

EASe-GAD Cooking Education

Cooking Vegetables



Tips: Fresh and frozen are both great options. Use olive oil when preparing vegetables.

Steaming vegetables: Bring 1-2 inches of water in a pot to a boil, then place your vegetables on top using a steamer basket or colander. After steaming, you can mix vegetables with olive oil, lemon, or seasoning like garlic or fresh herbs to add additional flavour. Vegetables like **broccoli and asparagus** are good for steaming because they are more delicate.

Boiling or blanching vegetables: Start by bringing a pot of water to a boil with a pinch of salt, then add your vegetables. Cook your vegetables only for a few minutes until they are tender (or they can get mushy). Vegetables like **green beans and cauliflower** are better for boiling.

Sautéing vegetables: Sautéing vegetables is quick and easy. Sautéing works on nearly any soft vegetables. Use 1-2 tablespoons of olive oil to coat your pan, and heat vegetables with medium-high heat. Vegetables like **peppers, carrots, zucchini, and mushrooms** are best for sautéing. Add any seasoning like chili flakes or onion powder.

Braising and stewing vegetables: Braising and stewing vegetables means cooking vegetables over low heat in a flavorful liquid for several hours. This makes the vegetables soft and tender, and tends to work best with **root vegetables, potatoes, squash, or celery**. First, sauté the vegetables in olive oil until they are slightly brown, and then add liquids like broths for them to cook in.

Roasting and baking vegetables: Roasting vegetables in the oven is easy and flavorful. Preheat the oven to 400°F or 200°C. Then, chop your vegetables, and cover them in about 1-2 tablespoons of olive oil with seasonings. Line a tray with parchment paper and spread your vegetables evenly.

Here are some average roasting times for vegetables at approximately 400°F/200°C:

Time	Vegetables
15-20 minutes	Asparagus, Zucchini, Green Beans, Mushrooms
20-30 minutes	Beets, Bell Peppers, Broccoli, Brussel sprouts, Carrots, Eggplant, Okra, Onions, Peppers, Plantains, Potatoes, Taro
30-40 minutes	Cauliflower, Squash (Spaghetti), Squash (Chayote), Sweet potatoes, Tomatoes, Turnips, Yams, Yuca (Cassava)
Up to 1 hour	Pumpkin, Squash (Butternut)

Frozen vegetables: You can steam, sauté or roast frozen vegetables. You often do not need to thaw them. Boiling frozen vegetables may make them mushy.



Cooking Grains

Brown rice: Combine 1 cup of rinsed rice, and 2 cups of water in a pot. Bring to a boil. Cover, and reduce to low heat and simmer for 40 minutes. Fluff with a fork.



Wild rice: Rinse 1 cup of wild rice. Place in a pot with 4 cups of water and bring to a boil. Turn the heat to low and cook for 45 minutes or until tender. If any liquid remains, drain it and serve.



Quinoa: Combine 1 cup of quinoa and 1 and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of water in a medium pot. Bring to a boil, cover, and reduce heat. Let simmer for 15 minutes. Then, remove from heat and let sit for 10 minutes. Fluff with a fork.



Barley (pearl): Rinse and drain 1 cup of barley. Bring 3 cups of water to a boil, and add barley. Cook pearl barley for about 35 minutes. Remove from heat and let stand for 5 minutes.



Buckwheat groats: Rinse and drain 1 cup of buckwheat. Optional: toast for 5 minutes at 320°F or 160°C before cooking. Bring large pot of 2 cups of water to a boil. Add buckwheat and lower the heat to a simmer. Cook buckwheat over low heat until it becomes tender, not mushy, for about 10-15 minutes. Drain any remaining water.



Millet: Rinse 1 cup of millet. Optional: toast for 5 minutes at 320°F or 160°C before cooking for a nutty flavour. Bring 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups of water to a boil. Add millet and lower heat to low-simmer. Cook for about 15 minutes until millet soaks up most of the water. Remove from heat and let sit for 10 minutes.





