

Leslie's Cucina



*"From Beginner To
Seasoned Chef"
by Leslie Vevera*

Leslie's Cucina

**From beginner to
seasoned chef.**

**Luscious dishes that are
created in the heart of
the home.**

Enjoy!

Leslie's Cucina

**Written by
Leslie Vevera**

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I love all of you!

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	5
Welcome to my kitchen!	7
What's great about this cookbook?	8
Recommended Ingredients & Prepared Items	10
Prepared Ingredients Recipes	13
Soups	18
Salads	30
Side Dishes	44
Main Dishes	58
My Absolute Favorites!	78
Italian Dishes	88
Garlic Bread, Pitas & Bread Crumbs	104
Closing Remarks	109
Glossary	110



Welcome to my kitchen!

Whether I'm contemplating a meal from beginning to end, thinking of the aroma, flavor and texture of each dish, going to the market and hand picking each item to creating new recipes, I feel a sense of peace in the kitchen. My younger sister used to say, "I love when you cook."

I suggest that you read through the entire recipe to be sure that you have everything that you need. I hope that you enjoy these recipes as much as my family and I do.

What's great about this cookbook?

The most important thing I wanted to do was make it easy for whomever is using it from the list of items for your pantry, to going to the grocery store, to the size and the way I had it bound. You can pop it in your purse or briefcase and, when you get to the store, just open to the recipe and fold it over, and there is your complete grocery list. You will not forget anything. There is nothing worse than getting home and finding out that you forgot one item. Been there; done that.

Also with these recipes you know exactly what is in your food and how it has been prepared. There is nothing like homemade. I feel this is very important, and I believe that there are many other people out there that feel the same way.



Recommended Ingredients & Prepared Items

Recommended Pantry Items (For the seasoned cook)

These are the items I have in my pantry and refrigerator at all times. Having these items on hand will help you to put together a luscious meal either quickly through the week or leisurely on a Sunday afternoon. You decide.

- ✓ Olive oil
- ✓ Balsamic vinegar & Red wine vinegar
- ✓ Granulated garlic
- ✓ McCormick® salt free all-purpose seasoning
- ✓ Mrs. Dash® table blend
- ✓ Herbs de Provence
- ✓ Italian seasoning
- ✓ Sea salt or Kosher salt
- ✓ Black pepper grinder
- ✓ 2 15 oz. cans tomato sauce
- ✓ 2 15 oz. cans diced tomatoes
- ✓ 2 28 oz. cans diced tomatoes
- ✓ 2 boxes whole grain pasta. I like penne and thin spaghetti.
- ✓ Bouillon bases (chicken, beef and vegetable); i.e., Better Than Bouillon® brand bouillon bases (This brand is by far the best.)
- ✓ Fresh garlic
- ✓ Onions
- ✓ 1 lb. lentils (brown)
- ✓ 1 lb. pinto beans
- ✓ 1 lb. brown rice
- ✓ 1 lb. pearl barley
- ✓ 1 lb. couscous
- ✓ Disposable vinyl gloves

Recommended Pantry Items

(For the beginner cook)

If you are just starting out on your own, I've put together a simple beginners list. Then you can add as you go along.

- ✓ Olive oil
- ✓ Balsamic vinegar
- ✓ Red wine vinegar
- ✓ Sea salt or Kosher salt
- ✓ Black pepper grinder
- ✓ Granulated garlic
- ✓ Italian seasoning
- ✓ McCormick® salt free all-purpose seasoning
- ✓ 2 15 oz. cans tomato sauce
- ✓ 2 15 oz. cans diced tomatoes
- ✓ 2 boxes whole grain pasta. I like penne and thin spaghetti.
- ✓ Bouillon bases (chicken, vegetable); i.e, Better Than Bouillon® brand bouillon bases (This brand is by far the best.)
- ✓ Fresh garlic
- ✓ Onions
- ✓ 1 lb. brown rice
- ✓ 1 lb. barley
- ✓ Disposable vinyl gloves

Refrigerator Ingredients

- ✓ Fresh parsley
- ✓ Fresh rosemary
- ✓ Hunk of parmesan
- ✓ Romaine, rinsed and spun. Store right in salad spinner with lid.
- ✓ Tomatoes
- ✓ Cucumber

Prepared Items to Have on Hand

- ✓ Marinated and grilled chicken tenders
- ✓ Ground turkey or round with onions and garlic
- ✓ Barley
- ✓ Rice
- ✓ Beans

Prepared Ingredients Recipes

Tip

Whenever you are cooking meat, pull it out of the fridge 20 minutes prior to cooking. It cooks more evenly.

