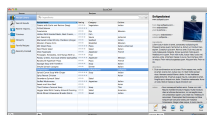


9 February 2009

By: Iulia Ivan, Mac Editor



SousChef

## [SousChef - Your Personal Cooking Assistant](#)

*Use your favorite recipes to create your own cookbook*

I am sure that one of the reasons we all love holidays are all those great traditional dishes. And since everyone likes keeping a little "holiday spirit" all year long, the piles of recipes grow bigger every year. Unfortunately, I haven't developed a classification method yet, so usually half of the time I spend cooking is reserved to recipe browsing. I doubt that I am the only one with this kind of problem - that is why I consider SousChef a lovely solution. In fact, as the developers say, SousChef is more than a solution, but a true "cooking assistant."

### The Looks

Probably the biggest issue that you encounter when you want to prepare a dish is the fact that the required ingredients are not in your fridge, so a trip to the supermarket is imperative. With SousChef, that is not necessary anymore.

Although SousChef has a very well organized interface, one of the innovations is actually the search feature. All you have to do is set the search criteria: ingredient, recipe name, category or cuisine and input the element you would like to find.

SousChef will automatically display recipes that match your search. This way, you will be able to find the ones that can be prepared using ingredients you already have. The great part is that, due to the interface enhanced functionality, all this is performed in only one window.

### The Works

The SousChef main window is divided into three separated areas: the Source, the Recipes and the Preview. The first zone provides easy access to the Recipes Library. To increase efficiency, SousChef allows you to organize your entries by cuisine, or by any criteria you would like but it is also displaying by default the recently imported and the recently cooked ones.

Although the search bar remains available at all times, on the top of the Recipe area, you can manually browse the library and still keep the search results intact. When you are done browsing, just go to the search folder and you will find your last one exactly how you left it.

The search results can be easily customized through the Preferences window. Define your own ingredient substitutions, besides the ones used in SousChef by default, and the result will also include the recipes that use the substitutions. The General panel in the Preferences allows you to input the ingredients you always have around the house in order to save time. Another time saving feature provided in the SousChef preferences gives you the possibility to set your own measurements.

As an application, SousChef has a very natural workflow. You start from the left side and when you get to the right side of the window, you are already able to start cooking, and in the process you get all the information you need. This is mostly achieved through the Recipe area. For each entry, you can see the name, rating, category, cuisine, date added and the last time you prepared it. If you press the name of the recipe, you will be able to

preview it on the right side of the window.

The actual information is very easy to follow because every time a new item is added, the SousChef basic rules can be easily applied due to the default recipe format. Basically, each entry respects the following guidelines: name, description, author, time, yield, category, cuisine, ingredients, directions and notes.

The import process is quite simple, thanks to the tag menu. All you have to do is add the text by using copy&paste or by opening a file, then assign the corresponding tags. After the actual import, the recipe automatically enters the editing mode, so make sure everything is in place, press the Finish Editing button and you are set to go.

As an additional feature, once you join the SousChef community you will be able to access hundreds of recipes with very little effort. Of course, you will also be able to share yours. Each one can be sent by email, printed or published on your blog.

Although the organizing part might seem a bit boring, the entire process leads to a fantastic small button situated in the right corner, called Cook. Pressing it will enable the full screen mode that displays the information in a large font in order to be visible from a distance. The Ingredients will be displayed on the top of the window and the panel can be easily resized.

The Directions browsing can be done in several modes. You have the possibility to use the up and down keys, or just hit play so the text will slide after a delay period. SousChef provides support for voice control and is able to loudly read the information for you. In full screen mode, the application is also responding to an Apple Remote. Once a recipe is viewed in Cook mode, it will automatically be transferred in the Recently Cooked folder.

### The Good

Once you will try "digital cooking," you will never go back to the classic cooking books. The process is efficient and clean, you don't have to turn pages and the searching speed is absolutely amazing.

### The Bad

Although the application is very well organized, it might take some time creating your own database. And, since the sharing feature is not available in the demo mode, you cannot know whether the SousChef community might actually be helpful.

### The Truth

The process can be a bit time consuming in the beginning but for \$30 you will have the tool to create your own cooking book that you can easily share with your friends.

*Here are some snapshots of the application in action:*