
Basic Cooking Terms and Tools

Cooking at home is a great way to eat healthier!

Benefits of cooking at home include:

- Eating more fruits, vegetables, beans and whole grains
- Trying new foods or ingredients
- Being able to modify a recipe to fit your health needs such as lowering sodium or adding fiber

Knowing a few common terms and having a few basic tools can help you get started cooking

Common Measurements

C = Cup

Tbsp. or T. = Tablespoon

Tsp. or t. = Teaspoon

oz. = Ounce

qt. = Quart

pt. = Pint

fl. Oz. = Fluid Ounce

lb. = Pound

g = Gram

Mg = Milligram

Measurement conversions

3 teaspoons (tsp.) = 1 Tablespoon (T.)

4 Tablespoons = $\frac{1}{4}$ Cup (C)

8 fl. oz = 1 Cup (C)

1 pint (pt.) = 2 Cups (C)

1 quart (qt.) = 2 pints or 4 cups

1 gallon = 4 quarts or 16 cups

Terms used for cutting foods

Mince: To cut or chop food into extremely small pieces.

Dice: To cut food in small cubes of uniform size and shape.

Chop: To cut solids into pieces with a sharp knife or other chopping device.



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Terms used for different cooking methods

Blanch: To cover food in rapidly boiling water and cooked just a little bit.

Braise: To cook food, tightly covered, in a small amount of liquid at low heat for a long time. Long, slow cooking tenderizes meats by gently breaking down the protein. The braising liquid keeps meats moist and later can be used as a base for sauce. Water or broth is a common braising liquid.

Boil: To heat a liquid until bubbles break continually on the surface.

Caramelize: Heat cooks proteins and sugars on a foods' surface browning the food and adding flavor.

Poach: To cook very gently in hot liquid kept just below the boiling point.

Roast: To cook by dry heat in an oven.

Sauté: To cook and/or brown food in a small amount of hot fat.

Simmer: To cook slowly in a small amount of liquid over low heat at a temperature of about 180°F. The surface of the liquid should be barely moving, broken from time to time by slowly rising bubbles.

Steam: To cook in steam. A small amount of water is brought to a boil and food is kept above the water on a rack in the pot.

Basic Cooking Tools:



Chef knife: A large knife, 8 or 10 inches long for cutting vegetables and meats.

Cutting board: Used for cutting vegetables and meat, for safety have several in different colors to keep raw meat, vegetables and cooked foods separate.

Liquid measuring Cup: Used for measuring liquid ingredients such as water or broth, more accurate for measuring liquid ingredients than measuring cups.

Measuring Cups: Used for measuring ingredients needed in larger amounts such as flour, 1 C., 1/2 C., 1/3C., 1/4 C. are common.

Measuring Spoons: Used for measuring ingredients needed in small amounts such as herbs and spices, 1T., 1/2 T., 1 t., 1/2 t., 1/4 t., 1/8 t. are common.

Paring knife: A small knife 6 inches for controlled cuts and small items like garlic.