

Cooking Terminology

Al Dente

An Italian term meaning "to the tooth." Pasta is cooked tender, but still firm.

Bake

Cooking in an oven.

Baste

The process of spooning or pouring pan juices over food while it cooks. This promotes moistness and a browned surface.

Beat

Making a mixture smooth by whipping or stirring with a spoon, fork, wire whisk, or beater.

Blanch

Refers to partially cooking an ingredient, usually vegetables, by placing them in boiling water for a few minutes.

Blend

Combining ingredients until smooth and uniform in texture, flavor, and color.

Boil

Heating liquid, which causes a constant production of bubbles that rise and break the surface.

Braise

Cooking food slowly in a small amount of liquid in a tightly covered pan.

Broil

Cooking food using an overhead source of heat.

Carmelize

The process of causing sugar or the natural sugars in food to darken to a golden brown and develop a rich flavor by cooking on a constant heat.

Chop

Cutting foods with a knife into smaller pieces.

Cream

Beating butter or shortening, either alone or with sugar, until it is light and fluffy.

Cut In

Working a solid fat such as butter or shortening into dry ingredients.

Dash

1/16 teaspoon measure. (Use 1/2 of a 1/8 teaspoon measure.)

Deglaze

Adding stock, wine or water to the pan after meat has been cooked and removed. When the liquid is added, it loosens the flavor from the pan to make a sauce for the meat.

Dice

To cut up in uniform pieces. Usually in 1/8 to 1/4 inch squares.

Dissolve

Stirring a solid food into a liquid to form a mixture in which the solid food does not remain.

Dredge

Coating food with flour, corn meal or sugar before or after cooking.

Emulsion

Suspension of two liquid ingredients that do not dissolve into each other.

Fold

A method of gently mixing ingredients. Use a rubber spatula to cut down through the mixture, move across the bottom of the bowl, and come back up, folding some of the mixture from the bottom close to the surface.

Fry

Fast browning and cooking food in varying amounts of fat, most often at a high heat.

Garnish

Adding extra appeal to a finished dish.

Grate

Using a grater to rub food, such as vegetables, cheeses and spices, across surface to make fine pieces.

Juice

Extracted liquid that comes from fruits, vegetables or meats.

Julienne

Cutting food into thin sticks about two inches long.

Marinade

A process of flavoring food by soaking in a liquid or dry mixture.

Mash

Removing all lumps from food with either a fork or electric beater.

Melt

To heat a solid food until it becomes liquid or semi-liquid.

Mix

Beating or stirring foods together until they are incorporated.

Pit

Taking the seed out of a piece of fruit or vegetable.

Poach

Cooking food by placing in simmering liquid.

Proof

Allowing a yeast dough to rise before baking.

Pre-heat

Heating the oven to the temperature needed before using it.

Puree

Blending a food into a liquid or heavy paste.

Reconstitute

Bringing condensed or concentrated food to its original strength by adding water.

Reduce

Briskly boil liquids, so that the liquid evaporates to thicken the sauce making it rich and flavorful.

Roast

Cooking an uncovered piece of meat, poultry, or vegetables in an oven.

Saute

Cooking on a stove in a small amount of oil or butter until tender.

Score

To cut slits through the outer surface of food before cooking to tenderize or to make a decorative pattern.

Sear

Quickly browning meat on all sides with high heat to seal in the juices.

Shred

Making long narrow strips of food with a food processor or a grater.

Sift

Putting dry ingredients such as flour or sugar through a sifter or mesh screen to loosen particles and incorporate air.

Simmer

A method of cooking food in liquid that is kept just below the boiling point.

Skim

Removing any fat or foam from the surface of liquid.

Steam

A method of cooking food in the vapor given off by boiling water.

Steep

Letting a food, such as tea, stand in water that is just below boiling to extract flavor and color.

Stir

Incorporating ingredients with a spoon to prevent them from sticking during cooking or to cool them after cooking.

Toast

Heating nuts, seeds, coconut or bread in the oven until they are slightly browned. This will bring out their natural flavor.

Whip

Beating food rapidly by using a whisk or electric beater to incorporate air into the mixture.