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?

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