Cooking Fish

Tip: Unbreaded frozen fish is a great affordable option. Defrost in the fridge overnight on top of a plate to collect any liquid. Some fish like tuna, salmon, sardines, oysters, and mussels, can be available in a canned option as well.

Baking fish: Brush your fish with a teaspoon of olive oil and then cover in the herbs or spices of your choosing. Typically, baking fish takes about 10-20 minutes depending on the fish and thickness at 400°F/200°C. Fish is ready when it is opaque (not see-through) and flaky.

Broiling fish: Turn on your oven to broil. Brush fish with olive oil and put in the oven for 6-8 minutes. Fish is ready when it is opaque (not see-through) and flaky.

Pan-fry: use a non-stick or cast-iron pan, heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil on medium heat. Cook for 3-4 minutes on each side. Fish is ready when it is opaque (not see-through) and flaky.



Cooking Tofu



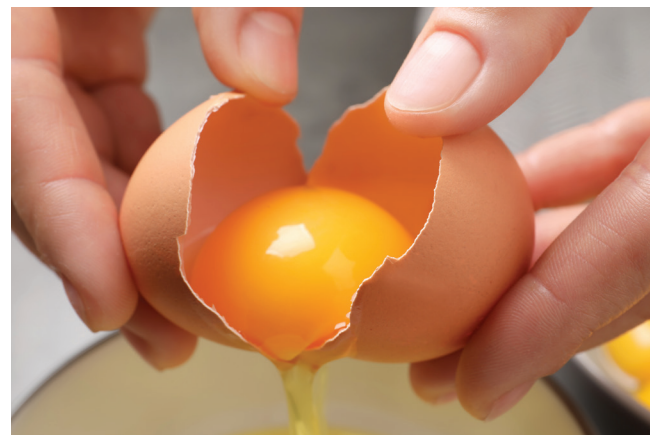
Tip: Firm or extra firm tofu tends to be the best for cooking dishes. Before any cooking method, pat dry with a paper towel to remove an excess liquid.

Baked: coat with olive oil and bake for 20 minutes at 425°F/220°C.

Saute or pan fried: add a tablespoon of olive oil, and then cook for 15-20 minutes on medium heat, flipping regularly. The outside of tofu should brown.

Cooking Eggs

How to Crack an Egg



1. Using a clean, flat surface, such as your kitchen counter, grasp the egg in your hand and in one swift decisive motion tap the egg once against it.
2. Use your thumbs to separate the egg shell where it's cracked and tip the egg into a bowl.

It's always best to crack your eggs into a separate bowl or ramekin before adding it to your main ingredients or pan to make sure the egg is still fresh and ensure no bits of shell remain.

Hard-boiled Eggs:



1. Place eggs in single layer at bottom of the pot and cover with cold water. The water should be about an inch or so higher than eggs. Cover the pot with a lid.
2. Over high heat, bring eggs to a boil.
3. Remove from heat and let stand in water for 10-12 minutes for large eggs.
4. Drain water and immediately run cold water over eggs until cooled.

How to Peel a Hard-boiled egg:



1. Crack the egg by tapping it on your counter.
2. Roll the egg gently between your hands to loosen the shell.

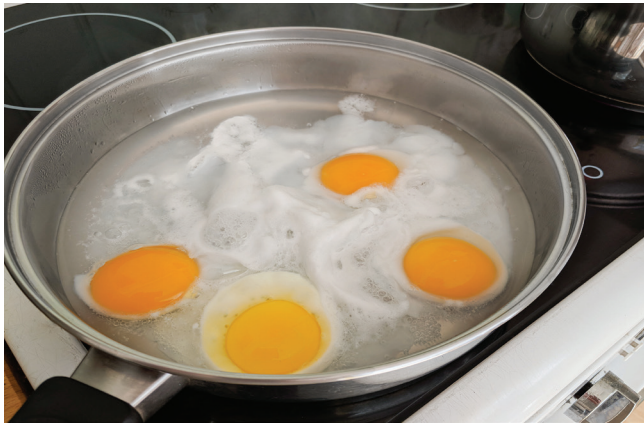
3. Peel the egg starting at the large end. If you hold the egg under cold water or dip it in a bowl of cold water it can help remove the shell. When storing, you can keep hard boiled eggs refrigerated in their shell and eat within the week.

