

COOK

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OVERVIEW

COOK is a free-form database, designed for use by anyone who enjoys cooking and wants an easy, flexible way to manage their favorite recipes, generate shopping lists, and instantly locate foods via any kind of search criteria (nutrition, ingredients, whatever).

If, after you use it for a week or two, you wish to register, it costs only \$29 and you get the latest version with over 100 recipes, a total of 400 possible recipes within each "cookbook" you create. And if you're a programmer, you'll enjoy the complete (text files only) Visual Basic sourcecode so you can see just how some of the effects were accomplished. You'll also get the latest version (without the reminder screen.)

Like Windows, COOK is intuitive, yet useful and powerful: just the kind of program to convince that long-time holdout from computers in your household that these machines can be valuable and fun to use.

DESIGN

A DATABASE is simply an organized collection of information, designed to make entry, modification, and retrieval as easy as possible. COOK is free-form because there are no restrictions on how the user manages and enters information. Anything can be typed into the title and body of each recipe, in any manner. It is also easy to import text files of recipes from the outside, by using Notepad and the Clipboard. The only two restrictions are that the number of recipes cannot exceed 400 and the information for any one recipe cannot exceed the visible computer screen.

COOK was designed to be as flexible as possible and there are a number of user-configurable parameters. Also, those registering the program for their use will receive the Visual Basic source code (with a variety of useful programming examples) in TXT format, many additional recipes, and instructions on how to further customize the program to suit personal tastes. For more on customizing, see "TIPS" below.

SETUP

After you UNZIP the COOK.ZIP file, you should create a directory called C:\COOK (OR DIRECTORY OF YOUR CHOICE) and put all

the COOK files in there.

Here is the list of files that come with COOK:

1. COOK.EXE (the main program)
2. VBTOOLS.VBX (an aftermarket runtime toolkit providing some graphics enhancements)
3. COOK.DAT (the file holding the recipes)
4. COOK.DEX (the file holding the titles)
5. COOK.INI (the initialization file)
6. COOK.WRI (this document)
7. ORDER.WRI (the order form)
8. README.TXT (quick start instructions)
9. Various icons and optional .BMP files

And, somewhere in your path, you must have the Visual Basic runtime module VBRUN100.DLL which can be downloaded under the name VBRUN100.ZIP from CompuServe's MSLANG (type GO MSLANG from any ! symbol) section, EXEC PC BBS's (type F E L L from the top menu), and from many other BBS's. VBRUN100.DLL must be available to any program written in Visual Basic, but is so large that you'll only want to download it once.

CONTROLS

The main screen of COOK contains a number of buttons on the right side. Any of these buttons may be selected by the user at any time. Here is how to use the buttons:

SEARCH

This brings up the search screen. On this screen, the user can search the "cookbook" in two

- ways:
1. by typing in a search word(s) and pressing Enter or
 2. by clicking on one of the icons representing "French," "Salads," "Beef," etc.

Clicking on the Search button then provides a list of all recipes containing the search word in either the body or the title of the recipe.

If the user types a word into the selection box, hitting the Enter key once puts that word into the target box. Hitting the Enter key again (with no word typed in) is the same as clicking on the Search button -- the search will start. (To type several words into the selection box, simply separate them by spaces before hitting the Enter key.)

As many search words as desired can be entered. However, each word entered narrows the search criteria. For example, entering "French" will list all recipes with the word "French" in them. Entering "French" and "Salad" will list only those recipes with *both* words in them.

You don't need to enter complete words. For example, Split Pea Soup can be

accessed by simply typing in Split. (Or even Spl, although a recipe that contained the instructions: "splash on some lemon juice before roasting" would also be listed.)

Another method is searching titles only. You simply add an asterisk. To see all recipes the title of which begins with the letter S, type in S*. Just an S by itself, without that asterisk, would produce a list of every recipe that contained the letter S anywhere within it (in other words, every recipe). The asterisk works much the same way it does in DOS directory listings: It means: Show everything matching what precedes the asterisk. For example, FR* would list all recipes the titles of which started with the letters "FR."

When the search is finished and the search box contains a list of target recipes, the user simply clicks on the desired recipe and is returned to the main screen where that recipe can be modified, deleted, printed, etc.

If, after getting a list of recipes, you want to perform another search, simply click anywhere on the form outside the search box.

Pressing the Exit button aborts a search and returns you to the main screen.

