

CUNNINGHAM'S
ENCYCLOPEDIA OF
WICCA IN THE
KITCHEN



SCOTT CUNNINGHAM

Food has played a significant role in human celebrations of all kinds. In earlier times, the Earth and its bounty were connected with goddesses and gods. Fruit, seed, root, and flower were all manifestations of divinity.

As we've lost the knowledge of the old magics, so too have we forgotten the mystic lore of food. But timeless energies still vibrate within our meals. They wait for us to sense and use them.

About the Author

Scott Cunningham practiced elemental magic for more than twenty years. He was the author of more than thirty books, both fiction and nonfiction. Cunningham's books reflect a broad range of interests within the New Age sphere, where he was highly regarded. He passed from this life on March 28, 1993, after a long illness.

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Llewellyn Publications
Woodbury, Minnesota

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THIRD EDITION
Sixth Printing, 2007

SECOND EDITION 1996, one printing (titled *The Magic of Food*)
FIRST EDITION, 1990, two printings (titled *The Magic in Food*)

Book design and editing by Kimberly Nightingale
Cover design by Kevin R. Brown
Cover illustration © 2003 by Jennifer Hewitson FR

ISBN 13: 978-0-7387-0226-1
ISBN 10: 0-7387-0226-9
CIP data for this title is on file with the Library of Congress.

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Llewellyn Publications
A Division of Llewellyn Worldwide, Ltd.
2143 Wooddale Drive, Dept. 978-0-7387-0226-1
Woodbury, MN 55125-2989, U.S.A.
www.llewellyn.com
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Printed in the United States of America

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The Truth About Herb Magic

The Truth About Witchcraft Today

Wicca

Biography

Whispers of the Moon

(*written by David Harrington and deTraci Regula*)

Video

Herb Magic

Acknowledgments

Many people have been of assistance during the seventeen years that it has taken to complete this book. In no particular order, some of them are:

Jeanne Rose, herbalist extraordinaire, for her inspiration, friendship, and also for supplying mail-order sources.

Morgan of Hawaii, for allowing me to publish her Fruit Salad Spell.

Barda of Nevada, for her early encouragement and sharing of food lore and recipes.

Vinnie Gaglione, of Spellbound in Bloomfield, New Jersey, for supplying me with Italian food lore.

Laurie Cabot of Salem, for sharing her notes with me while we were working on similar projects.

Virginia Thompson of Arizona, for information about Central American food magic and ritual uses.

Robert and Virginia Thompson, for Japanese food lore.

Ray T. Malbrough of Houma, Louisiana, for many long phone calls and for providing a copy of his paper concerning Louisiana plant magic.

deTraci Regula, for Chinese food magic.

Morgan, my first teacher, who introduced me to the idea that food could be magical.

Lou and Myrna of Las Vegas, for finding all those out-of-the-way print books.

And finally, to my mother, who rarely minded my licking the spoon for all those long years.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface | xv
Introduction | xvii

PART ONE: the magic in your kitchen

Chapter one
Food Power! | 3

Chapter two
Magic | 7

Chapter three
The Tools of Food Magic & Magical Cooking | 13

Chapter four
The Ritual of Eating | 19

Chapter five
Vegetarianism | 23

Chapter six
The Practice of Food Magic | 29

Chapter seven
Festival Foods | 33

PART TWO: the magic of food

- Introduction to the magic of food* | 43
- Chapter eight*
Bread & Grains | 47
- Chapter nine*
Cakes, Sweetened Breads, Cookies, & Pies | 61
- Chapter ten*
Vegetables | 75
- Chapter eleven*
Fruit | 101
- Chapter twelve*
Spices & Herbs | 127
- Chapter thirteen*
Honey, Sugar, Chocolate, Carob, & Maple Syrup | 153
- Chapter fourteen*
Nuts & Alleged Nuts | 165
- Chapter fifteen*
Salt, Vinegar, Soup, & Noodles | 175
- Chapter sixteen*
Food from Sea & River | 181
- Chapter seventeen*
Beer, Wine, & Alcoholic Beverages | 187
- Chapter eighteen*
Tea & Coffee | 197
- Chapter nineteen*
The Mystic Egg | 201
- Chapter twenty*
From the Dairy | 207

PART THREE: magical food diets

<i>Introduction to magical food diets</i>	217
<i>Chapter twenty-one</i>	
Love	221
<i>Chapter twenty-two</i>	
Protection	229
<i>Chapter twenty-three</i>	
Health & Healing	237
<i>Chapter twenty-four</i>	
Money	243
<i>Chapter twenty-five</i>	
Sex	249
<i>Chapter twenty-six</i>	
Spirituality	255
<i>Chapter twenty-seven</i>	
Psychic Awareness	261
<i>Chapter twenty-eight</i>	
Peace & Happiness	267
<i>Chapter twenty-nine</i>	
Purification	273
<i>Chapter thirty</i>	
Weight Loss	279
<i>Chapter thirty-one</i>	
Other Magical Food Diets	285

