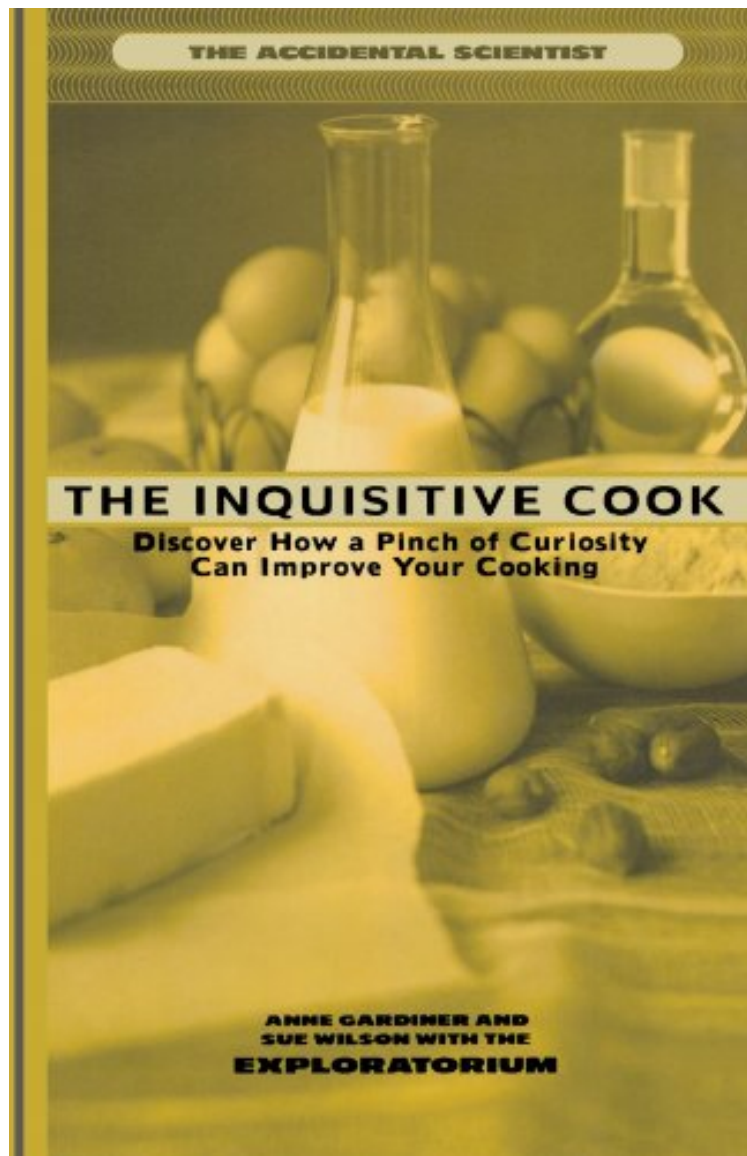


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The Inquisitive Cook: Discover the Unexpected Science of the Kitchen (Accidental Scientist)

Anne Gardiner, Sue Wilson, The Exploratorium
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Anne Gardiner, Sue Wilson, The Exploratorium : The Inquisitive Cook: Discover the Unexpected Science of the Kitchen (Accidental Scientist) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Inquisitive Cook: Discover the Unexpected Science of the Kitchen (Accidental Scientist):

25 of 25 people found the following review helpful. Light yet InformativeBy CustomerWhen I first began reading "The Inquisitive Cook", I was disappointed at its very simple, almost simplistic, style. Having slogged through "On Food and Cooking" (ISBN 0684843285), and having read "The Science of Cooking" (ISBN 3540674667), and "The Curious Cook: More Kitchen Science and Lore" (ISBN 0020098014), I wondered how such an obviously lightweight and short book could teach me anything. I need not have worried, though. Even though the chapters are short and the language usage is consistent with a 6th-to 8th-grade reading level, the book is highly informative. It doesn't go into deep discussions of principles, but instead gives a simple overview of a number of processes, together with lots of short, practical examples and experiments. I was very pleasantly surprised by how many of the things in the book covered new details on the topics I had already read about without excessively rehashing what I already knew. If you really want to learn more of the science behind cooking, you might want to try one of the other books I mention above. If you're just looking to expand your knowledge of cooking in a painless and even fun way, this is the book for you. You could easily read through the whole book in one session, but it really doesn't require that kind of investment of your attention. The chapters are short (as is the whole book), and there are lots of self-contained sidebars, so this book makes an excellent addition not only to your cooking library, but also to your bathroom magazine rack.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Barely readable printingBy Kristen R. BodieThis is a fabulous book. However, this EDITION is so poorly printed that you can barely read much of the text, particularly the printing in the gray boxes. We ordered this book based on the book we checked out of the library which is excellent. I ordered the book for Christmas but apparently too far ahead of time to return it. I saw the cover was good but didn't go through the book the way my daughter did. Ugly. And apparently too late to return it or get it replaced. But it is the only edition available from .0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Janice TaylorWhat a unique way to understand reasons behind how we prepare our food.

In a light, anecdotal, but highly informative style, seasoned cooking writers reveal the unexpected and always practical science of the kitchen. Covered are such subjects as the amazing alchemy of granules and powders, the astonishing egg, the effects on food of different cooking methods, the biology and psychology of flavor, the remarkable chemistry of doughs, spices, and much, much more. Amusing anecdotes, sidebars and illustrations en-liven the text. Throughout, there are "cook's queries," quick tips, and even recipes that will delight anyone interested in becoming a more knowledgeable cook.

From Library JournalThe science of the kitchen, an important component in the curricula of cooking schools, is a relatively new interest among the general public. The classic *Joy of Cooking* (LJ 10/15/97) has traditionally devoted some space to the subject, of course, but only recently has Harold McGee's seminal work, *On Food and Cooking* (1984), found popular expression in Shirley Corriher's *Cookwise* (LJ 6/15/97). Now, this broad topic has been condensed into a compact volume. The authors?two educators in cooking and the renowned San Francisco museum devoted to science, art, and human perception?have selected the most technical yet practical of culinary questions to explore: how to caramelize sugar, cooking times for various meats, and the phenomena of smell and taste, just to name a few. Eight chapters deconstruct chemistry's magical effect on vegetables, fruits, eggs, flour, salts, sugars, baking powder, yeast, flour, poultry, seafood, beef, and pork. There is a wonderfully authoritative bibliography and a good index. Highly recommended for all collections.?Wendy Miller, Lexington Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From BooklistFor anyone with unanswered questions about why things happen in the kitchen as they do, Gardiner and Wilson have answers ready. They can tell readers why their poached eggs look a mess (eggs too old), why adding more baking powder to a muffin may not make it any lighter (overinflation leading to collapse), or why onions make you cry (sulfurous gases). Along the way, cooks learn a host of other scientific principles underlying cooking. Less rigorously empirical than Harold McGee's *The Curious Cook* (1990), this approach to the physics and chemistry of cooking appeals particularly to students looking for science fair projects. The authors' descriptions of the activities of thickening starches ignore the significantly different effects produced by root and grain starches. Simple drawings enhance the text. Mark Knoblauch

About the AuthorAnne Gardiner and Sue Wilson (Vancouver, B.C.) together write "The Inquisitive Cook," a weekly column dedicated to explaining the science of the kitchen, for the *Montreal Gazette*, and syndicated to newspapers throughout Canada.