



Knife Skills



Cooking Meats

Six Basic Cooking Techniques

CULINARY ESSENTIALS FOR THE HOME COOK



Making Pan Sauces



Roasting Vegetables

Jennifer Clair



Blanching Green Vegetables



Cooking Leafy Greens

Photographs by Meredith Heuer

Six Basic Cooking Techniques

See cover file



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HCNY
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For my mother, Phyllis Herman, who prepared home-cooked meals every night of my childhood, with love.



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Introduction

You are holding a cookbook that has been informed by thousands of home cooks just like you who have taken this Six Basic Cooking Techniques class at our cooking school. That school is Home Cooking New York, in downtown Manhattan, where this has been our best-selling class since 2002. So, behold! Our first cookbook – an encapsulation of these six vital techniques interwoven with the questions and answers that pepper a live class, so you can benefit from years of student queries. Their voice is your voice, and we have made sure that it is loud and clear throughout the book’s chapters, each one highlighting a cooking technique that is instrumental to a solid culinary foundation.

We made sure the photographs clearly illustrate each technique, as if you were in the classroom with us. The recipes were written with home cooks in mind, so you can practice these six techniques while simultaneously cooking delicious meals for yourself (and lucky loved ones). The “Students Ask” and “Chefs Say” columns in each chapter also grant you inside access to the types of Q&A and kitchen advice that is covered during our cooking classes. We hope that every page of this book answers a culinary question you didn’t even know you had. After years of teaching, we’ve heard them all – and collected them here – just for you.

Jennifer Clavi



Making Friends with Your Chef's Knife

It is no surprise that this is the first chapter of the book. Every home-cooked meal begins with the grip of your chef's knife as you mince, chop, and slice your way to dinner. So grab hold of the most important tool in your kitchen and let's learn how to get along.

Materials

8-inch chef's knife

Cutting board
(we prefer wood or bamboo)

Handheld 2-stage sharpener

Serrated knife

3 1/2-inch paring knife



Choosing a Chef's Knife

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

- A knife is a lifetime investment, so don't be discouraged that a good chef's knife may run you upwards of \$70. You only really need 3 good knives to cover most kitchen tasks: An 8-inch chef's knife, a 3 1/2-inch paring knife, and a serrated knife (for thick-skinned foods like bread, bagels, and tomatoes).
- The best chef's knives are made from hefty high-carbon steel, a strong metal that provides durability and a sharp edge that lasts longer than lower-priced knives made from softer stainless steel. Make sure your knife also has a "full tang," meaning the metal goes through the entire handle. If you can see metal rivets along the handle or a strip of metal running along the top of the handle, it has a full tang.
- Remember, you only need to buy ONE good chef's knife in your lifetime, so make it count!

BRANDS WE LIKE: Wusthof, Henckels, Mundial.

CHEFS SAY



CHEFS SAY:
Stabilize your cutting board.

To prevent your board from moving while you are chopping, place it on top of a single, wet paper towel or a reusable rectangle of non-slip drawer liner. A steady board makes for safer knife work.

CHEFS SAY:
Steady round food.

For rounded ingredients (like onions, potatoes, and zucchini), cut a small slice off one side (or just cut in half) so they lay flat on the cutting board for a stable cutting foundation.



CHEFS SAY:
Don't mince basil, mint, or sage.

These delicate herbs turn black (oxidize) with every cut of the knife. To avoid ending up with a pile of blackened herbs, make a chiffonade (pg xx) instead. This creates thin ribbons of herbs that maintain more of their green color.



Sharpening

Since it is easier to cut yourself with a dull knife (it doesn't go where you are aiming it), you need to own one sharpening tool to keep your knife's edge in good shape. (You can also have your knife professionally sharpened at a cookware store; most of them offer this service.) For home cooks, we recommend a handheld 2-stage sharpener. With this, you'll have a new edge on your knife in a few minutes.

Please note: This is only for smooth, straight-edged knives; do not sharpen a serrated knife with this sharpener or you will mar its scalloped edge. Also, good sharpening is not easy on the ears; expect to hear the jarring sound of grinding metal in order to create a new "edge" on your knife.

1. Hold your knife horizontally and using gentle pressure, pull it through the 2 slots (stage I then stage II), from the heel to the tip of the knife, 10 times each.
2. Make sure to press down firmly on the knife during the whole process, so the entire blade is sharpened evenly. The first slot shaves fine metal filings from the knife and the second slot smooths it down for a finished edge.



Holding

Resist the temptation to extend your index finger out over the top of the blade. Rather use it with the thumb to pinch either side of the top heel (widest part) of the knife blade, just forward of the handle (this will give you the most control over the blade). The remaining 3 fingers should cradle the underside of the handle itself.



Slicing Safely

1. ALWAYS hold your knife with the tip safely positioned downward.
2. When slicing, the knife should ALWAYS move in a forward motion, never back toward your body (to avoid jamming the handle into your gut) and never vertically straight up and down off the cutting board, which dulls the blade when it lands flat on the board.
3. When you are holding something to be cut, ALWAYS tuck your fingertips under and pop your knuckles out, so the side of the blade rubs against your knuckles keeping your fingertips safe.

ATTENTION!

THIS IS NOT A KNIFE SHARPENER! Contrary to a whole lot of popular belief, this long honing steel does not actually sharpen your knife. Instead, it is designed to *straighten* the edge of your knife in between sharpenings (over time, a knife's fine edge will bend with normal use). Using the steel can temporarily make your knife feel sharper (further compounding this confusion) when actually your knife is just straighter.



Mincing

- Place your ingredients in the center of a cutting board. Place the palm of your left hand (or right, if you are left-handed) on the back of the knife's tip with the fingers extended straight out.
- Place the ingredients to be minced under the back 3 inches of the knife; this is where the greatest cutting force is exerted and the part of the knife that makes solid contact with the cutting board. Do not place food under the front tip of the knife, which pops up when the knife is level with the board.
- Cut down with a rapid chopping motion. Don't let the front of the blade lose contact with the cutting board (your palm will remind you to keep it down). As the pieces scatter, use the knife's edge (you won't damage it) to gently scrape them back to the center of the board and continue mincing until the ingredients are the size you want.

Fresh herbs should be minced until they fall like snow when sprinkled. **Garlic** should be minced into 1/4-inch pieces; mince more finely if using raw. To mince **ginger**, first slice into coins, then finely mince to break down its fibrous material.



STUDENTS ASK

STUDENTS ASK:

How often do I sharpen my knife?

The best test is to sharpen your knife right now. Then cut something up. Doesn't that feel amazing, how easily it glides through? That is how your knife should always feel. You cannot over-sharpen your knife, so sharpening it will never be the wrong decision.



STUDENTS ASK:

How do I remove the smell of garlic from my hands?

Garlic's potent scent lies in its sticky oils and needs a good scrub with an abrasive to remove it, along with hot water and soap. Your best bet is the scrubby part of the sponge, rubbing each fingertip against the coarse texture to remove the fragrant oil. Rubbing your hands against a cut lemon or something stainless steel (under running water) also does the trick.

STUDENTS ASK:

How do I keep from crying when cutting an onion?

We have tried it all (putting the onion in the freezer, wearing goggles), but if you are sensitive to onion's sulfuric fumes, your tears are going to flow. Our method for chopping onions is quick and efficient (see page xx), so crying time is at a minimum. If you are particularly sensitive, makes sure to rinse your cutting board and knife after cutting an onion, so the fumes don't continue to make you tear up.





Cutting an Onion

1. Cut the onion in half from top to bottom (so a small piece of the root end is attached to both halves).



2. Place the halves, cut-side down, on a board. Cut off the tip of the stem end so you have a small corner to more easily peel back the papery skin.



3. With the root end away from you, make lengthwise cuts all the way through to the board, leaving about 1/4-inch of the onion still attached at the root (back) end; this will hold the onion together in one piece as you dice it.



4. Rotate the onion 90° and cut perpendicular to the cuts you just made, to make diced onion.

Julienning and Dicing



1. Slice the vegetables lengthwise (you can cut long vegetables like carrots and zucchini in half first to make them more manageable).



2. Stack a few slices on top of each other and slice them into rectangular pieces, the same width as their height, called "julienne."



3. Gather the matchsticks together and chop crosswise into cubes, called "dice."

Making a Chiffonade

This technique for making thin strips of leaves is primarily used when cutting herbs that need a gentle touch – like basil, mint, and sage – to prevent these oxidizing leaves from turning black. Mincing is too rough on them, and only results in a pile of blackened herbs.

It is also helpful for cutting large cooking greens – like Swiss chard, kale or collards – down to size for cooking (see "Shredding the Leaves," pg TK).



1. First, stack several leaves on top of each other, with the largest on the bottom.



2. Roll them up crosswise.



3. Thinly slice crosswise from one end of the roll to the other.

CHEFS SAY



CHEFS SAY:
Garlic skin begone.

To remove the tight, papery skin from garlic cloves, find an object with a flat base (the flat edge of your knife, an olive oil bottle, a can of beans) and gently crush it. When the skin splits, you can easily remove it in one piece. Remove the woody base from the clove before mincing.

CHEFS SAY:
Peeling ginger is optional.

Really! The thin, papery skin is flavorless and you will never detect it after it is finely minced. You can trim away any particularly rough appendages and dried areas, but otherwise, just wash the ginger before slicing and mincing.



CHEFS SAY:
Mise en place!

This is a popular French culinary term, which translates to “put everything in its place.” Before you start cooking, have all your ingredients chopped and measured and “in their place,” in bowls or arranged on your cutting board. Then you can act like you’re on cooking show, throwing this and that into your pan as you effortlessly cook your dish. This is a cooking game changer.



CHEFS SAY:
Can I use my garlic press to mince garlic?

No, unless you are going to use that garlic raw (as in a salad dressing or to make gremolata (see pg xx). The aromatic oils stored inside garlic are sensitive to heat, so pressed garlic will quickly brown in hot oil, marring the sharp, pungent flavor for which it is beloved.



Visual Glossary of Knife Cuts

- 1 MINCED PARSLEY
- 2 MINCED GARLIC
- 3 DICED ONION
- 4 JULIENNED CARROT
- 5 JULIENNED PEPPER
- 6 DICED PEPPER
- 7 DICED CARROT
- 8 BASIL CHIFFONADE
- 9 SLICED ONION
- 10 ZUCCHINI HALF-MOONS

The Best Vegetable Soup You'll Ever Make

We make this soup during our Knife Skills 101 class, adding each vegetable to the pot as students finish practicing on them. It is a great excuse to practice your own knife skills. Consider it a delicious final exam. You can omit a few of these vegetables if you don't feel like chopping 8 different vegetables. But don't skimp on the anchovies or Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese rind; they are essential to the deep flavor of this soup.