INDEX

This second button on the main screen provides an alphabetized, scrollable list of all the recipes in the database. Clicking on any of these recipes will retrieve it.

REMOVE

Clicking on this button removes the currently visible recipe from the database.

UNDO

This button restores the previously REMOVEd recipe in the event of an accident.

CLIPBOARD

Activates the Clipboard window.

NOTEPAD

Activates a Notepad window.

IMPORT

After placing a recipe in the Clipboard (from Notepad, or any other word processor that allows

you to save ASCII or text-based files to the Clipboard), simply click on IMPORT and the recipe will be entered into the COOK database.

EXPORT

This places the current recipe into the Clipboard so that it can be accessed by other word processors or databases. It can thus also be saved as a plain- vanilla file for other uses.

PRINT

A form pops up with two buttons: Print Recipe and Print Ingredients. You can select either or both.

Print Recipe will print what you see on your screen.

Print Ingredients provides a shopping list by eliminating most information from a recipe other than the ingredients used. It does this by searching through the recipe for digits (5, 1/2, one, three, etc.) and then providing the digits with their associated phrases (5 cups water, 1/2 t. sugar, etc.)

Print Ingredients does the best it can, but it will sometimes be misled and print something that's not an ingredient, or miss one. It's of artificially average intelligence.

ADD

Clicking on the Add button presents a new, blank recipe screen and places the cursor in the title box. When you've typed in the title, you can move to the recipe box by pressing Tab or by clicking on the recipe window.

When you're finished typing in the recipe window, pressing Tab followed by Enter will bring up another blank screen for entering the next recipe. From the recipe window, Tab moves to the Add button.

To prevent delays, recipes are only alphabetized when the BACKUP button is clicked, or the program is exited.

BACKUP

Click this button to save your work if you've typed in a number of recipes and you don't want a power failure to ruin your efforts. BACKUP alphabetizes the recipes and stores them on disk.

QUIT

This alphabetizes the recipes, stores them on the disk, and closes the program down.

SEARCH BAR

At the bottom of the main screen is a bar which identifies the current recipe by number and shows where in the database you currently are. Clicking and holding down the mouse on the UP or DOWN buttons moves you through the database, with the title window changing each time you reach a new recipe. Clicking once on the UP or DOWN buttons moves you to the next recipe.

CONTROLS BUTTON

Clicking on the little button above the row of control buttons will hide them all except EXIT. Clicking again will reveal all the buttons once again. The default state for this row is visible, but this can be adjusted by modifying the COOK.INI file in the C:\COOK (OR DIRECTORY OF YOUR CHOICE) directory as described below.

TIPS AND CUSTOMIZATION

COOK can easily be used as any kind of general-purpose database. Just change the icons and you can make it into a videotape library database, a stamp collection database, a personnel file (if you can create or scan in icons that look like the people in your company), or whatever kind of information you want to manage. It's free-form. It will work with *any* information.

CUSTOMIZING COOK

You can modify the COOK.INI file to control the default button state; the colors appear on the backgrounds of the main screens; and which fonts and font sizes you want for the title, recipe, and search and index boxes.

The items in COOK.INI are:

```
controls = 1
backcolors = H00C0C0C0
titlefont = helv
titlefontsize = 12
recipefont = helv
recipefontsize = 7.8
indexfont = helv
indexfontsize = 7.8
```

Setting CONTROLS = 1 means that every time you load COOK, the row of buttons on

the main screen will be visible. CONTROLS = 0 defaults the buttons to invisible, and you can click on the green control on the screen to bring them up.

Backcolors can be anything your monitor can display. We've selected a light blue as the default, but you can play around with other color values. You can enter them as hex numbers (the Visual Basic way) as we have, or as regular decimal digits.

Titlefont, recipefont, and indexfont can be set to any fonts available on your system.

Titlefontsize, recipefontsize, and indexfontsize can be adjusted to be the most readable for your particular monitor display.

WALLPAPER

A very pleasing effect can be achieved by giving COOK wallpaper as a background, different than your Windows wallpaper. COOK, when loaded, checks to see if there is a file in the C:\COOK (OR DIRECTORY OF YOUR CHOICE) directory named COOK.BMP. If it finds one, it uses that for background within its windows. Marble and clouds are especially attractive. When you register, you'll receive several nice wallpaper selections. We've not included them in this version because they take up so much room they would add significantly to the download time.