PART FOUR: scott's favorite recipes

Introduction to scott's favorite recipes | 293

Chapter thirty-two

Appetizers | 295

Chapter thirty-three

Beverages | 299

Chapter thirty-four

Desserts | 303

Chapter thirty-five

Main Dishes | 307

Chapter thirty-six

Salads | 313

Chapter thirty-seven

Soups | 315

Chapter thirty-eight

Vegetables & Side Dishes | 319

PART FIVE: supplemental material

Tables | 323

The magical uses of junk food | 335

Symbols | 341

Mail-order Resources | 345

Glossary | 349

Bibliography | 355

Index | 369

PREFACE

Food is essential to our lives. For many of us, the art of cooking and eating is a chore. For others, it is a great delight. And for some, the culinary arts and their products are indulgences. Food is substituted for love. Food is an excuse. Food is a god.

You're about to embark on a journey into a familiar yet exciting realm. This book is a guide to choosing, ritually preparing, and eating foods to manifest necessary changes in our lives. The only tools that are necessary to practice this ancient branch of magic are food, common kitchen implements, and yourself. Food magic is a natural art, in which we unite our own energies with those that exist in food.

Part one of this book consists of introductory material: the processes of magic and cooking; foods associated with ancient festivals; vegetarianism; and a step-by-step guide to the practice of food magic.

Part two is an encyclopedia of magical foods. Concise articles explore the spiritual backgrounds and magical uses of hundreds of foods, including bread, fruits, vegetables, ice cream, tofu, sugar, chocolate, seafood, spices and herbs, nuts, coffee, tea, and alcoholic beverages. Many common

and exotic foods are discussed. Why is bird's-nest soup so prized by some Asians? What magical energies lie within apple pie, sprouts, oatmeal, and chocolate bars?

Part three could be called "The Magical Diet Book." Eleven chapters describe fifteen diets, each designed to create a different change within the diner's life: protection, love, money, psychic awareness, health, magical weight loss, and much more.

In part five I've collated some of the information contained within part two into tables for easy reference. A list of foods ruled by the signs of the zodiac and a table of the magical properties of fast food complete this section.

Finally, two appendices discuss magical symbols and mail-order sources of unusual foods, herbs, and spices.

This isn't a book of gourmet cooking; nor is it a cookbook. It is a guide to transforming our lives with the foods that we eat. It's a practical introduction to an ancient subject.

A Note on Notes

I've chosen to use this method rather than standard footnoting with good reason: it doesn't burden the pages of the text with lengthy footnotes, yet it allows the reader to easily check the sources of any information.

Some statements aren't followed by a number. I've lost the source for a few of them. Others are part of the knowledge that I've accumulated over years of study. Still others stem from oral sources or from the results of my own experience. In any case, a published work is unavailable for these few statements.

Numbers following a statement in this book refer to a specific entry in the bibliography. To find the source of the information contained within the statement, see the number list of books in the bibliography.

INTRODUCTION

Food is magic. Its power over us is undeniable. From the sweet, rich lure of a freshly baked brownie to an exquisitely steamed artichoke, food continues to seduce us.

Food is life. We can't continue to live without its magic. Food, however, also harbors energies. When we eat, our bodies absorb those energies, just as they absorb vitamins, minerals, amino acids, carbohydrates, and other nutrients. Though we may not be aware of any effect other than a sated appetite, the food has subtly changed us.

In times of scarcity as well as plenty, peoples around the world have subjected food to religious reverence. Rice in Asia; fruit throughout Europe; grains in Africa; pomegranates and beer in the Near East; acorns and pine nuts in the American Southwest; bananas and coconuts in the Pacific; vegetables in tropical America—these foods have all played significant roles in religious and magical rituals.

Sacred meals are shared with the goddesses and gods (or their priestesses and priests). Today, eating with others is still an act of energy sharing, bonding, and trust.

The magic of the hunt and the sacredness of gathering rituals in fields and groves are still remembered by a few isolated peoples. Most of us now, however, buy presliced

bread, gather our fruits and vegetables from gleaming counters, and hunt in refrigerated cases.

As we've lost the knowledge of the old magics, so too have we forgotten the mystic lore of food. But timeless energies still vibrate within our meals. They wait for us to sense and to use them.

