



From Cooking Video to Kitchen Disaster

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Are you an amateur cook or someone trying to find a newfound hobby in cooking while browsing through YouTube videos?

WHAT'S THIS CALLED? HOW'S THAT MUCH?

Imagine pausing a short cooking video to go grab a pen and paper, only to later realise the action was futile because no ingredient names were mentioned to begin with. You could pour random things in a pan too but that would probably not have the same end result as the video.

Was the red thing tomato ketchup or sriracha? Why do all ground pastes and powders look the same? Why do people use terms like "to taste" and "a pinch" when you can just mention the quantities? These are not prehistoric times, you know, we have measurement tools. At this rate, "eyeballing it" is probably a disclaimer that you could be bawling your eyes to.

FINDING REPLACEMENT INGREDIENTS

After having deciphered the ingredients used in the "recipe", you realise that you have not gone grocery shopping in a while and are out of most of the ingredients mentioned, so you begin looking for alternatives.

You find alternative ingredients on the internet, but many of them sound questionable in terms of taste. You wonder if you can really switch soy sauce with fish sauce, and think maybe it is because they are both salty. At this point, you are too. You proceed to question if fish could live in soy sauce but then realise you are procrastinating to avoid actually cooking.

THE MATH BEHIND TEMPERATURES

The recipe mentions a specific temperature, but you are using a pan instead of an oven. You look for another recipe to make the same dish using a pan, but the quantity of chicken breast you have used matches neither of the two recipes.

You try to do the math in your head; you don't even know where to start. You wish this stuff was taught in school instead of the unnecessary bill calculations of some lunk who bought 5000 watermelons. You end up having to check every few minutes to see if you have overcooked the chicken. How do you figure this out without cutting it in pieces or chewing bits to check? After all, food poisoning was not what you had in mind when you started cooking.

THE ULTIMATE OUTCOME

You have finally managed to find a video actually mentioning the names and quantities of the ingredients used, but as you begin seasoning the chicken with just salt and pepper, you have concerns over it being too bland. The person in the video seemed to think the end result was delicious so you follow suit anyway.

However, no matter how golden brown your chicken looks on the outside, it tastes nothing but steamed. It finally hits you that that is why you are recommended to season to taste, because taste varies from person to person. Where was this disclaimer in the video?

Let's face it, you'll probably just end up ordering in anyway.

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DECONSTRUCTING CRUSH CULTURE

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The celebrity crush culture has been democratised thanks to social media. With just a couple of taps on a lazy afternoon, we can now track someone's every activity without having to interact with them or even let them know that we are obsessing over them, given they have a social media presence. In other words, we engage in a form of parasocial interaction while crushing on someone.

But why do we collectively choose to constantly crush on someone while refusing to confront the messy realities of being in a relationship?

FEAR OF RISK TAKING

Confessing our liking for someone puts us in a vulnerable position where there is a chance we will be rejected, and therefore deemed unlovable or "not good enough" by the person we like. Crushing on someone is thus safer, because there is no possibility of confrontation and/or subsequent rejection.

If a confession results in a full-fledged relationship, then we are again at the risk of getting hurt, exposing the most vulnerable sides of ourselves, and discovering the flaws in a person we previously deemed perfect. Having a crush is exciting partly because we do not have to take these risks.

EXTREME INDIVIDUALISM

Living in 2021 comes with a myriad of downsides, one of which is extreme individualism. Finding oneself on the extreme side of individuality — like we tend to do these days, results in an inability to compromise or give someone space in our personal life.

For people who are extremely individualistic and have difficulty allowing someone in their space, or difficulty making compromises for others, crushing on someone saves them from the realities of being in a relationship.

FANTASY OVER REALITY

Having a crush on someone often involves daydreaming about them. It is also very common for people to create a perfect image of their crush based on their own projected desires. A lot of young girls and boys crush on someone when they want to be in a relationship, but are not emotionally mature enough to handle being in one. Having a crush then is more about the fantasy it creates than the reality we live in. What can be questioned then is an entire generation's obsession with fantasy over reality.

With the use of realism in movies, television series and even social media platforms where the representation of reality is carefully constructed, we cultivate in ourselves a desire to see this same constructed reality in our lives. This obsession with a perfect reality or hyperreality, is also causing us to endorse crush culture — to replace reality with a perfect image of it.

There is nothing wrong with having a crush on someone. If anything, it can be a healthy, self-reflective experience. However, if your obsessive crushing communicates a desire to be in a real relationship, then maybe ask yourself why you keep choosing to avoid acting on it.

References

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Tazreen considers reading "The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath" to be a calming activity. Question her sanity at tazreenzahan@gmail.com