SERVES 8

4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling
1 medium onion, diced small
1 fennel bulb, cored and sliced very thin
3 cloves garlic, minced
3 anchovy fillets
(or 1 teaspoon miso paste)
2 teaspoons minced rosemary
2 large ripe tomatoes, cut into 1-inch dice or one 14-ounce can diced tomatoes
1 red, orange, or yellow bell pepper, julienned
2 medium carrots, cut in thirds and julienned
2 medium turnips or potatoes (about ½ pound), peeled and cut in ½-inch dice
1 14-ounce can cannellini beans, drained but not rinsed
1 quart chicken broth, as needed
½ cup white wine (optional)
1 2-ounce piece Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, rind removed and reserved, cheese shaved with a vegetable peeler

1. In a large, heavy soup pot, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Add the onions and fennel and cook until translucent, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic, anchovies, and rosemary, and cook until the garlic starts to color and the anchovies have begun to dissolve, about 2 minutes. Add the tomatoes, pepper, carrots, turnips, beans, broth, wine, cheese rind, and 1 teaspoon salt. Add enough broth so the liquid level is 1 inch below the top of the vegetables.
2. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer, covered, until all the vegetables are tender, at least 25 minutes. Add the kale after 15 minutes of cooking, to preserve its color and texture. Discard the cheese rind and stir in the lemon juice. Season to taste with salt, pepper, and more lemon juice, as needed to perk it up.
3. Serve the soup hot or at room temperature with a healthy drizzle of olive oil and a very generous grating of Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese.

PARMIGIANO-REGGIANO VS. PARMESAN CHEESE

Parmesan cheese is a hard, salty, dry-aged cow's milk cheese. Parmigiano-Reggiano is the king of this cheese variety; it is made exclusively in Italy and aged for at least 2 years. Its nutty flavor and granular texture are incomparable to domestic Parmesan, which is aged for much less time. Please avoid the non-refrigerated, grated Parmesan sold in supermarkets; it contains a fair amount of non-cheese additives. Look for Parmigiano-Reggiano in the cheese department, with its name stamped on the rind, so you know you are buying the real thing. It is worth making a staple in your refrigerator.





Cooking Meat to Perfection

A perfectly cooked piece of meat is well within the reach of every home cook. All you need is a little know-how (all included in this chapter) and an instant-read thermometer. The days of poking your steak or slicing it open to see if it's "done" are over. It's time to cook meat like a chef.

Materials

- 12-inch stainless steel sauté pan
(with a metal handle)
- Tongs
- Instant-read thermometer
- Cutting board with a well



Ingredients

- Meat
(steaks, chops, tenderloins, chicken pieces on the bone)
- High-temperature oil
(see pg TK)
- Kosher salt and a pepper mill





Preparing

1. MAKE SURE THE MEAT IS DRY.

If not, remove from its wrapping and let it air-dry, uncovered, on the counter (up to 2 hours) or the refrigerator (up to 24). If time is of the essence, you can blot it dry with paper towel.

2. SEASON WELL WITH SALT AND PEPPER.

“Season high” (about 8 inches above the meat for an even coating, and only season one side to start. You’ll place the meat seasoned-side down in the hot pan and then continue seasoning the second side once it is face up in the pan.

Heating the Pan

Heat the pan over medium-high heat, then add the oil to the hot pan (heating the pan first creates a more nonstick surface). To determine when the oil is hot enough to add the meat, tilt the pan and watch the oil. If it moves in thin, fast ripples, then it is ready. If the oil is slow and smooth, keep heating. (If you are cooking meat that is thicker than 1-inch or chicken on the bone, preheat your oven to 375° at this time, because you will need to finish cooking it in the oven.)



Browning

Using tongs, carefully transfer the meat to the hot pan, seasoned-side down. Now, salt and pepper the unseasoned side (now face up). Turn on your exhaust fan now, if you have one.

Turning

When the underside of the meat is crisp and deeply browned, 4 to 5 minutes, turn it over. Do not flip the meat over and over, or you will leave too much of its appealing crust on the bottom of the pan. Flip once.



CHEFS SAY



CHEFS SAY:
Make a salt cellar.

You want a one-handed way to add salt to your food when cooking. We recommend a salt cellar, ramekin, or tea cup filled with kosher salt, so your fingertips can easily reach in and grab what you need. Keep it out on your counter so everyone knows you mean business in the kitchen.

CHEFS SAY:
Please don't wash your chicken.

Holding your chicken under running water greatly increases the risk of cross-contaminating your sink area with droplets of raw chicken juice. We recommend blotting the chicken dry with paper towel if it is particularly juicy. If you must wash it, make sure your sink is empty of dishes and that you thoroughly wipe down the surrounding surfaces afterwards. The only way to kill harmful bacteria is to cook the chicken; washing it may only spread it around.



CHEFS SAY:
Crisp that chicken skin.

Chicken skin takes longer to crisp up to crackly deliciousness than the bare surface of meat. When cooking chicken with the skin on, give it closer to 8 minutes on the skin side for the most impressive result.

Cooking Meat More Than 1-Inch Thick

If the meat is thicker than 1 inch (including all chicken on the bone), additional cooking in the oven is required to cook the meat through without burning the crispy surface. Preheat the oven to 375° at the same time you start heating your pan, so it is ready when you are finished with the browning step. Make sure your pan has a metal, oven-proof handle; otherwise you'll need to transfer your meat to a sheet pan before putting in the oven. To gauge how much more cooking in the oven is needed, check the temperature of the meat before transferring to the oven.

Allow 5 minutes of cooking for every 10 to 15 degrees you need to achieve.



Checking for Doneness

Use a thermometer and the chart below to determine when the meat is properly cooked. Make sure to insert the thermometer through the side of the meat, so the entire probe is touching the center of the meat, avoiding any bones. You are concerned with the temperature in the center only.

How to Know When Meat Is Done

STEAK		
125° rare	130° medium rare	140° medium 145° medium well
LAMB CHOPS & DUCK BREAST	PORK CHOPS & TENDERLOIN	CHICKEN
130° medium rare	145° - 150°	160° Breasts 165° Thighs & Legs



Resting

Once the meat is perfectly cooked, it needs to rest for 5 minutes before slicing. The meat needs this time to redistribute juices to its extremities, which have contracted during cooking. This allows more of the juices to stay in the meat during slicing, as opposed to rushing out onto your cutting board. If you are not eating after the 5 minute resting period, tent the meat loosely with foil. The temperature will hold for about 15 minutes.



Slicing

It's all about "the grain." Before slicing, you need to determine if the steak indeed has a "grain," a distinct direction to the meat's fibers. Flank, hanger, and skirt steaks all have grains. Hold your knife perpendicular to the direction of the grain and slice into 1/2-inch pieces to achieve the most tender cut. If the steak has no grain, cut it in any direction you like.



Cooking with Salt

We recommend cooking with **kosher salt** for its soft and coarse texture. It is perfect for pinching and sprinkling over food, because you can feel it in your fingertips and see it with your eyes. We don't recommend table salt for use in the kitchen; it is hard to hold in your fingertips, dissolves too quickly to see where you've sprinkled it, and leaves behind the trace metallic tang of iodine (most table salt is iodized). **Sea salt** is great for seasoning a dish just before serving (especially a salad and sliced meats) so you can enjoy the clean, briny crunch for which sea salt is prized. Our favorite is **flaky sea salt**; the soft white crystals can easily be crushed with your fingertips over a finished dish.

Understanding High-Heat Oils

Nature's unprocessed choices (extra-virgin olive oil and butter) aren't able to withstand the high heat needed to properly sear steaks, deep-fry, or cook food in a hot wok. Since most high-heat oils are processed and refined (which is required to remove every natural particle that might burn), your best choice is to buy a bottle of "neutral" oil (meaning no flavor), like avocado, grapeseed or safflower that is:

1. **SOLD IN A GLASS BOTTLE**
(no leaching of plastic chemicals)
2. **EXPELLER-PRESSED OR COLD-PRESSED**
(extracted by pressing as opposed to chemical solvents)
3. **ORGANIC**
(ensuring that it is not a GMO, genetically modified organism)



Note: Sautéing vegetables and lightly browning pieces of meat is not high-heat cooking and flavorful, unprocessed oils, like extra-virgin olive oil and butter, are fine for this type of cooking.

STUDENTS ASK

STUDENTS ASK:
Should I cover my pan to reduce splatter?

No. When you cover your pan, water vapor collects under the lid and falls back onto your food, steaming it instead of browning it. Instead, use a splatter screen, an immensely handy kitchen tool that traps cooking splatter and keeps your arms and stovetop free of hot spits of oil. The screen allow steam from the cooking meat to pass through so it does not hinder the browning process.



STUDENTS ASK:
Can I use a non-stick pan?

This question is asked once every class. And we understand; no one likes scrubbing. But we don't recommend non-stick cookware for cooking anything but eggs, potatoes, and pancakes. Everything else benefits from the beautiful caramelization that happens when food browns onto the bottom of a pan, especially meat. A little liquid will always remove (deglaze) browned-on bits of the bottom of a pan. Check out "The Clean Pan Club" (pg TK)!



STUDENTS ASK:
When should I use my convection oven?

If you have this setting on your oven, use it every time you cook. This setting activates a small fan built into the back of the oven, circulating the air during cooking. This results in better browning and a more efficient cooking time. If using convection, shave off 10 minutes for every hour of cooking time, making sure to check your food in advance of the recipe's timing. For baking, lower the oven temperature by 25 degrees, because ingredients like butter and sugar brown more quickly than meats and vegetables.





Making Pan Sauces

It's all about the fond. Fond, the browned-on meaty juices that stick to the bottom of your pan after cooking a piece of meat, is the beginning of every good pan sauce. There are two kinds of pan sauces: reduction sauces and thickened sauces (read: gravies). They vary in texture and intensity, and both allow you to harness the flavor left behind on the bottom of the pan and return it to where it rightfully belongs: on your food.

Materials

- A fond-covered pan
- Liquid measuring cup
- Flat-edged utensil, for scraping up fond



Ingredients

- Wine
- Chicken broth
- Fresh herbs
(thyme, rosemary, bay leaf)
- Unsalted butter
(only for reductions)
- Flour
(only for gravies)
- Kosher salt and a pepper mill



Making a Reduction Sauce

This is the quickest and easiest of the pan sauces. Just add some liquid to your fond-filled pan over medium-high heat, scrape the bottom of the pan clean, reduce by half, then remove from heat and swirl in some butter. Voila!



DEGLAZING

With your pan over medium heat, add the sauce liquids to the hot pan. The liquid will begin to work its magic on the fond immediately, loosening and liquefying it, hence the term “deglaizing.” Using a flat-edged utensil, gently clean the fond off the bottom of the pan so it can be incorporated into the sauce.



REDUCING

Allow the liquid to reduce by half, about 4 minutes. Boiling off half the water content concentrates the sauce’s flavor.



FINISHING

Remove your pan from the heat and add unsalted butter to the pan. Allow it to melt slowly, swirling the pan to fully incorporate the butter into the sauce. **Please note:** Adding butter to a simmering sauce will cause it to melt too fast and “break” out of its emulsified state, leaving behind an oily pool instead of the desired buttery creaminess.

Making a Gravy

Gravy is a pan sauce distinguished by the addition of flour, which thickens it to a consistency that is beloved for blanketing everything from pork chops to your Thanksgiving mashed potatoes.



