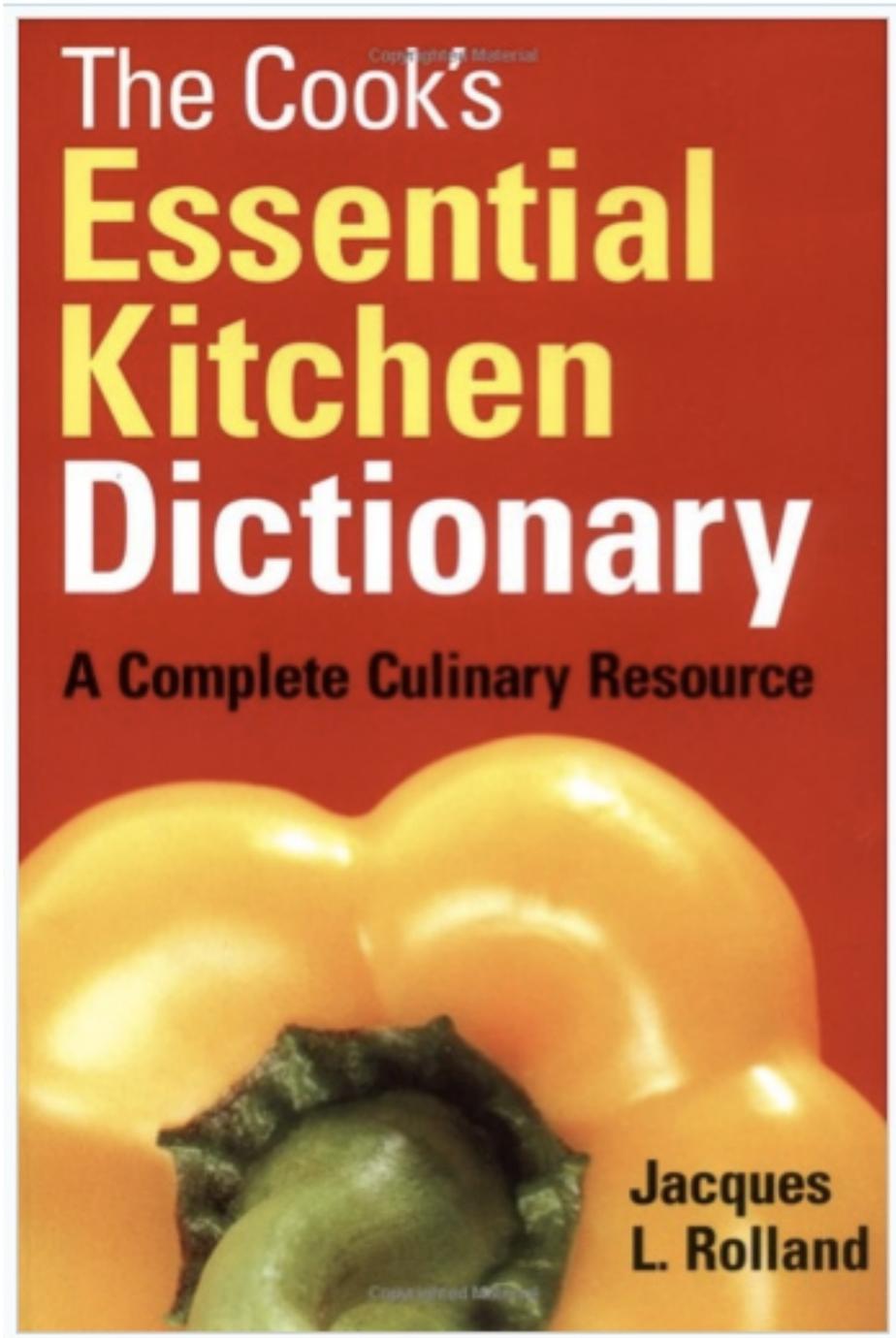


Dictionary Definitions

written for

The Cook's Essential Kitchen Dictionary, 2005



glace

- French for “ice” or “glaze.” In cooking, a glace or glaze is meat or fish stock reduced to the consistency of a syrup. It’s sometimes used as the sauce itself, as in demi-glace, used as the base for a sauce, as in Bordelaise, or added to a dish or another sauce for added body and/or flavourful richness. See also *glaze*.

glaze

- to give food a sheen. In baking, egg, milk and sometimes sugar are used to glaze breads, pies and pastry before baking. Diluted jams are brushed onto flans and sweet tarts to glaze them after baking. Vegetables are glazed by sautéing with butter and sugar, and meats, such as a roast ham, are brushed with their glaze throughout its cooking. Glaze also refers to a reduction of meat or fish stock. See also *glace*.

jerk

- a Caribbean spice mix containing allspice, pepper, ginger, brown sugar, cinnamon, thyme, garlic and Scotch bonnet pepper, handed down from West African slaves taken to Jamaica during the 17th century. Rubbed and marinated with the spice mix, the meat is cooked in large, stone-lined barbecue pits, covered with green pimento wood, which smokes easily, imparting additional characteristic flavour. Today, in Jamaica, jerk meats are sold by roadside vendors who cook the meats using vertically halved oil drums, most often using dry pimento wood.