Lengthy magical spells aren't required, though a simple ritual is necessary to boost the food's effectiveness. If you have little knowledge of magic, follow the instructions presented in this book. You'll soon discover its power.*

I've tried to speak to all tastes in writing this practical food magic manual. It isn't strictly vegetarian, nor is it concerned solely with healthy or organic food. You'll find the magic of wine, sugar, and hotcross buns here, along with that of seaweed, carrots, and tofu. This book has something for everyone.

Eating is a merging with the earth. It is a life-affirming act. Ritually preparing and eating specific foods is an effective method of enhancing and improving our lives.

It's also fun. Magic pretzels? Sacred chocolate? Passionate pickles? They're all part of the magic of food, and the spells to create them begin in your own kitchen.

*Magic is a positive, loving art. Magic isn't supernatural, evil, or dangerous. See chapter 2 for more information.

PART ONE

*the magic in
your kitchen*

Food Power!

The woman bent over the stone hearth, adding twisted branches to the embers that glowed behind the andirons. Once they'd sprung into flickering life, she stepped outside to pump water into the old iron pot.

She returned to her house and placed the heavy cauldron directly over the fire, positioning its three long legs evenly around the blaze.

As the water warmed, she carved a small heart on to a beeswax candle, placed it in a pewter holder on the kitchen table, and lit its wick. She uncovered the baskets of strawberries that she had gathered that morning. Removing one, she placed it on the cutting board.

"Love . . . for . . . me," she murmured.

Working slowly and deliberately, she transferred the luscious fruits to the board, placing them in a pattern. She soon had created a small heart fashioned of strawberries.

The woman made another heart around the first, then another and another, until her supply of strawberries was exhausted. She smiled and chopped the strawberries, imagining what her life would be like once she'd met a man.

While waiting for the water to boil, she took an apple from a string hung from the ceiling. She carefully carved a heart into its peel with a white-handled knife, saying:

“Love for me!”

The woman stared at the apple, smiled, and bit into the fruit. The sweetness refreshed her. She slowly ate the apple, biting clockwise around the fruit from where she’d first penetrated it, slowly consuming the heart.

Later, the woman rose from her spinning and checked the pot. It was nearly boiling. She took the cutting board to the open-faced hearth and, using the white-handled knife, slid the chopped strawberries into the rustling water. As the fruit dropped into the cauldron, she said:

“Love for me!”

The cake of sugar had sat undisturbed in its ceramic pot for three months, but now was the time. The woman gently added it to the simmering, fruit-filled cauldron. It absorbed the water and melted.

She sat beside the fire and took up a spoon made of cherry wood. Slowly stirring, and moving the spoon in the direction of the sun, the woman cooked her strawberry jam. As it boiled, she said, over and over again in a voice barely audible above the crackling wood and the bubbling water:

“Love for me!”

The practice of folk magic* utilizes a variety of tools to empower simple rituals. These tools include visualization, candles, colors, words, affirmations, herbs, essential oils, stones, and metals. Other tools, fashioned by our hands, are also used, but these are merely power-directors. They contain little energy save that which is provided by the magician.

Another magical tool is at our disposal, a tool that contains specific energies which we can use to create great changes in our lives. This tool is all around us. We encounter it every day without realizing the potential for change that exists within it; without

*See glossary for unfamiliar terms.

knowing that, with a few simple actions and a visualization or two, this tool can be as powerful as the rarest stone or the costliest sword.

What is this untapped source of power?

Food.

That's right, food. The oatmeal you had for breakfast, your salad-and-seafood lunch, even the chocolate ice cream that topped off your evening meal, are all potent magical tools.

This isn't a new idea. From antiquity, humans have honored food as the sustainer of all life, a gift from the unseen deities who graciously provided it. Food played an important role in religious rituals for most cultures of the Earth as they entered the earliest stages of civilization. Its essence was offered up to the deities that watched overhead, while its physical portion, if not burned, was shared by the priestesses and priests. Food became connected with rites of passage such as birth, puberty, initiation into mystical and social groups, marriage, childbirth, maturity, and death.

Not only was food linked with all early religions; it was also understood to possess a nonphysical energy. Different types of food were known to contain different types of energy. Certain foods were eaten for physical strength, for success in battle, for easy childbirth, for health, sex, prosperity, and fertility.

Though food magic was born in an earlier age, it hasn't died out. Foods are used in magic in both the East and West, though the rationale for including them may have changed. Birthday cakes are an example. Most birthday cakes contain iced wishes of good luck. Why should we eat words? Originally, the words were thought to contain the energies associated with them. So the birthday celebrant was believed to enjoy both the cake and the energy of the words. Birthday cakes are a contemporary form of food magic, whether or not those who perpetuate this ritual are aware of it.

