Cooking Practical Organization

Organization really begins with the menu planning.

At some point however we need to put theory away and actually get to work. So consider the following organizational concepts to help you be most effective. No detail is too small to plan out!

FIG. 1

Arrive early and in a neat and organized fashion. Be sure all food is stored at the proper temperature. Footlockers with wheels and ladder racks will help you move your food and equipment efficiently FIG. 1. Recruit a helper. Perhaps there is someone you know that is also interested in taking a practical test someday and they could benefit from watching and helping you through it. Of course you must do all the cooking yourself but your helper could be of assistance in many other ways.

The more you can organize the easier your experience will be. Notice in FIG. 2 each recipe is completely pre scaled (vegetables are only cleaned and not cut according to the guidelines). Also note that each course has a corresponding color tray for fast recognition while cooking – a BIG time saver. One thing you can't tell from the photo is that the cart is set up chronologically from top to bottom – the first task is on top and the second task is just below the first and so on down to the bottom of the cart.

FIG. 2

FIG. 3 This creative individual organized all the ingredients from each separate recipe together with a number label on the top of each ingredient container so once they are taken off the trays he could still know exactly what that particular ingredient was for.

FIG. 3

Creativity is not limited to food preparation, obviously! Remember you must bring all small equipment and china needed for your practical. How many innovations can you see on this individuals ladder rack FIG. 4? Note how clean, orderly and professional this looks.

FIG. 4

Managing your time effectively is a clear sign of organization and professionalism. Note the prep list and time line taped to the oven in FIG. 5. Design in time to clean into your program! Make sure your work station is always clean and has no unnecessary items on it. During plate up your station should look like a plate up station *minimalistic* and not a prep station which might have more items on it.

FIG. 5