leavening

- a substance or technique used to lighten the texture and increase the volume of batters and baked goods. The most common leavening agents are baking powder, baking soda and yeast. The former two become activated when coming into contact with liquid, producing carbon dioxide and its resulting pockets of air. Yeast leavens by its inherent live culture, which is activated with warm water, the environment needed to grow, and sugar, the food that sustains its growth. Leavening agents work both before cooking, as in batters for pancakes, fritters and batter-fried foods, and during cooking, as in breads and cakes. Stiffly beaten egg whites take the place of leavening in some recipes, providing its volume before baking, increasing its volume as the egg whites cook. They must be very carefully handled to avoid deflation. The leavening of puff pastry is the result of multiple folding during its preparation, adding numerous layers of its butter-flour-water mixture, so that during baking, the butter's water content steams and expands between the layers of the dough, and the butter melts into the flour to impart its characteristic flavour. The leavening of choux paste for profiteroles or eclairs is the result of egg yolks beaten into a warm mixture of butter, water and flour. As in a bread starter, flour in warm water will ferment to form natural yeast, encouraged to grow because of warm temperatures and fed by the flour's natural sugars.

lox

- brine-cured salmon, sometimes smoked, from the German *lachs*, meaning “salmon.”

Its North American roots as a Jewish favourite began before refrigeration, when salmon arrived from Alaska in brine. Delicatessens would refresh it with a rinse to remove some of the salt and sell it sliced, calling it “lox.” A higher grade of lox is known as Nova, for Nova Scotia salmon that has been salt-cured with brown sugar and then smoked. Slicing is the test of good quality lox; it must maintain its shape when sliced transparently thin. Recipes for lox are closely guarded secrets, but there is a common general procedure. Filleted salmon is heavily covered in a sugar-salt mixture, sometimes spiced and splashed with alcohol, depending on the desired flavour outcome, and left to cure for about 12 hours. It's then brined for another 12 hours, then removed, refreshed, “painted” with desired flavours, such as rum and brown sugar, and smoked, if desired. See also smoked salmon.

nouvelle cuisine

- a style of cooking that first emerged in the early 1970s, with a fresh-market approach, smaller portions and lighter sauces, served artistically on over-sized plates, a stark change from the rich, heavy sauces, multi-course meals and complex preparations of classical French cuisine. This style was first discussed in print by writers for *Le Nouveau Guide*, an outspoken publication that took issue with the Michelin Restaurant Guide and their tendency to favor traditional styles. As part of the a new cultural wave famously impacting French cinema at the time, the magazine began reporting on a trend of modern cuisine and the chefs responsible, primarily Paul Bocuse, but also Michel Guérard, Alain Senderens, among others.

organic

- a labeling term indicating a specific manner in which food is grown and processed. Farming must maintain and replenish the fertility of the soil, without the use of toxic and persistent pesticides and fertilizers. Processing must be done with a minimal use of artificial ingredients, preservatives or irradiation. Organic farming is now practiced in approximately 100 countries. Australia is the world leader, with 24.6 million acres (10 million hectares) and Argentina is second, with 7.4 million acres (3 million hectares). North America has nearly 3.7 million acres (1.5 million hectares) devoted to organic farming.

piri piri

- a tiny, hot pepper, from the Swahili, which translates as “pepper-pepper.” Its origins are often contested, but most historians agree that it was brought back by Columbus from his second voyage and introduced to the Iberian Peninsula. The Portuguese then introduced it to their colonies Angola and Mozambique, where it was named. The pepper’s use spread from there. Although part of many African cuisines, the pepper is best known as a Portuguese ingredient, sold marinated in oil, as a powder, a purée and even as a part of a sardine paté. Best known in *frango grelhado con piri piri* (grilled chicken marinated in piri piri), the condiment is also added to meat, vegetable and fish dishes. Its heat is rated at 30,000 to 50,000 Scoville Units, the equivalent of cayenne.

Scoville Units

- a measurement [SU] established in 1912 by chemist Wilbur Scoville as a way to measure the capsaicin, or heat, of a hot pepper; the higher the unit, the hotter the pepper.

smoked salmon

- perhaps the most popular of smoked foods, originally done for preservation, but since the days of refrigeration, done for mostly for flavour or texture. The salmon first undergoes a curing stage where the salt simultaneously penetrates the flesh and draws out moisture, which hinders the growth of bacteria that would spoil the fish. Cold smoking temperatures range between 70°F and 90°F (10°C and 30°C), producing milder, raw-textured flesh. This process, when used for the duration of a day to several weeks, will preserve the fish by drying it. Hard smoking refers to even longer cold smoking, which produces a jerky, also called Indian-smoked salmon, or squaw candy, which is usually cut into strips. Hot smoking temperatures range between 120°F and 180°F (50°C and 80°C), producing fuller flavours and thorough cooking, when the internal temperature is maintained at 145°F for 30 minutes. The flavours of hot smoking are dependent also on the characteristics of the wood used for burning. Kippered salmon is the name given to salmon that has been scored, dry-salted, painted with a flavouring mixture, usually brown sugar and rum, and then hot smoked. See also lox.