While food magic has suffered from neglect in most of the Western world (outside of religious connections), there are many places where food is still viewed as a tool of personal transformation. In Japan and China, specific foods are eaten to ensure long life, health, love, even a passing grade on an examination.

Such rituals have continued for 2,000 to 3,000 years because they are effective.

In my twenty-year excursion into the realm of magic, I've realized that no part of our lives is divorced from its power. I began researching the magical uses of food about seventeen years ago, when I was struck with the knowledge that it, too, was a tool of magic and could be used to create positive, needed change.

Many of my peers expressed disbelief when I first explained the premise of this book. Locked into one particular viewpoint concerning magic, they couldn't grasp the simple idea that food itself could be a force for magical change. Most of them agreed that herbs contain energies. All right, I said. If herbs are properly chosen and used, the magician can release their energies to manifest a specific change. Right? Correct, they said. Well, herbs are plants. Plants are food. And if food is properly chosen and used, couldn't the magician release its energies for magical purposes?

Of course they could, and they do. Doesn't it make sense that the rosemary a magician burns during a love ceremony could be used in other magical ways—in cooking, perhaps? Since lemons have been used for centuries in purifying rituals, can't we bake a lemon pie and internalize its cleansing energies?

This is the magic of food.

Both familiar and strange dishes can be found on these pages. Their magical energies are clearly stated. Where needed, directions for preparation are also given. I've included recipes where I felt they were appropriate, though you've probably prepared, or at least eaten, most of these dishes.

Every meal and every snack offers us a chance to change ourselves and our world. We can empower our lives with the energies of food. With knowledge and a few short rituals, we can spark the powers naturally inherent in food, transforming them into edible versions of the stones, woods, and metals used by magicians.

We must eat to live. Similarly, we must take control of our lives to be truly happy. The tools for doing just this are in your cupboards, in your refrigerator, and on your kitchen table.

Turn the page, and discover the magic that awaits!

Magic

Some words are necessary here regarding the practices described in this book. This information is vital to the correct practice of food magic.

"Magic is supernatural."

"Magic is evil."

"Magic is dangerous."

"Magic is illusion."

These statements, all false, have been passed down to us by earlier generations of nonpractitioners. Only those who haven't worked magic believe these ideas to be true. All of the statements have also been made about many other practices in earlier times: mathematics, chemistry, psychology, psychics, astronomy, and surgery. These and many other arts and sciences have been pushed from the darkness that lurks behind such statements into the light. They are no longer considered to be supernatural, evil, too dangerous, or illusionary.

At least two aspects of our lives haven't yet been ushered into this august group: *magic* and the *religious experience*. Hardline scientists and those sharing their worldview lump these two together because, to them, they're fantasies with

no basis in fact. Magic, to them, can't possibly be successful, because there are no known laws governing the mechanism at work in magic, and no known force that could empower it. They often view the religious experience with a similar mixture of amusement and contempt.

Unfortunately (for these scoffers, that is), magic works, and the religious experience does exist. Telling an individual who has established a personal relationship with deity that deity doesn't exist will produce predictable results. The same is true of magicians: they don't *believe* that magic is effective; they *know* that it is.

The basis of magic is power. Though magicians have used it for thousands of years, we still don't know exactly what "power" is. But we do know how to work with it.

Magic is the movement of natural but subtle energies to manifest needed change. These energies exist within ourselves, within our world, and within all natural objects on it. These energies, whether in avocados or in our own bodies, share a common source, even if their specific manifestations are quite different. What is this common source? Each religion has given it a different name.

Three types of energy are used in magic. These are *personal power*, the energy that our bodies possess; *earth power*, that which resides within our planet and within plants, stones, water, fire, the atmosphere, and animals; and *divine power*, which has not yet been brought to Earth in specific forms.

Magic always utilizes personal power. In folk magic, Earth power is used as well: the magician arouses (or awakens) her or his own power through visualization or physical exertion. Then Earth power (the energy that resides within natural objects) is awakened through visualization. Visualization (the process of creating images in the mind) fine tunes these energies, altering them in order to make them useful for a specific purpose. Once this has been accomplished, and it is easily done, the magician blends the two types of energies. This is usually done through visualization, but there are other techniques available. Food magic is unique in offering a very natural method of uniting these two energies.

For example: Marjorie wants to increase her income. She's working hard at her job and brings home a regular paycheck, but she can't seem to get ahead of her bills. She has a need: more money.

