

It is difficult to think of a time when food and cooking has been as popular as it is today. There are loads of cookery programmes on television; indeed gastronomes with satellite TV can enjoy food programmes throughout the daylight hours. Cooks like Delia Smith, Rick Stein, Keith Floyd, Robert Carrier and Gary Rhodes are stars; there are several popular food magazines; and London's Olympia was recently packed to the rafters with visitors to the Good Food Show.

This fascination with food is reflected in the number of food and wine software titles you can buy. Sadly, almost all the products are American – still no CD-ROM of Delia's *Complete Cookery Course*, no Floyd on fish to fire, no Mossman... Nevertheless, there is a huge range of computer cookbooks to choose from and these cover all types of cooking, from the

cordon bleu, through healthy cooking, regional cooking and ethnic cooking, to fun cooking with TV chefs. And, of course, there are cookbooks with literally thousands of recipes.

So why choose a computer cookbook instead of a paper recipe book? There are two reasons. One is that it is quick and easy to search a computer cookbook to find the perfect recipe for the ingredients you have to hand. Another reason is that you should be able to add your own recipes to the computer cookbook. You will then have a safe place for storing family recipes, concoctions given to you by friends and all those recipes that you cut out of magazines and the Sunday colour supplements.

Turning to drink, if you'll pardon the phrase, this vast subject lends itself perfectly to multimedia. All those grape varieties, beers, whisk(e)ys, bottle labels, types of

glass, cocktail recipes... Sadly, the subject has largely been ignored. Microsoft's Wine Guide is outstanding, but there is no comparable product about beers and spirits and shareware is still the place to turn for cocktail recipes. The good news, though, is that the Internet has loads of Web sites where you can obtain all sorts of information.

This is a lightning-quick tour of some of the different types of software available. So pour yourself a nice Sauterne, put a little Stilton on a cracker and sit back...

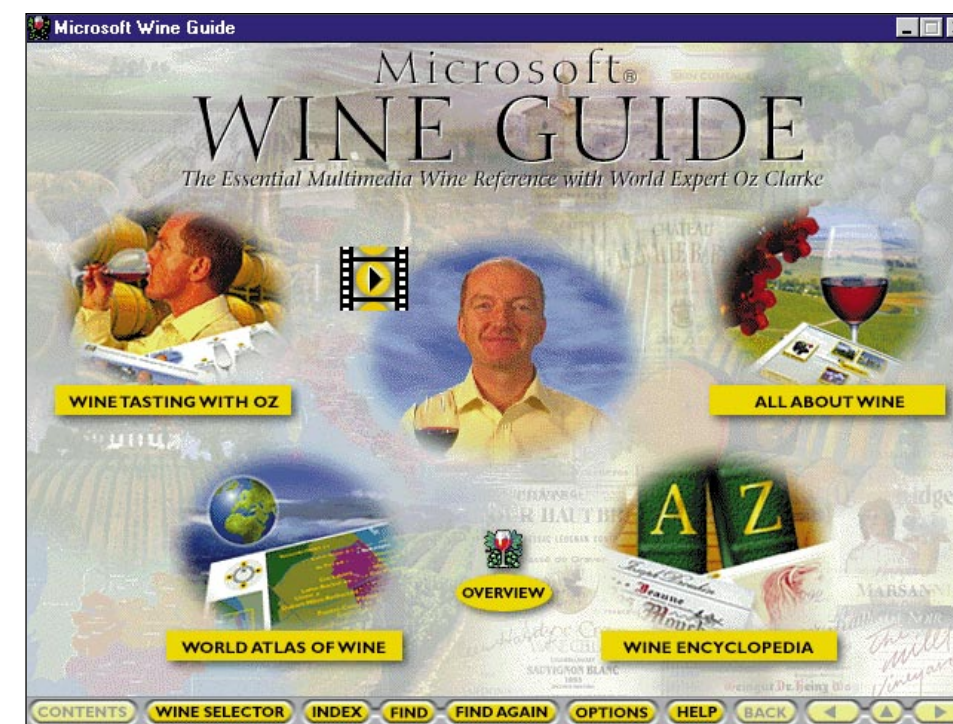
Wine, beer and spirits

Microsoft Wine Guide 2.0

This is a guide to the whole world of wine from the grape to the hang-over – well, almost. You can visit the vineyards, discover the wine-making process, and sample some wines (virtually, of course!), all in the company of the irrepressible Oz Clarke, world-renowned wine authority and star of BBC2's *Food and Drink* show.

