



Free to Cook, Bake & Share: The Public Domain and Recipes

While **copyright protects the creative expressive elements of cookbooks**, such as storytelling, photos, selection and arrangement, and presentation, basic recipes generally fall outside of copyright protection and into the public domain. **The public domain lets us share and adapt recipes** for education, commentary, commercial or personal use, **encouraging and promoting the spread and growth of culinary culture.**

Public Domain

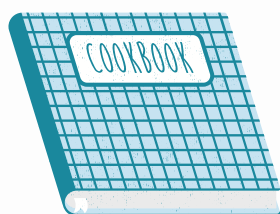
- ✓ List of ingredients
- ✓ Basic functional instructions
- ✓ Culinary education or teaching
- ✓ Food blog reviews or critiques
- ✓ Transformative tutorials or cultural commentary



Copyright-Protected

- ✗ Photographs or illustrations of food
- ✗ Creative writing, personal stories, or anecdotes in recipe intros, historic asides, and other prose that may accompany basic recipes
- ✗ Compilation or arrangement of the cookbook, blog, or other culinary content

Thanks to the Public Domain, anyone can use and mix up recipes to create new culinary cultures. Below are some examples:



- A food blogger posts a review of a cookbook and posts a portion of a recipe.
- A YouTuber vlogs themselves trying out a famous chef's recipe.
- A teacher copies and hands out parts of a recipe in class to show how to properly make sourdough bread.
- A TikToker posts a video tutorial for making a healthy, all-natural version of Taco Bell's Baja Blast.

Public Domain is the Secret Ingredient to Culinary Culture

Many recipes share a common foundation, since cooking, especially baking, is a form of science. Methods and systems, whether for cooking a delicious dessert or manufacturing a jet engine, are useful knowledge that the law encourages us to share. Copyright comes into the picture when someone expresses this knowledge in a new and creative way, adding their own stories, context, and personality to the mix. **The public domain encourages authors, chefs, and creators to build on culinary ideas**, adding new context and personal touches **to keep cuisines alive and evolving.**

