



Mastering Flavorful Cooking

Healthy cooking can be easy, fun, and rewarding. Using healthy cooking methods can invigorate old favorites and create new favorites. Healthy cooking techniques capture the **flavor of food**, increase the **nutritional quality of meals**, and promote **healthy eating behaviors**. Food that is prepared using healthy cooking methods also retain more nutrients and reduce fat, salt, and caloric intake.



Dry Heat Cooking Methods

Dry heat cooking methods use hot air and heat from a pan or grill to cook food.



BAKING: Using the hot air of an oven to cook food that is covered or uncovered

› **Equipment:** Metal, glass, or ceramic pan or baking sheet

› **Temperature:** Temperatures vary from low (250°F) to high (500°F)

› **Best foods for baking:** Fruit, vegetables, seafood (e.g. fish, scallops), and lean cuts of chicken, turkey, beef, pork, and lamb

› **Flavoring ideas:**

1. **Marinate.** Use low-fat marinades for vegetables, seafood, lean cuts of chicken, and thin cuts of lean beef, pork, and lamb
2. **Encrust.** Coat fish, and lean cuts of chicken, beef, pork and lamb with ground nuts (e.g. pecans, walnuts) or seeds (e.g. sesame seeds, flax seeds)
3. **Herbs and Spices.** Add a mixture of fresh or dried herbs and spices to vegetables, seafood, and lean cuts of chicken, beef, pork, and lamb

› **Helpful tips:** Fruits and vegetables should be cut in similar size pieces for even cooking.



ROASTING: Similar to baking but typically refers to cooking food uncovered in an oven

› **Equipment:** A heavy roasting pan with a rack, shallow baking pan, or baking sheet

› **Temperature:** Low (250 °F) to moderate heat (375°F)

› **Best foods for roasting:** Dense vegetables (e.g. potatoes, turnips, cauliflower), whole chicken, whole turkey, fish (e.g. salmon, red snapper, trout), and lean cuts of large pork and beef roasts (e.g. beef bottom round, pork top loin)

› **Flavoring ideas:**

1. **Herbs and Spices.** Fresh or dried
2. **Baste.** Use low-sodium vegetable, chicken, or beef broth for vegetables, fish, and lean cuts of chicken and turkey
3. **Vegetables.** Use seasoning vegetables such as a mirepoux (mir-pwa), a mixture of chopped celery, onions, and carrots; green peppers; or garlic

› **Helpful tips:**

1. Use a low temperature (250°F) to ensure that large cuts of meat (e.g. whole chicken) cook evenly and thoroughly
2. To prevent vegetables from becoming soft, use medium heat (375°F) for vegetables





BROILING: Cooking food directly underneath very high heat for a short length of time

- › **Equipment:** A broil pan
 - › **Temperature:** 500°F
 - › **Best foods for broiling:** Fish and thin, lean cuts of beef, chicken, lamb, and pork
 - › **Flavoring ideas:**
 1. **Herbs and Spices.** Use fresh or dried herbs and spices to season food
 2. **Marinate.** Use low-fat marinades for fish and thin, lean cuts of beef, chicken, lamb, and pork
 - › **Helpful tips:** To control the cooking time, adjust the distance of the food from the heat as opposed to adjusting the temperature
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GRILLING: Similar to broiling but food items are cooked over the flame. The heat can be direct or indirect. Indirect heat requires a closed covered grill, allowing hot air to circulate the food. Direct heat refers to cooking food directly on a grill uncovered

- › **Equipment:** Gas or charcoal grill
 - › **Best foods for grilling:** Vegetables, fruit, fish and lean cuts of chicken, turkey, beef, and pork
 - › **Flavoring ideas:**
 1. **Herbs and Spices.** Use as meat rubs
 2. **Marinate.** Use low-fat marinades for vegetables, and lean cuts of chicken, turkey, beef, and pork
 3. **Cedar Wood Plank.** Use to infuse a smoky wood flavor to fish
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SAUTÉ/STIR FRY: Sautéing and stir frying are fast cooking methods. Sautéing requires the constant flipping food over high heat. Stir-frying refers to frequently stirring food over medium high to high heat