The Wine Guide is an encyclopaedia on CD-ROM that is probably as comprehensive as any paper counterpart and, if you have a modem and access to either the Internet or the Microsoft Network, you can log onto the Wine Guide site and download all the latest information. Everything you are ever likely to want to know about wine is here. You can find out what all that stuff that you see on a wine label means, how to open a bottle with all the professionalism of the head wine waiter at an expensive restaurant, learn which is the correct sort of glass for serving which wine, and how to judge the colour, bouquet and taste.

There's an A to Z containing 2,200 encyclopaedic entries on wines and regions, plus tasting notes on almost 7,000 individual wines, as well as a wine atlas showing the 12 major wine-producing areas, 57 interactive maps, tours, and a glossary explaining every



wine word or phrase you are likely to encounter. You can even find out which wine goes best with what food.

Whether you are new to wine or are something of a wine buff, the Wine Guide will keep you entertained and informed.

£29.99 (inc VAT)
Microsoft: 0345 002000

Microsoft Wine Guide 2.0

Overall ★★★★★

Wines, Spirits & Beer

This CD-ROM is a missed opportunity. There is a lot of information here, though it isn't easy to find, and it is difficult to escape the feeling that you are using a piece of software that hasn't been finished. There's no guidance or help. There's no index, and you can't browse through the books (the 1996 *Which? Wine Guide and World Beer Guide*). The search interface is very basic and you won't find anything you are looking for unless you spell it correctly.

You have a choice of visiting one of three bars – a wine bar, an



American bar, and an English pub.

You can also visit the library. The problem with this is that there is a cross-over which sometimes makes it difficult to know where to go for the information you need. The American bar covers mainly cocktails, the English pub beer and lager and the wine bar wine.

The quantity of information isn't extensive. There are hundreds of superb cocktail recipes, different

'Claret is the liquor for boys; port for men; but he who aspires to be a hero must drink brandy'

 Samuel Johnson



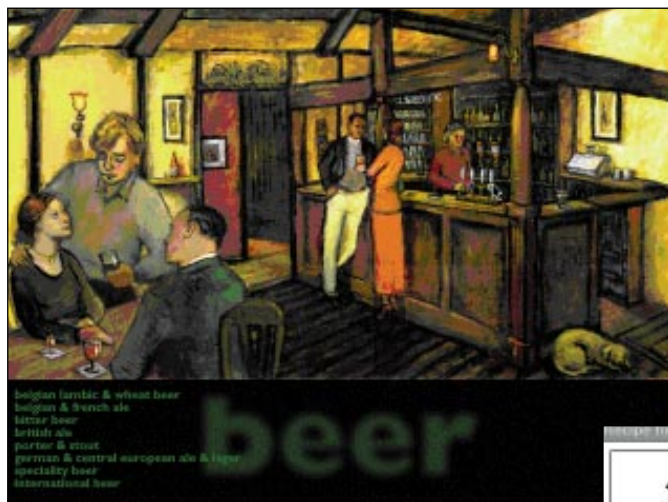
The current fascination with food and wine is reflected in the number of software titles devoted to these topics. To whet your appetite, we provide an overview of the kind of fare available

glasses to serve the various drinks in, and most are worthy of colour illustrations. There's nothing like that here though, which is a pity. And a search for Fremlins failed, though we eventually found it listed under Whitbread's family of beers, which would at least have been a starting point.

We certainly need a good beer and cocktails guide on CD-ROM. Sadly this isn't it. It's also expensive. On the up side, you can update the

'There is no bad beer: some kinds are better than others'

German proverb



information by logging onto the Notting Hill Web site at: www.gabriel.co.uk/nottinghill.

