

Cooking Methods

Roasting or Baking

- Roasting or baking involves cooking meat, poultry, fish, or vegetables in the oven without any liquid and no cover on the cooking vessel.
- When roasting or baking meat or poultry, remove all visible fat from poultry or beef.
- Add appropriate seasonings and flavorings to replace flavor lost when fat is removed. Since salt penetrates meat only about an inch and retards browning, most recipes suggest adding salt at the end of cooking. Do not add salt unless the recipe calls for it.
- If a meat thermometer is used, place it in the thickest part of the meat, away from bone or fat.
- Place in the cooking dish/pan. Do not cover, and do not add any liquid for meat or poultry. Place meat on a rack when appropriate so fat will drain and hot air can circulate on all sides.
- For meats, roast or bake following the recipe for the oven temperature until the food reaches the appropriate internal temperature (the temperature specified in the recipe).
- Remove from the oven and serve. For large pieces of meat, like a turkey or a large roast, allow the meat to sit in a warm place for about 15 minutes before carving or slicing. This makes the meat firmer, juicier, and easier to slice. Meats should be sliced across the grain.
- Hold cooked meat and poultry the correct way. If the meat or poultry will not be served immediately, it should be covered and kept in a warmer at the correct temperature or chilled in the refrigerator. Never hold a meat product at room temperature.

Sautéing

- Sautéing uses high heat and a small amount of fat to rapidly cook vegetables, meat, poultry, and fish. Searing and stir-frying are also sautéing techniques.
- Prepare the meat or poultry by making sure it is dry. If a marinade has been used, drain it thoroughly and pat the food dry. Food with a lot of moisture will steam rather than sauté.
- Add oil to the pan according to recipe. Measure the oil carefully.
- Heat the oil; add the meat, poultry, or fish. The meat, poultry, or fish pieces should be added to the pan in a single layer. If the pieces are touching, the product will steam, not sauté.
- Cook the meat by gently turning until browned on all sides and cooked evenly. Some recipes suggest that the cooked meat be removed from the pan and the remaining flavored juices be used to make a sauce. Follow the recipe.
- Sautéed meals should be cooked in batches just-in-time for service. Covering a sautéed food during holding causes it to steam, and the advantages of the sauté technique are lost. Serve immediately. Never hold a meat product at room temperature.

Braising and Stewing

- Braising and stewing are a combination of dry-heat and moist-heat cooking used for less tender cuts of meat. Braising is used for large cuts of meat. The same technique is called stewing when used for bite-sized pieces of meat, poultry, or fish.
- Trim fat and prepare meat according to the recipe.
- Sear the meat on all sides. Searing meat before braising or stewing adds color and flavor. Follow the recipe to use a small amount of oil or preferably, no oil. Brown the meat on all sides in a hot pan. For large pieces of meat, use a pan in the oven or a steam jacketed kettle. For smaller pieces, use a grill, or brown in a hot oven.
- Remove the meat from the pan and add any vegetables or seasonings called for in the recipe.
- Add the seared meat back to the cooking pan along with the liquid for cooking.
- Cover tightly and simmer until tender. Follow the recipe for the temperature and time for the equipment being used. Do not allow the liquid to boil. The size of the cut of meat and the kind of meat will also influence the cooking time. Braised or stewed meats are done when they are tender.
- Remove the meat from the cooking liquid. Some recipes suggest the cooking liquid be cooked an additional time to reduce the volume and concentrate the flavor. The cooking liquid may also be thickened with a roux.
- Hold cooked meat and poultry the correct way. If the meat, poultry, or fish will not be served immediately, it should be covered and kept in a warmer at the correct temperature or chilled in the refrigerator.