

Diane's Blog
4.21.2010

Tools of the Trade

I've been cooking in some professional manner or another for just over thirty years. My first cookbook was published twenty-three years ago. I'm not writing this blog to ruminate on my well-seasoned status in the culinary field, I'm noting these years almost as a reminder to myself that some of my kitchen tools date to the very beginning of my cooking days.

Take for instance my mixer. I have a still spankin' white Kitchenaid mixer that my husband bought me as a birthday present in 1980. I confess to replacing my ancient avocado green (now that dates me, or at least the era of my bridal registry) with a whirling dervish of a blender called a Vita-Mix, and my old food processor gave up the ghost and was replaced with a new one not many years ago. But it's the little tools I forget about. They're part of the highly organized clutter of my segregated kitchen drawers (rubber spatulas in one compartment, spoons and ladles in another, tongs in yet another, and the little gadgets neatly nestled in yet smaller bins.)

I was coring an apple a couple of weeks ago and looked at my well-loved apple corer. I can't even remember when I bought it. Its wooden handle was worn and there was almost a rounded edge at the base of the metal shaft meant to pierce the apple and neatly hollow out the core. The tool was no longer doing the work, making my task efficient, my biceps were getting the workout as I positioned and then pressed on the tool to extract the core. Besides that, the core stayed stuck in the tool, requiring me to press the core out with my finger.

I replaced the relic for ten dollars.

Like a child in a toy store, (which, if truth be told, is what I am when I enter a cookware store) I was coveting a completely tricked out new apple corer that was designed to fix all the flaws of my original one. Why hadn't I noticed sooner? Why did I wait twenty-five years to replace a ten-dollar tool?

Made by Cuisinepro, this tool has a silicone handle for a steady grip, has a sharp, tooth-edged cutter that easily pierces the fruit's flesh, and, cleverly enough, the metal shaft opens so the apple core just falls out without the needed push.

Beware old tools in my kitchen: I'm now on a hunt for the newer, cleverer, well-designed gadgets that make my kitchen days easier. It's a cheap treat that satisfies the kid in me.