How to Fry an Egg:



1. Coat pan with 1 tablespoon of olive oil. Heat over medium heat. Make sure oil is evenly dispersed over pan so eggs do not stick.
2. Once pan is coated with oil, crack your egg into a bowl.
3. Let eggs cook until the white of the egg is set and the corners of the egg curl slightly (usually about 3-4 minutes). For sunny side up eggs, slide eggs onto a plate and season again as desired. For over easy and medium eggs, continue to step 4.
4. Using a thin spatula, jiggle the spatula under the egg and flip the egg. It does not need to go all the way under, but should at least be under the yolk. After flipping, allow it to cook for another minute for over easy, and 2 minutes for over medium. Flip the egg again using the spatula and then serve.

How to Poach an Egg:



1. Boil water in a medium sized pot.
2. Reduce heat to a simmer.
3. Crack an egg in a separate bowl.
4. Place the egg in the simmering water and cook for 3-5 minutes, then remove.

How to Make Scrambled Eggs:



1. Crack two eggs in a bowl.
2. Whisk gently with either a fork or whisk until the eggs appear frothy.
3. Coat a pan with 1 tablespoon of olive oil. Heat pan over medium heat. Once pan is heated and coated with olive oil, pour in egg mixture.
4. Move the eggs across the bottom of the pan with a spatula, making soft curds. Try to redistribute the egg mixture so it cooks evenly.
5. Continue stirring until there is no more liquid egg.

How to Cook an Omelette:



1. Crack two eggs in a bowl.
2. Whisk gently with either a fork or whisk until the eggs appear frothy.
3. Coat a pan with 1 tablespoon of olive oil. Heat pan over medium heat. Once pan is heated and coated with olive oil, pour in egg mixture.
4. Move the eggs across the bottom of the pan with a spatula, making soft curds. Try to redistribute the egg mixture so it cooks evenly.
5. Continue stirring until there is no more liquid egg.

Good filling options and spices include: Spinach, peppers, mushrooms, sundried tomatoes, onions, garlic powder, sweet peppers, chili flakes.



Herbs and Spices



Herb: Herbs are the leafy part of plant that are used in cooking. Herbs can be fresh or dried. If using fresh herbs, add the herbs within the last few minutes of cooking. If using dry herbs instead of fresh herbs, use half the amount.



Spice: Spices are the other parts of the plant such as barks (cinnamon), berries (peppercorns), flowers (chamomile), roots (turmeric) and seeds (cumin). Usually spices are dried.

Why include herbs and spices in diet:

Herbs and spices are a great way to add flavour and colour to food without adding additional fat, salt, or sugars. Herbs and spices are nutritious and have many health benefits!

How to include in diet: You can customize any meal with your favourite herbs and spices - your imagination is the limit! Try

cooking the same recipe but with different spices (ex. swap Italian seasoning for a Mexican or Indian spice blend).

The exact amount of an herb or spice to add into your cooking is based on how strong you want the flavour to be. Generally, herbs and spices are used in volumes of 1-3 teaspoons (cumin), 1-3 tablespoons (ground cinnamon), 1/3rd of the bunch (cilantro), or 3-6 leaves (basil). Many herbs and spices have been made into teas, like hibiscus, mint, chamomile tea. Teas can be made hot with boiling water, or chilled with ice.

In this study, we encourage you to include spices traditional to your cultural heritage and family traditions into the recipes we have provided.

Tip: Some herbs and spices are strong and require less to be added to produce a strong flavour. To avoid having the flavour of a herb or spice over-power your cooking, add the herb or spice in small volumes. Taste small samples of your cooking and add more of the herb or spice until you reach the flavour you desire.