MAKING A ROUX

You will need a fat to flour ratio of 1:1 to make a proper roux. If you have fat left over in the pan from cooking meat, that is the ideal fat to use. If not, you will add more fat to your fond-covered pan (butter or olive oil will do). With your pan over medium heat, sprinkle the flour over the hot fat and stir until all the flour has dissolved, about 1 minute.



DEGLAZING

Add the sauce liquids to the hot pan. The liquid will begin to work its magic on the fond, loosening and liquefying it, hence the term “deglaizing.” Using a flat-bottomed utensil, gently clean the fond off the bottom of the pan so it can be incorporated into the sauce. **Please note:** If you are using wine, add it to the hot pan first and allow to cook down for 1 minute before adding any additional liquid. This cooks off the alcohol and caramelizes the wine’s fruity flavors.



THICKENING

When the gravy comes to a boil, the starch in the flour swells up and thickens the sauce. Once it thickens, continue cooking, stirring frequently, to develop the flavor, about 2 minutes more.

SEASONING

Start tasting! The gravy will likely need some salt (especially if you used unsalted broth). A good gravy should make you smile when you taste it.

STUDENTS ASK



STUDENTS ASK:
What kind of wine should I use for cooking?

The answer is simple: Cook with wine you like to drink; the varietal doesn't matter. That doesn't mean your finest bottle, but it should be palatable and not "cooking wine" from the supermarket, which has added salt and preservatives and is literally undrinkable. Purchasing single-serving wine bottles from a wine shop is a great way to have smaller quantities of wine on hand to avoid having to open up a whole bottle for a single recipe.

STUDENTS ASK:
What can I substitute for wine in a pan sauce?

If you are not inclined to use alcohol, you can substitute 3/4 teaspoon vinegar (red wine, white wine, sherry, apple cider, or rice) or lemon juice for 1/3 cup of wine (do not attempt this substitution if the sauce calls for more than 1/3 cup wine). Taste, adding 1/4 teaspoon more at a time until the sauce tastes bright.



STUDENTS ASK:
How do I choose the best meat?

When possible, you want to buy your meat from a butcher (in-store butchers are fine), so you can ask all the questions you have about its quality. For chicken and pork, the most important descriptors are "pasture-raised," "organic," "antibiotic-free," and "humanely-raised." For beef, "grass-fed" is the golden rule, along with the same keywords listed above. "Organic" labeling means the animal was never fed antibiotics, which is always a good thing.



Flavorful Liquids = Delicious Sauces

Try these liquid combos to make either a reduction sauce or a gravy. For these liquid quantities, a gravy will need 1 tablespoon of flour to start (added to 1 tablespoon of hot fat) and a reduction will need 1 tablespoon of unsalted butter swirled in at the end (off the heat).

For pork chops or tenderloin

- 1/2 cup apple cider
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1 sprig rosemary
- 1 tablespoon red wine or cider vinegar

For chicken or turkey

- 1 cup broth
- 1/3 cup white wine or dry sherry
- 1 sprig rosemary or thyme

For steak (reduction only)

- 1 cup red wine
- 1/3 cup chicken broth
- 1 sprig thyme or bay leaf



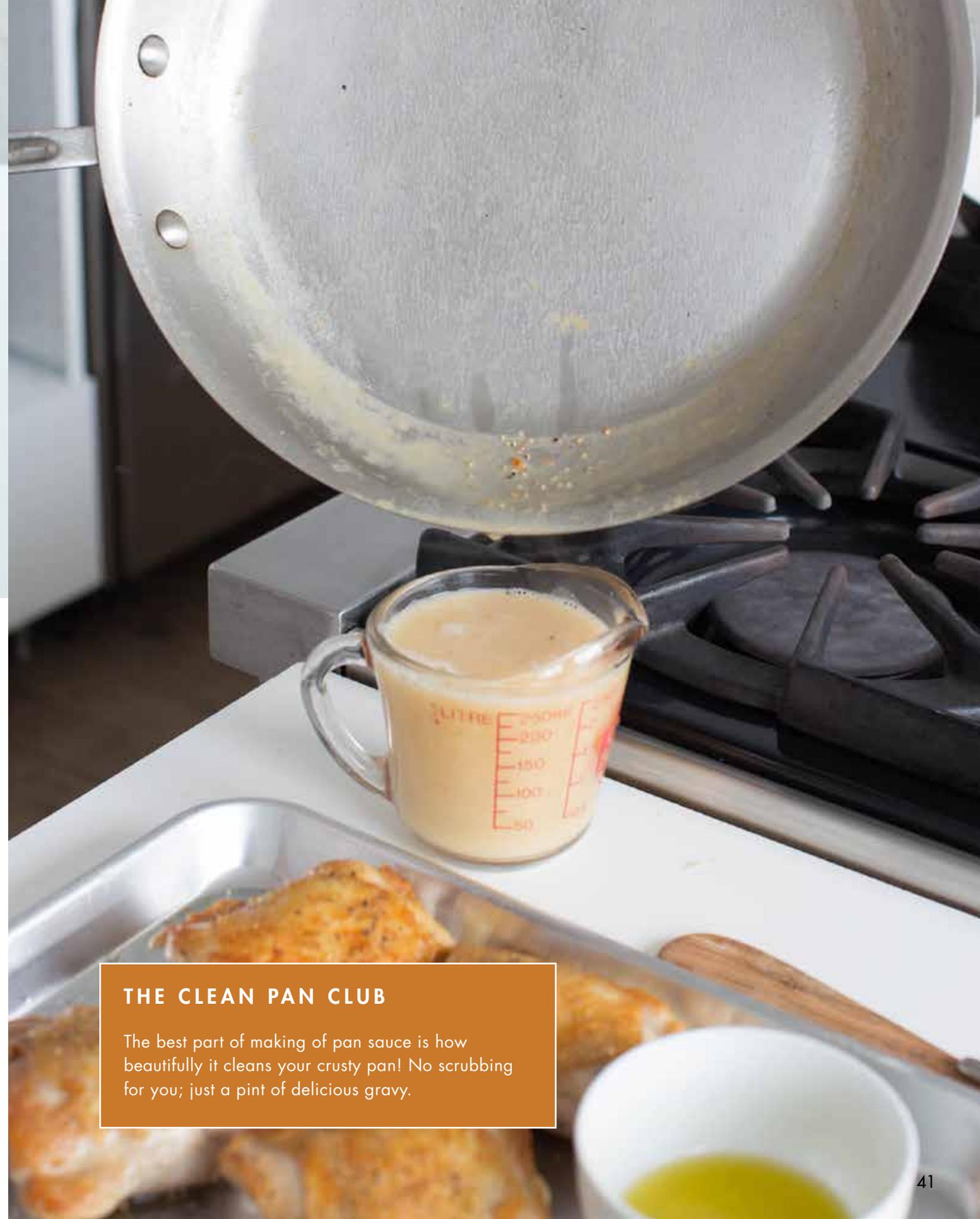
Enjoy the Good Fats

Fat is a vital component of good-tasting food and a balanced, healthy diet. But all fats are not equal, so it is important to choose the “good fats” when stocking your own kitchen. Cooking at home affords you the only chance to choose the quality of fat you consume, since the type of cooking fats used in restaurants, take-out joints, and pre-packaged meals are generally of poor-quality (mass food production errs on the side of economics when sourcing ingredients). So what are the “good fats”? They are unprocessed fats in their natural state, unadulterated by chemistry or refined to be flavorless and devoid of nutrition.

GOOD FATS ARE FULL OF FLAVOR:

- ① BUTTER
- ② EXTRA-VIRGIN OLIVE OIL
- ③ ANY KIND OF RENDERED ANIMAL FAT
(bacon, chicken, duck, but not the hydrogenated lard from the supermarket)
- ④ EXTRA-VIRGIN COCONUT OIL
- ⑤ ALL TOASTED NUT AND SEED OILS
(sesame, walnut, hazelnut, pumpkin seed, flax; all best used uncooked)

If you need a “neutral” (i.e. flavorless) oil for high heat cooking like deep-frying, wok cooking, or for some baked goods, consult the guidelines for buying those on pg TK.



THE CLEAN PAN CLUB

The best part of making of pan sauce is how beautifully it cleans your crusty pan! No scrubbing for you; just a pint of delicious gravy.

Steak with Classic Red Wine Sauce

This is the best way to enjoy a good steak. The acidic red wine reduction is softened by swirl of sweet butter at the end, making it the ultimate complement to steak's rich flavor. If you are cooking steaks thicker than 1-inch, make sure to preheat the oven to 375° before heating the pan. Thick steaks need additional cooking time in an oven after the browning step to ensure that they are properly cooked through. Use a full-bodied, fruity red wine for the best flavor: Cabernet, Merlot, or Pinot Noir.

SERVES 4

1 tablespoon high-heat oil

(see pg TK)

2 pounds hanger, rib-eye, or sirloin
steak (or your favorite cut), 1-inch thick

Kosher salt and a pepper mill

1 cup red wine

1/3 cup chicken broth

1 sprig thyme or 1 bay leaf

1 tablespoon unsalted butter

1. Heat the oil in a large sauté pan over medium-high heat. Season the steaks with salt and pepper on one side only. When the oil is hot enough to ripple, add the steaks, seasoned side down. Season the other side with salt and pepper. Cook until they are deeply browned and register 130° on an instant-read thermometer, about 5 minutes per side for medium-rare (or to your desired temperature; see When Meat is Done, pg TK). Transfer the steaks to a cutting board with a well and let rest for 5 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, make the pan sauce: To the hot pan, add the wine, broth, and thyme, scraping the fond off the bottom of the pan to incorporate it into the sauce. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to medium and simmer until the sauce is reduced by half, about 5 minutes.
3. Remove the pan from the heat and add the butter (**Please note:** If not removed from the heat, the butter will melt too quickly and “break,” turning the sauce oily). Swirl the pan until the butter is completely incorporated. Remove the herbs.
4. Slice the steaks 1/2-inch thick and serve with the red wine sauce poured over the top.

Pan-Roasted Chicken with Sherry-Thyme Gravy

This is a classic roast chicken and gravy recipe, despite the fancified “sherry-thyme” embellishment. But sherry and thyme are key to making a gravy that knocks your socks off. You can even use this same gravy recipe for your next Thanksgiving bird. Best of all, sherry is a fortified wine (meaning brandy is added to it), so it keeps almost forever on the shelf, ensuring that you always have it on hand.

SERVES 4

8 chicken thighs or 4 chicken breasts,
skin on, bone-in

Kosher salt and a pepper mill

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil,
and more as needed

2 tablespoons all-purpose flour

1/3 cup dry sherry or white wine

1 1/2 cups chicken broth

1 sprig thyme

1. Preheat the oven to 375°. Season the chicken with salt and pepper on the skin side only.
2. Heat 1 tablespoon of the oil in a large sauté pan over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot enough to ripple, add the chicken pieces, skin-side-down, and cook until the skin is a deep golden brown, about 8 minutes. Wait until the skin easily pulls away from the bottom of the pan (if it sticks, the chicken is not ready to be turned; continue cooking for another 2 minutes). Turn the chicken over and transfer the pan to the oven.
3. Cook until the chicken registers 160° for breasts and 165° for thighs on an instant-read thermometer, about 15 minutes for thighs, 20 to 25 minutes for thick breasts. Transfer the chicken to a serving plate.
4. Make the gravy: Immediately wrap the handle of the hot pan in a potholder or kitchen towel (to remind you that it's hot) and transfer to the stovetop over medium-high heat.
5. If there is less than 2 tablespoons of chicken fat in the pan, add enough olive oil to make 2 tablespoons of fat. Sprinkle the flour over the sizzling fat and cook, stirring, until the chalky flour disappears (i.e. is absorbed by the oil). Add the sherry to the hot pan and cook for 1 minute, scraping the fond off the bottom of the pan to incorporate it into the gravy. Add the broth and thyme and bring to a boil. Cook for 2 minutes, stirring, until thickened. Season to taste with salt. Pour the sauce over the chicken, and serve immediately.

