

Contents

Introduction

What would we do without our grannies?	15
Grandma knows best	16

Household Hints

The kitchen	19
Pots and pans	20
Coffee or tea stains on cups	22
Cleaning the kitchen sink	22
Antibacterial soap	23
Cleaning chrome	24
Ovenproof glass or porcelain dishes	25
Cleaning the oven	25
Keeping smells out of your refrigerator and freezer	25
Sticky stuff	26
Clean your bathroom in twenty minutes	27
Limescale	29
Vinegar, the miracle cleaner	30
Getting rid of moths	31
Picking up broken glass	32

Recycling torn tights	33
Toothbrushes clean more than teeth	34
How to fold a fitted sheet	36
How to iron a shirt	37
How to clean a diamond	38
Looking after your pearls	39

Remedies

Stings and how to treat them	41
Reducing the pain of burns	44
Getting rid of head lice	45
Dealing with fleas	46
Plants, herbs and spices that heal	47
Toothache	48
Eat your parsley	49
Headaches and migraines	49
Natural old-fashioned remedies	50

Food and Cooking: The Basics

Shopping for food	55
Keeping salad and soft fruit fresh	57
Skinning and deseeding fruit and vegetables	57
Get more juice out of citrus fruit	58
Keep salt flowing freely	59
Opening a jar	59
Cookery tips	60
Food hygiene	62
Cooking with kids	63

Fishy odours	64
Oversalting	64
How to stretch meals	64
Creative leftovers	65
Cooking with eggs	66

Recipes

The perfect poached egg	71
Omelette	72
Rice frittata	73
Homemade croutons	75
The vinaigrette ratio	76
Pasta casserole	77
Fishcakes	79
Everything-in-the-fridge stew	81
Risotto	82
Steak rub	83
Chicken good enough for a dinner party	84
Microwave lemon curd	85
Homemade baking powder	86
Homemade vanilla essence	86
Courgette tea cake	88
Very easy raspberry ice cream	90
Forgotten meringues	91
Mixed berry breakfast cake	92
Chocolate and cherry brownies	94
Old-fashioned lemonade	96
Iced coffee	97

Plants and Pets

Advice for the non-green-fingered	99
Growing your own food	101
Repotting plants	102
Herbs	103
Weeds	104
Choosing an appropriate family pet	105
Involving your children in pet maintenance	106
Puppy behaviour and training	107
Cleaning up after pets	108
Protecting your furniture from pets	109
Pets that provide food	110
When your pet dies	111

Advice about Children

Talking and listening	113
Don't always say no	114
Discipline	115
Embarrassing your children/grandchildren	115
Little children, little problems	116
Solidarity	117
Times change	117
Showing favouritism	118
Anger management	118
Competing to win	119
Good manners	120
Thank yous	122
Giving and getting presents	122

Bedtime	123
Safety precautions	124
How to get your child to eat	124
Telling the truth and bending it	125
Perception	126
Bullying	126

Families and Daily Life

Personal relationships	129
Family get-togethers	131
Remembering to make memories	134
Finding your roots	135
Grudges	136
Balancing the budget	136
Neither a borrower nor a lender be	137
Money saving tips	138
The value of lists	139
Fashion	141
Make-up and beauty tips	144
Making your own gifts	148
RSVPs	158
The golden rule	159



Household Hints

The kitchen

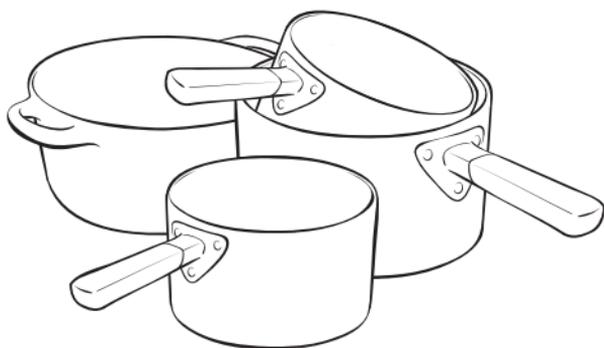
Our own grandmothers had a pretty good idea how to keep their kitchens clean, but they weren't as obsessed with kitchen hygiene as we have become.



Keeping everything as clean as possible in the area in which we prepare food is a given, but there is no need to keep lots of bottles of chemicals under the sink to do so. Most things can be cleaned perfectly well with six old-fashioned ingredients: vinegar, salt, soda water, lemon, cream of tartar and bicarbonate of soda. Just like our grandmothers did.

They certainly didn't have colour-coded cutting boards. Nor do I. I have a twenty-five-year-old wooden board, which I keep scrupulously clean with a table knife, steel wool and bicarbonate of soda. Sometimes if I have a tomato or berry

stain on the board, I cheat a little by rubbing the stain with a cut lemon.



Pots and pans

Removing burnt food from cookware can be a nightmare. As long as the pan isn't non-stick, the scouring powder and alternative methods below will work beautifully, and because they use natural ingredients, you won't have to worry about residual chemicals.

Make your own scouring powder

You can make your own gentle cleaner with no artificial ingredients or harmful chemicals that will work as well on porcelain sinks and easily scratchable countertops. Just add one cupful of salt to one cupful of bicarbonate of soda and blend well. Store in a covered container and keep with your other cleaning supplies.

When you need to use it, shake a little of the mixture on to a wet cloth and scour as usual. You'll find your pots and pans come up sparkling clean. Below are some alternative techniques, most involving the extremely handy bicarbonate of soda.

- ✿ Before you start doing the dishes, wet the burnt spot, sprinkle with salt, leave for ten minutes, then scrub well.
- ✿ Try cooking off the burnt-on food. Fill the saucepan or other cookware with water, add 30ml (two tablespoons) bicarbonate of soda and reheat on the hob. Bring the water to the simmer over a medium heat and use a spatula to scrape the food from the pan. Turn off the heat and let the pan sit on the hob until the water has cooled. At that point you can wash the food away without any fuss or additional elbow grease.
- ✿ Leave the pan to soak in a bicarbonate of soda solution for ten minutes before washing. Alternatively, scrub the pan with dry bicarb and a moist scouring pad.
- ✿ For badly burnt pans, sprinkle a thick layer of bicarbonate of soda on to the bottom of the pan, and then sprinkle with just enough water to moisten. Leave to soak overnight, then scrub clean.
- ✿ For non-stick pans, make a paste of bicarbonate of soda and water. Transfer to a cloth and scrub the pan gently. This will lift the grease, but won't