

Cooking Techniques



- **Poach:** to cook in hot water (140 to 190°F/60 to 88°C) that bubbles very gently. Used for delicate items such as eggs or fish.
- **Simmer:** to cook in liquid that is gently bubbling at a temperature above poaching but below boiling (185 to 205°F/85 to 93°C).
- **Boil:** to cook in rapidly bubbling, often salted, water (212°F/100°C).
- **Sear:** to cook by adding an ingredient directly to a very hot pan or griddle to quickly caramelize or brown the outside. This generally adds flavor at the beginning or end of cooking and is used along with another cooking method.
- **Braise:** to brown or sear an ingredient—often a protein—in a small amount of fat and then put into a covered pot with some cooking liquid and simmer slowly over low-to-moderate heat.
- **Broil:** to cook beneath a flame.
- **Grill:** to cook on a grate over open flame or hot coals.
- **Roast or Bake:** to cook uncovered, using dry heat (no liquid), generally in an oven.
- **Microwave:** to cook using a microwave. Used instead of boiling, steaming, or some long-cooking techniques, microwaving can preserve nutrients, especially in fruits and vegetables.
- **Steam:** to cook an ingredient set above, and not submerged in, boiling water.
- **Sauté:** to cook small or medium-sized pieces of food quickly over medium-high heat, stirring or tossing frequently, in a small amount of oil.
- **Stir-fry:** Similar to sautéing, but uses higher heat and food is cut small. The goal is to cook very quickly with a small amount of oil.
- **Water Sauté (or Stir-fry):** the same as sauté (or stir-fry) but using water (or broth) in place of oil; this technique generally will not achieve the same degree of caramelization as traditional sautés or stir-fries but reduces oil and calories in a dish.

No Cooking! Eating fresh vegetables and fruits alone, in a salad, or added to another dish is a great way to “bulk up” your meal with fewer added calories but LOTS of added nutrients.

Sauces

There are a variety of cooked and uncooked sauces based on nuts, fruits, vegetables, herbs, spices, and other flavoring ingredients. Many require no cooking and can be made ahead. Add these sauces to any combination of whole grains, legumes, and vegetables for a quick, delicious, healthy meal.

- **Nut-based Sauces:** cooked or raw sauces made from nut butters or soaked and blended nuts. These can either highlight the flavor of the nut or provide a creamy backdrop for other flavors.
- **Pureed Vegetable, Herb, and Fruit-based Sauces:** can replace oil or cream-based sauces and add flavor with fewer calories.
- **Vinaigrettes:** classic French sauce made of 2/3 to 3/4 oil and 1/4 acid (e.g., vinegar, lemon juice, etc.). A variety of flavoring ingredients can be added. Vinaigrettes are often used to dress salads or for marinades.
- **No- or Low-oil Dressings:** Some can be made similarly to a vinaigrette, by replacing oil with water, juice, broth, or another liquid. Others are made by blending a combination of ingredients, such as fruits, vegetables, broths, herbs, spices, vinegars, acids, and/or nuts.