Below is a chart of popular herbs and spices but please explore others too!

<p>Basil Type: Herb. Dried or fresh leaf Preparation: Use whole leaf or chop into fine pieces. Use dried leaf as is Flavour: Sweet, fresh Strength/Potency: Moderate Added to: Garnish, pizza and pasta sauces, sprinkled over salads</p>	<p>Bay Leaf Type: Herb. Dried or fresh leaf Preparation: Use whole leaf or chop into fine pieces. Use dried leaf as is Flavour: Subtle bitterness, faint minty Strength/Potency: Mild, moderate Added to: Soups, stews, braised meats, marinates for meats/fish</p>	<p>Black Pepper Type: Spice. Peppercorns or ground powder Preparation: Grind peppercorns to make a fine powder or use ground powder Flavour: Sharp, spicy Strength/Potency: Strong Added to: Salad dressings, toppings, meats, vegetables, sauces</p>
<p>Cilantro Type: Herb. Dried or fresh leaf Preparation: Pick leaf off stem or chop into fine pieces. Use dried leaf as is Flavour: Citrus Strength/Potency: Moderate Added to: Salads, salad dressings, toppings rice dishes dips</p>	<p>Cinnamon Type: Spice. Bark and ground powder Preparation: Use bark or ground powder as is Flavour: Sweet, Woody Strength/Potency: Strong Added to: Baking, tea, curry, desserts</p>	<p>Clove Type: Spice. Ground powder Preparation: Use ground powder as is Flavour: Warm, sweet, bitter Strength/Potency: Strong Added to: Soups, curry, spicing meat, rice dishes</p>
<p>Coriander Type: Spice. Seeds or crushed seeds/ground powder Preparation: Crush full seeds or use full seeds or ground powder as is Flavour: Floral, citrus, fresh Strength/Potency: Mild Added to: Vegetables, curry, meat, rice dishes, potatoes</p>	<p>Cumin Type: Spice. Seeds or crushed seeds/ground powder Preparation: Crush full seeds or use full seeds or ground powder as is Flavour: Rich, earthy, warm, citrus Strength/Potency: Strong Added to: Curry, soups, rice dishes, vegetables, meats, tofu</p>	<p>Dill Type: Herb. Dried or fresh leaf Preparation: Pick leaf off stem or chop into fine pieces. Use dried leaf as is Flavour: Bright, sweet, citrus Strength/Potency: Moderate, strong Added to: Salads, salad dressings, toppings, rice dishes, dips, potatoes</p>
<p>Fennel Type: Spice. Seeds or crushed seeds/ground powder Preparation: Crush full seeds or use full seeds or ground powder as is Flavour: Licorice, sweet Strength/Potency: Mild Added to: Tea, braised meats, meats, salads, dips, soups</p>	<p>Ginger Type: Spice. Root or ground powder Preparation: Use full root or slice into smaller pieces. Use ground powder as is Flavour: Citrus, peppery, sweet, spicy Strength/Potency: Strong Added to: Vegetables, curry, meat, rice dishes, tea, dips, soups</p>	<p>Mint Type: Herb. Fresh leaf or dried Preparation: Use whole leaf or chop into fine pieces. Use dried leaf as is. Flavour: Sweet, cool, fresh Strength/Potency: Moderate Added to: Tea, rice dishes, salads, salad dressings, dips, salsas, soups, grains</p>

