

LYNDA GENE RYMOND

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Authority Based on Actual Tests  
*Modern Priscilla Cook Book*, 1924.

The homemaker of today requires  
and insists upon:  
Accurate measurements.  
The temperature at which the dish should be cooked.  
The length of the cooking period.

“Bad luck” caused more waste  
in the old-fashioned kitchen  
than any other one cause.

Certainty in place of guessing  
eliminates failures.  
The back of a knife will do equally well,  
but the spatula has so many other uses  
that its purchase is not  
an extravagance.

À la, au, aux—all three forms  
mean just the same thing.  
Your French grammar explains the choice  
of each for use. Example:  
Rice à la Priscilla Proving Plant  
means simply rice  
as it is served there.

The Priscilla Cook Book  
is an authority based on actual tests.  
1924 Copyright in Great Britain and the Colonies.

Great care is the price  
of a really good cup of tea.

## ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

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Lynda Gene Rymond created “Authority Based on Actual Tests” from the *Modern Priscilla Cook Book* (1924). About the poem and the process of composing it, Lynda Gene writes:

My grandmother’s battered copy of the *Modern Priscilla Cook Book* is stuffed with newspaper clippings of recipes, homemaking tips, and a column on coping with husbands suffering from war trauma. The book is a potent relic, especially given my grandmother’s early death from the combined effects of anorexia and domestic violence. For this poem, I selected the opening pages of the book, which make the case for a more scientific approach to the home kitchen in a formal, even lecturing tone. I pored away with a sharp eye, looking for lines that open a small compressed window from those times, in which women’s lives were so diminished and constrained, to our times, in which many women continue to bear intense domestic responsibility in addition to other roles.

Lynda Gene Rymond is the author of *The Village of Basketweavers* (Houghton Mifflin 2005) and *Oscar and the Mooncats* (Houghton Mifflin 2007). She is also the founder of Words Come Easy, a weekly drop-in writing workshop. She lives in Quakertown, Pennsylvania, and can be found online at [goblinfarm.net](http://goblinfarm.net).

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