£40 (inc VAT)
Notting Hill: 0171 937 6003

Wines, Spirits & Beer

Overall ★★☆☆☆

The Interactive Wine Cellar

Extraordinarily good value for less than a tenner, The Interactive Wine Cellar is the poor man's Microsoft Wine Guide. It is nowhere near as comprehensive, but it is certainly all the wine novice will need to find a good bottle of wine to enjoy at

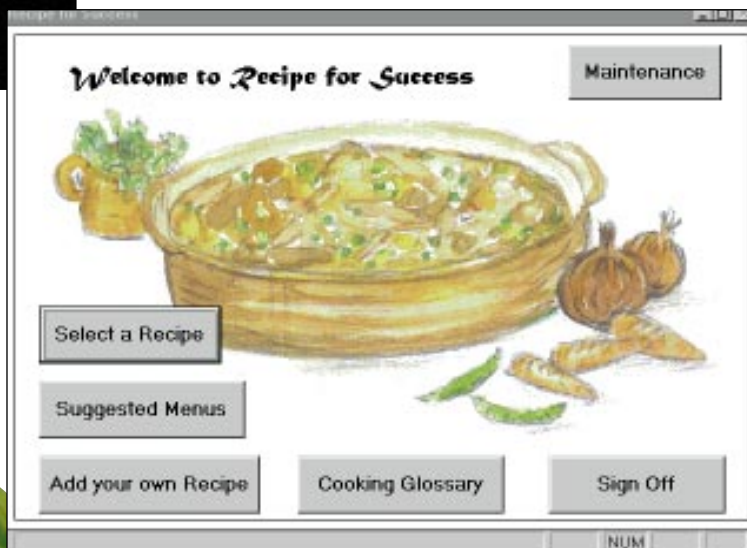
home or take to a party. Wine tips are provided by Robert Mondavi and other noted wine experts.

There is an A-Z guide to wine terms, an atlas of the wine-producing regions, and a descriptive guide to wines. Here, each wine is described and information is given about temperature and optimal age, the characteristics of the wine and the most appropriate foods with

Food 10,000 Recipes

Tremendous value for money, 10,000 Recipes is a very basic recipe database with the drawback that you can't add your own recipes. Nevertheless, it offers some good features such as a shopping list creator and a conversion utility for scaling recipes.

The opening screen looks a little like the Windows cardfile with a stack of recipe cards. You can scroll through the cards or search for a



which to drink it. You will have to put up with a bias towards America – there is a great deal about Californian wines, at the expense of giving information about the less common wine-growing regions – and Americanisms such as 'blush' instead of rosé. A multimedia section includes four videos and 17 audio extracts.

The Interactive Wine Cellar is a superb budget-priced introduction to wine for the beginner.

£9.99 (inc VAT)
Focus: 01889 570156

The Interactive Wine Cellar

Overall ★★☆☆☆

recipe by various criteria including ingredient, keyword, title, origin, time to prepare, instructions, notes, and nutritional information. Recipes can be printed – printouts include the date and page number – copied to a file or copied to the clipboard for inclusion in a word processor document or even to another recipe database.

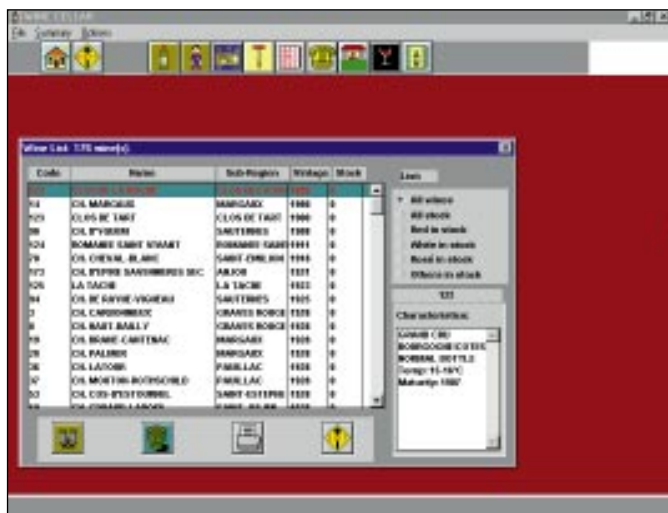
£9.99 (inc VAT)
Focus: 01889 570156

10,000 Recipes

Overall ★★☆☆☆

The Complete Interactive Cookbook

Potentially one of the best computer recipe books you can buy. The Complete Interactive Cookbook looks good, is packed with over 2,500 recipes, has a number of use-





ful tools, and is a database to which you can add your own recipes!