Pan-Roasted Lemon-Rosemary Chicken

This is our most requested recipe and you are about to see why. The chicken and sauce are juicy and flavorful, and the dish is efficient to boot: While the chicken skin is crisping in the pan, you are squeezing lemons and mincing garlic and rosemary. Please don't be tempted to use bottled lemon juice for this recipe; you really need that citrus zing only found in freshly squeezed lemons.

SERVES 4

8 chicken thighs or 4 chicken breasts,
skin-on, bone-in

Kosher salt and a pepper mill

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

Juice of 2 lemons (about 1/3 cup)

3 cloves garlic, minced

1 tablespoon minced rosemary

1. Preheat the oven to 375°. Season the chicken with salt and pepper on the skin side only.
2. Heat 1 tablespoon of the oil in a large sauté pan over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot enough to ripple, add the chicken pieces skin-side-down and cook until the skin is a deep golden brown, about 8 minutes. Wait until the skin easily pulls away from the bottom of the pan (if it sticks, the chicken is not ready to be turned; continue cooking for another 2 minutes).
3. Meanwhile, Make the lemon sauce: In a small bowl, combine the lemon juice, remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil, the garlic, rosemary, and ½ teaspoon salt. Set aside.
4. Turn the chicken so the crisp skin is face up. Pour the sauce over the chicken and scrape up the browned-on bits (fond) off the bottom of the pan to incorporate into the lemon sauce. Transfer the whole pan to the oven and cook until the chicken registers 160° for breasts and 165° for thighs on an instant-read thermometer, about 15 minutes for thighs and 20 to 25 minutes for breasts.
5. Serve the chicken with the lemony pan sauce spooned over the top.

Chicken Piccata with Capers and Caramelized Lemons

Bright with salty capers, caramelly lemon slices, and good old butter, this piccata sauce is good enough to drink from a spoon and gives pizzazz to chicken breast's mild flavor. The flour that dusts the chicken helps build up the brown crust (fond) on the bottom of the pan, creating a sauce with a real depth of flavor and a velvety texture.

SERVES 4

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

1 1/2 pounds boneless skinless chicken
breasts, sliced in half lengthwise to
make thin slices

Kosher salt and a pepper mill

1/2 cup all-purpose flour, on a plate

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 washed and unpeeled lemon, thinly
sliced and seeded

2 garlic cloves, minced

1/4 cup capers

1/2 cup white wine

3/4 cup chicken broth

2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley

1. In a large sauté pan, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Season the chicken with salt and pepper on both sides, then lightly dredge half of the chicken breasts in the flour, patting it firmly to remove all but the thinnest coating of flour.
2. Add the flour-dusted chicken to the pan and cook until golden brown on both sides and registers 160° on an instant-read thermometer, 4 to 5 minutes per side depending on the thickness of the chicken. Transfer the chicken to a plate and repeat with the remaining chicken and flour.
3. To the hot pan, add 1 tablespoon of the butter. Add the lemon slices and cook until golden brown on each side. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute, stirring. Add the capers and wine and cook for 1 minute, scraping up the browned-on bits (fond) off the bottom of the pan. Add the broth and bring to a boil and cook until the sauce is reduced by half and is well thickened, about 4 minutes.
4. Remove the pan from the heat and add the remaining tablespoon butter. (**Please note:** If not removed from the heat, the butter will melt too quickly and "break," turning the sauce oily). Swirl the pan until the butter is completely incorporated. Return the chicken to the pan to warm through. Serve, garnished with the parsley, if desired.

Pork Tenderloin with Bacon-Apple Cider Pan Gravy

Pork, bacon, apples. These are reason enough to make this recipe. You really can't improve upon this trifecta of goodness.

SERVES 4

4 strips bacon

2 pork tenderloins (about 2 pounds total)

Kosher salt and a pepper mill

1 small onion, sliced thin

1 crisp apple (Gala, Empire, Fuji), cored and sliced thin (skin on)

2 tablespoons all-purpose flour

2/3 cup apple cider (nonalcoholic) or apple juice

1 1/3 cups chicken broth

2 teaspoons apple cider vinegar or red wine vinegar

1 sprig thyme or rosemary

1. Add the bacon to a large sauté pan over medium-high heat. Cook until it renders its fat and crisps, about 8 minutes, turning as needed. Transfer the bacon to a paper towel-lined plate and pour off (and save) all but 2 tablespoons of the fat from the pan.
2. Season the tenderloins with salt and pepper on one side only and add them to the hot pan, seasoned-side down. Season the other side with salt and pepper. Cook until browned on both sides, about 8 minutes total. Transfer the tenderloins to another plate.
3. Make the gravy: Add 2 tablespoon reserved bacon fat to the pan and add the onion, apple and a generous sprinkle of salt, cooking until the apples are lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Sprinkle the flour over the apples and cook, stirring, until the chalky flour disappears (i.e. is absorbed by the oil). Add the cider, broth, vinegar, and thyme. Bring to a boil, scraping the fond off the bottom of the pan to incorporate it into the gravy.
4. Return the tenderloins to the pan along with any accumulated juices. Return to a boil, reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and cook until the pork registers 145° on an instant-read thermometer, 6 to 10 minutes, depending on the thickness of the tenderloin.
5. Transfer the pork to a cutting board with a well and let rest for 5 minutes. Taste the gravy, seasoning it with salt and more vinegar, as needed, to make it taste bright.
6. Slice the tenderloin 1-inch thick and serve with the rich gravy and crumbled reserved bacon on top (and don't fret if your bacon mysteriously disappears before the dish is finished: cook's treat).

Pork Chops with Grape-Rosemary Reduction

Pork plus fruit is a winning combination. Red grapes are a year-round supermarket staple, and this pan sauce is also terrific using any red fruit, especially pitted cherries (fresh or frozen) or sliced plums. Pork is bred to be very lean in this day and age, so make sure to catch these chops at 140° or they will lose too many of their precious juices.

SERVES 4

2 tablespoons bacon fat or extra-virgin olive oil

4 rib or loin pork chops, 1-inch thick (about 2 pounds)

Kosher salt and a pepper mill

1 cup halved seedless red grapes, pitted fresh or frozen cherries, or 1 plum, pitted and sliced thin

1/2 cup chicken broth

1/4 cup port, sherry, or red wine

1 tablespoon red wine or balsamic vinegar

1 sprig rosemary

1. Heat the fat or oil in a large sauté pan over medium-high heat. Season the pork chops with salt and pepper on one side only. When the oil is hot enough to ripple, add the chops, seasoned-side down. Season the other side with salt and pepper. Cook until the pork is well browned and register 140° on an instant-read thermometer, 4 to 5 minutes per side. Transfer the chops to a serving plate and let rest for 5 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, make the pan sauce; To the hot pan still over medium-high heat, add the grapes, broth, port, vinegar, and rosemary, and cook until reduced by half, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat, and discard the rosemary. Season to taste with salt, as needed.
3. Serve the pork chops with the pan sauce poured over the top.

Fresh Green Herb Sauce

This is not a pan sauce! However, we included it in the book simply because we bow down to this fresh and fully-flavored sauce and it needed to be included in our first book. It is an excellent accompaniment to all browned meats (steak, chicken, pork, even lamb), all manner of fish, and as a dip for roasted and blanched vegetables. It's also good with your morning eggs and as a sandwich spread. You can also substitute half of the parsley with cilantro for a more diverse flavor.

MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP

1/3 cup slivered or sliced almonds
(toasted in a dry skillet until golden;
this step is optional)
1 large garlic clove
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
Juice of 1/2 lemon (2 tablespoons)
2 cups packed flat-leaf parsley leaves
2 anchovy fillets
2 tablespoons capers
1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil

In the bowl of a food processor, combine the nuts, garlic, and salt until very finely ground. Add the lemon juice, parsley, anchovies, and capers and purée until roughly chopped. With the machine running, drizzle in the oil until it makes a smooth sauce, scraping down the sides of the processor with a rubber spatula. Serve at room temperature. Can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.

Fluffy Mashed Potatoes

Because every good pan sauce deserves a bed of light and fluffy mashed potatoes, we made sure to include this foolproof recipe. The key is to reserve at least 1 cup of the potato cooking water before draining. Using this liquid in place of traditional milk or cream protects the delicate flavor of the potatoes from being overwhelmed by the heavy taste of hot dairy. Also, always use a potato masher or ricer to mash potatoes, never anything with a blade or a paddle. Cutting or beating cooked potatoes releases excess starch and gives the potatoes a gluey texture.

SERVES 4

2 pounds russet baking potatoes, peeled
and cut into 2-inch pieces
Kosher salt and a pepper mill
4 tablespoons unsalted butter
(do not skimp!)

1. Place the potatoes and 2 teaspoons salt in a large pot and add enough water to cover the potatoes by 1 inch. Place the pot over medium-high heat and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer until the potatoes are very tender when pierced with a fork, 15 to 20 minutes.
2. Using a Pyrex measuring cup, remove and reserve 1 cup of the potato cooking water. Drain the potatoes into a colander set in the sink and immediately return them to the hot empty pot.
3. Add all of the butter and 1/3 cup of the potato water to start. Use a masher to mash until the potatoes are smooth and the butter is well incorporated. Add more cooking water as needed to make creamy potatoes. Taste, adding salt and pepper to taste, starting with at least 1/2 teaspoon of salt and 5 good grinds of black pepper. Mashed potatoes need aggressive seasoning to be their best. Serve warm.



Roasting Vegetables

This is – hands-down – the easiest and most rewarding way to cook vegetables. Five minutes of prep time and the rest is 100% unattended cooking, freeing you up to prepare the rest of your meal. Let the oven work its magic, creating tender vegetables tinged with a natural caramelized sweetness.

Materials

- Rimmed baking sheet
- Large mixing bowl
- Mixing spoon
- Thin spatula



GOOD VEGETABLES TO ROAST

- butternut squash*
- potatoes*
- sweet potatoes*
- carrots*
- eggplant*
- zucchini*
- mushrooms*
- peppers*
- Brussels sprouts*
- fennel*
- onion*
- cauliflower*
- cherry tomatoes*

Ingredients

- Just about any vegetable
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt and a pepper mill



Vegetable Size

- Bite-sized**
You shouldn't need a knife to eat them.
- Uniformity**
When it comes to cooking, it's a golden rule. Everything will be evenly tender and browned.



Vegetable Combinations

Many “like” vegetables can be roasted together on the same baking sheet since they cook at the same rate.

