

## Common Cooking Terms

**Al dente:** Pasta cooked until just firm. From the Italian "to the tooth."

**Bake:** To cook food in an oven, surrounded with dry heat; called roasting when applied to meat or poultry.

**Baking powder:** A combination of baking soda, an acid such as cream of tartar, and a starch or flour (moisture absorber). Most common type is double-acting baking powder, which acts when mixed with liquid and again when heated.

**Baking soda:** The main ingredient in baking powder, baking soda is also used when there is acid (buttermilk or sour cream, for example) in a recipe. Always mix with other dry ingredients before adding any liquid, since leavening begins as soon as soda comes in contact with liquid.

**Barbecue:** To cook foods on a rack or a spit over coals.

**Baste:** To moisten food for added flavor and to prevent drying out while cooking.

**Batter:** An uncooked pourable mixture usually made up of flour, a liquid, and other ingredients.

**Beat:** To stir rapidly to make a mixture smooth, using a whisk, spoon, or mixer.

**Blanch:** To cook briefly in boiling water to seal in flavor and color; usually used for vegetables or fruit, to prepare for freezing, and to ease skin removal.

**Blend:** To thoroughly combine 2 or more ingredients, either by hand with a whisk or spoon, or with a mixer.

**Boil:** To cook in bubbling water that has reached 212 degrees F.

**Bone:** To remove bones from poultry, meat, or fish.

**Bouquet garni:** A tied bundle of herbs, usually parsley, thyme, and bay leaves, that is added to flavor soups, stews, and sauces but removed before serving.

**Braise:** To cook first by browning, then gently simmering in a small amount of liquid over low heat in a covered pan until tender.

**Bread:** To coat with crumbs or cornmeal before cooking.

**Broil:** To cook on a rack or spit under or over direct heat, usually in an oven.

**Brown:** To cook over high heat, usually on top of the stove, to brown food.

**Caramelize:** To heat sugar until it liquefies and becomes a syrup ranging in color from golden to dark brown.

**Core:** To remove the seeds or tough woody centers from fruits and vegetables.

**Cream:** The butterfat portion of milk. Also, to beat ingredients, usually sugar and a fat, until smooth and fluffy.

**Cube:** To cut food into small (about 1/2- inch) cubes.

**Cut in:** To distribute a solid fat in flour using a cutting motion, with 2 knives used scissors-fashion or a pastry blender, until divided evenly into tiny pieces. Usually refers to making pastry.

**Deep-fry:** To cook by completely immersing food in hot fat.

**Deglaze:** To loosen brown bits from a pan by adding a liquid, then heating while stirring and scraping the pan.

**Dice:** To cut food into very small (1/8-to 1/4-inch) cubes.

**Dollop:** A spoonful of soft food such as whipped cream or mashed potatoes.

**Dot:** To scatter butter in bits over food.

**Dredge:** To cover or coat uncooked food, usually with a flour, cornmeal mixture or bread crumbs.

**Dress:** To coat foods such as salad with a sauce. Also, to clean fish, poultry, or game for cooking.

**Drippings:** Juices and fats rendered by meat or poultry during cooking.

**Drizzle:** To pour melted butter, oil, syrup, melted chocolate, or other liquid back and forth over food in a fine stream.

**Dust:** To coat lightly with confectioners' sugar or cocoa (cakes and pastries) or another powdery ingredient.

**Fillet:** A flat piece of boneless meat, poultry, or fish. Also, to cut the bones from a piece of meat, poultry, or fish.

**Fines herbs:** A mixture of herbs traditionally parsley, chervil, chives, and tarragon, used to flavor fish, chicken, and eggs.

**Flambé:** To drizzle liquor over a food while it is cooking, then when the alcohol has warmed, ignite the food just before serving.

**Flute:** To make decorative grooves. Usually refers to pastry.

**Fold:** To combine light ingredients such as whipped cream or beaten egg whites with a heavier mixture, using a gentle over-and-under motion, usually with a rubber spatula.

**Glaze:** To coat foods with glossy mixtures such as jellies or sauces.

**Grate:** To rub foods against a serrated surface to produce shredded or fine bits.

**Grease:** To rub the interior surface of a cooking dish or pan with shortening, oil, or butter to prevent food from sticking to it.

**Grill:** To cook food on a rack under or over direct heat, as on a barbecue or in a broiler.

**Grind:** To reduce food to tiny particles using a grinder or a food processor.

**Julienne:** To cut into long, thin strips, matchsticklike in shape.

**Knead:** To blend dough together with hands or in a mixer to form a pliable mass.

**Macerate:** To soak in a flavored liquid; usually refers to fruit.

**Marinate:** To soak in a flavored liquid; usually refers to meat, poultry, or fish.

**Mince:** To cut into tiny pieces, usually with a knife.

**Parboil:** To partially cook by boiling. Usually done to prepare food for final cooking by another method.

**Poach:** To cook gently over very low heat in barely simmering liquid just to cover.

**Purée:** To mash or grind food until completely smooth, usually in a food processor, blender, sieve, or food mill.

**Reduce:** To thicken a liquid and concentrate its flavor by boiling.

**Render:** To cook fatty meat or poultry—such as bacon or goose—over low heat to obtain drippings.

**Roast:** To cook a large piece of meat or poultry uncovered with dry heat in an oven.

**Sauté or panfry:** To cook food in a small amount of fat over relatively high heat.

**Scald:** To heat liquid almost to a boil until bubbles begin to form around the edge.

**Sear:** To brown the surface of meat by quick-cooking over high heat in order to seal in the meat's juices.

**Shred:** To cut food into narrow strips with a knife or a grater.

**Simmer:** To cook in liquid just below the boiling point; bubbles form but do not burst on the surface of the liquid.

**Skim:** To remove surface foam or fat from a liquid.

**Steam:** To cook food on a rack or in a steamer set over boiling or simmering water in a covered pan.

**Steep:** To soak in a liquid just under the boiling point to extract the essence—e.g., tea.

**Stew:** To cook covered over low heat in a liquid.

**Stir-fry:** To quickly cook small pieces of food over high heat, stirring constantly.

**Truss:** To tie whole poultry with string or skewers so it will hold its shape during cooking.

**Whip:** To beat food with a whisk or mixer to incorporate air and produce volume.

**Whisk:** To beat ingredients (such as heavy or whipping cream, eggs, salad dressings, or sauces) with a fork or whisk to mix, blend, or incorporate air.

**Zest:** The outer, colored part of the peel of citrus fruit.