The recipes are taken from the complete range of *Salamander Cookbooks* and cover a range of specialist topics such as afternoon tea, and cheeses. It is quick and easy to search, and a tool called the Menu Wizard will help you plan menus, or you can choose one of the 50 pre-planned menus supplied with the program. Each recipe includes a full-colour photograph of the finished dish and a lot of the recipes have a series of photographs following various stages in the preparation. There are some 8,000 photos.

○ £24.99 (inc VAT)
○ The Learning Company:
0181 246 4000

Complete Interactive Cookbook

Overall ★★★★★

Elle 2000 Recipes

Elle's recipe cards are quite famous and on this CD-ROM 2,000 of them have been collected together. They contain the ingredients, cooking instructions, cooking times and

recommended wines.

There are 100 classic *Elle* recipes (including one for bread and butter pudding) and a click on the A la Carte button gives you access to recipes suited to your particular requirements at the time. There are 26 video clips showing assorted professional tricks and tips, a feature to create menus and a glossary of cooking terms (which did not include a definition of the term 'sweat' – to cook without losing colour).

The program tries to look modern and refined, but looks oddly old-fashioned, with some garish colours. Nevertheless, it is a fine collection of recipes.

○ £24.99 (inc VAT)
○ Grolier Interactive:
01865 264800

Elle 2000 Recipes

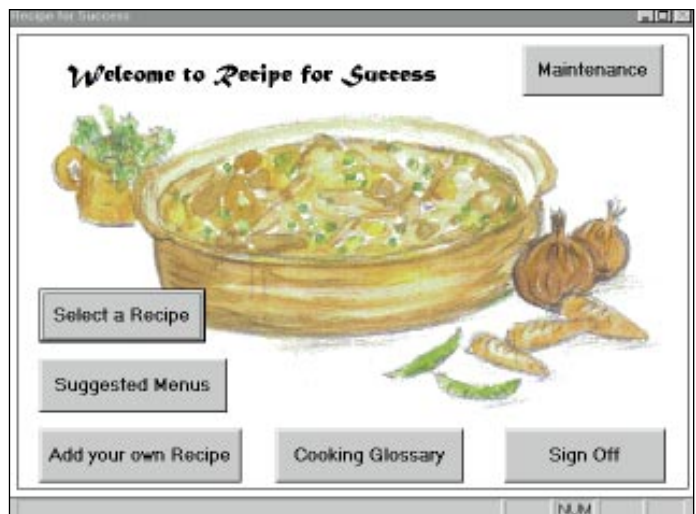
Overall ★★★★★



Recipe for Success

There are deficiencies with *Recipe for Success* such as no photographs of the finished dishes, no videos and no sound. This said, it is a nice and simple recipe database, cleanly presented, unpretentious, and a pleasure to use.

You can select a recipe according to several criteria such as ingredients, style of cuisine (in other words country of origin; your choices are Indian, Chinese, French, Italian, Thai, Greek, and British), difficulty (from dead easy to gourmet), calories, and time. You can also choose by category, and these are pleasingly varied, including starters and kids' meals to vegetarian dishes and cakes. *Recipe for Success*



also suggests menus, ranging from lunch for a summer day through low cost meals to healthy food. And if you fancy a blow-out, Italian food – ah, pizza! It's what teeth were invented for.

There is a good glossary of cooking terms that you often come across and sometimes never have explained. You can also add your own recipes. Finally, unlike most recipe databases, which have been created in America and sometimes contain ingredients which are not available in the UK or are proprietary to the States, *Recipe for Success* was developed in the UK.

