



GBS HEALTH & WELLNESS

Intention in the Kitchen

Odds are, you've probably eaten something in the past few hours. Odds also are you may not be able to recall everything you ate, let alone the sensation of eating it. Research suggests that the average American spends two-and-a-half hours a day eating, but more than half the time individuals are doing something else simultaneously. Whether it's working, driving, reading, watching TV, or scrolling on an electronic device, we're often doing two things at once and as a result not fully aware of what we're eating.

In a highly connected, chaotic world, finding ways to become grounded and centered are essential to a balanced life. While some people find practices like yoga or meditation helpful to combat the effects of a stress, you can also incorporate the practice of slowing down in everyday activities—like cooking or eating. Slowing down in the kitchen can help develop awareness by 'anchoring the mind and focusing attention on senses and tuning into the sights, sounds, smells, and textures of the task at hand.'

In essence, bringing intention to the kitchen means being fully attentive to your food – as you buy, prepare, serve, and consume it. How do we cultivate our awareness? Instead of using the breath to anchor the mind, as you would in a meditation, allow your focus to fall on the particular step of the recipe. When you cook mindfully and become generally curious about the food you are making, you'll naturally be in the here and now. Mindful meditation, whether it's practiced in the kitchen or on the couch, is proven to increase happiness and improve focus and satisfaction with life while reducing stress and irritability.

When you approach preparing a meal as a mindfulness exercise, you experience the present moment through every task, and in whatever utensil you are using. It could be chopping an onion, stirring/tasting soup, mixing spices to make a sauce, or bringing rice to the boil. In following the recipe and staying present with the process, step by step, you cultivate awareness and, in turn, discover calm, clarity, and contentment.



Cooking is an act of self-care and can serve as a reminder that we are worthy of a home-cooked meal. When you're mindful of the ingredients you choose to cook with, the food you prepare will come out nourishing and deeply satisfying. And when you're cooking mindfully for others, they will certainly notice the care and consideration you've poured into their meal.

By building moments of mindfulness into activities you already do each day, like cooking and eating, you can turn mindfulness into a daily habit. Continue reading for strategies that make intentional cooking more manageable and achievable.

Resources

[Chopra: Intention in the Kitchen](#)

[Harvard Health Publishing: 8 steps to mindful eating](#)

[Planted: What is mindful cooking and how do you practise it?](#)

[Headspace: What is mindful cooking and how to practice it](#)