

How to Cook



Full Boil

- Boiling food involves immersing food in boiling water until cooked.
- The temperature at which water will come to a “full boil” varies based on atmospheric pressure, but is usually around 212° F/100° C.
- At a full boil, the water has fast-moving, rolling waves of bubbles and gives off steam.
- Because of the constant movement and extreme heat of the water, boiling may damage delicate foods.

Slow Boil

- The temperature at which water will come to a “slow boil” is usually 205° F/96° C.
- At a slow boil, the water has slow-moving and large bubbles.

Simmering

- Technique in which foods are cooked in hot liquids kept at or just below the boiling point.
- To keep a pot simmering, bring it to a boil and then reduce the heat to a point where the formation of bubbles barely continues (200° F / 94° C).
- Simmering is gentler than boiling and will help to prevent food from toughening and/or breaking up.

Poaching

- 140° F - 190° F/60° C - 88° C.
- Liquid should not come to a boil.
- Ideal for eggs and fish.

Sautéing

- Cooking food in a pan, over high heat, in a small amount of fat (butter, oil).
- Heat pan and fat to a high temperature before adding food.
- To check if the pan is hot enough, add a couple of drops of water to the pan. If it sizzles vigorously and evaporates quickly, the pan is hot.
- Once food is in the pan, it is important to move it around with a utensil continuously.
- Food is usually cut into smaller pieces.

Broiling/Grilling/Barbecuing

- **Broiling** - The heat source is above the food.
- **Grilling** - The heat source is below the food.
- **Barbecuing (BBQ)** – The heat source is produced by burning wood or coal.
- Best to marinate the food first (soak in a seasoned liquid).

How to Cook (Part 2)

Frying

(Warning: hot oil may splatter and cause burns)

- **Pan Frying** - Similar to sautéing with oil, but at a lower heat.
 - Ideal for large pieces of meat, such as chicken, steaks, pork chops and fish.
 - Pan is coated with a thin layer of oil.
- **Shallow Frying** - Oil should reach about halfway up the sides of the food being cooked.
 - Ideal for chicken, battered shrimp and eggplant parmesan.
 - Food should be flipped half way through.
- **Deep Frying** - Oil completely immerses the food being cooked.
 - Food does not have to be flipped.
 - Ideal for french fries and donuts.
- **Stir Frying** - The food is cut into smaller pieces, similar to sautéing.
 - A wok is typically used. A wok is a deep metal bowl with gently sloping sides.

Microwaving

- Never put metal cookware in the microwave.
- Foods that have skins, such as potatoes and hot dogs, should be pierced with a fork before cooking to release steam while cooking.
- To prevent splattering and to help food heat evenly, it should be covered with a microwave safe lid.
- Rotate the food during cooking to help ensure even cooking.
- Microwaving can remove nutrients from vegetables.
- Look for microwave instructions on food packaging.

Steaming

- Steaming is a moist heating cooking method without submersing food into water. This method uses the heat from steam to cook food.
- Ideal for fish and vegetables.
- Very healthy form of cooking because it does not use oil or butter and does not remove nutrients from the food like microwave cooking can do.

Baking

- Dry heat method of cooking.
- Usually associated with food items that require batters and dough.
- Avoid over-mixing dough and batters. Over-mixing activates the gluten in flour, which makes baked goods firm and chewy rather than light and crumbly.
- Avoid using cold eggs. Cold eggs and dairy products don't bond well, which prevents air from becoming trapped in the mixture. This can result in dense, or heavy, cakes and muffins.
- Be sure to use a liquid measuring cup to measure liquid and make ingredients easy to pour. Use a dry measuring cup for measuring dry ingredients.

How to Cook (Part 3)

Common Cooking Terms

- **Whip** – Beat vigorously using a wire whisk or electric mixer.
- **Zest** – Remove the colored outer layer of a citrus fruit. Use a grater or fruit zester to rub over the sides of the fruit. Avoid the white layer of skin beneath the colored layer.
- **Knead** – Pressing and folding of dough with the heels of your hands.
- **Fold** – Gently mix ingredients using a rubber spatula. Cut through the center of the mixture, bringing mixture from the bottom of the bowl to the surface. Rotate the bowl to ensure uniformity.
- **Whisk** – Stirring or mixing ingredients using a wire whisk or fork. Allows air into the mixture. Not as vigorous as whipping.
- **Steep** – Submerge a food in water that has been heated to just below boiling point.
- **Score** – Make shallow cuts on the surface of a food to tenderize, allow fat to escape, allow flavors to seep in or for decoration.
- **Reduce** – Boil quickly so that some of the liquid evaporates, decreasing the overall volume.
- **Grease** – Coat a pan or baking tray with a layer of butter or oil to prevent sticking.
- **Blanch** – Place fruit, vegetables or nuts in boiling water to partially cook them to help intensify their flavor and color. Then, plunge into cold water to stop the cooking.
- **Baste** – Rubbing food with fat or other liquid during cooking to add moisture and flavor.

Preparing a Meal

1. Decide what you would like to cook.
 - Ask the client for their favorite recipes.
 - With your client, look through cookbooks to see if anything piques their interest.
2. Gather the ingredients.
 - Check the kitchen for ingredients the client may already have (check expiration dates).
 - Go to the grocery store.
3. Prepare the food for cooking: rinse and chop vegetables, meat, etc.
4. Preheat (if applicable): preheat oven, water, pan.
5. Follow the recipe.
6. Never leave the kitchen while food is cooking.
7. Turn off the oven when the food is finished cooking.