○ £9.99 (inc VAT)
○ VCI: 0171 470 6666

Recipe for Success

Overall ★★★★★

Micro Kitchen Companion

Another title which seems to cover all categories is the *Micro Kitchen Companion*. It is a powerful recipe database which you can search by almost any criteria you care to

imagine. You can search by key ingredients, calories, cooking method, cooking time, country of origin, or simply by word. Once you have chosen your recipe you can print out ingredients and shopping lists, and you can add items to the shopping list, such as a bottle of Domestos, so that it contains everything you want to get on your trip to the supermarket.

A neat feature is the automatic adjusting of ingredients which makes it easy to adapt a recipe for any number of guests. There's a pronunciation guide of many foreign ingredient names and cooking terms – unfortunately, it is American pronunciation, but it gives you some idea of what an unfamiliar word sounds like – and there are pictures and video. If you have a scanner you would be able to scan recipes from newspapers, magazines, and books and then add them to the cookbook.

What distinguishes Micro Kitchen Companion is the enormous range of add-on recipe books available, including Mrs Beeton's Book of Cookery and Household Management, 2,000 recipes from perhaps the most famous cookery book adapted for the modern cook and modern kitchen, and *The Times Cookbook*. Two cut-down books come free –



Cocktails on computer

Cocktails are usually colourful, they are served in a variety of shaped glasses, there are more recipes than you can shake a shaker at, and all kinds of technical stuff about how they should be mixed. Cocktails seem an ideal subject to be exploited by multimedia, yet they have been ignored by commercial companies.

There are several titles available as try-before-you-buy shareware, however. The **Complete Bartender's Guide** is a DOS-based database of cocktails and mixed drinks, many with rather naughty names. *PDSL: 01892 663298*

PC Bartender for Windows is a recipe database with some sample cocktail recipes to which you can add your own. *PDSL: 01892 663298*

Professional Bartender for Windows is far more accomplished, offering over 200 drink recipes and general information such as the temperature at which each one should be drunk and the best season for drinking it. Each drink is accompanied by a line drawing of the glass appropriate for each drink. If you register you will receive over 1,000 additional recipes. *PDSL: 01892 663298*

A Taste for All Seasons and New Currents in American Cuisine.

○ £29.99 (inc VAT)

○ One Stop Direct:
0181 947 1001

Micro Kitchen Companion

Overall ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Ethnic cookery Easy Cooking Greek

Easy Cooking Greek is part of a series exploring cuisines of the world, including Chinese, Thai, Indian, French and Italian. They are

like mini TV cookery programmes and would probably have been better suited to video. Nevertheless, they are useful step-by-step visual guides to preparing and cooking some of the world's most famous dishes.

Greek cuisine is distinctive and very healthy. It uses a lot of olive oil, which is low in cholesterol, plus yoghurt, and pasta. Also, unlike most other countries, the

Greeks use little meat in their cooking, but plenty of vegetables and fish. This disc has eight recipes, including Greek salad, tzatziki, lamb souvlaki, and stuffed tomatoes and red peppers.

The preparation and cooking of each dish is demonstrated by Christine Cushing, who was born and raised in Greece, trained at La Varenne in Paris and currently runs her own cooking school based in Toronto, Canada.

○ £19.99 (inc VAT)

○ Interactive Ideas: 0181 805 1000

Easy Cooking Greek

Overall ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Schwartz World Cuisine Recipe Book

This is another unpretentious recipe database, with no pictures to speak of, no sound and no video. It focuses on international cuisine and, of course, every recipe uses Schwartz herbs and spices.