- › **Equipment:** For sautéing use a skillet or sauté pan; for stir-frying use a wok or large skillet. For both methods, the cooking pan should be coated with a cooking spray or a healthy cooking oil with a high smoke point (e.g. olive oil, canola oil)
- › **Temperature:** Hot enough for the coated pan to sizzle
- › **Best foods for sautéing & stir frying:** Tender vegetables (e.g. asparagus, sugar snap peas, bok choy), tofu, and thin cuts of lean chicken, beef, and pork
- › **Flavoring ideas:**
 1. **Broth.** Use low-sodium vegetable, chicken, or beef broth
 2. **Wine.** Use red or white dry wine
 3. **Balsamic or Sherry Vinegar**
- › **Helpful tip:** If the cooking heat is too low, the vegetables will release liquids and steam as oppose to sautéing or stir frying



Moist Heat Cooking Methods

Moist heat cooking methods use a liquid or steam to cook food.



BLANCHING: Keeps food crispy by partially cooking food. Consists of two steps: boiling a food item, followed by immediately plunging into ice water

- › **Equipment:** A large pan for boiling and a bowl for ice water
 - › **Temperature:** Boiling (212°F) and ice water (32°F)
 - › **Best foods for blanching:** Vegetables
 - › **Flavoring ideas:**
 1. **Herbs and Spices.** Toss with cooled vegetables
 2. **Balsamic Vinegar.** Drizzle over cooled vegetables
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BRAISING: Slowly simmers food that is partially submerged in a liquid. Typically consists of two steps: a browning process followed by a slow simmer. Braising can be done on the stove or in the oven

- › **Equipment:** A deep and heavy pot with a tight fitting lid (e.g. a Dutch oven)
 - › **Temperature:** Use medium high heat (approx. 375°F) to brown the food items. Braise the food items on a low heat (200°F - 250°F)
 - › **Best foods for braising:** Firm vegetables (e.g. sweet potatoes, carrots, winter squash) and lean cuts of inexpensive beef roasts (e.g. bottom round), pork roasts (pork shoulder), and lamb shank
 - › **Flavoring ideas:**
 1. **Creative combination of liquids.** Combine cooking liquids such as vegetable broth and wine or beef broth and pureed tomatoes
 2. **Herbs and Spices.** Fresh or dried
 3. **Salsa.** Smother lean cuts of inexpensive beef, pork, and lamb in red or green salsa
 - › **Helpful tip:** Braising is not recommended for tender cuts of meat (e.g. chicken breast, pork chops) that are prone to drying out.
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POACHING: Submerging a food item in a liquid until its completely cooked

- › **Equipment:** A large cooking pan or pot with a lid
- › **Temperature:** Below boiling (160-180°F)
- › **Best foods to poach:** Fish, chicken breast, and eggs
- › **Flavoring ideas:** Flavorful liquids. Use low-sodium vegetable, chicken, or beef broth or vinegar



STEAMING: Uses steam to cook food

- **Equipment:** A pan with a rack and tight fitting lid, a pan with a steamer insert and tight fitting lid, or an enclosed wrapper (e.g. foil, grape leaves, corn husks, parchment paper)
- **Temperature:** Boiling (212°F)
- **Best foods to steam:** Vegetables, fish, and chicken breast
- **Flavoring ideas:**
 1. **Spinach & Tomatoes.** Add to food items in wrappers
 2. **Lime or Lemon juice.** Add lime or lemon juice to the boiling water to release the flavor in the steam
 3. **Herbs & Spices.** Add to the boiling water or sprinkle on top of food item in the wrappers

Using healthy cooking methods to prepare meals can be a great way to spend quality time with loved ones and cultivate a healthy lifestyle. To enjoy a safe and flavorful meal, please follow the **UNITES STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE** (USDA) recommended minimum internal cooking temperatures for meat and poultry.

USDA Recommended Minimum Internal Cooking Temperatures

Beef, Pork, Veal, Lamb, Steaks, Roasts, & Chops	Fish	Beef, Pork, Veal, Lamb (Ground)	Egg Dishes	Turkey, chicken, and Duck (Whole, Pieces, & Ground)
145 °F	145 °F	160 °F	160 °F	165 °F

For additional healthy eating resources, please visit:

[HTTP://WWW.MED.NAVY.MIL/SITES/NMCPHC/HEALTH-PROMOTION/HEALTHY-EATING/PAGES/HEALTHY-EATING.ASPX](http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/health-promotion/healthy-eating/pages/healthy-eating.aspx)