

# **GUNG HO COOKING MANUAL** by: **Corporal Seamus Garrahy**

Gung ho cooking does not use recipes and this is not a cookbook. Gung Ho cooking does not use teaspoons, tablespoons, cups or ounces. When you get used to cooking the Gung Ho way, you make the seasoning decisions and you decide what will be good in the chow you are cooking. You decide how to cook a dish and when a dish is cooked well enough.

You will need iron skillets and a gas or charcoal grill. Also, non-stick pans are very handy. Most of all, Gung Ho cooking requires time. If you are in a hurry, don't use these ideas. They won't work. These ideas are not fast food.

All of these ideas can be altered, shifted, or turned around to suit your own ideas. If you make something from these ideas, keep in mind how you did it and change it around the next time. Experiment! Have fun cooking!

While I encourage everyone to use their own ideas, there is one factor that cannot be altered. Buy the best food! Find the best butcher! Use the freshest produce! For a few cents or a few dollars more, you can buy the best. It does not make sense to spend good time on bad chow. There are some really good ideas here and the folks you cook for will applaud your efforts. You and they deserve the best. Make sure you start with the best.

Whether you use a gas or charcoal grill, there are so many makes and models, only you, by experience, can determine the right way to use them.

A 15" iron skillet is good and a 17" is better if you can find one. Another skillet to have is a fish fryer. It is an oblong pan about 14" long and approximately 6" wide. It will fit over two burners on a stove and is perfect for making gravy. Never wash an iron skillet in soap. I hope these ideas help you along in having fun while cooking. The following is a dozen ideas just to help you get started with Gung Ho Cooking.

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## 1. THE BEST STEAK ON THE PLANET

Steak is the number one food in the Gung Ho Food Chain, and I will take a lot of time on this most important food group. This may take a couple of pages, so bear with me. It will be worth it. What I share with you here, about steak, is exactly how we prepare steak for over 2,000 active duty Marines, every year, when they come to Gettysburg for a Professional Military Education (PME) on the Battlefields of Gettysburg, and an official Marine Corps Steaks & Beers (MCS&B.)

It is getting harder to find a real butcher, in a real butcher shop. If you cannot find a real butcher, you have to know how to talk to a supermarket meat cutter. There is a difference, but this will not have any effect on making the best steak on the planet.

Whether butcher or meat cutter, order a boneless sirloin steak that is cut 2" thick. Ask that the steak be trimmed of fat to avoid flare-ups in the grill when cooking a steak this thick. A butcher will know exactly what you are asking for, however you may have to tell a big market meat cutter that you need this steak cut 2" inches. Some meat cutters will presume you don't really need a steak cut this thick, and will cut it a little thinner.

There are more tender cuts, more marbled cuts, and more expensive cuts of steak, but the boneless sirloin is, in my opinion, the best the best cut there is. I would match a 2" boneless sirloin, cooked medium rare, and slathered with Gung Ho Steak Sauce, with any steak on the planet. This includes Kobe Beef, which seems mushy to me. Thousands of Marines agree!

Each 2" sirloin will weigh from 3 to 6 pounds, depending on the size of the steer, and each steak will feed from 4 to 8 people, depending on who is coming to chow. With Marines I figure 1 pound per Marine, but regular folks will not eat this much steak. A boneless sirloin has virtually no waste.

Preparation is easy. Make two cuts into one edge of the steak and one cut into the other, just through the membrane on the edge. These cuts do not have to be very deep and they will prevent the steak from curling during cooking. Now determine what side of the steak is the best side, meaning what side is smoother or meatier. The best side is the side you will put down on the grill first.

Here I would caution using any pre-cooking flavoring or spices that have salt in them. Salt makes meat lose its juices during cooking. Also, use tongs as opposed to forks to turn your steak.

