

## Pass It On®...

### Cooking With Sharks.

*Julia Child began her culinary career in the U.S. military. Too tall to enlist in the Women's Army Corps, she was assigned a research position where she cooked up shark repellent to coat sailors' life jackets.*

Julia Child stands tall in the history of culinary personalities. At six feet, two inches, she was quite a presence in the kitchen. But she didn't learn to cook until after she was married, preferring to spend her time playing tennis and earning her degree in history at Smith College in Massachusetts. As a young adult, she was more interested in writing than cooking, serving her country rather than serving fine food. She worked in advertising and kept her dreams of writing a novel in a nearby drawer.

Then, her typing skills got her assigned to the Secret Intelligence division of the Office of Strategic Services, specifically the Emergency Sea Rescue Equipment Section. Her first challenge was to find a way to keep curious sharks from exploding underwater ordinance designed to impact German U-boats. She went to work in the kitchen and concocted a shark-repellent recipe that the Navy used for decades. It was also adopted as a coating for life jackets to protect service members who landed in the water.

Child's assignments took her all over the world, from Sri Lanka to China and finally to Paris. Food was an influence everywhere she went, but it wasn't until she was in France that she had a transformative culinary experience. She married Paul Child, whom she met in Sri Lanka, and the two moved to Paris. The cuisine was "an opening up of the soul and spirit for me," Julia Child later wrote.

Being with Paul and his sophisticated palate was an education. He was a poet and a connoisseur. The couple often entertained other diplomats, and Julia Child decided to take up the apron and master the art of cooking. She graduated from the famous Cordon Bleu cooking school, learning French from recipes, and later studied privately with master chefs. Her appetite for perfection was matched by her delightful and humorous personality. Always quick with a one-liner, she was a breath of fresh air in stuffy diplomatic circles.

It was at her cooking club that Julia Child met Simone Beck, who was writing a French cookbook for an American audience hungry for the domestic arts yet needing a practical and accessible approach. The book was a smashing success, and Julia Child began her career as a knowledgeable, well-trained and entertaining chef for the masses. Hardly a kitchen in America was without a Julia Child cookbook. Her cooking show won Emmy awards, and millions of American housewives tuned in, anxious to feed their families well and show off their skills at social clubs.

Julia Child became the epitome of womanhood – well-educated, skilled with a skillet, and quick with a pinch of humor. Television was live, and so were Julia's blunders in the kitchen. Perfection wasn't the goal; enjoying the process was. It was empowering.

Julia Child's influence goes far beyond the kitchen. She was a commonsense personality who genuinely cared about all people. For decades, she was the voice of inclusion, making sure everyone was invited to dinner. "We should enjoy food and have fun," she sagely said.

**Bon Appetit...** [PassItOn.com](https://passiton.com)

By The Foundation for a Better Life®

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