

Grill it?



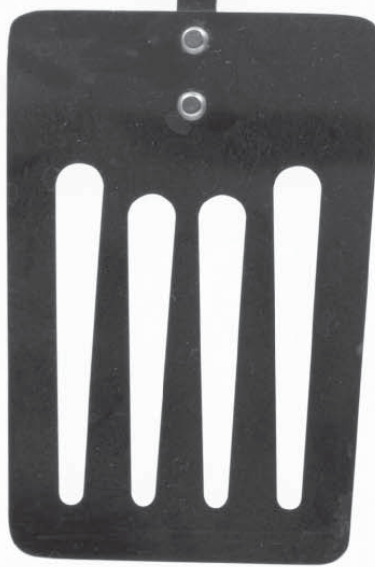
Roast it?



Broil it?



Which is Best?



By Chef Dave Fouts

Cooking methods are important in food preparation especially when preparing protein foods. Your protein intake, particularly from high quality meats, can be significantly increased by learning how to properly cook and prepare various types of meats to make them moist and tender.

Vegetables and fruits, on the other hand, can be eaten raw or cooked, and most cooking methods work well. Typically, dry cooking methods maintain the flavor and the integrity of food when cooking, but that is not to say that moist cooking methods do not have a place in the kitchen. As far as health and flavor, I recommend grilling. Not only is it easy, but the method gives a burst of flavor with every bite.

Cooking Choices

Before deciding which cooking method works best for you, understanding the different cooking methods will help in your meal planning. This article will give you information on dry and moist cooking methods as well as some cooking tips to make your next meal a big hit.

Dry Cooking Methods

Dry cooking methods are recommended when cooking meats and include:

- **Sauté** – To cook food in a preheated pan or griddle with minimum amount of fat
- **Rotisserie** – To cook food in dry heat, while food is rotating
- **Grilling** – To cook food from below heat
- **Roasting** – To cook food in dry heat with the aid of fat
- **Broiling** – To cook food from heat above

Sauté

When you sauté food, you cook it in a preheated pan or griddle with minimum fat. Sautéing is an easy and preferred method because cooking time is short (normally under seven minutes) and there are few guidelines that need to be followed.

1. Make sure the food that is to be cooked is no more than ½ inch thick. If thicker than ½ inch, the outside may burn while the inside remains uncooked.
2. It is important that the pan is heated before food is placed in the pan. Preheating the pan ensures that meat is cooked quickly and retains moisture.
3. NEVER walk away while cooking. Sautéing requires only two to seven minutes total cook time.

Rotisserie

Rotisserie cooking is another procedure that helps retain moisture in foods. Protein foods are most commonly used but some rotisseries have baskets to cook fruit and vegetables as well. Rotisserie involves cooking food over a dry heat while food is constantly rotating.

Roasting

Roasting, if done correctly, can be a great way to cook large cuts of meats and whole fish. To roast, preheat your oven to 500 degrees. Next, using a roasting pan with three inch sides, add liquid to fill the pan with one inch of liquid. If roasting a beef roast, I use beef stock. If roasting chicken, use chicken broth. And for fish, I use a fish broth. Water can be used but does not add much flavor if you plan on using the liquid as gravy or Au Jus. The liquid in the pan keeps the drippings from the protein from burning or evaporating from the pan.

Next, place your roasting rack over the liquid. The roasting rack will lift your protein just above the pan so the heat from the oven can cook the protein all the way around. If you do not have a roasting rack most kitchen stores have them for purchase.

Place your prepared protein into the 500 degree preheated oven and let it roast for five minutes. The high-heat will sear the protein all the way around and lock in the moisture. Turn the heat to 325 degrees and continue to roast until your protein is cooked to your desired "doneness."

Vegetables can also be roasted, but a roasting rack is not needed. First, cut your vegetables the same length and thickness so they will cook evenly. Next, coat with a small amount of oil (olive oil). Season and place them into your

Grilling Fruits

All fruit can be cooked on the grill. Firm fruits such as apples, pineapples and pears tend to be easier to grill than softer fruits such as peaches, bananas and mango. Softer fruits require more attention when grilled to prevent overcooking, which causes the fruit to become mushy. In addition, softer fruit only needs to be heated enough to take on the grill flavor.