It is easy to search, recipes can be modified and new ones added. There are some neat features, such as the 'Eat for Less Than £...' which lets you specify how much you have to spend and then produces a list of recipes to suit your budget. Most

15. Belles D'espagne En Brochette - Series 4

No.	Name	Calcs	Chol	Sat	Fat	Units	Sat	Fiber	Prot	S.Fat	Chol	Vit A	Vit C	Fib	Calcs
1	Assorted Mousses	20	251	76	44	21	21		17		1	1	4	20	
2	Angel Shrimp Scampi	21	259	169	6	3	3		9		8	6			
3	Arancini Gnocchetti	38	41	14	11	4	7		21		2	0			
4	Asparagus Parmigiana	3	17	373	7	2	4		5		37	5			
5	Asparagus Tip Potatoes	68	110	775	26	11	9		35		80	62	4		
6	Avocado Dip	28	21	338	40	28	10		6		35	6			
7	Avocado Soup	13	41	481	35	20	12		10		19	12	1		
8	Avocado, Orange and Watercress Salad	12	0	192	26	23	4		3		68	8			
9	Bananas Foster	42	53	150	16	5	10		5		9	4	3		
10	Barbecued Chicken Wings	16	62	982	13	5	7		37		7	5			
11	Barbecued Shrimp	6	685	278	54	40	9		142		20	10	1		
12	Beef Soup Stock	3	0	430	13	0	0		22		0	1			
13	Beetroot Salad	4	0	252	37	30	5		3		13	5	1		
14	Belgian Endive Salad	10	0	70	23	19	2		7		51	10			
15	Belles D'espagne En Brochette	13	438	1920	180	140	38		82		140	80			
16	Bibb Lettuce	24	442	266	96	34	57		62		60	49	8		
17	Biscuit Tarts	20	41	22	17	9	7		6		0	1			
18	Blackberry Pie	76	0	403	14	1	3		7		37	13			
19	Blackened Redfish	3	168	485	70	7	43		2		11	1			
20	Bouquetiere De Legumes	30	25	643	10	3	6		12		56	20	1		

A Taste For All Seasons 228 recipes 228 selected View

Home brewing

The **Beer Homebrewing Guide** contains loads of information (sadly much of it is American), and hundreds of different recipes for more beers than you can imagine. The recipes come either from Net sites or were provided by customers for the newsletter of a California-based company. **SUDS for Windows** is a comprehensive brewer's cookbook and log program, comes with a basic label printer and several recipes to get you started and a glossary of terms. (Both available from *PDSL: 01892 663298*)



3. Lamb Souvlaki

Preparation

PRINT

Yields 8-10 skewers to serve 4-6

Ingredients:

2 lbs. lamb shoulder or tenderloin, cubed
1/2 cup dry red wine
1 tbsp. fresh mint, chopped
1 tbsp. fresh dill, chopped
1 tbsp. dried Greek oregano
2 cloves garlic, chopped
3 tbsp. olive oil
salt and pepper to taste

Method:

1) Cut lamb into 1 1/2 inch sized cubes place in a medium bowl and marinate in all above listed ingredients, except salt for about 4-6 hours in

Introduction

Preparation

Tips

Shopping and Utensil List

Foreword

Principles

Recipes

Biography

Glossary

Quit

Restaurant and hotel guides

You can't be a chef at home all the time. Even the professionals like to eat out occasionally and, if you want to make sure you choose a good restaurant, then turn to one of these guides.

Egon Ronay's Visa Guide 1997 to Hotels and Restaurants

Egon Ronay's Guide is a hefty tome, but the slick CD-ROM version is easy to use, fun to browse and very fast at finding just the eatery to suit your tastes, occasion and pocket. The Guide lets you search for restaurants or hotels, a special section takes you straight to starred restaurants and deluxe hotels, and you can access a special section devoted to the many winners of the Egon Ronay Guide Awards.

The best restaurant this year was Marco Pierre White's – we wonder what the editor's expense account is like? If yours isn't that good, the guide has a monthly competition – good prizes too!

You can search by all sorts of criteria, including type of food (eg, British), by price, by wine (say champagne by the glass), or by some special criteria such as décor. Searching for hotels is equally comprehensive. *Leading Guides: 0171 490 7444*

The AA Hotel and Restaurant Guide

The AA Guide works in pretty much the same way as the Egon Ronay disc in that you can search for restaurants and hotels by various criteria. It isn't as slick as Ronay, but a new version, released too late for review here, may be available in the shops by the time you read this. The version we reviewed listed over 1,500 of the best restaurants in Britain and over 4,000 hotels. There are maps showing the location of the hotels and restaurants and in some cases colour photographs of interiors and exteriors. *Bradford Technology: 01724 8413207*

domestic kitchen. So several of his recipes have been adapted for home use. They aren't particularly easy (or cheap), but are the sort of thing you might produce for a very special dinner party. Here each recipe is demonstrated each step along the way. And the discs reek of class!

