…DON’T ASSUME!

6. **Gather the equipment:** Make sure you know what a saucepan, or a jelly roll pan is and place it on the counter.

7. **Gather the ingredients:** Make sure you have the spices and herbs needs in the recipe. Also, that you have enough flour/sugar, etc. in your kitchen. *If you don’t know what something is ...ask! For example, if you don’t know what confectioner’s sugar is …. Ask don’t assume.*

8. **Be mindful:** Check the list of ingredients that may need to be thawed, or brought to room temperature. Keep in mind, *recipe writer’s list ingredients in order of use*, typically from largest amount to smallest. This is also a cue for the cook as to how the ingredients should be measured and used. For example, if a recipe calls for both a tablespoon of honey and a tablespoon of oil, we call for the oil first so that the honey will be easier to measure.

9. **Respect the order of the steps:** Number the order of the steps in the recipe if it has not been done for you. List such things as #1. Heat the oven and prep the pans before dealing with other ingredients. This will save you both time and heartache in the kitchen.

10. **Assign Tasks for Each Person:** Each person in your group has to be working in order to make this lab a success and each person should be COOKING! Write their names beside the job they will be doing. Divide the recipe up into sections so each person has a job to do.

12. **Always triple note cooking or baking times and their ‘doneness indicators’:** If the biscuits should be golden brown or the butter should smell nutty: remember your eyes and ears can tell you more than a timer every time. If it smells burnt ---it probably is!