Being familiar with food magic, she decides to add one money-energizing food to each of her meals. She checks part three of this book and comes up with three foods for the first day: oatmeal for breakfast, a peanut butter-and-grape jelly sandwich for lunch, and fresh tomatoes for dinner. This won't be all that she'll eat, of course; Marjorie will simply include these foods in her meals.

The next morning, Marjorie lights a green candle in the kitchen. As the wick catches the flame and burns, Marjorie sees her self free from financial strain. She visualizes herself paying her bills on time and enjoying the use of more money. Marjorie doesn't hope that this happens—she sees it as if it has already occurred.

She continues to visualize as she pours water into a glass pot and measures the oatmeal. Once the measuring cup is full, she sets it on the kitchen counter and places her hands on either side of it. Marjorie visualizes as strongly as she can. She then adds the oatmeal to the water and cooks it as usual.

As she's waiting, Marjorie sections a grapefruit and pours a glass of low-fat milk. These foods aren't related to her magical need; they simply provide nourishment.

When the oatmeal has cooked, she moves the green candle to the kitchen table, spoons the cooked cereal into a bowl, pours a dab of maple syrup over it (another money food, she thinks), and looks down into the oatmeal. She may say this before she eats:

*“Oats of prosperity and gain,
lift away my financial pain.
I'm flooded with prosperity;
This is my will, so mote it be!”*

Marjorie may also not say anything, but simply renew her visualization. Then she finally eats the oatmeal. With every hot bite she feels money energy pouring into her body. She also senses her

body responding, welcoming both the nourishing food and its prosperous energy.

Marjorie pinches out the candle flame and returns the taper to a kitchen drawer until her next magical meal. She repeats the same ritual for at least one food per meal. Though she'll have the peanut butter and jelly sandwich at work, she'll prepare it with the same care and visualization, and will eat it in the same way during her lunch break.

As she wipes her lips, she decides to add money foods to her meals for at least a week to give the magic time to do its work.

So that's an example. What exactly did Marjorie do?

- She recognized that she had a problem.
- She found the tools (foods) that could help her solve it.
- She tuned her own personal power to a prosperous pitch through visualization.
- She also used visualization to attune the earth power contained within the oats.
- She used a short, rhymed chant to strengthen her resolve and her visualization.
- She moved the prosperous energy that resided within the oats into her body by eating them.

The green candle that she lit is a physical manifestation of the change that she wished to make: green is an ancient symbol of growth, prosperity, and abundance. In our modern world, it is also a color of money and of the things that money can bring us.

Folk magicians say that burning a candle releases energy into the surrounding area. The type of energy is determined by the color of the candle. By lighting the green candle, Marjorie added extra money-attracting energy to her ritual. The candle isn't necessary, but it can be used if desired.

Visualization is important in any type of magic. Most of us can visualize what we've already seen quite well. Close your eyes for a minute or two, and see in your mind's eye a picture of a favorite food, your pet, or your next-door neighbor. Don't just think about

these things; try to see them as if you were actually looking at them.

In magic, we use visualization to create images of the change that we've decided to make. It wouldn't have helped Marjorie to visualize stacks of unpaid bills, to see herself scrounging in her purse for her last few pennies, or to picture being thrown out of her apartment. These are symptoms of her problem, *and problems are never visualized.*

Instead, the solution to the problem and the outcome of the magical ritual is visualized. This is why Marjorie saw herself paying her bills and enjoying extra money. This isn't positive thinking, though that does play a part. Magical visualization is actually positive *imagining.*

On a subtle (but real) level, images created and sustained in the human mind affect us as well as objects around us. In visualizing, our heroine was setting both Marjorie-energies and oat-energies into motion and giving them purpose. The final step was introducing those energies into herself, which she accomplished by eating the oatmeal at breakfast.

Visualization is the most advanced magical technique necessary for the successful practice of food magic. Many good books are available on the subject. Read them if you feel you need help in this matter*, or attend a class if one is held nearby.

This is food magic. It consists of choosing foods, cooking or preparing them with a purpose, and eating them. Since we all have to eat to survive, why shouldn't we make our meals more than nourishment rituals?

Consider again the four statements that opened this chapter. Judging from the example I've given, it's obvious that the energies involved in magic aren't supernatural. On the contrary, they're the energies of food and our own bodies—and of life itself.

Magic certainly isn't evil, except to a minority of folks who, for religious reasons, have decided that it is. These same folks often consider exercise, psychological analysis, self-improvement, and

*Among the finest is Melita Denning and Osborne Phillips' *Practical Guide to Creative Visualization.*

many other aspects of personal growth to be evil as well. Though their bias is clear, it's meaningless to those who don't accept their religious views.

