20 Cheat Codes Every Line Cook Should Know

Preheat Your Pans - Always start with hot pans to ensure a proper sear and avoid food sticking.

Use a Damp Towel Under Cutting Boards - Place a damp towel under your cutting board to keep it from sliding around.

Mise en Place is Key - Have all ingredients prepped, measured, and ready before cooking to save time and reduce stress.

Keep Knives Sharp - A sharp knife not only cuts better but also reduces the risk of accidents.

Salt Early and Often - Season as you go to build layers of flavor, but be mindful not to over-salt.

Use the Palm Test for Steak Doneness - Compare the firmness of the meat to the firmness of the muscle at the base of your thumb to check doneness.

Cook Proteins from Room Temperature - Let meats rest at room temperature before cooking for more even results.

Deglaze for Flavor - After searing, use wine, broth, or vinegar to deglaze the pan and capture all those flavorful brown bits.

Taste Everything - Constantly taste your food as you cook to adjust seasoning and ensure quality.

Use Parchment Paper for Baking - Line baking sheets with parchment paper for easy cleanup and to prevent sticking.

Rest Meats After Cooking - Let meats rest after cooking to allow juices to redistribute, ensuring juicier results.

Cut Against the Grain - Always slice meat against the grain for a more tender bite.

Chill Your Dough - For pastries and doughs, chill before baking to help them maintain their shape and texture.

Don't Overcrowd the Pan - Give ingredients space in the pan for proper browning and even cooking.

Use Acid to Brighten Dishes - A squeeze of lemon or a splash of vinegar can elevate the flavor of most dishes.

Use a Scale for Baking - Weigh ingredients for more accurate and consistent baking results.

Freeze Herbs in Oil - Preserve fresh herbs by freezing them in olive oil in ice cube trays for easy use later.

Double-Pan for Slow Cooking - Stack two pans on top of each other for gentle, slow cooking, especially for delicate items.

Use Potato Water for Dough - Save water from boiled potatoes to use in bread dough for a softer texture.

Clean as You Go - Maintain a clean workspace by cleaning up spills and washing dishes as you cook, reducing the mess at the end of service.