Since there are so many grills on the market, I can only give general ideas of how to cook your steak to the desired doneness. Be it charcoal, gas, or electric, set your fire at low to medium low. For example, with a 3 burner Weber gas grill, set all three burners at low setting. A two burner gas grill may need the burners set on medium low, and a charcoal grill may use just one layer of charcoal on the grate. Only experience can tell you how to use your own grill. The idea here is to cook this thick steak slowly.

I have a 3 burner Weber, one of 6 in my back yard (for MCS&B Marines) and I set all three burners at low. Using tongs, place the best side of the steak down on the grill and close the lid. Let the steak cook about 30 minutes on this side, then turn over for about 15 minutes on the other side. Again, this is the time I use with my grills, but every grill is different and experience is the key to the proper doneness.

Place the best side up on a wooden platter and immediately Slather Sparingly with Gung Ho Steak Sauce. I prefer wood because a wood platter will not take any heat from the meat and wood will not damage a sharp knife. Let the steak set for a few minutes and cut in thin slices, across the grain. You will be able to see the way the grain runs through a steak, and if you slice against this grain, the slices will be easier to cut and eat. If you are not sure, slice the steak at right angles to the long or fatty side. A sharp knife is necessary to cut these slices thin, and the thinner they are, the easier they are to eat.

The edges around the steak will be fairly well done and should be served to those who like it this way, and the rarer steak will be towards the middle. This gives you the ability to cook one steak for several tastes in doneness.

Have fun and enjoy preparing the *Best Steak On The Planet*.

## **2. BAKED AND BAR-B-QUE CHICKEN**

In my opinion, chicken is the second most important food in the Gung Ho Food Chain. Since most grills, gas, charcoal, or electric, are too hot to cook tender meat like chicken thoroughly, and not leave it dry on the outside and sometimes rare in the inside, here is the best way to cook the second most important meat on the menu.

Using this method, it does not matter if the chicken is whole, halved, quartered, or in pieces. It does matter that the chicken is very fresh and clean. Cold water is the best chicken washer in your galley. If whole, cut the breast down the middle, lengthwise, and break it open. It is ok to keep the two halves joined.

Sprinkle, do not shake in the bag, some Shake & Bake over both sides of the chicken. Any flavor is OK except Bar-B-Que. This has sugar in it and will burn the chicken before you want it burned. Shake & Bake is good stuff on many meats, and we will get to that later.

Put chicken in an iron skillet or baking pan, skin side up, in a 350 degree oven. Chicken will be completely cooked in 1 to 1 1/2 hours. It is not necessary to turn the chicken, but it is advisable to loosen the chicken from the pan about halfway through the cooking time.

Remove the chicken from the oven and place on the grill, again, skin side up. The grill should be on a medium setting or two layers of charcoal. Slather (what a great word) your favorite bar-b-que sauce on the meat, turn it over, and slather the other side. The purpose here is to use the grill to burn the sauce into the already cooked chicken. You may slather and turn as many times as you want to. When the sauce is burned to your liking, it is ready to enjoy.

A word about applying the sauce! Grocery stores sell plastic squeeze bottles for ketchup and mustard. Using these bottles for sauce means no wasted sauce in a brush, and you can put it where you want it. If you use this method, avoid the chunky sauces. The chunks won't fit through the tips.

Your chicken will be fully cooked, moist, and all pieces, regardless of size, will be cooked perfectly.

## **3. BAKED PORK CHOPS AND BROILED GRAVY**

The third most important meat in the Gung Ho Food Chain is pork chops. The best pork chops are called center cut chops, which mean they come from the center of the pork rib. Ask your butcher or meat cutter for center cut chops at least 1" thick. You might have to ask for an inch and a quarter if it looks like he will cut them too thin. Allow one chop per person. Be careful how many you invite because the biggest iron skillet that will fit in a normal oven will only hold 6 pork chops.

Rinse the chops well with cold water and, with a sharp knife, make two or three cuts into the edges just into the meat. These cuts prevent the meat from curling when cooking.