Is magic dangerous? No more dangerous than any other part of life, from taking a shower to using a ladder. The idea that this ancient practice is dangerous stems from the concept that "magic is evil." Magicians don't contact demonic energies, perform sacrifices, or worship fallen angels (see chapter 22).

The fourth statement, that magic is illusion, is also false. This idea is accepted by most of those who haven't practiced it and who don't belong to a fundamentalist religious group. It is difficult or impossible to prove to these cynics that magic is effective precisely because magic utilizes energies that these cynics haven't yet fully investigated.

Still, the effects can be seen. Magic doesn't produce miracles; it produces needed changes. Disbelievers usually discount the fruits of magic as coincidence, as accidents, or as pure psychology. These three explanations are quite handy, but if magic produces the desired results time and time again, and if its practitioners find within its simple rituals ways of improving the quality of their lives, then it isn't illusion, no matter what others may say.

The only way you can discover this is by practicing it. Don't believe that magic works. Try it, so that you'll know that it does.

The Tools of Food Magic & Magical Cooking

Food magic is a direct and simple form of self-transformation. Its most important tools are food and the magician's personal power. Other implements, however, are necessary to prepare and to cook empowered dishes. This chapter describes the magical qualities of these tools and some basic magical cooking tips. Since this isn't a gourmet cookbook, no unusual objects are required. Your own kitchen should provide virtually everything you'll need.*

Cups, Bowls, and Pots

The earliest form of food container must have been cupped hands. Later, leather was shaped in imitation of this form and used to contain liquids and solid foods. In some parts of the globe, basketry was tightly woven into bowls and storage units. Baskets made of fresh leaves are still quite common in tropical parts of the world.

Clay was also shaped into bowls, and these forms were subjected to heat to firm their shapes and to prolong their

*Information about the elements and the planets can be found in part four.

lives. Gourds have been used as containers around the world for hundreds of years. Carved wooden bowls were in common use until quite recently.

With the coming of the Bronze and Iron Ages, peoples that possessed the knowledge of metalworking used these materials to create their bowls. Silver and gold vessels were also common grave goods in royal tombs in the ancient world.

Cups, bowls, and pots are certainly receptive; they *contain*. As implements related to the element of water and to the earth's moon, they possess loving energies and recall the loving cups—trophies—still awarded to exceptional individuals and teams.

Earlier cultures identified the pot as a symbol of the Great Mother. This concept is almost universal.⁷⁸ Rounded pots and bowls, associated with goddess energy, were also used to prepare food. Thus, a goddess symbol physically nourished humans. The Zuni, for example, saw the bowl as the emblem of the earth, which they described as “our Mother.” They drew food and drink from the bowl, as does a baby from its mother's breast. The bowl's rim was as round as the horizon of the earth.²¹

Pottery was invented by women, and pottery remained a feminine craft among virtually all culturally unadvanced early peoples. One of the hallmarks of “advanced” culture was the forced transference of this women's art to men.⁷⁸

Throughout the world, pots have been used for magical purposes. In Panama, a pot shaped like a human being was placed on the roof of a house for protection. In West Africa, shamans trapped the winds and rains in huge jars,⁶⁰ and ancient Hawaiian deities are said to have done much the same thing with gourds.

Chinese New Year's festivities often included stuffing a clay pot with stones and bits of iron, which represented the ills of the past year. Gunpowder was added to the pot, along with a fuse. The pot was buried, the fuse was lit, and the resulting explosion wiped out the evils of the past year.⁶⁰ On their ceremonial pots, the Pueblo Indians of North America rendered animals that are found near springs. This was done to ensure a steady supply of water.⁹

Any cup or bowl can be used in magic, as long as it's not made of plastic or aluminum. Earth colors (browns, beiges, and whites) are most appropriate for a container. Choose cooking pots of the same colors, and made preferably of glazed ceramic, glass, enameled metal, or stainless steel.

Avoid using aluminum implements in magical cooking.

The Oven

The oven is another symbol of the divine.²⁹ It encloses, performs a transformative process (cooking), and is warm and bright. Humans have used many types of ovens, from the mud-brick ovens of the Middle East to the earthen ovens used in both North America and Polynesia. Some cultures honored an oven goddess, such as Fornacalia of ancient Rome.²⁹ Others, like the Chinese, see a male deity within its sun-like warmth. In Europe, the oven didn't come into common use until the eighteenth century; the cauldron, a kind of portable oven, was used in its place.⁷¹

The oven's purpose is to retain heat from the burning fuel and to provide the even temperature necessary for proper cooking. Gas or electrically heated ovens are fine for magical cooking. Modern microwave ovens work on a completely different principle to heat the food. As food magic is a traditional practice, it's best to avoid microwaves and utilize the time-honored, traditional tools of food preparation.