“Unlike” vegetables can be cooked at the same time, just on separate baking sheets, since their cooking time will vary.

ROOT VEGETABLES

carrots
potatoes
sweet potatoes
butternut squash*
parsnips
onions
beets

CRUNCHY VEGETABLES

peppers
fennel
asparagus
broccoli
cabbage
Brussels sprouts
cauliflower

SOFT VEGETABLES

eggplant
zucchini
mushrooms
cherry tomatoes

**Not technically a root vegetable, but has a similar texture.*

Seasoning

Add olive oil, salt, pepper and optional seasonings to vegetables in a large mixing bowl then toss well to coat. Transfer to a baking sheet.



Arranging

Take care to arrange vegetables, cut side down (if they have a cut side), in a single layer on your baking sheet, so they all have a chance to brown against the hot metal of the sheet.





Flavor Combinations

SAVORY

EGGPLANT
ZUCCHINI
FENNEL
PEPPERS
TOMATOES
MUSHROOMS
ONION

with

Coriander
Cumin
Sumac
Za'atar
Oregano
Rosemary
Parsley
Thyme

SWEET

SWEET POTATOES
CARROTS
WINTER SQUASH

with

Smoked paprika
Cumin
Curry powder
Garam masala
(Indian spice blend)
Rosemary
Sage

MILD

CAULIFLOWER
POTATOES

with

Everything

(Really, they play well with any of the spices and herbs listed here.)

Sumac (deep red spice with a lemony tang), *za'atar* (Middle Eastern spice mix of dried thyme, sumac, and sesame seeds), and *smoked paprika* (richly fragrant spice that adds a deep smokiness and charred warmth to food).

Roasting

In a 375° oven, roast until golden brown on the underside; starting checking after 30 minutes. Each type of vegetable will vary, but 30 minutes is a great benchmark.

Resting

Let the vegetables rest for 5 minutes on the baking sheet before trying to remove them with the spatula. For starchier vegetables (potatoes!), this quick resting period allows them to naturally steam themselves off the hot sheet so you don't leave any golden crust behind.

Removing

A thin, hard spatula (metal or plastic) is your best friend here to remove the vegetables from the baking sheet in one piece.



STUDENTS ASK



STUDENTS ASK:
What is “extra-virgin” olive oil?

This is the gold standard for olive oil. “Extra-virgin” means the oil was extracted from the first pressing of the olives (subsequent pressings create less flavorful, less nutrient-dense oil) and the oil is cold-pressed (without heat or chemicals). This oil has the maximum amount of flavor, antioxidants, and vitamins still intact; heat destroys many of these qualities. There is no reason to use anything but extra-virgin when choosing a cooking oil (for exceptions, see pg xx); anything less is just a processed vegetable oil.

STUDENTS ASK:
Should I line my pan with foil?

No. If you let your roasted vegetables rest before removing them from the pan (at least 5 minutes), they will easily slide off, leaving no hardened crust behind. Cherry tomatoes are the one exception; during roasting, their juicy insides leak out and form a sticky crust. All other vegetables brown better in direct contact with the hot metal of the pan. If you must line your pan, we prefer parchment paper over foil (no metallic taste or waste!).



STUDENTS ASK:
How long do spices last?

Ground spices generally lose their flavor after a year or two. To determine if your spices are up to snuff, give them a sniff. If they have a strong aroma, they are fine. If they smell like dust, then dump them in the trashcan. Three factors diminish a spice’s potency: time, light, and heat. You can’t stop time, but you can store your spices away from light and heat in an overhead cabinet, far from the stove, to prolong their culinary usefulness.



Rosemary-Roasted Potatoes, Butternut Squash, and Red Onion

For the best roasted potatoes, choose the smallest potatoes you can find; the more times you have to cut a potato, the more places it loses moisture while roasting. An ideal potato should only need to be cut in half once to be bite-sized. This way the cut side can brown against the hot metal of the baking sheet and the flesh can steam to creaminess inside its protective skin.

SERVES 4

1 pound small potatoes (fingerling, red, new, or purple), cut in half lengthwise
1 large red onion, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch thick wedges (with some of the root attached at the base to hold the layers together)
1 small butternut squash (1 pound), peeled, seeded, and cut into 1-inch cubes
4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon minced rosemary, thyme, or sage (optional)
Kosher salt and a pepper mill

1. Preheat the oven to 375°. In a large mixing bowl, combine the potatoes, onion wedges, butternut squash, oil, the herbs (if using), 1 teaspoon salt and a few grindings of pepper; toss until the vegetables are evenly coated. Transfer to a baking sheet and arrange all the vegetables so their cut side is face down against the pan.
2. Roast until the vegetables are tender and the underside is golden brown, about 40 minutes. Let the vegetables rest for 5 minutes on the baking sheet before removing with a thin spatula. This gives the vegetables a chance to steam themselves off the pan's surface, so you don't leave any of their sweet crust behind.
3. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Curry-Roasted Delicata Squash

Delicata are a very special winter squash (see photo, pg xx). These oblong beauties appear in the markets in the fall and feel all the more special because they only show up seasonally (whereas you can find acorn and butternut squash year-round). They have a bright orange flesh and green and orange striped skin; the sweetest ones have more orange than green striping. Best of all, their skin is edible, so no peeling required! The roasted skin offers a perfect counterpoint to the buttery soft flesh. Smoked paprika is another great spice pairing with delicata; just substitute for the curry in this recipe when you want a smoky treat.

SERVES 4

2 large delicata squash, cut in half lengthwise and seeded
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
Kosher salt and a pepper mill
2 teaspoons curry powder

1. Preheat the oven to 375°. Cut the squash into 1/2-inch half moons.
2. In a large mixing bowl, toss the squash with oil, 1 teaspoon salt, a few grindings of pepper, and the curry powder. Transfer to a baking sheet and spread out in a single layer for even browning.
3. Roast until the vegetables are tender and the underside is golden brown, about 30 minutes. Let the squash rest for 5 minutes on the baking sheet before removing with a thin spatula. This gives them a chance to steam themselves off the pan's surface, so you don't leave any of their sweet crust behind.
4. Serve warm or at room temperature. They are also delicious eaten cold straight from the fridge, as a snack.

Smoky Sweet Potato Fries

Smoked paprika and sweet potatoes are a dream duo, and these smoky, sweet, and salty oven-roasted fries are quite addictive. Preheating the baking sheet for this recipe ensures fries with a deep golden crust.

SERVES 4

4 sweet potatoes (about 2 pounds), scrubbed
4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon smoked paprika
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt, plus more for serving

1. Preheat the oven to 400°. Place a baking sheet in the oven while it is preheating.
2. Slice the potatoes lengthwise (with or without the skin) into 1/2-inch slices, and cut again into 1/2-inch julienne (French fry shape). Place the potatoes in a bowl and toss with the olive oil, paprika, and salt.
3. Using a potholder, remove the hot baking sheet from the oven and arrange the potatoes (carefully) in a single layer. Roast until the potatoes are golden brown on the bottom and tender, about 40 minutes. Let the potatoes rest for 5 minutes on the baking sheet before removing with a thin spatula. This gives them a chance to steam themselves off the pan's surface, so you don't leave any of their sweet crust behind.
4. Sprinkle with additional salt as needed. Serve hot.

Roasted Ratatouille with Olives and Basil

Ratatouille is deeply satisfying Southern French dish made by individually cooking 5 different vegetables to perfection. While this creates unbeatable flavor, it also poses a lengthy task for the home cook. This recipe simplifies the steps needed to make a flavorful ratatouille without sacrificing flavor. The eggplant and zucchini roast and caramelize in the oven while you cook the juicier vegetables together to make a rich base. The addition of briny olives and fresh basil at the end further brighten the flavors of this traditional dish.

SERVES 6

1 large eggplant, cut into 1-inch cubes
2 large zucchini (about 1 pound), cut into 1-inch half moons
6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
Kosher salt and a pepper mill
1 medium onion, diced
2 orange or yellow bell peppers, cut in 1-inch squares
1/2 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves or minced rosemary
4 garlic cloves, minced
1 28-ounce can diced tomatoes
1/3 cup Kalamata olives, pitted and cut in quarters
20 fresh basil leaves, sliced in a chiffonade (see pg xx)

1. Preheat the oven to 375°. In a large bowl, toss the eggplant with 2 tablespoons of olive oil, 1/2 teaspoon salt and a few grindings of pepper; toss until the vegetables are evenly coated. Transfer to a baking sheet and arrange all the vegetables so their cut side is face down against the pan. In the same bowl, repeat with the zucchini, 2 more tablespoons of oil, 1/2 teaspoon of salt and some pepper, tossing and transferring to a second baking sheet.
2. Roast until the vegetables are tender and the underside is golden brown, about 40 minutes (the eggplant and zucchini may differ in cooking time, and that is fine; remove when each is cooked to perfection). Let the vegetables rest for 5 minutes on the baking sheet before removing with a thin spatula. This gives the vegetables a chance to steam themselves off the pan's surface, so you don't leave any of their sweet crust behind.
3. Meanwhile, in a large sauté pan, heat the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil over medium heat. Add the onion, peppers, and thyme and cook until the onions are translucent and the pepper softened, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and cook 2 minutes more. Add the tomatoes and olives, and cook, partially covered, until the tomatoes break down and the mixture is thickened slightly, about 10 minutes.
4. Stir in the roasted eggplant and zucchini and season to taste with more salt and pepper. Stir the basil in at the last minute, so it just wilts. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Roasted Cauliflower with Tomatoes and Capers

Roasted cauliflower is really a marvel. Creamy and caramelized all at once, it is by far the best way to prepare it. Cauliflower has a natural affinity for pairing with almost everything, and this recipe takes it to the limit, combining it with hot, sour, salty, and sweet elements all at once.

SERVES 4

1 head cauliflower, cut into 3-inch florets *(the stalk is very edible, so use as much as you can)*
6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
Kosher salt and a pepper mill
3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
2 anchovy fillets
¼ teaspoon crushed red-pepper flakes
2 large tomatoes, roughly chopped
2 tablespoons capers
2 tablespoons currants or minced raisins
Pinch of saffron (optional)

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F. In a large mixing bowl, combine the cauliflower florets with 3 tablespoons of the oil, 1 teaspoon salt and a few grindings of pepper; toss until evenly coated. Transfer to a baking sheet and arrange all the vegetables so their cut side is face down against the pan.
2. Roast until the florets are tender and the underside is golden brown, about 30 minutes. Let the vegetables rest for 5 minutes on the baking sheet before removing with a thin spatula. This gives the vegetables a chance to steam themselves off the pan's surface, so you don't leave any of their sweet crust behind.
3. Meanwhile, in a large sauté pan, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the garlic, anchovies, and pepper flakes and cook until the anchovies melt, about 2 minutes. Add the tomatoes, capers, currants, and saffron (if using), and cook until the tomatoes are saucy, about 5 minutes. Add the roasted cauliflower and cook until heated through. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Chile-Roasted Broccoli with Garlic

Roasting broccoli in a very hot oven really gives it a boost of flavor. The florets have time to develop a bit of crispy char, elevating a traditionally blanched vegetable to new heights.