○ £34.99 (inc VAT)

○ *Interactive Ideas: 0181 805 1000*

Escoffier Vol 1 and 2

Overall

★★★★★

Cooking With Dom DeLuise

Healthy cooking is a prominent feature of this double CD-ROM set. Dom DeLuise is the author of several popular cookery books and videos. He is also an excellent comic actor – you'll have seen him in loads of films including *Blazing Saddles*. The recipes on this disc are good, it is a passably good recipe database and it is both fun and funny to use. It is one of our favourite cooking CD-ROMs but is way, way over-priced and needs a price drop of at least 50 percent.

There are 200 recipes here. Lots of vegetables, soups and salads, plus pasta, as well as a suite of useful tools for printing shopping lists,



recipes offer suggestions about which wine to choose as an accompaniment, which is useful given that you may be unfamiliar with many of the dishes and not know what wine to have.

○ £24.99 (inc VAT)

○ GST: 01480 496666

World Cuisine Recipe Book

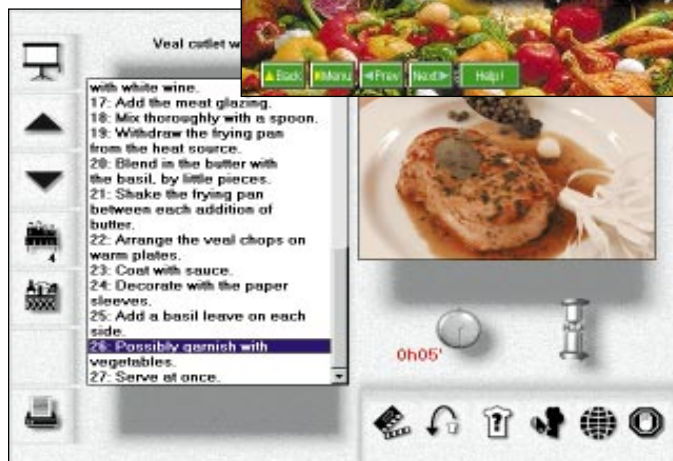
Overall

★★★★★

Celebrity cooking

Escoffier Vol 1 and 2

Auguste Escoffier (1846-1935) was one of the greatest chefs of all time – 'the king of chefs and the chef of kings' – and he created some remarkable dishes. Mind you, he



had a brigade of chefs on hand to make stocks and sauces... and, well, it simply wouldn't be practical to use an Escoffier recipe in a

a converter to change US measurements into UK ones, and so on.

You can change Dom's recipes, and add notes and recipes of your own. We particularly like Dom's recipe for chicken soup – but be warned, don't take his advice and use your CD-ROM drive as a juicer!

○ £58.69 (inc VAT)

○ Compu-Ed: 01626 889955

Cooking With Dom DeLuise

Overall

★★★★★



Net for food and drink

The Internet is a fantastic resource for food and drink information – everything from nutrition to home brewing. There are 38 sites devoted to cheese alone! Check out **Fromage**, a guide to French cheese at www.frenchwinesfood.com/guide/fromage/01.html, and **Camembert: A Village, a Cheese** at www.schamp.ccip.fr/~greg/tit0001.html

Food

Low fat recipes: a selection of delicious low fat food – vegetarian chilli and cream of sun-dried tomato soup. members.aol.com/meadowscd/recipes/lowfat/index.html

Cajun brew: loads of fabulous Cajun recipes. rampages.onramp.net/~ndronet/

The Creole and Cajun Recipe Page: lots more fabulous cajun recipes.

www.webcom.com/~gumbo/recipe-page.html

Italian Cuisine Home Page: pizza, pasta... there is much more to Italian cuisine.