Lay the chops flat in an iron skillet. Season with pepper and any other spice that sounds good to you, and then dust with Shake & Bake. (any flavor but Bar-B-Que) , then spoon on some salad dressing. Italian, French, Ranch, or any flavor that sounds good to you. Turn the chops over and do the same to the other side. A little extra Shake & Bake in the skillet will help with the gravy.

Place the skillet low in the oven, close to the heat, and bake at 300 degrees for 1 hour. You can turn the chops half way into the cooking time if you want to. If they do not look brown enough, bake some more at 350 or 400 degrees. They should be just brown and not dark.

When the chops are brown, remove them from the pan and turn off the oven. You can put them back into the oven or put them on a low fire grill. You need to remove them from the skillet so that you can make the gravy.

In making gravy, you have to determine how much fat you want in your gravy. Sprinkle just enough granulated gravy flour, such as Golden Sauce and Gravy Flour, into the skillet to absorb all the fat remaining in the skillet. Over high heat, mix the fat and flour while adding small amounts of water until the gravy is mixed well and smooth. When this is well mixed, add water to get the thickness you want. The longer the gravy boils the smoother it will be.

When the gravy is done, put the chops back into the skillet and spoon the gravy over them. Place the skillet under the broiler in the oven and broil until the chops are well browned and then turn over and do the other side. When the second side is done, and the chops and gravy are broiled to a dark brown, you have just cooked the best pork chop on the planet.

#### **4. COATED PORK CHOPS WITH RANCH DRESSING**

This method of cooking pork chops is different and unusual, but it is very good. The chops are coated with ranch dressing and pork rinds. I don't like pork rinds either, but trust me. These chops are great!

Like the above dish, choose pork chops that are about 1" inch thick. Punch a few holes in a bag of pork rinds and beat, roll, or squish the rinds into a powder and place in a bowl. In another bowl, pour out a jar of ranch dressing. This dressing can be seasoned with pepper, garlic powder, or anything else that comes to mind.

Slather the chops in the dressing, coat with the powdered pork rinds, and place in an iron skillet. Cook in a 350 degree oven until brown. This should take about 1 hour. The chops do not have to be turned. If desired, you can broil for a few minutes to brown them more.

#### **5. BAKED ONIONS**

Baked onions are good when you decide you need to cook something a little different. They are easy to do and require only some butter or margarine, some Gung Ho or spices and aluminum foil.

From the grocery store, pick onions from the bulk sales bin. It does not matter how big or small you choose, just be sure to choose all the same size. A large onion will be enough for 3 people, and a small onion will be right for 1 person. Keep in mind that the bigger the onion, the easier it will be to prepare..

With a sharp knife, cut the top of the onion off, leaving about a 2 inch circle on the onion. This may be obvious to some, but an onion has 2 ends. The bottom is the end with the little roots growing out of the nub. The top is the end where it has grown into a point. Cut the point off.

Carefully peel away the outer layers until there is only fresh, clean onion left. If you run this onion under cold water there will be no tears. With a sharp paring knife, measure the depth of the onion, on the outside, to about an inch from the bottom, and hold the knife at this point. Cut out a hole about an inch in diameter down to your mark. Do not cut through the bottom of the onion. Do this under water to keep from crying. Clean out the hole and rinse out the shards.

Here is where you get to use the basic fundamentals of Gung Ho cooking. Think of what would taste good in this onion and put it in the hole. Maybe garlic powder, seasoned salt, pepper, or even some Gung Ho Steak Sauce would also be good in this onion. Or, you may decide not to season it at all and just run with the natural onion taste.

With a regular table knife, fill the hole with butter or margarine. Stuff it full and pack it down. Now wrap the onion in an aluminum foil square that is big enough for all four sides of the square to reach above the top of the onion. Fold the four sides up and over the top and twist the foil to form an air tight seal. Be careful that the bottom of the foil is not torn or cut. If you are careful not to compress the foil against the sides of the onion, there will be room for the melting butter to blend with the outside of the onion as well as inside the hole.

