

## Cooking Utensils

Making wooden cooking utensils on the lathe is both fun and challenging. They are great projects to practice using the four key spindle tools (roughing gouge, parting tool, spindle gouge, and skew chisel). There are also ample opportunities to customize your work. You can develop a design and repeat it with each project or make each of the utensils different.

Cooking utensils are made to be used making food and cleaned with soap and water so tight, straight grained wood such as maple, ash, birch, cypress, and cherry work well. They can be sanded from 250-400 grit using Aluminum Oxide sandpaper. Silicone carbide sandpaper can darken the wood.

Cooking utensils can be finished with products formulated for salad bowls (Goodstuff), or polyurethane finishes (e.g. Minwax, Behrens salad bowl finish) which are safe to use after they dry. Often, utensils are simply finished with a mixture of mineral and beeswax, which is what we will use in this class.

We will begin with simpler projects (soup stirrers, French rolling pins) and move to more complex projects (spatulas, and offset-turned spoons).

### Lesson 1: Stirrer

The Scots call it a Spurtle and invented it for making porridge. The Irish also lay claim to the invention of the handy tool. I use it for soups and stirring boiling pasta, but they can also be used as wands in a pinch.

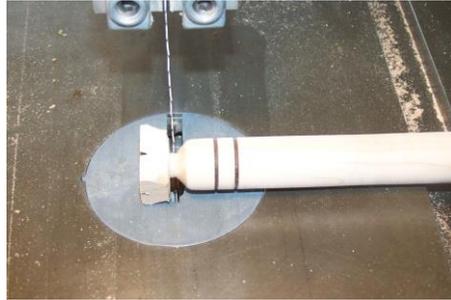
Prepare the blank: Most stirrers are about 12" long 1" square and made of close-grained hardwood. They can be various shapes that are comfortable for holding,

- Mark centers at both ends of the piece of wood with an awl.
- Place between centers of a spur drive (head) and live center (tail).
- Mark waste points ½" in from either end – these will be removed later.
- Turn round with a roughing gouge at 900 RPM taking very light cuts. Leave the waste ends square. Make finished cuts with a skew chisel (optional).
- Turn up the speed to 1200 or so and recheck the head and tailstocks for tightness. Stirrers require very light cuts because of their long length. A heavy hand can easily knock one end off the lathe. After making a few stirrers and getting comfortable turning them, lathe speed can increase to 1800 RPM to make the process go faster.



## Cooking projects

- Use a fluted spindle gouge to create the desired shape. Some stirrers have some kind of demarcation between the stirrer and the handle.
- Embellish the stirrer with beads, coves, and burn marks as desired.
- Turn down the lathe to about 900 RPM and sand up to 350 grit.
- Turn down the end marks to no less than ¼". Saw-off the waste from the bottom of the stirrer after it is off the lathe. Hold the square ends flat on the table for stability.



- Sand the ends. The bottom of the stirrer should be rounded to scrape soup from the bottom of the kettle. The handle end can be flat or rounded.
- Rub liberally with mixture of ½ mineral oil and ½ vegetable oil. Wipe off excess with a towel and let dry for 30 minutes or so.
- Make porridge!

## Lesson 2: French Rolling Pin

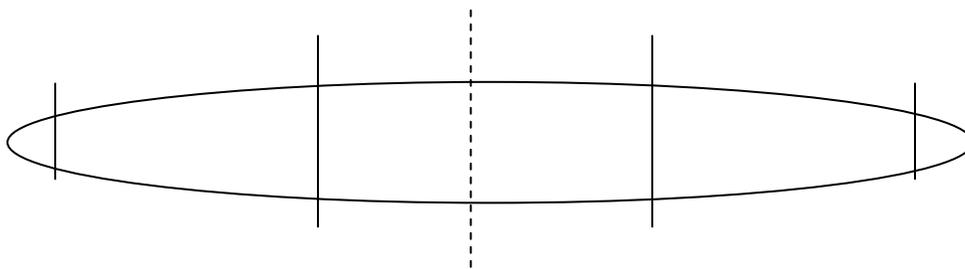
### Lesson 2: French Rolling Pin

Unlike the typical rolling pins, these are usually smaller in diameter and length, and are designed to make tarts. They are basically a cylinder with a flat portion across the center and tapered on the sides to hold them you're your hands.

We will start with a blank about 2-3" square and about 13-14 inches long. The entire project is turned between centers, but requires patience and precision to complete well.

#### Turning Process

- Mark the center points at each end of the blank and center on the lathe.
- Turn until just round with a roughing gouge with the lathe speed at 900 RPM. Be careful to take as little material as possible.
- Check the tightness of the tailstock and turn up the speed to 1800 RPM to make finish cuts with a skew chisel (or sand until smooth). Measure the diameter with callipers to be sure the diameter of the piece is consistent across the piece.
- Mark the center point of the blank and measure out 3" on each side of the center. Set callipers to 1<sup>3/4</sup>- 2" diameter. Make a V groove with a skew chisel at the two 3" marks and carefully turn the blank flat in between the marks.
- Mark 3/8" waste marks at both ends of the blank. Gradually taper each side of the rolling pin from the 3" mark to the waste mark, taking light cuts and go slowly. It is important that both tapered sides are mirror images of each other. Tip: Use callipers and a parting tool to mark the incremental reductions in depth.
- Periodically stop and examine the piece at eye level to check progress. If necessary, adjust the depth of each taper until they are symmetrical.
- Turn down the lathe speed and sand with progressively higher grits.
- Finish with mineral and vegetable oil mixture and let dry.