<p>Nutmeg Type: Spice. Ground powder Preparation: Use ground powder as is Flavour: Warm, nutty Strength/Potency: Strong Added to: Curry, baked fruit, vegetables, pasta, dips, rice dishes, meats</p>	<p>Oregano Type: Herb. Fresh, dried or crushed leaf Preparation: Pick fresh leaf off stem or chop into fine pieces. Use dried leaf as is Flavour: Bitter Strength/Potency: Strong Added to: Vegetables, meats, salad dressings, seafood, rice dishes, dips</p>	<p>Paprika Type: Spice. Ground powder Preparation: Use ground powder as is Flavour: Sweet, peppery Strength/Potency: Mild. moderate Added to: Braised meats, stews, meats, vegetables, potatoes, eggs</p>
<p>Parsley Type: Herb. Fresh or dried leaf Preparation: Pick leaf off stem or chop into fine pieces. Use dried leaf as is Flavour: Bitter Strength/Potency: Mild, moderate Added to: Meats, salads, vegetables, soups, dips, sauces</p>	<p>Rosemary Type: Herb. Fresh, dried or crushed leaf Preparation: Pick leaf off stem or chop into fine pieces. Use dried leaf as is Flavour: Lemon-pine, fresh, bittersweet Strength/Potency: Moderate Added to: Soups, casseroles, salads, stews, fish, rice dishes, potatoes</p>	<p>Saffron Type: Spice. Dried or ground powder Preparation: Use dried or ground powder Chef's Tip: It is a more expensive spice but you only need a tiny bit for any dish you are cooking Flavour: Sweet, floral Strength/Potency: Mild Added to: Seafood, stews, rice dishes, eggs, soups</p>
<p>Sage Type: Herb. Fresh or dried leaf Preparation: Pick leaf off stem or chop into fine pieces. Use dried leaf as is Flavour: Earthy, minty Strength/Potency: Moderate Added to: Poultry, root vegetables, meats, soups, dips, salad dressings</p>	<p>Thyme Type: Herb. Fresh or dried leaf Preparation: Pick leaf off stem or chop into fine pieces. Use dried leaf as is Flavour: Minty, citrus, savoury, woody, flowery Strength/Potency: Moderate Added to: Meat marinades, braised meats, meats, fish, salads, vegetables, soups, dips, teas</p>	<p>Tumeric Type: Spice. Root or ground powder Preparation: Use full root or slice into smaller pieces. Use ground powder as is Chef's Tip: It has a bright yellow color which can stain counter tops and clothing. Flavour: Spicy, warm, citrus Strength/Potency: Moderate, strong Added to: Vegetables, curry, soups, smoothies, tea</p>



Cooking Meat



Buying Meat: When buying red meat, try to select leaner cuts. You can also trim off excess fat or blot cooked meat with paper towel to remove excess fat. Choose chicken or turkey more often than red meat.

Safely Cooking with Chicken and Turkey:

Use extra caution when storing, thawing, and preparing chicken and turkey because they can contain bacteria that can cause illness.

- Store raw chicken in a package that won't leak.
- When thawing frozen chicken, place in the fridge on a plate or platter to collect any liquids. It can take up to 24 hours to thaw chicken in the fridge. Do not leave frozen meat on the countertop to thaw.
- After cutting or touching chicken, wash your hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds. Clean all cutting boards, utensils, counters, very thoroughly with soap and warm water.
- **Chef's Tip:** Some people find it easier to keep a separate cutting board for meats and vegetables.

Tip: You can add herbs and spices to meat before, during and/or after cooking meat to add flavour. Popular herbs or spices to add to meat are black pepper, basil, garlic powder or oregano.

Marinating Meat or Fish

What is marinating? Soaking meats or fish (or even vegetables) in liquids, herbs and spices before cooking. Marinating is not necessary when cooking meat but can add flavour. The basic ingredients of any marinade are oil (olive oil), herbs, and spices and other liquids.

How to marinate:

1. Before marinating, you can poke small holes in the meat with a sharp knife so it will absorb the marinade more easily.
2. Place the meat in a large bowl, or a plastic bag.
3. Cover the meat evenly in the marinade and refrigerate for several hours (1-12).
4. When the marinating is complete, cook the meat however you desire.

Note: Do not use the same marinade twice, bacteria that can make us ill can grow in the marinade if kept for a long period of time.