SERVES 6

1 head broccoli, cut into 4-inch florets *(the stalk is very edible, so use as much as you can)*
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
¼ teaspoon crushed red-pepper flakes
3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
Kosher salt

1. Preheat the oven to 450°. In a large bowl, combine the broccoli, oil, pepper flakes, garlic, ¼ cup water and ½ teaspoon salt and toss to coat. Transfer to a baking sheet and arrange the broccoli in a single layer.
2. Roast until the broccoli is tender and lightly charred, about 10 minutes. Serve warm or at room temperature.



Blanching Green Vegetables

Blanching is a cooking method that creates vivid and crisp-tender green vegetables by submerging them in well-salted boiling water. It is a beloved chef's technique and one that also has a lot of value for the home cook. Blanching cooks vegetables evenly and efficiently, either to enjoy right away or have on hand for future meals.

Materials

Wide, deep pot with a lid
Tongs
Colander or long-handled wire strainer
(called a "spider")



Ingredients

Green vegetables
(broccoli, broccoli rabe, string beans,
asparagus, snap peas, snow peas,
Brussels sprouts)
Kosher salt





Preparing

FIRST, REMOVE THE TOUGH PARTS:

- 1 **ASPARAGUS:** Snap the whitish/purple base off the bottom of the stalks (1 to 3 inches, depending on the thickness of the asparagus; the thicker the asparagus, the more you will need to remove); it will naturally snap off where the vegetable is tender enough to eat.
- 2 **SNAP PEAS/SNOW PEAS:** Pinch off the top stem and pull away the string that runs along the straight side of the vegetable. Note: not all of them have strings, so count yourself lucky if you don't find any.
- 3 **BROCCOLI RABE:** Cut off the bottom 3 inches of the stalk; it's too stringy to enjoy.
- 4 **BROCCOLI AND CAULIFLOWER:** Cut into small florets, keeping at least 3 inches of stalk attached (it is very edible)
- 5 **STRING BEANS:** Pinch off the top stem end; leave the "tails" intact.
- 6 **BRUSSELS SPROUTS:** Trim off the browned base and any outer leaves that come away with it; cut in half lengthwise.

CHEFS SAY



CHEFS SAY:

Don't skimp on the salt!

The water used to blanch vegetables (and cook pasta) needs to taste salty, like the sea. You will need 1 tablespoon of kosher salt for every 6 cups water in order to make a properly salted pot of blanching water. The small amount of salted water that vegetables absorb during blanching helps bring out their sweetest flavor; using unsalted water will only dilute their flavor. Most of that cooking water goes down the drain, so don't be concerned about "all that salt."

CHEFS SAY:

Salt + fat + acid = the flavor trifecta.

When seasoning the simplest of foods (like blanched asparagus and string beans or lettuce leaves), you need to remember 3 important ingredients: salt, fat, and acid. These are the building blocks of flavor and together, they make everything taste its best. Consider these combos when looking to season your vegetables: salt, butter, and lemon (we use this combo about 98% of the time); salt, extra-virgin olive oil, and red-wine vinegar; soy sauce, toasted sesame oil, and rice vinegar.



CHEFS SAY:

Make better broccoli rabe.

The secret to flavorful broccoli rabe is squeezing it dry after blanching. A lot of water gets trapped in the porous stalk and the leaves. After blanching, run the rabe under cold water until cool enough to handle. Take small handfuls of the rabe and firmly squeeze it over the sink. The less water, the more flavor. Cut the squeezed rabe in 2-inch pieces and season as you like (try our Garlicky Broccoli Rabe recipe, pg xx).



Blanching

1. Bring a large, covered pot of water to a boil.
2. Sufficiently salt the water: 1 tablespoon kosher salt for every 6 cups water (the water must be salty).
3. Using tongs, add the vegetables to the boiling water and submerge below the water line.
4. **Do not re-cover the pot.** Acids released during cooking can mar the bright green color if they fall back into the pot.
5. Cook for 3 minutes* (the water may not return to a boil, and that is fine), then start testing for crisp-tenderness, which is the ideal texture for blanched green vegetables. They should not taste raw or overcooked to limpness. Older, tougher vegetables may need up to 4 minutes.



Draining

TWO OPTIONS:

1. Drain the pot into a colander set in the sink, or
2. Remove the vegetables using a pair of tongs or a wire strainer (spider) to a bowl.

Shocking

“Shocking” is restaurant-speak for rapidly cooling food. Since you are not cooking massive amounts of vegetables like restaurants do, your cooling down method need not involve the ice bath that lends this technique its dramatic name. You can simply run the vegetables under cold water until they are cool to the touch.

If you are eating the vegetables right away, you can skip this step. However, keep in mind that vegetables left to sit in a hot heap in your colander or a bowl will continue cooking and may compromise their vibrant green color and crisp-tender texture if left for more than 5 minutes.



* TWO-MINUTE VEGETABLES

Some vegetables need less than 3 minutes of cooking to be perfectly crisp-tender: slim haricots verts, snap peas, snow peas, pencil-thin asparagus, and broccoli rabe (if you like the bitter bite) should all be tested for doneness at the 2 minute mark.

STUDENTS ASK

STUDENTS ASK:

Do I need to shock my vegetables if I am eating them right away?

No, but it can't hurt. If you are truly ready to sit down to your meal, then tossing the vegetables with salt-fat-acid and serving them straight away is perfectly fine. Don't leave them sitting in a hot heap for longer than five minutes or they will indeed move beyond their ideal texture.



STUDENTS ASK:

Do vegetables lose vitamins when you blanch them?

Yes, there is always a minimal loss of vitamins when you subject vegetables to any cooking process, so it is important to seek vitamins from raw fruits and vegetables too. But keep in mind that the fibrous roughage (i.e. dietary fiber) and minerals (calcium and iron) in cooked greens are still very good reasons to eat a lot of them. They fill you up and support good digestion like nothing other than a plant can.



STUDENTS ASK:

Is blanching vegetables better than steaming?

Yes, we think so. Steaming takes longer and does not produce as evenly cooked vegetables as plunging them into boiling water. We recognize that people love to steam vegetables (it sounds so gentle and lovely, after all), so feel free to use your steamer basket. The vegetables will take a bit longer to cook but you can prep, shock, and season them the same way as blanched vegetables.



Snappy Peas with Orange-Sesame Butter

This orange-sesame butter is addictive and a great seasoning for most green vegetables, particularly snap peas, blanched asparagus, broccoli, string beans, and snow peas.

SERVES 4

- 1 pound snap peas, strings removed (see "Preparing" pg TK)
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 3 tablespoons sesame seeds
Grated zest of ½ orange
- 1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil
- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice or rice vinegar

1. Bring a large pot of salty water (1 tablespoon of salt per 6 cups water) to a boil over high heat. Add the snap peas to the boiling water and submerge below the water line. Cook until bright green and crisp tender, testing for doneness after 2 minutes. Remove with a wire strainer or drain into a colander set in the sink. Run under cold water until they are cool to the touch.
2. In a large sauté pan, heat the butter over medium heat. Add the sesame seeds and orange zest and cook until the seeds just start to turn golden, about 2 minutes. Add the snap peas and sesame oil and cook until warmed through. Remove from heat and add the lemon juice or vinegar, and season with a generous pinch of salt. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Garlicky Broccoli Rabe

This is how you make delicious broccoli rabe. One trick is to squeeze as much water out of the blanched rabe as possible to concentrate its flavor. The other is to season it with enough garlic, hot pepper flakes, and salty Parmesan cheese. To make this a meal, add a can of drained (but not rinsed) chickpeas when you add the chopped rabe to the pan in Step 3. Serve over cooked pasta or polenta.

SERVES 4

Kosher salt

1 bunch broccoli rabe, bottom 3 inches of stalk discarded

4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

3 garlic cloves, minced

1/4 teaspoon crushed red-pepper flakes

2 tablespoons chicken broth or water

Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, for serving

1. Bring a large pot of salty water (1 tablespoon of salt per 6 cups water) to a boil over high heat. Using tongs, add the broccoli rabe to the boiling water and submerge below the water line. Cook until bright green and crisp tender, testing for doneness after 2 minutes. Remove with tongs or drain into a colander set in the sink. Run under cold water until they are cool to the touch, to stop them from cooking and set their vivid color.
2. Take 3 blanched stalks and firmly squeeze them over the sink to remove as much water from the stalks and leaves as you can. Repeat with the rest of the rabe. Cut the stalks into 2-inch pieces, and set aside.
3. In a large sauté pan set over medium heat, combine the oil, garlic, and pepper flakes. When the garlic becomes fragrant, about 2 minutes, add the chopped broccoli rabe and broth and cook until the rabe is warmed through. Season with salt and a generous grating of Parmigiano cheese. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Asparagus with Orange-Smoked Paprika Vinaigrette

Smoked paprika and orange zest add new dimension to a traditional vinaigrette. These flavors would also be welcome on blanched string beans, snap peas, and broccoli.

SERVES 4

Kosher salt and a pepper mill

1 bunch asparagus, tough ends removed (see "Preparing" page TK)

1 small shallot, diced small

Juice and zest of 1/2 navel or blood orange

1 teaspoon smoked paprika

1 tablespoon sherry or red wine vinegar

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, or more to taste

1 large navel, blood, or Cara Cara, orange, peeled and cut into thin rounds

1. Bring a large pot of salty water (1 tablespoon of salt per 6 cups water) to a boil over high heat. Using tongs, add the asparagus to the boiling water and submerge below the water line. Cook until bright green and crisp tender, testing for doneness after 3 minutes. Remove with tongs or drain into a colander set in the sink. Run under cold water until they are cool to the touch, to stop them from cooking and set their vivid color. Arrange on a serving platter.
2. Meanwhile, in a small glass jar with a lid, combine the shallot, orange juice and zest, paprika, vinegar, and a good pinch of salt. Let stand for 15 minutes to allow the flavors to develop.
3. Add the olive oil into the vinegar mixture and shake vigorously until completely blended. Season with a few grindings of pepper and a bit more salt, if necessary (dip a blanched asparagus spear in the dressing to taste it; a better judge than your finger). Pour the vinaigrette over the asparagus and garnish with the orange rounds for garnish. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Broccoli Amandine (with Toasted Almonds)

This recipe is based on the classic French “amandine” preparation, which seasons vegetables with toasted almonds, butter, and lemon juice. This flavor trio is also a winner with blanched string beans, asparagus, and Brussels sprouts.

SERVES 4

Kosher salt

1 bunch broccoli, cut into 4-inch florets
(the stalk is very edible, so use as much as you can)

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

1/4 cup slivered or sliced almonds

1 small shallot, sliced thin

Juice of 1/2 lemon

1. Bring a large pot of salty water (1 tablespoon of salt per 6 cups water) to a boil over high heat. Using tongs, add the broccoli to the boiling water and submerge below the water line. Cook until bright green and crisp tender, testing for doneness after 3 minutes. Remove with tongs or drain into a colander set in the sink. Run under cold water until they are cool to the touch.
2. In a large sauté pan, heat the butter and oil over medium heat. When the butter is melted and bubbling, add the almonds and shallots and cook, stirring frequently, until the nuts start to turn golden, about 3 minutes. Add the broccoli and cook, tossing, until warmed through. Remove from heat and add the lemon juice and season with a generous pinch of salt. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Brussels Sprouts with Bacon, Red Onion, and Toasted Pecans

Brussels sprouts needs a rich fat to soften their bitter flavor. Bacon is a natural choice, but butter can also be substituted. Sweet red onions and nutty pecans are added to further tame the sprouts.

