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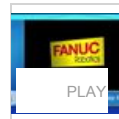
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Help! Recipes Ate My Kitchen!

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By Michelle Gerdes

My husband and I both [enjoy cooking](#). But we have a habit of printing out recipes — and then letting them get lost in the shuffle. Add these piles of paper to our stack of cookbooks and magazines, two kids under three and the dogs, and our kitchen sometimes looks like a bomb went off.

In an effort to combat the recipe clutter, for Christmas a few years ago I bought my husband a big three-ring binder and a three-hole punch. (For the record, I got him something else that was less practical, too). The idea was to keep all of our recipes organized and in one place and eliminate the need for scrambling as it gets closer to mealtime and/or food shopping. I even included dividers so we could organize the recipes into categories (main dishes, sides, etc.).

Though it would seem like an easy task to simply punch holes in a piece of paper and put it in the binder, the idea never really took off. There is usually a mad rush before dinnertime or before we do our week's grocery shopping to find recipes. Is it in the [Everyday Food Magazine](#) on my dresser? Was that dish from a clipping your mom sent from [Bon Appetit](#)? Did we print that out from [AllRecipes.com](#) and stick it in the junk drawer?

It is such a waste of time and energy, not to mention paper, when we can't find the original copy and have to print it out again. Occasionally, I'll bring my laptop into the kitchen and read a recipe directly off of the screen while I cook, but I'm old-fashioned and like to work off a paper copy complete with hand-written notes and food splatter. Also, paper is easier to move



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from counter to counter than it is to schlep the laptop, and I'd hate to think what would happen if I got some cake batter into the keyboard.

A [Personal Journal](#) article today talks with professional chefs to find out how they combat the recipe clutter. Many of them don't seem to be much better off than the rest of us, but one chef had an idea I think I could get behind. Joseph Gillard, executive chef at the [Napa Valley Grille](#) in Los Angeles, suggests using a [Kindle](#) to store cookbooks and recipes all in one place. Plus, the Kindle is small and lightweight so you can move it around the kitchen with ease, or put it on a stand to keep it stationary and reasonably protected from sauce and splatter. The chef started buying cookbooks on the Kindle and points out you can email other recipes to the device. At \$140, it might not be a bad idea. An iPad would also work, but is more expensive. I've also looked a bit into a device called [NeatDesk](#), which allows you to scan in and organize all sorts of papers, such as receipts, business cards, and of course recipes.

Readers, have you found a good way to organize your recipes? What about your other paper clutter? Have you tried using electronic solutions such as a Kindle or iPad? And just for fun, what are your go-to cookbooks and recipes?

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12:39 pm July 11, 2011

Kate wrote:

If you're looking for an easy way to organize recipes and take them with you, you might try

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About The Juggle

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The Juggle examines the choices and tradeoffs people make as they juggle work and family. The site provides readers with news, insight and tips on parenting, workplace issues, commuting, caregiving and other issues busy readers with families face. It is also a place for readers to share and compare their own work-and-family experiences and to seek advice and recommendations. The Juggle is edited by Rachel Emma Silverman (pictured, right), a mother of two young boys in Austin, Texas, and co-written by Sue Shellenbarger (center), the Wall Street Journal's "Work and Family" columnist in Portland, Ore., and a mother of two children and stepmother of three. Another contributor, Michelle Gerdes (left), chief of the Dow Jones Newswires Monitoring Desk in New York, is the mother of two young daughters. The Juggle also includes regular contributions from other staffers at the Journal. Contact the Juggle with ideas or suggestions at thejuggle@wsj.com



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