A Few Common Marinades:

- Ginger + garlic + soy
- Balsamic vinegar + garlic
- Garlic + rosemary + lemon
- Parsley + thyme + oregano + lemon

How to Stir-fry Meat:

1. In a wok or skillet, heat 1 tablespoon of oil on the stove. Add the meat.
2. Stir continuously while cooking. If you are cooking with whole pieces of meat, flip periodically throughout the cooking time.
3. When you are done cooking the meat, cut open one piece to ensure no pink/uncooked meat is visible. If not fully cooked, cook longer and test again.

How to Braise:

What is braising? Cooking meat or vegetables by heating them slowly with a small volume of liquid in an enclosed cooking pan.

How to braise meat:

1. Preheat oven to required temperature (300°F/150°C).
2. Add oil to a pot or pan and cook the meat on the stove using medium heat.
3. Make sure to turn the meat onto all sides until browned. Transfer to an oven dish and add desired herbs, spices and liquid (i.e., chicken broth, vegetable broth, soup, sauce) partially submerging the meat.
4. Place the oven dish in the oven. Stir halfway through cooking time
5. Bake until the meat is tender to touch with a fork or is easily peeled off the bone. To ensure fully cooked make sure there is no pink throughout the meat. Monitor to ensure it does not overcook.

Type of Meat	Approximate Time
Chicken (breast, thighs)	1 - 2 ½ hours
Turkey (whole turkey legs, breast, thighs)	1 ½ - 2 ½ hours
Beef	1 ½ - 3 hours
Pork	1 ½ - 2 ½ hours

How to roast meat:

1. Preheat oven to required temperature.
2. Use a wide, open baking pan or dish. Add oil, preferably olive oil, to the pan or dish and desired herbs or spices.
3. Place in the oven for the specified amount.

Type of Meat	Roasting Temperature	Approximate Roasting Time
Chicken (whole, about 3 to 4lbs)	350°F or 175°C	1 ¼ hours to 1 ½ hours
Turkey (whole, 8-12 lbs)	325°F or 160°C	3 hours
Beef Tenderloin (whole, 4 to 6lbs)	425°F or 220°C	45 to 60 minutes
Pork Tenderloin (½ to 1 ½ lbs)	425°F or 220°C	20 to 30 minutes

Utensils and Knife Skills

Important kitchen tools:



1. **Chef's Knife:** 8-inch knife for cutting larger fruits and vegetables and meat
2. **Paring knife:** for cutting, peeling, and dicing
3. **Peeler** for carrots and potatoes
4. **Cutting boards:** 1 for fruits and vegetables, 1 for meats and fishes to avoid contamination

Tip: Having a sharp knife means you can cut through more easily, so there is less chance that you can get hurt.

Videos about Cutting and Food preparation



Preparing Vegetables:

[How to steam vegetables](#)

[How to blanch vegetables](#)

[How to cut broccoli](#)

[How to cut a butternut squash](#)

[How to cut a bell pepper](#)

[How to dice an onion](#)

[How to cut potatoes into fries](#)

[How to shred carrots](#)

[How to chop green onion](#)

[How to peel potatoes](#)

[How to dice potatoes](#)

[How to slice carrots four ways](#)

[How to cut cauliflower](#)

[How to prepare asparagus](#)

[How to slice cabbage \(including red cabbage\)](#)

[How to chop celery](#)

[How to cut a zucchini](#)

[How to cut and peel a beet](#)

Preparing Fruit:

[How to cut a mango](#)

[How to peel a kiwi](#)

[How to slice an apple](#)

[How to peel and cut an avocado](#)

[How to cut a pineapple](#)

Preparing Herbs and Spices:

[How to peel fresh ginger root](#)

[How to chop or mince garlic](#)

[How to chop oregano, basil or other leafy herbs](#)

Preparing Eggs:

[How to Crack an Egg](#)

[Hard-boiled Eggs](#)

[How to Fry an Egg](#)

[How to Poach an Egg](#)

[How to Make Scrambled Eggs](#)

[How to Cook an Omelette](#)

Other:

[How to flip a pancake](#)

[How to cook grains](#)

[Knife Skills](#)



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