SERVES 4

Kosher salt and a pepper mill

1 pound Brussels sprouts, root end
trimmed and cut in half lengthwise

3 slices thick-cut bacon, cut in
1/4-inch thick pieces

1 small red onion, diced

1/3 cup chopped pecans

2 teaspoons Dijon mustard

1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
or apple cider vinegar

1. Bring a large pot of salty water (1 tablespoon of salt per 6 cups water) to a boil over high heat. Using tongs, add the sprouts to the boiling water and submerge below the water line. Cook until bright green and crisp tender, testing for doneness after 3 minutes. Remove with tongs or drain into a colander set in the sink. Run under cold water until they are cool to the touch.
2. In a large sauté pan over medium heat, cook the bacon until it is crisp and has rendered its fat, about 8 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the bacon to a paper towel to drain. When cool, crumble the bacon and set aside.
3. To the hot fat in the pan, add the onion and cook until golden, about 6 minutes. Add the Brussels sprouts and pecans and cook, stirring often, until the sprouts are golden brown in spots and heated through, about 5 minutes. Stir in the mustard and vinegar and season with a generous pinch of salt and a few grindings of pepper. Sprinkle with the bacon and serve warm.

String Beans with Lemon Gremolata

Gremolata is a bright, herbal sprinkle made from fresh parsley, garlic, and citrus zest. Traditionally used to top rich, long-cooked meats to cut their richness, it is also a terrific way to perk up any blanched or roasted vegetables. You can substitute some of the parsley for minced dill or cilantro to vary the flavor. Gremolata is best used on vegetables served warm or at room temperature.

SERVES 4

Kosher salt

4 tablespoons minced flat-leaf parsley

1 large clove garlic, minced fine

Grated zest and juice of 1 lemon

1 pound string beans, tops removed,
tails intact

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

1. Bring a large pot of salty water (1 tablespoon of salt per 6 cups water) to a boil over high heat. Meanwhile, in a small bowl, combine the parsley, garlic, and zest, and set aside.
2. Using tongs, add the string beans to the boiling water and submerge below the water line. Cook until bright green and crisp tender, testing for doneness after 3 minutes. Remove with tongs or drain into a colander set in the sink. Run under cold water until they are cool to the touch, to stop them from cooking and set their vivid color. Arrange on a serving platter.
3. Drizzle the string beans with the olive oil and 2 tablespoons lemon juice. Sprinkle over the gremolata mixture and finish with a dusting of salt. Serve at room temperature.





Cooking Leafy Greens

Leafy greens are your ticket to a long, healthy life. It is vital to know how to prepare them well, so you can eat a lot of them. The goal of this chapter is to turn you into the kind of cook that gazes in anticipation at the piles of bunched greens at the market. Listen to your mother: “Eat your greens.”

Materials

- 12-inch stainless steel sauté pan with lid
- Wooden spoon
- Large mixing bowl
(for washing leaves)



Ingredients

- Leafy greens
(spinach, arugula, Swiss chard, mustard greens, escarole, bok choy, kale, collard greens)
- Kosher salt





Removing the Stalks

For leafy greens with a tough inner stalk (lacinato kale, collard greens, mustard greens, and Swiss chard, pictured above, left to right), you will need to remove it before shredding the leaves. In most cases, you will discard it and use only the leaves. Remove with either the tip of a knife, cutting along the stalk to where the stalk narrows to about ½-inch thick, or strip it out with your hands. To do this, loosen a bit of the leaf from both sides of the stalk where the leaf ends. Grab hold of the stalk with one hand and gently pull the frayed leaves upwards with the other, stripping it away from the stalk.

CHEFS SAY



CHEFS SAY:
Save your chard stalks!

We like to thinly slice the brightly-colored stalks of Swiss chard and cook them with the leaves for texture. Since they take longer to soften than the leaves, add the sliced stalks to the hot oiled pan for 3 minutes on their own before adding garlic or greens to pan, so they can catch up on tenderness.

CHEFS SAY:
Boldy season your greens.

In addition to using the salt-fat-acid trinity to season, try these other flavorful combinations:

To the hot oil, add one or more and cook for 1 minute before adding greens: crushed red-pepper flakes, anchovy fillets ((they will dissolve when cooked), finely minced ginger, minced garlic, or chopped nuts or seeds (sliced almonds, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds) until they turn lightly golden.

When adding the greens, include one or more: chopped raisins or dried currants, sliced olives, capers, or sliced cherry tomatoes. Always season with salt before serving to bring the most flavor out of the greens and add-ins.



CHEFS SAY:
Think greens for dinner.

Most menu planning centers a meal around a piece of meat. Consider turning that on its head and making “leafy greens” your meal’s focal point. All the recipes in this chapter can be made into a full meal by adding a protein (chicken, shrimp, chickpeas, cannellini beans) to the greens during cooking, and serving alongside a cooked grain (rice, polenta, farro, quinoa, pasta, or even a hunk of crusty bread).

Washing the Leaves

Leafy greens can be gritty and dirty, especially if they are from the farmers market. Even those bunches from the supermarket need a good clean. Don't be tempted to simply wash the leaves under running water; it rarely does a good job of removing hidden dirt.

TO PROPERLY WASH LEAFY GREENS:

1. Fill your largest bowl with water and submerged the leaves, giving them a good swish around so the water gets into all the nooks and crannies (especially important for ridged leaves like kale, chard, and curly spinach, which hide dirt well).
2. Lift the leaves out of the bowl and transfer to a colander. If there is any grit leftover in the bottom of the bowl, repeat until the water is clear.



Shredding the Leaves

Larger leaves, like Swiss chard, kale and collards, must be cut down to size to make them manageable to cook and eat. Greens shrink considerably when cooked, so they need only be cut into thick strips before cooking. Smaller and more tender leaves, like spinach and arugula, can be cooked whole.



1. Lay whole, de-stalked leaves on top of each other



2. Roll crosswise into a tight cylinder.



3. Slice crosswise into 1-inch strips.



LEAFY GREEN TENDERNESS SCALE
The tenderness/toughness of a leaf will determine its approximate cooking time. Here is what to expect (cooking times are for 1 bunch; larger quantities will increase cooking time by a few minutes):

- Spinach, arugula - **2 minutes**
- Escarole, bok choy - **4 minutes**
- Mustard greens - **5 minutes**
- Swiss chard - **5 minutes**
- Kale - **6 minutes**
- Collards - **12 minutes, or more**

Cooking the Leaves



1. Heat enough fat (butter or extra-virgin olive oil) to coat the bottom of your pan, at least 2 tablespoons. Add the minced garlic (and pepper flakes, if desired) and cook for 1 minute, allowing garlic's sharp and flavorful oils to transfer to the fat, where it can properly coat and season every crevice of your greens. Do not let it brown, which will mar its pungent flavor.



2. Add the greens and cook, stirring constantly, until wilted and tender. This can take 2 to 12 minutes, depending on the tenderness of your greens. If cooking a large amount of greens, cover with a lid for the first 2 minutes of cooking to help them wilt down more quickly. Remove lid and continue cooking, uncovered, until tender.



3. Tough leafy greens, like kale and collards, benefit from a longer cooking time to properly soften. To hasten their cooking, add a splash of liquid (broth or water; about ¼ cup to start) to the greens while cooking to help steam them and prevent them from drying out during the prolonged cooking time.



4. Just before serving, season your greens with salt and an acid (1 tablespoon lemon juice or 1 teaspoon of red wine or cider vinegar to start), to brighten their flavor. Then taste, taste, taste until the greens are full of flavor (salt) and bright (acid).



Tuscan Kale with Almonds and Raisins

Raisins or currants (small dried raisins) are a terrific addition to any cooked leafy greens. Their burst of sweetness is exactly what earthy greens need. We recommend lacinato kale (see photo, pg 80), the most tender of the kale varieties, which also goes by a few other names: cavolo nero, Tuscan, and dinosaur. It has a green-black color and a bumpy surface. Adding creamy cannellini beans will turn this pan of greens into a meal. This recipe is also delicious with Swiss chard.

SERVES 4

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
3 tablespoons sliced or slivered almonds
2 garlic cloves, minced
2 anchovy fillets in oil (optional but delicious) or 1 tablespoon capers
1 large bunch kale, tough center stalks removed (see "Removing the Stalks," page TK) washed and cut in 1-inch chiffonade (see page TK)
2 tablespoons currants or minced raisins
Kosher salt and a pepper mill
Juice of 1/2 lemon

In a large sauté pan, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the almonds and cook until they just start to color, about 3 minutes. Add the garlic and anchovies and cook until fragrant and the anchovies have melted, about 2 minutes more. Add the kale and currants and cook, tossing with tongs, until the leaves are wilted, about 6 minutes. Season with a generous pinch of salt and a few grindings of pepper. Finish with the lemon juice and serve warm.

Swiss Chard Puttanesca

Puttanesca is an extra-flavorful, tomato-based pasta sauce, packed with salty, briny, and pungent ingredients. These same flavors also work wonders with a hearty bunch of chard. To turn this recipe into a full meal, stir in 1 can drained (but not rinsed) chickpeas towards the end of cooking and serve over your favorite pasta shape.

SERVES 4

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 small onion, diced
3 garlic cloves, minced
2 whole anchovy fillets
1/4 teaspoon crushed red-pepper flakes
2 medium tomatoes, diced or 1 cup halved cherry tomatoes
1 large bunch chard, tough center stalks removed and reserved, (see "Removing the Stalks," page TK), washed and cut in 1-inch chiffonade (see page TK)
2 tablespoons capers
1/4 cup chopped Kalamata olives
Kosher salt

1. Thinly slice the chard stalks and set aside.
2. In a large sauté pan, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the onion and sliced stalks and cook until softened, about 3 minutes. Add the garlic, anchovies, and pepper flakes and cook until the anchovies dissolve, about 1 minute. Add the tomatoes and cook until they become very juicy, about 3 minutes. Add the chard, capers, olives, and cook until the leaves have wilted and are tender, stirring constantly, about 4 minutes. Season to taste with salt, if needed (the capers, olives, and anchovies are quite salty), and serve warm or at room temperature.

Gingery Bok Choy with Tomato and Sesame

This is a deeply satisfying, somewhat soupy, pot of Asian greens. Bok choy has a pleasant mustard bite to it, and pairs well with tomatoes, sesame, and ginger. Adding uncooked shrimp to the pan when you add the tomatoes and bok choy will afford you a delicious full meal when served over rice or Asian noodles.

