

The Chef–Author–Television Personality–Bad Boy [Anthony Bourdain](#) a.k.a. ‘The Tough Guy of the New York Kitchen’ lays out ‘three stages of wisdom’ when cooking a meal:

1. Deep Preparation (sorting out your kitchen, utensils, staple ingredients & deciding what you ‘gonna’ cook).
2. Preparation (fresh ingredients & fine twists in the conception).
3. Assembly

Anthony BOURDAIN on Deep Preparation:

“Try this when preparing your next meal: Put everything in a heap in front of you. Every ingredient. Every tool. Then think. Think about the stages that follow. As you reflect on what you are going to do, and when and where you gonna put all this – a plan will emerge:

‘Well... I won’t be needing the cream till later, so I’ll put it in the fridge someplace I can grab it quickly when I need it... the butter? Hmm. It would be nice if it were soft when I use it. I’ll leave that out...’

And so on. THINK! Generally speaking, any recipe has three distinct phases, often separated by considerable periods of downtime. This is good. This will mean that with the more complicated dishes, you will often have time for a drink & a nap.” – [Les Halles Cook Book](#)

OK ... so you are now preparing your painting kit for your painting holiday! Hopefully the excitement is mounting... and maybe a little apprehension. By now, hopefully, you have read [the materials list](#) & checked if you need to buy anything. You have compared the materials list against your own painting kit. Hopefully by now, you have even started to lay out your kit ready for a dummy pack (don’t forget to weigh it to ensure it’s within the flight company’s weight limit. Please go back to the materials list for more tips about how to pack).

The point here is that you are now doing ‘deep preparation’. As you lay out your tools ‘in heap in front of you,’ your mind will be wondering what sort of paintings you might possibly make during this workshop (and also be pleased to hear that you’ll the time for “a drink & a nap” on holiday... ;-)) You have entered a creative cycle...

A Fairly Classic Model of Creativity

- Preparation
- Incubation
- Inspiration
- Evaluation

Back to Anthony BOURDAIN:

“ Once completed, it is a very good idea, I’ve found over the years, to allow yourself at least one evening and one full one night – to think about your lists, to dream about your meal plans. After choosing what you plan to prepare, reviewing the recipes, making general shopping plans and a plan of attack – even drafts of shopping and prep lists – it is beneficial in the extreme to allow your mind to wonder freely, returning of its own volition to the job to come. Surprising ideas, stratagems, changes and improvisations will come to you. Second thoughts will win out over initial brainstorming and excessive zeal. A full evening only partially occupied with the imminent meal, and a night’s sleep, are often followed by concentrated hours of inspired and creative activity.”

This falls within the incubation phase. 'Sleeping on it' is age-old wisdom. So ... I hope you are now dreaming of the painting you wish to do on your fast approaching painting holiday! Enjoy this phase, relish the painting in your mind's eye. This pre-visualization is important.

"There is no art without contemplation" - Robert Henri

Of course, you must react to what you actually find.... Or do not find... & then fine-tune, adapt as well as cocoon the new work taking form inside of you. For those of you who have not been to our venue before, you might have some ideas about what you expect to actually find. Our venues are lovely places to paint & holiday. I hope they brings you inspiration.

The important 'take-away' of this rumination on preparation & creativity is that it rarely comes from no-where. There is groundwork to be done. I should very much like you to bring along the obligatory sketchbook (A5 if poss), pencil & eraser. A sketchbook is your X-file to creativity... where you x-plore; x-press; x-amine; x-tract; x-etc... Everything goes in there, including notes & postcards... Please start before you arrive. Try & do some sketching before - it will wake your hand up. Do some 'carnet de voyage' as you travel? Come & show me this .

[Read more about the next step in my article on 'Carnet de Voyage'](#)