CONVENTIONS

The recipes included with COOK follow a convention that many cooks find useful:

t. = teaspoon
T. = tablespoon
c. = cup

It is not necessary to follow this convention when entering your own recipes. The next version of COOK will contain additional features, including global search and replace, which will allow such things to be standardized if the user wishes. However, the Print Ingredients feature currently works by looking for digits within a recipe, so you should use "2" instead of "two" if you wish to use this feature. Again, COOK v2.0 will improve on the intelligence of the Print Ingredients feature.

SEARCH CRITERIA

To make searching as useful as possible (without resorting to rigid templates), you may want to sometimes add a couple of words at the bottom of a recipe to identify it during a search.

For example, a recipe for refried beans might not contain the word MEXICAN or VEGETABLE or SIDE DISH anywhere within the title or body of the recipe. So, if you want to be able to do effective cross-indexed searches, it might be worth adding descriptive words at the bottom. They can be single words, phrases, within parentheses, sentences, whatever -- just so the key words you may want to look for later appear somewhere within the recipe.

If you don't want these notes or phrases printed when you use the PRINT feature, type in a circumflex (^) and everything following it will be ignored during printing.

Other useful categories such as "diet", calorie counts, and other potential search criteria can be included anywhere that you wish within the recipe or title, but if you'll want to search for something later, do put it in the recipe, somewhere.

ICONS

The palette of icons in the search screen can be modified as described under "what's new" above.

WHAT'S NEW IN COOK II

Several improvements have been made to COOK:

1. The COOK.INI file contains a list of icon names which you can change. For example, if you want the cake icon to search for "Cake" (rather than the default "dessert"), simply change the line in the COOK.INI file from:
icon1 = dessert
to:
icon1 = cake

In this way, you have control over which search word is triggered by each of the 18 icons in the search screen.

Likewise, you can now change any of the icons to icons of your own. To do this, just replace the, for example, CAKE.ICO in the C:/COOK (or the directory of your choice) directory with your new icon. The program loads in the icons that are in the C:/COOK directory, so whatever you put in there will be loaded (just use the same names). For example, even though you might be loading in a symbol for Vietnamese cooking, still call it CAKE.ICO. Just change the COOK.INI file above to:
icon1 = vietnam

NOTE: YOU MUST HAVE ALL THE ICONS IN THE DIRECTORY YOU ARE USING FOR COOK.EXE. The program expects ALL the icons (whatever they look like). If an icon is missing, the program will tell you and you must create one.

2. Another improvement is a complex beaded background for the main form. The program calls API functions to fill the background with an attractive jeweled look. However, you also have control over the background as well via the COOK.INI file. To omit the beads (which DO add several seconds to the initial startup of COOK while the beads are created), just change the line BEADS = 1 to BEADS = 0.

Also, if you want to fill the background with a .BMP file of your choice, simply put the .BMP file into the C:/COOK directory and name it COOK.BMP. It will be loaded in when COOK runs. The beads are essentially transparent (that is, if you set BEADS = 1 and include a COOK.BMP picture in the C:\COOK (OR DIRECTORY OF YOUR CHOICE) directory, you'll see the beads painted on top of your picture.

3. It would be my preference to provide the original Visual Basic source code. However, because COOK uses some graphics enhancements from VBTOOLS, an aftermarket product which restricts distribution of its design time version, I can only provide .TXT files that show how the COOK code works, but these files don't include the Visual Basic forms. You could reconstruct the forms by creating the various controls on the different forms, then plugging in the .TXT files (via Alt-C-L)...however this is a laborious process. If anyone has any suggestions on how to deal with this impasse, please contact me on Compuserve (Richard Mansfield).

4. The Print Ingredients (for shopping lists) is now more intelligent. However, it works best if you follow one simple guideline (something you probably do already anyway) when entering new recipes:

Use digits, not words, for ingredient quantities:

RIGHT: 1/3 c. butter

WRONG: one-third c. butter

5. You can now put COOK.EXE and the COOK.DAT, COOK.DEX, COOK.INI, and .ICO files in ANY directory or drive that you wish. Just put all the files in the same directory.

HOW TO REGISTER COOK

Use the ORDER.WRI registration form. Our crack mailroom staff will send you the complete package the very day we receive your order; we won't wait for the check to clear; we trust you.

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