The Cauldron

Long linked with Witches in the popular imagination, cauldrons were once the common cooking pots used throughout Europe. Made of iron, marked with ribs used for measuring, and standing on three long legs, millions of cauldrons have swung or stood on hearths to cook the family meal¹⁰⁴—the stockpot so loved by contemporary cooks has its origins in the lowly cauldron. The cauldron's association with Witches derives from the infamous "three Witches" scene in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. To use an iron pot for

brewing (such as in making teas) or cooking wasn't unusual in the sixteenth century. What *was* unusual, and what attracted the public's attention, was the *type* of cooking being done by these three women.

Among modern Wiccans, the cauldron is honored as a symbol of the Mother Goddess, just as bowls, jars, and pots have been. Cast-iron, three-legged pots are still produced for decorative and occult purposes, but I don't recommend trying to cook in a cauldron unless you have an open hearth and plenty of time. It takes hours to boil water in one of these big iron pots.

Plates and Platters

Plates were probably used before bowls. The first plates were flat pieces of wood or stiff leaves, which came in handy for holding and slightly cooling cooked food prior to eating.

Plates are ruled by the sun and the element of earth. Generally speaking, they represent the physical world, money, and abundance. Any plate made of natural materials can be used for magic.

Mortar and Pestle

The blender and food processor of earlier times, the mortar and pestle is still used by some cooks to crush or to grind herbs and nuts. Prehistoric mortars have been found among the archaeological remains of many peoples dating back to Neolithic times.¹⁰⁴ Mortars identical to those used by preconquest Mexican peoples are still used in contemporary Mexico.

Many Indian tribes of southern California fashioned mortars by grinding holes into huge rocks. A round stone was used as the pestle. As a child, I often threw acorns into such *mortars* in the Laguna Mountains near San Diego. I even tried to grind the acorns, as had the Digueno Indians.

Food processors are important tools for many of us, and they do save time. They, or the mortar and pestle, can be used if you wish. Grinding two cups of almonds with a mortar and pestle is a lengthy business; but while doing so we can pour our personal power into the food and concentrate on its eventual use.

Pantry

Pantries were once common to every home. Today, most of us fill cupboards with staples and canned foods. The pantry is ruled by the element of earth and the moon; because it is a container that houses food, it's intimately linked with the Mother Goddess. For our purposes, your kitchen cabinets constitute a pantry.

The magical cook should keep a stock of basic culinary ingredients: salt; sugar (if you use it); honey; maple syrup; herbs and spices; whole grains; flours of all types; corn meal; vinegar; and vegetable oils and other similar foods, stored in airtight containers.

As a place where food is stored, the pantry should be protected. A rope of braided garlic or chili peppers hung in or on the pantry will serve it well. While hanging the rope, visualize the vegetable's forceful energies driving away anything that would contaminate the food.

Spoons and Spatulas

The spoon is a bowl with a handle. As such, it is related to the moon and to the element of water.

Spoons have been used for thousands of years. Until quite recently in Japan, the *shamoji*, or rice-spatula, was considered a magical object. Small spatulas were nailed over the front door of a house to guard it, and in the hope that its inhabitants would never go hungry for lack of rice.⁵⁴

Forks

Though they are commonly found on Western tables today, forks were once used solely for noneating purposes such as spearing fish, working with hay, and digging. The first fork was probably a forked stick. Until late in the seventeenth century, most Western peoples ate with their fingers. Though the fork was introduced into Europe in the eleventh century, it took five hundred years for it to gain widespread use.⁶⁹

The fork is ruled by Mars and the element of fire. As a tool for eating, it has been regarded as sacred, and bent forks played a role in European protective rituals. They were buried in gardens or placed inside walls to ward off negativity.

Knives

Knives were first created by flaking flint, jasper, and other cryptocrystalline quartzes into finely edged tools. The knife is ruled by Mars and the element of fire. This tool has been used both for life-threatening (stabbing) as well as life-affirming (cooking) purposes. It was the first implement used for eating, for it could both cut food as well as transfer it to the mouth.

A Note on Magical Cooking

- When preparing foods for specific magical purposes, cook with purpose and care. Keep your goal in mind. Know that the food contains the energies that you require.
- Always stir clockwise. Clockwise motion is thought to be in harmony with the apparent movement of the sun in the sky, and has been linked with life, health, and success.
- Cut foods into shapes symbolic of your magical goal; i.e., hearts, stars, or circles (see chapters 21 through 31 for specific ideas).
- If you're cooking food that will be consumed by others as well as by yourself, don't load the whole dish with energy. Prepare it as you normally would. Then, just before you eat, charge your own portion with visualization. Failing to separate your empowered share is treading on the dangerous ground of manipulative magic.
- Cook with love.

