Food: a recipe for disaster

VOCABULARY PRACTICE
INTERMEDIATE | B1-B2

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 Tick the correct category for each word.

Word | Texture problem | Taste problem | Mistake | Fix

1 soggy [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
2 over-seasoned [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
3 mix up ingredients [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
4 rescue the dish [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
5 rubbery [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
6 tasteless [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
7 forget a step [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
8 adjust the seasoning [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

2 Correct the mistake in each sentence.

1 The chicken was very rubbery texture. _____
2 I mixed up the ingredients by accident on. _____
3 The soup was tasteless completely. _____
4 We managed rescue the dish somehow. _____
5 The rice turned out soggy and wet. _____
6 She over-seasoned with too much the stew. _____
7 I forgot a step of the recipe. _____
8 He adjusted the seasoning of taste. _____

3 Choose the more suitable description.

1 For rice or pasta that is wet and mushy: soggy / crispy.
2 For meat that is tough and chewy: rubbery / tender.
3 For adding far too much salt or spice: over-seasoned / under-seasoned.
4 For accidentally swapping ingredients: mixing up / following exactly.
5 For managing to save a failing dish: rescue the dish / abandon the dish.
6 For food with absolutely no flavour: tasteless / flavourful.

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4 Complete the accounts with words from the box.

adjust the seasoning | forgot a step | mixed up | over-seasoned | rescue the dish | rubbery | soggy | tasteless

Account A: I 1 _____ the sugar and salt, which made the cake taste strange and far too salty.
Account B: The chicken turned out 2 _____ because I cooked it for too long, and the vegetables were completely 3 _____ from sitting in too much water.
Account C: I accidentally 4 _____, adding twice the amount of spice the recipe asked for, and the stew was heavily 5 _____ as a result.
Account D: I realised too late that I had 6 _____ in the recipe, so I tried to 7 _____ by adding some fresh herbs and a squeeze of lemon, and managed to 8 _____ before serving it.

5 Read the text and answer the questions briefly.

When cooking goes wrong

Even experienced cooks occasionally ruin a dish, whether through a rushed step, an unfamiliar ingredient or simple bad luck. Professional chefs suggest that most kitchen disasters are avoidable with careful preparation, such as reading a recipe fully before starting and measuring ingredients in advance rather than mid-process. When something does go wrong, they recommend staying calm and considering whether the dish can be rescued, for example by adjusting the seasoning or adding a fresh element to balance an overpowering flavour. Not every mistake can be fixed, however, and knowing when to start again is, chefs argue, just as valuable a skill as knowing how to salvage a dish.

1 Do even experienced cooks occasionally ruin a dish? _____

2 What do professional chefs suggest most kitchen disasters are? _____

3 Name one piece of preparation advice mentioned. _____

4 What do chefs recommend when something goes wrong? _____

5 Give one example of rescuing a dish mentioned in the text. _____

6 What do chefs argue is just as valuable as knowing how to salvage a dish? _____

6 Rewrite each phrase using the word in capitals.

1 I accidentally swapped the ingredients. MIXED UP _____

2 The dish had far too much salt. OVER-SEASONED _____

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3 The chicken was tough and chewy. RUBBERY _____

4 I managed to save the meal at the last moment. RESCUE _____

OVER TO YOU

Write a 100-120 word account of a cooking disaster (real or imaginary) and how it was fixed, or why it couldn't be saved.

[ ] Use at least ten target expressions. [ ] Include polite, precise wording. [ ] Organise the account clearly.

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ANSWER KEY

1 Categories

1 Texture problem 2 Taste problem 3 Mistake 4 Fix 5 Texture problem 6 Taste problem 7 Mistake 8 Fix

2 Corrections

1 a very rubbery texture 2 mixed up the ingredients by accident 3 completely tasteless
4 managed to rescue the dish 5 soggy and wet 6 over-seasoned the stew
7 forgot a step in the recipe 8 adjusted the seasoning to taste

3 Suitable descriptions

1 soggy 2 rubbery 3 over-seasoned 4 mixing up 5 rescue the dish 6 tasteless

4 Accounts

1 mixed up 2 rubbery 3 soggy 4 over-seasoned 5 over-seasoned/tasteless 6 forgot a step
7 rescue the dish 8 rescue the dish

5 Reading - suggested answers

1 Yes.
2 Avoidable with careful preparation.
3 Reading a recipe fully before starting / measuring ingredients in advance.
4 Stay calm and consider whether the dish can be rescued.
5 Adjusting the seasoning or adding a fresh element to balance an overpowering flavour.
6 Knowing when to start again.

6 Rewriting - possible answers

1 I mixed up the ingredients. 2 The dish was over-seasoned.
3 The chicken was rubbery. 4 I managed to rescue the meal.

Over to you

Answers will vary. Check range, respectful register and clear organisation.