Bake in a shallow pan at 350 degrees for an hour or so. The longer it bakes the softer the onion will be. After baking, de-foil, cut off the root bottom, and serve individually or in a bowl. Another variation would be to remove the foil and broil the tops of the onions until brown.

There will be no strong onion taste or smell, and depending on seasoning, even the strongest onion will be very mild. This is really good eating!

## **6. SCORED AND BROWNE POTATOES**

I am very Irish and potatoes are very important to the Irish, so here comes 3 ways to prepare potatoes in very different Irish ways.

From the potato bin at your grocery store, select white or light skinned potatoes as close to the same size as possible. Each medium or large potato will be split to feed two people. Also, try to select all fat or skinny potatoes. Be aware that the largest iron skillet that will fit in the average oven will cook 6 or 7 potatoes or 12 or 14 halves.

Wash the potatoes well with cold water and gouge out any spots that do not look good. Cut the potatoes in half, length-wise, and immediately put them in cold water. If you do not put them in water, they will discolor from being exposed to air. With a sharp knife, carefully score lines across the length and breadth of the potatoes. The cuts do not have to be very deep and should be about an inch or less apart. When done, the potatoes should have a checkerboard pattern on the flat side. Keep them in cold water until ready to cook.

Just before cooking, spread butter or margarine on the scored side of the potatoes and place butter side up in an iron skillet. Bake at 350 degrees for about an hour. At 1 hour into the cooking, turn the spuds over and cook on the buttered side. The scores you put on the potatoes will absorb the butter into the potato, and the longer you cook them the browner they will get.

When the potatoes are done to your liking, you can also add any kind of cheese to the buttered side and bake until the cheese melts. Crumpled bacon would go good in the cheese. Sour cream and chives would be good. In fact, in keeping with the Gung Ho cooking theme, you decide what would be good on these scored and brown potatoes.

## **7. DAY BEFORE MASHED POTATOES**

I have truly time tested this method of preparing mashed potatoes, and I assure you that if you follow these steps, your friends and family will be praising your cooking skills in preparing this very important dish.

The day before you plan on serving mashed potatoes, cook as many potatoes as you need. I prefer red potatoes for mashing, as they are a bit harder than baking potatoes and I think they mash better. Also, I never peel potatoes. This is a personal thing, and some folks peel them and some folks don't. I have seen no difference in cutting them into little pieces or leaving them whole. They cook faster if cut into pieces, but they may be a bit water logged if cut up too small. Potatoes need about 1 hour to cook and are done when you can easily pierce with a fork. If you plan on making gravy, you should save the potato water. This is full of natural starch and vitamins.

Immediately start mashing the potatoes, and depending on how many you have cooked, drop 1 or 2 fresh eggs into the hot spuds. The eggs will cook by the heat of the potatoes and when cooked, will puff up your mashed potatoes. After the eggs, put sour cream and cream cheese in. These ingredients determine how thick or runny you want your potatoes. You can add fresh garlic or garlic powder, parmesan cheese, ranch salad dressing, or onion and garlic dip to the mixture. Experiment! Remember what you put in originally and try new ingredients from time to time.

Now you need an oven safe cooking dish. Spray the inside of the dish with a cooking spray making sure you cover the inside with oil. Scoop the spuds in, cover, and place in the fridge. As your mashed potatoes sit in the refrigerator overnight, all those different flavors meld into one.

One hour before serving the next day, uncover, put a lot of butter on the top of your potatoes, and bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour. If you spread a fair amount of parmesan cheese on the top, with the butter, the top will toast to a golden brown.

It just doesn't get any better than this!

## **8. GRATED POTATOES AND ONIONS**

Whether you slice, grate, shred, or chop up potatoes, it does not matter for this dish. Since I never peel potatoes, the skins and all are sliced, diced, or chopped. However you do them, immediately place in a bowl of cold water so they do not discolor.

