

Glossary of Cooking Methods and Terms

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Au gratin: Describes a dish that is coated with sauce, sprinkled with cheese or crumbs and browned in the oven or under the grill.

Baking: To cook by dry heat in the oven.

Basting: To moisten food with spoonfuls of fat or other liquids while cooking.

Beating: A brisk, whipping motion, using a fork, whisk or other form of beater, which lifts a mixture over and over in order to introduce air and to make it very smooth and light.

Blanching: To soak in boiling water for a few minutes, or in water just brought to the boil, and then plunged into ice water.

Blending: To mix in two or more ingredients so thoroughly that each loses its identity.

Boiling: To cook foods or liquids at boiling point.

Braising: To brown meats or vegetables in a small amount of fat and then to cook them slowly in a very small amount of liquid in a covered pan, either on top of the stove or in the oven.

Bouillon: A meat broth, not clarified, that is to say, not strained.

Bouquet garni: A mixture of herbs, tied loosely in muslin and used to flavour soups, stews and sauces.

Clarified fat: Fat heated, skimmed and strained, to be used for greasing tins etc.

Creaming: To mix and beat one or more foods (such as butter, or butter and sugar in cake-making) with a spoon or fork, until soft and fluffy.

Croutons: Tiny cubes of bread, fried until golden brown and crisp and used as a garnish for soups and other dishes.

Folding: A method of lightly combining beaten egg whites or whipped cream with another mixture so that the air cells are not broken down. Literally folding in the egg whites or cream with a downward cutting motion of the spoon, rather than stirring.

Frying: To cook in a small amount of fat or oil in an open pan. **Deep-frying** is to immerse food in sufficient hot fat or oil to cover it.

Glaze: Coated with a thin sugar syrup or glaze.

Grilling: To cook food quickly, under rather than over a flame. This method is only suitable for fresh fish and the more tender cuts of meat and poultry.

Kneading: A method of pressing, folding and stretching a dough with the hands, mainly applicable to yeast dough and the making of bread.

Marinade: A mixture of oil, lemon juice, vinegar or wine with seasonings and herbs in which meat or fish may be soaked before cooking, both to make it more tender and to improve its flavour.

Poaching: To cook food by putting it into sufficient hot liquid to cover. The liquid must be kept below boiling point.

Pressure Cooking: The method of cooking by steam in a specially constructed saucepan, at very high temperatures so that foods are cooked much more rapidly. Very useful for such long processes as making stock for soup, or the bottling of fruits and vegetables. Also tenderizes cheaper cuts of meat for stews and casseroles.

Puree: Reducing one or a combination of cooked foods to a smooth pulp by putting them through a sieve.

Roasting: To cook meat, poultry or vegetables with a little fat in either a covered or uncovered pan in the oven.

Roux: Melted butter or fat combined with an equal amount of flour and used as a basis for thickening sauces, soups or gravies.

Sauté: To cook small pieces of meat and vegetables very gently in a little butter or fat until they are tender but not browned or crisp.

Scalding: To heat a liquid such as milk to a temperature just below boiling point.

Simmering: To cook a liquid, or a food immersed in a liquid which is kept just below boiling point. A similar process to poaching, except it applies to longer periods of cooking ie a soup or stew is kept simmering or gently bubbling during the cooking process, without ever being brought to a full boil.

Steaming: To cook in the steam from boiling liquid. This may be done in a steamer, which is a closed sieved container placed over boiling water. Or the food may be placed in a basin that is then put into but not covered by boiling water in a closed pot.

Stewing: The process of cooking food slowly in enough liquid to cover in closed pot until tender.

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