



# The Curious Cook: More Kitchen Science and Lore

*Harold McGee*

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## **The Curious Cook: More Kitchen Science and Lore** Harold McGee

When Harold McGee's *On Food and Cooking* was published in 1984, it proved to be one of the sleepers of the year, eventually going through eight hardcover printings. It was hailed as a "minor masterpiece" and reviewers around the world praised McGee for writing the first book for the home cook that translated into plain English what scientists had discovered about our foods. Like why chefs beat egg whites in copper bowls and why onions make us cry."

## **The Curious Cook: More Kitchen Science and Lore Details**

Date : Published April 20th 1992 by John Wiley & Sons (first published January 1st 1990)

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# **From Reader Review The Curious Cook: More Kitchen Science and Lore for online ebook**

## **John Millard says**

Harold knows his stuff and he is very giving with his enthusiasm.

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## **Elizabeth Olson says**

Companion volume to "On Food and Cooking", nearly as entertaining and enlightening as that first book.

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## **Connie says**

OMG I think I'm in love. Seriously, though, it has to say something about the quality of the writing and exploration that I (a vegan) have even read all the chapters on meat and eggs. The exposition is clear, the process is fascinating. If you have any interest in the overlap between chemistry and food, Harold McGee is for you.

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## **Tim says**

If you're really into knowing about food and cooking on the technical side, this is for you. You'll have to be dedicated although you can only read the chapters that interest you.

On the other hand try those that don't appear to appeal to you, some of his experiments very illuminating, if not amusing.

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## **Andre says**

The book *The Curious Cook*, by Harold McGee has some very interesting aspects on the science behind cooking and includes facts in the kitchen as well as debunking myths that are prevalent in cooking today. This interests me as both a home cook, a chemical engineer and pursier of the sciences. The understanding, and technical work that he has put into this is clear and simple enough to follow, and his descriptions of his experiments are useful in following along. The only problem that I have with this would lie in his procedure and development with said experiments. The first thing to note in these experiments is his uneven detail in procedure. Taken from a scientist's point of view, it is usually helpful to point out as many of the details as possible when describing one's procedure, so that results can be as reproducible as possible. However, in this aspect McGee seems to be lacking. An example of this can be seen while observing the experiment he did with the meat and finding how long it would take to bring it to a desired temperature while cooking, this can be found in the beginning of chapter three. This experiment, while simple in nature, makes me ask a few questions as to how exactly this can be accomplished. The first, and biggest one for me, was where exactly

was the probe inserted on the meat and how far down into the meat did he go? While an average person would probably infer 'in the top and down to the center' this is not made as clear as one might seem. The probe itself is what calls this aspect into question as there are many different types out there and each one has its own way of gathering data in more favorable conditions. As in it might have produced better data if coming in from the side.

Technicalities and procedures aside, I greatly enjoyed this book. This provides an informative and easy to understand explanation and results of his research in the culinary works. The things that particularly strike me as interesting is his explanations and results. The way that he describes his theories or thought process, makes the book easier to follow and keeps one thinking and noticing things that we have overlooked while cooking. There were many times while reading the book in which I went, "Oh yeah, that really does happen". Being able to bring things that would otherwise be unnoticeable, or otherwise accepted as fact, McGee calls into question and brings to the table several theories that help explain what is happening and ways to combat what is going on. The results that he gives at the end of the chapters are especially useful and are a great way of understanding what one can do to get the results that they are looking for. In addition to that he also encourages one to do some at home experimentation to produce ones own results that would work best for them, which to me implies that he encourages others to continue to try what is best for them to achieve their goal and not to imply that his methods are absolute.

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### **Cait says**

I refer to it every spring and summer. It has an extensive chart of proportion for making fruit ices.

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### **Radu P says**

Did not resonate with this one from Harold Mcgee. "On food and cooking" remains his representative creation.

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### **Lu says**

More of a text book. Interesting but needs time to refer to

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### **Susie says**

pedantic. . .

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### **C says**

This is 0 part cookbook, all food science and a little body science. There was a bit less about food than I

preferred and a bit more than I would have wanted to read about saturated fats and heart health...but an interesting chapter on aluminum cookware and alzhiemers that I've been meaning to read.

It's a great book, just not 100% my personal preference. Ideally I'd be able to choose the food science topics ala carte and have them put together in one tome for my own reading, leaving the ones that don't interest me. Perhaps an idea for digital publishers...

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### **Alexander Miles says**

A co-worker lent me this book after hearing that I was a fan of Harold McGee's other books (namely, the amazing *On Food and Cooking*). It took me a while to read through, as I'd generally read a chapter at a time and come back for the next dose a good time later. That said, the chapters, are generally fine to consume a-la-carte, delving into the specifics of a dish, fruit, or phenomena, without too much concern for what came before or what comes next. There are a few solid through-lines and re-visited themes across the chapters though, and those alone made the book worth finishing. I wasn't really expecting the chapters on food and health. It's worth noting that some of the facts provided in those specific chapters are no longer in line with scientific consensus (it was published in 1984, if anything it'd be more shocking if nothing had changed). All that said, the untempered enthusiasm for food and science made for an exhilarating read. I'd recommend this book to anyone who dabbles in one or the other, and has ever wondered why things work well (or don't) in the kitchen.

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### **Katy Dickinson says**

Stories and discussion of the science of cooking - why things work as they do in the kitchen. Cooking is a mystery to me so knowing more about how and why - the chemistry and physics of it - is interesting. I am not a better cook after reading this but am a more informed one!

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### **Ben says**

Really excellent book on thinking about food and cooking using science and chemistry. McGee experiments with recipes as a iconic mad scientist would in his lab, and shares the results, frustrations, and confusions of the process. I really enjoyed it.

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