Now slice up an onion or two and put the onion slices in with the potatoes. Mix them up, drain the water, and add enough cooking oil to coat the potatoes and onions. The less oil you use the better the results will be. You can always add more oil, but it is hard to remove.

Place the potatoes and onions in a non-stick frying pan and cook under low heat until the spuds and onions are brown. This may take up to two hours, but the wait is worth it. Remember, the best thing for good cooking is time. Season to taste with any seasoning you would like. During cooking, you can stir or leave it intact. To turn the intact dish, shake the pan sharply to loosen it from the non-stick pan. Next, place a plate the size of the pan over the potatoes, hold the plate with one hand, and with the other hand, flip the pan over. Then, just slide the potatoes and onions back into the pan. This maneuver may take a little practice. When done this way, the potatoes and onions can be sliced just like a pizza.

## **9. A NEW IDEA FOR THE LOWLY HOT DOG**

This is a fun way to prepare a hot dog. Buy large, plump hot dogs. If your butcher makes his own, these are generally the best. You need a big hot dog because you are going to stuff a lot of ingredients into it.

About an inch from the end of the dog, make a slit down the entire length to the other end. Now make another slit about 1" inch the first. In other words, cut a trench down the center of the dog. The bigger the trench, the more flavorings you can get into the dog.

First into the trench is soy sauce, Chinese marinade, or stir fry sauce. Or you can put a little of each. Next comes thin strips of fresh onion. Over the onion spread a layer of Bar-B-Que sauce or Gung Ho Steak Sauce. Now would be a good time of a little garlic powder. Finish off the trench with chopped fresh or dried parsley.

To keep all this in the trench, take thick sliced bacon strips and, starting from one end of the hot dog, wrap the entire hot dog. This will require at least two strips of bacon. Wrap the bacon tightly around the hot dog and use wooden toothpicks to keep the bacon in place.

These hot dogs are best cooked on a grill, but an oven is ok. If you are using a grill, be sure to watch for bacon grease flare ups. Keep them moving around the grill and away from the fire. When the bacon is crisp the hot dogs are ready. You should be ready to make some more of these when your friends and family dig into these dogs.

## **10. STEWED TOMATOES WITH BAKED CHEESE CROUTONS**

Pour a can of Italian style stewed tomatoes in a shallow, oven-proof saucepan and bring this to a boil.

In a small cup, mix up some corn starch and cold water and slowly pour small amounts into the boiling tomatoes. Keep stirring as you add the corn starch. The corn starch is used to thicken up the stewed tomatoes. When you think the tomatoes are thick enough to support a layer of croutons, remove from the burner.

Using spicy or plain bread croutons, cover the tomatoes with a layer of croutons. Next, cover the croutons with American or cheddar cheese. You can use shredded, sliced or hunks of cheese.

Bake in the oven, and this dish is ready when the cheese starts to turn brown.

## **11. GUNG HO BREAD**

This is an easy way to turn store-bought garlic bread into bread your family and friends will kill for. You can also use regular bread for this.

In a coffee cup, blend butter or margarine and Gung Ho Steak Sauce. The strength of this mixture depends on how much Gung Ho you use. Remember, Gung Ho Steak Sauce is very strong and should be slathered sparingly.

Simply coat the two sides of the store-bought bread with this mixture and bake or broil as usual. I prefer to bake garlic bread until done, then broil to brown.

## **12. CHEESE GARLIC AND ONION BREAD**

Again, using store-bought or regular bread is fine for this dish.

Empty a package of Lipton Onion Soup mix or any comparable brand into a small sauce pan. You will need one package for each loaf of bread. Put a lump of butter and a splash of water with the mix and cook slowly until the mix is soft and smooth.

Cook the bread for about half the time the directions say and remove from the oven. Spread the onion soup mix over the bread. Next, cover the soup mix with cheddar or American cheese. You can use slices, grated, strips, or chunks. Place bread under the broiler until the cheese is browned to your liking. This bread will cut easily with an electric knife.