

## Prepare Like a Pro - Start with "Mise en Place"

Susan Denzer, Chef and Culinary Consultant

[www.loveandcraftkitchen.com](http://www.loveandcraftkitchen.com)



### Get Ready. Get Set. *Then* Cook!



Photo: iStock/NRuedisueli

Every culinary professional learns the French term "mise-en-place" early in their training and won't go far without adopting the practice. Meaning "put in place", it refers to the process of preparing yourself and your work space before beginning to cook. By reading the recipe and assembling all of the necessary tools and ingredients prior to cooking, the process flows more easily and efficiently. It allows the cook's attention to be on cooking rather than scrambling to chop the onion and peppers while the oil in the pan is burning up! (How many times has THAT happened?!)

Any kitchen will benefit from having this process in place. Restaurant and other commercial kitchens will not function well without it and using this process at home not only increases efficiency but also the chances of success - all which make cooking much more enjoyable.

#### How to "Mise-en-Place"

- Read through the recipe completely before shopping or gathering ingredients, and also again before starting to cook. Check that you have all the right equipment and add any needed ingredients to your shopping list. Walk through the steps of the recipe in your mind.
- Clear and clean the work area before starting to prep ingredients for sanitation purposes and ease of work.
- Assemble all ingredients and equipment (pans, knives, utensils, cutting boards, measuring cups and spoons, etc.) at your work station and or cooking area.
- Prep all ingredients according to recipe instructions - cutting, measuring, etc. - placing each into prep bowls. Ingredients that will be cooked together, such as onions, carrots and celery, or spices may share a bowl. Do not mix raw meat or seafood with other items - keep each one separate.
- Take care of any special preparations - like toasting nuts or thawing frozen items - before starting to cook.
- Arrange the prep bowls in order of use in the recipe.
- Clean as you go to keep your counter space organized and reduce the chance of cross-contamination. Place used bowls or utensils into or near the sink. Capture any spills to keep the area clean.