The Ritual of Eating

Eating is a simple practice. We put food into our mouths, then chew and swallow it. Nothing mystical about that, right?

Perhaps not. But because of food's importance, it has been linked with politics, social structures, legal systems, health maintenance, magic and, oh yes, religion.

Our lives still contain vestiges of these earlier practices. Prayer (or "saying grace") before meals is perhaps the most common. It is popular not only in Christianity but also in many other religions. The urge to give thanks for food prior to eating has its origins in the Pagan sacrifices common in ancient Egypt, Sumer, Greece, Rome, and many other cultures. Portions of the food were burned or placed in offering bowls. The food is now simply blessed.*

The idea today is the same: verbally or psychologically linking food with deity. Long ago, humans spent most of their time ensuring a steady supply of food, which could be wiped out by fires, droughts, insect infestations, torrential rains, storms, and unseasonal freezes. Unable to physically prevent such catastrophes, humans naturally turned to their deities for protection.

*People continue to offer food to deities in a variety of religions around the world, especially on feast days. This is even found in some Christian groups.

When the harvest had been spared, our ancestors thanked their deities with offerings of food. This may have been buried, flung into the air, or tossed into a fire. The portion earmarked for the deities wasn't consumed by humans.

Even today, with tremendous botanical knowledge and global weather reporting, farmers in most parts of the world are still at the mercy of natural forces. The increased knowledge and tools available to farmers and agribusinesses can't stop such events from destroying their crops.

In many parts of the world that suffer food shortages, food has become a tool of politics. People *are* starving on every continent and within our own borders. Emergency supplies shipped to the hungry are often held up by government intervention, or are funneled to those in power.

These two factors—the uncertainty of our food supply and its scarcity in many parts of the world—should deepen our appreciation of food.

Our ancestors* worshipped food, seeing it as a gift from the hands of their deities. Food magicians don't worship food, though we respect it as a life-sustaining substance containing the energies of the earth. Food is a manifestation of divine energies that's vital to our survival. Approaching food from this frame of mind makes it easier for us to utilize it as a tool of self-transformation.

About prayer: if you don't subscribe to any particular religion, and haven't been in the habit of praying before meals, there's no reason for you to begin to do so. Prior to eating, simply attune with the food (all of the food, not just that which you're eating for magical purposes). You can easily do this by placing your hands on either side of your portion of the food before beginning to eat. Sense their energies for a few seconds. You need say nothing. This simple act, which you can do in front of those who know nothing about your magical studies, prepares your body to accept the food. You absorb its essence (power) before absorbing its manifestation.

*Everyone's ancestors: African-Americans; Asians; American Indians; Arabs; Pacific Islanders; Caucasians—everyone's!

If it is your custom to pray before meals, continue to do so. Religion and magic have always been closely linked—religion worships the energy that created all things; magic utilizes the energies in those things that have been created.

You can also include a prayer to your deity while eating, or address your conception of deity during the magical preparation and consumption of the food. Though this may seem to be a new idea, it isn't. It's performed around the world by millions of non-Christian, nonWestern peoples.

Eating (and the resultant digestion) is an act of transformation. Our bodies change food into the fuel necessary for our continued physical existence. Be aware also of the higher aspects of food every time that you eat.

Vegetarianism

Many magicians are strict vegetarians. They shun meat, poultry, and fish; some even avoid eggs and milk products. They often believe that spiritual advancement and magical ability can only be obtained with such a diet.

There are many kinds of vegetarians. Those who follow a macrobiotic diet eat little more than grains. The more common type, commonly called “vegans,” add fruits, vegetables, and nuts to their diet. Some more broad-based vegetarians also consume milk (usually goat’s milk), cheese, and even eggs. A few “vegetarians” will also occasionally eat fish and seafood, or even poultry, but never red meat.

Most vegetarians rigidly adhere to their diets in the face of overwhelming odds. Their degree of adherence is usually determined by their reasons for adopting a vegetarian diet. Many of them see living creatures as our sisters and brothers—of different forms, but from the same source. They make a commitment not to ingest them.

Another rationale for vegetarianism seems to be that meat is a poison. It’s true that much of the meat eaten today in the United States is injected with growth hormones and is too fatty for sustaining good health. But meat isn’t poison. If it was, the entire world’s population would have died out thousands of years ago. As members