

Cooking Techniques

Al dente: Italian term meaning pasta cooked until tender but still firm to the bite.

Au jus: French term meaning served in natural meat juices.

Bake: To cook foods in the oven at a temperature specified in recipe.

Baste: To spread, brush or spoon water, melted fat or other liquid, such as chicken broth, over food to keep the surface moist and add flavor.

Blanch: To boil in water for a short time and then plunge into cold water, or to pour boiling water over food, then drain it almost immediately. Often used to preserve color in vegetables or to loosen the skin of tomatoes.

Boil: To cook in boiling water or other liquid. Liquid is at a "boil" when large bubbles rise continuously to the top.

Braise: To brown in fat, then cook covered on top of the stove or in the oven with some added liquid.

Broil: To cook by direct heat.

Parboil: To cook in a skillet kept dry by pouring off accumulated fat. Usually, fattier meats are parboiled.

Pan-fry: To cook in a small amount of fat in a skillet. Usually, leaner meats are pan-fried.

Poach: To cook in water, broth or other liquid that is just below the boiling point.

Preheat: To heat oven to desired temperature before putting food in oven. Preheat for 20 minutes when baking for a proper rise.

Roast: To cook by dry heat in oven.

Sauté: To cook briskly in a small amount of fat, usually in a skillet on top of the stove. Same thing as pan-fry.

Sear: To brown surfaces quickly over high heat, usually in a hot skillet.

Simmer: To cook in liquid at a low temperature. Be sure the liquid does not boil.

Steam (verb form): To cook, covered, over a small amount of boiling liquid so the steam formed in the pan does the cooking.

Steep: Let stand in hot liquid to extract flavor, as in tea, or to hydrate dried vegetables or fruits.

Stew: To cook slowly in liquid.