

## Healthy Cooking

**Preparing healthy meals:** Healthy cooking is often dismissed as producing bland, tasteless dishes and requiring extra time, effort, and cookware. However it is certainly possible to create delicious, well balanced, and healthy meals in the same amount of time and using the same cookware as is needed for much less healthy meals. The quality of the foods we eat significantly affects our feelings of well-being. That is why it is important to choose and prepare our meals with good health in mind.

Understanding cooking methods is one of the first steps in preparing delicious meals while preserving nutritional content and avoiding excessive salt and fat.

Definitions of cooking methods:

**Baking:** This is one of the simplest methods of food preparation and it does not require adding extra fat. Just place the food in the oven and wait.

**Braising:** This method involves browning ingredients in a pan and then slowly cooking them in a covered pot with a small amount of water or broth. The cooking liquid will absorb nutrients and flavor and can be used as a sauce.

**Sautéing:** This method allows for relatively quick cooking of thin pieces of food. If a high quality, non-stick pan is used, sautéing can be done without using any added fat. If necessary, use low-sodium broth, cooking spray, or water instead of oil.

**Steaming:** This is a very simple method to master. Place foods on a perforated tray above simmering liquid. Using a broth or other flavored liquid will enhance the dish.

**Stir-Frying:** This method involves small pieces food being cooked in a pan at high heat while being stirred rapidly; use only a small amount of low-fat oil or spray.

**Grilling:** This is a favorite cooking method for summer days. Place the food on a grill and monitor it carefully to ensure that it does not burn or char. This method allows fat to drip away as the food cooks.

**Poaching:** Poaching is a method that requires simmering ingredients in a cooking liquid such as water, broth, or juice.

**Roasting:** This is much like baking, but at a higher temperature. Be sure to use a baking sheet to allow fat to drip away during cooking.

Using these techniques can create healthy and delicious meals, but remember, purchasing healthy ingredients is the first step to healthy cooking. It is up to each of us to make healthy eating choices.

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Baking



Steaming



Stewing



Soup



Stir-frying



Grilling