

How to spot good recipes: A checklist

Who can you trust when it comes to cooking from a blog or investing in a cookbook? You should know, because a bad recipe -- one that is poorly written, or worse yet, untested -- can make you feel like a failure.

Here's the rest of the list:

- Does the recipe tell you what you can prepare ahead?
- Does it tell you how to store the food and for how long?
- Are the ingredients specific -- not "1 pound beef," but "1 pound well-marbled beef chuck"?

Do the instructions tell you

- What kind of pot and utensils to use?
- The level of heat and/or the timing needed for each step?
- What the food should look like, sound like, and/or smell like?
- How to know if it's done?
- How to serve?