***Caution:** Most fruits contain a high level of water. This water content will make the fruit extremely hot when grilling. If you do not allow the fruit to cool slightly after removing it from the grill, the fruit will cause serious burns to the mouth.*

Grilling Vegetables

The flavor of the vegetables increases when it is grilled. A lot of the moisture evaporates from the vegetables as they are grilled; the flavor becomes more concentrated and the sugars

become more condensed, which increases the sweetness and flavor of the vegetables. Some vegetables can be cut into pieces and some can be grilled whole.

Fruit Grilling Tips:

- Fruits are best grilled when using more of an indirect type of heat.
- When placing fruit directly on the grill rack, cut the fruit large enough so it does not fall through the grates.
- Fruits can be grilled with skins on.
- Brushing fruit with melted butter or oil during grilling will help to keep the fruit from sticking to the grill grate. Spraying a non-stick cooking spray on the grate before heating the grill also keeps foods from sticking.
- Soak bamboo skewers in water for 30 minutes or more before using to prevent them from burning on the grill.

Vegetable Grilling Tips:

- Vegetables should be grilled over a medium heat. The length of cooking time will vary depending on the type of vegetable and how it has been prepared. Prevent vegetables from drying out by soaking them in cold water before cooking.
- Cut vegetables into uniform size pieces so they will cook evenly. The larger and thicker the pieces, the longer the grilling time.
- Before placing on the grill, brush oil onto vegetables to prevent them from sticking to the grates. The vegetables must be dry before applying oil or the oil will not stick.
- Most root vegetables, such as potatoes, carrots, and parsnips, may need to be cooked before grilling to ensure that all the vegetables are done at the same time.
- Seasoning the vegetables with sea salt or kosher salt before grilling will draw out extra moisture from the vegetables, which will intensify its sweetness and flavor.
- Brushing vegetables with butter or your favorite oil during grilling helps to keep the vegetables from sticking to the grill grate. You can also sprinkle different herbs and spices over vegetables while grilling.

roasting pan. Next, place them into your preheated 350 degree oven. Using a flat spatula, turn vegetables every 15 minutes until vegetables are done to your desired tenderness. Root vegetables such as potatoes, carrots, parsnips, sweet potatoes and onion work best, but other vegetables such as broccoli, yellow squash, zucchini, bell peppers and cauliflower can also be used, but do not take long to roast.

Broiling

Broiling is typically only used to brown the tops of casseroles and melt cheese. However, this is a quick way to cook meats, fish, seafood and vegetables. You always want to turn your broiler on in your oven and get it preheated.

Using your broiler pan (all ovens come standard with them), lay your food without touching or stacking over the top of the pan. Next, season; and if needed, add a little oil. I find thin cuts of meats, fish and vegetables work well when broiling.

Place your oven rack four to six inches from the top of the oven and place your broiler pan with food under the broiler. At this point, you cannot walk away. Watch as your food begins to brown and when desired browning has occurred, flip food over and broil until desired “doneness.”

Moist Cooking Methods

Moist cooking methods include deep frying, pan frying, stewing, braising, poaching and boiling.

- **Deep Frying** – To cook food in preheated fat or oil totally immersed
- **Pan Frying** – To cook food in preheated fat or oil partially immersed
- **Stewing** – To cook small pieces of food at below simmering point with liquid
- **Braising** – To cook in a closed container with liquid in the oven or on top of the stove
- **Poaching** – To cook food in a liquid at a temperature below boiling
- **Boiling** – To cook in a liquid at 212 degrees

Moist cooking techniques are rarely used to cook meats, such as poultry, beef, lamb or pork because these techniques cause your food to be “chewy” and tough. On the other hand, moist cooking methods, such as poaching and steaming, are very effective in maintaining the tenderness of fish and seafood. Although, you will find dry cooking techniques, such as grilling, are also helpful in maintaining moisture and providing tenderness to seafood and fish.

No matter the cooking method, having a better understanding will save you time and improve your dishes.

About the Author:

Chef Dave Fouts is known as the world's premier culinary expert for weight-loss surgical patients. Chef Dave can be found speaking around the country to help in weight-loss patients' success. For more information please visit www.chefdave.org.



ABOUT THE OBESITY ACTION COALITION (OAC)

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