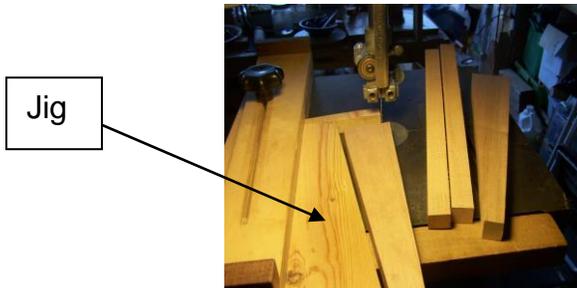


### Lesson 3: Spatula

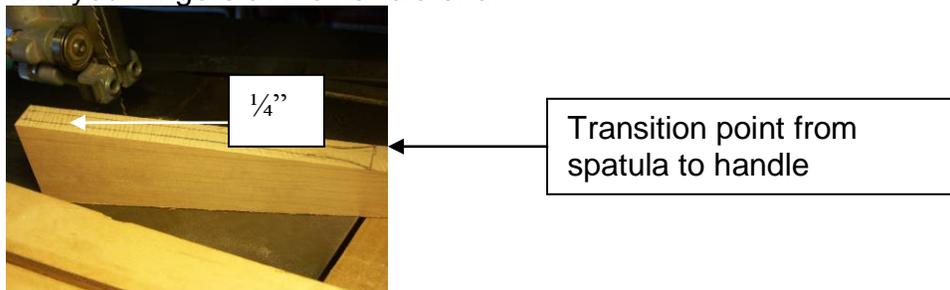
Spatulas come in handy because spoons cannot scrape the bottom of a pan or pick up food as easily. There are many ways to make them.

#### Make a jig

This is the approach we will use. A jig gives more consistent results and it is safer cutting the blanks on a band saw with a jig. The jig rides against a fence parallel to the blade to cut. If  $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 3" x 12" stock is used, then two blanks can be made with one cut.



Mark the distance where the spatula length will transition to the handle. This is an arbitrary choice, but about 5-6" up gives a long enough handle. Mark  $\frac{1}{4}$ " in from both sides of the spatula end and trim with a band saw. Leave the lines. Making the diameter too thin may break the wood when turning. Cut the sides on the band saw with your fingers at the handle end.



#### Turning the Spatula

- Place the spatula end into the chuck being careful to line it up so that the ends extend equally on both sides of the chuck jaws. Bring up the tailstock and center before tightening the piece on the lathe.

## Cooking projects



- Set the lathe speed to 900 RPM and round the piece taking light cuts. When the handle is rounded, the lathe speed can be increased to 1800 RPM.
- Turn the desired shape and decorate as desired.

### Lesson 4: Spoon

This is an essential tool for the kitchen, and is more challenging to make. It requires some careful planning and sanding to get the desired result. Two spoon designs will be offered in the class.

#### Supplies needed

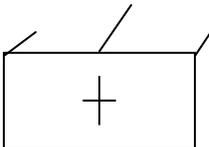
- Wood such as birch, ash, maple, or cherry (1" x 2 1/2" x 13").
- Spindle roughing gouge.
- Shallow fluted spindle gouge.
- Skew chisel (optional).
- Band saw and Belt sander

#### Spoon Design

- Copy the spoon design onto a wood blank.



- Measure the width of the stock and mark the center across the entire piece. Mark one end-grain side of the work piece about 3/8" down from the width center mark. Flip the board over and measure down 3/8" and mark the end-grain. Place between centers on the lathe. The piece will be slightly offset at opposite ends.



- Mark the ends and transition point between handle and spoon bowl.



Note the offset axis

## Cooking projects

- Set lathe speed at 900 RPM. Turn the general shape of the spoon with a spindle roughing gouge being careful to take very light cuts and leaving room at either end of the spoon. Work from the tailstock to the headstock end, leaving plenty of mass to minimize vibration.



- Stop the lathe and tighten tailstock. Turn up speed to 1800 RPM. Turn the spoon shape with a shallow fluted spindle gouge down to about 3/8" at the tailstock end. Work slowly and take light cuts proceeding from tail to head stock.



- Finish the shape and embellish with beads, coves, or burn marks. Note that the waste at both ends is still flat. This is important to keep the spoon stable when cut on the band saw.



## Cooking projects

- Mark the spoon shape on the stock and cut out the waste on the band saw being careful to keep fingers out of the way.



- Mark the back side in a curve shape. Trim off the excess and then carve out the spoon interior with power carving tools.



- Finish the spatula with a mix of 50/50 beeswax and mineral oil and drip dry.

