COOK! 4.5

OVERVIEW

COOK! is a free-form database, designed for use by anyone who enjoys cooking and wants an easy, flexible way to manage their favorite recipes, generate shopping lists, and instantly locate foods via any kind of search criteria (nutrition, ingredients, whatever).

If, after you use it for a week or two, you wish to register, it costs only $18 and you get the latest version with over 100 recipes, several wallpapers and a set of 36 additional cooking icons you can use in the Search Window. (The reminder screen is, of course, eliminated.)

In addition, you will receive two different versions of COOK.EXE. One is smaller (the one available via shareware). To reach the widest audience, the shareware version is designed to display well in VGA and other resolutions. However, if you use a larger monitor or if you run Windows in 800x600 (SVGA) or higher resolution--you can use the alternative version COOKHI.EXE. Try them both and see which one works best for you.

Like Windows, COOK! is intuitive, yet useful, swift, and powerful: just the kind of program to convince that long-time holdout from computers in your household that these machines can be valuable and fun to use.

DESIGN

A DATABASE is simply an organized collection of information, its purpose is to make entry, modification, and retrieval of that information as easy as possible. COOK! is "free-form" because there are no restrictions on how the user manages and enters information. Anything can be typed into the title and body of each recipe, in any manner. Any additional information can be entered into the Notes feature for each recipe. It is also easy to import text files of recipes from the outside, by using Windows' Notepad, the Clipboard, and COOK!'s Import & Export features. There is no restriction on the size of any individual recipe, nor is there any limit to the number of recipes in your COOK database.

COOK! was designed to be as flexible as possible and there are a number of user-configurable parameters. For more on customizing, see "TIPS" below.

SETUP

Simply create a directory on your hard drive called COOK, then unzip the COOK.ZIP file (or copy all the files from the COOK! disk in drive A: or B: and copy by typing on the DOS line: COPY A:*.* C:\COOK).

NOTE: If you have an earlier version of COOK (3.2 or earlier), make a backup of it, but delete it from your disk drive. You cannot use COOK3 or earlier with COOK4.5. However, if you have already used COOK4 or COOK4.5 to build a database of your recipes, you can use the RECS.LDB and RECS.MDB files with COOK4.5

Here is the list of files that come with COOK!:

1. COOK.EXE (the main program)
2. COOKHI.EXE (the high resolution version of COOK)
3. *.DLL (four libraries that are used by COOK! and should be put into your WINDOWS/SYSTEM directory).
4. THREED.VBX (another library that should be put into your WINDOWS/SYSTEM directory)
5. RECS.MDB (the file holding the recipes)
6. RECS.LDB (the file holding the database index)
7. .BMP (a set of optional icons you can use
8. COOK.WRI (this document)
9. ORDER.WRI (the order form)
10. README.TXT (quick start instructions)

CONTROLS

The main screen of COOK! contains a number of buttons on the right side. Any of these buttons may be clicked on at any time. Here is how to use the buttons:

SEARCH

This brings up the search screen. On this screen, the user can search the "cookbook" in two ways:

        1. by typing in a search word (or words) in the bar at the top, and pressing Enter (or clicking on the SEARCH button)

OR
        2. by clicking on one of the icons representing "French," "Salads," "Beef," etc.

Clicking on the Search button then provides a list of all recipes containing the search word in either the body or the title of the recipe.

If the user types a word into the selection box, hitting the Enter key once puts that word into the target box. (To type several words into the selection box, simply separate them by spaces before hitting the Enter key.)

As many search words as desired can be entered. However, each word entered narrows the search criteria. For example, entering "French" will list all recipes with the word "French" in them. Entering "French" and "Salad" will list only those recipes with *both* words in them.

You don't need to enter complete words. For example, Split Pea Soup can be accessed by simply typing in Split. (Or even Spl, although a recipe that contained the instructions: "splash on some lemon juice before roasting" would also be listed.)

Another method is searching titles only. You simply add an asterisk. To see all recipes the title of which begins with the letter S, type in S*. Just an S by itself, without that asterisk, would produce a list of every recipe that contained the letter S anywhere within it (in other words, every recipe). The asterisk works much the same way it does in DOS directory listings: It means: Show everything matching what preceeds the asterisk. For example, FR* would list all recipes the titles of which started with the letters "FR."

