

Kids In The Kitchen

How Families Can Connect In The Kitchen By Cooking Meals Together

By Kelly Rowland, four-time GRAMMY-winning singer, songwriter, actress and mom

(NAPSA)—Sharing stories over

plates of fried chicken, laughing over bowls of gumbo—there are certain meals that evoke sweet memories for me. Cooking and food have always been attached to memory and that's why I realize how important it is to invite my son into the kitchen. Even though Titan is still a toddler, he loves watching me cook and helping out in whatever ways he can in the kitchen, and I know that the time together will create lifelong memories for us both. While cooking, I ask him about the colors of food and about what I am making. His face lights up with excitement. It warms my heart to connect with him just as my mother, my aunt and I bonded in the kitchen when I was his age. I sincerely believe that our time in the kitchen can be the best time and that's why I teamed up with the UNCLE BEN'S® Brand for their 2016 Ben's Beginners™ Cooking Contest.

I'm thrilled to partner with a program that not only encourages families to get cooking, but inspires them to experiment with new, creative recipes and discover healthy ways to spend time as a family. This year, the UNCLE BEN'S® Brand is continuing to turn their annual contest into a movement by creating Ben's Beginners™ digital cooking lessons as a way to further support parents who want to invite their children into the kitchen. Families can take cooking to the next level by using these interactive step-by-step instructions and family-friendly recipes.

In addition, the UNCLE BEN'S® Brand is giving away five prize packages, each of which includes \$15,000 cash for the family, a \$30,000 cafeteria makeover for their child's school and a hometown celebration. Parents and kids in grades K–8 across the country submitted entries and are now in the running for a chance to win and inspire families to rediscover their love of cooking together. Help a finalist in your community by going to beginners.unclebens.com and voting for their photo from now until November 13th.

How can you encourage your family to join you in the kitchen? Here are a few of my best tips to



Singer Kelly Rowland and her family like cooking and eating together.

get kids cooking as well as the most important cooking lessons all young chefs should learn!

Tips for children three years old or younger (like Titan!):

- 1...2...3...let's count. Little ones can help count ingredients in a mixing bowl.

- For garnish or flavor. Young chefs can help pluck fresh herbs.

- Cleaning is fun. Have your young ones help wash vegetables—and hands. Use the time to teach a little about food safety as they help scrub the produce. As a bonus, it also reinforces general hand washing.

Tips for all kids:

- Grocery shop till you drop. Take your kids with you to the grocery store and have them pick out the produce they want to try.

- Let cooking time be their time. Let your kid choose what they want to help make for dinner even if it is pizza. Did you know you can make a crust using cauliflower?

- Clean up. Use those extra hands for even more help. Let them suds up the dishes.

Skills to teach your young chef:

- Measuring. Let your children help measure and count as they double recipes and mix in the correct amounts of ingredients.

- Stirring. Help them learn the different types of stirring utensils for different types of food, such as using a wooden spoon for stirring hot food.

- Chopping. Remind your little ones to chop slowly, and make sure their fingers are safe.

- Pouring. Have your kiddo fill a measuring cup with a specific amount of water to practice accurate pouring.

- Peeling. Remind your young chefs to peel away from themselves.

Need a quick recipe to inspire the whole family to get cooking

during the holidays? Whip up this playful dish:

Cranberry Rice Stuffed Pork Chops Main Course Serves 4

Ingredients:

- 1 8.8-oz. package UNCLE BEN'S® READY RICE® Whole Grain Brown
- ½ cup whole cranberry sauce
- ½ cup barbecue sauce
- 1 Tbsp. orange zest
- 2 Tbsp. orange juice
- ½ tsp. minced garlic
- 4 (5-oz.) boneless center-cut loin pork chops, trimmed (about ¾ in. thick)
- ¼ tsp. each of salt and pepper
- 2 Tbsp. butter
- 1 large orange, zested and juiced

Instructions:

1. Cook UNCLE BEN'S® rice according to directions on the pack and preheat oven to 375° F.
2. Mix together cranberry sauce, barbecue sauce, orange zest, orange juice and garlic in a small bowl. Split into two halves and set one half aside. Let children decide when the two halves are equal.

3. Gently stir in 1 cup of warm rice into one half of the mixture. Reserve remaining rice for another use.

4. Cut a horizontal slit through the thickest portion of each pork chop to form a pocket. Stuff ¼ to ½ cup of the rice mixture into each pocket. (Wooden picks help secure the pork chops if needed.)

5. Brush the chops with half of the remaining barbecue sauce mixture and bake for 30–40 minutes. Then, let kids brush the remaining barbecue sauce mixture onto chops.

• ABOUT: Kelly Rowland is a four-time GRAMMY-winning singer, songwriter, actress and mom. A global pop star since the age of 16, Kelly grew up in the spotlight as a member of Destiny's Child, one of the best-selling groups of all time. Her powerful voice a key ingredient in the group's awe-inspiring list of chart-toppers and dance floor smashes, including four No. 1 singles in the U.S. and more than 60 million albums sold worldwide.