hella.stm.it/market/cucina_italiana/ricette.htm

Made in Italy, Wine & Food: aah! Just thinking about it puts on weight.

www.made-in-italy.com/winefood/wf.htm

Kosher Express: Kosher food – turn your dining room into Blooms for a night.

www.marketnet.com/mktnet/kosher/recipes.html

Mexican cuisine: spicy... good food. Chilli is still a great meal. mexico.udg.mx/Ingles/Cocina/menu.html

Las Recetas del Torito: dedicated to the Spanish love of food!

www.netlink.co.uk/users/eltorito/recipes.html

Gaew's Thai Recipes Page

sashimi.wva.com/~yingthai/recipes.html

The Vegetarian Society, UK: loads of recipes from *The Vegetarian* magazine.

www.veg.org/veg/Orgs/VegSocUK/Recipes/recindx.html

Good Housekeeping: Food: from *Good Housekeeping* magazine.

homearts.com/gh/toc/osfood.htm

Gourmet Connection: food e-zine featuring articles about food and health.

www.norwich.net/gourmet/

La Cuisine Chantaine: the complete collection of original recipes created at the Restaurant Chantaine in Brussels.

www.globalserve.on.ca/~nsbrud/fdlines/pages/0links.htm

Mimi's Cyber Kitchen: an extensive list of food-related links currently available on the Internet.

www.cyber-kitchen.com/

Tropical fruit information: tips and recipes for common and uncommon tropical fruit.

www.globalserve.on.ca/~nsbrud/fdlines/pages/0links.htm

FoodLines: nutrition, lots of recipes, and much more.

www.globalserve.on.ca/~nsbrud/fdlines/pages/0fdlines.htm

Drink

Chinese tea ceremony: pictures and descriptions.

desires.com/1.4/Food/Docs/tea.html

Coke bottles of the world: photos of Coke bottles from around the world. Well, it takes all sorts.

users.aol.com/PL8Seditor/cocacola.htm

The Perrier Home Page: water water everywhere... plus art galleries and restaurant guides

www.cyber-kitchen.com/pgbevrag.htm

All About Wine With Hugh Johnston: wine expert tells all.

www.reedbooks.co.uk/docs/mitchell/wine/index.htm

Cats Meow 3: largest and most diverse collection of beer recipes on the Net.

alpha.rollanet.org/cm3/CatsMeow3.html

How to Make Fruit Wines: including recipes for strawberry, banana, peach and kiwi wine.

earth.tan.it.com.au/~tanoonpo/fruitwine.htm

Making of a Single Malt Whisky

www.os2.iaccess.za/ud/making.htm

The Mead Maker's Page

www.atd.ucar.edu/homes/cook/mead/mead.html

Premier Cru Online Wine Guide: fine wine page.

www.premier-cru.com/

The ultimate bartender's list: recipes and how-tos for hundreds of mixed drinks.

weber.u.washington.edu/~schell/drinks.html

WebCocktail: lists drink recipes and bartending how-tos.

www.cyber-kitchen.com/spirits.htm

Julia Child: Home Cooking With Master Chefs

Although there are recipes on this CD-ROM, some of which are very

good indeed, this isn't a recipe database and you can't add your own recipes to it. Instead it is a celebration of culinary magic combined with an introduction to the kitchen of Julia Child, America's

answer to our own Delia Smith. Ms Child introduces you to her kitchen knives and other utensils, cookware, plates and platters, wines, and her pantry. Here she guides you through the right way to buy your eggs, fresh herbs and spices, and oils like olive oil and walnut oil.

Supporting Julia are about a dozen masterchefs. Each is famous in his or her own right – in America! Not a European chef among them, which seems a little shortsighted of Microsoft, who one would have thought might have thrown in a token European. The chefs provide the recipes for their favourite dishes and give tips and tricks. There's a lot to learn here, but we're not convinced that you wouldn't actually be better off with Delia's *Complete Cookery Course*.

£29.99 (inc VAT)

Microsoft: 0345 002000

Julia Child: Home Cooking

Overall



Paul Begg