SERVES 4

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil or a neutral oil (see pg TK)
1 tablespoon finely minced ginger
3 garlic cloves, minced
3 plum tomatoes, cut in thin slices or 1 cup cherry tomatoes, cut in half
1 pound baby bok choy, washed and cut in 2-inch pieces
2 tablespoons soy sauce
2 tablespoons chicken broth
2 tablespoons toasted sesame oil
1 tablespoon rice vinegar or white wine vinegar
Kosher salt
Sriracha hot sauce, for serving (optional)

In a large saute pan, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the ginger and garlic and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add the tomatoes and bok choy and cook until the vegetables start to wilt, stirring constantly, about 4 minutes. Add the soy sauce, broth, sesame oil, and vinegar and cook for 1 minute. Season with a pinch of salt. Serve warm with hot sauce, if desired.

Escarole with Cannellini Beans

Escarole is a soft, leafy green used in Italian cooking. It has a pleasing bitter edge like many of Italy's beloved greens (broccoli rabe, radicchio, arugula). This side dish is easily transformed into a fantastic dinner-worthy soup by adding 4 cups of chicken broth in place of the lemon or balsamic and cooking for 10 additional minutes (to really soften the leaves). Serve with a generous grating of Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese and some crusty bread.

SERVES 4

4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
4 garlic cloves, minced or sliced
1/4 teaspoon crushed red-pepper flakes
1 large head escarole, washed and cut into 1-inch pieces (the whole leaf is edible)
Kosher salt
1 14-ounce can cannellini beans, drained
Juice of 1/2 lemon or 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar, as needed

In a large sauté pan, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the garlic and pepper flakes and cook for 1 minute. Add the escarole and 1/2 teaspoon salt and cook, stirring, until the escarole is wilted and tender, about 5 minutes. Stir in the beans and cook until heated through. Season with more salt, if needed. Finish with 1 tablespoon of lemon juice to start (or balsamic if you want a sweeter dish), until the flavors are bright. Serve warm.

Creamy Lemon Spinach

Creamed spinach is delicious, but often heavier than our current palettes can handle, especially when served alongside a meat dish. Try this updated version, which forgoes the flour and cream in place of thick and tangy Greek yogurt. You can also make this dish with 2 bunches Swiss chard, stalks removed.

SERVES 4

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

1 small onion, diced

2 16-ounce bags fresh spinach, tough stems removed

1/2 cup plain, whole milk Greek yogurt

Zest and juice of 1/2 lemon

Kosher salt and a pepper mill

In a wide, deep pot, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the onion and cook until very soft and golden, about 8 minutes. Add the spinach, in batches as necessary, and cook, uncovered, until just wilted, about 4 minutes for that much spinach. Stir in the yogurt, lemon zest, and 1/2 teaspoon salt and cook until the mixture thickens a bit, about 2 minutes. Add the lemon juice and season with more salt and a few grindings of pepper. Serve warm.

Classic Collard Greens with Bacon and Onions

Hearty collard greens need a lot of salt and fat to melt them into sublimeness. Here bacon lends its smoky-salty goodness to this velvety pot of greens.

SERVES 4

3 strips bacon, cut into 1/2-inch pieces

1 large onion, sliced

2 garlic cloves, minced

1/4 teaspoon crushed red-pepper flakes

1 pound collard greens (or any leafy green: Swiss chard, mustard greens, turnip greens, kale), tough center stalks removed (see "Removing the Stalks," pg xx), washed and cut in 1-inch chiffonade (see pg xx)

1/2 cup chicken broth

1 tablespoon red wine vinegar or apple cider vinegar

Kosher salt

1. In a large sauté pan with a lid, heat the bacon over medium heat. Cook until it is crisp and has rendered its fat, about 8 minutes. Add the onions and cook in the bacon fat until very soft and just beginning to brown, about 6 minutes. Add the garlic and pepper flakes and cook for 1 minute more.
2. Add the collard greens, broth, vinegar, and 1/2 teaspoon salt to the pan and bring the broth to a boil. Cover, reduce heat to medium-low, and cook the collards until they are very tender, at least 12 minutes. Season generously with more salt and vinegar as needed to brighten the flavors. Serve warm.



Recommended Kitchen Equipment

Having the right equipment really makes a difference in the kitchen. Use this list as a guide, as you build your collection.



Basic Pots & Pans

This should be heavy-duty, stainless-steel cookware with metal (read: ovenproof) handles. Do not invest in a whole set of nonstick cookware; it is only necessary to have 1 skillet with a nonstick coating.

- ❶ 1 ½ - and 3-quart saucepans with covers
- ❷ 6 - to 8-quart Dutch oven or saucepot with cover (depending on your family size or entertaining aspirations)
- ❸ 8-quart stockpot (for blanching/cooking pasta)

Basic Pots & Pans

Continued...

- ❶ 12-inch large sauté pan (sloped sides) or skillet (straight sides) with cover (2)
- ❷ 12-inch non-stick sauté pan
- ❸ 10-inch sauté pan



Preparation Tools

- ❶ Large utensil holder, to place near stove
- ❷ Stainless steel tongs (with locking mechanism) (2)
- ❸ Wooden spoons (3, one with a flat-edged tip)
- ❹ Flexible rubber spatula
- ❺ Large solid metal spoon (2)
- ❻ Ladle
- ❼ Stainless steel spatula (i.e. pancake turner)
- ❽ Kitchen shears
- ❾ Lemon/lime juicer
- ❿ Potato masher
- ⓫ Microplane grater
- ⓬ Vegetable peeler
- ⓭ Pastry brush
- ⓮ Large wire whisk
- ⓯ Can opener



Measuring Tools

- ❶ Set of dry measuring cups
- ❷ Set of measuring spoons
- ❸ 2-cup liquid measure (preferably Pyrex)
- ❹ Kitchen timer
- ❺ Instant-read meat thermometer





Preparation Equipment

- ❶ Peppermill (Peugeot brand offers the best grinding mechanism, from coarse to fine; check the bottom of the grinder for the name)
- ❷ Wooden or soft plastic cutting boards (2)
- ❸ 9 x 9 and 9 x 13-inch baking dishes (Pyrex or metal)
- ❹ Heavy-gauge baking sheets (also called “half sheet pans”) (2)
- ❺ Reusable non-stick baking mat (never grease a cookie sheet again!) (2)
- ❻ Kitchen towels (at least 6)
- ❼ Pot holders (2)
- ❽ Stainless steel mixing bowls, graduated sizes
- ❾ Colander
- ❿ Box grater
- ⓫ Salad spinner

High-Carbon Steel Knives

Wusthof and Henckels provide excellent quality.

- ❶ 8-inch chef’s knife
- ❷ 8-inch serrated bread knife
- ❸ Handheld 2-stage knife sharpener
- ❹ 3 ½-inch paring knife



Appliances

Resist the temptation to buy too many appliances for the kitchen. Most, with the exceptions of the following, don’t often save you time or hassle, and take up more room than they are worth.

- ❶ Food processor (1 1-cup or larger)
- ❷ Hand-held electric mixer or a standing mixer
- ❸ Blender





Jennifer Clair

Jennifer Clair is a culinary instructor and the founder of Home Cooking New York, a cooking school in downtown New York City. Before launching the school in 2002, she honed her culinary and editorial chops as a Food Editor at *Martha Stewart Living* and the Recipes Editor at *The Wall Street Journal*. She graduated from the Institute of Culinary Education on a full James Beard Foundation scholarship. Jennifer's first cookbook is *Gourmet Cooking on a Budget* (2010). She lives in the Hudson Valley, New York, with her husband and two children.



The Story of Home Cooking New York

In 2002, Home Cooking New York began as a mobile business that offered cooking classes in students' home kitchens across New York City. After 6 years of teaching in private homes, we branched out into public cooking classes after discovering a fully-stocked kitchen for rent in the back of a local bed and breakfast. That was 2008. Today, Home Cooking New York is a seven-days-a-week cooking school, with a rotating crew of many marvelous chef-instructors. We've moved many times throughout our growth before building out our own welcoming teaching kitchen in a former textile factory in downtown Manhattan. That is where you will find us today. Please be sure to pay us a visit next time you find yourself in town.

To learn more about Home Cooking New York (and receive free weekly recipes), please visit the school online @ www.homecookingny.com.

Acknowledgements

Now is my chance to gush about all the good people who have made Home Cooking New York a success and were instrumental to bringing this cookbook to fruition.

Chef John Scoff became my first official employee, back in 2004, turning my one-woman enterprise into a real business. He was, and still is, just the kind of person you want to spend time with in your kitchen. An impressive culinary pedigree alone does not make a successful chef-instructor (although that is required); it is who you are as a person. John's generosity as a human being set the benchmark for all the instructors that would come after him.

Chef Erica Wides joined us in 2014, right after we built out our new kitchen and could finally offer classes 7 days a week. She is smart and sassy and brings a vivaciousness and hilarity to every class she teaches. She was the "culinary editor" for this book, making sure everything written within was legit. After 15 years of teaching professional culinary students before making her way to us, she is a powerhouse of food knowledge.

Susana Tinizhanay completes the "dream team" that makes up the core of our school, along with John, Erica, and me. She keeps the school in order and sparkly clean and is the thread that ties the school together. Anyone who runs a kitchen will tell you, your cleaning staff is your greatest asset. Susana is no exception; in fact she breaks the mold. I am grateful for her at least twice a day.

This book – the culmination of my two great pleasures: food and writing – was finally pushed into the world with the help of many friends, who also happen to be at the top of their professional game. Julie Bickar, with years of book marketing expertise, helped me find my voice (which was harder to access than I thought) when I first began writing. She also helped uncover the voice of our students, helping to emphasize the dialogue that exists between chef and student, which you will find throughout the book. Julie Shiroishi was my first official "reader," and gave me the thumbs up I needed to press on.

Meredith Heuer, a good friend and culinary collaborator for years, also happens to be a top-notch food and lifestyle photographer for the likes of *The New York Times* and the former *Gourmet*. The chance to actual work together at her bright Newburgh, NY photo studio was so thrilling that I kept coming up with reshoot ideas just so we could keep laughing and bickering together as we created the lovely photographs for this book.

Choosing the designer for this book was a no-brainer. Dan Weise has branded a large swath of the local businesses in our town of Beacon, NY, and has both the perfect eye and keen food interest needed to combine Meredith's photography and my instructions into a brilliantly readable and beautifully composed book.

I am surrounded by a family that relishes the intricacies of the English language, which comes in quite handy when you need willing and able people to read a book you are writing. My sister, Kate Herman, is an exacting copy editor and vocabulary maven. My brother, Jon Herman, is a craftsman with words and novice cook who asked all the right questions. My husband, Stephen Clair, wielding his magic editing pen, slashed my prose to pieces, until it was clean and shiny. He is merciless, and masterful.

Our children, Esther and Henry, were more enthusiastic and engaged in this cookbook than I could ever have dared to hope. They chimed in – with conviction! – about it all: the photography, my wardrobe for photo shoots, and the deliciousness (or not) of the recipes. Their love and appreciation of food creates a soul-deep satisfaction in me.

The two people I am most grateful for, my parents Phyllis and Ivan Herman, are no longer here to cheer me on. But they always did, from my earliest memories, and they are the reason I am filled with the can-do spirit. They were both excellent wordsmiths and deeply-loving parents. This book would have made them kvell with joy.





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