Marinated Chicken Tenders

2 packages chicken tenders, cleaned and rinsed

Juice from 1 fresh lemon

Olive oil

Red wine vinegar

Kosher salt

Fresh ground pepper

McCormick® salt free all-purpose seasoning

Granulated garlic

Marinating container or Ziplock® gallon size bag

Put chicken in container or bag and add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup olive oil, $\frac{1}{8}$ cup vinegar, lemon juice, 1 tsp. salt, 1 tsp. pepper, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. garlic and 1 tbsp. McCormick® seasoning and toss to coat. Put the lid on, or seal the bag and refrigerate. Marinate for a few hours to overnight.

Grill over medium heat, roughly 2 to 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ minutes on each side. Store in an airtight container.

Ground Turkey Breast or Ground Round

48 oz. of meat

1 large onion, chopped

3 cloves garlic, chopped

1 tbsp. olive oil

Sea salt and freshly ground pepper

In a large frying pan over medium, heat up the oil and sauté onions and garlic until tender. Remove to a bowl. (If using turkey, add a little olive oil before adding meat. If using ground round no more oil is needed.)

Add meat and break it up with your spoon and add 2 tsp. salt and 1 tsp. pepper to start. Finish cooking. If extra fat is in the ground round, drain off. Stir in onions and garlic and cook over low for a few more minutes.

Store approximately $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups in airtight containers. Store in fridge or freezer, depending what you plan on preparing through the week.

Pre-cooked Barley

1 cup pearl barley

6 cups water

1 tsp. salt

(Yields roughly 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups cooked)

In a 3-quart pot combine all ingredients. Bring to a boil over medium heat and reduce to simmer. Cook until just tender, with a slight nutty bite. Cooking times may vary with gas or electric stoves.

Start to test after 20 to 25 minutes. Then go from there. Store in 1-cup airtight containers in fridge or freezer, depending on what you plan on preparing through the week.

Brown Rice

1 cup dry rice prepared yields roughly 2 cups cooked.

Prepare according to directions on package. Store in 1-cup airtight containers in the fridge or freezer, again depending on what you plan on preparing through the week.

Beans

6 cups pinto beans, sorted and rinsed

Water

Sea salt

(Yields roughly 8 to 10 cups cooked)

In my opinion the beans come out the best when soaked overnight. Follow the directions on the bag. When they are done, use a slotted spoon and store in 2-cup to 4-cup airtight containers. Store in the fridge or freezer depending on what you'll be preparing during the week.

Tip

Always have plenty of water covering the beans.

I like to have a small pot of water on low to add when needed.

They are great to have on hand for salads and soups, to mix into a pasta dish or puree and make a bean dip. Thaw and add to chili. There is nothing like homemade.

Soups



Cauliflower Soup

Serves 4-6

This soup is healthy and light with a ton of flavor.

1 medium sized cauliflower, tops only, cleaned

1 tbsp. olive oil

1 large onion, chopped

4 cloves garlic, chopped

1 large tomato, diced (use fresh only)

2 $\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp. dried oregano

Better Than Bouillon® vegetable bouillon base

2 $\frac{1}{2}$ quarts water

Sea salt and fresh ground pepper

In a 6-quart soup pot over medium, heat 1 tbsp. olive oil and sauté onions and garlic until tender. Add cauliflower, water, oregano and 1 tbsp. vegetable base. Bring to boil and turn down to simmer and cook until tender. Add tomato and taste to see if more base (1 tsp. at a time) or pepper is needed. Serve alone or with pasta and grated parmesan cheese. This is a luscious and quick recipe that can be a meal in itself or a first course. Enjoy!!