When the search is finished and the search box contains a list of target recipes, simply click on the desired recipe and you are returned to the main screen where that recipe can be modified, deleted, printed, etc.

If, after getting a list of recipes, you want to perform another search, simply click anywhere on the window outside the search box.

CHANGE ICONS

Clicking on Customize in the Search Screen will allow you to personalize COOK! You can replace any or all of the supplied icons with choices of your own. Simply select a graphic anywhere on your disk drive. You can also change the title of each icon.

Pressing the EXIT button aborts a search and returns you to the main screen.

INDEX

This second button on the main screen provides an alphabetized, scrollable list of all the recipes in COOK!. Clicking on any of these recipes will retrieve it.

ADD

Allows you to add a new recipe

Clicking on the Add button presents a new, blank recipe screen and places the cursor in the title box. When you've typed in the title, you can move to the recipe box by pressing Tab or by clicking on the recipe window.

When you've finished typing in the recipe window, pressing Tab followed by Enter will bring up another blank screen for entering the next recipe. From the recipe window, Tab moves to the Add button.

To prevent delays, recipes are only alphabetized intermittently while COOK is running. Thus, your new ADDed recipes might not be immediately integrated into the alphabetical order--however they will be. When first entered, a recipe is appended to the end of the existing list of recipes, later to be automatically alphabetized.

REMOVE

Clicking on this button removes the currently visible recipe from the database.

UNDO

This button restores the previously REMOVEd recipe in the event of an accident.

NOTES

Brings up the special window to attach reminders, additional comments, etc. to any recipe. These notes can be included or excluded from searches and/or from printing. (See OPTIONS below).

INGREDIENTS

Extracts from the visible recipe a list of its ingredients, removing most descriptive text and leaving a list of the quantities of the components of the recipe.

COLLAPSE

Removes all these buttons from the main window, leaving only a single button "EXPAND" (which reverses the process).

IMPORT

After placing a recipe in the Clipboard (from Notepad, or any other word processor that allows you to save ASCII or text-based files to the Clipboard),

simply click on IMPORT and the recipe will be entered into the COOK! database. This is the same as pressing Shift-Insert

EXPORT

This places the current recipe into the Clipboard so that it can be accessed by other word processors or databases. It can thus also be saved as a plain-vanilla file for other uses. This is the same as dragging the mouse over the entire visible recipe to highlight it, and then pressing Ctrl-Insert.

CLIPBOARD

Activates the Clipboard window.

NOTEPAD

Activates a Notepad window.

PRINT

A form pops up with two buttons: Print Recipe and Print Ingredients. You can select either or both by clicking on the jewelled buttons.

Print Recipe will print what you see on your screen.

Print Ingredients provides a shopping list by eliminating most information from a recipe other than the ingredients used. It does this by searching through the recipe for digits (5, 1/2, one, three, etc.) and then providing the digits with their associated phrases (5 cups water, 1/2 t. sugar, etc.)

Print Ingredients does the best it can, but it will sometimes be misled and print something that's not an ingredient, or miss one. It's of artificially average intelligent. However, if you are interested in using this feature to best advantage for shopping lists, etc., it works best if you follow one simple guideline (something you probably do already anyway) when entering new recipes:

        Use digits, not words, for ingredient quantities:

                RIGHT: 1/3 c. butter
                WRONG: one-third c. butter

OPTIONS

Clicking on this button brings up a special screen which allows you to adjust the size and font of the screen display and the printer typeface. You can also change the main window background wallpaper (from the default starfield). And you can

have COOK compact or repair the database, plus set several other options, as described below.

Click on a font name in the lists to change fonts. Type in a new size at the bottom of the screen to adjust the size of the fonts. The Cancel button rejects any changes you've made, the Accept Changes button accepts any changes.

