

The Times

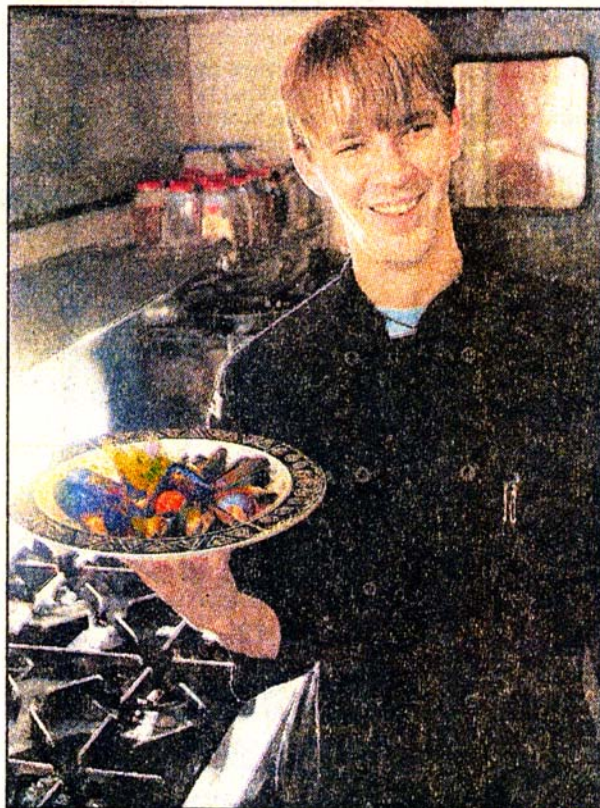
Time shavers

Local chefs offer tips on trimming time, effort in the kitchen

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Of all the things to cut in the kitchen, the most desirable would be time.

Always on the lookout for little ways to trim some of the drudgery and minutiae from the cooking process, The Times asked three local chefs for some handy tips.



Jim Hudelson/The Times

Sous Chef Justin McDonell of Columbia Cafe says before starting to cook, have all ingredients in place and ready to go.

Justin McDonell
Columbia Cafe

Organization is key to smooth meal preparation, said Justin McDonell. Don't make the mistake of starting to cook without having everything in front of you ready to go.

"I would have to say the best shortcut is *mise en place*, which means to have all of your ingredients in place. Have all your ingredients, have all your tools right in front of your face," McDonell said. For example, if you're making a stir-fry, have all your vegetables cut and sauces and seasonings measured before you even turn on the heat. This will keep you from having to stop and restart the cooking process.

Also, a food processor can get a lot of chopping and mincing done much quicker than a knife. "Put that \$400 food processor to work," he said.

Another good tip is to invite someone to join you in the kitchen. Besides the company, you could use the help.

"Cooking with a friend makes it a lot more fun. You can talk and share tasks," he said. "Delegating is the best shortcut I can think of."

