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Tool of the Trade 創意廚具

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Under pressure 壓力之下

Nothing saves time and seals in flavour quite like the pressure cooker

壓力煲以省時和能夠保存食物味道見稱



A favourite of home cooks and professional chefs alike, the pressure cooker has become arguably the best-selling kitchen gadget of the past decade thanks to the Instant Pot. The cult Canadian product, which consistently ranks among Amazon's top-selling consumer goods, has spawned an entire community of pressure-cooking enthusiasts with books, blogs and social-media accounts dedicated to developing and sharing recipes and techniques.

The process of cooking food under high-pressure steam, however, dates all the way back to the 17th century when French physicist Denis Papin invented a "steam digester" to extract fat from bones. The sealed vessel was designed to heat the bones

along with water, generating as much steam pressure as the safety valve would allow to prevent explosion.

While advances have been made in design and safety, the basic concept of the pressure cooker remains the same. Once the liquid inside the cooker reaches the boiling point of 100°C, steam begins to accumulate and thereby intensify the internal temperature and pressure. The food not only cooks around 30% faster compared with conventional methods but also retains more moisture, nutrients and flavour.

While electric models like the Instant Pot are fast and easy to use, stovetop pressure cookers can actually reach higher

temperatures and at a faster rate. They're also better at searing foods, which adds more depth of flavour. Whichever one you choose, keep in mind that the cooking vessel should only be filled up to two-thirds full and be careful when using the quick-release method to avoid the hot steam scalding your hands and face.

壓力煲不僅是家庭主夫和主婦的最愛，也深受專業廚師歡迎。壓力煲毫無疑問是過去十年最暢銷的煮食工具，當中的最大功臣當數加拿大製造的 Instant Pot。這個長年高踞亞瑪遜消費品暢銷榜的壓力煲品牌透過書籍、網誌、社交媒體帳戶等，致力發展及分享壓力煲烹調的食譜和技巧，培養了一群熱衷於用壓力煲煮食的同好。

利用高壓蒸汽煮食其實可追溯至17世紀，其時法國物理學家 Denis Papin 發

明了一個「蒸煮器」，用以提取骨頭裡的脂肪。蒸煮器是密封的，利用水給骨頭加熱，當容器裡產生的蒸汽壓力過高時就會透過安全閥門排氣減壓，以防發生爆炸。

壓力煲的設計和安全保障歷年來不斷改進，但基本原理維持不變。當煲裡的水達到攝氏100度的沸點，蒸汽便開始積聚，煲內的溫度和壓力就會上升，使烹調時間得以比傳統方法縮減30%，但食材的水分、營養和味道卻得以保留。

雖然電子壓力煲烹調省時又方便，但用爐火的壓力煲可以達到更高的溫度，烹調速度更快，也更適合用來做輕煎的菜式，讓菜式味道層次更豐富。不管是哪種壓力煲，使用時必須緊記煲裡最多只能放滿三分之二的食材，快速放壓時也要小心別被蒸汽燙傷手和臉。