Note that if you frequently make significant changes in the sizes of the fonts used when you enter new recipes, you will get some line breaks within the recipes. All the information will be there but it will be formatted somewhat clumsily. Likewise, if your printer font size is considerably larger than your screen font size, some words might be clipped off when printed. It's best to settle on particular fonts and sizes for both screen and printer (they can be different fonts and sizes), and also make the printer font size small enough so the line breaks are correct when printed (this usually means that the size should be one or two points less than the screen font size).

Repair/Compact. Over time your database might grow larger than necessary (for the same reason that a disk drive needs defragmenting from time to time). Select Repair/Compact to have COOK reorganize the database and, possibly, reduce its size. Likewise, if you have problems with the file, it might be possible for COOK to repair the problems. Otherwise, you can use the BACKUP files.

AUTOMATIC BACKUP At the bottom of the Options screen you can choose Automatic Backup (recommended). This causes COOK to save two files (BACKUP1 and BACKUP2) each time you exit. These are direct copies of the current database files RECS.MDB and RECS.LDB, respectively. If something goes terribly wrong--like you accidentally delete RECS.MDB and RECS.LDB, for example--you can recover your database by renaming BACKUP1 to RECS.MDB and renaming BACKUP2 to RECS.LDB. Then all will be well.

The other options in the Options Window determine whether a recipe's Notes (see Notes above) will be searched during searches, and whether the Notes will be printed when a recipe is sent to the printer.

Password permits you to restrict access to your COOK recipes to only those priviledged few who will prepare your recipes with the care and respect they deserve. This option is, by default, off--so no password is normally required.

HELP

Brings up this document

QUIT

This re-alphabetizes the recipes, stores them on the disk, saves the backup files (if you've chosen that option in the Options Window) and closes the program down.

MOVING THROUGH

Moving your mouse onto (but not clicking) one of the golden balls at the bottom of the screen moves you slowly through the database in either direction. Holding down the mouse button will move you quickly. Release the mouse button and you move slowly again. Clicking on one of the blue balls will move you instantly to the start or end of the recipes.

SEARCH ICONS

The registered version of COOK 4.0 comes with a set of high-quality search icons, ready to load into the Search screen. However, with a little effort, you can create your own. The main issue is size--COOK can use icons which are much larger, more high-resolution graphics than normal Window icons. A Windows icon is 766 bytes large; a typical COOK icon ranges from 5,000 to 30,000 bytes. Within that range, COOK loads reasonably quickly, yet icons this size can be highly detailed.

The issue is how quickly COOK! will load when you first start it up. A single million-byte icon will cause COOK! to load 10-20 times more slowly! When you select a .BMP file to be an icon (in the Customize screen of the Search window), you will be warned if a graphic is a bit large and will retard the startup process.

If you are fond of a particular large .BMP file (your son eating a hotdog to use for "SNACKS", for example)--there is a way. What you want to do is import that .BMP into Corel PhotoPaint or a similar photo-retouching program. Then reduce it in that program and resave it to disk as a smaller file.

CONVENTIONS

The recipes included with COOK! follow a convention that many cooks find useful:

t. = teaspoon
T. = tablespoon
c. = cup

It is not necessary to follow this convention when entering your own recipes. However, the Print Ingredients feature currently works by looking for digits within a recipe, so you should use "2" instead of "two" if you wish to use this feature.

SEARCH CRITERIA

To make searching as useful as possible (without resorting to rigid templates), you may want to sometimes add a couple of words at the bottom of a recipe to identify it during a search.

For example, a recipe for refried beans might not contain the word MEXICAN or VEGETABLE or SIDE DISH anywhere within the title or body of the recipe. So, if you want to be able to do effective cross-indexed searches, it might be worth adding descriptive words at the bottom. They can be single words, phrases, within parentheses, sentences, whatever -- just so the key words you may want to look for later appear somewhere within the recipe.

Other useful categories such as "diet", calorie counts, and other potential search criteria can be included anywhere that you wish within the recipe or title, but if you'll want to search for something later, do put it in the recipe, somewhere.

One tactic is to put these special words in the Notes for a recipe, then select, from the Options window--NO for Print Notes and YES for Search Notes.

HOW TO REGISTER

Use the ORDER.WRI registration form. Our crack mailroom staff will send you the complete package the very day we receive your order; we won't wait for the check to clear; we trust you.