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Posted on 06 March 2017 By Robert L Wolke

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Kitchen Science Explained



WHAT EINSTEIN TOLD HIS COOK



ROBERT L. WOLKE

"Wolke is Martha Stewart with a Ph.D." —American Scientist

What Einstein Told his cook was written by Robert Wolke The main theme of the book, if you can even call it that, is cooking, chemistry, and how they are related Robert Wolke, born april 2nd 1928, is an american chemist and professor of chemistry at the university of pittsburgh, he is most known for his Einstein series of books, including What Einstein told his cook I read the book as a part of my chemistry 1 class After careful consideration, I believe that this book was written to educate about chemistry and cooking I enjoyed the book because it helped explain a lot of cooking phenomenon that I have always wondered about. One way that the book really interested me was that it always connected back to chemistry in all of its points and explanations Wolke tries his hardest to make this a book about both chemistry and cooking This can be seen clearly in the chapter The Salt of The Earth Wolke writes very clearly about what salt is besides white crystals that we put on our food He spoke about how table salt is Sodium Chloride, and how there are many other types of things that are called salts in chemistry, which occur when an acid reacts with a base. Another thing that I enjoyed about the book was that even though it was packed with information and facts, it never got too complicated It was an enjoyable read, and at no point did it start throwing around complicated ions, chemical equations, gas laws, molecular formulas or anything else that gets thrown around that enough in my Chemistry class. What Einstein told his cook was a fun and interesting read that was written to educate people about the chemistry of cooking Wolke never forgets to tie all of his cooking facts back to chemistry and he never forgets to leave his writing light, fun, and easy to read so that the average person can enjoy it Overall the book was a pretty decent read and I would recommend it to most people.

Robert Wolke s What Einstein Told His Cook is one of several books he has written explaining the science behind everyday occurrences in an easy to understand way As a professor emeritus of chemistry at the University of Pittsburgh, Wolke is likened to a version of Martha Stewart with a PhD As part of my chemistry class, I was assigned to read this book Organized into hundreds of questions, answers, and recipes, this seemed like a daunting task to me at first However, one aspect of the book intrigued me I always wonder why certain things happen in the kitchen like why pasta should be cooked at boiling temperature What Einstein Told His Cook answers all the questions you could ever have about the chemistry behind cooking, and keeps readers interested using sarcasm and historical facts The book is broken into nine chapters of diverse information, ranging from the molecules inside our food to the tools people use to cook In each chapter, Wolke answers common questions that people may have about cooking While answering the question in bold, Wolke slips in historical background about the question or answer, a few jokes and slight sarcasm, and even a recipe Rather than creating a bland narrative, Wolke adds interest to his scientific explanations In an answer to a question about the differences between types of chocolate, Wolke gives background about how chocolate is made In his response, Wolke says that The dried beans are then shipped of to Willy Wonka at the chocolate factory 27 When Wolke references Willy Wonka,

it is clear that he wants to give the book a touch of sarcasm and playfulness This makes the book interesting to read, because it presents readers with information other than science While talking about Dutch process Cocoa, Wolke gives readers historical background with a touch of sarcasm In the Dutch process, invented in 1828 by Conrad J van Houten, in guess what country 31 Rather than providing readers with fact after fact, this sarcasm lightens up the density of material It gives the book an edginess, and keeps things interesting for the reader Wolke relates food with historical events, which reminds readers that social and cultural factors influence what makes it to their plates While Wolke describes the difference between cream of tartare and tartare sauce, he says that Tartar or tatar was the Persian name for Genghis Khan s horde of Mongols who stormed through Asia and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages 102 Historical snippets such as this remind readers that war and culture influence cuisine and type of food eaten It also adds diversity to the information in the book, which makes the book interesting Diving deeper into the history of food, Wolke brings social awareness to readers When describing food flavor enhancers, Wolke addresses a myth about Chinese restaurants from the past He says that Everyone has heard of Chinese Restaurant Syndrome or CRS, an unfortunate and politically incorrect label that was applied in 1968 to a diffuse collection of symptoms 107 Wolke is able to connect food to prominent factor in many people s lives, racial stereotypes The social awareness that Wolke provides continues to broaden the diversity of information presented in the book, and make it interesting Throughout What Einstein Told His Cook, questions that arise from cooking are answered using sarcasm and historical facts, which keep readers interested Wolke uses sarcasm to spice up a bland scientific narrative, and provides readers with the history of food to broaden their perspectives and keep them engaged What Einstein Told His Cook is the encyclopedia for all cooks and eaters who want to satisfy their appetite for understanding the many puzzling cooking phenomenas. I think this is probably better suited for middle school high school students or as an entry point for adults that aren t already science enthusiasts Wolke s subjects are interesting to me, but his explanations are just at a surface level and the language is reduced down enough that I feel like I m not getting much out of it I m keeping the book around, though, for my son when he s old enough to be interested.

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